



ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

AGENDA

Wednesday 12 May 2021

Commencing at 7.00pm

Wycheproof Supper Room

367 Broadway, Wycheproof

**Anthony Judd
Chief Executive Officer
Buloke Shire Council**

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. COUNCIL WELCOME AND STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

WELCOME

The Mayor Cr Daryl Warren will welcome all in attendance.

STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Mayor Cr Daryl Warren 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 Ordinary Meeting held on Wednesday, 14 April 2021.

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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| 8.6.2 | C97 2020-2021 NULLAWIL-BIRCHIP ROAD REHABILITATION | |
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| | If the meeting has been closed it will be brought back into open session by resolution | |
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| | NIL | |
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| | NIL | |
| 10. | MEETING CLOSE | |

NEXT MEETING

THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WILL BE HELD IN WYCHEPROOF SUPPER ROOM, , 367 BROADWAY,
WYCHEPROOF ON WEDNESDAY, 9 JUNE 2021 AT 7.00PM.

Anthony Judd
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 on 7, 20 and 21 April 2021.

- Attachments:**
- 1 [Councillor Briefing Record - 7 April 2021](#)
 - 2 [Councillor Assembly - Council Plan - 20 April 2021](#)
 - 3 [Councillor Briefing Record - 21 April 2021](#)

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 23 November 2020, 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 7, 20 and 21 April 2021 is attached for public information.

BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL

Record

Councillor Briefing

| | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Date and Time: | 7 April 2021 | Time: | 5:00pm – 8:00pm |
| Location: | Donald Council Chamber | | |

ITEMS

| NO. | TOPIC | PURPOSE |
|---|--|---|
| Councillor only time 5.00pm - 5.30pm | | |
| 1. | Welcome | |
| 2. | Apologies | Cr. Stewart, Travis Fitzgibbon |
| 3. | Attendees | Cr. Simpson, Cr. Milne, Cr. Getley, Cr. Warren, Cr. Vis, Cr Pollard, Anthony Judd, Hannah Yu, Wayne O'Toole, Rose Harris |
| 4. | Visitors | Ben Sawyer Valuer (Preston Rowe Paterson) (7.1); Mick Kealy, Senior Valuer (Rating Authority Valuations Valuer General Victoria) (7.1); Dan McLoughlan (7.3) |
| 5. | Declarations of Pecuniary Conflicts of Interest | Cr Getley declared a Material Interest for Item 10.1 (Draft Ordinary Agenda 14 April 2021 – Item 9.1.2 – Charlton Fire Brigade Facility Site) in his capacity as Real Estate Agent. |
| 6. | Confirmation of Councillor Briefing Notes | Agreed |
| 7. | Presentations | |
| 7.1 | Valuations – Ben Sawyer, and Mick Kealy, | |
| 7.2 | Budget Initiatives and Capital Works Priorities – Anthony Judd, Wayne O'Toole | |
| 7.3 | Streetscape Upgrades – Dan McLoughlan | |
| 8. | Items for Discussion | |

8.1 Community and Council Plan – Rose Harris

9. Councillor Matters

9.1 Back St Arnaud Road / Calder Road Hazard

9.2 Dump Point Culgoa

9.3 Nandaly Community Hotel Solar Funding Application

9.4 Maloney report

9.5 Council tour

9.6 Recognition of significant marriage milestones (e.g. 60th wedding anniversary)

9.7 Gravel Pits

9.8 Single Tree Road maintenance

9.9 Footpath Nandaly

9.10 Playground Nandaly

10. CEO Updates

10.1 Draft Council Meeting Agenda 14 April 2021

Cr Getley declared a Material Interest for Item 10.1 (Draft Ordinary Agenda 14 April 2021 – Item 9.1.2 – Charlton Fire Brigade Facility Site) in his capacity as Real Estate Agent.

10.2 Gender Equality Act

11. Next Briefing:

Date and Time: 21 April 2021

Time: 3.00pm – 6.00pm

Location: Watchem Hall

12. Briefing Close

9.05pm

BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL

Record

Councillor Council Plan Briefing

| | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Date and Time: | 20 April 2021 | Time: | 2:30pm – 5pm |
| Location: | Wycheproof Supper Room | | |

ITEMS

| NO. | TOPIC | PURPOSE |
|------|--|--|
| 1. | Welcome | |
| 2. | Apologies | Cr Pollard, Cr Stewart, Cr Simpson (from 4.13pm) |
| 3. | Attendees | Cr Simpson, Cr Milne, Cr Getley, Cr Warren, Cr Vis, Anthony Judd, Rose Harris, Hannah Yu, Wayne O'Toole, Travis Fitzgibbon |
| 4. | Visitors | Nil |
| 5. | Declarations of Pecuniary Conflicts of Interest | Not Applicable |
| 6. | Confirmation of Councillor Briefing Notes | Not Applicable |
| 7. | Presentations | |
| 7.1 | Plan 2021 – 2025 and Long Term Community Vision: Rose Harris | |
| 9. | Councillor Matters | |
| 9.1 | Not Applicable | |
| 10. | CEO Updates | |
| 10.1 | Not Applicable | |

11. Next Briefing:

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Date and Time: | 21 April 2021 | Time: | 3.00pm – 6.00pm |
| Location: | Watchem Hall | | |

12. Briefing Close

4.25 pm

BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL

Record

Councillor Briefing

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Date and Time: | 21 April 2021 | Time: | 3:00pm – 6:00pm |
| Location: | Watchem Hall | | |

ITEMS

| NO. | TOPIC | PURPOSE |
|---|---|--|
| Councillor only time 3.00pm-3.30pm | | |
| 1. | Welcome | |
| 2. | Apologies | Cr. Vis, Cr. Pollard |
| 3. | Attendees | Cr Simpson, Cr Milne, Cr Getley, Cr Warren, Cr Stewart, Anthony Judd, Hannah Yu, Wayne O'Toole, Rose Harris, Travis Fitzgibbon |
| 4. | Visitors | Dan McLoughlan (8.1), Amber Ricks (8.1), Ken Rowe (7.1), Aileen Douglas (8.1) |
| 5. | Declarations of Pecuniary Conflicts of Interest | Nil |
| 6. | Confirmation of Councillor Briefing Notes | Agreed |
| 7. | Presentations | |
| 7.1 | Works Area Requests for Service – Ken Rowe, Manager Works | |
| 7.2 | Working for Victoria Program – Travis Fitzgibbon, Manager Customer Engagement; Ken Rowe – Manager Works | |
| 7.3 | Buloke Street Art Festival – Wayne O'Toole, Director Works and Technical Services | |
| 8. | Items for Discussion | |
| 8.1 | Annual Budget Workshop – Aileen Douglas, Manager Finance | |

9. Councillor Matters

9.1 Dirrel Conservation Management Plan

9.2 Wimmera Development Association
(WDA) Membership

9.3 Community Plans

9.4 Channel – Wycheproof

9.5 Turntable lease

9.6 Calder Highway: Speed Zone and Truck
Route

10. CEO Updates

10.1 Beyond Buloke 2030 Listening Post Dates

10.2 Live Streaming of Council Meetings

10.3 Monthly Project Updates

11. Next Briefing:

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Date and Time: | 28 April 2021 | Time: | 5.00pm – 8.00pm |
|-----------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|

| | |
|------------------|------|
| Location: | Zoom |
|------------------|------|

12. Briefing Close

7.39pm

7.2 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 particular 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 |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|
| Country Fire Authority | John Powell Teddy Waddy Fire Brigade | April 2021 | Receiving a Country Fire Authority National Medal for his over sixty years of service to the Country Fire Authority, with his mainstay to be the Teddy Waddy Rural Fire Brigade |
| Victorian Rifle Association | Alister Larmour (Charlton) Birchip Rifle Club Member | 16 – 18 April 2021 | Winning the Victorian Rifle Association 2021 Victorian Queen's prize in the F Open Class on the Wellsford Rifle Range in Bendigo |
| Buloke Shire Council | Lorna Goldsworthy Sea Lake | 9 May 2021 | Celebrating the significant milestone of 100 years birthday. |

7.3 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 | Correspondence sent to | Date sent | Date of Response | Summary of Response |
|--|---|-----------|------------------|---------------------|
| Safety Upgrade – Boort Charlton Rail Crossing Safety Requirements | Jacinta Allan MP, Ben Carol MP Copy to: Louise Staley MP Paul Northey RRV | 30/4/21 | | |
| Requirement for site for new Charlton Fire Brigade Station | Danny Pearson MP, Copy to: Louise Staley MP, Jaala Pulford MP, | 30/4/21 | | |

7.4 BUILDING PERMITS - MONTHLY UPDATE

Author's Title: Statutory Administration Support

Department: Works and Technical Services

File No: DB/14/01

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides information on Building Permits approved by staff from 1 April 2021 to 30 April 2021.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council note information contained in the report on Building Permits approved by staff from 1 April 2021 to 30 April 2021.

Attachments: Nil

LIST OF BUILDING PERMITS APPROVED BY COUNCIL SURVEYOR

| Permit No. | BAMS Permit No. | Address | Project Description | Date Approved |
|------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 20210048 | 3278042992900 | 29 Sproats Lane, Donald | Shed Repair | 01/04/2021 |
| 20210049 | 8287630964789 | Mildura Way | Veterinary Shed | 01/04/2021 |
| 20210050 | 7329877802256 | 141 Woods Street, Donald | Garage/Storage Shed | 01/04/2021 |
| 20210053 | 8509359556542 | Boort-Charlton Road, Charlton | Fire Services | 01/04/2021 |
| 20210054 | 5020980112978 | Boort-Charlton Road, Charlton | Chicken Broiler Sheds (x5) | 01/04/2021 |
| 20210055 | 7035072505591 | 65 Horace Street, Sea Lake | Internal Alterations | 01/04/2021 |
| 20210056 | 7691997704898 | 7-21 Mount Street, Wycheproof | Storage Shed | 01/04/2021 |
| 20210057 | 8767851070284 | Woods Street, Donald (Tennis Club) | Light Towers | 15/04/2021 |
| 20210058 | 6314916445307 | 33 Railway Avenue, Sea Lake | Re-stump of dwelling | 15/04/2021 |
| 20210059 | 6541193241725 | Mildura Way, Charlton (Tennis Club) | Light Towers | 15/04/2021 |

| Permit No. | BAMS Permit No. | Address | Project Description | Date Approved |
|-------------------|------------------------|---|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 20210060 | 4009952560069 | 468 Broadway, Wycheproof (Tennis Club) | Light Towers | 15/04/2021 |
| 20210069 | 2331866375107 | Gretgrix Road, Wycheproof | Machinery Shed | 22/04/2021 |

LIST OF BUILDING PERMITS APPROVED BY PRIVATE SURVEYOR

| Permit No. | Address | Project Description | Date Approved |
|-------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 20210061 | 15 Johnson Street, Birchip | Shed | 25/03/2021 |

7.5 PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED - MONTHLY UPDATE

Author's Title: Planning Officer

Department: Works and Technical Services

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

| Application No | Applicant | Address | Date Rec | Summary of Proposal | Status |
|----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|--|---------------|
| PPA904/21 | Johnson Goodwin Memorial Homes | 22 Camp Street, Donald | 29/01/2021 | Construction of six units, garage and storage shed | Permit Issued |
| PPA907/21 | Gawk (Regional Billboard Co.) | 5 Woods Street, Donald | 08/02/2021 | Construct and display a major promotion sign | Objections |
| PPA910/21 | Price Merrett Consulting | 76-78 Mount Street, Wycheproof | 22/02/2021 | Two lot subdivision of land | Permit Issued |
| PPA911/21 | P Catherine | 16-18 Mildura way, Charlton | 25/02/2021 | Change category of liquor licence, vary hours and increase red line area | Permit Issued |
| PPA912/21 | D Oldfield | 7 Lundy Street, Charlton | 04/03/2021 | Use and development of land for a commercial shed for a retail business | Permit Issued |
| PPA913/21 | J Arrowsmith | 5 Gunyah Flat Road, Charlton | 10/03/2021 | Construction of a dwelling (studio cabin) | Permit Issued |

| Application No | Applicant | Address | Date Rec | Summary of Proposal | Status |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--|-----------------|--|---------------------------------|
| PPA915/21 | Northern Land Solutions | 94 Elliots Road, Bimbourie | 11/03/2021 | Two lot subdivision of land (boundary realignment) | Permit Issued |
| PPA918/21 | A Majeeb | 4 Arundell Square, Charlton | 19/03/2021 | Use and development of land for a store (shipping container) | Objections |
| PPA919/21 | CardnoTGM | Aitken Avenue, Donald (Lot 1 & 2 TP173081 | 26/03/2021 | Two lot subdivision of land and use and development of land for two dwellings | Notice of Application Referral |
| PPA920/21 | J Pringle | 65 Horace Street, Sea Lake | 01/04/2021 | Use of land to serve and consume liquor and construct and display a business identification sign | Request for Further Information |
| PPA921/21 | Action Steel Industries | 489 Brim East Road, Wilkur | 07/04/2021 | Construction of a farm shed | Permit Issued |
| PPA922/21 | CardnoTGM | 35 Aitken Avenue, Donald | 08/04/2021 | Two lot subdivision of land (rural dwelling excision) | Notice of Application Referral |
| PPA923/21 | P Noonan | 347 Barbers Road, Karyrie | 21/04/2021 | Use and development of land for animal production (duck farm), construction of new shed and increased capacity to 70,000 birds | Notice of Application Referral |
| PPA924/21 | Gawk (Regional Billboard Co.) | Birchip-Wycheproof Road, Birchip (Lot 1 PS11713) | 22/04/2021 | Construct and display a major promotion sign | Notice of Application Referral |

8. GENERAL BUSINESS

8.1 POLICY REPORTS

Nil

8.2 MANAGEMENT REPORTS

8.2.1 PROPOSAL TO UNDERTAKE SALE OF SURPLUS COUNCIL PROPERTY

Author's Title: Manager Facilities and Projects

Department: Works and Technical Services

File No: CP/02/08

Relevance to Council Plan 2017 - 2021

Strategic Objective: Deliver our service in a financially viable way

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the proposal to sell three properties at 131 Horace Street Sea Lake, 110 Sutcliff Street Sea Lake, and 8 Alexander Avenue Berriwillock.

SUMMARY

At the August 2019 Council meeting, Council noted that a 28 date consultation period was undertaken for the proposed sale of the aforementioned properties and no submissions were received, and resolved to proceed with the sale of the three properties. Due to change in department staff and the COVID-19 pandemic, the sale of the properties did not proceed. Given the time lapsed and potential for change in community sentiment, Council Officers undertook additional consultation in March 2021.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes the outcome of further consultation period was undertaken to the proposed sale of surplus Council property;
2. Authorises the CEO to undertake the required sale process for 131 Horace Street Sea Lake;
3. Authorises the CEO apply for funding to subdivide the blocks and undertake the required sale process for individual subdivided blocks on 110 Sutcliffe Street, Sea Lake (old Primary School site);
4. Requests Officers investigate opportunities of retaining one or more of the subdivided blocks at 110 Sutcliffe Street for community or social housing initiatives and provide a subsequent report to Council; and
5. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer or his delegate to set a reserve price for 131 Horace Street Sea Lake and individual blocks on 110 Sutcliff Street Sea Lake

Attachments: Nil

DISCUSSION

At the August 2019 Council meeting, Council noted that a 28 date consultation period was undertaken for the proposed sale of the aforementioned properties and no submissions were received, and resolved to proceed with the sale of 131 Horace Street, Sea Lake and 110 Sutcliff Street, Sea Lake. Due to change in department staff and the COVID-19 pandemic, the sale of the properties did not proceed.

Given the time lapse, in order to remain fully transparent, Council Officers undertook further consultation on the proposed sale. There were no formal submissions for the two properties at Sea Lake during the consultation period. Councillors and officers have however, been approached frequently about the future of 110 Sutcliff Street, Sea Lake (Old Primary School site) and it has a large amount of community interest.

Council did receive input in writing prior to the formal feedback process requesting consideration for the site to become a sustainability village and high density housing for older residents.

Other verbal approaches have lobbied for larger blocks for families to build on.

Council should note that Officers have been working with engineers to undertake the feasibility of subdivision, servicing and connecting services to 110 Sutcliff Street Sea Lake. There is currently a live funding application with Regional Development Victoria to undertake these works. If this application is successful, Officers would recommend the subdivision the property and have services connected to sell individual lots.

Council is also lobbying Homes Victoria and other Community Housing groups to apply for funding for social housing across the Shire from the \$5.3billion state government investment into social and community housing. Part of this lobbying has been identifying Council and other government land that could be suitable for such developments. A portion of the land at 110 Sutcliff Street, Sea Lake could be a consideration in our offerings to attract funding for social and community housing.

This report recommends that Council proceeds with the sale of 131 Horace Street Sea Lake and the subdivision of 110 Sutcliff Street Sea Lake.

Councillors should note that consultation was also undertaken on 8 Alexander Avenue Berriwillock and there were submissions made for this parcel of land. Officers will aim to gather further information from the submitters before bringing a report to Council in the June meeting for their consideration.

RELEVANT LAW

Local Government Act

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

In August 2019 Council resolved to undertake the sale of 131 Horace Street Sea Lake, 110 Sutcliff Street Sea Lake and 8 Alexander Avenue Berriwillock.

OPTIONS

Council could elect not to proceed with the sale for these blocks of land.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council Officer undertook community engagement in line with requirements under the Local Government Act in May 2019 and again in March 2021.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable.

COLLABORATION

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Council currently pays for some utilities, maintenance and insurance associated with these properties. This would be eliminated through the removal of these surplus assets.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Council Plan 2017-2021, Theme One, Deliver our service in a financially viable way.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

As this reports includes submissions by the public interested in purchasing or acquiring Council land, it is recommended that this report is considered in the confidential section of the meeting.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

8.2.2 BULOKE PLAYSPACE TRAIL STRATEGY

Author's Title: Manager Facilities and Projects

Department: Works and Technical Services

File No: PR/04/17

Relevance to Council Plan 2017 - 2021

Strategic Objective: Responding to and enhancing our built and natural environment

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to recommend that Council consider and adopt the Playspace Trail Strategy.

SUMMARY

In 2020 the Buloke Playspaces Project was undertaken to develop 5 concept design for playgrounds in Berriwillock, Birchip, Charlton, Donald and Wycheproof. Consultation was undertaken with the community and via online survey in the development of the designs at each of the 5 playground spaces. During the course of the project, Council Officers identified the opportunity to develop a Buloke Playspace Trail, and a more proactive and consistent to approach to the design, construction and maintenance of play spaces around the Buloke Shire. Subsequently, Council Officers have formalised this opportunity in to the Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy. This report intends to present the Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy document for Council for consideration and endorsement as a Council Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopt the Playspace Trail Strategy and seek funding opportunities for the implementation.

Attachments: 1 [Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy 2021](#)

DISCUSSION

In 2020 the Buloke Playspaces Project was undertaken to develop 5 concept design for playgrounds in Berriwillock, Birchip, Charlton, Donald and Wycheproof. Consultation was undertaken with the community and via online survey in the development of the designs at each of the 5 playground spaces. During the course of the project, Officers identified the opportunity to develop a Buloke Playspace Trail, and a more proactive and consistent to approach to the design, construction and maintenance of play spaces around the Buloke Shire.

The Strategy includes a consistency in approach for design features, yet ensuring each playground has a unique offering to draw community members and tourists through the Shire. In addition, improving the accessibility is a key theme across each playspace, with a full all-access playspace proposed for Donald.

The Strategy presented aims to make Buloke playspaces a tourism product and destination as well as enhance the liveability infrastructure within the communities. The Playspace Trail will be somewhere for the local community and user groups to enjoy, explore, stay active, socialise and connect with other townships in the region. While the Trail will also provide Buloke with a tourism product to promote to the visitor market, encouraging visitation, increased visitor stay and dispersal throughout the Buloke region.

The Strategy provides a clear and defined plan for Council to enhance the public open park spaces and play spaces within the Buloke Shire for a wide range of stakeholders, whilst also ensuring an economical and sustainable approach for the installation of infrastructure through well considered design principles.

This will ensure that on-ground parks and urban staff have the capacity to proactively plan maintenance to the infrastructure within their annual work plans, and within their annual maintenance budgets.

Council has recently submitted a funding application for the implementation of the Strategy to Regional Development Victoria.

RELEVANT LAW

Not applicable.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council has authorised a funding application under the State Government's Regional Infrastructure Fund for the Buloke Shire Playspace Trail and the draft budget commits \$200,000 as a co-contribution to the project should the application be successful.

OPTIONS

Not applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Officers have considered sustainability when establishing key design principles in the preparation of this Strategy.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement was undertaken in the development of the high level concept designs in the 2020 Buloke Playspaces Project. Further consultation will be required in the development of more detailed construction designs before new park infrastructure is built.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Council Officers have considered the long term sustainability of both the built and natural environment in the preparation of this Strategy.

COLLABORATION

Council Officers have collaborated internally cross-departmentally and with external consultants in the preparation of the Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

This project will see the replacement of a range of playground infrastructure that is nearing the end of its life. External funding will be needed for the implementation of this Strategy, given the cost estimates are far beyond the existing allocations in the forward capital works budgets.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

This plan responds to key state and regional plans including:

- Wimmera Southern Mallee Destination Management Plan.
- Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

This strategy addresses many of Council's existing plans and strategies including:

- Council Plan 2017-2021 - Develop a major projects advocacy document to present to potential funding partners including a strategic masterplan for the main park in each township
- Buloke 2030 – Develop and enhance parks and public spaces so they are welcoming, safe and accessible.
- Buloke Inclusiveness Plan – a key feature will be to increase the accessibility for all people.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council will consider this report in the section of the meeting which is open to the public.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No Officer in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest to declare.

Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy 2021



Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy

Background

Following the completion of the 2020 Playspaces Project undertaken for 5 Buloke Shire Park Playgrounds (Berriwillock, Birchip, Charlton, Donald and Wycheproof), Council Staff have determined the need for a defined strategy for the play spaces in public parks within the Buloke Shire Council. The strategy should assist staff in the planning, development and implementation of playground areas to achieve a consistently high standard of public infrastructure.

The 2020 Playspaces Project aimed to develop concept plans for each of the 5 Park's play spaces, with staged implementation and a costing schedule for the proposed work. Consultation was held with the local communities via an online survey (due to COVID restrictions), follow-up online Zoom meetings to discuss the resulting survey data and suggestions made by the appointed architects.

Council staff found the project initially challenging to direct without setting boundaries for the consultant and ensuring that the resulting plans spoke to the practicality of the playspaces for key user groups, including on-ground Council staff. To ensure the resulting plans would provide a completed design that not only achieved exciting modern play areas but also met realistic expectations and practical, usable spaces, the following parameters were set for the consultant to focus on as a basis for the project:

1. The playground equipment itself
2. Accessibility to the proposed Playground area/s
3. Natural and Built Shade
4. Furniture and edging

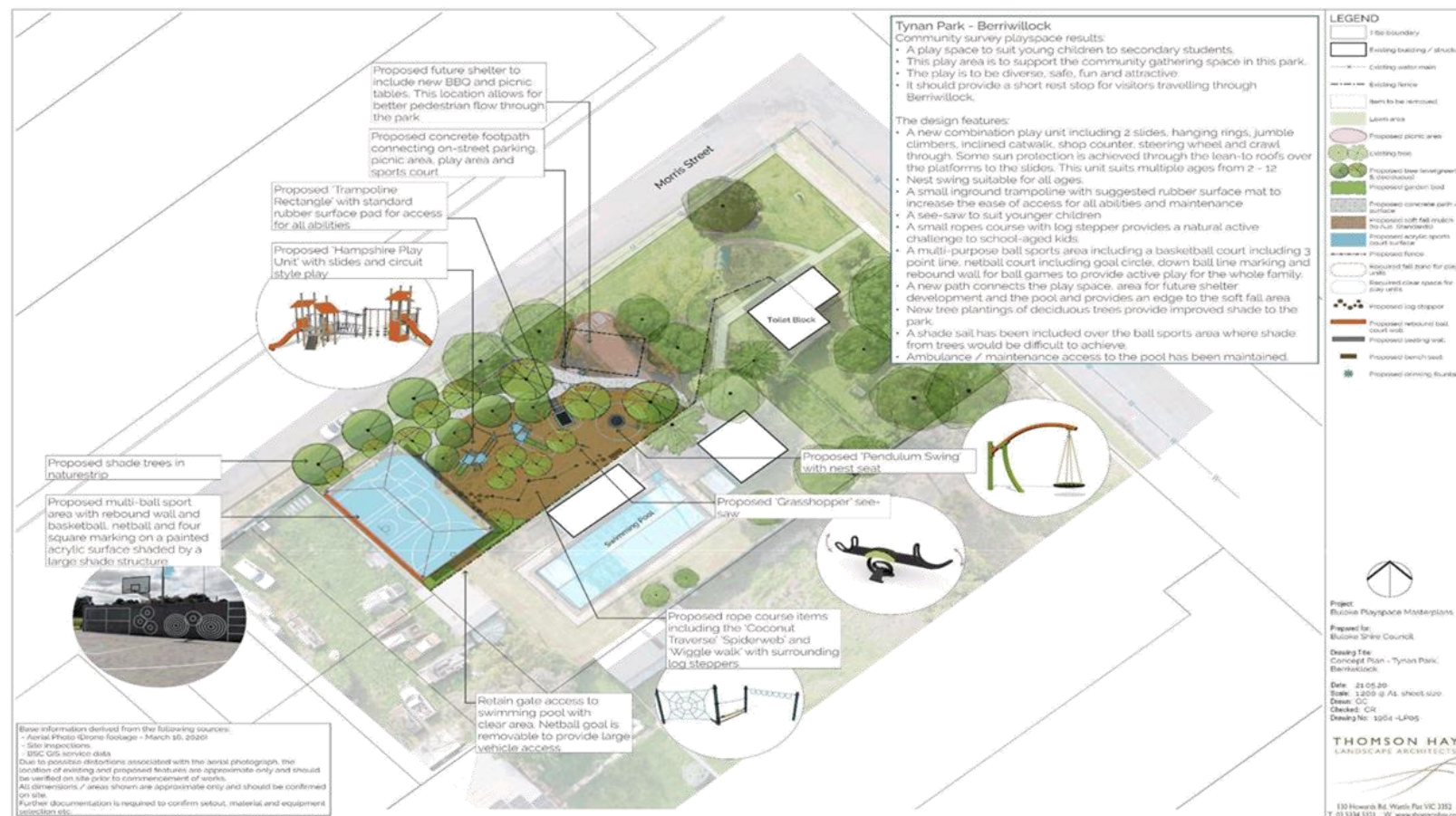
It was decided that the consultant would:

- Determine the suitability of the existing infrastructure and what key elements from the above 4 areas needed upgrading and in what order to ensure efficient implementation.
- Establish the community's priorities for each park and also the wider Buloke area, taking particular note of age groups and user groups commenting on which elements of the playspaces.
- Provide feedback on strategic decision-making for the implementation and maintenance of current and future playground equipment
- Consider cost, location and climate for all user groups including Council maintenance and upkeep.

The following high level concept designs and staged plans were developed as a result of the project:

Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy 2021

Berriwillock

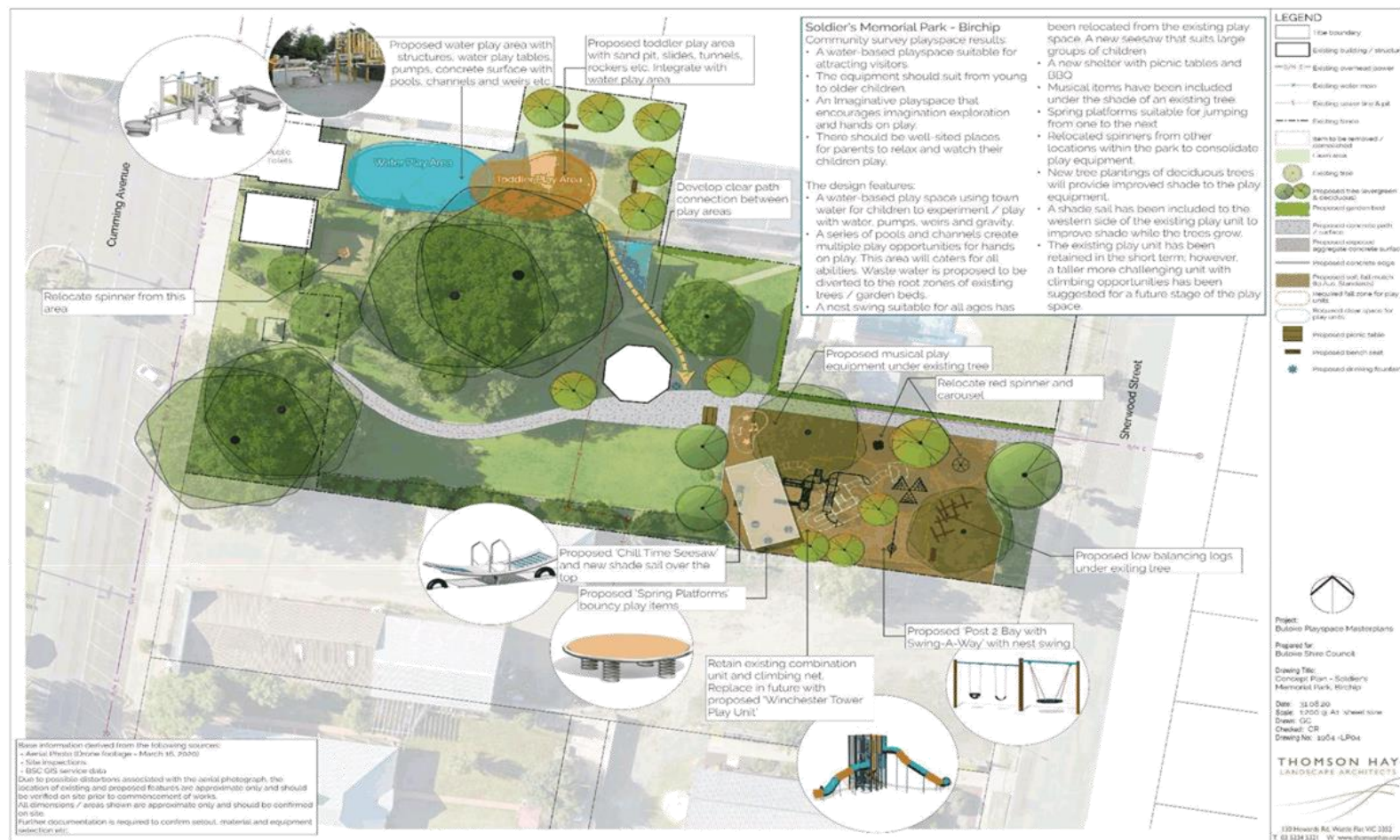


Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy 2021

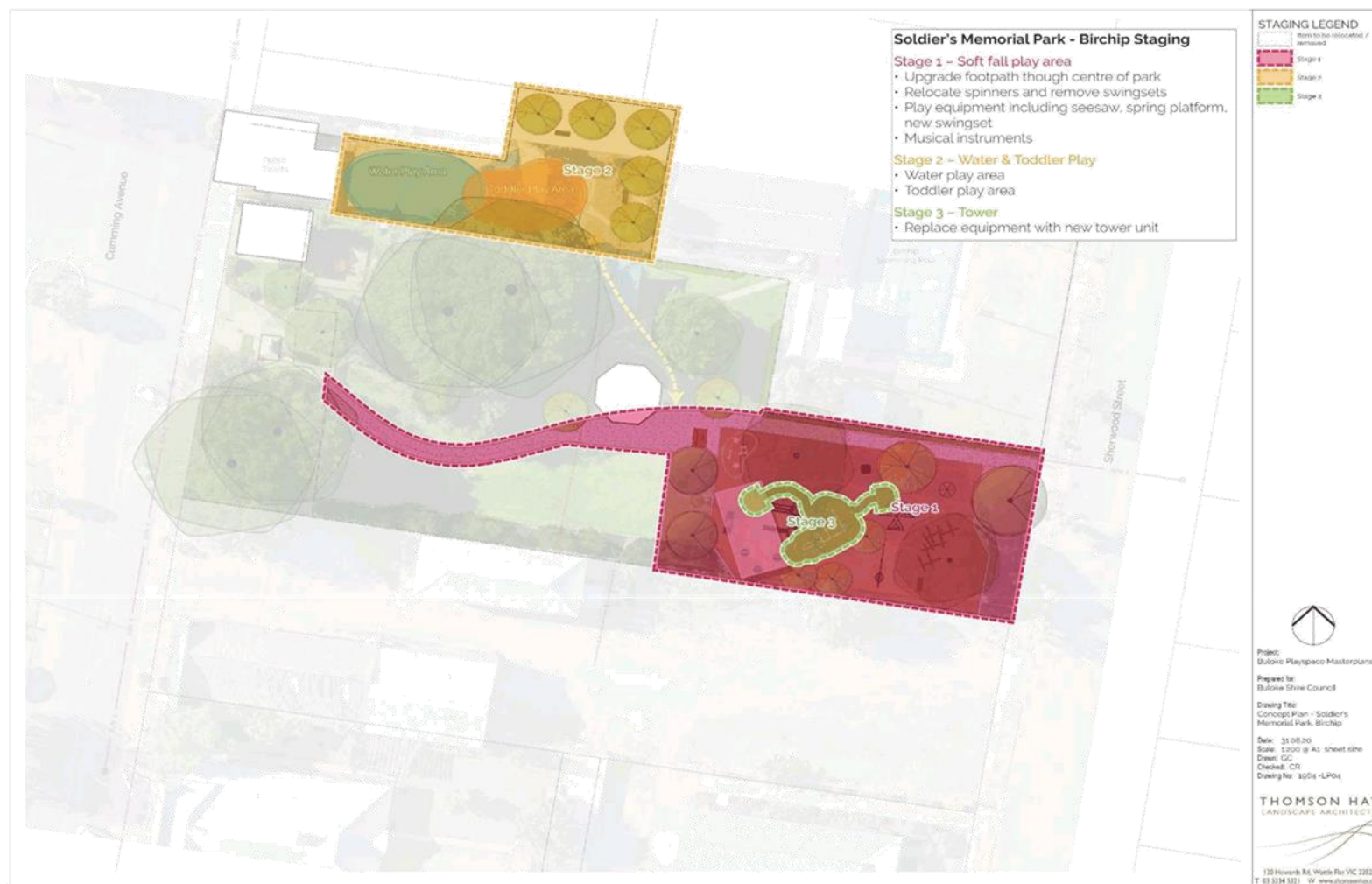


Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy 2021

Birchip



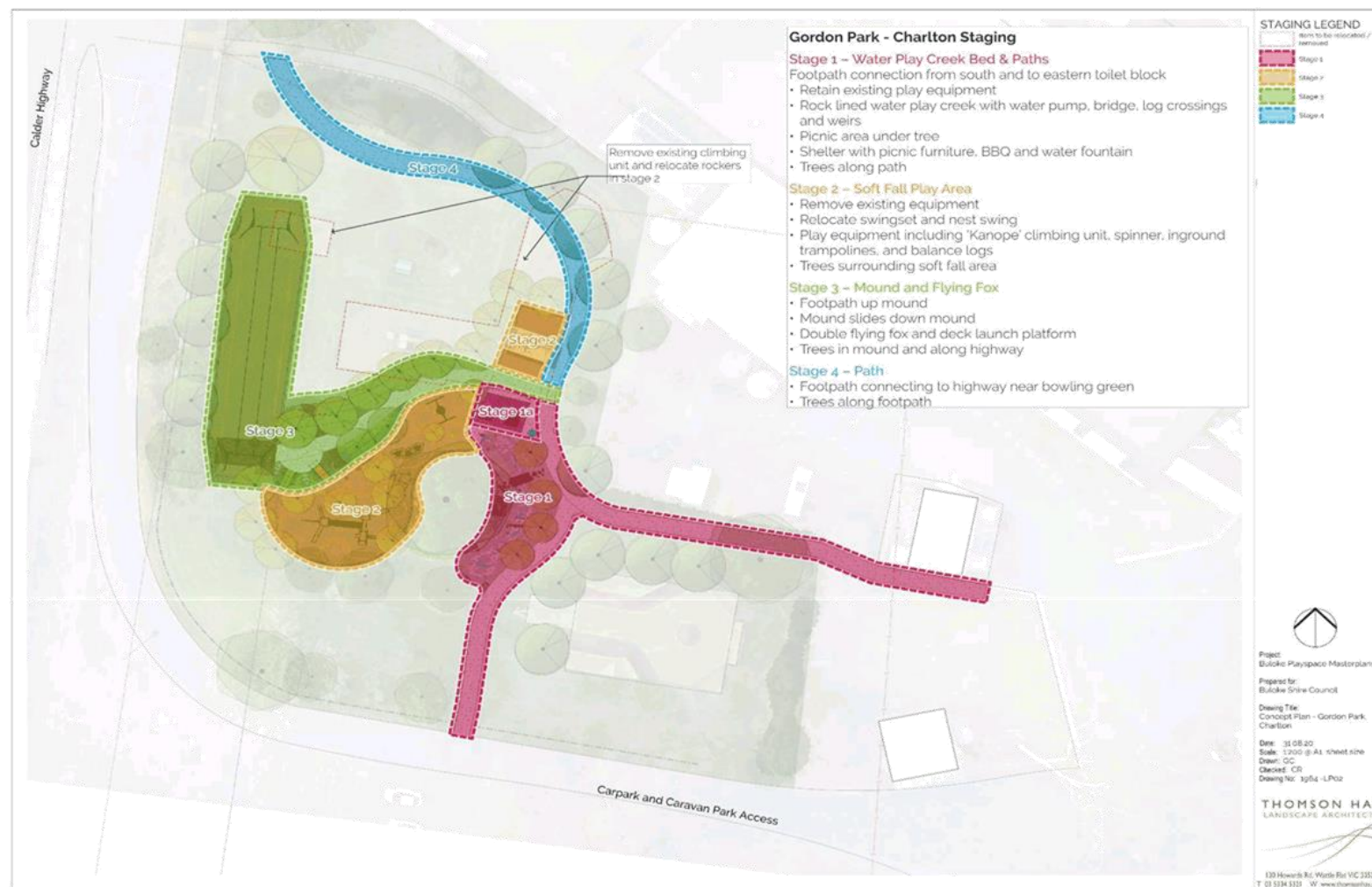
Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy 2021



Charlton



Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy 2021

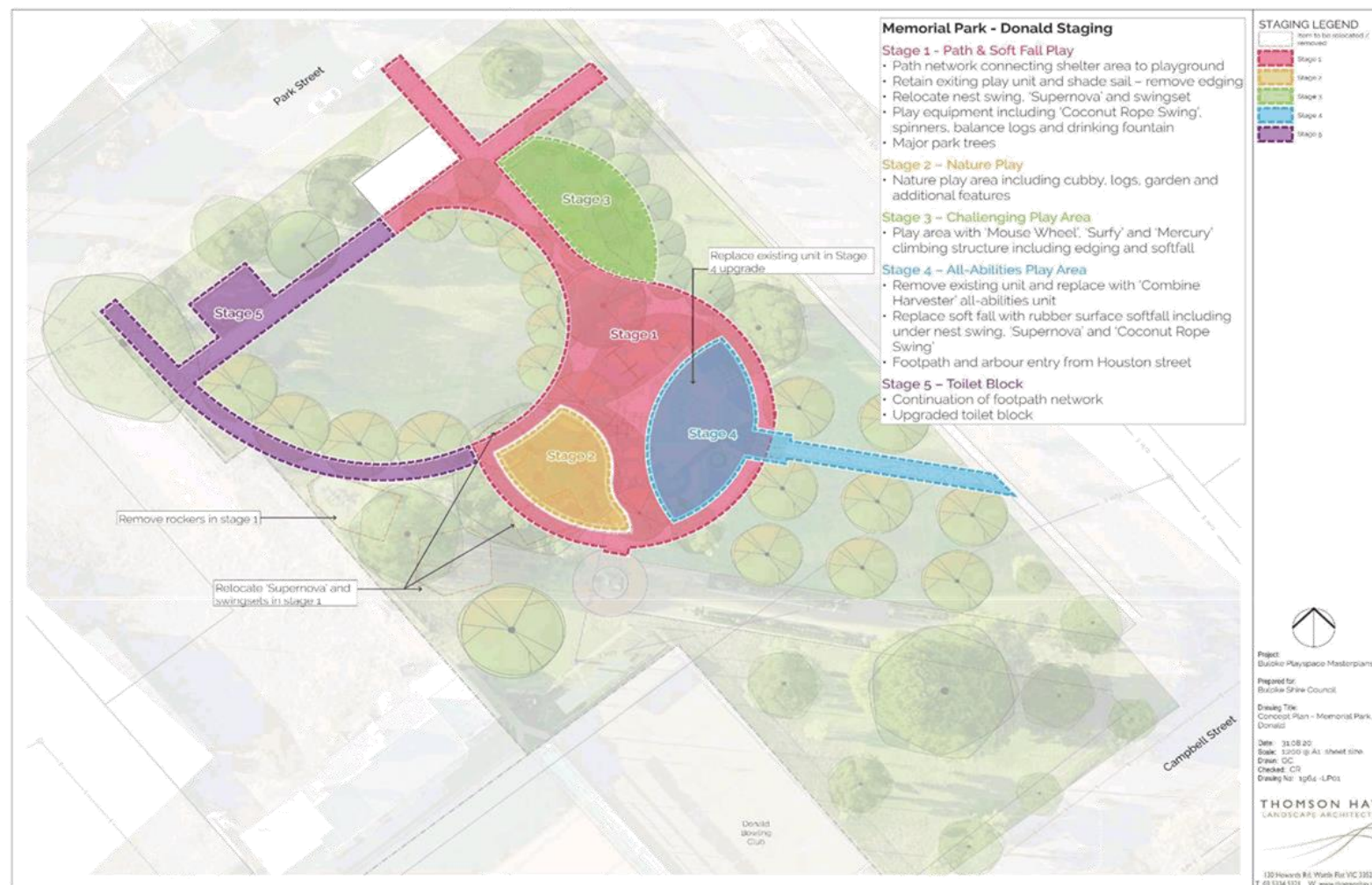


Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy 2021

Donald



Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy 2021



Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy 2021

Wycheproof



Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy 2021



Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy 2021

The community feedback, concept stage plans and costings provided at the conclusion of this project have provided Council with the foundations for the development of a playspace trail.

