



Ararat Rural City

# AGENDA

## COUNCIL MEETING

**Tuesday 24 February 2026**

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

**Commencing at 6.00pm**

**Council:**

**Cr Bob Sanders (Mayor)**

**Cr Jo Armstrong**

**Cr Rob Armstrong**

**Cr Peter Joyce**

**Cr Teli Kaur**

**Cr Luke Preston**

**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](http://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 27 January 2026 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.

### 2.1.1 PETITION - COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS AT GREVILLEA COURT PARK, ARARAT NORTH

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO'S OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 27116

#### **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.

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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

A petition has been received from the residents of Grevillea Court, Ararat supported by other Ararat residents requesting that Council consider installing a durable, weather resistant picnic table with seating and a small set of outdoor gym equipment (e.g. stepper, pull up bars, sit-up bench) suitable for community use.

The residents have stated that the inclusion of these items at the park would encourage community connection, promote health and wellbeing, inclusivity and enhance local pride.

#### **DISCUSSION**

The petition, comprising 110 signatures, reflects a strong level of community interest in enhancing Grevillea Court Park and indicates a desire for improved recreational and social infrastructure within the area.

Clause 100 of Council's Processes of Municipal Government (Meetings and Common Seal) Local Law 2007 states:

A petition or joint letter presented to the Council must lay on the table until the next ordinary meeting of the Council and no motion, other than to receive the petition or joint letter may be accepted by the Chairperson, unless Council agrees to deal with it earlier.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That:**

- 1. The petition requesting Council undertake Community Improvements at Grevillea Court Park, Ararat North received and lay on the table for consideration at the 31 March 2026 Council meeting**

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

A copy of the Petition from the Residents of Grevillea Court and surrounds is provided as Attachment 2.1.1

## SECTION 3 - REPORTS REQUIRING COUNCIL DECISION

### 3.1 BARKLY STREET CBD PARKING AUDIT

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** MAJOR PROJECTS LEAD  
**DEPARTMENT:** INFRASTRUCTURE  
**REFERENCE:** 27117

#### OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

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

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

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the May 2025 Council meeting, Council approved a review of disability parking in the Barkly Street CBD.

This work has been undertaken by our engineering team with a full audit of what parking is currently available and the suggested updates to meet current standards.

This report details the suggested alterations to parking as a result of the audit.

#### DISCUSSION

The audit of the Barkly Street CBD parking between Queen Street and View Point Street, Ararat, works have been completed by Council's engineering team.

The existing parking in Barkly Street is detailed as follows:

Total No. of signed Carparks	210
Total No. of unsigned Carparks:	10
Total No. of Accessible Parking bays:	8
Total No. of Motorcycle parking bays:	3
Total No. of Loading Bays:	10
Total No. of Taxi Bays:	2
Parking bays for vehicles exceeding 6m:	1
Unidentified Parking bays	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>246</b>

- The existing car parking layout includes 210 metered parks and 10 free car parks, thus resulting a total of 220 car parks
- The existing metered signs have been covered by tape to show that they are removed
- There are currently 8 accessible car parking bays, but only one of eight has the associated shared zone which is a requirement as per Australian Standard

Suggested alterations to parking will adjust the numbers to the following:

Total No. of Carparks:	206
Total No. of Accessible Parking bays:	11
Total No. of Motorcycle parking bays:	2
Total No. of Loading Bays:	8
Total No. of Taxi Bays:	1
Parking bays for vehicles exceeding 6m:	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>

The proposed changes to the area include the following:

- In the proposed parking layout, total number of car parks has been reduced to 201 which will have new parking signs thus eliminating the metered reading & allowing 2-hour parking limit from 9am to 5.30 pm from Monday to Friday & 9am to 12pm on Saturday.
- The updated parking layout includes total number of 11 accessible car parks with associated shared zones as well as bollards in front of the shared zone to prevent other vehicles from parking. These include new bays to the east of the pedestrian in close proximity to the chemist, and also at the front of the Mess and Barracks and the Town Hall.
- Updated plan includes 10 loading bays modified to meet the minimum standard width (3.6m) plus the width required for off loading of goods. The width for off loading of goods is to be further discussed. It is good to provide around 1 to 1.2m.
- A new taxi zone (1) is provided in front of Lyal Eales Store (opposite to Bendigo Bank)
- One of the unidentified bays has been changed to a loading zone and other one to a parking bay for vehicles exceeding 6 metres

It is recommended with these alterations be accepted by Council and put to public consultation via Engage Ararat which will then be presented back to Council for final approval at the April 2026 Council meeting.

## 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***

Council has available funds as part of the capital works program for 2025/2026.

#### ***Policy/Relevant Law***

- Road Management Plan
- Road Safety Act
- Local Government Act 2020
- ARCC Procurement Policy
- ARCC Asset Management Policy

#### ***Sustainability Implications***

These projects will improve road safety for all users and provide a more sustainable road infrastructure for the council.

#### ***Risk Assessment***

*Low Risk – Risks will be managed through project planning and management procedures and works administration*

#### ***Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement***

*Stakeholder engagement is to be undertaken through Engage Ararat and presented back to Council in April 2026.*

## RECOMMENDATION

### That:

1. Council accept the CBD Audit Report and Plans as provided.
2. Council consult with Barkly Street traders and GAB Network.
3. Council undertake public consultation for the proposed design changes to parking in Barkly Street CBD via engage Ararat.
4. Consider any submissions received during the consultation period at a future Council meeting.

## ATTACHMENTS

The Barkly Street CBD Concept Plan is provided as Attachment 3.1

### 3.2 DELEGATION FROM COUNCIL TO MEMBERS OF COUNCIL STAFF S6

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO'S OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 27118

#### **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.

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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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.

Changes made to this Instrument of Delegation include the following:

- Amendments which were implemented in the S6A Instrument which were introduced to address specific changes to the Planning and Environment Act 1987. As a result of these changes, the S6A Instrument is no longer required and will be removed once this delegation comes into effect.
- Minor staffing changes

#### **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***

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.

The 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. They be delegated to the members of Council staff holding, acting in or performing the duties of the offices or positions referred to in the attached Instrument of Delegation 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;**
- 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 members of Council staff (other than the Chief Executive Officer) are revoked including that of S6A;**
- 4. 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**
- 5. 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 MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO'S OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 27119

#### **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.

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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The financial statements and performance indicators have been prepared for the period ended 31 January 2026.

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 \$25.677 million in revenue and \$21.556 million in expenses to 31 January 2026. This has resulted in an operating surplus of \$4.121 million for the seven months ended 31 January 2026.

##### **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 \$18.145 million has been recognised as income for the seven months ended 31 January 2026.

**User fees** account for 5% of the total budgeted income for 2025/26 and \$1.084 million has been received to 31 January 2026. The majority of this relates to transfer station fees, fitness centre income and commercial waste management charges.

**Recurrent Operating Grants** total \$2.772 million to 31 January 2026, including \$1.253 million from the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission for general purpose grants and \$0.813 million for the local roads grants.

**Non-recurrent Operating Grants** total \$1.577 million to 31 January 2026. 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.

<b>Non-Recurrent Operating Grants</b>	<b>Budget 2025/26 \$'000</b>	<b>Income 2025/26 \$'000</b>	<b>Unearned Income \$'000</b>
Ararat Housing Transition	-	-	300
Digital Twin Victoria	-	-	950
Free Public WiFi Services	-	-	1,289
Supported Playgroups	67	41	-
Ararat Rural City Sport, Active Recreation & Open Space Strategy	-	-	36
CALD Outreach Workers Initiative	129	129	-
Tiny Towns Fund - Pomonal Community Hub	-	45	74
Natural Disaster Relief	-	558	-
Council Support Fund - Pomonal Fires	-	-	-
Engage - Youth Events Activities & Happenings	55	55	-
Centenary Park Dog Park	100	8	67
Queen Street Housing Program	-	456	5,241
Ararat Hills Adventure Sports Precinct	-	-	400
Early Career Educators	-	73	30
Ararat Active Bike Network	266	-	-
Ararat City Tennis Sports Lighting and Accessibility	-	-	280
Primary Producer Support Payment	-	125	-
Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund	-	50	-
Other Minor Grants (under \$30,000)	-	37	-
	<b>617</b>	<b>1,577</b>	<b>8,667</b>

**Non-recurrent Capital Grants** total \$1.425 million to 31 January 2026, 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.

<b>Non-Recurrent Capital Grants</b>	<b>Budget 2025/26 \$'000</b>	<b>Income 2025/26 \$'000</b>	<b>Unearned Income \$'000</b>
Pedestrian Infrastructure Program	-	-	50
Tiny Towns Fund - Buangor Recreation Reserve Pavillion Redevelopment	-	-	25
Tiny Towns Fund - Buangor Cobb & Co Stables	-	29	25
Pony Club Sports Arena	1,490	126	307
Queen Street Housing Program	-	-	1,683
Ararat Library Lighting & Exterior Upgrade	-	45	6
TAC Safe Local Roads and Streets Program	-	86	407
Jack & Jill Kindergarten Upgrade	-	72	3
Mount William Road Reconstruction	-	1,065	935
Footpath-Ararat Retirement Village & Sports Precinct	-	-	35
Other Minor Grants (under \$30,000)	-	2	9
	<b>1,490</b>	<b>1,425</b>	<b>3,485</b>

**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 \$1.482 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 seven months ended 31 January 2026 Council has incurred \$7.470 million in employee costs.

**Materials and Services** account for approximately 28% of the total budgeted expenditure for 2025/26. For the seven months ended 31 January 2026, Council has incurred \$7.033 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 surplus and 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 January 2026. Comparative figures have been provided as at 30 June 2025.

