



Ararat Rural City

# AGENDA

## COUNCIL MEETING

**Tuesday 26 May 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](https://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 28 April 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.

## SECTION 3 - REPORTS REQUIRING COUNCIL DECISION

### 3.1 ADOPTION OF THE ARARAT RURAL CITY COUNCIL BUDGET 2026-27

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO'S OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 28964

#### **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**

In accordance with Section 94 of the Local Government Act 2020, Council is required to prepare a budget for each financial year and the subsequent 3 financial years by 30 June each year, or any other date fixed by the Minister by notice published in the Government Gazette.

Section 96 of the Local Government Act 2020 requires Council to develop the budget in accordance with the financial management principles and its community engagement policy.

This report presents the Budget 2026/27 for adoption after it has been presented to community for community consultation and engagement.

#### **DISCUSSION**

The 2026/27 Budget sets out Council's continued commitment to responsible financial management, strong service delivery, and strategic investment in the municipality's long-term economic growth and wellbeing. Building on the efficiencies achieved over the past eight financial years, this Budget focuses on maintaining essential services, renewing critical community assets, and ensuring that ratepayers receive value for money.

In preparing the 2026/27 Budget, Council has prioritised sustainability and prudent decision-making in an environment of rising operating costs and evolving community expectations. The Budget provides for ongoing investment in infrastructure, community facilities, and service improvements, ensuring that Council can meet current needs while planning for future growth and resilience.

A core feature of the 2026/27 financial year is a substantial capital works program, with a \$15,797,000 investment dedicated to strengthening enabling infrastructure, supporting local economic activity, and enhancing liveability across the municipality. At the same time, Council continues to pursue operational efficiencies, internal capability building, and service refinements to keep cost pressures low and deliver better outcomes for residents.

#### **Key Budget Influences include:**

- a. Ararat Rural City Council's 2026/27 Budget has a 2.25 percent rate rise. This is a 0.5 percent discount on the rate cap for 2026/27 of 2.75 percent and a net increase of 3.75 percent in nine years.

By contrast, had Council increased rates to the level allowable under the State Government's Fair Go Rates System (FGRS) over the nine-year period including 2026/27, this would have increased the total burden to ratepayers by 22.00% during that same period.

- b. In July 2022, Council adopted key drivers of financial sustainability, which form the basis for developing the 2026/2027 Budget. These drivers of financial sustainability are:

#### **Rating**

Maintenance of the "pie model" to provide some form of long-term rating equity and reduce rate shock across rating sectors based on annual valuation fluctuations.

### **Debt**

Debt is only used to fund strategic infrastructure outcomes with an emphasis on intergenerational equity.

### **Asset Preservation**

Maintain the asset renewal and upgrade ratio to at least 110% of depreciation.

### **Surplus Budgets**

Maintain cash and operating surpluses in each financial year.

### **Managing Expenditure**

Managing expenditure is a key driver of financial sustainability at Ararat Rural City Council.

### **Rate Rises**

Rate rises will be kept to a minimum based on seeking organisational efficiency. These efficiencies will be returned to the ratepayer as a dividend through lower rate rises or rate cuts.

### **Service Standards**

Expenditure savings and ratepayer dividends will not come at the price of lower service standards.

Key elements of Council's 2026/2027 Budget are:

- \$200,000 for the Moyston Recreation Reserve public toilet upgrade
- \$100,000 for a walking track around the Pomonal Recreation Reserve oval, supported by the Victorian Government's Pomonal Council Support Fund for 2024 Bushfires
- \$548,000 for a new roundabout at the Queen & Moore Street intersection, funded by the Victorian Government's Safer Local Roads and Streets Program
- \$100,000 for young people's programs across schools, largely through the Crazy Ideas College
- \$100,000 for Community Support Grants
- \$100,000 for the successful business Façade Improvement and Kick Start Grants Programs
- \$1,800,000 renewing rural gravel roads through resheeting or treatments such as OTTA Seal
- \$1,000,000 to seal urban gravel roads and laneways
- \$750,000 to fund Year 5 of Council's five-year commitment to improve urban drainage systems
- \$400,000 to upgrade footpath network
- \$300,000 to renew kerb and channel assets
- Continuing to fund free access to Outdoor Pools
- Continuing the YEAH Crew, with support from the Victorian Government's Engage! program
- Continuing to support culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) families to access kindergarten and Pre-Prep, with support from the Victorian Government's CALD Outreach Initiative program
- Continuing the delivery of \$7.38 million of enabling infrastructure to unlock housing at the Prestige Mill site, funded by the Federal Government's Housing Support Program
- Continuing the delivery of a total of over \$10 million worth of road and bridge upgrades on Buangor-Ben Nevis Road, funded by Council and the Federal Government under the Roads to Recovery and the Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure Program

### **Revenue**

Council's first considerations in framing the 2026/2027 Budget are on the revenue side. Key considerations are:

- returning efficiency dividends to the community through a 2.25 percent rate rise
- ensuring a commitment to maintaining relativities in rating burden by each identified rating sector
- attempting to ease the impact of rates rises on individual ratepayers
- avoiding where possible "rate shock" experiences of large and unexpected rate increases.

It is proposed that the best mechanism for ensuring this is to propose a rating approach in 2026/2027 that, as far as possible, provides similar revenue outcomes across each sector as 2025/2026. Council believes that the approach taken is perfectly consistent with Section 101 (1)(c) of the Local Government Act 2020 where “financial policies and strategic plans, including the Revenue and Rating Plan, must seek to provide stability and predictability in the financial impact on the municipal community”.

In the 2026 valuation there have again been some shifts in valuations across the classes of properties, although these have not been as significant as 2021/2022 and 2022/2023. The 2026 valuation has again yielded some asymmetry in valuations compared to the previous year. The table below demonstrates the nature of this uneven distribution of revaluations between 2025 and 2026:

Rates Sector	Total 2025 CIV	Total 2026 CIV	Increase/Decrease in CIV - 2025 to 2026	Average % change in CIV
General	\$2,037,664,000	\$2,109,417,000	\$71,753,000	3.52%
Commercial	\$160,970,000	\$167,197,000	\$6,227,000	3.87%
Industrial	\$53,613,000	\$56,741,000	\$3,128,000	5.83%
Farm	\$4,331,530,300	\$4,319,081,000	-\$12,449,300	-0.29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,583,777,300</b>	<b>\$6,652,436,000</b>	<b>\$68,658,700</b>	<b>1.04%</b>

If the current 0.39 farm differential rate and 1.35 commercial/ industrial differential rates are maintained there will be a change in relativities in rates burden between farm, commercial/industrial and general rates between 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 (assuming a 2.25% rate cap increase), as shown in the table below.

Rates Sector	Rating Differential 2025/2026	2025/2026	2026/2027
General	1.00	51.8%	52.7%
Commercial	1.35	5.4%	5.5%
Industrial	1.35	1.7%	1.9%
Farm	0.39	41.1%	40.0%

The mechanism for maintaining relativities in rate burden between rating sectors, created through asymmetries in valuation movement is through alteration of rating differentials. The table below demonstrates the impact of a movement in farm rate differential from 0.39 to 0.405 and a retaining of the commercial/industrial rate at 1.35 on adjusting the relative rate burden.

Rates Sector	Rating Differential 2025/2026	2025/2026 Rates Burden	Rating Differential 2026/2027	2026/2027 Rates Burden
General	1.00	51.8%	1.00	51.9%
Commercial	1.35	5.4%	1.35	5.4%
Industrial	1.35	1.7%	1.35	1.8%
Farm	0.39	41.1%	0.405	40.8%

Council is proposing a change in the farm rate differential from 0.39 to 0.405 and no change in the commercial/industrial differential of 1.35 in order to ensure relative burden between rating sectors is maintained from 2025/2026 to 2026/2027.

Minor amendments to the number of assessments, CIV and rates figures in Section 4.1.1 have been made since the Draft Budget 2026/2027 was released for public consultation as a result of updated valuation information from the Valuer-General Victoria Office. These amendments have also resulted in changes to some indicators in Section 5.

### **A 2.25 percent rate increase in 2026/2027**

Council has budgeted for a 2.25 percent increase to rates in 2026/2027, which is a 0.5 percent discount on the rate cap for 2026/27 of 2.75 percent, in order to ensure that the community receives a dividend for improved organisational efficiency and cost savings

### **Expenditure**

The key driver of the 2026/2027 Budget expenditure is to continue to deliver long-term, sustainable value to the Ararat Rural City community. This will be achieved by focussing on the following key areas:

- strategic renewal of Council's key assets
- driving organisational effectiveness through managing performance and efficiency
- implementing a digital transformation program
- implementation of key projects contained in Council's adopted advocacy program
- ongoing commitment to service review

The proposed Ararat Rural City Council Budget 2026/2027 document outlines the key expenditure areas, which are informed by Council's operational activity, key projects and the Council Plan 2025-2029.

### **Other considerations**

The waste management kerbside collection charges for residential properties will increase by approximately 2.75%, with fees rounded up to the nearest dollar, to contribute to increased costs for waste management services.

The Municipal Charge will be fixed at \$96 for 2026/2027.

The budgeted operating result for 2026/2027 is a surplus of \$4.624 million, compared to a budgeted result of \$2.050 million surplus in 2025/2026.

The budgeted cash flow statement indicates an increase in cash & cash equivalents of \$0.001 million.

## **KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

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

This report aligns with the Council Plan 2025-29 in the following areas:

#### **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.

- 6.1** Deliver responsible budget outcomes linked to strategy, that deliver value, innovation and rating fairness.
- 6.2** Ensure appropriate risk management is applied to Council and organisational decisions. Council's internal function is applied to areas of perceived risk.
- 6.3** 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 Draft Budget has been prepared within the following parameters:

- The Draft Budget proposes the following differential rates - general rate - 100%, commercial and industrial rate - 135% of the general rate and farm rate - 40.5% of the general rate
- A 2.25% increase in the total amount received from general rates and charges;
- No increase in the Municipal Charge which will remain at \$96 per rateable property in 2026/2027;

- A balanced budget in terms of a cash result and an operating surplus of \$4.624 million in terms of an accrual accounting result;
- A net increase in cash and cash equivalents of \$0.001 million;
- A capital works program of \$15.797 million;
- No new loan borrowings; and
- Capital budgets have been prepared in accordance with good asset management principles.

More detailed information is contained in the Budget document.

