



Ararat Rural City

AGENDA

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 26 August 2025

**To be held in the Council Chambers, Shire Offices
(Livestreamed)**

Commencing 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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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

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

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

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 be accepted

1.4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 29 July 2025 be confirmed.

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.

SECTION 3 - REPORTS REQUIRING COUNCIL DECISION

3.1 DELEGATION FROM COUNCIL TO CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER S5

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: GOVERNANCE AND RISK LEAD
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 23322

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 Local Government Act 2020, and a variety of other legislation, makes provision for the appointment of delegates to act on behalf of Council. The delegation of powers is essential to enable day to day decisions to be made and for the effective operation of the organisation.

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider remaking the S5 Instrument of Delegation - Council to the Chief Executive Officer.

DISCUSSION

Under the Local Government Act 2020, Section 11 (1)(b) A Council may by instrument of delegation delegate to the Chief Executive Officer any power, duty or function of a council under this Act or any other Act other than power, duty or function specified in subsection (2)

The S5 Instrument has been drafted to take into account the matters that cannot be delegated by the CEO pursuant to section 11(2) of the 2020 Act. These matters are listed as Conditions and Limitations in the Schedule to the S5 Instrument, including the conditions under section 11(5) that any delegation to enter into a contract must include a financial limit.

Pursuant to section 11(4) of the 2020 Act, a council may delegate to the CEO the power to appoint an Acting CEO for a period not exceeding 28 days.

Changes to this delegation include:

- Inserting wording to reflect that the S5 Instrument may be executed with the signature of the CEO and Mayor, or by application of the Council seal; and
- Substituted reference to "fire services property levy" to emergency services and volunteers funding levy" following the commencement of the Fire Service Property Amendment (Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund) Act 2025

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

- 6 Strong and Effective Governance
We 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

Budget Implications

There are no budget implications arising from the review of the S5 Instrument of Delegation - Council to the Chief Executive Officer.

Policy/Relevant Law

Under the section 11 of the Local Government Act 2020, Councils have the power to delegate to the Chief Executive Officer any power, duty or function of a Council under this Act other than an power, duty or function specified in subsection (2).

Section 11(8) of the Local Government Act 2020 requires that the Council keep a register of delegation. This delegation will be made available to the public.

Section 437 (1) the Environment Protection Act 2017 states that the Governing Board may be instrument delegate all or any of the Authority's powers and functions under this Act to (b) a council.

Sustainability Implications

There are not economic, social or environmental implications in relation to the S5 Instrument of Delegation - Council to the Chief Executive Officer.

Risk Assessment

The remaking of the Instrument of Delegation form Council to CEO ensures ongoing legislative compliance for Ararat Rural City Council.

It is essential that the Instrument of Delegation are kept up to date to ensure that the CEO is properly empowered to undertake the role.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Any amendments or recommendations regarding the Instrument of Delegation for Council to the Chief Executive Officer have been sources utilising Council's subscription to the Maddocks Lawyers Delegations Service.

The delegation service provides two updates per year and mini updates as required when legislation changes. This review has been initiated following the second update for 2025 and the updated Procurement Policy.

The revocation and consideration of delegations does not require any public consultation; however, Council is required to keep a public register of all delegations.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

In the exercise of the powers conferred by Section 11(1)(b) of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act), Ararat Rural City Council resolves that -

- 1. There be delegated to the person holding the position, acting in or performing the duties of Chief Executive Officer the powers, duties and functions set out in the attach Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer, subject to the conditions and limitations specified in that Instrument;**
- 2. The instrument comes into force immediately the common seal of Council is affixed to the instrument;**
- 3. On the coming into force of the instrument all previous delegations to the Chief Executive Officer are revoked;**
- 4. The duties and functions set out in the instrument must be performed, and the powers set out in the Instruments must be executed, in accordance with any guidelines or policies of Council that it may from time to time adopt; and**
- 5. The instrument is signed under the seal of the Council**

ATTACHMENTS

The S5 Instrument of Delegation - Council to CEO is provided as Attachment 3.1

3.2 DELEGATION FROM COUNCIL TO MEMBERS OF COUNCIL STAFF S6

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: GOVERNANCE AND RISK LEAD
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 23323

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.

Introduction

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider adoption of the revised Instrument of Delegation from Council to Members of Council Staff.

Discussion

Delegation to Council staff is necessary to enable Council to conduct business efficiently by enabling Council staff to make routine decisions under different Acts.

Various Acts, including the Local Government Act 2020, empower Council to delegate statutory functions, powers and duties. This report recommends that specific functions, powers and duties be delegated to identify staff positions in accordance with the attached S6 – Instrument of Delegation by Council to Members of Council Staff.

The instrument of Delegation has recently been updated to reflect the following changes:

- Amended typographical changes in the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003
- Replaced the Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2015 with the Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 which came into operation on 15 June 2025
- Inserted additional powers, implied from the Planning and Environment Act 1987, which are not derived from any specific provisions.

Key Considerations

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

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

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.

Budget implications

There are no budget implications arising from the review of the S6 Instrument of Delegation – Council to Members of Council Staff.

Policy / Relevant Law

The Council is required to keep a register of delegations, and it must be made available for public inspection. This report is presented to reflect the changes in legislation and staff. The Council can amend or revoke any delegated power at any time. Council must review all delegations within a period of 12 months after a general election.

Sustainability Implications

There are no economic, social or environmental implications in relation to S6 Instrument of Delegation – Council to Members of Council Staff.

Risk Assessment

The amendment of the Instrument of delegation from Council to Members of Council Staff ensures ongoing legislative compliance for Ararat Rural City Council. It is essential that the Instrument of Delegation is kept up to date to ensure that the members of staff are properly empowered to undertake their roles.

The formal delegation of legislated powers, duties and functions via instruments of delegation, supported by consistent policies allows Council staff to perform day to day duties and make decisions that may otherwise need to be decided upon Council.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

The amendments of Instruments of Delegation from Council to Members of Council staff that have been updated using Maddocks Lawyers Delegation Service and RelianSys software.

The delegation service provides two updates per year and mini updates as required when legislation changes.

Chief Executive Officer and relevant officers have reviewed this document.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

In the exercise of the powers conferred by the legislation referred to in the attached instrument of delegation, Ararat Rural City Council (Council) resolve that:

- 1. There be delegated to the members of Council staff holding, acting in or performing**
- 2. the duties of the offices or positions referred to in the attached Instrument of Delegation Council to Member of Council Staff (S6), the powers, duties and functions set out in that instrument, subject to the conditions and limitations specified in that Instrument;**
- 3. The instrument comes into force immediately the common seal of Council is affixed to the instrument**
- 4. On the coming into force of the instrument all previous delegations to members of Council staff (other than the Chief Executive Officer) are revoked;**
- 5. The duties and functions set out in the instrument must be executed, in accordance with any guidelines or policies of Council that it may from time to time adopts; and**
- 6. The instrument be signed under the seal of the Council.**

ATTACHMENTS

The Instrument of Delegation from Council to Members of Council Staff S6 is provided as Attachment 3.2

3.3 MAV STATE COUNCIL MOTION REGARDING WESTERN HIGHWAY

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 23324

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

Ararat Rural City Council received a memorandum sent from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Horsham Rural City Council to the member councils of the Western Highway Action Committee regarding a proposed MAV Motion to the upcoming MAV State Council meeting.

The proposed motion seeks MAV's support in calling for the Victorian and Australian Governments to ensure sufficient funding and expedite the required legal and administrative processes, to enable the delayed section of works near Ararat to recommence as soon as possible. This report recommends that Ararat Rural City Council supports the proposed motion.

DISCUSSION

The duplication of the Western Highway has been an Ararat Rural City Council priority for many years, and the section from Buangor to Ararat remains a top priority in Council's Advocacy Program 2025.

Council is a member of the Western Highway Action Committee (WHAC). An objective of WHAC is to pursue the upgrading of the Western Highway to achieve improvements to safety, transport efficiency and amenity.

The Proposed Motion is:

"Understanding that duplication of the Western Highway from Ballarat to Stawell was scheduled to be completed in 2018, THAT, the Municipal Association of Victoria support the ten member Councils of the Western Highway Action Committee (WHAC) in calling for the Victorian and Australian Governments to ensure sufficient funding and expedite the required legal and administrative processes, to enable the delayed section of works near Ararat to recommence as soon as possible. This project is imperative, in light of the continuing numbers of serious accidents, including fatalities, on that particularly perilous section of the Western Highway, which affects all western Victorians, as well as interstate travellers (including B-double and road train heavy vehicles) and tourists."

The context provided in the memorandum from the Horsham Rural City Council CEO is also included below:

"The Western Highway is Australia's third busiest interstate freight route.

- Duplication of the Western Highway commenced with the Bacchus Marsh bypass in about 1972.
- Since then duplication has progressed to reach Buangor, east of Ararat, 155 km from Caroline Springs on Melbourne's western edge, and only about 38% of the 408 km to the South Australian border. Progress of duplication to the border has averaged about 0.7% per year.
- While some of the delays may have been beyond the control of the Governments, the intent of this motion is to call on Governments to do all within their powers to expedite the supporting legal and administrative processes which are also required to enable works to recommence.

- For example, work on a new Cultural Heritage Management Plan is understood to be significantly advanced. The Governments are urgently requested to expedite any supporting processes necessary to enable that to be considered by the Registered Aboriginal Party.
- In the period 2020-24, the unduplicated section of the Western Highway from Buangor to Stawell experienced 5 fatalities and 26 serious injuries as a result of collisions. Four of the five fatalities arose from head-on collisions, which may have been less serious if duplication had been completed.
- The collision statistics continue to increase, with a further three fatalities and four serious injuries occurring so far in 2025 (to July). Tragically, the three fatalities were in a single accident."

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

There are no budget implications to Council arising from this report.