Strategy Aim

This strategy aims to make Buloke playspaces a destination, somewhere for local user groups to thoroughly enjoy regularly and visitors to envy.

The Playspace Trail concept further enhances the proposed upgrades to park playspaces by inspiring intrastate tourism. Local community members can provide new and exciting opportunities to their children within the Buloke Shire Council without the expense of lengthy travel times.

Larger centres in neighboring local government areas may provide playgrounds that appeal to user groups for their wealth of equipment. The benefits of a 'playspace trail' concept within Buloke however will provide Council with an opportunity for further promotion of visitors staying on a little longer, increasing visitor dispersal throughout Buloke, as well as supporting local and loving where you live.

In recent times, play spaces have evolved from primary coloured slide and swing sets. We now acknowledge the importance of a successful playground through their ability to encourage users to explore, interact, imagine, create and consider the elements around them. Ongoing research regarding children's health and the importance of staying physically active ensures this is an increasingly high priority for parents and families today when considering their chosen lifestyle and surrounding community.

Playspaces in public parks present an opportunity for children to take calculated risks, and develop socially with those around them whom they otherwise may not interact with normally and challenge themselves in a number of ways. The added benefit of these experiences are that they happen commonly in the company of their primary caregivers – parents, grandparents, relatives or friends. The effects of children discovering new things, developing new skills and accomplishing elements of a play area with an influential care giver watching or participating can be a very powerful and rewarding experience. As a result, these public spaces and park playground areas have the ability to influence the livability and wellbeing of not only the local community, but also visitors and travellers experiencing the area.

Buloke Shire Council has previously adopted a replacement approach to Playgrounds and surrounding park infrastructure, however the need within today's environment for a more considered, sustainable and measured approach is evident.

This strategy aims to enhance the public open park spaces and play spaces within the Buloke Shire Council for a wide range of stakeholders, whilst also ensuring an economical and sustainable approach for the installation of infrastructure that is manageable within the capabilities of on-ground parks and urban staff as well as annual maintenance expenditure budgets for these areas.

Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy 2021

Strategy Objectives

The Buloke Shire Playspace Trail Strategy objectives are to:

1. Promote tourism and visitation to Buloke by creating memorable destinations and experiences for visitors
2. Encourage and enhance the liveability of Buloke communities
3. Provide public spaces that encourage social interaction between children and caregivers that promotes physical activity and living a healthy active lifestyle
4. Provide a variety of creative, high quality play opportunities for children and their families that meet modern expectations for playground development
5. Provide strategic direction for the planning, development, upgrading and maintenance of playspaces within Buloke
6. Ensure future playground developments are relevant and responsive to community needs, whilst also following the key principles set out within the Playspace Trail Strategy
7. Maintain a safe play environment for children that encourages physical and emotional development across a wide range of age groups and ability levels

Key Principles & Actions

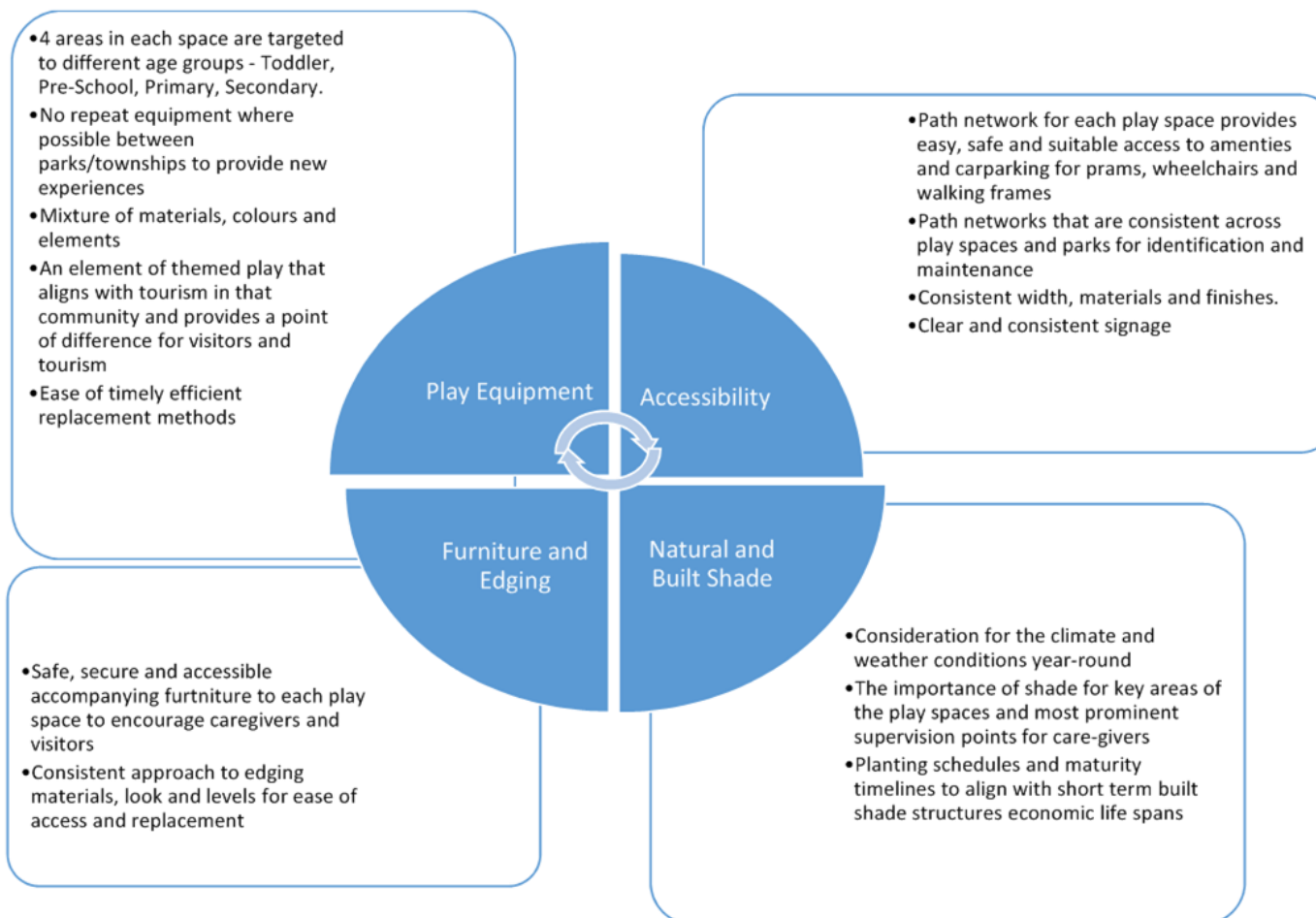
The concept of the Buloke Play Space Trail will provide Council with public play spaces which are:

- consistent in particular areas of design and concept for ease of maintenance and upkeep
- offer a different perspective in other areas of the design and concept to ensure each Buloke play space provides a varied experience for each of the identified age groups, as well as creating an individual 'destination' for play at each township
- a tourism drawcard for the Buloke Shire, for both increased visitation, length of stay and dispersal throughout the region

The successful implementation of the strategy will result in a clear management schedule for Council staff and a valuable and exciting array of playgrounds for the community and visitors to enjoy.

Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy 2021

Key design principles



Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy 2021

| PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Existing Equipment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow a clear replacement schedule developed using outcomes of most recent audit process and play spaces staged development plans Replacement schedules should align with designated age appropriate areas of each park, to ensure the replacement process does not result in complete disuse of the entire park space during maintenance works at one given time Gradual replacement of outdated equipment no longer in line with regulations or objectives of Strategy through staged replacement process Equipment no longer of use to Council and in need of disposal should be investigated for recyclability or alternative re-use opportunities in line with safety standards prior to relocation to landfill. | <p>Actions:</p> <p><i>Audit of current equipment safety standards</i></p> <p><i>Investigation of Recyclability and sustainable disposal methods for existing equipment</i></p> <p><i>Development of Replacement schedule – urgent removals for safety reasons as highest priority</i></p> <p><i>Community consultation</i></p> |
| New Equipment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following the model of age group targeted areas within each play space, individual items of equipment installed should provide a different play experience for children from park to park. Should consider the sustainability and recyclability of equipment at the end of its economic life. Should provide an economic life in a similar or consistent timeframe for replacement with surrounding equipment to ensure efficient methods of maintenance or major disruptive works. An element of inclusive play that meets the requirements for special needs children should be included in all play spaces where possible. These elements should differ in each play space to provide the same 'trail' effect. | <p><i>Engagement with identified playground suppliers from Playspaces project to provide direct quotations for stages of implementation identified within the project.</i></p> <p><i>Community consultation</i></p> |

Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy 2021

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|---------------------------------|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One main all-abilities playground with significant investment in a modern structure should be implemented in one of the larger play spaces in the medium term when/if funding becomes available. Donald has initially been identified to be best positioned for this area due to the existing programming for this sector of the community and existing physical activity opportunities for all-abilities in the area. | |
| Safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety is paramount and should be adhered to with regular audit processes and maintenance reporting. By operating via a timeline of scheduled replacement and rotation works between the park areas, Council staff will be able to regularly report on the usage and needs of the community over time. | <i>Regular auditing and systematic scheduling for maintenance and asset infrastructure reporting</i> |
| Placement & Location | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 key age group zones in each play space. <p>Toddler Zone: emphasis on natural play, natural elements that encourage exploration and discovery, sensory play elements (sand, water etc.) and encourage the interaction and ease of access for caregivers (e.g. No tight or confined spaces that make retrieving a hurt child or assisting a child difficult for adults). These areas should not directly adjoin a BBQ or social area that places caregivers at risk of distraction from others or complacency for supervision.</p> <p>Pre-School Zone: Emphasis on physical development and taking calculated risks. Engaging mix of natural and bright sensory coloured equipment to enhance the play experiences. Similar to toddler zone – consideration for caregiver assistance and ability to retrieve children is essential.</p> | <i>Incorporate these principles in decision making regarding in design, construction or replacement of equipment at playspaces across the Shire</i> |

Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy 2021

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| | <p>Primary Zone: Increased challenges and movability of equipment – swings, moving balance equipment which encourages improved fine motor skills and core strength. These areas can be better positioned nearer to BBQ shelters or social areas due to the supervision required for this age bracket.</p> <p>Secondary Zone: Consideration for play elements which encourage increased imagination in this age bracket can be difficult, however challenging climbing structures or skate elements are often popular and present a wealth of opportunities.</p> | |
| Theme Play | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each community play space will aim to incorporate an element of themed play that aligns with that community. These were clearly established through the Playspaces project and will help establish the enhancement of tourism and visitor engagement within our communities. For example – Wycheproof consultation indicated strong emphasis for the Train and Mt Wycheproof to be incorporated into their play spaces. Where not necessarily as clear, more consultation may be required. | <p><i>Community consultation</i></p> <p><i>Incorporating clear community vision in initial consultation in Playspaces project in to design, construction and/or reconfiguration of play spaces</i></p> |
| ACCESSIBILITY | | |
| Connectedness and safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The connectedness from the play space to the existing park amenities, including BBQ shelter, toilets and parking is critical to the overall play experience and enjoyment or return of caregivers Play space edging should be flush to ground level for ease of access to playground. | <p>Actions:</p> <p><i>Consider overall connectedness and movement through the entire space</i></p> <p><i>Ensure basic principles regarding accessibility are adhered to when designing or constructing Buloke Playspaces</i></p> |

Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy 2021

NATURAL AND BUILT SHADE

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Sustainability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shade for the play space is vital in the harsh summer months experienced in Buloke. Natural shade is preferable or where possible, should align with maturity levels to achieve shade with built shade structures that can provide instant shade however depreciate and expire over time. Particular interest has been paid in the design of the play spaces for shade positioning, species types and time frame before maturity and beneficial shade stage is reached and realized in harsh weather. | Actions: <i>Follow natural and built shade principles when designing or constructing Buloke playspaces</i> |
|-----------------------|--|--|

FURNITURE AND EDGING

| | | |
|----------------|---|--|
| Amenity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These elements are to align with the playspace concepts based on aesthetics and access, however opting for materials that are economical, replaceable to our location and expect reasonable regular maintenance. Each play space should have surrounding furniture and table seating to encourage visitors to shop locally for meals whilst also supporting caregivers with multiple children to care for. An element of shelter for parents or care givers should also be incorporated where possible in conjunction with key play elements which require higher supervision/present greater risks or challenges for the children. This may include an overhead shelter over a picnic table, or alternatively a slightly built up wind protective native garden bed. Public safety and line of | <i>Follow furniture and edging principles when designing or constructing Buloke playspaces</i> |
|----------------|---|--|

Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy 2021

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| | sight for parents is also to be considered, the need for unobstructed view to play areas is crucial – particularly between zones if supervising children in two different areas. E.g. A parent may be supervising a toddler and also a pre-school aged child from a slight distance at once. | |
|--|--|--|

Actions

| Action | Timing | Status |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| Quantity surveying of cost schedules provided by Thomson Hay Landscape Architects | 2020 | Complete |
| Feature surveys to be conducted at each site in Playspace trail | 2020 | In progress |
| Audit of existing play spaces formally undertaken by qualified professional | 2020 | In progress |
| Develop full project scope for Play space Trail project | 2021 | Complete |
| Seek funding opportunities for the detailed design and construction for the Buloke | 2021 | Ongoing |

Buloke Playspace Trail Strategy 2021

| | | |
|--|---------|--|
| Playspaces Project (5 playgrounds - Berriwillock, Birchip, Charlton, Donald, Wycheproof), and make applications | | |
| Develop replacement schedule and annual maintenance program for all play spaces in Buloke | Ongoing | |
| Sustainability investigation for recyclability of materials (existing and planned) | 2021 | |
| Investigate recyclability, alternative re-use or disposal opportunities for redundant equipment across Buloke Shire | Ongoing | |
| Partner with Buloke Tourism Board and Wimmera Mallee Tourism in development of formal play space trail incorporating playspaces in each town as a tourism product to promote | 2022 | |
| Seek funding for development of marketing material and a marketing campaign to promote the Buloke Playspaces Trail | 2022 | |

8.2.3 PLANNING PERMIT APPLICATION 907/21 TO CONSTRUCT AND DISPLAY A MAJOR PROMOTION SIGN

Author's Title: Planning Officer

Department: Works and Technical Services

File No: LP/09/01

Relevance to Council Plan 2017 - 2021

Strategic Objective: Responding to and enhancing our built and natural environment

PURPOSE

The purpose of the report is for Council to consider planning permit application 907/21 and determine to issue a Notice of Decision to Refuse a Planning Permit to construct and display a major promotion sign on Lot 2 on PS070354, known as 5 Woods Street, Donald.

SUMMARY

A planning application was received by Council on 21 January 2021 seeking approval to construct and display a double-sided, non-illuminated major promotion sign at 5 Woods Street, Donald.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council determine to issue a Notice of Decision to Refuse a Planning Permit to construct and display a major promotion sign on Lot 2 on PS070354, known as 5 Woods Street, Donald on the following grounds:

- (a) The proposed sign is excessive in scale and is inappropriate in the centre of the Donald Township;
- (b) The proposed sign is incompatible with the amenity and visual appearance of the area; and
- (c) The proposed sign does not complement or enhance the character of the area.

Attachments: 1 [5 Woods Street Donald - Major Promotion Sign - drawings](#)

DISCUSSION

The application is for the property 5 Woods Street, Donald (Lot 2 PS070354). The property is 2113m² and contains a former car dealership currently being used for a thrift store. The land is zoned Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z) and a Design and Development (DDO1) and Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) apply. The land is adjacent a Road Zone, Category 1 (RDZ1).

The land is situated on the corner of Woods Street and Hammill Street. The land adjoins Donald Riverside Motel, zoned C1Z to the northwest and residential dwellings, zoned Township Zone (TZ) to the northeast. The Richardson River lies north and northeast of the subject site.

The land is located in the centre of the township. There are a mix of uses including commercial, residential and public uses in the immediate proximity. The area is characterised by single story residential buildings, located immediately northeast, southeast and southwest, and similarly scaled commercial buildings immediately south. Further southeast, the main shopping strip of Donald contains single and double story buildings. Existing signage in the area include modest business identification signs on the subject site, the neighbouring Riverside Motel and the Donald Motor Lodge diagonally opposite the subject site, and street and directional signage near the intersection.

Proposal

The proposal is to construct and display a double-sided, non-illuminated major promotion sign on the southwest (Wood Street) boundary, parallel to and 500mm from the northwest boundary, being the boundary between the subject site and the Riverside Motel. The advertising panel is proposed to be 8.3 metres wide and 2.2 metres high, giving a display area of 18.26m². In addition to the advertising panel is an 850 millimetre skirting board below the sign. The structure will be mounted on two steel columns, elevating the bottom edge of the sign to 1.7 metres above the natural ground level and the overall height of the structure is to be 4.85 metres. The sign will display static imagery and will be changed from time to time at the discretion of Gawk (the applicant).

Planning Scheme Provisions

A planning permit is required under Clause 52.05-11 – Category 1- Commercial areas. The sign does not meet the criteria of Section 1 – Permit not required, and therefore becomes Section 2 – Permit required.

The purpose of Clause 52.05 Signs is:

- To regulate the development of land for signs and associated structures.
- To ensure signs are compatible with the amenity and visual appearance of an area, including the existing or desired future character.
- To ensure signs do not contribute to excessive visual clutter or visual disorder.
- To ensure that signs do not cause loss of amenity or adversely affect the natural or built environment or the safety, appearance or efficiency of a road.

The purpose of Clause 52.05-11 Category 1 – Commercial areas is

- To provide for identification and promotion signs that add vitality and colour to commercial areas.

Planning Policy Framework

Clause 11 – Settlement

This clause outlines that planning is to recognise the need for, and as far as practicable contribute towards achieving a number of key principles, including achieving a high standard of urban design and amenity.

Clause 15.01-1S Urban design

This clause has the objective to assist in creating urban environments that are safe, healthy, functional and enjoyable and that contribute to a sense of place and cultural identity by:

- requiring development to respond to its context in terms of character, cultural identity, natural features, surrounding landscape and climate;
- ensuring that development, including signs, minimises detrimental impacts on amenity, on the natural and built environment and on the safety and efficiency of roads; and
- promoting good urban design along transport corridors.

Clause 15.01-5S Neighbourhood character

The objective of this clause is to recognise, support and protect neighbourhood character, cultural identity, and sense of place by:

- Ensuring development responds to cultural identity and contributes to existing neighbourhood character.
- Ensuring development responds to its context and reinforces a sense of place and the valued features and characteristics of the local environment and place by emphasising the built form that

reflects community identity.

Clause 15.01-6 Design for rural areas

The objective of this clause is to ensure development respects valued areas of rural character by:

- Ensuring that the siting, scale and appearance of development protects and enhances rural character.
- Protecting the visual amenity of character areas along township approaches by ensuring new development is sympathetically located.

Clause 18.01-2S Transport system

This clause includes strategy to regulate new development of land near an existing transport route to avoid detriment to and where possible enhance, the service, safety and amenity desirable for that transport route in the short and long term.

Clause 18.02-1S Sustainable personal transport

This clause has the objective of promoting the use of sustainable personal transport by encouraging the use of walking and cycling by creating environments that are safe and attractive.

Clause 18.02-3S Road system

This clause includes strategy to regulate the design of transport routes and nearby areas to achieve visual standards appropriate to the importance of the route with particular reference to landscaping and the control of outdoor advertising.

Local Planning Policy Framework

Municipal Strategic Statement

Clause 21.01-1 Snapshot of Buloke Shire

This clause recognises one of the features of the Buloke Shire's (and the regions') towns is the way in which sympathetic rural, urban commercial and industrial land uses are interspersed. While the main towns do have distinct commercial and industrial areas, historic patterns of development have created urban areas with mixed land uses.

Clause 21.01-2 Key influences

One of the key influences in relation to the municipality is the viability, character and heritage of existing rural townships.

Clause 21.01-3 Key issues

One of the key issues recognised in this clause is the importance of enhancing the viability of townships by encouraging appropriate development and maintaining and / or improving urban character, amenity and services.

Clause 21.02-2 Townships

Objective 1 is to provide high quality, attractive, functional and efficient townships by:

- Considering local heritage values, built character and streetscape of towns when designing and siting development.
- Requiring that the design of new buildings and works in addition to existing buildings must be in keeping with the streetscape character and built form of the area.

- Recognising that the design of buildings, their mass and scale is important in preserving the historical attributes and visual character of towns.
- Consider the presentation of town entrances and streetscapes and their capacity to attract tourism, encourage development and demonstrate civic pride in determining applications for land use and development.

Particular Provisions

Clause 52.05 Signs

The purpose of this clause includes:

- To provide for signs that are compatible with the amenity and visual appearance of an area, including the existing or desired future character.
- To ensure signs do not contribute to excessive visual clutter or visual disorder.
- To ensure that signs do not cause loss of amenity or adversely affect the natural or built environment or the safety, appearance or efficiency of a road.

Clause 52.05-8 includes extensive decision guideline specific to the assessment of application for signs. These include:

- The character of the area
- Impacts on views and vistas
- The relationship to the streetscape, setting or landscape
- The relationship to the site and buildings
- The impact of any structure associated with the sign
- The impact of any illumination
- The impact on road safety

In addition to these decision guidelines, further decision guide lines relating to major promotion signs apply. These include the effect of the major promotion sign on:

- Significant streetscapes, buildings and skylines
- The visual appearance of a significant view corridor, view line, gateway location or landmark site identified in a framework plan or local policy
- Residential areas and heritage places

When determining the effect of a proposed major promotion sign, the following locational principles must be taken into account:

- Major promotion signs are encouraged in commercial and industrial locations in a manner that complements or enhances the character of the area.
- Major promotion signs are discouraged along forest and tourist roads, scenic routes or landscaped sections of freeways.
- Major promotion signs are discouraged within open space reserves or corridors and around waterways.
- Major promotion signs are discouraged where they will form a dominant visual element from residential areas, within a heritage place or where they will obstruct significant view lines.
- In areas with a strong built form character, major promotion signs are encouraged only where they are not a dominant element in the streetscape and except for transparent feature signs (such as neon signs), are discouraged from being erected on the roof of a building.

Clause 65 Decision guidelines

Because a permit can be granted does not imply that a permit should or will be granted. The responsible authority must decide whether the proposal will produce acceptable outcomes in terms of the decision guidelines of this clause.

Assessment of application

There are a number of state planning policies that emphasise the need for quality urban design, the need for minimising detrimental impacts on amenity, particularly along transport corridors. State planning policy also aims to protect and support neighbourhood character and recognises in the design for rural areas policy the need to ensure that the siting, scale and appearance of development protects and enhances rural character. The design for rural areas policy specifically highlights protecting the visual amenity of character areas along township approaches by ensuring new development is sympathetically located. It is important to note that although the location is not necessarily a township approach, it is an approach to the main business and shopping strip of Donald. The road system state policy highlights the importance of considering the design of transport routes and nearby areas to achieve visual standards appropriate to the importance of the route with particular reference to landscaping and the control of outdoor advertising.

One of the focal points of local planning policy is the distinct character of the Shire's rural townships. The townships policy emphasises the requirement that new building and works must be in keeping with the streetscape character and built form of the area. The policy also highlights that the design of buildings, their mass and scale is important in preserving the visual character of towns.

It is acknowledged that the Commercial 2 Zone is one of the least restrictive for signs; however, signs must still be established in a manner that respects the township character and scale of the surrounds. The proposed site is central to the Township of Donald. The character of this area consists of low density, single storey commercial and residential buildings with generous setbacks from the road and vegetation forming the backdrop. The proposed major promotion sign does not compliment or enhance the character of the area. The size and scale of the proposed sign will dominate the location, is excessive in scale to the surroundings and has no regards to the existing character.

Clause 52.05 Signs assessment

Decision guidelines relevant to this proposal:

The character of the area including:

- The sensitivity of the area in terms of the natural environment, heritage values, waterways and open space, rural landscape or residential character.
- The compatibility of the proposed sign with the existing or desired future character of the area in which it is proposed to be located.
- The cumulative impact of signs on the character of an area or route, including the need to avoid visual disorder or clutter of signs.
- The consistency with any identifiable outdoor advertising theme in the area.

The proposed sign is not compatible with the existing character of the area, it is not aligned with the character of signs in the surrounding area, and is not consistent with the current outdoor advertising in the area.

Impacts on views and vistas including:

- The potential to dominate the skyline.

The scale of the existing building and vegetation in the background lessens the potential of the sign to dominate the skyline in the immediate area; however it will impact the view of the motel and surrounding vegetation.

The relationship to the streetscape, setting or landscape including:

- The proportion, scale and form of the proposed sign relative to the streetscape, setting or landscape.
- The position of the sign, including the extent to which it protrudes above existing buildings or landscape and natural elements.
- The ability to screen unsightly built or other elements.

The proposed sign is not in proportion or scale to the signs setting. Although the sign will not protrude above existing buildings, it will be a dominant feature of the streetscape.

The impact on road safety. A sign is a safety hazard if the sign:

- Obstructs a driver's line of sight at an intersection, curve or point of egress from an adjacent property.

A large quantity of traffic passes through this intersection; however, it is considered that the sign does not pose an obstruction to a driver's line of sight.

Clause 52.05-6 Major Promotion Sign

In addition to the basic purpose and decision guidelines of *Clause 52.05 Advertising Signs* which are applicable to all signage, at *Clause 52.05-6 Major Promotion Sign* the policy includes additional objectives and decision guidelines which are specific to the high impact nature of Major Promotion Signs. The proposed sign is a major promotion sign because of its size.

The effects of the proposed major promotion sign on:

- Significant streetscapes, buildings and skylines
- The visual appearance of a significant view corridor, view line, gateway location or landmark site identified in a framework plan or local policy

The intended location is a significant street scape, including commercial and residential elements, located in the centre of Donald. The proposed sign has the potential to visually dominate the area.

When determining the effect of a proposed major promotion sign, specified locational principles must be taken into account, including:

- Major promotion signs are encouraged in commercial and industrial locations in a manner that complements or enhances the character of the area.

Although this is a commercial zoned area, the sign does not complement or enhance the area.

- Major promotion signs are discouraged where they will form a dominant visual element from residential areas, within a heritage place or where they will obstruct significant view lines.

There are residential buildings located immediately opposite the subject site. The sign will be a dominant visual element from this viewpoint.

- In areas with a strong built form character, major promotion signs are encouraged only where they are not a dominant element in the streetscape and except for transparent feature signs (such as neon signs), are discouraged from being erected on the roof of a building.

The proposed major promotion sign will be a dominant element in the streetscape.

RELEVANT LAW

The actions are in accordance with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable

OPTIONS

An assessment of the proposal has been undertaken and it is considered that the application does not accord with relevant policy, nor achieve compliance with the purpose and decision guidelines of Clause 52.05 Advertising Signs and more specifically Clause 52.05-6 Major Promotion Signs.

A Council determination is sought for the application as the Council's Planning Officer recommends that a Notice of Refusal to grant a planning permit be issued.

Council must determine a position on the application for a planning permit and take one of the following options:

1. Approve a planning permit and issue a Notice of Decision to Grant a Planning Permit for the proposal (with conditions prepared by the planning office)
2. Issue a Refusal to Grant a Planning Permit for the proposal – appeal rights apply to the applicant

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no known sustainability considerations.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Notice of Application was undertaken in accordance with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* by placing a notice in all Buloke newspaper publications on 23, 24 and 25 February 2021, by placing a sign on site and by sending letters to seventeen (17) adjoining owners and occupiers.

Seven (7) submissions were received in relation to the application. The objections were forwarded to the applicant, who provided a response. After considering the available information, it was decided a mediation would not be conducted.

The concerns raised by the objectors are as follows:

- The sign will be visually dominant and cause a distraction for drivers, affecting road safety
- The sign will encroach on the modest signage of the Riverside Motel and impact the visibility of the motel
- The sign will cause overshadowing of the Riverside Motel
- Concerns over sign content, locals will not have control over advertisements and local businesses may not be able to afford to advertise
- The scale and location of the sign is considered inappropriate and not in keeping with the character or landscape of the area
- The sign will cause visual clutter

The applicant responded to the objections as follows:

- Road Safety: The sign will be visible and prominent; however this does not automatically result in unwavering attention. VicRoads did not object to the proposed sign, subject to road safety conditions.
- Visibility to Motel: The separation to the neighbouring motel signage is sufficient to not dramatically impact on the visibility. In addition the applicant has offered:
 - 1 metre setback to Woods Street
 - Skirting board advertising for the Riverside Motel, free of charge
- Content: The applicant would consider it suitable to include a condition in the permit favouring local businesses in the municipality and adjoining Council areas.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable

COLLABORATION

The application was referred to Head, Department of Transport (Vicroads). They did not object to the application, but supplied eight conditions to be included on the permit if the Council regarded the proposal favourably.

The application was referred internally to the Municipal Building Surveyor. The Building Surveyor provided comment that the proposed sign would require a building permit.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The applicant may appeal the Notice to Refuse to VCAT. There may be cost associated with an appeal.

There may be legal costs if Council seeks legal advice or representation in regard to this matter.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Before deciding on an application or approval of a plan, the responsible authority must consider the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES*Buloke Council Plan*

3.7 – Enhance community cohesion and attractiveness with well-maintained and functional streetscapes.

04 – Responding to and enhancing our built and natural environment.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

In order to promote transparency, Council will consider this decision in an open meeting.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

All officers involved in the preparation of this report can confirm that they do not have a conflict of interest in the subject matter of this report.

DONALD - PROPOSED DOUBLE SIDED, NON-ILLUMINATED, MAJOR PROMOTION SIGN

5 WOODS STREET,
 DONALD, VIC 3480

TOWN PLANNING DRAWINGS

- A01 COVER PAGE
- A02 SITE PLAN
- A03 FLOOR PLAN & ELEVATIONS
- A04 PERSPECTIVE VIEWS



PHOTO 01



PHOTO 02



PHOTO 03



PHOTO 04



KEY PLAN
 SCALE 1 : 1000

| PHOTO LEGEND | |
|--------------|--|
| NO. | DESCRIPTION |
| 01 | PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEW OF THE SURROUNDING CONTEXT NORTH OF THE SUBJECT SITE FROM THE CORNER OF HAMMILL ST & WOODS ST. |
| 02 | PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEW OF THE SURROUNDING CONTEXT EAST OF THE SUBJECT SITE FROM THE CORNER OF HAMMILL ST & WOODS ST. |
| 03 | PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEW OF THE SURROUNDING CONTEXT SOUTH OF THE SUBJECT SITE FROM THE CORNER OF HAMMILL ST & WOODS ST. |
| 04 | PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEW OF THE SURROUNDING CONTEXT WEST OF THE SUBJECT SITE FROM THE CORNER OF HAMMILL ST & WOODS ST. |

ISSUE/AMENDMENTS SCHEDULE

- 01 20.01.2020
TOWN PLANNING ISSUE

TOWN PLANNING

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION



PROJECT
 DONALD - PROPOSED DOUBLE SIDED, NON-ILLUMINATED,
 MAJOR PROMOTION SIGN
 ADDRESS
 5 WOODS STREET,
 DONALD, VIC 3480

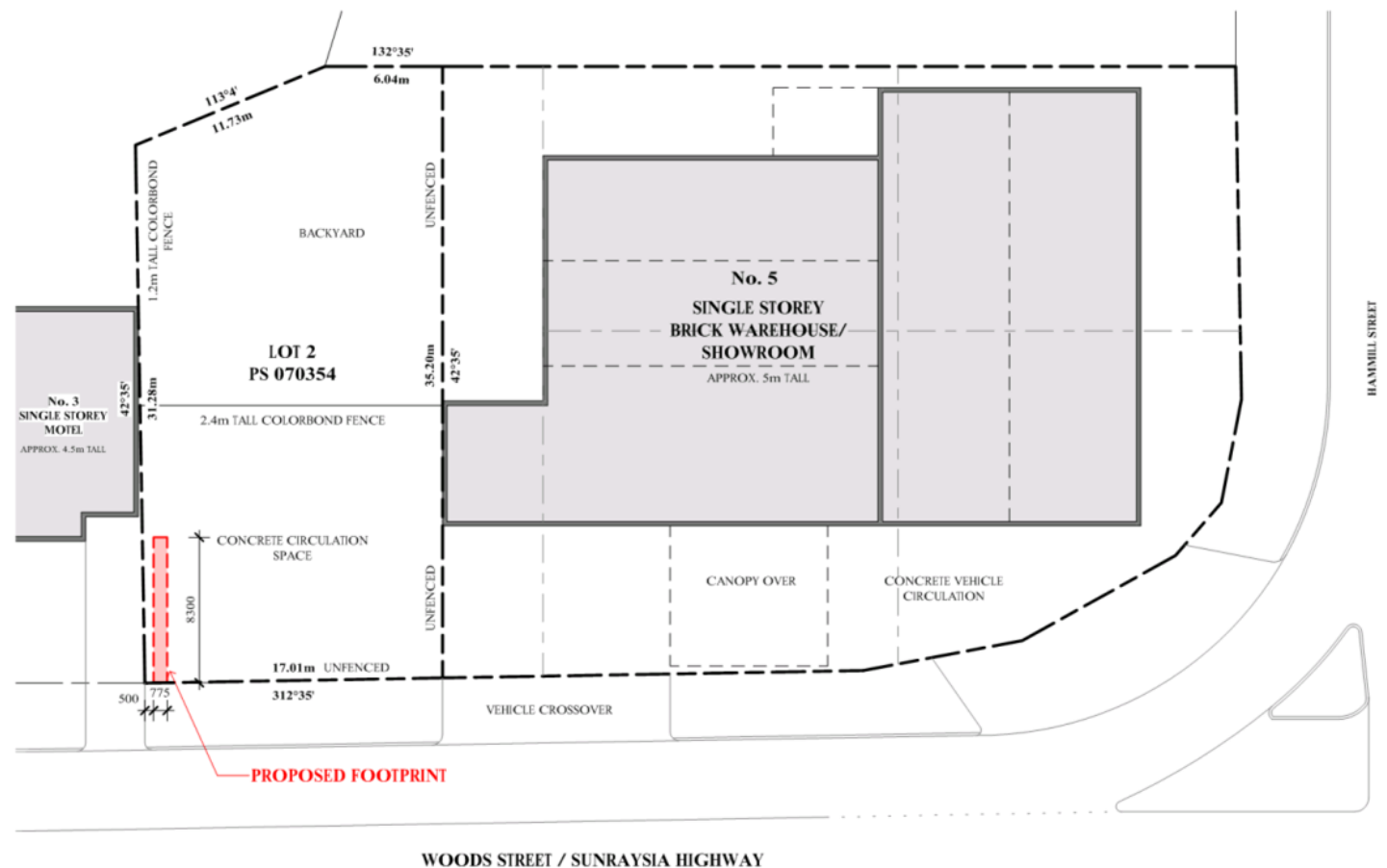
NORTH POINT



DATE
 20.01.2020
 DRAWING NO.
 A01
 DRAWN BY
 JC
 PROJECT NO.
 20-015
 PAGE SIZE
 A3
 ISSUE NO.
 01

REGIONAL BILLBOARD CO.

A 62 John Street, ELTHAM VIC 3095
 E james@regionalbillboardco.com.au
 M 0400 096 182



SITE PLAN
 SCALE 1 : 250

ISSUE/AMENDMENTS SCHEDULE

01 20.01.2020
 TOWN PLANNING ISSUE

LEGEND

- PROPERTY BOUNDARY
- EXISTING BUILDINGS ONSITE
- PROPOSED MAJOR PROMOTION SIGN FOOTPRINT

TOWN PLANNING

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION



PROJECT
 DONALD - PROPOSED DOUBLE SIDED, NON-ILLUMINATED,
 MAJOR PROMOTION SIGN
 ADDRESS
 5 WOODS STREET,
 DONALD, VIC 3480

NORTH POINT



DATE
 20.01.2020

DRAWING NO.
 A02

DRAWN BY
 JC

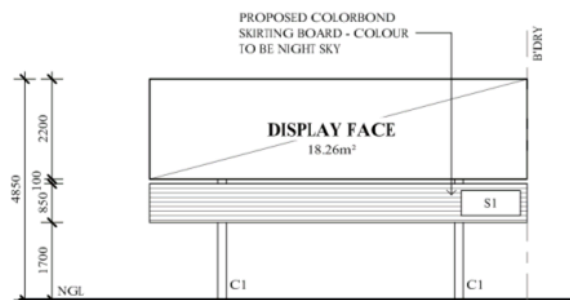
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 20-015

PAGE SIZE
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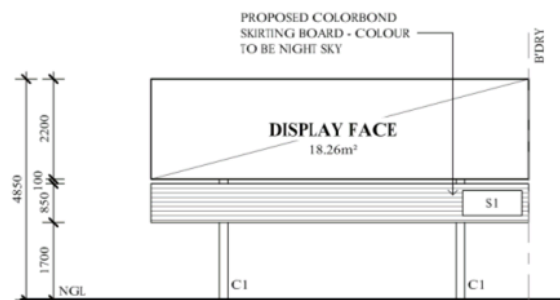
ISSUE NO.
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REGIONAL BILLBOARD CO.

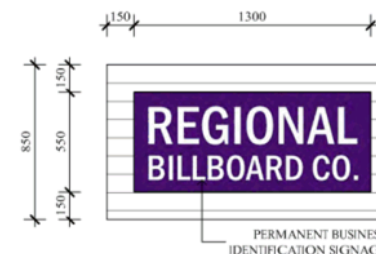
A 62 John Street, ELTHAM VIC 3095
 E james@regionalbillboardco.com.au
 M 0400 096 182



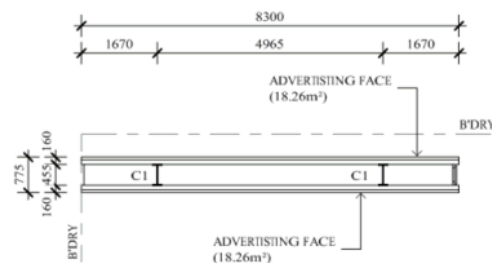
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SCALE 1 : 100



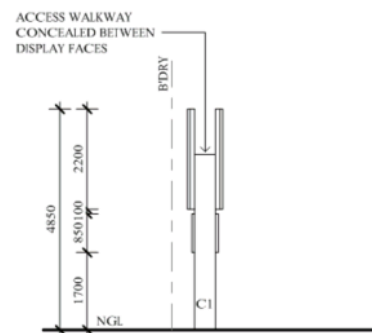
WEST ELEVATION
SCALE 1 : 100



S1 - SIGNAGE DETAIL
SCALE 1 : 25

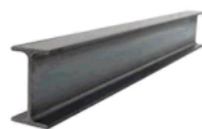


FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1 : 100



SOUTH ELEVATION
SCALE 1 : 100

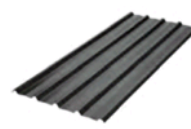
MATERIALS BOARD



C1
PROPOSED COLUMN -
POWDERCOAT BLACK
FINISH



BLACK PAINT
PROPOSED BLACK PAINT
FINISH TO ALL FEATURES,
TRIMS AND LIGHTING



SKIRTING BOARD
PROPOSED COLORBOND
SKIRTING BOARD WITH
NIGHT SKY FINISH

ISSUE/AMENDMENTS SCHEDULE

01 20.01.2020
TOWN PLANNING ISSUE

LEGEND

C1 PROPOSED COLUMN - POWDERCOAT
BLACK FINISH
NGL NATURAL GROUND LINE
S1 PERMANENT SIGN 1 - REFER TO DETAIL

TOWN PLANNING

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION



PROJECT
DONALD - PROPOSED DOUBLE SIDED, NON-ILLUMINATED,
MAJOR PROMOTION SIGN
ADDRESS
5 WOODS STREET,
DONALD, VIC 3480

NORTH POINT



DATE
20.01.2020

PROJECT NO.
20-015

DRAWING NO.
A03

PAGE SIZE
A3

DRAWN BY
JC

ISSUE NO.
01

REGIONAL BILLBOARD CO.

