



## Budget 2025/26 Community Consultation Summary

### Summary of Discussions During the Community Consultation Sessions

#### **Ararat:**

- Question was asked about what was happening with the A&J McDonald Centre, they would like to see the Centre refurbished so that it could be used. Response provided during the Engagement Session was that there had been inspections completed in 2009 that found the building did not meet the current standards for essential services and occupant safety. The cost to refurbish the building to make it compliant to current standards is significant. Council have identified the McDonald Centre as an advocacy priority for 2025.
- Other non-budget queries were discussed, these were noted by the Council officers for follow up.

#### **Buangor:**

- Attendees had questions about the Cobb & Co building works and the Buangor-Ben Nevis Road project. Other potential building works were also discussed.

#### **Elmhurst:**

- Council representatives presented budget highlights, the rising costs to operate necessitating the 1.5% rate increase and the proposed closure of the Elmhurst, Moyston, Pomonal and Willaura Transfer Stations due to these becoming financially unviable.
- Attendees were against the closure of the Elmhurst Transfer Station.
- Community members discussed the distance to Ararat being a 70km round trip, which would cost them in fuel and generate emissions.
- Concerns around illegal rubbish dumping were raised. It was discussed that this was an issue everywhere and already happening in places that had transfer stations as well as places without them.
- One resident was not able to access the kerbside bin collection service and queried what the closure of the Transfer Station would mean for them. Council are liaising with the resident directly on possible solutions.
- Council provided details on the usage and costs of running the Elmhurst Transfer Station. This station received 3.6 tonnes of waste in 12 months. The gross cost to run the Station was \$18,518 and income from fees and charges was \$1,820, resulting in a net operating cost of \$16,698.
- Feedback was provided that the height of the skip bins made it challenging to dispose of waste into the bins.
- Some local residents had large volumes of waste they needed to dispose of but they could only transport waste in the boot of their car, so a closure of the local Transfer Station would

mean multiple trips into Ararat or other Transfer Stations. The option of hiring a skip bin for one-off large volumes of waste was suggested as being more economical for larger volumes.

- The community proposed a compromise of keeping the Transfer Station open one day per week, preferably on Sunday afternoons, to reduce costs for Council while still enabling them to access this service locally.
- The Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) was discussed and how this would severely financially impact on rate payers. The impact on Council if residents chose to simply not pay the ESVF was queried. The response provided was that Council would still be required to pay a proportion of its income from ratepayers to the State Government, even if ratepayers refused to pay the ESVF portion of their rates.
- Roads that were priorities for the Elmhurst community were discussed. It was acknowledged that the grading of gravel roads has been impacted by the lack of water available for these works.
- Other non-budget queries were discussed, these were noted by the Council officer for follow up.

#### **Lake Bolac:**

- Council representatives presented budget highlights, the rising costs to operate necessitating the 1.5% rate increase and the proposed closure of the Elmhurst, Moyston, Pomonal and Willaura Transfer Stations due to these becoming financially unviable.
- Question was asked about different types of glass for the glass recycling bin. The reason why some glass is allowed and others, like window glass, is currently not is because of the different melting temperatures of the glass during the recycling process.
- There was a query about how to buy smaller amounts of compost. This will be considered by Council separately to the annual budget process.
- An attendee asked about disposing of large quantities of sump oil since the limit at the transfer stations is 20 litres. Options for coordinating a sump oil collection run between multiple sites was discussed.
- There was strong support for the continuation of the free pools.
- The need to replace the solar heating system for the pool was raised. This will be followed up as a maintenance request.
- The need for a road upgrade at an approx 300m section of Chatsworth-Wickliffe Road that was in very poor condition was raised. The road is also too narrow for agricultural vehicles.
- Other non-budget queries were discussed, these were noted by the Council officer for follow up.

#### **Moyston:**

- Council representatives presented budget highlights, the rising costs to operate necessitating the 1.5% rate increase and the proposed closure of the Elmhurst, Moyston, Pomonal and Willaura Transfer Stations due to these becoming financially unviable.
- Concerns about the impact of the closure of the Moyston Transfer Station on illegal rubbish dumping was discussed. It was acknowledged this issue is a problem already.
- Issues around the disposal of larger items that do not fit into the kerbside bins and the frequency of needing to dispose of these was discussed. The larger items were not a weekly requirement.

