



COUNCIL MEETING

AGENDA

Wednesday 14 February 2024

Commencing at 7:00pm

Wycheproof Supper Room

367 Broadway, Wycheproof

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. COUNCIL WELCOME AND STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

WELCOME

The Mayor Cr Alan Getley will welcome all in attendance.

STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

2. RECEIPT OF APOLOGIES

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council adopt the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday, 13 December 2023 and Council adopt the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Thursday, 21 December 2023.

4. REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

5. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

- a) Disclose the conflict of interest in the manner required by the Council's Governance Rules 2020; and
- a) Exclude themselves from the decision making process in relation to that matter, including any discussion or vote on the matter at any Council meeting or delegated committee, and any action in relation to the matter.

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

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

NIL

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The Meeting may be closed to members of the public to consider confidential matters.	
9.5.1 RFQ 287 2023-24 SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF TWO NEW TRACTORS	
If the meeting has been closed it will be brought back into open session by resolution	
10. MEETING CLOSE	

NEXT MEETING

THE NEXT MEETING OF COUNCIL WILL BE HELD IN WYCHEPROOF SUPPER ROOM, 367 BROADWAY, WYCHEPROOF ON WEDNESDAY, 13 MARCH 2024 AT 7:00PM.

Wayne O'Toole
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Nil

7. PROCEDURAL ITEMS**7.1 CORRESPONDENCE INITIATED BY COUNCIL****Author's Title:** Executive Assistant**Department:** Office of the CEO**File No:** GO/06/06**PURPOSE**

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

RECOMMENDATION

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

Attachments: Nil**TABLE OF CORRESPONDENCE**

Council Initiative	Sent to	Sent	Response	Purpose of Letter/Response
Notice of Motion from September 2023 CM to forward letter.	Hon Sonya Kilkenny MP Victorian Minister for Planning	3 Oct 2023	12 Dec 2023 Tim Pallas MP Treasurer	To outline Council's concerns with the impacts on small communities with the introduction of the Windfall Gains Tax (WGT). RESPONSE: The Minister acknowledged concerns regarding WGT tax. Outlining WGT applies to value uplift associated with rezoning decisions made on or after 1 July 2023. Noting the tax is designed to capture a portion of windfall gains of over \$100,000 in land value that landowners receive directly due to a Govt decision to rezone their land. This includes rezonings of land held by both state & local govts. Highlighting WGT will be applied to the value uplift associated with Govt decisions to rezone land and will not be calculated based on the extent of any future improvements to the land. Under WGT rates schedule, the tax rate effectively phases up to a maximum of 50 per cent of the total value uplift, with landowners retaining the remainder. Stating revenue generated by WGT will help support vital services & infrastructure such as hospitals, schools & public transport, including in rural communities. WGT also includes a number of exemptions, including some that may be relevant to landowners of Buloke Shire. 1. An exemption for up to two hectares of residential land, which includes primary production land with a dwelling affixed to it that is fit for occupancy at the time of a rezoning. This exemption will apply even where the dwelling is not

Council Initiative	Sent to	Sent	Response	Purpose of Letter/Response
				the landowner's principal place of residence. 2. An exemption for rezoning to a Rural Zone other than the Rural Living Zone
Notice of Motion from October 2023 CM to forward letter.	<i>The Hon. Anthony Carbines MP Minister of Victorian Police</i>	19 Oct 2023	18 Dec 2023 <i>The Hon. Anthony Carbines MP</i>	<p>Calling on the State Government to guarantee that one-person police stations will not close</p> <p>RESPONSE: The Minister outlined the critical importance of single person stations across Victoria and advised VicPol have committed not to remove Police from single person stations. The Minister noted that as a result of 22-23 Government Budget funding an additional 502 police officers and 50 PSO's will be recruited, of which their deployment positions are decided by the Chief Commissioner.</p>
Notice of Motion from Nov 2023 CM to forward letter.	<p><i>Hon Melissa Horne MP Minister for Roads and Road Safety</i></p> <p><i>Copy sent to: Anthony Judd Exec Director Loddon, Mallee and Hume Dept of Transport & Planning</i></p>	17 Nov 2023	4 Jan 2024 The Hon Melissa Horne MP – Min for Roads and Safety	<p>Council write regarding the poor condition of regional and rural roads and request that these ongoing poor conditions be addressed as a matter of urgency.</p> <p>RESPONSE: 2023 – 2024 Road Maintenance is well underway, and DTP will be delivering repairs to many roads in Shire including: Sunraysia Hwy, Calder Hwy, Borung Hwy, Donald – Murtoa Rd, Birchip-Wycheproof Rd, Birchip–Sea Lake Rd. DTP manages arterial road network in accordance with its Road Management Plan.</p> <p>Government is investing an additional \$2.8 billion over 10 years into road maintenance and renewal works, including flood recovery. This will see a total of at least \$6.6 billion invested in maintaining our road network over the next decade.</p> <p>This new multi-year funding approach means DTP can plan a long-term road maintenance program and deliver works in a strategic manner across the State, also allow DTP to take a more efficient and sustainable approach to road maintenance over the next decade. \$770 million is being spent in this financial year alone to maintain our roads.</p> <p>Our maintenance season is well underway with a focus on repairing roads that were damaged as a result of last year's unexpected weather events. This includes patching and pothole filling that will keep our roads drivable and safe for passenger and freight transport. DTP crews have also achieved significant milestones in the past year: patching thousands of potholes, clearing hundreds of thousands of tonnes of snow from alpine roads, repairing or replacing more than 20,000 signs and preparing for the upcoming summer with tens of thousands of kilometres of roadside grass being mowed, slashed and sprayed.</p> <p>Thank you again for sharing your concerns. Your</p>

Council Initiative	Sent to	Sent	Response	Purpose of Letter/Response
				feedback is important to the Allan Labor Government as it continues to work hard to improve regional roads in Victoria.

7.2 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 Meeting held 6 December 2023.

Attachments: 1 [Councillor Briefing Record - 6 December 2023](#)

KEY POINTS/ISSUES

Transparency is a fundamental principle of democratic governance.

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

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

As per the Council Meeting Schedules adopted 9 November 2022 and 8 November 2023, 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 Briefing held on 6 December 2023 is attached for public information.



Councillor Briefing Record

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

Date:	6 December 2023	Time	5:00pm – 8:00pm
Location:	Berriwillock Community Centre		
Attendees:	Mayor Cr Alen Getley, Deputy Mayor Cr Bronwyn Simpson, Cr Graeme Milne, Cr Bernadette Hogan, Wayne O'Toole – Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Michelle Stedman – Director Corporate & Organisational Performance (DCOP),		
Apologies:	Cr Daryl Warren, Cr David Pollard, Travis Fitzgibbon – Director Community Development (DCD), Hannah Yu – Director Infrastructure & Delivery (DID)		
Guests:	Berriwillock Community Devl. Group – Alison Watson (President), Paul Rohleder (Secretary), Jo Postlethwaite - Manager Community Recovery Trevor Rumbold - Coordinator Project Delivery Daniel McLoughlan – Manager Assets		
Acknowledgement of Country:	The Mayor will acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we are meeting and pay our respects to their Elders and to the Elders from other communities who may be here today.		
Conflicts of Interest:	Nil		

ITEMS

NO.	MATTER FOR DISCUSSION	Notes
1.	Councillor only time 5:00pm – 5:30pm	
2.	Confirmation of Councillor Briefing Minutes – 15 November 2023	Confirmed
3.	Presentations	
3.1	Berriwillock Community Devl. Group – Alison Watson (President), Paul Rohleder (Secretary)	
3.2	Community Recovery Grants – Jo Postlethwaite	
4.	Councillor Matters	
	Monthly Project Report	
Dinner Break		6:30pm
5.	CEO Updates 6:40pm	
5.1	Draft Council Meeting Agenda and Confidential Agenda - 13 December 2023	



5.2	Australia Day Awards	
5.3	Department Transport and Planning Discussion	
5.4	Update: Interest in Land Purchase	
5.5	Update: Glass Out Bins	
5.6	Budget Timetable Discussion	
NEXT BRIEFING		
7 February 2024 – Sea Lake Senior Citizens Centre at 5:00pm		

7.3 LETTERS OF CONGRATULATIONS AND RECOGNITION OF ACHIEVEMENT/AWARDS

Author's Title: Executive Assistant

Department: Office of the CEO

File No: CR/13/01

PURPOSE

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

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

RECOMMENDATION

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

Attachments: Nil

RECOGNITION OF ACHIEVEMENT ITEMS

Provider	Recipient	Date	Purpose for Recognition
ABC Heywire Storytelling Competition	Elliott Bidstrup Birchip	December 2023	For being a winner of the ABC 2023 Heywire competition for his life story on "how he realised he was supposed to be born a boy' – The day he realised he was transgender".
Birchip Forum	Maureen Donnellon Birchip	26 January 2024	Citizen of the Year Birchip and District
Charlton Forum	Emily Olive Charlton	26 January 2024	Young Citizen of the Year Charlton and District
Charlton Forum	Anne Kenny Charlton	26 January 2024	Citizen of the Year Charlton and District
Charlton Forum	Charlton Camp-draft Club Inaugural Camp-draft Event Charlton	26 January 2024	Event of the Year Charlton and District

Provider	Recipient	Date	Purpose for Recognition
Charlton Forum	Charlton Youth Group Emily Olive, Dayne Bartlett, Ezzie Gray, Fletcher Holmes- Brown, Annie Olive, Emmy Nelson, Elise Fitzpatrick, Poppy Fitzpatrick, Amali Fitzpatrick, Sheena Fitzpatrick, Maggie Riley, Isabel Soulsby, Elliott Fitzpatrick, Isaac Bourke, Angus Johnstone, Bailey Hooper-Dixon, Jye Roberts, Michael Olive, Hugh Sait, Nick Thompson.	26 January 2024	Youth Volunteers Recognition Recipients
Donald 2000	Jacob Donnellon Donald	26 January 2024	Junior Citizen of the Year Donald and District
Donald 2000	Graham and Jenni Shilton Donald	26 January 2024	Joint winners for Citizen of the Year Donald and District
Donald 2000	Donald's Platform 3480 Donald 2000 Railway Station	26 January 2024	"Place of the Year" now restored was able to host many fun and vibrant community events at this venue
Advance Sea Lake Inc	Julie Pringle Sea Lake	26 January 2024	Citizen of the Year Sea Lake and District
Advance Sea Lake Inc	Family Festival of Fun Event Tyrrell College Leadership Group Angus Renney, Callum Mott, Charlie Mitchell, Georgia McClelland, Judd Durie, Jada Symes	26 January 2024	Community Event of the Year Sea Lake and District
Wyche Alive Inc	Sharna Bartram Nullawil	26 January 2024	Junior Citizen of the Year Wycheproof
Wyche Alive Inc	Max Dillon Wycheproof	26 January 2024	Citizen of the Year Wycheproof
Wyche Alive Inc	Wycheproof-Narraport Football Club's King of the Mount Event	26 January 2024	Event of the Year Wycheproof

7.4 STATUS OF ACTION OF PAST COUNCIL MEETING RESOLUTIONS

Author's Title: Executive Assistant

Department: Office of the CEO

File No: GO/05/04

PURPOSE

To provide Council with a list of the Status of Action (SOA) of Council Resolutions outstanding for completion of action, and the SOA for the 13 December 2023 Council Meeting Resolutions.

RECOMMENDATION

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

Attachments: 1 [Status of Action on Council Meeting Resolutions](#)

KEY POINTS/ISSUES

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

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

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

Attached to this report for public information is a list of the SOA of Council Resolutions outstanding for completion of action and introducing the SOA for the 13 December 2023 Council Meeting Resolutions.

Summary of Action on Council Resolutions – Outstanding Previous Months Items to 13 December 2023 Council Meeting

Date	Directorate	Item	Resolution/Question	Actioning Officer/s	Status of Action	Complete or Commenced
02082023	Infrastructure and Delivery	8.2.1	That Council: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Notes that following the consultation process in accordance with its Community Engagement Policy, one submission was received to the proposed nine-lot subdivision sale of land at 110 Sutcliffe Street, Sea Lake; Sells the nine-lot subdivision surplus land at 110 Sutcliffe Street, Sea Lake by private treaty or auction in accordance section 114 of the Local Government Act 2020 and Council's Sale of Land Policy; and Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to execute the Transfer of Land documents and any other documents required to affect the sale of the land. 	Dir Infra & Del	GWMWater approval obtained, procurement for works has commenced. Civil contractor has recommended works.	Commenced
09082023	Infrastructure and Delivery	8.2.4	Risk and Resilience Grants Program That Council: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Approve a financial co-contribution of \$70,000 from the \$200,000 Grant Opportunity Reserve FY24 in addition to a \$180,000 Council cash commitment in FY25 for the purposes of a funding application towards the Risk and Resilience Grants Program 2023. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to apply for the Risk and Resilience Grants Program 2023; and Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to sign the funding agreement on behalf of the Council should the application be successful. 	Dir Infra & Del	Expression of Interest submitted	Commenced

Tabled 14 February 2024 Council Meeting

Summary of Action on Council Resolutions – Outstanding Previous Months Items to 13 December 2023 Council Meeting

Date	Directorate	Item	Resolution/Question	Actioning Officer/s	Status of Action	Complete or Commenced
11102123	Corporate and Organisational Performance	8.2.2	Audit and Risk Committee Chair Report 1. That Council notes the Biannual Audit and Risk Report from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee. 2. Council also write to the retiring Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, Ms Margaret Abbey, to thank her for her dedicated and professional service as Chair of this Committee.	Dir Corp Org Perf	Correspondence issued to ARC Chair thanking them for service over the past three years and congratulating on their appointment for a further 12 months.	Completed
13122023	Office of the CEO	7.3	That the Council acknowledge and congratulate the persons and/or groups mentioned in the report for their achievements.	EA	Letters drafted, approved by Mayor. All mailed	Completed
13122023	Corp and Org Performance	7.7	That Council: 1. Note the circulated motion and the decision of Councillors not on a leave of absence in relation to the reappointment of Mr Bernard Young as an independent Audit and Risk Committee member, and Ms Margaret Abbey PSM as Chair of the Committee for the periods specified; and 2. In the interest of removing any ambiguity or doubt: a) Appoint Mr Bernard Young as an independent Audit and Risk Committee Member for a second term of 3 years, effective from 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2026 inclusive; and b) Appoint Ms Margaret Abbey PSM as Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee for a third term of 12 months, effective from 16 November 2023 to 14 November 2024.	Dir Corp and Org Perf	Correspondence issued to reappointed Chair and independent member for their respective terms.	Completed

Tabled 14 February 2024 Council Meeting

Summary of Action on Council Resolutions – Outstanding Previous Months Items to 13 December 2023 Council Meeting

Date	Directorate	Item	Resolution/Question	Actioning Officer/s	Status of Action	Complete or Commenced
13122023	Community Development	8.2.1	That Council endorse the Draft Children, Youth and Families Plan to go out for community feedback.	Dir Comm Dev	Advertised and available on Council website. Direct contact with stakeholder groups underway, will come back to Council in March for adoption.	In progress
13122023	Corp and Org Performance	8.2.2	<p>That Council resolves that in the exercise of the powers conferred by the legislation referred to in the attached Instrument of Delegation to Members of Council staff:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There be delegated to the members of Council staff holding, acting in or performing the duties of the offices or positions referred to in the attached Instrument of Delegation to members of Council Staff (Instrument), the powers, duties and functions set out in that instrument, subject to the conditions and limitations specified in that Instrument; 2. The Instrument comes into force immediately upon this resolution being made and is to be signed by the Council's Chief Executive Officer and the Mayor; 3. On the coming into force of the Instrument all previous delegations from S6 Instrument of Delegation by Council to members of Council staff (other than the Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer) are revoked; and 4. The duties and functions set out in the Instrument must be performed, and the powers set out in the Instrument must be executed, in accordance with any guidelines or policies of Council that it may adopt. 	Dir Corp and Org Perf	Instrument of Delegation actioned	Completed

Tabled 14 February 2024 Council Meeting

Summary of Action on Council Resolutions – Outstanding Previous Months Items to 13 December 2023 Council Meeting

Date	Directorate	Item	Resolution/Question	Actioning Officer/s	Status of Action	Complete or Commenced
13122023	Corp and Org Performance	8.4.1	That Council In the exercise of the powers conferred by s147(4) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987: 1. Appoints Rodney Hotker and Roslyn Olle as Authorised Officers per the attached instruments of Appointment and Authorisation (the instruments); 2. The instruments come into force immediately it is signed by Council's Chief Executive Officer, and remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it; and 3. Revokes the Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 for Wayne O'Toole that was adopted by Council on 12 August 2020.	Dir Corp and Org Perf	Instruments of Appointment and Authorisation actioned	Completed
13122023	Infra & Delivery	9.5.1	Award Contract C121 2023/24 AGRN 1037 – Rehabilitation of two Floodways on Yeungroon Road	Dir Infra & Delivery		
13122023	Infra & Delivery	9.5.2	Award Contract C122 2023/24 Design & Construct Changing Places Amenities Block & Car Park at Donald Memorial Park.	Dir Infra & Delivery		
13122023	Infra & Delivery	9.5.3	Award Contract C120 2022/23 Birchip Football Oval Lighting Upgrade	Dir Infra & Delivery		
21122023	Infra & Delivery	4.1.1	Birchip Community Housing Growing Regions application stage 2 That Council: Gives approval for Birchip Community Housing Incorporated to seek a bank loan of up to \$350,000 to complete the construction, should their funding application be successful;	Dir Infra & Del	Correspondence supporting stage 2 application sent	Complete – awaiting outcome of stage 2 process

 Tabled 14 February 2024 Council Meeting

Summary of Action on Council Resolutions – Outstanding Previous Months Items to 13 December 2023 Council Meeting

Date	Directorate	Item	Resolution/Question	Actioning Officer/s	Status of Action	Complete or Commenced
			<p>Provides in principle support to act as guarantor for a 10-year loan up to a maximum of \$350,000;</p> <p>Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to negotiation the terms and structure of the guarantor agreement with Birchip Community Housing Incorporated and the bank;</p> <p>Allocate up to \$100,000 over 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years through the established Grant Opportunity Reserve.</p> <p>5. Makes the land at 56 Cumming Avenue, Birchip available to implement the construction work proposed under the Project.</p>			

7.5 PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED - MONTHLY UPDATE

Author's Title: Planning Officer

Department: Community Development

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	Address	Date Rec	Summary of Proposal	Status
PA23020	Church Street, Culgoa	10/05/2023	Use and development of land for a transfer station (install an RV dump point and septic holding tank)	Permit Issued
PA23026	Horace Street, Sea Lake	06/09/2023	Construct and display internally illuminated business identification sign (LED priceboard)	Review
PA23034	Enterprise Drive, Donald	25/09/2023	Three-lot subdivision of land	Permit Issued
PA23036	Birchip – Sea Lake Road, Marlbed	11/10/2023	Two-lot subdivision of land	Permit Issued
PA23037	Connellan Road, Watchem	24/10/2023	Two lot subdivision of land (boundary re-alignment)	Permit Issued
PA23038	Industry Drive, Donald	25/10/2023	Telecommunications Facility (Installation of a 60-metre-high lattice tower and ancillary equipment)	Permit Issued
PA23041	Morrison Street, Birchip	03/10/2023	Construct a fence greater than 1 metre high in Public Park & Recreation Zone	Request for Further Information
PA24001	Yeungroon Road, Yeungroon East	13/12/2023	Use and development of land for rural worker accommodation (two two-bedroom units and carport)	Request for Further Information

Application No	Address	Date Rec	Summary of Proposal	Status
PA24002	Borong Highway, Wooroonook	10/01/2024	Use and development of land for a single dwelling on an allotment in the Farming Zone, create or alter access to a Transport Zone and build within a setback to a Transport Zone	Request for Further Information
PA24003	Clifton Street, Charlton	22/01/2024	Construction of a dwelling and demolition of an outbuilding within a Heritage Overlay	New
PA24004	Borong Highway, Gil Gil	28/01/2024	Use and development of land for a place of assembly to hold the Donald B & S on one occasion in 2024 and one occasion in 2025, patron camping for the event, building and works for the construction of a sound shell/stage.	Request for Further Information
PA24005	Slocombe Road, Warmur	24/01/2024	Subdivision of land (boundary realignment)	New
VS23010	Mildura Way, Charlton	1/11/2023	Building and works to construct a garage associated with existing dwelling in a Heritage Overlay	Request for Further Information
VS23011	High Street, Wycheproof	31/11/2023	Construct a 2 metre fence in a Heritage Overlay	Request for Further Information
VS24001	Woods Street, Donald	11/01/2024	Carry out external works to a building in a Heritage Overlay (awning)	Request for Further Information
VS24002	Austerberry Road, Sea Lake	25/01/2024	Construct a building (fertiliser shed 26m x 24m x9mH) within a minimum setback from a road	Review

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

7.6 BUILDING PERMITS - MONTHLY UPDATE

Author's Title: Statutory Administration Support

Department: Community Development

File No: DB/14/01

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides information on Building Permits approved by staff from 1 December 2023 to 31 January 2024.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council note information contained in the report on Building Permits approved by staff from 1 December 2023 to 31 January 2024.

