



Ararat Rural City

AGENDA

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 30 June 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 into your address bar.

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

SECTION 1 - PROCEDURAL MATTERS	3
1.1 LIVE STREAMING.....	3
1.2 TRADITIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT/OPENING PRAYER/COUNCILLORS PLEDGE	3
1.3 APOLOGIES.....	3
1.4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES	3
1.5 DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST	4
SECTION 2 - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.....	5
2.1 PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS.....	5
SECTION 3 - REPORTS REQUIRING COUNCIL DECISION	6
3.1 COUNCIL PLAN 2025-29: ANNUAL PLAN 2026/2027	6
3.2 DISABILITY ACTION PLAN: DISCUSSION PAPER.....	8
3.3 EASTERN TOWN ENTRANCE ENGAGEMENT REPORT.....	10
3.4 RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY AND FRAMEWORK.....	13
3.5 PROCUREMENT STRATEGY.....	16
3.6 MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN 2026-2029	18
3.7 MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORT	21
3.8 YEAR 2026 GENERAL VALUATION	27
3.9 ROAD NAMING - MCADIE LANE.....	30
3.10 ROAD NAMING PROPOSAL - OAK LANE.....	32
SECTION 4 - INFORMATION REPORTS.....	34
4.1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM 25-26 - MAY 2026	34
4.2 PRESTIGE MILL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT - MAY 2026 UPDATE.....	36
4.3 ANNUAL PLAN 2025/26 UPDATE (MAY 2026)	38
4.4 2025/2026 CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM - MAY 2026	45
SECTION 5 - COMMITTEE MINUTES/REPORTS.....	56
5.1 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING	56
SECTION 6 - INFORMAL MEETINGS.....	58
6.1 COUNCIL BRIEFINGS	58
SECTION 7 - NOTICES OF MOTION	60

SECTION 8 - URGENT BUSINESS	61
SECTION 9 - CLOSE SESSION (CONFIDENTIAL)	62
CLOSURE OF COUNCIL MEETING TO THE PUBLIC	62
OPEN COUNCIL MEETING RECOMMENCEMENT	62
LIFTING OF CONFIDENTIALITY OF CLOSED SESSION RESOLUTIONS	62

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 26 May 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 COUNCIL PLAN 2025-29: ANNUAL PLAN 2026/2027

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 29671

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

Each financial year Council produces an Annual Plan which provides a series of actions aimed at operationalising the Council's strategic intent. The Annual Plan 2026/2027 covers the second year of the Council Plan 2025-29, and references other Council plans and strategies where the action contributes to or aligns with other strategic documents.

DISCUSSION

Section 90 of the Local Government Act 2020 requires that Council adopts a Council Plan that outlines its strategic direction, objectives, and measures of performance for at least the following four years. In addition to adopting the Council Plan 2025-2029, each year Council produces an Annual Plan for the financial year which outlines the actions to be taken each year to implement Council's strategy. It is essentially the plan to operationalise Council's strategic direction.

The Annual Plan 2026/2027 represents the second year of delivering the strategic intent of the Council Plan 2025-2029. It is focused on delivering lasting value, underpinned by a clear commitment to innovation, sustainability, and growth. This Plan sets out 54 targeted actions aligned to the objectives under each of the six strategic directions of the Council Plan. These are provided below:

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

Other key strategic Council documents are referenced in this Annual Plan where those actions align or contribute to those plans and strategies. These include the Asset Plan 2025-34, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-29, Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2024-34, and the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2026-36: Action Plan.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

The Annual Plan 2026/27 aligns with all strategic objectives of the Council Plan 2025-29

Budget Implications

Adoption of the Annual Plan 2026/27 does not have any additional budget implications. All actions in the Annual Plan have been budgeted in the 2026/27 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

The Council Plan 2025-2029 was adopted following deliberative engagement in line with the Council's community engagement policy. There are also a significant number of actions in the Annual Plan 2026/27 that will involve community and stakeholder engagement during delivery.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1. Council adopt the Annual Plan 2026/27**

ATTACHMENTS

The Annual Plan 2026/27 is provided as Attachment 3.1

3.2 DISABILITY ACTION PLAN: DISCUSSION PAPER

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO OFFICE
REFERENCE: 29672

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

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

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council established a Disability Action Plan Working Group in January 2026 to ensure the development of a new Disability Action Plan is designed and informed by people with lived experience of disability.