Policy/Relevant Law

Not applicable

Sustainability Implications

The Western Highway continues to experience unacceptable levels of traffic accidents, disruptive road closures and detours onto rural roads. This has an impact on the environment and economic productivity.

Risk Assessment

The upgrade of this key transport route is urgently needed to reduce fatalities and injuries.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Council is regularly contacted by the local community who are deeply concerned about safety on the existing Western Highway and the lack of progress on the upgrade. As a member of WHAC, Council is also actively participating in advocacy efforts and activities to progress the Western Highway upgrade.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. **Council supports the Proposed Motion to the Municipal Association of Victoria's (MAV) State Council calling for the Victorian and Australian Governments to recommence the duplication of the Western Highway as soon as possible.**
2. **Council delegates the Mayor and CEO the ability to work with other Councils to develop a consolidated motion if required prior to the adoption of Motions at MAV State Council.**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments relating to this item

3.4 MAV STATE COUNCIL MOTION REGARDING ABUSE DIRECTED AT COUNCILLORS AND STAFF

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO OFFICE
REFERENCE: 23326

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

Councils across Victoria have been experiencing negative behaviours and attacks on social media directed at Councillors and staff. Abusive behaviour towards other people is simply unacceptable and never appropriate.

The Municipal Association of Victoria will hold another State Council meeting later this year. Hepburn Shire Council have endorsed a Proposed Motion aimed at addressing this issue, and other councils in Victoria may propose similar motions.

This report recommends that Ararat Rural City Council supports MAV State Council Motions that seek to end abusive and negative behaviours towards Councillors and Council staff.

DISCUSSION

Councils have an important role in service delivery, providing infrastructure and supporting our communities to thrive. Many of council responsibilities and functions are legislated, and councils are required to adhere to laws, regulations and policies. With the diversity of views, circumstances and contexts in the community, as well as the breadth of services delivered by councils, occasionally customers may have an issue they need rectified or they may disagree with a council decision.

Despite having a clear and publicly available Complaints Handling Policy that provides a an efficient, fair and accessible framework for resolving complaints, Ararat Rural City Council staff and Councillors have experienced abuse and harassment in their workplace, on social media and in their personal lives. Complainants also have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner that supports the resolution of the issue, and the conduct that Council will and will not accept from complainants are outlined in the Complaints Handling Policy. Abusive and inappropriate behaviour has also been directed at Councillors and Council staff by others in the community who have seen misinformation. Reacting to false information does not warrant negative, abusive behaviour, and it is simply not acceptable. Our Council team work hard to serve the community, and they can not serve to the best of their abilities if they are concerned about their own or their families' well-being.

Similar issues are experienced by other Councils, and this type of inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated anywhere. At their July 2025 Council Meeting, Hepburn Shire Council unanimously voted to endorse the following Motion for MAV State Council:

"That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) should initiate a comprehensive, statewide communications and marketing campaign that promotes positive messages about the vital role of Local Government and the wide array of services it provides. This campaign should also include targeted messaging aimed at countering negative community behaviours and addressing social media attacks directed at Councillors and Officers."

The MAV State Council meeting is expected to be held in October 2025, and other councils in Victoria may propose similar motions. It would be unnecessary for Ararat Rural City Council to propose its own Motion, and these efforts should be supported to manage health and wellbeing risks to Council staff and Councillors, and to promote positive communities.

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.

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.

Budget Implications

There are no budget implications to Council arising from this report.

Policy/Relevant Law

Not applicable

Sustainability Implications

This report supports social sustainability and promotes respectful interactions.

Risk Assessment

Supporting efforts to reduce or eliminate abusive and inappropriate behaviour towards Councillors and Council staff will help to reduce the likelihood of psychosocial injuries.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Councillors and Council staff are frequently contacted by other members of the community who do not support the abusive and inappropriate behaviours that they have observed or heard. The vast majority of the Ararat Rural City want to see civil and respectful behaviour in their communities, and disagreements resolved without attacks on other parties on social media or abusive behaviour directed towards staff who are simply doing their jobs.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1. Council supports Motions to the Municipal Association of Victoria's (MAV) State Council that seek to end abusive and negative behaviours towards Councillors and Council staff.**
- 2. Council delegates the Mayor and CEO the ability to work with other Councils to develop a consolidated motion if required prior to the adoption of Motions at MAV State Council.**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments relating to this item

3.5 RURAL COUNCILS VICTORIA

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 23327

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

Ararat Rural City Council ceased its membership of Rural Councils Victoria (RCV) in 2022. This report provides considerations for re-joining RCV, including consideration of their value proposition, and recommends that Ararat Rural City Council not re-join.

DISCUSSION

This report discusses the value proposition to Ararat Rural City Council (ARCC) for re-joining Rural Councils Victoria (RCV). The value they provide to Council could be defined within the following categories:

1. Advocacy
2. Sharing of information
3. Access to or discounts for resources, such as software tools.

Of the above, 'Advocacy' appears to provide the most value. This is interrogated further in the table below:

For Re-joining	Against Rejoining
RCV are active and able to communicate the perspectives of rural councils in the relevant forums.	ARCC is able to effectively communicate the unique perspectives of Ararat Rural City to the required audiences.
If our advocacy priorities are aligned, we are more likely to achieve the outcomes we are seeking by combining with RCV's advocacy efforts.	We can pick and choose which RCV priorities align with our own and make media statement accordingly.
Joining will add weight to RCV's efforts	As at March 2025, RCV represented 33 rural councils, but there are 38 councils classified as 'rural'. The other rural councils that are not members include: Bass Coast, Baw Baw, Queenscliffe, and Surf Coast.
There is a State Election in 2026, which is a good opportunity to advocate for changes and commitments	ARCC proactively and effectively advocates for its priorities.
RCV was one of the organisations on the Vic Gov's Drought Response Taskforce, represented by Deputy Chair, Cr Kate Makin. Their number 1 priority in their submission dated 1 June 2025 to the Taskforce was for rate relief for farmers. The Primary Producer Support Payment was announced on 4 July 2025, for a 40% reduction on property rates.	N/A. This was a good outcome for our farm ratepayers.

RCV have done advocacy work in housing, industrial trunk infrastructure and other matters.	ARCC have achieved significant outcomes during the period that we have not been a member. We expect this will continue.
RCV relies on councils being members in order to continue to operate. They are overall beneficial for rural councils in Victoria.	The future benefits to ARCC by re-joining do not currently justify the membership fee.

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 their centre through effective financial management, well measured risk management, and implementation of effective community engagement practices.

Budget Implications

Re-joining RCV will cost \$5,500, while not joining will have no budget implications.

Policy/Relevant Law

Not applicable

Sustainability Implications

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

Risk Assessment

There are pros and cons to either choice to re-join or not.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

The Mayor sought information from RCV on their value proposition and this information was considered as part of the preparation for this report.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1. Ararat Rural City Council not re-join Rural Councils Victoria**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

3.6 ROAD NAMING PROPOSAL

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 23328

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 need has arisen for Council to formally name an unnamed road located off Moyston-Dunkeld Road in Moyston, opposite White Patch Road. A new dwelling constructed along this road now requires a formal address to ensure accurate property identification for essential services, including postal delivery, utilities, and most importantly, emergency response.

Council is asked to consider commencing the statutory consultation process to formally name the road.

DISCUSSION

Guidelines developed by Geographic Names Victoria provide direction to Councils in relation to road naming. These guidelines recommend community consultation with those in the immediate area.

A property owner directly affected by the proposed naming has suggested the name Prospectors Lane, referencing Moyston's rich history associated with the Victorian gold rush and its past mining activity. This name is considered to meet the requirements of the *Naming Rules for Places in Victoria* (2022), specifically Section 2, Principle C - *Linking the name to the place*.

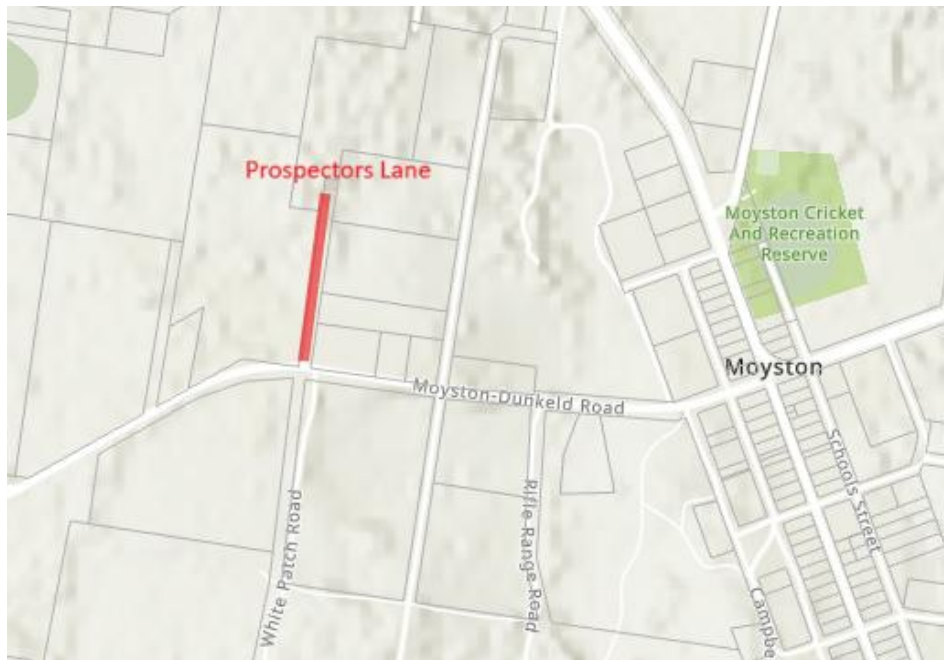
Preliminary checks also indicate that Prospectors Lane does not duplicate or conflict with any existing road names within a 30 kilometre radius, consistent with Principle D - *Ensuring Names are not Duplicated*.