Attachments: Nil

LIST OF BUILDING PERMITS APPROVED BY COUNCIL SURVEYOR

Permit No.	Address	Project Description	Date Approved
1265661872318	Stannard Road Watchupga Victoria 3485	Construction of To build a shed to house farrowing pigs	5/12/2023
6228472111726	High Street Charlton VIC 3525	Demolition of Building	11/12/2023
2839256446257	High Street Charlton VIC 3525	Demolition of Building	14/12/2023
7332137479508	McCulloch Street Donald VIC 3480	Removal of existing Ford signage & fascia cladding. Install of new Ford signage & cladding	25/1/2024
4069522510852	Park Street Culgoa vic 3530	To remove existing garage and replace with a new shed with bigger dimensions	25/1/2024

LIST OF PRIVATE BUILDING PERMITS APPROVED BY COUNCIL SURVEYOR

Permit No.	Address	Project Description	Date Approved
7058371728606	Hannon Street Sea Lake VIC 3533	Construction of x5 Townhouses	13/12/2023
7744170801905	Dumosa-Birchip Road Dumosa VIC 3527	Extension to Existing Shed	13/12/2023
5890204694899	Morrison Street Birchip VIC 3483	Construction of Storage Shed	22/12/2023
3713441002257	Hammill Street Donald VIC 3480	Sub Floor Rectification Works to Existing Dwelling welling	9/1/2024
6889928123564	Drury Road Berriwillock Vic 3531	Construction of Farm Shed	15/1/2024
7820827446953	Mildura Way Charlton VIC 3525	Construction of Shelter	17/1/2024
9722060826158	Sunraysia Highway Birchip West VIC 3483	New construction of a detached dwelling & garage	23/1/2024
2424229017901	Railway Avenue Sea Lake VIC 3533	Construction of a Service Station	23/1/2024

8. GENERAL BUSINESS

8.1 POLICY REPORTS

Nil

8.2 MANAGEMENT REPORTS

8.2.1 DRAFT AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES 6 DECEMBER 2023

Author's Title: Director Community Development

Department: Community Development

File No: FM/02/09

Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025

Strategic Objective: Our Council and Community Leadership

PURPOSE

To provide Council with the confirmed minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held on 6 December 2023.

SUMMARY

The 6 December 2023 Audit and Risk Committee minutes are attached for the information of Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the confirmed Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 6 December 2023.

Attachments: 1 [Draft Audit and Risk Committee Meeting Minutes 6 December 2023](#)

DISCUSSION

The Audit and Risk Committee (the Committee) is a statutory committee of Council which considers matters of governance, finance, and risk management. The Committee is comprised of three independent members the Mayor and one Councillor. The Committee provides advice on the integrity and effectiveness of Council's financial reporting and risk management system.

At the meeting held, the Committee considered the following matters:

- Outstanding Action Items
- Audit and Risk Committee Work Plan
- Asset Management quarterly update
- Legislative Compliance Register
- Internal Audit Status Report and update
- Internal Audit – ICT General Security Controls Audit Report
- Internal Audit – Procurement Audit Report
- External Audit - VAGO - Final Management Letter
- Victorian Auditor-General's Office Status Report – November 2023
- Councillor and CEO reimbursements
- Finance Report as at 30 September 2023
- Audit and Risk Annual Self-Assessment Survey
- Audit and Risk Committee 2024 Meeting Schedule
- Audit and Risk Committee 2024 Work Plan
- 2024/25 Annual Budget Timetable

RELEVANT LAW

Council is required under the *Local Government Act 2020* to establish and maintain an Audit and Risk Committee.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Committee was established by Council at its meeting held on 12 August 2020. The most recent Audit and Risk Committee Charter was adopted by Council on 9 November 2022.

OPTIONS

Not applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Committee provides guidance and recommendations that result in improvements to methods and systems of Council.

COLLABORATION

Councillors and senior staff are invited to attend, and present as required at Committee meetings. Recommendations from the Committee are communicated to relevant staff members for action.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The costs associated with the Committee are considered in the Annual Budget.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

The Audit and Risk Committee Charter was adopted by Council on 9 November 2022.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Audit and Risk Committee is considered an essential element of good governance, monitoring Council's financial and performance reporting, monitoring and providing advice on risk management and overseeing internal and external audit functions. The draft minutes are provided to Council to consider the activities undertaken by the Committee.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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



AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

Wednesday 6 December 2023

Commencing at 10 AM

**Wycheproof Hall Supper Room
367 Broadway
Wycheproof**

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. WELCOME

The Chair opens the meeting and welcomes those present.

2. RECEIPT OF APOLOGIES

Hannah Yu (Director Infrastructure and Delivery), Martin Thompson (Crowe).

3. ATTENDEES

Margaret Abbey PSM (Chair), Dean Sleigh (Member), Bernard Young (Member), Cr Alan Getley (Mayor), Cr Bernadette Hogan, Wayne O'Toole (CEO), Michelle Stedman (Director Corporate and Organisational Performance), Travis Fitzgibbon (Director Community Development), Andrew Rose (Acting Manager Governance), Jen Hewett (Governance), Cr Daryl Warren, Cr Bronwyn Simpson, Dan McLoughlan (Manager Assets), Paul Harrison (RSD Audit)-via Teams.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

MOTION:

That Council adopt the Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held on Tuesday, 12 September 2023.

MOVED: DEAN SLEIGH

SECONDED: BERNARD YOUNG

CARRIED.

Minutes were confirmed subject to correcting the attendees and signed by Chair.

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE BRIEFING

Briefing by Chief Executive Officer to the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting including any legal matters.

The Chief executive officer briefed the Committee on the following topics;

- Council held a Statutory Meeting on 8 November 2023, Cr Getley was re-elected as Mayor and Cr Simpson was elected Deputy Mayor.
- Council's Pools were opened on the 18 November 2023
- Home Support Services provided by Council have ceased
- Council's Manager Financial Strategy, Nathan Cutting resigned from Council
- Fire season has commenced and Fire Inspections and Notices have now been undertaken
- The Charlton Post Office was destroyed by fire on 19 November 2023. Council is assisting the Post Office, providing the Shire Hall for mail distribution until alternative arrangements can be arranged.
- EBA negotiations have in principle agreement in quantum and backpay, further details are to be negotiated. Voting on the agreement is expected in the new year.

The committee were further advised that whilst Council has ceased Home Care services, there are 4 providers who will assume delivery of this service. There is no financial implications to Council as there was provisions within Council's budget.

Buloke Shire Council Audit and Risk Committee Meeting Minutes**Wednesday, 6 December 2023**

There was also a provisions in Council's budget for the EBA backpay, and payments are within the provision amount.

6. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest. .

7. MATTERS FOR DECISION / DISCUSSION / NOTING

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8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**9. MEETING CLOSE****NEXT MEETING**

THE NEXT AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING WILL BE HELD IN WYCHEPROOF HALL SUPPER ROOM

367 BROADWAY

WYCHEPROOF ON WEDNESDAY, 7 FEBRUARY 2024 AT 1:00 PM.

Wayne O'Toole

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

7. MATTERS FOR DECISION / DISCUSSION / NOTING**7.1 OUTSTANDING ACTION ITEMS**

Author's Title: Governance Officer

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

PURPOSE

To inform the Audit and Risk Committee of the current status of actions from internal and external audit and relevant regulatory reports.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee:

1. Notes the status of the outstanding actions

NOTED

Attachments: 1 Outstanding Action Items

KEY POINTS / ISSUES

Council staff are required to provide updated commentary and to advise when an action is complete. Once completed items are to the satisfaction of the Audit and Risk Committee, the action will be removed from the report.

Current comments are indicated by red font.

DISCUSSION

The Committee were advised that Council is undertaking a more strategic risk review and to assess the actions to ensure that they are still appropriate given the time frame several of them have been outstanding.

The Committee noted the Outstanding Action Items.

7.2 REVIEW OF AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

Author's Title: Governance Officer

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

PURPOSE

To provide an updated status of the Audit and Risk Committee Work Plan

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee note and review the work plan

NOTED

Attachments: 1 2023 Work Plan

KEY POINTS / ISSUES

The work plan incorporates all matters that have been considered or will be considered by the Audit and Risk Committee over a twelve-month period.

The attached annual work plan has been populated to show the status of current documents and processes, and key documents and initiatives to be considered within the 2023 meeting schedule, that are known.

The work plan is a dynamic document. It is updated quarterly to reflect reports presented to the committee.

DISCUSSION

The Committee noted the status of the 2023 Work Plan

7.3 LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE REGISTER

Author's Title: Governance Officer

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

PURPOSE

To provide the Audit and Risk Committee with the status of legislative compliance obligations.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the Legislative Compliance Report.

NOTED

Attachments: 1 Legislative Compliance Report - 30 Nov 2023

KEY POINTS / ISSUES

A Legislative Compliance Register has been developed containing items for compliance pursuant to the *Local Government Act 1989* (LGA89), the *Local Government Act 2020* (LGA20) and associated regulations.

Compliance obligations have been included in the report, taking into consideration the commencement dates of the various sections of the LGA20. Items for compliance to other legislation are being added progressively as these items are identified.

The Legislative Compliance Framework places the responsibility on individual departments to identify compliance items and to notify the Governance Team for inclusion into the Register. The subscription service provided through the compliance system provides Council with alerts when there is new or changed obligations to key legislation.

The Register:

- receives legislative updates on a periodical basis.
- identifies legislative obligations and then to be assigned to staff members.
- sets due dates and review cycles. The system will send reminder emails to staff members when their assigned obligation is near due.

The Register is monitored, new legislative obligations are assigned to staff members, and obligations are audited and signed off to ensure that Council's legislative obligations are met.

DISCUSSION

The Committee noted that the status on one obligation was marked partially complete, and were advised that the obligation was mostly met only several returns were still required before it could be marked as complete.

The Committee noted the Legislative Compliance Status Report.

7.4 ASSET MANAGEMENT QUARTERLY UPDATE

Author's Title: Manager Assets

Department: Infrastructure and Delivery

File No: FM|02|09

PURPOSE

To update the Audit and Risk Committee on Council's flood response and recovery activities, and progress on business-as-usual asset management programs.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the information contained in the quarterly update.

NOTED

Attachments: Nil

KEY POINTS / ISSUES

Council Officers prepare a summary of Asset Management initiatives and activities to present to the Audit and Risk Committee each quarter in view of the size of its asset base, and the challenges associated with sustainable management of its assets.

Since presenting the Asset Management Report to the Audit and Risk Committee at its September 2023 Meeting, the following matters have commenced, progressed, or concluded:

October Flood Event (AGRN 1037)

Council submitted all Emergency Works claims, totalling approximately \$4.4M, by the extended due date of 30 September 2023 following in principle agreement by the Department of Transport and Planning on its business rules, and plant and equipment rates.

Completion of emergency works, and the emergency works claims process, was a significant undertaking which ultimately involved claims for over 7,750 standard treatment types across the Council's road network.

Council staff and its consultant engineers are working towards submission of approximately 30 Reconstruction of Essential Public Asset (REPA) packages with an estimated total value of \$20M. Crucially, the betterment identified as required during Council's preliminary investigation (prior to pre-approval of design stage) far exceeds the state government allocation to the Shire.

Council, through the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Phase 4 funding allocation, is required to invest approximately \$922,000 to improve its road network. This allocation, in addition to FY23 Council cash allocation of \$1.9M, and the proposed FY24 allocation of \$3M (long term financial plan rehabilitation allocation) will be used to cover the shortfall associated with 'the gap'.

Business As Usual Activities

1. Road Services Preventative Maintenance Program

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Work continues to occur in the development and implementation of Council's Road Services Preventative Maintenance Program. Initially identified as a key outcome of the Road Services Review undertaken during FY23, the Program has been developed in consultation with Infrastructure and Delivery staff using the following assumptions:

Standard treatments – established based on DRFA	Reseal detail set 3 years in advance
9-month schedule	Preventative schedule; not 100% reactive
Following harvest cycle	8 weeks lead time for inspections
Patrol crews preceding asset inspections	Defect rating system established; all attributes inspected; works based on road use
No dead mileage	Resources allocated per standard treatment type
High staff skill level in equipment and ICT systems	Equipment operational; optimum plant maintenance period identified
Material suitable	Stack sites and stockpiles established
Outsource certain service delivery aspects, e.g., vegetation removal	Staff employment conditions support program (e.g., 4-day working week)

2. Rural Council's Transformation Program (RCTP) – Total Asset Management System

Presentation of 3 vendors shortlisted for further evaluation occurred in October. The RCTP evaluation panel subsequently determined to engage a subject matter expert to support the continued delivery of the Project, including through undertaking a further risk assessment of vendor capability and capacity to deliver core requirements under the Project.

DISCUSSION

The committee queried if there was a gap as previously advised that there was \$13M damage to the road network, and Council has submitted claims for \$4.4M. The Committee was advised that Council had received an advance of \$8.8M, the current work stage is \$4.4M, the gap is an unknown quantity due to inconsistencies of assessments by different departments. The gap is dependent on the delivery time line, and method in which Council utilises funding to commence planning and survey activities. Council is also spending its own funding to achieve some betterment.

7.5 INTERNAL AUDIT STATUS REPORT AND UPDATE

Author's Title: Governance Officer

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

PURPOSE

To provide the Audit and Risk Committee with a report from Council's Internal Auditors on the status of the Internal Audit Program and the Internal Audit Update Report that provides a list of recent reports and publications that may be of interest.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee note:

1. the status of the Internal Audit program,
2. the internal audit update report advising of recent publications of interest.

NOTED

Attachments:

- 1 Internal Audit Status Report
- 2 Internal Audit Update Report

KEY POINTS / ISSUES

RSD Audit has provided a status update of the Internal Audit Program and Risk Management project that has been undertaken outside of the strategic audit plan.

A summary of recent reports and publications by government agencies and other sources that may impact on public sector agencies has also been provided.

The Internal Audit Status Report and Update Report are attached.

DISCUSSION

The Committee were advised that the Status report has been superseded due to the inclusion of the Final Reports for the Internal Audits for ICT General Controls and Procurement, that have been included in the agenda for this meeting.

There have also been delays with the current Internal Audit for Building Maintenance and Human Resources. The draft report for the Building Maintenance Audit is near completion, and delays in receiving documents from Council have slowed progress on the Human Resources Audit.

The Committee noted the reports from the Internal Auditor.

7.13 INTERNAL AUDIT - ICT GENERAL SECURITY CONTROLS**Author's Title:** Director Corporate and Organisation Performance**Department:** Corporate and Organisational Performance **File No:** FM/02/09**PURPOSE**

To inform the Audit and Risk Committee of the ICT General Security Controls Audit undertaken by RSD Audit.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the ICT General Security Controls Internal Audit Report from RSD Audit

NOTED**Attachments:** 1 Internal Audit - ICT General Controls - Final Report**KEY POINTS / ISSUES**

Council's Internal Auditors, RSD Audit, undertook a review of Council's ICT General Security Controls in accordance with Council's Internal Audit Plan.

The Internal Audit for ICT General Security Controls was undertaken in 2022-23 and actions arising from the report will be incorporated into the Outstanding Action Items Report.

DISCUSSION

RSD advised the committee that the project had been difficult due to loss of key staff during the audit. Since the fieldwork for the audit which was been completed 12 months ago there has been a changing environment, so it may be possible some of the data is now out of date, however, the management comments indicate there are still a number of key issues.

The Committee were advised that there has been a change of management in the IT team, that has experience with the base level of security, and improvements have occurred in several areas outlined in the report. It was acknowledged a number of gaps still remain and Council intends to obtain 3rd party assistance to identify issues.

It was suggested that Council share the Audit Report with Council's current third party provider.

The Committee noted that the report indicated that the reporting requirements to the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner should be reviewed with consideration if the organisation had undergone significant change, they were advised that Council does not consider significant change has occurred and the next Protective Data Security Plan (PDSP) is due to be undertaken in 2024.

The Committee noted that there were a large number of high actions and queried how much of the implementation is reliant on culture, management and resources, and if more resources are required, and were informed that Council has prioritised resources and considers it to be adequate.

- The Manager IT has made headway into a number of issues shown in the Audit since he commenced.
- A third party contractor is in place
- Recruitment of additional resources has commenced
- The Executive team will act as a project control group
- The implementation of the actions will require management support, cultural change and resources
- Management consider that once a second FTE is recruited, appropriate resources will be in place
- The re-development of BCP and DRP will result in Council being in a better position
- Appropriate documentation will be developed
- Areas of financial efficiency gains are being identified and implemented

The committee also expressed that they would like reports on implementation progress to be provided at each meeting, and for this to be included into the 2024 work plan.