- There would need to be a provision for larger amounts of waste during and after an emergency, such as bushfire or flood where residents may need to dispose of damaged items.
- There was discussion around the graduate and cadet appointments and development of a trades apprenticeship program that commenced in the previous financial year. Council are still employing graduates, cadets and trainees in this upcoming budget.
- The Community Support Grants vs sponsorships was discussed, and whether infrastructure funding could be considered in future.
- Road works was discussed, the OTTA seal received positive feedback.
- The need for a disabled toilet for visitors was mentioned.

#### **Pomonal:**

- A question was asked about their options for the closure of the Pomonal Transfer Station. Their waste needs were discussed and it was suggested that they could opt to have a second kerbside bin. They were happy with this option because it meant they did not need to load the waste into their car and travel.

#### **Tatyoon:**

- No attendees

#### **Willaura:**

- Council representatives presented budget highlights, the rising costs to operate necessitating the 1.5% rate increase and the proposed closure of the Elmhurst, Moyston, Pomonal and Willaura Transfer Stations due to these becoming financially unviable.
- Concerns were raised about the disposal of bigger pieces of rubbish if the Willaura Transfer Station were to close. This was already happening around Willaura, leading to properties that look like old car yards.
- Council explained that they are unable to force people to remove large items from their property, but can issue fire prevention notices if there were large numbers of flammable material.
- Promotion of arts in Willaura and a possible arts trail via Beaufort, Ararat, Willaura, Dunkeld and Glenthompson was suggested.
- There was strong support for the continuation of the free pools.

## **Summary of Phone Conversations**

Caller 1 - This conversation occurred over multiple phone calls due to follow ups.

Caller was concerned about how the closure of the Elmhurst Transfer Station would effect older people in the town. There had been an older person from Elmhurst who had a fatal car accident while travelling to Ararat for groceries within the past couple of years. The caller did not want to see older people forced to make extra trips into town if they did not have to. The option of having a second kerbside bin was suggested to reduce the need to travel to a transfer station. They were also concerned about people's mental health if they experienced barriers to getting rid of their rubbish waste and it built up.

The reason for the proposed closure was discussed, including the gross costs, income and net costs that is covered by rates.

There were different types of waste items that are generated on farm properties that can't go into the kerbside bins, including oils, batteries, metal parts. The frequency that this waste needs to be disposed of was discussed. The caller said they go to the Elmhurst Transfer Station regularly, but they suggested they could work around a reduced schedule for the opening hours, such as once a week, once a fortnight or even once a month.

They preferred a during the week rather than the weekend.

It was identified during the conversation that the caller had a fortnightly kerbside garbage collection, which meant they lived in the Pyrenees Shire. The rates that they pay goes to the Pyrenees Shire Council whereas Ararat Rural City Council operates the Elmhurst Transfer Station. This also meant that the caller's rates did not contribute to the cost of running the Elmhurst Transfer Station, only the fees and charges that they pay at the gates. Elmhurst is on the border of two local government areas, so there would be many others from the Elmhurst region who reside in the Pyrenees Shire as well.

The caller read a number of Facebook posts. The comments from these posts include:  
They felt they receive very little services out here for the rates they pay  
There are some people who only come to Elmhurst on weekends so they can't put their bins out for the kerbside collection and put them away again.

The caller asked for details on how many people use the Elmhurst Transfer Station at the moment. This information was not able to be found during the phone call, the answer is provided in the Council Report.

Caller 2

Caller saw a notice in the local community to call Council if they objected to the closure of the Elmhurst Transfer Station.

They use the tip frequently for domestic rubbish and recycling, and also the DRUMmuster program, that's an essential part of their operations. They have disposed of quite a few chemical drums and it's a very convenient and handy outlet. They don't need to drive far. They also use the tip for getting rid of metal and fencing material that was damaged due to flooding. They said they don't fully understand what the problem is with keeping it there.

Elmhurst is isolated as far as tip goes. They would have to travel 34 kms to Ararat to dispose of their waste.

Elmhurst has had the closure of the local store, local hotel, it's just another nail in the coffin for their district.

The cost of running the Elmhurst Transfer Station vs the income generated and the decreasing financial viability of the station was discussed, and they understood the challenges of this decision.

The caller was asked how often they disposed of chemical drums. They said they have an accumulation on the farm in a container and they dispose of them when it gets full, which was around four times a year.

Disposal of metals in normal year (no floods or bushfires) was infrequent, probably once a year or ad hoc.

The caller said that having things close down makes a small community life less viable. The town needs more support to get more community life.