### **Policy/Relevant Law**

Council is required under Section 94 of the Local Government Act 2020 to prepare a budget for each financial year. The budget contains the Financial Statements, a description of services and initiatives to be funded in the budget, service outcome indicators, and major initiatives to be undertaken during the financial year and the performance measures in relation to each major initiative.

### **Sustainability Implications**

All environmental, social and economic impacts have been considered during the development of the Budget 2026/2027.

### **Risk Assessment**

Council must implement the principles of sound financial management, which includes managing financial risks faced by Council and ensuring that decisions are made and actions taken having regard to their financial effects on future generations.

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

The Draft Budget 2026/27 was released for community consultation and engagement from Friday 20 March 2026 with 5 week period for submissions that closed on Friday 24 April 2026. The Draft Budget document and a Snapshot summary was available online via Engage Ararat, available from the Council Office and distributed across the municipality as part of the face-to-face community engagement sessions held at the dates, times and locations in the table below. A drop-in session was also held at the Ararat Rural City Council offices at 59 Vincent Street, Ararat on Friday 27 March 2026, from 9:00am-2:00pm.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Time and Date</b>
Ararat Town Hall	5:30pm, Monday 23 March 2026
Buangor Cobb & Co	10:30am, Wednesday 25 March 2026
Elmhurst Mechanics Institute	3:30pm, Wednesday 25 March 2026
Lake Bolac Info & Business Centre	1:30pm, Monday 23 March 2026
Moyston Community Hall	1.00pm, Tuesday 24 March 2026
Pomonal Community Hall	11.00am, Tuesday 24 March 2026
Tatyoorn Hall	12:00pm, Thursday 26 March 2026
Willaura Memorial Hall	3.00pm, Tuesday 24 March 2026

There were 9 online submissions, 27 attendees to the community engagement sessions and 2 letters received. Council wishes to thank everyone who participated in the engagement process and took the time to provide feedback.

A copy of the feedback is in the attached Community Consultation Report, along with responses to the feedback. As a result of the consultation process, a number of projects have been added to the capital works program for 2026/27, these include:

- Sealing of Green Street in Elmhurst from the Bush Nursing Centre to Elmhurst-Glenpatrick Road.
- The footpath on Main Street, Willaura, from the supermarket to the Police Station will be upgraded, and a pedestrian ramp outside the Willaura bank will be incorporated into this project.

Other requests and suggestions have been reviewed, with several to be investigated further and considered as part of future capital works planning and budgeting.

## RECOMMENDATION

That Council, having considered the Draft Budget 2026/2027 and having distributed the budget for community consultation, resolves as follows:

1. To adopt the Budget 2026/2027, comprising the 2026/2027 financial year plus the subsequent three financial years 2027/2028 to 2029/2030, pursuant to Section 94 of the Local Government Act 2020
2. To declares Rates and Charges for the 2026/2027 financial year as follows
  - a. An amount of \$18,228,943 be declared as the amount which Council intends to raise by General Rates, Municipal Charge and Annual Service Charges which amount is calculated as follows:

	Amount
<b>General Rates</b>	
Residential	\$7,593,901
Commercial	\$812,577
Industrial	\$275,761
Farm	\$6,297,220
Municipal Charge	\$649,344
<b>Annual Service Charges</b>	
Kerbside Collection Charges	\$2,600,140
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$18,228,943</b>

- b. A general residential rate of 0.3600 cents in the dollar of the Capital Improved Value be declared for the period 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027
- c. A commercial/industrial differential rate of 0.4860 cents in the dollar of the Capital Improved Value be declared for the period 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027
- d. A farm differential rate of 0.1458 cents in the dollar of the Capital Improved Value be declared for the period 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027
- e. Council resolves to adopt a municipal charge of \$96 per rateable assessment for the period 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027
- f. Annual Service Charge be declared for the period 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027 on properties where the service is provided, as follows:
  - g. Kerbside collection - 4 bin system \$483
  - h. Kerbside collection - 3 bin system \$428
  - i. Kerbside collection - additional 140 litre garbage \$169
  - j. Kerbside collection - additional 240 litre recycling \$146
  - k. Kerbside collection - additional 240 litre organics \$146
  - l. Kerbside collection - additional 80 litre glass \$25
3. To declare the Fees and Charges for the 2026/2027 financial year, contained in Section 6- Schedule of Fees and Charges of the Budget document.

## ATTACHMENTS

The Ararat Rural City Council Budget 2026/27 is provided as Attachment 3.1a and The Community Consultation Report - Draft Budget 2026/27 is provided as Attachment 3.1b

### 3.2 BARKLY STREET CBD PARKING AUDIT

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** MAJOR PROJECTS LEAD  
**DEPARTMENT:** INFRASTRUCTURE  
**REFERENCE:** 28965

**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

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. The design has then been out for community consultation, this report details the community's response to the plan and options moving forward.

#### 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.

Suggested CBD Parking plan provided for community consultation includes the following:

Total No. of Carparks:	201
Total No. of Accessible Parking bays:	11
Total No. of Motorcycle parking bays:	2
Total No. of Loading Bays:	11
Total No. of Taxi Bays:	2
Parking bays for vehicles exceeding 6m:	2

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 11 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

A total of 39 responses from the community consultation were received through Engage Ararat and letters/emails received to the project team and are summarised as follows:

- Accessible parking: Requests for more disabled bays near key destinations and closer to ramps; concern about bay length for wheelchair hoists deploying into traffic. *Note: a shared bay with linemarking and bollards has been provided for all accessible car parks in this design inline with Australian Standards.*
- Short-stay Parking Options: Suggestions for 10-15 minute bays near post office/ATMs/chemists, including a lunchtime time-window arrangement.

- Bay design: Calls to widen bays and adjust angles to reflect larger vehicles and improve ability to load children into car seats. *Note: the designs have been created to align with the Australian Standards as previously detailed.*
- Operations: Maintain and/or widen loading bays for delivery access; retain taxi bay for older residents with limited walking tolerance. *Note: the designs have been created to align with the Australian Standards as previously detailed.*
- Family bays debate: Multiple requests for parent/pram bays countered by a view that such bays are not necessary compared to disability needs.

One alteration has been made to the plan placing the taxi bay back in its original position adjacent to the chemist.

This feedback indicates strong community expectation that any alterations to Barkly Street parking will improve equitable access, particularly for people with disability and older residents, support CBD economic activity through better turnover, and reduce safety conflicts for pedestrians and cyclists.

## 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 is presented within this report.*

## RECOMMENDATION

### **That:**

- 1. Council accept the CBD Parking Plan as presented.**

## ATTACHMENTS

The Barkly Street concept plan is provided as Attachment 3.2

### 3.3 DRAFT COMMUNITY ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2025-2030

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** MAJOR PROJECTS LEAD  
**DEPARTMENT:** INFRASTRUCTURE  
**REFERENCE:** 28966

**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

This report presents the draft Community Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2030 for consideration and endorsement by Council.

The Strategy establishes a long-term, evidence-based framework to reduce road trauma across the municipality, aligned with Vision Zero and the Safe System approach. It responds to local crash data, community feedback, and regional road safety risks, and sets clear targets and actions to reduce fatal and serious injury crashes within the Ararat Rural City Council.

#### DISCUSSION

The Community Road Safety and Action Plan 2025-2030 establishes a long term evidence based framework to reduce road trauma across the Ararat Rural City Council.

Between 2020 and 2024, the municipality has recorded 158 casualty crashes, including five fatalities and 83 serious injuries, highlighting the urgent need for coordinated and sustained road safety improvements.

The Action Plan outlines seven strategic goals, focusing on high risk rural roads, intersections, vulnerable road users, speed management and continuous improvement.

Key road safety risks identified include:

- High Speed rural roads and long distance travel
- Run off road crashes and roadside hazards
- High risk intersections
- Wildlife hazards on key corridors
- Exposure for vulnerable road users

The community priorities identified four key points:

- Fixing potholes and edge drop offs
- Intersection upgrades
- Speed limit reviews
- Improved school zone safety

The strategic goals of the strategy are as follows:

- Reduce fatal and serious injuries on rural roads
- Prevent run off road crashes
- Improve safety and high risk intersections
- Protect vulnerable road users
- Align speeds with road function and risk
- Improve safety for work related road use
- Strengthen data, monitoring and reporting
-

Key performance targets for the plan are:

- 30% reduction in fatal and serious injuries by 2030
- 10% reduction by 2027 (interim)
- 40% reduction at high-risk intersections
- 40% reduction for vulnerable road users

Key actions for the plan include:

- Treating high risk rural corridors (barriers, line marking, shoulders)
- Upgrading Intersections
- Expanding pedestrian and shared path infrastructure
- Undertaking speed reviews and traffic calming initiatives
- Delivering education and enforcement programs to the community
- Strengthening data collection and reporting.

The draft strategy as provided gives a clear strategic direction for Council to work towards and aligns with state and national road safety frameworks, the consideration of community priorities has been undertaken and will support Council when looking at funding applications in the future, building relationships with both state and federal government.

There are no significant changes to be made to the content of the strategy as presented, however the final draft will include a message from the mayor, updated maps and plans, relevant photos from within our works program, glossary, references and appendix. Once approved the final document will be returned to council for final approval and release to the community.

## 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***

Implementation of the plan will be through:

- Capital Works and maintenance programs
- External funding opportunities supporting road safety
- Integration with existing asset management and infrastructure planning.

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

- Road Management Act 2024
- National Road Safety Strategy
- Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030
- Local Government Act 2020
- ARCC Road Management Plan
- ARCC Asset Management Policy
- Council Plan and Community Vision

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

The strategy strongly supports social sustainability by improving community safety, well being and liveability. By reducing trauma and improving equitable access to transport the strategy contribute to stronger and more connected communities. The strategy supports long term economic sustainability by reducing the economic costs of road trauma, supporting freight efficiency and safer transport routes,

particularly in our municipality with strong agriculture and industry reliance, and promoting the attractiveness of the municipality for tourism and investment into the future.

**Risk Assessment**

Key risks include continued road trauma without intervention and changing traffic patterns and environmental conditions which are able to be mitigated through data prioritisation, monitoring and reporting.

**Collaborative Tendering Opportunity**

NA

**Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement**

*Extensive stakeholder engagement including community workshops and online engagement through “Engage Ararat” has been undertaken. This feedback has directly informed the priorities and actions associated with this plan.*

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That:**

- 1. Endorse the draft Community Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2030**

**ATTACHMENTS**

The Draft Community Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2030 is provided as Attachment 3.3

### 3.4 BUILDING PERMITS

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 28967

**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

This report proposes a reassessment of the Council's capacity to issue building permits for small sheds, pergolas and carports to ensure the safety of ratepayers and the public.