7.14 INTERNAL AUDIT - PROCUREMENT AUDIT

Author's Title: Director Corporate and Organisation Performance

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

PURPOSE

To inform the Audit and Risk Committee of the Procurement Audit undertaken by RSD Audit.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the Procurement Internal Audit Report from RSD Audit

NOTED

Attachments: 1 Internal Audit - Procurement Audit - Final Report

KEY POINTS / ISSUES

Council's Internal Auditors, RSD Audit, undertook a review of Council's Procurement in accordance with Council's Internal Audit Plan.

The Internal Audit for Procurement was undertaken in 2023 and actions arising from the report will be incorporated into the Outstanding Action Items Report.

DISCUSSION

The Committee was informed that the audit was scoped to assess the effectiveness of the Contract Manuals and procedures that were introduced to Council approximately a year before the audit. It was noted that the recommendations are all rated medium and low and are reflective of Council moving in the right direction.

The Committee noted the Procurement Audit Final Report.

7.6 EXTERNAL AUDIT FINAL MANAGEMENT LETTER

Author's Title: Acting Manager Finance

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

PURPOSE

To advise the Audit and Risk Committee of the contents of the External Audit - Final Management Letter relating to the 2022-23 financial year audit.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the External Audit Final Management Letter 2022-23.

NOTED

Attachments: 1 VAGO Final Management Letter - Buloke Shire Council

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this report is for the Audit and Risk Committee to be aware of the contents of the Final Management Letter from Crowe, on behalf of VAGO, providing a summary of audit findings and Council's management responses. The content of the Final Management Letter includes:

- Introduction
- Summary of audit findings
- Appendix A Rating definitions and actions

Findings identified in previous periods have included:

- Revaluation of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment policy not adhered to
- Assessment of the impairment of assets not formally documented
- Provision for restoration of the gravel pits uses potentially outdated numbers
- Landfill rehabilitation provision does not include the ongoing monitoring costs
- Excessive annual leave

It is noted that the Final Management Letter 2022-23 has identified no open issues and that all issues identified from previous periods have been resolved.

The Final Management Letter 2022-23 is attached.

DISCUSSION

The Committee noted the Final Management Letter from VAGO.

7.7 VICTORIAN AUDITOR-GENERAL'S OFFICE STATUS REPORT SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 2023

Author's Title: Acting Manager Finance

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

PURPOSE

To provide the Audit and Risk Committee with status reports from the Victorian Auditor-General's Office for September to November 2023.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the Victorian Auditor-General's Office Status Reports for September to November 2023.

NOTED

Attachments:

- 1 VAGO - LG Status Report - September 2023
- 2 VAGO - LG Status Report - October 2023
- 3 VAGO - LG Status Report - November 2023

DISCUSSION

The Victorian Auditor-General's Office has provided recent Status Reports that contain information relating to VAGO activities and matters specific to the local government sector, both in Victoria and around Australia. The content of the Status Reports include:

- Caretaker convention
- VAGO news
- VAGO Financial Audit – update
- VAGO Performance Audit – proposed engagements
- VAGO Performance Audit – engagements in progress
- VAGO recently tabled Parliamentary reports
- Other Victorian Integrity and Local Government related bodies
- Other Australian audit offices.

The September 2023, October 2023, and November 2023 Status Reports are attached.

DISCUSSION

The Committee noted the Report

7.8 COUNCILLOR AND CEO REIMBURSEMENTS

Author's Title: Acting Manager Finance

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

PURPOSE

To note the report on the reimbursement of Councillor expenses in accord with section 40(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* and reimbursements to the Chief Executive Officer for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 September 2023.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the report of the reimbursement of Councillor and CEO expenses for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 September 2023.

NOTED

Attachments:

- 1 Councillor Reimbursements Report July 2023 to September 2023
- 2 CEO Reimbursements Report July 2023 to September 2023

DISCUSSION

Section 40 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to reimburse Councillors or members of a delegated committee for out-of-pocket expenses, and to provide details of all reimbursements under this section to the Audit and Risk Committee.

Council has adopted a Councillor Expenses Policy that provides information on what expenses can be reimbursed, and the conditions of the reimbursement:

- Must be a bona fide expense.
- Have been reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of Councillor or member of a delegated committee; and
- Are reasonably necessary for the Councillor or member of a delegated committee to perform that role.

The attached reports itemise all reimbursements to Councillors and the CEO during the period from 1 July 2023 to 30 September 2023.

DISCUSSION

The Committee were informed that all reimbursements are reviewed by Finance team in accord with Council Policies, Council will consider providing more context regarding the expenses. The Committee noted the Councillor and CEO reimbursements.

7.9 FINANCE REPORT AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2023**Author's Title:** Acting Manager Finance**Department:** Corporate and Organisational Performance **File No:** FM/19/01**Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025****Strategic Objective:** Our Council and Community Leadership**PURPOSE**

To present to the Audit & Risk Committee the financial reports for the period ending 30 September 2023.

SUMMARY

The year-end surplus in the 2023/24 adopted budget was \$6.2M. The current forecasted year-end surplus remains similar at this early stage of the financial year and is \$5.6M, anticipating no significant capital project delays impacting capital grant income recognition.

The Actuals vs. Approved (Budget) reporting year-to-date includes timing variances which relate to the months in which the income or expenditure is incurred. Timing differences are anticipated to be resolved throughout the financial year and are not expected to impact the Full Year Forecast result. As at 30 September 2023, Council has achieved an actual surplus of \$8.0M which is equal to the year-to-date budget for this period, which reflects the steady start to the financial year.

Further discussion around non-timing variances in financial reports is outlined below.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit & Risk Committee receives and notes the Financial Performance Report for the period ending 30 September 2023.

NOTED**Attachments:**

- 1 BSC Quarterly Financial Reports - YTD September 2023
- 2 Capital Works Statement YTD September 2023 - 2023-24 Capital Projects
- 3 Capital Works Statement YTD September 2023 - Carry Forward Projects

DISCUSSION

Report:	Report explanation:	Year to date (YTD) performance to budget and forecast commentary
Income Statement	<p><i>The Income Statement provides a summary of the total income and total expenditure relating to Council's annual operations for the reporting period. Capital grant income is included in this statement, but any related expenditure is not reflected as this is reported as increased assets on the Balance Sheet. To exclude potential distortion of underlying operations in the Income Statement, capital income is reported separately to identify the Operating Net Surplus/(Deficit).</i></p>	<p>Rates & charges Favourable variance of \$12K YTD, mainly due to supplementary rates notices. Full year forecast has been varied upward slightly to \$15.03M.</p> <p>Statutory fees and fines Unfavourable variance of \$37K YTD, mainly due to lower than anticipated permit applications. Full year forecast has been varied downward slightly to \$224K.</p> <p>Grants – operating Unfavourable variance of \$1.1M YTD, mainly due to the timing of Financial Assistance Grant payments. 100% of the 2023/24 grant allocation was paid in the 2022/23 financial year. As we near the end of financial year we will await the decision on the early payment of 2024/25 grants. Full year forecast has been varied downward slightly to \$353K.</p> <p>Contributions Unfavourable variance of \$30K YTD, mainly due to timing of capital project completion and the associated community contribution invoicing. Full year forecast has remained unchanged at this stage.</p> <p>Other income Favourable variance of \$25K YTD, mainly due to the unbudgeted receipt of funds relating to native vegetation works which Council will conduct on behalf of the Department of Transport. Full year forecast has been varied upward to \$860K to reflect this and other reimbursements relating to WorkCover insurance.</p> <p>Employee costs Favourable variance of \$729K YTD, mainly due to several vacant positions that exist, many of which are in the process of being recruited to.</p> <p>Part of this variance also relates to the EBA negotiations which continue. Once agreed on, any increases and associated backpay will be processed which should reduce this variance.</p> <p>Full year forecast has been varied downward to \$10.93M to reflect the period of time where vacant positions existed.</p> <p>Materials and services Favourable variance of \$809K YTD, mainly due to the procurement timing of several budgeted operational projects. Full year forecast has been varied upward to \$12.4M, which is a \$973K forecast overspend. This is mainly related to flood recovery expenditure, in which the</p>

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Income Statement (Continued)	<p><i>Prescribed expenditure of Capital Income is not included in the Income Statement, and this can distort the analysis of the financial performance which is better reflected by the Operating Net Surplus/(Deficit). Capital expenditure against capital grant income is provided in the Capital Work Program report and as additional assets on the balance sheet.</i></p>	<p>recognition of revenue occurred in 2022/23.</p> <p>Depreciation & amortisation Unfavourable variance of \$75K YTD, mainly relating to variances in budget estimates. Full year forecast has been varied upward and will continue to be reviewed particularly in relation to asset purchases which are below the \$5,000 asset capitalisation threshold for plant and equipment.</p> <p>Bad and doubtful debts/Borrowing costs Traditionally these expense accounts will see actuals in the second half of the financial year.</p> <p>Other expenses Favourable variance of \$50K YTD, mainly due to the timing of membership payments and community contributions. Full year forecast has been varied upward slightly to \$859K, mainly due to unbudgeted association membership costs.</p> <p>Capital income Capital grants are currently forecasting to the approved budget amount. As capital projects progress, this should result in the associated revenue being released to Council soon after.</p> <p>Full year forecast for Profit/(Loss) Disposal of Assets has been varied upward by \$43K due to the sale of multiple Council owned vehicles that have reached the end of their useful life.</p>
Balance Sheet	<p><i>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 as at the end of the month reported.</i></p>	<p>Cash and cash equivalents Cash balances (incl. investments) are at \$37M, which is a \$3.3M decrease since 30 June 2023. This is mainly due to the payment of 30 June 2023 creditor balances, resulting in a decrease in Trade and other payables liability.</p> <p>Trade and other receivables Rates debtors are the main contributor to the \$13.2M increase in Trade and other receivables, resulting from annual rates notices being generated and sent.</p> <p>Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment There has been a \$1.1M decrease in this area since 30 June 2023, mainly relating to depreciation of assets which partially offsets capital expenditure year-to-date.</p> <p>Trade and other payables There has been a \$1.2M decrease since 30 June 2023, mainly due to the volume of creditor payments which occurs prior to end of financial year.</p> <p>Trust funds and deposits</p>

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		There has been a \$1.4M increase since 30 June 2023, mainly due to the fire services levy amounts which are held on behalf of the State Revenue Office (SRO) when rates notices are initially generated. This is then paid to the SRO on a quarterly basis.
Cashflow Statement	<i>The Cashflow Statement reflects actual results for the reporting period in line with statutory financial reporting.</i>	There has been \$1.3M used to support the capital works program as at 30 September 2023. Overall, there has been a reduction in cash of \$3.3M since 30 June 2023.
Cashflow Forecast	<i>The Cashflow Chart visually depicts the cashflow forecast and the updated format is illustrated in a dual design, based on best practice reporting.</i> <i>The P & L Forecast is a projection of cashflow for the remainder of the year based on the month-end cash balance, the monthly budgets, specified timing parameters (such when BAS/super are due and quarterly rate receipts) and capital expenditure.</i>	Timing assumptions have been made regarding capital project income and expenditure for 2023/24. While this is still being confirmed in accordance with capital project delivery, all income and expenditure is reported in June 2024 by default unless otherwise specified. The cashflow forecast across the 12 months results in an increase of approximately \$5.6M. This is however highly dependent on decisions that will be made around the timing of the Financial Assistance Grants, expected in May/June 2024.
Capital Works Program	<i>The Capital Works Statement lists the expenditure for each project incurred to date.</i>	The total capital works program for 2023/24 is \$24.3M, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2022/23 carry forward project budget \$10.7M • 2022/23 night art activation project, originally listed as a carry forward \$0.4M • 2023/24 budgeted capital projects \$13.2M <p>The total delivery as at 30 September 2023 was \$1.3M, representing 5.5% of the total capital works program including carry forwards.</p> <p>A number of large value capital projects are currently in early procurement stages and we expect to see progress in the October to December 2023 quarter.</p>

RELEVANT LAW

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

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Council adopted its Annual Budget 2023/24 on 27th June 2023.

OPTIONS

Not applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

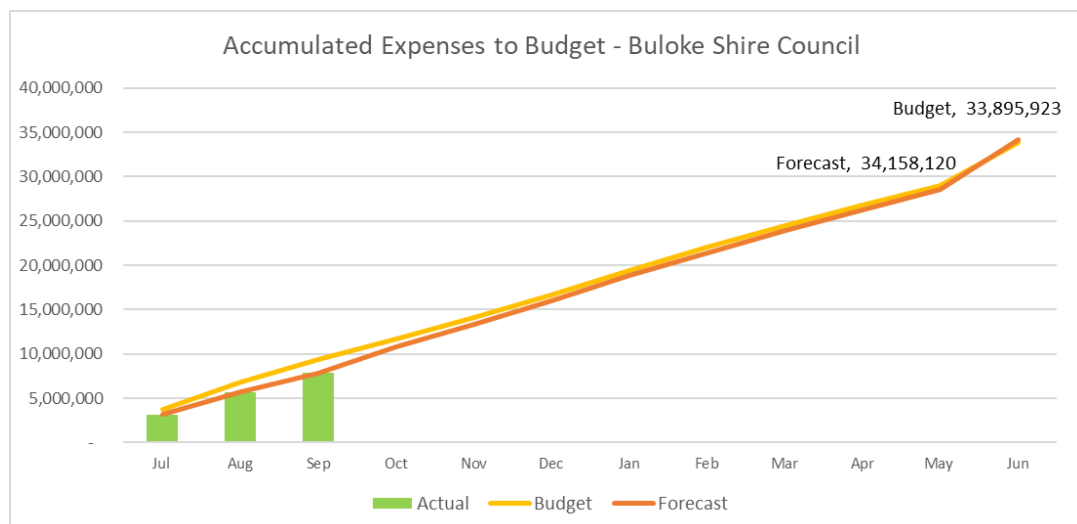
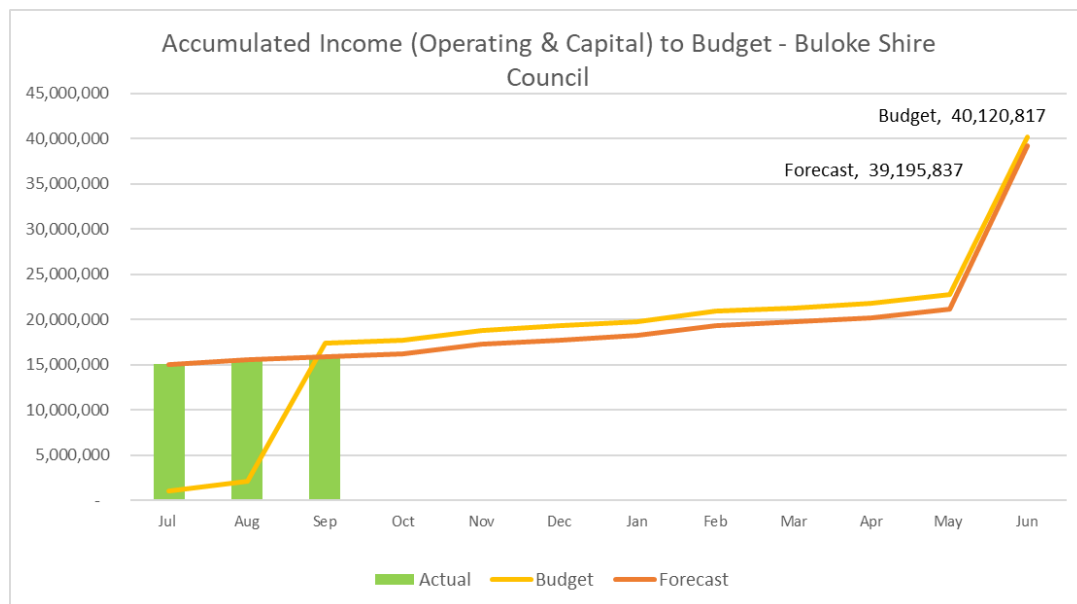
Not applicable.

COLLABORATION

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The tables below provide an overview of Council's financial performance against Adopted budget income and expenses at 30th September 2023.

**REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES**

Not applicable.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Council adopted its Annual Budget 2023/24 on 27th June 2023. The Buloke Shire Council Plan 2021-2025 outlines Council's commitment to developing responsible cash flow budgets to achieve long term financial sustainability and reporting quarterly against their delivery.

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.

DISCUSSION

The Committee queried given the 'over and unders' where does the organisation think the sustainable number is? The Committee was informed that while financial position is tight and heavily leveraged toward external grant funding, much of the challenge lies in balancing timing. Quarterly reports help the organisation to understand the financial position at various points in time, and helps business to understand there are not significant variances from our long-term planned position.

Council has a high reliance on grant income, which, if it shifts substantially, may have a large impact on the balance sheet. VAGO's treatment of revenue and how/when it is recognised also has had an impact on the Balance Sheet at a point in time.

The Committee expressed the quality of the report and noted the report.

7.10 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT SURVEY**Author's Title:** Governance Officer**Department:** Corporate and Organisational Performance **File No:** FM/09/02**PURPOSE**

To inform the Audit and Risk Committee of the outcomes from the Audit and Risk Committee Self-Assessment Survey for 2023.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting note the outcomes from the Audit and Risk Committee Self-Assessment Survey for 2023.

NOTED**Attachments:** 1 Audit and Risk Committee 2023 Self Assessment**KEY POINTS / ISSUES**

In accord with the Audit and Risk Committee Charter, an Audit and Risk Committee Self-Assessment Survey was undertaken. Council's Audit and Risk Committee members, internal and external auditors, current Councillors and the Senior Leadership Team were invited to participate in the survey. The survey was optional for Councillors, internal and external audit and Council officers who regularly attend Audit and Risk Committee meetings.

The survey is designed to ensure the Audit and Risk Committee has the opportunity to self-evaluate and receive feedback on its performance over the preceding twelve months, and consider:

- Its effectiveness as an Advisory Committee to Council;
- Areas for improvement, and ensure plans to support improvement are developed; and
- Compliance with the Charter.

The final survey results are attached to this report.

The survey results are anonymous, however, there were 4 Responses from Audit and Risk Committee members and 4 responses from 'Other', which included Council Officers and Councillors.

DISCUSSION

The Committee expressed that the outcome of the survey does show that more focus and improvement is required on Risk Management and Business Continuity.

The Committee noted the report.

7.11 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE 2024 MEETING SCHEDULE**Author's Title:** Governance Officer**Department:** Corporate and Organisational Performance **File No:** FM/02/09**PURPOSE**

To propose the 2024 meeting schedule for the Audit and Risk Committee.

