

ARART RURAL CITY COUNCIL

Annual Plan

2025/2026



1. Growing Our Place

1.1 Develop a strategic land use planning framework with annual targets to support sustainable urban growth.	1.1.1 Complete a review of Council's Planning Scheme as required under Section 12B of the Planning Environment Act 1987.	Ongoing until October 2026
	1.1.2 Establish annual targets for sustainable urban growth.	30/06/2026
	1.1.3 Complete the 'Unlocking Ararat North East' Structure Plan project.	30/06/2026
1.2 Support innovative housing models that work to overcome market failure and create the capacity to increase the population of Ararat Rural City.	1.2.1 Deliver enabling infrastructure for well-located homes that address critical housing gaps in central Ararat, with support from the Housing Support Program: Community Enabling Infrastructure Stream.	30/06/2026
	1.2.2 Continue to develop the Ararat Housing Enterprise P/L, delivering another four houses in Ararat during 2025/2026.	30/06/2026
	1.2.3 Work with developers to submit EOI application/s to the National Housing Infrastructure Facility Crisis and Transitional Housing (NHIF CT) program.	05/01/2026
1.3 Work with other levels of government, business, educational institutions and not-for-for profits to develop programs to increase in-migration to Ararat Rural City to grow our population.	1.3.1 Complete the Jack and Jill Kindergarten Refurbishment, with support from the Building Blocks Improvement Grant.	30/06/2026
	1.3.2 Establish a new childcare centre in Lake Bolac.	31/12/2025
	1.3.3 Deliver the CALD Outreach Initiative.	Ongoing until June 2027

2. Building Robust Local Economies

2.1 Partner with Federation University Australia to deliver the Ararat Jobs and Technology Precinct with a focus on engaging with local agribusiness, industry and community.	2.1.1 Build stronger connections between AJTP and local industry, including promotion of industry internships for research students.	Ongoing
	2.1.2 Work with Federation University, community and industry stakeholders to apply for a grant for National Science Week in August 2026.	Est. Oct 2025
	2.1.3 Continue to support the delivery of TAFE courses at the Ararat Jobs and Technology Precinct.	Ongoing
2.2 Work with other levels of government, local business, and private investors to develop a business park within Ararat Rural City, focused on agricultural value adding and advanced manufacturing, potentially leveraging “behind the meter” power.	2.2.1 Work with Invest Victoria, Regional Development Victoria and private sector partners to develop plans for the ARCC Circular Economy Precinct.	Ongoing
	2.2.2 Continue to support Valorify P/L to develop a biogas plant in Ararat which uses straw as the major input.	Ongoing
	2.2.3 Seek funding from the Victorian Government’s \$10 million fund to unlock industrial trunk infrastructure to accelerate new industrial developments.	Application due date to be confirmed
2.3 Engage with Grampians Wimmera Mallee Tourism and local businesses to improve the quality of experience and drive growth in high yield tourist outcomes.	2.3.1 Deliver the Ararat Hills Outdoor Adventure Precinct Feasibility Study.	Ongoing until June 2027
	2.3.2 Partner with local hospitality, accommodation, food and wine industry to develop an annual fine wine and food event within the municipality.	30/06/2026
	2.3.3 Work with operators and Grampians Wimmera Mallee Tourism to deliver 4 star and above accommodation.	Ongoing until June 2029

3. Preserving Our Environment

3.1 Position Ararat Rural City Council as a prime mover in driving circular economy policy in waste management, including local processing and management of recyclables, and in use of renewable energy for Council purposes.	3.1.1 Develop and adopt an ambitious business based on key partnerships and production of higher value outputs, that views municipal “waste” as an economic resource.	30/06/2026
	3.1.2 Continue to support PlastOil to develop a plastics recycling facility in Ararat.	Ongoing
3.2 Develop innovative energy solutions utilising locally produced waste.	3.2.1 Continue to support Valorify P/L to develop a biogas plant in Ararat which uses straw as the major input.	Ongoing
	3.2.2 Work with Federal and State Government and private sector partners to plan, fund and develop a circular economy industrial precinct.	30/06/2026
	3.2.3 Continue to advocate for greater policy confidence and support for renewable gas generation.	Ongoing
3.3 Partner with local organisations and scientific experts to implement the Environment Strategy 2024-34, with a focus on circular economy, emissions reduction and sustainable management of Council assets.	3.3.1 Deliver the Pomonal Community Hall Battery Project with the Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance and with support from the 100 Neighbourhood Batteries Grants Program.	Ongoing until 31 August 2026
	3.3.2 Deliver the Roadside Weeds and Pests Program (subject to State Government funding).	30/06/2026
	3.3.3 Explore a model for collaborating with community asset committees to use rooftop solar to increase use of renewable energy at community facilities.	31/01/2026

