



Ararat Rural City

MINUTES

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 17 June 2025

**Held in the Council Chambers, Shire Offices
(Livestreamed)**

Commenced at 6.00pm

Council:

Cr Jo Armstrong (Mayor)

Cr Rob Armstrong

Cr Peter Joyce

Cr Teli Kaur

Cr Luke Preston

Cr Bob Sanders

Cr Bill Waterston

A recording of this meeting is being made for the purpose of verifying the accuracy of the minutes of the Council Meeting.

The recording is being streamed live via Facebook, to improve transparency between council and the community and give more people the opportunity to view what decisions are being made. You do not require a Facebook account to watch the live broadcast, simply enter www.facebook.com/araratruralcitycouncil into your address bar.

Recordings of Council Meetings (excluding closed sessions) are made available on Council's website.

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PRESENT: Cr Bob Sanders, Cr Rob Armstrong, Cr Peter Joyce, Cr Teli Kaur, Cr Bill Waterston, Dr Tim Harrison – Chief Executive Officer, Chandra Willmott – Governance & Risk Lead, Rebecca Rodger – Major Projects Lead, Thomas Duncan – Theatre Technical Officer

SECTION 1 - PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1.1 LIVE STREAMING

Council is keen to engage with members of the community and live streams the formal Council Meetings to make them accessible. The stream is available to view on Council's Facebook page from 6pm and on Council's website following the Council Meeting.

1.2 TRADITIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT/OPENING PRAYER/COUNCILLORS PLEDGE

Traditional acknowledgement - CR KAUR

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today, and pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging.

Opening Prayer - CR JOYCE

Almighty God, we humbly ask you to help us, as elected Councillors of the Ararat Rural City Council. Guide our deliberations. Prosper what is your will for us, to your honour and glory and for the welfare and benefit of the people whom we serve in the Ararat Rural City.

Councillors Pledge - CR R ARMSTRONG

We will faithfully and impartially carry out and exercise the functions, powers, authorities and discretions invested in us under the *Local Government Act 2020* and any other Act to the best of our skill and judgement.

1.3 APOLOGIES

RECOMMENDATION

That the apology of Cr Jo Armstrong and Cr Luke Preston be accepted.

The apologies of Cr Jo Armstrong and Cr Luke Preston were noted

5152/25

1.4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 27 May 2025 be confirmed.

**MOVED CR JOYCE
SECONDED CR KAUR**

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 27 May 2025 be confirmed.

No Councillors spoke for or against the motion

**CARRIED 5/0
5053/25**

1.5 DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A Councillor who has a conflict of interest in a matter being considered at a *Council meeting* at which he or she:

- 1 is present must disclose that conflict of interest by explaining the nature of the conflict of interest to those present at the *Council meeting* immediately before the matter is considered; or
- 2 intends to be present must disclose that conflict of interest by providing to the *Chief Executive Officer* before the *Council meeting* commences a written notice:
 - (a) advising of the conflict of interest;
 - (b) explaining the nature of the conflict of interest; and
 - (c) detailing, if the nature of the conflict of interest involves a Councillor's relationship with or a gift from another person, the:
 - name of the other person;
 - nature of the relationship with that other person or the date of receipt, value and type of gift received from the other person; and
 - nature of that other person's interest in the matter,and then immediately before the matter is considered at the meeting announcing to those present that he or she has a conflict of interest and that a written notice has been given to the *Chief Executive Officer* under this sub-Rule.

The Councillor must, in either event, leave the *Council meeting* immediately after giving the explanation or making the announcement (as the case may be) and not return to the meeting until after the matter has been disposed of.

SECTION 2 - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

2.1 PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

- 1 Unless *Council* determines to consider it as an item of urgent business, no motion (other than a motion to receive the same) may be made on any petition, joint letter, memorial or other like application until the next *Council meeting* after that at which it has been presented.
- 2 It is incumbent on every Councillor presenting a petition or joint letter to acquaint himself or herself with the contents of that petition or joint letter, and to ascertain that it does not contain language disrespectful to *Council*.
- 3 Every Councillor presenting a petition or joint letter to *Council* must:
 - write or otherwise record his or her name at the beginning of the petition or joint letter; and
 - confine himself or herself to a statement of the persons from whom it comes, the number of signatories to it, the material matters expressed in it and the text of the prayer or request.
- 4 Every petition or joint letter presented to *Council* must be in *writing* (other than pencil), typing or printing, contain the request of the petitioners or signatories and be signed by at least 12 people.
- 5 Every petition or joint letter must be signed by the persons whose names are appended to it by their names or marks, and, except in cases of incapacity or sickness, by no one else and the address of every petitioner or signatory must be clearly stated.
- 6 Any signature appearing on a page which does not bear the text of the whole of the petition or request may not be considered by *Council*.
- 7 Every page of a petition or joint letter must be a single page of paper and not be posted, stapled, pinned or otherwise affixed or attached to any piece of paper other than another page of the petition or joint letter.
- 8 If a petition, joint letter, memorial or other like application relates to an operational matter, *Council* must refer it to the *Chief Executive Officer* for consideration.

2.2 REQUEST TO ADDRESS COUNCIL

Questions to address the Council can be made without notice

The presenter will be allocated a maximum of three (3) minutes to present his or her address to the Council. An extension of time may be granted by a resolution of Council. During the presentation, the presenter may not address questions to Councillors or officers.

Two minutes will be allocated for Councillors to ask questions of the presenter, if required. Following the presentation, Council may request a further report on the matter from officers.

Members of the public gallery are not allowed to communicate with Councillors and officers whilst the meeting is in progress.

Mr Henry Leschen submitted the following address brief:

"Regarding= 'ESVF' What can the combined efforts of all our regional councils North, South, East and West in Victoria do to cancel this cruel and inequitable tax. Our Premier, J.Allen must not be allowed to let it stand. I assert it is unlawful according to Common Law - See Runnymede 1215"

Mr Leschen's address to be responded to in Agenda Item 3.1 - Continued Strong Objection to the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund

SECTION 3 - REPORTS REQUIRING COUNCIL DECISION

3.1 CONTINUED STRONG OBJECTION TO THE EMERGENCY SERVICES & VOLUNTEERS FUND

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO OFFICE
REFERENCE: 21315

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report recommends that the Ararat Rural City Council maintains its strong objection to the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF). The ESVF has an unfair impact on all ratepayers and Council will continue to work with the MAV, other Councils and groups such as the Victorian Farmers' Federation to oppose the implementation of the ESVF in its current form.

DISCUSSION

On 13 December 2024 as part of the 2024-25 State Budget Update, the Victorian Government announced that the Fire Services Property Levy will be replaced by the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) from 1 July 2025. The Department of Treasury and Finance website¹ showed a doubling of the variable rates of the Fire Services Property Levy (FSPL) rate in 2024/25 to the proposed ESVF rate for 2025/26 for the Residential and Commercial sector variable rate, a 64% increase for Industrial sector, and as at 20 February 2025, the website showed a 189% increase in for the Primary Production sector.

Ararat Rural City Council has advocated very strongly against the ESVF due to the significant financial impacts on ratepayers, particularly the impact on primary producer properties. At the 25 February 2025 Council Meeting, Councillors unanimously adopted the motion that:

- 1) *While Council acknowledges the importance of adequate funding for emergency services, Council condemns the ESVF for the following key reasons:*
 - *The disproportionate impact of the ESVF on primary producers*
 - *The obscenely steep increase imposed onto all ratepayers*
 - *The ongoing expectation that local councils act as the collection agency for a state-imposed tax*

The Ararat Rural City Mayor and Councillors have also been very prominent in public actions and events, including in Melbourne, at MAV and with other Mayors in the region, and many letters have also been sent to State Government Legislative Council members strongly advocating against the ESVF.

The Victorian Government passed the Fire Services Property Amendment (Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund) Bill 2025 in the Legislative Assembly on 20 March 2025 and in the Legislative Council on 16 May 2025. The Amendment Bill was given Royal Assent on 27 May 2025. On 30 May 2025, the Victorian Government announced that the ESVF variable rate for all Primary Production properties will remain at the FSPL 2024-25 rate of 28.7 cents per \$1,000 CIV for the 2025-26 financial year. The rates for the Residential, Commercial and Industrial property sectors were not changed and remain an obscenely steep increase.

¹ <https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/emergency-services-and-volunteers-fund>

The ESVF Amendment Act 2025 does not change section 12 (1) of the Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012, where the Minister may determine and specify the levy rates for the next levy year. This determination is made on or before 31 May each year for the following financial year, which means the ESVF variable rates can be increased in future financial years.

The Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012 appoints each Council as the collection agency for its municipal district, and Councils would be in breach of legislation if it refuses to collect the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund levy. Section 25(4)(a) of this Act requires that the State Government levy must be on the notice of the general rates, municipal charges, service rates and service charges sent by councils. If the Council chose to not include the ESVF levy on the rates notice, this will also put the Council in breach of the Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012.

Section 25(5) of the Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012 also states that if people simply chose to not pay the ESVF levy, Councils must proportionally divide the rates revenue it received and pay a portion the rates payments to the State Government. Council's internal modelling found that this requirement means the Ararat Rural City could potentially lose millions of dollars that would have been spent on local roads and community facilities. This is a significant financial penalty for Councils as the collection agency and reduces the Council's capacity to deliver services, asset maintenance and upgrades.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

6. STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE
We will work hard to build models of governance that place delivering public value at the centre through effective financial management; well measured risk management; and implementation of effective community engagement practices.
- 6.1 Deliver responsible budget outcomes, linked to strategy, that deliver value, innovation and rating fairness

Budget Implications

Non-payment of the ESVF levy by rate-payers can have a significant financial impact on Council due to Section 25(5) of the Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012, which requires Councils to divide its rates revenue proportionally and transfer a portion to the State Government.

Policy/Relevant Law

Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012
Fire Services Property Amendment (Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund) Act 2025
Local Government Act 2020
Local Government Act 1989

Sustainability Implications

The steep increase in the impost on rate payers due to the ESVF will have a flow on effect into the local economy and community. Cashflow has already been reduced by the recent bushfires and the current severe drought. The ESVF will further reduce spending in local shops, contributions to local community groups and sporting organisations, and private investment into environmental sustainability initiatives.

Risk Assessment

In addition to the budgetary risks to Council, the increase cost of living pressures caused by the ESVF can increase financial stress on households, particularly low income households.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Council have been proactively engaged with the local community and with Members of Parliament and Ministers on this issue.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Maintains its strong objection to the introduction of the Emergency Services Volunteer Fund (ESVF)*
- 2. Acknowledges the unfair impacts that its introduction will have on all ratepayers, including farmers, business and urban residents*
- 3. Continue to work with the MAV, other Councils and groups such as the Victorian Farmers' Federation to oppose the implementation of the ESVF in its current form*
- 4. Publish an open letter to the Ararat Rural City community clearly stating Council's position on the ESVF.*

MOVED CR R ARMSTRONG SECONDED CR JOYCE

That Council:

- 1. Maintains its strong objection to the introduction of the Emergency Services Volunteer Fund (ESVF)**
- 2. Acknowledges the unfair impacts that its introduction will have on all ratepayers, including farmers, business and urban residents**
- 3. Continue to work with the MAV, other Councils and groups such as the Victorian Farmers' Federation to oppose the implementation of the ESVF in its current form**
- 4. Publish an open letter to the Ararat Rural City community clearly stating Council's position on the ESVF.**

Cr R Armstrong and Cr Joyce spoke for the motion

**CARRIED 5/0
5154/25**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

3.2 YEAR 2025 GENERAL VALUATION

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 21316

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 19 May 2025, Council received notification from the Valuer-General certifying the 2025 General Valuation to be generally true and correct. The Valuer-General has reported to the Minister for Planning that the 2025 General Valuation is generally true and correct with respect to each of the bases of value. Once the Minister has made a declaration that the valuation is suitable to be adopted and used, Council will be able to raise rates for the 2025/26 financial year.

DISCUSSION

The Valuer-General Victoria is the valuation authority responsible for revaluing all properties in the municipality each year.

The Valuer-General Victoria appointed Wigg and Partners as the valuer. Mr Peter Wigg has delivered valuations for rateable and non-rateable leviable properties to Council. The non-rateable leviable valuations are returned to enable Council to calculate the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund for these properties. The Valuer-General has audited the valuations to ensure they are generally true and correct. The Minister for Planning will make a declaration under the provisions of the Valuation of Land Act 1960 that allows the returned valuations to be used to raise rates for 2025/26.

	2025 Rateable Valuations	2025 Non Rateable Leviable Valuations	Total
Site Value	\$5,160,652,000	\$57,591,000	\$5,218,243,000
Capital Improved Value	\$6,546,662,000	\$449,223,000	\$6,995,885,000
Net Annual Value	\$332,223,400	\$33,485,500	\$365,708,900

The following table illustrates the change in Capital Improved Valuations (CIV) between each category of property as a result of the revaluation. The categories included in this table are based on Valuation Best Practice Guidelines which are not consistent with the classifications used for rating purposes.

For example, the rural category includes urban farm land that may not necessarily be defined as farmland for rating purposes. There are several properties that are rated at the general rate but are classed as rural for the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund.

Category	2025 CIV\$	2024 CIV\$	% Change
Residential	\$1,820,859,000	\$1,860,357,500	-2.12%
Commercial	\$176,483,000	\$173,061,000	1.98%
Industrial	\$62,518,000	\$62,449,000	0.11%
Rural (including Urban Farm Land)	\$4,486,802,000	\$4,653,222,000	-3.58%
Non Rateable Leviable (including Wind Farms)	\$449,223,000	\$474,543,500	-5.34%
Totals	\$6,995,885,000	\$7,223,633,000	-3.15%

Residential properties

In comparison to 2024 valuations, residential property valuations have decreased by 2.12%.

Commercial and Industrial properties

In comparison to 2024 valuations, commercial property valuations have increased by 1.98%.
Industrial property valuations have increased by 0.11%.

Rural properties

In comparison to 2024 valuations, rural valuations have decreased by 3.58%.

Non rateable leviable properties

In comparison to 2024 valuations, non-rateable leviable property valuations have decreased by 5.34%.

Whilst these properties are non-rateable for municipal rates, they are charged the *Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund*. Land in this category includes properties such as Council owned properties and churches.

The table below outlines the movement in valuations over previous years:

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Residential	-2.12%	1.76%	12.18%	33.85%	14.73%	3.07%	4.32%	3.45%
Commercial	1.98%	3.94%	12.65%	8.97%	1.17%	0.29%	1.43%	8.69%
Industrial	0.11%	-15.38%	12.69%	-88.83%	0.36%	3.83%	0.09%	0.75%
Rural	-3.58%	-1.74%	7.33%	50.23%	39.00%	21.79%	2.72%	24.48%
Non Rateable	-5.34%	376.60%	8.50%	0.18%	5.67%	37.49%	3.06%	1.15%

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

- 6 Strong and Effective Governance
We will work hard to build models of governance that place delivering public value at the centre through effective financial management; well measured risk management; and implementation of effective community engagement practices.

Budget Implications

The Valuer-General Victoria is now responsible for the cost of the annual general revaluation. Council is required to pay for the costs of supplementary valuations during the year, and these costs are included in the budget each year.

Policy/Relevant Law

The Valuer-General Victoria is required to revalue all properties in accordance with the Valuation of Land Act 1960.

Sustainability Implications

There are no economic, social or environmental implications in relation to the item

Risk Assessment

Low

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

The valuation process is undertaken by the Valuer-General Victoria and widely promoted to ratepayers across various websites including the Department of Transport and Planning, State Revenue Office and the Council's.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

Subject to Ministerial approval, Council adopts the General Valuation for 2025 conducted by Mr Peter Wigg for:

- 1. Total Site Value of \$5,218,243,000 (rateable Site Value of \$5,160,652,000 and non-rateable leviable Site Value of \$57,591,000);*
- 2. Total Capital Improved Value of \$6,995,885,000 (rateable Capital Improved Value of \$6,546,662,000 and non-rateable leviable Capital Improved Value of \$449,223,000); and*
- 3. Total Net Annual Value of \$365,708,900 (rateable Net Annual Value of \$332,223,400 and non-rateable leviable Net Annual Value of \$33,485,500).*

MOVED CR KAUR

SECONDED CR R ARMSTRONG

That:

Subject to Ministerial approval, Council adopts the General Valuation for 2025 conducted by Mr Peter Wigg for:

- 1. Total Site Value of \$5,218,243,000 (rateable Site Value of \$5,160,652,000 and non-rateable leviable Site Value of \$57,591,000);**
- 2. Total Capital Improved Value of \$6,995,885,000 (rateable Capital Improved Value of \$6,546,662,000 and non-rateable leviable Capital Improved Value of \$449,223,000); and**
- 3. Total Net Annual Value of \$365,708,900 (rateable Net Annual Value of \$332,223,400 and non-rateable leviable Net Annual Value of \$33,485,500).**

Cr Kaur and Cr R Armstrong spoke for the motion

CARRIED 5/0

5155/25

ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

3.3 PROCUREMENT POLICY

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: MAJOR PROJECTS LEAD
DEPARTMENT: FINANCE
REFERENCE: 21317

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council policies are updated as part of an ongoing policy and procedure review process. The Procurement Policy has been updated as part of the review process.

DISCUSSION

The update of Council's Procurement Policy is crucial for ensuring compliance, transparency and efficiency of Council's procurement processes ensuring compliance with the Local Government Act 2020 and the updated MAV Best Practice Procurement Guidelines 2024.

Multiple updates were made to the existing policy and are detailed below:

<p><u>1 - OVERVIEW - updated wording</u></p> <p>1.1 - Applicability - Replaces background clause</p> <p>1.2 - Scope and Objectives - Updated wording in line with Local Government Act 2020</p> <p>1.3 - Treatment of GST - no change</p>
<p><u>2 - LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY COMPLIANCE CONTROL</u></p> <p><u>2.1 - Ethics and Probity - no change</u></p> <p>2.1.1 - Requirements - new clause</p> <p>2.1.2 - Conduct of Councillors and Council Staff - updated wording</p> <p>2.1.3 - Conflict of Interest - updated wording</p> <p>2.1.4 - Fair and Honest Dealing - updated wording</p> <p>2.1.5 - Probity, Accountability and Transparency - updated wording</p> <p>2.1.6 - Gifts and Hospitality - no change</p> <p>2.1.7 - Disclosure of Information - updated wording</p> <p>2.1.8 - Management of Information - new clause</p> <p><u>2.2 - Complaints and Reporting Suspicious Activities - new section which includes the following:</u></p> <p>2.2.1 - Complaints handling</p> <p>2.2.2 - Reporting Suspicious Activities</p> <p>2.2.3 - Dispute Resolution</p>
<p><u>2.3 - Governance - no change</u></p> <p>2.3.1 - Structure - Updated wording and dot points</p> <p>2.3.2 - Methods - Updated wording</p> <p>2.3.3 - Apply a Consistent and Standard Approach - updated wording</p> <p>2.3.4 - Responsible Financial Management - updated wording</p> <p>2.3.5 - Procurement Thresholds and Competition - new clause</p> <p>2.3.6 - Splitting of Quotations - new clause</p> <p>2.3.7 - Cumulative Spend - no change</p> <p><u>2.4 - Policy Responsibility - New Clause</u></p> <p><u>2.5 Policy Review Process - no change</u></p>
<p><u>3 - PROCUREMENT PRINCIPLES</u></p> <p>Overview - no change</p> <p><u>3.1 - Procurement Methodology</u></p>

<p>3.1.1 - Fair Value - No change</p> <p>3.1.2 - Best Value - No change</p> <p><u>3.2 - Exemptions from Tendering</u></p> <p>Overview - No Change</p> <p>3.2.1 - Borrowings - No Change</p> <p><u>3.3 - Contract Variations - no change</u></p> <p><u>3.4 - Sole or Select Sourcing - new clause</u></p> <p><u>3.5 - Public Tender Requirements - no change</u></p> <p>3.5.1 - Supply by Contract - no change</p> <p>3.5.2 - Contract Term - no change</p> <p>3.5.3 - Tender Evaluation - no change</p> <p>3.5.4 - Non-Conforming Tenders - Updated wording</p> <p>3.5.5 - Probity Advisor - new clause</p> <p>3.5.6 - Short Listing and Negotiation - no change</p> <p>3.5.7 - Collaborative Procurement - new clause</p> <p><u>3.6 - Delegation of Authority - no change</u></p> <p>3.6.1 - Chief Executive Officer - no change</p> <p>3.6.2 - Council Officers - no change</p> <p>3.6.3 - Delegations Reserved for Council - no change</p> <p><u>3.7 - Internal Controls - updated wording</u></p> <p><u>3.8 - Risk Management - no change</u></p> <p><u>3.9 - Occupational Health and Safety - no change</u></p> <p><u>3.10 - Contract Management - new clause</u></p>
<p><u>4 - DEMONSTRATE SUSTAINED VALUE - new section which includes</u></p> <p><u>4.1 - Achieving Value for Money</u></p> <p><u>4.2 - Sustainable Procurement</u></p> <p>4.2.1 - Definition</p> <p>4.2.2 - Application</p> <p><u>4.3 - Social Procurement</u></p> <p><u>4.4 - Diversity</u></p>
<p><u>5 - BUILD AND MAINTAIN SUPPLY RELATIONSHIPS - new title</u></p> <p><u>5.1 - Managing Suppliers - new clause</u></p> <p><u>5.2 - Supply Market Development - new clause</u></p> <p><u>5.3 - Local Supply - no change</u></p> <p><u>5.4 - Third Party Privacy - new clause</u></p>
<p><u>6 - PROCUREMENT METHODS</u></p> <p><u>6.1 - Market Engagement Methods - no change</u></p> <p><u>6.2 - Role of Specification - new clause</u></p> <p><u>6.3 - Procurement Type</u></p> <p>6.3.1 - Direct Purchase - no change</p> <p>6.3.2 - Single Written Quotation - no change</p> <p>6.3.3 - Multiple Written Quotations - no change</p> <p>6.3.4 - Select Tender or Request for Quotation - no change</p> <p>6.3.5 - Public Tender - no change</p> <p><u>6.4 - Panel Arrangements - Approved Suppliers - administrative updates (works up to \$15,000)</u></p> <p>6.4.1 - Panel Arrangements - Approved Suppliers - Administration - no change</p> <p><u>6.5 - Asset Disposal - new clause</u></p>
<p><u>7 - CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMPLIANCE - no change</u></p>
<p><u>8 - REFERENCE & ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS</u></p> <p>Addition of the following Acts and Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Protection Act 1970 • Goods Act 1958 • Fair Work Act 2009 • Working with Children Act 2005 • Working with Children Regulations 2016 • Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014

- Procurement Procedures and Guidelines
- Fraud & Corruption Policy

APPENDICIES

Appendix 1 - Financial Delegations - no change
Appendix 2 - Evaluation Panel - no change
Appendix 3 - Procurement Methods - update of thresholds in value of procurement
Appendix 4 - Exemptions - inclusion of cultural procurement and IT Software (subscriptions)
Appendix 5 - Collaborative Tendering - New Appendix
Appendix 6 - Sustainable Procurement - New Appendix
Appendix 7 - Definitions and Abbreviations - New Appendix

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

- 6 Strong and Effective Governance
We will work hard to build models of governance that place delivering public value at the centre through effective financial management; well measured risk management; and implementation of effective community engagement practices.

Budget Implications

Ensuring good financial controls around expenditure of Council funds.

Policy/Relevant Law

The review of the Procurement Policy is prescribed within the Local Government Act 2020 and must be completed once in every four-year council term.

Sustainability Implications

Environmental, social and economic impacts have been considered in the development of the Procurement Policy.

Risk Assessment

Clarity and transparency of Council Policies and Procedures is enhanced.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Internal consultation has been undertaken with all relevant staff in relation to the alterations to the Procurement Policy. The Procurement Policy was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee on 3 June 2025, with minimal changes incorporated into the policy following this meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That

1. Council adopt the Procurement Policy.

MOVED CR WATERSTON SECONDED CR JOYCE

That

1. Council adopt the Procurement Policy.

Cr Waterston and Cr Joyce spoke for the motion

**CARRIED 5/0
5156/25**

ATTACHMENTS

The Procurement Policy is provided as Attachment 3.3



Procurement Policy

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Procurement Policy



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Procurement Policy



1 OVERVIEW

The Ararat Rural City Council Procurement Policy is made under Section 108 and 109 of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act). The Act requires each council to:

- Prepare and adopt a procurement policy which specifies the principles, processes and procedures applying in respect of the purchase of goods and services and carrying out of works by the Council; and
- Seek to promote open and fair competition and provide value for money;
- Review its Procurement Policy at least once during each 4-year term of the Council, and
- Describe how the council will seek to collaborate with other Councils and public bodies

1.1 APPLICABILITY

This Policy applies to all contracting and procurement activities at the Ararat Rural City Council and is applicable to Councillors and Council Staff.

It is recognised this will enhance achievement of the Council's objectives such as sustainable and socially responsible procurement, supporting local economies and obtaining Value for Money, leading to a better result in the provision of goods, services and works for the benefit of the community.

This Policy provides direction on the conduct of procurement activities throughout the sourcing, management and disposal phases, it also covers the general procurement framework.

The Council must comply with this Procurement Policy before entering into a contract for the purchase of goods or services or the carrying out of works.

1.2 SCOPE & OBJECTIVES

This Procurement Policy is made under Section 108 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act). The Act is the crucial legislative framework that regulates the process of all local government procurement in Victoria. Section 108 of the Act requires Council to prepare, approve and comply with a procurement policy encompassing the principles, processes and procedures applied to purchasing goods, services and undertaking of works.

This Policy is consistent with the requirements of S108(2) of the Act and will:

- Seek to promote open and fair competition and provide Value for Money;
- Provide clear guidelines to Council to allow consistency and control over procurement activities;
- Demonstrate accountability to ratepayers and residents.
- Provide guidance on ethical behaviour in public sector procurement.
- Demonstrate the application of best practice in procurement activities.
- Demonstrate the consideration of sustainability in procurement with respect to social, economic and environmental factors.
- Increase the probability of obtaining the best outcome for the community when procuring goods, services and works.
- Seek to undertake collaborative procurement in accordance with section 3.5.7 of this Policy.

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These objectives will be achieved by requiring, that the Council's contracting, purchasing and contract management activities:

- Support the Council's corporate strategies, aims and objectives.
- Span the whole life cycle of an acquisition and take sustainability considerations into account.
- Achieve demonstrable Value for Money.
- Are conducted in, and demonstrate an impartial, fair and ethical manner.
- Seek continual improvement through innovative and technological initiatives.
- Generate and support Local Business through inclusion wherever practicable.

1.3 TREATMENT OF GST

All monetary values stated in this policy **exclude** GST except where expressly stated otherwise.

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2 LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY COMPLIANCE CONTROL

2.1 ETHICS AND PROBITY

2.1.1 REQUIREMENTS

The Council's procurement activities shall be performed in an open, transparent and ethical manner with demonstrated integrity, fairness and accountability that meets relevant legal requirements.

All tender processes shall be conducted in accordance with the requirements of this Procurement Policy and any associated procedures, relevant legislation, relevant Australian Standards, Commercial Law and S126-131 of the Act.

2.1.2 CONDUCT OF COUNCILLORS AND COUNCIL STAFF

Councillors and Council staff shall at all times undertake procurement activities in ways that are ethical and of the highest integrity, in accordance with the Councillors Code of Conduct or the Staff Code of Conduct. Councillors and Council staff have an overriding responsibility to act impartially and with integrity, avoiding conflicts of interest.

Councillors and Council officers must:

- Treat potential and existing suppliers with equality and fairness.
- Not use their position to seek or receive personal gain in procurement matters.
- Maintain confidentiality of Commercial in Confidence information.
- Present the highest standards of professionalism and probity.
- Deal with suppliers honestly and impartially.
- Afford suppliers and tenderers with the same information and an equal opportunity to tender or quote for goods, services and works contracts.
- Be accountable for all decisions made and demonstrate and provide evidence of the processes followed.
- Maintain fair, equitable and non-discriminatory procedures for addressing complaints and concerns raised by suppliers or community members regarding Council's procurement activities.
- Query incidents, decisions or directions that appear to contradict or deviate from Council's standards of ethics or probity or established policies and procedures.
- Not perform any outsourced Council services and works.

2.1.3 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Councillors and Council staff shall at all times avoid situations which may give rise to an actual or perceived conflict of interest. Further, Councillors and staff shall avoid situations in which private interests have a potential to or might be thought to conflict with their Council duties.

A member of Council Staff has a general conflict of interest in a matter if an impartial, fair-minded person would consider that the person's private interests could result in that person acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty.

A member of Council Staff has a material conflict of interest in a matter if an affected person would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter. The benefit or loss may be

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direct or indirect and pecuniary or non-pecuniary. Affected persons include, among others, the member of Council Staff and their family members.

Councillors and Council staff involved in the procurement process, in particular preparing tender documentation, including writing tender specifications, tender opening, and tender evaluation panels, must:

- **Avoid** conflicts of interest, whether actual, potential, or perceived, arising between their official duties and private interests. Private interests include the financial and other interests of Councillors and Council officers, plus their relatives and close associates.
- **Declare** any conflict of interest that exists or that they have no conflict of interest.
- **Observe** prevailing Council, and Victorian Government Purchasing Board guidelines on how to prevent or deal with conflict-of-interest situations; and not take advantage of any tender related information whether or not for personal gain.

2.1.4 FAIR AND HONEST DEALING

Council is committed to providing equal opportunity for all businesses, irrespective of their size and location, to bid for work through open and transparent market processes.

Impartiality is to be maintained through the procurement process to eliminate the prospect of any bias in decisions and withstand public scrutiny.

Any suspected improper conduct, including but not limited to:

- suspected fraud,
- corruption,
- substantial mismanagement of public resources,
- risk to public health and safety,
- risk to the environment.
- detrimental action,

should be managed in accordance with Council's internal policies and processes.

2.1.5 PROBITY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Accountability in procurement means being able to justify and provide evidence of the process followed. An independent third party must be able to see clearly that a process has been followed and that the process was fair and reasonable.

Council Staff must be able to account for all procurement decisions and ensure all procurement activities leave an audit trail for monitoring and reporting purposes.

2.1.6 GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

No Councillor or member of Council staff shall either directly or indirectly solicit or accept gifts or presents from any supplier, provider or contractor, or any other member of the public, involved with any matter connected with the procurement of goods, services or works. The Councillor Gifts Policy and Staff Gift Policy also apply.

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2.1.7 DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

Commercial in Confidence information received by the Council must not be disclosed and is to be stored in a secure location.

Councillors and Council Staff must take all reasonable measures to maintain confidentiality of:

- Information disclosed by organisations in tenders, quotation or during tender negotiations; and
- Commercial in Confidence information.

Councillors and Council Staff are to avoid references to current or proposed contracts in discussion with acquaintances or outside interests.

Discussion with potential suppliers during tender evaluations should not go beyond the extent necessary to resolve doubt on what is being offered by that supplier.

At no stage should any discussion be entered into which could improperly influence the procurement process or negotiation of a contract prior to the contract approval process being finalised, other than authorised pre-contract negotiations.

2.1.8 MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

The Council will capture procurement management information in a variety of areas, including:

- Maintaining a register of all public contracts.
- Tender and contract status.
- Approved supplier lists.
- Pre-qualified supplier lists.
- Supplier performance; and

2.2 COMPLAINTS & REPORTING SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITIES

2.2.1 COMPLAINTS HANDLING

Members of the public and suppliers, are encouraged to report known or suspected incidences of improper conduct to the CEO. Councillors and Council Staff will report and manage complaints in accordance with Council's internal fraud and corruption policies and processes.

2.2.2 REPORTING SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITIES

All Councillors, Council Staff and Council suppliers are always required to act honestly and with integrity and to safeguard the public resources for which they are responsible.

Council is committed to protecting all revenue, expenditure and assets from any attempt to gain illegal benefits (financial or otherwise).

Council will take all reasonable steps to protect those who assist Council by providing information about suspected fraud. This will include confidentiality of identity and protection from harassment to the extent possible.

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Suspected improper conduct, offers of bribes, commissions and any other irregular approaches from suppliers, prospective suppliers or other individuals will be investigated and reported in accordance with Council's internal policies and processes.

The CEO must notify IBAC of any matter they suspect on reasonable grounds to involve corrupt conduct occurring or having occurred in accordance with mandatory reporting requirements under the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2011.

2.2.3 DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Where relevant, all Council contracts shall incorporate dispute management and alternative dispute resolution provisions to minimise the chance of disputes escalating to legal action.

Contracts shall be administered to:

- Reasonably and proactively manage the performance of responsibilities and obligations of both parties under the contract; and
- Provide a means for the early recognition of issues and performance problems and the identification of resolution methods; and
- Enable disputes to be resolved prior to and without recourse to litigation

2.3 GOVERNANCE

2.3.1 STRUCTURE

Council has delegated a range of powers, duties and functions to the CEO in relation to procurement. The delegation aims to ensure that the Council's procurement structure operates according to processes that:

- Are flexible enough to procure in a timely manner the diverse range of goods, works and services required by Council.
- Guarantee that prospective contractors and suppliers are afforded an equal opportunity to tender or submit a quotation; and
- Encourage competition and collaboration.
- Ensures that changes to this policy and associated procedures are communicated and implemented.

2.3.2 METHODS

Council's standard methods for procuring goods, services and works shall be by one or more of the following methods:

- Purchase order; following a quotation process from suppliers for goods or services that represent best Value for Money under the quotation thresholds adopted by the Council. An approved purchase order must be created prior to committing expenditure on behalf of Council for the provision of services, goods or works in accordance with the Council's procurement thresholds and guidelines;
- Under contract following quotation or select tender process;
- Under contract following a public tender process; or

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- Using collaborative purchasing arrangements with other Councils, MAV Procurement, Victorian Government, Procurement Australia or other bodies where procurement processes meet the requirements of the Act and this policy.
- Purchase card (i.e. fuel card);
- Credit card;
- Other arrangements authorised by the Council or the CEO on a needs basis as required by abnormal circumstances such as emergencies.

2.3.3 APPLY A CONSISTENT AND STANDARD APPROACH

Council will maintain standard operating procedures for all stages of procurement.

Standard operating procedures will be documented in a Service Delivery Plan.

The Service Delivery Plan shall be reviewed and revised following the principles of continuous improvement.

The Procurement Department manages and amends the Service Delivery Plan, including associated forms, templates, work instructions, and other business processes.

The Service Delivery Plan will address the following:

- Pre-procurement planning.
- Tender and quotation requests.
- Tender and quotation evaluation.
- Contract administration.
- Post-contract evaluation.
- Records Management.
- Reporting; and
- Roles and responsibilities.

2.3.4 RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Council shall apply responsible financial management to all procurement activities. Funding for any procurement must be from an existing approved budget or have documented grant funding before commencing any procurement action to supply goods, services or works. No procurement can begin without approved funding unless in an emergency.

Where the quotation or tender sum exceeds the budget allocation, the Responsible Officer will review the project's scope or obtain an expenditure variation to the budget before committing.

Council staff shall not authorise the expenditure of funds above their financial delegations or split funds to fit within their financial delegation. Council staff that breach their delegated authority may face action under the Performance Management Employee Discipline Policy.

Financial Management entails:

- Efficient and effective use of Council funds to procure goods, services, and works.
- Every purchase attempt must use the procurement process, and not compromise any of the procurement principles set out in this policy.

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2.3.5 PROCUREMENT THRESHOLDS AND COMPETITION

Wherever it would likely achieve best value, procurements will be arranged under a relevant contractual arrangement established in accordance with section 108 of *the Act* and this Procurement Policy.

In every procurement activity all practicable efforts will be made to consider the sustainable procurement as listed in Section 4.2.

Council will invite offers from the supply market for goods, services and works in accordance with the thresholds listed in [Appendix 3](#).

2.3.6 SPLITTING OF QUOTATIONS

Splitting of tenders or quotes to circumvent procurement thresholds is strictly prohibited. All procurement activities must comply with the Ararat Rural City Council policy, ensuring transparency and fairness in the selection process. Any attempt to divide purchases artificially to avoid competitive thresholds will result in the disqualification of the tender or quote.

2.3.7 CUMULATIVE SPEND

Cumulative spend with a supplier shall not exceed the Value of Procurement limit for the procurement method (refer [Appendix 3](#)). Cumulation of expenditure shall conclude at each subsequent approach to market.

Cumulative spend limits shall not apply to services exempt from tendering.

2.4 POLICY RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of all officers to monitor and ensure compliance with the requirements of this Policy. Check points will be put in place within the Council's purchase order system to ensure compliance before orders can be completed.

It is the responsibility of all officers to ensure all purchases for goods, services or works are undertaken in compliance with the systems and procedures designated by this Policy and associated procedures.

The Procurement Department's responsibility for staff inductions, to ensure all new staff are familiar with the requirements of this Policy and associated procedures.

Staff not complying with the requirements of this policy may be in breach of the Staff Code of Conduct and subject to disciplinary action.

2.5 POLICY REVIEW PROCESS

In accordance with *the Act*, Council will review its Procurement Policy at least once during each four-year term of the Council.

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3 PROCUREMENT PRINCIPLES

Council will apply the following fundamental best practice principles to procurement, irrespective of the value and complexity of that procurement:

- Value for Money;
- Sustainability (social, economic and environmental);
- Open and fair competition;
- Accountability;
- Risk management; and
- Probity and transparency.

3.1 PROCUREMENT METHODOLOGY

Section 108 of *the Act* details that each Council will set the public tender threshold above which tenders or expressions of interest for contracts must be publicly invited.

A public tender process must be used for all procurement activities valued at \$150,000 and above (for goods, services or works).

For procurements under \$150,000, the procurement methodology thresholds detailed in [Appendix 3](#) will apply.

3.1.1 FAIR VALUE

Where procurement is undertaken through direct purchase or single quotation, or where an approach to market through a request for quote or a request for tender results in less than three (3) responses, the decision to enter into a supply arrangement shall be based on an assessment of fair value.

Fair value can be assessed based on one or more of the following:

- price;
- quality;
- time;
- fit for purpose; or
- other applicable criteria.

3.1.2 BEST VALUE

Best value procurement requires that the selecting of a suitable supply of goods, services and works based on cost and non-cost factors. These include:

- Quality and cost standards are defined by the Council for the delivery of services.
- Services that are accessible to those members of the community for whom the service is intended.
- Services that meet the community's expectations and values; and
- Services that provide value for money.

3.2 EXEMPTIONS FROM TENDERING

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An exemption to the Market Engagement methods and procedures may be requested under the following circumstances:

- In emergency matters, including public health, security or safety due to an unforeseen event or occurrence.
- A change in supplier would necessitate the procurement of goods and services that do not meet the requirements for interoperability or interchangeability.
- Absence of competition for technical reasons.
- The goods, services or works are required as part of a grant, funding agreement, lease or similar arrangement explicitly stating how the goods, services or works are to be provided or undertaken.
- Research and development matters for specialist input for the Council's future development, operations, projects, and services.
- The purchase relates to unique objects such as works of art, artefacts, live shows and other items for which there is no alternative or equivalent supply option. Delegations as defined in [Appendix 1](#) apply. Section 6.1 does not apply in respect of a contract if:
 - The contract becomes novated (terminated), and
 - The original contract was entered into in accordance with section 6.1, and
 - The Council has undertaken due diligence in respect of the new party.
 - Where the procurement is on Council's procurement exemptions list (refer to [Appendix 4](#)).

Where a competitive procurement process cannot be undertaken, due to the nature of the goods being acquired, the Responsible Officer must ensure that the procurement has addressed issues of risk, best or fair value, and is in accordance with other applicable policies, strategies and plans of Council.

Council may exempt a procurement process from a formal tender process when there are extenuating circumstances. A report must be presented to Council clearly outlining the reasons why a formal tender process should not be completed. No engagement for services or works can commence until Council formally approves the exemption.

3.2.1 BORROWINGS

Borrowings (often referred to as loans) are not within the scope of the Procurement Policy. Borrowings are considered contracts for borrowings and not contracts for goods, services or works. The process undertaken in sourcing borrowings will seek to get the best financial outcome transparently.

3.3 CONTRACT VARIATIONS

All contract variations must be assessed to determine whether they are properly characterised as variations, or whether they are in effect a new contract. This will depend on factors such as:

- The monetary value of the proposed variation, i.e. the value of the variation in the context of the thresholds fixed in the Procurement Policy; and
- The subject matter of the proposed variation, and whether it is consistent with the scope of the original contract.

3.4 SOLE OR SELECT SOURCING

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Council can elect to send tender documents to specific tenderers whom they believe able to respond to the tender **in addition** to those already registered on the e-tendering portal or whom they think may respond to the tender via media. These tenderers will not receive any preferential treatment.

3.5 PUBLIC TENDER REQUIREMENTS

All public tenders invited by the Council will be published via Council's eTendering Portal and may be advertised in the media.

Awarding of the Tenders will be published on Council's website and/or eTendering Portal.

3.5.1 SUPPLY BY CONTRACT

Where procurement risk can be better managed through supply by contract, as an adjunct to the *Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012*, use of contract should be considered.

The Council will minimise its risk exposure by measures such as:

- Use of standard contracts that are appropriate to the specific supply.
- Use of securities including retentions, bank guarantees or cash deposits where applicable.
- Use of pre-qualification procedures to assess supplier capability.
- Use of post-contract evaluation to manage contractor performance.
- Use of controls such as liquidated damages to manage contractor performance.
- Use of specifications appropriate to the specific supply, including use of peer or professional review before approaching the market.
- Requiring contractual agreement before allowing the commencement of work.
- Use of, or reference to relevant, Australian Standards (or equivalent); and
- Accurate and effective administration of contracts including monitoring and enforcing performance.

3.5.2 CONTRACT TERMS

All contractual relationships must be documented in writing and based on standard terms and conditions.

Terms and conditions must be defined before approaching the market and settled before making any commitment to the supplier.

Acceptance of a quote and or issue of a purchase order without a formal contract in place amounts to a contract and is subject to Australian Consumer Law.

3.5.3 TENDER EVALUATIONS

Tenders and quotations shall be evaluated based on either:

- lowest price; or
- value weighted assessment.

Where value weighted assessment is applied, the assessment shall be undertaken by a panel in accordance with [Appendix 2](#).

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Evaluation of higher value tenders must have key evaluation criteria clearly outlined in the specification/brief. There are two types of criteria:

Mandatory Criteria (Pass/Fail)

- Compliance Criteria (ABN registration, OHS & Fair Work Act)
- Business Insurances as nominated by Council
- Any regulatory/legislative requirements/licences
- Any other as specified in the tender documentation

Project qualitative/comparative criteria (scored)

Areas such as experience, capability, methodology and timeframe can be considered in this criteria.

3.5.4 NON-CONFORMING TENDERS

Upon receipt, the Procurement department will review all tender submissions to ensure that required schedules have been submitted.

A tender submission will be deemed non-conforming if:

- a) Required schedules have not been included or are incomplete.
- b) Submission has not met specification requirements
- c) Tendered price is 30% or greater than the allocated budget and all other tender prices.

A tender submission may be identified as non-conforming during the evaluation process. In this case, the evaluation panel should quarantine the submission and refer to the procurement department for further review/confirmation of non-conformance.

Council may receive tenders which offer alternatives that were not sought in the tender documentation. Council should always be open to innovative proposals as they may provide opportunities to achieve continual improvement. Tender documentation where alternative solutions are sought should specifically invite non-conforming bids to be submitted and considered with other tenders.

A tenderer submitting a non-conforming tender shall fully detail the extent of any variance from the tender documents in the tender schedule headed "Statement of Conformance". If the "Statement of Conformance" is not correctly completed the tender may not be further considered at the discretion of the evaluation panel.

3.5.5 PROBITY ADVISOR

A formal probity plan may be developed, and a probity advisor appointed at the discretion of the CEO in the following circumstances:

- Where the proposed Total Contract Sum exceeds \$5 million over the life of the contract; or
- Where a proposed project is considered to be particularly complex, of a high risk or controversial nature, and/or
- requiring a high level of public confidence.

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The probity advisor may be appointed to any tender evaluation panel and may be appointed to oversee the evaluation process.

The role and responsibilities of a Probity Advisor is detailed in the supporting Procurement Guidelines

3.5.6 SHORT LISTING AND NEGOTIATIONS

Council may conduct a shortlisting process during EOI, tender and quotation processes. Shortlisting can be based on any criterion or criteria but only in pursuit of the most advantageous outcome for the Council.

All shortlisted tenderers may be invited by Council to submit a best and final offer in relation to all or certain aspects of their respective tenders. Once a preferred tenderer/s is/are selected, negotiations can be conducted in order to obtain the optimal solution and commercial arrangements, within the original scope and intent of the tender. Probity requirements apply to all negotiations.

3.5.7 COLLABORATIVE PROCUREMENT

In accordance with section 108(c) of the Act, the Council will first consider collaboration with other Councils and public bodies or utilise Collaborative Procurement Arrangements, when procuring goods, services and works in order to take advantage of economies of scale.

Council Staff must consider any opportunities for Collaborative Procurement in relation to a procurement process undertaken by Council and document this decision in the Procurement Plan. Any Council report that recommends commencing a procurement process must set out information relating to opportunities for Collaborative Procurement, if available, including:

- The nature of those opportunities, if any, and the councils or public bodies with which they are available; and
- Why Council did, or did not, pursue the identified opportunities for collaboration in relation to that procurement process.

When collaborating with other Councils and/or public bodies, the Council will do so in accordance with Appendix 5.

3.6 DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

Delegation of authority for procurement allows specific Council officer to approve purchases, quotation, tenders and contractual processes without prior referral to the Council. Enabling Council to conduct procurement activities in an efficient and timely manner whilst maintaining transparency and integrity.

3.6.1 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The Chief Executive Officer holds delegation to all aspects of procurement except those delegations reserved for the Council.

The Chief Executive Officer can establish, amend and revoke sub-delegations to staff concerning procurement.

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The Chief Executive Officer can authorise procurement of goods, services and works to unlimited value in emergency circumstances.

3.6.2 COUNCIL OFFICERS

Delegations for Council officers are defined in [Appendix 1](#). The delegations include:

- authority to enter into an arrangement to procure goods, services and works within an approved budget or procurement threshold.
- authority to approve payments for goods, services and works in part and in full against an approved budget;
- authority to use purchase cards (where applicable);
- authority to approve variations to contracts (as per Appendix 3); and
- authority to approve contract extensions.

These delegations are to be reviewed in conjunction with each review of this policy.

3.6.3 DELEGATIONS RESERVED FOR COUNCIL

The following procurement values must be approved by the Council:

- \$50,000 and above for works of art and other unique purchases; or
- \$225,000 and above for agreements or contracts for the purchase of goods and services; or
- \$300,000 and above for entry into contract for works;
- Contract variations that require allocation of funds over Council approved budgets;
- Contract term extensions that require allocation of funds over Council approved budgets.
- Contracts, regardless of value, requiring execution under the common seal.

3.7 INTERNAL CONTROLS

Council maintains a framework of internal controls over procurement processes that ensures:

- More than one person is involved in, and responsible for, end to end procurement transactions.
- Financial and audit control methods are applied to all procurement transactions.
- Transparency in the procurement process.
- Appropriate authorisations are obtained and documented.
- Systems exist for appropriate monitoring and performance measurement; and
- The administration of contracts will be undertaken to ensure variations and extensions are approved in accordance with officer delegations.
 - A process is in place for escalation, where appropriate, of procurement matters (including procedural non-compliance) to the CEO, the Audit and Risk Committee and Council (where appropriate)

3.8 RISK MANAGEMENT

Council will manage all aspects of its procurement processes in accordance with its adopted Risk Management Policy and Risk Management Framework.