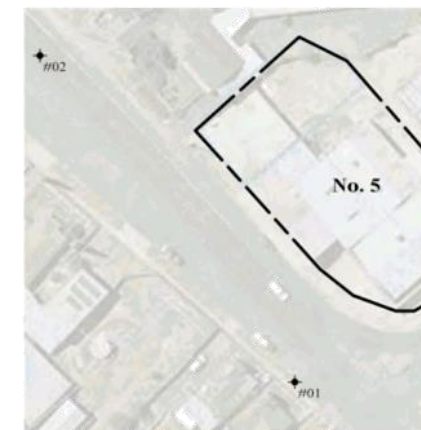
A 62 John Street, ELTHAM VIC 3095
E james@regionalbillboardco.com.au
M 0400 096 182



EXISTING PERSPECTIVE VIEW #01 - NORTH-WESTBOUND TRAFFIC



EXISTING PERSPECTIVE VIEW #02 - SOUTH-EASTBOUND TRAFFIC



PERSPECTIVE VIEW REFERENCE
 SCALE 1 : 1000



PROPOSED PERSPECTIVE VIEW #01 - NORTH-WESTBOUND TRAFFIC



PROPOSED PERSPECTIVE VIEW #02 - SOUTH-EASTBOUND TRAFFIC

ISSUE/AMENDMENTS SCHEDULE

01 20.01.2020
 TOWN PLANNING ISSUE

GENERAL NOTES

PROPOSED PERSPECTIVE VIEW IS AN ARTIST'S IMPRESSION OF THE PROPOSAL ONLY. SIZE AND SCALE ARE REFERENCED ON THE FLOOR PLANS AND ELEVATIONS.

ALL DRAWINGS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SUPPLIED TOWN PLANNING REPORT

REFER TO THE TOWN PLANNING REPORT FOR THE WRITTEN STATEMENT REGARDING THE METHODOLOGY DURING THE PREPARATION OF PERSPECTIVE VIEWS

LEGEND

#00 PERSPECTIVE VIEW - LOCATION IN WHICH PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEWS WERE TAKEN

TOWN PLANNING

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION



PROJECT
 DONALD - PROPOSED DOUBLE SIDED, NON-ILLUMINATED,
 MAJOR PROMOTION SIGN
 ADDRESS
 5 WOODS STREET,
 DONALD, VIC 3480

NORTH POINT



DATE
 20.01.2020

PROJECT NO.
 20-015

DRAWING NO.
 A04

PAGE SIZE
 A3

DRAWN BY
 JC

ISSUE NO.
 01

REGIONAL BILLBOARD CO.

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E james@regionalbillboardco.com.au

M 0400 096 182

8.2.3 Planning Permit Application 907/21

To Construct And Display A Major Promotion Sign

Attachment 1 5 Woods Street Donald - Major Promotion Sign - drawings

8.2.4 COMMUNITY GRANTS & SPONSORSHIP

Author's Title: Community Development Officer

Department: Community Development

File No: GS/09/42

Relevance to Council Plan 2017 - 2021

Strategic Objective: Build a healthy and active community

PURPOSE

This report is presented to Council to consider the allocation of funds from the Community Grants and Sponsorship Program

SUMMARY

Presenting one application for a small equipment Grant and two applications for Sustainability Grants.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council allocated the following funding under the Community Grants and Sponsorship program:

- \$1,000 Small Capital Equipment Grant for Charlton Club;
- \$424 Sustainability Grant for the Red Gate Community Garden; and
- \$8,526 Sustainability Grant for the Donald Children's Centre.

Attachments: 1 [2020-2021 Community Grants](#)

DISCUSSION

The following applications for funding were applied for under Council's Community Grants and Sponsorship Program.

Each of these applications have been assessed as per the Community Grant Guidelines as accepted by council. The senior leadership team recommends the following grants for council's consideration and final decision on the allocations.

| Project: | Reinvigoration of Charlton Club Carpark |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Organisation: | Charlton Club |
| Amount Applied: | \$1000 |
| Funding Amount Recommended: | \$1000 |
| Total project cost: | \$2700 |
| Project Description: | The reinvigoration of the rear carpark into an outdoor entertaining space. The funding would allow the club to buy tables and chairs, umbrellas and plant pots with suitable greenery. This would allow the club to hold different functions and events. |
| Project Benefit: | The Charlton Club was unable to get government funding while it was closed for the COVID 19 lockdown. The reinvigoration of the outdoor area will encourage members and the community back to the club while highlighting the view of the river. They hope to encourage travellers staying in the Caravan Park to use the facility and connect with the community. |

| Project: Purchase of Shredder/Mulcher | |
|--|---|
| Organisation: | Red Gate Community Garden |
| Amount Applied: | \$424 |
| Funding Amount Recommended: | \$424 |
| Total project cost: | \$849 |
| Project Description: | The Red Gate Community Garden plan to purchase a mulcher/shredder to repurpose garden waste material into usable mulch for the garden. |
| Project Benefit: | The use of the Mulcher will decrease the amount of waste that is sent to landfill therefore limit the carbon footprint. They will be able to reduce the workload of volunteers by reducing the amount and labour used to take the garden waste to the local tip. The applicant are matching the funding request dollar for dollar and buying the equipment from a local business. |

| Project: Donald Children's Centre Solar Panel Project | |
|--|---|
| Organisation: | Donald Children's Centre |
| Amount Applied: | \$8526 |
| Funding Amount Recommended: | \$8526 |
| Total project cost: | \$12,790.12 |
| Project Description: | The addition of solar panels on the Donald Children's Precinct to help reduce the carbon footprint of the centre. |
| Project Benefit: | The Donald Children's Centre will lessen their environmental impact with the addition of the solar panels, also lowering their financial output for electricity. Those funds that can be saved due to lower utility bills will be used to help the education of children at the centre. The YMCA Ballarat will oversee the project to completion and a local contractor will be hired to undertake the works. |

RELEVANT LAW

Not Applicable

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not Applicable

OPTIONS

Council can determine not to grant any, or all, of these funding options.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Both applications from the Red Gate Community Garden and the Donald Children's Centre targeting a reductions in their carbon footprint and impact on the environment. Both applications highlight how their project will reduce their environmental effects.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council continue to encourage and support groups, such as the three that have applied, to consider making an application under the program.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not Applicable

COLLABORATION

Council officers have liaised with community members whilst some of these applications were being developed.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

With the approval of the above applications the allocation for Community Grant Funding will be \$10,618 of a total of \$20,000 annual budget and the Sustainability Grant Funding will be \$34,684 out of a total \$50,000 annual budget.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not Applicable.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

These projects all fit broadly within the Council Plan strategies, particularly in supporting community enterprise and enhancing the sustainability of our community facilities

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report is being presented to open Council meeting for full transparency of decision making.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

| Community Grants, Sponsorship & Sustainability Fund | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---------------|----|-----------------------|----------------|
| 2020-2021 | | | | | |
| Organisation | type | Date received | I | Amount in Application | Recommended \$ |
| Charlton Croquet Club | Project Support Grant | 23032020.00 | | \$731 | \$731 |
| Charlton Golf Club | Project Support Grant | 7072020.00 | | \$2,000 | \$2,000 |
| Sea Lake Golf & Bowls club | Project Support Grant | 29102020 | \$ | 2,000.00 | \$ 2,000.00 |
| Charlton Lions | Project Support Grant | 7/10/2020 | \$ | 2,000.00 | \$ 1,000.00 |
| Charlton Forum | Project Support Grant | 24/11/2020 | \$ | 576.63 | \$ 576.63 |
| Donald Learning Group | Project Support Grant | 9/11/2020 | \$ | 1,310.60 | \$ 1,310.60 |
| Birchip Neighbourhood House | Project Support Grant | 23/02/2021 | \$ | 2,000.00 | \$ 2,000.00 |
| Charlton Club | Small Equipment Grant | 9/04/2021 | \$ | 1,000.00 | \$ 1,000.00 |
| | | | | \$11,618 | \$10,618 |
| Charlton Park Committee | Sustainability Grant | 2/09/7627 | \$ | 10,000.00 | \$ 10,000.00 |
| Birchip Cropping Group | Sustainability Grant | 23/11/2020 | \$ | 8,778.00 | \$ 8,778.00 |
| Nandaly Community Hotel | Sustainability Grant | 10/03/2021 | \$ | 6,956.00 | \$ 6,956.00 |
| Red Gate Community Garden | Sustainability Grant | 26/03/2021 | \$ | 424.00 | \$ 424.00 |
| Donald Children's Centre | Sustainability Grant | 25/03/2021 | \$ | 8,526.00 | \$ 8,526.00 |
| | | | | | \$ 34,684.00 |

8.2.5 LOCAL GOVERNMENT GENERAL ELECTION REPORT 2020

Author's Title: Director Corporate Services

Department: Corporate Services

File No: GO|07|06

Relevance to Council Plan 2017 - 2021

Strategic Objective: Support our councillors, staff, volunteers and the community to make informed and transparent decisions.

PURPOSE

To provide information on the 2020 Buloke Shire Council general election.

SUMMARY

The 2020 Buloke Shire Council general election (election) was undertaken by the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* (Act).

Following completion of the election, the Council received the 2020 Local government elections Buloke Shire Council Election Report (Report) from the VEC which confirmed that no significant issues arose as part of the election.

In noting this Report Council satisfies its requirements under the *Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020* (Regulations).

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the 2020 Local Government Elections Buloke Shire Council Election Report on the 2020 Buloke Shire Council general election

Attachments: 1 [Local Government General Election Report 2020](#)

DISCUSSION

Key changes to the 2020 election program required by the Act were implemented by the VEC, including but not limited to introduction of mandatory candidate training prior to nominating for election. A summary of the key changes is outlined in the Report.

Although uncertainties arose due to the COVID-19 pandemic, confirmation was received in May 2020 that the elections would proceed. The VEC notes adjustments to ensure health and safety of voters, election staff, councils, candidates and other stakeholders were made in response to the pandemic, including the development of a COVIDSafe Election Plan.

Nominations for the election period commenced 9 am 17 September and closed 12 noon 22 September. At close of nominations, 8 candidates nominated for election. The number of nominations for Mallee and Mount Jeffcott Wards were the same as the number of vacancies, and as such were uncontested. The results of the election were declared on 2 November 2020 at the Buloke Shire Council Officers, Wycheproof.

Participation rate in the election was 85.35%, which is higher than the state average of 84.12% and the 82.54% rate at the 2016 election.

Subsequent to the election, a Report was received by the VEC which advised Council of the process and the results. The process leading to the counting of votes, and post-election activities, are set out in the attached Report.

RELEVANT LAW

The election was held in accordance with the Act and the Regulations. The VEC is an independent statutory authority established under the *Electoral Act 2002*.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable.

OPTIONS

Not applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The VEC delivered a state-wide advertising campaign to maximise public awareness and participation amongst all eligible voters. Information was provided through statutory notices in local newspapers, the VEC website, social media and the VEC VoterAlert service. Full details of the voter engagement program are included in the Report.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable.

COLLABORATION

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The cost of the election was as per the budget allocation made by Council as part of the 2020-21 budget. The figure is yet to be finalised as the Victorian Electoral Commission will now pursue those who failed to vote for a valid reason for not doing so. It will then issue infringement notices for those whose reason is not considered adequate.

Any income received will be forwarded to Council.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Regulations require the Report be submitted to the Council at the earliest practicable meeting of the Council held after receipt of the Report by the Chief Executive Officer.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

I, Hannah Yu, have no conflicts of interest to declare in relation to this report.

2020 Local government elections

Buloke Shire Council

Election Report



**© State of Victoria**

(Victorian Electoral Commission)
April 2021

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Level 11, 530 Collins Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
T 131 832
info@vec.vic.gov.au
vec.vic.gov.au

Acknowledgement of Country

The Victorian Electoral Commission pays respect to Victoria's traditional owners and their elders past and present who have been custodians of this country for many thousands of years. Their living culture and their role in the life of Victoria is acknowledged by the VEC.

Letter of Transmittal

19 April 2021

Mr Anthony Judd
Chief Executive Officer
Buloke Shire Council
PO Box 1
Wycheproof VIC 3527

Dear Mr Judd

Pursuant to Regulation 83 of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020, I submit this report to the Chief Executive Officer of Buloke Shire Council on the general election held in October 2020.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Warwick Gately', with a stylized, cursive script.

Warwick Gately AM
Electoral Commissioner

Buloke Shire Council

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| About Buloke Shire Council | 5 | Appendix 10: Election participation statistics | 35 |
| Voters' roll | 5 | | |
| Advertising and communication campaign | 5 | | |
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| Election office | 8 | | |
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Buloke Shire Council

Introduction

The Victorian local government general elections are held every four years as defined by the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) (**LG Act**). In 2020, general elections were held for 76 of the 79 Victorian councils¹ with Saturday 24 October marking election day. In accordance with section 263(1) of the LG Act, the Victorian Electoral Commission (**VEC**) is the statutory election service provider for the conduct of local government elections in Victoria.

This report provides information on the 2020 Buloke Shire Council general election including details of the end-to-end service delivery of electoral activities throughout the election timeline. This report also provides details of post-election items including compulsory voting enforcement.

About the Victorian Electoral Commission

The VEC is an independent statutory authority established under the *Electoral Act 2002* (Vic) (**the Electoral Act**). The VEC's principal functions are to conduct State elections, local government elections, certain statutory elections and polls, commercial and community elections, and to support electoral representation processes for local councils and the Electoral Boundaries Commission for State electoral boundaries. The VEC is also responsible for maintaining the Victorian register of electors and administering political funding and donation disclosure laws. The VEC has a mandated role to conduct electoral research, provide communication and education services, and inform and engage Victorians in the democratic process.

Warwick Gately AM is the appointed Electoral Commissioner and Liz Williams is the appointed Deputy Electoral Commissioner. The Electoral Commissioner and Deputy Electoral Commissioner report to the Victorian Parliament in relation to the VEC's operations and activities.

The Electoral Commissioner heads the VEC's Executive Management Group that comprises the Deputy Electoral Commissioner, the Executive Director, Corporate Services and seven Directors, each leading the main functional areas of the VEC. Each Director acts as subject matter experts within their legislative responsibilities under the LG Act and the Electoral Act.

The VEC has a dedicated local government election program which is managed by Katrina Collins and incorporates a range of programs, projects and activities that are supported through strategic planning, project management, and process mapping. The program is overseen by the VEC's Planning Group and has sponsorship from the Executive Management Group.

¹ The South Gippsland Shire Council was placed into administration in mid-2019. The Council's general election has been postponed until October 2021. Casey City Council and Whittlesea City Council were placed into

administration in early 2020. The Councils' general elections have been postponed until October 2024.

Buloke Shire Council

Key changes

Changes in legislation

The new LG Act received royal assent on 24 March 2020 and introduced a number of changes, some requiring immediate implementation and others to be implemented progressively. Those requiring immediate implementation had a significant impact on the 2020 local government election program.

Following the LG Act completing its passage through Parliament, the VEC implemented the necessary changes to the 2020 local government election program in response to the reforms as they applied to the elections.

The key changes from the LG Act are as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Local government electoral structures | <p>The default electoral structure for all local councils is single-councillor wards, although some regional and rural local councils may be unsubdivided or divided into wards with equal numbers of councillors in each ward.</p> <p>The VEC is no longer responsible for conducting electoral representation reviews of all local councils in Victoria.</p> <p>An independent Local Government Electoral Representation Advisory Panel will review council electoral structures. The panel includes the Electoral Commissioner and other members appointed by the Minister for Local Government.</p> |
| Voting system | <p>The voting system (attendance or postal) is set by the Minister for Local Government.</p> <p>All local council elections are conducted according to the same voting system.</p> |
| Enrolment and voters' rolls | <p>Non-resident property owners need to apply to be enrolled (this change will be implemented in stages leading up to the 2024 local government elections).</p> <p>Amendments to the voters' roll are completed by the VEC only (excluding Melbourne City Council).</p> |
| Candidate qualifications | <p>It is compulsory for local government candidates to complete mandatory training prior to nominating for local government elections.</p> |
| Nominations/candidate statements | <p>When nominating, candidates are required to declare they have completed the mandatory Local Government Candidate Training.</p> <p>The maximum number of words for a candidate statement was increased to 300 (350 for the Melbourne City Council Leadership Team and Councillor Groups).</p> |
| Election staff | <p>The term 'Election Manager' replaced 'Returning Officer' making the term consistent with the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i>.</p> |
| Extraordinary vacancies | <p>The VEC will fix the timeline for local council by-elections (previously fixed by the Minister).</p> <p>Changes to the countback process which now draws on a broader pool of ballot papers to determine the successful candidate at a countback.</p> |
| Compulsory voting | <p>From the 2024 local government general elections onwards, it will be compulsory for everyone enrolled on a voters' roll to vote.</p> |

Buloke Shire Council

The LG Act made other changes to the local government electoral landscape, including:

- operational and technical provisions for electoral matters are now prescribed in the Regulations rather than being contained in the LG Act.
- disputed election results are now heard by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (**VCAT**).

On 8 May 2020, the Minister determined² all of the 2020 general elections would be held by postal voting. As such, the VEC adjusted preparations in response to the Minister's determination.

In addition, new Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020 (**the Regulations**) came into operation on 13 July 2020.

Response to public health crisis: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

In response to the coronavirus (**COVID-19**) global pandemic, a State of Emergency was declared in Victoria on 16 March 2020. While the VEC was well advanced in planning for the elections, some uncertainty arose due to speculation that the elections could be rescheduled.

Following the Local Government Minister's confirmation on 15 May 2020 that the 2020 local government elections would proceed, the VEC's operating model was adjusted to deliver a compliant election while meeting health, safety, social distancing and hygiene obligations to voters, election staff, councils, candidates and all other stakeholders.

On Wednesday 1 September 2020, the Governor in Council made amendments to the regulations to allow certain provisions to be varied in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the amendments allowed the VEC to determine an appropriate method for eligible candidates to lodge their nomination form and pay their nomination fee electronically; and to allow the Election Manager to determine the maximum number of scrutineers that may be present for any activity at any one time. The amended regulations commenced the day after

they were made and remain in place until 26 April 2021.

On 29 September 2020, the Governor in Council made further changes to the Regulations to provide greater clarity of mitigation options for any disruptions to the voting timeline, including delays across the postal network that could threaten the integrity of the elections. The changes allowed the Electoral Commissioner to alter the last day of voting and/or the extended postal vote receipt deadline if necessary, to maintain and protect election integrity.

The VEC developed a COVIDSafe Election Plan³ in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services which complemented the VEC's Service Plan. The COVIDSafe Election Plan outlined the VEC's actions and strategies to deliver safe and compliant local government elections.

The plan considered all electoral operations and activities and included changes such as (but not limited to):

- acquiring larger election office spaces to accommodate social distancing practices
- moving operations from face-to-face to online (when legislation permitted), for example:
 - the VEC's briefing meetings with individual councils
 - the candidate information sessions
- modifying the timeline for ballot paper extraction and counting activities
- modifying scrutineer practices.

The VEC acknowledges the collaboration and contributions of council officers in navigating the changes required to the program due to COVID-19.

² The Minister published this decision in the Government Gazette on 18 May 2020

³ 'VEC COVIDSafe election plan' - <https://www.vec.vic.gov.au/about-us/publications/local-council-election-reports-and-plans>

Buloke Shire Council

Election dates

The key timelines that applied to the 2020 local government elections were as follows.

| | |
|--|--|
| Deadline fixed by the VEC for council primary enrolment data | Monday 13 July 2020 |
| Close of roll | 4 pm Friday 28 August 2020 |
| Opening of the election office to the public | Wednesday 16 September 2020 |
| Certification of the voters' roll and opening of nominations | Thursday 17 September 2020 |
| Close of nominations | 12 noon Tuesday 22 September 2020 |
| *Ballot draw | From 1 pm on Tuesday 22 September 2020 |
| *Deadline for lodging candidate statements, photographs and questionnaires | 12 noon Wednesday 23 September 2020 |
| *General mail out of ballot packs to voters | Tuesday 6 October to Thursday 8 October 2020 |
| *Close of voting | 6 pm Friday 23 October 2020 |
| Day prescribed as Election Day | Saturday 24 October 2020 |
| *Close of extended postal vote receipt period | 12 noon Friday 30 October 2020 |
| Declaration of election results | No later than Friday 13 November 2020 |

*Dates with asterisks relate to contested elections only.

Buloke Shire Council

About Buloke Shire Council

Buloke Shire Council is comprised of seven councillors elected from one three-councillor ward and two two-councillor wards.

The electoral structure was last reviewed in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989* through an electoral representation review in 2019.

Subsequent to the review, in April 2020 the structure of Buloke Shire Council was determined by the Minister to remain unchanged.

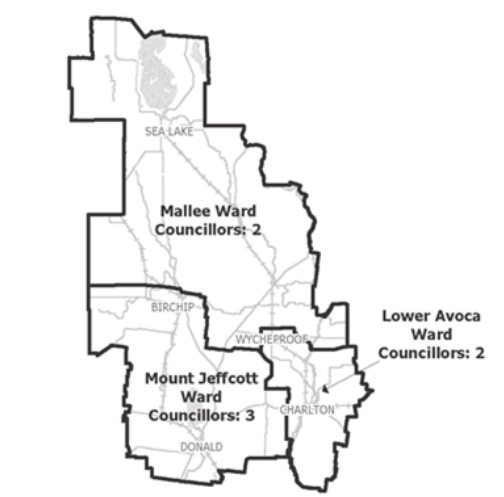


Figure 1: The electoral structure of Buloke Shire Council at the general election held on 24 October 2020.

Voters' roll

The VEC prepared the voters' roll for the election under section 8(2)(c) of the Electoral Act and in accordance with section 249 of the LG Act. The close of roll for the election was 4 pm on Friday 28 August 2020. Pursuant to section 249(4) of the LG Act, the VEC certified the voters' roll on Thursday 17 September 2020.

At certification, the voters' roll for the 2020 Buloke Shire Council general election included 5,404 enrolled voters.

Composition of the voters' roll

The LG Act specifies that the voters' roll for a local government election is formed by combining two separate lists of voters.

1. The Electoral Commissioner's list (EC list) – List of State electors that are enrolled within that local government area.
2. The Chief Executive Officer's list (CEO list) – List of council-entitled voters.

Refer to **Appendix 1** for a breakdown of the Buloke Shire Council general election voters' roll.

Amendments to the voters' roll

In accordance with section 250 of the LG Act, the VEC is able to amend any error or omission in the preparation, printing or copying of the voters' roll, or correct any misnomer or inaccurate description of any person, place or thing on the voters' roll. Following the passage of the LG Act, amendments to the voters' roll are to be certified by the VEC. All voters added to the roll were issued with a ballot pack. Where a voter was deleted from the roll after the mail-out of ballot material, the VEC had systems in place to ensure that returned ballot papers from the deleted voters could be identified and excluded from the extraction and count. Where roll amendments were required, the total number of voters on the roll was updated.

Following the close of roll, the VEC made two amendments to the voters' roll, two additions and no deletions.

Advertising and communication campaign

State-wide advertising

The VEC delivered a state-wide advertising campaign to maximise public awareness and participation amongst all eligible voters. Campaign activities and consistent messaging were delivered across two phases – enrolment and voting – and through multiple traditional and emerging mediums, including radio, digital and social media, and offline/outdoor advertising.

Buloke Shire Council

Statutory advertising

The VEC published a series of statutory notices throughout the election as required by the LG Act. The notices included critical information relevant to each milestone of the election timeline.

For the 2020 statutory notices, Buloke Shire Council nominated the following newspapers for the statutory notices to appear in:

- Buloke Times
- Sea Lake & Wycheproof Times
- North Central News

In 2020, the VEC established a new policy position for statutory advertising in alignment with the updated definition of 'publish' in the LG Act. The policy position included the following:

- all statutory and non-statutory election advertising would be published on the VEC website, and
- where available, all statutory and non-statutory election advertising would be published in local newspapers and/or other selected newspapers identified following consultation with the council.

Refer to **Appendix 2** for further information in relation to the statutory advertising.

VEC website

The VEC provided council specific information regarding the election on its website under the '2020 local council election' page. The VEC website went live for the local government elections in early August 2020. Whilst some council specific data remained static during the election, the website was regularly updated with content relevant to the election and at each key milestone such as close of roll, nominations, voting and results.

Media liaison

An online media webinar was held on Friday 21 August 2020. The webinar could be downloaded or accessed at a later time for those who were unable to participate live. The media briefing summarised the planning and timeline for the 2020 local government elections, and also

provided a specific update in relation to the availability of election results in light of COVID-19.

Media outlets were provided with a media information booklet that outlined the election timeline and key messages, and provided the VEC's head office media contacts. The VEC's communication team supported each Election Manager as the primary media spokesperson in relation to each election.

The VEC's media liaison program principally featured staged media releases aimed to highlight key milestones during the election timeline, and capitalise on existing general news coverage. More information on the VEC's media release schedule is available at **Appendix 3**.

Social media campaign

As part of its state-wide advertising campaign, the VEC used paid promotions on social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat and WeChat, targeting voters through audience segmentation.

This advertising was supported by a defined timeline of organic social media posts on the VEC's channels, designed to cover each of the key messages of the communication campaign to further extend the reach to the community and promote conversation about the democratic process.

VEC VoterAlert advisories

Electors on the State enrolment register are able to sign up to the VEC's free SMS or email alert service VoterAlert, to receive reminder messages pertinent to elections that affect them. They can subscribe to receive SMS messages only, email only, or both SMS and email.

During the general election, the VEC used its VoterAlert service to send the following direct messages to those State-enrolled voters on the roll for the election.

The messages were rolled out in the following schedule:

Wednesday 19 August to Wednesday 26 August 2020 – 2,590 VoterAlert messages were sent by SMS and email reminding voters to enrol or update their details by the close of roll.

Friday 25 September 2020 – 1,937 VoterAlert messages were sent by SMS and email advising

Buloke Shire Council

voters in wards where an election is uncontested that they are not required to vote.

Friday 9 October to Friday 13 October 2020 – 740 VoterAlert messages were sent by SMS and email advising that the VEC had commenced posting ballot packs.

Monday 19 October 2020 – 737 VoterAlert messages were sent by SMS and email reminding voters that it was the last week to post their ballot material back to the VEC.

In mid-October, the VEC commenced sending its final VoterAlert – a reminder to post ballot packs by the voting deadline. Whilst approximately 900,000 of the 1.8 million voters scheduled to receive an alert were contacted it was identified that an unanticipated high volume of calls was received by both the VEC and councils as a result of the alert. Therefore the VEC suspended the VoterAlert messages scheduled for the remaining 900,000 voters.

More information on the VEC's VoterAlert advisories is available at **Appendix 4**.

Voter engagement

The VEC delivered an extensive voter engagement program. The program sessions were implemented throughout Victoria and were specific to local demographics. Please refer to **Appendix 5** to view the full list of initiatives for the 2020 local government elections. Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the VEC's programs traditionally offered through face-to-face education and engagement were redesigned to comply with health, safety, social distancing and hygiene obligations.

Blind and low vision services

Braille and large print ballot material was available to blind and low vision voters who had registered for these products by 5 pm on Tuesday 15 September 2020.

The Election Manager did not receive any requests for braille or large print ballot material for the election.

Interpreting services

The VEC engaged the Victorian Interpreting and Language Services' Language Link to provide a telephone interpreting service for telephone

enquiries from voters who had a first language other than English. The VEC advertised direct lines for 20 languages other than English and a general line for all other languages.

Telephone enquiry service

A local telephone enquiry service was provided at the election office from Wednesday 16 September 2020 until the close of voting, for enquiries regarding the election.

The local telephone enquiry service was supplemented by an overflow call centre at the VEC's head office. The overflow call centre received calls made directly to the VEC's head office line (131 VEC, 131 832 or +61 3 8620 1100 for callers outside of Australia) and diverted calls from the election office when the election office lines were at capacity. Additionally, email enquiries were received and processed through info@vec.vic.gov.au.

The types of calls that are typical during an election relate to:

- voting entitlements and compulsory voting obligations
- enrolment questions
- ballot pack had not been received
- ballot material was spoilt or destroyed, so replacement ballot material was required
- a voter advising that they were overseas or interstate
- queries regarding the content of the ballot pack.

A breakdown of the daily number of calls received by the telephone enquiry service and the overflow call centre in respect to the election is available at **Appendix 6**.

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Election Manager

The VEC maintains a pool of trained senior election officials located across the state to fill election management roles for State and local government elections. Election-specific training is provided to senior election officials prior to each election management appointment.

The size of the election management team appointed for the conduct of an election is based on the size of the council. As required under the LG Act an Election Manager is appointed to conduct the election and is supported by one or more Assistant Election Managers for larger councils, or a senior election official for smaller councils.

In accordance with section 3 of the LG Act, the Electoral Commissioner appointed Bevan Spencer as the Election Manager for the 2020 Buloke Shire Council general election.

Based on the size of the Buloke Shire Council election, an Assistant Election Manager was not appointed, however the Election Manager was supported by a senior election official.

Election office

The Election Manager was responsible for the establishment and management of the election office located at the Buloke Shire Council Offices, 65 Horace Street, Sea Lake. The election office was provided by Council.

In accordance with the VEC's COVIDSafe election plan, the election office was open to the public by appointment only. The election office was available for appointments from Wednesday 16 September until Friday 23 October 2020 between 9 am and 5 pm. Opening hours were extended on Thursday 22 October (9 am to 8 pm) and Friday 23 October (9 am to 6 pm) to allow for final enquiries and the hand-delivery of ballots prior to the close of voting. Enquiries regarding the election were also managed by phone.

Candidates

Nominations for the election opened at 9 am on Thursday 17 September and closed at 12 noon on Tuesday 22 September 2020. Candidates were required to lodge their nomination forms in person at the election office. A \$250 nomination fee applied.

On Wednesday 9 September 2020, the Electoral Commissioner published a determination⁴ establishing a framework for prospective candidates who were prevented from attending the election office due to health directions regarding COVID-19 under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*. The determination outlined provisions for electronic lodgement of the nomination form and nomination fee for affected candidates.

Candidate information

The VEC developed a suite of resources that were accessible to prospective candidates prior to the nomination period. From early September, candidates were able to access the VEC's information about the process of nominating and becoming a candidate for the election. The VEC's online *Candidate Helper*, accessible via the VEC website, went live on Thursday 3 September 2020. The *Candidate Helper* enabled candidates to pre-complete their nomination form and other forms online before lodging them with the Election Manager.

For the 2020 elections, the VEC's candidate information session was recorded and available for online streaming from the VEC website. The session was complemented by three state-wide interactive seminars consisting of a panel from the VEC's leadership and executive teams.

⁴ VEC 2020 Determination No.1 - Nominations from candidates impacted by COVID-19 Public Health Directions in respect to local government elections -

<https://www.vec.vic.gov.au/about-us/legislation/determinations>

Buloke Shire Council

Nominations

At the close of nominations, eight candidates had nominated for election to council.

The following is a breakdown of candidate nominations per ward:

- Lower Avoca Ward - three nominations
- Mallee Ward - two nominations
- Mount Jeffcott Ward - three nominations

As the number of nominations for Mallee and Mount Jeffcott Wards was the same as the number of vacancies, these elections were uncontested.

The ballot draw to determine the order in which the names would appear on the ballot paper for Lower Avoca Ward was held at the election office following the close of nominations using the VEC's computerised ballot draw application.

See **Appendix 7** for the list of candidates in ballot draw order.

Candidate statements and photos

In accordance with Regulation 39 of the Regulations, candidates were able to lodge a 300 word statement and submit a recent photograph for inclusion in the ballot packs sent to voters. The deadline for the submission of candidate statements and photographs was 12 noon on Wednesday 23 September 2020.

See **Appendix 7.1** for a breakdown of submitted statements and photos, and **7.2** for the sample website version product.

Candidate questionnaires

In accordance with Regulation 43 of the Regulations, candidates were able to complete and lodge their answers to a set of prescribed questions in addition to a statement and photograph. The Election Manager accepted questionnaire submissions lodged by seven of the eight candidates at the election.

The completed questionnaires were accessible to voters on the VEC website or by contacting the election office.

Uncontested elections

As Mallee Ward and Mount Jeffcott Ward were uncontested, an uncontested election leaflet was mailed out to voters in that ward. The VEC mailed out all uncontested ward leaflets at the beginning of the general mail out period in October 2020. See **Appendix 7.3** for the sample version of the uncontested leaflet products and **Appendix 8.1** for a breakdown of the leaflets mailed out on each day during the general mail-out.

Voting

Redirection of ballot packs

The Regulations provide that a voter may – no later than the day the roll is certified (or a later date if specified by the Election Manager under Regulation 22(2)(f) of the Regulations) – make a request in writing to the Election Manager to have their postal ballot envelope redirected to another address. For the 2020 elections voters had until Thursday 17 September to submit requests for redirection.

The Election Manager received one request for redirection of a ballot pack for the election.

Early votes

A voter may request an early postal ballot envelope (early vote) prior to the general mail out of ballot packs. The Election Manager processes the request and issues the early vote if the request is assessed as reasonable. Requests for early votes could be processed from Wednesday 23 September 2020, the day after nominations closed, until the commencement of the general mail out of ballot packs on Tuesday 6 October 2020. Due to the timing of early votes, some early voters may not have had access to the candidate statements, photographs or questionnaires.

Due to the impact that COVID-19 restrictions had on election services for the 2020 elections, requests for early votes were managed by appointment.

The Election Manager did not receive any early vote requests for the election.

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Mail-out of ballot packs

The VEC mailed 1,636 ballot packs between Tuesday 6 October and Thursday 8 October 2020. See **Appendix 8** for a breakdown of the packs mailed out on each day during the general mail-out, noting that ballot packs were not mailed to any voters that had passed away between the close of the roll and generation of the mail-out file.

This included one ballot pack that was redirected to an alternative address for a voter that had applied to redirect their ballot pack by Thursday 17 September 2020.

In accordance with Regulation 49(3) of the Regulations, no more than 35% of ballot packs were mailed or delivered to voters on any one day during the mail out period. All ballot packs were lodged with Australia Post under the priority paid delivery timetable.

The VEC liaised closely with Australia Post during the mail out period to confirm that ballot packs had been delivered to voters. The VEC received confirmation that all ballot packs had been delivered to delivery addresses by Wednesday 14 October 2020.

During the voting period, 23 ballot packs were returned to the election office by Australia Post as return-to-sender mail. Most of this mail was due to the addressee not residing at the address.

Election office counter services

In order to safeguard the health and wellbeing of voters and VEC personnel in the COVID-19 environment, the VEC did not provide an over-the-counter replacement or unenrolled vote service at election offices in the Metropolitan Melbourne region (including Mitchell Shire Council) for the elections. Similar restrictions were initially imposed on election offices in Regional Victoria and were relaxed in the final weeks of voting. Voters were advised to request replacement or unenrolled ballot material by phone, which was sent to them by post.

Unenrolled votes

Unenrolled votes are issued to people whose name cannot be found on the voters' roll but who claim

they are entitled to vote at the election. The unenrolled ballot pack includes a declaration that is signed by the applicant and assessed by the Election Manager prior to either admitting or disallowing the vote.

The Election Manager did not issue any unenrolled votes for the election.

Replacement ballot packs

Following the general mail-out of ballot packs, a voter who claimed that their ballot pack had not been received, or had been lost, spoilt or destroyed, could apply to the Election Manager for a replacement ballot pack. Requests for replacement ballot packs within metropolitan councils were processed and fulfilled at the election office then lodged at the local postal facility. In order to assist in the mail turnaround time for regional councils, the VEC established a centralised postal vote issuing service at head office. Replacement vote requests were processed at the election office and fulfilled and lodged with Australia Post from the VEC in Melbourne.

The Election Manager issued 6 replacement ballot packs during the voting period. Please refer to **Schedule 1** for further information on replacement ballot packs issued.

Return of ballot paper envelopes

Voters were provided with a priority reply-paid envelope for the return of their ballot paper envelope containing their completed ballot paper. The return mail was delivered to the election office from local postal facilities or mail distribution centres. Voters who chose to hand-deliver their vote to the election office were able to do so by placing their ballot paper envelope containing their completed ballot paper into ballot boxes located at the election office. The ballot boxes allowed voters to drop off their ballot envelopes without interaction with staff, therefore remaining compliant with a COVIDSafe election⁵.

As ballot paper envelopes were returned, they were progressively checked by the election management team to ensure they had been signed by the voter. Additionally, processes were in place to ensure that only one returned ballot

⁵ "VEC COVIDSafe election plan" - <https://www.vec.vic.gov.au/about-us/publications/local-council-election-reports-and-plans>

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from any one voter could proceed to the extraction and count.

The Election Manager received a total of 1,154 returned ballot paper envelopes across all wards by the close of voting at 6 pm on Friday 23 October 2020.

The Regulations provide that the Election Manager can accept returned ballot paper envelopes up until 12 noon on the Friday following the close of voting, if satisfied that the ballot paper envelope was completed by the voter prior to the close of voting. The Election Manager accepted 255 ballot paper envelopes across all wards during the extended postal vote receipt period.

The total returned ballot paper envelopes for Buloke Shire Council was 1,409.

The Election Manager set aside 45 returned ballot paper envelopes that were not admitted to the extraction and counting process due to the voter not having signed the declaration envelope or, in the case of unenrolled declaration votes, an entitlement was not found for the person, or the declaration envelope was not returned with the vote.

Refer to **Schedule 1** for the total certified record of ballot papers and declaration envelopes across all wards.

Results

Extraction

A total of 1,364 ballot paper envelopes were admitted to the extraction process.

The extraction of ballot papers occurred at the the election office commencing on Monday 26 October 2020. The extraction of all admitted ballot paper envelopes was completed on Monday 2 November, following the close of the extended postal vote receipt period.

The extraction process involved separating the declaration flaps containing voters' details from each admitted ballot paper envelope, and then extracting the ballot papers from the envelopes. This two-stage process maintains anonymity and

ensures the number of envelopes is tracked for ongoing reconciliation.

Any returned ballot paper envelopes found not to contain a ballot paper, or that contained more than one ballot paper, were required to be rejected and could not be counted. There were six returned ballot paper envelopes rejected during the extraction activity.

Following the extraction of ballot papers from the ballot paper envelopes, a total of 1,358 ballot papers proceeded to the count.

Computer count

Following the extraction of ballot papers admitted to the count for Buloke Shire Council, Lower Avoca Ward, preferences on ballot papers were data entered into the VEC's computer counting application at the election office. The application distributes preferences using the proportional representation method once data entry of ballot paper preferences is complete. The computer count information session explaining the process was recorded and available for online streaming from the VEC website from Monday 19 October 2020. Results were calculated at the election office on Monday 2 November 2020.

The provisional results were published to the VEC website as they became available. Results were updated as finalised⁶ once declarations had taken place.

For a breakdown of the first preference results, refer to **Appendix 9**.

Recounts

At any time before a candidate is declared as elected, a recount may be initiated by the Election Manager or requested in writing by a candidate stating the reasons for their request. Such requests are assessed by the Election Manager supported by the VEC and either accepted or declined.

The Election Manager did not receive any requests for a recount following the count for Buloke Shire Council.

⁶ A preference distribution report can be found at [2020 council election results | Victorian Electoral Commission \(vec.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.vec.vic.gov.au/council-election-results).

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Declaration of results

The declaration of results was scheduled later than at previous elections, due to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on extraction and counting timelines. As per the Service Plan, the latest date for all results declarations to have been completed was Friday 13 November 2020.

The results of the 2020 Buloke Shire Council general election were declared at 6 pm on Monday 2 November 2020 at the Buloke Shire Council Offices, 367 Broadway, Wycheproof.

The VEC website was updated following the declaration to reflect the elected candidates from the election.

Election statistics

Participation

Participation is measured by the number of marks on the roll as a percentage of the total enrolment and can vary from turnout. The overall participation rate in the Buloke Shire Council election was 85.35%, which is higher than the State average of 84.12% (excluding Melbourne City Council) and higher than the 82.54% rate at the 2016 Buloke Shire Council general election.

Analysis of voter participation for the different enrolment categories shows that participation is higher for voters who are enrolled on the EC's List (87.18%) compared to voters enrolled on the CEO's List (71.79%).

Refer to **Appendix 10** for further information on participation, including a breakdown by enrolment category.

Turnout

Voter turnout is measured by the number of formal and informal ballot papers counted in the election as a percentage of voters on the voters' roll for the election.

The overall voter turnout for the 2020 Buloke Shire Council general election was 83.01%. This is compared to the State average turnout of 81.47% (excluding Melbourne City Council). The voter turnout at the 2016 general election for council was 81.13%.

Informality

The overall informal voting rate recorded at the 2020 Buloke Shire Council general election was 0.88%, compared with the State average of 4.76%. An informality rate of 1.21% was recorded at the Buloke Shire Council general election held in October 2016.

Complaints

Type of complaints

At local government elections, complaints generally fall into two broad categories:

1. The conduct of participants in the election.

Complaints about the conduct of candidates and other participants in the election, at times alleging a breach of the LG Act or local laws.

2. The administration of the election.

Complaints about the conduct of the election and services to voters.

The majority of complaints at the 2020 local government elections related to category one, often where the complainant alleged inappropriate or illegal action by another person or group associated with the election.