#### DISCUSSION

Through the Municipal Building Surveyor, councils administer parts of the Building Act 1993 related to compliance with building regulations. Councils act as a regulator of building safety by undertaking inspections of buildings or sites when required, and issue notices and orders if necessary.

Council staff can assist with advice and technical information in regard to construction, alteration, extension, demolition or change of use for all types of buildings, but Council does not currently issue building permits. These are obtained through registered private building surveyors.

There have been concerns regarding the increasing difficulty of the cost of accessing private building surveyors for small sheds, pergolas and carports, resulting in these structures proceeding to be built without prior assessment of their structural adequacy, safety and suitability to be used or occupied. Rectifying structural, health and safety issues after being built is far more challenging and costly than addressing the issue in the design stage.

Given the difficulty of accessing private building surveyors for small jobs as described above, and the safety and financial risks to the public, it has become timely to reassess Ararat Rural City Council's capacity to issue building permits particularly for small sheds, pergolas and carports.

#### 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.

- 6.2** Ensure appropriate risk management is applied to Council and organisational decisions. Council's internal function is applied to areas of perceived risk.

##### ***Budget Implications***

Budget implications will depend on the reassessment of capacity.

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

Building Act 1993  
Building Regulations 2018

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

Not applicable

***Risk Assessment***

A reassessment of Council's building permitting capacity is expected to reduce risks to the public.

***Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement***

This report has been prompted by input from stakeholders and observations of an emerging trend in the building permit area related to small sheds, pergolas and carports.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That:**

**1. The CEO develops and executes a plan to establish and sustain Council's capacity to issue building permits by 30 September 2026**

**ATTACHMENTS**

There are no attachments relating to this item

### 3.5 ARARAT RURAL CITY SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2026-36

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO'S OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 28969

**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 draft Ararat Rural City Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2026-36 and Action Plan have been released for community consultation, and the final documents are presented to Council for final consideration.

**DISCUSSION**

The community of Ararat Rural City are passionate about their sport and active recreation. A framework is needed to foster increase participation in physical activity and guide Council's investment decisions in sport and active recreation over the next 10 years.

Following extensive community and stakeholder engagement, the draft Ararat Rural City Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2026-36 and Action Plan was received by Council at the March 2026 Council Meeting. The draft Strategy and Action Plan was released for a final round of community review and feedback, and submissions closed on 24 April 2026.

One submission was received, and a response is provided in the table below. In response to the submission, item 1.3 of the Action Plan has been updated to include "Ararat" as shown in bold: "Undertake an Aquatic Review to explore options regarding aquatic facilities in Ararat, including potential pool upgrades at **Ararat**, Willaura and Lake Bolac."

Council wishes to thank everyone who had participated in the community and stakeholder engagement during the development of the Strategy and Action Plan, as well as everyone who took the time to review the final draft documents.

Table 1. Submission received and response to the submission.

Submission
<p>The draft plan provides very little information about Council's intention for the indoor pool. Given the ageing population in Ararat and that the planning identifies swimming as one of the top three activities undertaken - this is very disappointing. The indoor pool as it currently stands is well beyond its use by date. It is currently so cold that it is almost unusable for children and older adults. The change rooms are in desperate need of a makeover.</p> <p>Council has talked about renovation/ redevelopment of the indoor heated pool for a number of years with funding allocated for scoping such developments. Nothing has changed. It is disappointing that so much money can be spent on football facilities, but facilities that are predominantly used by the wider community including older women are neglected.</p> <p>(Response on next page)</p>
Response

Thank you for your feedback. Council recognises the importance of the Ararat Fitness Centre to health and wellbeing and is already in the process of planning for new aquatic facilities in Ararat to meet the future needs of the community.

We are sorry to hear that the pool temperature may not have met the expectations of some patrons. The indoor pool is a shared, multi-use pool that accommodates a range of activities simultaneously, including learn-to-swim lessons, lap swimming and water aerobics classes. Aquatic industry guidelines generally recommend that shared indoor pools used for both lessons and lap swimming operate between 28–30 °C. The Ararat indoor pool is maintained within a balanced operating range of approximately 29–30 °C. This range provides a balance so that patrons undertaking continuous exercise, such as lap swimming or aqua aerobics, can participate safely without overheating, while still remaining comfortable for learn-to-swim participants.

Please be assured that we take feedback about the comfort and safety of our patrons seriously. We continue to monitor both pool temperature and patron feedback to ensure the most comfortable experience possible for all users, within the constraints of a shared facility.

Regarding the redevelopment of the Ararat Fitness Centre, Council had previously completed a feasibility study in 2022 on redeveloping the existing Ararat Fitness Centre, with a Stage 1 cost estimate of \$680,000. However, by 2024 when the Stage 1 redevelopment was planned, cost escalations in the construction sector combined with findings from detailed site inspections resulted in the cost estimate increasing to \$1.84 million for the Stage 1 works.

Council decided to investigate alternative options, including exploring the delivery of new facilities at another location. An upgrade of the Ararat Outdoor Pool to an indoor pool with a new and improved facilities was identified as the option to be investigated further. This work is being undertaken as part of action item 4.2.1 of the Annual Plan 2025/26, which is to progress plans and costings for both a new indoor sports facility and the outdoor pool upgrade. The feedback above, as well as the feedback received during the initial development stages of the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy and the Budget 2026/27 will be considered as part of the planning for the outdoor pool upgrade.

## 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.

- 1.3** 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.

#### **2. DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING KEY ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE**

We will ensure that we plan, fund and develop new infrastructure in ways that deliver strong public value. Existing infrastructure will be managed, renewed, and maintained to ensure that it continues to serve identified public needs.

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

- 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.

**3. 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.

**5.3** Partner with community groups, not-for-profits, and Traditional Owner organisations to develop Ararat Rural City into a more inclusive, welcoming, tolerant and diverse community.

***Budget Implications***

There are no budget implications arising from the draft Strategy and Action Plan. These documents will assist in providing the strategic frameworks for future investments by Council and potentially State and Federal Government partners.

***Policy/Relevant Law***

ARCC Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029  
Sport and Recreation Victoria's Active Victoria 2022-2026  
Various State Sporting Association strategic plans and documents

***Sustainability Implications***

The Sport and Action Recreation Strategy 2026-36 and the Action Plan are expected to have a positive economic, social and environmental impact in Ararat Rural City.

***Risk Assessment***

The extensive consultation and engagement that has been undertaken has reduced the risk that the Strategy and Action Plan will be inconsistent with the priorities of the Ararat Rural City community.

***Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement***

Extensive consultation and engagement has already occurred during the development of the draft Strategy and Action Plan. A final round of community review of the draft documents has also been undertaken.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That:**

- 1. Council endorse the Ararat Rural City Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2026-36 and Action Plan**

**ATTACHMENTS**

The Ararat Rural City Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2026-36 & The Ararat Rural City Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2026-36: Action Plan are provided as Attachment 3.5

### 3.6 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM 2026/2027

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 28970

**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

This report presents the Community Engagement Program 2026/27, which contributes to the Council Plan 2025-29 objective 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."

This program has been revised with learnings from the Community Engagement Program 2025/26, and outlines indicative dates and locations for the next financial year of engagement.

#### DISCUSSION

Ararat Rural City Council recognises that the involvement of the community in making decisions and plans is fundamental to good governance. The Ararat Rural City community is culturally diverse and engaged, rich with experience and expertise, whose participation is valued by Council.

The Council Plan 2025-29 strategic objective number 6.3 is to "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." To achieve this objective, Council has developed a regular program of face-to-face community engagement opportunities.

This Community Engagement Program 2026/27 will deliver proactive and meaningful engagement with the wider community, and also assists Council to effectively manage risks. This Program supports Councillors to fulfill their role as defined by the Local Government Act 2020. Councillors represent the interests of the municipal community in their decision making and in their contributions to the strategic direction of the Council.

Councillors are already well connected to their communities, and bring with them their lived experience as residents, farmers, business owners and active members of their community. However, some members of the community may not be engaged in the groups and communities that Councillors interact with. There are also new residents relocating to Ararat who have not met other locals yet, or there are existing residents who become socially isolated for various reasons.

This Program supports Councillors to continually maintain their awareness of the sometimes dynamic and diverse interests and needs of the municipal community. This Program can also help to support social inclusion and connectedness in our communities and support outcomes from the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-29.

The attached Community Engagement Program 2026/27 document outlines how Council will engage with community, risk analysis and monitoring and evaluation. The attachment is a 'living document' and will be continually improved and updated to ensure it supports effective community engagement.

Quarterly 'rounds' of community engagement are proposed, with indicative dates and locations below:

Indicative Dates	Indicative Locations
14 to 18 September 2026	Ararat, Buangor, Elmhurst, Lake Bolac, Moyston, Pomonal, Tatyoon, Willaura
7 to 11 December 2026	Ararat, Lake Bolac, Mininera, Streatham, Warrak, Wickliffe, Willaura
22 to 25 March 2027 (Budget Engagement Sessions)	Ararat, Buangor, Elmhurst, Lake Bolac, Moyston, Pomonal, Tatyoon, Willaura
21 to 25 June 2027	Ararat, Lake Bolac, Mininera, Moyston, Pomonal, Streatham, Warrak, Wickliffe

## 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 2026/2027 does not have any budget implications. This Program will be delivered within the existing resources and budget.

#### ***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 2026/27 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 adopt the Community Engagement Program 2026/2027**

## ATTACHMENTS

The Community Engagement Program 2026/27 is Provided as Attachment 3.6

### 3.7 MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO'S OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 28971

**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 30 April 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 \$30.981 million in revenue and \$30.732 million in expenses to 30 April 2026. This has resulted in an operating surplus of \$0.249 million for the ten months ended 30 April 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 \$18.317 million has been recognised as income for the ten months ended 30 April 2026.

**User fees** account for 4.74% of the total budgeted income for 2025/26 and \$1.474 million has been received to 30 April 2026. The majority of this relates to transfer station fees, fitness centre income and commercial waste management charges.

**Recurrent Operating Grants** total \$3.893 million to 30 April 2026, including \$1.880 million from the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission for general purpose grants and \$1.220 million for the local roads grants.