MOTION:

That the Audit and Risk Committee adopts its 2024 Meeting schedule as follows:

1. Wednesday 7 February 2024, commencing at 1.00 pm Wycheproof Supper Room
2. Wednesday 1 May 2024 commencing at 2.00 pm Wycheproof Supper Room
3. Tuesday 10 September 2024 commencing at 10.00 am Wycheproof Supper Room
4. Wednesday 4 December 2024 commencing at 10.00 am Wycheproof Supper Room

MOVED: DEAN SLEIGH**SECONDED:** BERNARD YOUNG**CARRIED.****Attachments:** Nil**KEY POINTS / ISSUES**

The Audit and Risk Committee (Committee) is required to schedule its meeting dates for 2024. The proposed dates are recommended and take into consideration the preparation of the Annual Budget, and the year-end Financial and Performance Reporting Statements.

In the event the Financial and Performance Reporting Statements are not finalised in time for the September 2024 Council Meeting, the Committee may determine to reschedule the meeting or hold a meeting outside of the above arrangements.

The above meeting dates do not prevent the Chair from scheduling other meetings during the calendar year.

DISCUSSION

The Committee considered and adopted the proposed meeting dates.

7.12 DRAFT 2024 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**Author's Title:** Governance Officer**Department:** Corporate and Organisational Performance **File No:** FM/02/09**PURPOSE**

To provide the Audit and Risk Committee (Committee) with the Draft Annual Work Plan for 2024.

MOTION:

That the Audit and Risk Committee adopt the 2024 Audit and Risk Committee Work Plan

MOVED: BERNARD YOUNG**SECONDED:** DEAN SLEIGH**CARRIED.****Attachments:** 1 Draft - 2024 Audit and Risk Committee Work Plan**KEY POINTS / ISSUES**

The Audit and Risk Committee Charter (Charter) requires the Committee to adopt and maintain an annual work plan. The work plan incorporates all matters to be considered by the Committee over a twelve-month period, including matters outlined in the Committee Charter adopted by Council in November 2022.

The attached Annual Work Plan has been populated based on the status of current documents and processes, and key documents and initiatives to be considered within the 2024 meeting schedule.

For the 2024 Work Plan the scope and reports from Internal Audit have been moved to the Internal Control Category to align with the responsibilities that are outlined in the Charter.

The Annual Work Plan is not a static document and is reviewed and adjusted for each meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee to include additional items as recommended.

DISCUSSION

The Committee requested the inclusion of the following items

- ICT update report
- Budget Timetable and status update – provide to February meeting
- Debtor Write Offs to be scheduled for May meeting
- Include an In-Camera session for May meeting

7.15 2024/25 BUDGET TIMETABLE

Author's Title: Acting Manager Finance

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

PURPOSE

To inform the Audit and Risk Committee of the proposed timetable for the development of the 2024/25 Budget.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting note the proposed 2024/25 budget timetable.

NOTED

Attachments: 1 Proposed 2024/2025 Budget Timetable

KEY POINTS / ISSUES

The 2024-28 budget encompasses the year commencing 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 and projections for the following three years. It is prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*, the *Local Government Act 1989*, Better Practice Guides and the Australian Accounting Standards.

The budget documents include:

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

Council provides an annual budget timetable to enable stakeholders to meet key timeframes and obligations in regards to reviewing the current budget year end forecasts and the following year's budget development.

The proposed forecast and budget timetable has been prepared to allow sufficient time for Councillor briefings and input.

The timetable also provides the opportunity to ensure the community has time to consider the key initiatives proposed within the 2024/25 Annual Budget in accordance with the community engagement principles enshrined within the *Local Government Act 2020* and the requirements under Council's Community Engagement policy.

DISCUSSION

Buloke Shire Council Audit and Risk Committee Meeting MinutesWednesday, 6 December 2023

The Committee noted the challenges of preparing the budget and meeting community expectations and being able to present optionality to stakeholders, ensuring Councillors understand their roles and any assumptions. They were advised that the Ministerial announcement of Rate Cap is still pending, which leads to the development of different scenarios for the budget, and the inclusion of some Capital budget items being contingent subject to availability of funds.

The proposed format of community engagement would include meetings with community members and groups, community forums, online feedback opportunities, social and traditional media. It was acknowledged Council receive low input from young people and Traditional Owner cohorts, and acknowledges that this is an ongoing challenge for Council to overcome.

The Committee suggested that it is important to have clarity of purpose for Community meetings, and assess the level of maturity, also ensure that Councillors have appropriate tools to understand the budget and the long term plans to enable them to engage with the Community, and be to be able to manage community expectations, by providing feedback to the Community as to what Council did and didn't do and provide the reasons why.

Cr Warren indicated that Council experiences difficulties with engaging farming-based ratepayers, who contribute 73% of Council's rate income, and that the view is that Council's Budget is mostly predetermined such that there is little flexibility in taking onboard feedback and giving back to the community.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9. MEETING CLOSE

The meeting was closed at 11:24 pm

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 7 February 2024 in the Wycheproof Supper Room at 1pm.

8.2.2 COMMUNITY GRANTS

Author's Title: Manager Community Development

Department: Community Development

File No: GS/09/42

Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025

Strategic Objective: Our Community Wellbeing

PURPOSE

To present to Council the Community Grant applications recommended for funding under the Community Grants Program.

SUMMARY

Each year, Council allocates funds in the Annual Budget to support community initiatives that align with Council's priorities and vision as outlined in the Council Plan.

In the 2023-24 Annual Budget, Council allocated \$20,000 to the **Community Grants Program** and \$50,000 to the **Community Sustainability Grants Program**. The purpose of these programs are:

- **Community Grants** support the strengthening of the capacity and capability of local organisations, assist with the organisation and management of events, or help with the purchase of small capital items.
- **Sustainability Grants** assist projects that contribute to reducing the community's carbon footprint, improve the environment or effectively conserve resource usage.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council considers the following allocation of funds under the Community Grants Program:

\$2,000 Explore Buloke Bus Trips (*Charlton Neighbourhood House Inc*)

\$2,000 Mali Heart Street Art Festival (*Birchip Community Forum Inc*)

\$2,000 Performance by synchronized swimming groups, The Clams (*Charlton Forum Inc - Auspice for the Charlton Chamber of Commerce*)

Attachments: Nil

DISCUSSION

Three applications have been received since the Community Grants Program opened in August 2023.

As per the current Community Grant Guidelines, each application was assessed by an Assessment Panel. The Panel of three assessors consisted of one Council officer and two external consultants.

Based on their assessment against the selection criteria, the Panel recommends the following grants for Council's consideration and final decision on the budget allocations.

Project: Explore Buloke Bus Trips	
Organisation:	Charlton Neighbourhood House Incorporated
Grant Type	Community Grant (<i>Project Support</i>)
Amount Applied:	\$2,000
Funding Amount Recommended:	\$2,000
Full project cost:	\$2,000
Project Description:	The Charlton Neighbourhood House Incorporated would like to run two day bus trips around the shire for socially isolated members of the community.
Project Benefit:	The bus trips will tour around Buloke Shire with the aim to provide social connection and an enjoyable day out for those that may not normally have the opportunity to engage with others or travel.
Assessment Panel Scoring	Average Score = 13.6 out of 20. All members of the Assessment Panel recommended the ' <i>Explore Buloke Bus Trips</i> ' project be funded for the full amount requested (\$2,000).

Project: Mali Heart Street Art Festival	
Organisation:	Birchip Community Forum Inc
Grant Type	Community Grant (<i>Project Support</i>)
Amount Applied:	\$2,000
Funding Amount Recommended:	\$2,000
Full project cost:	\$30,000
Project Description:	The Birchip Community Forum Inc would like to add a new mural to the Mali Street Art Trail.
Project Benefit:	The proposed project will add a new feature to an existing community event and has the potential to attract new visitors as well as local residents as it becomes another exciting public art feature of Birchip.
Assessment Panel Scoring	Average Score = 15.6 out of 20. All members of the Assessment Panel recommended the ' <i>Mali Heart Street Art Festival</i> ' project be funded for the full amount requested (\$2,000).

Project: Performance by synchronized swimming groups, The Clams	
Organisation:	Charlton Forum Inc
Grant Type	Community Grant (<i>Project Support</i>)
Amount Applied:	\$2,000
Funding Amount Recommended:	\$2,000
Full project cost:	\$7,500
Project Description:	The Charlton Chamber of Commerce (auspiced by the Charlton Forum Inc) would like to introduce a new act 'The Clams' to the upcoming OK Motels event in February.
Project Benefit:	The proposed project will add a unique act to the already successful event to provide the opportunity for locals and visitors to experience an award winning performance not previously seen in Regional Victoria. The Clams will also showcase a local community asset by being performed in the Charlton Pool.

Assessment Panel Scoring	Average Score = 15.6 out of 20. All members of the Assessment Panel recommended the ' <i>Performance by synchronized swimming groups, The Clams</i> ' project be funded for the full amount requested (\$2,000).
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RELEVANT LAW

Not applicable to this report.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable to this report.

OPTIONS

Council has the option to not to allocate the funds as recommended by the Assessment Panel however, such amendments to the proposed funding recommendations may undermine the integrity and fairness of the assessment process.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable to this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Applicants were contacted by either a Council officer and/or an external consultant if their application required additional information or clarification.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable to this report.

COLLABORATION

Not applicable to this report.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The allocation of funds for successful applications under the Community Grants Program will come from the Community Grants budget (\$20,000) in Council's Annual Budget 2023-24.

There is currently \$20,000 remaining in the adopted Community Grants budget for the 2023-24 financial year.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable to this report.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

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

Community Grant Guidelines.

Community Engagement Policy.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable to this report.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

I, Jenna Allan, have no conflicts of interest to disclose in relation to this report.

All members of the Assessment Panel have no conflict of interest to disclose in relation to their recommendations or this report.

8.2.3 VISITOR ECONOMY PARTNERSHIP

Author's Title: Chief Executive Officer

Department: Office of the CEO

File No: CS/18/14

Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025

Strategic Objective: Our Economy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider authorising the Chief Executive Officer to join the Grampians, Wimmera Mallee Visitor Economy Partnership which will be the recognised Visitor Economy Partnership for the Region.

SUMMARY

Victoria's regional visitor economy is entering a new era, and from 2023, Regional Tourism boards have commenced the transition to form a network of Visitor Economy Partnerships (VEPs). These partnerships will be independent destination management organisations and represent their region as official voices to government.

At present, Buloke Shire Council (BSC) is affiliated with Wimmera Mallee Tourism Incorporated (WMT), which lacks official recognition as a tourism board, thereby limiting its access to sustained funding opportunities. To ensure the prosperity and expansion of our Shire and region within the tourism sector, BSC must join a VEP. This document delineates the advantages of such a collaboration and elucidates how, through the VEP, our region can adeptly address industry challenges, capitalise on emerging prospects, and effectively cater to the evolving needs of visitors, local communities, and businesses in the foreseeable future.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to join the Grampians, Wimmera Mallee Visitor Economy Partnership which will be the recognised Visitor Economy Partnership for the Region.
2. Subject to Council's annual budgetary process allocate a financial contribution of \$15,000 for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 years to the Grampians, Wimmera Mallee Visitor Economy Partnership.
3. Note that the funding allocation for the 2023/24 Financial Year was reallocated from Wimmera Mallee Tourism to the new Visitor Economy Partnership and increased to anticipate the change.
4. Note that the Wimmera Mallee Destination Management Plan, once developed, will be the key strategic document for the future entity to deliver, which will be informed by the Wimmera Mallee Tourism Strategy 2022-2027.

Attachments: 1 [Visitor Economy Partnership Framework Overview](#)
2 [Visitor Economy Partnership FAQs](#)

DISCUSSION

Buloke Council's Relationship with Wimmera Mallee Tourism

BSC is currently a member of Wimmera Mallee Tourism (WMT), which is a volunteer-based organisation, with membership consisting of passionate Councillors, Community Members and Council Officers from across Buloke, West Wimmera, Hindmarsh and Yarriambiack Shires.

WMT was formed with an aim of assisting our communities to understand, and embrace tourism, with a focus on diversifying the economy, which is predominately driven by agriculture. Whilst the community is still in the early stages of understanding and realising the benefits of tourism, WMT has worked hard to leverage funding opportunities to develop this market segment. In 2021 auspiced via YSC, and later Wimmera Southern Mallee Development (WSMD), WMT was successful in securing the Flagship Tourism Infrastructure Funding to deliver marketing, signage and virtual reality projects and to engage a WMT Officer to the iconic silo art trail promotion.

Unfortunately, as WMT was not a recognised tourism board, and did not have a governance structure that was endorsed by the State Government, all funding opportunities had to be auspiced by either a Council or another approved body.

In 2022 further funding opportunities became available for the WMT Council's to commence transitioning towards joining a Visitor Economy Partnership. WSMD auspiced the funding to engage a WMT Executive Officer and Support Officer to deliver not only the Flagship Funding Projects, but to also assist with exploring the transition to the State Government-initiated Visitor Economy Partnership model.

Background - Visitor Economy Partnership

In 2019 the Victorian State Government conducted the Regional Tourism Review. It was an extensive review to understand how to improve the management of regional tourism in Victoria. Unfortunately, the findings of the review were not fully realised due to the 2019- 2020 bushfires and then the Covid-19 pandemic. In the interim, the Victorian Government did, however, commit to supporting the enhancement of the sector with the Experience Victoria 2033 Plan and changes to the Regional Tourism Network.

In 2023 the Victorian Government released the Visitor Economy Partnership (VEP) Framework, which changed how regional tourism is supported in the State of Victoria. The ambition of the VEP Framework is to transition Regional Tourism Boards to new entities called Visitor Economy Partnerships and to ensure that all regions have equitable access to these entities. VEP's will be the official peak tourism bodies for regions. They will deliver supply and demand activities, such as advocacy, policy development and marketing to support growth of the visitor economy whilst also managing growth. VEP's will have improved governance and create clarity of roles and responsibilities within the visitor economy.

In conjunction with the VEP Framework, the State Government announced funding opportunities and benefits for regional tourism boards (RTB's), and outlying Council's not associated with RTB's to join forces under a VEP. The State Government is offering \$590,000 per year for six or more Council's to join under a VEP which will resource the expert tourism organisation.

To be eligible for the funding all Local Government areas aligned with the new entity must financially contribute to the partnership. Council contributions are not prescribed due to the different nature of structures with each Visitor Economy Partnership.

VEP's are also required to be an independent entity to satisfy the Victorian Government funding requirements.

Benefits to Joining a Visitor Economy Partnership for Buloke Shire

There are numerous benefits for outlying Council's not associated with an RTB to join a VEP. Below is an outline of the broader benefits for Buloke Shire;

1. **Destination Marketing:** Increased Visibility and Brand Awareness: Being part of an annual regional marketing campaign to raise brand awareness of the Wimmera Mallee and leverage industry to support and contribute to destination marketing. The VEP will deliver effective

- evidenced based Destination Marketing Strategies to extend length of stay, improve dispersal, increase yield, and support the Wimmera Mallee regional brand.
2. **Educational and Skill Development:** Learning Opportunities: Involvement in the VEP will provide opportunities for industry partners to learn about tourism management, marketing, and community development. It will be a platform for skill development and gaining valuable experience in various aspects of the tourism industry.
 3. **Infrastructure Improvement:** Investment Attraction: VEP will work with and advocate on behalf of Wimmera Mallee Local Government partners to attract new investors and investment opportunities for the Wimmera Mallee region.
 4. **Community Engagement:** Fostering Community Pride: The VEP will provide a platform for community involvement and engagement. Partners and stakeholders will be encouraged to actively participate in initiatives that build local pride, unity, and a sense of identity.
 5. **Networking Opportunities:** Business Connections: Involvement in the VEP will provide networking opportunities with local businesses, Government departments i.e. Regional Development Victoria and Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions, and other stakeholders. This can be beneficial for personal and professional growth, as well as for the overall development of the region.
 6. **Crisis Management:** Coordination in Emergencies: VEP will play a role in crisis and media management and response planning.
 7. **Data and Research Access:** Informed Decision-Making: VEP will have access to valuable data and research related to tourism trends. Being part of the VEP will ensure informed decisions, contributing to the strategic development of the region.

The Joining of Grampians Tourism and Wimmera Mallee Tourism to form a Visitor Economy Partnership – Grampians, Wimmera Mallee Tourism

It is recommended that Buloke Shire Council, join with Wimmera Mallee Tourism and Grampians Tourism Local Government areas to form a Visitor Economy Partnership.

Transitioning to the VEP would enable the four WMT Council's to enact the strategic priorities and projects identified by the WMT Committee, in their recently adopted strategy.

The new VEP will be recognised by the Victorian Government as the peak official voice for the visitor economy in the Grampians and Wimmera Mallee region.

In negotiating the model, the following was noted as part of the consideration and final recommendation;

1. Additional funding is required on top of the \$590,000, as the WMT catchment requires investment for industry uplift, development and marketing. The State Government has endorsed the additional funding for a two-year period. In addition to the \$590,000 being offered for a VEP of six or more Councils, we have negotiated a further \$200,000 per annum to support Wimmera Mallee in the new trial VEP. The funding is to be directed towards additional staffing and program funds (industry development and marketing) to directly support the Wimmera Mallee.
2. A new Marketing Manager is to be employed and is to oversee Visit Wimmera Mallee Brand and tactical marketing initiatives.
3. A New Partnership/Project Manager in support of Wimmera Mallee to foster positive partnerships and manage the delivery of industry development and destination (DMP) planning.

As the funding is only guaranteed for a two-year period, and the State Government has agreed to make the funding available from 01 February 2024, the following has been agreed to in principle by the eight CEO's, pending endorsement from respective Council's:

1. That the VEP would be established with eight Council's participating (Northern Grampians, Ararat, Horsham, Southern Grampians, West Wimmera, Buloke, Hindmarsh, Yarriambiack).

2. The two brands would remain, Visit Grampians and Visit Wimmera Mallee. Both brands would have their own separate Partnership and Project Manager.
3. Both brands would be managed under the VEP referred to as Grampians, Wimmera Mallee Visitor Economy Partnership.
4. To establish a new constitution and business entity would be time consuming and could prevent the eight Council's from immediately benefiting from the funding opportunity, therefore as the funding is only temporary, it was agreed that the VEP would operate under the Grampians Tourism business entity, trading as Grampians, Wimmera Mallee Visitor Economy Partnership.
5. It was noted that the current Grampians Tourism Council's contribute \$75,000 each per year, with their contribution to increase in future years. The WMT Council's will only be contributing \$15,000 per year and collectively it will be \$60,000, which is \$15,000 less than one GT Council contribution. Whilst it is argued that WMT has secured additional funding of \$200,000, that funding is being directed to engaging staff specifically for the Wimmera Mallee, and not to overall operations. It was agreed in principle that initially, during the two-year period, one Wimmera Mallee CEO would be appointed as an additional director on the GT board. This would be reviewed at the end of a two-year pilot period. With the aim of every Wimmera Mallee Council being provided with the opportunity to become board members.
6. To ensure information sharing, and collaborative decision making, the four Wimmera Mallee CEO's will meet prior to the board meeting, and after the board meeting to discuss decisions and outcomes.
7. Decisions and outcomes will then be reported back via the individual CEOs to each Council, via their forum / briefings process, providing regular updates.