Council's current assets have increased by \$9.434 million from \$17.978 million as at 30 June 2025 to \$27.412 million as at 31 January 2026. Cash and cash equivalents have increased by \$0.543 million from \$14.841 million to \$15.384 million. Trade and other receivables have increased by \$8.852 million from \$3.066 million as at 30 June 2025 to \$11.918 million as at 31 January 2026.

Total liabilities have increased from \$16.464 million in 2024/25 to \$18.290 million in 2025/26. Trade and other payables have decreased by \$1.401 million and trust funds and deposits have increased by \$0.249 million. Unearned income/revenue increased by \$3.349 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 increased by \$0.543 million to \$15.384 million as at 31 January 2026.

Net cash of \$4.282 million was provided by operating activities, \$3.302 million was used in investing activities, and \$0.437 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	31/01/2026
<p><b>Working capital</b>  <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</p>	122%	165%
<p><b>Loans and borrowings</b>  <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</p>	0.86%	0.22%
<p><b>Indebtedness</b>  <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</p>	7.83%	8.61%
<p><b>Rates concentration</b>  <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</p>	49.39%	74.92%
<p><b>Expenditure level</b>  <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</p>	\$4,936	\$2,876
<p><b>Indicator - Revenue level</b>  <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</p>	\$2,002	\$2,034

Indicator	30/6/2025	31/01/2026
<p><b>Indicator - Percentage of total rates collected</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>The outstanding Rates Debtors is reported in the Annual Financial report.</p> <p>As at 31 January 2026 the outstanding Rates Debtors totalled \$11.492 million compared to \$2.466 million as at 30 June 2025, an increase of \$9.026 million. In percentage terms 44.5% of the rates raised have been collected at 31 January 2026 compared to 37.0% up to 31 January 2025. The increased percentage at 31 January 2026 includes payments totalling \$2.054 million received under the Victorian Government’s Drought Support Package for Primary Producer Support Payments, which represents a 40% rate reduction on farm-rated properties.</p> <p>Outstanding rates are currently charged 10% interest.</p> <p>Council issues approximately 7,900 rate notices. In 2025/26 there are 2,495 assessments paying by instalments compared with 2,653 assessments in 2024/25.</p>	87.8%	44.5%
<p><b>Indicator - Asset Renewal &amp; Upgrade</b></p> <p><i>Measure - Asset renewal &amp; Upgrade compared to depreciation</i></p> <p>Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework - 40% to 130%</p> <p>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.</p>	100.75%	51.09%

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.

#### 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 January 2026 be received and adopted.**

**ATTACHMENTS**

Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Financial Performance Indicators are provided as Attachment 3.3

### 3.4 NEW POLICY DESIGN

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO'S OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 27120

#### **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.

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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Councils' policies that are outward facing have been redesigned to be more engaging, accessible and user-friendly. The updated template shifts away from bureaucratic, text-heavy formats toward clear language, visual hierarchy and contemporary layout elements. This redesign supports improved transparency, enhances community understanding of Council's policy intent and aligns with the best-practice governance communication.

The purpose of this briefing is to inform Council of the new format and outline the benefits, considerations and implementation approach.

#### **DISCUSSION**

A review of Council's existing outward-facing policy documents identified that many were difficult for the community to navigate due to the dense text, inconsistent structure and limited use of visual elements. The redesign project sought to:

- Improve readability and public accessibility
- Create a consistent and recognisable "Council Policy" look and feel
- Modernise the presentation of key governance documents
- Support staff to develop policies that better communicate purpose, responsibilities and outcomes.

The redesigned format includes:

- Improved visual structure through headings, icons and white space
- Plain language
- Consistent sections such as purpose and scope
- A design aligned with contemporary local government communication standards

#### **KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

##### ***Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives***

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 redesign, as the work has been completed internally and ongoing application will be integrated into standard policy review processes.

##### ***Policy/Relevant Law***

Local Government Act 2020 - requirements for transparency, community engagement and accessible information

Local Government Best Practice Guidelines (readability and public accessibility expectations)

***Sustainability Implications***

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

***Risk Assessment***

The redesign format reduces reputational and operational risk by improving clarity, reducing misinterpretation and strengthening consistency across governance documents.

***Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement***

Internal consultation was undertaken with governance, communications and operational departments to ensure useability and alignment with communication standards. Direct community consultation was not required as changes relate to the document presentation rather than policy content.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That:**

- 1. Council approve the new policy design.**

**ATTACHMENTS**

The new policy design is attached as Attachment 3.4

### 3.5 PROGRAM OF WORKS - OTTA SEAL

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** MAJOR PROJECTS LEAD  
**DEPARTMENT:** INFRASTRUCTURE  
**REFERENCE:** 27121

#### **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.

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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Over the past two years Council has been trialling the OTTA Seal road treatment on its rural township and low traffic roads with good results achieved.

This report nominates roads for inclusion in the program of OTTA Seals for the 25/26 financial year with the budget allocation in Capital Works.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Over the past two years Council has completed 180,000m<sup>2</sup> of OTTA seals across the municipality, with successful outcomes for our rural township and low traffic roads. This is a financially responsible treatment that allows for a safer driving surface on our roads and lowers our continued grading maintenance works requirements for gravel surface roads. On average, the cost to undertake the OTTA seal treatment is \$15.50/m<sup>2</sup>, this includes all preparatory works before the seal occurs.

There are four main roads nominated for OTTA seal for this financial year, these are:

#### **Tatyoan North Road - Geelong Road to Logan Road (approx. 3.5km)**

The prep works on this road have been undertaken, minimal additional work will required before the seal can be completed. The works on this road were suspended due to the current pipeline works being undertaken by Mitchell Water. Once this work is completed we will finish this project.

#### **Jacksons Creek Road - Seal Change to Logan Road (approx. 5.6km)**

This section of road has had a recent resheeting completed and will not require extensive preparation work to have it suitable for sealing works to happen. This will also complete the loop of Tatyoan North Road, Logan Road and Jackson Creek as being fully sealed.

#### **Logan Road - Tatyoan Road to Tatyoan North Road (approx. 5km)**

By undertaking work on this section of road the loop will be completed between Jacksons Creek Road, Logan Road and Tatyoan North road which will be fully sealed.

#### **Sugarloaf Road - Boyds Road to Pentlands Creek Road (approx. 2.6km)**

Completion of these works will have Sugarloaf Road fully sealed from the Western Highway to Pentlands Creek Road. There is some drainage installation to be undertaken as part of the works as road preparation occurs.

Estimated cost for the sealing works occurs is \$889,000 from the Capital Works Budget for Gravel Road Sheetting, Widening and Alternate Seals. Additional cost for pre works will be required and is expected to exhaust the funds for this financial year.

## 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***

Council has allocated funds as part of the capital works program for 2025/2026.

### ***Policy/Relevant Law***

- Road Management Plan
- Road Safety Act
- Local Government Act 2020
- ARCC Procurement Policy
- ARCC Asset Management Policy

### ***Sustainability Implications***

These projects will improve road safety for all users and provide a more sustainable road infrastructure for the council.

### ***Risk Assessment***

*Low Risk – Risks will be managed through project planning and management procedures and works administration*

### ***Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement***

*Internal stakeholder engagement has been undertaken as part of works programming for the financial year.*

## RECOMMENDATION

### **That:**

- 1. Council approve the OTTA seal works as nominated in this report**

## ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

## SECTION 4 - INFORMATION REPORTS

### 4.1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM - DECEMBER 2025 REPORT: UPDATE

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 27122

#### OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

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

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

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the January 2026 Council Meeting, a report was provided on the status of issues raised by community during the December 2025 Council Drop In Sessions for the Community Engagement Program 2025/26. This report provides an update on the status of issues as at February 2026.

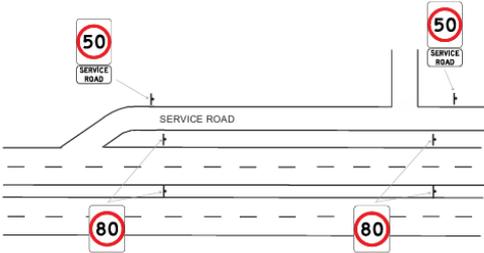
#### DISCUSSION

Council adopted the Community Engagement Program 2025/26 at the November 2025 Council Meeting. This Program outlined a schedule for engagement sessions to be held in December 2025, March and June 2026.

Council delivered the December 2025 round of engagements in Ararat, Buangor, Elmhurst, Lake Bolac, Mininera, Moyston, Pomonal, Willaura. 49 issues were raised and as at 12 February, 43 have been resolved or are considered actioned for the purposes of this engagement process, but may be revisited as needed. A summary of the issues raised and the status of actions taken to date are provided below.

Table 1. Summary of issues raised and progress as at 12 February 2026. The green colour in the left column indicates that the issue has been resolved or considered actioned.

#	Issues Raised	Progress as at 12 February 2026
	<b>Ararat</b>	
1	A person had great concerns for the safety of children being dropped off at a bus stop on View Point Street between Taylor and Banksia Sts, across from the intersection with Tobin St.	Council staff have followed up with the School Bus Coordinator. Issue has been resolved.
	<b>Buangor</b>	
2	If cracks on the tennis courts could be fixed.	A maintenance request has lodged to inspect the cracks in the Buangor tennis courts and consider options. This issue is considered addressed within the scope of this engagement process, with any further considerations to be managed through the broader capital works and maintenance program.
	<b>Elmhurst</b>	
3	The local community were very keen to see their local pub reopen, this was their top priority for the town. The business owners were present and discussed their progress.	Council staff are continuing to liaise with the business owners to navigate and meet the regulatory requirements.
4	The community wanted to say that the Council staff member who does the mowing in town does a great job.	The positive feedback has been noted and passed on to the staff member.