**Non-recurrent Operating Grants** total \$1.857 million to 30 April 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	58	-
Ararat Rural City Sport, Active Recreation & Open Space Strategy	-	25	11
CALD Outreach Workers Initiative	129	129	-
Tiny Towns Fund - Pomonal Community Hub	-	61	58
Natural Disaster Relief	-	158	-
Council Support Fund - Streatham Fires	-	400	-
Engage - Youth Events Activities & Happenings	55	55	-
Centenary Park Dog Park	100	36	39
Queen Street Housing Program	-	514	5,183
Ararat Hills Adventure Sports Precinct	-	-	400
Early Career Educators	-	73	30
Ararat Active Bike Network	266	-	-
Ararat City Tennis Sports Lighting and Accessibility	-	131	373
Primary Producer Support Payment	-	125	-
Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund	-	50	-
Other Minor Grants (under \$30,000)	-	42	-
	<b>617</b>	<b>1,857</b>	<b>8,633</b>

**Non-recurrent Capital Grants** total \$3.394 million to 30 April 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	-	-	50
Tiny Towns Fund - Buangor Cobb & Co Stables	-	29	25
Pony Club Sports Arena	1,490	1029	-
Queen Street Housing Program	-	-	1,683
Ararat Library Lighting & Exterior Upgrade	-	45	6
TAC Safe Local Roads and Streets Program	-	201	291
Jack & Jill Kindergarten Upgrade	-	75	-
Mount William Road Reconstruction	-	2,000	-
Footpath-Ararat Retirement Village & Sports Precinct	-	12	23
Other Minor Grants (under \$30,000)	-	3	9
	<b>1,490</b>	<b>3,394</b>	<b>2,137</b>

#### Note

It is important to note the following:

- 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 deficit of \$0.912 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 ten months ended 30 April 2026 Council has incurred \$10.648 million in employee costs. These costs include several grant-funded positions not budgeted for, and organisation restructure costs. Council has also incurred capitalised salary costs of \$0.669 million, which are included in capital works reporting rather than the income statement, as they are treated as part of the cost of creating or improving Council assets.

**Materials and Services** account for approximately 36.94% of the total budgeted expenditure for 2025/26. For the ten months ended 30 April 2026, Council has incurred \$10.029 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 30 April 2026. Comparative figures have been provided as at 30 June 2025.

Council's current assets have increased by \$0.959 million from \$17.978 million as at 30 June 2025 to \$18.937 million as at 30 April 2026. Cash and cash equivalents have decreased by \$0.594 million from \$14.841 million to \$14.247 million. Trade and other receivables have increased by \$1.492 million from \$3.066 million as at 30 June 2025 to \$4.558 million as at 30 April 2026.

Total liabilities have increased from \$16.464 million in 2024/25 to \$17.131 million in 2025/26. Trade and other payables have decreased by \$0.364 million and trust funds and deposits have increased by \$0.123 million. Unearned income/revenue increased by \$1.436 million, which includes grants received by Council, where in accordance with accounting standards, they are held as a liability until grant-related performance obligations have been met.

### **Statement of Cash Flows (Attachment 3)**

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

The Cash and Cash Equivalents at the beginning of the financial year of \$14.841 million have decreased by \$0.594 million to \$14.247 million as at 30 April 2026.

Net cash of \$9.714 million was provided by operating activities, \$9.696 million was used in investing activities, and \$0.612 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	30/04/2026
<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%	123%
<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%	0.00%
<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%	8.25%
<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%	66.48%
<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	\$4,094

Indicator	30/6/2025	30/04/2026
<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	\$2,032
<p><b>Indicator - Percentage of total rates collected</b>                      The internal audit conducted in 2019 on Rates Revenue and Rate Debtor Management found no routine or regular reporting of large and long outstanding rates debtors.                      The outstanding Rates Debtors is reported in the Annual Financial report.                      As at 30 April 2026 the outstanding Rates Debtors totalled \$4.057 million compared to \$2.466 million as at 30 June 2025, an increase of \$1.591 million. In percentage terms 80.4% of the rates raised have been collected at 30 April 2026 compared to 77.7% up to 30 April 2025.                       Outstanding rates are currently charged 10% interest.                      Council issues approximately 7,900 rate notices. In 2025/26 there are 2,495 assessments paying by instalments compared with 2,158 assessments in 2024/25.</p>	87.8%	80.4%
<p><b>Indicator - Asset Renewal &amp; Upgrade</b>  <i>Measure - Asset renewal &amp; Upgrade compared to depreciation</i>                      Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework - 40% to 130%                      Assessment of whether council assets are being renewed or upgraded as planned. It compares the rate of spending on existing assets through renewing, restoring, replacing or upgrading existing assets with depreciation. Ratios higher than 1.0 indicate there is a lesser risk of insufficient spending on Council's asset base.</p>	100.75%	85.50%

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 30 April 2026 be received and adopted.**

**ATTACHMENTS**

Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Financial Performance Indicators are provided as Attachment 3.7

## SECTION 4 - INFORMATION REPORTS

### 4.1 COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO'S OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 28972

#### **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**

Council has received the results from the 2026 Annual Community Satisfaction Survey. This survey provides insight on how the community views the performance of Council. Council's overall performance against both small rural and state-wide averages has yet again demonstrated consistency across the board.

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

#### **DISCUSSION**

The Victorian Government coordinates the annual Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey (CSS). The survey gathers community feedback on council performance across five key service areas and is conducted on behalf of participating councils. In 2026, the survey was undertaken by the independent research organisation JWS Research. The survey was based on interviews with 400 randomly selected households conducted between 2 February and 15 March 2026.

The 2026 survey results were provided on Friday, 24 April 2026. Overall, the results indicate that Council continues to perform well in meeting community expectations. Compared with both similar small rural councils and the state-wide average, Ararat Rural City Council has maintained a strong performance. At the same time, the results highlight that there remains room for improvement across a number of service areas. While several areas are performing strongly, continued focus on service quality and responsiveness will be important over the next 12 months. It is also important to recognise that measuring service performance in a public sector context involves broader social, economic and political considerations than in the private sector.

The 2026 survey recorded a number of Council service areas with satisfaction scores above 70. These included Customer Service (72), Arts Centres and Libraries (77), Emergency and Disaster Management (74), Recreation Facilities (74), Waste Management (72), and the Appearance of Public Areas (73).

The table below shows the spread of services areas that had improved, the same or decreased levels of customer satisfaction from the 2025 Survey.











Changes in satisfaction ranking	Number
Improved on 2025 results	9
Stayed the same	5
Decreased on 2025 results	8

The table below demonstrates Council's sustained performance against like Council and the state average for 2025 and 2026

ARCC performance	2026		2025	
	Small Rural	State-wide	Small Rural	State-wide
Better than	15	22	21	22
Same as	5	0	0	0
Worse than	2	0	1	0

In a number of cases, Ararat Rural City Council rankings were around ten points higher than state and small rural averages. Examples are: Sealed local roads, Planning and Building Permits, Unsealed Road, and value for money

The tables below show results in key measured areas.

Services	Ararat 2026	Ararat 2025	Small Rural 2026	Overall 2026
 Overall performance	64	64	60	57
 Value for money	57	57	52	49
 Overall council direction	52	55	52	48
 Customer service	72	73	70	69
 Art centres & libraries	77	75	77	76
 Emergency & disaster mngt	74	75	70	68
 Recreational facilities	74	72	69	71
 Appearance of public areas	73	71	73	71
 Waste management	72	73	71	69
 Community & cultural	69	66	70	67

Services	Ararat 2026	Ararat 2025	Small Rural 2026	Overall 2026
 Elderly support services	67	67	67	62
 Bus/community dev./tourism	66	63	60	59
 Environmental sustainability	63	64	60	60
 Informing the community	61	61	62	60
 Lobbying	60	60	57	54
 Community decisions	60	59	56	52
 Local streets & footpaths	58	59	56	54
 Consultation & engagement	57	59	57	53
 Sealed local roads	57	56	48	46
 Planning & building permits	56	51	47	46
 Slashing & weed control	49	53	47	45
 Unsealed roads	49	48	46	40

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

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

This report links for the following Council Plan objectives:

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

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

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

#### **Budget Implications**

There are no budget implications

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

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

***Sustainability Implications***

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

***Risk Assessment***

Nil

***Innovation and Continuous Improvement***

Careful analysis of the full 2026 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey Report will provide significant data to base further continuous improvement activity in each service area.

***Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement***

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

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That:**

- 1. That Council receive the Community Satisfaction Survey 2026 results**

**ATTACHMENTS**

The final Community Satisfaction Survey 2026 is provided as 4.1

#### 4.2 ARARAT FITNESS CENTRE - INDOOR POOL OPERATIONS, TEMPERATURE MANAGEMENT AND UTILITY COST MONITORING

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 28973

##### **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**

This report provides an overview of the operational management of the indoor aquatic facilities at the Ararat Rural City Council's Ararat Fitness Centre, including pool temperature management, pool hall heating practices, patron usage considerations, and recent measures introduced to improve operational efficiency and reduce utility costs.

##### **DISCUSSION**

The Ararat Fitness Centre indoor aquatic facility includes:

- A 25-metre heated indoor pool;
- A spa pool; and
- A toddler pool.

The 25-metre indoor pool is a shared, multi-purpose facility that accommodates a broad range of users and activities simultaneously, including:

- Learn-to-swim programs
- Lap swimming
- Aqua aerobics classes; and
- Hydrotherapy activities.

As the pool services multiple user groups with differing requirements, water temperatures are maintained within a balanced operating range of 29-30°C.

##### **Pool Temperature Management**

Aquatic industry guidelines generally recommend that shared indoor pools used for both learn-to-swim activities and lap swimming operate within a temperature range of 28-30°C. This range provides an appropriate balance between comfort for learn-to-swim participants and safe operating conditions for patrons undertaking continuous exercise such as lap swimming.

Dedicated hydrotherapy or specialist learn-to-swim pools are often maintained at warmer temperatures, generally between 31-33°C. However, these facilities are typically purpose-built program pools and not shared 25-metre community pools such as the facility operated at the Ararat Fitness Centre.

It is important to note that the Ararat Fitness Centre is a community aquatic and recreation facility and not a dedicated medical or hydrotherapy facility. While the Centre welcomes and supports patrons undertaking hydrotherapy activities, operational decisions must ensure the facility remains suitable and accessible for the broader community.

##### **Pool Temperature Monitoring**

Pool temperatures are monitored regularly throughout each day to ensure they remain within the target operating range.