The Role of Wimmera Mallee Tourism

Wimmera Mallee Tourism deserves commendation for its exemplary leadership in the tourism sector throughout the region. As previously mentioned, the organisation has offered invaluable insights into understanding the dynamics of the region. Funding of \$120,000 was allocated to WMT for the development of a Destination Management Plan (DMP). However, the progress on the DMP has been temporarily halted pending the outcome of the VEP negotiations.

The DMP holds significance in formulating key strategic objectives and an action plan for managing the Wimmera Mallee as a destination over a specific timeframe. It outlines the roles of various stakeholders, identifies clear actions they will undertake, and designates resources to ensure the plan's successful implementation.

The following proposals are suggested:

1. Wimmera Mallee Tourism Committee members (excluding Officers), in collaboration with the WM Partnership/Projects Manager, should meet with consultants to provide insights for the development of the DMP.
2. Once the DMP is completed, it is recommended that WMT, as an incorporated association, go into recess until the conclusion of the two-year pilot period.
3. WMT Councillors and Community representatives form a reference group to the VEP, Visit Wimmera Mallee brand. They should meet quarterly with the CEO's, Partnership/Project Manager, and VEP CEO to review the progress of the DMP's actions.
4. The Councillors and Community Members of the WMT reference group should be empowered to report progress back to their respective Councils, communities, and Shire Tourism Advisory Committees.
5. Financial contributions towards WMT should cease from the 2023-2024 financial year, with Council's budgeted funds redirected to co-contribute to the VEP.

Benefits for Buloke Shire Council

Although the Council boasts numerous tourism enterprises throughout our Shire, there is an untapped potential in comprehending and leveraging destination marketing. Joining a larger specialised entity that possesses the capacity to highlight and endorse our region, **articulate the advantages of the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse**, and engage in hosting and participating in industry forums across the region is crucial. Additionally, through the VEP, we can access opportunities to apply for substantial project funding from the \$150 million Regional Tourism and Events Fund. This funding supports the development of new events, attractions, and increased accommodation options, which would otherwise not be available to stand alone Council's.

RELEVANT LAW

Local Government Act 2020

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council adopted its Buloke Shire Council Long-Term Community Vision and Council Plan 2021-2025 on 16 June 2021 and the Interim Economic Development and Tourism Strategy was adopted on 8 April 2022.

OPTIONS

- a) The Council could choose not to join a Visitor Economy Partnership, however, limited funding opportunities for single LGA's will be available for Tourism into the future.
- b) The Council could choose to join the VEP without the support of all WMT LGA's. The VEP requires only six Council's to form the new entity. However, without the support of all four LGA's the additional \$200,000 for the next two years from the State Government would not be secured. The ownership / management of the Visit Wimmera Mallee Brand would also need to be explored.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic: Joining the VEP would provide an overarching economic benefit to Tourism entities across our Shire, enabling them to capitalise on the tourism market segment to enhance and mature their businesses / operations.

Social: The VEP will create a larger voice and advocacy group for the region. This will assist to promote the benefits of recreation and tourism investment within our region.

Environmental: The VEP as an advocacy group will provide a platform for highlighting the importance of waterways, lakes and weir pools across our Region, including recreational water.

Financial: A financial contribution of \$15,000 per annum to enhance and develop destination marketing, education and skills development, infrastructure improvement funding and delivery, networking opportunities and to have access to data and research to inform decision making and investment is considered value for money, when considering the time and resources that currently goes into the WMT Committee.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council has an adopted Interim Economic Development and Tourism Strategy that clearly articulates partnerships to deliver economic development and tourism outcomes.

Community engagement was undertaken during the development process of the Council's Long-Term Community Vision and Council Plan 2021 – 2025, and its Interim Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2022 – 2023.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The WSMD Ltd objective is to lead, support and encourage the sustainable development of the Region in partnership with government, business and the community; and to determine the natural and built resources of the region, which might act as focal points for economic development and opportunity.

COLLABORATION

To collaborate with the other member Councils as a whole, would undoubtedly provide significant strength and power, for a more productive and effective approach to attract and promote any proposed business, agricultural, industry and tourism projects for the Wimmera Southern Mallee area.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Subject to Council's annual budgetary process allocate a financial contribution of \$15,000 for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 years to the Grampians, Wimmera Mallee Visitor Economy Partnership.

Note that the funding allocation for the 2023/24 Financial Year was reallocated from Wimmera Mallee Tourism to the new Visitor Economy Partnership and increased to anticipate the change.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Wimmera Mallee Tourism Strategy 2022-2027
- [Experience Victoria 2033](#)
- [Visitor Economy Recovery and Reform Plan](#)
- Constitution of the Wimmera Southern Mallee Development Limited

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Long-Term Community Vision and Council Plan 2021-2025

Interim Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2022-2023

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report outlines what Buloke Shire Council will need to allocate as its financial contribution to the Grampians, Wimmera Mallee Visitor Economy Partnership.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

Growing Victoria's regional visitor economy

Visitor Economy Partnership (VEP) Framework overview

Victoria's regional visitor economy is entering a new era. Even before the pandemic, floods, fires and extreme weather events, a new approach was needed to realise the full potential of regional Victoria's tourism offering.

Feedback from Regional Tourism Boards (RTBs), councils, industry leaders, community members and others made this clear.

Now, as the visitor economy recovers with new and upcoming experiences and events, the challenge is to make sure that growth is sustained and shared across the state.

From 2023, RTBs will begin to transition to VEPs so each one has the structure, resources, strategy and scale to perform its role. Regional councils will be encouraged to participate.

Through the reforms, VEPs will be able to better respond to challenges facing industry, capture emerging opportunities, and meet the needs of visitors, local communities and businesses.

This will support recovery and growth of the visitor economy – in all corners of Victoria.

This document provides a summary of the VEP Framework. It has been developed to support RTBs and councils' understanding and engagement while VEPs are established.

About VEPs

What are VEPs?

VEPs are independent destination management entities recognised by the Victorian Government as peak official voices for the visitor economy in their region.

VEPs collaborate with the Victorian Government, councils, regional tourism organisations and industry to set the vision and manage the growth of their region's visitor economy, ensuring alignment with the State's goals.

VEPs deliver on the vision through supply and demand activities to support the growth of their region's visitor economy.

VEPs have core responsibilities to:

- deliver enhanced leadership and collaboration at a regional level
- tailor industry strengthening support to address regional needs
- encourage increased community support for tourism
- facilitate enhanced visitor dispersal and experiences
- undertake collaborative destination marketing and regional conversion
- provide insights and investor connections that inform a strengthened pipeline and product development
- provide regional context and insights to inform government policy development, decision making and investment priorities
- ensure continued crisis preparedness and support relative to the visitor economy.

OFFICIAL

Benefits of this way of working

VEPs represent a better way of working together to ensure every region has equal access to the benefits of an evolved regional tourism network.

Four core benefits	How VEPs will benefit
Official recognition, increased clarity and collaboration with government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be the lead voice in advising governments on investments and policies for their regions. This means greater influence with decision-makers, invitations to state forums, and a seat at the table for government consultation on Victoria's visitor economy. Be recognised by, and work collaboratively with Visit Victoria, as peak tourism bodies.
A more transparent funding model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access financial support from the Victorian Government through a transparent funding model. Receive (where applicable) a modest increase to existing Victorian Government RTB funding.
Enhanced operational support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise streamlined reporting with greater guidance on requirements, including tools and templates. Access expertise for planning or responding to crisis and/or changing circumstances. Access support during board recruitment to identify directors with a broad mix of regional, skills-based, and industry perspectives.
Access to data, insights and tools to track outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a nominated point of contact into government through the Tourism and Events team of the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR – Tourism & Events), who shares insights on best practice from across the network and can connect VEPs with other Victorian Government departments and agencies. Receive regional visitor economy data and insights. Take advantage of regional knowledge and leadership via councils that actively contribute to strategy and operations.

Key features of VEPs

The Regional Tourism Review and subsequent stakeholder engagement helped inform six key features of VEPs, which will be reflected in VEP Agreements, board charters and/or strategic plans.

Key features	Expectations and requirements of VEPs
Defined responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Destination Management Plan (DMP) that outlines clear roles and responsibilities for each VEP, its board, partner councils, industry and other stakeholders.
Strong governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent legal entity. Constitution with specific requirements for purpose, board recruitment and tenure. Board membership is diverse, comprising local government, industry and skills-based, as well as region-wide representatives. A board charter or constitution that outlines tenure and recruitment processes to help stagger the departure of board members to ensure business continuity and retention of organisational knowledge.
Regional focus and collaborative action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The interests of all stakeholders are represented, and a VEP operates for the benefit of all its region. A VEP and its board collaborate across regions, including with other VEPs, and with the Victorian Government. Commitment and structures or forums to engage stakeholders to identify whole of region priorities and develop, implement and report on a DMP, reflecting multiple brands (if required). Collaboration and cooperation with the Victorian Government including DJSIR – Tourism & Events, Regional Development Victoria (RDV) and Visit Victoria.
Organisational sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sound financial management, including an audited financial statement for financial risk assessments, and a costed DMP implementation plan (aligned to the DMP's annual budget). Appropriate people resources to achieve DMP deliverables. Strong and extensive relationships with industry, community and partner councils. Adequate business acumen reflected across the collective skillset of the VEP's board and staff.
Leverages benefits of scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficient scale to deliver a strategic approach to destination management, maintain sustainable investment from councils and support operating costs. A minimum of three councils where a regional city¹ is included, and six where one is not. Some regions may require boundary changes to achieve scale. Evidence from each partner council of their multi-year financial commitment to the VEP (e.g. a memorandum of understanding (MOU), council resolution, letter of commitment).
Balances focus on supply and demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balance supply and demand priorities, as articulated in the region's DMP.

¹ There are ten regional cities in Victoria as defined by RDV [here](#). DJSIR – Tourism & Events requires a regional city to have a population greater than 60,000 for the purposes of calculating VEP funding. This population size ensures sufficient scale to deliver a strategic approach to destination management, maintain sustainable investment from councils and support operating costs.

Governance, outcomes and accountability

VEP Agreements

VEP Agreements are multi-year contracts outlining how VEPs and the Victorian Government (DJSIR – Tourism & Events) will partner to deliver on aligned priorities outlined in the region's DMP.

Core requirements of VEP Agreements

Legal structure: VEPs must be independent, formal legal organisations governed by an independent board.

Each VEP will take an approach that suits their region, regional visitor economy and partner councils. For example, the model could be company limited by guarantee, incorporated association etc. Staffing levels and organisational structures may vary, but need to support financial stability, delivery, particularly of the DMP, and performance.

Mandatory inclusions:

- The primary stated purpose of supporting the sustainable growth of visitation in the VEP's region.
- Recognition that board members represent the interests of the VEP and all stakeholders in the region.
- An outline of board member recruitment and tenure processes, to ensure attraction of diverse and skilled members and retention of organisational knowledge.
- Provision for active involvement by DJSIR – Tourism & Events via:
 - observation at VEP board meetings
 - consultation on and participation in VEP board chair recruitment
 - the opportunity to participate in VEP board member recruitment.

VEP Agreements will also include a commitment to:

- be collaborative partners of the Victorian Government and do everything reasonable to support its policies and strategies
- have DJSIR – Tourism & Events and Visit Victoria representatives on destination planning project working groups, with an RDV representative optional
- provide draft DMPs to DJSIR – Tourism & Events and Visit Victoria for feedback, and final versions for noting
- have annual implementation plans approved by DJSIR – Tourism & Events, with input from Visit Victoria
- use templates for reporting, supplied by DJSIR – Tourism & Events.

These commitments will ensure alignment between each VEP's DMP, the State's Visitor Economy Master Plan (VEMP) and Brand Framework, and support delivery against VEP Agreement milestones.

Reporting and accountability

VEPs are required to report regularly on performance, using the support offered and templates supplied by DJSIR – Tourism & Events.

VEP reporting requirements, that are also linked to milestone payments

Six-monthly	Annual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress report outlining achievement against the year's milestones and targets, including those specified in the annual DMP implementation plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A report that outlines achievement against the previous year's milestones and targets, including those specified in the annual DMP implementation plan. Updated annual DMP implementation plan for the upcoming 12 months, including milestones and targets. Audited annual financial accounts of the organisation. Corporate Governance reporting.

The above does not preclude any additional reporting requirements for additional program/project funding that may be obtained during the partnership agreement.

Destination Management Plans (DMPs)

A central tenant of VEPs is the development and implementation of the region's DMP. These plans reflect a shared vision and strategy for growth of the region's visitor economy.

DJSIR – Tourism & Events and Visit Victoria have been supporting RTBs to develop DMPs that:

- balance the delivery of projects to support the demand and supply side of the visitor economy
- align with the state-wide VEMP, which sets out the needs and opportunities for Victoria's visitor economy for the next ten years
- align with the state-wide Brand Framework, designed to tell the story of Victoria and its regional destinations.

DJSIR – Tourism & Events and Visit Victoria will continue to provide input into DMP development, so that each VEP's vision and strategy align with state-wide priorities.

Each VEP will be required to develop an annual implementation plan for their DMP that outlines the priority projects for the year, roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, timing, resourcing requirements and targets.

Annual implementation plans are to be provided for approval under the funding agreement with the Victorian Government and it is against these plans that VEPs will be required to report.

VEPs have full agency over how DMPs are delivered through the execution of these plans.

Summary of DMPs and annual implementation plans

VEP DMPs Three to five years	Annual implementation plans 12 months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline multi-year vision (three-five years). Meet Destination Planning Guidelines and align with the VEMP, the Victorian Brand Framework and local strategies. Outline SMART targets (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timely). Outline clear roles and responsibilities between the VEP, partner councils and any other stakeholders (e.g. Local Tourism Associations, industry groups). 	<p>Priorities and activities for the next 12 months (financial year), outlining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> timelines and budgets for each activity roles and responsibilities targets. <p>Reporting requirements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> key milestones and targets reported at six and twelve-month intervals. financial audit opinion provided annually.

Funding model

Replacing RTB Core Funding, the new VEP funding model has tiers based on a VEP's number of partner councils, and whether these are regional or interface.

Council partners	Funding commitment
Three or more regional councils, including a regional city	\$350,000 a year
Six or more regional councils	\$590,000 a year

Funding for existing regions including interface councils or regional groupings where there is no regional city will be determined based on discussions with councils and existing RTBs.

There are ten regional cities in Victoria as defined by RDV here. DJSIR – Tourism & Events requires a regional city to have a population greater than 60,000 for the purposes of calculating funding. This population size ensures sufficient scale to deliver a strategic approach to destination management, maintain sustainable investment from councils and support operating costs.

Council participation

Every regional council is encouraged to participate in the VEP network by becoming a partner in a VEP.

Councils may participate in multiple VEPs but need to nominate a primary VEP so Victorian Government funding can be determined and to ensure that tourism data is linked to only one tourism region.

Council contributions are not prescribed. As part of the co-design process to establish VEPs, this must be discussed and agreed to by partners.

In addition, VEPs can invite other councils to participate in specific activities or initiatives and councils may choose to participate in other VEPs through 'pay to play' or similar models.

Accessing additional funding

VEPs are encouraged to access other funding sources e.g. industry sponsorship, industry memberships, other state and federal government funding as it becomes available.

This will not impact the VEP funding model arrangements.

Transition and support

Transition timing

Creating a network of VEPs will take time. Transitions will be staged and in **three phases**:

- **Phase 1** will occur in 2023 and focus on areas that have 2026 Commonwealth Games Hubs or no formal tourism entity.
- **Phases 2 and 3** comprising the rest of the RTB network, will occur from late 2023.

DJSIR – Tourism & Events will consult with all RTBs and councils to discuss the proposed transition timing within each region.

Transition support

DJSIR – Tourism & Events has a lead role to play to promote successful transitions to VEPs, as well as long-term success. RDV and Visit Victoria are vital partners.

At a minimum, the following support will be offered to RTBs and councils in transition:

- attendance at regular project working group meetings (both in person and online)
- cross-sharing of opportunities and learnings from other regions in transition
- procurement of an independent transition facilitator to help guide the process
- funding support for transition activities such as legal costs and transition facilitator.

While we are prioritising regions identified as phase 1, we will work with the phase 2 and 3 regions to ensure their readiness to transition as soon as possible.

Ongoing support for the regional tourism network

The Victorian Government remains focused on ensuring the regional tourism network (comprising RTBs and VEPs) continues to thrive during the VEP transition. The following support, communication and engagement initiatives will be available.

DJSIR – Tourism & Events will provide:

- every RTB, interim entity and VEP with a relationship manager as key point of contact
- DMP development and delivery guidance
- regular updates on visitor economy research and available programs and support
- advice or assistance from government subject matter experts as needed e.g. investment facilitation roles
- coordinated engagement via monthly email newsletters, triannual forums, regular updates to the RTB collaboration website and other activities (to be determined in partnership with the network).

RDV will provide DMP implementation support and regional expertise and insights.

Visit Victoria will work collaboratively with VEPs as peak tourism bodies.

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Next steps

Resources are being prepared and will be shared to assist RTBs and councils with transition planning.

DJSIR – Tourism & Events will keep VEPs, RTBs and councils updated around actions impacting their region.

The team is available to answer any questions. For more information, please contact DJSIR – Tourism & Events.

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Visitor Economy Partnerships (VEPs)

General questions

What is happening to Victoria's RTBs?

Regional Tourism Boards (RTBs) are transitioning to new structures called Visitor Economy Partnerships (VEPs).

The VEP Framework is tailor-made for Victorian tourism, shaped by input from RTBs, councils, industry and other stakeholders, insights from interstate and overseas, and the Regional Tourism Review findings, as well as learnings from the implementation of the Visitor Economy Recovery and Reform Plan.

This evolution of Victoria's regional tourism network aims to ensure that the state's regional visitor economy is set up for continued success.

VEPs will strengthen boards so each one has the structure, resources, strategy, and scale to perform its role.

This also means inviting every regional council to participate.

The Tourism and Events team of the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR – Tourism & Events) is consulting with RTBs and councils to discuss the transition to VEPs within each region.

What are VEPs?

VEPs are independent destination management entities recognised by the Victorian Government as peak official voices for the visitor economy in their region.

VEPs collaborate with the Victorian Government, councils, regional tourism organisations and industry to set the vision and manage the growth of their region's visitor economy, ensuring alignment with the State's goals.

VEPs deliver on the vision through supply and demand activities to support the growth of their region's visitor economy.

VEPs have core responsibilities to:

- deliver enhanced leadership and collaboration at a regional level
- tailor industry strengthening support to address regional needs
- encourage increased community support for tourism
- facilitate enhanced visitor dispersal and experiences
- undertake collaborative destination marketing and regional conversion
- provide insights and investor connections that inform a strengthened pipeline and product development
- provide regional context and insights to inform government policy development, decision making and investment priorities
- ensure continued crisis preparedness and support relative to the visitor economy.

What does this mean for councils?