This report provides a brief progress update on the development of the Disability Action Plan, an overview of the upcoming community listening workshops and targeted engagement sessions and presents the Disability Action Plan: Discussion Paper to Council.

DISCUSSION

The Disability Action Plan Working Group was formed following an Expression of Interest process in late 2025. Its members consist of representatives from Council, community representatives with lived experience as a person with disability or carer, and representatives from the disability support workforce and from organisations with expertise in inclusive practices for people with disabilities. The members of the Working Group are very committed to delivering improvements to the lives of people living with disability, as well as all others who would benefit from improved access, clearer communication and greater self-agency.

Over five meetings, the Disability Action Plan Working Group have:

- Developed a comprehensive communication and engagement plan that considers the diversity of disability and ways to reduce barriers to participation in the engagement process.
- Provided feedback to the Ararat CBD Parking Review
- Identified immediate priorities and actions, which include a Changing Places facility in Ararat and a review of emergencies and natural disasters from a disability perspective.
- Prepared a Discussion Paper to help guide the public discourse towards meaningful and productive conversations on what actions Council could deliver within its remit to improve accessibility and inclusion outcomes.

The planned process for developing the Disability Action Plan has been significantly improved by the involvement of the Working Group and their contributions, guidance and feedback, including the preparation of the Discussion Paper and the approach to the upcoming community engagement.

From approx. late August to mid-September, a series of face-to-face community listening workshops will be held. Exact dates will be promoted once venue bookings are confirmed. There will be a mix of general sessions and targeted sessions, to help ensure Council captures a diverse range of views and perspectives. There will be sessions held in Ararat and in towns across the municipality to understand experiences in rural areas. One-on-one and phone/online sessions will also be available, as well as a survey that can be completed online via Engage Ararat or on paper.

Promotion of the community listening workshops will be via online and print media, radio advertisements, and through promotional fliers and posters shared through service organisations and groups.

Council wishes to sincerely thank the members of the Disability Action Plan Working Group for their contributions and efforts thus far, and acknowledge their generosity of time and the valuable insights they bring to shaping this important work.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

This initiative is aligned to the Council Plan 2025-29 Objectives:

5. ENHANCING COMMUNITY LIFE

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

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

Budget Implications

The development of the Disability Action Plan is expected to be undertaken with existing Council resources and is therefore not expected to have budget implications.

Policy/Relevant Law

Disability Act 2006
Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

Sustainability Implications

There are no sustainability implications in relation to the item

Risk Assessment

The development of the Disability Action Plan ensures Council complies with the Disability Act 2006 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth). The involvement of Disability Action Plan Working Group helps to ensure that the Plan contributes to the elimination of discrimination of people with disability.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

This report outlines how Council will undertake stakeholder collaboration and community engagement in the development of the Disability Action Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1. Council receives the progress report and the Disability Action Plan: Discussion Paper; and**
- 2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to release the Discussion Paper and commence community engagement for the development of the Disability Action Plan**

ATTACHMENTS

The Disability Action Plan: Discussion Paper and the Disability Action Plan: Discussion Paper – Plain Language Summary are provided as Attachment 3.2

3.3 EASTERN TOWN ENTRANCE ENGAGEMENT REPORT

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO's OFFICE
REFERENCE: 29673

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

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

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the March 2026 Council meeting, an upgrade of the eastern entry signage to Ararat was discussed, with approval given to undertake community engagement to seek community input for signage ideas. It was acknowledged that such entrance signage has a range of benefits, for both residents and visitors, establishing a sense of pride and place. Community input and ideas for new designs were encouraged through Engage Ararat, supported by local media and online promotion. The engagement occurred between May 6 and June 4, and the feedback and suggestions from community members has been received and collated for Council review.

DISCUSSION

There was a very positive response from the community, with 37 submissions received and several visual designs also provided as possible examples of new entrance treatments.

Key suggested themes for new signage:

- Indigenous heritage
- Chinese heritage and the gold rush
- Agriculture
- Manufacturing
- Natural environment

Key suggested design considerations:

- Use of natural materials
- Use of regional materials, such as bluestone
- Rusted metals, native plantings

Some residents suggested the Pyrenees Shire's approaches, at towns such as Beaufort and Waubra were very effective - with a use of stone, metal and plants.