Temperature records indicate:

- Since February 2026, the indoor pool temperature has consistently remained between 29-30°C, with daily averages ranging from 29.3°C to 29.9°C.
- Data recordings from April 2025 to February 2026 show daily average temperatures ranging from 29.0°C to 30.4°C.

The adjustment toward maintaining temperatures more consistently within the 29-30°C range was implemented to better balance the needs of all facility users.

Feedback received previously from regular lap swimmers indicated that the pool temperature was often too warm for sustained exercise. Industry guidance suggests that ideal lap swimming temperatures are generally between 24-27°C; however, patrons acknowledged the need for compromise given the shared nature of the facility.

The Centre currently records an average of nine lap swimmers each weekday morning from 6:00 am, with additional lap swimming participation occurring consistently throughout the day.

### **Pool Hall Heating Management**

In addition to water temperature management, the Centre also monitors the temperature of the indoor pool hall environment.

The target operating range for the pool hall is generally maintained between 24-26°C, particularly during Learn-to-swim sessions and Aqua aerobics classes. This range aims to provide a comfortable environment for all pool users, spectators and employees, particularly lifeguards.

Council has a duty of care to provide a safe working environment for employees. Excessive pool hall temperatures can increase the risk of heat-related illness and fatigue for lifeguards. Should a lifeguard become unwell while on duty, aquatic operations would be disrupted, with patrons asked to exit the pool until replacement staff can be secured.

### **Operational Changes Implemented**

Several minor operational adjustments have recently been introduced to improve efficiency and reduce unnecessary utility consumption.

Prior to January 2026, it is understood that the pool hall heater was commonly left operating continuously, including overnight periods when the facility was closed. While this practice ensured warmer conditions for 6:00 am patrons, it also resulted in extended heating periods when no patrons or staff were present.

Current operational practices now include:

- Turning off the pool hall heater when the facility closes; and
- Having the opening lifeguard activate the heater at approximately 5:30 am prior to opening.

This approach allows the overnight chill to be removed before patrons arrive, while also reducing unnecessary overnight energy consumption.

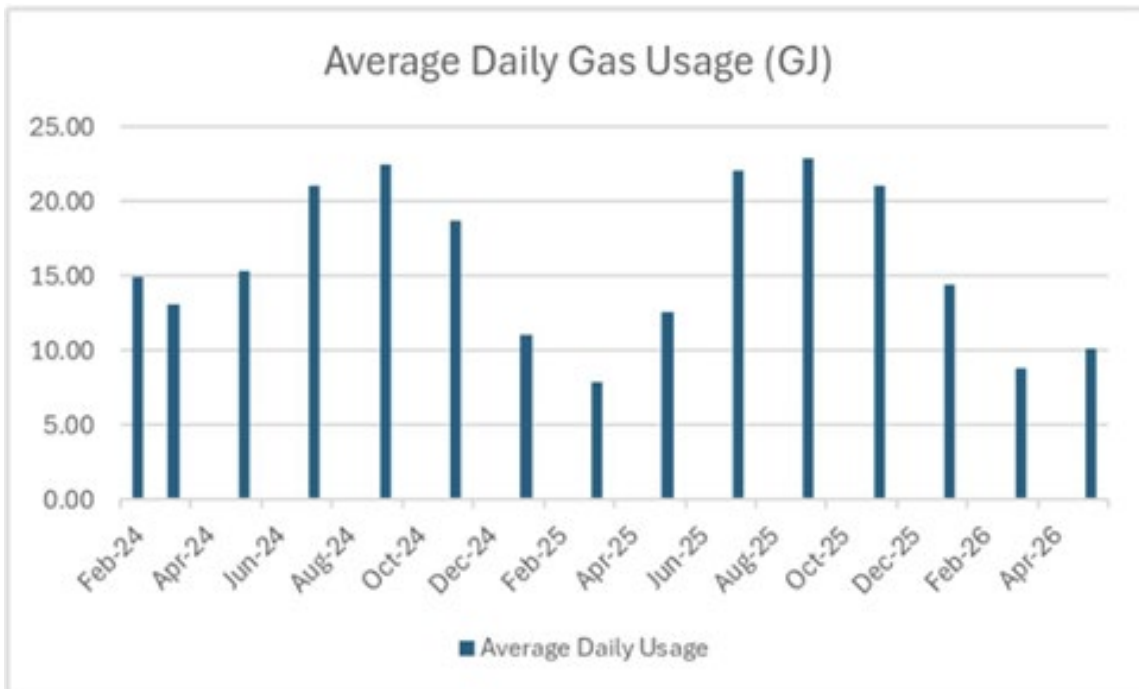
### **Utility Cost Management**

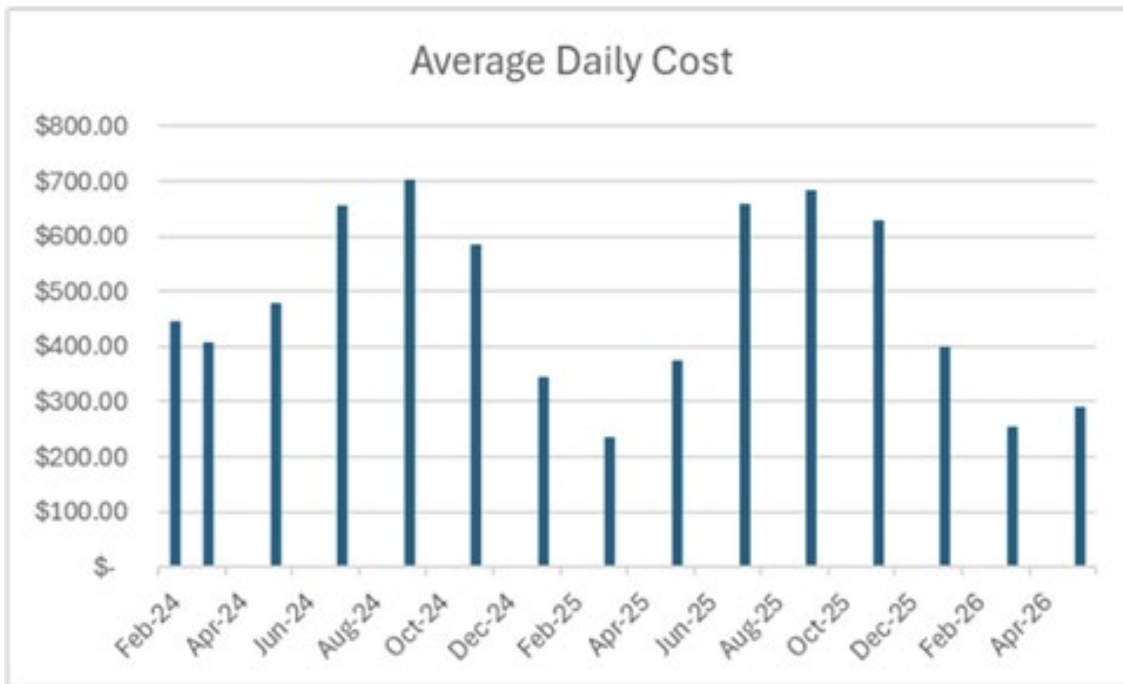
The operational changes introduced form part of broader efforts to better manage the Fitness Centre operating budget.

For the current financial year, the utility budget for the Ararat Fitness Centre was set at \$180,000. As at the beginning of January 2026, gas utility expenditure had already reached \$115,105. While relatively small changes to pool and air temperature management may appear minor operationally, early indications suggest they are contributing to measurable reductions in gas consumption.

**Gas Usage and Cost Comparison**

Bill Date	Usage Amount(GJ)	Days	Cost	Average Daily Usage	Average Daily Cost
Feb-24	1047.55782	70	\$ 31,283.50	14.97	\$ 446.91
Mar-24	797.58845	61	\$ 24,929.66	13.08	\$ 408.68
May-24	918.11748	60	\$ 28,696.96	15.30	\$ 478.28
Jul-24	1260.35718	60	\$ 39,394.10	21.01	\$ 656.57
Sep-24	1284.00017	57	\$ 40,133.09	22.53	\$ 704.09
Nov-24	1067.95646	57	\$ 33,380.37	18.74	\$ 585.62
Jan-25	829.75689	75	\$ 25,827.60	11.06	\$ 344.37
Mar-25	442.17397	56	\$ 13,206.76	7.90	\$ 235.84
May-25	791.31143	63	\$ 23,634.73	12.56	\$ 375.15
Jul-25	1279.3594	58	\$ 38,211.65	22.06	\$ 658.82
Sep-25	1259.51475	55	\$ 37,618.93	22.90	\$ 683.98
Nov-25	1303.37223	62	\$ 38,928.86	21.02	\$ 627.88
Jan-26	996.31491	69	\$ 27,601.38	14.44	\$ 400.02
Mar-26	504.67508	57	\$ 14,525.31	8.85	\$ 254.83
May-26	645.77877	64	\$ 18,586.90	10.09	\$ 290.42
<b>Total</b>	<b>14427.83499</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>\$ 435,959.80</b>		





### Early Savings Indicators

As the operational changes were implemented in March 2026, only one comparable billing cycle is currently available for assessment.

Comparison between May 2025 and May 2026 billing periods indicates:

- A reduction in average daily gas usage of approximately 2.47 GJ per day; and
- A reduction in average daily gas costs of approximately \$84.73 per day.

Across the 64-day May 2026 billing cycle, this represents an estimated saving of approximately \$5047.83 when compared with the equivalent period in the previous year.

While additional data over a longer period will be required to fully assess annual savings, the early indicators are positive.

### Ongoing Monitoring

The Fitness Centre will continue monitoring the impact of these operational adjustments on:

- Electricity consumption;
- Gas consumption; and
- Chlorine usage.

It is noted that higher pool water temperatures generally result in increased chlorine consumption, creating additional operational costs.

### Conclusion

The Ararat Fitness Centre remains committed to providing a safe, accessible and enjoyable aquatic facility for the entire Ararat Rural City Council community.

The operational changes implemented to pool and pool hall temperature management have been undertaken to:

- Balance the needs of all user groups;
- Maintain safe operating conditions for both patrons and employees;
- Improve operational efficiency; and
- Reduce utility expenditure where possible.

We are committed to continue to monitor patron feedback, facility conditions and operational costs to ensure the aquatic facility remains sustainable and responsive to community needs.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### *Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives*

#### **4. DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING KEY ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE**

We will ensure that we plan, fund and develop new infrastructure in ways that deliver strong public value. Existing infrastructure will be managed, renewed, and maintained to ensure that it continues to serve identified public needs.