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Where appropriate, procurement risks are to be assessed and mitigated through risk planning to address:

- Financial risks including cost management, insurances and securities.
- Social risks including community expectations, indigenous and cultural heritage, and public and workplace safety; and
- Environmental risks including threatened flora and fauna, contamination of water, air and soil.

Management of risk is to be undertaken through all stages of procurement and commensurate with the level of assessed risk and associated mitigation plans.

Risk assessments are to be in accordance with the standard required by law and in accordance with Australian Standards.

3.9 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

To ensure the health and safety of our workers and visitors, procurement will be undertaken in accordance with requirements set out in the Occupational Health and Safety Policy.

3.10 CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

In order to continually improve its procurement and contract management processes and outcomes, Council will review and evaluate its documented procurement processes and Contract Management Guidelines on a regular basis.

Good contract management ensures goods, services and works are delivered to the required standards of quality and quantity as intended by the contract through:

- Establishing a system monitoring and achieving the responsibilities and obligations of all parties under the contract;
- Providing a means for the early recognition of issues and performance problems and the identification of solutions;
- Adhering to the Council's risk management framework and relevant Occupational Health and Safety and sustainability requirements.

Council contracts are to include contract management requirements commensurate with the complexity of the procurement. Furthermore, contracts are to be proactively managed by the member of Council Staff responsible for the delivery of the contracted goods, services or works to ensure the Council and therefore the community, receives Value for Money.

Council awards some contracts that are strategically critical and of relatively high value. Council will provide additional senior oversight to the management of such significant contracts.

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4 DEMONSTRATE SUSTAINED VALUE

4.1 ACHIEVING VALUE FOR MONEY

Council's procurement activities will be carried out based on obtaining value for money. This means minimising the total cost of ownership over the lifetime of the asset consistent with acceptable quality, reliability and delivery considerations.

Lowest price is not the sole determinant of Value for Money.

This will be facilitated by:

- Achieving continuous improvement in procurement activity in accordance with the direction set out in the Council's Procurement Strategy.
- Developing, implementing and managing procurement activities that support the coordination and streamlining of procedures.
- Identifying and rectifying inefficiencies in procurement processes.
- Promoting effective use of competition;
- Using existing Council contractual arrangements or Collaborative Procurement arrangements where appropriate;
- Establishing panels of preferred suppliers for standing offer arrangements.
- Developing cost and time-efficient tender processes including appropriate use of e-procurement.
- Use of pre-qualified suppliers to minimise costs associated with tender completion and compliance.
- Providing staff training to ensure adequate understanding of policies and procedures.
- Council Staff responsible for providing procurement services or assistance within the Council providing competent advice in terms of available products and agreements; and
- Working with suppliers to create relationships that are professional, productive, and are appropriate to the value and importance of the goods, services and works being acquired.

4.2 SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

4.2.1 DEFINITION

Sustainable procurement involves decision making that has the most positive environmental, social and economic impacts possible across the entire lifecycle of goods, services and works. The United Nations Environment Programme defines sustainable procurement as a

"Process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole of life basis in terms of generating benefits not only the organisation, but also to society and the economy whilst minimising damage to the environment."

4.2.2 APPLICATION

Sustainability will be embedded in the Council's work. All Council Staff will have a clear and shared understanding about what it means and how they can apply it to their daily tasks. The Council commits to applying the principles of sustainability to all of its decision-making and activities.

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Council demonstrates sustainable procurement by:

- Being accountable for its impacts on society, the economy and the environment including the impacts of the organisation's supply chain.
- Examining anticipated organisational, project and/or community needs.
- Continually improving sustainability specifications, practices and outcomes.
- Planning and undertaking sustainability evaluations as part of contracting activities.

Council commits to:

- Applying specific principles of sustainability to its decision-making and activities; and
- Focusing on specific Economic, Environmental and Social objectives. Appendix 6 sets out Council's commitment to Sustainable Procurement.

4.3 SOCIAL PROCUREMENT

Social procurement involves using procurement processes and purchasing power to generate positive social outcomes in addition to the efficient delivery of goods, services and works. Social Procurement generates positive outcomes by building on initiatives already undertaken by the Council in enhancing sustainable and strategic procurement practices, enabling procurement to effectively contribute towards building stronger communities and meeting the social objectives of the Council.

Social Procurement includes:

- Employment of groups with entrenched disadvantage.
- Use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned and operated companies.
- Social Enterprises.
- Disability Enterprises.
- Employment of Apprentices.
- Employment of recognised Youth Traineeships.
- Employment of Youth Labour.
- Benefits to the Local Community.

The Council is supporting social procurement when engaging local suppliers, contractors or service providers. Council may engage with any of the groups below when:

- a) Advantageous to a specific procurement.
- b) Is within specific procurement thresholds.
- c) The works or services required provide best value for money.

4.4 DIVERSITY

Promoting equality through procurement can improve competition, best value and the quality of public services, user satisfaction and community relationships. It should be a consideration in procurement activities and reflect corporate commitment to diversity and equal opportunity where possible.

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Council recognises the importance of having a diverse supplier base that reflects the extent of Council's clients and community.

Diversity and inclusion in procurement can refer to diverse suppliers, for example indigenous, culturally diverse, disability or gender diverse suppliers or generic suppliers considering the needs of various groups.

A wide range of suppliers should be encouraged to compete for Council work. The focus for new work should encourage business diversity including:

- Local suppliers
- Green suppliers
- Small to medium sized enterprises (SME's)
- Social enterprises
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned and operated
- Voluntary and community organisations.

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5 BUILD & MAINTAIN SUPPLY RELATIONSHIPS

5.1 MANAGING SUPPLIERS

Council recognises the importance of effective and open working relationships with its suppliers and is committed to managing existing suppliers via performance measurements to ensure the benefits negotiated through contracts are delivered.

5.2 SUPPLY MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Council recognises the importance of effective and fair working relationships with its suppliers. Council is committed to the following:

- Managing existing suppliers, via the appropriate development programs and performance measurements to ensure the best performance;
- Maintaining an up to date Approved Supplier Lists; and
- Developing new suppliers and improving the capability of existing suppliers where appropriate.

Broadening the base of suppliers benefits the competitiveness of procurement and provides opportunities for business development. Council is committed to supporting:

- Social enterprises;
- Voluntary and community organisations; and
- Small to medium sized businesses (SME's).

5.3 LOCAL SUPPLY

Council is committed to supporting local suppliers where supply can be justified on best value grounds. Where procurement is based on price alone or a value weighted assessment process, a local benefit of 5% shall be applied to the weighted cost component of supply that is sourced within the municipality.

A local supplier is defined as:

- Organisation that employs one or more people who currently reside in the municipality, and who have continually done so for at least 12 months; or
- Organisation that has their registered business premises located within the municipality (refer to the Australian Business Register – <http://abr.business.gov.au>)

5.4 THIRD PARTY PRIVACY

Suppliers (including their sub-contractors) engaging in procurement with Council are bound by Council's Privacy Policy.

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6 PROCUREMENT METHODS

Council procurement processes are based on several principles:

6.1 MARKET ENGAGEMENT METHODS

Section 108 of the Act details that each Council will set the public tender threshold above which tenders or expressions of interest must be publicly invited.

A public tender process must be used for all procurements valued at above \$150,000 (ex GST) for goods and services and \$200,000 (ex GST) for works.

For all procurements valued under \$150,000 (ex GST), the procurement methodology and thresholds are detailed in Appendix 3 of this Policy.

The procurement thresholds for different procurement methods shall not exceed thresholds defined by this Policy.

Use of procurement methods below their thresholds is recommended where the following may occur or be achieved:

- Improved competitiveness,
- Better management of risk;
- Fairer opportunity for prospective suppliers; or
- Variations to supply may take total expenditure above the applicable threshold.

If an approved budget for the procurement process is within 5% of the tendering threshold listed in Appendix 3, then the procurement requirements must be followed.

Where a procurement process has been undertaken, and the tendered cost of supply (including contingency for variations) by the preferred supplier exceeds the limit for the procurement method, the process shall be declared void and a new approach to market undertaken.

The supply shall not be intentionally divided to avoid exceeding a procurement limit.

6.2 ROLE OF SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications used in quotations, tenders and contracts are to support Council's best value for money objectives and should be written to:

- Ensuring impartiality and objectivity.
- Identifying the procurement requirements.
- Encouraging the use of standard products.
- Promoting sustainability (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Renew).
- Eliminating unnecessarily stringent requirements.
- Supports local supply.
- Where practical promotes Social Procurement including the use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned and operated companies along with social enterprises or other social benefit suppliers.
- Ensure that relevant legislation is complied with when required:
 - Gender Equality Act 2020

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- o Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- o Labour Hire Licencing 2018
- o Modern Slavery Act 2018
- o Others as relevant to works/services

6.3 PROCUREMENT TYPE

6.3.1 DIRECT PURCHASE

- a) Direct purchase may be used for minor purchases valued up to the procurement threshold for this procurement method as defined in [Appendix 3](#). The Officer must be able to demonstrate that fair value has been obtained.
- b) Direct purchase may be used up to the procurement threshold for single or multiple written quotation as defined in [Appendix 3](#) where goods, services or works are provided by suppliers who have been pre-approved or pre-qualified through an approach to market that meets the applicable procurement method. The Officer must be able to demonstrate that fair value has been obtained.

6.3.2 SINGLE WRITTEN QUOTATION

- a) Purchase using a single written quotation may be used for goods, services and works up to the procurement threshold for this procurement method as defined in [Appendix 3](#). The Officer must be able to demonstrate that fair value has been obtained.

6.3.3 MULTIPLE WRITTEN QUOTATIONS

- a) Three or more written quotations are to be sought to procure goods, services and works up to the procurement threshold for this procurement method as defined in [Appendix 3](#). Lowest price or fair value (value based assessment) is to be demonstrated. Where value based evaluation is used, the procurement is approved by the Responsible Officer.
- b) Use of quotation (rather than tender) for procurement should only apply where risk associated with procurement has adequate protection under Australian Consumer Law.
- c) Where the allocated budget is above \$30,000, the Responsible Officer must formalise the quotation/tender through the procurement processes stipulated in [Appendix 3](#).

6.3.4 SELECT TENDER OR REQUEST FOR QUOTATION

A tender process should be used to provide management of procurement risk than is achieved through quotation.

Three or more suitable suppliers are to be sought for the procurement of goods, services and works up to the procurement limit for this procurement method as defined in [Appendix 3](#). Lowest price or value based assessment is to be demonstrated. Where value based evaluation is used, evaluation is to be in accordance with [Appendix 2](#).

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Where a select tender is called Council shall either:

- Invite all respondents to an expression of interest for the service type who is, upon assessment, deemed to be suitable suppliers and who, upon assessment, can reasonably be expected to affect supply, the opportunity to tender, or;
- Invite three or more respondents to an expression of interest for the service type who is, upon assessment, deemed to be suitable suppliers and who, upon assessment, can reasonably be expected to affect supply, the opportunity to tender, or;
- Where no expression of interest has been called, invite three or more suitable suppliers who can reasonably be expected to undertake the opportunity to tender.

6.3.5 PUBLIC TENDER

Public tenders shall be called where the cost of supply may or will exceed the minimum thresholds identified in [Appendix 3](#).

Public tenders may be called where the cost of supply is less than the threshold and such a tender may:

- Improve competitiveness of supply
- Ensure fairer opportunity to supply
- Provide better quality of supply
- Result in better timeliness of supply

Public tenders shall be called by public notice and via Council's e-tendering Portal.

6.4 PANELS ARRANGEMENTS – APPROVED SUPPLIERS

An approved supplier is a contractor/company that has been appointed following an public tender process. New suppliers can only be added to these panels via approval at a Council meeting. Unless specified during a tender process no minimum quantity of sales or turnover is guaranteed to an approved supplier.

The use of established panels should be transparent as suppliers appointed to the panel will have a reasonable expectation that Council will provide panel members with an equal opportunity to quote for goods, services or works. Before establishing a panel there should be documented methodology on how works/services are to be determined for allocation to companies appointed to the panel. Consideration should be given to the number of companies to be appointed to maintain a workable panel.

When accessing established panels arrangements quotations should be sought consistent with the guidelines set out in 6.1 to ensure that any procurement through panels demonstrates value for money and a competitive process.

An exception is that an Approved Supplier may be appointed directly for works up to \$15,000 where a Schedule of Rates has been provided under the panel's terms. For procurements greater than \$15,000 the quotation requirement outlined in Appendix 3 must be followed.

Council officers responsible for the contract management of panel arrangements should be mindful of day to day practicalities and acknowledge that a competitive process and value for money

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assessment has already been undertaken to establish the panel in the first instance. Accordingly, there may be situations where no further benefit is obtained from seeking quotations from the panel. For example:

- Small, every day, low risk, low value works such as those from trade services providers like electricians, plumbers, or
- Where the contract with each panel supplier includes a comprehensive schedule of rates covering all expected work items the costs for packages of work can be accurately determined beforehand by the Council officer without the need for further quotations.

For the examples, it may be appropriate for the Council officer to allocate work across the individual panel suppliers based on their respective skill sets and capacity at the time to meet Council's required timeframes. This allocation methodology should be determined prior to the establishment of the panel.

6.4.1 PANEL ARRANGEMENTS – APPROVED SUPPLIERS – ADMINISTRATION

Approved suppliers will be appointed following a formal public tender process and will be contracted for the period as outlined in the tender specification, including any options for extension.

Approved suppliers should be monitored periodically to determine if suppliers should remain on the panel. Approved suppliers who fail to meet expectations may be removed from the panel without notification.

Council may choose to run a tender process to add suppliers to a panel during its term, if it determines that the panel may benefit from having additional suppliers incorporated before the end of the contract term.

6.5 ASSET DISPOSAL

Council shall apply best value principles when undertaking disposal of assets.

The following principles shall apply to disposal:

- Where appropriate, sale of assets shall be through public process including tender, quotation or auction, or other 'arms-length' arrangement.
- Where appropriate, opportunities for local sale shall be facilitated.

7 CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMPLIANCE

Council will ensure that all its procurement operations are fully consistent with the prescribed rights and responsibilities and that they respect fundamental rights within the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic).

8 REFERENCES & ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

This Policy has clear linkages to a range of codes, charters, legislation and Council documents, including but not limited to:

- Local Government Act 2020

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- Gender Equality Act 2020
 - Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
 - Labour Hire Licencing 2018
 - Modern Slavery Act 2018
 - Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014
 - Competition of Consumer Act 2010 (Cwth)
 - Freedom of Information Act 1982
 - Public Records Act 1973
 - Security of Payments Act 2002
 - Charter of Human Rights Compliance (Vic) 2006
 - Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012 (Vic)
 - *Environment Protection Act 1970*
 - *Environmental Protection Act 2017 (Vic).*
 - *Goods Act 1958,*
 - *Fair Work Act 2009,*
 - *Working with Children Act 2005,*
 - *Working with Children Regulations 2016*
 - *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*
-
- Procurement Procedures and Guidelines
 - Staff Code of Conduct
 - Councillor Code of Conduct
 - Performance Management Employee Discipline Policy
 - Risk Management Policy
 - Risk Management Framework
 - Fraud & Corruption Policy
 - OHS Policy
 - Privacy Policy
 - Councillor Gifts Policy
 - Staff Gifts Policy
 - Social Procurement: A Guide for Victorian Local Government
 - Victorian Local Government Best Practice Procurement Guidelines 2013
 - Victorian Government Gazette, Order in Council 7 August 2008

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9 APPENDICIES

9.1 APPENDIX 1: FINANCIAL DELEGATIONS

The following table defines financial delegations for the CEO, Officers and other positions based on identified tiers. Refer to Council's delegations by specific role or position.

POSITION	DELEGATION	COMMENT
Tier 1: Chief Executive Officer	goods / services: \$225,000 works: \$300,000	Within approved budget. Unlimited if approved by Council or in emergency circumstances.
Tier 2: Nominated Coordinators & Officers	\$50,000	Within approved budget under direct management, or budget as delegated by CEO.
Tier 3: Nominated Coordinators & Officers	\$30,000	Within approved budget under direct management, or budget as delegated by CEO.
Tier 4: Nominated Coordinators, Officers & Team Leaders	\$10,000	Within approved budget as delegated by CEO.

Note: Tiers relate solely to the requirements of the Procurement Policy.

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9.2 APPENDIX 2: EVALUATION PANEL

PROCUREMENT VALUE	METHOD	EVALUATION PANEL
< \$15000	Quotation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officer
\$15,000 ~ \$30,000 - lowest price	Quotation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible Officer
\$10,000 ~ \$30,000 - value weighted	Quotation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible Officer Tier 4 Coordinator, Tier 3 Officer, or Tier 2 Officer
\$30,000 ~ \$75,000 - lowest price	Tender or Quotation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officer Tier 3 Officer or Tier 2 Officer
\$30,000 ~ \$75,000 - value weighted	Tender or Quotation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible Officer Council Officer Procurement Officer (Chairperson non-voting)
\$75,000 ~ \$150,000 - goods or services \$75,000 ~ \$200,000 - works	Tender or Quotation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible Officer Council Officer Procurement Officer (Chairperson non-voting)
> \$150,000 - goods or services > \$200,000 - works	Tender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible Officer Council Officer Procurement Officer (Chairperson non-voting)

- 1 Consideration should be given to gender diversity in the makeup of a panel
- 2 The evaluation panel must have a minimum of three (3) members (minimum of two council staff) and may include external consultants who are specialists in the area.
- 3 The evaluation process must be documented, robust, systematic and unbiased.
- 4 Once a preferred tenderer is selected, negotiations may be conducted to obtain the optimal solution and commercial arrangements, providing they remain within the intent and scope of the tender. Such negotiations must be exhausted with one tenderer before beginning with another tenderer.
- 5 The tender evaluation panel will produce a written report using the prescribed template.

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9.3 APPENDIX 3: PROCUREMENT METHODS



METHOD	DIRECT PURCHASE	DIRECT PURCHASE	SINGLE QUOTE	MULTIPLE QUOTES	REQUEST FOR QUOTATION OR SELECT TENDER	REQUEST FOR QUOTATION OR SELECT TENDER	PUBLIC TENDER
VALUE OF PROCUREMENT	\$0 - \$100	\$101 - \$1,000	\$1,000 - \$10,000 (OR GREATER AMOUNT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUB-CLAUSE 2.8.4.2(B))	\$15,000 - \$50,000	\$50,000 - \$150,000	\$50,000 TO \$150,000 (GOODS AND SERVICES) \$75,000 TO \$200,000 (WORKS)	\$150,000+ (GOODS AND SERVICES) \$200,000+ (WORKS)
MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of any suitable supplier. Fair value applies. Credit card invoice, or Cash sale invoice or Purchasing card invoice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of any suitable supplier. Fair value applies. Purchase order issued, or Credit card invoice, or Cash sale invoice or Purchasing card invoice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 1 written quote. Fair value applies. Use of any suitable supplier. Purchase Order issued. Credit card invoice Procurement Summary between \$5,000 to \$10,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 3 written quotes. Lowest price, or Best value to be demonstrated. Use of any suitable supplier. Procurement summary to be completed. Use of preferred supplier without quotation subject to aggregated spend. Purchase Order issued. Registration of all quotations over \$10,000 with Procurement department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 3 suitable suppliers approached. Written Scope / Specification. Use of template proforma for procurement. Procurement evaluation criteria to be defined. Evaluation by officer or tender panel. Procurement summary may be used if assessment by lowest price, or Tender evaluation report detailing assessment process if value weighted assessment used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 3 suitable suppliers approached. Written Scope / Specification. Use of template proforma for procurement. Procurement & Risk plan prior to tender. Procurement evaluation criteria to be defined. Evaluation by tender panel. Tender evaluation report detailing assessment process for approval by CEO. Recommendation prepared for approval by CEO. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Tender Written Scope / Specification Use of template proforma for procurement. Procurement & Risk plan prior to tender. Procurement evaluation criteria to be defined. Evaluation by tender panel. Evaluation criteria reviewed by tender panel – variance reported. Tender evaluation report detailing assessment process. Recommendation prepared to CEO for approval by Council.
OPTIONAL REQUIREMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase Order Must be created after purchase for invoice payment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written quotes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 written quote. Use of preferred supplier without quotation subject to aggregated spend. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of preferred supplier without quotation subject to aggregated spend. Request for Quotation or Select Tender. Written Scope / Specification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Tender, or Expression of interest and Select Tender to follow. Select Tender or RFQ to Pre-qualified suppliers. Aggregated purchasing arrangements that have met multiple quotation requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Tender Expression of interest and Select Tender to follow. Select Tender or RFQ to Pre-qualified suppliers. Aggregated purchasing arrangements that have met multiple quotation requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expression of interest and Public Tender to follow. Aggregated purchasing arrangements that have met public tender requirements.
APPROVAL OF SCOPE / SPECIFICATION	Officer	Officer	Officer	T3 Coordinator / T3 Officer	T2 Coordinator / Officer	T2 Coordinator / Officer	T2 Coordinator / Officer
REPOSITORY FOR PROCUREMENT RECORDS	Not applicable	Not applicable	Service Network Directory	Contracts Network Directory	Contracts Network Directory	Contracts Network Directory	Contracts Network Directory
NOTIFICATION OF OUTCOME / PERIOD	NA	NA	NA	NA	Web site / 1 month	Web site / 3 months	Web site / 6 months
RESPONSIBILITY FOR EVALUATION	Officer	Officer	Officer	Responsible Officer or Responsible Officer and Coordinator / Officer if value assessment used	Responsible Officer or Responsible Officer and T4 Coordinator / Officer	Tender panel	Tender panel
APPROVAL OF PROCUREMENT PROCESS PRIOR TO EXECUTION	Authorised Officer	Authorised Officer	Authorised Officer	Procurement Officer	CEO	CEO	CEO
CONTRACT EXECUTION	Authorised Officer	Authorised Officer	Authorised Officer	Authorised Officer	Chief Executive Officer	Chief Executive Officer	Chief Executive Officer within Delegation Council resolution Signed and sealed by Mayor & Chief Executive Officer
APPROVAL OF VARIATIONS (PERCENTAGE OF PRICE OR CONTRACT AMOUNT)	NA	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <10% Officer >10% Coordinator / Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <5% T3 Coordinator / T3 Officer 5-15% T2 Coordinator / Officer >15% CEO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <10% T2 Coordinator / Officer >10% CEO Council if budget variation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <10% T2 Coordinator / Officer >10% CEO Council if budget variation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <10% T2 Coordinator / Officer >10% CEO Council if budget variation

Note 2: An Officer or Responsible Officer cannot be the Authorised Officer to the procurement task.
Note 3: T4 refers to Tier 4 etc. as per Appendix 1.

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9.4 APPENDIX 4 – EXEMPTIONS

The following procurements are either exempt from market engagement and/or the requirement for a Purchase Order. With the Chief Executive's approval, exemptions can be added or removed from this list at any time.

Category	Description	Exempt from Market Engagement	Exempt from Purchase Order
Utilities	Electricity, gas, water and telephone services.	No	Yes
Insurance premiums and claims	WorkCover and other insurances.	No	Yes
Prescribed contracts	Legal services	Yes	No
Payroll expenses	Superannuation and PAYG.	Yes	Yes
GST	Goods and Services Tax payable.	Yes	Yes
Postage	Australia Post.	Yes	Yes
Vehicle registrations	VicRoads vehicle registrations.	Yes	Yes
Councillor expenses	Allowances and Reimbursements.	Yes	Yes
Refundable trust funds	Includes Security Bonds, Contract Retentions and other funds held in trust.	Yes	Yes
Levies	EPA Victoria Levy.	Yes	Yes
	Fire Services Property Levy.	Yes	Yes
Research & Development	Research and Development (R&D) includes activities that Council undertake to innovate and introduce new projects & services.	Yes	No

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Category	Description	Exempt from Market Engagement	Exempt from Purchase Order
	Does not include inputs to the R&D – ie. Technology		
Other	Acquisition of Land and Buildings.	Yes	Yes
	Medical expenses.	Yes	Yes
	Venue hire.	Yes	Yes
	Memberships and subscriptions.	Yes	Yes
	External audit fees – Victorian Auditor-General's Office.	Yes	No
	HACC service agreement.	Yes	Yes
	Annual community grants.	Yes	Yes
	Professional workshop and conference registration fees and associated costs.	Yes	No
	Loans and investments.	Yes	Yes
	General advertising.	Yes	No
	Recruitment advertising.	Yes	No
	Cultural Procurement	Yes	No
	IT Software (subscriptions)	Yes	Yes

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9.5 APPENDIX 5 – COLLABORATIVE TENDERING

The following framework was developed by the SWRPEN as guiding principles for member Councils

Council Officers will seek to use Collaborative Procurement Arrangements with third parties when procuring Goods, Services and Works in order to take advantage of economies of scale in accordance with section 108(3)(c) of the Act. When a report for a procurement is presented to Council for approval, it will include information relating to any collaborative arrangement opportunities that were explored as part of the procurement process.

When collaborating with other Councils, the Council will do so in accordance with the following:

- a) working with other SWRPEN Councils to develop a consolidated contract register to identify joint procurement projects on an annual basis;
- b) Council Officers must actively consider all contracts to determine if the procurement would benefit from expertise, economies of scale or other strategic benefits to Council (other than projects that are unique to an individual Council (e.g. unique construction or works projects)) must be included in the consolidated contract register for collaboration consideration;
- c) other contracts which, due to the subject matter, nature or scope, are likely to deliver operational efficiencies if procured in collaboration with the other Councils, must be included in the consolidated contract register for consideration as a possible joint procurement opportunity;
- d) Council Officers commit to regularly reviewing the contracts register to determine whether collaborative procurement should be considered;
- e) where collaborative procurement is to be pursued:
 - i. a pre-market approval submission will be submitted to each Council prior to commitment to collaboration, seeking delegation of contract approval to the appropriate Council Officer of that Council;
 - ii. the participating Councils will establish a *Heads of Agreement* that gives authority for a lead council to act as each Council's agent in the Collaborative Procurement Arrangements;
 - iii. each of the Councils who participate will be able to enter into a contract with the preferred supplier identified through the collaborative procurement process, or may choose as a group to enter into a contract using "jump in/opt-in" contract provisions during the contract term, or with the Council which conducted the relevant procurement;
 - iv. each participating Council must be involved in:
 - I. the initial decision to undertake the Collaborative Procurement Arrangement;
 - II. preparation of, and agreement to, the specifications;
 - III. ensuring probity for the Collaborative Procurement Arrangement; and
 - IV. the acceptance of tender(s) and awarding of contract(s); and
 - v. when considering the evaluation criteria for a particular Collaborative Procurement Arrangement each participating Council will prioritise Value for Money for the collaborating Council's in addition to its usual Procurement Policy to ensure alignment can be achieved between Council's for the evaluation criteria.

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Furthermore, Council may collaborate with other Councils or other bodies such as MAV Procurement or Procurement Australasia to procure Goods, Services or Works, or utilise existing Collaborative Procurement Arrangements established through a public tender process where it provides an advantageous, Value for Money outcome for the Council.

Any Federal or State Government grant funded projects may be excluded from Collaborative Procurement Arrangements.

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9.6 APPENDIX 6 – SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

Ararat Rural City Council commits to applying the principles of sustainable procurement by addressing the three key areas of Economic, Environmental and Social Impact.

ECONOMIC

Council commits to procurement that supports local business and economic diversity within the region.

Where practicable, Council will give preference for the purchase of goods, machinery or material manufactured or produced in Australia.

Council also considers the economic benefits of securing goods and services from local/regional suppliers where such spend may be justified as demonstrating Value for Money and its impact on the local economy.

Council is committed to buying from local businesses, whilst remaining compliant with the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 and other fair trading legislation requirements.

Expenditure retained in the region may contribute to the local economy's sustainability through:

- increasing local employment
- increasing business activity within the region
- building relationships and helping them to increase their capacity, and
- fostering innovative and emerging sectors.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Council seeks to reduce the impact on our environment through:

- increasing the use of recycled content when purchasing goods or materials, where practical
- encouraging the diversion of waste materials from landfill through renewal/upgrading or converting to recycled materials
- encouraging the purchase of repairable items in the procurement of goods, and
- Incentivising the use of recovered materials where possible.

SOCIAL

Social procurement involves using procurement processes and purchasing power to generate positive social outcomes in addition to the delivery of efficient goods, services and works.

For Local Government, social procurement builds on initiatives already undertaken by the sector in enhancing sustainable and strategic procurement practice, enabling procurement to effectively contribute to building stronger communities. Social procurement is a key mechanism by which to generate wider social benefits by providing a mechanism for linking and integrating social and economic agendas.

Council supports social procurement when engaging suppliers, contractors and/or service providers.

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Consideration will be given to procurement that supports disadvantaged or minority groups within the community.

DEMONSTRATION OF COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

Council demonstrates its commitment to sustainable procurement by:

Actively seeking quotations from local suppliers (where a local supplier exists) when procurement activities require a request for quotation.

Preferencing local suppliers where a quotation has been sought and the price difference is within 10%.

Applying a flexible non-price evaluation criteria that supports economic, social and environment outcome on all tender opportunities.



Procurement Policy



9.7 APPENDIX 7 - DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
Act / The Act	Local Government Act 2020
Authorised Officer	A Council staff member is authorised to approve the release of a purchase order or the entry into an agreement or contract.
Best Value	Best value in procurement requires selecting a suitable supply of goods, services and works based on both cost and non-cost factors. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality, time and cost standards defined by the Council for the delivery of services. • Services that are accessible to those members of the community for whom it is intended. • Services that meet the community's expectations and values; and • Services that provide value for money.
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
Collaborative Tendering	Opportunities for tendering with other councils or public bodies or through a collaborative procurement arrangement to purchase goods, service and works to take advantage of economies of scale.
Commercial in Confidence	If released, information may prejudice the business dealings of a party e.g., prices, discounts, rebates, profits, methodologies, and process information.
Contract Management	The process ensures both parties to a contract fully meet their respective obligations as efficiently and effectively as possible to deliver the business and operational objectives required from the contract and provide value for money.
Council Staff	Includes full-time and part-time Council officers, and temporary employees, contractors and consultants while engaged by the Council.
Cumulative Spend	The total value of goods, services or works procured from a single supplier is associated with an approach to market via quotation or tender. Cumulative spending should not exceed the tender threshold without a formal procurement process.
e-Procurement	The use of online tendering and electronic systems to purchase and pay for supply.
EOI	Expression of Interest
Expression of Interest	An invitation for persons to submit an EOI for the provision of the goods, services or works. This Invitation is not an offer or a contract.
Officer	Any member of Council staff.
Outsourced Council Works	Works undertaken by request, purchase order or contract to Council by an independent entity.
Panel Arrangements	A contract that sets out rates for goods, services or works available for the agreement term. No commitment is made to purchase a specified value or quantity of goods or services.

Procurement Policy



Probity	Uprightness, honesty, proper and ethical conduct and propriety in dealings. Within Government, the word "probity" is often used in a general sense to mean "good process." A procurement process that conforms to the expected standards of probity is one in which clear procedures that are consistent with the Council's policies and legislation are established, understood and followed from the outset. These procedures consider the legitimate interests of suppliers and ensure that all potential suppliers are treated equally.
Procurement	Procurement is the whole process of acquisition of external goods, services or works. This process spans the whole life cycle from concept to the end of the useful life of an asset (including disposal) or the end of a service contract.
Public Tender	A formal written request for the provision of goods, services or works, open to any prospective supplier. A public notice or advertisement must be issued.
Request for Quotation	A formal written request to selected prospective suppliers for the provision of goods, services or works. A request for quotation will allow the supplier to define some or all the terms and the specification of the supply.
Responsible Officer	Any Council staff member who is responsible for a service or project for which procurement is being undertaken.
Select Tender	A formal written request to selected prospective suppliers for the provision of goods, services or works. A tender will define the terms and specification of supply. A select tender is equivalent to a request for quotation.
Standing Offer Arrangements	A contract that sets out rates for goods, services or works which are available for the agreement term. No commitment is made under the agreement to purchase a specified value or quantity of goods or services
Supply	Goods, services or works that have been procured from another entity.
Sustainability	Activities that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.
Tender Process	The process of inviting parties to submit a quotation or tender, followed by evaluation of submissions and selection of a successful bidder or tenderer.

3.4 MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 21318

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The financial statements and performance indicators have been prepared for the period ended 31 May 2025.

Based on the information provided by responsible officers and managers Council's overall financial performance is in line with budget.

DISCUSSION

Council must establish and maintain a budgeting and reporting framework that is consistent with the principles of sound financial management.

Key Financial information:

Income Statement (Attachment 1)

The Income Statement measures how well Council has performed from an operating nature. It reports revenues and expenditure from the activities and functions undertaken, with the net effect being a surplus or deficit. Capital expenditure is excluded from this statement, as it is reflected in the Balance Sheet.

Attachment 1 shows that Council generated \$31.973 million in revenue and \$30.680 million in expenses to 31 May 2025. This has resulted in an operating surplus of \$1.293 million for the eleven months ended 31 May 2025.

Income

Rates and charges account for 50% of the total budgeted income for 2024/25. Rates and charges are recognised when the rates have been raised, not when the income has been received. An amount of \$18.073 million has been recognised as income for the eleven months ended 31 May 2025.

User fees account for 4% of the total budgeted income for 2024/25 and \$1.586 million has been received to 31 May 2025. The majority of this relates to transfer station fees, fitness centre income and commercial waste management charges.

Recurrent Operating Grants total \$8.696 million to 31 May 2025, including \$4.765 million from the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission for general purpose grants and \$3.094 million for the local roads grants.

Non-recurrent Operating Grants total \$1.310 million to 31 May 2025. Council has been successful in obtaining several grants that had not been budgeted for, as detailed in the table below. The amounts shown as unearned income will be treated as income in future accounting periods once the performance obligations of the grant have been met.

Non-Recurrent Operating Grants	Budget 2024/25 \$'000	Income 2024/25 \$'000	Unearned Income \$'000
Ararat Housing Transition	-	-	300
Digital Twin Victoria	-	5	949
Free Public WiFi Services	-	47	1,196
Supported Playgroups	65	56	-
Ararat Rural City Sport, Active Recreation & Open Space Strategy	-	-	36
CALD Outreach Workers Initiative	-	64	-
Tiny Towns Fund - Pomonal Community Hub	-	90	110
Natural Disaster Relief	-	160	-
Council Support Fund - Pomonal Fires	-	750	-
Centenary Park Dog Park	-	25	-
Other Minor Grants (under \$30,000)	-	113	-
	65	1,310	2,591

Non-recurrent Capital Grants total \$0.839 million to 31 May 2025, as detailed in the table below. The amounts shown as unearned income will be treated as income in future accounting periods once the performance obligations of the grant have been met.

Non-Recurrent Capital Grants	Budget 2024/25 \$'000	Income 2024/25 \$'000	Unearned Income \$'000
Mt William Road reconstruction	5,000	-	-
Back Bolac Road reconstruction	-	229	-
Churchill Avenue reconstruction	843	356	190
Pedestrian Infrastructure Program	-	20	50
Tiny Towns Fund - Buangor Recreation Reserve Pavillion Redevelopment	-	-	50
Tatyoan Oval Upgrade Grant	-	225	-
Tiny Towns Fund - Buangor Cobb & Co Stables	-	-	30
Pony Club Sports Arena	-	-	447
Other Minor Grants (under \$30,000)	-	9	-
	5,843	839	767

Note

It is important to note the following:

1. Unearned revenue received in prior years has been adjusted between the Original Budget and Current Budget with an additional \$2.936 million for Grants Operating (non-recurrent), \$0.366 million for Grants Capital (recurrent) and \$0.070 million for Grants Capital (non-recurrent) included in the Current Budget on the assumption that each of the grant projects will be completed during the 2024/25 financial year.
2. These changes in the budget, plus the note reported under expenses, create a change in the reported surplus position from a projected surplus of \$8.163 million to a surplus of \$9.205 million for 2024/25. The year-end variance is a deficit of \$6.466 million when the actual year to date expenses are compared to the year to date budget.

Expenses

Employee Costs account for approximately 40% of the total budgeted expenditure for 2024/25. For the eleven months ended 31 May 2025 Council has incurred \$11.233 million in employee costs, which

includes additional wages for emergency management relief and recovery, and organisation restructure costs. Workcover premiums have increased by \$0.104 million compared to 2023/24.

Materials and Services account for approximately 29% of the total budgeted expenditure for 2024/25. For the eleven months ended 31 May 2025, Council has incurred \$9.912 million in materials and services costs. There are a number of projects, including those carried forward from 2023/24 that are expected to be completed before the end of the financial year.

Depreciation totals \$8.905 million to 31 May 2025. The higher than budgeted depreciation has resulted from increased asset valuations being received as at 30 June 2024 after the budget was finalised.

Note

It is important to note the following:

There has been an increase in expenditure on materials and services from \$8.259 million in the Original Budget to \$10.589 million in the Current Budget for 2024/25. This has resulted from a carry forward amount of \$2.330 million from the 2023/24 financial year surplus and unspent grant funds which will be used for additional activity in 2024/25.

Balance Sheet (Attachment 2)

The Balance Sheet is one of the main financial statements and reports Council's assets, liabilities and equity at a given date, in this case 31 May 2025. Comparative figures have been provided as at 30 June 2024.

Council's current assets have increased by \$0.587 million from \$11.732 million as at 30 June 2024 to \$12.319 million as at 31 May 2025. Cash and cash equivalents have increased by \$5.761 million from \$3.049 million to \$8.810 million. Trade and other receivables have decreased by \$1.772 million from \$5.212 million as at 30 June 2024 to \$3.440 million as at 31 May 2025.

Total liabilities have increased from \$8.777 million in 2023/24 to \$9.429 million in 2024/25. Trade and other payables have increased by \$0.990 million and trust funds and deposits have increased by \$0.059 million. Unearned income/revenue decreased by \$0.014 million, which includes grants received by Council, where in accordance with accounting standards, they are held as a liability until grant-related performance obligations have been met.

Statement of Cash Flows (Attachment 3)

The Statement of Cash Flows shows how changes in the Statement of Financial Position and Income Statement affect Cash and Cash Equivalents, and breaks down the analysis to operating activities, investing activities and financing activities.

The Cash and Cash Equivalents at the beginning of the financial year of \$3.049 million have increased by \$5.761 million to \$8.810 million as at 31 May 2025.

Net cash of \$13.404 million was provided by operating activities, \$7.162 million was used in investing activities, and \$0.481 million was used in financing activities.

Investing activities includes payments for property, plant and equipment, and infrastructure.

Financial Performance Indicators (Attachment 4)

The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework requires Councils to report various performance indicators at the end of each financial year.

A full list of financial performance indicators is included in Attachment 4.

Indicator	30/6/2024	31/05/2025
Working capital <i>Measure - Current assets compared to current liabilities.</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework 100% to 400% Indicator of the broad objective that sufficient working capital is available to pay bills as and when they fall due. High or increasing level of working capital suggests an improvement in liquidity	162%	157%
Loans and borrowings <i>Measure - Loans and borrowings compared to rates.</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework - 0% to 70% Indicator of the broad objective that the level of interest-bearing loans and borrowings should be appropriate to the size and nature of a council's activities. Low or decreasing level of loans and borrowings suggests an improvement in the capacity to meet long term obligations	1.71%	0.85%
Indebtedness <i>Measure - Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework - 2% to 70% Indicator of the broad objective that the level of long-term liabilities should be appropriate to the size and nature of a Council's activities. Low or decreasing level of long-term liabilities suggests an improvement in the capacity to meet long term obligations	7.49%	7.83%
Rates concentration <i>Measure - Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework - 30% to 80% Indicator of the broad objective that revenue should be generated from a range of sources. High or increasing range of revenue sources suggests an improvement in stability	73.82%	58.23%
Expenditure level <i>Measure - Expenses per property assessment</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework \$2,000 to \$10,000 Indicator of the broad objective that resources should be used efficiently in the delivery of services. Low or decreasing level of expenditure suggests an improvement in organisational efficiency	\$4,592	\$4,119
Indicator - Revenue level <i>Measure - Average residential rate per residential property assessment</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework - \$700 to \$2,000 Indicator of the broad objective that resources should be used efficiently in the delivery of services. Low or decreasing level of rates suggests an improvement in organisational efficiency	\$1,993	\$2,002

Indicator	30/6/2024	31/05/2025
Indicator - Percentage of total rates collected The internal audit conducted in 2019 on Rates Revenue and Rate Debtor Management found no routine or regular reporting of large and long outstanding rates debtors. The outstanding Rates Debtors is reported in the Annual Financial report. As at 31 May 2025 the outstanding Rates Debtors totalled \$2.780 million compared to \$2.320 million as at 30 June 2024, an increase of \$0.460 million. In percentage terms 84.8% of the rates raised have been collected at 31 May 2025 compared to 85.6% up to 31 May 2024. Outstanding rates are currently charged 10% interest. Council issues approximately 7,900 rate notices. In 2024/25 there are 2,158 assessments paying by instalments compared with 2,640 assessments in 2023/24.	88.1%	77.7%
Indicator - Asset Renewal & Upgrade <i>Measure - Asset renewal & Upgrade compared to depreciation</i> Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – 40% to 130% Assessment of whether council assets are being renewed or upgraded as planned. It compares the rate of spending on existing assets through renewing, restoring, replacing or upgrading existing assets with depreciation. Ratios higher than 1.0 indicate there is a lesser risk of insufficient spending on Council's asset base.	124.63%	107.78%

The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework provides "Expected ranges" for each indicator. The framework has been developed to consider results at the end of the financial year so some results during the year are outside the expected range due to the timing of receipts and payments.

Explanations are provided in Attachment 4 for those indicators that are outside the "expected ranges".

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

- 6 Strong and Effective Governance
We will work hard to build models of governance that place delivering public value at the centre through effective financial management; well measured risk management; and implementation of effective community engagement practices
- 6.1 Deliver responsible budget outcomes, linked to strategy, that deliver value, innovation, and rating fairness

Budget Implications

Council's financial performance is in line with expectations. Council's cash position was expected to reduce in the first half of the year, and then increase later in the year with many ratepayers electing to pay their rates in full due 15 February 2025, and the third instalment due 28 Feb 2025 and fourth instalment due 31 May 2025.

Policy/Relevant Law

Section 97 - Quarterly Budget Report of the Local Government Act 2020 states:

1. As soon as practicable after the end of each quarter of the financial year, the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a quarterly budget report is presented to the Council at a Council meeting which is open to the public.
2. A quarterly budget report must include–
 - a. a comparison of the actual and budgeted results to date; and
 - b. an explanation of any material variations; and
 - c. any other matters prescribed by the regulations.
3. In addition, the second quarterly report of a financial year must include a statement by the Chief Executive Officer as to whether a revised budget is, or may be, required.

Sustainability Implications

There are no economic, social or environmental implications in relation to the item

Risk Assessment

Council is required to establish and maintain a budgeting and reporting framework that is consistent with the principles of sound management and this report assists Council in meeting that requirement.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Council's financial performance reports will continue to be published monthly.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. *The Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Financial Performance Indicators for the period ended 31 May 2025 be received and adopted.*

MOVED CR JOYCE SECONDED CR KAUR

That:

1. **The Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Financial Performance Indicators for the period ended 31 May 2025 be received and adopted.**

Cr Joyce, Cr Kaur and Cr Sanders spoke for the motion

**CARRIED 5/0
5157/25**

ATTACHMENTS

Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Financial Performance Indicators are provided as Attachment 3.4

Attachment 1

Comprehensive Income Statement for the eleven months ended 31 May 2025

	Original Budget \$'000	Current Budget \$'000	YTD Budget \$'000	YTD Actual \$'000	YTD Variance \$'000	Variance
Income						
Rates and charges	17,950	17,950	17,950	18,073	123	1%
Statutory fees and fines	272	272	249	226	(23)	-9%
User fees	1,515	1,515	1,403	1,586	183	13%
Contributions - cash capital	-	-	-	94	94	0%
Contributions - cash operating	100	100	82	212	130	159%
Grants - operating (recurrent)	8,258	8,258	8,210	8,696	486	6%
Grants - operating (non-recurrent)	65	3,001	67	1,310	1,243	1855%
Grants - capital (recurrent)	1,461	1,827	1,461	666	(795)	-54%
Grants - capital (non-recurrent)	5,843	5,913	5,356	839	(4,517)	-84%
Net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, plant and equipment	-	-	-	(198)	(198)	0%
Other income	722	722	662	469	(193)	-29%
Fair value adjustments for investment property	-	-	-	-	-	0%
Share of net profits/(losses) of associates and joint ventures accounted for by the equity method	-	-	-	-	-	0%
Total income	36,186	39,558	35,440	31,973	(3,467)	
Expenses						
Employee costs	11,333	11,333	10,796	11,233	437	4%
Materials and services	8,259	10,589	8,976	9,912	936	10%
Bad and doubtful debts	-	-	-	-	-	0%
Depreciation	7,681	7,681	7,041	8,905	1,864	26%
Amortisation - right of use assets	302	302	277	280	3	1%
Borrowing costs	6	6	6	7	1	17%
Finance costs - leases	74	74	68	69	1	1%
Other expenses	368	368	291	274	(17)	-6%
Total expenses	28,023	30,353	27,455	30,680	3,225	12%
Surplus for the year	8,163	9,205	7,985	1,293	(6,692)	-84%
Other comprehensive income						
Net asset revaluation increment	-	-	-	-	-	
Total comprehensive result	8,163	9,205	7,985	1,293	(6,692)	

Attachment 2
Balance Sheet as at 31 May 2025

	31/05/2025 \$'000	30/06/2024 \$'000
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	8,810	3,049
Trade and other receivables	3,440	5,212
Financial assets	-	3,040
Inventories	69	71
Prepayments	-	360
Total current assets	12,319	11,732
Non-current assets		
Trade and other receivables	5	5
Investments in joint venture	998	498
Property, plant and equipment, infrastructure	309,260	308,261
Right of use assets	1,111	1,359
Investment property	1,535	1,535
Total non-current assets	312,909	311,658
Total assets	325,228	323,390
Liabilities		
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	2,014	1,024
Trust funds and deposits	362	303
Unearned Income	3,358	3,372
Provisions	2,093	2,104
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings	-	150
Lease liabilities	24	275
Total current liabilities	7,851	7,228
Non-current liabilities		
Provisions	293	293
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings	156	156
Lease liabilities	1,129	1,100
Total non-current liabilities	1,578	1,549
Total liabilities	9,429	8,777
Net Assets	315,799	314,613
Equity		
Accumulated surplus	99,419	98,126
Reserves	216,380	216,487
Total Equity	315,799	314,613

Printed 9/06/2025

Attachment 3
Statement of Cash Flows for the eleven months ended 31
May 2025

	Eleven months to 31/05/2025	Forecast Year End to 30/06/2025
	Inflows/ (Outflows) \$'000	Inflows/ (Outflows) \$'000
Cash flows from operating activities		
Rates and charges	17,026	17,943
Statutory fees and fines	227	272
User fees	1,675	1,715
Grants - operating	10,250	10,270
Grants - capital	3,641	7,304
Contributions - monetary	237	240
Interest received	316	500
Trust funds and deposits taken	324	-
Other receipts	155	222
Net GST refund/payment	1,812	1,942
Employee costs	(10,830)	(11,527)
Materials and services	(10,787)	(11,666)
Trust funds and deposits repaid	(358)	-
Other payments	(284)	(368)
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	13,404	16,847
Cash flows from investing activities		
Payments for property, plant and equipment, infrastructure	(9,865)	(15,513)
Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment, infrastructure	163	163
Proceeds from investments	3,040	3,040
Payments for investments	(500)	(1,000)
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities	(7,162)	(13,310)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Finance costs	(7)	(6)
Repayment of borrowings	(150)	(150)
Proceeds from borrowings	-	-
Interest paid - lease liability	(69)	(74)
Repayment of lease liabilities	(255)	(283)
Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities	(481)	(513)
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	5,761	3,024
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	3,049	3,049
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	8,810	6,073

Printed 9/08/2025

Attachment 4
Financial Performance Indicators for the eleven months ended 31 May 2025

Result

Material Variations

LIQUIDITY

Dimension - Operating position

Indicator - Adjusted underlying result

Measure - Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit)

1.16%

[Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit) / Adjusted underlying revenue] x100

No material variation

Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework

-20% to 20%

Indicator of the broad objective that an adjusted underlying surplus should be generated in the ordinary course of business. A surplus or increasing surplus suggests an improvement in the operating position

Dimension - Liquidity

Indicator - Working capital

Measure - Current assets compared to current liabilities

157% No material variation

[Current assets / Current liabilities] x100

Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework

100% to 400%

Indicator of the broad objective that sufficient working capital is available to pay bills as and when they fall due. High or increasing level of working capital suggests an improvement in liquidity

Indicator - Unrestricted cash

Measure - Unrestricted cash compared to current liabilities

63.50% No material variation

[Unrestricted cash / Current liabilities] x100

Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework

10% to 300%

Indicator of the broad objective that sufficient cash which is free of restrictions is available to pay bills as and when they fall due. High or increasing level of unrestricted cash suggests an improvement in liquidity

Financial Performance Indicators for the eleven months ended 31 May 2025

Result

Material Variations

OBLIGATIONS

Dimension - Obligations

Indicator - Loans and borrowings

Measure - Loans and borrowings compared to rates

0.85% No material variation

[Interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x100

Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework

0% to 70%

Indicator of the broad objective that the level of interest bearing loans and borrowings should be appropriate to the size and nature of a council's activities. Low or decreasing level of loans and borrowings suggests an improvement in the capacity to meet long term obligations

Loans and borrowings repayments compared to rates

0.87% No material variation

[Interest and principal repayments on interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x100

Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework

0% to 20%

Indicator - Indebtedness

Measure - Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue

7.83% No material variation

[Non-current liabilities / Own source revenue] x100

Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework

2% to 70%

Indicator of the broad objective that the level of long term liabilities should be appropriate to the size and nature of a Council's activities. Low or decreasing level of long term liabilities suggests an improvement in the capacity to meet long term obligations

Indicator - Asset renewal (& Asset Upgrade included now also)

Measure - Asset renewal & Upgrade compared to depreciation

107.78% No material variation

[Asset renewal expenses / Asset depreciation] x100

Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework

40% to 130%

Indicator of the broad objective that assets should be renewed as planned. High or increasing level of planned asset renewal being met suggests an improvement in the capacity to meet long term obligations

STABILITY

Dimension - Stability

Indicator - Rates concentration

Measure - Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue

58.23% No material variation

[Rate revenue / Adjusted underlying revenue] x100

Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework

30% to 80%

Indicator of the broad objective that revenue should be generated from a range of sources. High or increasing range of revenue sources suggests an improvement in stability

Indicator - Rates effort

Measure - Rates compared to property values

0.27% No material variation

[Rate revenue / Capital improved value of rateable properties in the municipality] x100

Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework

0.15 to 0.75%

Indicator of the broad objective that the rating level should be set based on the community's capacity to pay. Low or decreasing level of rates suggests an improvement in the rating burden

Financial Performance Indicators for the eleven months ended 31 May 2025	Result	Material Variations
EFFICIENCY		
Dimension - Efficiency		
Indicator - Expenditure level		
Measure - <i>Expenses per property assessment</i> [Total expenses / Number of property assessments]	\$4,119.23	No material variation
Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework \$2,000 to \$5,000		
Indicator of the broad objective that resources should be used efficiently in the delivery of services. Low or decreasing level of expenditure suggests an improvement in organisational efficiency		
Indicator - Revenue level		
Measure - <i>Average rate per property assessment</i> [Total rate revenue (general rates and municipal charges) / Number of property assessments]	\$2,001.61	Outside Expected Range The average rate per property assessment is slightly above the expected range.
Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework \$700 to \$2,000		
Indicator of the broad objective that resources should be used efficiently in the delivery of services. Low or decreasing level of rates suggests an improvement in organisational efficiency		

SECTION 4 - INFORMATION REPORTS

4.1 COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 21319

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council has received the results from the 2025 Annual Community Satisfaction Survey. This survey provides insight on how the community views the performance of Council. Council's overall performance against both small rural and state-wide averages has yet again demonstrated consistency across the board.