5	<p>Asked whether Council could mow the grass at the church as well, because the church no longer has someone to mow.</p>	<p>This request has been carefully considered. Council is unable to mow lawns for third parties, even churches. This is the responsibility of the property owner (or tenant or property manager, if applicable). The Chair of the Elmhurst Community Development Group has been informed of this outcome via phone.</p>
6	<p>Community members raised concerns about sight distance and road safety Landsborough-Elmhurst Road, from the intersection with Pyrenees Highway to the end of the 'dog-leg' shape. They also asked if road safety can be improved at the intersection of the Pyrenees Highway and Landsborough-Elmhurst Road with an overtaking lane, turning lane, or similar. There is a rail crossing on Landsborough-Elmhurst Road approx. 20m from the Pyrenees Highway. When the rail crossing is closed for a train, there may be multiple vehicles and trucks waiting on the Pyrenees Highway, which could become a safety hazard.</p>	<p>The feedback on the Council managed section of road has been received by the Council engineering team. Although this cannot be actioned straight away, the issue has been logged and will be considered when that section is next programmed for maintenance.</p> <p>The community's concerns regarding the Pyrenees Highway section of this intersection were also lodged with VicRoads 30 December 2025 via the online form below: <a href="https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/traffic-and-road-use/report-a-road-issue">https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/traffic-and-road-use/report-a-road-issue</a></p> <p>For this stage of the engagement process, these issues are considered addressed, noting that they may be revisited as needed.</p>
7	<p>Residents queried if the speed limit at the railway crossings on Pyrenees Highway can be changed from 60km/hr to 80km/hr.</p>	<p>This query was lodged with VicRoads on 30 December 2025 via the online form below: <a href="https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/traffic-and-road-use/report-a-road-issue">https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/traffic-and-road-use/report-a-road-issue</a></p>
8	<p>Residents also asked if the speed limit through the town can be changed from 80km/hr to 60km/hr</p>	<p>The Dept. Transport and Planning's Speed Zoning Policy and Speed Zoning Technical Guidelines were reviewed. The 80km/hr speed limit on the Pyrenees Highway through the township is consistent with the Policy and Guidelines, see image captured below from page 20 of the Guidelines:</p>  <p><i>Figure 4: Service road with signposted speed limit</i></p> <p>The Chair of the Elmhurst Community Development Group has been advised on this finding via phone.</p>
9	<p>There are some dirt roads where the grading has created mounds of dirt on the roadsides, which prevents access for their grass slashers and they become overgrown.</p>	<p>Feedback has been lodged that mounds of dirt on roadsides is preventing the ability for locals to slash overgrown grass. An email has been sent to the Chair of the Elmhurst Community Development Group to pass on to the community to ask that they submit a Snap Send Solve to notify us of specific locations of the mounds.</p>

10	Several outer roads are in need of roadside slashing, Boundary Road was mentioned specifically.	A request has been lodged to slash the roadsides on Boundary Road, and to inspect the other roadsides for slashing. Residents of Elmhurst will be asked to send a Snap Send Solve request roadside slashing is needed on other roads.
11	<p>Can the dust on some of the dirt roads be suppressed, possibly using Otta seals? The roads that were mentioned for dust suppression in the meeting included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From the Bush Nursing Centre to the railway tracks</li> <li>• From the police station to McKay St</li> <li>• The road to the power substation (Pyrenees Shire road)</li> </ul>	<p>OTTA seal of the first two sections will be considered as part of the Council's budget development process, which is still underway.</p> <p>The request for dust suppression on the roads to the power substation (Wiltshires Lane and Easter Brooks Lane) have been passed to the Pyrenees Shire Council.</p>
12	Attendees were disappointed the 2026 bin calendars did not have magnets. Attendees discussed a solution of simply sticking the 2026 calendars onto the 2025 calendar. The community asked if the bin calendars for 2027 can have magnets on the back.	This feedback and suggestion has been lodged.
13	Can all bins be collected on the same day? The green bin is collected on a different day to the other bins.	This feedback and suggestion has been lodged.
14	Residents asked about the possibility of a hard rubbish collection for large items and metals.	<p>Based on the Victorian Auditor-General's Office report to Parliament 'Council Waste Management Services' (December 2021)<sup>1</sup>, in 2019/20, 43 out of 79 Victorian councils provided a kerbside hard waste collection service, and 31 of these were metropolitan councils. These 43 councils spent a total of approx. \$39.6 million on this service, or close to \$930,000 per council. If Ararat Rural City Council were to introduce this service based on the average 2019/20 cost per council, and without factoring in additional costs for the larger geographical distances for rural areas, Council would need to increase its 2025/26 waste charges by at least 37%. This increase is too high to impose onto ratepayers. It is therefore not financially viable to offer a kerbside hard rubbish collection service for Ararat Rural City.</p> <p>A hard rubbish skip option has also been considered, but this would also require a ramp to be available to assist people to drop large, bulky items into the skip. There is currently no suitable site in Elmhurst that Council is aware of that is suitable for this purpose.</p>
15	There is a very large pine tree that has fallen over on the edge of town to the west, can this be removed?	Tree is located on the Pyrenees Highway in the 80km/hour zone, which is a VicRoads managed road. The fallen tree has been reported to VicRoads via their online form: <a href="https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/traffic-and-road-use/report-a-road-issue">https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/traffic-and-road-use/report-a-road-issue</a>

<sup>1</sup> [Council Waste Management Services](#)

16	Managing waste from the Elmhurst Cemetery and several options were discussed during the drop in session.	No further action required.
17	The quality of the tap water was discussed, some locals have noticed an occasional odour in the water.	Attendees were advised to contact GWMWater if they detect odour in their water supply again.
18	Timing of the fire prevention inspections was discussed and a query was asked on whether the inspections had already occurred.	The prevention inspections had already occurred and notices were issued in mid-December 2025.
19	Concerns were raised about the state of the former Elmhurst Primary School and it being underutilised land.	No further action by Council. Concerns were noted, community members were aware that this was State Government owned land.
20	Query was asked about how many water tankers does Council have available to assist in the event of a bushfire.	Council has 1 water tanker that is used for road maintenance and other infrastructure works.
21	One local resident stopped receiving all mail from Council, including bin calendars, rates notice, etc.	Rates department have spoken to the resident on 31 December 2025 and confirmed their postal address details. The resident was not receiving any of their mail from other entities as well and will be following up with the Post Office
22	Concerns about cars being left on the roadside for long periods in a specific location in Elmhurst.	Location was visited after the Drop In Session on the 17 <sup>th</sup> December 2025, all vehicles in the area appeared to be within private property boundaries. Community will be asked to report any other abandoned vehicles via Snap Send Solve
<b>Lake Bolac</b>		
23	The management of rabbits was raised by multiple people.	Council officers have investigated potential options to use the Roadside Weeds and Pests grant funding to help manage the rabbit pest problem. This funding only allows for works in the roadside, and so would be of limited help to rabbit issues within property boundaries. Council acknowledges the major negative impact of rabbits, but it does not have extra resources, capability or capacity to further address this issue.
24	There were several queries regarding roads that were managed by VicRoads/Dept. Transport and Planning.	No further action required by Council
25	Fire prevention inspections and notices were discussed	No further action required by Council
26	People asked about the McCrows Road Bridge Upgrade, it was reiterated that the bridge upgrade would not commence until after harvest.	No further action required by Council. Notification of works and detours will be released in the lead up to the commencement of construction.
<b>Mininera</b>		
27	An upgrade of the lighting at the oval was requested	A grant application for this project will be submitted for funding to the current round of Sport and Recreation Victoria's Country Football Netball Program.
28	The Mininera Recreation Reserve may seek another water tank in the future to help them maintain their oval green.	Noted. No further action required by Council until further notice.
<b>Moyston</b>		
29	There was general confusion about the change of speed limit on Ararat-Halls Gap Road from 100km/hr to 80km/hr. Comments	Council attendees reiterated that Council was notified at the same time as the general public about the speed change to 80km/hour. The road

	included: why did the change occurred; concerns around the lack of consultation and signage about the changed speed limit, and the lack of speed limit signage on the roadside between Ararat and Moyston.	is a VicRoads road, attendees were advised to provide their feedback directly to VicRoads.
30	Council was thanked for opening the Moyston Transfer Station in late October/early November 2025.	The feedback was received and appreciated.
31	Road safety outside the Moyston Primary School was raised as a serious concern, especially when detours are in place on the Western Highway that direct traffic through Moyston. Cars are seen driving through at above 40km/hr. Flashing signs were suggested to raise awareness of the school zone and speed limit during school hours.	Ararat-Halls Gap Road is an arterial road managed by the Department of Transport and Planning. Council will advocate to the Department of Transport to install flashing signs at Moyston Primary School on the arterial road.
32	Road safety at the intersection of Moyston-Great Western Road and Ararat-Halls Gap Road was raised. B-Double trucks often cut across the intersection.	Feedback about this intersection has been received by the Council's engineering team. Although this cannot be actioned straight away, the issue has been logged and will be considered when that section is next programmed for maintenance.
33	On Moyston-Great Western Road, there is a section of road where the trees block the view of the road ahead. Could the trees be cut back or cut higher for further sight distance.	Request has been submitted to see if overhanging branches can be trimmed higher, this remains pending.
34	Concerns were raised about the safety of the intersection of Morocco Hill Road and Ararat Halls Gap Road, with the first section of Morocco Hill Road being a ramp up to a crest.	Suggestion to close part of Morocco Hill Road has been received by the Council's engineering team. This will require further investigation. This issue is considered addressed within the scope of this engagement process, with any further considerations to be managed within the capital works planning and programming.
35	An approx. 200 metre section of Morocco Hill Road was resheeted with a gravel/rock mix and has since been very dusty. Could this section be Otta sealed to suppress the dust?	OTTA seal of this section will be considered as part of the Council's budget development process, which is still underway.
36	The locals like to go for walks from the Recreation Reserve, along Ararat-Halls Gap Road, Adelaide Hills Road, Morocco Hill Road, then Moyston-Great Western Road back to the Recreation Reserve. Some also like to continue along Adelaide Hills Road up to Rocky Point Road before heading back down on Moyston-Great Western Road. The roadside vegetation has become quite overgrown in places, leaving walkers with little room when a car drives past. Can these roadsides be tidied up?	Request has been submitted to tidy up the roadsides mentioned during the Drop In Session.  Community members are encouraged to report overgrown roadsides via the Snap Send Solve app.
37	Pest management of rabbits was discussed. The community wanted to learn more about what treatments were being used and in which locations.	Council officers have provided information to the community member who asked this query. The Roadside Weeds and Pests grants program provides funding to help manage the rabbit pest problem. This funding only allows for works in the roadside.