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

**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.

#### **5. ENHANCING COMMUNITY LIFE**

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

### ***Budget Implications***

Early results show the recent operational changes are reducing gas consumption and delivering initial savings which supports improved management of the Ararat Fitness Centre's utility budget. Ongoing tracking of electricity, gas, and chlorine usage will confirm longer-term impacts.

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

Aquatic Industry Guidelines  
The Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations (GSPO)

### ***Sustainability Implications***

The changes improve environmental sustainability by reducing heating energy use and emissions through tighter temperature control, while also lowering utility costs to support long-term financial viability. They maintain safe, comfortable conditions for staff and patrons, strengthening overall community access.

### ***Risk Assessment***

Key risks include temperature mismanagement, increased chemical demand, staff heat-stress, community dissatisfaction, and a financial risk that energy savings may not continue across seasons. These risks are mitigated through ongoing monitoring, daily temperature logging and responsive operational adjustments.

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

This report has been prompted by input from stakeholders and observations of an emerging trend in the consumers raising concerns around pool temperature.

## RECOMMENDATION

**That:**

- 1. Council receive the Ararat Fitness Centre - Indoor Pool Operations, Temperature Management and Utility Cost Monitoring Report**

## ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

### 4.3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM 26-27 - APRIL 2026

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO'S OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 28974

**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

Community Engagement Program 2025/26 is a series of quarterly engagement outreach activities that aims to provide community with opportunities to ask questions, raise concerns and meet with Councillors and key staff at the Council. This monthly report provides a regular update to issues raised or upcoming plans for engagement activities.

#### 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.

The March 2026 round of engagement sessions was delivered between 23 to 27 March 2026 in Ararat, Buangor, Elmhurst, Lake Bolac, Moyston, Pomonal, Tatyoon and Willaura, with a focus on the Draft Budget 2026/27. 27 people attended the engagement sessions and 42 non-budget issues were raised or discussed, and the progress of these are in the table below. The report for the Budget 2026/27 contains the budget related matters raised during the engagement session.

The next community engagement sessions will occur between 22 to 26 June 2026 in the following towns, as indicated in the Community Engagement Program 2025/26 document adopted in November 2025: Ararat, Lake Bolac, Moyston, Pomonal, Streatham, Warrak, Wickliffe, Willaura.

Table 1. Non-budget issues raised and their progress to date.

#	Issues Raised	Progress as of 14 May 2026
	<b>Ararat</b>	
1	Query about what's happening with the glass house at Alexandra Gardens, Ararat	Rotary, in conjunction with Council, have completed the EOI process for the removal of the orchid glass house and are waiting for the remover to take the structure.
2	Asked if a native plant or two could be planted in the garden beds near the glass house mentioned above.	The Alexandra Gardens have a dedicated area for natives between the old fernery and Alexandra Oval.
3	Asked if the slope on the lake side of the cafe in Alexandra Gardens can be improved.	Suggestion has been reviewed. The existing path follows the existing fall of the land. Changing the slope would require a significant redesign of the area and considerable cost, making this financially unfeasible.
4	Query regarding whether Council has a building inspector for pools, and if not, whether we could get one.	Council currently does not have a building inspector for pools, but is open to having one in the future.
	<b>Buangor</b>	No issues raised
	<b>Elmhurst</b>	

5	There is a dip in the road at Hillarys Road, Elmhurst, near the intersection with Pyrenees Highway, can this be filled in and levelled?	As this is in an area adjoining the Pyrenees Highway, Council will need to engage with VicRoads on any works and therefore is unable to be actioned immediately. This request will be considered as part of future capital works planning and budgeting.
6	Boundary Road, Elmhurst, between the intersections with Glenpatrick Road and Pyrenees Highway also needs some maintenance work	Same as above, this request will be considered as part of future capital works planning and budgeting.
7	Asked for clarity on what can and cannot be taken to the Elmhurst Transfer Station when it opens, and if this can be mailed to all of the residents.	Information has been provided on what can be disposed of at the Elmhurst Transfer Station via poster/fliers, social media, etc. Unfortunately this information cannot be sent by mail to all residents in Elmhurst due to the cost per letter. Public notification of the opening dates commenced on 15 April 2026.
8	Feedback was received that garbage truck drivers were doing u-turns in a couple of resident's driveways.	Feedback has been passed on to the waste team to not use driveways for u-turns.
9	The community wanted to say that the Council staff member who does the mowing in Elmhurst does a great job.	The positive feedback has been noted and passed on to the staff member.
10	Dust suppression on Boundary Lane and Darbyshires Road was requested, the latter is used by a lot of farm machinery and trucks	Dust suppression methods have a short lifespan. Other options, such as OTTA seals, will be considered based on traffic count and other data. This request will be considered as part of future capital works planning and budgeting.
11	Query was raised around whether signs can be installed onto heritage buildings.	Council has liaised directly with the member of the community on their query.
	<b>Lake Bolac</b>	
12	Positive feedback was received that Council were doing a great job.	Feedback noted with thanks.
13	Query was received on the status of the Lake Bolac Walking Track project.	A significant part of this project is in areas that Council does not own or manage. The sections that are in areas that Council has oversight have not been funded in the 2026/27 Budget, however will be considered as part of future capital works planning and budgeting
	<b>Moyston</b>	
14	Request for bin surrounds at the Recreation Reserve	This request has had an initial investigation. There are a number of bins on site. The optimal location for a permanent bin surround structure needs to be determined. This request will be considered as part of future capital works planning and budgeting.
15	Queries regarding the Fire Prevention Notices and how this process worked.	Queries were resolved at the engagement session, no further action required.
16	There was discussion around a future restoration works on the rotunda	For noting, no further action at this stage.
17	Queries regarding upgrades to the netball courts in Moyston and new change rooms	Funding from the Local Sports Infrastructure Fund was announced recently to upgrade the netball/tennis courts and begin planning for new changerooms close to the courts.

18	There was a general discussion around the rabbit pest problem and measures being trialled in the area.	For noting, no further action required.
	<b>Pomonal</b>	
19	Request for walking/bike riding track from Pomonal Hall to Pomonal Estate	This will be considered as part of future capital works planning and budgeting
20	There were queries regarding disposing of large volumes of greenwaste	These queries will be considered as part of a review of the rural skip bin service later this year.
21	Community asked for the opening times and dates for the rural skip bins in Moyston and for these to be communicated to the community.	The Moyston Transfer Station will be open on Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup> and 23 <sup>rd</sup> May from 10am to 1pm. Promotion of these dates began on 15 April.
22	Pomonal community requested to have their own rural skip bin.	This request will be considered as part of a review of the rural skip bin service later this year.
23	Request for clean-up of the burn scar on Tunnel Road, Pomonal	Service request lodged to investigate and action, as appropriate
24	The tunnel track loop walking track is getting washed away when it rains	Maintenance schedule will be reviewed with consideration for increasing with rain frequency.
25	Wattles need cleaning up on the edge of bitumen on Waterhole Road, Pomonal	This request has been actioned
26	Dead wood along Springwood Hill Road intersection requires cleaning up	Service request lodged to investigate and action, as appropriate
27	The Pomonal Newsletter asked to be notified of Council's media releases	The Pomonal Newsletter's email has been provided to the Council's media team.
28	Query about walking tracks on the roadside on Robins Road.	This will be considered as part of future capital works planning and decision making
29	There was interest in the Council's Environmental Working Group in the Pomonal community.	Sustainability Officer has visited Pomonal and met with interested community members on 25 March
30	Request for information to be received in a more timely manner	CFA will be notified directly on relevant information
31	Concerns around the speed limit on Waterhole Road was raised. This feedback was also submitted to the Road Safety Strategy consultation process.	This request will be reviewed as part of the Rural Road Strategy process.
32	Proposed idea for a school drop off point between the school and the CFA building. Letter of support may be requested	Noted, no further action until request for letter of support received.
33	Safety improvements were requested at the intersection of Tobacco Road and Ararat-Halls Gap Road. Road name sign missing.	Safety improvements to be submitted to VicRoads as the road authority for this intersection. The road name sign was replaced on 25 March 2026.
	<b>Tatyoon</b>	
34	There was positive feedback about the Mount William Road and a query around upcoming road works for the purposes of planning school bus routes.	Query was resolved during the session, no further action.
35	Query about the Significant Landscape Overlay for the Grampians National Park	Details for this overlay can be found in clause 42.03, Schedule 1 of the Ararat Planning Scheme
36	The proposed wind farm project was raised.	Topic was discussed during the engagement session. Council is not the planning authority for this proposed project. No further action.
37	The Tatyoon Pavilion project was presented as a high priority and there was a strong request for Council's support to advocate for the project.	Council officers will continue to work with the Tatyoon Community Asset Committee towards achieving this project.

38	Possible future community facilities at Maroona Recreation Reserve were flagged.	Future intentions were noted, Council will work with the Maroona Community Asset Committee as these plans take shape.
	<b>Willaura</b>	
39	Area around the Willaura Cenotaph is likely to need some maintenance work in the future.	Area was tidied before ANZAC Day. Future works will be considered as part of future capital works planning and budgeting.
40	Footpath between the Willaura supermarket and Police Station needs attention	This request is unable to be accommodated in this financial year and will be considered as part of future capital works planning and budgeting.
41	Request for a new ramp for wheelchair/scooter access from the road to the footpath outside the Willaura bank area.	This request is unable to be accommodated in this financial year and will be considered as part of future capital works planning and budgeting.
42	Could there be a pool committee to help manage the Willaura swimming pool?	A committee of Council would not normally be established for a facility that is currently managed by staff.

## 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:**

- 1. Council receives the Community Engagement Program April 2026 report**

**ATTACHMENTS**

There are no attachments relating to this item

#### 4.4 PRESTIGE MILL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT - APRIL 2026 UPDATE

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO'S OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 28975

**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

This report provides a regular 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.

#### 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

Works resumed on this project on 27 April 2026 under strict environmental and safety regulations and in accordance with WorkSafe Victoria and the Environment Protection Authority requirements.

##### Decontamination of Removed Material

Decontamination, inspection and clearing of the building rubble material that was removed from the Queen St site by certified hygienists is complete. The remaining contaminated material will be transported by a licensed transporter to the lawful place of disposal at Stawell Landfill.