Complaints process

The VEC operates a streamlined complaints process during elections, developed in consultation with local councils and enforcement agencies. The process requires complaints to be lodged in writing, and they are then processed through the VEC's head office. For the 2020 local government elections, customers were able to provide feedback and complaints through an online submission form on the VEC's website.

Each complaint is evaluated and an appropriate course of action is determined. Complaints alleging a breach of the LG Act, for example, are forwarded to the Local Government Inspectorate (LGI). Complaints relating to local laws are referred to council. Complaints about the VEC's services or the behaviour or actions of VEC staff and election officials are the responsibility of the VEC. In these cases, the VEC investigates the matter and determines the most appropriate response. The VEC committed to responding to each complaint within five working days, however due to the unanticipated high volume of

Buloke Shire Council

complaints received this extended in some instances.

Complaints received

The VEC received one written complaint relating to the election for Buloke Shire Council which related to category two, the administration of the election.

Post-election activities

Storage of election material

All records from the election will be kept by the VEC safely and secretly in accordance with Regulation 79 of the Regulations.

Refund of nomination fees

Nomination fees were refunded to eligible candidates on Thursday 10 December 2020. Eligible candidates included elected candidates or those who received at least 4% of the first preference vote. Any forfeited nomination fees were remitted to Council on 10 December 2020.

Courts and tribunals

The Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) is responsible for hearing disputes on the validity of an election under section 311 of the LG Act.

Applications for a review of the declaration of the results of an election must be lodged within 14 days of the election and can be made by a candidate in the election, 10 persons who were entitled to vote at the election, or the VEC.

There were no applications to the VCAT disputing the result of the Buloke Shire Council general election.

Non-voter follow up

In accordance with section 267 of the LG Act, the VEC has commenced its compulsory voting enforcement program. Any person who was required to vote at the election and failed to vote will be issued with an Apparent Failure to Vote Notice. Apparent non-voters have 28 days in which to respond.

People who do not respond to that notice, or do not provide a satisfactory response to the notice, may be issued with an Infringement Notice that will incur a penalty. Further follow-up by way of a Penalty Reminder Notice may also take place – this stage includes the original penalty and a Penalty Reminder Notice fee. Penalties collected on behalf of council will be reimbursed at the end of the Infringement and Penalty Reminder Notice stages.

Additionally, during the Infringement and Penalty Reminder Notice stages, non-voters may request for their matter to proceed directly to the Magistrates' Court.

Any such requests will be actioned at the conclusion of the Infringement and Penalty Reminder Notice stages. The VEC will lodge the file of any remaining non-voters with Fines Victoria at the conclusion of the Penalty Reminder Notice stage.

Evaluating the VEC's services

The VEC is committed to providing high quality election services to its local government clients. Through the VEC's formal feedback and debriefing program, the VEC is able to gauge its performance and seek advice for future local government election projects.

Feedback from councils

The VEC invited feedback from councils on its services in December 2020 and acknowledges the receipt of feedback provided by Buloke Shire Council. Additional feedback can be provided to the Program Manager for Local Government elections by emailing LGProgram2020@vec.vic.gov.au.

Internal debriefing program

After every electoral event, the VEC conducts an internal debriefing program which includes input from all areas across the VEC's workforce. Internal debriefing following the local government elections commenced in December 2020. In due course, the VEC will publish a consolidated report on its performance and key statistics from the elections. This report will be tabled in Parliament and available on the VEC website.

Buloke Shire Council

Schedule 1: Record of ballot papers and declaration envelopes

| Buloke Shire Council Lower Avoca Ward election | |
|---|--------------|
| BALLOT PAPERS PRINTED | |
| Victorian Electoral Commission | 2,500 |
| Election Manager | 0 |
| Total | 2,500 |
| BALLOT PAPERS ISSUED | |
| General mail out | 1,636 |
| Early and replacement votes | 6 |
| Unenrolled declaration votes | 0 |
| Spoilt | 0 |
| Sub total | 1,642 |
| Unused | 858 |
| Total | 2,500 |
| DECLARATIONS RETURNED | |
| General mail out admitted to the extraction | 1,361 |
| Early and replacement votes admitted to the extraction | 3 |
| Unenrolled declaration votes admitted to the extraction | 0 |
| Returned declarations unable to admit to extraction | 45 |
| Declarations returned to sender | 23 |
| Sub total | 1,432 |
| Declarations not returned | 210 |
| Total | 1,642 |

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Schedule 2: Certification statement

In accordance with Regulation 77, I certify that Schedule 1 of this report on the conduct of the 2020 Buloke Shire Council local government election is a true and correct account of the number of ballot papers issued, returned and not used in this election and declarations not returned.



Warwick Gately AM
Electoral Commissioner

Buloke Shire Council

Appendix 1: Breakdown of the voters' roll

| Buloke Shire Council | |
|---|--------------|
| Voters enrolled through an entitlement under section 241 of the LG Act | 4,735 |
| Voters enrolled through entitlements under sections 242 – 245 of the LG Act | 669 |
| Total | 5,404 |
| Lower Avoca Ward election | |
| Voters enrolled through an entitlement under section 241 of the LG Act | 1,441 |
| Voters enrolled through entitlements under sections 242 – 245 of the LG Act | 195 |
| Lower Avoca Ward election total | 1,636 |
| Mallee Ward election | |
| Voters enrolled through an entitlement under section 241 of the LG Act | 1,210 |
| Voters enrolled through entitlements under sections 242 – 245 of the LG Act | 245 |
| Mallee Ward election total | 1,455 |
| Mount Jeffcott Ward election | |
| Voters enrolled through an entitlement under section 241 of the LG Act | 2,084 |
| Voters enrolled through entitlements under sections 242 – 245 of the LG Act | 229 |
| Mount Jeffcott Ward election total | 2,313 |

Buloke Shire Council

Appendix 2: Statutory advertising

Buloke Shire Council election schedule of public notices

Close of roll notice (see Appendix 2.1 for example)

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| VEC Website | 8 August 2020 |
| Buloke Times | 11 August 2020 |
| Sea Lake & Wycheproof Times | 13 August 2020 |
| North Central News | 12 August 2020 |

Notice of election (see Appendix 2.2 for example)

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| VEC Website | 31 August 2020 |
| Buloke Times | 1 September 2020 |
| Sea Lake & Wycheproof Times | 3 September 2020 |
| North Central News | 2 September 2020 |

Voting details notice (see Appendix 2.3 for example)

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| VEC Website | 28 September 2020 |
| Buloke Times | 29 September 2020 |
| Sea Lake & Wycheproof Times | 1 October 2020 |
| North Central News | 30 September 2020 |

Reminder notice (see Appendix 2.4 for example)

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| VEC Website | 12 October 2020 |
| Buloke Times | 13 October 2020 |
| Sea Lake & Wycheproof Times | 15 October 2020 |
| North Central News | 14 October 2020 |

Notice of result (see Appendix 2.5 for example)


| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| VEC Website | 23 November 2020 |
| Buloke Times | 24 November 2020 |
| Sea Lake & Wycheproof Times | 26 November 2020 |
| North Central News | 25 November 2020 |

Buloke Shire Council

Appendix 2.1: Close of roll notice for Buloke Shire Council

Buloke Shire Council postal election

Your council, your vote



You must be enrolled to vote
A general election will be held for Buloke Shire Council in October 2020. To be able to vote in the election, you must be enrolled by the close of roll at 4 pm on Friday 28 August 2020. Two categories of voters can be enrolled to vote in the Buloke Shire Council election: State-enrolled voters and Council-enrolled voters.

State-enrolled voters

Am I enrolled to vote?

You are automatically enrolled for this election if:

- you will be 18 years of age or over on Saturday 24 October 2020 AND
- you live in Buloke Shire AND
- you are on the State electoral roll for your current address.

You need to enrol if:

- you are an Australian citizen aged 18 or over on Saturday 24 October 2020 AND
- you live in Buloke Shire and you are not on the State electoral roll OR
- you have lived at your current residential address within Buloke Shire for at least a month and have not yet updated your enrolment details, including any changes to your postal address.

How do I enrol?

You can enrol online at vec.vic.gov.au
You can also download an enrolment form from the website.
All enrolment applications must be received by the Victorian Electoral Commission by the close of roll at 4 pm on Friday 28 August 2020.

How can I check my State enrolment?

You can check your enrolment details online at vec.vic.gov.au at any time, or call 1300 805 478.

Council-enrolled voters

Am I enrolled to vote?

To be a Council-enrolled voter, you must be:

- 18 years of age or over on Saturday 24 October 2020 AND
- not a State-enrolled voter within Buloke Shire.

You are automatically enrolled for this election if you were enrolled as a non-resident owner at the most recent election for your local area. This includes any by-elections held since the last general election.

If your circumstances have changed since the most recent election and you are no longer a non-resident owner of that property, you will not be automatically enrolled for this election. Depending on your circumstances, you may still be eligible to apply to be enrolled as a Council-enrolled voter.

Who else can enrol & vote?

You may also apply to enrol if:

- you have purchased a rateable property in Buloke Shire since the last election or by-election and you are not automatically enrolled OR
- you are not an Australian citizen and you live in, and pay rates for, a property within Buloke Shire OR
- you pay rates on a property you occupy in Buloke Shire, for example you are a shop tenant and pay rates to the Council for the tenancy, and you have no other voting entitlement within Buloke Shire OR
- you are a director or company secretary of a corporation that pays rates to Buloke Shire Council and you have no other voting entitlement within Buloke Shire.

How do I apply to be a Council-enrolled voter?

If you meet any of the mentioned criteria and wish to enrol, contact Buloke Shire Council on 1300 520 520 for a council enrolment form. Council enrolment forms must be received by the Council by the close of roll at 4 pm on Friday 28 August 2020.

How can I check if I am Council-enrolled?

You can check your enrolment details by contacting the Council on 1300 520 520.

Thinking about standing for election?

Candidate requirements have recently changed. To nominate as a candidate for Buloke Shire Council, you must:

- be an Australian citizen and enrolled on the voters' roll for Buloke Shire Council AND
- be eligible to become a councillor should you be elected AND
- have completed the mandatory candidate training before lodging your nomination with the Election Manager.

For further information, visit vec.vic.gov.au

Enrolment closes

4 pm Friday 28 August

State-enrolled voters can register for free VoterAlert SMS and email reminders at vec.vic.gov.au



vec.vic.gov.au | 131 832

For enquiries in languages other than English call our interpreting service:

- Arabic 0209 0190 Arabic • Bosanski 0209 0191 Bosnian • 繁體中文 0209 0192 Cantonese • Hrvatski 0209 0193 Croatian • 0209 0193 Dari • 0209 0194 English • 0209 0195 Greek • Italiano 0209 0196 Italian • 0209 0197 Khmer • 0209 0198 Korean • 0209 0199 Macedonian • 0209 0200 Mandarin • 0209 0201 Persian • 0209 0202 Russian • 0209 0203 Serbian • 0209 0204 Somali • 0209 0205 Spanish • 0209 0206 Turkish • 0209 0207 Vietnamese • All other non-English languages 0209 0208

Authorised by W. Gately, AM, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

@electionvec



Buloke Shire Council

Appendix 2.2: Notice of election for Buloke Shire Council

Buloke Shire Council postal election

Your council, your vote

Vote by post this October

Voting

Ballot packs will be mailed to voters enrolled in the Buloke Shire Council election from Tuesday 6 October 2020. Return your completed ballot material by mail ASAP or hand-deliver it to the Election Manager by the close of voting at 6 pm on Friday 23 October 2020.

If you will be away

If you will be away when ballot packs are mailed, or your address has changed since Friday 28 August 2020, you can request for your ballot pack to be redirected by writing to:

Election Manager
Buloke Shire Council election
c/- Victorian Electoral Commission
Level 11, 530 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Alternatively, you can email your request to:
redirections@vec.vic.gov.au

Please include the address for redirection. Each voter requesting redirection must sign their request.

Requests for redirection must be received by Thursday 17 September 2020.

Large print and braille ballot papers

Large print or braille ballot papers are available for voters who are blind or have low vision—please register by Tuesday 19 September 2020. To register, call (03) 8620 1222 during business hours.

Request an early postal vote

To apply for an early postal vote, contact the Election Manager from Wednesday 23 September 2020 on 1300 108 806 and make an application. You must provide a valid reason.

How to nominate as a candidate

Candidate requirements have recently changed. To nominate as a candidate, you must:

- be an Australian citizen and enrolled on the voters' roll for Buloke Shire Council AND
- be eligible to become a councillor should you be elected AND
- have completed the mandatory candidate training before lodging your nomination with the Election Manager.


To nominate, complete the nomination form and lodge it with the Election Manager together with the \$250 nomination fee. Nomination forms can be lodged by appointment during business hours from Thursday 17 September 2020 until 12 noon on Tuesday 22 September 2020 at:

Buloke Shire Council Offices
65 Horace Street, Sea Lake

Visit vec.vic.gov.au for more information and to pre-complete your nomination form using the online Candidate Helper. The online Candidate Helper will be available from Thursday 3 September 2020.

If you use the online Candidate Helper, print your pre-completed form and make an appointment to lodge it with the Election Manager along with the nomination fee.

Call the Election Manager from Wednesday 16 September 2020 on 1300 108 806 to make a nomination appointment.



Online candidate information session

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the VEC's recorded candidate information session can be streamed online from Thursday 3 September 2020 complemented by state-wide interactive candidate seminars based on the information video. To watch the information session or find out how to join an online interactive seminar, visit vec.vic.gov.au

Nominations close

12 noon Tuesday 22 September

State-enrolled voters can register for free VoterAlert SMS and email reminders at vec.vic.gov.au

vec.vic.gov.au | 131 832

For enquiries in languages other than English call our interpreting service:

- Arabic 9209 0190
- Amharic 9209 0190
- Assamese 9209 0190
- Bengali 9209 0190
- Bosnian 9209 0190
- Cantonese 9209 0190
- Croatian 9209 0190
- Dari 9209 0190
- English 9209 0190
- Greek 9209 0190
- Gujarati 9209 0190
- Hindi 9209 0190
- Indonesian 9209 0190
- Italian 9209 0190
- Japanese 9209 0190
- Korean 9209 0190
- Macedonian 9209 0190
- Mandarin 9209 0190
- Marathi 9209 0190
- Nepali 9209 0190
- Persian 9209 0190
- Polish 9209 0190
- Punjabi 9209 0190
- Romanian 9209 0190
- Russian 9209 0190
- Serbian 9209 0190
- Somali 9209 0190
- Spanish 9209 0190
- Tagalog 9209 0190
- Thai 9209 0190
- Turkish 9209 0190
- Vietnamese 9209 0190
- All other non-English languages 9209 0190

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Appendix 2.3: Voting details notice for Buloke Shire Council

Buloke Shire Council postal election

Your council, your vote

Check the mail for your ballot pack

Ballot packs containing voting material will be mailed to enrolled voters from Tuesday 6 October 2020.

This is a postal election only.

If you do not receive your ballot pack by Friday 16 October 2020, please call 1300 108 806 during office hours to arrange a replacement.

How to vote correctly

You must complete your ballot paper correctly for your vote to count. Put the number 1 in the box next to the candidate you most want to see elected, then number ALL the other boxes in order of your choice. You must number EVERY BOX and only use each number once.

How to return your completed ballot paper

Follow the instructions on your ballot paper to complete your vote. To return your completed ballot paper, put it in the ballot paper envelope then use the reply-paid envelope provided or hand-deliver it during office hours to:

Buloke Shire Council Offices, 65 Horace Street, Sea Lake

Voting is compulsory

Voting is compulsory for all voters who were on the State roll at 4 pm on Friday 28 August 2020.

You may be fined if you do not vote — this includes homeowners and tenants.

You are encouraged to vote, but you will not be fined if you don't vote, if:

- you live outside this local council area OR
- you are enrolled directly with the Council to be on the voters' roll for this election.

Your completed ballot pack must be in the mail or hand-delivered by 6 pm* Friday 23 October

*Local mail clearance times vary. Ballot packs must be mailed before final clearance times in the last week of voting. Don't risk a fine.

State-enrolled voters can register for free VoterAlert SMS and email reminders at vec.vic.gov.au

vec.vic.gov.au | 1300 108 806

For enquiries in languages other than English call our interpreting service:

- Arabic 9209 0190
- Amharic 9209 0190
- Assamese 9209 0190
- Bengali 9209 0190
- Bosnian 9209 0190
- Cantonese 9209 0190
- Croatian 9209 0190
- Dari 9209 0190
- English 9209 0190
- Greek 9209 0190
- Gujarati 9209 0190
- Hindi 9209 0190
- Indonesian 9209 0190
- Italian 9209 0190
- Japanese 9209 0190
- Korean 9209 0190
- Macedonian 9209 0190
- Mandarin 9209 0190
- Marathi 9209 0190
- Nepali 9209 0190
- Persian 9209 0190
- Polish 9209 0190
- Punjabi 9209 0190
- Romanian 9209 0190
- Russian 9209 0190
- Serbian 9209 0190
- Somali 9209 0190
- Spanish 9209 0190
- Tagalog 9209 0190
- Thai 9209 0190
- Turkish 9209 0190
- Vietnamese 9209 0190
- All other non-English languages 9209 0190

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Buloke Shire Council

Appendix 2.4: Reminder notice for Buloke Shire Council

Buloke Shire Council postal election

Your council, your vote

Check the mail for your ballot pack

Ballot packs containing voting material were mailed to enrolled voters from Tuesday 6 October 2020.

This is a postal election only.

If you do not receive your ballot pack by **Friday 16 October 2020**, please call 1300 108 806 during office hours to arrange a replacement.

How to vote correctly

You must complete your ballot paper correctly for your vote to count. Put the number **1** in the box next to the candidate you most want to see elected, then number **ALL** the other boxes in order of your choice. You must number **EVERY BOX** and only use each number once.

How to return your completed ballot paper

Follow the instructions on your ballot paper to complete your vote. To return your completed ballot paper, put it in the ballot paper envelope then use the reply-paid envelope provided or hand-deliver it during office hours to:

Buloke Shire Council Offices, 65 Horace Street, Sea Lake

Voting is compulsory

Voting is compulsory for all voters who were on the State roll at **4 pm** on **Friday 28 August 2020**.

You may be fined if you do not vote — this includes homeowners and tenants.

You are encouraged to vote, but you will not be fined if you don't vote, if:

- you live outside this local council area **OR**
- you are enrolled directly with the Council to be on the voters' roll for this election.

Your completed ballot pack must be in the mail or hand-delivered by 6 pm* Friday 23 October

*Local mail clearance times vary. Ballot packs must be mailed before final clearance times in the last week of voting. Don't risk a fine.

State-enrolled voters can register for free VoterAlert SMS and email reminders at vec.vic.gov.au

vec.vic.gov.au | 1300 108 806

For enquiries in languages other than English call our interpreting service:

- Arabic 9209 0190 Amharic 9209 0190 Arabic 9209 0190 Bosnian 9209 0190 Cantonese 9209 0190 Croatian 9209 0190 Dari 9209 0190
- English 9209 0190 Greek 9209 0190 Hindi 9209 0190 Italian 9209 0190 Japanese 9209 0190 Korean 9209 0190 Macedonian 9209 0190
- Mandarin 9209 0190 Persian 9209 0190 Polish 9209 0190 Russian 9209 0190 Serbian 9209 0190 Somali 9209 0190 Spanish 9209 0190
- Turkish 9209 0190 Vietnamese 9209 0190 Vietnamese 9209 0190 Vietnamese 9209 0190 Vietnamese 9209 0190 Vietnamese 9209 0190

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@electionsvic


Facebook Twitter Instagram

VEC Victorian Electoral Commission

Appendix 2.5: Notice of results for Buloke Shire Council

Buloke Shire Council election

Declaration of results



BULOKE
SHIRE COUNCIL

The following candidates were elected to the Buloke Shire Council at the general election held in October 2020:

Lower Avoca Ward

STEWART, Carolyn (1st elected)

POLLARD, David Thomas (2nd elected)

Mallee Ward

GETLEY, Alan Ronald (elected unopposed)

VIS, David (elected unopposed)

Mount Jeffcott Ward

WARREN, Daryl (elected unopposed)

MILNE, Graeme Leon (elected unopposed)

SIMPSON, Bronwyn (elected unopposed)

Further details about the results are available at vec.vic.gov.au

Bevan Spencer
Election Manager
Monday 2 November 2020

vec.vic.gov.au | 131 832

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Facebook Twitter Instagram

VEC Victorian Electoral Commission

Buloke Shire Council

Appendix 3: Schedule of media releases and advisories

| Buloke Shire Council Council-specific media releases and advisories | |
|--|-------------------|
| Enrol now for the Buloke Shire Council election | 7 August 2020 |
| Call for candidates for the upcoming Buloke Shire Council election | 24 August 2020 |
| Candidates announced for the Buloke Shire Council election | 23 September 2020 |
| Ballot packs mailed this week for Buloke Shire Council election | 5 October 2020 |
| Voting closes soon for the Buloke Shire Council election | 12 October 2020 |
| New councillors for Buloke Shire Council | 2 November 2020 |
| Statewide media releases and advisories | |
| Victorians urged to enrol for upcoming council elections | 7 August 2020 |
| October local council elections to proceed under COVIDSafe election plan | 19 August 2020 |
| Last chance to enrol for Victorian council elections | 21 August 2020 |
| Enrolment closes tomorrow for October's council elections | 26 August 2020 |
| Nominations open soon for Victorian local council elections | 31 August 2020 |
| Council election information one click away on VEC website | 4 September 2020 |
| Accessing candidate information for the 2020 Victorian local council elections | 14 September 2020 |
| Victorian voters encouraged to sign up for free election reminders | 16 September 2020 |
| Nominations are in for the October council elections | 23 September 2020 |
| Authority granted for postal vote contingency | 30 September 2020 |
| Voting underway for Victoria's local council elections | 5 October 2020 |
| Mobile numbers not from VEC | 12 October 2020 |
| Local council elections voting deadline looms | 19 October 2020 |
| Strong voter response to local council elections | 20 October 2020 |
| Results timeline for Victorian local council elections (media advisory, not for publication) | 21 October 2020 |
| Final day of voting shows high voter turnout for council elections | 23 October 2020 |
| VEC won't risk public health for quick results in record turnout | 28 October 2020 |
| A win for democracy in a challenging year | 13 November 2020 |
| Didn't vote in the election? Please explain. | 8 February 2021 |

Buloke Shire Council

Appendix 4: VoterAlert advisories

Appendix 4.1: SMS alerts

4.1.1 close of roll – sent from Wednesday 19 August to Wednesday 26 August 2020



Council elections will be held by post in October. Make sure you are correctly enrolled by 4pm 28 Aug. More info or unsubscribe at: <https://voteralert.vec.vic.gov.au/s/tohMhA5l>

4.1.2 uncontested ward – sent Friday 25 September 2020



VEC VoterAlert: the election in **Council Name Council, Ward Name Ward** was uncontested and you do not have to vote. More info or unsubscribe at: <https://voteralert.vec.vic.gov.au/s/t2of6wcY>

4.1.3 mail out of ballot pack Friday 9 October to Friday 13 October 2020



VEC has posted a ballot pack to your enrolled address. Voting in council elections is compulsory. More info or unsubscribe at: <https://voteralert.vec.vic.gov.au/s/ufDvSR07>

4.1.4 reminder close of voting - Monday 19 October 2020




Council elections: voting closes 6pm Friday. Post your vote or return it to your election office ASAP. More info or unsubscribe: <https://voteralert.vec.vic.gov.au/s/usSUBkIM>

Buloke Shire Council

Appendix 4.2: Email alerts

4.2.1 Close of roll email

VoterAlert

2020 Local council elections

Hello,

Local council elections will be held in Victoria by post this October. It is important that you are correctly enrolled so you receive a ballot pack at your correct address.

Enrolment closes at 4 pm on Friday 28 August 2020.

If you haven't changed your postal address, residential address or name, there is no need to do anything.

Are your details up to date?

You can check your details online on the VEC's Check My Enrolment portal. Complete all fields, making sure you:

- enter your first and middle names in the 'Given names' field
- start to enter your suburb and pick it from the list suggested
- start to enter your street name only and pick it from the list suggested.

CHECK MY ENROLMENT

Do you need to update your details?

CHANGE MY DETAILS

Are you eligible to vote in another council?

In a council election, there are two types of enrolment: State enrolment and council enrolment.

You are receiving this message because you are State-enrolled.

But if you own property or pay rates in another council, you may be enrolled or eligible to enrol directly with that council.

Find out more: [Enrolling for council elections](#)

Do I have to vote at these elections?

Voting is compulsory for State-enrolled voters. Don't risk a fine!

If you are on the roll for Melbourne City Council, it is also compulsory for council enrolled voters to vote.




FIND OUT MORE

Authorised by W. Gately, AM, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

Our mailing address is:
Level 11, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

This message was sent to you by the Victorian Electoral Commission because your contact details are listed on the Victorian electoral roll.


UNSUBSCRIBE



VEC website | Contact us | Privacy | Legal

Buloke Shire Council

4.2.2 Uncontested ward email

VoterAlert

Your election was uncontested

Hello **Voter Name**

At the close of nominations, the number of candidates who nominated for the **Council Name** Council election in **Ward Name** Ward was the same as the number of vacancies.

This is known as an uncontested election.

The candidates who nominated are successful and you are not required to vote.

Are you eligible to vote in another council?

If you have an enrolment entitlement in another council, you may be on the roll for that council.

[Find out more information about council enrolment on our website](#)

More information




For more information [visit our website](#).

Authorised by W. Gately, AM, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

Our mailing address is:
Level 11, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

This message was sent to you by the Victorian Electoral Commission because your contact details are listed on the Victorian electoral roll.

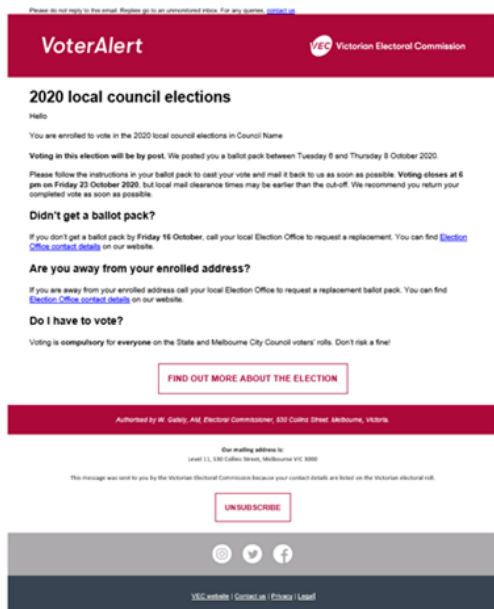
UNSUBSCRIBE



[VEC website](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Legal](#)

Buloke Shire Council


4.2.3 Ballot Pack mailout email



Buloke Shire Council

4.2.4 Last week to vote email

Please do not reply to this email. Replies go to an unmonitored inbox. For any queries, [contact us](#).

VoterAlert  Victorian Electoral Commission

2020 local council elections

Disregard this email if you have already voted.

Hello

You are enrolled to vote in the 2020 local council elections in **Council Name** Council.

Voting closes 6 pm this Friday 23 October.

How to vote

As soon as possible, make sure you:

mail your completed ballot paper in the reply-paid envelope provided

OR

drop your completed ballot paper off at [your local Election Office](#)

Please note: voting closes at 6 pm on Friday 23 October. However, local mail clearance times vary and we recommend you return your completed vote as soon as possible.

Didn't get a ballot pack?

If you haven't received a ballot pack, [check our website to understand your options](#).

Do I have to vote?

Voting is compulsory for everyone on the State and Melbourne City Council voters' rolls. Don't risk a fine!




FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE ELECTION

Authorised by W. Gately, AM, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

Our mailing address is:
Level 11, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

This message was sent to you by the Victorian Electoral Commission because your contact details are listed on the Victorian electoral roll.

UNSUBSCRIBE

[VEC website](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Legal](#)

Buloke Shire Council

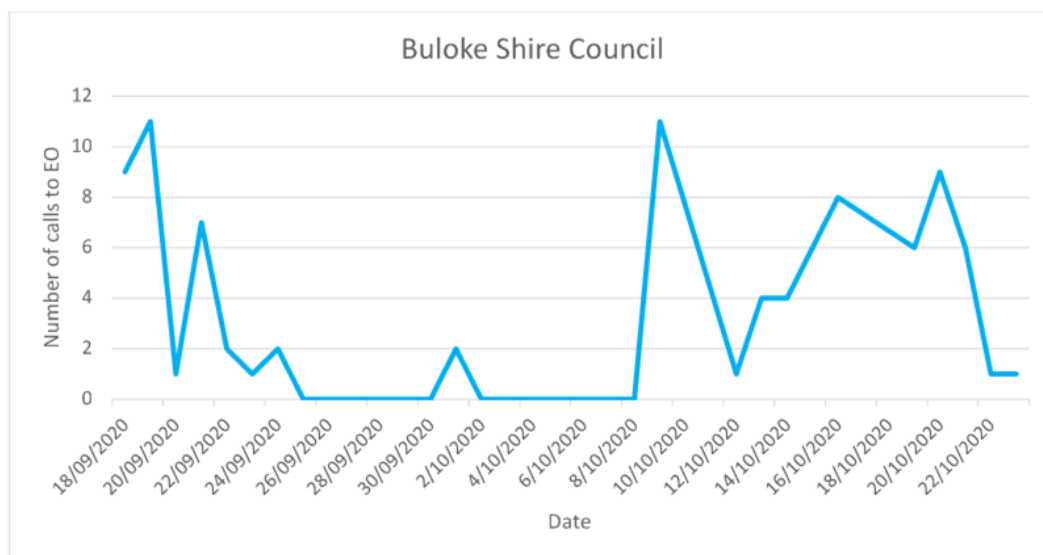
Appendix 5: Voter engagement program and initiatives

| Program | Program Details |
|--|---|
| Be Heard Democracy Ambassador program | This program normally provides face-to-face electoral education sessions and was adapted to an online delivery model, providing peer-led electoral education to residents in specialist disability services and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. A total of 47 sessions were provided to people with disabilities and a total of 80 sessions were provided to CALD communities through councils and community organisations hosting online sessions. |
| Myth busting campaign. | This offline campaign addressed myths around enrolling and voting for those experiencing homelessness or with unstable housing. Four myths were dispelled and displayed on billboards and street posters, in metropolitan Melbourne areas with high populations of people experiencing homelessness. During the enrolment period, no-fixed-address enrolment forms were distributed with 4,500 meals to those suffering financial hardship, through a sponsorship with StreetSmart. This partnership included social media and Electronic Direct Mail distribution to StreetSmart's database of homeless services and community partners. A 1800 freecall number was also established to support those with financial hardship to provide support for enrolling and voting. This phone number was advertised on posters distributed through homelessness agencies, drug and alcohol services and services providing COVID-19 testing in hotels. |
| CALD in-language social media videos. | This project produced a series of three videos in 10-12 different languages which provided electoral information on how to enrol, how to vote by post, and how to respond to an Apparent Failure to Vote Notice. These were widely distributed and shared through the VEC's social media platforms and community networks. |
| Aboriginal short videos. | This project produced five videos in collaboration with Reconciliation Victoria. Two videos featured Aboriginal Elders and other leading Aboriginal community members discussing the value and ways to engage with local council elections. A further three videos, using culturally relevant animation, explained what services councils are responsible for, how to vote and the role of a councillor. These were shared through Aboriginal community channels and organisations. |
| DemGraphics young people co-designed social media project. | This project involved conducting research to identify barriers to enrolling and voting with a diverse group of young people. This information was then used to pilot a social media campaign in selected councils to encourage engagement in the elections for those aged 18-29. |
| Easy English tutor guide and worksheets. | These were produced for people with low English proficiency and designed as a co-read product where a person supports the learner through the worksheets. The tutor guide and worksheets were based on the VEC's Easy English guides for local council elections and were available for download from the VEC's website in PDF and Word formats. |

Buloke Shire Council

Appendix 6: Daily telephone enquiries

The following graph shows the number of telephone calls recorded by the election office telephone enquiry service including those received by the VEC's overflow call centre and tagged as relating to Buloke Shire Council during the 2020 local government elections.



Buloke Shire Council

Appendix 7: Final list of candidates in ballot paper order

Buloke Shire Council election

The candidates, in ballot paper order, were as follows:

Lower Avoca Ward election

STEWART, Carolyn

GETLEY, Kelvin

POLLARD, David Thomas

Buloke Shire Council

Appendix 7.1: Candidate statements and photographs

Buloke Shire Council election

Lower Avoca Ward election (see Appendix 7.2.1 for candidate statement leaflet)

| Total number of candidates at close of nominations | Number of candidates that lodged a candidate statement | Number of candidates that lodged a candidate photograph |
|--|--|---|
| 3 | 3 | 3 |

Mallee Ward election (see Appendix 7.3.1 for uncontested ward leaflet)

| Total number of candidates at close of nominations | Number of candidates that lodged a candidate statement | Number of candidates that lodged a candidate photograph |
|--|--|---|
| 2 | 2 | 2 |

Mount Jeffcott Ward election (see Appendix 7.3.2 for uncontested ward leaflet)

| Total number of candidates at close of nominations | Number of candidates that lodged a candidate statement | Number of candidates that lodged a candidate photograph |
|--|--|---|
| 3 | 3 | 3 |


Appendix 7.2.1: Candidate statement leaflet for Lower Avoca Ward election

Election Report **Local Government elections 2020**

Buloke Shire Council

Appendix 7.3: Uncontested ward leaflets

Appendix 7.3.1: Uncontested leaflet for Mallee Ward election






Buloke Shire Council elections
Mallee Ward
October 2020


At the close of nominations for the Mallee Ward election, 2 nominations were received for 2 vacancies. Therefore, Alan Ronald Getley and David Vis will be elected unopposed.

You are not required to vote.


Bevan Spencer, Election Manager
Information: 1300 108 806

vec.vic.gov.au

@electionsvic   

 Victorian Electoral Commission

Appendix 7.3.2: Uncontested leaflet for Mount Jeffcott Ward election






Buloke Shire Council elections
Mount Jeffcott Ward
October 2020


At the close of nominations for the Mount Jeffcott Ward election, 3 nominations were received for 3 vacancies. Therefore, Daryl Warren, Graeme Leon Milne and Bronwyn Simpson will be elected unopposed.

You are not required to vote.

Bevan Spencer Election Manager
Information: 1300 108 806

vec.vic.gov.au

@electionsvic   

 Victorian Electoral Commission

Buloke Shire Council

Appendix 8: Daily breakdown of the general mail-out

| Buloke Shire Council election | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------|
| 6 October 2020 | 7 October 2020 | 8 October 2020 | Total |
| 556 | 556 | 524 | 1,636 |

| Lower Avoca Ward election | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------|
| 6 October 2020 | 7 October 2020 | 8 October 2020 | Total |
| 556 | 556 | 524 | 1,636 |

Appendix 8.1 Daily breakdown of the uncontested leaflet mail-out

| Mallee Ward election | | | |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------|-------|
| 6 October 2020 | 7 October 2020 | 8 October 2020 | Total |
| 495 | 495 | 465 | 1,455 |

| Mount Jeffcott Ward election | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------|
| 6 October 2020 | 7 October 2020 | 8 October 2020 | Total |
| 786 | 786 | 741 | 2,313 |

Buloke Shire Council

Appendix 9: Result information

Buloke Shire Council election

| Lower Avoca Ward Count summary | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Enrolment: | 1,638 | |
| Formal votes: | 1,346 | |
| Informal votes: | 12 (0.88% of the total votes) | |
| Voter turnout: | 1,358 (82.91% of the total enrolment) | |
| Candidates (in ballot paper order) | First preference votes | Percentage |
| STEWART, Carolyn | 678 | 50.37% |
| GETLEY, Kelvin | 134 | 9.96% |
| POLLARD, David Thomas | 534 | 39.67% |
| Successful candidates | | |
| STEWART, Carolyn (1st elected candidate) | | |
| POLLARD, David Thomas (2nd elected candidate) | | |
| Mallee Ward – uncontested election | | |
| GETLEY, Alan Ronald (Elected unopposed) | | |
| VIS, David (Elected unopposed) | | |
| Mount Jeffcott – uncontested election | | |
| WARREN, Daryl (Elected unopposed) | | |
| MILNE, Graeme Leon (Elected unopposed) | | |
| SIMPSON, Bronwyn (Elected unopposed) | | |

Buloke Shire Council

Appendix 10: Election participation statistics

Note: Participation is measured by the number of marks on the roll as a percentage of total enrolment and can vary from turnout (total ballot papers counted as a percentage of total enrolment).

| Buloke Shire Council election | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| Enrolment category | Participation as a percentage of voters enrolled in each category for 2020 Buloke Shire Council general election | Comparator for 2016 Buloke Shire Council general election | Statewide postal election comparator for 2020 LG elections (excl. Melbourne City Council) |
| Voters enrolled through section 241 of the LG Act | 87.18% | 85.69% | 86.27% |
| aged 18 to 69 years old on election day | 85.40% | 85.93% | 85.48% |
| aged 70 years and over on election day | 91.28% | 84.94% | 90.14% |
| Voters enrolled through sections 243 - 245 of the LG Act | 71.79% | 67.43% | 60.96% |
| Council total | 85.35% | 82.54% | 84.12% |

| Lower Avoca Ward election | | |
|--|--|---|
| Enrolment category | Participation as a percentage of voters enrolled in each category for 2020 Buloke Shire Council general election | Statewide postal election comparator for 2020 LG elections (excl. Melbourne City Council) |
| Voters enrolled through section 241 of the LG Act | 87.18% | 86.27% |
| aged 18 to 69 years old on election day | 85.40% | 85.48% |
| aged 70 years and over on election day | 91.28% | 90.14% |
| Voters enrolled through sections 243 - 245 of the LG Act | 71.79% | 60.96% |
| Ward total | 85.35% | 84.12% |

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8.2.6 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORT

Author's Title: Director Corporate Services

Department: Corporate Services

File No: FM/02/09

Relevance to Council Plan 2017 - 2021

Strategic Objective: Support our councillors, staff, volunteers and the community to make informed and transparent decisions.

PURPOSE

To provide Council with the annual assessment of the Audit and Risk Committee's performance against the Audit and Risk Committee Charter and biannual audit and risk report from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.

SUMMARY

The biannual audit and risk report from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee was provided to the Chief Executive Officer in March 2021. It describes the activities of the Committee and includes its findings and recommendations. A copy of the annual self-assessment of the Audit and Risk Committee's performance against the Audit and Risk Committee Charter is also included.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the report from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.

- Attachments:**
- 1 [Audit and Risk Committee Chair's Report March 2021](#)
 - 2 [Audit and Risk Committee 2020 Annual Assessment](#)

DISCUSSION

The *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) provides that the Audit and Risk Committee (the Committee) must prepare a biannual audit and risk report that describes the activities of the Committee and includes its findings and recommendations. The Committee is also required to undertake an annual assessment of the performance of the Committee against the Audit and Risk Committee Charter. These obligations are also included in the Audit and Risk Committee Charter.

The Act further provides that these assessments and audits must be provided to the Chief Executive Officer for tabling at the next Council meeting.

RELEVANT LAW

Section 54(4)(b) of the Act requires the Chief Executive Officer to provide a copy of the annual assessment of the Committee's performance against the Charter for tabling at the next Council meeting, following its annual assessment.

Section 54(5)(b) of the Act requires the Chief Executive Officer to provide a copy of the biannual audit and risk report to the Chief Executive Officer for tabling at the next Council meeting, following the audit and preparation of the report.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Committee was established by Council at its ordinary meeting held on 12 August 2020. The Audit and Risk Committee Charter was adopted on 12 August 2020.

OPTIONS

Not applicable

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable

COLLABORATION

Not applicable

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The Committee is required to monitor financial and performance reporting.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Audit and Risk Committee Charter's purpose and objectives are to ensure good governance and provide guidance on how Council will work with the Committee for the benefit of the organisation and the community.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

In providing this advice to the Council as the Director Corporate Services I, Hannah Yu, have no interests to disclose in this report.

Buloke Shire Council

AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE CHAIR'S REPORT

PURPOSE

To advise the Councillors and Chief Executive Officer at Buloke Shire Council of the activities of the Audit and Risk Committee since the last Chair's report in September 2020.

INTRODUCTION

The Buloke Shire Council Audit and Risk Committee Charter provides that the Chair will prepare a biannual audit and risk report that "describes the activities of the Audit and Risk Committee and includes its findings and recommendations." The Charter also provides that this report will be tabled at the next Council meeting by the Chief Executive Officer and that the Chair may present the report to Councillors at that meeting if desired.

The Audit and Risk Committee is established in accordance with s53 of the Local Government Act 2020 which provides that the Committee is not a delegated committee but rather fulfils an advisory role. The key purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview of the Committee's primary functions and activities during the past 6 months.

AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE CHARTER

The Charter was reviewed by the Committee and subsequently approved by Council on 12 August 2020. It outlines the Scope of Authority, Composition and Responsibilities of the Committee.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Committee comprises four members – the Mayor and three external, independent members.

The three Independent members are:

- Margaret Abbey PSM – appointed by Council on 9 September 2020 to become chair of the Committee on 1 October 2020
- Dean Sleigh
- Bernard Young.

Cr Carolyn Stewart and Cr Daryl Warren have been the two Mayors who have served on the Committee during this reporting period.