Students in Grade 3-4 at St Mary's Primary School took the time to make numerous suggestions, some of which are in the attached consultation report. Suggestions from residents are also included in this attachment.

Of the 37 responses submitted, 4 suggested that the existing sign is fine if it is 'just maintained' or could have some 'basic repairs.' For example, the existing sign has lights embedded in it, which do not work anymore and displays visible damage to existing Colourbond sheeting.

The question was asked by 3 respondents that if the existing east entrance signage is upgraded, what will Council do about the entrance signs on the other main roads into town, as the existing entrance sign is duplicated on some of these entrances.

Other submissions noted that the location of the existing sign opens out onto some poorly maintained private properties, so a 'nice sign' will only be partly successful in setting a scene. One respondent also suggested that the main roundabout approaching town also needed to be considered, as it is very poor.

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

Any response to an eastern entry signage upgrade or replacement will have budget implications. If the existing signage is refreshed, which would require the replacement of damaged Colourbond sheeting, electrical repairs, some painting and possibly some planting, this cost would be minimal. Design and construction of a new entrance sign could entail a range of trades and processes. This could end up costing in the range of \$35,000 - \$45,000 based on Southern Grampians Shire Council's recent Hamilton Gateway Entrance signage project, or even more depending on the scale and complexity of the signage.

The ongoing care and maintenance of any entrance signage is as critical as what is installed, so staff or contractor time, over a period of years, should be factored into a final decision.

Policy/Relevant Law

Not applicable.

Sustainability Implications

Depending on the design and implementation of the project, sustainability implications are low. Recycling and reuse of raw materials, which is supported by the engagement outcomes, such as suggested use of bluestone, rusty metals, native plants, have some potential to improve the project's sustainability outcomes. A refurbishment of the existing signage has better sustainability outcomes through extended use of the existing asset.

Risk Assessment

While no heavily negative sentiment was expressed during the community consultation period, a number of significant factors was identified that will require further consideration. These include:

- A refresh of the existing signage combined with landscaping improvements to the eastern entrance area will minimise financial risks and maintain consistency across the other town entrances, but will this achieve the desired uplift in the arrival experience into Ararat?
- The development of a new entrance sign design comes at a cost, so carries financial risks. If a small, capped budget is allowed, the new design may be underwhelming, while an unrestricted new design is likely to be very costly.
- The speed limit at the signage location is 100km/hour. At this speed, overly intricate messaging on signage (as some of the community designs suggest) may not be able to be fully appreciated by passing motorists and could become distracting for drivers travelling at 100km/hour. Town entrance signs at Beaufort, for example, are viewed at a 60km/h speed limit.
- The installation of a new entrance sign without improving the appearance of the surrounding area may result in a negligible improvement to the arrival experience.
- The Western Highway is managed by the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), so any changes to this area may require engagement and endorsement from DTP.

General landscaping improvements to the eastern entrance area may be able to be achieved in the short term, while the factors above and entrance signage design options are considered further.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Community engagement occurred using Engage Ararat, from May 6 - June 4, inclusive, supported by active social media and print media support. St Mary's Primary School, Grades 3 and 4, also submitted

numerous designs to Council, as part of the consultation process. No real negative sentiment was expressed, with most of the suggestions being positive and accompanied by design or photographic suggestions.

Council wishes to thank the community for their strong interest, ideas and submissions.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Engages with the Department of Transport and Planning and other stakeholders, as appropriate, on general landscaping improvements at the eastern entrance of Ararat; and**
- 2. Continues to review and consider the submissions received from community regarding the eastern entrance, with a further report to be presented at a future meeting.**

ATTACHMENTS

The Eastern Entrance Signage Engagement Summary Report is provided as Attachment 3.3

3.4 RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY AND FRAMEWORK

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 29674

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 Risk Management Policy and Risk Management Framework have been reviewed as part of Council's ongoing commitment to maintaining a contemporary and effective approach to risk management across the organisation. The updated documents strengthen Council's risk management practices and align with AS ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management Guidelines, the Local Government Act 2020 and Council's governance responsibilities.

The Audit and Risk Committee reviewed the updated documents and supported a recommendation that Council consider consolidating the Risk Management Policy and Risk Management Framework into a single integrated document which is being presented to Council.