The road type "Lane" is considered suitable, as it applies to a narrow country roadway.

Formally naming the road will ensure accurate property identification for emergency services, postal delivery, and utility connections.

Council is now asked to consider whether to commence proceedings to officially name the road. To build awareness of the proposal and invite feedback, it is appropriate to undertake public consultation. This would include written notice to adjoining landowners, publishing a notice on Engage Ararat, and promotion through Council's social media channels. In accordance with the Naming Rules, consultation with the immediate community must be undertaken for a minimum period of 30 days.

A map showing the road and surrounding area is provided below.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

6 Strong and Effective Governance.

Budget Implications

There are no budget implications arising from this report.

Policy/Relevant Law

Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 1989 provides Council with the power to name roads. The Geographic Place Names Act 1998 provides for the naming and registration of place names.

Sustainability Implications

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

Risk Assessment

Low.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Council's intention to name the road will be published on Engage Ararat. Abutting landowners and relevant stakeholders will also be consulted.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. Council advertise its intention to name the road off Moyston-Dunkeld Road, Moyston, as Prospectors Lane; and
2. Council consider any submissions received during the consultation period at a future Council meeting.

ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item.

3.7 PRE-SEASON FIRE PREVENTION

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: GOVERNANCE AND RISK LEAD
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 23329

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

Fire prevention are activities aimed at minimising the incidents of bushfires and grassfires. Fire prevention aims to apply principles to identify, analyse, priorities, treat and evaluate all fire related risks by

- Reducing the number of unplanned fires
- Assisting the rapid control of fires
- Increasing community awareness and preparedness.

Fire prevention involves a wide range of stakeholders at the local, regional and state level. This report discusses the involvement of resident's responsibility and how Council can assist residents in their pre-season preparation.

DISCUSSION

Fire prevention involves a wide range of stakeholders. Some have legislative responsibilities while other have a commercial, community or personal interest and involves a holistic approach that involves residents, CFA and local brigades, Fire Rescue Victoria, DEECA/FFMV and Public Authorities.

Each year Council engages with the community in a range of ways to help mitigate and reduce the risk of bush and grass fires around private property. The private property owners within the municipal that that Council actively engages with are identified through the Victorian Fire Risk Register as residing in a are that has been rated high to extreme risk.

Engagement with these property owners in previous years has been in the form of a letter from Council outlining their responsibilities and the provision of two green waste vouchers that can be redeemed at our Resource Recovery Centres to help with any clean up prior to the start of the fire danger period where Council will commence inspections of properties.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

5 Enhancing Community Life

We will work with the community of Ararat Rural City to maintain social cohesion, support community activity and cultural life, and enhance safety.

Budget Implications

There are budget implications arising from the issuing of the Green Waste Vouchers and need to be taken into consideration.

Policy/Relevant Law

Under the Country Fire Authority Act 1958, municipal councils have a legal obligation to reduce the community's risk from bushfire and are authorized to inspect private land and direct owners to perform hazard reduction works.

Sustainability Implications

Providing free green waste vouchers supports circular economy, as green waste can be turned into mulch or compost for reuse, while also encouraging vegetation clearing that reduces fire risk. To be sustainable, such programs should be balanced with education initiatives, appropriate limits and monitoring to ensure the environment benefits outweigh potential drawbacks.

Risk Assessment

There is a risk of increased cost to council with the processing of the additional green waste and will need to be monitored and manage the increase of green waste in a cost effective way.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Stakeholder engagement includes working with the Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee, local CFA brigade and community feedback.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1. Council will engage with residents who reside in areas that are high to extreme fire danger areas as identified in the VFRR website and offer 2 x green waste vouchers per property to assist with pre fire season cleanups.**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

3.8 2024/2025 CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM - ALTERATION OF BUDGETED WORKS

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 23330

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 2025/2026 Capital Works Program as a fundamental component of the current budget. With a substantial capital works investment totalling \$12.437 million, the budget primarily targets infrastructure enhancements.

As a part of Council commitment to improving local infrastructure this report details an alteration to budget allocations to specific areas of work and them being recommitted to Gravel Road Sheeting, Road Widening and Alternative Seals with further OTTA seals work being completed in the 25/26 fiscal year.

DISCUSSION

The current Capital Works Budget includes significant external funding for completion of works, and within these projects such as Mt William Road, Buangor Ben Nevis Road and the Housing Support Fund for 87 Queen Street, Ararat, areas for replacement of assets such as drainage, bridges and other infrastructure types will meet our targets through funded money.

With this it is suggested to nominate transfer of allocated budgets to increasing the amount of OTTA seals we can complete on municipal roads. The OTTA seals is a cost effective road sealing option that has been proven on a number of our rural roads to be a significant upgrade from our gravel surface infrastructure that requires continual ongoing maintenance. By undertaking these works we can continue to reduce our road maintenance costs into the future and increase our asset renewal ratio for the coming year.

Budget reallocation of \$1.5m to Resheeting, Road Widening and Alternative Seals is suggested and can be achieved with the changes detailed below:

	Current Budget		Notes
PROPERTY - CAPITAL			
Property Capital	\$550,000		
PLANT & EQUIPMENT			
Plant and Equipment	\$640,000		
INFRASTRUCTURE			
Works by others			
Woorndoo Streatham Road	\$683,000	-	Council Contribution to works.
Roads			

Gravel Road Sheetting, Widening & Alternative Sealing	\$1,800,000	\$5,345	Fully Expended 24/25
Reseal Program	\$1,000,000		Fully Expended 24/25
Buangor Ben Nevis Road	\$1,000,000		
Urban Road Gravel to Seal	\$1,000,000		
Road Reconstruction Program	\$2,324,000		
Buangor Ben Nevis Road Contribution	-\$500,000		
Mt William Road Contribution	-\$1,250,000		
Bike Network Contribution	-\$133,000		
Remaining Budget	\$441,000	Transfer \$400,000	All programmed works are allowed for within Capital Works Budget or Funding Allocations
Major Patching	\$100,000	-	
Bridges	\$400,000	Transfer \$400,000	All programmed bridge works are covered through Roads to Recovery Funding. No additional works are intended for 25/26.
Footpath Renewal Program	\$400,000		
Urban Drainage Works	\$750,000	Transfer \$400,000	Urban drainage works will be undertaken within the Housing Support Project at Queen St and asset replacement ratio should be met within the altered budget and funded work.
Kerb and Channel	\$300,000	Transfer \$300,000	Programmed works for Basham Street will be carried over to 26/27 financial year as works can not commence in this area until gas works are completed within the road envelope.
		\$1,500,000	

This report requests Council approve the suggested amendments to the capital works program as detailed.

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 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 approve the amended Capital Works Program as detailed.**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

3.9 MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 23331

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 July 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 \$18.771 million in revenue and \$3.679 million in expenses to 31 July 2025. This has resulted in an operating surplus of \$15.092 million for the month ended 31 July 2025.

Income

Rates and charges account for 54% of the total budgeted income for 2025/26. Rates and charges are recognised when the rates have been raised, not when the income has been received. An amount of \$17.716 million has been recognised as income for the month ended 31 July 2025.

User fees account for 5% of the total budgeted income for 2025/26 and \$0.359 million has been received to 31 July 2025. The majority of this relates to transfer station fees, fitness centre income and commercial waste management charges.

Non-recurrent Operating Grants total \$0.328 million to 31 July 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 2025/26 \$'000	Income 2025/26 \$'000	Unearned Income \$'000
Ararat Housing Transition	-	-	300
Digital Twin Victoria	-	-	950
Free Public WiFi Services	-	-	1,243
Supported Playgroups	67	6	-
Ararat Rural City Sport, Active Recreation & Open Space Strategy	-	-	36
CALD Outreach Workers Initiative	129	129	-
Tiny Towns Fund - Pomonal Community Hub	-	-	119
Natural Disaster Relief	-	102	-
Council Support Fund - Pomonal Fires	-	-	-
Engage - Youth Events Activities & Happenings	55	-	-
Centenary Park Dog Park	100	-	25
Queen Street Housing Program	-	91	3,391
Ararat Hills Adventure Sports Precinct	-	-	400
Early Career Educators	-	-	103
Ararat Active Bike Network	266	-	-
Ararat City Tennis Sports Lighting and Accessibility	-	-	280
Other Minor Grants (under \$30,000)	-	-	-
	617	328	6,847

Non-recurrent Capital Grants have not been recognised as income up to 31 July 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 2025/26 \$'000	Income 2025/26 \$'000	Unearned Income \$'000
Pedestrian Infrastructure Program	-	-	50
Tiny Towns Fund - Buangor Recreation Reserve Pavillion Redevelopment	-	-	50
Tiny Towns Fund - Buangor Cobb & Co Stables	-	-	30
Pony Club Sports Arena	1,490	-	433
Queen Street Housing Program	-	-	1,683
Ararat Library Lighting & Exterior Upgrade	-	-	51
TAC Safe Local Roads and Streets Program	-	-	468
Jack & Jill Kindergarten Upgrade	-	-	75
Other Minor Grants (under \$30,000)	-	-	10
	1,490	-	2,850

Note

It is important to note the following:

1. The Grants Operating (recurrent) figure in the Original Budget was \$8.909 million and in the Current Budget is recorded as \$4.721 million, as \$4.188 million was paid to Council in 2024/25 by the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission (VLGGC) for the 2025/26 financial year. Council has still received the expected VLGGC income, to be spent in 2025/26, however it will be reported over two financial years.
2. Unearned revenue received in prior years has been adjusted between the Original Budget and Current Budget with an additional \$6.659 million for Grants Operating (non-recurrent), \$0.386 million for Grants Capital (recurrent) and \$2.282 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 2025/26 financial year.

3. These changes in the budget, plus the note reported under expenses, create a change in the reported surplus position from a projected surplus of \$2.050 million to a surplus of \$3.028 million for 2025/26. The year-end variance is a surplus of \$0.163 million when the actual year to date expenses are compared to the year to date budget.