The Committee has met on three occasions during this period and all members have been in attendance. These meetings were held on:

- 22 October 2020
- 2 December 2020
- 10 February 2021

The Committee has been supported by the Council's capable and professional staff who have ensured there has been the timely provision of reports and requested information thus enabling the Committee to meet its stated objectives.

AUDIT FUNCTIONS

The Committee continues to assist the Council in addressing financial, strategic and operational risks and also ensuring that the Council maintains a reliable system of internal controls. At the 2 December 2020 meeting, the Committee adopted its Work Plan for the 2021 year and this Work Plan is reviewed at each meeting.

GOVERNANCE

In order to ensure accountability, compliance and transparency, in addition to this biannual report, the minutes of each Committee meeting are presented to the next available Ordinary Council meeting.

The Committee also receives a report from the Chief Executive Officer at each Committee meeting regarding any legal, significant OH&S issues, fraud events, or any other events or issues affecting Council as an organisation at a strategic level.

EXTERNAL AUDITORS

In accordance with the Local Government Act, Council's Auditor is appointed by the Victorian Auditor General (VAGO). For the 2019/2020 financial year VAGO's contracted Agent, Accounting and Audit Solutions Bendigo (AASB) undertook the external audit.

The Committee met on 22 October 2020 and received the Victorian Auditor General's Closing Report for the 2019/20 financial year. The External Auditor confirmed that there were no material issues raised during this audit.

The Committee also received the draft financial statement and draft performance statement for the 2019/20 financial year. The Committee was very pleased to recommend to Council that it adopt and approve the 2019-20 Financial and Performance Statements in principle and certify the 2019-20 Financial and Performance Statements.

The Council staff are to be commended for the outstanding work they did to ensure that the draft financial and performance statements were ready for the external auditor given the very difficult times of 2020.

INTERNAL AUDITORS

Buloke Shire Council engages RSD Audit Bendigo as its Internal Auditors. The Committee receives a regular Internal Audit Progress report which provides not only a progress report on the Buloke internal audit program but also a very useful summary of recent reports from public bodies.

During this reporting period the Committee also considered the Strategic Internal Audit Plan for 2021-23 and the scope of two forthcoming internal audits: debtor management and business continuity and disaster recovery.

The Internal Audit Plan for the next three years is intended to cover the following areas and for report at the listed Committee meeting:

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery | May 2021 |
| 2. Debtor Management (including Rates Collection) | May 2021 |
| 3. Procurement (including credit cards, reimbursements etc) | November 2021 |
| 4. ICT General Security Controls | May 2022 |
| 5. Department Review – Saleyard | May 2022 |
| 6. Building Maintenance | November 2022 |
| 7. Human Resources (excluding Payroll Function) | May 2023 |
| 8. Records Management | May 2023 |
| 9. Emergency Management | November 2023 |

The Audit Program is regularly reviewed to ensure that it remains current to the needs of the Council.

A valuable element of the Plan is that a Strategic Risk Mapping exercise has been undertaken to link the audit plan to the current corporate risk register.

MANAGEMENT REPORTS

In addition to the External and Internal audit functions of the Committee, in order to meet its advisory functions, the Committee also receives regular management reports at each meeting which have incorporated the following:

- Progress on implementing outstanding actions arising from past internal and external audits and other regulatory reports.
- An asset management update is received at each meeting, recognising its importance of Council.
- A risk management update is also presented to each meeting.
- The regular updating of the legislative compliance register is an important tool for Council to be assured that it is meeting its legal obligations.
- Financial Performance reports are received by the Committee for the preceding quarter enabling discussion on management reports, the statutory accounts, performance statements and forward looking reports such as the budget and strategic resource plan.
- The Committee also undertakes various management duties such as preparing and reviewing its annual work plan, setting meeting dates and also undertaking its annual self-assessment.

Specific reports were also received in relation to the:

- Integrated Strategic Planning Framework
- Rates and Financial Hardship Policy
- Related Party Transaction Policy
- Council's Annual Report.

CONCLUSION

A very overused word in 2020 has been 'unprecedented'. But, that has certainly been the case for local government in Victoria. Not only did Councils have to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic, but they also had to manage their responses to the new obligations under the Local Government Act, 2020 and the results of the Council elections and consequential councillor induction.

Councillors and staff are to be commended for the outstanding manner in which the obligations arising from these responsibilities have been dealt with. The work of the Audit and Risk Committee has been greatly assisted by the diligence, professionalism and contribution of both Councillors and officers. The Committee looks forward to the continuation of a very strong working relationship with the Council and staff in 2021.

Margaret Abbey PSM

Chair

Audit and Risk Advisory Committee

Buloke Shire Council

**Buloke Shire - Audit and Risk Committee
Self Assessment Survey 2020**

| | Result | Result | Result | Result | Variance to last year |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|---|
| | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | |
| Financial Reporting | | | | | |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has monitored and reported on systems and activities to ensure reliable financial reporting and management information and reflects appropriate accounting principles. | 9.5 | 8.3 | 8 | 7.5 |  |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has monitored and reported on systems and activities to ensure measures are in place to provide early warning of any issues affecting the Council's financial wellbeing, including significant accounting and reporting issues, or complex or unusual transaction. | 7.5 | 7.8 | 8 | 7.5 |  |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has reviewed with management and external auditors, audit results including difficulties encountered. | 8.5 | 8 | 8.5 | 8.5 |  |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has monitored and reported on systems and activities to ensure appropriate application of accounting policies and considered all matters required to be communicated to the Audit and Risk Committee under the Australian Auditing Standards. | 8.5 | 8.5 | 8 | 8.5 |  |
| Internal Control | | | | | |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has understood the scope of internal and external reviews of internal controls over financial systems and reviewed audit findings and management response. | 8.3 | 8.5 | 8 | 8.5 |  |
| Risk Management | | | | | |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has gained a level of assurance that systems are in place within Council to identify high risks and are being dealt with appropriately | 8 | 7.3 | 7.5 | 8 |  |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has scheduled audit reviews in accordance with risk assessments | 9 | 7.3 | 8.5 | 8 |  |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has reviewed the accountability of Council's material business risks and controls | 8 | 7.3 | 8 | 7.5 |  |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has reviewed the effectiveness of internal control systems in place to mitigate risks | 8 | 7 | 7.5 | 7.5 |  |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has made recommendations to management to address control deficiencies | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8.5 |  |
| Business Continuity | | | | | |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has monitored and reported on systems and activities to ensure the level and effectiveness of appropriate Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery planning | 7.5 | 6.8 | 7 | 7 |  |
| Internal Audit | | | | | |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has monitored and reported on systems and activities to ensure effective and efficient internal audit functions that cover material business risks | 8 | 7.3 | 8.5 | 8 |  |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has reviewed the performance of internal audit giving consideration to Institute of Internal Auditors' International standard for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing. | 7 | 6.3 | 5 | 4 |  |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has reviewed the charter, activities of staff and organisational structure of the internal audit function. | 7.5 | 7 | 5 | 8.5 |  |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has approved the internal audit program | 8.5 | 8.7 | 8.5 | 9 |  |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has provided a structured reporting line for internal audit to insure internal audit independence | 8.5 | 8 | 8 | 9 |  |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has been given the opportunity to meet with the internal auditor to discuss any matter the internal auditor or Audit and Risk Committee believe should be discussed privately. | n/a | n/a | 7.5 | 8.5 |  |

| | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|
| External Audit | | | | | |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has provided a structured reporting line for external audit | n/a | n/a | 8 | 9 | 😊 |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has monitored and reported on systems and activities to ensure effective and efficient external audit functions | 8.5 | 8.3 | 8 | 9 | 😊 |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has reviewed the effectiveness of the annual external audit | 8 | 6.3 | 5 | 8.5 | 😊 |
| Compliance | | | | | |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has received regular updates outlining compliance with applicable laws and regulations | 8 | 8.3 | 8.5 | 7.5 | 😞 |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has monitored and reported on systems and activities to ensure the fostering and maintenance of an ethical environment | 8 | 7.3 | 8.5 | 7.5 | 😞 |
| The Audit and Risk Committee have been informed of developments and changes in the various rules, regulations and laws which relate generally to Council's business operations | 8 | 8.3 | 8.5 | 8 | 😞 |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has reviewed reports outlining measures to ensure Council's compliance to legislation, and been kept abreast of findings of any examinations (such as from LGI) and monitored management responses to these findings. | 8 | 8 | 8.5 | 8 | 😞 |
| Reporting Responsibilities | | | | | |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has provided an Audit and Risk Report to Stakeholders outlining how their duties have been discharged, raising issues of concern or any other statutory information required. | n/a | n/a | 6 | 8.5 | 😊 |
| Meetings have been conducted to allow for full participation by all members and maintain . | 9.5 | 8.8 | 9 | 9 | 😊 |
| Meetings have allowed Committee members to raise any issue they believe relevant with management and /or auditors | 9.5 | 8.8 | 8.5 | 9 | 😊 |
| Meetings have been conducted to allow for open, frank and robust discussion of all matters raised | 9.5 | 8.7 | 8.5 | 8.5 | 😊 |
| Consider findings of Performance Audit reports undertaken by VAGO to ensure Council implements recommendations. | n/a | n/a | 8 | 8 | 😊 |
| Agendas and Minutes and Other | | | | | |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has received whatever information, presentations or explanations it considers necessary to fulfil its responsibilities | 8.5 | 8.5 | 9 | 8.5 | 😞 |
| The Audit and Risk Committee is satisfied with the standard of Audit and Risk Committee Minutes | n/a | n/a | 9 | 9 | 😊 |
| Meetings have been conducted in accordance with the agenda issued | 9.5 | 9 | 9.5 | 9.5 | 😊 |
| The Committee members have attended meetings on a regular basis | 9.5 | 9 | 10 | 9.5 | 😞 |
| Please rate the effectiveness of the Audit and Risk Committee to work with management and internal auditors to develop a framework for monitoring corporate governance | 7.6 | 7.8 | 8.5 | 8 | 😞 |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has reviewed and approved the proposed Audit and Risk Committee meeting dates | 8 | 9.3 | 9.5 | 9.5 | 😊 |
| The Audit and Risk Committee has reviewed and approved the annual work plan on a regular basis. | n/a | n/a | 9.5 | 9.5 | 😊 |
| Meeting agendas and supporting papers have been well structured and well written | 9 | 8.8 | 9 | 9.5 | 😊 |
| Comments | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

| | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | Var |
|-------------------------------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Financial Reporting | 8.5 | 8.2 | 8.1 | 8.0 | - 0.1 |
| Internal Control | 8.3 | 8.5 | 8.0 | 8.5 | 0.5 |
| Risk Management | 8.2 | 7.4 | 7.9 | 7.9 | - |
| Business Continuity | 7.5 | 6.8 | 7.0 | 7.0 | - |
| Internal Audit | 7.9 | 7.5 | 7.1 | 7.8 | 0.8 |
| External Audit | 8.3 | 7.3 | 7.0 | 8.8 | 1.8 |
| Compliance | 8.0 | 8.0 | 8.5 | 7.8 | - 0.8 |
| Reporting Responsibilities | 9.5 | 8.8 | 8.0 | 8.6 | 0.6 |
| Agendas and Minutes and Other | 8.7 | 8.7 | 9.3 | 9.1 | - 0.1 |
| Overall | 8.3 | 7.9 | 7.9 | 8.2 | 0.3 |

8.2.7 BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL 2017-21 - YEAR 4 ANNUAL PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Author's Title: Chief Executive Officer

Department: Office of the CEO

File No: CM/13/06

Relevance to Council Plan 2017 - 2021

Strategic Objective: Deliver our service in a financially viable way

PURPOSE

This report is presented to give Council a progress update on the actions taken against the Year 4 Annual Plan.

SUMMARY

Council, at its Special Meeting 21 June 2017, adopted the Buloke Council Plan 2017-2021 and has subsequently developed and adopted a Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4 Annual Plan for the implementation of the strategic objectives. Quarterly progress reports will be presented to Council throughout 2020/21.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the progress made to deliver the strategic objectives noted in the adopted Year 4 Annual Plan for the Buloke Council Plan 2017-2021.

Attachments: Nil

DISCUSSION

The purpose of these Annual Plans is for Council to develop a series of actions, projects, programs and initiatives to achieve on the Council Plan 2017-2021.

This is the second report against the 2020/21 adopted Annual Plan, with quarterly reports to follow for the remainder of the financial year.

Further to the reported actions in February 2021, progress has been made on the following:

- Delivery of the COVID Community Connector and Bounce Back Buloke program with a range of community grants being delivered.
- Commencement on both the Charlton and Donald Riverfront projects, with
- Commencement on key road projects such as the Culgoa Lalbert Road and Berriwillock Birchip Road.
- Mandatory councillor induction program completed
- Adoption and implementation of the Community Engagement Policy, particularly utilised for the development of the Community Vision and Council Plan
- Surplus land identified and linked to housing opportunities, with funding applications in for development at the old Sea Lake Primary School site
- Secured funding for the completion of the road intersection upgrade at Baileys Road (Lake Tyrrell)
- Works commenced on the Sea Lake Tourism Hub (old Shire Office)
- Consultation underway for the Climate Change Strategy, for completion in June.
- Funding secured for upgrades on the Nullawil Birchip Road (\$350,000)
- Training Needs Analysis, Strategic Risk Management and OHS Review completed.
- Ongoing progress with the Birchip Streetscape project.
- Completion of upgrade at Birchip Netball Court and the Birchip Community Leisure Centre change facilities.
- Ongoing implementation of COVID Recovery initiatives.

Projects identified to be delayed and extend into the next financial year due to increased projects and funding received since adopting the plan include Wycheproof Library Upgrade and development of the Gender Equality Plan.

RELEVANT LAW

The Annual Plan forms part of the annual review of the Council Plan, required under the Local Government Act.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report responds directly to item '8.2.5 Shire Council 2017-21 – Year 4 Annual Plan'.

OPTIONS

Not applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Projects such as the Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy and Street Light Conversion are identified in the plan and will have enhanced sustainability outcomes for Council.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There was significant consultation undertaken in the development of the Council Plan 2017- 2021, which is the basis of this document. Further actions have been developed through consultation with the community over the past two years.

Many of the actions have a high level of community engagement.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable.

COLLABORATION

Many actions rely on the collaboration with other Councils and also key peak bodies, local stakeholder groups and community.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The items listed in the Annual Plan have been factored into the Council budget, which is reported on monthly.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

This report responds directly to the implementation of the Council Plan 2017-21 and the adopted Annual Plan 20/21. Some actions will result in the development of new plans and policies (e.g. Gender Equality Action Plan, Community Engagement Policy)

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

The adoption and regular reporting of an Annual Plan provides good strong transparency to the community regarding the key focus areas of Council over the 20/21 year and how Council is tracking against those actions.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

8.3 FINANCIAL REPORTS

8.3.1 DRAFT FINANCIAL PLAN

Author's Title: Director Corporate Services

Department: Corporate Services

File No: FM|15|01

Relevance to Council Plan 2017 - 2021

Strategic Objective: Deliver our service in a financially viable way

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the draft Financial Plan for 2021/22 to 2030/31.

SUMMARY

The requirement of a Financial Plan is established under the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act). The Financial Plan is a key document which enables improved monitoring of Council's financial viability, and enables better reporting and analysis of decisions and assumptions over a 10 year period. A draft Financial Plan has been developed for the purpose of community engagement.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Having prepared the Long Term Financial Plan in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* gives public notice for a period of 28 days and makes the Long Term Financial Plan available on Council's website;
2. Allows persons to make submissions on any proposal contained within the Long Term Financial Plan; and
3. Allows presentations in support of written submissions to be heard at the Council Meeting to be held on 9 June 2021.

Attachments: 1 [Buloke Shire Council Financial Plan - Draft](#) (to be loaded to the website separately)

DISCUSSION

The purpose of a Financial Plan is to express in financial terms the activities the Council proposes to undertake over the medium to longer term to achieve the Community Vision. It is similar to, but less detailed than, the Annual Budget and helps guide Council's future actions depending on the longer-term revenue and expenditure proposals.

The Financial Plan is particularly important for Council due to the high level of long-lived assets and significant asset management responsibilities relative to its income base. Council needs to generate revenue in an equitable manner over time and ensure that it has the capacity to finance peaks in asset management and other outlays.

The preparation of a Financial Plan generates improved information to guide Council's decisions about the mix and timings of outlays on operating activities and additional assets and the funding implications

of these. Without a soundly based Financial Plan, the Council with its significant asset management responsibilities is unlikely to have sufficient data to determine sustainable service levels with affordable asset strategies, appropriate revenue targets and treasury management. The key objective which underpinning the Financial Plan is long term financial stability whilst maintaining our commitment to asset renewal, specifically our large road network

RELEVANT LAW

The draft Financial Plan has been prepared in accordance with section 91 of the Act.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council adopted a Long Term Financial Plan in 2019, which included a detailed 10 year capital expenditure program. Key principles underpinning the Long Term Financial Plan, including:

- Prudent management of financial risks related to debt, assets and liabilities,
- Reasonable stability in level of rate burden,
- Financial effects of Council decisions on further generations, and
- Full, accurate and timely disclosure of financial information,

continue to underpin Council's financial direction.

OPTIONS

The Financial Plan is based on assumptions and estimates. Council manages this risk by reassessing progress and developments each year and adjusting its Financial Plan and other key strategic documents where necessary.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The Financial Plan incorporates key actions and initiatives under the Climate Change Mitigation Strategy, Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy and other key strategic documents which give effect to Council's obligation to ensure the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipality is planned for and promoted.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Financial Plan will be updated as part of the Council's 2021/22 Budget process. It is proposed that the Financial Plan be placed on public exhibition with the draft Annual Budget, Community Vision and Council Plan for community engagement and feedback. Submissions on the Financial Plan and other key strategic documents will be considered at the June 2021 Council Meeting.

The Financial Plan has been referred to the Council's Audit and Risk Committee for review and comment.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The annual review of the Financial Plan will enable Council to respond to external factors which may impact, transform or require re-invention of existing services and activities. The Financial Plan provides a basis from which Council has the ability to blend data from different sources, make decisions about effective use of resources, and evaluate its strategic planning framework.

COLLABORATION

The Act provides collaboration with other councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought. The Financial Plan will enable effective measurement and evaluation of collaboration, particularly in the area of shared services initiatives, in a consistent manner over the life of the Plan.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The Financial Plan outlines the resources required to give effect to the Council Plan and other strategic plans. The Act requires that the Financial Plan must be for a period of at least 10 years and must contain information about decisions and assumptions which underpin forecasts. The financial management

principles under the Act require Council to ensure financial sustainability in the medium to long term, while still providing sufficient resources to achieve Council's strategic objectives.

The Financial Plan is for the years 1 July 2021/22 to 30 June 30/31 and contains financial statements, including a budgeted Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows, Statement of Capital Works and Statement of Human Resources (Statements).

Statements have been prepared for the year ended 30 June 3031 in accordance with the Act. They are consistent with the financial statements prepared in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

The Financial Plan can be adjusted each year to respond to relevant regional, state and national plans and policies. It is a key tool in protecting against future cost shift by state and federal government.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

The Financial Plan has been formulated from the Community Vision and is based on key initiatives and business as usual activities established under the Council Plan. Future strategic, planning and policy initiatives will be incorporated into the Financial Plan each year.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Financial Plan sets out the quantitative information derived from Council's strategic planning framework. It provides information to the community to assist its understanding of the Council's financial performance and viability.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No Officer involved in the preparation of the draft Financial Plan has a conflict of interest.

8.3.1. Draft Financial Plan

Buloke Shire Council Financial Plan - Draft (to be loaded to
the website separately)

0 Pages

8.3.2 DRAFT REVENUE AND RATING PLAN

Author's Title: Director Corporate Services

Department: Corporate Services

File No: RV|11|01

Relevance to Council Plan 2017 - 2021

Strategic Objective: Deliver our service in a financially viable way

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is for the Council to consider the proposed Rating and Revenue Plan (Plan) for approval to exhibit and call for public submissions.

SUMMARY

The proposed Plan is used to inform a medium-term approach to generating income required to support the implementation of the Council Plan and Budget for the next four years. A period of community engagement must be undertaken prior to the adoption of the Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Having prepared a draft Revenue and Rating Plan, place the Revenue and Rating Plan on public exhibition;
2. Invites submissions from the community on the proposals contained in the draft Revenue and Rating Plan; and
3. Allows presentations in support of written submissions to be heard at the Council Meeting to be held on 9 June 2021.

Attachments: 1 [Draft Revenue and Rating Plan](#)

DISCUSSION

The development of a Plan is a new requirement under the *Local Government Act 2020* (Act). The Act states Council must prepare a Plan for a period of 4 years, to commence on 30 June the year following a general election.

The development of the Plan has been based on the current Rating Strategy and Rating Policy, adopted by the Council in 2019. The Plan sets out the details of the policies the Council has in place for each source of revenue, including the system of rates and charges to be adopted by the Council for the purpose of distributing the rates burden across the Buloke municipality on a fair and equitable basis.

Key policies in the proposed Plan include:

- Use of capital improved value system of valuation
- 4 differential rates with the level of rate applicable to each class as follows:
 - Residential rates at 100% of the general rate
 - Commercial rates at 100% of the general rate

- Industrial rates at 100% of the general rate
- Farm rates at 70% of the general rate
- Municipal charge levied on all rateable properties maintained at \$170
- Service rate and charge levied for kerbside garbage and recycling at full cost recovery
- Rates payable by quarterly instalment or as a yearly lump sum in February
- Rates and concessions offered in accordance with legislation, including the state government funded pensioner rebate scheme
- Deferment and/or waivers of rates and charges in cases of demonstrable financial hardship for specified property classes
- Benchmarking of non-statutory fees and charges, including subsidised fees and charges

Prior to adoption, the Council must take appropriate steps to engage with the community in development of the draft Plan. This report proposes exhibition of the draft Plan, with feedback and submissions to be heard at the June Council Meeting.

RELEVANT LAW

Section 93 of the Act provides the Council must prepare a 4-year Plan which describes its rating structure and pricing policy. The adoption of the Plan must occur after a period of community engagement.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council adopted its first Rating Strategy, and Rating Policy in 2019 as part of best practice methodology. This draft Plan explains how Council calculates the revenue needed to fund its activities, and how the funding burden will be apportioned between ratepayers and other users of Council facilities and services.

OPTIONS

The proposed Plan sets out in-principle decisions of the Council in relation to rating options available under the Act to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of rates burden across property owners. It also sets out principles used in decision making for other revenue sources such as fees and charges.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The Plan seeks to provide stability and predictability in the financial impact on the municipal community.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The community engagement process provides for public exhibition of the draft Plan with submissions to be heard at the June Council Meeting.

Council's community engagement will seek comment and opinion on payment arrangements, and adjustment of the parameters for the purpose of deciding when a review of differential rate levels is required in any budget year.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable.

COLLABORATION

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The Revenue and Rating Plan outlines the assumptions, policy, and decisions of Council in relation to generating the required income to effectively support implementation of the Council Plan and budget for a 4-year period.

The plan will include transparent consideration of the policy objectives and social, economic, and environmental benefit delivered through subsidies, waivers, and discounts. It will identify financial and revenue related risks and ensure these are mitigated and effectively managed.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

In 2019 the Victorian State Government conducted a Local Government Rating System Review. The Local Government Rating System Review Panel presented their final report and list of recommendations to the Victorian Government in March 2020. The Victorian Government subsequently published a response to the recommendations of the Panel's report. However, at the time of publication the recommended changes have not yet been implemented, and timelines to make these changes have not been announced.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Financial policies and strategic plans, including the draft Plan, Financial Plan and Annual Budget, form part of the integrated strategic planning framework. These and other strategies and policies will be considered by the Council in the period leading to 30 June 2021.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council's Revenue and Rating Plan enables the community to understand how, and on what basis, rates and charges are levied.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

I, Hannah Yu, have no conflicts of interest to declare in relation to this report.



REVENUE AND RATING PLAN 2021-2025

**BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL
REVENUE AND RATING PLAN
2021-2025**

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**BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL
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1 PURPOSE

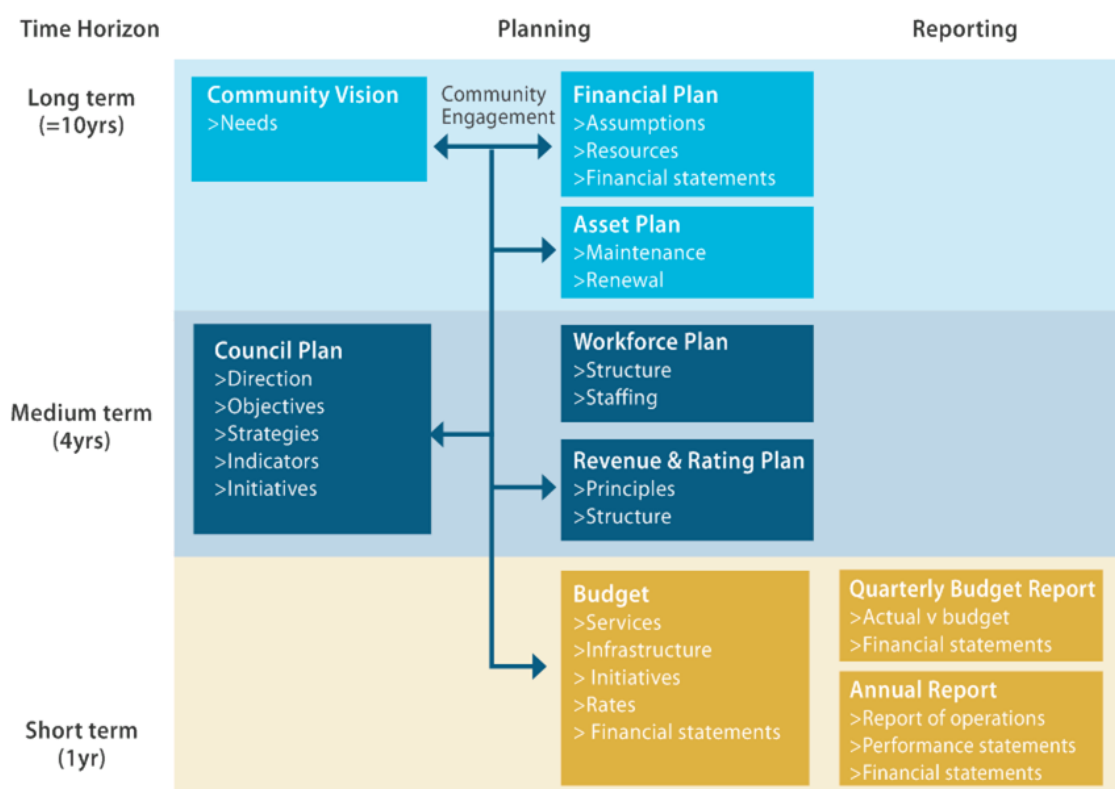
The *Local Government Act 2020* requires each council to prepare a Revenue and Rating Plan to cover a minimum period of four years following each Council election. The Revenue and Rating Plan establishes the revenue raising framework within which the Council proposes to work.

The purpose of the Revenue and Rating Plan is to determine the most appropriate and affordable revenue and rating approach for the Buloke Shire Council (Council) which in conjunction with other income sources will adequately finance the objectives in the Council Plan.

The Revenue and Rating Plan is part of the Council's Integrated Strategic Planning Framework as set out in the following diagram.

The strategies outlined in this plan align with the objectives contained in the Council Plan and feed into the Council's Budget and Financial Plan, as well as other strategic planning documents.

This plan explains how Council calculates the revenue needed to fund its activities, and how the funding burden will be apportioned between ratepayers and other users of Council facilities and services. In particular, this plan sets out decisions that Council has made in relation to rating options available to it under the *Local Government Act 2020* to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of rates across property owners. It also sets out principles that are used in decision making for other revenue sources such as fees and charges. The plan does not set revenue targets.

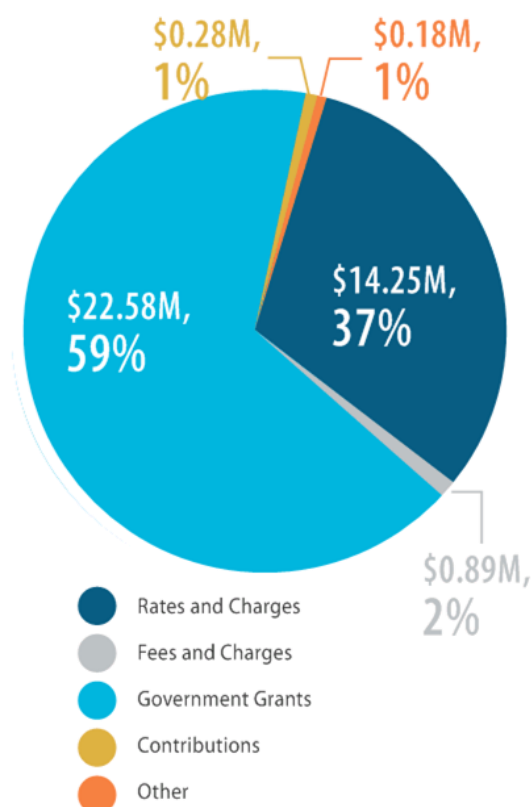


BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL
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2 INTRODUCTION

Council provides a number of services and facilities to its local community, and in doing so, must collect revenue to cover the cost of providing these services and facilities.

2.1 REVENUE SOURCES



The above graph shows a breakup of the revenue the Council uses to fund services and facilities for the Buloke Shire community. The total revenue for the 2021-22 year is budgeted to be \$38 million with the major components being rates and charges (37%), government grants (59%) and fees and charges (2%).

2.2 REVENUE REQUIREMENTS

The Revenue and Rating Plan is a medium-term plan for how the Council will generate income to deliver on the Council Plan, program and services and capital works commitments over the next four years. In determining its revenue requirements, the Council has identified what each source of revenue is, how much will be raised in each class, and the policy rationale/assumptions for each. In doing this, the Council has given consideration to:

- How revenue will be generated through rates on properties (including differential rates [if any] on different property classes)
- Fixed service charges that might be applied on services such as waste or recycling
- Fees and charges for services and programs including cost recovery policies, user charges and means testing
- Recurrent and non-recurrent operational and capital grants from other levels of government
- Developer contributions and other revenue
- Revenue generated from the use or allocation of Council assets (including the application of discounts and waivers)
- Entrepreneurial, business, or collaborative activities established to deliver programs or services and generate income or reduce costs.

2.3 REVENUE BALANCE

The Council provides public good and services, private goods and services and a mix of both to the community. In determining if services should be funded through rates and charges or other revenue sources such as user charges, the Council considers whether services are either entirely or partially public goods. That is, where a service provides a broad benefit to the whole community then it will be mostly funded from rates. Where individuals or groups of ratepayers receive a particular benefit then the service will be mostly funded from user charges.

BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL
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3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Revenue and Rating Plan outlines the Council's decision-making process on how revenues are calculated and collected. The following public consultation process will be followed to ensure due consideration and feedback is received from relevant stakeholders.

Revenue and Rating Plan community engagement process:

- Draft Revenue and Rating Plan prepared by officers and a number of briefings provided to Council
- Draft Revenue and Rating Plan placed on public exhibition at the 12 May 2021 Council meeting for a period of 28 days and calling for public submissions
- Community engagement through local news outlets and social media
- Hearing of public submissions to be held at a Council Meeting on 9 June 2021
- Draft Revenue and Rating Plan (with any revisions) to be presented to the 16 June 2021 Council Meeting for adoption.

The following changes are proposed to the structure and level of rates and charges for the 2021-22 year compared to the 2020-21 year:

- Decrease the farm land differential rate from 80% to 70% of the general rate.

Further details including the impact of these changes on the average rate for each category and/or type of rate is provided in Appendix A.

No changes are proposed to any other revenue policies in this Revenue and Rating Plan.

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4 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The legislative framework as it applies to the raising of revenue including the levying of rates and charges by the Council includes the *Local Government Act 2020* (including subordinate legislation, guidelines etc) and the *Valuation of Land Act 1960*. The rates and charges provisions are as per the previous *Local Government Act 1989* pending the outcome of the Local Government Rating System Review.

4.1 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2020

Section 8 Role of a Council

The role of a Council is to provide good governance in its municipal district for the benefit and wellbeing of the municipal community.

Section 9 Overarching Governance Principles

A Council must in the performance of its role give effect to the overarching governance principles. Relevant overarching governance principles include:

- Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations
- The economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district is to be promoted
- The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making
- The ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured.

In giving effect to the overarching governance principles, a Council must take into account the financial management principles.

Section 94 The Budget

Council must adopt a budget by 30 June each year (or at another time fixed by the Minister) to include:

- The total amount that the Council intends to raise by rates and charges
- A statement as to whether the rates will be raised by the application of a uniform rate or a differential rate
- A description of any fixed component of the rates, if applicable
- If the Council proposes to declare a uniform rate, the matters specified in section 160 of the *Local Government Act 1989*

- If the Council proposes to declare a differential rate for any land, the matters specified in section 161(2) of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

Council must ensure that, if applicable, the budget also contains a statement:

- That the Council intends to apply for a special order to increase the Council's average rate cap for the financial year or any other financial year; or
- That the Council has made an application to the Essential Services Commission for a special order and is waiting for the outcome of the application; or
- That a special order has been made in respect of the Council and specifying the average rate cap that applies for the financial year or any other financial year.

4.2 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1989

Section 155 Charges that Maybe Declared

A council may declare the following rates and charges on rateable land:

- General rates
- Municipal charges
- Service rates and charges
- Special rates and charges.

Section 157 System of Valuing Land

A council may use the site value, net annual value or capital improved value system of valuation. For the purposes of calculating the site value, net annual value or capital improved value of rateable land, a council must use the current valuations made in respect of the land under the *Valuation of Land Act 1960*.

4.3 QUANTUM OF RATES AND CHARGES

This plan outlines the principles and strategic framework that Council will use in calculating and distributing the rating burden to property owners, however, the quantum of rate and charges revenue will be determined in the Annual Budget.

**BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL
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4.4 LOCAL GOVERNMENT RATING SYSTEM REVIEW

In 2019 the Victorian State Government conducted a Local Government Rating System Review. The Local Government Rating System Review Panel presented their final report and list of recommendations to the Victorian Government in March 2020. The Victorian Government subsequently published a response to the recommendations of the Panel's report. However, at the time of publication the recommended changes have not yet been implemented, and timelines to make these changes have not been announced.

4.5 TAXATION PRINCIPLES

The Victorian Government's Local Government Better Practice Guide: Revenue and Rating Strategy 2014 states that when developing a rating plan, in particular with reference to differential rates, the Council should give consideration to the following key good practice taxation principles:

- **Wealth Tax:** The "wealth tax" principle implies that the rates paid are dependent upon the value of a ratepayer's real property and have no correlation to the individual ratepayer's consumption of services or the perceived benefits derived by individual ratepayers from the expenditures funded from rates
- **Equity:** Horizontal equity – ratepayers in similar situations should pay similar amounts of rates (ensured mainly by accurate property valuations, undertaken in a consistent manner, their classification into homogenous property classes and the right of appeal against valuation). Vertical Equity – those who are better off should pay more rates than those worse off (the rationale applies for the use of progressive and proportional income taxation. It implies a "relativity" dimension to the fairness of the tax burden)
- **Efficiency:** Economic efficiency is measured by the extent to which production and consumption decisions by people are affected by rates
- **Simplicity:** How easily a rates system can be understood by ratepayers and the practicality and ease of administration
- **Benefit:** The extent to which there is a nexus between consumption/benefit and the rate burden

- **Capacity to pay:** The capacity of ratepayers or groups of ratepayers to pay rates
- **Diversity:** The capacity of ratepayers within a group to pay rates.

4.6 RATE CAPPING

The Fair Go Rates System (FGRS) sets out the maximum amount councils may increase rates in a year. For the 2020-21 year the FGRS cap was set at 2.00%. For the 2021-22 year it has been set at 1.50%. The cap applies to both general rates and municipal charges and is calculated on the basis of council's average rates and charges.

From the 2019 year, general revaluations of all properties have been undertaken on an annual basis. As a result, the actual rate increase for an individual rateable property may differ from the rate cap percentage due to changes in its valuation. Where the change in an individual property valuation is higher than the average for all rateable properties, the rate increase for that property may be greater than the cap. Where the change in the property valuation is lower than the average for all properties, the rate increase may be lower than the cap.

BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL
REVENUE AND RATING PLAN
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5 RATES AND CHARGES

Rates and charges are property taxes that allow Council to raise revenue to fund essential public services to cater to their municipal population. Importantly, it is a taxation system that includes flexibility for councils to use different tools in its rating structure to accommodate issues of equity and to ensure fairness in rating for all ratepayers.

5.1 VALUATION METHOD

Legislation

Under Section 157 of the *Local Government Act 1989* a council may use the site value, net annual value or capital improved value system of valuation. For the purposes of calculating the site value, net annual value or capital improved value of rateable land, a council must use the current valuations made in respect of the land under the *Valuation of Land Act 1960*.

Valuations occurring up to January 2018 were undertaken on a two-year basis, with supplementary valuations able to be done where there are sales in subdivisions and consolidations, as well as following the construction and demolition of buildings. Changes were made to the *Valuation of Land Act 1960* that from 2019 require property valuations to be undertaken by the Valuer General's Office on an annual basis.

Policy

The Council uses the capital improved value system of valuation. This means the sum that the land and improvements, might be expected to realise at the time of valuation if offered for sale on any reasonable terms and conditions which a genuine seller might in ordinary circumstances be expected to require.

5.2 RATES AND CHARGES

Legislation

Under Section 155 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, a council may declare the following rates and charges on rateable land:

- General rates
- Municipal charges
- Service rates and charges
- Special rates and charges.

Policy

The Council's current policy for rates and charges is set out in the following sections.

5.3 DIFFERENTIAL RATES

Legislation

Under Section 158 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, a Council when declaring rates and charges must declare whether the general rates will be raised by the application of a uniform rate or differential rates.

Under Section 161 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, if a Council declares a differential rate for any land, the Council must:

- Specify the objectives of the differential rate including a definition of the types or classes of land which are subject to the rate and a statement of the reasons for the use and level of that rate
- Specify the characteristics of the land which are the criteria for declaring the differential rate.

A Council must have regard to any Ministerial guidelines before declaring a differential rate for any land. The Minister issued Guidelines in April 2013. These guidelines attempt to spell out clearly what types and classes of land may be considered for differentials and also those that are not appropriate for differentials or need to be "carefully considered".

The highest differential rate must be no more than four times the lowest differential rate.

Policy and Charges

Council has four differential rates. Details of the types/ classes of land and the level of rate applicable to each differential is as follows:

- Residential: 100 per cent of the general rate
- Commercial: 100 per cent of the general rate
- Industrial: 100 per cent of the general rate
- Farm: 70 per cent of the general rate

The definition of each differential rate is set out in Appendix B.

Council has established the following parameters for the purposes of deciding when a review of differential rate levels is required in any budget year:

- The rate burden for any differential rate category changes by +/- 5% or greater following a general revaluation of properties
- Any change in the legislative framework that materially impacts the equitable imposition of rates and charges.

BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL
REVENUE AND RATING PLAN
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5.4 MUNICIPAL CHARGE

Legislation

Under Section 158 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, a council may declare a municipal charge to cover some of the administrative costs of the council. A council's total revenue from a municipal charge in a financial year must not exceed 20 per cent of the sum total of the council's total revenue from a municipal charge and total revenue from general rates.

A person may apply to a council for an exemption from the payment of a municipal charge on rateable land if the rateable land is farm land, the rateable land forms part of a single farm enterprise and an exemption is not claimed in respect of at least one other rateable property which forms part of the single farm enterprise. In the case of a single farm enterprise which is occupied by more than one person, an exemption cannot be claimed in respect of more than one principal place of residence.

Policy and Charges

The Council levies a municipal charge for the purpose of covering some of the administrative costs of Council. In applying the municipal charge, Council ensures that each rateable property in the Shire makes a contribution.

5.5 SERVICE RATES AND CHARGES

Legislation

Under Section 162 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, a Council may declare a service rate or charge for any of the following services:

- Provision of a water supply
- Collection and disposal of refuse
- Provision of sewage services
- Any other prescribed service.

Policy and Charges

The Council has the following service rates and charges:

- Kerbside garbage and recycling collection

The Council's policy in regard to setting service rates and charges is full cost recovery.

5.6 SPECIAL RATES AND CHARGES

Legislation

Under Section 163 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, a Council may declare a special rate or charge for the purposes of defraying any expenses or repaying (with interest) any advance made to or debt incurred or loan raised by the Council, in relation to the performance of a function or the exercise of a power of the Council, if it will be of special benefit to the persons required to pay the special rate or special charge.

Policy

Special rates and charges schemes are raised in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

5.7 PAYMENT OF RATES AND CHARGES

Legislation

Under Section 167 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, a Council must allow rates and charges to be paid in four instalments. A Council may also allow rates and charges to be paid in a lump sum. Under Section 168 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, a council may also provide incentives for prompt payment.

Policy

Rates are payable by quarterly instalments or by lump sum in February.

BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL
REVENUE AND RATING PLAN
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5.8 REBATES AND CONCESSIONS

Legislation

Under Section 169 of the Local Government Act 1989, a Council may grant a rebate or concession in relation to any rate or charge to:

- Assist the proper development of the municipal district; or
- Preserve buildings or places in the municipal district which are of historical or environmental interest; or
- Restore or maintain buildings or places of historical, environmental, architectural or scientific importance in the municipal district; or
- Assist the proper development of part of the municipal district.

A Council resolution granting a rebate or concession must specify the benefit to the community as a whole resulting from the rebate or concession.

Policy

Ratepayers who hold eligible pensioner concession cards may be entitled to receive a State Government-funded concession on their rates and charges for their principal place of residence. The pensioner concession is set at 50 per cent of the rates and charges levied up to a maximum amount and is fully funded by the State Government. Eligible pensioners are also entitled to receive a concession on the Fire Services Property Levy.

A rate rebate is provided to property owners who wish to protect remnant native vegetation. The amount of the rebate is 100 per cent of the general rate and is administered in accordance with the 'Rate Rebate Scheme for Protection of Indigenous Vegetation Guidelines'.

5.9 DEFERMENTS AND WAIVERS

Legislation

Under Section 170 of the Local Government Act 1989, a council may defer in whole or in part any rate or charge if the payment would cause hardship to the person. Under Section 171 of the Local Government Act 1989, a council may waive the whole or part of any rate or charge or interest in relation to:

- An eligible recipient
- Any other class of persons determined by the Council for the purpose of waiving rates or charges on the grounds of financial hardship.

Policy

The Council has a Rates and Charges Financial Hardship Policy for the handling of hardship cases which allows deferment of all or part of rates for varying times depending on circumstances. Interest may also be waived in hardship cases.

BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL
REVENUE AND RATING PLAN
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6 FEES AND CHARGES

Fees and charges consist of statutory fees and fines and user fees. Statutory fees and fines relate mainly to those levied in accordance with legislation and include animal registrations, *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* registrations and parking fines. User fees relate to the recovery of service delivery costs through the charging of fees to users of the Council's services. These include use of leisure, entertainment and other community facilities, and the provision of human services such as childcare and home and community care services.

6.1 PRICING POLICY

Council's Pricing Policy (to be adopted in the 2021-22 year) provides guidance for its approach in setting appropriate levels of fees and charges. This policy applies to all fees and charges that are listed in the Fees and Charges Schedule which is published in the Annual Budget. The policy seeks to ensure that the following key service performance principles under Section 106 of the Act are met:

- Services should be provided in an equitable manner and be responsive to the diverse needs of the municipal community
- Services should be accessible to the members of the municipal community for whom the services are intended
- Quality and costs standards for services set by the Council should provide good value to the municipal community.

The Council must also comply with the government's Competitive Neutrality Policy for significant business activities it provides and adjust service prices to neutralise any competitive advantages when competing with the private sector.

6.2 STATUTORY FEES AND FINES

Policy

Statutory fees and fines are those which the Council collects under the direction of legislation or other government directives. The rates used for statutory fees and fines are advised by the state government department responsible for the corresponding services or legislation, and the Council has limited discretion in applying these fees.

Fees and Fines

A summary of statutory fees and fines by major service area is as follows:

- Election fines
- Town planning
- Revenue collection
- Compliance
- Buildings

6.3 USER FEES

Policy

For user fees not regulated by statute, the Council determines the extent of cost recovery for particular services consistent with the level of both individual and collective benefit that the services provide and in line with the community's expectations. The three types of non-statutory pricing are as follows:

- Market price: Price based on the benchmarked competitive prices of alternate suppliers. In general this represents full cost recovery plus an allowance for profit
- Full cost recovery price: Price based on recovering all direct and indirect costs incurred by Council. This pricing is used in particular where a service provided by Council benefits individual customers specifically, rather than the community as a whole
- Subsidised price: Price based on less than full cost of the service and ranges from full subsidies (i.e. The Council provides the service free of charge) to partial subsidies, where the Council provides the service to the user with a discount.

The schedule of Fees and Charges in the Budget includes around 300 individual fees and charges which are reviewed annually as part of the Budget process. The Council currently benchmarks user fees as part of its annual Budgeting process and sets subsidised fees to community groups, organisations and committees in accordance with the Community Support Policy. The Council intends to apply the new Pricing Policy to its non-statutory fees and charges during the 2021-22 year.

User Fees

A summary of user fees by major service area is as follows:

- Compliance
- Home help
- Public health and wellbeing
- Building
- Swimming pools
- Halls
- Landfill and transfer stations
- Saleyards truck wash

BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL
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7 OTHER REVENUE SOURCES

Other revenue sources that Council uses to fund services and facilities include government grants, contributions and other revenue.

7.1 GOVERNMENT GRANTS

Policy

Grant revenue represents income usually received from other levels of government. Some grants are singular and attached to the delivery of specific projects, whilst others can be of a recurrent nature and may or may not be linked to the delivery of projects. The Council pro-actively advocates to other levels of government for grant funding support to deliver important infrastructure and service outcomes for the community. The Council may use its own funds to leverage higher grant funding and maximise external funding opportunities.

When preparing its financial plan, the Council considers its project proposal pipeline, advocacy priorities, upcoming grant program opportunities, and co-funding options to determine what grants to apply for. The Council will only apply for and accept external funding if it is consistent with the Community Vision and does not lead to the distortion of Council Plan priorities. Grant assumptions are then clearly detailed in the Council's budget document. No project that is reliant on grant funding will proceed until a signed funding agreement is in place.

Government Grants

A summary of government grants by type is as follows.

Operating

- Financial assistance grant
- Aged care
- School crossings
- Libraries
- Maternal and child health
- Playgroups
- Flood rehabilitation
- Environmental management

Capital

- Roads to recovery
- Buildings
- Road infrastructure

7.2 CONTRIBUTIONS

Policy

Contributions represent funds received by the Council, usually from non-government sources, and are usually linked to projects. Contributions can be made to the Council in the form of either cash payments or physical assets. Contributions are always linked to a planning or funding agreement and the Council will not undertake any work on a contribution-funded project until a signed agreement outlining the contribution details is in place. Contributions linked to developments can be received well before any expenditure occurs. In this situation, the funds are identified and held separately in a reserve for the specific works identified in the agreements.

Contributions

A summary of contributions by type is as follows.

- Capital works
- Community service
- Revenue collection

7.3 OTHER REVENUE

Policy

The Council earns other revenue from sources such as property rental and interest on investments. The amount of revenue earned from property rental is based on rental agreements that set the rental amount at market rates. The Council receives interest on funds managed as part of its investment portfolio, where funds are held in advance of expenditure, or for special purposes. The investment portfolio is managed in accordance with the Council's investment policy (to be adopted in the 2021-22 year), which seeks to earn the best return on funds, whilst minimising risk.

Other Revenue

A summary of other revenue by type is as follows:

- Rental
- Interest on investments
- Reimbursements
- Fuel tax credits

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REVENUE AND RATING PLAN
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APPENDIX A: IMPACT OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO RATES AND CHARGES

The following changes are proposed to the level of rates and charges for the 2021-22 year compared to the 2020-21 year:

- Decrease the farm land differential rate from 80% to 70% of the general rate.

The following table shows the change in the 2021-22 average general rate for each category and/or type of land between the level of differential rates levied in the 2020-21 year "Current" and those proposed to be levied in the 2021-22 year "Proposed". The average general rates for the 2021-22 year is based on the level of valuation as at 1 January 2021.

| Type/Class of Land | Average General Rate 2020-21 | Current Average General Rate 2021-22 | Proposed Average General Rate 2021-22 | Variance Proposed vs 2020-21 | Variance Proposed vs 2020-21 |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ | % |
| Residential | 872 | 806 | 890 | 18 | 2.1 |
| Commercial/Industrial | 1,380 | 1,201 | 1,326 | 54 | 3.9 |
| Farm | 2,920 | 3,058 | 2,954 | 34 | 1.2 |

**BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL
REVENUE AND RATING PLAN
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APPENDIX B: DIFFERENTIAL RATE DEFINITIONS

| Residential Land | |
|------------------------|--|
| Definition | <i>Residential Land is all rateable land, which is occupied for the principal purpose of physically accommodating persons; or unoccupied but zoned residential under the Buloke Shire Planning Scheme and which is not commercial or industrial land</i> |
| Objectives | <p>The objective of this differential rate is to ensure that all rateable land makes an equitable financial contribution to the cost of carrying out the functions of the Buloke Shire Council, including (but not limited to) the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction and maintenance of infrastructure assets • Development and provision of health and community services • Provision of general support services |
| Characteristics | <p>The characteristics of planning scheme zoning are applicable to the determination of vacant land which will be subject to the rate applicable to residential land.</p> <p>The vacant land affected by this rate is that which is zoned residential under the Buloke Planning Scheme.</p> <p>The classification of land which is improved will be determined by the occupation of that land and have reference to the planning scheme zoning.</p> |
| Types and classes | The types and classes of rateable land within this rate are those having the relevant characteristics described above. |
| Use of rate | <p>The money raised by this rate will be applied to the items of expenditure described in the Budget by Council.</p> <p>The level of the rate for land in this category is considered to provide for an appropriate contribution to Council's budgeted expenditure, having regard to the characteristics of the land.</p> |
| Level of rate | 100 per cent of the general rate. |
| Use of land | Is any use permitted under the Buloke Shire Planning Scheme. |
| Geographic location | This rate is applicable to land within the municipal district. |
| Planning scheme zoning | The zoning applicable to each rateable land within this category, as determined by consulting maps referred to in the relevant Planning Scheme. |
| Types of buildings | The types of buildings on the land within this rate are all buildings already constructed on the land or which will be constructed prior to the expiry of the 2021/22 year. |

BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL
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APPENDIX B: DIFFERENTIAL RATE DEFINITIONS

| Commercial Land | |
|------------------------|--|
| Definition | <i>Commercial land is all rateable land, which is occupied for the principal purpose of carrying out the manufacture or production of, or trade in, goods or services, or unoccupied but zoned commercial under the Buloke Shire Planning Scheme</i> |
| Objectives | <p>The objective of this differential rate is to ensure that all rateable land makes an equitable financial contribution to the cost of carrying out the functions of the Buloke Shire Council, including (but not limited to) the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction and maintenance of infrastructure assets • Development and provision of health and community services • Provision of general support services |
| Characteristics | <p>The characteristics of planning scheme zoning are applicable to the determination of vacant land which will be subject to the rate applicable to commercial land.</p> <p>The vacant land affected by this rate is that which is zoned commercial under the Buloke Shire Planning Scheme.</p> <p>The classification of land which is improved will be determined by the occupation of that land and have reference to the planning scheme zoning.</p> |
| Types and classes | The types and classes of rateable land within this rate are those having the relevant characteristics described above. |
| Use of rate | <p>The money raised by this rate will be applied to the items of expenditure described in the Budget by Council.</p> <p>The level of the rate for land in this category is considered to provide for an appropriate contribution to Council's budgeted expenditure, having regard to the characteristics of the land.</p> |
| Level of rate | 100 per cent of the general rate. |
| Use of land | Is any use permitted under the Buloke Shire Scheme. |
| Geographic location | This rate is applicable to land within the municipal district. |
| Planning scheme zoning | The zoning applicable to each rateable land within this category, as determined by consulting maps referred to in the relevant Planning Scheme. |
| Types of buildings | The types of buildings on the land within this rate are all buildings already constructed on the land or which will be constructed prior to the expiry of the 2021/22 year. |

**BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL
REVENUE AND RATING PLAN
2021-2025**

APPENDIX B: DIFFERENTIAL RATE DEFINITIONS

| Industrial Land | |
|------------------------|--|
| Definition | <i>Industrial land is all rateable land, which is occupied for the principal purpose of carrying out the manufacture or production of, or trade in, goods or services, or unoccupied but zoned industrial under the Buloke Shire Planning Scheme</i> |
| Objectives | <p>The objective of this differential rate is to ensure that all rateable land makes an equitable financial contribution to the cost of carrying out the functions of the Buloke Shire Council, including (but not limited to) the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction and maintenance of infrastructure assets • Development and provision of health and community services • Provision of general support services |
| Characteristics | <p>The characteristics of planning scheme zoning are applicable to the determination of vacant land which will be subject to the rate applicable to industrial land.</p> <p>The vacant land affected by this rate is that which is zoned industrial under the Buloke Shire Planning Scheme.</p> <p>The classification of land which is improved will be determined by the occupation of that land and have reference to the planning scheme zoning.</p> |
| Types and classes | The types and classes of rateable land within this rate are those having the relevant characteristics described above. |
| Use of rate | <p>The money raised by this rate will be applied to the items of expenditure described in the Budget by Council.</p> <p>The level of the rate for land in this category is considered to provide for an appropriate contribution to Council's budgeted expenditure, having regard to the characteristics of the land.</p> |
| Level of rate | 100 per cent of the general rate. |
| Use of land | Is any use permitted under the Buloke Shire Scheme. |
| Geographic location | This rate is applicable to land within the municipal district. |
| Planning scheme zoning | The zoning applicable to each rateable land within this category, as determined by consulting maps referred to in the relevant Planning Scheme. |
| Types of buildings | The types of buildings on the land within this rate are all buildings already constructed on the land or which will be constructed prior to the expiry of the 2021/22 year. |

BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL
REVENUE AND RATING PLAN
2021-2025

APPENDIX B: DIFFERENTIAL RATE DEFINITIONS

| Farm Land | |
|------------------------|--|
| Definition | <i>Farm Land is all rateable land, which is not less than 2 hectares in area; used primarily for grazing (including agistment), dairying, pig farming, poultry farming, fish farming, tree farming, bee keeping, viticulture, horticulture, fruit growing or growing of crops of any kind or any combination of those activities; used by a business that has significant and substantial commercial purpose or character, seeks to make a profit on a continuous or repetitive basis and is either making a profit or has reasonable prospect of making a profit from its activities</i> |
| Objectives | <p>The objective of this differential rate is to ensure that all rateable land makes an equitable financial contribution to the cost of carrying out the functions of the Buloke Shire Council, including (but not limited to) the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction and maintenance of infrastructure assets • Development and provision of health and community services • Provision of general support services <p>The rate also recognises the changes to property values relative to other categories, the high value of land as an input to farm operations, the contribution that the farm sector makes to the economic activity of the Shire and in recognition of a lower level of service usage associated with their rural isolation.</p> |
| Characteristics | <p>The characteristics of planning scheme zoning are applicable to the determination of vacant land which will be subject to the rate applicable to farm land.</p> <p>The vacant land affected by this rate is that which is zoned farm land under the Buloke Shire Planning Scheme.</p> <p>The classification of land which is improved will be determined by the occupation of that land and have reference to the planning scheme zoning.</p> |
| Types and classes | The types and classes of rateable land within this rate are those having the relevant characteristics described above. |
| Use of rate | <p>The money raised by this rate will be applied to the items of expenditure described in the Budget by Council.</p> <p>The level of the rate for land in this category is considered to provide for an appropriate contribution to Council's budgeted expenditure, having regard to the characteristics of the land.</p> |
| Level of rate | 70 per cent of the general rate. |
| Use of land | Is any use permitted under the Buloke Shire Planning Scheme. |
| Geographic location | This rate is applicable to land within the municipal district. |
| Planning scheme zoning | The zoning applicable to each rateable land within this category, as determined by consulting maps referred to in the relevant Planning Scheme. |
| Types of buildings | The types of buildings on the land within this rate are all buildings already constructed on the land or which will be constructed prior to the expiry of the 2021/22 year. |



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Buloke Shire Council

8.3.3 DRAFT 2021/22 ANNUAL BUDGET

Author's Title: Director Corporate Services

Department: Corporate Services

File No: FM|05|02

Relevance to Council Plan 2017 - 2021

Strategic Objective: Deliver our service in a financially viable way

PURPOSE

This report proposes the adoption of the Draft 2020/2021 Annual Budget (Draft Budget) and commencement of public submissions in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* (Act).

SUMMARY

Section 94 of the Act requires the Council to prepare an Annual Budget. The Draft Budget outlines the revenue raising activities and financial resourcing of Council's key initiatives for the 2021/22 financial year. Prior to budget adoption a period of community engagement must be undertaken.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Having prepared the Draft 2021/22 Annual Budget and schedule of fees in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, gives notice of its endorsement
2. Invites submissions in relation any proposal contained with the Draft 2021/22 Draft Annual Budget until 12 noon 9 June.
3. Allows presentations in support of submissions to be heard at the Council Meeting to be held on 9 June 2021.

Attachments: 1 [Download Draft Buloke Shire Council 2021-2022 Budget](#) - to be loaded to the website separately

DISCUSSION

The Act requires Council to prepare and adopt an Annual Budget. The Annual Budget is required to contain certain information about the rates and charges the Council intends to levy, as well as a range of other information required by Regulations which support the Act.

The Draft Budget reflects Council's focus to delivering on key initiatives and maintaining current services across its programs, services, facilities and infrastructure. The Draft Budget has been developed alongside the draft Financial Plan and builds on Council's commitment to long term financial sustainability and continued support for the community with a range of initiatives.

Council proposes to resource key priorities under its draft Council Plan as follows:

- \$14,435M – Our Built and Natural Environment: review of 10 year capital works program, review waste and recycling management and procurement for new kerbside collection contract, and support to Lake Committees for contribution of water payments for lake top-ups;
- \$0.746M – Our Community Wellbeing: Implementation of the Community Vision and Council Plan, redevelopment of town plans, support for Bounce Buloke Back project, review and implementation of Volunteer Action Plan and COVID Recovery Plan;
- \$0.773M – Our Economy: working with key stakeholders to review and promote housing opportunities, implementation of key projects from Silo Art Activation fund, and development of a new Economic Development and Tourism Strategy; and
- \$0.548M – Our Council and Community Leadership: commence implementation of Business Transformation Strategy, continued implementation of the Act, develop Gender Equity Action Plan and continued active review of Financial Plan to improve long term financial management of the organisation.

Expenditure on infrastructure projects will total \$19.529M across roads (\$7.437M), drainage (\$40K), footpaths and cycleways (\$163K), parks and streetscapes (\$3.361M) buildings and building improvements (\$4.879M), plant and equipment (\$1.256M). This includes carried forward projects from the current financial year separately identified in the budget.

The Draft Budget highlights a general rating increase of 1.5% in line with the Fair Go Rates System and a further shift in the farming differential to 70% down from 80%.

The Act requires the Council to undertake community engagement action prior to the final adoption of the 2021/22 Annual Budget. It is proposed the community engagement commences following Council's endorsement of the Draft Budget, and concludes 12 noon 9 June 2021, with invitation extended to any persons to present their submissions at the Council Meeting to be held on 9 June 2021.

RELEVANT LAW

The Draft Budget has been prepared in accordance with section 94 of the Act.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Council will be commencing community engagement for plans and strategies under the integrated strategic framework during the engagement period for the Draft Budget.

OPTIONS

Council Officers modelled the financial implications of reducing general rates below the gazetted rate cap (1.5%). Modelling identifies the cumulative impact of reducing general rates to 0% is lost revenue of \$2,157,000 over a 10 year period. A reduction of general rate revenue would impact Council's ability to sustain current service level standards and its ability to generate income through matched government grants.

Council Officers modelled differential rate structure against Council's Revenue Policy and Revenue Strategy which commits Council to match (as far as reasonably practicable) a tolerance of +/- 1% variance across each property class. Modelling undertaken has resulted in a recommended differential rate for farms to be set at 70%.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

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

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Draft Budget engagement process will comprise media information across print, social and radio media. A copy of the Draft Budget will be made available to community forums, and be placed on the

Council's website. The process of community engagement is consistent with the Council's community engagement policy.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

There are no direct innovation and continuous improvement activities associated with this report, however the Draft Budget provides for specific actions in relation to review of waste and resource management and the development of a new Economic Development and Tourism Strategy.

COLLABORATION

The Draft Budget initiatives include further investigation of shared services opportunities with other councils and governance bodies.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The Draft Budget is for the year 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022, and contains financial statements including a budgeted Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash flows, Statement of Capital Works and Statement of Human Resources.

These statements have been prepared for the year ended 30 June 2022 in accord with the Act and Regulations. They are consistent with the annual financial statements prepared in accord with the Australian Accounting Standards.

The Draft Budget also includes information about the rates and charges to be levied, the capital works program to be undertaken, the human resources required, and other information Council requires in order to make an informed decision about the adoption of the Budget.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Key initiatives include supporting deliver of VicHealth Local Government Partnering priorities, development of a Gender Equity Action Plan, and continued implementation of the Act.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

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

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council's engagement approach provides for receipt and consideration of submissions to the Draft Budget at a Council Meeting which is open to the public.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

I, Hannah Yu, have no conflicts of interest to declare in relation to this report.

8.3.3. Draft 2021/22 Annual Budget

Draft Buloke Shire Council 2021-2022 Budget - to be loaded
to the website separately

0 Pages

8.3.4 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

Author's Title: Director Corporate Services

Department: Corporate Services

File No: FM|19|01

Relevance to Council Plan 2017 - 2021

Strategic Objective: Deliver our service in a financially viable way

PURPOSE

To present to the Council the financial statements for the period ending 31 March 2021.

SUMMARY

The anticipated year-end surplus has been forecast down further confirmation of capital and operating grants have been made.

The forecasted year-end surplus is \$8.143m which is less \$2.028m less than the approved budget adopted at the start of the financial year.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Financial Performance Report for the month ending 31 March 2021.

- Attachments:**
- 1 [Income Statement](#)
 - 2 [Balance Sheet](#)
 - 3 [Cashflow Forecast](#)
 - 4 [Cashflow Forecast Chart](#)

DISCUSSION

The **Income Statement** provides a summary of the total income and total expenditure relating to Council's annual operations. Capital grant income is included in the calculation of the Council's total surplus/ (deficit) but is presented separately to distinguish operational activities. Capital grant income is specifically used to fund expenditure on Council assets which is reported on the balance sheet.

The reported surplus as at 31 March is \$8.572m. Excluding capital grant income of \$11.278m, the operating result is a deficit of \$2.706m. These results reflect the impact of a forecast update in the Independent Support programs in March following project work in this area.

As highlighted in the Full Year Budget and Forecast columns, an unfavourable variance of \$130k is anticipated in operating profit mostly due to reforecasting Independent Support. Other variance in Total Operating Income and Total Operating Expenses are attributable to the Dec 18 Flood event project which offset each other with minimal net effect. A reduction in Capital Grant income of approximately \$2.1m due to projects to be carried forward the next financial year remains the most significant variance to budget.

The **Balance Sheet** summarises the value of Assets (what Council owns) and our Liabilities (what Council owes), and the difference between assets and liabilities (Net Assets or Equity) reflects Council's net worth. Council's net worth as at this accounting period is \$293,803m.

The **Cashflow Statement** has been held over due to a system issue relating to the recognition of leases under the new accounting standard which is in the process of being resolved.

At 31st March 2021, Council's Cash and Cash Equivalents were \$27.455m of which approximately \$4m is grant funding received in advance (restricted cash).

The **Cashflow Forecast** is a projection of cashflow for the remainder of the year based on the cash balance as at 31 March 2021, the monthly budgets, specified timing parameters (such when BAS/super are due and quarterly rate receipts) and capital expenditure.

The **Cashflow Chart** visually depicts the cashflow forecast and the updated format is illustrated in a dual design, based on best practice reporting.

The bank balance is expected to remain positive throughout the 2020-21 financial year and adequate to cover predicted current liabilities.

The **Capital Works Program** has been held over whilst the timing of multi-year capital projects is being finalised.

RELEVANT LAW

This report is consistent with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Council adopted its Annual Budget 2020/21 on 1 July 2020. Variations identified at the July Council Meeting have been incorporated into the Council's current budget. Council's current budget will be used for financial report comparison for the remainder of the 2020/21 financial year.

OPTIONS

Not applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

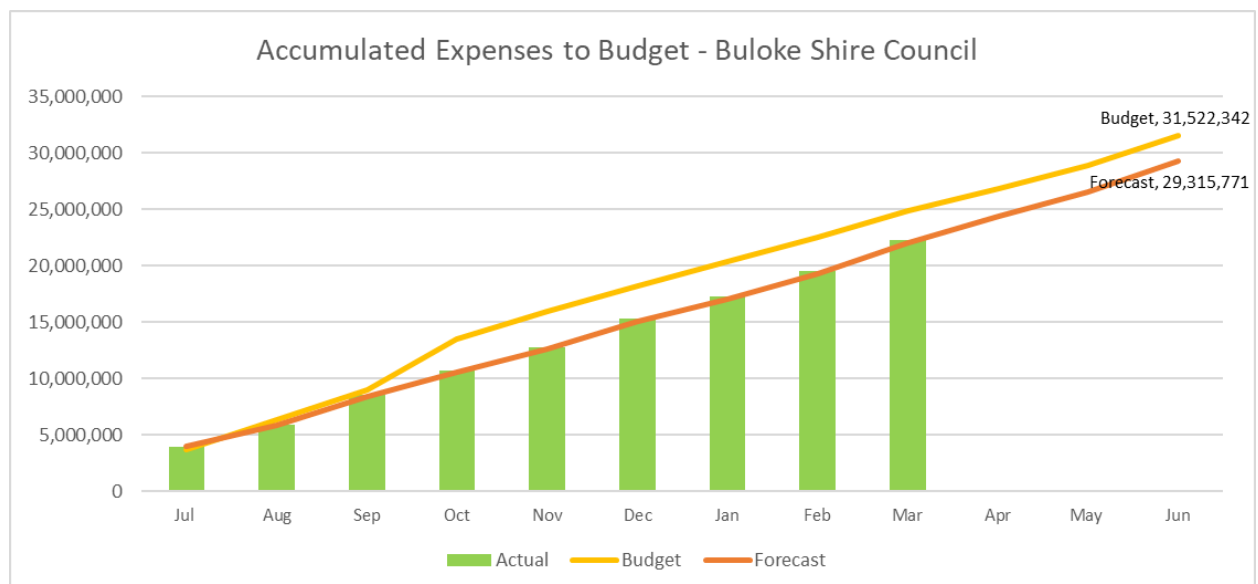
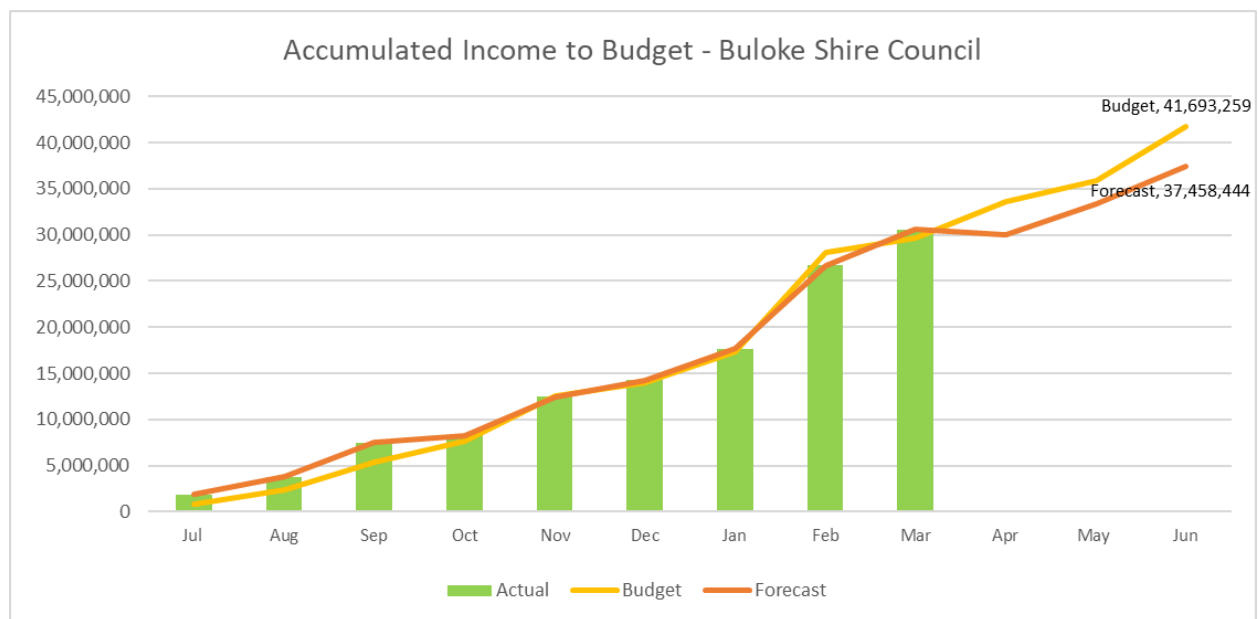
Not applicable.

COLLABORATION

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The tables below provide an overview of Council's financial performance against Approved budget income and expenses as at 31 March 2021.



REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Council adopted its Annual Budget 2020/21 in July 2020. The Buloke Shire Council Plan 2017-21 outlines Council's commitment to providing clear and concise reporting on a monthly basis to Council meetings.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

Financial reporting ensures the Council and the Buloke community are aware of financial implications of decisions and actions. Reporting Council's financial position allows the Council to monitor and respond to financial risk.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

Income Statement — Buloke Shire Council

MONTH: MAR 2021

| | Jul 2020 - Mar 2021 | | Approved Budget | | Full Year Budget | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | Actuals | Approved | Variance | Variance (%) | Approved | Forecast |
| Operating Income | | | | | | |
| Rates and charges | 11,852,005 | 12,666,917 | (814,912) | (6%) | 14,023,076 | 14,048,329 |
| Statutory fees and fines | 267,498 | 222,574 | 44,924 | 20% | 266,791 | 311,715 |
| User fees | 577,224 | 437,046 | 140,178 | 32% | 618,810 | 800,681 |
| Grants - operating | 6,286,903 | 8,749,218 | (2,462,315) | (28%) | 13,424,994 | 10,898,934 |
| Contributions | 64,503 | 59,763 | 4,740 | 8% | 70,033 | 74,773 |
| Other Income | 294,729 | 118,665 | 176,064 | 148% | 131,963 | 323,960 |
| Total Operating Income | 19,342,862 | 22,254,183 | (2,911,321) | (13%) | 28,535,668 | 26,458,392 |
| Operating Expense | | | | | | |
| Employee Costs | 9,111,133 | 9,150,356 | 39,224 | 0% | 11,376,239 | 11,392,656 |
| Materials and services | 5,838,836 | 8,168,513 | 2,329,677 | 29% | 9,823,263 | 7,948,482 |
| Depreciation & Amortisation (Leasing) | 6,689,914 | 7,011,587 | 321,672 | 5% | 9,287,795 | 8,973,064 |
| Bad and doubtful debts | 210 | 0 | (210) | N/A | 300,000 | 200,210 |
| Borrowing costs | 13,972 | 0 | (13,972) | N/A | 0 | 17,507 |
| Other expenses | 394,460 | 518,070 | 123,610 | 24% | 735,045 | 783,854 |
| Total Operating Expense | 22,048,526 | 24,848,526 | 2,800,001 | 11% | 31,522,341 | 29,315,773 |
| Operating Profit | (2,705,663) | (2,594,343) | (111,320) | (4%) | (2,986,673) | (2,857,380) |
| Capital Income | | | | | | |
| Grants - capital | 11,156,774 | 7,390,182 | 3,766,591 | 51% | 13,107,589 | 10,828,840 |
| Other Capital Income | 121,213 | 0 | 121,213 | N/A | 50,000 | 171,213 |
| Total Capital Income | 11,277,986 | 7,390,182 | 3,887,804 | 53% | 13,157,589 | 11,000,052 |
| Net Surplus/Deficit | 8,572,323 | 4,795,839 | 3,776,484 | 79% | 10,170,916 | 8,142,672 |

Balance Sheet — Buloke Shire Council

MAR 2021

| | Mar 2021 | Jun 2020 | Variance | % Variance |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Asset | | | | |
| Current assets | 28,448,148 | 20,525,882 | 7,922,266 | 39% |
| Cash and cash equivalents | 27,455,359 | 17,544,040 | 9,911,319 | 56% |
| Trade and other receivables | 813,851 | 2,612,321 | (1,798,471) | (69%) |
| Inventories | 126,937 | 180,882 | (53,945) | (30%) |
| Other assets | 52,001 | 186,725 | (134,724) | (72%) |
| Accrued Interest | 0 | 1,914 | (1,914) | (100%) |
| Non-current assets | 275,060,673 | 270,940,296 | 4,120,377 | 2% |
| Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment | 275,060,673 | 270,940,296 | 4,120,377 | 2% |
| Right of Use Assets | 252,679 | 394,161 | (141,482) | (36%) |
| Right of Use Assets | 870,505 | 688,281 | 182,224 | 26% |
| Accum Amortisation - Right of Use Assets | (617,826) | (294,120) | (323,706) | (110%) |
| Total Asset | 303,761,500 | 291,860,339 | 11,901,161 | 4% |
| Liability | | | | |
| Current liabilities | 8,821,469 | 5,333,078 | (3,488,392) | (65%) |
| Trade and other payables | 5,623,349 | 2,399,697 | (3,223,651) | (134%) |
| Trust funds and deposits | 399,005 | 200,294 | (198,711) | (99%) |
| Provisions | 2,519,114 | 2,475,819 | (43,295) | (2%) |
| Leases | 280,002 | 257,267 | (22,735) | (9%) |
| Non-current liabilities | 1,136,567 | 1,296,122 | 159,554 | 12% |
| Leases | 0 | 159,554 | 159,554 | 100% |
| Provisions | 1,136,567 | 1,136,567 | 0 | 0% |
| Total Liability | 9,958,037 | 6,629,199 | (3,328,837) | (50%) |
| Net Assets | 293,803,463 | 285,231,140 | 8,572,323 | 3% |
| Equity | | | | |
| Equity | 293,803,463 | 285,231,140 | 8,572,323 | 3% |

| | Mar 2021 | Jun 2020 | Variance | % Variance |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------|
| Accumulated Surplus | 112,144,954 | 103,766,640 | 8,378,314 | 8% |
| Reserves | 173,086,186 | 173,086,186 | 0 | 0% |
| Current Earnings | 8,572,323 | 8,378,314 | 194,010 | 2% |
| Total Equity | 293,803,463 | 285,231,140 | 8,572,323 | 3% |

Cashflow Forecast — Buloke Shire Council

APR 2021

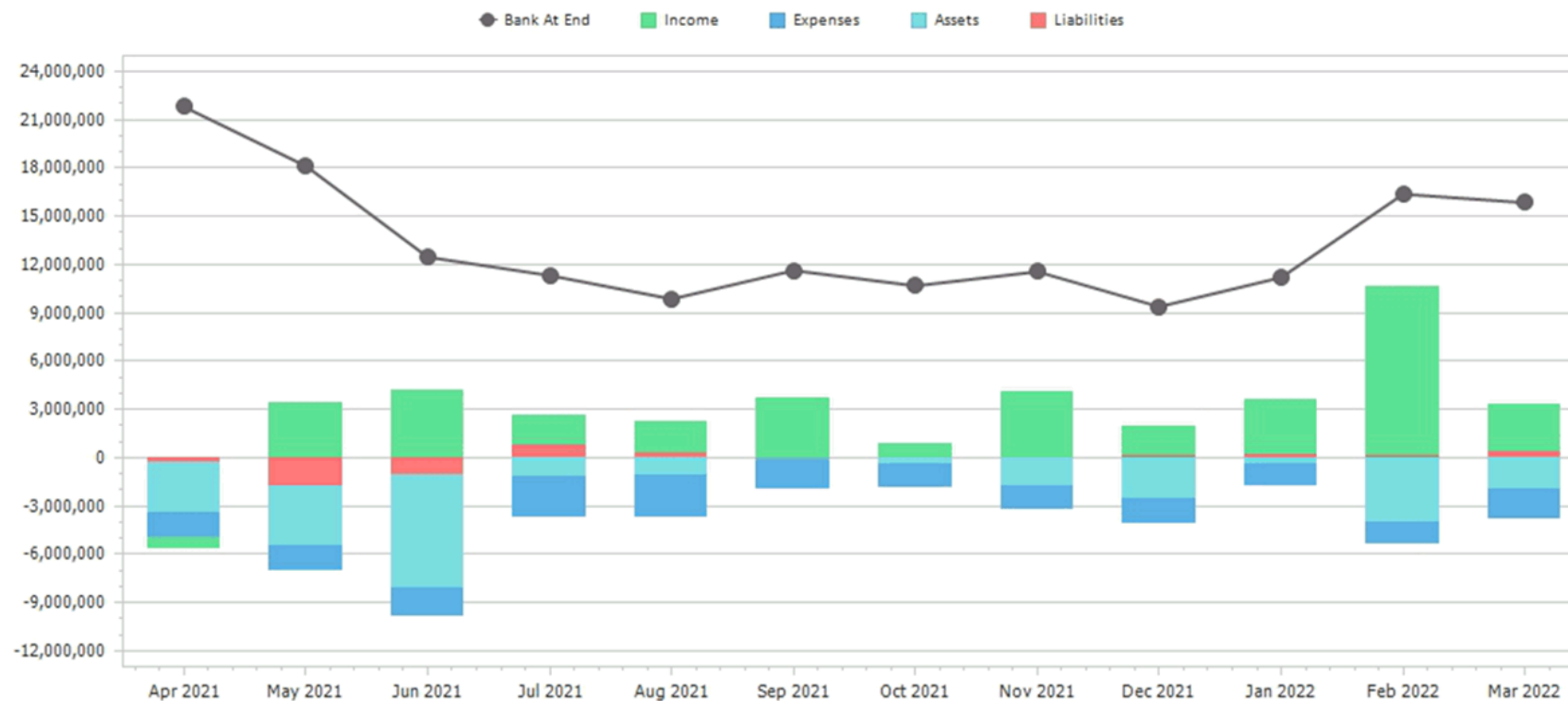
| | Apr 2021 | May 2021 | Jun 2021 | Jul 2021 | Aug 2021 | Sep 2021 | Oct 2021 | Nov 2021 | Dec 2021 | Jan 2022 | Feb 2022 | Mar 2022 | Total |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Bank at Beginning | 27,455,359 | 21,798,907 | 18,122,205 | 12,461,705 | 11,322,902 | 9,861,949 | 11,629,287 | 10,680,555 | 11,557,710 | 9,381,938 | 11,200,735 | 16,372,662 | 27,455,359 |
| Operating Income | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rates and charges | 0 | 2,179,640 | 16,683 | (25) | 140,736 | 1,391,155 | (4,275) | 1,331,448 | 9,513 | 1,016,859 | 9,142,513 | 16,713 | 15,240,959 |
| Statutory fees and fines | 14,739 | 14,739 | 14,739 | 21,571 | 22,469 | 20,049 | 8,874 | 29,122 | 80,503 | 21,238 | 14,739 | 14,739 | 277,521 |
| User fees | 65,315 | 69,824 | 110,663 | 29,198 | 52,072 | 73,344 | 52,902 | 74,213 | 57,822 | 106,448 | 43,767 | 54,381 | 789,950 |
| Grants - operating | 158,942 | 897,993 | 3,555,097 | 913,729 | 1,424,749 | 101,466 | 106,848 | 1,006,859 | 132,197 | 647,877 | 1,315,085 | 77,965 | 10,338,807 |
| Contributions | 91 | 91 | 10,087 | 2,843 | 42,488 | 3,044 | 2,521 | 1,036 | 1,712 | 2,802 | 91 | 91 | 66,900 |
| Other Income | 10,747 | 8,602 | 9,882 | 2,545 | 52,371 | 46,255 | 35,331 | 36,096 | 65,590 | 13,124 | 8,922 | 44,924 | 334,389 |
| Cash Inflows from Operation | 249,835 | 3,170,890 | 3,717,151 | 969,862 | 1,734,884 | 1,635,314 | 202,200 | 2,478,773 | 347,337 | 1,808,348 | 10,525,117 | 208,813 | 27,048,525 |
| Operating Expense | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Employee Costs | (774,376) | (746,208) | (760,939) | (509,759) | (792,011) | (1,292,404) | (884,731) | (930,314) | (1,035,695) | (787,565) | (929,163) | (1,220,622) | (10,663,787) |
| Materials and services | (585,300) | (641,990) | (770,879) | (1,858,679) | (1,772,722) | (369,545) | (427,761) | (508,519) | (428,818) | (507,622) | (455,672) | (544,220) | (8,871,727) |
| Depreciation & Amortisation (Leasing) | (629) | (891) | (891) | (10,858) | (29,834) | (33,089) | (36,537) | (45,537) | (40,219) | (38,289) | (31,675) | (23,882) | (292,330) |
| Bad and doubtful debts | 0 | 0 | (95,324) | (124,656) | (20) | 0 | (100) | (131) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (220,231) |
| Borrowing costs | (10,551) | (1,180) | (1,178) | (621) | 61 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (13,468) |
| Other expenses | (160,014) | (153,530) | (94,115) | (96,235) | (31,349) | (32,570) | (34,081) | (29,318) | (37,873) | (37,987) | (32,737) | (35,232) | (775,041) |
| Cash Outflows from Operation | (1,530,870) | (1,543,798) | (1,723,327) | (2,600,808) | (2,625,876) | (1,727,608) | (1,383,210) | (1,513,818) | (1,542,605) | (1,371,462) | (1,449,247) | (1,823,956) | (20,836,585) |

| | Apr 2021 | May 2021 | Jun 2021 | Jul 2021 | Aug 2021 | Sep 2021 | Oct 2021 | Nov 2021 | Dec 2021 | Jan 2022 | Feb 2022 | Mar 2022 | Total |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Asset | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Debtor Rates & Charges accrual adjus... | 0 | (2,179,844) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (2,179,844) |
| GST - Receivable | 0 | 0 | 1,440 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,440 |
| Prepayments | 0 | 0 | (134,724) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (134,724) |
| Workcover Clearing | 0 | 0 | 15,604 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15,604 |
| Works In Progress | (3,105,911) | (1,495,820) | (7,179,587) | (1,136,745) | (1,051,793) | (222,619) | (373,701) | (1,770,394) | (2,556,367) | (409,773) | (3,972,128) | (2,003,245) | (25,278,081) |
| Debtors | 0 | 0 | 332,731 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 332,731 |
| Non-current assets | (15,849) | (15,849) | (15,847) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (47,546) |
| Movement in Assets | (3,121,760) | (3,691,513) | (6,980,383) | (1,136,745) | (1,051,793) | (222,619) | (373,701) | (1,770,394) | (2,556,367) | (409,773) | (3,972,127) | (2,003,245) | (27,290,420) |
| Liability | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PO Accrual | (2,008,759) | (2,008,759) | (1,004,378) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (5,021,896) |
| Creditors Accruals | 0 | 0 | (15,840) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (15,840) |
| GST | 228,266 | 229,360 | 181,319 | 772,547 | 369,757 | 118,800 | 64,216 | 76,518 | 194,757 | 287,622 | 68,184 | 416,209 | 3,007,555 |
| Fringe Benefits Tax (8070) | 0 | 0 | 27,451 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 27,451 |
| Grants received in Advance | 1,457,126 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,457,126 |
| Payroll Clearing Account | 0 | 0 | 1,544 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,544 |
| Aust Services Union - Clearing | 0 | 0 | (2,693) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (2,693) |
| Tattsлото Clearing | 0 | 0 | (130) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (130) |
| WorkSafe Reimbursable - Clearing | 0 | 0 | 31,423 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 31,423 |
| Garnishee Order - Clearing | 0 | 0 | (2,262) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (2,262) |
| Superannuation Payable | 10,579 | 0 | 0 | (43,658) | (67,926) | (108,563) | (76,831) | (79,942) | (90,964) | (79,549) | 0 | 0 | (536,854) |

| | Apr 2021 | May 2021 | Jun 2021 | Jul 2021 | Aug 2021 | Sep 2021 | Oct 2021 | Nov 2021 | Dec 2021 | Jan 2022 | Feb 2022 | Mar 2022 | Total |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Fire Service Levy Clearing | 0 | 0 | (305,999) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (305,999) |
| Community Climate Change Adaptati... | 0 | 0 | (3,180) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (3,180) |
| Defined Benefit Super - Current | (10,203) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (10,203) |
| Lease Liability - Current | (23,581) | (23,581) | (23,581) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (70,744) |
| Movement in Liabilities | (346,572) | (1,802,980) | (1,116,326) | 728,889 | 301,831 | 10,237 | (12,614) | (3,425) | 103,792 | 208,074 | 68,184 | 416,209 | (1,444,703) |
| Equity | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Suspense | 0 | 0 | (1,066) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (1,066) |
| Capital Inflows and Outflows | 0 | 0 | (1,066) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (1,066) |
| Capital Income | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Grants - capital | (907,085) | 135,700 | 443,451 | 900,000 | 180,000 | 2,072,014 | 598,593 | 1,686,019 | 1,472,070 | 1,563,611 | 0 | 2,670,721 | 10,815,095 |
| Other Capital Income | 0 | 55,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20,000 | 0 | 0 | 20,000 | 0 | 0 | 95,000 |
| Other Inflows | (907,085) | 190,700 | 443,451 | 900,000 | 180,000 | 2,072,014 | 618,593 | 1,686,019 | 1,472,070 | 1,583,611 | 0 | 2,670,721 | 10,910,095 |
| Net Movement | (5,656,453) | (3,676,702) | (5,660,500) | (1,138,803) | (1,460,953) | 1,767,338 | (948,732) | 877,155 | (2,175,772) | 1,818,797 | 5,171,927 | (531,457) | (11,614,154) |
| Bank at End | 21,798,907 | 18,122,205 | 12,461,705 | 11,322,902 | 9,861,949 | 11,629,287 | 10,680,555 | 11,557,710 | 9,381,938 | 11,200,735 | 16,372,662 | 15,841,205 | 15,841,205 |

Cashflow Chart — Buloke Shire Council

APR 2021 — MAR 2022



8.4 ORGANISATIONAL REPORTS

8.4.1 DRAFT COUNCIL PLAN 2021-25 AND LONG TERM COMMUNITY VISION

Author's Title: Chief Executive Officer

Department: Office of the CEO

File No: CM/13/06

Relevance to Council Plan 2017 - 2021

Strategic Objective: Diversify and enhance our local economy.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the Draft Council Plan 2021-2025 and Long Term Community Vision document for consideration and to go on public exhibition for feedback.