38	During the engagement session, multiple trucks passed the Moyston General Store on Brook Street. Was there a traffic counter on this street and if so, what is the number of cars and trucks that use this road?	We do not have recent traffic counts on this road available. New traffic counters will be purchased and installed, but it is unlikely to be installed before the end of the current harvest season.
<b>Pomonal</b>		
39	Suggestions for how the Council Drop In Session could be better promoted in Pomonal were shared, including putting a poster in the General Store's community notice board, putting the events in the Pomonal community newsletter and making sure it's on Nadya's blackboard in the lead up to the event.	The community member was thanked for their feedback, it was acknowledged that communication is always a challenge and we will endeavour to improve the promotion of future sessions.
40	The change of speed limit between Ararat and Moyston was discussed. Similar to Moyston, there was confusion about what the current speed limit was, and why the limit was changed.	Council attendees reiterated that Council was notified at the same time as the general public about the speed change to 80km/hour. The road is a VicRoads road, attendees were advised to provide their feedback directly to VicRoads.
41	Road safety outside the Pomonal Primary School was raised. Cars have been observed overtaking other cars that have slowed to 40km/hr in the school zone. Flashing signs were suggested, or whether it was possible to build a school pick up location somewhere off Ararat-Halls Gap Road.	Ararat-Halls Gap Road is an arterial road managed by the Department of Transport and Planning. Council will advocate to the Department of Transport to install flashing signs at Pomonal Primary School on the arterial road.  Building an alternative school pick up location has significant challenges because there are no other existing roads next to the school, and limited space within the school to build a new pickup area.
42	People asked for the Pomonal Transfer Station to be reopened. The Halls Gap Transfer Station staff have been unfriendly and unwelcoming towards Pomonal residents. The option of requesting a second kerbside bin was discussed, as well as going to the Moyston Transfer Station.	This feedback and request will be considered when the review of the Moyston and Elmhurst transfer station openings are reviewed at the end of this financial year.
43	There was a query about the status of the planning permit application for a new tourism development in Pomonal.	The planning permit application and status is available on the <a href="#">Greenlight</a> and can be found by searching the Public Planning Register.
44	A person had a planning related query regarding their private property.	Council planning department will liaise directly with the community member about their query.
<b>Willaura</b>		
45	Can the line marking paint be refreshed at the intersection of Pyrenees Highway, Moyston-Willaura Road, Yarram Gap Road and Warranooke St?	Lines have been repainted.
46	Can a dirt patches outside the Willaura Bakery, which used to have plants in them in the footpath, be patched up or filled in with asphalt and made the same as the surrounding path?	Request has been submitted to patch the footpath, this remains pending.
47	The drainage in the laneway needs a tidy up.	Drainage area has been tidied up.
48	Request for a new community notice board near the park bench next to the supermarket.	Request to investigate and install a new community notice board has been lodged, this remains pending.

49	One person wanted to learn more about how their rates were used to fund roads, paths, kerb & channel, community infrastructure and services. This was discussed on the day.	No further action required.
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**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.

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

***Budget Implications***

The Community Engagement Program 2025/2026 does not have any budget implications. This Program will be delivered within the existing resources and budget. The issues arising from the engagement sessions may have budget implications, these will be assessed on a case by case basis and may be considered for future budgets.

***Policy/Relevant Law***

Ararat Rural City Council’s Community Engagement Policy

***Sustainability Implications***

The community engagement sessions will aim to coincide with other community events and activities, or locate the sessions in places where people may wish to visit. This is in recognition of the value of people’s time and travel costs, and enables community members to achieve multiple activities in the one journey.

***Risk Assessment***

The attached Community Engagement Program 2025/26 includes a risk analysis and mitigation measures. This is a low risk Program.

***Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement***

This Program supports stakeholder collaboration and community engagement.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That:**

- Council receives the Community Engagement Program - December 2025 Update Report**

**ATTACHMENTS**

There are no Attachments relating to this item

## 4.2 PRESTIGE MILL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT - JANUARY 2026 UPDATE

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 27123

### 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 an update on the Housing Support Program - Community Enabling Infrastructure Stream (HSP-CEIS) funded project at 87 Queen St, also known as the former Prestige Mill site. To align this report to a more locally recognisable project name, this monthly report will be referred to as the 'Prestige Mill Infrastructure Project' update.

The subdivision plan has been drafted and the design work for the civil and utility infrastructure, such as roads, paths, water mains, sewer, power, NBN connections, etc, are underway.

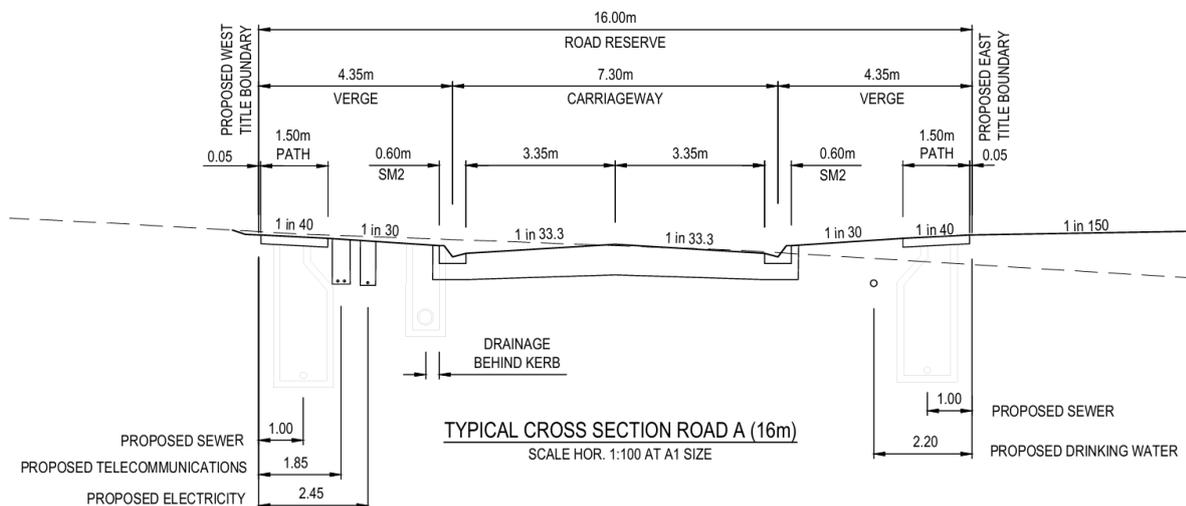
### DISCUSSION

#### Recap

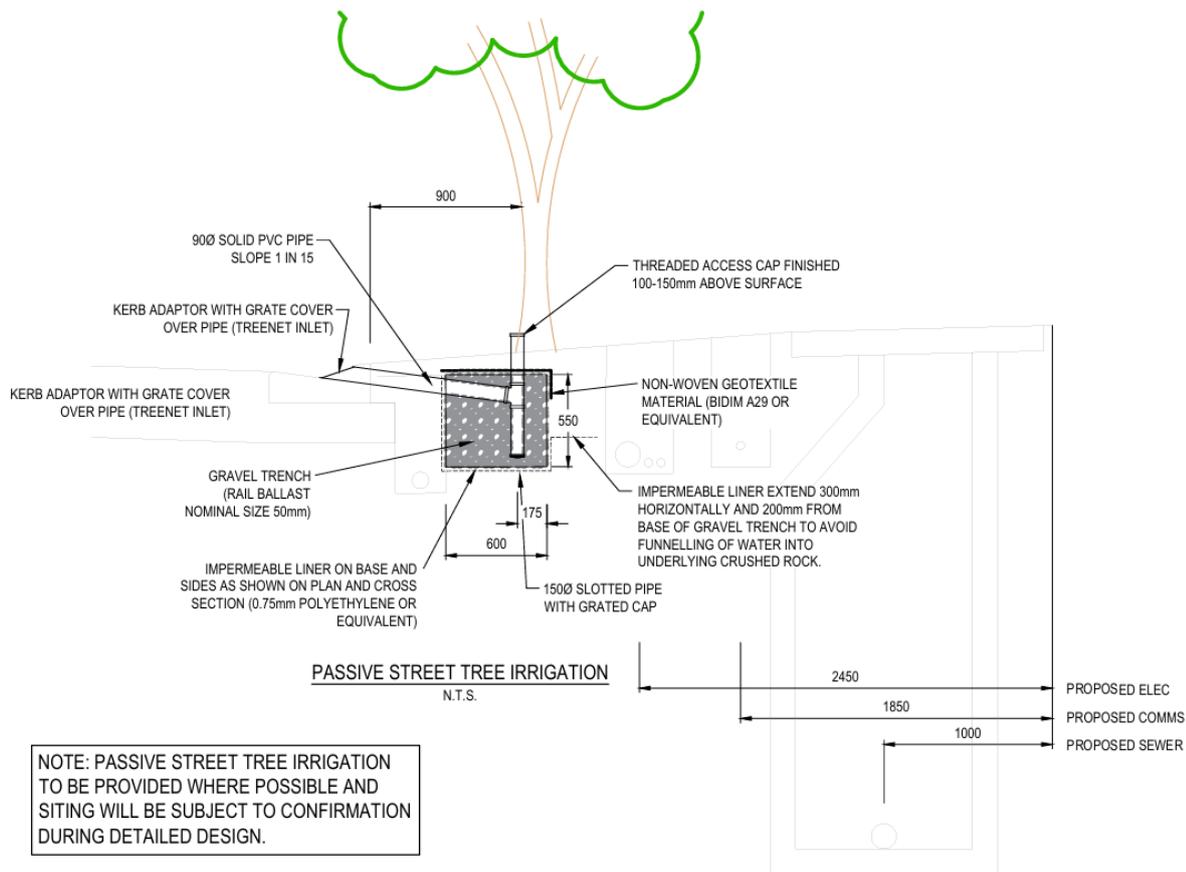
The HSP-CEIS grant helps to resolve the barriers that have previously prevented this site from being financially viable to develop into assets that could provide better value for the community, such as housing. The grant unlocks the site by funding the cost of enabling infrastructure for 90 new dwellings, including planning, detailed designs, construction costs for roads, footpaths, kerb & channel, drainage, as well as costs for utility infrastructure such as power, water, sewerage, and NBN. The grant does not fund the cost to build the homes, however with the major barriers removed, private investment into housing will become viable.