Expenses

Employee Costs account for approximately 37% of the total budgeted expenditure for 2025/26. For the month ended 31 July 2025 Council has incurred \$0.950 million in employee costs.

Materials and Services account for approximately 28% of the total budgeted expenditure for 2025/26. For the month ended 31 July 2025, Council has incurred \$1.686 million in materials and services costs. There are a number of projects, including those carried forward from 2024/25 that are expected to be completed before the end of the financial year.

Note

It is important to note the following:

There has been an increase in expenditure on materials and services from \$9.186 million in the Original Budget to \$13.357 million in the Current Budget for 2025/26. This has resulted from a carry forward amount of \$4.171 million from the 2024/25 financial year unspent grant funds which will be used to complete the projects in 2025/26.

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 July 2025. Comparative figures have been provided as at 31 July 2024.

Council's current assets have increased by \$17.695 million from \$17.747 million as at 31 July 2024 to \$35.442 million as at 31 July 2025. Cash and cash equivalents have decreased by \$2.263 million from \$14.841 million to \$12.578 million. Trade and other receivables have increased by \$19.943 million from \$2.835 million as at 31 July 2024 to \$22.778 million as at 31 July 2025 which is predominantly due to the full year rates being raised in July 2025.

Total liabilities have decreased from \$16.464 million in 2024/25 to \$15.936 million in 2025/26. Trade and other payables have decreased by \$1.288 million and trust funds and deposits have increased by \$0.089 million. Unearned income increased by \$0.746 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 \$14.841 million have decreased by \$2.263 million to \$12.578 million as at 31 July 2025.

Net cash of \$1.822 million was used in operating activities, \$0.356 million was used in investing activities, and \$0.085 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	30/6/2025	31/07/2025
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	120%	249%
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	0.86%	0.66%
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	8.02%	9.38%
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	50.13%	94.38%
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	\$4,948	\$493
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	\$2,002	\$2,035

Indicator	30/6/2025	31/07/2025
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 July 2025 the outstanding Rates Debtors totalled \$19.524 million compared to \$2.466 million as at 30 June 2025, an increase of \$17.058 million. In percentage terms 5.5% of the rates raised have been collected at 31 July 2025 compared to 5.1% up to 31 July 2024. Outstanding rates are currently charged 10% interest. Council issues approximately 7,900 rate notices. In 2024/25 there were 2,158 assessments paying by instalments compared with 2,640 assessments in 2023/24.	87.8%	5.5%
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.	99.92%	36.12%

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 month of the year to pay for the outstanding accounts at year end.

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 July 2025 be received and adopted.**

ATTACHMENTS

Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Financial Performance Indicators are provided as Attachment 3.9

SECTION 4 - INFORMATION REPORTS

4.1 2024/2025 CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM - JULY 2025

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 23332

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 2025/2026 Capital Works Program as a fundamental component of the current budget. With a substantial capital works investment totalling \$12.437 million, the budget primarily targets infrastructure enhancements.

Key initiatives include:

- Year two of Mount William Road Construction - supported by Federal Government funding.
- Buangor Ben Nevis Road Construction - including replacement of bridge one at the Warrak end of the project.
- The covered sports arena at the Ararat Pony Club facilities.
- 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 2025/2026 fiscal year.

DISCUSSION

Council's 2025/2026 Capital Works Program continues our shift to reintroduction of larger road and bridge construction projects post-pandemic. The program's budget has substantial state and federal funding targeting road construction works and road safety initiatives.

The focus for 2025/2026 remains on renewing and updating Council assets, leveraging in-house capabilities, and supporting local employment and contractors, and the tender of works with the expectation of possible budget savings in a softening construction market.

Key areas include:

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

Budget Status:

As of 31 July 2025, <1% of the budget is expended.

Mt William is expected to commence work in late August with final cultural heritage inductions now complete, design time frames for bridge one on Buangor Ben Nevis Road will be confirmed in coming weeks and commencement dates confirmed.

Tenders for the Ararat Pony Club and Jack and Jill Kindergarten projects are expected to go out to market by the end of August.

Final plans are being completed for the Safe Local Roads and Streets program with detailed design due to the funding body by late September with works to commence either by in-house team or tendered to the market.

The works on Webb Street funded through the Roads to Recovery Funding is commencing with services being altered and road works to commence in September with the return of better weather.

	Budget	Committed/ Contracted	Expended	%	Notes
PROPERTY - CAPITAL					
Property Capital	\$550,000				
Funding Property Capital Co-Contribution Allocations	-\$404,388				
Remaining Budget	\$145662	-	-		
TOTAL PROPERTY CAPITAL		-	-	0%	
PLANT & EQUIPMENT					
Vehicle Purchases	\$240,000				
Major Plan Purchases	\$260,000				
Computer Equipment	\$100,000				
Book stock - Library Book Replacement	\$40,000				
TOTAL PLANT & EQUIPMENT		-	-	0%	
INFRASTRUCTURE					
Works by others					
Woorndoo Streatham Road	\$683,000	-	-		Works for this road is being undertaken by Moyne Shire. The budget amount is Council's contribution.
Roads					
Gravel Road Sheeting, Widening & Alternative Sealing	\$1,800,000	-	\$5,345		Fully Expended 24/25
Reseal Program	\$1,000,000	-	-		Fully Expended 24/25
Buangor Ben Nevis Road	\$1,000,000	-	-		These works will make up part of project in Funded projects - Roads
Urban Road Gravel to Seal	\$1,000,000	-	\$5,676	<1%	Works Allocated for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alexandra Avenue (in conjunction with SLRSP Funding) Coral & McNeil Stret Maude Street (in conjunction with Pony Club Project)

Road Reconstruction Program	\$2,324,000	-			
Buangor Ben Nevis Road Contribution	-\$500,000				
Mt William Road Contribution	-\$1,250,000				
Bike Network Contribution	-\$133,000				
Remaining Budget	\$441,000		\$120	<1%	
Major Patching	\$100,000	-	-	0%	
Bridges	\$400,000	-	-	0%	
Footpath Renewal Program	\$400,000	-	\$615	<1%	<i>Works Allocated for:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Street (Vincent to Queen St) • Taylor Street (Barkly to View Point - in conjunction with SLRSP Funding)
Urban Drainage Works	\$750,000	-	\$510	<1%	
Kerb and Channel	\$300,000	-	\$2,941	1%	
TOTAL INFRASTRUCTURE		-	\$15,207	<1%	
TOTAL CAPITAL WORKS		-	\$15,207	<1%	

FUNDED PROJECTS - PROPERTY CAPITAL

Current Funded Projects	Budget	Funding Amount	Council Contribution	Community Contribution	Previous Years Expenditure	Expended (25/26)	Overall Total	%	Notes
Former Cobb & Co Staging Stables (Disaster Recovery Heritage Program)	\$60,000	\$60,000	Nil		\$1,237		\$1,237	2%	Ararat Maintenance Plumbing has commenced works on this project.
Ararat Pony Club - Covered Sports Area (Play our Way Program)	\$1,490,000	\$1,490,000	Nil		\$14,270		\$14,270	1%	Tender documents currently being compiled for design and construction of pavilion. Expected to be out to market by September 2025.
Centenary Park - Dog Park (Open Space for Everyone Program)	\$112,000	\$100,000	\$12,000		\$1,172	\$4,536	\$5,708	6%	Detailed design being completed inhouse and to be approved by funding body in September 2025. Works to commence via inhouse team by November 2025.
Buangor Sports Pavilion Redevelopment (Tiny Towns Program)	\$631,000	\$50,000	\$581,000 ((\$220k Property Capital) (\$361k Property Reserve)		\$303	\$2,727	\$3,030	<1%	Detailed design currently being completed by Contractor. Funding requires building approval by September 2025.
Jack and Jill Kindergarten Redevelopment (Building Blocks improvement grants program)	\$821,000	\$745,000			\$26,000		\$26,000	3%	Documentation expected from Architect in the coming weeks and project will go to tender.
Ararat City Tennis Sports Lighting Installation and accessibility upgrade (Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Fund)	\$700,000	\$560,000	\$120,000	\$20,000	NA		-	0%	New Grant Received July 2025. Schematic drawings to be approved and works can commence.
Gordon Street Cricket Nets Upgrade (Australian Cricket Infrastructure Grant)	\$39,985	\$15,000	\$24,985		NA		-	0%	Currently arranging quotes for concrete and synthetic covers to be undertaken.

Pomonal Hall Battery Project (Powering Resilience in the Regions Program)	\$148,760	\$141,407	\$7,353		NA	\$7,353	\$7,353	5%	Council have paid their contribution to the project and the tender is currently out to market.
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FUNDED PROJECTS - ROADS & INFRASTRUCTURE

Current Funded Projects	Budget	Funding Amount	Council Contribution	Previous Years Expenditure	Expended 25/26	Overall Total	%	Notes
Webb Street Reconstruction (Roads to Recovery 24/25)	\$400,000	\$400,000		\$13,822	\$595	\$14,417	2%	Services and levels are currently being set and road works will commence in September with the return of better weather.
Buangor Ben Nevis Road (Roads to Recovery 24/25 & 25/26)	\$2,143,000	\$1,643,000	\$500,000 (Roads Program 25/26)	\$269,592		\$269,592	12%	Staging of works is being finalised, commencement dates will be advised when confirmed.
Buangor Ben Nevis Road (SILRP Funding 26/26)	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000						Council contribution of \$1,250,000 required in 26/27 Budget
Mt William Road (HSVPP Funding 24/25)	\$6,250,000	\$5,000,000	\$1,250,000 (Roads Program 25/26)	\$217,582		\$217,582	3%	Traditional owner site commencement meeting is booked in for 20 August 2025. Works will commence in the fortnight following this meeting.
Buangor Ben Nevis Road - Bridge 7001.14 Design and Construct (Roads to Recovery - 25/26)	\$1,300,000	\$1,300,000		\$68,723	\$1,289	\$70,012	5%	Contract No. 731 - Awarded July 2025 \$1.109m - Road and Bridge Pty Ltd \$100,000 allowance for Permits and Vegetation offsets.
McCrows Road Bridge (Roads to Recovery)	\$350,000	\$350,000		\$17,738		\$17,738	5%	Budget is estimate only - going to market to test pricing.
Ararat Active Bike Network (Active Transport Fund)	\$399,000	\$266,000	\$133,000 (Roads Program 25/26)	\$13,525		\$13,525	3%	Detailed designs are being finalised and tenders for the works are expected to be called in September 2025.
Banfield Street - School Crossing (Road Safety Program - School Safety Improvements 20-25)	\$19,009	\$19,009		\$8,244	\$4,085	\$12,329	65%	These works are complete.
Queen Street Housing Support Program	\$7,380,000	\$7,380,000		\$152,580	\$91,371	\$243,951	3%	Sub-division planning and associated reporting are still in progress before submission to Council.