## Feedback submitted online via Engage Ararat

To whom it might concern,

I would love to see more meeting spaces in Ararat in a non commercial environment. I am from Italy and I miss so much our squares which are places which every neighborhood has got usually around some cultural and historical landmarks. They are big open pedestrian-only spaces with a lot of trees and natural shade where people from every generation meet - you see kids kicking the ball, the elderly chatting sitting on benches, teenagers walking and chatting. I envision something similar to Alexandra gardens in a smaller scale but in every neighborhood. A safe and well shaded hub with maybe a food stall and no other commercial intent.

Some ideas, though different contexts:

-Playing in the square:

[https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=10154920312402555&id=18429207554](https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10154920312402555&id=18429207554)

-People at eating places at the square (4th picture): <https://urbanpitch.com/genoa-the-best-football-city-you-havent-been-to-yet/>

This could be easily implemented in already existing areas where playgrounds are, though with more natural shade through trees, plus sitting spots and tables. This can also be implemented while creating affordable houses, for example having courtyards/meeting places in the middle of compounds / townhouses, something similar to this example:

<https://www.istockphoto.com/photo/cityscape-of-a-residential-area-with-modern-apartment-buildings-new-green-and-gm1451442656-488126584>

Having more greenery meeting / multipurpose places fosters connections, safety, multigenerational contacts, improves people's physical and mental health, the environment and better and more affordable houses.

This could be tied up with having rooftop solar by default and community batteries, and bicycle tracks and parking. On the long run also electric car shares could be part of the compound and the whole community.

All in all, it is a vision of a more resilient and connected community, not just a dormitory.

With thanks,

[Personal information removed for privacy]

Another idea that I really really would love to see in Ararat is: weekly fruit and vegetable local markets in town: a hub where small local producers can sell and exchange produce and also create a seed saving bank. The latter could be done in collaboration with the Neighborhood house as well a bulk buying group.

I think it is important to have fruit and veggies shops but even more so local markets that can provide essential products. I mainly saw second hand trinkets at the local monthly market which I find deeply unsatisfactory.

However, this can be better achieved with CSA (community supported agriculture) where small biodiverse organic farms can sell directly to the public (from their farms or from the local market), making food more affordable and farmer's income more stable. And create new jobs for the younger generations.

In relation to the ARCC Draft Budget, here is my submission:

1. I have concerns about the Moyston tip permanently closing for the following reasons:

- Lack of community consultation. Suggest a ARCC representative address the community to inform properly.
- Removing waste facility from farmers and small businesses owners to utilise for waste too big for bins. Suggest cutting open times to once or twice a month instead of a permanent removal of service.
- Likely increase in illegal rubbish dumping. Suggest a percentage of funds saved from transfer station reductions go towards mitigating rubbish dumping in our beautiful nature reserves.

2. The omission of toilet upgrades at the Moyston Recreation Reserve is disappointing. Suggest ARCC perhaps work with the Moyston community in helping make the upgrades to the outdated toilet block eventuate.

Thank you for reading.

[Personal information removed for privacy]

**Waste Management** This service provides for collection and processing of four materials streams from household collection: general waste, mixed recyclables, glass, and green organics. Council has committed to local processing where possible. Council has local processing of green organics and glass at the Ararat Transfer Station. To achieve budget efficiencies and maintain low rates, Council will consolidate waste services by closing the Willaura, Elmhurst, Moyston and Pomonal Transfer Stations on 30 June 2025. Declining usage alongside ongoing operational costs render the sites no longer financially viable. Ararat and Lake Bolac Transfer Stations will remain open to serve the community's needs.

\* Figures suggest minimal "financial benefit gained" by closing Willaura, Elmhurst, Moyston and Pomonal.

\* Lake Bolac and Ararat transfer stations too far away from the towns that utilize the 'closing transfer stations'. Ratepayers would have to travel considerable distance and incur considerable expense . Some of these Ratepayers being older community members, farmers and people who rely upon others for assistance in removing items from their property for disposal. (ie) wire, green waste, old tyres, car batteries, gas bottles and hard rubbish. Basically, items that cannot be placed

into the kerbside bins .

\* Items may end up remaining on properties, becoming both eyesores and hazards to all.

\* Removing access to a 'local transfer station' will also be removing yet another piece of infrastructure from a struggling town. (Elmhurst). As property owners here, we personally own two properties and regularly use the Elmhurst Transfer station to dispose of rubbish and associated items that have been lying dormant on our properties for years prior to us acquiring them. Believe it or not, the fact the Transfer station is here was a factor that we considered positively when we decided to purchase here, roughly 8 years ago!

\* We would be extremely disappointed if the Elmhurst Transfer Station closes, and would view it as further evidence that the Rural City of Ararat is not interested in the viability of this township.

Regards,

[Personal information removed for privacy]

Good Morning,

I refer to your recent Moyston Engagement Meeting regarding your draft budget.