Safety measures during this phase included:

- Ongoing air quality monitoring
- Dust suppression with water
- Established site exclusion zones
- Use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)

##### Crushing for Reuse

Now that the material has been cleared of asbestos contamination by the certified hygienist, the concrete building waste will be crushed to create reusable construction material. Crushing will occur over approximately 6-8 weeks, undertaken in batches as cleared material becomes available. Activities are expected 1-2 days per week between 7:00am and 6:00pm. Water will be used for dust suppression, and noise will be carefully managed in accordance with permitted working hours. All crushed material will be tested and cleared before being reused or removed from site. A licensed and qualified contractor has been appointed to undertake these works.

##### Demolition Works at Queen Street

New fencing has been erected at the Queen Street site as part of the site controls in preparation for the resumption of demolition works. Demolition works at the Queen Street site are expected to recommence in early June 2026.

### Construction of New Infrastructure

The engineering and civil design work for the roads, footpaths, kerb and channel, and utilities has been continuing in preparation for when the site is cleared and new infrastructure is able to be built.

The estimated timeframe for the construction of new enabling infrastructure is expected to commence in the second half of 2026.

## **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 - April 2026 Update**

## **ATTACHMENTS**

There are no attachments relating to this item

#### 4.5 ANNUAL PLAN 2025/26 UPDATE (APRIL 2026)

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 28976

**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	28 (+7)
In progress 51-99%	8 (-2)
In progress 0-50%	8 (-4)
Not Started	0
Ongoing	9 (-1)

Further details on each action is provided in the table below. Six (6) actions are expected to be partially completed by the end of June 2026 and will be carried forward and completed in 2026/27.

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% (to be carried forward)	Council officers are working with the Department of Transport and Planning's (DTP) Regional Planning Hub on the Ararat Planning Scheme review. An updated timeframe from the Regional Planning Hub for the completion of the Review is Oct 2026.
	1.1.2 Establish annual targets for sustainable urban growth	In progress 0-50% (to be carried forward)	This action is closely linked to action 1.1.1 and will occur concurrently.
	1.1.3 Complete the 'Unlocking Ararat North	In progress 51-99%	This project is expected to be completed in June 2026.

	East' Structure Plan project		
1.2 Support innovative housing models that work to overcome market failure and create the capacity to increase the population of Ararat Rural City.	1.2.1 Deliver enabling infrastructure for well-located homes that address critical housing gaps in central Ararat, with support from the Housing Support Program: Community Enabling Infrastructure Stream.	In progress 0-50% (to be carried forward)	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.	Complete	This action was completed at the April 2026 Council Meeting.
	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	This action was completed at the January 2026 Council Meeting.
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	Complete	Refurbishment works commenced in the April school holidays and are now complete. The Jack and Jill Kindergarten program returned to their upgraded facility on Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> May.
	1.3.2 Establish a new childcare centre in Lake Bolac	In progress 0-50% (to be carried forward)	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 supporting families to enrol into kindergarten for 2027. This action will be completed in June 2026 while the Initiative will continue until June 2027.
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	This action was completed at the October 2025 Council Meeting.
	2.1.3 Continue to support the delivery of TAFE courses at the Ararat Jobs and Technology Precinct	Complete	Supporting the delivery of the Cert 3 in Early Childhood Education and Care courses has now become embedded in Council's day to day operations at the Precinct, so this action is marked complete.

2.2 Work with other levels of government, local business, and private investors to develop a business park within Ararat Rural City, focused on agricultural value adding and advanced manufacturing, potentially leveraging “behind the meter” power.	2.2.1 Work with Invest Victoria, Regional Development Victoria and private sector partners to develop plans for the ARCC Circular Economy Precinct.	Ongoing	Council is working with Invest Victoria, Regional Development Victoria and a number of private sector partners to make a case for a state significant circular economy hub in Ararat
	2.2.2 Continue to support Valorify P/L to develop a biogas plant in Ararat which uses straw as the major input.	Ongoing	Council continues to strongly support Valorify P/L.
	2.2.3 Seek funding from the Victorian Government’s \$10 million fund to unlock industrial trunk infrastructure to accelerate new industrial developments	Complete	This action was completed at the March 2026 Council Meeting.
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% (to be carried forward)	Engagement with key stakeholders on the feasibility study 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 51-99%	Council staff are liaising with Grampians Wimmera Mallee Tourism to develop concepts and ideas for an annual fine wine and food event. This action is expected to be completed by June 2026.
	2.3.3 Work with operators and Grampians Wimmera Mallee Tourism to deliver 4 star and above accommodation	Complete	The quality of accommodation and tourism offerings in Ararat Rural City has significantly improved. Highlights include Mount William Station which won Gold at the 2025 Victorian Tourism Awards in the "5 Star Luxury Accommodation" category. More high quality accommodation options are in the pipeline. This action is marked complete.
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.	Complete	This action was completed at the April 2026 Council Meeting.
	3.1.2 Continue to support Plastoil to develop a plastics recycling facility in Ararat	Complete	This action was completed at the April 2026 Council Meeting.
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	This issue has been identified as a priority in the proposed 2026 Advocacy Priorities Council Meeting report.
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%	Installation of the new battery is expected to occur in June 2026.
	3.3.2 Deliver the Roadside Weeds and Pests Program	In progress 51-99%	The Roadside Weeds and Pest Program works are underway and expected to be completed in May 2026
	3.3.3 Explore a model for collaborating with community asset committees to use rooftop solar to increase use of renewable energy at community facilities.	Complete	This action was completed at the November 2025 Council Meeting.
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). The State and Federal Government announced on 15 May 2026 that construction is set to begin before the end of the year.
	4.1.3 Continue to advocate for a North South Heavy Vehicle Route	Ongoing	This issue has been identified as a priority in the 2026 Advocacy Priorities.
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	Complete	The final draft Strategy is presented to Council at the April Council Meeting for consideration.
	4.2.3 Deliver the Ararat Rural City Sport and Active Recreation Strategy	Complete	The final Strategy and Action Plan is presented to Council at the April Council Meeting for consideration.
4.3 Deliver infrastructure outcomes that support economic growth, are mindful of intergenerational equity and enhance community wellbeing and safety.	4.3.1 Deliver the 2025/26 Capital Works Program	In progress 51-99%	Refer to the Capital Works report.

These approaches will explore strategic use of debt to fund long-term assets and ensure Council's financial sustainability.			
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	This action was completed at the February 2026 Council Meeting.
	5.1.2 Increase participation in programs at Ararat Gallery TAMA	Complete	This action was completed at the February 2026 Council Meeting.
	5.1.3 Investigate ways to maximise scheduling of community events at the Town Hall	Complete	This action was completed at the January 2026 Council Meeting.
	5.1.4 Identify innovative ways to increase the promotion and reach of performances at the Town Hall	Complete	This action was completed at the January 2026 Council Meeting.
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 was held on 25 February with a new group of young people from across the municipality. This action will be completed in June 2026.
	5.2.2 Deliver young people's programs across schools, largely through the Crazy Ideas College	In progress 51-99%	Crazy Ideas College have commenced delivery of their Term 2 program. This action will be completed in June 2026.
	5.2.3 Work with community groups to deliver an annual Volunteer Expo	Complete	Council have promoted and supported range of community events held by other groups and organisation to recognise and celebrate volunteers across the municipality.
	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-for-profits, and Traditional Owner organisations to develop Ararat Rural City into a more inclusive, welcoming, tolerant and diverse community.	5.3.1 Develop the Disability Action Plan	In progress 51-99% (to be carried forward)	The Disability Action Plan Working Group have drafted a 'Disability Action Plan: Discussion Paper'. This contains 5 priority actions identified by the Working Group for immediate implementation, as well as discussion points to support genuine engagement and co-design of a Disability Action Plan. Public consultation and engagement on for the development of the Disability Action Plan will commence in early 2026/27.
	5.3.2 Develop the Municipal Public Health	Complete	The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-29 was adopted at the October 2025 Council Meeting.

	and Wellbeing Plan 2025-29		
	5.3.3 Hold quarterly meetings of the Child Friendly Cities and Communities Working Group	Complete	The final quarterly meeting of the Child Friendly Cities and Communities Working Group for 2025/26 was held on 20 May 2026.
	5.3.4 Deliver multicultural events	Complete	This action was completed at the March 2026 Council Meeting.
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	This action was completed at the January 2026 Council Meeting.
	6.1.2 Undertake a review of Council's insurance coverage and policies to ensure they continue to provide value for money	Complete	This action was completed at the November 2025 Council Meeting.
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	Complete	This action was completed at the April 2026 Council Meeting.
	6.2.2 Undertake the Strategic Internal Audit Program - 5 years.	Complete	This action was completed at the April 2026 Council Meeting.
	6.2.3 Develop the 2026-2030 Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP)	Complete	This action was completed at the April 2026 Council Meeting.
	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	This action was completed at the August 2025 Council Meeting.
	6.3.2 Develop a regular biannual program of face-to-face community engagement opportunities	Complete	This action was completed at the November 2025 Council Meeting.

## 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 - April 2026 report**

**ATTACHMENTS**

There are no attachments relating to this item

#### 4.6 2025/2026 CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM - APRIL 2026

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**DEPARTMENT:** CEO'S OFFICE  
**REFERENCE:** 28977

##### **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 totaling \$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 continue 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 30 April 2026, 77% of the budget is expended with committed works expected to be completed by 30 June 2026.

Mt William Road is progressing well with the final stage commencing stabilizing, and other completed stages being sealed, line marking, guard rail installations are expected to commence soon.. Buangor Ben Nevis Road Bridge Reconstruction is completed with bridge strengthening works on the bridge over Billy Billy Creek progressing well with completion towards the end of May 2026. Jack and Jill Kindergarten redevelopment has been completed on time with the kinder moving furniture and equipment back in the week commencing 11 May 26. The Pony Club arena construction is nearing

completion with lighting and drainage works to be finalized in the coming months. The OTTA seal on Jacksons Creek Road is complete with prep works being undertaken on the other roads. Road construction works have commenced on the first stage of Buangor Ben Nevis Road at the Warrak end of the project.