There are still opportunities for substantial services improvement in all areas of Council's operations that will again be a focus of activity in the next twelve months.

DISCUSSION

The Department of Government coordinates the survey, which this year has been conducted by the independent research group, JWS Research. The 2025 survey was conducted through interviews with 400 randomly selected households during the period of 28 January to 16 March 2025.

Of Victoria's 79 Councils, 56 participated in the 2025 survey, providing data benchmarked against state-wide results and the 18 Councils within the small rural Council group.

The results of the 2025 Local Government Satisfaction Survey were provided on Monday 2 June 2025. Overall, the results again show that Council is moving in the right direction in terms of meeting community expectations around performance. In terms of relatively to similar Councils and the state average, Ararat Rural City is performing well.

As always it is important to understanding that there is still plenty of room for improvement and we are still a long way in some cases from reaching excellence in service delivery. A private sector measure of excellence in service provision would be ranking of at least 85. It needs to be acknowledged that ranking of services in a public sector environment has a greater number of social and political complexities than the private sector.

The 2025 Survey yielded a number of Council service areas with satisfaction scores over 70. These were Customer Service (73), Art Centres and libraries (75), Emergency and Disaster Management (75) Waste Management (73) Recreational Facilities (72) and Appearance of public areas (71).

The table below shows the spread of services areas that had improved, the same or decreased levels of customer satisfaction from the 2024 Survey.

Changes in satisfaction ranking	Number
Improved on 2024 results	6
Stayed the same	4
Decreased on 2024 results	12

The table below demonstrates Council's sustained performance against like Council and the state average for 2023 and 2024

ARCC performance	2025		2024	
	Small Rural	State-wide	Small Rural	State-wide
Better than	21	22	21	22
Same as	0	0	0	0
Worse than	1	0	1	0

In a number of cases, Ararat Rural City Council rankings were around ten points higher than state and small rural averages. Examples are: Overall Performance, Value for Money, Overall Council Direction, Art Centres and Libraries, Emergency and Disaster Management, Lobbying, Community Decisions, Sealed Local Roads.

The tables below show results in key measured areas.

Services		Ararat 2025	Ararat 2024	Small Rural 2025	State-wide 2025
	Overall performance	64	65	54	53
	Value for money	57	53	47	47
	Overall council direction	55	55	46	46
	Customer service	73	75	65	66
	Art centres & libraries	75	78	72	73
	Emergency & disaster mngt	75	76	66	65
	Waste management	73	74	66	65
	Recreational facilities	72	73	66	67
	Appearance of public areas	71	72	70	68
	Elderly support services	67	68	66	63

Services	Ararat 2025	Ararat 2024	Small Rural 2025	State-wide 2025
 Community & cultural	66	67	68	65
 Environmental sustainability	64	63	58	59
 Bus/community dev./tourism	63	66	57	56
 Informing the community	61	61	57	56
 Lobbying	60	60	51	49
 Community decisions	59	61	50	49
 Consultation & engagement	59	59	51	50
 Local streets & footpaths	59	57	53	52
 Sealed local roads	56	54	44	45
 Slashing & weed control	53	48	49	47
Services	Ararat 2025	Ararat 2024	Small Rural 2025	State-wide 2025
 Planning & building permits	51	54	43	43
 Unsealed roads	48	45	40	38

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

This report links for the following Council Plan objectives:

6. Strong and Effective Governance

We will work hard to build models of governance that place delivering public value at their centre through effective financial management, well measured risk management, and implementation of effective community engagement practices.

- 6.3 Continuously improve Council's community engagement process and practices in line with deliberative engagement practices, while ensuring that Councillors roles as elected community representatives are understood and reflected in decision-making.

Budget Implications

There are no budget implications

Policy/Relevant Law

The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework includes three measures taken directly from the Community Satisfactory Survey data.

Sustainability Implications

There are no economic, social or environmental implications in relation to the item

Risk Assessment

Nil

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Careful analysis of the full 2025 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey Report will provide significant data to base further continuous improvement activity in each service area.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

This report is based on a survey of Ararat Rural City Council Residents seeking to measure their satisfaction with service delivery in several key service areas.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. *That Council receive the Community Satisfaction Survey 2025 results*

**MOVED CR R ARMSTRONG
SECONDED CR KAUR**

That:

1. **That Council receive the Community Satisfaction Survey 2025 results**

Cr R Armstrong and Cr Kaur spoke for the motion

**CARRIED 5/0
5158/25**

ATTACHMENTS

The final Community Satisfaction Survey 2025 is provided as 4.1

2025 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey

Ararat Rural City Council

Coordinated by the Department of
Government Services on behalf of
Victorian councils





Contents

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<u>Key findings and recommendations</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>Waste management</u>	<u>95</u>
<u>Detailed findings</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>Business and community development and tourism</u>	<u>99</u>
<u>Overall performance</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>Planning and building permits</u>	<u>103</u>
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Background and objectives

The Victorian Community Satisfaction Survey (CSS) creates a vital interface between the council and their community.

Held annually, the CSS asks the opinions of local people about the place they live, work and play and provides confidence for councils in their efforts and abilities.

Now in its twenty-sixth year, this survey provides insight into the community's views on:

- councils' overall performance, with benchmarking against State-wide and council group results
- value for money in services and infrastructure
- community consultation and engagement
- decisions made in the interest of the community
- customer service, local infrastructure, facilities, services and
- overall council direction.

When coupled with previous data, the survey provides a reliable historical source of the community's views since 1998. A selection of results from the last ten years shows that councils in Victoria continue to provide services that meet the public's expectations.

Serving Victoria for 26 years

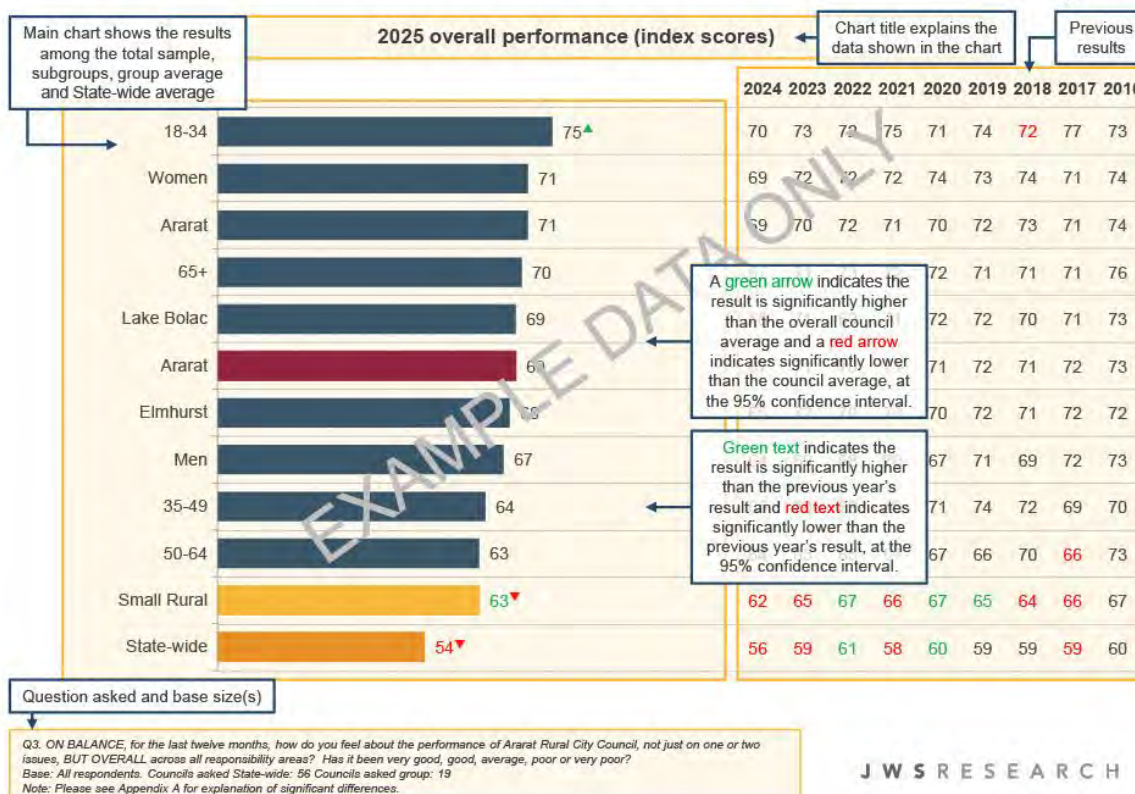
Each year the CSS data is used to develop this State-wide report which contains all of the aggregated results, analysis and data. Moreover, with 26 years of results, the CSS offers councils a long-term measure of how they are performing – essential for councils that work over the long term to provide valuable services and infrastructure to their communities.

Participation in the State-wide Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey is optional.

Participating councils have various choices as to the content of the questionnaire and the sample size to be surveyed, depending on their individual strategic, financial and other considerations.

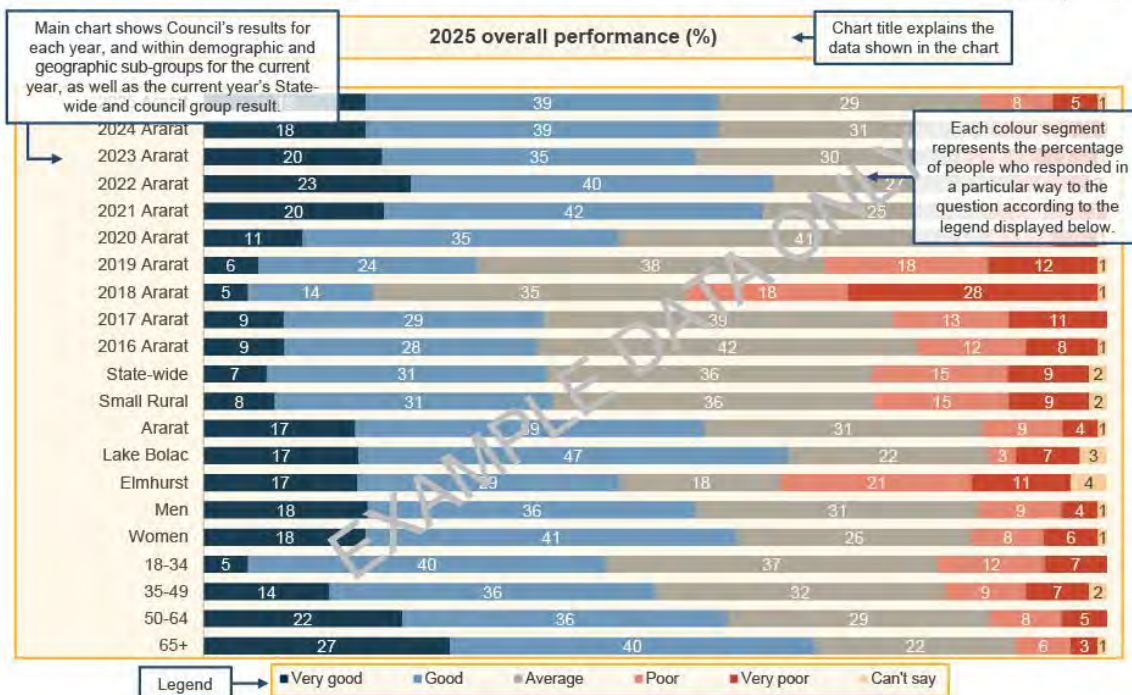


How to read index score charts in this report





How to read stacked bar charts in this report



Q3. ON BALANCE, for the last twelve months, how do you feel about the performance of Ararat Rural City Council, not just on one or two issues, BUT OVERALL across all responsibility areas? Has it been very good, good, average, poor or very poor?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 56 Councils asked group: 19



Key findings and recommendations

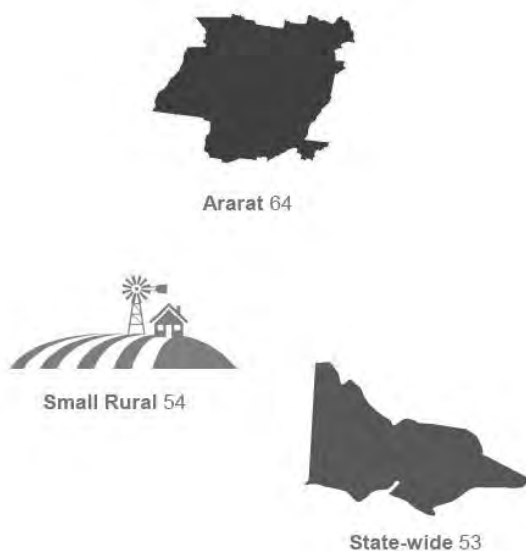
J W S R E S E A R C H 6

Ararat Rural City Council – at a glance



Overall council performance

Results shown are index scores out of 100.

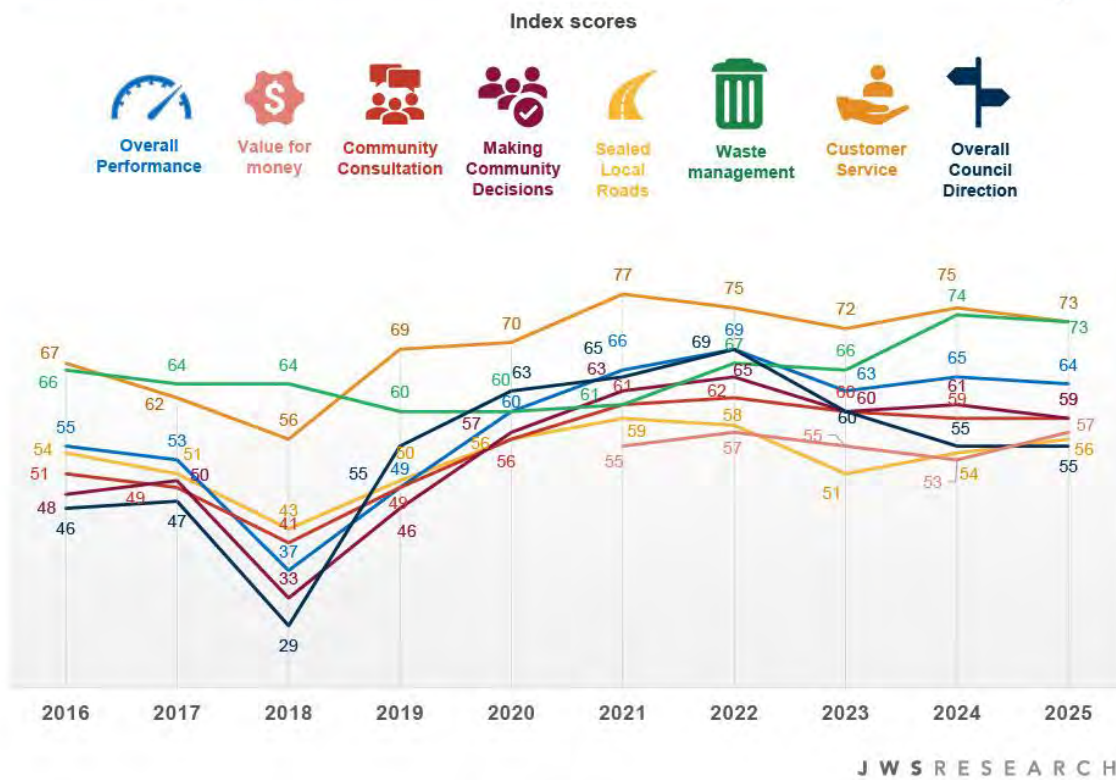


Council performance compared to group average

Top 3 performing areas		
	Art centres & libraries	▲ higher
	Emergency & disaster mngt	▲ higher
	Waste management	▲ higher
Bottom 3 performing areas		
	Unsealed roads	▲ higher
	Planning & building permits	▲ higher
	Slashing & weed control	▲ higher
	Customer service	▲ higher

J01430 Community Satisfaction Survey 2025 – Ararat Rural City Council

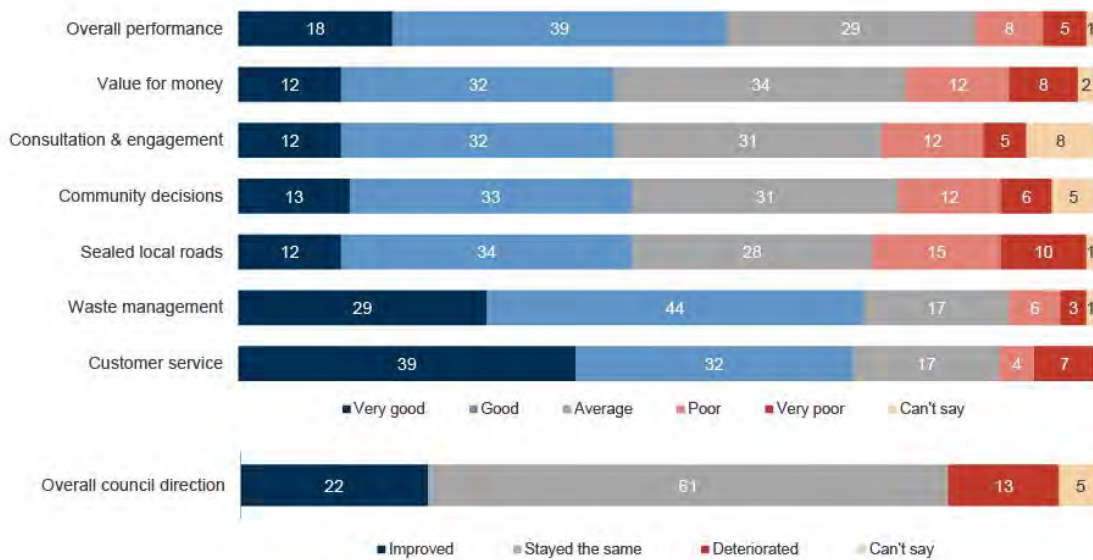
Summary of core measures





Summary of core measures

Core measures summary results (%)



Summary of Ararat Rural City Council performance



Services	Ararat 2025	Ararat 2024	Small Rural 2025	State-wide 2025	Highest score	Lowest score
 Overall performance	64	65	54	53	65+ years	18-34 years
 Value for money	57	53	47	47	65+ years	18-34 years
 Overall council direction	55	55	46	46	65+ years	18-34 years
 Customer service	73	75	65	66	Women	Men
 Art centres & libraries	75	78	72	73	50+ years, Women	18-34 years
 Emergency & disaster mngt	75	76	66	65	65+ years	35-49 years
 Waste management	73	74	66	65	65+ years	35-49 years
 Recreational facilities	72	73	66	67	50-64 years	35-49 years
 Appearance of public areas	71	72	70	68	50-64 years	18-34 years
 Elderly support services	67	68	66	63	65+ years	18-34 years

Significantly *higher* / *lower* than Ararat Rural City Council 2025 result at the 95% confidence interval.
Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

J W S R E S E A R C H 10

Summary of Ararat Rural City Council performance



Services	Ararat 2025	Ararat 2024	Small Rural 2025	State-wide 2025	Highest score	Lowest score
 Community & cultural	66	67	68	65	65+ years	18-34 years
 Environmental sustainability	64	63	58	59	50-64 years	35-49 years
 Bus/community dev./tourism	63	66	57	56	65+ years	18-34 years
 Informing the community	61	61	57	56	65+ years	35-49 years
 Lobbying	60	60	51	49	65+ years	18-34 years
 Community decisions	59	61	50	49	65+ years	18-34 years
 Consultation & engagement	59	59	51	50	65+ years	18-64 years
 Local streets & footpaths	59	57	53	52	50-64 years	18-34 years
 Sealed local roads	56	54	44	45	50-64 years	18-34 years
 Slashing & weed control	53	48	49	47	65+ years	35-49 years

Significantly **higher** / **lower** than Ararat Rural City Council 2025 result at the 95% confidence interval.
Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

J W S R E S E A R C H 11

J01430 Community Satisfaction Survey 2025 – Ararat Rural City Council

Summary of Ararat Rural City Council performance



Services	Ararat 2025	Ararat 2024	Small Rural 2025	State-wide 2025	Highest score	Lowest score
 Planning & building permits	51	54	43	43	65+ years	50-64 years
 Unsealed roads	48	45	40	38	65+ years	18-34 years

Significantly *higher* / *lower* than Ararat Rural City Council 2025 result at the 95% confidence interval.
Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

J W S R E S E A R C H 12



Focus areas for the next 12 months

Overview

Ararat Rural City Council's overall performance index of 64 experienced a (not significant) one-point decline since the previous result. Performance perceptions on most individual service areas are not significantly different to 2024, with the exceptions of slashing and weed control, where performance ratings improved significantly, and art centres and libraries, where performance ratings declined significantly.

Key influences on perceptions of overall performance

Council should focus on maintaining and improving performance in the individual service area that most influences perception of overall performance, namely, decisions made in the interest of the community. Following this, the more moderately influential but related service areas of consultation and engagement, and informing the community, should be prioritised as areas for improvement in the year ahead. Communication with residents in Council decision making is important to ensure residents feel heard on key local issues.

Comparison to state and area grouping

Importantly, Council performs significantly higher than both the Small Rural group and State-wide averages in almost all areas evaluated. Council performs in line with the group average but significantly higher than the State-wide average in the appearance of public areas and elderly support services. Community and cultural activities is the only service area where Council performs in line with the Small Rural group and State-wide averages.

Maintain gains achieved to date

Over the next 12 months, Council should look to uphold and build upon its relatively strong performance across many service areas, particularly waste management, and emergency and disaster management (both of which are influential in perceptions of overall performance). A focus for Council should be to abate the significant declines in perceptions among 18 to 34 year olds in several service areas, including community decisions and lobbying, to shore up the overall positive assessment achieved this year.

DETAILED FINDINGS

J W S R E S T A R A T 14

Overall performance



J W S R E S E A R C H 15



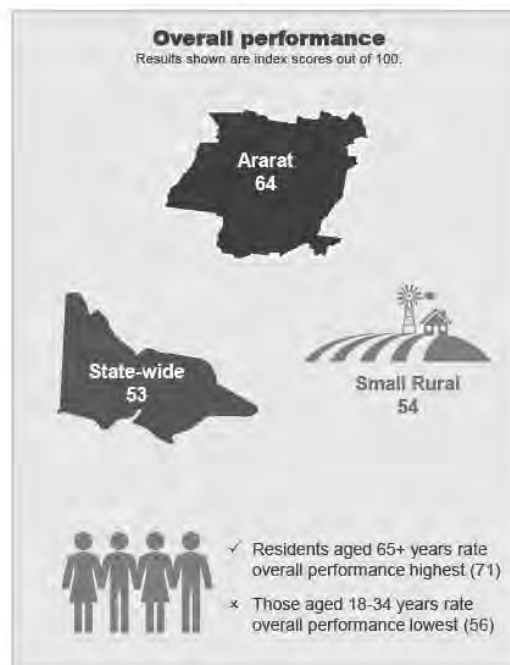
Overall performance

The overall performance index score of 64 for Ararat Rural City Council is mostly consistent with 2024, albeit a one-point decline.

Council's overall performance is rated statistically significantly higher (at the 95% confidence interval) than both the State-wide and Small Rural council group averages (index scores of 53 and 54 respectively).

- Overall performance ratings are significantly higher than average among residents aged 65 years and over (index score 71) and significantly lower among 18 to 34 year olds (56).
- Elmhurst residents provide the lowest ratings (55 – noting this is a small sample size and should be viewed with caution).
- While based on a small sample size, ratings among Lake Bolac residents (index score of 67) experienced a significant 16-point decline since the last evaluation (but remain above average).

More than four in ten residents (44%) rate the value for money they receive from Council in infrastructure and services provided to their community as 'very good' or 'good'. This is more than twice as many as those who rate Council as 'very poor' or 'poor' (20%). A further 34% rate Council as 'average' in terms of providing value for money.



Overall performance



2025 overall performance (index scores)

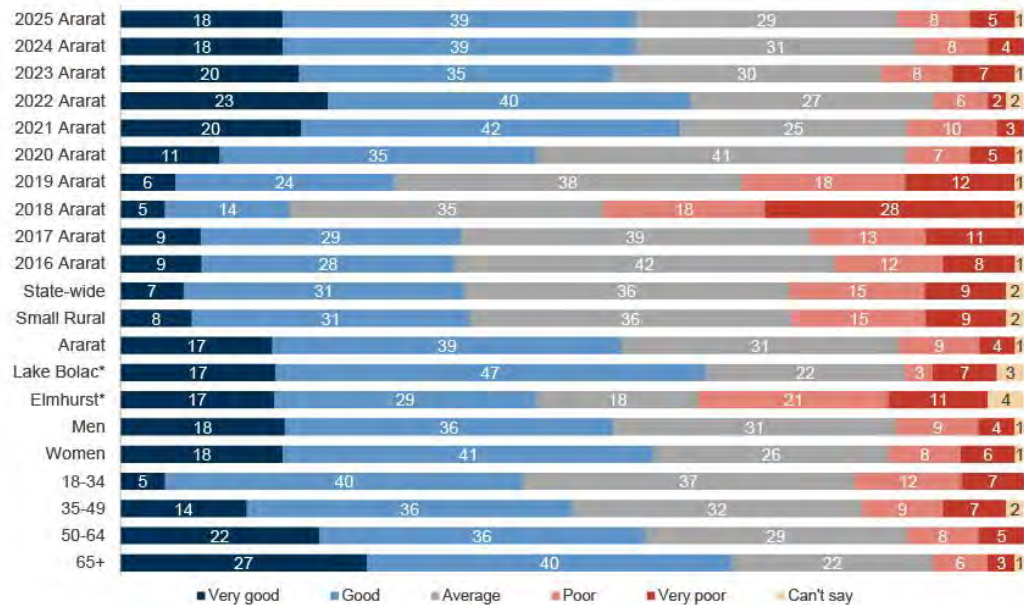
		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
65+	<div></div> 71▲	69	70	75	73	63	52	41	54	57
Lake Bolac	<div></div> 67*	83	74	70	72	32	29	19	48	53
50-64	<div></div> 66	62	61	66	63	61	50	39	54	54
Women	<div></div> 65	64	63	69	67	62	50	43	56	55
Ararat	<div></div> 64	65	63	69	66	60	49	37	53	55
Men	<div></div> 64	66	63	69	65	58	48	33	50	55
Ararat	<div></div> 64	64	63	70	66	61	51	41	54	55
35-49	<div></div> 61	61	50	62	62	53	40	27	50	53
18-34	<div></div> 56▼	62	65	70	63	60	52	42	53	56
Elmhurst	<div></div> 55*	58	53	67	82	54	66	38	50	71
Small Rural	<div></div> 54▼	53	55	58	60	56	58	56	58	57
State-wide	<div></div> 53▼	54	56	59	61	58	60	59	59	59

Q3. ON BALANCE, for the last twelve months, how do you feel about the performance of Ararat Rural City Council, not just on one or two issues, BUT OVERALL, across all responsibility areas? Has it been very good, good, average, poor or very poor?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 56 Councils asked group: 19
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.
*Caution: small sample size < n=30



Overall performance

2025 overall performance (%)



Q3. ON BALANCE, for the last twelve months, how do you feel about the performance of Ararat Rural City Council, not just on one or two issues, BUT OVERALL across all responsibility areas? Has it been very good, good, average, poor or very poor?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 56 Councils asked group: 19
*Caution: small sample size < n=30



Value for money in services and infrastructure

2025 value for money (index scores)

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
65+	65▲	61	64	66	64	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lake Bolac	62*	61	55	48	41	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Men	57	53	55	55	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ararat	57	53	55	57	55	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ararat	57	53	55	60	56	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Women	56	52	55	60	56	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
50-64	55	47	54	54	52	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
35-49	53	46	39	41	50	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
18-34	49▼	48	54	61	48	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Elmhurst	49*	46	45	47	65	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Small Rural	47▼	47	49	51	52	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
State-wide	47▼	48	49	53	54	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Q3b. How would you rate Ararat Rural City Council at providing good value for money in infrastructure and services provided to your community?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 55 Councils asked group: 19

Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

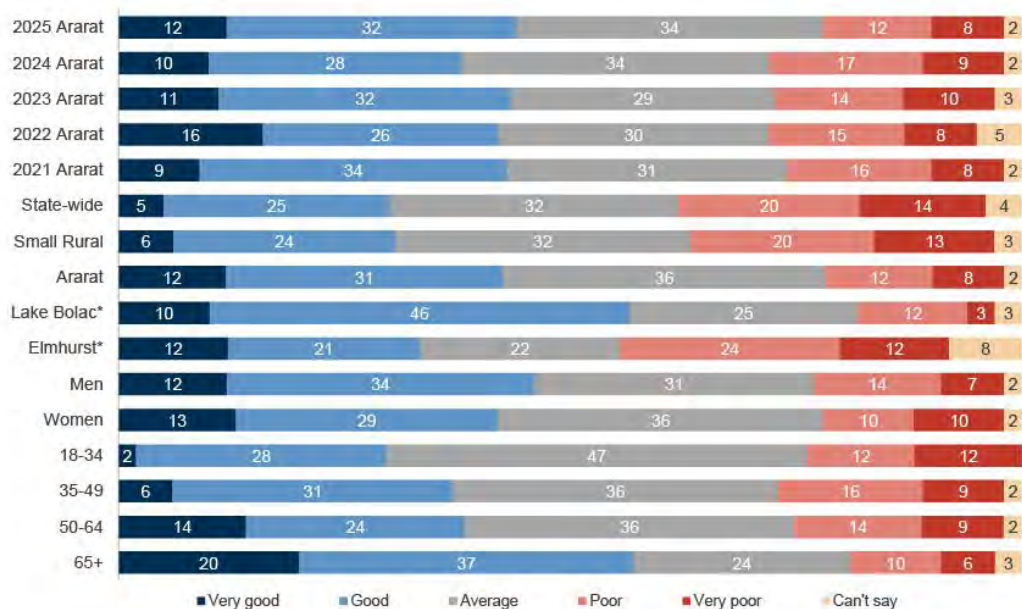
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

J W S R E S E A R C H 19



Value for money in services and infrastructure

2025 value for money (%)



Q3b. How would you rate Ararat Rural City Council at providing good value for money in infrastructure and services provided to your community?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 55 Councils asked group: 19
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 20



Top performing service areas

Council performs best in the areas of art centres and libraries, and emergency and disaster management (both with an index score of 75). Council continues to perform significantly higher than the State-wide and Small Rural group averages in these service areas.

In the area of art centres and libraries, however, Council's rated performance declined significantly by three points in the current evaluation, negating the significant improvement in the previous evaluation.

- Contributing to this result are significantly declined ratings among residents aged 18 to 34 years and those in the Ararat area.

Council's rated performance in emergency and disaster management also significantly declined among 18 to 34 year olds, but significantly improved among residents of Lake Bolac (noting the latter is based on a small sample size and should be interpreted with caution).

Waste management is Council's next highest-rated service area. Here, Council also performs significantly higher than the State-wide and Small Rural group averages.

- In each of the aforementioned areas, performance is rated highest among residents aged 65 years and over (significantly higher in emergency and disaster management, and waste management).



Art centres and libraries, and emergency and disaster management (both with an index score of 75) are the areas where Council performed best in 2025.



Low performing service areas



Maintenance of unsealed roads (index score of 48) remains the area where Council rates lowest, despite a (not significant) three-point improvement this year.

- This service area continues to exhibit the greatest disparity between perceived community importance and Council performance (36-point net differential).

Planning and building permits is Council's next lowest-rated service area (index score of 51, down three points from 2024).

- Since the last evaluation, ratings of this service area declined significantly among women.

Slashing and weed control (index score of 53) is another service area where Council performs relatively less well. Promisingly, ratings in this area experienced a significant five-point increase since the last evaluation.

- Contributing to this improved result are significantly increased ratings among residents aged 50 to 54 years and those in the Ararat area.
- While based on a small sample size, ratings among Lake Bolac residents are significantly below average and at the lowest levels to-date. Given Lake Bolac is the only location where residents' perceptions have worsened, service enhancements in this area should be prioritised in the year ahead.



Individual service area performance

2025 individual service area performance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Art centres & libraries	75	78	75	75	74	78	76	70	70	69
Emergency & disaster mngt	75	76	72	74	75	74	73	70	72	72
Waste management	73	74	66	67	61	60	60	64	64	66
Recreational facilities	72	73	71	75	74	71	68	64	65	65
Appearance of public areas	71	72	70	76	75	73	69	65	66	72
Elderly support services	67	68	66	71	72	68	65	64	67	68
Community & cultural	66	67	65	65	64	63	63	n/a	n/a	n/a
Environmental sustainability	64	63	63	62	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Bus/community dev./tourism	63	66	65	69	65	61	61	57	60	61
Informing the community	61	61	60	64	63	58	49	44	50	56
Lobbying	60	60	61	64	63	56	50	44	53	54
Community decisions	59	61	60	65	63	57	46	33	50	48
Consultation & engagement	59	59	60	62	61	56	49	41	49	51
Local streets & footpaths	59	57	55	63	62	62	55	53	55	59
Sealed local roads	56	54	51	58	59	56	50	43	51	54
Slashing & weed control	53	48	52	53	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Planning & building permits	51	54	54	58	59	51	52	46	50	51
Unsealed roads	48	45	42	47	50	44	39	33	38	40

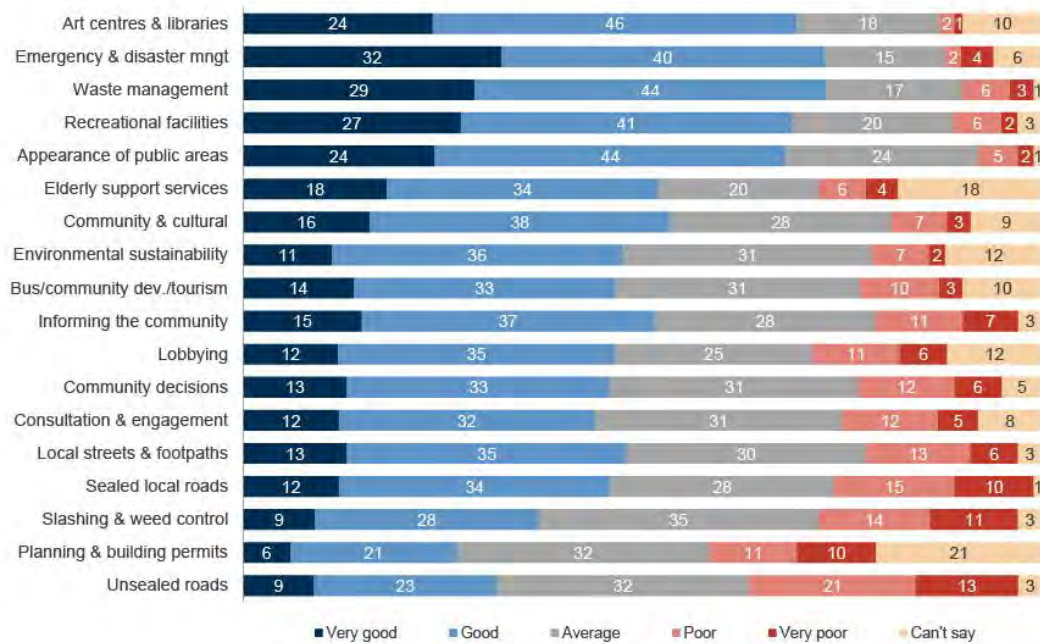
Q2. How has Council performed on [RESPONSIBILITY AREA] over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 56 Councils asked group: 19
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

J W S R E S E A R C H 23



Individual service area performance

2025 individual service area performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on [RESPONSIBILITY AREA] over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 56 Councils asked group: 19

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Individual service area importance

2025 individual service area importance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Unsealed roads	84	83	86	85	81	81	84	86	83	80
Sealed local roads	84	82	84	82	80	81	82	n/a	n/a	n/a
Emergency & disaster mngt	83	85	81	80	79	82	81	80	83	80
Community decisions	80	81	83	80	78	83	82	n/a	n/a	n/a
Elderly support services	80	82	83	82	82	79	79	80	79	79
Local streets & footpaths	80	78	80	79	77	76	77	77	77	76
Slashing & weed control	79	79	80	80	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Informing the community	79	80	79	79	77	76	77	76	76	75
Waste management	78	82	80	81	80	80	79	79	76	76
Consultation & engagement	77	77	79	76	75	74	78	74	74	75
Appearance of public areas	76	75	76	76	74	74	72	74	74	75
Recreational facilities	75	76	75	77	74	73	71	75	73	74
Lobbying	73	74	75	74	71	71	69	70	70	70
Bus/community dev./tourism	72	74	73	73	72	72	68	72	71	71
Planning & building permits	72	70	73	71	69	68	65	68	66	68
Environmental sustainability	66	68	69	72	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Art centres & libraries	65	64	62	63	61	59	59	60	60	61
Community & cultural	62	61	64	64	62	60	60	n/a	n/a	n/a

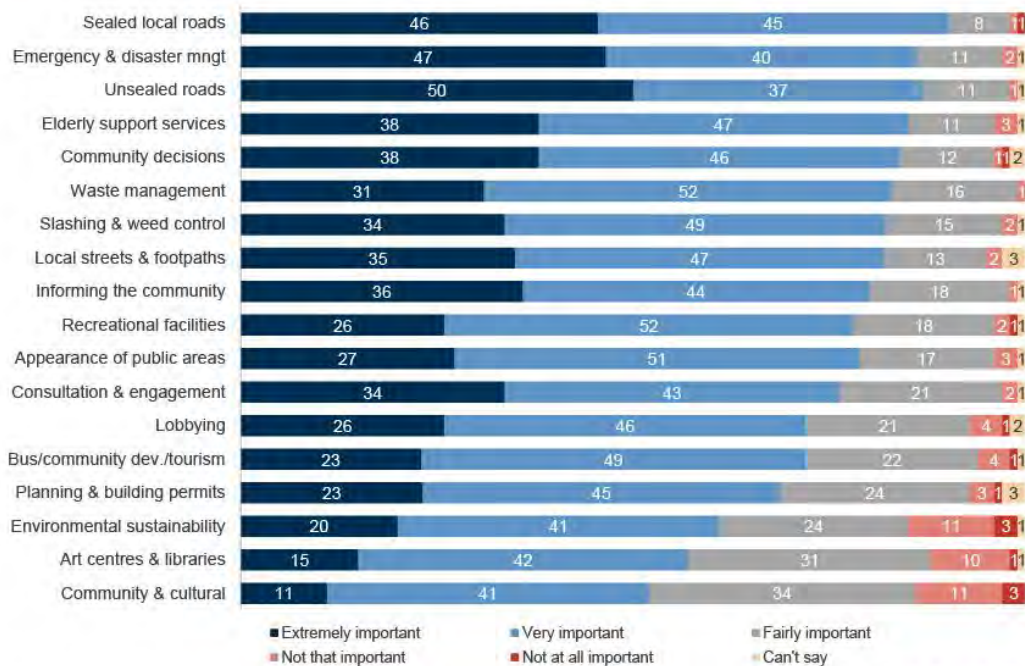
Q1: Firstly, how important should [RESPONSIBILITY AREA] be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 24 Councils asked group: 7
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

J W S R E S E A R C H 25



Individual service area importance

2025 individual service area importance (%)



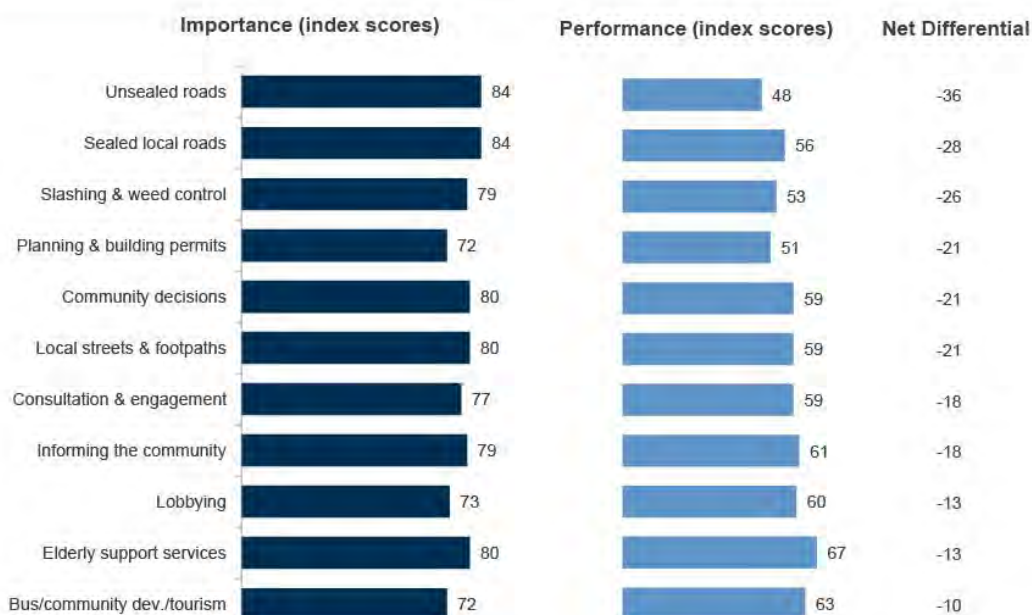
Q1. Firstly, how important should [RESPONSIBILITY AREA] be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 24 Councils asked group: 7

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Individual service areas importance vs performance

Service areas where importance exceeds performance by 10 points or more, suggesting further investigation is necessary.



Note: Net differentials are calculated based on the un-rounded importance and performance scores, then rounded to the nearest whole number, which may result in differences of +/-1% in the importance and performance scores and the net differential scores.

JWS RESEARCH 27

Influences on perceptions of overall performance



The individual service area that has the strongest influence on the overall performance rating (based on regression analysis) is:

- Decisions made in the interest of the community.

Good communication and transparency with residents about decisions Council has made in the community's interest provides the greatest opportunity to drive up overall opinion of Council's performance.

Following on from that, other service areas with a more moderate influence on the overall performance rating are:

- Informing the community
- Emergency management
- Waste management
- Community consultation and engagement.

Looking at these key service areas only, Council performs best on emergency management and waste management (index scores of 75 and 73 respectively).

Maintaining these positive results should remain a focus – but there is greater work to be done elsewhere.

Other service areas that have a more moderate influence on overall perceptions, but where Council performs relatively less well, are informing the community and community consultation (index scores of 61 and 59 respectively).

Ensuring residents are kept well informed and consulting residents about key local issues and Council activities can also help to shore up positive overall ratings of performance.



Regression analysis explained

We use regression analysis to investigate which individual service areas such as community consultation and the condition of sealed local roads (the independent variables) are influencing respondent perceptions of Council's overall performance (the dependent variable).

In the charts that follow:

- The horizontal axis represents Council's performance index score for each individual service. Service areas appearing on the right side of the chart have a higher index score than those on the left.
- The vertical axis represents the Standardised Beta Coefficient from the multiple regression performed. This measures the contribution of each service area to the model. Service areas near the top of the chart have a greater positive effect on overall performance ratings than those located closer to the axis.

The regressions are shown on the following two charts.