#### Progress Update

The engineering and civil design work for the roads, footpaths, kerb and channel, and utilities has continued while demolition works are in progress. Examples of the design work is provided below. The first image below is a typical cross section of the infrastructure that will be built into the public road reserve:



Consideration has also been given to environmental sustainability and water saving measures, such as passive street tree irrigation, as indicated below:



## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### **Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives**

#### 1. GROWING OUR PLACE

We will create the settings to support growth across our municipality through an improved planning scheme, actively pursuing new housing options and exploring models for in-migration.

1.2 Support innovative housing models that work to overcome market failure and create the capacity to increase the population of Ararat Rural City.

#### **Budget Implications**

This project is funded by a \$7.3 million grant from the Federal Government's Housing Support Program: Community Enabling Infrastructure Fund.

#### **Policy/Relevant Law**

Not applicable

#### **Sustainability Implications**

Not applicable

#### **Risk Assessment**

Demolition works are progressing in line with risk assessment and mitigation measures, ensuring that all identified hazards are being effectively managed and safety protocols are strictly followed.

***Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement***

Council officers have liaised closely with the site owners on this project. Project updates for the broader community are provided on Council's Engage Ararat website.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That:**

- 1. Council receives the Prestige Mill Infrastructure Project - January 2026 Update report.**

**ATTACHMENTS**

There are no attachments relating to this item

### 4.3 ANNUAL PLAN 2025/26 UPDATE (JANUARY 2026)

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 27124

#### 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 53 actions to be undertaken during the 2025/2026 (Year 1) financial year under the strategic objectives:

1. Growing our place
2. Building robust local economies
3. Preserving the environment
4. Developing and maintaining key enabling infrastructure
5. Enhancing community life; and
6. Strong and effective governance

These actions are provided in the Annual Plan 2025/26 and their progress is reported monthly at Council Meetings.

#### DISCUSSION

The Annual Plan 2025/26 contains 53 actions. Progress on these actions are summarised below, with the change from the previous monthly report shown in brackets.

Status	Number of Actions
Completed	13 (+3)
In progress 51-99%	11 (-3)
In progress 0-50%	18 (+1)
Not Started	0 (-1)
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	In progress 0-50%	Council officers are working with the Department of Transport and Planning's (DTP) Regional Planning Hub on the Ararat Planning Scheme review. A contractor will be procured by DTP to assist Council
	1.1.2 Establish annual targets for sustainable urban growth	In progress 0-50%	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 51-99%	The second draft of the structure plan has been received and is being reviewed by Council officers.
1.2 Support innovative housing models that work to overcome market	1.2.1 Deliver enabling infrastructure for well-located homes that	In progress 0-50%	Pre-construction planning and design for the enabling infrastructure is underway, and demolition and site

failure and create the capacity to increase the population of Ararat Rural City.	address critical housing gaps in central Ararat, with support from the Housing Support Program: Community Enabling Infrastructure Stream.		clearing is progressing. See 'Housing Support Program Project Update' report for further details.
	1.2.2 Continue to develop the Ararat Housing Enterprise P/L, delivering another four houses in Ararat during 2025/2026.	In progress 0-50%	Two homes are nearing completion of construction. Another two homes are due to commence construction, and pre-construction planning for another two homes is underway.
	1.2.3 Work with developers to submit EOI application/s to the National Housing Infrastructure Facility Crisis and Transitional Housing (NHIF CT) program	Complete	The EOI application has been submitted. This action is marked complete, however if the EOI is successful, a full application will be submitted and further updates will be provided.
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%	Refurbishment works will commence in the April school holidays. Council is working closely with Y Kinders to minimise disruptions to families as much as possible during the works.
	1.3.2 Establish a new childcare centre in Lake Bolac	In progress 0-50%	Council officers are continuing to liaise with potential childcare providers to deliver this project
	1.3.3 Deliver the CALD Outreach Initiative	In progress 51-99%	The CALD Outreach Officer is continuing to actively engage families and working closely with the kindergartens and childcare centres to support 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	Complete	The application has been submitted for a project titled 'Celebrating Science in Rural Communities'. Outcomes are expected in March 2026 and further engagement with stakeholders will occur afterwards if funding is awarded.
	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, will be recommencing on 4 March 2026.
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	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	Ongoing	Council continues to strongly support Valorify P/L.

"behind the meter" power.	which uses straw as the major input.		
	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%	The Economic Development team is continuing to liaise closely 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.	In progress 0-50%	Investigation and development of other opportunities to produce higher value outputs from municipal waste is underway.
	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.
	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 is continuing to engage with State and Federal governments to advocate for stronger support for renewable gas generation.
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%	Indigo Power have undertaken site inspections and met with community members to discuss the project and answer queries. The new battery is expected to be installed by June 2026.
	3.3.2 Deliver the Roadside Weeds and Pests Program	In progress 51-99%	The tender for Roadside Weeds and Pest Program has been awarded and works are 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.	Complete	The application to the Community Energy Upgrades Fund Round 2 was unsuccessful. Council will continue to liaise with interested community asset committees to explore rooftop solar and renewable energy options at community facilities.
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	Complete	The Asset Plan 2025-35 was adopted at the October 2025 Council Meeting
	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)
	4.1.3 Continue to advocate for a North South Heavy Vehicle Route	Ongoing	This initiative is included in the Advocacy Program 2025 and will be discussed with key stakeholders at the next available opportunity.
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%	Revised concept drawings have been prepared for the indoor sports facility after a review of accessibility and gender impacts.
	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 final 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 final 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 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	Complete	The exhibit programs for the Barkly St Laneway and Community Wall to 30 June 2026 from the EOI process has now been finalised. Works by Christine Baines from Elmhurst is currently on exhibit on the Community Wall, and works by Anne-Marie Randall from Lake Bolac are exhibited in the Laneway.
	5.1.2 Increase participation in programs at Ararat Gallery TAMA	Complete	Ararat Gallery TAMA has increased its promotion of events and programs, and the strength and reputation of artists and exhibitions. This has resulted in a 5% increase in the number of participants at scheduled program so far this financial year, compared to the period to December of last financial year. This approach will continue where possible, in order to maintain this growth in

			participation. The number of school students visiting TAMA as part of a school group has also increased significantly, with 169 students so far to December 2025, compared to 142 students in the 2024/25 financial year. Engagement with school groups will continue as well.
	5.1.3 Investigate ways to maximise scheduling of community events at the Town Hall	Complete	The Town Hall has reviewed its previous bookings and schedules, and has identified that the number of events has been increasing each year, with a strong level of community usage. Auditorium utilisation has increased from 105 bookings in 2023/24, to 153 bookings in 2024/25. For 2025/26, the Town Hall has already delivered 91 bookings as at 31 December 2025. There is still scope for community to book parts of the Town Hall, such as the foyer for smaller community gatherings. Community are encouraged to reach out to the Town Hall as early as possible to secure their bookings.
	5.1.4 Identify innovative ways to increase the promotion and reach of performances at the Town Hall	Complete	A staffing and structural update has occurred within the Arts Precinct to better integrate our arts, culture, visitor services and venue operations, as well as increase the promotion, reach and participation in events and programs. This includes the appointment of two part time Administration & Marketing Officers, following the retirement of the Town Hall's Admin Coordinator.
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 51-99%	The first meeting of the 2026 YEAH Crew is scheduled for 25 February.
	5.2.2 Deliver young people's programs across schools, largely through the Crazy Ideas College	In progress 51-99%	The Ararat Youth Activators program has spent the summer school holidays preparing for another big year of helping young become changemakers.
	5.2.3 Work with community groups to deliver an annual Volunteer Expo	In progress 0-50%	Planning for the National Volunteer Week celebrations has commenced. The feedback from the previous Ararat Volunteer Expos indicated that an annual Expo may not be the most effective way to help people who wish to volunteer to connect with organisations that are looking for volunteers. Potential alternative options are being investigated and considered.
	5.2.4 Promote the benefits and achievements of volunteers, to encourage participation	Ongoing	Applications to join Council's volunteer team have opened. The application form and Frequently Asked Questions are available via Engage Ararat.
5.3 Partner with community groups, not-	5.3.1 Develop the Disability Action Plan	In progress 0-50%	The first meeting of the Disability Action Plan Working Group was held