(Housing Support Program - Community Enabling Infrastructure)								Demolition works are progressing.
SAFE LOCAL ROADS AND STREETS PROGRAM								
View Point, Tobin & Taylor St Intersections	\$224,000	\$224,000		\$581		\$581	<1%	The detailed design for this project is expected to be complete by early September 2025, then works will be tendered. This project will be run in conjunction with Footpath project for Taylor Street.
Ingor Street - Raised Crossing	\$110,000	\$110,000		\$600	\$139	\$739	<1%	The detailed design for this project is expected to be complete by early September 2025, then works will be tendered.
King Street - Raised Crossing	\$110,000	\$110,000		\$4,702	\$155	\$4,857	4%	Detailed design is nearing completion and works will be undertaken by an in-house team.
View Point & High St Intersection	\$117,000	\$117,000		\$1,526	\$2,385	\$3,911	3%	Detailed design is nearing completion and works will be undertaken by an in-house team.
Moore & Princes Street Intersection	\$131,000	\$131,000		\$145		\$145	<1%	The detailed design for this project is expected to be complete by early September 2025, then works will be tendered.
Vincent Street & Alexandra Avenue - Raised Crossing	\$321,000	\$321,000		\$239		\$239	<1%	The detailed design for this project is expected to be complete by early September 2025, then works will be tendered. This project will be run in conjunction with Gravel to Seal project for Alexandra Avenue.
Queen & Moore Street Roundabout	\$548,000	\$548,000		\$1,531	\$202	\$1,733	<1%	The detailed design for this project is expected to be complete by early September 2025, then works will be tendered.
SAFE SYSTEM PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM (23/24)								
Barkly Street Raised Crossing	\$312,232	\$312,232		\$398	\$202	\$591	<1%	This project is awaiting final design approval from the department of transport for the works to commence.
High Street Raised Crossing								This project is awaiting final design approval from the department of transport for the works to commence.

FUNDED PROJECTS - MISCELLANEOUS

Current Funded Projects	Budget	Funding Amount	Council Contribution	Previous Years Expenditure	Expended (25/26)	Overall Total	%	Notes
Roadside Weeds and Pest Program 25/26 (Funding of the same name)	\$74,135	\$74,135		NA		-	0%	The tender for the contractor for this program is currently out to market with tenders closing on 12 August 2025.
Sport & Active Recreation Strategy (Local Sports Infrastructure Funding 23/24)	\$55,000	\$40,000	\$15,000	\$12,452		\$12,452	23%	CommunityVibe is undertaking the works associated with this project. Community engagement has been undertaken and draft reporting is underway.
Community Road Safety Action Plan (TAC Local Govt Funding)	\$49,540	\$59,540		\$437		\$437	1%	DWB Engineering is undertaking the works associated with this project. Community engagement has been completed and draft reporting is being compiled
Unlocking Ararat North East (Streamlining for Growth 22/23)	\$85,000	\$85,000		NA			0%	Beveridge Williams is undertaking the works for this project. They are working with our Planning Department and Strategic Project Lead to progress the outcomes of the funding.
Ararat City Tennis Sports Lighting Installation and accessibility upgrade - Participation Initiative. (Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Fund)	\$50,000	\$50,000		NA			0%	This grant was received in July 2025 and will run in conjunction with the infrastructure project for Sports Lighting and accessibility upgrades.
Lake Bolac Kindergarten Carpark (YMCA received funding for work)	\$80,339	\$80,339		\$61,358	\$12,200	\$73,558	91%	Funding was received by the YMCA to undertake the carpark works at Lake Bolac Kindergarten. Council procured the contractor and project managed the works with the funding amount being paid to Council on completion of the works. Work are now complete.

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 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 - July 2025 report.**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

4.2 BUANGOR BEN NEVIS ROAD - SCOPE OF WORKS

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 23333

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 Buangor Ben Nevis Road is an essential link between the Pyrenees and Western Highways, servicing major freight services and residents of the municipality.

The proposed works include reconstruction of a 10 kilometre stretch of road between Warrak Township and the Western Highway. Works include excavation and removal of existing pavement, new stabilised road base course layers, drainage, widened road seal, line marking, safety barriers and associated signage.

Two bridges will also have works completed with one being strengthened, while the other is to be reconstructed, both projects allowing for safer travel routes for vehicles in this area.

With the safety and efficiency of our roads being one of our highest priorities it is project is of great significance, with funding from Council through its capital works budget and \$5 million from the Federal Government through the Safe Local Roads and Infrastructure Program.

This report details the project scope of works and timeframe for works to be undertaken.

DISCUSSION

The Buangor Ben Nevis Road renewal works will be conducted in stages as set out in the table below. Chainage measurements are taken from the southern extent of the road (western Highway end).

It is designed to accommodate B-double traffic, with a stabilised pavement design similar to that being used on Mt William Rd. The road will have a 7.2m wide seal, targeted shoulder width is 1.5m however there will be narrower sections due to ecology and cultural heritage constraints.

Vertical alignments have been optimised to make the road safer by reducing grade changes and increase sight distances as much as possible.

The Cultural Heritage Management Plan for road and bridge renewal works between Warrak and the Western Highway has been finalised, there are several no-go zones within the project area but these will not impede project delivery.

Ecological impacts have been assessed at the whole of project level. Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC) and Flora Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (FFG) species will be impacted during works, as such there will need to be permits sought from state and federal authorities where required. Offsetting for general ecology impacts is also necessary. Detailed assessments and mitigation/offsetting is to be carried out at individual project stages, enabling works to commence sooner while allowing time for relevant assessment and permitting of higher-complexity sections.

Federal funding classifies this project as a road safety project, which enables Council to undertake works in accordance with relevant planning scheme exemptions where applicable. This reduces complexity in general ecology impact assessments and offsetting and will support proposed actions when reporting FFG and EPBC impacts.

Disruptions to traffic will be unavoidable, through traffic will be maintained using shuttle flow arrangements as much as possible, however road closures will be necessary at times, particularly during bridge works.

Stage	Ch Start	Ch End	Projected completion
1	9065	10740	FY 25/26
2	0	1317	FY 25/26
3	2070	4152	FY 26/27
4	4785	7860	FY 26/27
5	7860	9065	FY 26/27
6	4152	4785	FY 27/28
7	1317	2070	FY 27/28

Stage 1

- 1.7km section, currently narrow seal. Warrak fire station (approximately) to bridge 7001.14 (Mount Cole Creek)
- Minimal ecology impacts, will tie in with the renewal of bridge 7001.14.

Stage 2

- 1.3km section, currently narrow seal. Western Highway to bridge 7001.02 (Billy Billy Creek).
- Lower habitat value, some vegetation removal will be necessary. EPBC referral is unlikely to be required, FFG permits to take may be required. Delays in permitting are not anticipated.

Stage 3

- 2.1km section, currently narrow seal.
- FFG and EPBC referrals and permits to take likely required.

Stage 4

- 3.1km section, currently narrow seal.
- FFG and EPBC referrals and permits to take likely required.

Stage 5

- 1.2km section, wide seal (poor pavement condition)
- FFG and EPBC referrals and permits to take likely required.

Stage 6

- 0.6km section, wide seal (poor pavement condition)
- FFG and EPBC referrals and permits to take likely required.

Stage 7

- 0.8km section, wide seal (poor pavement condition)
- FFG and EPBC referrals and permits to take likely required.

Bridge deck renewal - 7001.02 (Billy Billy Creek)

- Designs have been completed for strengthening of the existing bridge abutments and renewal of the superstructure (deck), which will achieve SM1600 compliance and a 100-year design life.
- Deck replacement is more economical and provides greater assurance of long-term reliability (100-year design life instead of 30-50 year).

- The exiting abutments will be capped with a reinforced layer of concrete, tying both abutments together to enhance stability and achieve 100-year design life.
- This project is being prepared for tender and construction is anticipated to be completed in the first half of 2026. Disruptions will be limited to 1-2 weeks closure, with limited access either side of that period (traffic light controlled shuttle flow likely).
- Culturally significant artefacts were found in the vicinity of this bridge, existing no-go zones should not impede works but there is a heightened potential for additional artefacts to be uncovered during works, which may delay progress.

Bridge renewal - 7001.14

- The bridge will be 28m long, double span, SM1600 compliant (suitable for B-doubles), with 2 x 3.6m traffic lanes.
- The bridge superstructure is a "Super-T beam" design (precast concrete deck sections), which reduces future maintenance requirements by significantly reducing the number of joins in the deck compared to traditional designs.
- Concrete piles, abutments and wingwalls will be cast in-situ.
- Planned construction commencement is 13 October 25, planned completion is 12 December 25.
- Road closures will span 4-5 weeks from 13 October 25, every effort will be made to minimise the impacts of this closure.
- Due to ecological sensitivities within the site, it will not be possible to construct a temporary crossing while the bridge is out of service.
- Vehicles will be required to detour via Ararat (38km/19 min journey increase). Light vehicles may detour via Warrayatkin Road however this should not be signed, to discourage heavy vehicle use.
- The bridge is to current standards for heavy vehicle traffic and will have a 100-year design life.