Every regional council is encouraged to participate in the regional tourism network by becoming a council partner of a VEP or VEPs.

Consultation and research have reinforced that tourism plays a strong role in job creation, supports regional supply chains and fosters community pride and connectivity.

Collaborating regionally and investing in VEPs gives councils and their communities a voice to shape their visitor economy, deliver sustainable services for their business community, and seize new opportunities to strengthen community connectedness, pride, and livelihoods.

We understand that for some councils, participation in the tourism network is familiar, while for others it will be new or different. The Department will work with each council to talk through what may work best for it and its region.

Why is change happening?

Even before the pandemic and extreme weather events, a new approach was needed to realise the full potential of regional Victoria's tourism offering.

Feedback given during the Regional Tourism Review made this clear. As did extensive research, and further consultation in late 2021 with RTBs and councils - a changed approach to network reform was needed – one that suited industry, councils and the RTBs.

To add to this, as the visitor economy recovers with new and upcoming experiences and events, the challenge is to make sure that growth is sustained and shared across the state.

Through the reforms, VEPs will be able to better respond to challenges facing industry, capture emerging opportunities, and meet the needs of visitors, local communities and businesses.

And this will support recovery and growth of the visitor economy – in all corners of Victoria.

When will change happen?

Creating a network of VEPs will take time. We expect transitions will be staged and are planning **three transition phases**:

- **Phase 1** will occur in 2023 and focus on areas that have Victoria 2026 Commonwealth Games Hubs or no formal tourism entity. In some cases, these conversations are already well advanced.
- **Phases 2 and 3** comprising the rest of the regional tourism network, will occur from late 2023.

Transition will look different from region to region, but all will be grounded in consultation and collaboration. This means DJSIR – Tourism & Events will work with RTBs, councils and industry to develop and determine key aspects of the transition, including timelines and boundary changes – which we are not advocating unless required. In some cases a facilitator will be required to guide these conversations.

Why is change occurring over phases?

A phased approach to the VEP transition is occurring in response to regional needs, to maximise Victoria 2026 Commonwealth Games' benefits for all regions, and to allow for continuous improvement. It also responds to feedback from some regions which indicated that they were not yet ready for reform.

Can a region move to a different phase or are these fixed?

DJSIR – Tourism & Events will be speaking with RTBs and councils to reach agreement on each region's proposed phase.

While the team will be supportive of RTBs/regions that wish to transition sooner than proposed, it has a strong focus on assisting phase 1 regions over the next few months to late 2023.

For those not in phase one, we will be engaging with RTBs and councils to provide sufficient information and advice to help transition preparation and planning.

Please contact us if you would like to discuss the timing of your region's transition further.

How will this change take place?

In person meetings will be held in May/June with:

- all RTBs to discuss phasing/timing, transition considerations and impacts
- councils involved in phase 1 transitions.

DJSIR-Tourism & Events will meet the remaining regional and interface councils (i.e. those in phase 2 and 3) later in the year. In the meantime, materials and support will be available to help councils stay informed and prepare for transition.

DJSIR – Tourism & Events has a lead role to play to promote successful transitions to VEPs, as well as long-term success. That's why each transition will begin with meetings to understand what's required and develop a tailored transition plan. At a minimum, the following support will be offered to RTBs and councils in transition:

- attendance at regular project working group meetings (both in person and online)
- cross-sharing of opportunities and learnings from other regions in transition
- procurement of an independent transition facilitator to help guide the process
- funding support for transition activities such as legal costs and transition facilitator.

While we are prioritising regions identified as phase 1, we will work with phase 2 and 3 regions to ensure their readiness to transition as soon as possible.

We will keep you updated along the way, so you know what's going on in the network and what's next for your region.

How is this different to the way RTBs have been working with government?

VEPs represent a better way of working together to ensure every region has equal access to the benefits of an evolved regional tourism network:

- Official recognition, increased clarity and collaboration with the Victorian government.
- A more transparent funding model.
- Access to data, insights and tools to track outcomes.
- Enhanced operational support.

How will RTBs and councils be kept updated?

We will keep RTBs and councils updated along the way, so you know what's going on in the network and what's next for your region.

RTBs and interim entities can expect to hear from us through our monthly email-newsletter and regular forums. In addition, DJSIR – Tourism & Events will attend board meetings to provide updates, where required.

Councils will be kept updated via regular emails and should also expect updates from their RTBs.

When will the Visitor Economy Master Plan be released?

The Visitor Economy Master Plan will be released shortly. DJSIR – Tourism & Events will update RTBs and councils once it is released.

Who is leading this change?

DJSIR – Tourism & Events will provide a single point of contact before, during and after the transition to VEPs.

Whom can I contact with questions?

If you have additional questions, please contact Sam Jackson: Senior Project Manager, Visitor Economy Partnerships – Tourism & Events, E: sam.jackson@ecodev.vic.gov.au or M: 0459 879 237

Transitioning RTBs to VEPs

Are RTBs' responsibilities changing?

The reforms are changing how RTBs do things, not what they do.

The core responsibility of VEPs, as with RTBs, is to set the vision and manage the growth of their region's visitor economy.

Destination Management Plans (DMPs) are now central to the delivery of this responsibility. VEPs will deliver on the vision of their region through DMPs, which include supply and demand activities to support the growth of their region's visitor economy.

Reflecting the increased focus on DMPs, funding will be provided to deliver on the priorities of the DMP and the terms of the agreement will focus on annual planning, delivery and reporting.

Is support available to RTBs for planning and transitioning? (i.e. any extra funding, resourcing)

Support during the transition to VEPs will be provided by DJSIR – Tourism & Events through:

- regular in-region visits and participation in project working groups
- cross-sharing of opportunities and learnings from other regions in transition
- appointment of an independent transition facilitator to help guide the process where required
- funding support for transition activities such as legal costs and a transition facilitator.

How do RTBs prepare for this transition if they are in phase 2 or 3? When should this occur?

The purpose of in-region visits during May is to discuss each region's path to transition, including timing and the actions and milestones required in preparation.

Who is responsible for engaging RTBs' stakeholders in the transition?

DJSIR – Tourism & Events will be liaising directly with Councils and RTBs during the VEP transition. Where there are key tourism or industry associations in a region, they may participate in any transition working group, however it is not recommended that individual businesses participate.

RTBs and councils are responsible for engaging more broadly with industry in the region. The form and timing of this can be resolved in early transition project working group meetings.

Councils are responsible for ensuring that key internal stakeholders are engaged and that the resolution of Council to join a VEP is obtained.

DJSIR – Tourism & Events will provide resources (e.g. messaging) to assist as well as actively participating in the transition project working group.

Will there be any changes to RTB branding?

The reforms are centred on the creation of administrative entities and the Victorian Government does not expect changes to brands. The VEP Framework does not preclude incorporation/management of more than one brand within a region, as is current practice for some RTBs.

What the VEP Framework means for councils

What are the expectations for council participation in the VEP network?

Every regional council is encouraged to participate in the VEP network by becoming a partner in a VEP.

Councils may participate in multiple VEPs, but need to nominate a primary VEP so Victorian Government funding can be determined and to ensure that tourism data is linked to only one tourism region.

Council contributions are not prescribed. As part of the co-design process to establish VEPs, this must be discussed and agreed to by partners.

In addition, VEPs can invite other councils to participate in specific activities or initiatives and councils may choose to participate in other VEPs through 'pay to play' or similar models.

Is a partner council expected to contribute funding? What should the contribution be?

The Victorian Government is not prescribing a minimum financial contribution from partner councils.

However, to be considered a partner council in a VEP, a council must financially contribute. This is seen as a sign of commitment to the region.

Understanding there are different capacities to contribute, each region's VEP co-design process enables councils to work together to identify what they think is a fair and an appropriate contribution.

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How do councils partner with more than one VEP?

Councils may participate in multiple VEPs but need to nominate a primary VEP so that Victorian Government funding can be determined, and to ensure that tourism data is linked to only one tourism region.

How will smaller councils have a voice and be heard?

The Victorian Government wants to ensure every council has the same level of access to, and opportunity from, Victoria's regional tourism network.

Through the transition to a VEP, a co-design process may be undertaken to enable each partner Council to contribute to the future of the VEP.

VEP Agreements, signed by each VEP and DJSIR – Tourism & Events, include requirements for the Victorian Government's investment. Among these requirements are:

- constitutional recognition that board members represent the interests of the organisation and all stakeholders in the region
- provision for active involvement by DJSIR – Tourism & Events in board recruitment.

These measures will ensure that every partner council will be represented on the VEP board, either directly or via an appropriate delegate. They will also mean all regional voices are considered in decision-making.

Key to the VEP is the development and implementation of a DMP, which all stakeholders have an important role to contribute to.

Will councils receive funding to be part of a VEP (eg. board appointments, DMP planning and execution activities)?

No, funding will not be provided directly to councils to be part of a VEP. However, councils will access many opportunities by joining a VEP, including access to DJSIR – Tourism & Events funding.

Funding

How will funding change?

For RTBs, VEP Funding will replace Core Funding.

This new and more transparent funding model has tiers based on a VEP's number of partner councils, and whether these are regional or interface. VEPs are encouraged to access other funding sources e.g. industry sponsorships.

Under the VEP Funding model, RTBs will receive (where applicable) a modest increase to existing Victorian Government RTB funding.

The VEP Funding model:

Council partners	Funding commitment
Three or more regional councils, including a regional city	\$350,000 a year
Six or more regional councils	\$590,000 a year
Interface or regional groupings where there is no regional city will be determined based on discussions with councils	

What is a regional city?

There are ten regional cities in Victoria as defined by Regional Development Victoria [here](#). DJSIR – Tourism & Events requires a regional city to have a population greater than 60,000 for the purposes of calculating funding. This population size ensures sufficient scale to deliver a strategic approach to destination management, maintain sustainable investment from councils and support operating costs.

What is the trigger for a funding change? Will funding change for all RTBs at the same time, or only once a VEP Agreement is signed?

Existing RTB funding agreements will continue until 30 June 2024. Where a region can transition to a VEP sooner, by mutual agreement the existing agreement will be voided, and a new (VEP Funding) agreement entered into.

What happens if current funding arrangements expire before an RTB transitions to a VEP?

Current funding agreements with RTBs are due to expire on 30 June 2024. If it appears that an RTB will not transition to a VEP before then, DJSIR – Tourism & Events will consider interim arrangements in consultation with the RTB.

What happens post 30 June 2024 given there is no further funding?

DJSIR – Tourism and Events will be advocating for more funding in the next budget cycle.

8.3 FINANCIAL REPORTS

8.3.1 FINANCE REPORT AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

Author's Title: Acting Manager Finance

Department: Corporate and Organisational Performance **File No:** FM/19/01

Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025

Strategic Objective: Our Council and Community Leadership

PURPOSE

To present to the Council the financial reports for the period ending 31 December 2023.

SUMMARY

The year-end surplus in the 2023/24 adopted budget was \$6.2M. The current forecasted year-end surplus for the financial year is \$3.4M, anticipating no significant capital project delays impacting capital grant income recognition.

The Actuals vs. Approved (Budget) reporting year-to-date includes timing variances which relate to the months in which the income or expenditure is incurred. Timing differences are anticipated to be resolved throughout the financial year and are not expected to impact the Full Year Forecast result. As at 31 December 2023, Council has achieved an actual surplus of \$857K which is less than the year-to-date budget for this period.

Further discussion around non-timing variances in financial reports is outlined below.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. receives and notes the Financial Performance Report for the period ending 31 December 2023.
2. receives and notes the Capital Works Statement for the period ending 31 December 2023, consisting of the carry forward projects and current financial year capital projects.
3. notes the statement by the Chief Executive Officer that a revised budget will not be required for the 2023-24 financial year.

Attachments:

- 1 [December 2023 Capital Works Carried Forward](#)
- 2 [December 2023 Capital Works 2023/24](#)
- 3 [December 2023 Quarterly Finance Report](#)

DISCUSSION

Report:	Report explanation:	Year to date (YTD) performance to budget and forecast commentary
Income Statement	<p><i>The Income Statement provides a summary of the total income and total expenditure relating to Council's annual operations for the reporting period. Capital grant income is included in this statement, but any related expenditure is not reflected as this is reported as increased assets on the Balance Sheet. To exclude potential distortion of underlying operations in the Income Statement, capital income is reported separately to identify the Operating Net Surplus/(Deficit).</i></p>	<p>Rates & charges Favourable variance of \$10K YTD, mainly due to supplementary rates notices. Full year forecast has been varied upward slightly to \$15.03M.</p> <p>Statutory fees and fines Unfavourable variance of \$46K YTD, mainly due to lower than anticipated permit applications. Full year forecast has been varied downward slightly to \$211K.</p> <p>Grants – operating Unfavourable variance of \$1.7M YTD, mainly due to the timing of Financial Assistance Grant payments. 100% of the 2023/24 grant allocation was paid in the 2022/23 financial year. As we near the end of financial year we will await the decision on the early payment of 2024/25 grants. Full year forecast has been varied downward slightly to \$8.9M.</p> <p>Contributions Unfavourable variance of \$30K YTD, mainly due to timing of capital project completion and the associated community contribution invoicing. Full year forecast has remained unchanged at this stage.</p> <p>Other income Favourable variance of \$159K YTD, mainly due to the unbudgeted receipt of funds relating to native vegetation works which Council will conduct on behalf of the Department of Transport. Full year forecast has been varied upward to \$904K to reflect this and other reimbursements relating to WorkCover insurance.</p> <p>Employee costs Unfavourable variance of \$48K YTD, mainly due to the EBA negotiations and processing of the Back Pay. Full year forecast has been varied upward to \$11.69M to reflect the processing of the Back Pay.</p> <p>Materials and services Favourable variance of \$486K YTD, mainly due to the procurement timing of several budgeted operational projects. Full year forecast has been varied upward to \$13.1M, which is a \$1.7M forecast overspend. This is mainly related to flood recovery expenditure, and the recognition of operating expenditure that was originally treated as capital expenditure.</p> <p>Depreciation & amortisation Unfavourable variance of \$167K YTD, mainly relating to variances in budget estimates. Full year forecast has been</p>

Income Statement (Continued)	<p><i>Prescribed expenditure of Capital Income is not included in the Income Statement, and this can distort the analysis of the financial performance which is better reflected by the Operating Net Surplus/(Deficit).</i></p> <p><i>Capital expenditure against capital grant income is provided in the Capital Work Program report and as additional assets on the balance sheet.</i></p>	<p>varied upward and will continue to be reviewed particularly in relation to asset purchases which are below the \$5,000 asset capitalisation threshold for plant and equipment.</p> <p>Bad and doubtful debts/Borrowing costs Traditionally these expense accounts will see actuals in the second half of the financial year.</p> <p>Other expenses Favourable variance of \$115K YTD, mainly due to the timing of membership payments and community contributions. Full year forecast has been varied upward slightly to \$849K, mainly due to unbudgeted association membership costs.</p> <p>Capital income Capital grants are currently forecasting to the approved budget amount. As capital projects progress, this should result in the associated revenue being released to Council soon after.</p> <p>Full year forecast for Other Capital Income has been varied upward by \$41K due to the Nullawil Streetscape contribution.</p> <p>Full year forecast for Profit/(Loss) Disposal of Assets has been varied upward by \$43K due to the sale of multiple Council owned vehicles that have reached the end of their useful life.</p>
Balance Sheet	<p><i>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 as at the end of the month reported.</i></p>	<p>Cash and cash equivalents Cash balances (incl. investments) are at \$32M, which is a \$8.3M decrease since 30 June 2023. This is mainly due to the payment of 30 June 2023 creditor balances, resulting in a decrease in Trade and other payables liability.</p> <p>Trade and other receivables Rates debtors are the main contributor to the \$11M increase in Trade and other receivables, resulting from annual rates notices being generated and sent.</p> <p>Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment There has been a \$1.4M decrease in this area since 30 June 2023, mainly relating to depreciation of assets which partially offsets capital expenditure year-to-date.</p> <p>Trade and other payables There has been a \$1.6M decrease since 30 June 2023, mainly due to the volume of creditor payments which occurs prior to end of financial year.</p> <p>Trust funds and deposits</p>

		There has been a \$1.1M increase since 30 June 2023, mainly due to the fire services levy amounts which are held on behalf of the State Revenue Office (SRO) when rates notices are initially generated. This is then paid to the SRO on a quarterly basis.
Cashflow Statement	<i>The Cashflow Statement reflects actual results for the reporting period in line with statutory financial reporting.</i>	There has been \$3.4M used to support the capital works program as at 30 September 2023. Overall, there has been a reduction in cash of \$8.2M since 30 June 2023.
Cashflow Forecast	<i>The Cashflow Chart visually depicts the cashflow forecast and the updated format is illustrated in a dual design, based on best practice reporting.</i> <i>The P & L Forecast is a projection of cashflow for the remainder of the year based on the month-end cash balance, the monthly budgets, specified timing parameters (such when BAS/super are due and quarterly rate receipts) and capital expenditure.</i>	Timing assumptions have been made regarding capital project income and expenditure for 2023/24. While this is still being confirmed in accordance with capital project delivery, all income and expenditure is reported in June 2024 by default unless otherwise specified. The cashflow forecast across the 12 months results in an increase of approximately \$3.4M. This is however highly dependent on decisions that will be made around the timing of the Financial Assistance Grants, expected in May/June 2024.
Capital Works Program	<i>The Capital Works Statement lists the expenditure for each project incurred to date.</i>	The total capital works program for 2023/24 is \$24.3M, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2022/23 carry forward project budget \$10.7M • 2022/23 night art activation project, originally listed as a carry forward \$0.4M • 2023/24 budgeted capital projects \$13.2M <p>The total delivery as at 31 December 2023 was \$3.52M, representing 14.5% of the total capital works program including carry forwards.</p> <p>A number of large value capital projects are currently in early procurement stages and it is expected that much progress will occur in the March 2024 quarter.</p>
Statement by the Chief Executive Officer	CEO Statement <i>Section 95 of the Local Government Act 2020</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the analysis and review of the budget, actual year to date result and other known financial factors as at 31 December 2023, it is considered that a revised budget for the purposes of s95 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> is not required.

RELEVANT LAW

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

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Council adopted its Annual Budget 2023/24 on 27th June 2023.