SUMMARY

Council must adopt and prepare a Council Plan for the period of at least the next four financial years after a general election. Council must also prepare a Community Vision with an outlook of at least the next 10 years. This document presents both of these together under the four Strategic Objective areas of Our Built and Natural Environment, Our Community Wellbeing, Our Economy and Our Council and Community Leadership. This draft document also incorporates the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan for the second time.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopt the Draft Long-Term Community Vision and Council Plan 2021-2025 to go on exhibition to the public for 28 days.

Attachments: 1 [Draft Buloke Shire Long-Term Community Vision and Council Plan 2021-2025](#) - to be added prior to meeting

DISCUSSION

The Draft Long-Term Community Vision and Council Plan 2021-2025 comes to Council for endorsement to go on public exhibition for 28 days. The Draft document presents a range of strategies to guide Council for the next four years, under the ten year vision of the community.

This draft has been prepared following a range of community consultation processes, analysis of strategies and plans which interact with this document and consultation with stakeholders.

The Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan is integrated into this Council Plan for the second time, following the endorsement of this Draft, it will also be submitted to the State Government for verification that all the key points have been covered for this integration. We have some strong data through the Primary Health Network, the Primary Care Partnership, the Buloke, Loddon, Gannawarra Health Needs Analysis and the State of Buloke's Children and Young People's Report which have been reflected in this draft document. Critical partnerships with service providers and key stakeholders sit behind these reports which have given a great foundation for Council to continue to work towards prevention, early intervention and population health outcomes.

Alongside this planning, the Buloke Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy is being developed also which will present some key actions to focus on as we move towards our future vision.

Outcomes of our last Council Plan, including the Customer Service Charter, Inclusiveness Plan, updated financial systems, Volunteer Strategy, Rural Land Use review, Economic Development and Tourism Strategy will also play into this plan with the actions from those carrying through to what we are hearing from community in their aspirations.

Our newly adopted Community Engagement Policy has shaped the way we have put this document together.

In 2018, Council undertook an extensive planning exercise which resulted in ten individual community plans, feeding into the integrated community plan under the heading of “Building Buloke 2030”. Under the new Local Government Act 2020, we have reviewed this vision to “Beyond 2030” to form Buloke’s long term community vision. Much remains the same as that original 2018 aspiration as we take in the lessons of 2020 and build towards a better Buloke, led by our community.

The draft document sets out the ten-year aspiration under each theme and then leads into the four-year strategies and actions which will guide Council in assisting these long-term aspirations.

These will then form Annual Plans. The progress of these will be reported on each quarter. A full review of this document will be undertaken annually.

RELEVANT LAW

Not applicable

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council decisions around other key strategic documents will interact with this Draft Council Plan.

OPTIONS

Council has the option to not endorse this Draft document.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The Draft Long-Term Community Vision and Council Plan 2021-2025 presents several strategies around sustainability initiatives and responds to the requirement that Local government is identified in the *Climate Change Act 2017* as a decision-maker that must consider climate change when preparing a municipal public health and wellbeing plan, which is incorporated into this document.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A range of community consultation activities were undertaken to form this draft document which resulted in high quality feedback from community members.

Letters were issued to Community Forums in December 2020 explaining the upcoming community planning process and a suite of tools were provided to the groups to aid in the revision and renewal of their own community plans to feed into the process of this planning cycle.

Listening Posts and Street Walks were held in all ten communities, where possible, in conjunction with the Buloke Library Service. Both Councillors and Officers attended these.

Flyers were sent to all residents explaining the planning process and ways to get involved. Three key questions were included in the flyer as well as ways to get involved in the feedback process. These flyers were also distributed as an insert in all three local newspapers that cover the Buloke Shire area.

An online survey was made available, and hard copies also on offer for those unable to connect online.

A total of 68 people filled in the online survey, with each respondent spending at least 30 minutes answering the 16 open-ended questions. The depth of this engagement delivered more than 1,000 individual pieces of feedback which have been analysed in the production of this document.

Councillor and officer attendance at Community Forum meetings and key gatherings during the consultation period included explanation of the planning process, ways to get involved as well as feedback taken on the spot.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

This Draft document being presented outlines several innovative strategies building on the community feedback as well as indicators to promote continuous improvement. This document will have an annual review and an annual plan which will be reported on quarterly.

COLLABORATION

In developing this draft document, Council has collaborated with a range of stakeholders and regional and state bodies to build into the strategies presented.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The Draft Budget underpins how the strategies in this document will be resourced, grouped under the same four strategic objectives.

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

This draft document sets out the next four year Council Plan. The previous Council Plan (2017-2021) has been taken into account to link through to this new document. The Integrated Buloke 2030 Plan has heavily influenced this Draft document also.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report recommends this draft document goes on public exhibition for 28 days to enable the public to make submission and provide feedback on the proposed strategies and direction.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

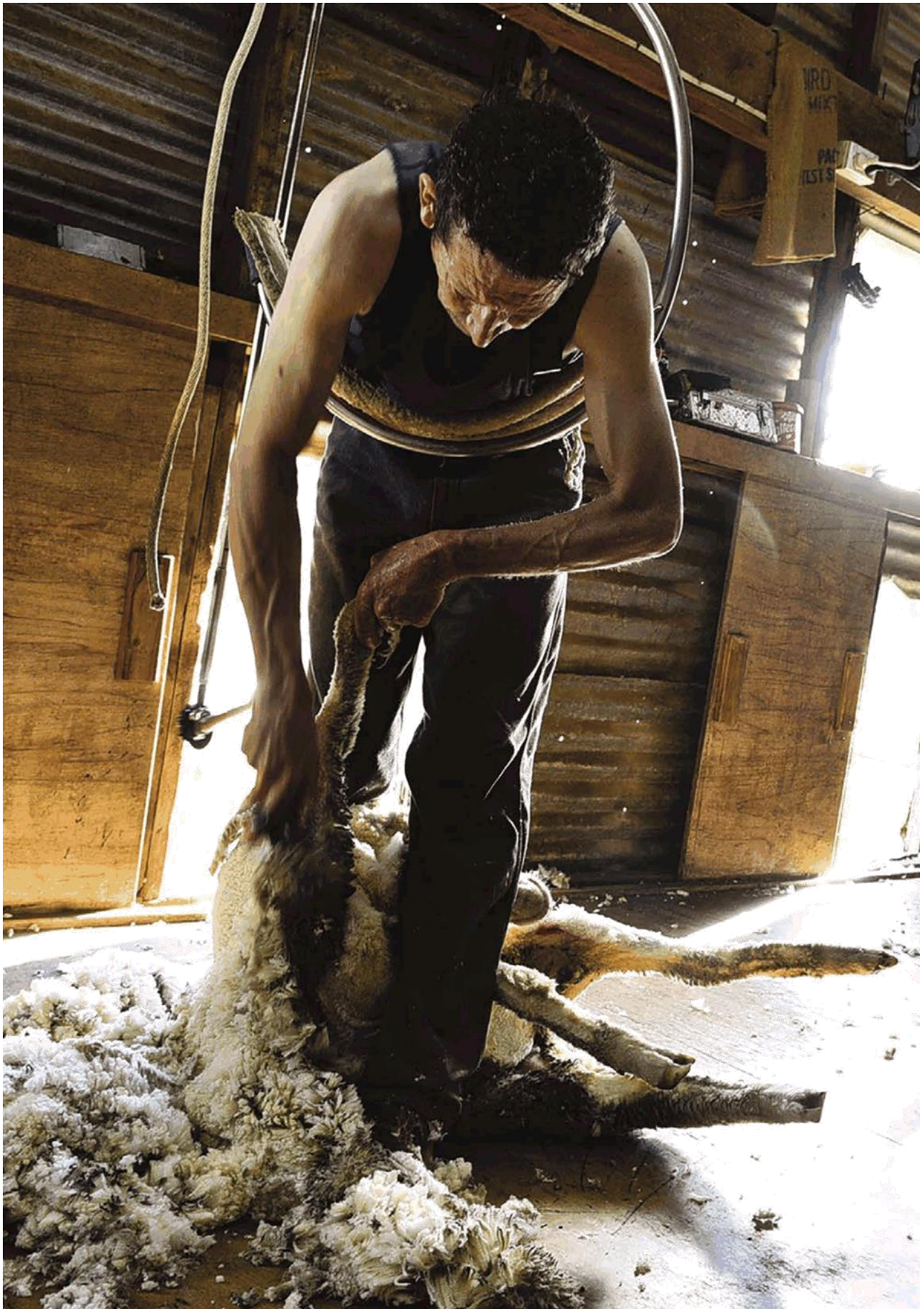
BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL

LONG-TERM COMMUNITY VISION AND COUNCIL PLAN

2021-2025



BULOKE
SHIRE COUNCIL



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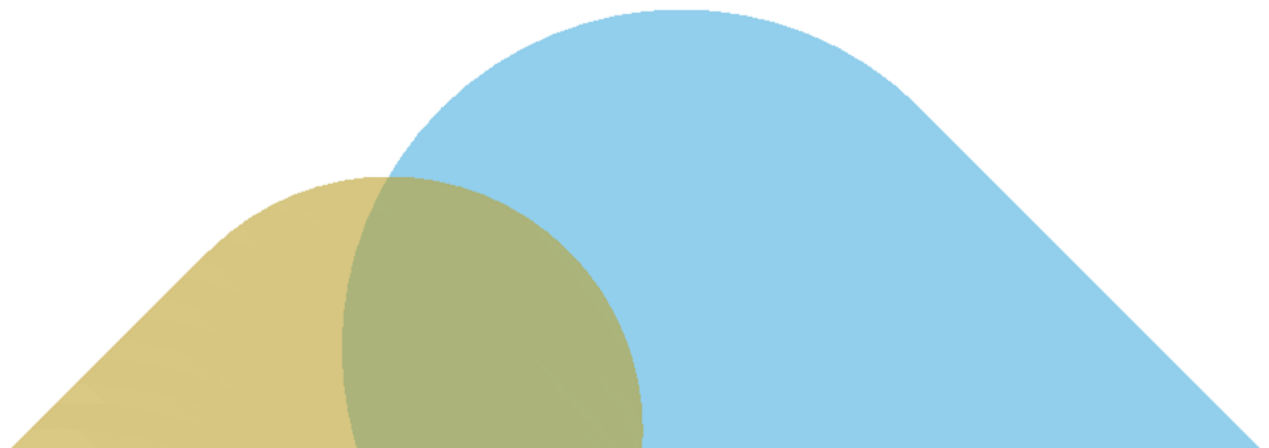
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Strategic Resource Plan



ABOUT BULOKE



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

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

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

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

Council maintains a road network spanning 5,302 kilometres. There are also 747 kilometres of roads under State Government control within Buloke.

The two main highways servicing the Buloke are the Calder Highway and the Sunraysia Highway. Both highways run north and south through the Shire.

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

The Buloke Shire is named after the 'buloke' or 'bullock' tree, *Allocasuarina Luehmannii* which is common in the area and the feature of the Buloke Shire logo.

OUR VISION

Building a Better Buloke - A healthy, connected, inclusive and prosperous community.

OUR VALUES

Council addresses its key values through:

- **Good communication**
- **Transparency in decision making**
- **Accountability for actions**
- **Working collaboratively with partners**
- **Taking responsibility**
- **Being responsive and timely**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

Buloke has significant number cultural heritage places including an Aboriginal historical place, burials, artefact scatters, earth features, low density artefact distributions, scarred trees and a stone feature.

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WHAT IS THE COUNCIL PLAN?

Council must prepare and adopt a Council Plan for a period of at least the next 4 financial years after a general election.

The Council Plan must demonstrate:

- the strategic direction of Council
- strategic objectives for achieving that direction
- strategies for achieving the objectives (for at least 4 years)
- strategic indicators for monitoring achievement
- description of initiatives and priorities for services, infrastructure, and amenity

The Council must own the Council Plan and is responsible for developing, adopting, and maintaining the Plan.

The community must be consulted and involved through deliberative engagement and other consultation processes.

WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY VISION?

Council must develop, maintain, and review a Community Vision with its municipal community using deliberative engagement practices.

The Community Vision has an outlook of at least 10 years and describes the municipal community's aspirations for the future of the municipality.

It should describe the social, economic, cultural, and environmental aspirations for the future of the municipality.

The *Public Health and Wellbeing Act (2008)* requires the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan to be consistent with the Council Plan prepared under section 90 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (previously section 125 of the *Local Government Act 1989*) and the Municipal Strategic Statement prepared under section 12A of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

Councils are required to review the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan annually and, if appropriate, amend it; and to provide a copy of the current Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

For the second time the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing will be incorporated in this Council Plan.

The Community Vision will establish higher-order aspirations for the community and ambitious goals for Council and the community to work towards in collaboration.

It is informed by community engagement and a consensus view on aspirations and it is an influential document informing Council's strategic planning and broader partnerships with civil society, government and community organisations.

The Community Vision extends beyond Council's jurisdiction and provides a platform for collaboration with community, regional partnerships, and advocacy. It should reflect and consider relevant regional, state, and national plans.

The Community Vision is, in part, an expression of how Council will work with the community to apply and direct resources under its control towards achieving the desired future. The Vision will significantly influence and provide direction to the Council Plan and for other mandated plans and strategies.

Section 26 of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act specifies what must be included in a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan:

- include an examination of data about health status and health determinants in the municipal district
- identify goals and strategies based on available evidence for creating a local community in which people can achieve maximum health and wellbeing
- specify measures to prevent family violence and respond to the needs of victims of family violence in the local community
- provide for the involvement of people in the local community in the development, implementation and evaluation of the Public Health and Wellbeing plan
- specify how the Council will work in partnership with the Department (of Health and Human Services) and other agencies undertaking public health initiatives, projects and programs to accomplish the goals and strategies identified in the Public Health and Wellbeing plan.

HOW THIS DOCUMENT WORKS AND WHERE IT FITS

There are some other important considerations to take into account in this new planning cycle. The events of 2020 rearranged many priorities, but in Buloke, the impacts felt were largely an exacerbation of issues our community had already told us needed attention, for that reason there will be reference to Covid-19 Recovery actions in the planning document. Many of these actions, if achieved, would address long-term aspirations of our Buloke communities. Examples of this are connected access to services, especially mental health services and addressing internet blackspots.

We have some strong data through the Primary Health Network, the Primary Care Partnership, the Buloke, Loddon, Gannawarra Health Needs Analysis and the State of Buloke's Children and Young People's Report. Critical partnerships with service providers and key stakeholders sit behind these reports which have given a great foundation for Council to continue to work towards prevention, early intervention and population health outcomes.

Alongside this planning, the Buloke Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy is being developed which presents some key actions to focus on as we move towards our vision.

Outcomes of our last Council Plan, including the Customer Service Charter, Inclusiveness Plan, updated financial systems, Volunteer Strategy, Rural Land Use and Settlement Strategy, Economic Development and Tourism Strategy will also play into this plan with the actions from those carrying through to what we are hearing from community in their aspirations.

Our newly adopted Community Engagement Policy has shaped the way we have put this document together.

There are many other considerations to take into our forward planning, including the proposed new Emergency Management Act, recent Royal Commissions and recommendations, the incoming *Disability Act 2020*.

The Gender Equality Act is only in its beginning stages as we write this document, but it brings with it significant and timely considerations to take into our forward planning work.

In 2018, Council undertook an extensive planning exercise which resulted in ten individual community plans, feeding into the Integrated Community Plan under the heading of "Building Buloke 2030". Under the new *Local Government Act 2020*, we have reviewed this vision to "Beyond 2030" to form Buloke's long term community vision. Much remains the same as that original 2018 aspiration as we take in the lessons of 2020 and build towards a better Buloke, led by our community.

In this document, we set out the ten year aspiration under each theme and then lead into the four-year strategies and actions which will guide Council in achieving these long term aspirations.

These will then form Annual Plans. The progress of these will be reported on each quarter. A full review of this document will be undertaken annually.

7 BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL LONG-TERM COMMUNITY VISION AND COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

A range of community consultation activities were undertaken to form this draft document which resulted in high quality feedback from community members.

Letters were issued to Community Forums in December 2020 explaining the upcoming community planning process and a suite of tools were provided to the groups to aid in the revision and renewal of their own community plans to feed into the process of this planning cycle.

Listening Posts and Street Walks were held in all ten communities, in conjunction with the Buloke Library Service. Both Councillors and Officers were in attendance.

Flyers were sent to all residents explaining the planning process and ways to get involved. Three key questions were included in the flyer as well as ways to get involved in the feedback process. These flyers were also distributed as an insert in all three local newspapers that cover the Buloke Shire area.

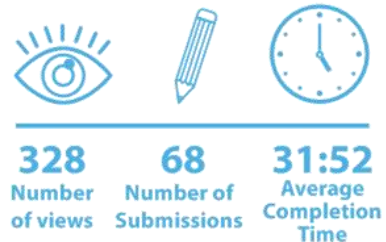
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A total of 68 people filled in the online survey, with each respondent spending at least 30 minutes answering the 16 open-ended questions. The depth of this engagement delivered more than 1,000 individual pieces of feedback

which have been analysed in the production of this document.

Councillor and Officer attendance at Community Forum meetings and key gatherings during the consultation period included explanation of the planning process, ways to get involved as well as feedback taken on the spot.

Survey Results:





In engaging the community during the draft stages of this document, and in support of the above traditional and face to face methods of engagement, Council undertook a social media campaign to capture the thoughts of residents and engage each individual community.

Engagement results throughout the campaign were:

Facebook post reach of 12,630 (average 790 per post).

Twitter impressions 3,386 (average 546 per post).

LinkedIn impressions 1,534 (average 384 per post).

During March (2021), a Community Summit was held with invited members of a diverse range of community sectors coming together in Wycheproof (numbers capped due to gathering restrictions under Covid regulations) with Councillors, Officers and Senior Management. This deliberative engagement session formed around the four priority areas and empowered attendees with information, data and context as well as subject matter experts to help engage in the conversation and discuss strengths, challenges and opportunities for the ten-year vision and the next four years of Council's strategic direction.

This event resulted in more than 500 individual pieces of written feedback during the two-hour event. The theme that was the most active was the topic of Tourism and Housing with 40 individual points raised.

All the received feedback has been recorded and while not all of these individual points are able to be reflected in this document, the key themes and common points have been pulled through into the following strategies and actions.

The rich resource of the feedback will continue to guide this plan going forward as annual plans are established and work on individual community plans continues.

Community Summit:



100
Attendees



500
Ideas and feedback



40 sticky notes
Most popular feedback station - Tourism and Housing

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MAYORS MESSAGE



The Councillors and I are pleased to present the Buloke Shire Council Long-Term Community Vision and Council Plan 2021-2025.

This document is Council's most important, everything we do on behalf of ratepayers and the community relates to what is set out under our four key themes:

Our Built and Natural Environment

Our Community Wellbeing

Our Economy

Our Council and Community Leadership

Buloke is on the bubble, adding layers to our economy that is so strongly underpinned by the agriculture sector.

We are an emerging tourism destination with enviable recreational lakes, the sightseeing phenomenon that is Lake Tyrell and an emerging street art collection to supplement our two Silo Art Trail stops.

The liveability and attraction of our towns is something that our communities continue to engage with Council about. We are setting in place strategies to improve the lifestyle in Buloke for our residents and to maximise the opportunities to turn visitors to our region into locals.

Our four key themes are our way forward, our objectives in the delivery of a better Buloke.

We also understand our challenges.

Strong consultation with our community over many years together with Council's work during the last Council Plan period has identified key challenges that we need to address. This at a time that the world is looking to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Like the pandemic, issues around climate change and waste reduction are not unique to Buloke. Whilst locally we are challenged by the availability of quality housing stock, skills gaps, and digital connectivity. All of which will define our population and demography in the years to come.

If our population is to grow, critical issues such as these and support service like childcare need to be understood and addressed. This will give families the tools they need to not only survive, but thrive.

Council also needs to continue to appropriately fund its ageing infrastructure and control its asset renewal gap. Our road and drainage networks as well as an array of buildings and other assets place an enormous burden on our small ratepayer base.

Council and staff are looking forward to working with the community, all levels of government and external stakeholders in Building a Better Buloke.

Cr Daryl Warren
Mayor

OUR COUNCILLORS



LOWER AVOCA WARD

CR DAVID POLLARD**M: 0458 918 638****E: crpollard@buloke.vic.gov.au**

Cr Pollard is currently serving a fourth term as Councillor. David's extensive community outreach has included involvement with Ambulance Victoria, the CFA, Scouts Victoria, along with being the driver of the community purchase of Charlton's Rex Theatre. David's lifetime experience on the family farm near Wycheproof brings an understanding of rural issues as well as urban concerns. A representative of the Lower Avoca Ward since 2008 David has served three terms as Mayor from November 2011, 2016 and 2017, as well as holding the role of Deputy Mayor twice.

**CR CAROLYN STEWART****M: 0488 032 063****E: crstewart@buloke.vic.gov.au**

Cr. Stewart's second term on Council has seen her elected as a representative of the Lower Avoca Ward. With a strong commitment to ensuring future growth and viability for the region, Carolyn's accountancy background, family involvement and farming commitments at Buckrabanyule have her well placed to understand the future directions for Buloke's prosperity. Carolyn has served two terms as Mayor from November 2018, 2019, and has also served on the Local Government Minister's Mayoral Advisory Panel in 2020.



MOUNT JEFFCOTT WARD

CR GRAEME MILNE**M: 0419 126 911****E: crmilne@buloke.vic.gov.au**

Cr. Milne has begun his third term as Councillor representing the Mount Jeffcott Ward. Passionate about being a voice for the people, Graeme believes Buloke will continue to build on its successes and provide valuable outcomes for all ratepayers and residents. An active volunteer in the Watchem community, Graeme's skills are focused on providing strong representation for all across the wider Buloke region. Graeme served as Deputy Mayor from November 2016 to November 2017.

**CR BRONWYN SIMPSON****M: 0436 914 253****E: crsimpson@buloke.vic.gov.au**

Cr. Simpson is commencing her second term on Council - this time as a representative for the Mount Jeffcott Ward where she holds part-time employment. Bronwyn is focused on maximising the potential of the Council Plan, within budget, and in ways which will enhance the liveability of Buloke. Environment, economic development and advocacy for rural issues are highlighted, and her background in customer relations and committee membership are a plus for community engagement.

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MOUNT JEFFCOTT WARD

CR DARYL WARREN (MAYOR)

M: 0427 194 422

E: crwarren@buloke.vic.gov.au

Cr. Warren has been elected for a second term on Council. Daryl has been heavily involved in numerous community initiatives, and is keen to see Buloke as a vibrant, welcoming region. With a "can-do" attitude and an ability to respond willingly to resident's needs, financial accountability - now and for the future - is also an integral part of his vision. Daryl was voted in as Mayor in November 2020 and served as Deputy Mayor between November 2017 and November 2019.



MALLEE WARD

CR ALAN GETLEY

M: 0437 876 726

E: crgetley@buloke.vic.gov.au

A first term Councillor, Cr. Getley is representing the Mallee Ward. Alan is keen to see employment opportunities grow through attracting more industry to Buloke, along with retaining young people in area. Building strong communication through greater community interaction and exploring ways of easing the rate burden are also key areas of focus. Alan has embraced leadership roles across many sectors of the Charlton community, and seeks to bring a fresh approach to Council.



CR DAVID VIS (DEPUTY MAYOR)

M: 0488 032 723

E: crvis@buloke.vic.gov.au

Cr. Vis has returned for a second term to represent the Mallee Ward. With a vision to help make Buloke a thriving place to live and visit, David has been a passionate advocate for his local area, and for the growth of the wider Buloke region. Building on his Council experience, David believes a good working relationship with Council's leadership team will bring continued progress over the next few years.

HOW WE WILL BUILD A BETTER BULOKE

PRIORITY 1: OUR BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The vision:

Our future buloke has quality, safe and accessible infrastructure valued by the community alongside attractive streetscapes and a protected and celebrated natural environment reflecting buloke pride.

PRIORITY 2: OUR COMMUNITY WELLBEING

The vision:

Our future buloke... is a welcoming, well-connected and inclusive community built around social connections for all age groups and backgrounds and access to, as well as ongoing advocacy for, vital services.

PRIORITY 3: OUR ECONOMY

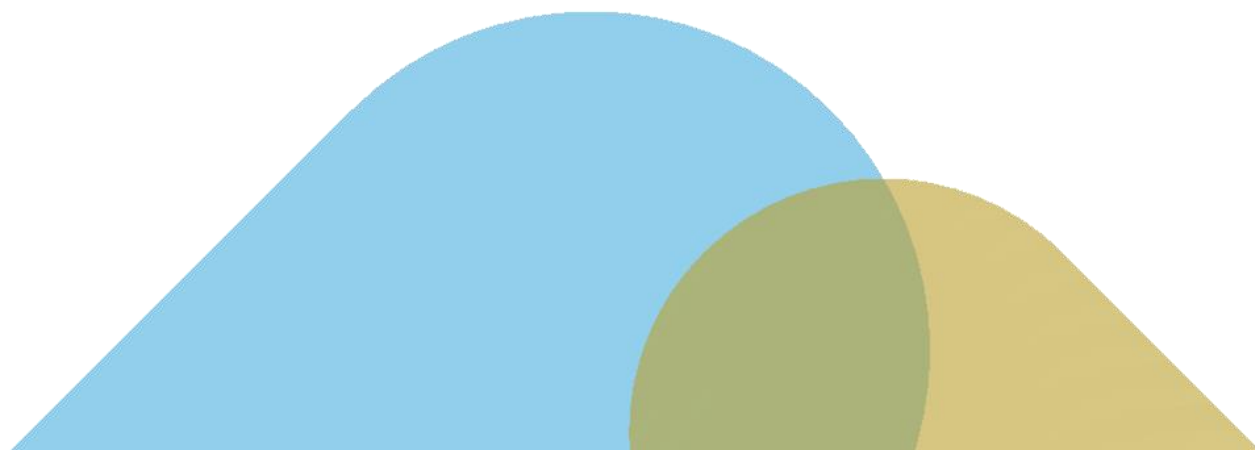
The vision:

Our future buloke... is an innovative and strong economy with agriculture, small business and industry capitalising on new ideas to provide a range of employment and tourism opportunities backed by the services, connectivity and housing to achieve population stability.

PRIORITY 4: OUR COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

The vision:

Our future buloke... is dynamically led by a council that informs community, has active partnerships, authentic advocacy and quality customer service delivering valued community services in a responsible way.



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OUR COMMUNITY

POPULATION:

2016 Census:

PEOPLE 6,201

FEMALE 49.4%

MALE 50.6%



ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION:



2016: 6,284

2021: 6,071

2026: 5,742

2031: 5,392

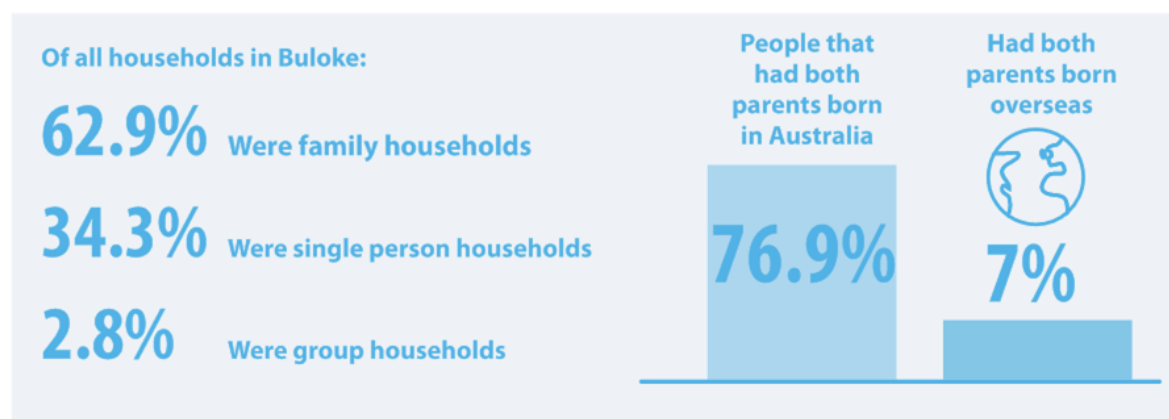
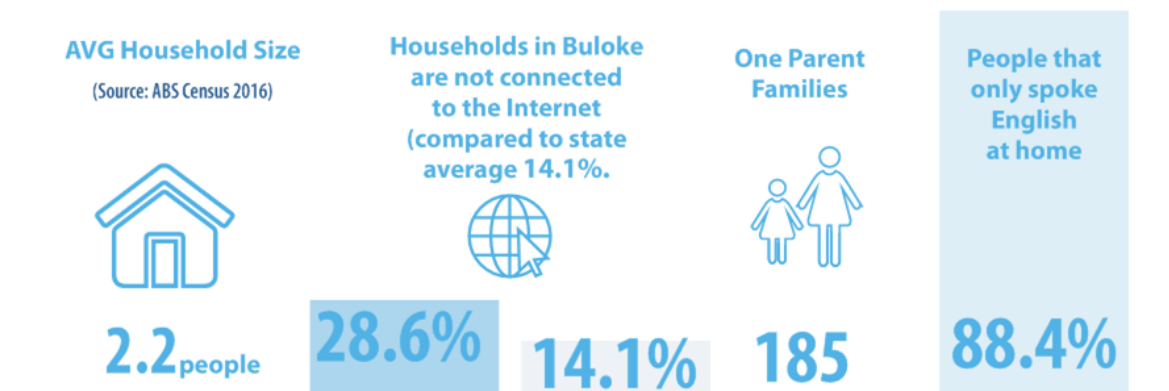
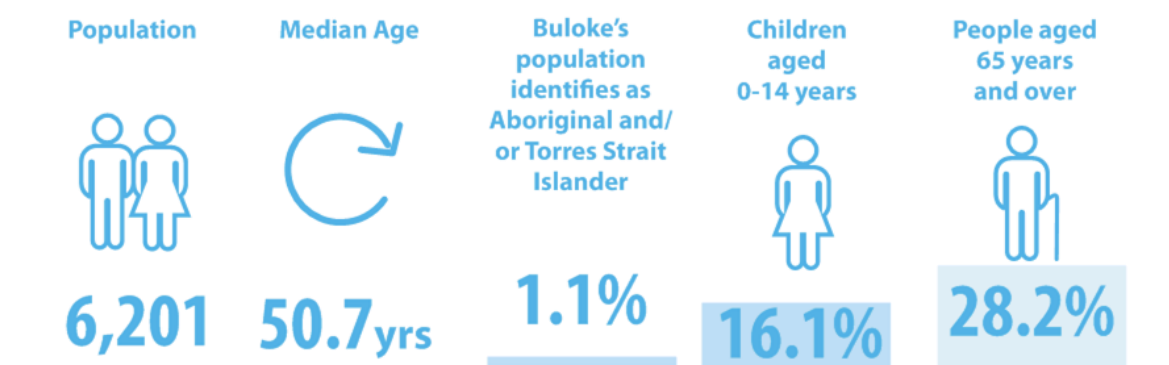
| AGE | BULOKE (S) | % |
|-------------------|------------|----------|
| Median Age | 51 | - |
| 0-4 years | 253 | 4.1 |
| 5-9 years | 357 | 5.8 |
| 10-14 years | 383 | 6.2 |
| 15-19 years | 345 | 5.6 |
| 20-24 years | 195 | 3.2 |
| 25-29 years | 252 | 4.1 |
| 30-34 years | 215 | 3.5 |
| 35-39 years | 245 | 4.0 |
| 40-44 years | 307 | 5.0 |
| 45-49 years | 402 | 6.5 |
| 50-54 years | 454 | 7.3 |
| 55-59 years | 516 | 8.3 |
| 60-64 years | 519 | 8.4 |
| 65-69 years | 486 | 7.9 |
| 70-74 years | 340 | 5.5 |
| 75-79 years | 345 | 5.6 |
| 80-84 years | 234 | 3.8 |
| 85 years and over | 336 | 5.4 |

Estimated resident population (ERP) is the official Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) measure of the population of areas in Australia according to a usual residence population concept. Usual residence is that place where each person has lived or intends to live for six months or more from the reference date for data collection. It refers to all people, regardless of nationality or citizenship, who usually live in Australia, with the exception of foreign diplomatic personnel and their families. It includes usual residents who are overseas for less than 12 months. It excludes overseas visitors who are in Australia for less than 12 months.

In census years, ERPs are derived using data from the Census of Population and Housing and Post Enumeration Survey, with an allowance for the number of residents temporarily overseas (RTOs) at the census date. For post-censal years ERPs are calculated using mathematical models and indicator data such as dwelling approvals, Medicare enrolments managed by the Australian Government Department of Human Services and Australian Electoral Roll enrolments managed by the Australian Electoral Commission. Population estimates for Australia and the states and territories are updated by adding to the estimated population at the beginning of each period the components of natural increase (births minus deaths, on a usual residence basis) and net overseas migration.

Estimates of the resident populations as at 30 June are released annually for all Statistical Areas Level 2 (SA2s) and Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Australia. The estimates are generally revised 12 months later and final estimates are available after the following census. (Remplan)

DEMOGRAPHIC STATS



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LONG-TERM COMMUNITY VISION
AND COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

Median weekly
PERSONAL income
15+



\$474

Persons 15+
Earning Less
than \$300pw



24.6%

Employed people in Buloke:

12.7% Worked 1 to 15 hours

10.9% Worked 16 to 24 hours

46.6% Worked 40 hours or more



OUR SERVICE STATS

WASTE



TWO landfills

located in Donald and Birchip.

THREE Transfer Stations

located in Charlton, Wycheproof and Sea Lake.

ONE small recycle centre

in Watchem.

In 2019-2020

2164
tonnes

Kerbside
rubbish
collected

874
tonnes

Kerbside
recycles
collected

602
tonnes

Green Waste
collected at
all sites

16,205

Drumuster
Chemical
Drums
collected



5,913 HOURS

of service delivered into
people's homes under the
Commonwealth Home
Support Program.

Council is considered a leader in the Local Government sector in its use of social media. Be it in times of celebration or emergency, Council has one of the broadest reaches to its community of all 79 Victorian Local Government Areas with around 45% of its population following Council's Facebook page. In February 2021 Council's Facebook page was evaluated as the second most engaging Facebook offering of all Victorian Councils by Shunt, an independent social media analytical authority. Council operates Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn accounts with a combined followership of 4,110. (*Figure taken at 31 March 2021.) Council also operates a YouTube channel to broadcast Ordinary Meetings of Council and Story Time library resources amongst other media.



OUR ROADS



5,313km
of Roads

900km
of Sealed Roads

700km
of Gravel Roads

Minor (3595km)

A Limited Access Road/Track provides primarily access to undeveloped properties in rural areas

Collector (311km)

A Collector Road provides primarily a feeder service to Link Roads.

It provides access to local properties in both rural and town areas and access to moderate local rural industries

Access (1196 km)

An Access Road provides primarily direct access to occupied residential properties and industries in urban and rural areas.

Link Roads (211 km)

A Link Road provides primarily for collecting and distributing traffic from local areas to the wider Arterial Road Network.

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OUR COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

AGRICULTURE

The Agricultural industry is by far the provider of the most jobs in the Buloke Shire. In the 2016 Census, 32.17% of Buloke's population were employed under the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Industry. The second highest employer by industry was the Health Care and Social Assistance area at 13.36%. The increasing diversity in the agricultural sector, through intensive agriculture, on-farm micro operations, and value-adding opportunities right through to farm-based tourism continues to be a key strength of the Buloke region. The industries servicing the sector, including machinery dealerships, rural supply businesses and research bodies also present a key strength as a flow on effect from the Agricultural sector. With a focus on the changing climate, paddock-to-plate, and renewed interest in regional Victoria, Buloke's agricultural sector is at the innovative leading edge and presents a wealth of potential.

TOURISM

The 'trail experience' Buloke presents is gaining significant spotlight and momentum since the last Council Plan cycle. Lakes, local businesses, silo and mural art, playspaces, op shops all encourage visitors to spend time moving around the Buloke area. Infrastructure projects continue to build on this attraction with the lockdown experience of 2020 also injecting a renewed interest in local, regional tourism. Water-based tourism (lakes and rivers) is a key component of Buloke's attraction to visitors. Building on the attraction of campers and caravanners and permanent accommodation options continue to build on this strength.