Other bridges and major drainage

There are three other small bridges within this section of Buangor-Ben Nevis Road. They are currently in acceptable conditions but strengthening works will be necessary as heavy vehicle traffic increases. A number of major culverts will need to be renewed during road reconstruction stages and have been considered as part of the total project costs.

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 delivers strong public value. Existing infrastructure will be managed, renewed and maintained to ensure that it continues to serve identified public needs.

Budget Implications

The Capital Works Budget currently has \$3,143,000 through Council contribution and Roads to Recovery (Year 1) Funding. The Safe Local Roads and Infrastructure Program has provided \$5 million in funding with a Council contribution in the 26/27 Capital Works budget of \$1.25 million. The renewal of bridge 7001.14 as awarded at the July council meeting has \$1.3 million funded through Roads to Recovery (Year 2).

Policy/Relevant Law

- Local Government Act 2020

- Relevant Funding Agreements
- ARCC Procurement Policy
- Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
- Flora Fauna Guarantee Act 1988
- Cultural Heritage Management Plan 20159

Sustainability Implications

There are a number of sustainability implications noted within the report and include issues related to Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, Flora Fauna Guarantee Act 1988, Cultural Heritage Management Plan 20159

Risk Assessment

Risks associated with this project have been considered through funding applications and project design phases. Related risks will be identified and managed based on the stage of works being undertaken.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Staging of this project allows an agile response to market conditions. A capacity to rework strategy based on a changing environment is a critical element undertaking such significant projects.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Stakeholder engagement has been undertaken through various planning stages of this project, including, design, funding, cultural heritage and ecological engagements.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1. Council receive the Buangor Ben Nevis Road - Scope of Works report.**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

4.3 ANNUAL PLAN 2025/26 UPDATE (JULY 2025)

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO OFFICE
REFERENCE: 23334

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 Plan 2025-29 contains 18 strategic objectives that have been broken down into 53 actions that are to be undertaken during the 2025/2026 (Year 1) financial year. These actions are provided in the Annual Plan 2025/26 and their progress is reported monthly at Council Meetings.

One action has been completed, thirty five are in progress, six have not commenced and eleven are ongoing.

DISCUSSION

The Annual Plan 2025/26 contains 53 actions. Progress on these actions are summarised below.

Status	Number of Actions
Completed	1
In progress 51-99%	2
In progress 0-50%	33
Not Started	6
Ongoing	11

Further details on each action is provided in the table below.

Council Plan Objectives	Actions	Progress	Officer Comment
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	Not Started	The Planning Practice Note for 'Review of Planning Schemes' is currently being reviewed by the Victorian Government. The review will commence once the Planning Practice Note is updated.
	1.1.2 Establish annual targets for sustainable urban growth	Not Started	This action is closely linked to action 1.1.1 and will occur concurrently.
	1.1.3 Complete the 'Unlocking Ararat North East' Structure Plan project	In progress 0-50%	Contractor has been engaged and work has commenced.
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.	In progress 0-50%	Pre-construction planning and design for the enabling infrastructure is underway, and demolition and site clearing has commenced.
	1.2.2 Continue to develop the Ararat Housing	In progress 0-50%	Pre-construction planning for the four homes is underway or complete.

	Enterprise P/L, delivering another four houses in Ararat during 2025/2026.		Construction is expected to commence soon.
	1.2.3 Work with developers to submit EOI application/s to the National Housing Infrastructure Facility Crisis and Transitional Housing (NHIF CT) program	In progress 0-50%	Consultations between developers and potential crisis and transitional housing providers is underway.
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	In progress 0-50%	Specifications and designs for tender are being prepared.
	1.3.2 Establish a new childcare centre in Lake Bolac	In progress 0-50%	Council officers are continuing to liaise with developers and potential childcare providers to deliver
	1.3.3 Deliver the CALD Outreach Initiative	In progress 0-50%	The CALD Outreach Officer has actively engaged families and a range of health and support services to facilitate, support and improve access to early childhood education.
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	The AJTP Advisory Group and the Future of the Regions group are focused on industry and stakeholder engagement. As PhD students commence their research projects the level of industry engagement is increasing.
	2.1.2 Work with Federation University, community and industry stakeholders to apply for a grant for National Science Week in August 2026	Not Started	National Science Week grant applications are expected to be due in October 2025. Engagement to develop the program of activities for National Science Week 2026 is planned for commencement in September.
	2.1.3 Continue to support the delivery of TAFE courses at the Ararat Jobs and Technology Precinct	Ongoing	Cert 3 in Early Childhood Education and Care courses are continuing at the Precinct. The Ararat Best Start Workshop Series, supported by a Dept. Education Innovation Grant, held its first face to face session at the Precinct on 12 August 2025.
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	Council is working with Invest Victoria, Regional Development Victoria and a number of private sector partners to make a case for a state significant circular economy hub in Ararat
	2.2.2 Continue to support Valorify P/L to develop a biogas plant in Ararat which uses straw as the major input.	Ongoing	Council continues to strongly support Valorify P/L. An engagement session was held in Ararat on 7 August 2025 to provide an update to stakeholders.
	2.2.3 Seek funding from the Victorian Government's \$10 million fund to unlock industrial trunk infrastructure to accelerate new industrial developments	In progress 0-50%	Regional Development Victoria and the Department of Transport and Planning have been engaged on our industrial trunk infrastructure needs.

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	In progress 0-50%	The establishment of the Project Control Group is underway.
	2.3.2 Partner with local hospitality, accommodation, food and wine industry to develop an annual fine wine and food event within the municipality.	In progress 0-50%	Following the successful delivery of the 'Take Another Breathe' event in June 2025, the Economic Development team continues to liaise closely week with the local industry to identify potential opportunities for an annual fine wine and food event.
	2.3.3 Work with operators and Grampians Wimmera Mallee Tourism to deliver 4 star and above accommodation	In progress 0-50%	Council is supporting the development of a range of accommodation businesses in the municipality.
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.	Not Started	Work on this action has not yet commenced in the 2025/26 year
	3.1.2 Continue to support PlastOil to develop a plastics recycling facility in Ararat	Ongoing	Council continues to strongly support PlastOil through the Economic Development team.
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	Council continues to strongly support Valorify P/L. An engagement session was held in Ararat on 7 August 2025 to provide an update to stakeholders.
	3.2.2 Work with Federal and State Government and private sector partners to plan, fund and develop a circular economy industrial precinct.	In progress 0-50%	Council is working with Invest Victoria, Regional Development Victoria and a number of private sector partners to make a case for a state significant circular economy hub in Ararat.
	3.2.3 Continue to advocate for greater policy confidence and support for renewable gas generation	Ongoing	Council issued a statement in July 2025 calling for the Victorian Government to provide clear policy direction and greater support for renewable gas production.
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	In progress 0-50%	Tender for this project has opened.
	3.3.2 Deliver the Roadside Weeds and Pests Program (subject to State Government funding)	In progress 0-50%	State funding as been confirmed. Planning is now underway.
	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.	In progress 0-50%	An application to the Community Energy Upgrades Fund Round 2 was submitted in June 2025 and we are awaiting the outcome.

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	In progress 0-50%	Drafting of the Asset Plan 2025-35 is underway
	4.1.2 Continue to advocate for the Western Highway Upgrade from Buangor to Ararat	Ongoing	Advocacy efforts are ongoing with the Western Highway Action Committee (WHAC), and with support for a Motion to the MAV State Council
	4.1.3 Continue to advocate for a North South Heavy Vehicle Route	Ongoing	Advocacy on this issue has not yet commenced in the 2025/26 year
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	In progress 0-50%	Gender Impact Assessments are in progress.
	4.2.2 Deliver the Community Road Safety Strategy	In progress 51-99%	Contractor was engaged and community consultation undertaken in 2024/25. Preparation of the draft Strategy is in progress.
	4.2.3 Deliver the Ararat Rural City Sport and Active Recreation Strategy	In progress 51-99%	Contractor was engaged and community consultation undertaken in 2024/25. Preparation of the draft Strategy is in progress.
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	In progress 0-50%	Refer to the Capital Works Program report.
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	In progress 0-50%	Expressions of Interest (EOIs) closed in June 2025. A higher number of submissions was received than expected and assessments of the EOIs has required additional time. The Visual Arts Coordinator will correspond to the applicants once the assessments are complete and the 2026 community program is finalised.
	5.1.2 Increase participation in programs at Ararat Gallery TAMA	In progress 0-50%	Ararat Gallery TAMA has launched a new Analog Art Club program with the first session held on 9 August 2025. Promotions for the new and existing programs has been delivered via the Ararat Gallery TAMA social media channels, Council's Focus Page, and email newsletters.
	5.1.3 Investigate ways to maximise scheduling of community events at the Town Hall	In progress 0-50%	A review of the Ararat Town Hall's previous years usage and available days has commenced to identify future scheduling opportunities.
	5.1.4 Identify innovative ways to increase the promotion and reach of performances at the Town Hall	In progress 0-50%	A grant application has been submitted to Creative Australia's Playing Australia Audience Development Multi-Year Investment Program 2026-2028, and the outcome is pending.