OPTIONS

Not applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

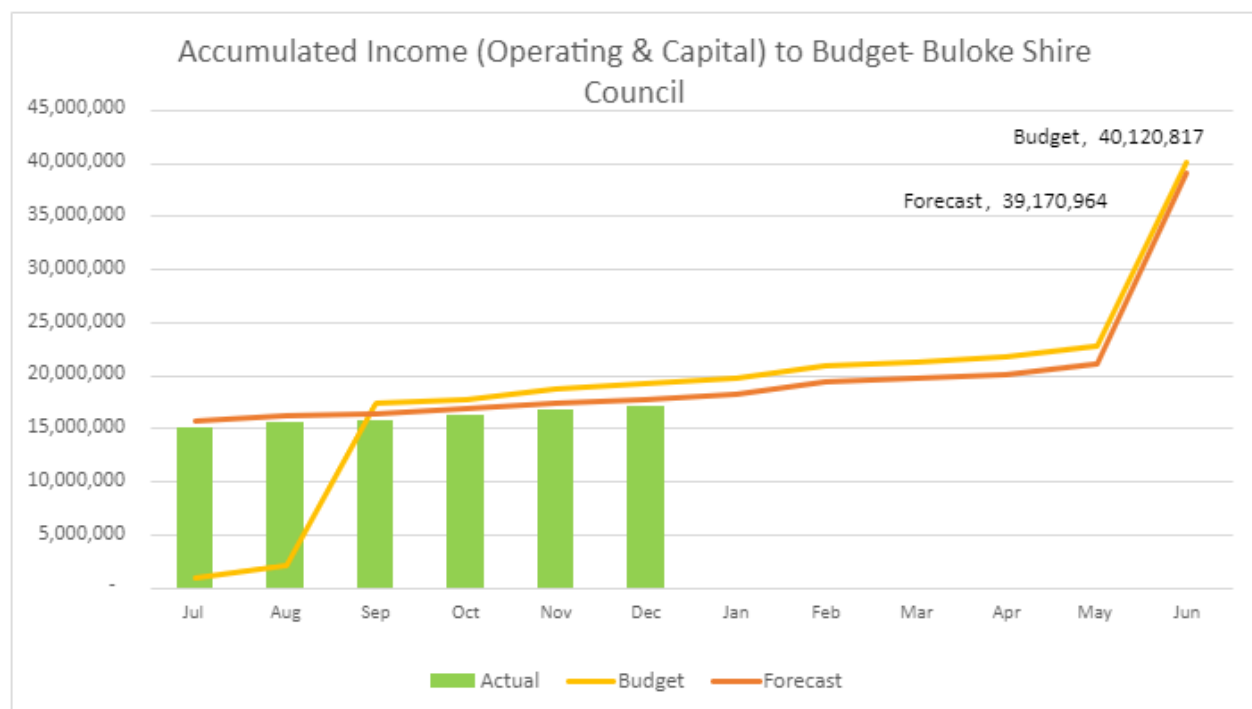
Not applicable.

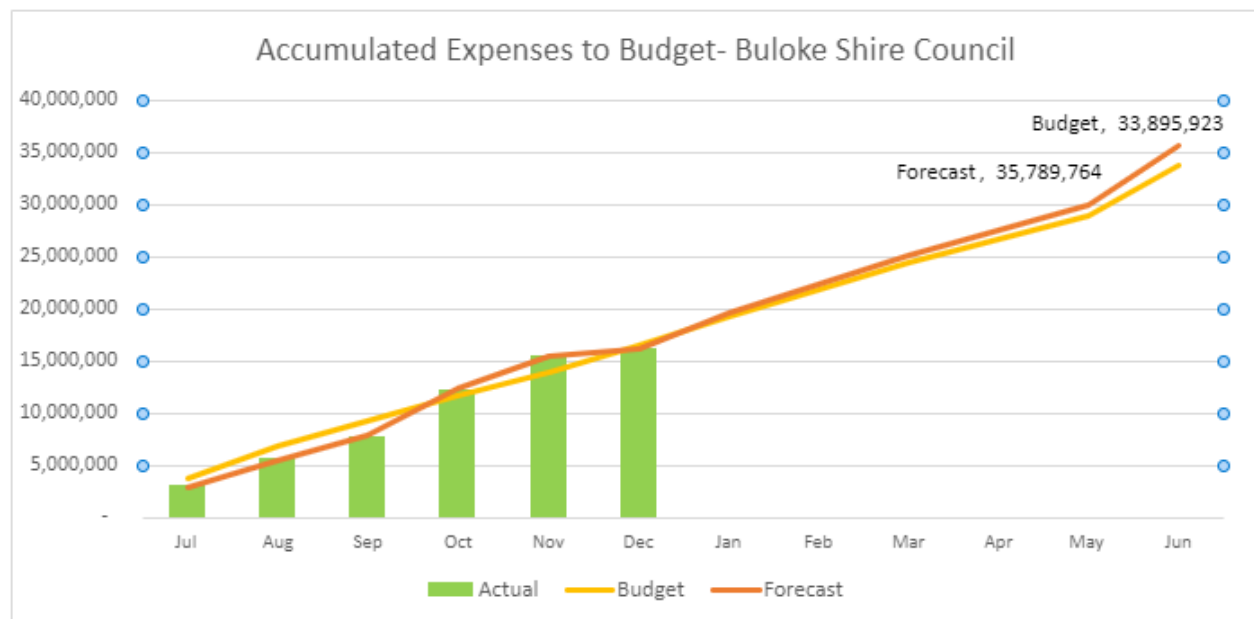
COLLABORATION

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The tables below provide an overview of Council's financial performance against Adopted budget income and expenses at 31 December 2023.





REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Council adopted its Annual Budget 2023/24 on 27th June 2023. The Buloke Shire Council Plan 2021-2025 outlines Council's commitment to developing responsible cash flow budgets to achieve long term financial sustainability and reporting quarterly against their delivery.

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.

BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL			
CAPITAL PROJECT REPORT - Carry Forwards Only			
July to December 2023			
Projects	Carry Forward Budget 2022/23	YTD Actual Expenditure	YTD Remaining budget
Aerodromes	23,324	-	23,324
Aerodrome Water Connections	23,324	-	23,324
Building improvements	70,982	71,080	- 98
Donald Community Precinct Stage 2	10,557	133	10,424
Litchfield Hall ceiling lining, lighting & solar	60,425	70,611	- 10,186
Watchem Hall Entrance	-	336	- 336
Drainage	732,600	3,513	729,087
Birchip Oval Drainage	59,323	-	59,323
Drainage Plans	390,651	3,320	387,331
Nullawil - West/East drainage (Calder Hwy Pipeworks)	282,626	192	282,433
Footpaths and cycleways	808,790	109,781	699,008
Crossovers	243,918	12,994	230,924
Footpaths	564,872	96,788	468,084
Land	332,942	34,073	298,869
Sea Lake Housing Development	332,942	34,073	298,869
Land improvements	61,668	77,598	- 15,930
Nullawil Silo Art Carpark	41,264	40,857	408
Wycheproof Saleyards Masterplan Implementation	20,404	36,741	- 16,338
Parks, open space and streetscapes	1,855,207	471,593	1,383,614
Birchip Streetscapes	-	7,462	- 7,462
Charlton Streetscapes	-	9,059	- 9,059
Donald Streetscapes	551,566	130,733	420,832
Sea Lake Streetscapes	402,600	144,473	258,127
Wyche Wetlands	901,041	166,268	734,773
Wycheproof Streetscapes	-	13,597	- 13,597
Recreational leisure and communities facilities	2,679,938	1,523,165	1,156,773
Berriwillock Pool Fence Replacement	21,882	155	21,727
Buloke Playspaces Trail: Berriwillock	284,111	245,543	38,568
Buloke Playspaces Trail: Birchip	628,456	297,715	330,742
Buloke Playspaces Trail: Charlton	464,405	31,670	432,735
Buloke Playspaces Trail: Donald	265,680	289,961	- 24,281
Buloke Playspaces Trail: Wycheproof	259,987	258,338	1,649
Charlton Riverfront	40,399	2,748	37,651
Culgoa Dump Point (Septic Upgrade)	52,154	947	51,208
Donald caravan Park cabins	107,018	110,882	- 3,863
Donald Riverfront	65,787	-	65,787
Lake Tyrell	19,892	-	19,892
LUB Birchip Football Oval	362,866	92,934	269,931
Tchum Lakes Septic Works	-	3,118	- 3,118
Watchem Oval Water Connection	4,223	1,147	3,076
Watchem Toilet Lake Remediation	-	8,943	- 8,943
Wooroonook Lakes Camping Ground	68,383	9,152	59,231
Wycheproof Caravan Park	34,695	169,913	- 135,218
Roads	4,111,717	327,783	3,783,934
Berriwillock Birchip Rd Rehab and Final Seal	569,432	-	569,432
Boundary Street Birchip Seal	14,056	-	14,056
Jeffcott Road Rehabilitation	350,000	-	350,000
Marlbed Curyo Rehab Ch0 to 1.075km	453,754	216	453,538
McLoughlan Road (Ch 7.350 to Ch 9 kms)	252,935	144	252,790
McLoughlan Road Rehabilitation Ch9.000km to Ch10.730km	211,875	14,644	197,231
Nullawil-Birchip Final Seal	131,806	177,661	- 45,854
Nullawil-Birchip Road Rehab Ch21.910 to 23.760 1.85km	754,800	-	754,800
Reseal Program (R2R)	68,634	22,874	45,760
Resheet Program	385,574	112,244	273,330
Sea Lake - Lascelles Road Final Seal (Ch 9.915 - Ch 11.32 kms)	68,000	-	68,000
Traynors Lagoon Rd Rehab Ch1.855 to 2.950km 1.095km	17,735	-	17,735
Watchem-Corack Rd Rehab Ch3.560 to 4.785km 1.225km	23,795	-	23,795
Wedderburn Buckrabanyule Road Design	29,891	-	29,891
Wilkur Watchupga Road Ch29.26km - Ch31.06km	779,429	-	779,429
Grand Total	10,677,168	2,618,587	8,058,581

BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL					
CAPITAL PROJECT REPORT - 2023/24 Capital Projects (excl. Carry Forwards)					
July to December 2023					
Row Labels	2023/24		Total Budget + Carry Forward	YTD Actual Expenditure	YTD Remaining Budget
	Carry Forward (negative - to reduce budget)	Approved Budget			
Drainage	-	289,175	289,175	48	289,127
Drainage Works	-	269,175	269,175	48	269,127
Kaye St Rehabilitation design	-	20,000	20,000	-	20,000
Footpaths and cycleways	-	60,000	60,000	-	60,000
Footpaths & Crossovers	-	60,000	60,000	-	60,000
Land improvements	-	21,680	629,725	166,179	441,867
Dog Pound Fence, Wycheproof Depot	-	28,500	28,500	-	28,500
Night Art Activation	-	4,074	361,225	165,318	191,833
Transfer Station (Glass Out)	-	17,606	200,000	860	181,534
Wycheproof saleyards rural water connection	-	40,000	40,000	-	40,000
Opex	-	-	-	24,209	- 24,209
Donald Stadium water supply upgrade	-	-	-	1,500	- 1,500
Berriwillock bowling club surface repairs	-	-	-	649	- 649
Birchip Recreation Reserve Masterplan	-	-	-	3,650	- 3,650
Birchip Town Centre	-	-	-	-	-
Donald pre-fabricated levee	-	-	-	9,010	- 9,010
Wycheproof Library	-	-	-	9,400	- 9,400
Other infrastructure	-	200,000	200,000	-	200,000
Town entry signage	-	200,000	200,000	-	200,000
Parks, open space and streetscapes	-	114,347	6,424,045	196,558	6,113,139
Birchip Netball court 2 remediation	-	20,000	20,000	3,567	16,433
Birchip Streetscape lighting	-	199,064	199,064	-	199,064
Buloke Playspaces	-	1,743,755	1,743,755	-	1,743,755
Donald memorial park Changing Places	-	383,097	383,097	2,677	380,420
Donald tennis court synthetic resurfacing	-	53,500	53,500	48,383	5,117
Public showers automatic timers	-	24,771	24,771	2,366	22,405
Raise Nullawil toilet block	-	34,313	34,313	-	34,313
Sea Lake apex park shelter	-	38,287	38,287	18,969	19,318
Sea lake streetscape lighting	-	206,223	206,223	4,805	201,418
Swimming pool improvements	-	40,000	40,000	-	40,000
Wooroonook Septic replacement	-	300,000	300,000	-	300,000
Wyche Wetlands	-	310,270	310,270	-	310,270
Wycheproof recreation reserve public toilets	-	100,000	100,000	6,204	93,796
Cabins	-	114,347	2,970,765	109,588	2,746,829
Plant and equipment	-	1,275,000	1,275,000	10,308	1,264,692
Computers and telecommunications	-	183,000	183,000	10,308	172,692
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	-	65,000	65,000	-	65,000
Library books	-	27,000	27,000	-	27,000
Plant, machinery and equipment	-	1,000,000	1,000,000	-	1,000,000
Recreational leisure and communities facilities	-	550,000	550,000	4,725	545,275
Sports ground lighting	-	50,000	50,000	-	50,000
Wycheproof Recreation reserve multi-sport change facility	-	500,000	500,000	4,725	495,275
Roads	-	4,149,000	4,149,000	495,262	3,653,738
Grain Receival Access: Donald	-	100,000	100,000	3,250	96,750
Grain Receival Access: Nandaly	-	100,000	100,000	3,633	96,367
Grain Receival Access: Wycheproof	-	100,000	100,000	3,440	96,560
Major Patching	-	100,000	100,000	-	100,000
Rehabilitation	-	1,900,000	1,900,000	-	1,900,000
Rehabilitation R2R	-	-	-	445,846	- 445,846
Reseal Program	-	1,200,000	1,200,000	-	1,200,000
Resheet Program	-	649,000	649,000	39,093	609,907
Grand Total	-	136,027	13,576,945	897,289	12,543,629
Night Art Activation - Not included on final carry forward list, listed as new instead (above)					
		361,225			
2022/23 Carry Forward Capital Projects					
		10,677,168			
2023/24 Approved Capital Projects					
		13,576,945			
Total Capital Works Program 2023/24 + 2022/23 Carry Forwards					
		24,254,113			

Income Statement — Buloke Shire Council

MONTH: DEC 2023

	Jul 2023 - Dec 2023			Full Year Budget		
	Actuals	Approved	Variance	Approved	Forecast	Variance
Operating Income						
Rates & Charges	14,988,940	14,978,657	10,283	15,018,657	15,034,858	16,201
Statutory fees and fines	102,032	148,103	(46,070)	240,865	211,490	(29,375)
User fees	313,838	348,248	(34,410)	813,596	793,746	(19,850)
Grants - operating	899,469	2,599,112	(1,699,643)	9,747,461	8,892,025	(855,436)
Contributions	594	30,600	(30,006)	74,416	74,510	94
Other Income	548,646	389,770	158,876	814,540	904,568	90,028
Total Operating Income	16,853,518	18,494,490	(1,640,971)	26,709,535	25,911,197	(798,338)
Total Income	16,853,518	18,494,490	(1,640,971)	26,709,535	25,911,197	(798,338)
Operating Expense						
Employee Costs	5,877,282	5,829,192	(48,090)	11,660,465	11,692,050	(31,585)
Materials and services	5,223,331	5,709,126	485,795	11,414,390	13,107,610	(1,693,220)
Depreciation & Amortisation (Leasing)	4,898,489	4,731,582	(166,907)	9,862,298	10,031,461	(169,163)
Bad and doubtful debts	2,946	0	(2,946)	78,000	80,946	(2,946)
Borrowing costs	0	0	0	32,995	32,995	0
Other expenses	247,507	363,311	115,804	847,773	849,479	(1,705)
Total Operating Expense	16,249,555	16,633,210	383,655	33,895,923	35,794,541	(1,898,619)
Operating Net Surplus/(Deficit)	603,964	1,861,280	(1,257,316)	(7,186,388)	(9,883,345)	(2,696,957)
Capital Income						
Grants - capital	169,154	800,000	(630,846)	12,946,256	12,715,410	(230,846)
Other Capital Income	41,309	0	41,309	465,026	506,335	41,309
Net Profit/(Loss) disposal of PIPE	42,800	0	42,800	0	42,800	42,800
Total Capital Income	253,263	800,000	(546,737)	13,411,282	13,264,544	(146,737)
Net Surplus/Deficit	857,226	2,661,280	(1,804,054)	6,224,894	3,381,200	(2,843,694)

Balance Sheet — Buloke Shire Council

DEC 2023

	Dec 2023	Jun 2023	Variance	% Variance
Asset				
Current assets	49,281,810	47,131,361	2,150,449	5%
Cash and cash equivalents	31,998,038	40,320,373	(8,322,335)	(21%)
Trade and other receivables	16,646,193	5,604,854	11,041,339	197%
Inventories	128,006	181,298	(53,292)	(29%)
Prepayments	61,494	315,633	(254,140)	(81%)
Other assets	164,542	387,184	(222,642)	(58%)
GST	283,538	322,019	(38,481)	(12%)
Non-current assets	299,554,436	300,950,041	(1,395,605)	0%
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	299,554,436	300,950,041	(1,395,605)	0%
Right of Use Assets	976,279	976,279	0	0%
Total Asset	349,812,525	349,057,681	754,844	0%
Liability				
Current liabilities	13,175,024	13,277,406	102,382	1%
Trade and other payables	1,486,193	3,159,804	1,673,610	53%
Trust funds and deposits	1,418,784	344,100	(1,074,684)	(312%)
Unearned Income	6,531,875	5,796,618	(735,257)	(13%)
Provisions	3,690,462	3,681,977	(8,486)	0%
Leases	47,568	283,669	236,100	83%
PO Accrual	141	11,239	11,098	99%
Non-current liabilities	1,663,471	1,663,471	0	0%
Leases	701,028	701,028	0	0%
Provisions	962,443	962,443	0	0%
Total Liability	14,838,495	14,940,877	102,382	1%
Net Assets	334,974,030	334,116,804	857,226	0%
Equity				

	Dec 2023	Jun 2023	Variance	% Variance
Accumulated Surplus	129,606,700	120,557,174	9,049,526	8%
Reserves	204,510,104	204,510,104	0	0%
Current Earnings	857,226	9,049,526	(8,192,299)	(91%)
Total Equity	334,974,030	334,116,804	857,226	0%