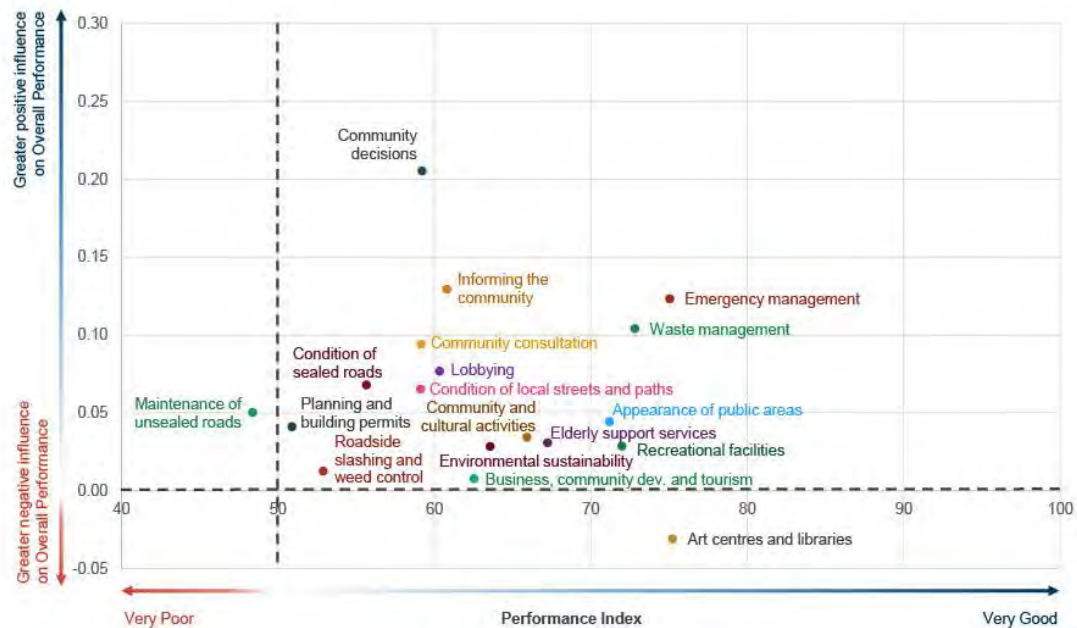
1. **The first chart** shows the results of a regression analysis of *all* individual service areas selected by Council.
2. **The second chart** shows the results of a regression performed on a smaller set of service areas, being those with a moderate-to-strong influence on overall performance. Service areas with a weaker influence on overall performance (i.e. a low Standardised Beta Coefficient) have been excluded from the analysis.

Key insights from this analysis are derived from the second chart.



Influence on overall performance: all services

2025 regression analysis (all services)



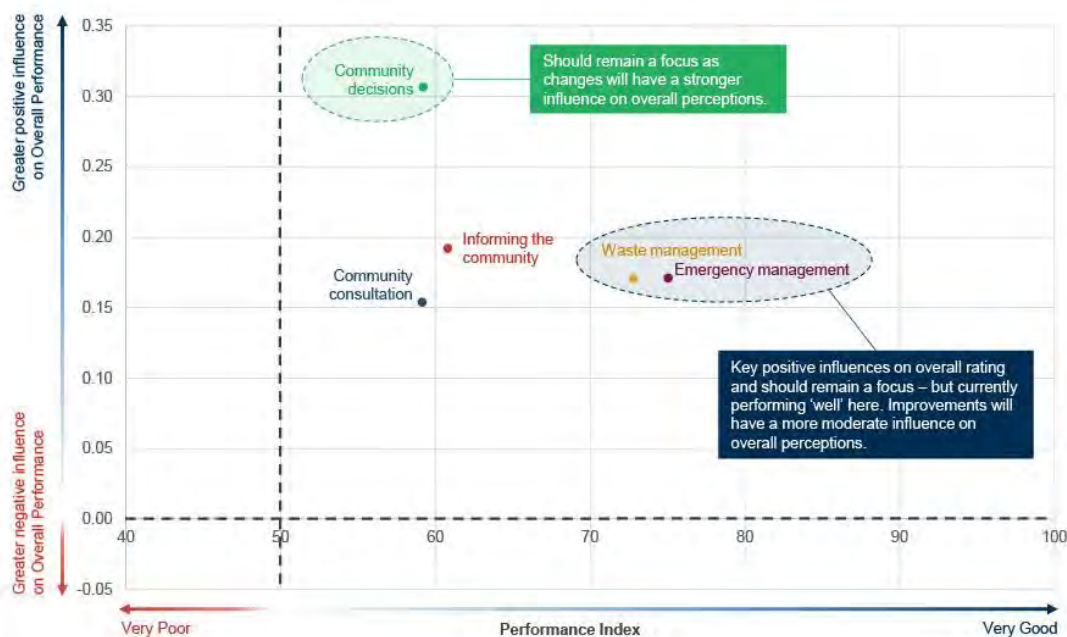
The multiple regression analysis model above (all service areas) has an R^2 value of 0.674 and adjusted R^2 value of 0.659, which means that 66% of the variance in community perceptions of overall performance can be predicted from these variables. The overall model effect was statistically significant at $p = 0.0001$, $F = 43.84$.

JWS RESEARCH 30



Influence on overall performance: key services

2025 regression analysis (key services)



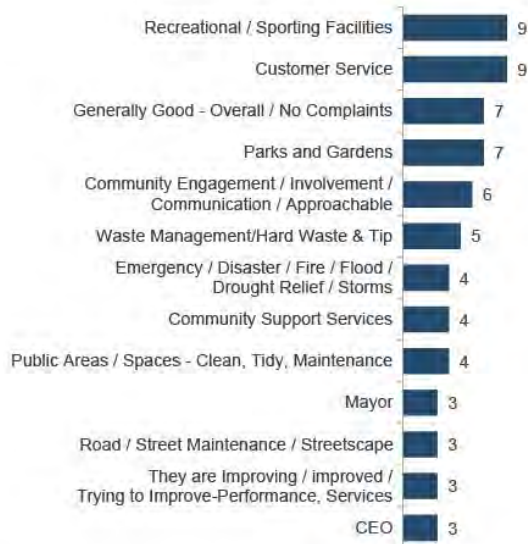
The multiple regression analysis model above (reduced set of service areas) has an R^2 value of 0.641 and adjusted R^2 value of 0.636, which means that 64% of the variance in community perceptions of overall performance can be predicted from these variables. The overall model effect was statistically significant at $p = 0.0001$, $F = 140.48$.

JWS RESEARCH 31

Best things about Council and areas for improvement



2025 best things about Council (%)
- Top mentions only -



2025 areas for improvement (%)
- Top mentions only -



Q16. Please tell me what is the ONE BEST thing about Ararat Rural City Council? It could be about any of the issues or services we have covered in this survey or it could be about something else altogether?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 29 Councils asked group: 10

Q17. What does Ararat Rural City Council MOST need to do to improve its performance?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 44 Councils asked group: 14

A verbatim listing of responses to these questions can be found in the accompanying dashboard.

Customer service



J W S R E S E A R C H 33

Contact with council and customer service



Contact with council

More than three in five households (62%) have had contact with Council in the last 12 months – largely in line with previous rates of contact.

- Rate of contact is significantly higher than average among residents aged 35 to 49 years (78%).



Customer service

Ararat Rural Council's customer service index of 73 is mostly consistent with 2024 but has declined slightly by two index points.

Positively, Council's customer service continues to rate significantly higher than both the State-wide and Small Rural group averages (index scores of 66 and 65 respectively).

- Customer service ratings across demographic and geographic cohorts are not significantly different from the Council average. However, similar to overall performance perceptions, customer service is rated higher among residents in Lake Bolac and lowest among those in Elmhurst (noting these are small sample sizes and should be considered with caution).

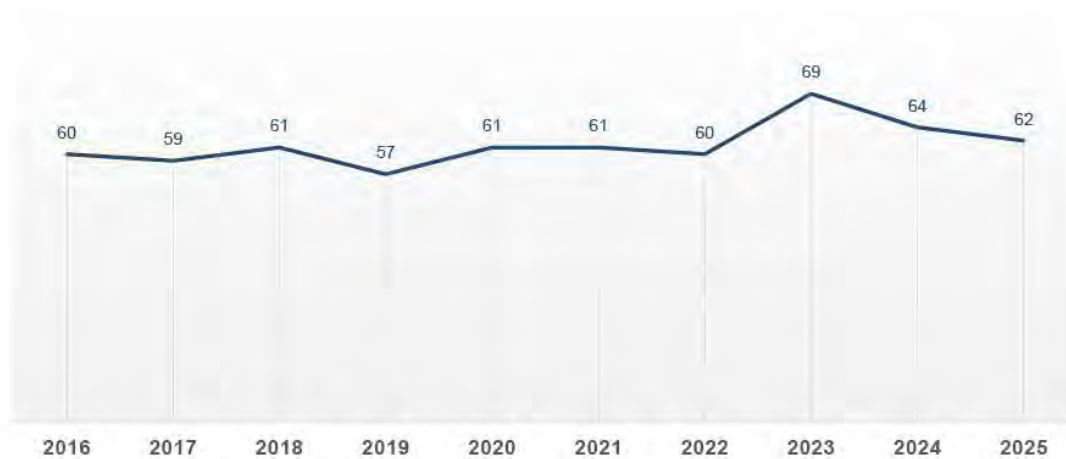
Importantly, among those who have had contact with Council, seven in ten (71%) provide a positive customer service rating, far outweighing the 11% who provide a 'poor' or 'very poor' customer service rating. Furthermore, 9% of all residents cite customer service as the best thing about Council.

J01430 Community Satisfaction Survey 2025 – Ararat Rural City Council

Contact with council



2025 contact with council (%)
Have had contact



Q5. Over the last 12 months, have you or any member of your household had any contact with Ararat Rural City Council?
This may have been in person, in writing, by telephone conversation, by text message, by email or via their website or social media such as Facebook or Twitter?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 32 Councils asked group: 14

JWS RESEARCH 35



Contact with council

2025 contact with council (%)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
35-49	78▲	74	74	56	67	67	64	74	67	70
50-64	74	75	78	68	68	66	61	67	59	67
Small Rural	63	65	66	63	63	66	63	64	65	60
Men	63	64	68	58	61	62	57	63	60	61
Ararat	62	64	69	60	61	61	57	61	59	60
Elmhurst	62*	64	90	80	64	69	51	31	18	22
State-wide	61	62	62	60	61	63	61	61	61	60
Ararat	61	63	64	57	61	61	57	59	58	59
Women	61	64	70	63	62	60	56	58	57	58
65+	54	59	69	57	56	56	54	53	56	50
18-34	53	57	57	63	57	59	49	49	54	57
Lake Bolac	46*	77	94	74	69	100	72	69	71	62

Q5. Over the last 12 months, have you or any member of your household had any contact with Ararat Rural City Council?
This may have been in person, in writing, by telephone conversation, by text message, by email or via their website or social media such as Facebook or Twitter?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 32 Councils asked group: 14
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.
*Caution: small sample size < n=30



Customer service rating

2025 customer service rating (index scores)

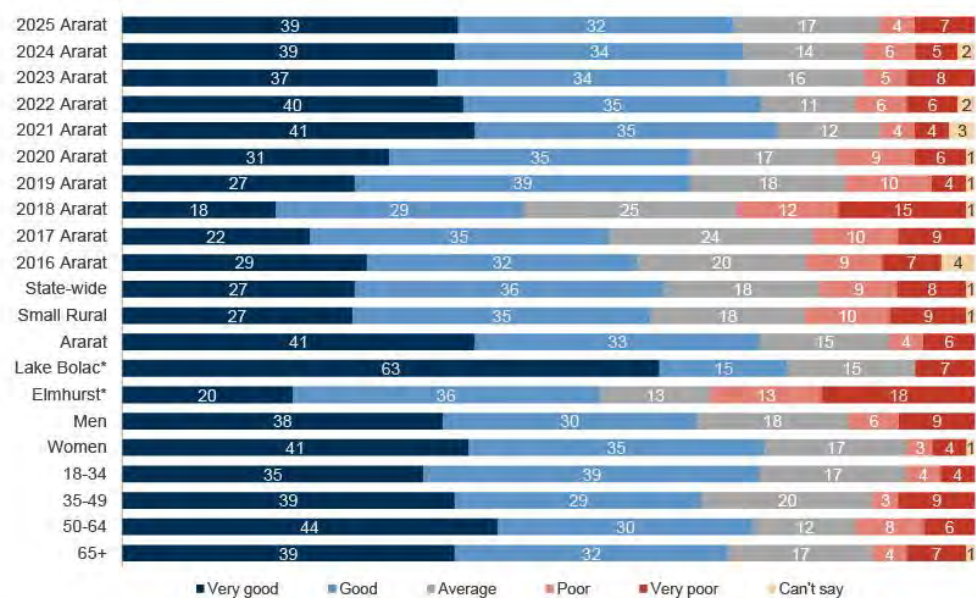
		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Lake Bolac	82*	83	72	75	78	32	56	38	61	64
Women	77	77	72	77	80	68	70	61	64	73
Ararat	74	73	71	75	76	71	70	59	63	68
50-64	74	78	73	69	73	67	69	63	67	69
18-34	74	75	70	76	69	78	71	63	68	62
65+	74	77	73	76	85	73	74	56	64	67
Ararat	73	75	72	75	77	70	69	56	62	67
35-49	72	69	70	77	77	61	63	44	53	69
Men	71	72	72	73	74	71	69	51	61	62
State-wide	66▼	67	67	68	70	70	71	70	69	69
Small Rural	65▼	66	65	67	69	70	70	69	69	69
Elmhurst	57*	76	73	73	88	55	77	12	100	75

Q5c. Thinking of the most recent contact, how would you rate Ararat Rural City Council for customer service?
Please keep in mind we do not mean the actual outcome but rather the actual service that was received.
Base: All respondents who have had contact with Council in the last 12 months.
Councils asked State-wide: 56 Councils asked group: 19
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.
*Caution: small sample size < n=30



Customer service rating

2025 customer service rating (%)



Q5c. Thinking of the most recent contact, how would you rate Ararat Rural City Council for customer service?
Please keep in mind we do not mean the actual outcome but rather the actual service that was received.
Base: All respondents who have had contact with Council in the last 12 months.
Councils asked State-wide: 56 Councils asked group: 19
*Caution: small sample size < n=30



Communication

J W S R E S E A R C H 39

Communication



The preferred form of communication from Ararat Rural City Council about news and information and upcoming events is a newsletter sent via email (27%).

Preference for emailed newsletters continues to steadily increase over time (up from 18% in 2020). In contrast, preference for mailed newsletters has waned, dropping from 26% to 19% over the last two years.

The next preferred channels are advertising in local newspapers (17%) and social media (16%), which have also lost some appeal since the last evaluation.

- Among residents aged under 50 years, preference for a newsletter sent via email (27%) is now preferred over social media (23%, down from 33% in 2024) and mailed newsletters (19%, up from 13%).
- Among those aged 50 years and over, emailed newsletters are also preferred (26%) ahead of advertising in local newspapers (22%, down from 28%) and mailed newsletters (19%, down from 29%). Appetite for communication via social media has also increased among residents aged 50 years and over (11%, up from 4%).

Demand for receiving Council news and information from the Council website remains low (1%). This suggests residents want Council to push key information to them, rather than proactively seeking it out.

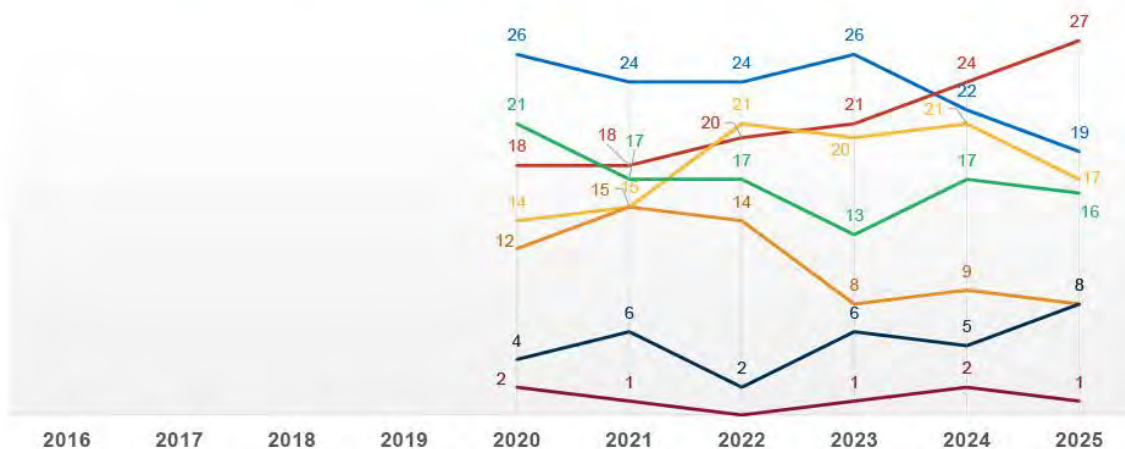


J W S R E S E A R C H 40



Best form of communication

2025 best form of communication (%)



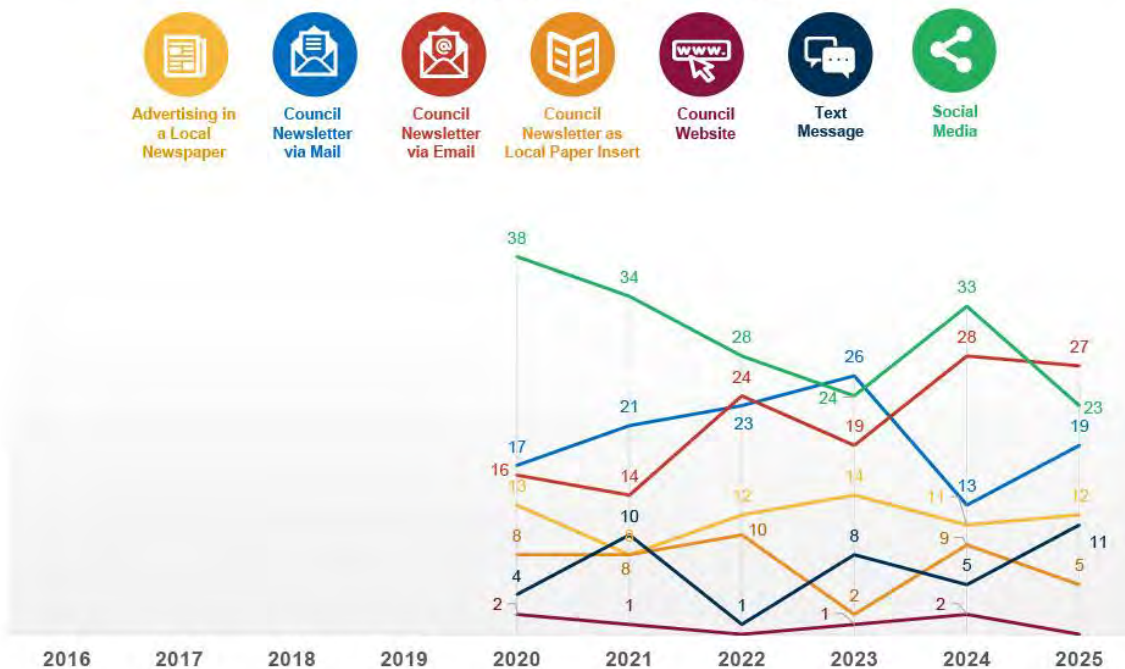
Q13. If Ararat Rural City Council was going to get in touch with you to inform you about Council news and information and upcoming events, which ONE of the following is the BEST way to communicate with you?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 33 Councils asked group: 12

J W S R E S E A R C H 41



Best form of communication: under 50s

2025 under 50s best form of communication (%)



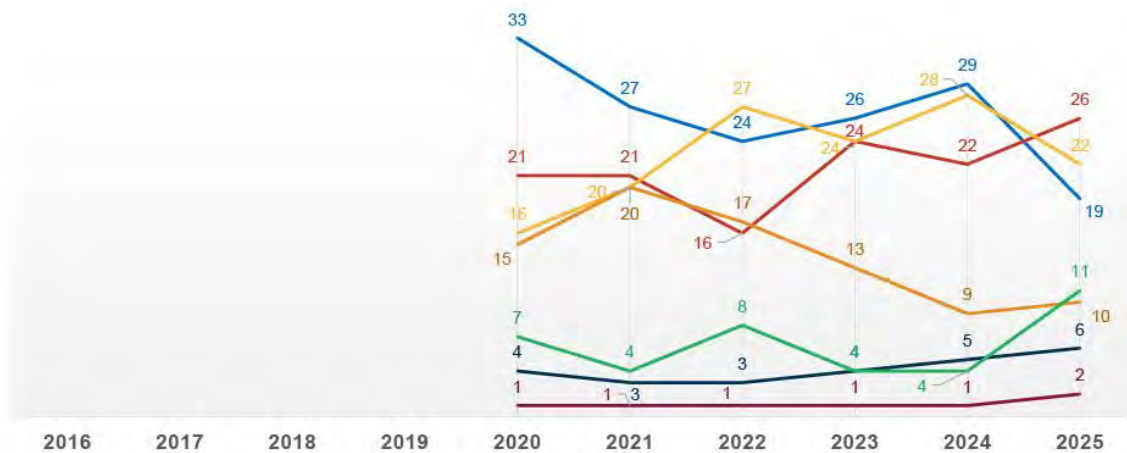
Q13. If Ararat Rural City Council was going to get in touch with you to inform you about Council news and information and upcoming events, which ONE of the following is the BEST way to communicate with you?
Base: All respondents aged under 50. Councils asked State-wide: 33 Councils asked group: 12

J W S R E S E A R C H 42



Best form of communication: 50+ years

2025 50+ years best form of communication (%)



Q13. If Ararat Rural City Council was going to get in touch with you to inform you about Council news and information and upcoming events, which ONE of the following is the BEST way to communicate with you?
Base: All respondents aged 50+ years. Councils asked State-wide: 33 Councils asked group: 12.

J W S R E S E A R C H 43



Council direction

J W S R E S E A R C H 44

Council direction



Perceptions of the direction of Ararat Rural City Council's overall performance (index score of 55) is equal to last year. Council continues to perform significantly above the State-wide and Small Rural council group averages (index scores of 46 each).

Over the last 12 months, 22% believe the direction of Council's overall performance has improved (down four percentage points from 2024). An increased majority of residents think it has stayed the same (61%, up five percentage points), while a further 13% feel it has deteriorated (compared to 16% in 2024).

- The most satisfied with council direction are those aged 65 years and over (index score of 59).
- The least satisfied with council direction are those aged 18 to 34 years (index score of 47), significantly lower than average.
- Since last year, views of the direction of Council's overall performance declined significantly among Lake Bolac residents (noting this result is based on a small sample size).

Similar to previous evaluations, almost half of residents (49%) think there is 'a lot' of room for improvement in Council's overall performance, while the majority (70%) say Council is generally heading in the right direction.





Overall council direction last 12 months

2025 overall council direction (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
65+	59	60	66	73	75	66	60	32	45	46
35-49	57	58	50	64	60	60	38	19	47	45
Men	56	56	61	68	65	63	55	24	44	44
Ararat	55	55	60	69	65	63	55	29	47	46
50-64	54	50	58	64	61	65	55	29	45	44
Women	54	54	58	70	65	64	55	34	49	48
Ararat	54	54	59	68	63	63	57	30	45	46
Elmhurst	51*	52	55	71	91	60	41	32	50	50
Lake Bolac	48*	71	70	69	81	82	47	26	57	48
18-34	47▼	49	58	70	58	61	65	36	50	52
Small Rural	46▼	44	47	51	53	50	53	50	52	50
State-wide	46▼	45	46	50	53	51	53	52	53	51

Q6. Over the last 12 months, what is your view of the direction of Ararat Rural City Council's overall performance?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 56 Councils asked group: 19

Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

*Caution: small sample size < n=30

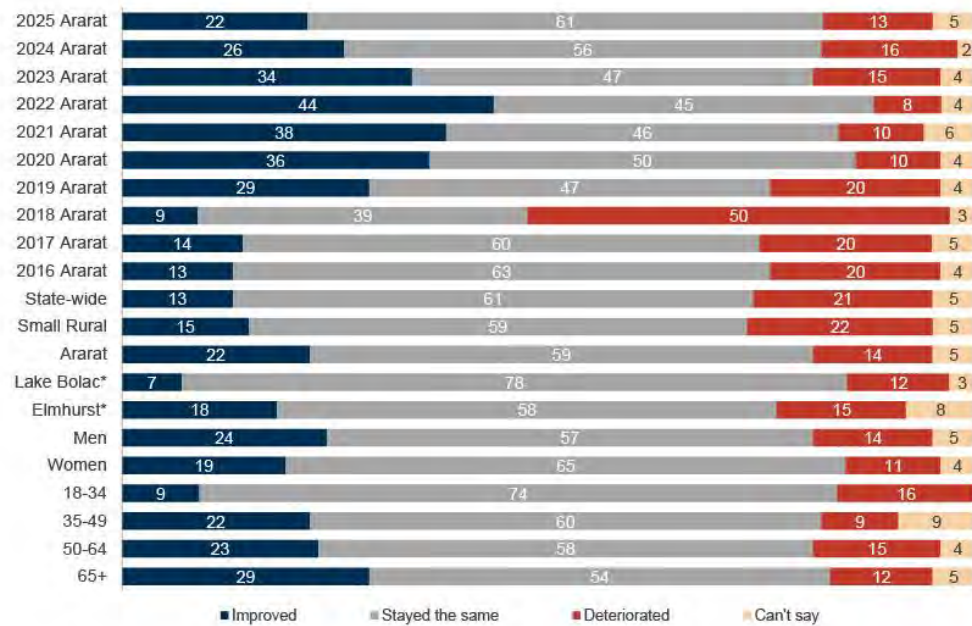
J W S R E S E A R C H

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Overall council direction last 12 months

2025 overall council direction (%)

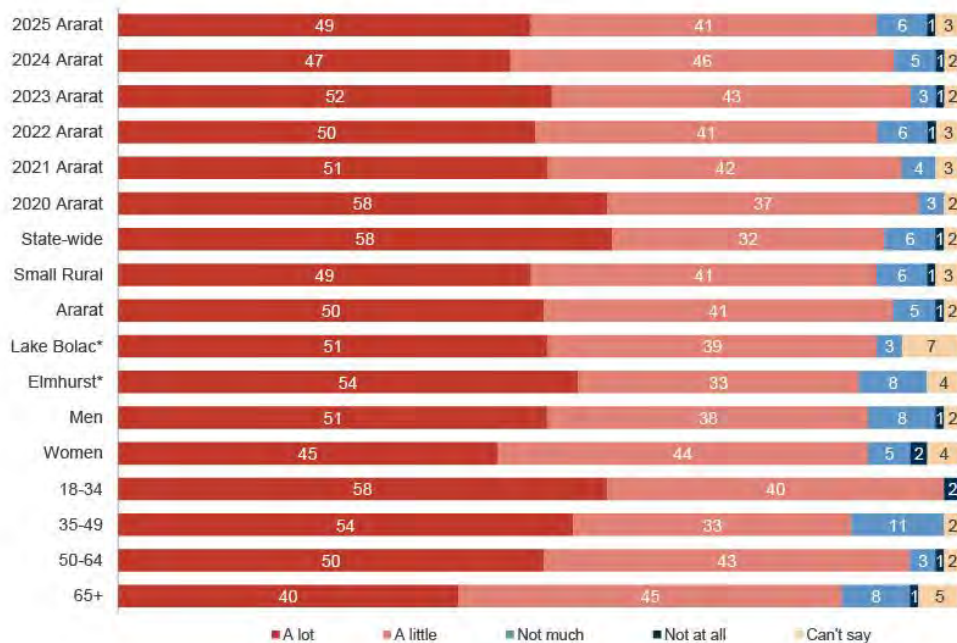


Q6. Over the last 12 months, what is your view of the direction of Ararat Rural City Council's overall performance?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 56 Councils asked group: 19
*Caution: small sample size < n=30



Room for improvement in services

2025 room for improvement in services (%)



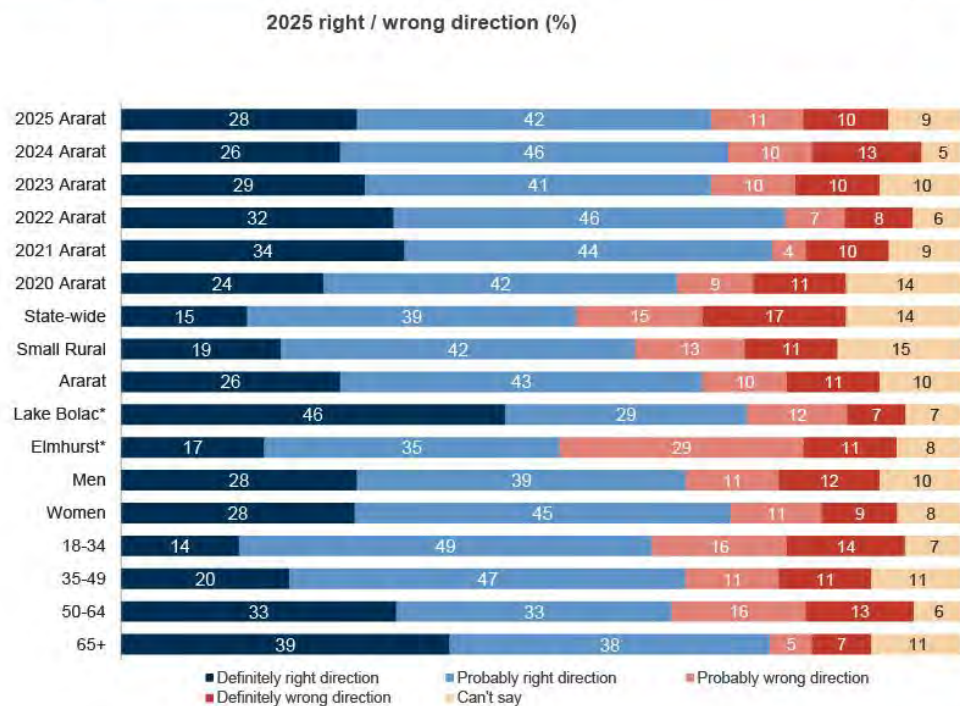
Q7. Thinking about the next 12 months, how much room for improvement do you think there is in Ararat Rural City Council's overall performance?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 2 Councils asked group: 1
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH

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Right / wrong direction



Q8. Would you say your local Council is generally heading in the right direction or the wrong direction?
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 8 Councils asked group: 3
 *Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 49



Individual service areas

J W S R E S E A R C H 50

Community consultation and engagement importance



2025 consultation and engagement importance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
35-49	81	77	83	80	74	74	80	79	78	77
Elmhurst	81*	79	87	87	80	77	93	62	81	85
50-64	79	79	81	81	78	80	82	77	78	79
Lake Bolac	79*	67	76	71	70	84	66	78	66	73
Women	79	78	82	78	79	77	79	77	78	77
Ararat	77	77	79	76	75	74	78	74	74	75
Ararat	77	78	80	78	75	74	78	74	76	75
Small Rural	77	77	77	78	77	76	76	74	75	77
65+	76	75	77	75	74	75	77	72	73	73
State-wide	76	76	76	76	75	74	74	74	74	75
Men	76	76	77	75	71	71	78	71	71	72
18-34	74	79	79	70	73	67	74	66	67	70

Q1: Firstly, how important should 'Community consultation and engagement' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 22 Councils asked group: 6

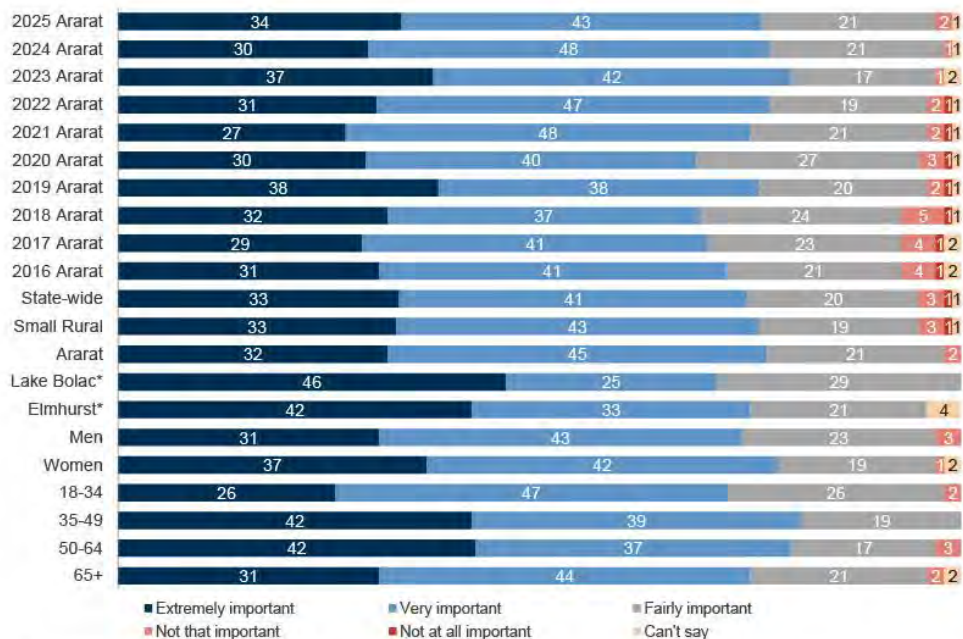
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

*Caution: small sample size < n=30

Community consultation and engagement importance



2025 consultation and engagement importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Community consultation and engagement' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 22 Councils asked group: 6
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 52

Community consultation and engagement performance



2025 consultation and engagement performance (index scores)

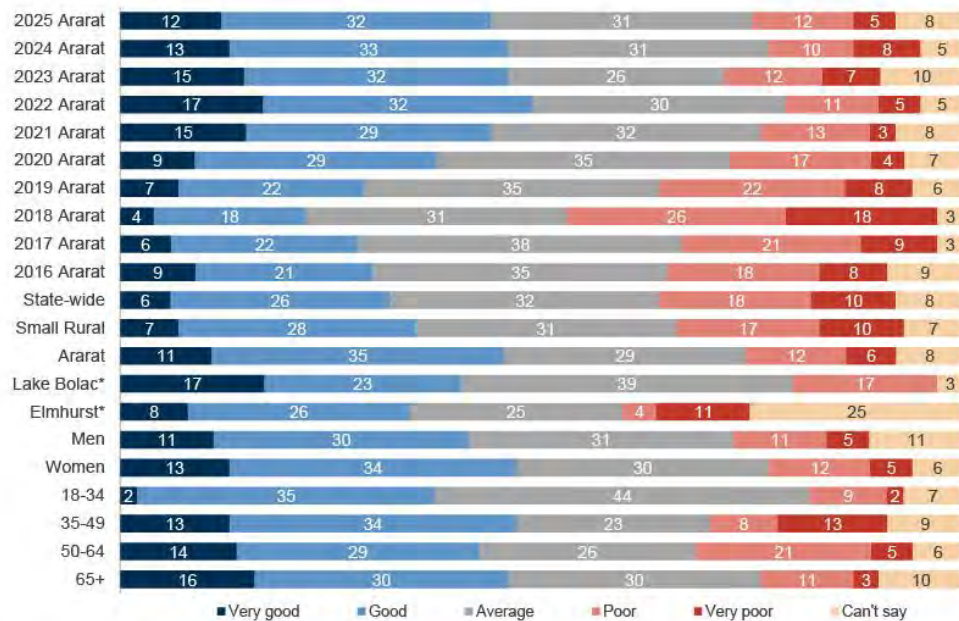
		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
65+	62	62	66	66	67	56	55	46	49	55
Lake Bolac	60*	58	75	67	77	16	47	22	51	49
Women	60	58	57	61	60	56	50	43	52	55
Ararat	59	59	60	62	61	56	49	41	49	51
Ararat	59	58	58	61	60	58	51	45	49	51
Men	59	59	63	63	62	57	49	39	46	48
35-49	57	54	50	54	65	56	44	32	45	49
50-64	57	54	59	57	56	56	48	42	49	49
18-34	57	60	59	67	52	58	49	42	52	50
Elmhurst	56*	52	61	48	81	55	48	53	51	65
Small Rural	51▼	51	53	54	56	54	56	54	55	55
State-wide	50▼	51	52	54	56	55	56	55	55	54

Q2. How has Council performed on 'Community consultation and engagement' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 56 Councils asked group: 19
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

Community consultation and engagement performance



2025 consultation and engagement performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Community consultation and engagement' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 56 Councils asked group: 19
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

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Lobbying on behalf of the community importance



2025 lobbying importance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Elmhurst	82*▲	77	71	76	68	77	76	56	70	71
35-49	79▲	76	78	78	69	72	72	72	73	74
Women	76	76	78	74	75	74	72	73	74	71
Ararat	73	74	75	74	71	71	69	70	70	70
Ararat	73	74	75	75	71	72	70	71	72	70
Small Rural	73	72	73	74	71	73	70	70	70	71
50-64	73	72	78	78	74	77	73	71	71	72
65+	72	69	73	71	71	69	65	68	69	67
Men	72	72	72	74	66	69	67	68	67	69
18-34	71	82	75	71	68	70	70	71	69	67
State-wide	70▼	68	68	71	69	68	67	68	69	69
Lake Bolac	66*	64	83	60	65	34	60	69	63	77

Q1: Firstly, how important should 'Lobbying on behalf of the community' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 19 Councils asked group: 4

Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

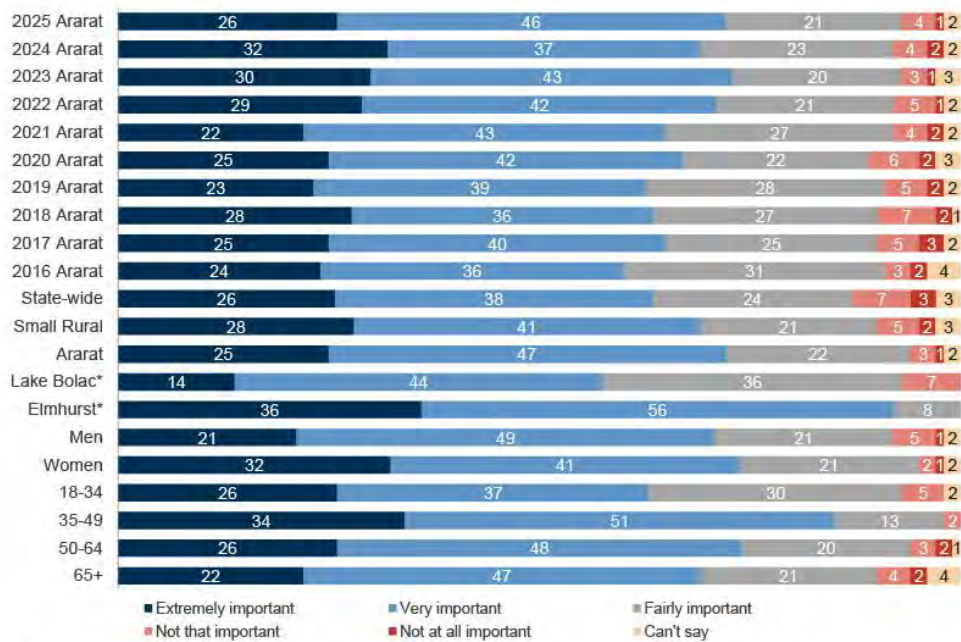
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

J W S R E S E A R C H 55

Lobbying on behalf of the community importance



2025 lobbying importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Lobbying on behalf of the community' be as a responsibility for Council?
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 19 Councils asked group: 4
 *Caution: small sample size < n=30

Lobbying on behalf of the community performance



2025 lobbying performance (index scores)

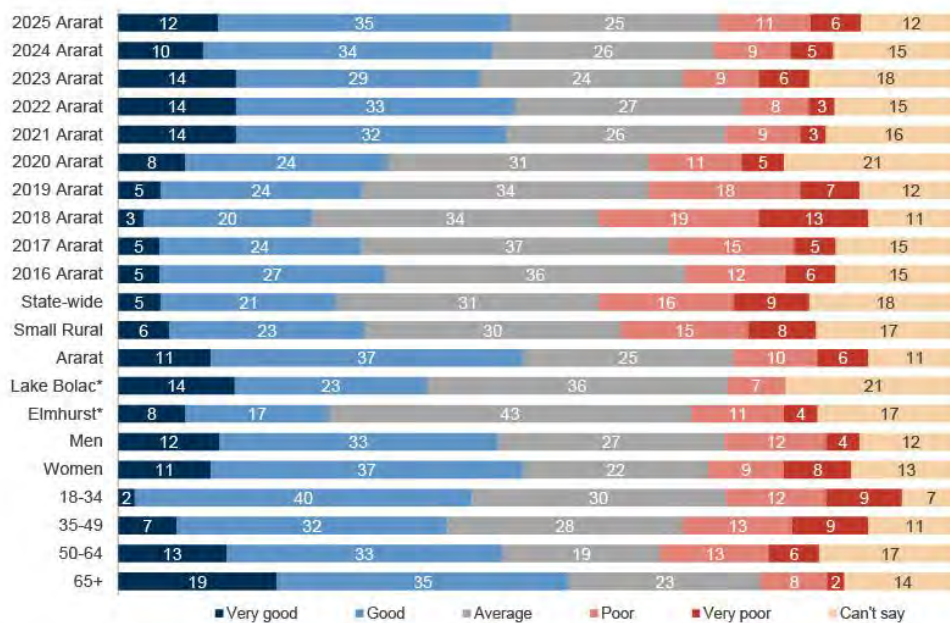
		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
65+	68▲	64	67	66	70	57	51	52	54	56
Lake Bolac	64*	67	60	70	64	n/a	42	24	46	51
Men	61	62	63	65	65	56	50	42	52	52
Ararat	60	60	61	64	63	56	50	44	53	54
50-64	60	60	61	60	62	54	53	45	53	55
Ararat	60	60	61	64	63	56	52	48	54	55
Women	60	58	58	63	61	56	51	47	53	56
35-49	54	52	45	58	61	54	44	34	49	50
Elmhurst	54*	44	56	56	75	58	48	40	51	69
18-34	54▼	62	62	68	54	56	53	46	54	55
Small Rural	51▼	50	52	54	55	52	55	53	55	54
State-wide	49▼	50	51	53	55	53	54	54	54	53

Q2. How has Council performed on 'Lobbying on behalf of the community' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 41 Councils asked group: 14
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

Lobbying on behalf of the community performance



2025 lobbying performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Lobbying on behalf of the community' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 41 Councils asked group: 14
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

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Decisions made in the interest of the community importance



2025 community decisions made importance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Elmhurst	84*	80	92	75	84	85	88	n/a	n/a	n/a
Women	84▲	84	84	80	81	84	84	n/a	n/a	n/a
50-64	83	80	82	86	82	84	86	n/a	n/a	n/a
65+	82	80	78	75	78	80	80	n/a	n/a	n/a
35-49	81	84	88	85	80	84	80	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ararat	81	81	82	80	78	82	83	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ararat	80	81	83	80	78	83	82	n/a	n/a	n/a
State-wide	80	80	80	81	81	80	80	80	79	80
Small Rural	79	80	82	82	80	82	81	77	78	n/a
Lake Bolac	78*	87	89	66	73	84	77	n/a	n/a	n/a
Men	78	79	81	79	76	81	81	n/a	n/a	n/a
18-34	77	82	84	76	73	84	85	n/a	n/a	n/a

Q1: Firstly, how important should 'Decisions made in the interest of the community' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 17 Councils asked group: 3

Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

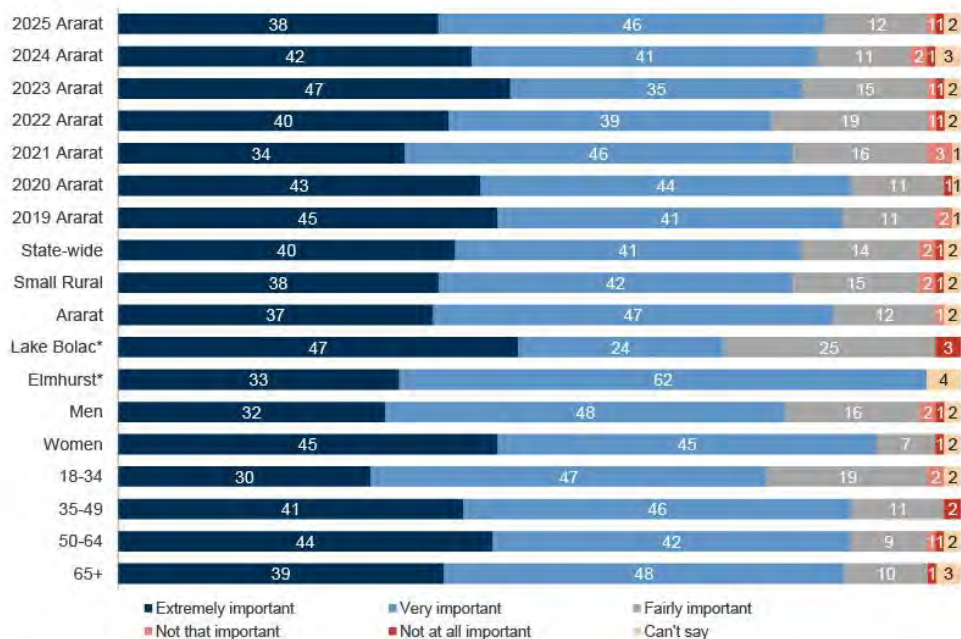
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

J W S R E S E A R C H 59

Decisions made in the interest of the community importance



2025 community decisions made importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Decisions made in the interest of the community' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 17 Councils asked group: 3
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

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Decisions made in the interest of the community performance



2025 community decisions made performance (index scores)

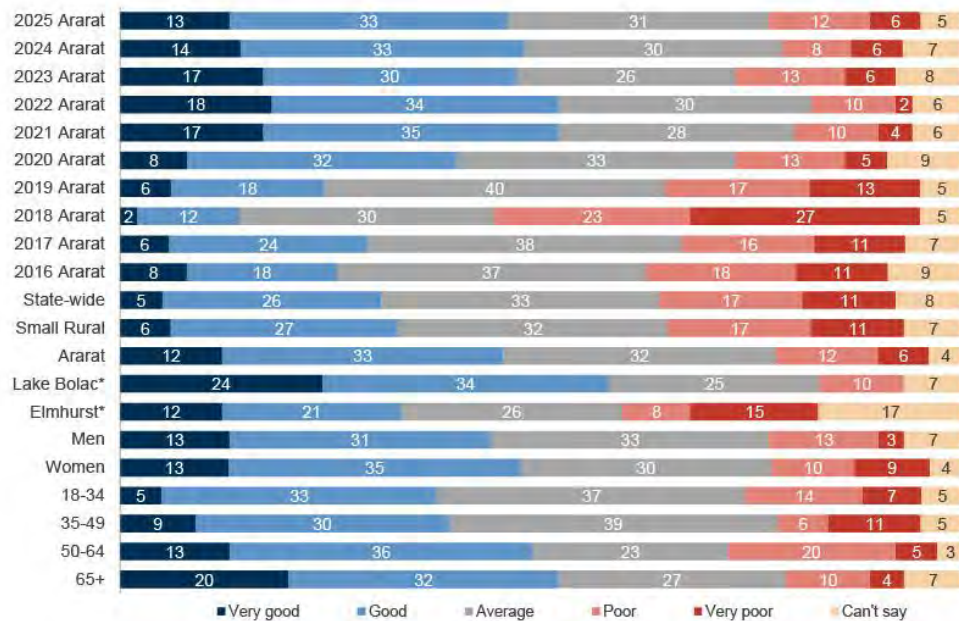
		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Lake Bolac	<div><div></div></div> 69*	70	71	68	79	32	21	17	48	39
65+	<div><div></div></div> 65▲	66	68	69	71	59	50	38	52	50
Men	<div><div></div></div> 60	61	61	66	64	56	45	28	48	44
Ararat	<div><div></div></div> 59	61	60	65	63	57	46	33	50	48
Ararat	<div><div></div></div> 59	61	60	67	62	57	48	36	50	49
50-64	<div><div></div></div> 58	58	60	59	60	58	47	39	48	51
Women	<div><div></div></div> 58	61	60	65	63	58	48	39	51	53
35-49	<div><div></div></div> 55	54	48	57	62	52	41	22	48	45
18-34	<div><div></div></div> 54	62	58	72	56	57	47	33	50	46
Elmhurst	<div><div></div></div> 52*	49	44	42	75	52	59	36	50	51
Small Rural	<div><div></div></div> 50▼	50	52	54	56	53	55	52	55	53
State-wide	<div><div></div></div> 49▼	50	51	54	56	53	55	54	54	54