Closing the Moyston Transfer Station is a major blow to our local community, residents, farmers and property owners.

Our community has suffered great losses over the last 16 months and to also here that there will be a 1.5% rate increase as well.

As our Community Council we would expect much more loyalty instead of bringing more financial burdens to an already struggling community.

Perhaps the key is for better transparency and organisation of a meeting with the community after 5pm, when we would have the opportunity to attend and address your changes.

Kind Regards

[Personal information removed for privacy]

Dear Councillors

As a Moyston resident, property owner and who is environmentally conscious, the closure of the Moyston transfer station is undesirable.

This impacts the whole community including farmers who rely on this service.

This would add traffic to Ararat taking our rubbish that potentially could increase unnecessary hazards on the roads including the township, it would certainly increase the amount of rubbish pile at the Ararat transfer station.

Our time is valuable and for farmers time is money. The time taken to drive to Ararat, then I can imagine the long waiting queues at the station and the drive back home.

Our rates have increased and yet services in our area have decreased.

I've personally have waiting for months the council workers to slash the grass on the AFL monument side of the fence.

With the recent bushfire, I would have thought the council workers would be vigilant and slash the dried grass closest to my property that if sparked would impact my property.

But my the point is Moyston is left out and as a small community we have a lot to offer being mid point for travellers as a stop over, various events at the oval to name a couple.

Closing the transfer station is a blow to our farming community that is important to our economy.

I thank you for your time to read this.

Kind regards

[Personal information removed for privacy]

I have just heard that Moyston is going to loose its transfer station?

Where are we supposed to take our extra rubbish?

I also hear our rates are rising by 1.5%, but your reducing services like the transfer station?

What about the disabled toilet at the oval promised this time last year?

The gravel to 300 meters of campbells Reef rd that the council trucks continue to destroy and kick up dust for residents? I was told, when I attended the council office, that this was going to be done with the other roads in town, but it wasn't.

But my rates go up and I get nothing in return? Not even a gravel road.

Please reconsider the transfer station. Please gravel the 300 meters of campbells Reef rd.

Elmhurst needs the tip, I moved here in December and the costs involved are ridiculous enough without having that added stress of travelling to and from Ararat to do tip runs.

The population here is increasing and we are seeing many new residents coming to our town as young families.

things that would make a difference to the community is wifi, phone tower -

Cell service is horrendous

The net is extremely slow making working from home a stressful experience!

A playground at the recreation reserve for the kids in the town would be great too!

127.8 full-time equivalent staff employed by the council is not financially (\$13M) sustainable when considering the current small population that is serviced. Is there plans to outsource some services to reduce the employee costs? What services can be automated to release staff resources?



## Feedback received via email

Drinking fountain

Ararat town hall square

I would like to suggest that council consider some funding allocation for maintenance and upkeep for the drinking fountain cnr Barkly -Vincent streets

I am concerned that if not maintained - it could fall into disrepair

The fountain is of historical significance to Ararat

[Personal information removed for privacy]

Dear Sirs, I would like to protest at the imminent closure of the Elmhurst Tip. Surely residents will not be expected to travel 35 kilometres into Ararat to a tip. Please think again! Our rates are high enough Surely we can afford to keep our Tip.

[Personal information removed for privacy]

To Whom it may concern.

1-5-2025

As a resident of Elmhurst I am writing to you to express my concern regards the pending closure of the recycle station in our fair village.

Residing on three acres the green waste that is generated by far exceeds the capacity of my green waste bin, the same with my yellow recycling bin numerous times in a year it is overflowing forcing us to make other arrangements.

To expect the residents to cart their generated waste be it hard rubbish or green waste into Ararat transfer station in the name of environmental sustainability is an absolute folly.

The majority of Elmhurst residents will have to travel at least a 76 klm return trip into Ararat towing a trailer, another expense on an overtaxed household budget. A greater percentage of Elmhurst residents are in their senior years and cannot utilise the current facility as it requires hoisting their waste over the side of a very high skip unable to do so they are forced to drive into Ararat.

We as rate payers ask the council to consider opening the recycle facility once a week to ensure all residents have an opportunity to dispose of their waste in an environmentally friendly way.

Lessening the impending cost to both council and ratepayers a win for all and the environment.

[Personal information removed for privacy]

Elmhurst Depot/Tip to remain

I wish to have Elmhurst depot/tip to remain as it is convenient to dispose unwanted materials and waste.