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	In progress 0-50%	The inaugural YEAH Crew has been established and has eight members. Six members have participated in event management training in August 2025.
	5.2.2 Deliver young people's programs across schools, largely through the Crazy Ideas College	In progress 0-50%	The Ararat Youth Activators program 2025 is underway.
	5.2.3 Work with community groups to deliver an annual Volunteer Expo	Not Started	National Volunteer Week will be celebrated from 19-25 April 2026. Planning for the Ararat Volunteer Expo will commence towards late 2025.
	5.2.4 Promote the benefits and achievements of volunteers, to encourage participation	Ongoing	Council has publicly thanked our dedicated volunteers as part of Aged Care Employee Day on 7 August 2025.
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	In progress 0-50%	The draft Terms of Reference and indicative meeting schedule is being prepared. An EOI for the Working Group will open in September
	5.3.2 Develop the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-29	In progress 0-50%	The Draft Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-29 has been released for public consultation
	5.3.3 Hold quarterly meetings of the Child Friendly Cities and Communities Working Group	In progress 0-50%	A quarterly meeting of the CFCC Working Group was held on 20 August 2025.
	5.3.4 Deliver multicultural events	In progress 0-50%	Staff have participated in event management training in August 2025 and planning is underway.
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	In progress 0-50%	A review of trends for the previous financial year is underway.
	6.1.2 Undertake a review of Council's insurance coverage and policies to ensure they continue to provide value for money	In progress 0-50%	An analysis of the existing insurance coverage and opportunities for reducing insurance risks is underway.
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	In progress 0-50%	IT infrastructure and systems upgrades are underway
	6.2.2 Undertake the Strategic Internal Audit Program – 5 years.	In progress 0-50%	Progress is being made on the items in the Strategic Internal Audit Program.
	6.2.3 Develop the 2026-2030 Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP)	Not Started	Council officers are finalising reporting on the 2021-2025 GEAP before commencing the 2026-30 GEAP.
	6.2.4 Ensure appropriate analysis of all inquiry and investigation reports relevant to Council operations are examined	Ongoing	Each external enquiry and investigation undertaken in the local government sector is examined and appropriate actions undertaken. Significant issues and remedies are

	and recommendations implemented.		reported to the audit and risk committee.
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	Complete	The new CRMS and integration with the Snap Send Solve app is now complete. Council officers will continue to encourage residents to install the app.
	6.3.2 Develop a regular biannual program of face-to-face community engagement opportunities	In progress 0-50%	Planning for face-to-face engagement sessions has commenced.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

The Annual Plan 2025/26 aligns with all strategic objectives of the Council Plan 2025-29

Budget Implications

The Annual Plan 2025/2026 does not have any additional budget implications. All actions in the Annual Plan have been budgeted in the 2025/2026 Budget or have no additional resourcing requirements.

Policy/Relevant Law

Section 90 of the Local Government Act 2020 requires that Council produces a Council Plan for a minimum of a four year period. The Annual Plan is a document related to operationalising the Council Plan.

Sustainability Implications

The Annual Plan provides specific actions that will be undertaken for the key theme 5. Preserving Our Environment.

Risk Assessment

Implementing the Annual Plan has some inherent risks around project and program delivery on time, at cost and at an acceptable quality. These risks are managed through careful budget monitoring, a focus on effective project management and appropriate stakeholder engagement. Council has a commitment to improved performance across all of these areas.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Stakeholders and community groups will be engaged during the development and delivery of the actions, where applicable.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- Council receives the Annual Plan 2025/26 - July 2025 report**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

4.4 ARARAT PONY CLUB PROJECT UPDATE

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: STRATEGIC PROJECT LEAD
DEPARTMENT: CEO OFFICE
REFERENCE: 23335

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 provides a status update on the project titled 'New Covered Sports Arena for the Ararat Pony Club', funded by a \$1.49 million grant from the Federal Government's Play Our Way grants program.

The grant agreement was executed on 26 March 2025, enabling the project to commence. A feature survey and geotechnical investigation was undertaken on the Ararat Pony Club site, these are a necessary step in the preparation of concept plans and layouts on the site. Preliminary layout plans have been presented to the Ararat Pony Club and an agreed layout plan option has been confirmed.

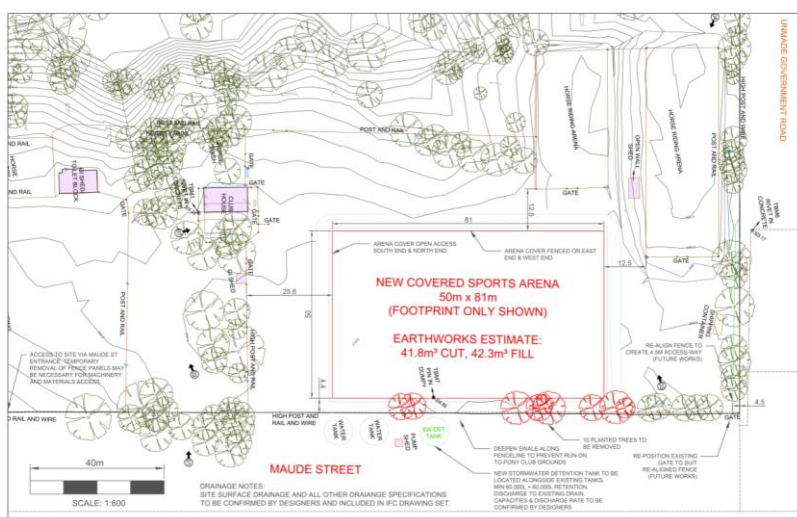
The Ararat Pony Club tender is now being finalised and is expected to open in late Aug/early Sept 2025.

DISCUSSION

Since the announcement of the successful grant to deliver a new covered arena at the Ararat Pony Club, Council officers have been undertaken the necessary pre-construction planning tasks and liaising with the Club on the details of the project.

A feature survey and geotechnical investigation of the site has been undertaken. The feature survey provides the details of the existing assets on the site, such as the existing uncovered arenas, structures, utility connections and other features of the site that inform the development of new infrastructure. A geotechnical investigation was undertaken to assess the soil properties for the design of the foundation for the proposed development. Once these site details were received, suitable site layouts were assessed, and two preliminary layout options were presented to the Ararat Pony Club.

The Ararat Pony Club have confirmed their preferred site layout as shown in the image below.



Council officers are now finalising the specifications for the tender for the project, and will open the tender as soon as possible. This is expected to occur in late August or early September. Once the tender closes and the contract is awarded, the detailed designs for the project will be finalised by the successful contractor prior to the commencement of construction.

Construction activity will commence after the satisfactory completion of the detailed designs and the successful contractor's availability to commence works.

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.

4.2 Work directly with asset users to manage and develop new and existing assets.

Budget Implications

There are no budget implications arising. This project has been fully funded by a Play Our Way grant and the project is forecasted to remain within budget.

Policy/Relevant Law

Not applicable

Sustainability Implications

The pre-construction planning work undertaken thus far ensures that the new infrastructure can be delivered in a manner that requires as minimal ongoing maintenance and intervention as possible. The consultation that has occurred with the Ararat Pony Club ensures that the social benefits arising from this project will meet the needs of existing and future users, and sustain the benefits long term.

Risk Assessment

The pre-construction planning and consultations reduces project and construction risks.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

The Ararat Pony Club have been closely consulted and kept informed of the progress of the project.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. Council receive the Ararat Pony Club Project Update

ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

4.5 POMONAL COMMUNITY HALL BATTERY PROJECT

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: STRATEGIC PROJECT LEAD
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 23336

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

Ararat Rural City Council has partnered with Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance (CVGA) to deliver a state-of-the-art energy backup system for the Pomonal Community Hall, a key community hub, meeting space, and the designated emergency relief and recovery centre. This project is part of the CVGA-led Powering Resilience in the Regions (PRITR) Project, funded under Round 2 of the Victorian Government's 100 Neighbourhood Batteries Program.

The PRITR Project involves a total of ten local governments across three Victorian Greenhouse Alliances. The procurement for the project is being undertaken as a joint tender to achieve cost efficiencies. Ararat Rural City Council has supported the joint tender by releasing it via our eProcure channel.

DISCUSSION

The Pomonal community had been seeking to enhance energy resilience through the establishment of a 'Community Energy Hub' at the Pomonal Community Hall. This facility is used as a community service hub and an emergency relief and recovery centre. A backup energy solution was sought for the Pomonal Community Hall to achieve disaster resilience and cost-saving benefits for the local community, and to reduce reliance on diesel-fuelled generators that are costly to fuel and maintain and have negative health and environmental impacts.

This project will deliver an energy backup system with a 25 kW/50 kWh battery integrated with existing solar PV at the Pomonal Community Hall. This will future-proof this site as a designated emergency relief centre and create a Community Power Hub for residents of Pomonal and nearby rural areas to access power and support services during extended grid outage and emergency events.

The proposed system would provide up to 2 days backup power for critical power and lighting circuits from the battery alone, with capacity to charge from solar in island-mode to extended backup power duration if required.

Energy cost savings generated from this system would enable the Pomonal Community Hall and Recreation Reserve Community Asset Committee to invest more funds into maintaining the facilities in the best interest of the community and to promote use of the facility as a community asset and service hub.

To deliver the battery infrastructure, Ararat Rural City Council has joined with 10 other councils in the CVGA-led Powering Resilience in the Regions (PRITR) Project and a joint tender.

This joint tender is open and closes on 1 September 2025.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

3. PRESERVING OUR ENVIRONMENT

We will take pragmatic approaches to ensuring that Ararat Rural City Council takes a regional lead in responsible environmental management and engagement with the circular economy

- 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.

Budget Implications

This project is included in the 2025/26 Budget and no further budget implications are anticipated.

Policy/Relevant Law

Procurement Policy

Sustainability Implications

This project supports environmental and social sustainability.