Q2. How has Council performed on 'Decisions made in the interest of the community' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 56 Councils asked group: 19
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

Decisions made in the interest of the community performance



2025 community decisions made performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Decisions made in the interest of the community' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 56 Councils asked group: 19
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

The condition of sealed local roads in your area importance



2025 sealed local roads importance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Lake Bolac	90*	77	88	78	80	75	94	n/a	n/a	n/a
Elmhurst	88*	83	87	74	80	84	81	n/a	n/a	n/a
Women	86	83	85	83	80	83	84	n/a	n/a	n/a
35-49	86	82	88	86	84	82	85	n/a	n/a	n/a
Small Rural	84	85	84	82	81	83	82	84	81	n/a
50-64	84	85	82	84	78	87	86	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ararat	84	82	84	82	80	81	82	n/a	n/a	n/a
18-34	84	82	85	80	77	81	76	n/a	n/a	n/a
State-wide	83	83	82	81	79	79	79	80	78	78
Ararat	82	82	83	83	80	80	81	n/a	n/a	n/a
65+	82	82	81	81	82	79	82	n/a	n/a	n/a
Men	81	82	83	82	81	80	81	n/a	n/a	n/a

Q1: Firstly, how important should 'The condition of sealed local roads in your area' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 17 Councils asked group: 5

Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

*Caution: small sample size < n=30

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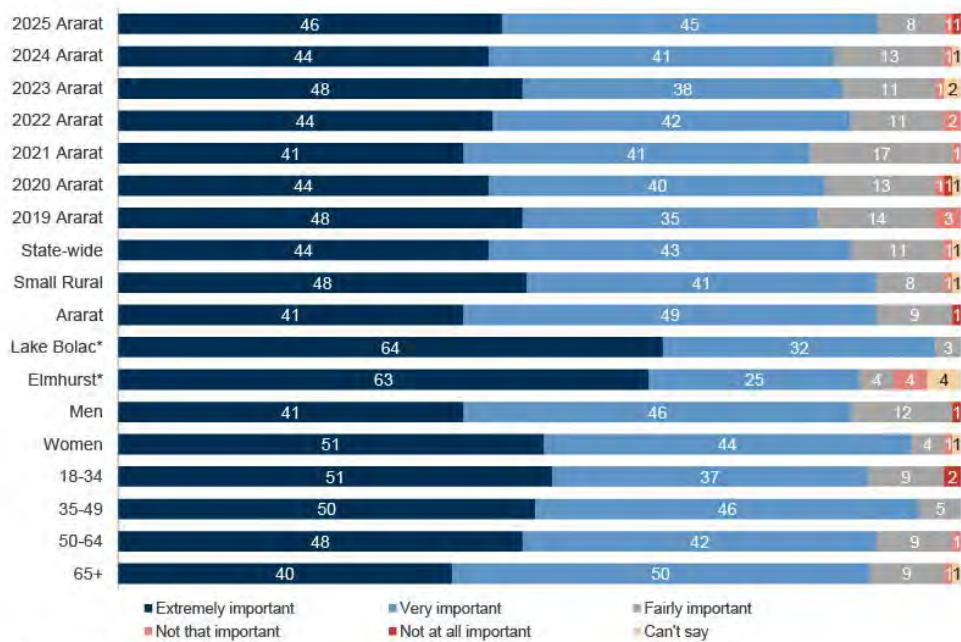
63

J01430 Community Satisfaction Survey 2025 – Ararat Rural City Council

The condition of sealed local roads in your area importance



2025 sealed local roads importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'The condition of sealed local roads in your area' be as a responsibility for Council?
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 17 Councils asked group: 5
 *Caution: small sample size < n=30

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The condition of sealed local roads in your area performance



2025 sealed local roads performance (index scores)

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
50-64	53	52	60	60	54	51	44	47	52
65+	58	54	63	63	61	55	49	55	57
Ararat	55	53	62	60	59	53	48	56	58
Women	56	56	48	59	60	57	51	46	51
Ararat	54	51	58	59	56	50	43	51	54
Men	53	53	57	59	55	50	40	51	53
Elmhurst	52	41	39	67	54	53	50	55	51
35-49	52	45	47	60	52	45	34	47	52
Lake Bolac	55	39	54	59	32	29	20	27	40
18-34	51	49	59	52	53	48	44	53	51
State-wide	45	45	48	53	57	54	56	53	54
Small Rural	41	44	50	53	51	53	49	50	52

Q2. How has Council performed on 'The condition of sealed local roads in your area' over the last 12 months?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 56 Councils asked group: 19

Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

*Caution: small sample size < n=30

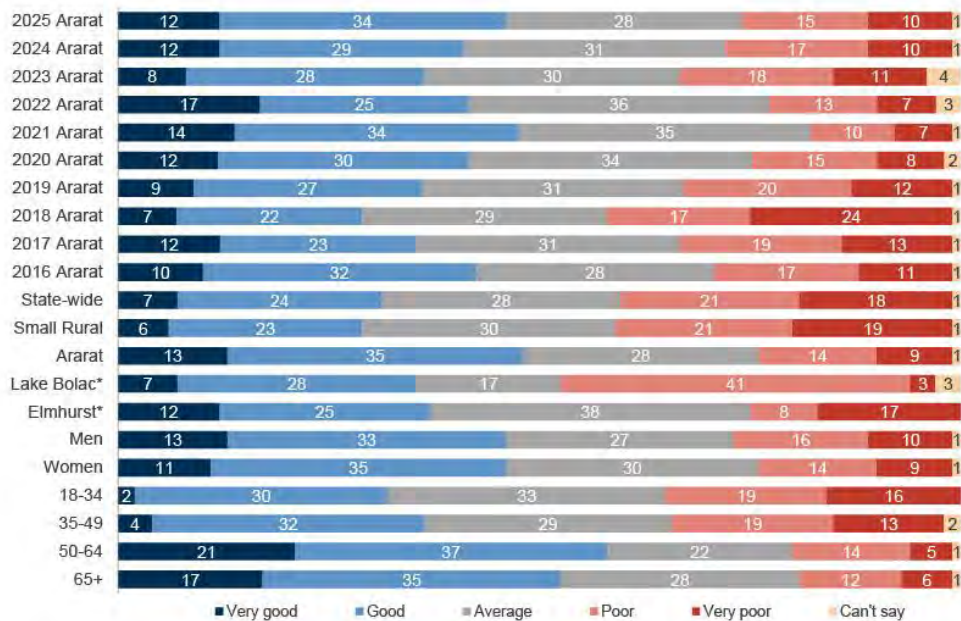
J W S R E S E A R C H

65

The condition of sealed local roads in your area performance



2025 sealed local roads performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'The condition of sealed local roads in your area' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 56 Councils asked group: 19
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 66

Informing the community importance



2025 informing community importance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Elmhurst	85*	85	88	85	82	70	83	60	81	79
Women	81	83	82	82	80	80	79	82	80	79
50-64	79	80	78	83	83	82	81	76	79	79
Ararat	79	81	79	80	79	77	79	78	78	76
65+	79	77	76	77	76	76	77	74	74	73
35-49	79	81	83	85	77	74	79	80	75	79
Ararat	79	80	79	79	77	76	77	76	76	75
18-34	78	85	80	74	75	73	72	73	74	70
Small Rural	77	78	77	79	77	77	76	75	76	78
Men	77	77	76	77	75	73	76	71	72	72
State-wide	76▼	76	76	77	77	75	75	75	74	76
Lake Bolac	68*▼	72	66	72	68	84	62	70	62	69

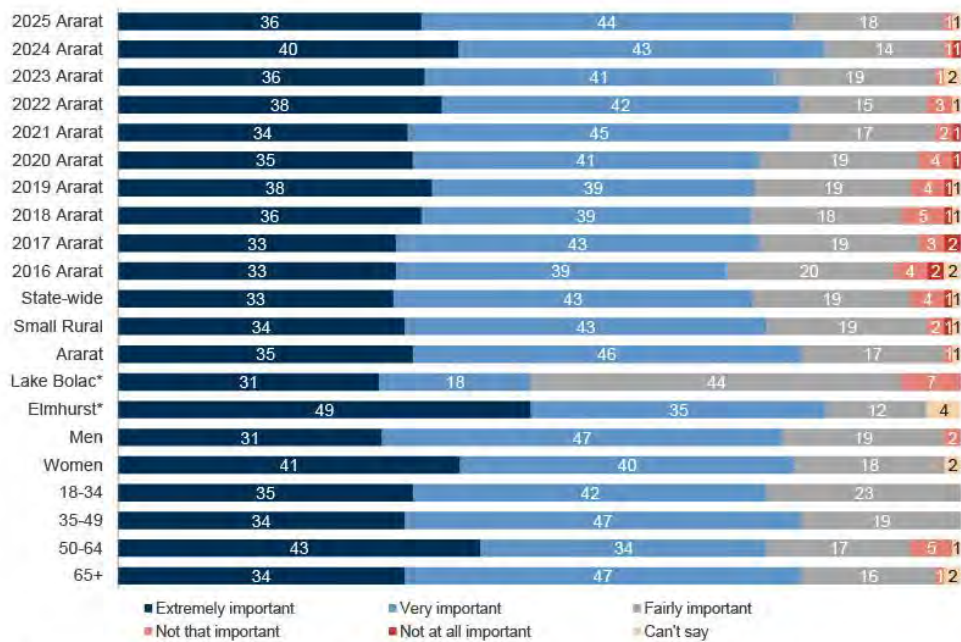
Q1: Firstly, how important should 'Informing the community' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 16 Councils asked group: 4
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 67

Informing the community importance



2025 informing community importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Informing the community' be as a responsibility for Council?
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 16 Councils asked group: 4
 *Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 68

Informing the community performance



2025 informing community performance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Lake Bolac	<div></div> 67*	66	75	69	75	16	38	40	56	63
65+	<div></div> 65	66	67	68	69	60	49	48	51	56
Women	<div></div> 61	60	59	62	63	59	50	46	51	59
Ararat	<div></div> 61	61	60	64	63	58	49	44	50	56
Ararat	<div></div> 61	60	59	64	63	58	50	45	49	54
Men	<div></div> 60	61	61	66	63	57	49	42	50	52
18-34	<div></div> 60	59	59	69	62	61	52	48	49	60
50-64	<div></div> 57	56	61	58	56	59	52	42	50	56
Small Rural	<div></div> 57▼	56	58	59	61	58	58	56	58	58
35-49	<div></div> 57	57	49	57	62	52	45	37	50	50
State-wide	<div></div> 56▼	56	57	59	60	59	60	59	59	59
Elmhurst	<div></div> 54*	55	50	45	81	49	57	53	56	71

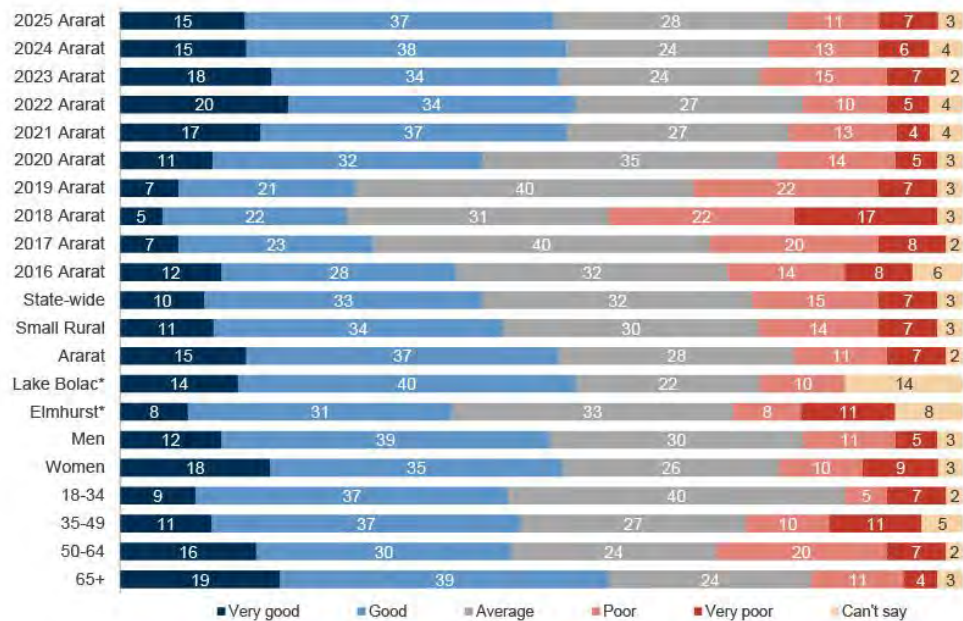
Q2. How has Council performed on 'Informing the community' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 29 Councils asked group: 10
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

J W S R E S E A R C H 69

Informing the community performance



2025 informing community performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Informing the community' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 29 Councils asked group: 10
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 70

J01430 Community Satisfaction Survey 2025 – Ararat Rural City Council

The condition of local streets and footpaths in your area importance



2025 streets and footpaths importance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
18-34	84▲	84	82	74	79	68	74	74	76	70
Lake Bolac	83*	73	83	75	65	84	77	68	77	62
Women	81	80	84	82	81	79	78	80	80	79
Elmhurst	81*	74	75	73	73	70	79	53	84	85
35-49	80	74	80	83	77	78	79	78	77	78
Ararat	80	79	81	80	78	77	77	79	78	79
Ararat	80	78	80	79	77	76	77	77	77	76
State-wide	79	80	81	81	79	78	77	78	77	77
Small Rural	79	80	80	80	77	77	77	76	76	75
Men	78	77	77	76	75	73	75	75	75	73
65+	78	77	79	78	78	75	76	77	76	77
50-64	76	77	78	81	77	82	78	79	80	77

Q1: Firstly, how important should 'The condition of local streets and footpaths in your area' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 17 Councils asked group: 5

Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

*Caution: small sample size < n=30

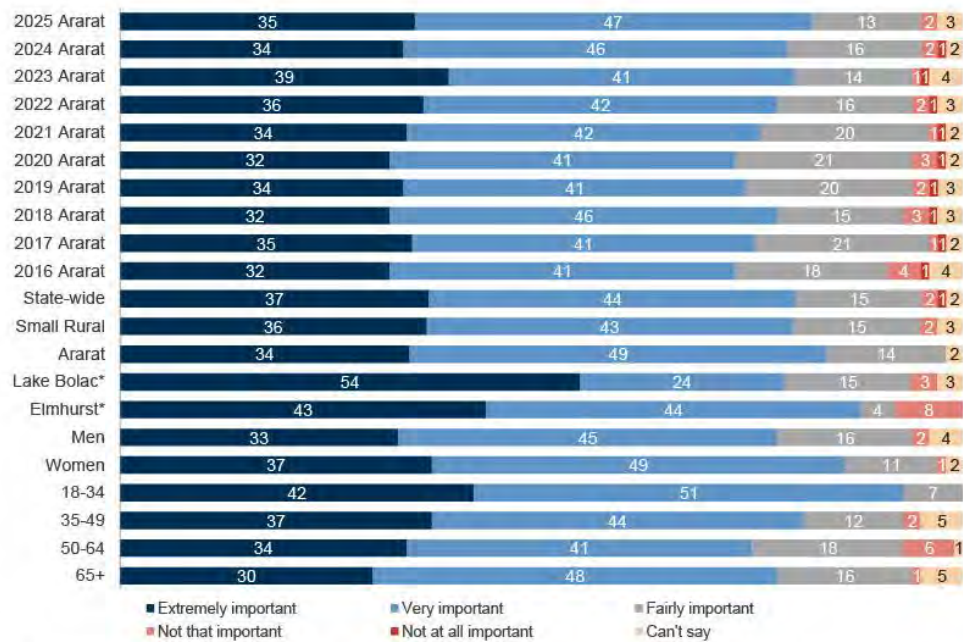
JWS RESEARCH 71

J01430 Community Satisfaction Survey 2025 – Ararat Rural City Council

The condition of local streets and footpaths in your area importance



2025 streets and footpaths importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'The condition of local streets and footpaths in your area' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 17 Councils asked group: 5
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 72

The condition of local streets and footpaths in your area performance



2025 streets and footpaths performance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Lake Bolac	66*	65	52	62	51	48	47	42	45	61
50-64	64	58	57	63	62	62	54	57	55	60
65+	64▲	60	59	65	64	61	56	57	58	61
Men	59	57	59	65	66	62	55	51	55	60
Ararat	59	57	55	63	62	62	55	53	55	59
Women	59	57	51	62	57	61	54	56	55	59
Ararat	59	57	57	65	62	62	55	56	57	59
35-49	57	53	44	55	60	60	50	50	53	61
Elmhurst	54*	54	41	50	63	50	56	34	36	46
Small Rural	53▼	51	52	55	58	57	57	57	57	58
State-wide	52▼	52	52	57	59	58	59	58	57	57
18-34	50▼	55	57	69	60	64	57	49	53	55

Q2. How has Council performed on 'The condition of local streets and footpaths in your area' over the last 12 months?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 27 Councils asked group: 8

Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

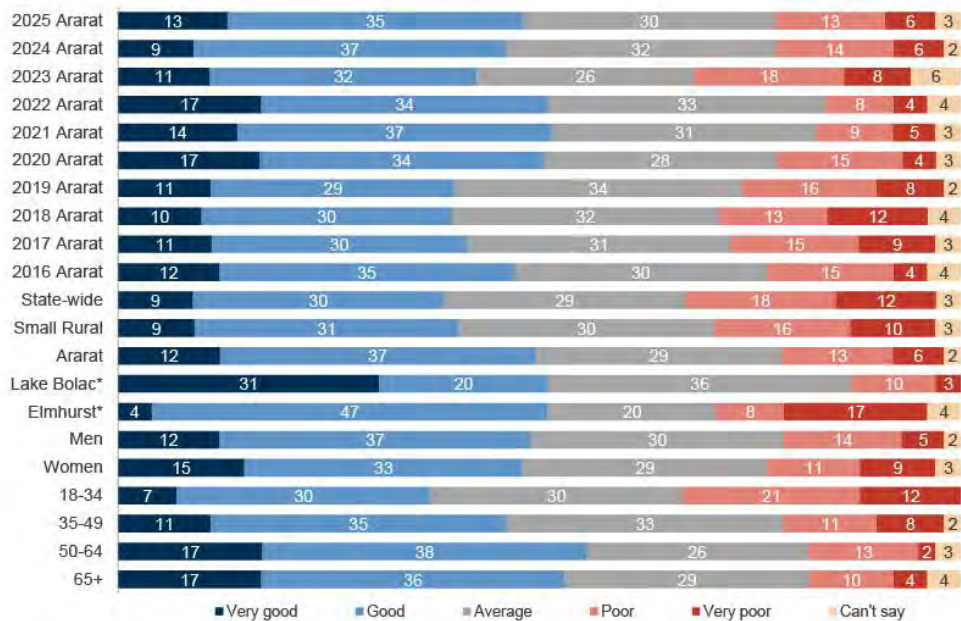
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

J W S R E S E A R C H 73

The condition of local streets and footpaths in your area performance



2025 streets and footpaths performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'The condition of local streets and footpaths in your area' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 27 Councils asked group: 8
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 74



Elderly support services importance



2025 elderly support importance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Women	83	86	86	84	87	85	83	84	85	82
35-49	81	80	85	82	80	78	74	80	79	80
18-34	81	87	85	82	82	76	76	78	74	77
Ararat	81	83	83	83	82	80	80	81	80	80
Lake Bolac	81*	70	77	70	83	59	66	74	77	78
65+	81	80	81	81	82	81	80	79	78	78
Ararat	80	82	83	82	82	79	79	80	79	79
Small Rural	80	82	82	82	83	81	80	80	79	79
Elmhurst	80*	80	85	86	90	80	78	52	85	85
State-wide	79	80	80	82	82	80	80	79	78	78
Men	78	78	80	79	78	75	76	76	74	76
50-64	77	81	81	83	84	82	87	82	85	82

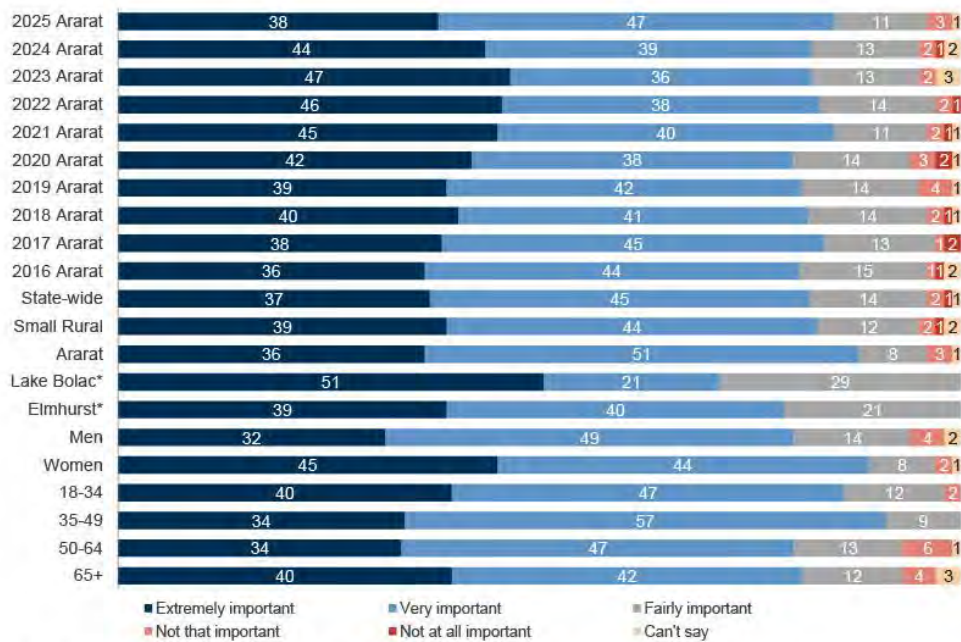
Q1: Firstly, how important should 'Elderly support services' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 6 Councils asked group: 2
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.
*Caution: small sample size < n=30



Elderly support services importance



2025 elderly support importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Elderly support services' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 6 Councils asked group: 2
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

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Elderly support services performance



2025 elderly support performance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Lake Bolac	72*	63	63	80	74	n/a	65	51	62	65
65+	71	72	71	74	78	73	67	69	72	70
50-64	69	64	65	66	70	70	67	65	66	68
Men	69	69	70	72	72	71	65	62	66	67
Ararat	68	68	67	73	72	69	66	65	68	68
35-49	68	64	54	65	68	63	61	61	62	68
Ararat	67	68	66	71	72	68	65	64	67	68
Small Rural	66	65	66	70	72	71	71	69	71	70
Women	66	65	62	71	72	65	66	67	68	70
State-wide	63▼	63	63	67	69	68	68	68	68	68
18-34	60▼	65	69	77	66	62	64	62	64	65
Elmhurst	59*	62	58	70	81	67	63	62	57	76

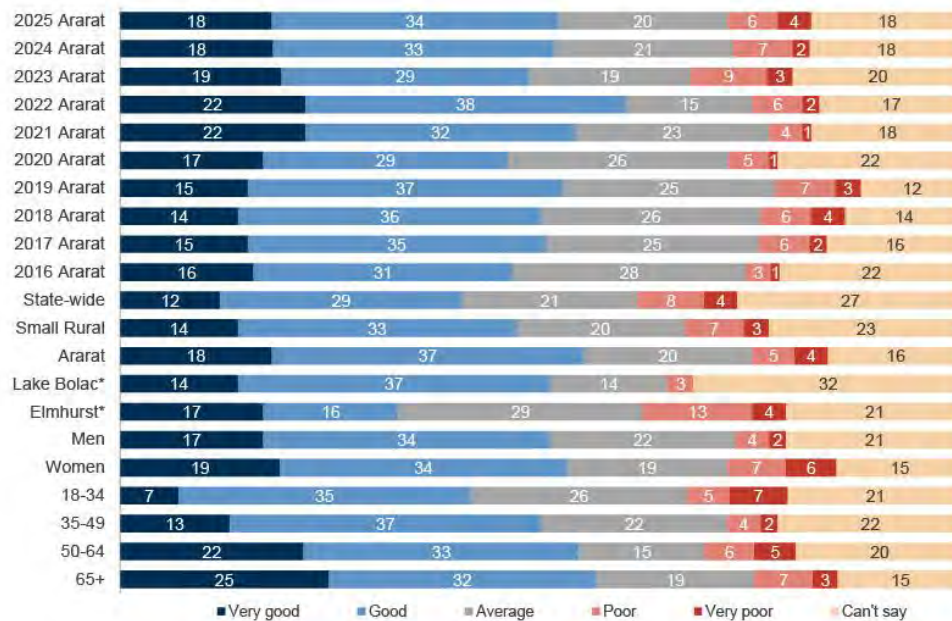
Q2. How has Council performed on 'Elderly support services' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 16 Councils asked group: 5
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.
*Caution: small sample size < n=30



Elderly support services performance



2025 elderly support performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Elderly support services' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 16 Councils asked group: 5
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 78



Recreational facilities importance



2025 recreational facilities importance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
35-49	78	77	77	78	81	74	72	76	77	77
18-34	77	81	76	81	68	67	71	81	69	75
Elmhurst	76*	68	63	69	72	64	61	68	70	68
Women	76	79	76	77	76	74	72	77	75	75
Ararat	75	77	76	78	75	73	71	77	73	76
Ararat	75	76	75	77	74	73	71	75	73	74
Men	74	74	73	76	73	72	70	74	72	74
50-64	74	77	77	76	74	78	73	76	75	75
Small Rural	73	73	73	74	73	73	72	72	71	72
Lake Bolac	73*	85	68	65	78	68	68	68	73	77
65+	73	72	71	73	73	72	69	70	72	72
State-wide	73	73	73	74	74	72	72	73	72	73

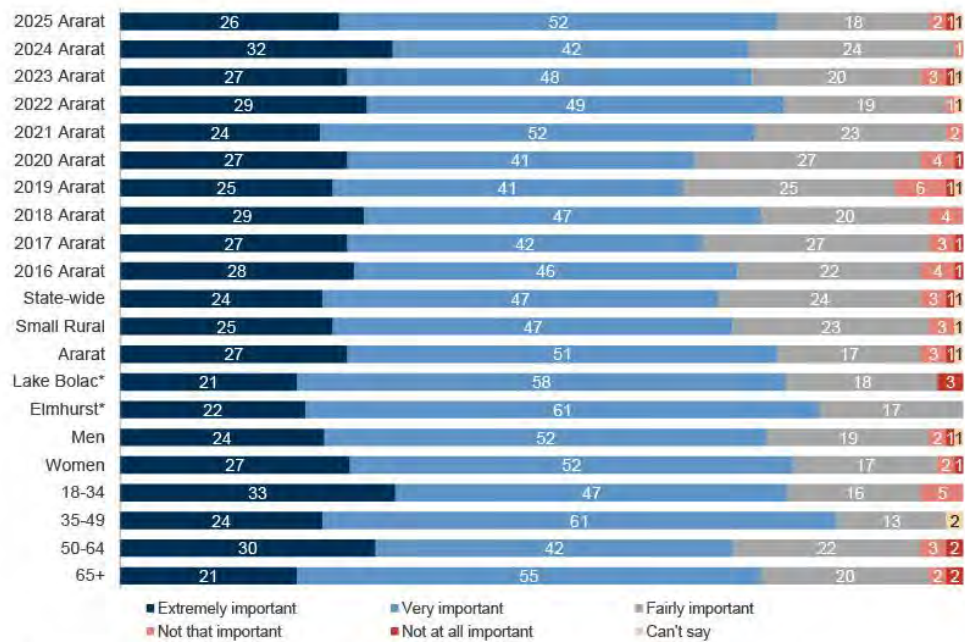
Q1: Firstly, how important should 'Recreational facilities' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 22 Councils asked group: 7
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.
*Caution: small sample size < n=30



Recreational facilities importance



2025 recreational facilities importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Recreational facilities' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 22 Councils asked group: 7
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

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Recreational facilities performance



2025 recreational facilities performance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
50-64	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div><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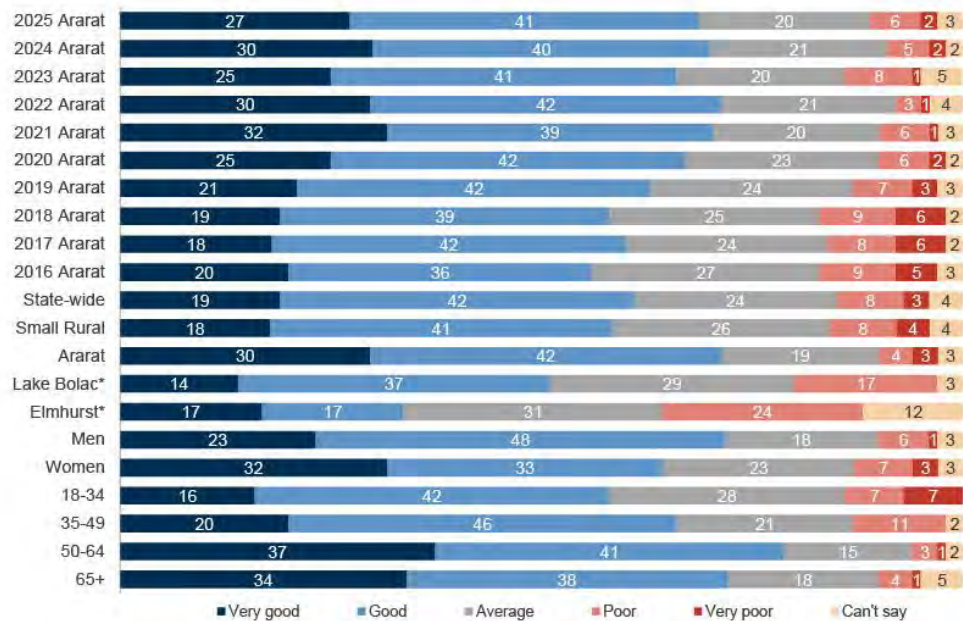
Q2. How has Council performed on 'Recreational facilities' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 36 Councils asked group: 13
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.
*Caution: small sample size < n=30



Recreational facilities performance



2025 recreational facilities performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Recreational facilities' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 36 Councils asked group: 13
*Caution: small sample size < n=30



The appearance of public areas importance



2025 public areas importance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Women	79	78	77	78	79	75	76	78	76	77
Lake Bolac	78*	65	66	69	82	59	59	72	67	75
65+	77	74	73	77	75	74	71	74	74	74
Ararat	76	76	77	79	75	75	74	75	77	77
Elmhurst	76*	68	75	84	75	63	59	49	81	74
Ararat	76	75	76	76	74	74	72	74	74	75
18-34	76	75	79	73	70	72	71	74	68	69
Small Rural	75	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74
50-64	74	76	77	78	73	77	74	73	76	76
35-49	74	75	79	77	78	73	73	73	77	79
State-wide	74▼	74	74	75	75	74	73	74	74	74
Men	73	73	76	75	70	73	69	70	72	73

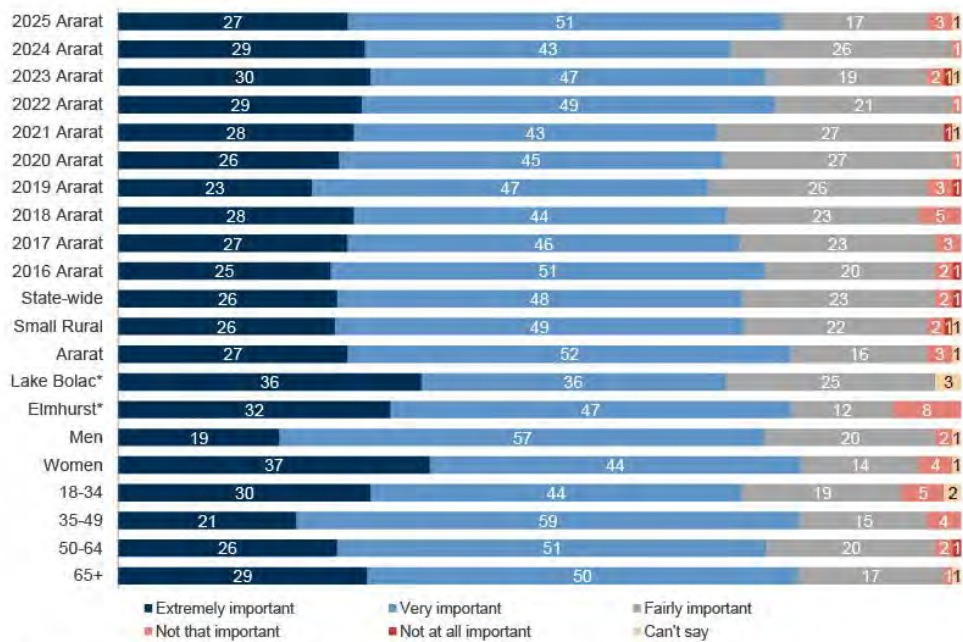
Q1: Firstly, how important should 'The appearance of public areas' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 22 Councils asked group: 7
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.
*Caution: small sample size < n=30



The appearance of public areas importance



2025 public areas importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'The appearance of public areas' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 22 Councils asked group: 7
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 84



The appearance of public areas performance



2025 public areas performance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Lake Bolac	79*	68	85	77	82	48	68	61	71	69
50-64	75	72	67	74	75	73	69	64	64	70
65+	73	76	75	77	79	73	71	69	70	74
Women	73	71	67	75	75	71	70	68	69	74
Ararat	71	72	70	76	75	73	69	65	66	72
Ararat	71	72	69	76	75	73	69	66	65	73
Small Rural	70	71	71	73	75	72	73	72	74	73
35-49	70	67	64	72	73	73	66	60	69	71
Elmhurst	70*	57	54	71	74	75	79	59	65	81
Men	70	72	72	77	76	74	69	63	64	71
State-wide	68▼	68	67	71	73	72	72	71	71	71
18-34	66	69	67	79	74	70	71	66	60	73

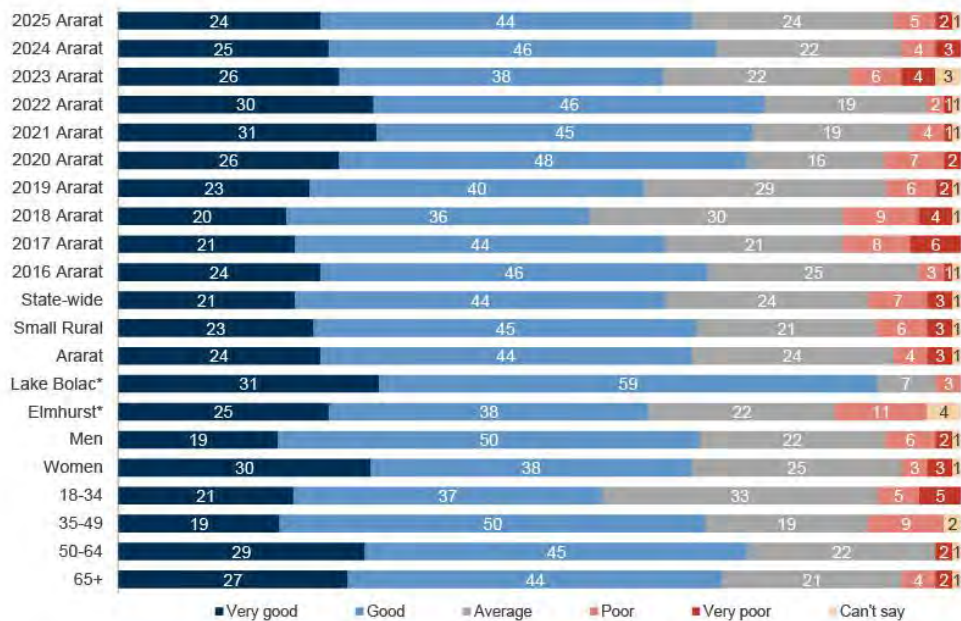
Q2. How has Council performed on 'The appearance of public areas' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 37 Councils asked group: 14
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.
*Caution: small sample size < n=30



The appearance of public areas performance



2025 public areas performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'The appearance of public areas' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 37 Councils asked group: 14
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

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Art centres and libraries importance



2025 art centres and libraries importance (index scores)

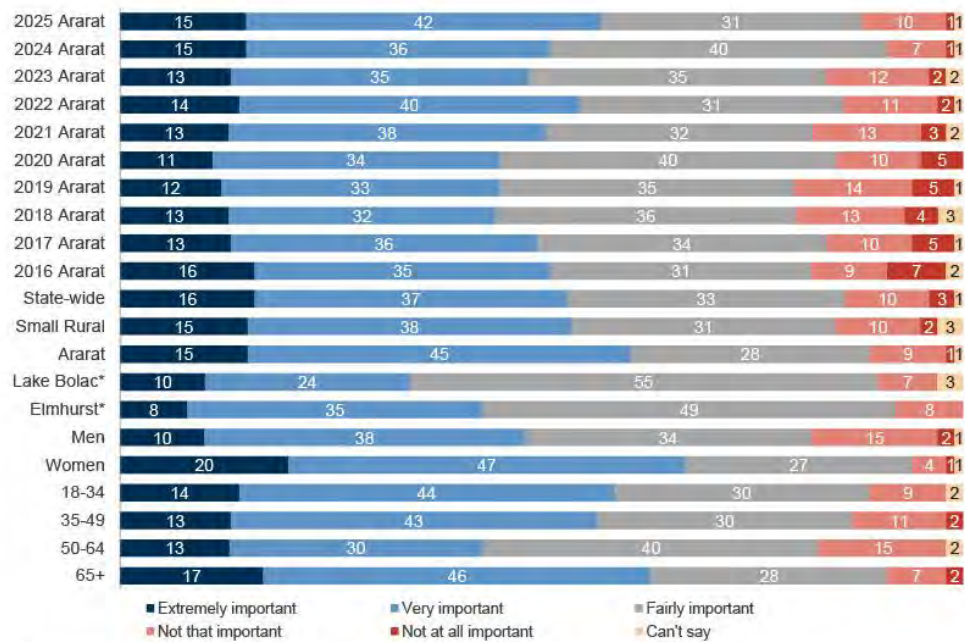
		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Women	71▲	67	67	70	65	64	65	67	67	69
65+	67	63	63	66	63	63	58	62	60	62
Ararat	67	65	64	64	62	59	60	61	62	64
18-34	66	65	61	63	58	50	60	57	56	64
Ararat	65	64	62	63	61	59	59	60	60	61
Small Rural	64	61	60	63	63	60	63	61	61	65
35-49	63	65	61	59	62	57	56	58	64	59
State-wide	63	64	65	67	67	65	65	65	64	66
Elmhurst	61*	58	47	72	70	60	65	50	55	71
50-64	61	64	61	64	62	65	62	61	60	60
Men	60▼	61	57	58	58	55	53	53	54	54
Lake Bolac	60*	60	47	53	60	75	39	53	53	62

Q1: Firstly, how important should 'Art centres and libraries' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 14 Councils asked group: 3
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

Art centres and libraries importance



2025 art centres and libraries importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Art centres and libraries' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 14 Councils asked group: 3
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 88



Art centres and libraries performance



2025 art centres and libraries performance (index scores)

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
65+	78	79	76	78	78	77	73	76	74
50-64	78	78	75	75	76	80	77	71	67
Women	78	81	76	78	77	79	77	74	71
35-49	75	76	71	69	75	81	72	65	69
Ararat	75	78	75	75	74	78	76	70	69
Ararat	75	79	75	76	73	78	76	70	70
Elmhurst	74*	66	72	70	86	57	88	70	88
Lake Bolac	74*	80	75	76	83	41	70	63	68
State-wide	73▼	73	73	73	74	74	74	73	72
Men	73	76	73	73	76	74	66	69	67
Small Rural	72▼	73	73	71	72	74	74	73	72
18-34	68▼	79	77	78	67	71	77	69	66

Q2. How has Council performed on 'Art centres and libraries' over the last 12 months?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 24 Councils asked group: 7

Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

*Caution: small sample size < n=30

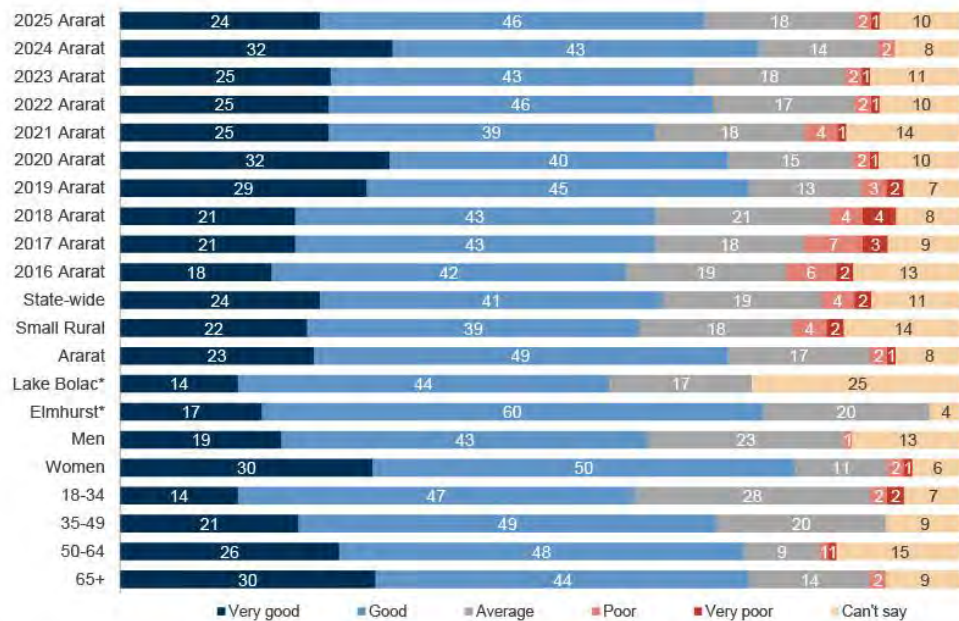
J W S R E S E A R C H

89

Art centres and libraries performance



2025 art centres and libraries performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Art centres and libraries' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 24 Councils asked group: 7
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

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Community and cultural activities importance



2025 community and cultural activities importance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Lake Bolac	66*	45	52	59	59	59	40	n/a	n/a	n/a
Women	63	63	67	65	65	65	64	n/a	n/a	n/a
65+	63	59	63	62	63	60	57	n/a	n/a	n/a
35-49	62	62	65	64	63	60	55	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ararat	62	63	65	65	63	61	61	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ararat	62	61	64	64	62	60	60	n/a	n/a	n/a
Small Rural	62	61	64	64	62	60	62	60	62	64
Men	60	60	62	63	59	57	56	n/a	n/a	n/a
50-64	60	58	63	65	63	67	64	n/a	n/a	n/a
18-34	59	68	67	66	57	57	64	n/a	n/a	n/a
State-wide	59▼	60	62	64	64	62	61	61	61	62
Elmhurst	57*	63	62	65	65	54	57	n/a	n/a	n/a

Q1: Firstly, how important should 'Community and cultural activities' be as a responsibility for Council?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 11 Councils asked group: 1

Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

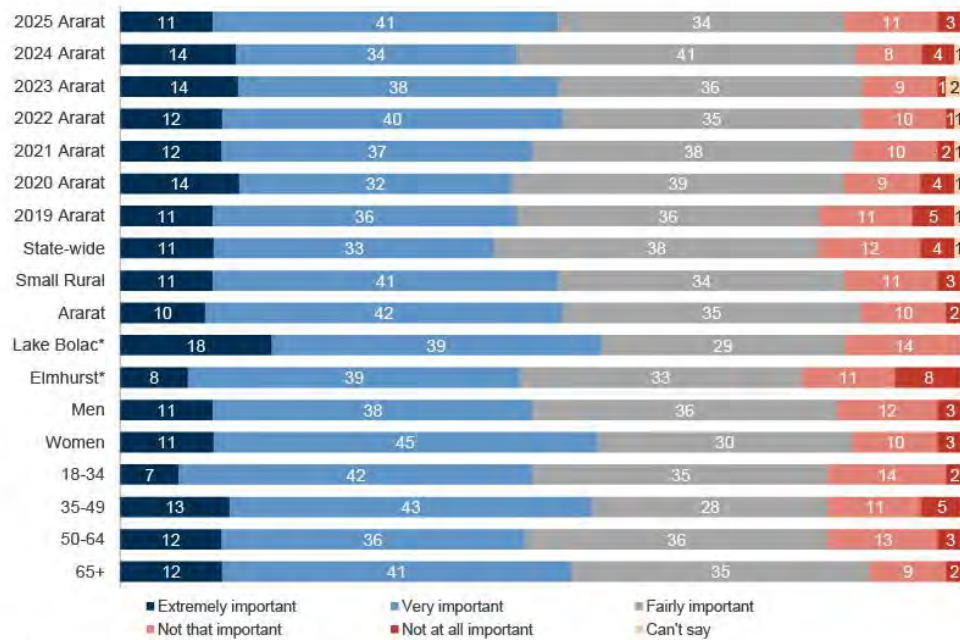
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

J W S R E S E A R C H 91

Community and cultural activities importance



2025 community and cultural activities importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Community and cultural activities' be as a responsibility for Council?
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 11 Councils asked group: 1
 *Caution: small sample size < n=30

Community and cultural activities performance



2025 community and cultural activities performance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
65+	72▲	71	70	68	68	67	66	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lake Bolac	68*	60	69	75	75	32	58	n/a	n/a	n/a
Small Rural	68	69	70	68	67	68	66	69	69	65
Ararat	66	68	65	65	63	63	63	n/a	n/a	n/a
Men	66	68	64	64	65	60	62	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ararat	66	67	65	65	64	63	63	n/a	n/a	n/a
Women	66	65	65	66	63	66	64	n/a	n/a	n/a
50-64	65	61	63	63	64	63	65	n/a	n/a	n/a
State-wide	65	66	66	65	65	68	69	69	69	69
35-49	64	61	57	60	67	61	59	n/a	n/a	n/a
Elmhurst	62*	52	61	54	71	70	84	n/a	n/a	n/a
18-34	58▼	68	63	66	55	58	60	n/a	n/a	n/a

Q2. How has Council performed on 'Community and cultural activities' over the last 12 months?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 20 Councils asked group: 2

Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

*Caution: small sample size < n=30

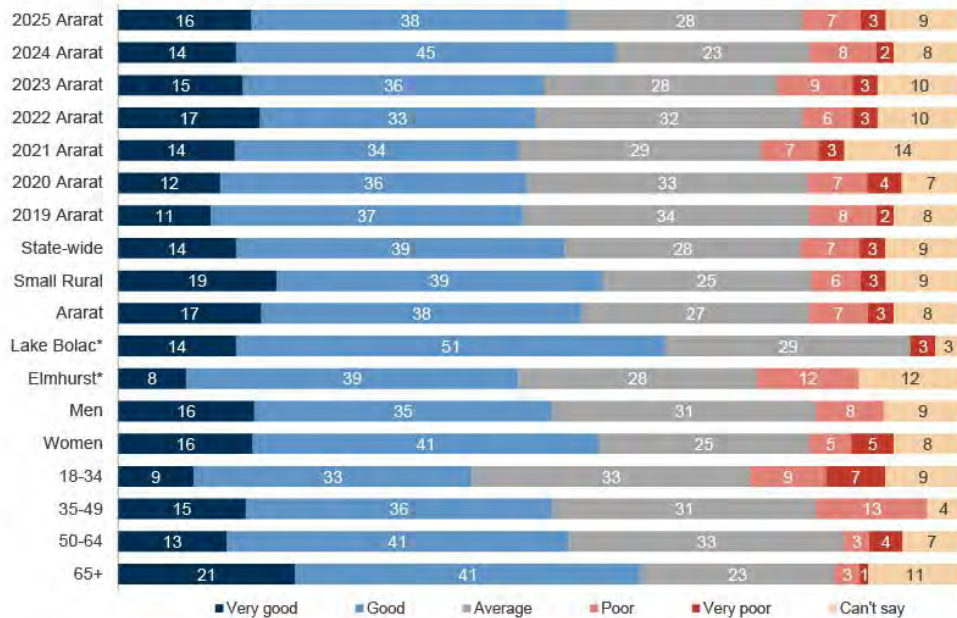
J W S R E S E A R C H

93

Community and cultural activities performance



2025 community and cultural activities performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Community and cultural activities' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 20 Councils asked group: 2
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 94

Waste management importance



2025 waste management importance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Elmhurst	81*	80	78	82	80	82	78	60	81	69
Women	81	82	81	84	84	85	80	85	78	77
Lake Bolac	80*	81	74	78	83	100	74	70	74	80
18-34	80	88	84	82	80	80	76	78	74	77
65+	79	80	77	79	80	79	79	79	75	75
State-wide	79	81	81	82	82	82	81	81	79	80
Ararat	79	82	81	81	81	81	80	81	76	77
Ararat	78	82	80	81	80	80	79	79	76	76
Small Rural	78	79	78	80	80	79	79	78	76	79
35-49	78	79	82	84	82	81	81	79	76	74
Men	76	81	79	78	78	76	79	75	73	75
50-64	75	81	79	79	81	81	80	81	77	79

Q1: Firstly, how important should 'Waste management' be as a responsibility for Council?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 21 Councils asked group: 6

Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

*Caution: small sample size < n=30

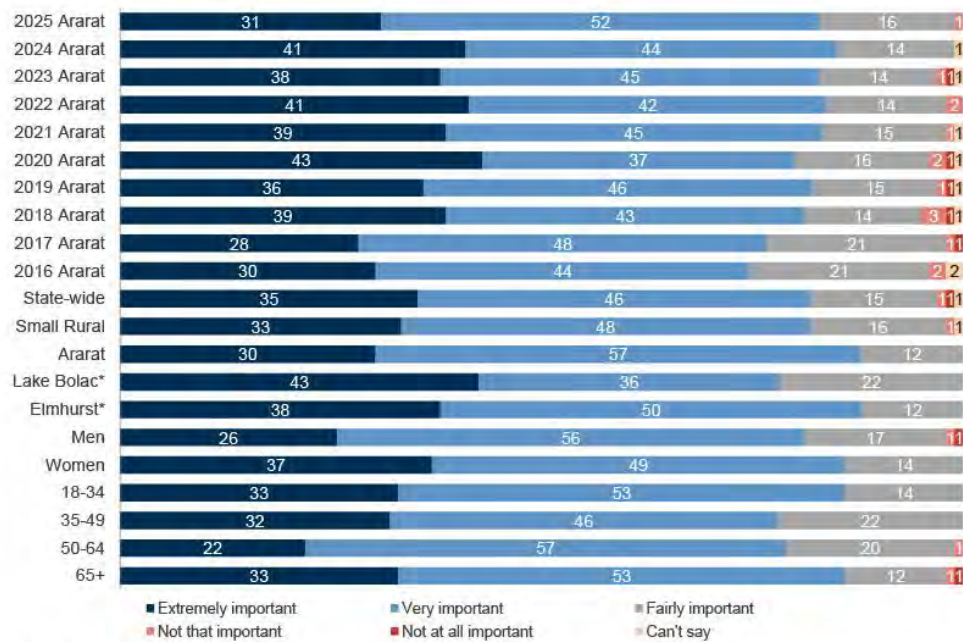
J W S R E S E A R C H

95

Waste management importance



2025 waste management importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Waste management' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 21 Councils asked group: 6
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

Waste management performance



2025 waste management performance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Lake Bolac	79*	78	90	64	65	16	49	49	55	58
65+	78▲	78	73	70	71	65	63	69	69	72
50-64	76	75	64	63	57	59	58	61	61	66
Women	73	74	63	68	61	60	59	61	64	68
Ararat	73	74	66	67	61	60	60	64	64	66
Men	73	74	69	67	62	60	61	66	63	65
Ararat	72	74	66	69	61	61	63	66	65	67
18-34	69	67	61	75	55	57	65	65	62	62
Small Rural	66▼	67	66	68	68	64	66	69	70	69
35-49	66▼	73	60	58	56	56	55	59	60	63
State-wide	65▼	67	66	68	69	65	68	70	71	70
Elmhurst	64*	72	67	62	68	35	62	64	39	76

Q2. How has Council performed on 'Waste management' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 56 Councils asked group: 19
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

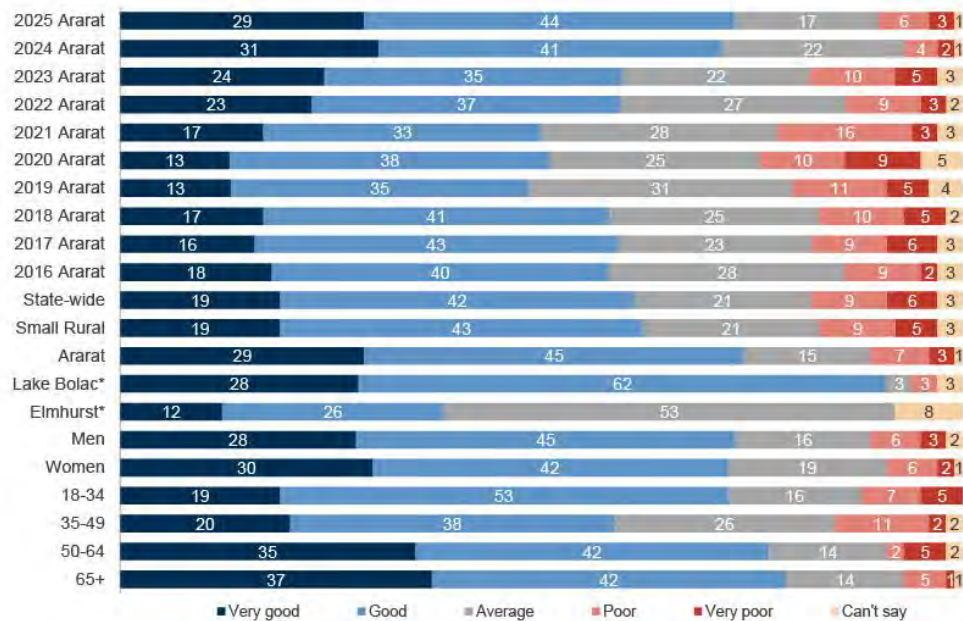
J W S R E S E A R C H 97



Waste management performance



2025 waste management performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Waste management' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 56 Councils asked group: 19
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 98

Business and community development and tourism importance



2025 business/development/tourism importance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Elmhurst	80*	69	70	64	70	56	79	61	85	75
35-49	74	74	78	74	72	75	69	71	74	69
Women	74	75	73	73	75	74	70	77	75	74
Ararat	73	75	75	75	73	74	70	74	74	73
Ararat	72	74	73	73	72	72	68	72	71	71
65+	72	71	70	72	71	71	65	69	69	67
18-34	72	80	75	72	73	67	65	71	70	74
50-64	72	71	69	74	74	78	73	76	72	75
Men	72	73	73	72	70	72	66	67	68	68
Small Rural	71	70	71	72	74	74	71	71	72	71
State-wide	69▼	67	67	69	70	67	65	66	67	67
Lake Bolac	66*	80	71	59	68	66	45	61	57	64

Q1: Firstly, how important should 'Business and community development and tourism' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 16 Councils asked group: 5

Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

*Caution: small sample size < n=30

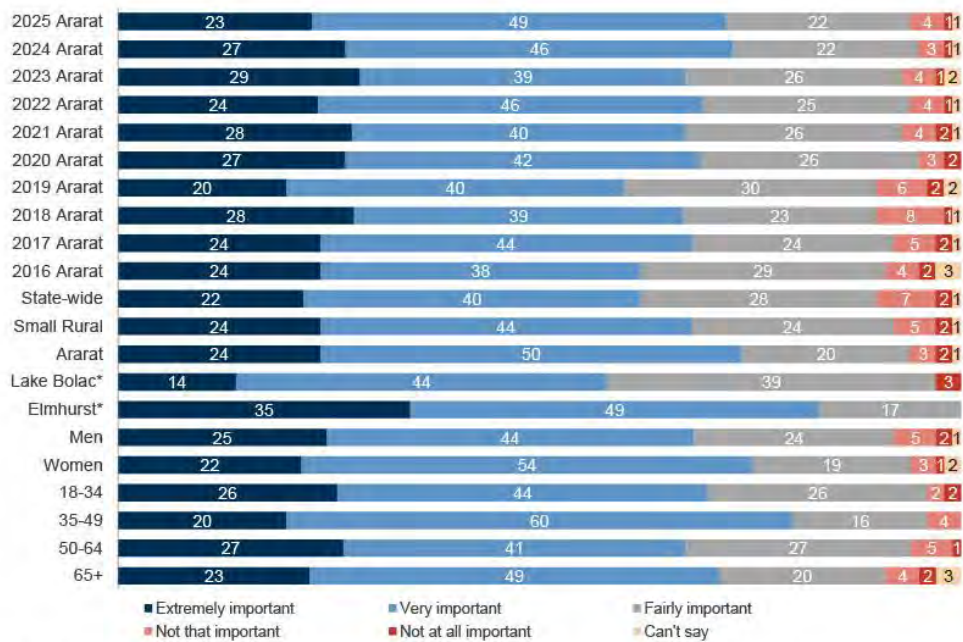
J W S R E S E A R C H

99

Business and community development and tourism importance



2025 business/development/tourism importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Business and community development and tourism' be as a responsibility for Council?
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 16 Councils asked group: 5
 *Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 100

J01430 Community Satisfaction Survey 2025 – Ararat Rural City Council

Business and community development and tourism performance



2025 business/development/tourism performance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
65+	<div></div> 67	70	70	72	71	64	63	59	64	61
Lake Bolac	<div></div> 64*	62	65	70	63	32	44	49	60	56
Elmhurst	<div></div> 63*	47	53	65	71	43	60	61	65	92
Women	<div></div> 63	67	66	70	65	59	62	61	62	64
Ararat	<div></div> 63	67	66	70	65	61	62	58	61	62
Ararat	<div></div> 63	66	65	69	65	61	61	57	60	61
35-49	<div></div> 63	63	61	67	63	55	56	51	57	59
Men	<div></div> 62	65	65	69	66	62	60	53	58	58
50-64	<div></div> 62	64	63	65	64	62	60	56	59	64
Small Rural	<div></div> 57▼	59	61	63	62	58	59	59	64	61
18-34	<div></div> 56▼	65	63	71	60	62	63	61	58	59
State-wide	<div></div> 56▼	57	59	60	61	59	61	60	61	60

Q2. How has Council performed on 'Business and community development and tourism' over the last 12 months?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 23 Councils asked group: 8

Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

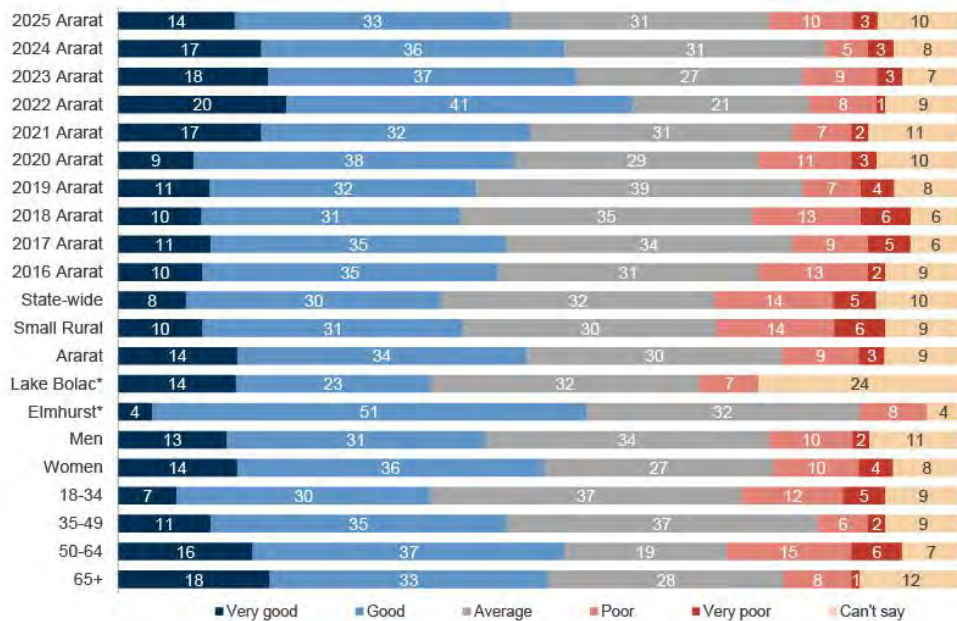
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 101

Business and community development and tourism performance



2025 business/development/tourism performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Business and community development and tourism' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 23 Councils asked group: 8
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 102

Planning and building permits importance



2025 planning and building permits importance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Elmhurst	83*▲	67	68	74	81	57	56	62	64	63
65+	74	73	72	73	69	68	67	72	68	66
35-49	74	64	74	71	71	67	64	64	70	72
Women	72	70	73	75	72	67	70	73	70	70
Ararat	72	70	73	71	69	68	65	68	66	68
Men	72	70	72	68	66	68	62	64	63	66
Ararat	71	72	75	73	70	69	68	69	68	70
50-64	71	73	68	76	74	74	69	72	66	68
State-wide	71	72	72	73	73	71	71	71	72	71
Small Rural	70	70	71	73	71	68	70	68	68	71
Lake Bolac	68*	71	48	65	66	66	52	71	59	67
18-34	67▼	68	75	64	63	61	61	64	61	67

Q1: Firstly, how important should 'Planning and building permits' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 18 Councils asked group: 6
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

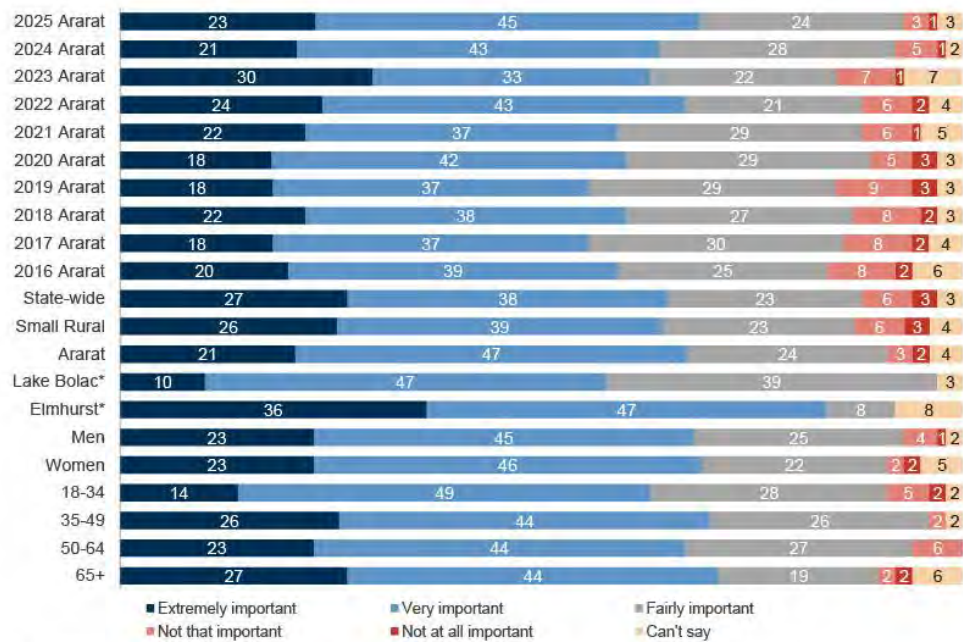
J W S R E S E A R C H 103



Planning and building permits importance



2025 planning and building permits importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Planning and building permits' be as a responsibility for Council?
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 18 Councils asked group: 6
 *Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 104



Planning and building permits performance



2025 planning and building permits performance (index scores)

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
65+	54	58	62	63	54	54	47	51	49
Ararat	53	54	53	59	52	53	46	51	52
35-49	52	50	45	49	57	42	48	41	48
Men	52	52	54	58	59	50	51	43	46
Ararat	51	54	54	58	59	51	52	46	50
Women	50	56	54	59	58	53	53	50	55
Lake Bolac	48*	49	65	65	56	n/a	29	43	44
18-34	48	53	53	64	57	56	56	54	47
50-64	46	49	48	52	56	52	48	43	54
State-wide	43▼	45	47	50	51	51	52	52	51
Small Rural	43▼	43	45	48	49	46	48	51	51
Elmhurst	42*	52	46	60	57	63	67	48	77

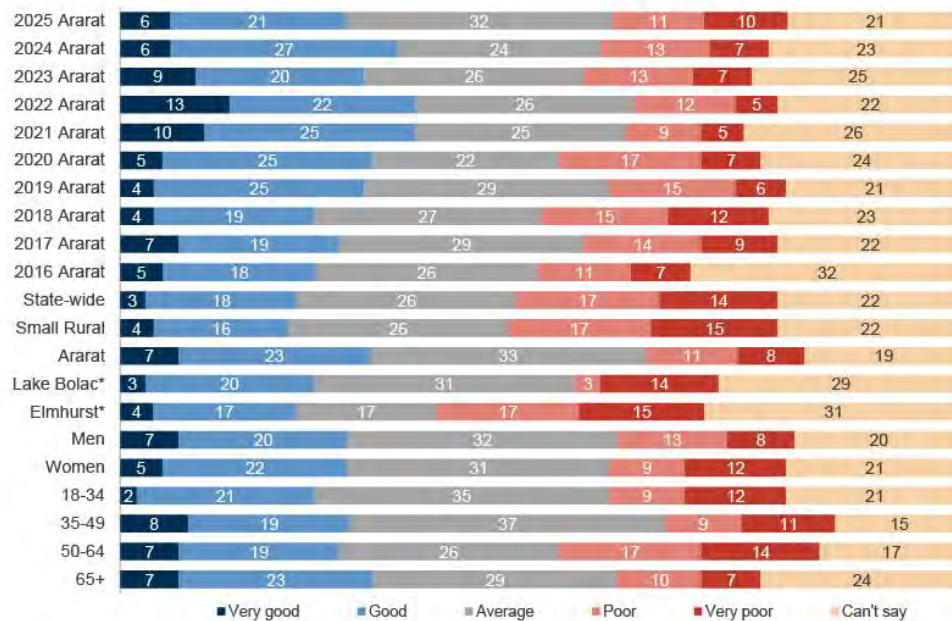
Q2. How has Council performed on 'Planning and building permits' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 26 Councils asked group: 8
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.
*Caution: small sample size < n=30



Planning and building permits performance



2025 planning and building permits performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Planning and building permits' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 26 Councils asked group: 8
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 106

Environmental sustainability importance



2025 environmental sustainability importance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Women	72▲	72	73	75	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
65+	69	64	67	72	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Elmhurst	68*	62	68	75	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lake Bolac	68*	59	63	57	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ararat	67	69	69	73	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ararat	66	68	69	72	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
18-34	65	80	69	77	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
State-wide	65	68	70	73	74	74	74	73	72	73
50-64	64	68	69	73	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
35-49	64	64	71	66	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Small Rural	63▼	66	67	70	71	70	72	70	70	74
Men	61▼	65	65	69	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Q1: Firstly, how important should 'Environmental sustainability' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 19 Councils asked group: 4
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

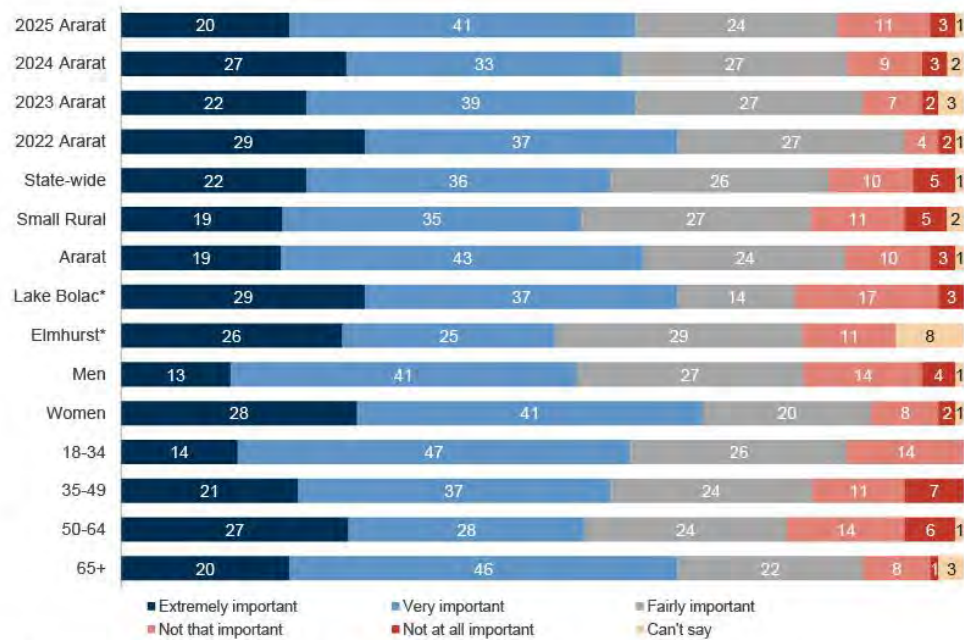
J W S R E S E A R C H 107



Environmental sustainability importance



2025 environmental sustainability importance (%)



Q1: Firstly, how important should 'Environmental sustainability' be as a responsibility for Council?
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 19 Councils asked group: 4
 *Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 108

Environmental sustainability performance



2025 environmental sustainability performance (index scores)

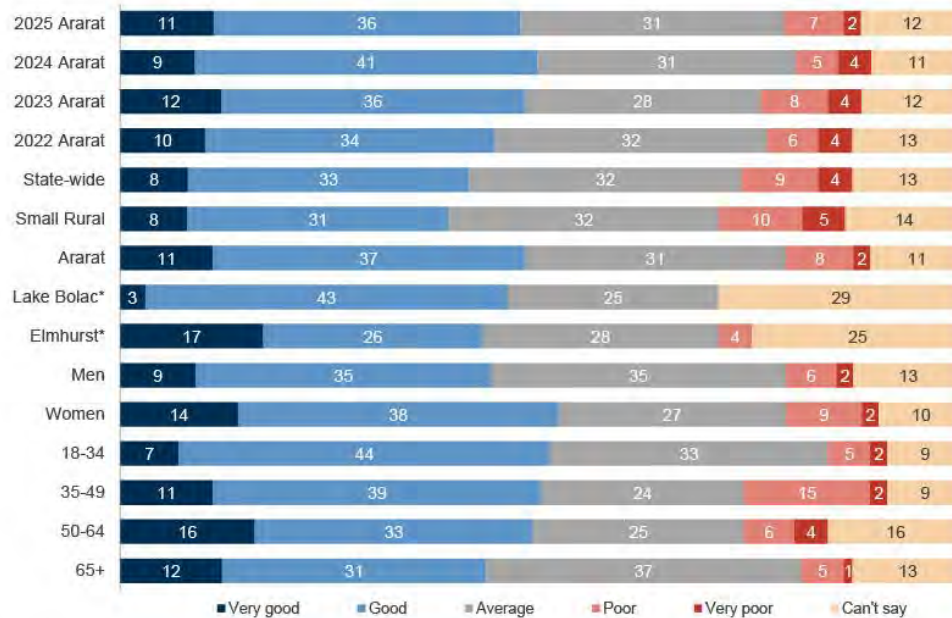
		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Elmhurst	69*	54	65	52	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lake Bolac	67*	69	65	57	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
50-64	66	62	63	58	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Women	64	65	61	62	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
65+	64	67	66	64	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ararat	64	63	63	62	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ararat	64	63	62	63	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
18-34	63	63	65	64	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Men	63	61	64	62	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
35-49	61	56	53	58	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
State-wide	59▼	60	60	61	62	60	62	63	64	63
Small Rural	58▼	59	59	59	61	57	59	62	63	61

Q2. How has Council performed on 'Environmental sustainability' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 30 Councils asked group: 8
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

Environmental sustainability performance



2025 environmental sustainability performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Environmental sustainability' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 30 Councils asked group: 8
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 110



Emergency and disaster management importance



2025 emergency and disaster management importance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Elmhurst	89*	81	96	92	92	82	84	66	94	81
Women	86	89	85	83	85	86	85	84	87	84
18-34	85	93	81	79	75	81	82	78	85	82
Ararat	84	86	80	79	79	82	82	81	83	81
35-49	83	83	80	75	76	80	77	80	85	78
Ararat	83	85	81	80	79	82	81	80	83	80
65+	82	84	80	81	81	82	79	80	81	79
50-64	82	81	84	83	82	84	86	82	83	82
Men	80	82	77	76	74	78	78	77	79	76
Small Rural	80▼	82	80	81	82	82	81	80	81	82
State-wide	79▼	80	80	81	81	80	81	81	80	80
Lake Bolac	73*	75	78	79	83	84	75	79	84	77

Q1: Firstly, how important should 'Emergency and disaster management' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 12 Councils asked group: 3
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

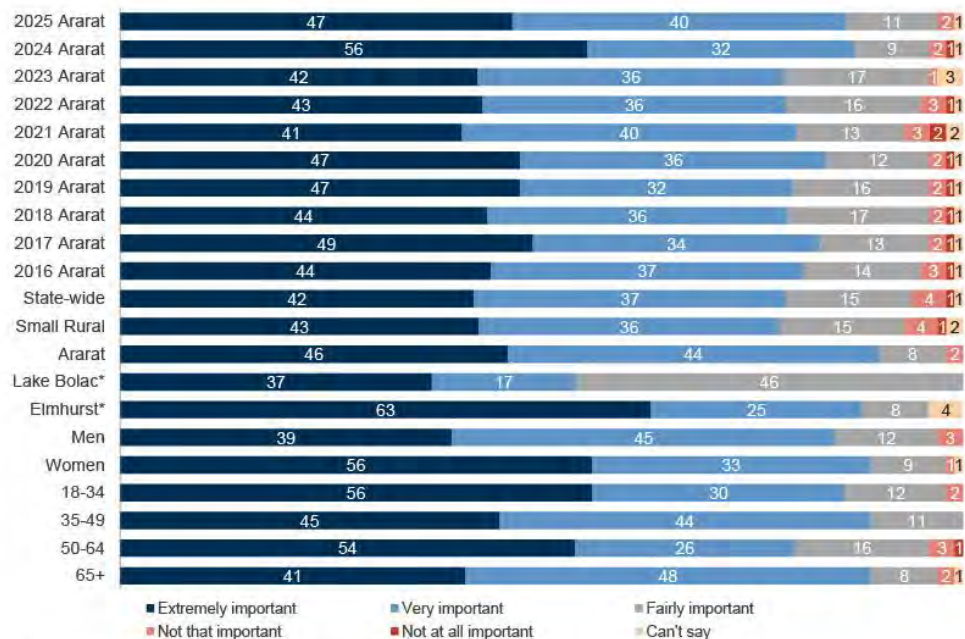
J W S R E S E A R C H 111



Emergency and disaster management importance



2025 emergency and disaster management importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Emergency and disaster management' be as a responsibility for Council?
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 12 Councils asked group: 3
 *Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 112

Emergency and disaster management performance



2025 emergency and disaster management performance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
65+	81▲	77	76	79	79	76	73	72	76	76
Lake Bolac	81*	67	74	72	73	48	66	64	64	75
Women	77	78	71	74	75	75	74	70	74	76
50-64	76	75	74	70	76	75	78	74	71	69
Ararat	75	77	74	75	75	75	73	72	74	73
Ararat	75	76	72	74	75	74	73	70	72	72
Men	74	73	74	74	75	73	72	70	70	68
18-34	71	79	72	77	72	76	72	70	72	67
35-49	67▼	71	65	67	72	69	69	63	68	73
Small Rural	66▼	66	66	68	72	70	72	72	72	71
State-wide	65▼	65	65	66	71	68	72	71	70	69
Elmhurst	65*	57	58	70	89	68	75	63	82	88

Q2. How has Council performed on 'Emergency and disaster management' over the last 12 months?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 21 Councils asked group: 6

Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

*Caution: small sample size < n=30

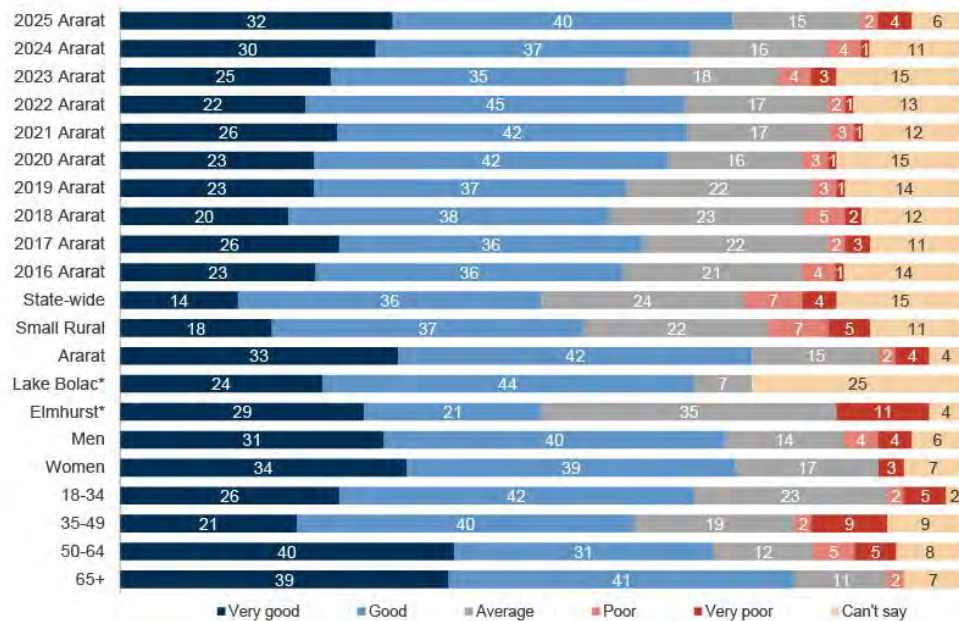
JWS RESEARCH 113



Emergency and disaster management performance



2025 emergency and disaster management performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Emergency and disaster management' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 21 Councils asked group: 6
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 114



Roadside slashing and weed control importance



2025 roadside slashing and weed control importance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Lake Bolac	92*▲	66	92	89	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Elmhurst	88*	87	94	93	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Women	82	80	82	82	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
35-49	82	80	80	86	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Small Rural	80	80	81	81	82	80	76	76	76	n/a
18-34	80	81	83	76	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
State-wide	79	80	79	79	79	78	74	73	74	73
Ararat	79	79	80	80	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
65+	78	78	77	79	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
50-64	77	81	82	80	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ararat	77	78	79	78	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Men	76	79	78	79	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Q1: Firstly, how important should 'Roadside slashing and weed control' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 6 Councils asked group: 2

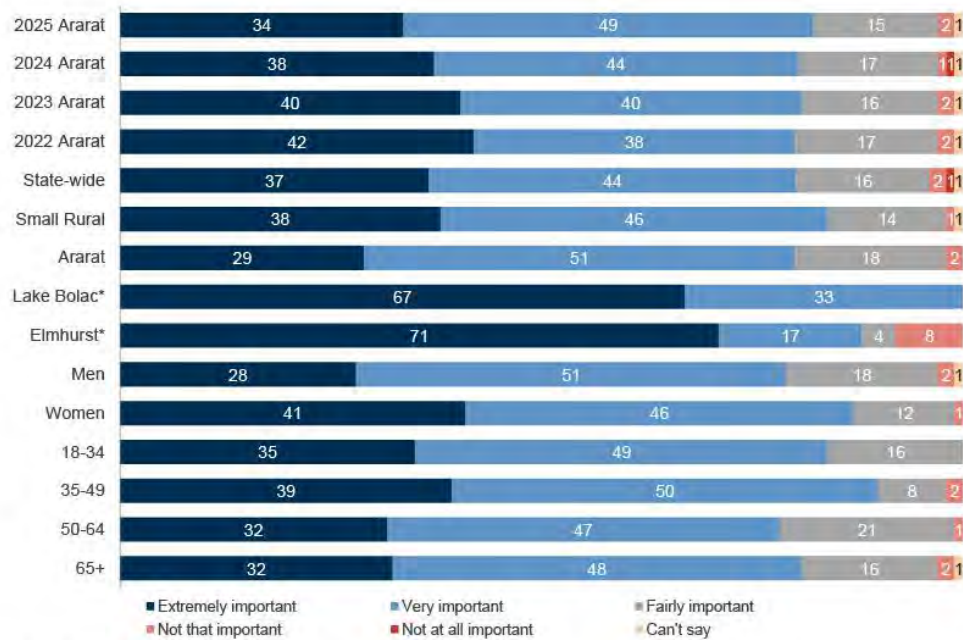
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

*Caution: small sample size < n=30

Roadside slashing and weed control importance



2025 roadside slashing and weed control importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Roadside slashing and weed control' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 6 Councils asked group: 2
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 116

Roadside slashing and weed control performance



2025 roadside slashing and weed control performance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
65+	58	53	51	55	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
50-64	56	46	53	51	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ararat	56	48	54	55	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Men	54	49	54	53	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ararat	53	48	52	53	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Elmhurst	52*	42	49	30	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Women	51	47	51	53	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
18-34	50	43	56	59	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Small Rural	49▼	46	47	50	49	48	55	54	51	51
State-wide	47▼	45	46	49	51	49	56	55	53	56
35-49	45▼	46	50	44	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lake Bolac	35*▼	43	39	58	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Q2. How has Council performed on 'Roadside slashing and weed control' over the last 12 months?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 11 Councils asked group: 5

Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

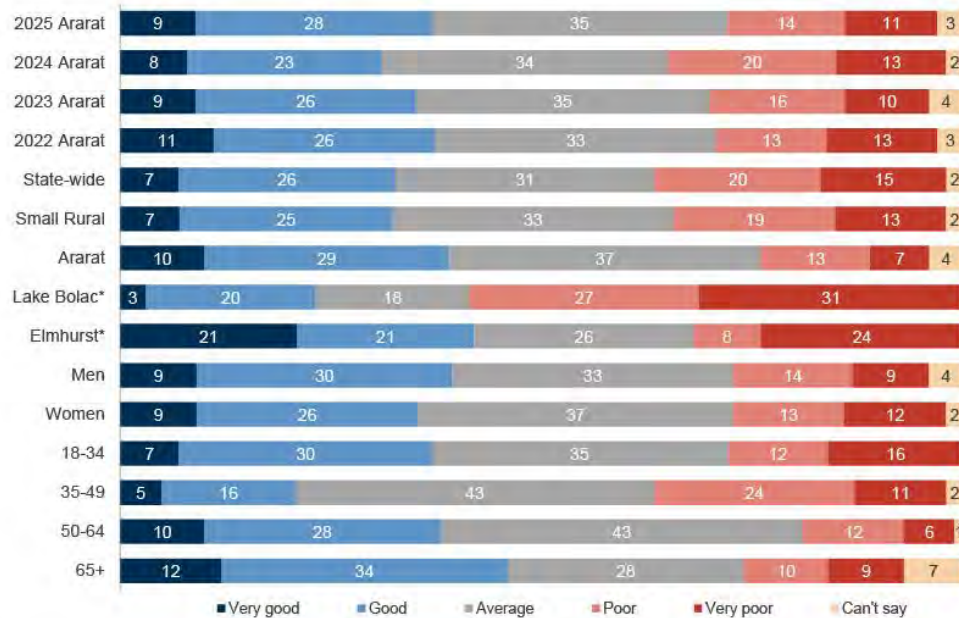
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

J W S R E S E A R C H 117

Roadside slashing and weed control performance



2025 roadside slashing and weed control performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Roadside slashing and weed control' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 11 Councils asked group: 5
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 118

Maintenance of unsealed roads in your area importance



2025 unsealed roads importance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Lake Bolac	94*▲	92	93	87	98	100	88	94	92	87
Elmhurst	91*▲	90	89	95	89	87	89	89	90	85
18-34	88	84	90	82	78	76	80	90	79	74
35-49	86	78	85	91	86	86	86	86	87	80
Women	86	84	88	87	80	81	85	88	85	81
Small Rural	85	85	85	85	84	83	82	84	81	81
Ararat	84	83	86	85	81	81	84	86	83	80
State-wide	83	84	83	83	81	80	80	80	79	79
Men	82	82	83	84	83	81	83	85	81	79
Ararat	82	81	84	85	80	80	82	85	80	77
50-64	82	89	87	85	81	86	87	86	83	83
65+	82	82	83	84	81	79	83	84	82	81

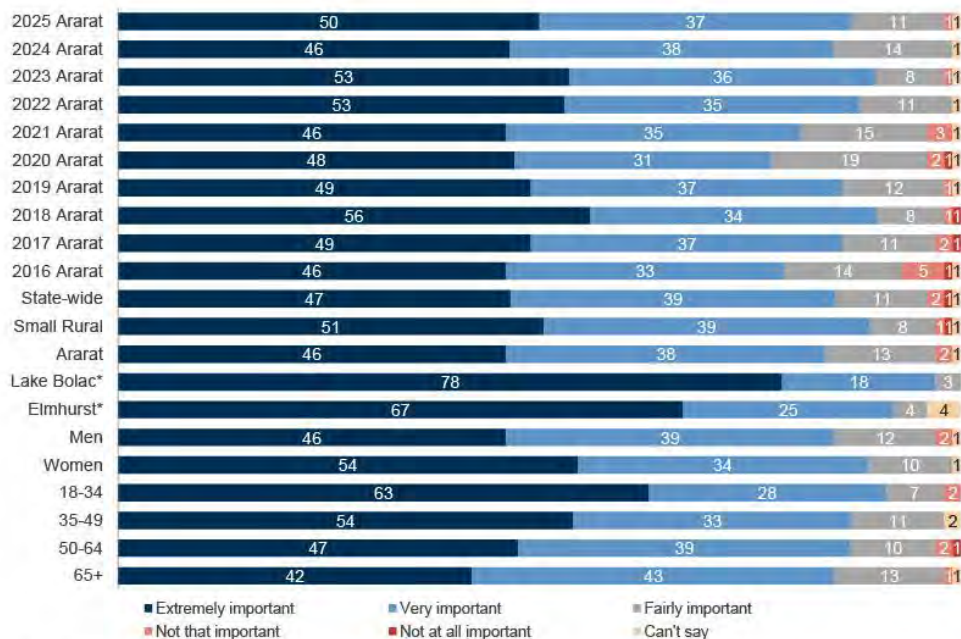
Q1: Firstly, how important should 'Maintenance of unsealed roads in your area' be as a responsibility for Council?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 15 Councils asked group: 6
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

J W S R E S E A R C H 119

Maintenance of unsealed roads in your area importance



2025 unsealed roads importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Maintenance of unsealed roads in your area' be as a responsibility for Council?
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 15 Councils asked group: 6
 *Caution: small sample size < n=30

JWS RESEARCH 120

Maintenance of unsealed roads in your area performance



2025 unsealed roads performance (index scores)

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
65+	54▲	47	48	52	54	46	41	37	39	42
50-64	50	41	43	48	48	45	39	35	36	42
Men	50	44	44	45	51	46	41	29	36	37
Ararat	49	46	45	50	50	45	42	36	42	45
Lake Bolac	49*	56	34	52	46	16	14	19	24	25
Ararat	48	45	42	47	50	44	39	33	38	40
Women	47	45	41	50	49	41	36	37	40	42
Elmhurst	44*	34	24	26	51	34	39	21	25	40
35-49	44	48	34	32	50	37	34	25	36	35
18-34	43	40	39	54	46	46	40	32	43	39
Small Rural	40▼	35	38	42	44	43	43	40	43	44
State-wide	38▼	36	37	41	45	44	44	43	44	43

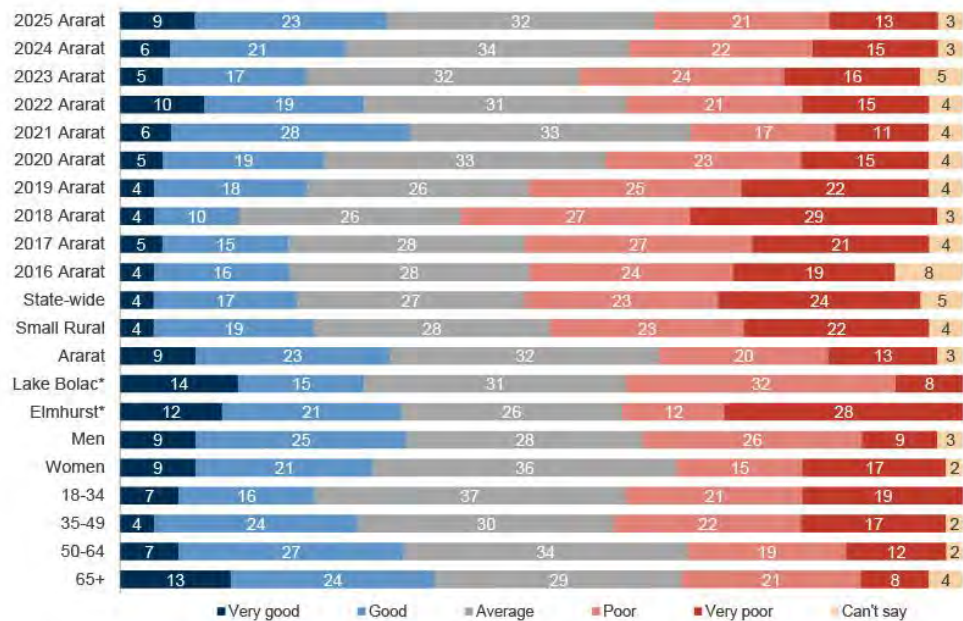
Q2. How has Council performed on 'Maintenance of unsealed roads in your area' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 28 Councils asked group: 10
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

J W S R E S E A R C H 121

Maintenance of unsealed roads in your area performance



2025 unsealed roads performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Maintenance of unsealed roads in your area' over the last 12 months?
Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 28 Councils asked group: 10
*Caution: small sample size < n=30

J W S R E S E A R C H 122

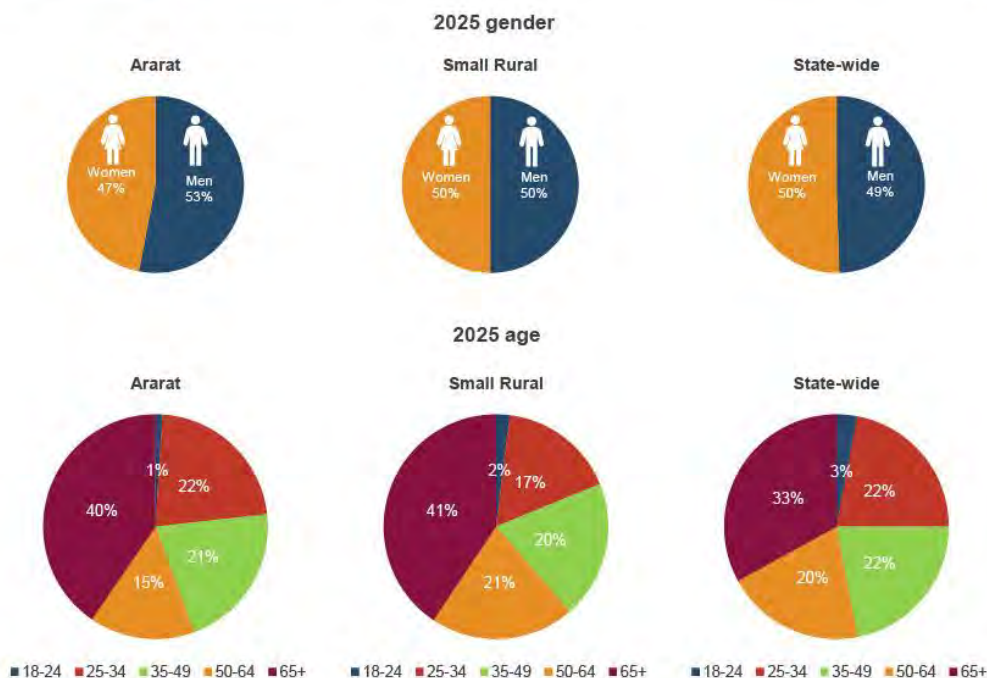
Detailed demographics



J W S R E S E A R C H 123



Gender and age profile



S3. How would you describe your gender? / S4. To which of the following age groups do you belong?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked State-wide: 56 Councils asked group: 19

An "Other" option has been included for gender, hence the results may not add to 100%.

Please note that for the reason of simplifying reporting, interlocking age and gender reporting has not been included in this report. Interlocking age and gender analysis is still available in the dashboard and data tables provided alongside this report.

Appendix A: Index scores, margins of error and significant differences

J W S R E S E A R C H 125

Appendix A: Index Scores



Index Scores

Many questions ask respondents to rate council performance on a five-point scale, for example, from 'very good' to 'very poor', with 'can't say' also a possible response category. To facilitate ease of reporting and comparison of results over time, starting from the 2012 survey and measured against the state-wide result and the council group, an 'Index Score' has been calculated for such measures.

The Index Score is calculated and represented as a score out of 100 (on a 0 to 100 scale), with 'can't say' responses excluded from the analysis. The '% RESULT' for each scale category is multiplied by the 'INDEX FACTOR'. This produces an 'INDEX VALUE' for each category, which are then summed to produce the 'INDEX SCORE', equating to '60' in the following example.

Similarly, an Index Score has been calculated for the Core question 'Performance direction in the last 12 months', based on the following scale for each performance measure category, with 'Can't say' responses excluded from the calculation.

SCALE CATEGORIES	% RESULT	INDEX FACTOR	INDEX VALUE
Very good	9%	100	9
Good	40%	75	30
Average	37%	50	19
Poor	9%	25	2
Very poor	4%	0	0
Can't say	1%	--	INDEX SCORE 60

SCALE CATEGORIES	% RESULT	INDEX FACTOR	INDEX VALUE
Improved	36%	100	36
Stayed the same	40%	50	20
Deteriorated	23%	0	0
Can't say	1%	--	INDEX SCORE 56

Please note that the horizontal (x) axis of the index score bar charts in this report is displayed on a scale from 20 to 100.

Appendix A: Margins of error



The sample size for the 2025 State-wide Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey for Ararat Rural City Council was n=400. Unless otherwise noted, this is the total sample base for all reported charts and tables.

The maximum margin of error on a sample of approximately n=400 interviews is +/-4.8% at the 95% confidence level for results around 50%. Margins of error will be larger for any sub-samples. As an example, a result of 50% can be read confidently as falling midway in the range 45.2% - 54.8%.

Maximum margins of error are listed in the table below, based on a population of 9,700 people aged 18 years or over for Ararat Rural City Council, according to ABS estimates.