VOLUNTEERISM

In the 2016 Census, it was recorded that 46.1% of Buloke's population volunteer. This has been a long-held strength of Buloke. With the growing tourism opportunities, the events and attractions that make Buloke a great place to visit can almost always be traced back to a dedicated band of volunteers. Anecdotal evidence suggests the rate of Buloke volunteering is even higher than the census reported data as many giving their time in our communities don't recognise it as formal volunteering. Emergency response, sports and service clubs, community transport, events committees are just some of the groups based on volunteering in Buloke. The prevalence of volunteering contributes heavily to the sense of community and connectedness which came through as a key reason why people love Buloke in our community consultation for this document.

OUR SPACE

On average, each Buloke resident has 1.3 square kilometres to themselves. The expansive area Buloke covers offers plenty of space to live, work and play. The open space and natural attractions are also gaining notoriety as a great place to visit with the big skies of Buloke sitting 276 kms from Melbourne and 265km from Mildura, served by the Calder and Sunraysia highways. The space of Buloke also offers great potential in key economic development and tourism areas.

ACTIVATED COMMUNITIES

Led by Buloke's high rate of volunteerism, the communities and districts within the area show great motivation and action to respond to community need, take advantage of opportunities and work together to achieve great places to live. The forward-focus and activated nature of Buloke communities has seen a record investment in infrastructure projects across the footprint and robust, dynamic community plans which aid in bringing together the place-based vision to achieve long term goals. Innovative businesses, community enterprise and a solutions-focussed attitude also contribute to this strength.



"Open space, the freedom to move around in a clean, quiet environment."

"Resilient people."

"Friendly communities."

"Collaboration of friendships between towns"

"A great place to live."

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OUR COMMUNITY CHALLENGES

DIVERSE AND QUALITY HOUSING STOCK

Demand for a range of quality housing options across sectors of the Buloke community has been a long-term challenge in the Buloke Shire. The extra pressure brought about by the 2020 lockdown, as well as the renewed interest in rural living has further exacerbated this challenge. Access to social housing, step-down housing for older residents looking to down size from their multiple bedroom detached dwellings or move into town from the farm, right through to family-friendly housing and that which suits the professional end of the market all present challenges for Buloke. Identification and availability of land to build and develop is also a key component of this challenge. Addressing derelict and vacant housing is also a key concern of the Buloke community.

ASSET RENEWAL GAP

Ageing infrastructure has been a long-term challenge in the Buloke Shire. The enormous asset burden on a small rate payer base presents an ongoing challenge of sourcing appropriate funds to reduce the asset renewal gap on Buloke's extensive road network as well as key community infrastructure such as Town Halls, pools and sports precincts. Upgrading the ageing drainage network across Buloke and ensuring accessibility considerations are taken into account to cater for Buloke's population demographic all bring together the challenge of ensuring required investment into the priority areas.

DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

Black spot issues and sub-standard access to quality internet speeds has an impact across the population. This was also recorded as a community challenge in our 2017-2021 Council Plan. While some headway has been made on rectifying black spot areas, the lack of consistent access to online options has become considerably more noticeable following the sweeping move and focus on remote working, study, telehealth and finding connection through online means that 2020 brought about. Beyond mobile phone coverage, reducing the rural disadvantage in dwelling and business access to the internet is a key Buloke challenge.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The wide-reaching impacts associated with Climate Change present an adaptation challenge for the Buloke Shire. Plenty of opportunity is also present in this adaptation challenge. Innovating new ways to achieve outcomes with a softer touch on the planet, adapting to a climate with more extremes, enhancing renewable options and understanding the combined community approach needed for the long-term risk reduction.

WASTE

In March 2020, the State Government announced its Circular Economy Policy which will transform the recycling industry in Victoria. Working towards a reduction in waste to landfill, resource recovery and addressing illegal dumping alongside community education in a small, rural Shire such as Buloke.

SKILLS GAPS

The 2019 Nous Report into Workforce and Training Need in the Buloke Shire found established demand for workers that cannot be met locally. Consequently, skills are a secondary priority to finding individuals that can turn up and do the work. This is most evident in community services and agricultural roles and some manufacturers. Selected businesses in other industries faced similar constraints. Critical issues exist around childcare which limits the ability for workers, particularly women, to work in the region and the scarcity of rental accommodation creates barriers for people to move to the region. This report also identified the risk of the Buloke Shire becoming disconnected from the tertiary education system.

COVID RECOVERY

There was a significant impact on Buloke communities as a result of both the adaptation to CovidSafe living as well as the lockdowns, cancellation of sport and events, impact on businesses and loss of connection opportunities.

A photograph of a town street at night. In the background, there is a large, well-lit building with a gabled roof and a covered entrance, possibly a community center or a small business. To the right, a blue sign with a white cross and the word 'HOSPITAL' with an arrow pointing left is visible. The foreground shows a grassy area and a road. The image is overlaid with a blue gradient and several text boxes.

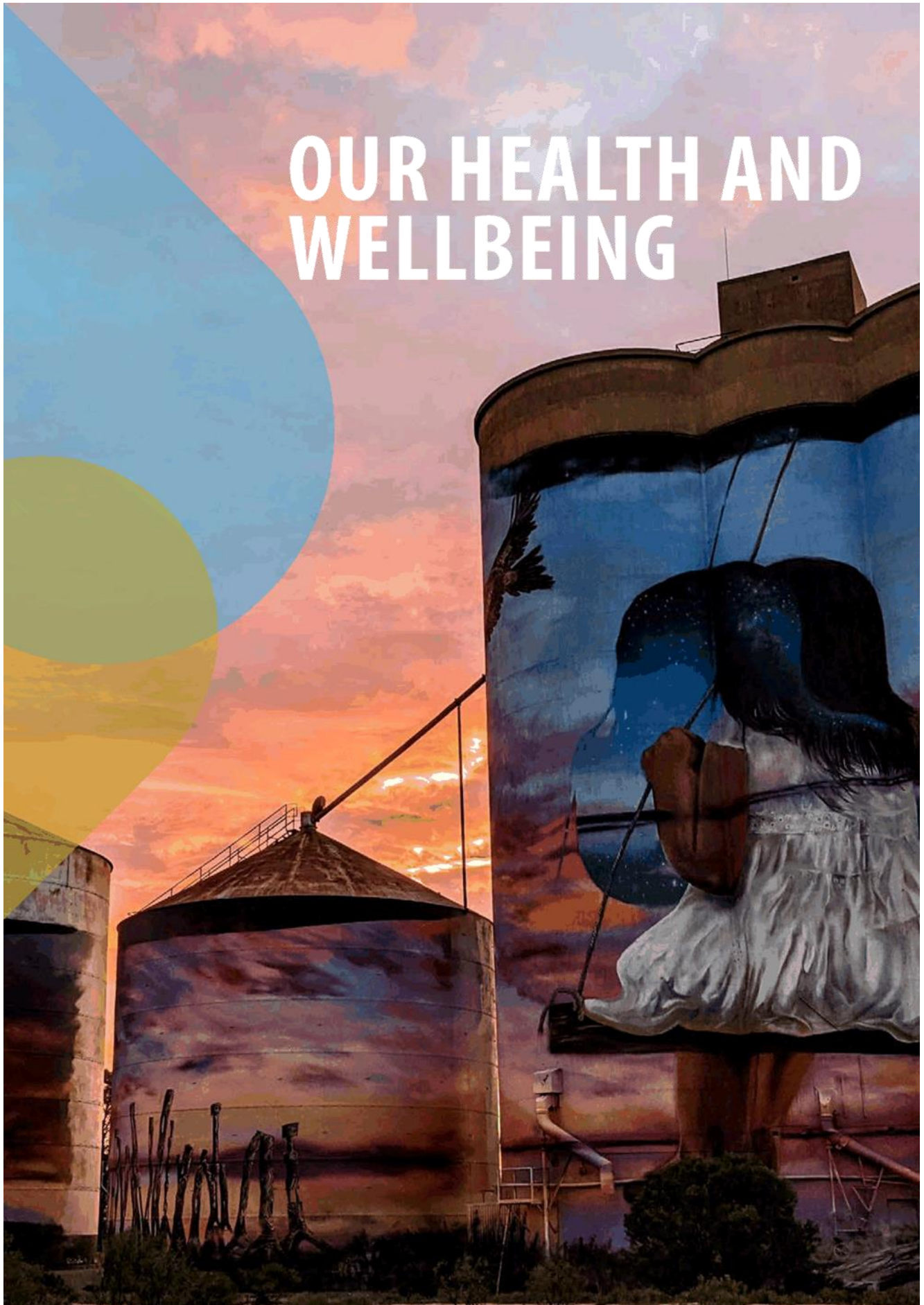
“Grow the population, grow the jobs more housing.”

“Investment in community to uplift practical sustainability initiatives”.

“Increased engagement and support of the local youth groups.”

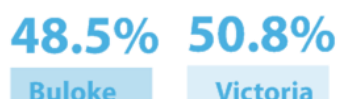
“More money spent on rural roads”.

OUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING



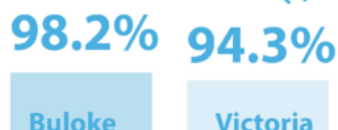
BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL
LONG-TERM COMMUNITY VISION AND COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025 **22**

Adult population overweight.



Children fully immunised at 1 year of age (2018)

(Australian Childhood Immunisation Register).



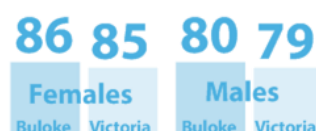
Smoking during pregnancy (2012-2014)

(Data Source: PHIDU from ABS Census 2011 & 2016).



Median Age of death.

(Data Source: Murray PHN)

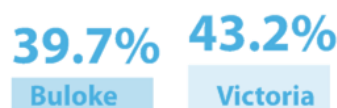


BIRTH RATES:

Total Fertility Rate.



Adult population complied with fruit consumption guidelines.

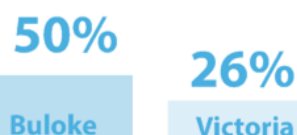


DENTAL HEALTH (Data source: Murray PHN):

Adult population fair/poor self-reported dental health.



Children (0-5 years) presenting with at least one decayed, missing or filled (baby) or permanent (adult) tooth, attending public dental services.



Potentially preventable hospitalisations dental conditions for children aged 0-9 years, standardised rate per 1,000 persons.



Estimated number of people with high, or very high, levels of psychological distress.

(based on K10 score) (ASR per 100).

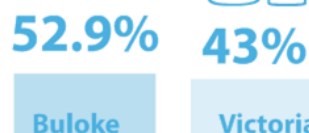


Avoidable deaths from suicide and self-inflicted injuries, persons aged 0-74 years.

(average annual ASR per 100,000)



Adult population increased risk of injury from a single occasion of drinking.



Buloke has the HIGHEST rate of participation in organised sport in Victoria.

(Sport Participation in Victoria, VicHealth, 2019).



31%

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OUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING CHALLENGES

The Buloke 2030 Community Planning process, which was undertaken in 2018 identified the following health wellbeing challenges in Buloke, these were consistent with the 2020/21 Community Consultation in the process of forming this document:

| | |
|---|--|
| Ageing community | Attracting and retaining GP's |
| Declining population | Maintaining and increasing place-based health and wellbeing services |
| High number of lone households | Travel required to access specialist medical services |
| Youth retention | Volunteer fatigue |
| Lack of access to childcare services | Access to public transportation |
| Accessing health and wellbeing services | Providing support for vulnerable residents; and |
| Continuity of health and wellbeing services | Ensuring residents across all socio-economic backgrounds are socially connected. |

Data shows that the Loddon/Buloke/Gannawarra region has over 1000 dependent children in over 600 families earning less than \$650 per week and over one third of all young people in the region:



have low wellbeing, with lower than average scores on optimism, self-esteem, happiness and absence of sadness



leaving/ left school early, which impacts on their income and life chances.

The State of Buloke's Children and Young People's Report identified the following Health and Wellbeing challenges for our younger residents:

Physical Health and Wellbeing

| | Buloke | Victoria |
|-------------------|--------|----------|
| On Track | 71.2% | 81% |
| At Risk | 7.7% | 10.8% |
| Vulnerable | 21.2% | 8.2% |

* Child is ready each day healthy and independent, and has excellent gross and fine motor skills.

Data Source AEDC 2018



Social Competence

| | Buloke | Victoria |
|-------------------|--------|----------|
| On Track | 69.2% | 77.3% |
| At Risk | 17.3% | 13.9% |
| Vulnerable | 13.5% | 8.8% |

* Child gets along with others and shares, is self confident.

Data Source AEDC 2018



Emotional Maturity

| | Buloke | Victoria |
|-------------------|--------|----------|
| On Track | 69.2% | 77.7% |
| At Risk | 21.2% | 14.2% |
| Vulnerable | 9.6% | 8.1% |

* Child is able to concentrate, helps others, not aggressive or angry.

Data Source AEDC 2018



**Language & Cognitive Skills
(School-based)**

| | Buloke | Victoria |
|-------------------|--------|----------|
| On Track | 82.7% | 84.76% |
| At Risk | 11.5% | 9.0% |
| Vulnerable | 5.8% | 6.4% |

* Child is interested in reading or writing, can count and recognise numbers and shapes.

Data Source AEDC 2018



Communication Skills & General Knowledge

| | Buloke | Victoria |
|-------------------|--------|----------|
| On Track | 75.0% | 79.4% |
| At Risk | 13.5% | 13.2% |
| Vulnerable | 11.5% | 7.4% |

* Child can tell a story, communicate with adults and children, articulate themselves.

Data Source AEDC 2018



Vulnerable in 1 or More Domain(s)

Buloke: 30.8%

Victoria: 19.9%

Vulnerable in 2 or More Domain(s)

Buloke: 17.3%

Victoria: 10.1%

Data Source AEDC 2018



The Buloke, Loddon, Gannawarra Strategic Health Partnership identified four evidence based priority needs, which are:

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| | Heart and Respiratory Health |
| | Mental Health |
| | Diabetes |
| | Oral Health |

Provide more opportunities for teenagers to have fun social interaction as a whole Buloke group. //

Would be nice to have access to a dentist! //

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OUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRENGTHS

SPORTS PARTICIPATION

A VicHealth Research Study into organised sport participation which was released in 2021 found the Buloke Shire has the **highest overall sport participation rate in the state.**

Participation was 31% in the Buloke Shire, in the Regional- other area. The highest participation rates in the other areas were: Regional- growth: Surf Coast, 25%; Metropolitan- other: Nillumbik 23%; and Metropolitan-growth: Cardinia, 14%. This report took into account player registrations across 12 key sports.

Strong player registration in organised sport links with the high rate of volunteerism in the Buloke Shire. Membership of Sports Groups in Buloke also tops the state at 50.2% in the last Census.

SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Respondents to the survey undertaken in the preparation of this document highlighted the sense of community as the thing they love the most about Buloke. Caring communities, connections between different communities and the willingness of community members to rally in tough times and support each other were all highlighted as key components in this. The community advocacy undertaken on behalf of health and wellbeing challenges, access to services and better connected approaches is also a strength in Buloke.

Smoking rates are below the state average, The percentage of the adult population current (i.e. daily or occasional) smokers in Buloke is **13.2% compared to the Victorian average of 16.7%**



13.2% **16.7%**

Buloke

Victoria

IMMUNISATION RATES

The rate of children in immunisations in Buloke has consistently been above the State average.

| | Buloke |
|--|--------|
| Children fully immunised at 1 year of age % | 98.2 |
| Children fully immunised at 2 years of age % | 96.4 |
| Children fully immunised at 5 years of age % | 100 |



PRIORITY 1: OUR BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

TYRRELL

LONG TERM VISION:

Our future Buloke has quality, safe and accessible infrastructure valued by the community alongside attractive streetscapes and a protected and celebrated natural environment reflecting Buloke pride.

Long Term Aspirations:

| | |
|--|--|
| Accessible buildings and spaces. | A collaborative approach to safe, well designed and well maintained local and arterial road network. |
| Inclusive footpath and kerb planning. | Quality infrastructure and multi-use assets that are well maintained and used. |
| Attractive streetscapes and town entrances that are well maintained and presented. | Natural areas are preserved and enjoyed. |
| Effective waste and resource recovery. | Buildings and houses well kept and maintained to achieve collective town pride. |
| Upgraded drainage. | Housing diversity to suit various cohorts. |
| An environmentally aware community. | Renewable energy in action. |
| Effective weed and pest management. | Active outdoor spaces |

OUR BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

| Long Term Strategies: | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Strategy | Council's Role |
| 1. Maintain, develop and plan for viable, multi-use infrastructure and assets that respond to community needs and priorities. | Leader Provider |
| 2. Enhance parks and public spaces so they are welcoming, safe and accessible to encourage active recreation and participation. | Leader Provider |
| 3. Review built community assets and explore opportunities for shared facilities and resources. | Leader Facilitator |
| 4. Work with key stakeholders to provide a safe road network and keep the community well informed. | Provider Partner Supporter |
| 5. Work together with communities to activate town centres and entrances and keep these well maintained. | Leader Provider |
| 6. Support local initiatives to encourage residents to tidy up their properties and the community. | Partner Facilitator |
| 7. Develop and enhance walking and cycling paths with a connected approach. | Leader Provider |
| 8. Improve accessibility to buildings and public facilities for all community members. | Regulator Supporter |
| 9. Educate, promote and support the community in implementing waste minimisation and management strategies. | Leader Provider Regulator |
| 10. Actively use, promote and support the use of renewable energy sources. | Leader Partner Supporter Facilitator |
| 11. Protect, enhance and manage natural resources, flora and fauna and waterways. | Provider Partner |

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OUR BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025 STRATEGIES

1.1 WORK TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 1.1.1 | Develop and implement actionable plans from the Buloke Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy. |
| 1.1.2 | Implement key initiatives from the Buloke Shire Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2020-2025, including campaigns to target illegal dumping and reviewing the feasibility of extending the kerbside rubbish and recycling offering. |
| 1.1.3 | Partner with business and community to establish innovative solutions to rubbish removal. |
| 1.1.4 | Support, localise and track regional bulk-buy solar initiatives and support community groups and buildings to go solar. |
| 1.1.5 | Investigate opportunities to improve stormwater harvesting and the use of reclaimed/recycled materials in key community assets. |

1.2 SUITABLE HOUSING OPTIONS

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 1.2.1 | Build on the Wimmera Southern Mallee Housing Study to identify opportunities for Council and the community to enhance diversity in housing stock. |
| 1.2.2 | Support Community Housing initiatives to provide suitable step-down housing for older population. |
| 1.2.3 | Advocate for quality and affordable social housing options. |
| 1.2.4 | Encourage housing development and investment suitable to community needs and professional housing options. |

1.3 AN ATTRACTIVE AND WELL MAINTAINED BULOKE

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 1.3.1 | Develop and fund the implementation of drainage improvement plans in key flooding hotspots. |
| 1.3.2 | Prioritise the improvement of maintenance to town parks and other urban infrastructure across the Shire and enhance green spaces through irrigation and tree planting initiatives. |
| 1.3.3 | Implement the Buloke Playspace Trail and develop masterplans for playgrounds in other key locations. |
| 1.3.4 | Identify and seek funding for opportunities to rationalise Council's excess building assets and invest into multi-use facilities. |

1.4 A SAFE AND ACTIVE BULOKE

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 1.4.1 | Strengthen relationship with Regional Roads Victoria and other transport authorities to engage and inform the community. |
| 1.4.2 | Prioritise capital works investment into renewal of roads and road-related infrastructure, informed by Council's Asset Plans. |
| 1.4.3 | Seek funding for the development and implementation of masterplans for active recreation facilities, including Aquatic Strategy, Walking and Cycling Plans and Birchip and Sea Lake Recreation Reserve Masterplans. |
| 1.4.4 | Identify accessible mobility maps in main townships, linking retail, health and community facilities. |

OUR BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

INDICATORS

Actions from Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy Achieved
Uptake of Solar Bulk Buy Initiatives
Reduce waste to landfill as per the waste strategy and resource recovery
Real Estate indications on housing waitlists and uptake of housing options
Maloney's road quality report
Customer satisfaction survey results
Parks and Urban maintenance requests

CURRENT STRATEGIES AND PLANS

Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy
Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy
Wimmera Mallee Housing study
Regional Climate Strategies
CMA Strategic Plans
Inclusiveness Plan
Rural Land Use and Settlement Strategy
Economic Development and Tourism Strategy
Playspace Masterplan

ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING

Social Housing
Waste
Road Asset Renewal Gap
Funding Active Recreation
Opportunities in preventative health space.



PRIORITY 2: OUR COMMUNITY WELLBEING

LONG TERM VISION:

Our future Buloke... is a welcoming, well-connected and inclusive community built around social connections for all age groups and backgrounds and access to, as well as ongoing advocacy for, vital services.

Long Term Aspirations:

| | |
|--|--|
| A well connected and inclusive community that is welcoming of diversity. | A collaborative approach to safe, well designed and well maintained local and arterial road network. |
| Free from violence. | Continuity of healthcare. |
| Early years focus. | A wide range of activities and connection opportunities for children and young people. |
| Support and connection for vulnerable residents. | Comprehensive and quality place based GP services. |
| Infrastructure and programs to support physical activity. | A connected Buloke where loneliness is reduced. |
| A connected approach to support young people in all aspects of their lives and have a genuine youth voice in Council Planning. | Affordable, accessible mental health services alongside reduced stigma. |
| Quality, well-supported schools. | |

OUR COMMUNITY WELLBEING

| Long Term Strategies: | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Strategy | Council's Role |
| 1. Work with key stakeholders to lobby for effective place-based health and wellbeing services in the Buloke Shire. | Facilitator Supporter |
| 2. Work with key stakeholders to increase community understanding of the availability of health and wellbeing services across the Buloke Shire alongside health literacy. | Supporter |
| 3. Increase digital literacy to enable uptake of tele-health options and include as key advocacy point for reliable internet access. | Supporter |
| 4. Advocate for fit-for-purpose rebate schemes (for example, Childcare Subsidy, Victorian Patient Transport Rebate). | Supporter |
| 5. Create and support opportunities that encourage community wellbeing, social connections and inclusion and active and healthy lifestyles. | Provider Partner |
| 6. Work with key stakeholders to address social disadvantage backed by data, evidence and lived experience. | Provider Supporter |
| 7. Support community-led initiatives to welcome newcomers. | Leader |
| 8. Continue to support community driven primary prevention responses to key issues of concern, including family violence, community inclusion and mental health. | Supporter Partner |
| 9. Offer/actively support a range of non-sport activities, events and leisure opportunities for residents of all ages including children and young people. | Provider Partner |
| 10. Provide a range of learning and skill development opportunities for all stages of life. | Supporter |
| 11. Continue to lobby the Government for improved and viable public transport services across the Buloke Shire. | Supporter |
| 12. Work towards population attraction and retention. | Leader Supporter |

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OUR COMMUNITY WELLBEING

COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025 STRATEGIES

2.1 PARTNERSHIPS TO OUTCOMES

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 2.1.1 | Work within the Buloke, Loddon, Gannawarra Health Needs Analysis to address identified issues; heart and respiratory health, mental health, oral health and diabetes with health services. |
| 2.1.2 | Strengthen and explore partnerships with a dedicated focus to cohorts: Strong Families, Strong Children Partnership (0-8); Strong Youth, Strong Communities alongside VicHealth Local Government Partnership (9-19) and continue to evolve this through to 60+ to address systems-based issues. |
| 2.1.3 | Support and connect Young Professionals Networks and address skills training gaps as identified in the 2019 Nous Workforce Development and Training Needs in the Buloke Shire report. |
| 2.1.4 | Facilitate a genuine youth voice in Council and Community Planning to achieve better outcomes for young people's health and wellbeing. |

2.2 INCLUSIVENESS PLAN IN ACTION

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 2.2.1 | Implement and regularly report on the Buloke Inclusiveness Plan and update as needed. |
| 2.2.2 | Redevelop, implement and report on a Gender Equality Plan and imbed Gender Equality Act into forward work. |
| 2.2.3 | Work with local Registered Aboriginal Parties to strengthen relationships with Council and community. |
| 2.2.4 | Create a "Holding Buloke's Wisdom" partnership for 60+ to help navigating services and ageing in place priorities. |

2.3 WELL SUPPORTED COMMUNITY

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 2.3.1 | Continue to develop the Library Service through a dedicated and updated service plan and VAGO recommendations and closer connection of customer service and library. |
| 2.3.2 | Actively work with Early Years Providers to improve the early childhood care and education service offerings across the Shire. |
| 2.3.3 | Strengthen Strategic Health Partnerships to overcome the many boundaries that cross the Buloke Shire. |
| 2.3.4 | Understand and support Covid-19 recovery and adaptation strategies and actions in a place-based way. |

2.4 INCREASED COMMUNITY WELLBEING

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 2.4.1 | Continue to advocate for improved mental health services and utilise local resources such as the Five Ways to Wellbeing Framework to encourage healthy lifestyles |
| 2.4.2 | Support the renewal and implementation of township community plans, including the development of masterplans, to drive improved community connectedness and outcomes. |
| 2.4.3 | Champion advocacy on matters that improve connectivity of residents, including public and community transport needs, telehealth and programs offering social connection. |
| 2.4.4 | Sustain advocacy around quality of care and access to services, both place based and outreach. |

OUR COMMUNITY WELLBEING

INDICATORS

Progress on the Buloke, Loddon, Gannawarra Health Needs Analysis Action Plan.

Progress Reports on the Buloke Shire Inclusiveness Plan.

Positive shift in downward trends as identified in the State of Buloke's Children and Youth Report.

Review of recommendations achieved from the 2019 Nous Workforce Development and Training Needs in the Buloke Shire report.

All Community Plans reviewed and renewed.

Covid Recovery Actions supported.

Visible and genuine representation from young people.

Gender Equity Plan and Act requirements upheld.

CURRENT STRATEGIES AND PLANS

Buloke Shire Inclusiveness Plan

Ten Buloke Community 2030 Community Plans

Buloke, Loddon, Gannawarra Health Needs Analysis

State of Buloke's Children and Youth Report.

Loddon Mallee Covid Recovery Plan

State Youth Strategy

Rainbow Ready Roadmap

ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING

Funding for social connection and community activation opportunities.

Access to general community wellbeing and mental health support and services.

Skills and training gaps.



PRIORITY 3: OUR ECONOMY

LONG TERM VISION:

Our future Buloke... is an innovative and strong economy with agriculture, small business and industry capitalising on new ideas to provide a range of employment and tourism opportunities backed by the services, connectivity and housing to achieve population stability.

Long Term Aspirations:

New industry and business including entrepreneurs and social enterprise.

Access to affordable (subsidised) childcare under a sustainable rural model.

A range of employment opportunities and action towards filling identified gaps.

Shop-local support from residents.

A range of suitable housing options.

Telecommunications that support modern day business, education and health needs.

Continue to build on exciting tourism attractions and events.

Population stability.

OUR ECONOMY

| Long Term Strategies: | |
|---|------------------------------|
| Strategy | Council's Role |
| 1. Support the attraction of diverse industries and businesses to the Buloke Shire and provide support for projects that create new jobs. | Leader Supporter Partner |
| 2. Support existing business and industry and actively encourage social enterprise and entrepreneurs. | Leader Supporter Partner |
| 3. Explore solar (renewables), recycling, waste diversion and agricultural industry opportunities. | Leader Facilitator Supporter |
| 4. Provide strengthened leadership and resources to drive investment, economic development and tourism. | Leader Facilitator Supporter |
| 5. Explore opportunities for art, culture and history-based tourism. | Leader Supporter Partner |
| 6. Broadly promote Buloke Shire as a great place to live, work, visit and invest. | Leader Partner |
| 7. Advocate for the increased provision of childcare services and rural models of subsidised childcare. | Facilitator Supporter |
| 8. Determine current and future housing needs and explore innovative approaches that could better support a mixture of housing options e.g. units, retirement and rental housing. | Leader Supporter Partner |
| 9. Undertake workforce planning to ensure future access to a flexible and skilled workforce for a range of business and industry. | Partner Facilitator |
| 10. Improve access to telecommunication services. | Supporter |
| 11. Continue to strengthen, promote and support the Agricultural industry and innovation to ensure a strong local future for the sector. | Facilitator Supporter |

OUR ECONOMY

COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025 STRATEGIES

3.1 TOURISM

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 3.1.1 | Build on regional tourism opportunities and the Buloke 'trail' experience (art trail, playspace trail, train trail, shop and eat local trail). |
| 3.1.2 | Develop a gap analysis on signage for key tourist wayfinding. |
| 3.1.3 | Continue to develop Buloke's water-based tourism by promoting lakes and riverfronts as key tourist attractions for campers and caravanners and support projects such as on-site cabins. |
| 3.1.4 | Work with Buloke Tourism to continue to identify and act upon arts and culture opportunities in line with local community plans. |

3.2 ATTRACTION AND PROMOTION OF LOCAL BUSINESS

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 3.2.1 | Plan for the provision of facilities, such as incubator hubs and co-working spaces, that will support the start up of local enterprise and investigate alternative use for existing, vacant land and facilities for this purpose. |
| 3.2.2 | Develop business cases for key opportunities, with a focus on renewable solutions. |
| 3.2.3 | Develop a Buloke events framework to enable local events to take place in the Covid normal environment. |
| 3.2.4 | Agriculture-based tourism to promote and enhance local agriculture and value-add. |

3.3 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 3.3.1 | Build on skills gaps studies, strengthen partnerships with Universities, Charlton Trade Training Centre, Birchip Cropping Group etc. |
| 3.3.2 | Redevelop the Buloke Shire Economic Development and Tourism Strategy. |
| 3.3.3 | Focus on hospitality and care (aged, disability and early childhood) and key trade workforce gaps. |
| 3.3.4 | Implement agreed actions Investment Attraction Guide and the Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy. |

3.4 DIGITAL CONNECTIONS

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 3.4.1 | Review Blackspots and renew advocacy with increased emphasis on 'remote working'. |
| 3.4.2 | Work with Mallee Regional Partnerships to implement key initiatives from the Mallee Digital Strategy. |
| 3.4.3 | Identify, support and seek funding for place-based projects aimed at increasing digital literacy. |
| 3.4.4 | Advocate for NBN upgrades to fibre connections across Buloke townships to support business growth and the attraction of new businesses. |

OUR ECONOMY

INDICATORS

REMPPLAN Data on Economic Factors
 Actions and outcomes from Economic Development and Tourism Strategy
 Local Employment Rates
 Buloke Shire Visitor Rates
 Buloke Shire Community Satisfaction Survey
 Outcomes of population growth/decline against projections
 Number of planned business development activities
 Planning and Building development data across the Shire

CURRENT STRATEGIES AND PLANS

Buloke Economic Development and Tourism Strategy
 Buloke Industry, Product and Services Gap Analysis
 Loddon Mallee Economic Recovery Strategy
 Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy
 Mallee Digital Strategy
 Mallee Regional Partnership Priorities
 Regional Tourism Plans and Priorities
 Individual Community Plans
 Skills and Workforce Gap Report
 Rural Land Use & Settlements Strategy

ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING

Funding for blackspots and internet connection upgrades
 Funding for tourism infrastructure upgrades and a supported tourism industry
 Partnership with relevant universities, RTO's and industry for education and training opportunities





PRIORITY 4: OUR COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

LONG TERM VISION:

Long Term Vision: Our future Buloke... is dynamically led by a Council that informs community, has active partnerships, authentic advocacy and quality customer service delivering valued community services in a responsible way.

Long Term Aspirations:

| | |
|--|---|
| Active partnerships and good communication with Council. | Support community leaders with the skills and knowledge required to advocate for their communities. |
| Dynamic well supported and recognised volunteers. | Active local laws guidance and support. |
| Quality customer service and response times. | Valued, supported and recognised volunteers. |
| Less red tape. | |

OUR COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

| Long Term Strategies: | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Council's Role |
| 1. Encourage and make clear opportunities for community participation in Council decision making. | Leader Facilitator |
| 2. Employ a range of effective communication methods to actively and openly share information with community members, as per Council's Engagement Policy. | Leader |
| 3. Partner with community and town forums and other key groups to advance agreed community planning priorities and address emerging issues. | Leader Partner Facilitator Supporter |
| 4. Work collaboratively to develop and build community leadership skills. | Supporter Partner |
| 5. Strive for excellence in customer service delivery. | Leader |
| 6. Support, encourage and recognise community volunteers. | Provider Supporter |
| 7. Provide leadership to communities to strengthen relationships and collaboration between community groups and across towns. | Leader Facilitator |
| 8. Work together with the Victorian Government to better support community innovation, investment and jobs through the reduction of unnecessary red tape. | Supporter Partner Regulator |
| 9. Continue to advocate for funding structures, rules, regulations and service models that better fit small rural environments. | Supporter |

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OUR COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025 STRATEGIES

4.1 ACTIVE LEADERS AND VOLUNTEERS

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 4.1.1 | Redevelop and implement the Volunteer Action Plan. |
| 4.1.2 | Support volunteer attraction initiatives from local community groups. |
| 4.1.3 | Support opportunities that inspire leadership within communities, strengthen relationship with NCLLEN Youth Action Council. |
| 4.1.4 | Invest in skill development of community groups and leaders building on the community-led response throughout 2020. |

4.2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 4.2.1 | Continue to enhance our online and traditional communication presence to reach all community members with Council information by developing a Communication Strategy. |
| 4.2.2 | Provide high quality customer service and foster an all of organisation customer service approach through a revised Customer Service Strategy. |
| 4.2.3 | Ensure all customer requests are actioned and recorded in a timely manner by giving all staff the tools to succeed. |
| 4.2.4 | Enact Council's Community Engagement Policy by giving Council Officers the tools they need to engage effectively and meet the expectation of our community by establishing a Communications and Engagement Strategy |
| 4.2.5 | Run regular information sessions on Council operations and opportunities and listening posts in conjunction with the Library Service. |

4.3 CONTINUOUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT FOR EFFICIENT AND FLEXIBLE SERVICES

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 4.3.1 | Undertake regular reviews of Council services. |
| 4.3.2 | Continue to report on the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework. |
| 4.3.3 | Identify opportunities to upgrade and streamline Council's systems to create a better experience for residents and staff as identified through the Business Transformation Strategy |
| 4.3.4 | Continue to innovate when considering service delivery, including exploring shared service opportunities |

4.4 A WELL GOVERNED AND HEALTHY ORGANISATION

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 4.4.1 | Develop responsible cash flow budgets to achieve long term financial sustainability and report quarterly against the delivery. |
| 4.4.2 | Annually review and adopt an Advocacy Strategy, with a continued focus on supporting the sustainability of rural Councils. |
| 4.4.3 | Actively pursue funding opportunities from Federal and State Government and other community and private investors. |
| 4.4.4 | Develop and implement a Workforce Strategy. |

OUR COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

INDICATORS

Achieve the financial results set out in the 10-year Financial Plan

Improve community satisfaction results for overall performance and customer service

Funding of projects identified in Council's Advocacy Strategy

Volunteer involvement numbers

Number of information sessions undertaken and attendance data

Service Review Data and Reports

Implementation of Workforce Strategy

Business Transformation Strategy Actions

CURRENT STRATEGIES AND PLANS

Annual Budget

Financial Plan

Revenue and Rating Plan

Community Engagement Policy and Strategy

Customer Service Charter

Risk Register and Internal Audit Plan

Volunteer Action Plan

Inclusiveness Plan

Individual Town Plans

Business Transformation Strategy

ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING

Volunteer support through funding and capacity building

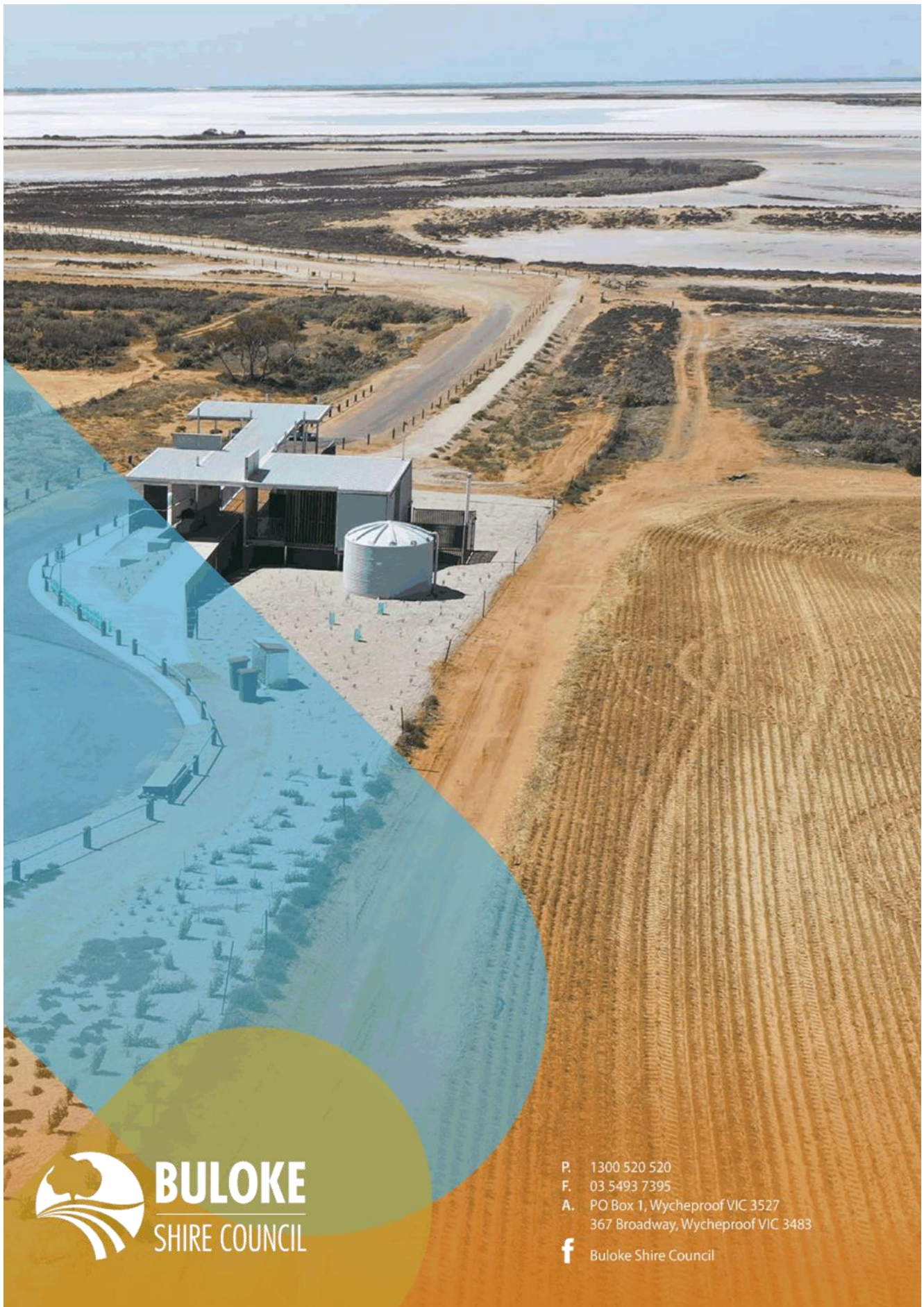
Linkages to networks for community members further leadership skills

Resourcing for gaps identified through service reviews

Shared service opportunities

Advocacy Strategy Priorities





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8.5 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

Nil

8.6 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:

- | | | |
|-------|--|---|
| 8.6.1 | C92 2020-2021 SEA LAKE-LASCELLES ROAD REHABILITATION - UPGRADING ROADS OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE | (h) confidential meeting information, being the records of meetings closed to the public under section 66(2)(a) Contract |
| 8.6.2 | C97 2020-2021 NULLAWIL-BIRCHIP ROAD REHABILITATION | (h) confidential meeting information, being the records of meetings closed to the public under section 66(2)(a) Contract |
| 8.6.3 | C96 2020-2021 - BRIGHTENING BROADWAY STAGE 1A | (h) confidential meeting information, being the records of meetings closed to the public under section 66(2)(a) Contract |

RECOMMENDATION:

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

9. OTHER BUSINESS**9.1 NOTICES OF MOTION****9.1.1 SUPPORT FOR IDAHOBIT - RAISE THE RAINBOW PRIDE FLAG**

Author's Title: Councillor

Department: Office of the CEO

File No: CS/16/46

PURPOSE

There is an opportunity to support the LGBTQIA+ community by actively participating and promoting the International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia, Interphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) on May 17 each year.

SUMMARY

Council has supported this initiative in the past and the Rural Rainbows Roadmap identifies this celebration as an inclusive way to celebrate this part of our community.

To show its support I table this Notice of Motion that Council show its support for IDAHOBIT and the LGBTQIA+ community by raising the rainbow pride flag at our Wycheproof Customer Service Centre on each 17 May during this term of Council as per Council's Flag Flying Policy.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council show its support for IDAHOBIT (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Interphobia, and Transphobia) and the LGBTQIA+ community by flying the Rainbow Pride Flag at Council's Wycheproof Customer Service Centre on each IDAHOBIT (17 May) throughout the term of this Council.

Attachments: Nil

9.2 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Nil

9.3 URGENT BUSINESS

Nil

9.4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Nil

10. MEETING CLOSE