Risk Assessment

Participating in the joint tender reduces the financial and project risks to Council.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

The Pomonal Community Hall and Recreation Reserve Community Asset Committee have been kept informed of progress. Further engagement will occur in the lead up to the installation of the battery to minimise disruptions to users of the Hall.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1. That Council receive the Pomonal Hall Community Battery Project Report**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

4.6 KINDERGARTEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES PLAN

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: STRATEGIC PROJECT LEAD
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 23337

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

As part of the Victorian Government's Best Start, Best Life reforms, Ararat Rural City Council has been working with the Department of Education to update the Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan (KISP) for Ararat Rural City. This document includes an estimate of the forecast demand for kindergarten places from 2025 to 2036, and supports the planning for services and infrastructure to meet the demand. The latest KISP is now finalised and publicly available. It estimates that the demand for 3 Year Old Kindergarten and Pre-Prep will exceed the supply of kindergarten places from 2026 onwards.

Ararat Rural City Council does not deliver kindergarten programs directly. There are six sessional kindergarten programs in Ararat Rural City that are delivered by the Y Kinders (also known as the Y), and there are two approved kindergarten programs in long day care settings. Four of the sessional kindergartens by the Y Kinders are delivered from Council managed facilities in Ararat, Lake Bolac and Willaura.

The Department of Education will use the latest KISP to plan for more kindergarten services and infrastructure to meet the future demand, with input from stakeholders, including Council.

DISCUSSION

As part of the Victorian Government's Best Start, Best Life reforms, 4 Year Old Kindergarten in Ararat Rural City transitioned from 15 hours per week to a 30 hour per week Pre-Prep program in 2025. In preparation for the roll out of Pre-Prep, Council have been working with the Department of Education since late 2023 to update the previous KISP completed in 2021, which had not factored in the increased demand for kindergarten places created by Pre-Prep and the forecasted population growth.

The purpose of the KISP is to enable the Department of Education to identify where and when new infrastructure will be required to support both the Best Start, Best Life reform implementation and population growth. The latest KISP estimates that in the Ararat SA2 (ie the suburb of Ararat), there will not be enough kindergarten places to meet demand from 2026 onwards. The KISP modelling also shows that there are enough kindergarten places in the Ararat Surrounds SA2 (ie Lake Bolac and Willaura) to meet demand until 2036. The Department of Education will investigate options for new and expanded kindergarten infrastructure in Ararat to meet this demand. They will seek input from stakeholders, including Council.

Council manages a number of facilities that are used by the Y for their kindergarten program, but does not run the kindergarten programs directly. In May 2024, Council identified its kindergarten infrastructure priorities and actions. The priorities at the time and the status of these is summarised below.

1. **Ararat North Kindercare:** Council sought to work with the Y to advocate for facility upgrades at Ararat North Kindercare. This work is continuing.
2. **Ararat Early Learning Centre:** Council worked with the Ararat Early Learning Centre to find an alternative solution to their kindergarten infrastructure needs. The Ararat Early Learning Centre have since found a suitable farm-based facility to support their Pre-Prep program.

3. **Carey Street Kindergarten:** Council sought to replace the existing building at this location because the building is approaching the end of its useful life. The Department of Education are aware that this site is an option for new kindergarten infrastructure to deliver sufficient kindergarten places for Ararat.
4. **Jack & Jill Kindergarten:** Council worked with the Y to secure a Building Blocks - Improvement Grant to refurbish the facilities. This project will be delivered as part of the Council's Capital Works Program for 2025/26.
5. The kindergarten services that were not mentioned in the May 2024 Council Report were engaged and supported, where possible.

Council officers will continue to liaise with stakeholders and advocate to the Department of Education to ensure that there will be new and/or expanded kindergarten infrastructure to meet the forecasted demand for kindergarten places.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

1. GROWING OUR PLACE

- 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.

4. DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING KEY ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE

- 4.2 Work directly with asset users to manage and develop new and existing assets.

Budget Implications

There are no budget implications arising from this report.

Policy/Relevant Law

Victorian Government's Best Start, Best Life reforms

Sustainability Implications

There are no sustainability implications in relation to the item

Risk Assessment

There is a risk that new kindergarten places will not become available in time to meet demand. Council will continue to engage with the early childhood education sector to monitor unmet demand and engage closely with the Department of Education to ensure our children do not miss out on a kindergarten or Pre-Prep place.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Council officers will continue to work closely with the local kindergarten and childcare providers, and the Department of Education, to deliver early years services and infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1. Council receives the Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan**

ATTACHMENTS

The Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan is provided as Attachment 4.6

4.7 COMMUNITY ASSET COMMITTEES' HALF YEAR REPORT

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 23338

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

A Community Asset Committee (CAC) is a committee with powers of the Council, established and with members appointed by Council. Powers are delegated by the Chief Executive Officer, subject to the terms and conditions specified by the Chief Executive Officer, for the purpose of managing a community asset in the municipal district

Section 47(6) of the Local Government Act 2020 states that a Chief Executive Officer must submit an annual report to the Council in relation to the activities and performance of a Community Asset Committee in respect of which the members have been given a delegation under this section.

DISCUSSION

Chief Executive Officer Update:

I have attended a variety of different meetings of Council's CACs over the past six months since the last report to Council. These include but are not limited to:

Ordinary Committee and Annual General Meetings;

Meetings to discuss the future of the Community Asset Committees and the way forward; and

Discussion relating to the redevelopment or development of current facilities.

Following the extreme heat and bushfire conditions of the 2024/25 season, some Committees have had discussions about their facility being used as a community refuge for residents without access to air conditioning on extreme heat days. Another example of how a Community Asset can be used to support vulnerable members of the community.

I will continue to work with Committees to ensure that the standard of facilities are maintained for future generations. Council has a project management budget to upgrade these facilities as required, together with the Facilities Maintenance Grant for 2024/25 paid to each Committee in the past six months for anything needed to maintain or improve their facility.

Our CAC members perform a brilliant service to our communities. Their contribution to the health and wellbeing of communities is huge and without their passion, hard work and energy our community life would be greatly diminished. I enjoy working with our CACs and wish to express my admiration for their work.

I provide the following report in relation to the activities of CACs.

1 Community Asset Committee - Meetings Minutes

The following table outlines the recent meetings held by the Community Asset Committees.

Minutes provided as an attachment show that the Committee members have been very busy over the past six months, with general maintenance requirements, event preparation and future planning for their facilities.

Community Asset Committee	Meetings held during the report period	Meetings scheduled advised
Alexandra Hall	27 March 2025, 24 July 2025 (AGM minutes not supplied)	Quarterly meetings scheduled.
Buangor Community Sports Centre	16 April 2025, 14 May 2025, 11 June 2025, 16 July 2025 (minutes not supplied)	Monthly meetings scheduled.
Elmhurst Public Hall	14 May 2025, 20 August 2025	13 November 2025 (AGM)
Lake Bolac Memorial Hall	No meetings held.	No meetings scheduled.
Maroona Recreation Reserve	No meetings held.	No meetings scheduled.
Mininera Recreation Reserve	26 February 2025 (AGM & ordinary)	No meetings scheduled.
Moyston Public Hall	11 February 2025, 13 May 2025, 17 June 2025	Regular meetings scheduled.
Pomonal Hall and Recreation Reserve	6 January 2025, 10 February 2025, 5 May 2025, 2 June 2025, 7 July 2025, 4 August 2025 (minutes not supplied)	Monthly meetings scheduled.
Streatham Memorial Hall	19 May 2025	No meetings scheduled.
Tattoon Hall and Recreation Reserve	24 February 2025	September 2025 (AGM).
Warrak Public Hall	2 December 2024 (AGM)	No meetings scheduled.
Wickliffe Recreation Reserve	9 May 2025 (AGM)	No meetings scheduled.
Willaura Memorial Hall	6 February 2025, 5 June 2025	Bi-monthly meetings scheduled.
Willaura Recreation Reserve	14 April 2025, 16 June 2025	Monthly meetings scheduled.
Yalla-Y-Poora Community Centre	No meetings held.	No meetings scheduled.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

The report supports the strategic objectives of the Council Plan 2025 - 2029:

4 Developing and Maintaining Key Enabling Infrastructure

4.2 Work directly with asset users to manage and develop new and existing assets.

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.

5.2 Develop models of volunteering that recognise, support and properly utilise the skills that community volunteers bring to community life.

Budget Implications

All Community Asset Committee projects or maintenance funding are allocated in the current Council budget.

Community Asset Committees report on their finances at their meetings.

Policy/Relevant Law

The Local Government Act, section 47(6) states that a Chief Executive Officer must submit an annual report to the Council in relation to the activities and performance of a Community Asset Committee in respect of which the members have been given a delegation under this section.

Sustainability Implications

All economic, social and environmental implications were considered when writing this report.

Risk Assessment

Not reporting the Community Asset Committees activities and performance to Council would breach the legislative requirements of the Local Government Act 2020, in particular section 47(6).

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

The Chief Executive Officer or delegated Officer has attended the majority of Community Asset Committees since the last report in January 2025.

The Community Asset Committees consist of Committee members who volunteer their time to manage the facilities on Council's behalf.

RECOMMENDATION

That

- 1. the Community Asset Committee Half Year report be recieved**

ATTACHMENTS

Community Asset Committee Meeting Minutes provided.

SECTION 5 - INFORMAL MEETINGS

5.1 COUNCIL BRIEFINGS

AUTHOR'S TITLE: ACTING 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:

2. is scheduled or planned for the purpose of discussing the business of *Council* or briefing Councillors;
3. is attended by at least one member of Council staff; and
4. 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 12 August 2025

Matters discussed at the briefing:

- KISP
- Ararat Pony Club Project Update
- Pomonal Battery Project
- RCV Value Proposition
- CBD Movements
- Draft MAV Motion - Western Highway
- Student Sponsorship to Attend SEDA College Vic
- Community Asset Committee Half Year Report
- Monthly Progress Report - Council Plan - Annual Plan
- Capital Works Program - July 2025
- Building approvals
- Planning approvals under delegation
- Library Exterior Options

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.**

ATTACHMENTS

The Summary of Council Briefings are provided as Attachment 5.1.

SECTION 6 - COMMITTEE MINUTES/REPORTS

No Committee Minutes/Reports received

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:

No Confidential Agenda Items