Demographic	Actual survey sample size	Weighted base	Maximum margin of error at 95% confidence interval
Ararat Rural City Council	400	400	+/-4.8
Men	210	213	+/-6.7
Women	189	186	+/-7.1
Ararat	308	314	+/-5.5
Lake Bolac	19	21	+/-23.1
Elmhurst	19	17	+/-23.1
18-34 years	43	93	+/-15.1
35-49 years	46	84	+/-14.6
50-64 years	86	61	+/-10.6
65+ years	225	161	+/-6.5

Appendix A: Index score significant difference calculation



The test applied to the Indexes was an Independent Mean Test, as follows:

$$Z \text{ Score} = (\$1 - \$2) / \text{Sqrt} ((\$5^2 / \$3) + (\$6^2 / \$4))$$

Where:

- \$1 = Index Score 1
- \$2 = Index Score 2
- \$3 = unweighted sample count 1
- \$4 = unweighted sample count 2
- \$5 = standard deviation 1
- \$6 = standard deviation 2

All figures can be sourced from the detailed cross tabulations.

The test was applied at the 95% confidence interval, so if the Z Score was greater than +/- 1.954 the scores are significantly different.

Appendix B: Further project information



J W S R E S E A R C H 129

Appendix B: Further information



Further information about the report and explanations about the State-wide Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey can be found in this section including:

- Background and objectives
- Analysis and reporting
- Glossary of terms

Detailed survey tabulations

Detailed survey tabulations are available in supplied Excel file.

Contacts

For further queries about the conduct and reporting of the 2025 State-wide Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey, please contact JWS Research on

(03) 8685 8555 or via email:

admin@jwsresearch.com

Appendix B: Survey methodology and sampling



The 2025 results are compared with previous years, as detailed below:

- 2024, n=400 completed interviews, conducted in the period of 29th January – 18th March.
- 2023, n=400 completed interviews, conducted in the period of 27th January – 19th March.
- 2022, n=400 completed interviews, conducted in the period of 27th January – 24th March.
- 2021, n=401 completed interviews, conducted in the period of 28th January – 18th March.
- 2020, n=401 completed interviews, conducted in the period of 30th January – 22nd March.
- 2019, n=408 completed interviews, conducted in the period of 1st February – 30th March.
- 2018, n=400 completed interviews, conducted in the period of 1st February – 30th March.
- 2017, n=400 completed interviews, conducted in the period of 1st February – 30th March.
- 2016, n=400 completed interviews, conducted in the period of 1st February – 30th March.

Minimum quotas of gender within age groups were applied during the fieldwork phase. Post-survey weighting was then conducted to ensure accurate representation of the age and gender profile of the Ararat Rural City Council area.

Any variation of +/-1% between individual results and net scores in this report or the detailed survey tabulations is due to rounding. In reporting, '—' denotes not mentioned and '0%' denotes mentioned by less than 1% of respondents. 'Net' scores refer to two or more response categories being combined into one category for simplicity of reporting.

This survey was conducted by Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) as a representative random probability survey of residents aged 18+ years in Ararat Rural City Council.

Survey sample matched to the demographic profile of Ararat Rural City Council as determined by the most recent ABS population estimates was purchased from an accredited supplier of publicly available phone records, including up to 55% mobile phone numbers to cater to the diversity of residents within Ararat Rural City Council, particularly younger people.

A total of n=400 completed interviews were achieved in Ararat Rural City Council. Survey fieldwork was conducted in the period of 28th January – 16th March, 2025.

Appendix B: Analysis and reporting



All participating councils are listed in the State-wide report published on the DGS website. In 2025, 56 of the 79 Councils throughout Victoria participated in this survey. For consistency of analysis and reporting across all projects, Local Government Victoria has aligned its presentation of data to use standard council groupings. Accordingly, the council reports for the community satisfaction survey provide analysis using these standard council groupings. Please note that councils participating across 2012-2025 vary slightly.

Council Groups

Ararat Rural City Council is classified as a Small Rural council according to the following classification list:

- Metropolitan, Interface, Regional Centres, Large Rural & Small Rural.

Councils participating in the Small Rural group are:

- Alpine, Ararat, Benalla, Buloke, Central Goldfields, Gannawarra, Hepburn, Hindmarsh, Indigo, Loddon, Mansfield, Murrindindi, Northern Grampians, Pyrenees, Queenscliffe, Strathbogie, Towong, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack.

Wherever appropriate, results for Ararat Rural City Council for this 2025 State-wide Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey have been compared against other participating councils in the Small Rural group and on a state-wide basis. Please note that council groupings changed for 2015, and as such comparisons to council group results before that time can not be made within the reported charts.

Appendix B: Core, optional and tailored questions



Core, optional and tailored questions

Over and above necessary geographic and demographic questions required to ensure sample representativeness, a base set of questions for the 2025 State-wide Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey was designated as 'Core' and therefore compulsory inclusions for all participating Councils.

These core questions comprised:

- Overall performance last 12 months (Overall performance)
- Value for money in services and infrastructure (Value for money)
- Contact in last 12 months (Contact)
- Rating of contact (Customer service)
- Overall council direction last 12 months (Council direction)
- Community consultation and engagement (Consultation)
- Decisions made in the interest of the community (Making community decisions)
- Condition of sealed local roads (Sealed local roads)
- Waste management

Reporting of results for these core questions can always be compared against other participating councils in the council group and against all participating councils state-wide. Alternatively, some questions in the 2025 State-wide Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey were optional. Councils also had the ability to ask tailored questions specific only to their council.

Appendix B: Analysis and reporting



Reporting

Every council that participated in the 2025 State-wide Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey receives a customised report. In addition, the State government is supplied with this State-wide summary report of the aggregate results of 'Core' and 'Optional' questions asked across all council areas surveyed, which is available at:

<https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/our-programs/council-community-satisfaction-survey>

Tailored questions commissioned by individual councils are reported only to the commissioning council and not otherwise shared unless by express written approval of the commissioning council.

Appendix B: Glossary of terms



Core questions: Compulsory inclusion questions for all councils participating in the CSS.

CSS: 2025 Victorian Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey.

Council group: One of five classified groups, comprising: metropolitan, interface, regional centres, large rural and small rural.

Council group average: The average result for all participating councils in the council group.

Highest / lowest: The result described is the highest or lowest result across a particular demographic sub-group e.g. men, for the specific question being reported. Reference to the result for a demographic sub-group being the highest or lowest does not imply that it is significantly higher or lower, unless this is specifically mentioned.

Index score: A score calculated and represented as a score out of 100 (on a 0 to 100 scale). This score is sometimes reported as a figure in brackets next to the category being described, e.g. men 50+ (60).

Optional questions: Questions which councils had an option to include or not.

Percentages: Also referred to as 'detailed results', meaning the proportion of responses, expressed as a percentage.

Sample: The number of completed interviews, e.g. for a council or within a demographic sub-group.

Significantly higher / lower: The result described is significantly higher or lower than the comparison result based on a statistical significance test at the 95% confidence limit. If the result referenced is statistically higher or lower then this will be specifically mentioned, however not all significantly higher or lower results are referenced in summary reporting.

State-wide average: The average result for all participating councils in the State.

Tailored questions: Individual questions tailored by and only reported to the commissioning council.

Weighting: Weighting factors are applied to the sample for each council based on available age and gender proportions from ABS census information to ensure reported results are proportionate to the actual population of the council, rather than the achieved survey sample.

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Director of Client Services
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4.2 2024/2025 CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM - MAY 2025

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 21320

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council has approved its 2024/2025 Capital Works Program as a pivotal component of the current budget. With a substantial capital works investment totalling \$15.513 million, the budget primarily targets infrastructure enhancements.

Key initiatives include:

- Mount William Road Stage Two Construction - supported by Federal Government funding.
- Buangor Ben Nevis Road Stage One Construction - beginning from the Western Highway section for approximately 1.5 kilometres
- Urban Gravel to Seal Road Upgrades continuing to upgrade accessibility across urban areas.
- Maintenance of Footpaths, Drainage, and Kerb and Channel

These projects underscore the Council's commitment to improving local infrastructure and fostering community development in the 2024/2025 fiscal year.

DISCUSSION

Council's 2024/2025 Capital Works Program marks a significant shift from previous years, reintroducing larger road and bridge construction projects post-pandemic. The program's budget has increased by \$6 million, with substantial state and federal funding, alongside smaller targeted works.

The focus for 2024/2025 remains on renewing and updating Council assets, leveraging in-house capabilities, and supporting local employment and contractors.

Key areas include:

- Enhanced roads reseal program.
- Urban drainage improvements
- Footpath network upgrades
- Major urban road gravel to seal program
- Stage two of Mt William Road Reconstruction
- Roads to Recovery funded projects (Webb Street & McCrows Road Bridge)

Budget Status:

As of 03 June 2025, 61% of the budget is expended.

Buangor Ben Nevis Road and Mt William Road have both received their cultural heritage management plan. The additional resealing works have been completed and OTTA seal works are due to be completed by 30 June 2025.

The works on Churchill Avenue funded through the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Funding will be completed by 30 June 2025, meeting the funding requirements.

With the Yarram Gap Road fires it is likely that our capital works budget will again be affected with emergency works being a priority in early 2025. Construction on Churchill Avenue is continuing with utilities and service provision being undertaken and footpath works ongoing.

	Budget	Committed/ Contracted	Expended	%	Notes
PROPERTY CAPITAL	-				
Property Capital	\$270,000		\$241,992	91%	Works have been completed for the resurfacing of the Pomonal Tennis Courts, replacement of windows at the Town Hall in the Arts & Crafts Room, painting of the Maroona Rec Reserve and new touch screen kiosks.
Ararat Library Upgrade	\$200,000		\$227,859	114%	Works have been complete.
Tatyoan Oval, Drainage, Irrigation & Resurfacing	\$333,500 \$83,500 Council \$250,000 CFNP		\$355,562	108%	Aqualines Irrigation Pty Ltd have completed the works with the new pump connections to the reservoir to be completed before commencement of the football season.
TOTAL PROPERTY			\$825,413	103%	
PLANT & EQUIPMENT					
Book stock - Library Book Replacement	\$40,000		\$41,261	103%	Fully expended for 2024/2025
TOTAL PLANT & EQUIPMENT			\$41,261	103%	
ROADS			-	-	
Gravel Road Sheeting, Widening & Alternative Sealing	\$1,800,000	-	\$2,813,555	104%	<p>Resheeting, widening and alternative seal works have been completed on a number of roads including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alexandra Oval resheeting • Geelong Road Shoulders • Bowen Place (OTTA) • Railway Road (OTTA) • Greenhill Drive (OTTA) • Warrayatkin Road (OTTA) • Nott Road (OTTA) • Leach Road (OTTA) • Grahams Road (OTTA) • Tunnel Road (OTTA) • Sugarloaf Road (OTTA) • Tatyoan North Road (OTTA) • Old Brewery Road (OTTA)

					Additional resheeting/OTTA seal works have been completed in April and May 2025.
Reseal Program	\$1,000,000	-	\$2,004,411	200%	Reseals for 2024/25 and 2025/26 have been completed in full.
Mt William Road (24/25 - HSVPP Funding)	\$6,250,000	-	\$156,193	2%	The CHMP has been received for this project. Inception meeting with the RAP group has been arranged. Works will commence soon after this time. The EMAC CHMP has been received for works over Fiery Creek.
Buangor Ben Nevis Road	\$2,143,000		\$159,490	7%	Plans and technical reporting have been completed. The cultural heritage management plan has been received. Finalisation of the native vegetation offsets is progressing.
Weighbridge Place, Lake Bolac			\$134,772		Asphalting works at Weighbridge Place have been completed. The intersection with Mortlake Ararat Road was in poor condition and required the upgrade to withstand the heavy vehicle use in the industrial area.
Churchill Avenue, Ararat	\$800,000	\$338,450	\$341,804	43%	Concrete footpaths are complete, road surface removal has been undertaken, stabilisation is commencing and kerb and channel works are underway. Works are to be completed by 30 June 2025 in line with LRCI funding.
Webb Street, Ararat	\$700,000		\$12,534	2%	Works will be undertaken in conjunction with works on Churchill Avenue.
Urban Road Gravel to Seal	\$700,00		\$1,008,058	144%	<p>Works for this year's program have been completed at</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bailey Lane • Currajong Ave/McLellan Street • ROW Dawson/High Streets • Mulcahy Road • Young Street. <p>Multiple design works are being finished for the coming years programs which will be prioritised by a matrix to be presented to Council soon.</p>
Major Patching	\$100,000	\$	\$72,421	72%	Priority works have been completed in November 24.

					Other works are currently being prioritised.
Bridges	\$80,000		\$109,692	137%	The Buangor Ben Nevis Road Bridge 1 project is currently out to tender with 35 downloads. This is funded under roads to recovery funding. These works include McCrows Road Bridge which will be undertaken with Roads to Recovery funding as approved in January 2025. Other bridge strengthening works are being investigated and estimated for upcoming programs.
Footpath Renewal Program	\$400,000		\$443,531	111%	Council's footpath program has been fully expended. Other costs within this budget include works on Tunnel Track, Pomonal which was a funded project and make up part of the overrun.
Urban Drainage Works	\$750,000		\$387,612	52%	Drainage works are progressing with works currently completed at Ararat Cemetery and Thompson and Kneale Street and Queen Street Stormwater. Works on the main drain are being compiled for completion.
Kerb and Channel	\$239,000	\$84,500	\$309,472	129%	Committed works for Kerb and Channel in George Road is due for completion by 30 June 2025.
Miscellaneous			\$367,109		These works include finalisation of works at Gordon Street Reserve and Wilson Street construction and small projects carried over from previous years.
TOTAL INFRASTRUCTURE		\$422,950	\$8,320,654	59%	
TOTAL CAPITAL WORKS		\$422,950	\$9,187,328	61%	

Current Projects	Funded Budget	Committed/Contracted	Expended	%	Notes
Buangor Cobb & Co Heritage Grant	\$60,000		\$514		Works are expected to commence in the new Financial Year with works to be undertaken by Ararat Maintenance Plumbing.
Ararat Pony Club - Covered Sports Area	\$1,490,000		\$13,235		Plans are currently being finalised for this project to go to tender.

School Safety Funding - Banfield Street, Ararat	\$19,009		\$3,221		Works on the school crossing will be completed by 30 June 2025.
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There are also projects that were funded in the 2023/2024 budget that have extended beyond the single financial year. The committed expenditure includes contracts entered for construction of various elements of the projects. The table below provides a summary of these projects:

	Budget	Previously Expended Funds	Committed/Contracted	Total Expended	%	Notes
Mt William Road	\$1,000,000	\$313,911		\$711,325	71%	Work commenced in late May 2024. The works have been set out, tree and stabilising works have been completed. There were significant soft spots found within the area and these have been remedied. Final works include class A stone and sealing works.
Buangor Recreation Reserve Kitchen Extension		\$53,849		\$303		The project has been out to the market and came in with a significant price difference between the cost plan and the pricing received from the tenderers. Funding has been received as part of the Tiny Towns Funding Program which will help progress Stage 1 of this project. Council is currently undertaking quotation works with a local commercial builder to try to progress these works with alternative design options to provide better value to the community.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

The key financial drivers align strongly with the thrust of the Council Plan 2021-2025, particularly the following:

- 4.1** Ensure that asset development and renewal during the planning period matches that identified in Council's Asset Plan 2021-2031.
- 4.2** Work directly with asset users to manage and develop new and existing assets.
- 4.3** Deliver infrastructure outcomes that support economic growth, promote community wellbeing and safety and align with Council's financial sustainability.
- 6.1** Deliver responsible budget outcomes, linked to strategy, that deliver value, innovation, and rating fairness.

Budget Implications

The 2024/2025 Capital Works Program represents a significant element of Council's 2024/2025 Budget. In the current civil construction market, it is essential that Council manages capital works expenditure carefully to ensure budget outcomes are met.

Policy/Relevant Law

The 2024/2025 Capital Works Program complies with the program funded in the 2024/2025 Budget.

Sustainability Implications

There are no environmental sustainability implications. Council is mindful of considering new innovative approaches to improve its sustainability and environmental footprint as a part of the Capital Works program.

Risk Assessment

The 2024/2025 Capital Works Program was developed as a mitigation of the financial risks associated with market volatility currently being experienced in the civil and building construction sectors.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Development of the 2024/2025 Capital Works Program represented an agile response to market conditions. A capacity to rework strategy based on a changing environment is a critical element in developing an innovative organisation.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

The 2024/2025 Capital Works Program has been developed as an element of the 2024/2025 Budget. There was extensive community engagement undertaken prior to adoption.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. *That Council receive the Capital Works Program - May 2025 report.*

MOVED CR WATERSTON SECONDED CR JOYCE

That:

1. **That Council receive the Capital Works Program - May 2025 report.**

Cr Waterston and Cr Joyce spoke for the motion

**CARRIED 5/0
5159/25**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

4.3 2025/2026 CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM - DETAILED PLAN

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 21321

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the May 2025 Council meeting the 2025/2026 budget was approved and with that its Capital Works Program which is a pivotal component of the budget. The 2025/26 budget provides a capital works investment totaling \$12.437 million, that primarily targets infrastructure enhancements.

As a part of the capital work delivery, extensive detailed planning is being undertaken for business as usual works, high value held over projects and government funded projects, making up over \$30 million dollars in works for the coming financial year.

This report details the commitment of Council to provide a strong working plan for its ability to deliver a program of this calibre.

DISCUSSION

The 2025/26 capital works budget is made up of a business as usual works including community building projects, road reconstruction projects, bridges, footpaths and drainage. The \$12.437 million allocated in the forthcoming budget includes the funded projects for the new covered sports arena for the Ararat Pony Club, Council contribution to the Ararat Active Transport Bicycle Network and an additional \$1 million to the continuation of works on Buangor Ben Nevis Road.

CAPITAL WORKS BUDGET - WORKS PROGRAM	
DETAIL	BUDGET
<u>BUSINESS AS USUAL</u>	
<u>PROPERTY - BUILDINGS</u>	\$550,000.00
Community Building Projects	
<u>Plant, Machinery and Equipment</u>	
Vehicle Purchases	\$240,000.00
Major Plant Purchases	\$260,000.00
<u>Fixtures, Fittings and Furniture</u>	
Computer Equipment	\$100,000.00
<u>Library Books</u>	
Bookstock - Library Book Replacement	\$40,000.00
INFRASTRUCTURE	
WORK BY OTHERS	
Woorndoo Streatham Road (Moyne Shire with Council's Contribution)	\$683,000.00
GRAVEL ROAD SHEETING & WIDENING - ALTERNATIVE SEALS	\$1,800,000.00

Resheeting All Costs Shoulder Sheeting/Grading	
RESEAL PROGRAM	\$1,000,000.00
ROAD RECONSTRUCTION	
Buangor Ben Nevis Road	\$1,000,000.00
Road Reconstruction Program 25/26	\$2,324,000.00
Buangor Ben Nevis Road Bridge (D&C) - (5) (R2R)	
URBAN ROAD AND LANEWAY SEALING	\$1,000,000.00
Gravel to Seal - Alexandra Avenue	
Gravel to Seal - Coral & McNeill Street	
Gravel to Seal - Maude Street	
MAJOR PATCHING	\$100,000.00
Major Patching	
Dig Outs/Pavement Failure >300mm	
BRIDGES	\$400,000.00
Bridge Strengthening	
Buangor Ben Nevis Road - Bridge Strengthening	
Bellellen Road (Flood) (R2R)	
FOOTPATHS AND CYCLEWAYS	\$400,000.00
Footpath Connections	
Footpath Condition Assessments	
DRAINAGE - URBAN DRAINAGE WORKS	\$750,000.00
Drainage Renewal Works	
Major Culvert Renewal	
Excavate & Relay Culverts - Sealed Roads	
Excavate & Relay Culverts - Gravel Roads	
KERB & CHANNEL	\$300,000.00

Carried over works such as Buangor Ben Nevis Road and Mt William Road reconstructions are due to the works required to be undertaken to receive a cultural heritage management plan and native vegetation approvals. With these certifications now received works will commence in the coming weeks with all works expected to be undertaken through council's in-house infrastructure team.

<u>DETAIL</u>	BUDGET
<u>WORKS CARRIED FORWARD</u>	
Mount William Road (HSVPP) -delay due to CHMP	\$6,250,000.00
Buangor Ben Nevis Road - delay due to CHMP	\$2,143,000.00
Webb Street (R2R)	\$700,000.00
McCrows Road (R2R)	\$200,000.00

Most significantly Council's successful government funding highlights our ability to gain external support for our community and the ability to deliver significant projects and specifically road safety improvements is highlighted in the list below. Some of these projects are currently in progress being

completed by contractors. Some projects will be able to be undertaken by Council's in-house infrastructure team including a number of the safe local roads and streets program works, those that can not be completed in house will be put out to public tender.

DETAIL	BUDGET
FUNDED PROJECTS	
LSIF - Recreation Planning (\$40k SRV/\$15k Council) - 30 May 2026	\$55,000.00
Roadside Pest Plant and Animal	\$76,767.00
Lake Bolac Kindergarten Car Park	\$80,339.00
Safe Local Roads and Streets Program	
Road - View Point, Tobin, Taylor St Intersection	\$224,000.00
Road - Ingor Steet	\$110,000.00
Road - King Street	\$110,000.00
Road - View Point & High Street Intersection	\$117,000.00
Road - Moore & Princes Street Intersection	\$131,000.00
Road - Vincent Street & Alexandra Ave	\$321,000.00
Road - Queen St & Moore Street (Roundabout)	\$548,000.00
Pedestrian Safety Program (IP43)	
Barkly Street - Raised Crossing	\$312,232.00
High Street - Raised Crossing	
Ararat Active Transport Bicycle Network	\$399,000.00
Queen Street Housing Support Program	\$7,380,000.00
Community Road Safety Action Plan	\$49,540.00
Pomonal Community Hall Battery Project	\$148,760.00
Unlocking Ararat North East	\$85,000.00
Buangor Cobb & Co Heritage Grant	\$60,000.00
Ararat Pony Club - Covered Sports Arena	\$1,490,000.00
Centenary Park - Dog Park	\$112,000.00
Buangor Recreation Reserve Pavilion Redevelopment	\$270,000.00
Jack and Jill Kindergarten Redevelopment	\$821,000.00

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

The key financial drivers align strongly with the thrust of the Council Plan 2025-2029, particularly the following:

- 4.1** Ensure that asset development and renewal during the planning period matches that identified in Council's Asset Plan 2025-2035.
- 4.2** Work directly with asset users to manage and develop new and existing assets.
- 4.3** Deliver infrastructure outcomes that support economic growth, are mindful of intergenerational equity and enhance community wellbeing and safety. These approaches will explore strategic use of debt to fund long-term assets and ensure Council's financial sustainability.
- 6.1** Deliver responsible budget outcomes, linked to strategy, that deliver value, innovation, and rating fairness.

Budget Implications

The 2025/2026 Capital Works Program represents a significant element of Council's 2025/2026 Budget. In the current civil construction market, it is essential that Council manages capital works expenditure carefully to ensure budget outcomes are met.

Policy/Relevant Law

The 2025/2026 Capital Works Program complies with the program funded in the 2025/2026 Budget.

Sustainability Implications

There are no environmental sustainability implications. Council is mindful of considering new innovative approaches to improve its sustainability and environmental footprint as a part of the Capital Works program.

Risk Assessment

The 2025/2026 Capital Works Program was developed as a mitigation of the financial risks associated with market volatility currently being experienced in the civil and building construction sectors.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Development of the 2025/2026 Capital Works Program represented an agile response to market conditions. A capacity to rework strategy based on a changing environment is a critical element in developing an innovative organisation.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

The 2025/2026 Capital Works Program has been developed as an element of the 2025/2026 Budget. There was extensive community engagement undertaken prior to adoption.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. *That Council receive the Capital Works Program 2025/26 - Detailed Plan*

MOVED CR JOYCE SECONDED CR KAUR

That:

1. **That Council receive the Capital Works Program 2025/26 - Detailed Plan**

Cr Joyce and Cr Kaur spoke for the motion

**CARRIED 5/0
5160/25**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

4.4 MAJOR PLANT RENEWAL PROGRAM

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 21322

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council's Operations and Infrastructure Department undertakes a range of operational services associated with the management of parks and gardens, roads, bridges, other civil infrastructure, as well as buildings and facilities. Heavy vehicles and plant are used by depot staff in delivering these services.

The cost-of-service delivery includes an internal charge for both the operational and the renewal expenses of plant and vehicles. These funds are held in a reserve. Renewal of plant is paid for from this reserve. A long-term renewal plan has been updated to forecast the cost of the item of plant for its total lifecycle.

This plan is based on the service life by class of plant with consideration of current utilisation, cost of replacement with a modern equivalent item and a five (5) year operating cost of the vehicle including operator employment costs, through both lease and capital purchase options.

DISCUSSION

The following pages shows the calculations for replacement and five year operating costs of the following vehicles:

- Unit 2360 - 2012 Rosmech Street Sweeper - replaced with equivalent vehicle
- Unit 2380 - 2010 UD Nissan Tipper - replaced with equivalent vehicle
- Unit 2190 - 2013 Mack Prime Mover - replaced with a Prime Mover and Live Floor Trailer
- Unit 4840 - 2018 Multipac Multi Tyre Roller - replaced with second-hand equivalent
- Unit 4870 - 2018 Multipac Multi Tyre Roller - replaced with second-hand equivalent
- Unit 4880 - 2018 Multipac Multi Tyre Roller - replaced with Tractor and Tow Behind Roller
- Unit 4670 - 1979 Highgate Water Tanker - replaced with new Water Tanker

Note:

- Second hand vehicles cannot be leased

It is requested that Council endorse the purchase or lease of the above vehicles after consideration of the following:

**UNIT 236 - 2012 ROSMECH SWEEPER
LIKE FOR LIKE REPLACEMENT**

CURRENT VEHICLE EXPENSES (21/22 TO CURRENT)

TOTAL 21/22	\$104,317
TOTAL 22/23	\$123,763
TOTAL 23/24	\$76,613
TOTAL 24/25 (FORECAST)	\$110,370
4 YR AVERAGE	<u>\$103,766</u>

Calculations based on:

10823 km 3 year average - 2021/2022 to 2023/2024
895 hours 3 year average - 2021/2022 to 2023/2024

CAPITAL PURCHASE

5 year estimated cost to Council	\$786,335
Average Cost Per Year	\$157,267

LEASING COSTS

5 year estimated cost to Council	\$463,088
Average Cost Per Year	\$92,618

Capital Cost	\$351,161
Trade In	-\$70,000

Leasing Costs (Purchase + Registration + 9%)	\$382,765
Trade In	-\$70,000

5 year Operational Costs

Employee Cost (inc. oncosts & allowances)	\$ 314,556
Fuel - based on ave km's	\$ 97,236
Plant Hire - based on ave hrs	-\$289,652
Registration	\$3,690
Insurance	\$7,500
Tyres	\$10,314
Servicing	\$10,358
Depreciation Costs	\$351,161

Employee Cost (inc. oncosts & allowances)	\$ 314,556
Fuel - based on ave kms	\$ 97,236
Plant Hire - based on ave hrs	-\$289,652
Insurance	\$7,500
Tyres	\$10,314
Servicing	\$10,358

UNIT 2380 - 2010 UD PK10 Nissan (Reg: 1UR2PR)

LIKE FOR LIKE REPLACEMENT

CURRENT VEHICLE EXPENSES (21/22 TO CURRENT)

TOTAL 21/22	\$ 48,204
TOTAL 22/23	\$ 46,552
TOTAL 23/24	-\$ 16,578
TOTAL 24/25 (FORECAST)	\$ 3,880
4 YR AVERAGE	\$ 20,514

Calculations based on:

12883 km 4 year average - 2021/2022 to 2024/2025
743 hours 4 year average - 2021/2022 to 2024/2025

CAPITAL PURCHASE

LEASING COSTS

5 year estimated cost to Council	\$ 609,523
Average Cost Per Year	\$ 121,905

5 year estimated cost to Council	\$ 348,771
Average Cost Per Year	\$ 69,754

Capital Costs	\$ 276,000
Trade In	-\$ 45,000

Leasing Costs (Purchase + Registration + 9%)	\$ 300,840
Trade In	-\$ 45,000

5 year Operational Costs

Employee Cost (inc. oncosts & allowances)	\$ 258,949
Fuel - based on ave km's 21-24	\$ 30,589
Plant Hire - based on ave hrs 21-24	-\$ 223,140
Registration	\$ 9,592
Insurance	\$ 10,000
Tyres	\$ 8,765
Servicing	\$ 7,768
Depreciation Costs	\$ 276,000

Employee Cost (inc. oncosts & allowances)	\$ 258,949
Fuel - based on ave km's 21-24	\$ 30,589
Plant Hire - based on ave hrs 21-24	-\$ 223,140
Insurance	\$ 10,000
Tyres	\$ 8,765
Servicing	\$ 7,768

UNIT 2190 - 2013 MACK PRIME MOVER

REPLACEMENT WITH PRIME MOVER AND LIVE FLOOR TRAILER

CURRENT VEHICLE EXPENSES (21/22 TO CURRENT)

CAPITAL	TOTAL 21/22	\$ 55,130	
	TOTAL 22/23	\$ 98,582	
	TOTAL 23/24	\$ 177,827	<i>Calculations based on:</i>
	TOTAL 24/25 (FORECAST)	\$ 120,464	36053 km 4 year average - 2021/2022 to 2024/2025
			848 hours 4 year average - 2021/2022 to 2024/2025
	4 YR AVERAGE	<u>\$ 113,001</u>	

CAPITAL PURCHASE

LEASING COSTS

5 year estimated cost to Council	\$ 598,183	5 year estimated cost to Council	\$ 118,615
Average Cost Per Year	\$ 119,637	Average Cost Per Year	\$ 23,723

Capital Costs	\$ 441,063
Trade In	-\$ 70,000

Leasing Costs (Purchase + Registration + 9%)	\$ 480,759
Trade In	-\$ 70,000

5 year Operational Costs

Employee Cost (inc. oncosts & allowances)	\$ 370,259
Fuel - based on ave km's 21-24	\$ 115,112
Plant Hire - based on ave hrs 21-24	-\$ 834,952
Registration	\$ 78,201
Insurance	\$ 12,000
Tyres	\$ 35,069
Servicing	\$ 10,358
Depreciation Costs	\$ 441,063

Employee Cost (inc. oncosts & allowances)	\$ 370,259
Fuel - based on ave km's 21-24	\$ 115,112
Plant Hire - based on ave hrs 21-24	-\$ 834,952
Insurance	\$ 12,000
Tyres	\$ 35,069
Servicing	\$ 10,358

**UNIT 4840 - MULTIPAC 524H MULTI TYRED ROLLER (REG: 1NJ1AN)
REPLACE WITH SECONDHAND EQUIVALENT**

CURRENT VEHICLE EXPENSES (21/22 TO CURRENT)

TOTAL 21/22	\$ 26,081
TOTAL 22/23	\$ 48,250
TOTAL 23/24	\$ 41,238
TOTAL 24/25 (FORECAST)	\$ 66,514
4 YR AVERAGE	\$ 45,521

CAPITAL PURCHASE

5 year estimated cost to Council	\$ 274,090
Average Cost Per Year	\$ 54,818

Comprising	Capital Costs	\$ 85,000
	Trade In	-\$ 50,000

5 year Operational Costs

Employee Cost (inc. oncosts & allowances)	\$ 281,655
Fuel - based on ave km's 21-24	\$ 30,420
Plant Hire - based on ave hrs 21-24	-\$ 175,769
Registration	\$ 560
Insurance	\$ 3,645
Tyres	\$ 8,400
Servicing	\$ 5179
Depreciation Costs	\$ 85,000

Calculations based on:

2698 km - 4 year average - 2021/2022 to 2024/2025

689 hours - 4 year average - 2021/2022 to 2024/2025

**UNIT 4870 - MULTIPAC 524H MULTI TYRED ROLLER (REG: 1MT5MV)
REPLACE WITH SECONDHAND EQUIVALENT**

CURRENT VEHICLE EXPENSES (21/22 TO CURRENT)

TOTAL 21/22	\$ 24,606
TOTAL 22/23	\$ 78,370
TOTAL 23/24	\$ 29,726
TOTAL 24/25 (FORECAST)	\$ 59,243
4 YR AVERAGE	\$ 47,986

CAPITAL PURCHASE

5 year estimated cost to Council	\$ 255,155
Average Cost Per Year	\$ 51,031

Capital Costs	\$ 85,000
Trade In	-\$ 50,000

5 year Operational Costs

Employee Cost (inc. oncosts & allowances)	\$ 250,118
Fuel - based on ave km's 21-24	\$ 48,663
Plant Hire - based on ave hrs 21-24	-\$ 183,999
Registration	\$ 560
Insurance	\$ 3,645
Tyres	\$ 8,400
Servicing	\$ 7,768
Depreciation Costs	\$ 85,000

Calculations based on:

4136 km - 4 year average - 2021/2022 to 2024/2025

721 hours - 4 year average - 2021/2022 to 2024/2025

**UNIT 4670 - 1979 HIGHGATE WATER TANKER (REG: 50814S)
LIKE FOR LIKE REPLACEMENT**

CURRENT VEHICLE EXPENSES (21/22 TO CURRENT)

TOTAL 21/22	\$ 28,672
TOTAL 22/23	\$ 30,777
TOTAL 23/24	\$ 49,431
TOTAL 24/25 (FORECAST)	\$ 37,272
4 YR AVERAGE	\$ 36,538

CAPITAL PURCHASE

5 year estimated cost to Council	\$ 357,241
Average Cost Per Year	\$ 35,724

Capital Costs	\$ 88,000
Trade In	-\$ 15,000

5 year Operational Costs

Employee Cost (inc. oncosts & allowances)	\$ 232,998
Fuel - based on ave km's 21-24	NA
Plant Hire - based on ave hrs 21-24	-\$ 64,875
Registration	\$ 10,561
Insurance	\$ 4,500
Tyres	\$ 7,878
Servicing	\$ 5,179
Depreciation Costs	\$ 88,000

Calculations based on travel data for Prime Mover 2240 used for water tanker:

15257 km - 4 year average - 2021/2022 to 2024/2025

519 hours - 4 year average - 2021/2022 to 2024/2025

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

The key financial drivers align strongly with the thrust of the Council Plan 2025-2029, particularly the following:

- 4.1** Ensure that asset development and renewal during the planning period matches that identified in Council's Asset Plan 2025-2035.
- 4.2** Work directly with asset users to manage and develop new and existing assets.
- 4.3** Deliver infrastructure outcomes that support economic growth, are mindful of intergenerational equity and enhance community wellbeing and safety. These approaches will explore strategic use of debt to fund long-term assets and ensure Council's financial sustainability.
- 6.1** Deliver responsible budget outcomes, linked to strategy, that deliver value, innovation, and rating fairness.

Budget Implications

The 2025/2026 Capital Works Program represents a significant element of Council's 2025/2026 Budget, major plant replacement makes up part of this budget.

Policy/Relevant Law

- Ararat Rural City Council Asset Management Plan
- Ararat Rural City Council Procurement Policy

Sustainability Implications

There are no environmental sustainability implications. Council is mindful of considering new innovative approaches to improve its sustainability and environmental footprint as a part of the Capital Works program.

Risk Assessment

The 2025/2026 Capital Works Program was developed as a mitigation of the financial risks associated with market volatility currently being experienced in the civil and building construction sectors.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Development of the 2025/2026 Capital Works Program represented an agile response to market conditions. A capacity to rework strategy based on a changing environment is a critical element in developing an innovative organisation.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is undertaken as part of the plan development.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. Council receive the Major Plant Renewal Program Report

MOVED CR JOYCE

SECONDED CR R ARMSTRONG

That:

1. Council receive the Major Plant Renewal Program Report

Cr Joyce, Cr R Armstrong and Cr Sanders spoke for the motion.

CARRIED 5/0

516125

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments relating to this item

4.5 SAFE LOCAL ROADS AND STREETS PROGRAM

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: MAJOR PROJECTS LEAD
DEPARTMENT: INFRASTRUCTURE/ENGINEERING
REFERENCE: 21323

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Safe Local Roads and Streets Program (SLRSP) is a collaborative effort between Victoria's Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) and the Transport Accident Commission (TAC). The program aims to support Victorian Councils in planning and implementing safe system infrastructure improvements across their local networks.

Under this program, each council can apply for an initial funding amount of \$2 million from a total pool of \$200 million. There is also the possibility of securing additional funding for high-value or innovative projects. Notably, there is no co-contribution requirement from the Council. Councils are encouraged to propose projects slightly exceeding the preliminary funding amount, as well-conceived projects are likely to receive approval.

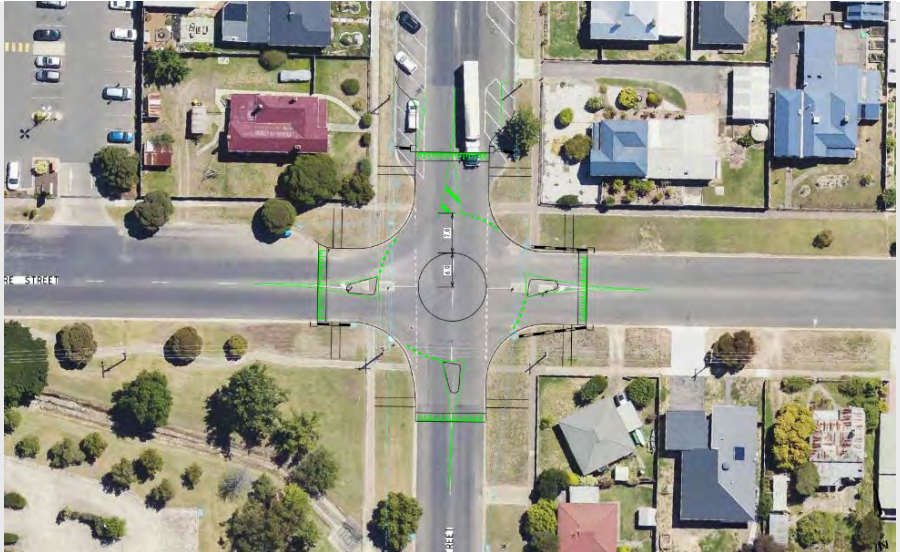

In April 2025 Council submitted their functional designs to the Traffic Accident Commission and Department of Transport and Planning for approval. This report provides detail of the accepted projects and the funding timelines for completion.



DISCUSSION

A project commencement workshop was hosted by the Council in late May 2024, where preliminary project concepts were proposed by our engineering team, and the program's scope was discussed. Since then, the Council's team has worked with SMEC to develop a suite of projects that address key areas of concern and complies with program constraints, notably the restriction that no works be carried out on VicRoads managed roads.

Designs and funding applications were submitted to the funding bodies in April 2025 and received funding approval in May 2025. Each project is to be completed within 18 months from the date of approval, being October, 2026. The funding received via this program totals \$1,561,000.

The approved projects are presented in the table on subsequent pages. The diagrams shown are preliminary concepts, final detailed designs are to be complete by 31 July 2025. These will be completed by both Council's in-house infrastructure team and larger projects by contractors.

	Status	Location	Funding	Diagram
Project 1	Approved	<p>Queen St/Moore St, Ararat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised intersection with mountable roundabout • Addresses severe side impact crash risk (3 recorded in last 5 years) • Maintains truck accessibility • Potential for pedestrian priority crossings 	\$548,000	
Project 2	Approved	<p>View Point St/High St, Ararat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-align kerb and install splitter islands • Speed cushions on View Point • Removes see-through effect of intersection 	\$117,000	

	Status	Location	Funding	Diagram
Project 3	Approved	Vincent St/Alexandra Ave, Ararat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised Intersection • Pedestrian priority crossing between Alexandra Avenue & Gardens 	\$321,000	
Project 4	Approved	Moore St & Princes St, Ararat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wombat Crossings to provide pedestrian priority between schools and on Moore St 	\$131,000	

	Status	Location	Funding	Diagram
Project 5	Approved	Ingor St, Ararat King St, Ararat (Barkly St Intersections) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wombat Crossing to provide pedestrian priority between post office and CBD 	\$220,000	
Project 6	Approved	View Point Street, Tobin St & Taylor St, Ararat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raised priority Crossing 	\$224,000	No plan available

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

4. Developing and Maintaining Key Enabling Infrastructure
We will ensure that we plan, fund and develop new infrastructure in ways that deliver strong public value. Existing infrastructure will be managed, renewed and maintained to ensure that it continues to serve identified public needs.

Budget Implications

These projects will be captured as a part of the 2025/26 Capital Works Program, with funds adding to Council's overall budget.

Policy/Relevant Law

- Road Management Plan
- Road Safety Act
- ARCC Procurement Policy
- ARCC Asset Management Policy

Sustainability Implications

These projects will improve road safety for all users and provide a more sustainable road infrastructure for the council.

Risk Assessment

Low Risk - all projects will be managed by Council Engineers ensuring compliance to plans and current regulations.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Extensive stakeholder engagement has been undertaken as a part of the planning and funding process of this project.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. Council receive the Safe Local Roads and Streets Program report

MOVED CR WATERSTON SECONDED CR KAUR

That:

1. Council receive the Safe Local Roads and Streets Program report

Cr Waterston, Cr Kaur and Cr Sanders spoke for the motion

**CARRIED 5/0
5162/25**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

4.6 ARARAT RURAL CITY SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION STRATEGY UPDATE

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: STRATEGIC PROJECT LEAD
DEPARTMENT: CEO OFFICE
REFERENCE: 21324

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This information report provides an update to the development of the new Ararat Rural City Sport and Active Recreation Strategy. Community and stakeholder consultation and engagement has commenced and Council are seeking the community's feedback to identify and address the community's sport and active recreation needs and priorities.

Community members are invited to attend Community Drop-in Sessions in Pomonal, Lake Bolac and Ararat in late June and provide submissions via the online survey or written submissions by 30 June 2025. Stakeholder meetings with clubs and organisations will also occur during June/July.

DISCUSSION

Ararat Rural City Council is developing a new ten-year Sport and Active Recreation Strategy for the municipality and has appointed Communityvibe to prepare the strategy.

The consultation and engagement phase of the project has commenced with the launch of the Engage Ararat website for this project, accessed via this [link](#), and the opening of the online survey and written submissions. Community members are also invited to attend drop-in session to share their thoughts and ideas. These sessions will be held in front of the following venues:

Date	Time	Location
Tuesday 24 June 2025	9.00am-11.00am	Grampians Store Pomonal
Saturday 28 June 2025	10.30am - 12.30pm	Lake Bolac Supermarket
Saturday 28 June 2025	1.30pm - 3.30pm	Alexandra Oval Community Centre (during the football / netball matches held that day).

Clubs and organisations will be invited to attend meetings during June / July to share their ideas and thoughts about sport and active recreation facilities, programs and services and to identify the best way to work in partnership with one another.

Following the consultation and engagement phase, the project team will review community feedback, along with other information such as demographic projections, facility audit, trends, existing policies and strategies, etc, to prepare a draft report.

This Ararat Rural City Sport and Active Recreation Strategy is supported by the Victorian Government.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

5. ENHANCING COMMUNITY LIFE
We will work with the communities of Ararat Rural City to maintain social cohesion, support community activity and cultural life, and enhance safety.
- 5.1 Open up Council's arts and culture assets to greater community participation, ownership and engagement in decision-making.
- 5.2 Develop models of volunteering that recognise, support and properly utilise the skills that community volunteers bring to community life.
- 5.3 Partner with community groups, not-for-profits, and Traditional Owner organisations to develop Ararat Rural City into a more inclusive, welcoming, tolerant and diverse community.

Budget Implications

There are no budget implications arising from this report

Policy/Relevant Law

None identified

Sustainability Implications

There are no economic, social or environmental implications in relation to this report.

Risk Assessment

None identified

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

This report provides an update on the stakeholder collaboration and community engagement phase of the development of the Ararat Rural City Sport and Active Recreation Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. Council receive the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy update

MOVED CR JOYCE

SECONDED CR R ARMSTRONG

That:

1. Council receive the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy update

Cr Joyce spoke for the motion

**CARRIED 5/0
5163/25**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

4.7 COMMUNITY SUPPORT GRANTS - APRIL 2025

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 21325

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any Conflict of Interest.
No person involved in the preparation of this report has a Conflict of Interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council received 13 applications for the April 2025 round of Community Support Grants. An assessment panel comprising two community members and the Strategic Project Lead assessed the applications and agreed to fund 9 of the applications, all to the full requested amount. The rejected applications were due to the following reasons:

1. Ineligible request due to maintenance work. As the facility is Council owned, finance can be given under building and maintenance budget instead
2. Proposal had less community benefits than other proposals and their request was for building/maintenance which is ineligible. Council to go back to the group and request further information regarding their project
3. Major maintenance work which is ineligible
4. Suspicious application, ABN only recently registered

DISCUSSION

Community organisations are required to provide matching funding based on cash or in-kind contributions to support their project or event. Infrastructure projects are not included in the new funding guidelines.

Council received 13 applications for the April 2025 round of Community Support Grants. An assessment panel comprising of two community members and the Strategic Project Lead assessed the applications and agreed to fund 9 of the applications, all to the full requested amount.

The successful grants were as follows:

COMMUNITY ORGANISATION	PURPOSE	AMOUNT
Ararat Neighbourhood House	Punjabi Indian community annual festival	\$5000.00
Ararat Show Society Inc	Installation of 15 amp power points and Sensor Light at Ararat Showgrounds	\$5000.00
Australian Plant Society Grampians Group	Pomonal Native Flower Show	\$1650.00
Chalambar Golf Club	Native Shrub and Tree Planting Project - grant received in recent round of Council's Community Grants	\$2260.00
Lake Bolac Eel Festival	2026 Lake Bolac Eel Festival	\$5000.00
Moyston Progress Association	Spread awareness of the facilities at Moyston Recreation Reserve via erecting appropriate signage visible to passing tourists	\$900.00
Moyston Public Parks Committee of Management	Replacement of the inside chairs which, are used by various community groups	\$2600.00

Scouts Victoria - Ararat Scout Group	Equipment for Camping	\$3000.00
The Willaura and District Community Development Group	Willaura Lions Club Playground Upgrade	\$3000.00
TOTAL		\$28,410.00

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

5 Enhancing Community Life

We will work with the communities of Ararat Rural City to maintain social cohesion, support community activity and cultural life, and enhance safety

Budget implications

The grants were all made within existing budgetary allocations

Policy / Relevant Law

Community & Event Support Guidelines

Sustainability Implications

There are no economic, social or environmental implications in relation to the item

Risk Assessment

Risks have been assessed and understood by the grants committee. No unmanaged risks identified at this time.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

The outcome of each grant was made in conjunction between the two external panel members and the Strategic Project Lead.

RECOMMENDATION

That

- Council receive the Community Support Grants - April 2025 report*

MOVED CR WATERSTON SECONDED CR R ARMSTRONG

That

- Council receive the Community Support Grants - April 2025 report**

Cr Waterston spoke for the motion

**CARRIED 5/0
5164/25**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments relating to this item

SECTION 5 - INFORMAL MEETINGS

5.1 COUNCIL BRIEFINGS

AUTHOR'S TITLE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 13039074

OFFICER'S DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Governance Rules state that if there is a meeting of Councillors that:

1. is scheduled or planned for the purpose of discussing the business of *Council* or briefing Councillors;
2. is attended by at least one member of Council staff; and
1. is not a *Council meeting*, *Delegated Committee* meeting or *Community Asset Committee* meeting, the *Chief Executive Officer* must ensure that a summary of the matters discussed at the meeting are:
 - a. tabled at the next convenient *Council meeting*; and
 - b. recorded in the minutes of that *Council meeting*.

DISCUSSION

As a requirement of the Governance Rules, a summary of matters discussed at the Council Briefings held since the last Council Meeting are presented to Council and will be recorded in the minutes.