**Mt William Road**





**Buangor Ben Nevis Road**





**Jack and Jill Kindergarten**





**Ararat Pony Club Arena**



**Buangor Ben Nevis Road Bridge - Over Mt Cole Creek**



**IP43 Construction - Raised Crossings**



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							
<b>Mininera Recreation Reserve Toilet Upgrade</b>							\$173,471	\$173,471		Toilets have been installed onsite and only require connection to the septic.
<b>Tatyoan Oval Upgrade</b>							\$11,393	\$11,393		Works are completed with some final issues to be rectified before final completion is issued
<b>Video Cameras/Security - Ararat Skate Park</b>							\$6,421	\$6,421		These have been installed.
<b>Video Camera/Security - Ararat Fitness Centre</b>							\$13,203	\$13,203		These have been installed.
<b>Lake Bolac Club Rooms - Roof Upgrade</b>						\$23,400		\$23,400		Works to be completed by 30 June 26
<b>Alexandra Oval - Hot Water Service Replacements</b>							\$22,854	\$22,854		Works have been completed
<b>Former Cobb &amp; Co Staging Stables</b> <i>(Disaster Recovery Heritage Program)</i>	<b>\$60,000</b>	\$60,000			\$1,237		\$29,134	\$30,371	50%	Ararat Maintenance Plumbing has completed works on this project & and acquitted. A variation
<b>Ararat Pony Club - Covered Sports Area</b> <i>(Play our Way Program)</i>	<b>\$1,490,000</b>	\$1,490,000			\$14,270	\$108,360	\$1,216,682	\$1,339,313	89%	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	\$50,122	\$24,770	\$76,064	68%	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		\$129,726	\$130,029	21%	Works have commenced on-site with demolition and electrical works complete, new slabs are being laid.
<b>Jack and Jill Kindergarten Redevelopment</b> <i>(Building Blocks improvement grants program)</i>	<b>\$745,000</b>	\$745,000			\$26,000	\$303,371	\$319,345	\$648,716	86%	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 have commenced, and tracking well.
<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 from Tennis Australia)	\$20,000	NA	\$328,095	\$131,755	\$459,850	65%	Tenders for Civil, Lighting and Fencing have been awarded under Council Delegation. Civil works are expected to commence on 7 April 2026 by SHS Civil.
<b>Gordon Street Cricket Nets Upgrade</b> <i>(Australian Cricket Infrastructure Grant)</i>	<b>\$39,985</b>	\$15,000	\$24,985		NA		\$35,301	\$35,301	88%	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>\$813,348</b>	<b>\$2,166,604</b>	<b>\$3,022,934</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>		\$208,395	80%	Replacement of 4 x Utilities and 2 x SUV
Major Plant Purchases	<b>\$260,000</b>		\$113,000		New reach mower
Fixtures, Fittings & Furniture	<b>\$100,000</b>	\$61,128	\$15,990		Town Hall - New Speaker IT Capital - Core Switch and WiFi Replacement
Book stock - Library Book Replacement	<b>\$40,000</b>		\$41,268	103%	
<b>TOTAL - PLANT &amp; EQUIPMENT</b>		<b>\$61,128</b>	<b>\$378,653</b>	<b>66%</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	\$1,014,915	\$478,685	\$1,493,601	<b>99%</b>	\$1.5m budget reallocated from other line items. Additional OTTA Seal works include: - Tatyoon North Road - Logan Road - Jacksons Creek Road (complete)
<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	\$738,825	\$49,552	\$788,377	78%	Works Allocated for: - Alexandra Avenue (in conjunction with SLRSP Funding) - Coral & McNeil Street (Early June Commencement) - 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		\$65,131	\$334,723		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	\$7,388	\$316,250		Bridge Strengthening has been awarded West Pacific Group and is to commence 20 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		\$2,955,976	\$3,173,558	51%	The first stages of road have been completed and are sealed with linemarking and guide posts to be completed. The final 800m of stabilizing will be complete mid May with final dressing of road to be completed.
<b>Webb Street Reconstruction</b> <i>(Roads to Recovery 24/25)</i>	<b>\$400,000</b>		\$400,000	\$13,822		\$152,093	\$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.

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS	Budget	Funding Amount	Council Contribution	Previous Years Expenditure	Committed Expenditure (25/26)	Expended 25/26	Overall Total	%	Notes
<b>Ararat Active Bike Network</b> <i>(Active Transport Fund)</i>	<b>\$399,000</b>	\$266,000	\$133,000	\$13,525	\$175,202	\$17,275	\$206,002	52%	Tenders have been awarded for linemarking, and shoulder sealing under the CEO's delegation. Works to commence on shoulders 20 April 26.
<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	\$60,727.25	\$1,064,110	\$1,199,560	92%	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>McCrows Road Bridge</b> <i>(Roads to Recovery - 24/25)</i>	<b>\$350,000</b>		\$350,000	\$17,738	\$79,756	\$319,219	\$416,714		Works awarded to Waratah Constructions - work to commence early April 26. Additional cost to be paid from savings on Webb St Roads to Recovery costs.
<b>Major Patching</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>		\$100,000			\$115,930	\$115,930	115%	
<b>Bridges</b>	<b>\$0</b>					\$1,114	\$1,114		Transferred to Gravel Road Sheeting, Widening & Alternative Sealing
<b>Footpath Renewal Program</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>		\$400,000			\$321,275	\$321,275		All projects complete for 25/26 Financial Year
<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		\$48,621	\$11,810	\$60,431	71%	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>					\$37,164	\$37,164		Savings from Gravel to Seal and Footpath Construction line items to pay for septic units at Buangor and Mininera

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS	Budget	Funding Amount	Council Contribution	Previous Years Expenditure	Committed Expenditure (25/26)	Expended 25/26	Overall Total	%	Notes
<b>Mininera Recreation Reserve - Septic Upgrade</b>			\$206,000		\$89,000	\$125,460	\$214,460		Works to be undertaken by Alford Drainage. Money from Building Reserve
<b>Buangor Recreation Reserve - Septic Upgrade</b>			\$201,000		\$84,000	\$121,450	\$205,450		Works to be undertaken by Alford Drainage, commencing week of 23 February 2026. Money from Building Reserve
<b>Kerb and Channel</b>	\$0					\$105,923	\$105,923		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>	\$80,339	\$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>	\$19,009	\$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>	\$7,380,000	\$7,380,000		\$152,580	\$442,700	\$518,217	\$1,113,498	15%	<i>Planning Permit application has been approved.</i>

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS	Budget	Funding Amount	Council Contribution	Previous Years Expenditure	Committed Expenditure (25/26)	Expended 25/26	Overall Total	%	Notes
<b>SAFE LOCAL ROADS AND STREETS PROGRAM</b>									
View Point, Tobin & Taylor St Intersections	\$224,000	\$224,000		\$581		\$11,281	\$11,862	5%	<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		\$19,584	\$20,184	12%	<i>The detailed design for this project is complete, and procurement commencing in February 2026.</i>
King Street - Raised Crossing	<b>\$110,000</b>	\$110,000		\$4,702	\$41,000	\$14,825	\$60,527	54%	<i>Tenders have been awarded to SHS Civil. Works to be undertaken outside of school term.</i>
View Point & High St Intersection	<b>\$117,000</b>	\$117,000		\$1,526		\$99,451	\$100,977	68%	<i>SHS Civil have completed these works..</i>
Moore & Princes Street Intersection	<b>\$131,000</b>	\$131,000		\$145		\$13,584	\$13,729	9%	<i>The detailed design for this project is complete, and procurement will commence in February 2026.</i>
Vincent Street & Alexandra Avenue - Raised Crossing	<b>\$321,000</b>	\$321,000		\$239		\$21,926	\$22,165	6%	<i>The detailed design for this project has been received; some alterations are being requested to make the works more amenable to the location.</i>
Queen & Moore Street Roundabout	<b>\$548,000</b>	\$548,000		\$1,531		\$20,530	\$22,061	4%	<i>The detailed design for this project is complete, and the lighting design is being finalised.</i>

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS	Budget	Funding Amount	Council Contribution	Previous Years Expenditure	Committed Expenditure (25/26)	Expended 25/26	Overall Total	%	Notes
<b>SAFE SYSTEM PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM (23/24)</b>									
Barkly Street Raised Crossing	<b>\$312,232</b>	\$312,232		\$398		\$189,058	\$319,220	102%	<i>Both Projects have been completed.</i>
High Street Raised Crossing						\$129,764			
<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>\$3,766,608</b>	<b>\$7,068,898</b>	<b>\$11,668,392</b>		

FUNDED PROJECTS - MISCELLANEOUS (NOT CAPITALISED)	Budget	Funding Amount	Council Contribution	Previous Years Expenditure	Committed Expenditure (25/26)	Expended (25/26)	Overall Total	%	Notes
<b>Roadside Weeds and Pest Program 25/26</b> <i>(Funding of the same name)</i>	<b>\$74,135</b>	\$74,135		NA	\$28,000	\$51,362	\$69,362	93%	<i>This project has been awarded to Project Platypus, all funds are expected to be expended by mid May 2026.</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		\$24,904	\$37,356	67%	<i>CommunityVibe is undertaking the works associated with this project. Community engagement has been undertaken, and the draft report is currently out for final consultation.</i>
<b>Community Road Safety Action Plan</b> <i>(TAC Local Govt Funding)</i>	<b>\$49,540</b>	\$49,540		\$437		\$39,581	\$40,018	81%	<i>DWB Engineering is undertaking the works associated with this project. Community engagement has been completed and draft reporting is being compiled</i>

FUNDED PROJECTS - MISCELLANEOUS (NOT CAPITALISED)	Budget	Funding Amount	Council Contribution	Previous Years Expenditure	Committed Expenditure (25/26)	Expended (25/26)	Overall Total	%	Notes
<b>Unlocking Ararat North East</b> <i>(Streamlining for Growth 22/23)</i>	<b>\$85,000</b>	\$85,000		NA	\$20,335	\$38,750	\$59,085	70%	<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 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 - April 2026 report.**

## ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

**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:** 28978

#### 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 12 May 2026
Council Briefing held on 19 May 2026

#### Matters discussed at the briefing:

- Draft Budget 2026/27
- CEO Employment & Remuneration Committee
- Community Satisfaction Survey
- CBD Parking Plan
- Draft Road Safety Strategy
- Pomonal Planning issue
- Building Permits
- Sports Strategy
- Community Engagement dates
- Monthly Performance Report - April 2026
- Leisure Centre Swimming Pool
- Monthly Community Engagement Report
- Monthly Performance Report - Prestige Mill Infrastructure Project Update - April 2026
- Monthly Progress Report - Council Plan - Annual Plan
- Capital Work Program - April 2026
- Building approvals
- Planning approvals under delegation

## 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:

- 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 and decision in relation to Confidential Agenda Item 9.1 not be lifted on adoption of the motion.**