for-profits, and Traditional Owner organisations to develop Ararat Rural City into a more inclusive, welcoming, tolerant and diverse community.			on 21 January 2026, with passionate input from members about what is needed. The next meeting is scheduled for 11 March .
	5.3.2 Develop the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-29	Complete	The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-29 was adopted at the October 2025 Council Meeting.
	5.3.3 Hold quarterly meetings of the Child Friendly Cities and Communities Working Group	In progress 51-99%	The EOI for the 2026 CFCC Working Group closed on 14 February 2026 with a strong level of interest. The first meeting for 2026 will be scheduled at a time that suits the members of the Group.
	5.3.4 Deliver multicultural events	In progress 51-99%	Council is partnering with many local community organisations for Harmony Day on Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup> March 2026 at the Ararat Town Hall, and preparations are well 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	Complete	Efficiencies have been identified and implemented. The organisation will now work to maintain and embed the changes, while continuing to look for improvements where possible.
	6.1.2 Undertake a review of Council's insurance coverage and policies to ensure they continue to provide value for money	Complete	Multiple meetings have been held with insurance representatives and all opportunities for cost efficiencies have been found and implemented.
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 51-99%	IT infrastructure and systems upgrades are underway
	6.2.2 Undertake the Strategic Internal Audit Program – 5 years.	In progress 51-99%	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)	In progress 0-50%	Development of the 2026-30 GEAP has commenced
	6.2.4 Ensure appropriate analysis of all inquiry and investigation reports relevant to Council operations are examined and recommendations implemented.	Ongoing	Each external enquiry and investigation undertaken in the local government sector is examined and appropriate actions undertaken. Significant issues and remedies are 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 and report issues.
	6.3.2 Develop a regular biannual program of face-to-face community engagement opportunities	Complete	A quarterly program is presented. Refer to the Community Engagement Program 2025/26 Council Report.

## 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:**

- 1. Council receives the Annual Plan 2025/26 - January 2026 report**

## ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments relating to this item

#### 4.4 2025/2026 CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM - JANUARY 2026

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO'S OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 27125

**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.

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#### 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. The program's budget has substantial state and federal funding targeting road construction and 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 January 2026, 29% of the budget is expended, a further 48% of the budget is committed with works expected to be completed by 30 June 2026.

Mt William Road reconstruction is currently underway with stage one works completed and the road reopened for the harvest season. Stage two is commencing on 9 February 2026 with stabilising works. Piles have been completed at the Buangor Ben Nevis Bridge construction, and many of our road safety projects under construction.

PROPERTY CAPITAL PROJECTS	Budget	Funding Amount	Council Contribution	Community Contribution	Previous Years Expenditure	Committed Expenditure (25/26)	Expended (25/26)	Overall Total	%	Notes
<b>Property Capital General</b>	<b>\$166,000</b>		\$166,000				\$86	\$86		
<b>Mininera Recreation Reserve Toilet Upgrade</b>						\$164,810	\$4,010			Installation works are to commence week of 23 February 2026.
<b>Mininera Recreation Reserve - Septic Upgrade</b>	<b>\$206,000</b>		\$206,000			\$206,000				Works to be undertaken by Alford Drainage. Money from Building Reserve
<b>Buangor Recreation Reserve - Septic Upgrade</b>	<b>\$201,000</b>		\$201,000			\$134,000	\$67,000			Works to be undertaken by Alford Drainage, commencing week of 23 February 2026. Money from Building Reserve
<b>Tatyoan Oval Upgrade</b>							\$11,165			Works are completed with some final issues to be rectified before final completion is issued
<b>Video Cameras/Security - Ararat Skate Park</b>						\$6,479				These have been installed.
<b>Video Camera/Security - Ararat Fitness Centre</b>						\$13,203				These have been installed.
<b>Former Cobb &amp; Co Staging Stables</b> <i>(Disaster Recovery Heritage Program)</i>	<b>\$60,000</b>	\$60,000			\$1,237		\$29,137	\$30,371	50%	Ararat Maintenance Plumbing has completed works on this project & and acquitted.
<b>Ararat Pony Club - Covered Sports Area</b> <i>(Play our Way Program)</i>	<b>\$1,490,000</b>	\$1,490,000			\$14,270	\$1,231,515	\$125,706	\$1,371,491	92%	The design and construction of the undercover arena has been awarded to MKM Constructions works are to commence 16 February 2026. Lighting installation has been awarded to Matt Peel Electrical - this includes the installation of 3-phase power. Power Upgrade not expected until mid year with Powercor.
<b>Centenary Park - Dog Park</b> <i>(Open Space for Everyone Program)</i>	<b>\$112,000</b>	\$100,000	\$12,000		\$1,172	\$63,590	\$8,318	\$73,080	65%	Works are commencing in February, all equipment and fencing is ordered and Parks & Gardens team to undertake installation.

PROPERTY CAPITAL PROJECTS	Budget	Funding Amount	Council Contribution	Community Contribution	Previous Years Expenditure	Committed Expenditure (25/26)	Expended (25/26)	Overall Total	%	Notes
<b>Buangor Sports Pavilion Redevelopment</b> <i>(Tiny Towns Program)</i>	<b>\$631,000</b>	\$50,000	\$581,000 (\$220k Property Capital) (\$361k Property Reserve)		\$303	\$542,738	\$87,959	\$631,523	100%	Building Permit has been approved and works are expected to commence in February.
<b>Jack and Jill Kindergarten Redevelopment</b> <i>(Building Blocks improvement grants program)</i>	<b>\$745,000</b>	\$745,000			\$26,000	\$539,734	\$71,764	\$637,498	85%	Works for this project have been awarded to: Renovation Works - ISJ Building Painting Works - Grampians Painting and Decorating Flooring - Choices Ararat Switchboard Upgrade - CHS Electrical Works to commence week of 5 April 2026
<b>Ararat City Tennis Sports Lighting Installation and accessibility upgrade</b> <i>(Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Fund)</i>	<b>\$700,000</b>	\$560,000	\$120,000	\$20,000	NA		\$2,339	-	<1%	New Grant Received July 2025. Project is currently at tender with award expected in February 26 for civil and lighting works.
<b>Gordon Street Cricket Nets Upgrade</b> <i>(Australian Cricket Infrastructure Grant)</i>	<b>\$39,985</b>	\$15,000	\$24,985		NA	\$13,850	\$19,732	\$33,852	82%	Synthetic carpet is being installed in February and concrete works have been completed, netting is the final works to be completed.
<b>Pomonal Hall Battery Project</b> <i>(Powering Resilience in the Regions Program)</i>	<b>\$148,760</b>	\$141,407	\$7,353		NA		\$7,353	\$7,353	100%	Council have paid their contribution to the project. Indigo Power have been awarded this project - any further expenditure will be paid by CVGA.
<b>Ararat Library Lighting and Exterior Upgrade.</b> <i>(Living Libraries Infrastructure Program 2024-25)</i>	<b>\$51,026</b>	\$51,026			NA		\$45,196	\$45,196	88%	External Painting and lighting have been completed.
<b>TOTAL - PROPERTY CAPITAL</b>	<b>\$4,550,771</b>	<b>\$3,212,433</b>	<b>\$1,318,338</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$42,982</b>	<b>\$2,391,427</b>	<b>\$397,504</b>	<b>\$2,830,364</b>		

<b>PLANT &amp; EQUIPMENT</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Committed/ Contracted</b>	<b>Expended 25/26</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Vehicle Purchases	<b>\$240,000</b>		\$204,131	85%	Replacement of 4 x Utilities and SUV
Major Plant Purchases	<b>\$260,000</b>		\$113,450		New reach mower.
Fixtures, Fittings & Furniture	<b>\$100,000</b>		\$15,990		Town Hall - New Speaker
Book stock - Library Book Replacement	<b>\$40,000</b>		\$33,497	60%	
<b>TOTAL - PLANT &amp; EQUIPMENT</b>			<b>\$367,068</b>	<b>57%</b>	

<b>ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Funding Amount</b>	<b>Council Contribution</b>	<b>Previous Years Expenditure</b>	<b>Committed Expenditure (25/26)</b>	<b>Expended 25/26</b>	<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Works By Others</b> <i>Woorndoo Streatham Road - Completed by Moyne Shire</i>	<b>\$683,000</b>		\$683,000	NA	\$683,000		\$683,000	<b>100%</b>	Works for this road is being undertaken by Moyne Shire. The budget amount is Council's contribution
<b>Gravel Road Sheeting, Widening &amp; Alternative Sealing</b>	<b>\$1,500,000</b>		\$1,500,000	NA		\$353,256	\$353,256	<b>23%</b>	\$1.5m budget reallocated from other line items. Additional OTTA Seal works include: - Nott Road, Ararat (Pyrenees Hwy End) - Sugarloaf Road
<b>Reseal Program</b>				NA		\$33,824	\$33,824		Reseal Program Completed in 24/25, current charge to this item is linemarking that was invoiced late and has been allocated to 25/26 budget.