INFORMAL MEETINGS
Council Briefing held on 10 June 2025

Matters discussed at the briefing:

- Capital Works detailed plan 2025/2026
- Capital Works Program Update
- Major Plant Renewal Program
- Safe Local Roads and Streets Program
- Procurement Exemption – Demolition Works
- Procurement Policy
- Legal issues
- Community Satisfaction Survey Results
- Sport and Active Recreation update
- ESVF
- Annual Plan 2025/2026
- Year 2025 General Valuation
- Community Support Grants Round 2 – April 2025
- Monthly Performance Report
- Building approvals
- Planning approvals under delegation
- CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

The report supports the strategic objective of the Council Plan 2021-2025:

6. STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

We will work hard to build models of governance that place delivering public value at the centre through effective financial management; well measured risk management; and implementation of effective community engagement practices.

- 6.3** Continuously improve Council's community engagement process and practices in line with deliberative engagement practices, while acknowledging the need for a range of different techniques to ensure effective engagement.

Financial

There are no financial impacts for the receiving of Informal Meetings of Councillors.

Policy/Relevant Law

Reporting of Informal Meetings is in line with the requirements of the Governance Rules.

Risk Assessment

Following the requirements of the Governance Rules will ensure that Council meets its legislative requirements.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

A summary of matters discussed at the Council Briefings are presented for community information.

RECOMMENDATION

That

1. the Informal Meetings of Councillors Report be received.

MOVED CR JOYCE

SECONDED CR R ARMSTRONG

That

1. the Informal Meetings of Councillors Report be received.

No Councilors spoke for or against the motion

CARRIED 5/0

5165/25

ATTACHMENTS

The Summary of Council Briefings are provided as Attachment 5.1.

Councillor Briefing Agenda



Date: Tuesday 10 June 2025

Commencement: 5.00 pm

Location: Council Chamber, Shire Offices

Councillors: Cr Jo Armstrong
Cr Rob Armstrong
Cr Peter Joyce
Cr Teli Kaur
Cr Luke Preston
Cr Bob Sanders
Cr Bill Waterston

Officers: CEO, Dr Tim Harrison

Disclosure of Conflict of Interests

Disclosure of Interests are to be made immediately prior to any relevant item being discussed (**Local Government Act 2020 - Section 131 and Chapter 5, Section 6 of the Governance Rules**).

Matters Considered

- 1 Mayor's roundup
- 2 Capital Works detailed plan 2025/2026
- 3 Capital Works Program Update
- 4 Major Plant Renewal program
- 5 Safe Local Roads and Streets Program
- 6 Procurement Exemption - Demolition works
- 7 Procurement Policy
- 8 Legal issues
- 9 Community Satisfaction Survey results
- 10 Sport and Active Recreation update
- 11 ESVF
- 12 Annual Plan 2025/2026
- 13 Year 2025 General Valuation
- 14 Community Support Grants Round 2 - April 2025
- 15 Monthly Performance Report
- 16 Building approvals
- 17 Planning approvals under delegation
- 18 CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee

Dr Tim Harrison

SECTION 6 - COMMITTEE MINUTES/REPORTS

6.1 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING

AUTHOR'S TITLE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 21326

OFFICER'S DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report contains the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on the 3 June 2025.

DISCUSSION

Minutes of Audit and Risk Committee meetings are provided to Council at the first available opportunity after clearance by the Audit and Risk Committee Chairperson. The report contains the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held on 3 June 2025

Council Committees	Councillor representative	Current meeting (as presented)	Next scheduled meeting/s
Audit and Risk Committee	Cr Jo Armstrong	03 June 2025	09 September 2025
Audit and Risk Committee	Cr Bob Sanders	03 June 2025	09 September 2025

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

The report supports the strategic objective of the Council Plan 2025 - 2029:

- 6 Strong and Effective Governance
We will work hard to build models of governance that place delivering public value at their centre through effective financial management, well measured risk management, and implementation of effective community engagement practices
- 6.2 Ensure appropriate risk management is applied to Council and organisational decisions.
Council's internal function is applied to areas of perceived risk.

Budget Implications

No budget impact for the receiving of minutes.

Policy/Legal/Statutory

Section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020* states that Council must establish an Audit and Risk Committee.

Section 6.1 of the *Audit and Risk Committee Charter* states that minutes of Committee meetings will be provided to Council at the first available opportunity after clearance by the Committee Chairperson following each Committee meeting.

Risk Assessment

Council needs to be aware of issues raised in the minutes.

Stakeholder Consultation and Communication

Audit and Risk Committee members.

Councillor representation on Council Committees.
Chief Executive Officer and relevant Council officers.

RECOMMENDATION

That

- 1. the Audit and Risk Committee Meetings minutes of 03 June 2025 be received*

**MOVED CR WATERSTON
SECONDED CR JOYCE**

That

- 1. the Audit and Risk Committee Meetings minutes of 03 June 2025 be received**

No Councillors spoke for or against the motion

**CARRIED 5/0
5166/25**

ATTACHMENTS

The Audit and Risk Committee minutes as listed above are provided as Attachment 6.1



Ararat Rural City



Ararat Rural City

MINUTES

Audit and Risk Committee

Tuesday 3 June 2025

Location: CEO's Office,
59 Vincent St, Ararat

Commencing at 1:00 pm

Audit and Risk Committee:

Cr Jo Armstrong (Mayor)
Cr Bob Sanders
Ms Jessica Adler
Mr Greg Jakob
Ms Janet Dore

In attendance:

Dr Tim Harrison
Mr Bradley Ead
Mr Ryan Schischka
Ms Karissa Hogan
Mrs Chandra Willmott

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AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MINUTES
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SECTION 1 – PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1.1 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies

1.2 DECLARATION OF DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

No disclosures of Interests

1.3 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Internal Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held on 04 March 2025 be received.

MOVED Jessica Adler

SECONDED Greg Jakob

That the Minutes of the Internal Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held on 04 March 2025 be received.

CARRIED

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SECTION 2- CEO UPDATE

2.1 CEO UPDATE – CONFIDENTIAL

The CEOs report will be circulated prior to the meeting

RECOMMENDATION

That the CEO's report be received.

RECEIVED

ATTACHMENTS

CEO Confidential Report provided as Attachment 2.1
Community Vision 2035 and Council Plan 2025-2029 provided as Attachment 2.2
Financial Plan 2025-35 provided as Attachment 2.3
Rating and Revenue Plan 2025-29 provided as Attachment 2.4
Ararat Rural City Budget 2025-26 provided as Attachment 2.5

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SECTION 3- FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORTING

3.1 MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORT – ENDING 30 APRIL 2025

Aligns with Audit and Risk Committee Charter 5.6: Review the appropriateness of the format and content of periodic management financial reports and performance statements.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The financial statements and performance indicators have been prepared for the period ended 30 April 2025.

Based on the information provided by responsible officers and managers Council's overall financial performance is in line with budget.

DISCUSSION

Council must establish and maintain a budgeting and reporting framework that is consistent with the principles of sound financial management.

Key Financial information:

Income Statement (Attachment 1)

The Income Statement measures how well Council has performed from an operating nature. It reports revenues and expenditure from the activities and functions undertaken, with the net effect being a surplus or deficit. Capital expenditure is excluded from this statement, as it is reflected in the Balance Sheet.

Attachment 1 shows that Council generated \$30.707 million in revenue and \$28.005 million in expenses to 30 April 2025. This has resulted in an operating surplus of \$2.702 million for the ten months ended 30 April 2025.

Income

Rates and charges account for 50% of the total budgeted income for 2024/25. Rates and charges are recognised when the rates have been raised, not when the income has been received. An amount of \$17.912 million has been recognised as income for the ten months ended 30 April 2025.

User fees account for 4% of the total budgeted income for 2024/25 and \$1.469 million has been received to 30 April 2025. The majority of this relates to transfer station fees, fitness centre income and commercial waste management charges.

Recurrent Operating Grants total \$8.362 million to 30 April 2025, including \$4.583 million from the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission for general purpose grants and \$2.975 million for the local roads grants.

Non-recurrent Operating Grants total \$1.274 million to 30 April 2025. Council has been successful in obtaining several grants that had not been budgeted for, as detailed in the table below. The amounts shown as unearned income will be treated as income in future accounting periods once the performance obligations of the grant have been met.

Non-Recurrent Operating Grants	Budget 2024/25 \$'000	Income 2024/25 \$'000	Unearned Income \$'000
Ararat Housing Transition	-	-	300
Digital Twin Victoria	-	5	949
Free Public Wi-Fi Services	-	47	1,196

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Supported Playgroups	65	55	-
Ararat Rural City Sport, Active Recreation & Open Space Strategy	-	-	36
CALD Outreach Workers Initiative	-	64	-
Tiny Towns Fund - Pomonal Community Hub	-	83	117
Natural Disaster Relief	-	160	-
Council Support Fund – Pomonal Fires	-	750	-
Centenary Park Dog Park	-	25	-
Other Minor Grants (under \$30,000)	-	85	-
	65	1,274	2,598

Non-recurrent Capital Grants total \$0.474 million to 30 April 2025, as detailed in the table below. The amounts shown as unearned income will be treated as income in future accounting periods once the performance obligations of the grant have been met.

Non-Recurrent Capital Grants	Budget 2024/25 \$'000	Income 2024/25 \$'000	Unearned Income \$'000
Mt William Road reconstruction	5,000	-	-
Back Bolac Road reconstruction	-	229	-
Churchill Avenue reconstruction	843	-	-
Pedestrian Infrastructure Program	-	20	50
Tiny Towns Fund - Buangor Recreation Reserve Pavillion Redevelopment	-	-	50
Tatyoan Oval Upgrade Grant	-	225	-
Tiny Towns Fund - Buangor Cobb & Co Stables	-	-	30
Pony Club Sports Arena	-	-	447
	5,843	474	577

Note

It is important to note the following:

1. Unearned revenue received in prior years has been adjusted between the Original Budget and Current Budget with an additional \$2.936 million for Grants Operating (non-recurrent), \$0.366 million for Grants Capital (recurrent) and \$0.070 million for Grants Capital (non-recurrent) included in the Current Budget on the assumption that each of the grant projects will be completed during the 2024/25 financial year.
2. These changes in the budget, plus the note reported under expenses, create a change in the reported surplus position from a projected surplus of \$8.163 million to a surplus of \$9.205 million for 2024/25. The year-end variance is a deficit of \$1.235 million when the actual year to date expenses are compared to the year to date budget.

Expenses

Employee Costs account for approximately 40% of the total budgeted expenditure for 2024/25. For the ten months ended 30 April 2025 Council has incurred \$9.750 million in employee costs, which includes additional wages for emergency management relief and recovery, and organisation restructure costs. Workcover premiums have increased by \$0.104 million compared to 2023/24.

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Materials and Services account for approximately 29% of the total budgeted expenditure for 2024/25. For the ten months ended 30 April 2025, Council has incurred \$9.580 million in materials and services costs. There are a number of projects, including those carried forward from 2023/24 that are expected to be completed before the end of the financial year.

Depreciation totals \$8.099 million to 30 April 2025. The higher than budgeted depreciation has resulted from increased asset valuations being received as of 30 June 2024 after the budget was finalised.

Note

It is important to note the following:

There has been an increase in expenditure on materials and services from \$8.259 million in the Original Budget to \$10.589 million in the Current Budget for 2024/25. This has resulted from a carry forward amount of \$2.330 million from the 2023/24 financial year surplus and unspent grant funds which will be used for additional activity in 2024/25.

Balance Sheet (Attachment 2)

The Balance Sheet is one of the main financial statements and reports Council's assets, liabilities and equity at a given date, in this case 30 April 2025. Comparative figures have been provided as of 30 June 2024.

Council's current assets have increased by \$2.493 million from \$11.732 million as of 30 June 2024 to \$14.225 million as at 30 April 2025. Cash and cash equivalents have increased by \$5.818 million from \$3.049 million to \$8.867 million. Trade and other receivables have increased by \$0.073 million from \$5.212 million as at 30 June 2024 to \$5.285 million as at 30 April 2025.

Total liabilities have decreased from \$8.777 million in 2023/24 to \$8.062 million in 2024/25. Trade and other payables have decreased by \$0.024 million and trust funds and deposits have decreased by \$0.137 million. Unearned income/revenue decreased by \$0.197 million, which includes grants received by Council, where in accordance with accounting standards, they are held as a liability until grant-related performance obligations have been met.

Statement of Cash Flows (Attachment 3)

The Statement of Cash Flows shows how changes in the Statement of Financial Position and Income Statement affect Cash and Cash Equivalents, and breaks down the analysis to operating activities, investing activities and financing activities.

The Cash and Cash Equivalents at the beginning of the financial year of \$3.049 million have increased by \$5.818 million to \$8.867 million as at 30 April 2025.

Net cash of \$11.079 million was provided by operating activities, \$4.810 million was used in investing activities, and \$0.451 million was used in financing activities.

Investing activities includes payments for property, plant and equipment, and infrastructure.

Financial Performance Indicators (Attachment 4)

The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework requires Councils to report various performance indicators at the end of each financial year.

A full list of financial performance indicators is included in Attachment 4.

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Indicator	30/6/2024	30/04/2025
Working capital <i>Measure - Current assets compared to current liabilities.</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework 100% to 400% Indicator of the broad objective that sufficient working capital is available to pay bills as and when they fall due. High or increasing level of working capital suggests an improvement in liquidity	162%	219%
Loans and borrowings <i>Measure - Loans and borrowings compared to rates.</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – 0% to 70% Indicator of the broad objective that the level of interest-bearing loans and borrowings should be appropriate to the size and nature of a council's activities. Low or decreasing level of loans and borrowings suggests an improvement in the capacity to meet long term obligations	1.71%	0.86%
Indebtedness <i>Measure - Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – 2% to 70% Indicator of the broad objective that the level of long-term liabilities should be appropriate to the size and nature of a Council's activities. Low or decreasing level of long-term liabilities suggests an improvement in the capacity to meet long term obligations	7.49%	7.97%
Rates concentration <i>Measure - Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – 30% to 80% Indicator of the broad objective that revenue should be generated from a range of sources. High or increasing range of revenue sources suggests an improvement in stability	73.82%	59.33%
Expenditure level <i>Measure - Expenses per property assessment</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework \$2,000 to \$10,000 Indicator of the broad objective that resources should be used efficiently in the delivery of services. Low or decreasing level of expenditure suggests an improvement in organisational efficiency	\$4,592	\$3,761
Indicator - Revenue level <i>Measure - Average residential rate per residential property assessment</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework - \$700 to \$2,000 Indicator of the broad objective that resources should be used efficiently in the delivery of services. Low or decreasing level of rates suggests an improvement in organisational efficiency	\$1,993	\$2,002

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Indicator	30/6/2024	30/04/2025
Indicator – Percentage of total rates collected The internal audit conducted in 2019 on Rates Revenue and Rate Debtor Management found no routine or regular reporting of large and long outstanding rates debtors. The outstanding Rates Debtors is reported in the Annual Financial report. As at 30 April 2025 the outstanding Rates Debtors totalled \$4.490 million compared to \$2.320 million as at 30 June 2024, an increase of \$2.170 million. In percentage terms 77.7% of the rates raised have been collected at 30 April 2025 compared to 78.9% up to 30 April 2024. Outstanding rates are currently charged 10% interest. Council issues approximately 7,900 rate notices. In 2024/25 there are 2,158 assessments paying by instalments compared with 2,640 assessments in 2023/24.	88.1%	77.7%
Indicator – Asset Renewal & Upgrade <i>Measure - Asset renewal & Upgrade compared to depreciation</i> Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – 40% to 130% Assessment of whether council assets are being renewed or upgraded as planned. It compares the rate of spending on existing assets through renewing, restoring, replacing or upgrading existing assets with depreciation. Ratios higher than 1.0 indicate there is a lesser risk of insufficient spending on Council's asset base.	124.63%	90.79%

The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework provides “Expected ranges” for each indicator. The framework has been developed to consider results at the end of the financial year so some results during the year are outside the expected range due to the timing of receipts and payments.

Explanations are provided in Attachment 4 for those indicators that are outside the “expected ranges”.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

- 6 Strong and Effective Governance
We will work hard to build models of governance that place delivering public value at the centre through effective financial management; well measured risk management; and implementation of effective community engagement practices
- 6.1 Deliver responsible budget outcomes, linked to strategy, that deliver value, innovation, and rating fairness

Budget Implications

Council's financial performance is in line with expectations. Council's cash position was expected to reduce in the first half of the year, and then increase in the third quarter with many ratepayers electing to pay their rates in full due 15 February 2025 and the third instalment due 28 Feb 2025.

Policy/Relevant Law

Section 97 – Quarterly Budget Report of the Local Government Act 2020 states:

1. As soon as practicable after the end of each quarter of the financial year, the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a quarterly budget report is presented to the Council at a Council meeting which is open to the public.
2. A quarterly budget report must include—

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- a. a comparison of the actual and budgeted results to date; and
 - b. an explanation of any material variations; and
 - c. any other matters prescribed by the regulations.
3. In addition, the second quarterly report of a financial year must include a statement by the Chief Executive Officer as to whether a revised budget is, or may be, required.

Sustainability Implications

There are no economic, social or environmental implications in relation to the item

Risk Assessment

Council is required to establish and maintain a budgeting and reporting framework that is consistent with the principles of sound management and this report assists Council in meeting that requirement.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Council's financial performance reports will continue to be published monthly.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Financial Performance Indicators for the period ended 30 April 2025 be received

RECEIVED

ATTACHMENTS

Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Financial Performance Indicators for the period ended 30 September 2024 are provided as Attachment 3.1

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SECTION 4 – INTERNAL CONTROLS

4.1 COUNCIL POLICY REVIEW UPDATE

Aligns with Audit and Risk Committee Charter 5.7: Review the adequacy and effectiveness of key policies, systems and controls for providing a sound internal control environment.

BACKGROUND

Council policies are reviewed on an ongoing and procedure review process.

This report outlines two Administrative and Council Policies which are currently being reviewed.

DISCUSSION

Council has committed to reviewing policies through review process to ensure that all Council policies meet legislative requirements and established internal processes.

All Council policies are accessible to Councillors, Audit and Risk Committee and staff through Microsoft Teams, hard copies in tearooms at the Depot and Municipal Offices and on Council website.

The below table outlines all policies that will be presented to the Audit and Risk Committees as they come up for review.

Council Policy	Due	Audit and Risk Committee
Asset Management Policy	Jan-15	Sept 25
Audit and Risk Committee Charter	Dec 25	Dec 25
Community Engagement Policy	Feb-25	Jun 25
Complaints Handling Policy	Mar-25	Jun 25
Compliance Framework and Policy	Jan 27	Dec 26
Council Expenses and Support Policy	Jul 28	Jun 28
Councillor Code of Conduct	Dec 28	Dec 28
Councillor Gifts Policy	Feb-25	Jun 25
Election Period 2020 Policy	Apr 28	Mar 28
Fraud and Corruption Policy	Dec 25	Dec 25
International and Interstate Travel Policy	Mar-28	Mar 28
Investment Policy	Feb-25	Sept 25
Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy	Sep-24	Sep-25
Privacy Policy (<i>prev Privacy & Data Protection & Health Records Policy</i>)	Jan-25	Sept 25
Procurement Policy	Jun-24	Jun 25
Public Transparency Policy	Jul-24	Sept 25
Risk Management Policy	Dec 25	Dec 25
Social Media Policy	Feb 28	Dec 27
Valuation Policy - Major Asset Classes	May-26	Mar-26

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Administration Policy		
Conflict of Interest Policy	Nov 28	Sept 28
Corporate Purchase Card Policy	Nov-23	Jun 25
Disposal and Sale of Items at Transfer Station Policy	Mar-26	Mar-26
Disposal and sale of minor assets policy	Sep-25	Sep-25
Equal Employment Opportunity Policy	Mar-26	Mar-26
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy	Nov 28	Sept 28
Essential Safety Measures Policy	Mar-24	Sept 25
Health and Wellbeing Policy	Mar-24	Sep-25
Injury Management Policy	Sep-25	Sep-25
Municipal Emergency Policy	May-25	Jun 25
Occupational Health and Safety Policy	Sep 26	Sep 26
OHS Workplace Emergency Evacuation Policy	Nov-25	Dec-25
Prevention of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace	Aug-24	Sep-25
Public Interest Disclosures Procedure	Oct 25	Sept 25
Risk Management Framework	Dec 25	Dec 25
Staff Code of Conduct	Aug-25	Sep-25
Staff Gift Policy	Sep-25	Sep-25
Staff Grievances Policy	Sept-27	Sep-27
Vehicle Policy	July 25	Sept 25
Workplace Anti-Discrimination & Harassment Policy	Jun 26	Jun 26

There are six policies / frameworks being presented for review at this meeting which are:

- Corporate credit card policy
- Procurement Policy

The table below provides a list of the reviewed policies noting the main changes and a copy of the policies with track changes are attached.

Administrative / Council	Policy Title	Last review and adopted	Current Review Date ready for Adoption	Next Review
Administrative	Corporate credit card	31 January 2023	June 2025	October 2027
Council	Procurement	June 24	June 2025	June 2028

The review of the corporate credit card policy is timely as Council are changing of service providers from ANZ to Commonwealth bank. The policy outlines the responsibility of the card holders, compliance responsibilities, and as the distribution of new corporate credit cards occurs, each card holder will complete the corporate purchase card application and acknowledgement. This policy was presented at the last Audit and Risk Committee and had to undergo some additions. This is now been completed for further review.

The Procurement Policy is required under the Local Government Act 2020 and is required to be reviewed at least every 4 years. This policy applies to all contracting and procurement activities at the Ararat Rural City Council. This policy will enhance Council's objectives such as sustainable and socially responsible procurement, supporting local economies and

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obtaining value for money, leading to better result in the provision of goods, services and works for the benefit of the community.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council Policy Review Update be noted.

RECEIVED

ATTACHMENTS

Draft review of Corporate Credit Card Policy is attached as Attachment 4.1.1
Draft review of Procurement Policy is attached as Attachment 4.1.2

ACTIONS: Changes as outlined to be made to the Procurement Policy.

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4.2 INSURANCE PROGRAM - Confidential

Aligns with Audit and Risk Committee Charter 5.16 Review the insurance program annually prior to renewal

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council Insurance report be noted.

NOTED

ACTIONS: Organise for JLT to meet with the Audit and Risk Committee.

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SECTION 5- RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER REVIEW AND RISK REGISTER PROGRAM UPDATE

Aligns with Audit and Risk Committee Charter 5.14: Review Council's risk profile and the changes occurring in the profile from meeting to meeting and 5.15 Review Councils treatment plans for significant risks

BACKGROUND

Council's Strategic Risk Register is reviewed by the Chief Executive Officer on a regular basis and is presented to the Audit and Risk Committee.

DISCUSSION

The Chief Executive Officer ensures that strategic risks are identified and assessed, treatment options are prioritized and implemented, actions are assigned, and performance is monitored and reviewed.

Over the past 12 months, the Chief Executive Officer has reviewed all strategic risks in as per the past plan and have now updated the plan to reflect the 2025-2026 for reviewing the strategic risks within Ararat Rural City Council. The suggested program focused on the higher risk areas first however if the Audit and Risk Committee would like this program altered at any stage then

July 2025	Fraud and Corruption; Cyber Attack	January 2026	Legislative Compliance
August 2025	Asset Management	February 2026	Business Continuity
September 2025	Business Continuity	March 2026	Procurement; and Emergency Management
October 2025	Financial Sustainability	April 2026	Waste Management; and Occupational Health and Safety
November 2025	IT Infrastructure	May 2026	Strategic Leadership and Advocacy
December 2025	Governance	June 2026	Climate Change; and Records Management

The Governance and Risk Lead Continues to work with Service owners to review the operational risks and set ongoing review dates. The table below outlines the timeframe for each of these reviews to take place over the next 6 months and continuing training for key service providers in using the system.

Month	Service Area
June	Local Laws, Municipal Building Services, Planning, Environmental Health, Environmental Management and Sustainability
July	Risk Management, Governance, Emergency Management, Insurance Management
August	Design and Project Management, Information Technology, Asset Management, Records Management, Graphic Information Systems,
September	Maternal & Child Health, Occupational Health and Safety, Library Service, Events, Human Resource, Customer Services
October	Art Gallery / TAMA, Sport and recreation, Tourism, Town Hall, Media and Communications, Economic Development

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November	Depot, Waste management, Contracts and Procurement, Finance, Property Rates and Valuation,
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RECOMMENDATION

That the Strategic Risk Review and Update Report be received.

RECEIVED

ATTACHMENTS

The Strategic Risk Register is provided as Attachment 5.1

ACTIONS: Align the strategic topics with the Internal audit timeframes. Add ESVF and Cultural Risks into the strategic risks

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SECTION 6- FRAUD PREVENTION

No reports tabled at this meeting

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SECTION 7- INTERNAL AUDIT

7.1 INTERNAL AUDIT – INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: RISK ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGIC INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Aligns with Audit and Risk Committee Charter 5.25 Review reports on internal audit reviews, including recommendations for improvement arising from those review

BACKGROUND

AFS Associates is Ararat Rural City Council's Internal Audit service provider. AFS has completed a Risk Assessment which has informed a proposed Five Year rolling Strategic Internal Audit Program (SIAP) This report presents the outcome of the risk assessment work and the proposed SIAP for consideration.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the risk assessment was to gain an understanding of the risk environment at ARCC to:

- Allocate internal audit resources to the areas of greatest risks as perceived by you for the Five Year Strategic Internal Audit Program (SIAP)
- Accurately scope topics
- Maximise the value you achieve for your internal audit budget.

The Risk Assessment Survey was completed by Councillors, Audit and Risk Committee members and the Executive Leadership Team to gain an understanding of the key risk area of concern to ARCC as well as met with five participants for further discussion on key themes and risks identified in the survey as well as a review of other measures.

As a result of the work undertaken the attached Five Year SIAP is attached and is seeking adoption through the Audit and Risk Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

That the committee adopts the 5 Year Strategic Internal Audit Program.

ADOPTED

ATTACHMENTS

The AFS & Associate Internal Audit Planning document for the Risk Assessment and Strategic Internal Audit Program Development report as Attachment 7.1

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7.2 INTERNAL AUDIT – AUDIT REVIEW THE STRATEGIC AUDIT PLAN

Aligns with Audit and Risk Committee Charter 5.23 Review progress of annual internal audit plan

BACKGROUND

Council appointed AFS & Associates from Bendigo as Council's Internal Auditors. This report outlines the audit program that was presented at the last Audit and Risk Committee meeting with changes to the delivery time as discussed between Council and Audit and Risk Committee.

DISCUSSION

AFS & Associates have provided the internal Audit Program Review document which outlines the forward rolling four year program for Council.

This Status Update includes:

- The current status in the previous SIAP
- The new SIAP (with adjustments following the March Audit and Risk Committee Meeting)
- Review the proposed scopes for
 - Waste Management
 - Service Review – Environmental Health
 - Rates Revenue and Debtor Management

RECOMMENDATION

The Strategic Audit Program Status Update be received

RECEIVED

ATTACHMENTS

The Strategic Internal Audit Program Status Update as Attachment 7.2.1

The Internal Audit Action on Internal Audit Findings and Recommendations as Attachment 7.2.2

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7.3 INTERNAL AUDIT – RATES REVENUE & DEBTOR MANAGEMENT

Aligns with Audit and Risk Committee Charter 5.24 Review and approve proposed scopes for each review in the annual internal audit plan

BACKGROUND

In accordance with Ararat Rural City Council's Internal Audit Program, an internal audit is to be undertaken to the rates revenue function and associated internal controls.

DISCUSSION

The objective is to assess the reliability and effectiveness of the current internal controls operating within the rate revenue and rates debtor management functions.

The attached document, outlines the scope and the approach on how this audit will be delivered as well as what is excluded from the scope.

The timeframe for this audit is scheduled for 18 September 2025 and the results are scheduled to be presented at the December 2025 audit and risk committee meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Internal audit planning document for the Rates Revenue and Debtor Management audit be received.

REVEIWED

ATTACHMENTS

The AFS & Associate Internal Audit Planning document for the Rates Revenue and Debtor Management is provided as Attachment 7.3.

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7.4 INTERNAL AUDIT – ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Aligns with Audit and Risk Committee Charter 5.24 Review and approve proposed scopes for each review in the annual internal audit plan

BACKGROUND

In accordance with Ararat Rural City Council's Internal Audit Program, an internal audit is to be undertaken as a service review for Environmental Health.

DISCUSSION

The objective of this internal audit is to assess the effectiveness of Council's management and enforcement of compliance with relevant Environmental Health legislation and regulations.

The attached document, outlines the scope and the approach on how this audit will be delivered as well as what is excluded from the scope.

The timeframe for this audit is scheduled for 15 July 2025 and the results are scheduled to be presented at the December 2025 audit and risk committee meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Internal audit planning document for the Environmental Health audit be received.

RECEIVED

ATTACHMENTS

The AFS & Associate Internal Audit Planning document for the Service Review – Environmental Health as Attachment 7.4

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7.5 INTERNAL AUDIT – WASTE MANAGEMENT

Aligns with Audit and Risk Committee Charter 5.24 Review and approve proposed scopes for each review in the annual internal audit plan

BACKGROUND

In accordance with Ararat Rural City Council's Internal Audit Program, an internal audit is to be undertaken of Waste Management

DISCUSSION

The objective of this internal audit is to examine how and to what extent Council is ensuring water management services are delivering value for money for ratepayers

The attached document, outlines the scope and the approach on how this audit will be delivered as well as what is excluded from the scope.

The timeframe for this audit is scheduled for 21 July 2025 and the results are scheduled to be presented at the December 2025 audit and risk committee meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Internal audit planning document for the Waste Management audit be received.

RECEIVED

ATTACHMENTS

The AFS & Associate Internal Audit Planning document for the Service Review – Waste Management as Attachment 7.5

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7.6 INTERNAL AUDIT – INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: 2024-08 DEPOT COSTINGS REVIEW

Aligns with Audit and Risk Committee Charter 5.25 Review reports of internal audit reviews, including recommendations for improvement arising from those reviews.

BACKGROUND

Ararat Rural City Council (ARCC) utilises cost tracking codes within its Xero general ledger that allow the capture and allocation of costs, both direct and indirect, to specific programs, projects and activities.

DISCUSSION

ARCC sought to assess how the true and complete cost of labour, plant, equipment and inventory is applied to jobs/ assets from depot operations, including whether:

- The on-cost model currently used for depot labour, plant and equipment is most suitable
- ARCC should move to a more activity-based costing method.

The audit concluded there were 8 areas of strength and 5 moderate and 2 minor findings.

All recommendations suggested to management have been agreed to. An update on the progress of the agreed to action items will be provided at the September 2025 Audit & Risk Committee meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That the findings from the depot Costing Review audit be received.

RECEIVED

ATTACHMENTS

The AFS & Associate Audit of the Depot Costing report is provided as Attachment 7.6

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SECTION 8- EXTERNAL AUDIT

8.1 EXTERNAL AUDIT – DRAFT INTERIM MANAGEMENT LETTER FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2025

Aligns with Audit and Risk Committee Charter 5.33 Quarterly review to ensure that managements responses to any external audit findings are acted upon in a timely manner.

BACKGROUND

The Victoria Auditor General appoints a service provider to undertake the annual financial audit. Mr Ryan Schischka of Johnsons MME has been appointed by the Victoria Auditor-General's office to undertake the annual financial audit for the year ending 30 June 2025.

DISCUSSION

Johnsons MME conducted the interim audit in April within the remote working environment. A draft interim management letter has been received. There is one new issue for the current period that has been fully resolved and two open issues from the prior period.

VAGO has also included in the letter four recommendations that are specific to all councils, based on the findings in their report to parliament, *Results of 2023-24 audits – Local Government*. Three of these recommendations have been resolved and one remains unresolved at the time of issuing the letter.

Mr Ryan Schischka of Johnsons MME will attend the meeting remotely to present the draft Interim Management Letter

RECOMMENDATION

That the draft Interim Management Letter Report for the financial year ending 30 June 2025 be noted.

NOTES

ATTACHMENTS

The draft Interim Management Letter is provided as Attachment 8.1

ACTIONS: Valuations to be forward to committee once received

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8.2 EXTERNAL AUDIT – IMPACT OF CHANGES TO AUSTRALIAN ACCOUNTING STANDARD AASB 13 FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENT

Aligns with Audit and Risk Committee Charter 5.35 Consider the findings and recommendations of any relevant performance audits undertaken by VAGO and monitor Council's responses to them

BACKGROUND

The Victoria Auditor General's Office (VAGO) presented a report to parliament, *Results of 2023-24 audits - Local Government* on 3 April 2025. The report discusses the observations and findings across all 79 councils as a result of their audit of the sector. The report includes a total of seven recommendations, however only four of the recommendations are specific to all councils. The fourth recommendation requires a report to the Audit & Risk Committee to brief the committee on the material changes introduced by the AASB 13 amendments, which covers the impact on valuation practices, financial reporting, and any new disclosure requirements. Also, where material, impacts to the asset management plan, long-term financial plan, operating and capital expenditure budgets.

DISCUSSION

The Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) undertook a special project in relation to Fair Value for Public and Not for Profit sectors and released clarifications and additional Australian Guidance to AASB13 Fair Value Measurement in December 2022 with a commencement date of 1 July 2024.

The clarifications and guidance has been reviewed against Council's processes with the determinations outlined in the following table:

Topic	Issue	Impact
Depreciation Calculation	<p>AASB notes each part of the asset should be depreciated separately.</p> <p>Straight line depreciation should be calculated (Carrying Amount – Residual Value)/(Remaining Useful Life).</p> <p>Where appropriate, depreciation should be calculated following the pattern of consumption</p>	<p>Council assets were not previously componentised. Council systems were based on useful life, however the same depreciation amount resulted. All depreciation has previously been based on straight line depreciation.</p>
Componentisation of Assts and Useful Lives - Long Life/Short Life Assets	<p>To properly determine the carrying amount of an asset to enable the calculation of depreciation expense, it is required that the asset be disaggregated into different parts with a different remaining useful life. This is so that the carrying amount of the different parts can be depreciated to its residual value over its remaining useful life.</p>	<p>Council assets were not previously componentised.</p>

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Topic	Issue	Impact
Replacement Cost	Replacement cost should be calculated using the gross replacement cost, identifying the modern equivalent asset rate. Guidance added to AASB 2022-10 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Fair Value Measurement of Non-Financial Assets of Not for Profit Public Sector Entities includes the following in Replacement Cost: - Costs to restore third-party assets - Other disruption costs (e.g. costs associated with redirecting traffic) - Site preparation costs Of note, is that Council does not need to go above and beyond to ascertain the replacement cost data, per AASB 2022-10 (F6), for the purposes of determining the fair value, exhaustive efforts need not be undertaken to assess whether market data is reasonably available.	Building and infrastructure assets were previously valued using depreciated replacement cost.
Highest and Best Use	AASB 2022 – 10 includes the specific amendments to AASB 13: Current Use is presumed to be highest and best use, unless the asset is classified as held for sale or it is highly probable the asset will be used for an alternative purpose to its current use. Entities must assess whether the highest and best use of non-financial assets differs from their current use.	Compliant
Restricted Land	AASB 13 and 116 state Council must only take into consideration the restrictions that would pass from a hypothetical seller to a hypothetical buyer, not whether you could ever sell it.	Compliant

Council has engaged a valuation and asset management firm, APV, to conduct full revaluations on all property and infrastructure asset classes, to ensure that Council valuations are fully compliant with the updates to the Australian Accounting Standard AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement. The valuations will have an effective date of 1 July 2024. Onsite visits have been completed and staff are currently working with APV to finalise the results. Preliminary figures show a significant increase in both the replacement cost and the annual depreciation expense. The increased replacement cost appears to result primarily from the substantial increases in building and civil construction costs in recent years. Additionally, an increase in land sales has resulted in higher market values for land, compared to the previous valuation.

A full assessment of the revaluations will be performed upon completion and will be presented to the September Audit and Risk Committee meeting.

The following table outlines Council's accounting policy for each property class, including the depreciation period, capitalisation threshold, date of the last independent valuation and approach to valuations.

	Depreciation Period	Capitalisation Threshold	Recorded at Cost or Fair Value	Standard Cycle of Full Revaluation	Date of Last Full Revaluation
Freehold land	-	\$10,000	Fair Value	2 years	30-Jun-22
Controlled land	-	\$10,000	Fair Value	2 years	30-Jun-22
Land under roads	-	\$10,000	Fair Value	2 years	30-Jun-22

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Land improvements – Playground assets	20 years	\$10,000	Fair Value	2 years	30-Jun-22
Building on freehold land	25-193 years	\$10,000	Fair Value	2 years	30-Jun-22
Building on controlled land	25-193 years	\$10,000	Fair Value	2 years	30-Jun-22

The valuation method to be applied at 30 June 2025 will be a fair value assessment, which will involve reviewing the Valuer General Victoria Index for Land and Buildings and making adjustments for material changes.

The following table outlines Council's accounting policy for each infrastructure asset class, including the depreciation period, capitalisation threshold, date of the last independent valuation and approach to valuations.

	Depreciation Period	Capitalisation Threshold	Recorded at Cost or Fair Value	Standard Cycle of Full Revaluation	Date of Last Full Revaluation
Roads - pavements and seals	10 - 20 years	\$10,000	Fair Value	3 years	30-Jun-22
Roads - substructure	30 - 80 years	\$10,000	Fair Value	3 years	30-Jun-22
Roads - kerb, channel and minor culverts	30 - 100 years	\$10,000	Fair Value	3 years	30-Jun-22
Bridges	50 -120 years	\$10,000	Fair Value	3 years	30-Jun-22
Footpaths and cycleways	10 - 80 years	\$10,000	Fair Value	3 years	30-Jun-22
Drainage	50 - 100 years	\$10,000	Fair Value	3 years	30-Jun-22

The valuation method to be applied at 30 June 2025 will be a fair value assessment, which will involve reviewing the ABS Producer Price Index and making adjustments for material changes. The index for Road and Bridge Construction Victoria will be considered for road, bridge and footpath asset classes, while the index for Other Heavy & Civil Engineering Construction Victoria will be considered for drainage assets.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Impact of Changes to Australian Accounting Standard AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement be noted.

NOTED

ATTACHMENTS

No attachment

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SECTION 9- COMPLIANCE

9.1 AGVIC CHEMICAL REVIEW – NON COMPLIANCE

Aligns with Audit and Risk Committee Charter 5.20 Review reports by management about actual actions taken by Council to report such matters to the appropriate integrity bodies.

BACKGROUND

Agriculture Victoria within the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) is responsible for administering the Agriculture and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act 1992 and the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Regulations 2017.

At the end of 2024, Agriculture Victoria audited Ararat Rural City Council as part of a project auditing councils chemical use across Victoria.

DISCUSSION

On the 12th December 2024, Agriculture Victoria visited the Municipal Office to audit agricultural chemical use records of herbicide applications made by various staff from the Parks and Gardens department. This was to assess compliance with the Act and Regulations.

From this audit several issues were identified for improvement which are outlined below:

- **Trade name of the product:** Records made by two staff members do not specify the product name, whilst records made by another two staff members were lacking sufficient information to identify the specific product.
- **The date of use:** Records made by several staff members did not include the date of application.
- **Applicator Name and Contact Details:** These details were incomplete on some records and the applicator was unable to be identified or verified in the ACUP database.
- **The rate of application of the product:** or information to allow calculation of rate of application. In the records by one employee the application rate was recorded as "as per" The correct was to record application rate is 10ml/L
- **Crop / commodity or situation** which is the product was applied. During the audit council mentioned that most applications are herbicides on roadsides, parks & gardens and ovals / turf. All records audited were lacking enough information to determine the situation. A correct way to record the crop commodity / situation could include "general weeds, knapsack around parks and gardens."
- **Application Location:** specifying where the chemical was applied. Some records contained general location such as Moyston and Ararat. Locations where the chemical was applied needs to be more specific such as Alexandra Gardens, Ararat and Warrak Road, Ararat

Under Section 73 of the Act businesses and employers may be held liable for offences committed by their employees or contractors. Council is required to adequately address the above matters outlined or Agriculture Victoria may be required to undertake enforcement action and may be contacted at any time to audit our chemical use.

ACTIONS

The following actions are currently taking place:

- Standard Operating Procedure has been updated including the Chemical Record log that is based off the template that has been shared from Ag Victoria. All previous versions of the template are not to be available to staff.

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- Meeting with the Supervisors on 3 June 2025 to discuss the results of the audit and plan moving forward.
- Meeting 5 June 2025 with all employees involved in chemical applications at Council to discuss audit outcomes and to re-train employees how to complete the chemical log and record forms.
- Develop a training video that will be mandatory to undertake annually. This will be part of compliance training for Parks and Garden employees as well as anyone else who is involved in these works.
- Random spot checks / audits on Chemical logs and record forms that will be matched with timesheets / Confirm works.

RECOMMENDATION

That the report from AGVIC be noted and that a follow up actions are reported at next Audit and Risk Committee Meeting.

NOTED

ATTACHMENTS

The letter from AGVIC is provided as Attachment 9.1

ACTION: Follow up actions are to be reported at the next Audit and Risk Committee Meeting.

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SECTION 10- GENERAL BUSINESS

10.1 INDUSTRY UPDATE- RECENT REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

BACKGROUND

AFS & Associates (AFS) are Council's Internal Auditors. AFS have provided an Industry Update report to be included in the agenda. The Industry Update report lists recent reports and publications that may be of interest to Ararat Rural City Council.

DISCUSSION

The Industry Update report lists 16 recent articles and reports, covering a range of different topics from sources such as: IBAC, IIA, and OVIC etc.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Industry Update report be noted.

ATTACHMENTS

The Industry Update report is provided as Attachment 10.1.

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SECTION 11 – FUTURE MEETINGS

11.1 FUTURE MEETING DATES

Future meetings of the Audit and Risk Committee are scheduled as follows:

- Tuesday 9 September 2025 1pm
- Tuesday 2 December 2025 1pm
- Tuesday 3 March 2026 1pm
- Tuesday 2 June 2026 1pm

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SECTION 12- NEXT MEETING/CHARTER ITEMS

September 2025	
Ref. from Charter	
5.1	Review significant accounting and external reporting issues
5.2	Review changes to the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework
5.3	Review the annual financial report and annual performance statement
5.4	Review with management and the external auditors the results of the audit
5.5	Recommend the adoption of the annual financial report and annual performance statement to Council
5.19	Receive reports from management about actual or suspected instances of fraud or corruption
5.20	Review reports by management about the actions taken by Council to report such matters to the appropriate integrity bodies
5.24	Review and approve scopes for each review in the annual internal audit plan
5.25	Review reports on internal audit reviews, including recommendations for improvement arising from those reviews.
5.27	Monitor action by management on internal audit findings and recommendations
5.29	Ensure that the Committee is aware of and appropriately represented with regard to any proposed changes to the appointment of the internal audit service provider.
5.30	Recommend to Council, if necessary, the termination of the internal audit contractor.
5.32	Discuss with the external auditor any audit issues encountered in the normal course of audit work, including any restrictions on scope or work or access to information.
5.33	Ensure that significant findings and recommendations made by the external auditor, and management's responses to them, are appropriate and are acted upon in a timely manner.
5.34	Review the effectiveness of the external audit function and ensure that the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) is aware of the Committee's views.
5.36	Meet with the external auditor at least annually in the absence of management

SECTION 7 - NOTICES OF MOTION

A *notice of motion* must be in writing signed by a Councillor and be lodged with or sent to the *Chief Executive Officer* no later than 12.00pm (noon) and at least six (6) days prior to the Council Meeting to allow sufficient time for the *Chief Executive Officer* to include the *notice of motion* in agenda papers for a *Council meeting*.

SECTION 8 - URGENT BUSINESS

Items cannot be admitted as urgent business other than by resolution of *Council* and only then if it:

- 1 relates to or arises out of a matter which has arisen since distribution of the *agenda*; and
- 2 cannot safely or conveniently be deferred until the next *Council meeting*.

SECTION 9 - CLOSE SESSION (CONFIDENTIAL)

In accordance with section 66(2)(a), 3(1) *Confidential Information* (a) of the Local Government Act 2020, the following agenda items are listed for consideration in the confidential section:

- Item 9.1 - Procurement Exemption - Demolition Works
- Item 9.2 - Procurement Exemption - Ararat Library Services
- Item 9.3 - Councillor - Request for Leave of Absence
- Item 9.4 - CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee Meeting

CLOSURE OF COUNCIL MEETING TO THE PUBLIC - 6:37PM

The Open Council Meeting will now be closed, but members of the public are welcome to rejoin the Council Meeting following the recommencement of the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That the meeting be closed to members of the public pursuant to section 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020 to consider confidential reports.

**MOVED CR R ARMSTRONG
SECONDED CR WATERSTON**

That the meeting be closed to members of the public pursuant to section 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020 to consider confidential reports.

No Councillors spoke for or against the motion

**CARRIED 5/0
5167/25**

OPEN COUNCIL MEETING RECOMMENCEMENT - 6:52PM

RECOMMENDATION

That the Open Council Meeting recommence.

**MOVED CR R ARMSTRONG
SECONDED CR WATERSTON**

That the Open Council Meeting recommence.

No Councillors spoke for or against the motion

**CARRIED 5/0
5172/25**

Gallery invited to return to Council Chamber.

LIFTING OF CONFIDENTIALITY OF CLOSED SESSION RESOLUTIONS

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. *The confidentiality of the report in relation to Item 9.1 and 9.2 not be lifted on adoption of the motion*
2. *The confidentiality of the decision in relation to Item 9.1 and 9.2 be lifted on adoption of the motion*
3. *The confidentiality of the report and decision in relation to Confidential Agenda Item 9.3 and 9.4 not be lifted on adoption of the motion.*

MOVED CR WATERSTON SECONDED CR R ARMSTRONG

That:

1. **The confidentiality of the report in relation to Item 9.1 and 9.2 not be lifted on adoption of the motion**
2. **The confidentiality of the decision in relation to Item 9.1 and 9.2 be lifted on adoption of the motion**
3. **The confidentiality of the report and decision in relation to Confidential Agenda Item 9.3 and 9.4 not be lifted on adoption of the motion.**

No Councillors spoke for or against the motion

**CARRIED 5/0
5173/25**

9.1 PROCUREMENT EXEMPTION - DEMOLITION WORKS

MOVED CR JOYCE SECONDED CR R ARMSTRONG

That:

1. **That Council approve a procurement exemption for Barry Marx Demolition for demolition and site clearance works at 87 Queen Street, Ararat.**
2. **That the confidentiality of this report not be lifted on adoption of the motion**
3. **That the confidentiality of the decision be lifted on adoption of the motion**

Cr Joyce spoke for the motion

**CARRIED 5/0
5168/25**

9.2 PROCUREMENT EXEMPTION - ARARAT LIBRARY SERVICES

**MOVED CR WATERSTON
SECONDED CR KAUR**

That:

- 1. That Council approve a procurement exemption for City of Ballarat for the provision of library services for the period from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2030.**
- 2. That the CEO be authorised to sign the agreement on Council's behalf.**
- 3. That the confidentiality of the report not be lifted on adoption of the motion**
- 4. That the confidentiality of the decision be lifted on adoption of the motion**

Cr Waterston and Cr Kaur spoke for the motion

**CARRIED 5/0
5169/25**

Meeting closed at 6:53pm

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT PAGES 11010 - 11285 INCLUDING PAGES 812 - 834 OF THE CLOSED SESSION ARE CONFIRMED AND ARE A TRUE AND CORRECT RECORD.

DEPUTY MAYOR - CR BOB SANDERS