Cashflow Statement — Buloke Shire Council

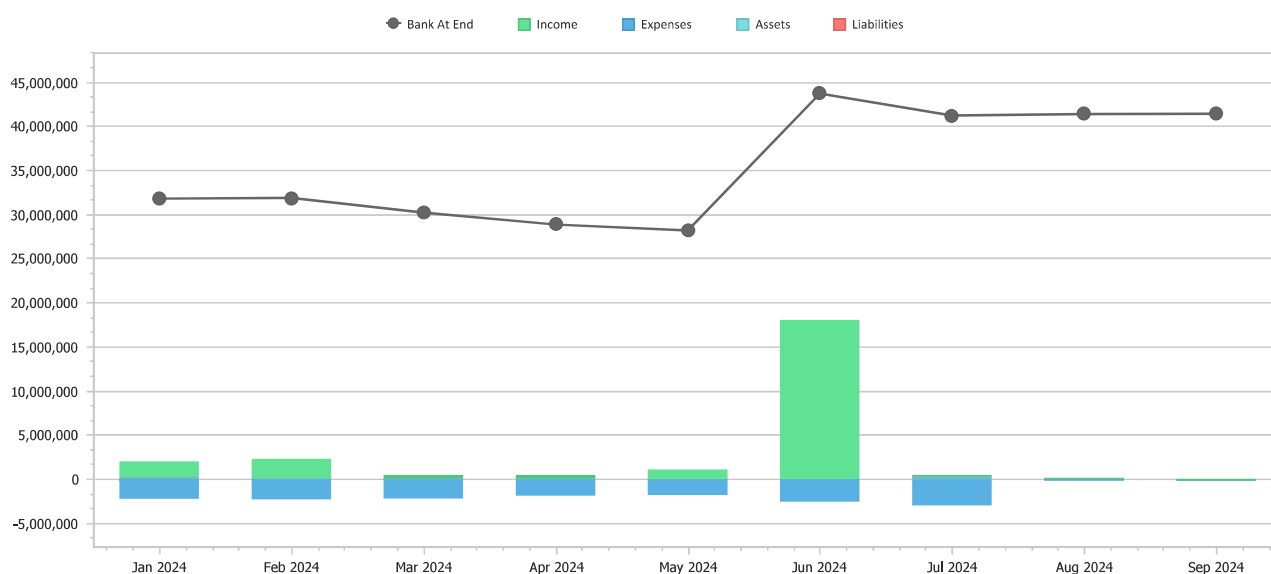
JUL 2023 - DEC 2023

	Jul 2023 - Dec 2023
	Actuals
Bank at Beginning	40,316,932
Cashflow from Operating Activities:	
Net Profit	857,226
Adjustments to Net Profit for Non-Cash Activities:	
Non - Cash expenses	4,898,489
Depreciation	4,898,489
Total Adjustments to Net Profit for Non-Cash Activities	4,898,489
Adjustments to Net Profit for Non-Operating Activities:	
Operating Activities	(42,800)
Cash Inflows - Operational Income	(42,800)
Total Adjustments to Net Profit for Non-Operating Activities	(42,800)
Adjustments for Balance Sheet Movement on Operating Activities:	
Current assets	(10,470,885)
Cash and cash equivalents	1,900
Trade and other receivables	(11,041,339)
Inventories	53,292
Prepayments	254,140
Other assets	222,642
GST	38,481
Current liabilities	(102,111)
Trade and other payables	(1,673,340)
Trust funds and deposits	1,074,684
Unearned Income	735,257
Provisions	8,486

Leases	(236,100)
PO Accrual	(11,098)
Total Adjustments for Balance Sheet Movement on Operating Activities	(10,572,996)
Net Cashflow from Operating Activities	(4,860,081)
Cashflow from Investing Activities:	
Operating Activities	42,800
Cash Inflows - Operational Income	42,800
Non-current assets	(3,418,673)
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(3,418,673)
Net Cashflow from Investing Activities	(3,375,873)
Cashflow from Financing Activities:	
Current liabilities	(271)
Trade and other payables	(271)
Net Cashflow from Financing Activities	(271)
Net Cashflows	(8,236,224)
Discrepancy	(84,211)
Bank at End	31,996,496

Cashflow Chart — Buloke Shire Council

JAN 2024 — SEP 2024



01/02/2024 22:07

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P & L Forecast - Chart input — Buloke Shire Council

JUL 2023 - JUN 2024

	Jul 2023	Aug 2023	Sep 2023	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Jan 2024	Feb 2024	Mar 2024	Apr 2024	May 2024	Jun 2024	Projected Total
	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	
400 · Income													
Total Income	15,698,353	479,520	303,082	481,684	498,112	300,029	512,038	1,103,866	368,005	450,038	964,274	18,011,961	39,170,964
Gross Profit	15,698,353	479,520	303,082	481,684	498,112	300,029	512,038	1,103,866	368,005	450,038	964,274	18,011,961	39,170,964
600 · Expense													
Total Expense	2,996,813	2,581,129	2,325,901	4,466,749	3,216,153	722,938	3,307,411	2,874,433	2,643,497	2,463,496	2,416,475	5,774,768	35,789,764
Operating Profit	12,701,540	(2,101,609)	(2,022,819)	(3,985,065)	(2,718,041)	(422,909)	(2,795,373)	(1,770,567)	(2,275,492)	(2,013,458)	(1,452,201)	12,237,193	3,381,200
Net Profit	12,701,540	(2,101,609)	(2,022,819)	(3,985,065)	(2,718,041)	(422,909)	(2,795,373)	(1,770,567)	(2,275,492)	(2,013,458)	(1,452,201)	12,237,193	3,381,200

Business Unit(s)	Buloke Shire Council
Budget Version	Q2 FORECAST
Account Tree	BSC - Bal Sheet
Account Types	Income, Cost of Sales, Expense, Other Income, Other Expense



8.4 ORGANISATIONAL REPORTS

8.4.1 COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025 - YEAR 3 ANNUAL PLAN REVIEW

Author's Title: Director Community Development

Department: Community Development

File No: CM/13/06

Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025

Strategic Objective: Our Council and Community Leadership

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council an update on the actions taken against the Council Plan 2021-2025 - Year 3 Annual Plan.

SUMMARY

Council at its 16 June 2021 Meeting adopted its Long-Term Community Vision and Council Plan 2021-2025 and subsequently developed an Annual Plan for the implementation of the strategic objectives in each subsequent financial year.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the progress made to deliver the strategic objectives noted in the Year 3 Annual Plan for the Buloke Council Plan 2021-2025.

Attachments: 1 [Year 3 Annual Plan Quarterly Report February 2024](#)

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the Annual Plans is for Council to develop a series of actions, projects, programs and initiatives, to achieve the Council Plan 2021-2025.

Council receives progress reports against the Year 3 Annual Plan throughout the financial year.

The report outlines delivery against the Annual Plan, and the overarching Council Plan 2021-2025. Some of the key actions are:

- Development and adoption of a Buloke Aquatic Strategy
- Completion of construction of Playspaces for Berriwillock, Donald, and Wycheproof
- Preparation of Buloke Drainage Plans
- Preparation of Community Plans
- Recreation Reserve Planning projects for Birchip, Donald, and Sea Lake
- Development and adoption of an Integrated Community Planning Framework
- Development and adoption of the Children, Youth and Families Strategy
- Delivery of Silo Art Night Activation
- Delivery of the Safer Together Program

RELEVANT LAW

The Annual Plan forms part of the review of the Council Plan, required under the *Local Government Act 2020*.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

This item responds directly to the adoption of the Year 3 Annual Plan on 9 August 2023 and noting of progress against the plan on 8 November 2023.

OPTIONS

Not applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no sustainability implications.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There was significant consultation undertaken in the development of the Council Plan 2021-2025, 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

Reporting on the delivery of strategic objectives ensures continuous improvement and accountability to the community.

COLLABORATION

Many actions achieved in the Annual Plan rely upon the collaboration of other Councils and key peak bodies, local stakeholder groups and the community.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The items listed in the Annual Plan have been factored into the Annual Budget, which is reported on regularly.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

This report responds directly to the implementation of the Council Plan 2021-2025 and the adopted Annual Plan.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

The adoption of regular reporting on the Annual Plan provides strong transparency to the community regarding the key focus areas of Council over the 2023/24 year and how Council is tracking against those actions.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No staff member involved in the compilation of this report has a conflict of interest to declare.

Buloke Shire Council Plan 2021-2025

Annual Plan - Year 3 - Periodic Report

Priority 1:

Our Built and Natural Environment.

The Vision: Our future Buloke has quality, safe and accessible infrastructure valued by and responsive to the community alongside attractive streetscapes and a protected and celebrated natural environment reflecting Buloke pride.

Initiative	Council Plan Relevance	Measure	Timeframe	Status	Comments
Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption Strategy	1.1 Work Towards Sustainability	Funding sought to continue the implementation of the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption Strategy.	June 2024	Commenced	Working with the CVGA with an eye to the Federal Government's \$100 million Community Energy Upgrades Fund and the Regional Greenhouse Alliance Neighbourhood Battery Investigation. Key staff attendance at the CVGA Local Government Guiding Better Practice Renewable Energy Development training workshop and Renewable Energy Zone training.
Community-based Solar Bulk-Buy Initiatives	1.1 Work Towards Sustainability	Support community groups to purchase and implement solar initiatives through the Community Sustainability Grants Program and other external funding sources and programs.	June 2024	Commenced	Council is transitioning its community grant streams to the Smarty Grants platform. A review of the Community Grants Guidelines and Program is required to better support the community in accessing the

					Community Sustainability Grants Program pool.
Rural Land Use Strategy	1.2 Suitable Housing Options	Continue to investigate a Buloke Shire Rural Land Use Strategy to provide strategic direction and a consistent approach to use and development of rural land for rural-style living.	June 2024	Commenced	<p>Councillors have undertaken a workshop with the consultant as this priority progresses.</p> <p>Community Consultation to be undertaken in short term.</p> <p>In September last year, a Notice of Motion was moved to write to the Minister for Planning in relation to the impacts of a Windfall Gains Tax on small rural communities.</p>
Housing and Development Incentives	1.2 Suitable Housing Options	Implement New Housing Rates Incentive Program.	June 2024	Commenced	A preliminary assessment was made during the 2023/24 budget development process and will be further developed for Council consideration through the year.
Buloke Drainage Plans	1.3 An Attractive and Well Maintained Buloke	Revisit preparation of Buloke Drainage Plans and associated flood modelling in partnership with Catchment Management Authorities.	June 2024	Commenced <i>*multi-year</i>	Supported MCMA in funding application to risk and resilience fund for LiDAR; NCCMA seeking DEECA funding LiDAR (LiDAR costs circa \$800K inc. community consultation, etc). LiDAR survey may take up to 12 months to complete. Project for DAMP and drainage plan development not fully scoped and on hold until LiDAR survey details available.

Streetscape Upgrades	1.3 An Attractive and Well Maintained Buloke	Complete Streetscape upgrades in Donald and Sea Lake.	June 2024	Commenced <i>*Donald PC FY25</i>	Sea Lake will be completed pending resolution of contract dispute (lighting). Donald will have some components which are anticipated to be carried forward to FY25 – specifically non-slip treatment. PAG advised and agree with proposed delay. DDW engaged to complete mural; laneway upgrade with footpath, lighting, etc, EV charger installed. Replacement of trees to be finalised.
Buloke Playspaces Trail	1.3 An Attractive and Well Maintained Buloke	Complete Construction of Playspaces for Berriwillock, Donald, and Wycheproof.	June 2024	Commenced <i>*multi-year</i> <i>*additional scope (LRCI) FY25 pending budget discussions</i>	Original funded scope to be completed FY24; additional scope (lighting all sites, and shade structures Wyche) not in funded project and proposed additional work – pending FY25 budget discussion outcomes these components will be completed FY25
Key Heavy Road Upgrades	1.4 A Safe and Active Buloke	Complete Key Heavy Road upgrade projects including Marlbed-Curyo Road and Jeffcott Road.	June 2024	Commenced	Contract awarded – works to commence January 2024. PC FY24; final seal FY25 per normal process.
Road Services Internal Service Review	1.4 A Safe and Active Buloke	Road Services Internal Service Review completed with report to Councillor briefing.	June 2024	Completed	Briefing with Councillors held in November 2023.

Buloke Shire Council Aquatic Strategy	1.4 A Safe and Active Buloke	Develop and adopt Buloke Shire Council Aquatic Strategy.	September 2024	Delayed	Previous strategy and process reviewed; new RFQ document collation paused. Significant OHS and plant/equipment services reviews have been undertaken as priority works to prepare for season opening and in season. Condition Assessments and review and update of Lifeguard Manuals to be prioritised. This action has been impacted by staffing availability in the area.
Birchip Recreation Reserve Masterplan	1.4 A Safe and Active Buloke	Complete Birchip Recreation Reserve Masterplan.	June 2024	Nearing Completion	This process is progressing well but will now be finalised in June.
Donald Recreation Reserve Masterplan	1.4 A Safe and Active Buloke	Complete Project Plan for Donald Recreation Reserve Masterplan ahead of Plan development in 2024/25.	December 2024	Commenced Delayed	Recreation allocations have been subjected to a more transparent governance process to adhere to the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> . This process has taken priority ahead of the master planning process advancement.
Sea Lake Recreation Reserve Masterplan	1.4 A Safe and Active Buloke	Complete Project Plan for Sea Lake Recreation Reserve Masterplan ahead of Plan development in 2024/25.	December 2024	Commenced Delayed	Recreation allocations have been subjected to a more transparent governance process to adhere to the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> . This process has taken priority ahead of the master planning process advancement.

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.

Initiative	Council Plan Relevance	Measure	Timeframe	Status	Comments
VicHealth Local Government Partnership	2.1 Partnerships to Outcomes	VicHealth Local Government Partnership Project Year 3 delivered.	June 2024	Ongoing	VicHealth Local Government Partnership Project is ongoing. Currently delivering walk to school initiatives in Wycheproof and Sea Lake. Application for further staffing and project funding for 2024 -25 has been submitted and Sate funding also secured.
Land Use Activity Agreements	2.2 Inclusiveness Plan in Action	Achievement of Land Use Activity Agreements for the Donald Playspace Project and Flood Initiatives.	June 2024	Commenced <i>*LUAA projects/initiatives multi-year</i>	LUAA for Donald Playspace finalised – works/projects under LUAA ongoing; LUAA requirements for Donald pre-fab levee to be determined (likely alteration to existing CHMP required) (note: pre-fab levee funding application outcome still not known at time of writing)
Gender Equality Action Plan	2.2 Inclusiveness Plan in Action	Submit Gender Equality Action Plan Progress Report to the Commissioner for Gender Equality.	20 February 2024	Well advanced	Reporting to the Commissioner for Gender Equality well advanced.

Library Services Review	2.3 Well Supported Community	Undertake Library Service Review and develop subsequent Library Service Plan.	November 2024	Commenced Delayed	Initial internal review of policies and procedures being undertaken, RFQ document being drafted. Changes in funding to Public Libraries Victoria (PLV) new trial system for inter library loans has delayed review process. PLV lobbying State Government for increased Libraries funding currently.
Buloke Shire Children, Youth & Families Strategy	2.3 Well Supported Community	Finalise and adopt the Buloke Shire Children, Youth & Families Strategy.	December 2023	Nearing Completion	The Draft Buloke Shire Children, Youth & Families Strategy has been released to the Community for feedback, this will return to the Council for adoption in the March 2024 Meeting.
Buloke Shire Integrated Community Planning Framework	2.4 Increased Community Wellbeing	Prepare and adopt the Buloke Shire Integrated Community Planning Framework.	March 2024	Commenced	An internal working group has been established. The working group has engaged with several other Councils to assist in the planning stage. The project is currently 1-2 months behind schedule. Timeframe to be revised in view of recent key staff changes.
Community Plans	2.4 Increased Community Wellbeing	Work with communities to prepare Community Plans for localities to drive community connectedness and outcomes.	June 2024	Ongoing	3 plans completed, 5 other drafts on track to be completed in the short term. 2 plans are behind schedule owing to community response.

Home and Independence Support Services Transition	2.4 Increased Community Wellbeing	Help facilitate transition of community members receiving Home and Independence Support Services to new providers under the Federal Government's Support at Home Program.	December 2023	Complete	Transition was completed in December 2023 to four new service providers. Council still has staff employed in the area to help navigate the changes and will devise a Positive Ageing Strategy to inform future support to this cohort.
Viable Childcare Services Advocacy	2.4 Increased Community Wellbeing	Continue to advocate for the provision of viable childcare services for Buloke Shire and rural communities.	June 2024	Ongoing	Continued work to leverage the Creating Viable Childcare Service in Rural Areas document. Shine Bright EYM have been appointed as the new Early Years Managers of the Charlton Centre. Long Day to be operational by the end of Feb.

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.

Initiative	Council Plan Relevance	Measure	Timeframe	Status	Comments
Silo Art Night Activation	3.1 Tourism	Silo Art Night Activation installed.	June 2024	Ongoing	Consultation with Traditional Owners completed. Equipment for projection has been received, currently waiting for external

					agency to confirm timeframe re installation of infrastructure.
Birchip Civic and Community Hub Project	3.2 Attraction and Promotion of Local Businesses	Preparation of feasibility study for the Birchip Civic and Community Hub Project.	June 2024	Ongoing	Community consultation ongoing. Community planning process for the township has taken precedent and will help progress this project through the calendar year.
Implement Interim Economic and Tourism Development Strategy	3.3 Employment Opportunities	Implement identified initiatives from the Interim Economic and Tourism Development Strategy.	June 2024	Commenced	Working with external consultant to address workforce participation roadblocks e.g. childcare/disability support. Community consultation is ongoing regarding priorities/solutions. Opportunities for collaboration with educational institutions/career guidance services are also being discussed.

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 responsive community services in a responsible way.

Initiative	Council Plan Relevance	Measure	Timeframe	Status	Comments
Safer Together Program	4.1 Active Leaders and Volunteers	Deliver the Safer Together Program in conjunction with Gannawarra Shire Council and report to Council Safer Together Program progress.	June 2024	Ongoing	Project is resourced and has commenced a consultation phase. This project no longer will be delivered in conjunction with Gannawarra Shire Council.
Customer Experience Strategy	4.2 Community Engagement	Implement identified initiatives from the Customer Experience Strategy.	June 2024	Ongoing	Goal 1: Wellbeing and Customer Service training conducted in Customer Engagement & Development Services and Enviro. Health teams. Council Plans under review; Customer Experience Charter adopted; Service medals awarded in December 2023; Staff Ambassadors promoted through staff bulletin as Thank You's; Community Grants Concierge review underway training in Feb; staff annual well-being survey conducted. Pulse surveys not implemented; Teams and SharePoint integrated, staff training still not commenced. Goal 2: Business Service Plans not commenced. Complaints management policies updated; Quarterly Report due February '24. Goal 3: Translation services introduced; Cultural and diversity training delivered to

					Management team; community engagement provided through street walk surveys (Community Recovery); Message on Hold Updated with staff safety message December '23; significant delays in response to customer requests in Confirm dur to staff resourcing issues; Social media reporting community sentiment to Management meetings; Customer Journey mapping undertaken in Customer engagement as pilot; Goal 4: Website information review progressed with Social Pinpoint integration underway; iPads purchased to extend face-to-face and data feedback with community for online surveys and increased use of posters with direct links to QR-codes; Communications Toolkit draft completed and to be integrated into Social Pinpoint adoption.
Advocacy Strategy	4.4 A Well Governed and Healthy Organisation	Review, update and adopt Council's Advocacy Strategy in line with Council's Long-Term Community Vision and Council Plan 2021-2025.	March 2024	Commenced	Review undertaken with rescoping of the document underway.

8.5 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

Nil

9. OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 NOTICES OF MOTION

Nil

9.2 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Nil

9.3 URGENT BUSINESS

Nil

9.4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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

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

9.5.1 RFQ 287 2023-24 SUPPLY AND
DELIVERY OF TWO NEW TRACTORS

(g(ii)) private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage

(h) confidential meeting information, being the records of meetings closed to the public under section 66(2)(a)

RECOMMENDATION:

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

10. MEETING CLOSE