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS	Budget	Funding Amount	Council Contribution	Previous Years Expenditure	Committed Expenditure (25/26)	Expended 25/26	Overall Total	%	Notes
<b>Urban Road - Gravel to Seal</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>		\$1,000,000	NA		\$44,205	\$44,205	<b>5%</b>	Works Allocated for: - Alexandra Avenue (in conjunction with SLRSP Funding) - Coral & McNeil Street - Maude Street (in conjunction with Pony Club Project)
<b>ROAD RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAM</b>									
<b>Buangor Ben Nevis Road</b> <i>(Roads to Recovery 24/25 &amp; 25/26)</i>	<b>\$3,143,000</b>		\$2,143,000 (24/25)	\$269,592		\$48,679	\$318,271		Stage One of Road works are expected to commence in the coming months inline with the bridge works, to be undertaken by internal crew
<b>Buangor Ben Nevis Road - Bridge Strengthening</b>			\$1,000,000 (25/26)		\$308,862	\$2,450	\$311,312		Bridge Strengthening has been awarded West Pacific Group and is to commence around April 2026
<b>Buangor Ben Nevis Road</b> <i>(SILRP Funding 25/26)</i>	<b>\$5,000,000</b>	\$5,000,000							Council contribution of \$1,250,000 required in 26/27 Budget
<b>Mt William Road</b> <i>(HSVPP Funding 24/25)</i>	<b>\$6,250,000</b>	\$5,000,000	\$1,250,000	\$217,582	\$845,879	\$1,037,999	\$2,101,460		Stage 1 of the works are complete with sealing finalised in December 25. Stage 2 will commence at the conclusion of harvest. All works must be complete by 30 June 2026.
<b>Webb Street Reconstruction</b> <i>(Roads to Recovery 24/25)</i>	<b>\$400,000</b>		\$400,000	\$13,822	\$115,528	\$36,564	\$165,915	100%	Works have been completed with sealing of the road expected in late January, early February.
<b>Churchill Avenue Reconstruction</b>			\$30,371			\$30,371	\$30,371		Final invoices for works completed in June 26.
<b>Ararat Active Bike Network</b> <i>(Active Transport Fund)</i>	<b>\$399,000</b>	\$266,000	\$133,000	\$13,525		\$8,942	\$22,467	5%	New tenders are currently out to market and close on 24 February 2026.

<b>Buangor Ben Nevis Road - Bridge 7001.14 Design and Construct</b> <i>(Roads to Recovery - 25/26)</i>	<b>\$1,300,000</b>		\$1,300,000	\$68,723	\$838,954	\$286,724	\$1,194,401	91%	Contract No. 731 - Awarded July 2025 \$1.109m - Road and Bridge Pty Ltd \$100,000 allowance for Permits and Vegetation offsets. Works commenced onsite on 12 January 2026. Construction timeframe through until mid March 2026.
<b>ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Funding Amount</b>	<b>Council Contribution</b>	<b>Previous Years Expenditure</b>	<b>Committed Expenditure (25/26)</b>	<b>Expended 25/26</b>	<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>McCrows Road Bridge</b> <i>(Roads to Recovery - 24/25)</i>	<b>\$350,000</b>		\$350,000	\$17,738	\$392,974	\$1,791	\$412,503		Works awarded to Waratah Constructions - work to commence early April 26.
<b>Major Patching</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>		\$100,000			\$61,911	\$61,911		
<b>Bridges</b>	<b>\$0</b>					\$869	\$869		Transferred to Gravel Road Sheeting, Widening & Alternative Sealing
<b>Footpath Renewal Program</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>		\$400,000		\$33,750	\$188,994	\$222,744		
<b>Albert Street Footpath</b> <i>(Flexible Local Transport Solutions Program 25/26)</i>	<b>\$85,000</b>	\$42,500	\$42,500 taken from Footpath Renewal Program above			\$2,044	\$2,044	2%	Improving Pedestrian Accessibility to the Ararat Retirement Village and Sports Precinct - New Grant received September 2025. This project is currently out to tender.
<b>Urban Drainage Works</b>	<b>\$350,000</b>		\$350,000			\$23,697	\$23,697	6%	
<b>Kerb and Channel</b>	<b>\$0</b>					\$95,917	\$95,917		Transferred to Gravel Road Sheeting, Widening & Alternative Sealing Final payment for works on George Rd, carried over from 24/25.

<b>Lake Bolac Kindergarten Carpark</b> <i>(YMCA received funding for work)</i>	<b>\$80,339</b>	\$80,339		\$61,358		\$12,559	\$73,917	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 is now complete.
<b>Banfield Street - School Crossing</b> <i>(Road Safety Program - School Safety Improvements 20-25)</i>	<b>\$19,009</b>	\$19,009		\$8,244		\$4,369	\$12,613	66%	<i>These works are complete.</i>
<b>Queen Street Housing Support Program</b> <i>(Housing Support Program - Community Enabling Infrastructure)</i>	<b>\$7,380,000</b>	\$7,380,000		\$152,580		\$457,419	\$609,999	8%	<i>Sub-division planning and associated reporting are still in progress before submission to Council. Demolition works are progressing.</i>

<b>ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Funding Amount</b>	<b>Council Contribution</b>	<b>Previous Years Expenditure</b>	<b>Committed Expenditure (25/26)</b>	<b>Expended 25/26</b>	<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>SAFE LOCAL ROADS AND STREETS PROGRAM</b>									
View Point, Tobin & Taylor St Intersections	\$224,000	\$224,000		\$581		\$10,739	\$11,320	4%	<i>The detailed design for this project is complete, and lighting design is being finalised, with procurement commencing in February 2026. This project will be run in conjunction with the Footpath project for Taylor Street.</i>

Ingor Street - Raised Crossing	<b>\$110,000</b>	\$110,000		\$600		\$13,383	\$13,983	12%	The detailed design for this project is complete, and procurement commencing in February 2026.
King Street - Raised Crossing	<b>\$110,000</b>	\$110,000		\$4,702	\$41,000	\$11,601	\$57,303	15%	Tenders have been received for this project and will be awarded in mid-January 2026.
View Point & High St Intersection	<b>\$117,000</b>	\$117,000		\$1,526	\$64,500	\$12,503	\$78,529	12%	Tenders have been received for this project and will be awarded in mid-January 2026.
Moore & Princes Street Intersection	<b>\$131,000</b>	\$131,000		\$145		\$5,543	\$5,688	4%	The detailed design for this project is complete, and procurement will commence in February 2026.
Vincent Street & Alexandra Avenue - Raised Crossing	<b>\$321,000</b>	\$321,000		\$239		\$12,104	\$12,343	3%	The detailed design for this project has been received; some alterations are being requested to make the works more amenable to the location. This project will be run in conjunction with the Gravel to Seal project for Alexandra Avenue.
Queen & Moore Street Roundabout	<b>\$548,000</b>	\$548,000		\$1,531		\$21,671	\$23,202	4%	The detailed design for this project is complete, and the lighting design is being finalised, with procurement commencing in February 2026.
<b>SAFE SYSTEM PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM (23/24)</b>									
Barkly Street Raised Crossing	<b>\$312,232</b>	\$312,232		\$398	\$153,156	\$2,727	\$158,811	34%	This project is awaiting final design approval from the department of transport for the works to commence.
High Street Raised Crossing					\$99,750	\$2,780			This project has been awarded to SHS Civil and are progressing.
<b>TOTAL - ROADS CAPITAL</b>	<b>\$30,312,580</b>	<b>\$19,661,080</b>	<b>\$10,639,371</b>	<b>\$832,886</b>	<b>\$3,577,353</b>	<b>\$2,825,835</b>	<b>\$7,135,875</b>		

<b>FUNDED PROJECTS - MISCELLANEOUS (NOT CAPITALISED)</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Funding Amount</b>	<b>Council Contribution</b>	<b>Previous Years Expenditure</b>	<b>Committed Expenditure (25/26)</b>	<b>Expended (25/26)</b>	<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Roadside Weeds and Pest Program 25/26</b> <i>(Funding of the same name)</i>	<b>\$74,135</b>	\$74,135		NA			-	0%	<i>This project has been awarded to Project Platypus, and they have commenced spraying and rabbit control in October.</i>
<b>Sport &amp; Active Recreation Strategy</b> <i>(Local Sports Infrastructure Funding 23/24)</i>	<b>\$55,000</b>	\$40,000	\$15,000	\$12,452			\$12,452	23%	<i>CommunityVibe is undertaking the works associated with this project. Community engagement has been undertaken, and draft reporting is underway.</i>
<b>Community Road Safety Action Plan</b> <i>(TAC Local Govt Funding)</i>	<b>\$49,540</b>	\$49,540		\$437		\$582	\$1,019	2%	<i>DWB Engineering is undertaking the works associated with this project. Community engagement has been completed and draft reporting is being compiled</i>
<b>Unlocking Ararat North East</b> <i>(Streamlining for Growth 22/23)</i>	<b>\$85,000</b>	\$85,000		NA	\$13,888	\$34,827	\$48,715	57%	<i>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.</i>
<b>Ararat City Tennis Sports Lighting Installation and accessibility upgrade - Participation Initiative.</b> <i>(Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Fund)</i>	<b>\$50,000</b>	\$50,000		NA				0%	<i>This grant was received in July 2025 and will run in conjunction with the infrastructure project for Sports Lighting and accessibility upgrades.</i>

## 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 - January 2026 report.**

## ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

#### 4.5 URBAN GRAVEL TO SEAL PROGRAM 25/26

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** MAJOR PROJECTS LEAD  
**DEPARTMENT:** INFRASTRUCTURE  
**REFERENCE:** 27126

#### **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.

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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

As a part of Council's capital works program, the urban gravel to seal program has been part of the program for the past two years. This report provides information on the works scheduled within the 2025/2026 financial year.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Ararat Rural City Council is implementing an Urban Gravel to Seal Program to upgrade remaining unsealed roads within urban areas to a sealed standard. The program responds to increasing community expectations, safety considerations and the need to improve long-term asset sustainability within urban environments.