The revised documents clarify risk management roles and responsibilities, strengthen governance arrangements, update risk appetite statements, improve reporting and monitoring requirements, and reinforce the integration of risk management into Council planning, service delivery and decision-making processes.

DISCUSSION

Council operates in an increasingly complex environment requiring the effective identification, assessment, treatment, monitoring and reporting of risks that may impact service delivery, strategic objectives, financial sustainability, governance obligations and community outcomes. The reviewed Risk Management Policy and Risk Management Framework provide the foundation for Council's risk management system and establish a consistent approach to managing risk across the organisation.

The Risk Management Policy establishes Council's commitment to embedding risk management into organisational culture and decision-making processes. It outlines Council's risk appetite, strategic and operational risk management arrangements and the responsibilities of Council, the Audit and Risk Committee, the Chief Executive Officer, management and staff.

The Risk Management Framework provides practical guidance for implementing the Policy. It establishes the methodology for identifying, assessing, evaluating, treating and monitoring risks across strategic, operational and project activities. The Framework also details reporting requirements, risk registers, performance measures, training requirements and responsibilities across the organisation.

Key updates include:

- Reinforcement of Council's alignment with AS ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management Guidelines.
- Updated risk appetite statements across the categories of finance, governance, service delivery, environment, reputation and occupational health and safety.
- Enhanced reporting and oversight arrangements for strategic and operational risks.
- Clarification of roles and responsibilities across Council, management, employees, volunteers, contractors and Community Asset Committees.
- Strengthened integration of risk management into planning, project management, emergency management, procurement, business continuity and service delivery processes.
- Improved guidance regarding risk assessment, risk treatment, risk appetite and monitoring activities.

During consideration of the documents, the Audit and Risk Committee suggested that Council consider combining the Policy and Framework into a single document to improve accessibility, reduce duplication and strengthen the relationship between Council's risk management principles and operational practices. Officers support this approach and hence have produced this combined Risk Policy and Framework.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

6. STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

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

Budget Implications

There are no direct budget implications resulting from the adoption of the updated Risk Management Policy and acknowledgement of the Risk Management Framework.

Implementation of risk treatment actions, training requirements and system improvements will continue to be managed through existing operational budgets and future budget processes where required.

Policy/Relevant Law

Relevant legislation, standards and documents include:

- Local Government Act 2020.
- AS ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management Guidelines.
- Council Plan 2025-2029.
- Fraud and Corruption Policy.
- Business Continuity Plan.
- Disaster Recovery Plan.

Sustainability Implications

The Risk Management Policy and Framework contribute to:

- **Social sustainability** through the protection of community safety, wellbeing and service continuity.
- **Economic sustainability** through the management of financial, operational and strategic risks that may impact Council's long-term viability.
- **Environmental sustainability** through the identification and management of environmental risks and support for sustainable decision-making.

Risk Assessment

Failure to maintain a contemporary risk management framework may result in:

- Increased exposure to strategic and operational risks.
- Reduced organisational resilience and preparedness.
- Legislative or regulatory non-compliance.
- Financial, reputational and governance impacts.
- Reduced ability to achieve Council Plan objectives.

The updated Policy and Framework support a systematic and proactive approach to managing risks and ensuring appropriate governance oversight.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

The review of the Risk Management Policy and Framework included engagement with Councillors, the Audit and Risk Committee, the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Operating Officer and Council officers. The review process supports continual improvement of Council's governance and risk management practices.

The Audit and Risk Committee has provided valuable input into the review process, including the recommendation that Council consider a future consolidated Risk Management Policy and Framework document.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1. Council adopts the Risk Management Policy and Framework June 2026.**

ATTACHMENTS

The Risk Management Policy and Framework is provided as Attachment 3.4

3.5 PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 29675

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

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

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the Procurement Strategy 2026–2031 for Council consideration. The Strategy has been developed in response to an internal audit into procurement, which identified the need for Council to establish a clearer strategic framework to guide procurement planning, decision-making, contract management, reporting and continuous improvement.

The Strategy sets out how Council will use procurement to deliver value for money, strengthen governance and probity, support local economic participation, embed social and environmental outcomes, and improve oversight across the procurement lifecycle. It aligns with Council's legislative obligations under the Local Government Act 2020, Council's Procurement Policy and broader strategic priorities including the Community Vision 2035 and Council Plan 2025–2029.