4. Developing and Maintaining Key Enabling Infrastructure

4.1 Ensure that asset development and renewal during the planning period matches that identified in Council's Asset Plan 2025-2035.	4.1.1 Develop the Asset Plan 2025-35.	31/10/2025
	4.1.2 Continue to advocate for the Western Highway Upgrade from Buangor to Ararat.	Ongoing
	4.1.3 Continue to advocate for a North South Heavy Vehicle Route.	Ongoing
4.2 Work directly with asset users to manage and develop new and existing assets.	4.2.1 Progress plans and costings for a new indoor sports facility and the outdoor pool upgrade.	31/12/2025
	4.2.2 Deliver the Community Road Safety Strategy.	30/06/2026
	4.2.3 Deliver the Ararat Rural City Sport and Active Recreation Strategy.	30/06/2026
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.	4.3.1 Deliver the 2025/26 Capital Works Program.	30/06/2026

5. Enhancing Community Life

5.1 Open up Council's arts and culture assets to greater community participation, ownership and engagement in decision-making.	5.1.1 Deliver artist and community group exhibits in the Barkly St Laneway and Community Wall within the Ararat Gallery TAMA	30/06/2026
	5.1.2 Increase participation in programs at Ararat Gallery TAMA	30/06/2026
	5.1.3 Investigate ways to maximise scheduling of community events at the Town Hall	30/06/2026
	5.1.4 Identify innovative ways to increase the promotion and reach of performances at the Town Hall	30/06/2026
5.2 Develop models of volunteering that recognise, support and properly utilise the skills that community volunteers bring to community life.	5.2.1 Deliver the first of three years of the Youth Events, Activities and Happenings (YEAH) Crew	Ongoing until 31 December 2027
	5.2.2 Deliver young people's programs across schools, largely through the Crazy Ideas College	30/06/2026
	5.2.3 Work with community groups to deliver an annual Volunteer Expo	30/06/2026
	5.2.4 Promote the benefits and achievements of volunteers, to encourage participation	Ongoing
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.	5.3.1 Develop the Disability Action Plan	31/12/2025
	5.3.2 Develop the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-29	31/10/2025
	5.3.3 Hold quarterly meetings of the Child Friendly Cities and Communities Working Group	30/06/2026
	5.3.4 Deliver multicultural events	30/06/2026

6. Strong and Effective Governance

6.1 Deliver responsible budget outcomes linked to strategy, that deliver value, innovation and rating fairness.	6.1.1 Deliver operational efficiencies to reduce avoidable overtime and improvements in casual staff rostering.	30/06/2026
	6.1.2 Undertake a review of Council's insurance coverage and policies to ensure they continue to provide value for money.	30/06/2026
6.2 Ensure appropriate risk management is applied to Council and organisational decisions. Council's internal function is applied to areas of perceived risk.	6.2.1 Deliver organisational efficiencies and improvements through IT infrastructure and systems upgrades.	30/06/2026
	6.2.2 Undertake the Strategic Internal Audit Program – 5 years.	30/06/2026
	6.2.3 Develop the 2026-2030 Gender Equality Action Plan	01/05/2026
	6.2.4 Ensure appropriate analysis of all inquiry and investigation reports relevant to Council operations are examined and recommendations implemented.	Ongoing
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.	6.3.1 Deliver a new Customer Request Management System (CRMS) integrated with the Snap Send Solve app.	31/07/2025
	6.3.2 Develop a regular biannual program of face-to-face community engagement opportunities.	31/12/2025