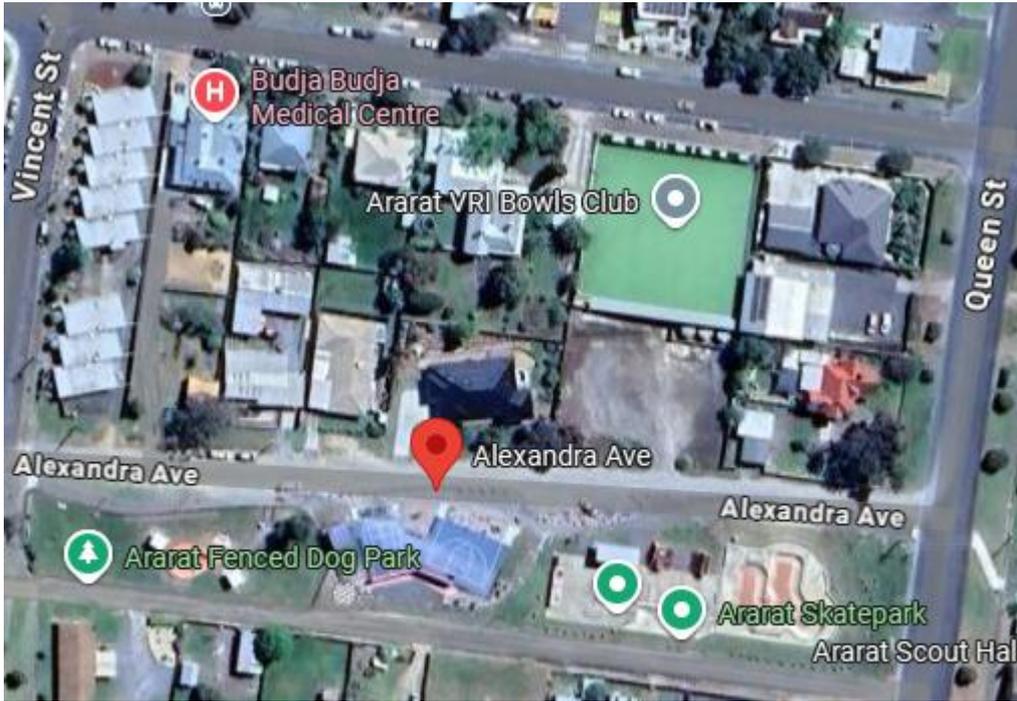
Unlike rural gravel roads, unsealed roads within townships present unique challenges due to higher traffic volumes, pedestrian activity, residential density and proximity to community facilities. Dust generation, surface deterioration and drainage issues significantly impact amenity, public health and maintenance costs.

There are three projects nominated for completion in this years gravel to seal program which are:

- Alexandra Avenue (Queen Street to Vincent Street)
- Coral & McNeill Street
- Maude Street (Off Elizabeth Street) - will be undertaken in conjunction with the Ararat Pony Club Development.

These three roads were ranked highly on our priority matrix for works to be completed with consideration of the residential access requirements of the roads

Alexandra Avenue is currently out to tender with upgrades to parking, kerb and channel, drainage, footpaths and pedestrian crossings in the plans which will upgrade the area which has both residential and public spaces in the vicinity. Tenders close on 3 March 2026.



Coral Street & McNeill Street is currently out to tender with upgrades to kerb and channel, drainage and property access in this residential area. Tenders close on 3 March 2026.



The third section is the small gravel road that leads into the Gordon Street Reserve from Elizabeth Street, these works will be undertaken in conjunction with the Ararat Pony Club development as it is a requirement of the project funding. Tendering for these works will occur in the new future when the completion date of the arena is complete so as to allow for reduced chance of damage from heavy vehicles entering the site.



## 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***

Council has allocated \$1,000,000 in its 2025/2026 capital works budget under urban gravel to seal.

#### ***Policy/Relevant Law***

- Road Management Plan
- Road Safety Act
- Local Government Act 2020
- ARCC Procurement Policy
- ARCC Asset Management Policy

#### ***Sustainability Implications***

These projects will improve road safety for all users and provide a more sustainable road infrastructure for the council. This project will also meet the cultural heritage and native vegetation required as part of the Cultural Heritage Management Plan and Native Vegetation Reports.

**Risk Assessment**

*Low Risk - Risks will be managed through project planning and management procedures and contract administration*

**Collaborative Tendering Opportunity**

*There is no opportunity for collaborative tendering associated with this project.*

**Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement**

*Stakeholder engagement was undertaken as part of the budget process.*

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That:**

- 1. Receive the report on the 2025/2026 Gravel to Seal program.**

**ATTACHMENTS**

There are no Attachments relating to this item

#### 4.6 COMMUNITY ASSET COMMITTEES' HALF YEAR REPORT

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO'S OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 27127

##### **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.

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##### **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 2025/26 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.

Last year Community Emergency Management Planning (CEMP) workshops organised by Council and run by a group called The Six C's were held at Moyston, Wickliffe, Willaura and Streatham Halls and Recreation Reserves.

On the catastrophic fire day of 9 January, a fire started near Streatham and quickly spread into neighbouring Municipalities. Streatham Hall is currently open Friday afternoons in February as part of a Fire Relief Hub for residents to drop in.

Our Community Assets play a vital role in supporting communities in times of need.

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 2025/26 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 November 2025	Quarterly meetings scheduled.
Buangor Community Sports Centre	13 August 2025, 10 September 2025 (no minutes supplied), 08 October 2025, 12 November 2025 (AGM & ordinary), 10 December 2025 (no minutes supplied)	Monthly meetings scheduled.
Elmhurst Public Hall	20 August 2025 (no minutes supplied), 26 November 2025	13 May 2026, 13 August 2026, 18 November 2026 (AGM & ordinary)
Lake Bolac Memorial Hall	No meetings held.	No meetings scheduled.
Maroona Recreation Reserve	8 September 2025 (AGM & ordinary)	No meetings scheduled.
Mininera Recreation Reserve	3 November 2025	No meetings scheduled.
Moyston Public Hall	12 August 2025, 11 November 2025 (AGM & ordinary)	Regular meetings scheduled.
Pomonal Hall and Recreation Reserve	1 September 2025, 20 October 2025, 17 November 2025	Monthly meetings scheduled.
Streatham Memorial Hall	No meetings held.	No meetings scheduled.
Tatyoan Hall and Recreation Reserve	6 October 2025 (AGM & ordinary)	No meetings scheduled.
Warrak Public Hall	No meetings held.	No meetings scheduled.
Wickliffe Recreation Reserve	No meetings held.	No meetings scheduled.
Willaura Memorial Hall	7 August 2025, 2 October 2025 (AGM & ordinary)	Bi-monthly meetings scheduled.
Willaura Recreation Reserve	18 August 2025, 20 October 2025 (AGM & ordinary), 22 December 2025	Monthly meetings scheduled.
Yalla-Y-Poora Community Centre	20 October 2025 (AGM & ordinary)	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 has attended the majority of Community Asset Committees since the last report in June 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 received.**

## ATTACHMENTS

The Community Asset Committee Meeting Minutes provided as Attachment 4.6

**SECTION 5 - COMMITTEE MINUTES/REPORTS**

No Committee Minutes/Reports received

## SECTION 6 - INFORMAL MEETINGS

### 6.1 COUNCIL BRIEFINGS

**AUTHOR'S TITLE:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO'S OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 13039074

#### OFFICER'S DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

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

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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Governance Rules state that if there is a meeting of Councillors that:

1. is scheduled or planned for the purpose of discussing the business of *Council* or briefing Councillors;
2. is attended by at least one member of Council staff; and
3. 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 17 February 2026

#### Matters discussed at the briefing:

- CEO Employment & Remuneration Committee
- New beneficial enterprise
- CBD Audit
- S6 - Delegation from Council to Members of Council Staff
- New Style Policies
- Petition for Community Improvements at Grevillea Court, Ararat North
- Sector 37
- Monthly Community Engagement Report
- Monthly Performance Report - Prestige Mill Infrastructure Project Update - January 2026
- Monthly Progress Report - Council Plan - Annual Plan
- Monthly Performance Report - January 2026
- Community Asset Committees Half Year Report
- Capital Works Program - January 2026
- Program of Works - OTTA Seal
- Urban Gravel to Seal Program 2025/26
- Building approvals
- Planning approvals under delegation
- Electronic Briefing Materials
- Budget

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### ***Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives***

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

#### **6. STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE**

We will work hard to build models of governance that place delivering public value at 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 ensuring that Councillors' roles as elected community representatives are understood and reflected in decision-making.

#### ***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 6.1.

## **SECTION 7 - NOTICES OF MOTION**

A *notice of motion* must be in writing signed by a Councillor and be lodged with or sent to the *Chief Executive Officer* no later than 12.00pm (noon) and at least six (6) days prior to the Council Meeting to allow sufficient time for the *Chief Executive Officer* to include the *notice of motion* in agenda papers for a *Council meeting*.

**SECTION 8 - URGENT BUSINESS**

Items cannot be admitted as urgent business other than by resolution of *Council* and only then if it:

- 1 relates to or arises out of a matter which has arisen since distribution of the *agenda*; and
- 2 cannot safely or conveniently be deferred until the next *Council meeting*.

## **SECTION 9 - CLOSE SESSION (CONFIDENTIAL)**

In accordance with section 66(2)(a), 3(1) *Confidential Information (a)* of the Local Government Act 2020, the following agenda items are listed for consideration in the confidential section:

- Item 9.1 - CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee update

## **CLOSURE OF COUNCIL MEETING TO THE PUBLIC**

The Open Council Meeting will now be closed, but members of the public are welcome to rejoin the Council Meeting following the recommencement of the meeting.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the meeting be closed to members of the public pursuant to section 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020 to consider confidential reports.**

## **OPEN COUNCIL MEETING RECOMMENCEMENT**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Open Council Meeting recommence.**

**Gallery invited to return to Council Chamber.**

## **LIFTING OF CONFIDENTIALITY OF CLOSED SESSION RESOLUTIONS**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That:**

- 1. The confidentiality of the report in relation to Confidential Agenda Item 9.1 not be lifted on adoption of the motion.**
- 2. The confidentiality of the decision and the Terms of Reference be lifted on adoption of the motion.**