Sincerely,

[Personal information removed for privacy]

Hi Dr Tim Harrison,

As a rate payer of Elmhurst I am writing to you to express my concern regarding the pending closure of the recycle station in Elmhurst.

I have ½ an acre in town & the green waste that is generated by far exceeds the capacity of my green waste bin, the same with my yellow recycling bin numerous times in a year it is overflowing forcing us to make other arrangements.

To expect the residents to cart their generated waste be it hard rubbish or green waste into Ararat transfer station in the name of environmental sustainability is a stretch.

Most Elmhurst residents will have to travel at least a 76 Ks return trip into Ararat towing a trailer, another expense on the household budget.

A greater percentage of Elmhurst residents are in their senior years and cannot utilise the current facility as it requires hoisting their waste over the side of a very high skip bin unable to do so they are forced to drive into Ararat I believe the cost cutting exercise implementing the skip bins in the first place has added to the declining usage and not the requirement.

We as rate payers ask the council to consider opening the recycle facility once a week to ensure all residents have an opportunity to dispose of their waste in an environmentally friendly way and at ground level for the more senior rate payers of Elmhurst.

Lessening the impending cost to both council and ratepayers a win for all and the environment.

If the Elmhurst tip was to close, then I would expect any savings made by the Ararat Rural City council will be passed in full onto all Elmhurst residents only via the rates bill.

Thank you

[Personal information removed for privacy]

As a resident ratepayer and age pensioner living in Elmhurst I am compelled to express my concern regarding the pending closure of the transfer station here Elmhurst.

In my opinion, to expect the residents to deliver their generated waste, hard rubbish or green waste into Ararat transfer station in the name of environmental sustainability requires more consideration.

In my case I wonder if you have usage data because on many occasions I've had a neighbour generously add any scrap metal or green waste to his load and take it to the transfer station. So one vehicle turning up at the ETS could be carrying waste for more than one user.

I ask the council to consider keeping our transfer facility open, even if it means reduced days of access to ensure all residents have an opportunity to dispose of their waste in a local and environmentally friendly way.

This would lessen the impending cost to both council and ratepayers while retaining what we in Elmhurst consider a vital service to our community. A win for all, the environment and a much needed service retained.

Thank you in advance.

Kind regards,

[Personal information removed for privacy]

To Whom it may concern. 1-5-2025

As a resident of Elmhurst I am writing to you to express my concern regards the pending closure of the recycle station in our fair village.

Residing on three acres the green waste that is generated by far exceeds the capacity of my green waste bin, the same with my yellow recycling bin numerous times in a year it is overflowing forcing us to make other arrangements.

To expect the residents to cart their generated waste be it hard rubbish or green waste into Ararat transfer station in the name of environmental sustainability is an absolute folly.

The majority of Elmhurst residents will have to travel at least a 76 klm return trip into Ararat towing a trailer, another expense on an overtaxed household budget. A greater percentage of Elmhurst residents are in their senior years and cannot utilise the current facility as it requires hoisting their waste over the side of a very high skip unable to do so they are forced to drive into Ararat.

We as rate payers ask the council to consider opening the recycle facility once a week to ensure all residents have an opportunity to dispose of their waste in an environmentally friendly way. Lessening the impending cost to both council and ratepayers a win for all and the

I hope that this will show community support for the Elmhurst community's woe

Afternoon,

I do not agree with the recommendations of closing the rural transfer stations.

[Personal information removed for privacy]

## Note Received at the Council Office

<input type="checkbox"/> Attention _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Copy for your information	
<input type="checkbox"/> As requested	
with compliments	
Ararat Rural City	
<p>COXELLS WITH KEPT TO THE PROPOSE TO REMOVE HEAVY VEHICLE TRAFFIC VIA BRUCE-BENNETTS RD. THIS WILL DIRECTLY AFFECT SMALL COMMUNITIES SUCH AS BOWEN + WIPRAK - PROPOSED RDY + BNL INFORMATION REGARDING COUNCIL HAS FOR THE RE-ROUTING OF HEAVY VEHICLE TRAFFIC TO</p>	
<p>Address Municipal Offices Corner Vincent &amp; High Streets, Ararat</p> <p>Postal Address Post Office Box 246 Ararat, Victoria Australia, 3377</p> <p>Telephone (03) 5355 0200</p> <p>Facsimile (03) 5352 4749</p> <p>Email council@ararat.vic.gov.au</p> <p>Ararat &amp; Grampians Visitor Information Centre</p> <p>Address Railway Station Complex 91 High Street, Ararat</p> <p>Telephone (03) 5355 0281</p> <p>Fire-station</p>	

[Personal information removed for privacy]