DISCUSSION

An internal audit into procurement recommended that Council develop a procurement strategy to provide a clear and coordinated direction for procurement activity. While Council's Procurement Policy establishes the mandatory requirements, thresholds, delegations and procedural controls for procurement, the Strategy provides the longer-term strategic framework for how procurement can better support community outcomes, financial sustainability, risk management and organisational accountability.

The Procurement Strategy 2026–2031 is structured around three strategic themes: social and economic prosperity; environmental leadership and circularity; and governance, innovation and value. These themes are supported by objectives, measures of success, implementation actions, a risk management framework, roles and responsibilities, and monitoring and reporting arrangements.

The Strategy will assist Council to move procurement from a largely transactional function to a more strategic and risk-based function. It will support stronger planning, more consistent contract management, improved procurement data, greater use of local and regional suppliers where appropriate, and clearer reporting on the social, environmental and financial value delivered through Council expenditure.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

6. STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

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

Budget Implications

There are no immediate budget implications arising from adoption of the Procurement Strategy.

Policy/Relevant Law

The Strategy supports Council's obligations under the Local Government Act 2020, including requirements for Council to prepare, adopt and comply with a Procurement Policy that promotes open and fair competition and provides value for money. The Strategy should be read in conjunction with Council's Procurement Policy, Fraud and Corruption Control Policy, Public Interest Disclosure Policy, Risk Management Framework and other relevant governance instruments.

Sustainability Implications

The Strategy has positive economic, social and environmental implications. It seeks to increase local supplier participation, strengthen ethical and transparent supply chains, support social value through community infrastructure, reduce emissions through fleet and plant transition, increase use of recycled and recovered materials, and embed whole-of-life value in procurement decisions.

Risk Assessment

Adoption of the Strategy will reduce procurement-related risk by providing a clearer framework for governance, probity, supplier management, contract oversight, modern slavery risk, environmental and social risk, cybersecurity considerations and supply continuity

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

The Strategy has been developed following an internal audit recommendation and has been considered by the Audit and Risk Committee. Implementation will require a whole-of-organisation approach, with key internal stakeholders including the Executive Leadership Team, procurement function, managers and budget owners, delegates and approvers, contract managers and staff involved in procurement. Community engagement is not required for adoption of the Strategy; however, implementation will include ongoing engagement with local suppliers, regional procurement networks and relevant community stakeholders where actions relate to local participation, social procurement or community infrastructure outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1. Council notes that the Procurement Strategy 2026-2031 has been developed in response to an internal audit recommendation to establish a strategic procurement framework.**
- 2. Council adopts the Procurement Strategy 2026-2031.**
- 3. Council notes that implementation of the Strategy will be monitored through internal governance processes and reported as appropriate through future procurement reporting.**

ATTACHMENTS

The Procurement Strategy 2026-2031 is provided as Attachment 3.5

3.6 MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN 2026-2029

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 29676

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 Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) 2026-2029 has been prepared by the Ararat Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) in accordance with the requirements of the Emergency Management Act 2013. The Plan outlines the arrangements for prevention, preparedness, response, relief and recovery from emergencies within Ararat Rural City.

The MEMP is a strategic document developed collaboratively with emergency management agencies and stakeholders and is intended to support a coordinated and integrated approach to emergency management across the municipality. The Plan identifies key municipal risks, emergency management responsibilities, governance arrangements and supporting sub-plans and complementary plans.

While Council is not required to formally approve the MEMP, Councillor endorsement demonstrates Council's support for the collaborative emergency management arrangement developed through the MEMPC and acknowledges the importance of emergency management planning to the safety and resilience of the Ararat community. The Plan has been endorsed by the MEMPC as well as the Grampians Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee (REMPC).

DISCUSSION

The Emergency Management Act 2013 requires every municipal district in Victoria to maintain as Municipal Emergency Management Plan prepared through the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC). The MEMPC is responsible for the preparation, review and maintenance of the MEMP and ensuring alignment with both the State Emergency Management Plan and the Grampians Regional Emergency Management Plan.

The revised MEMP replaces the previous 2020-2023 Municipal Emergency Management Plan and has been updated to reflect current legislation, governance arrangements, municipal risk assessments, agency responsibilities and emergency management practices.

The Plan provides a comprehensive framework covering:

- Municipal emergency management governance and planning arrangements.
- Community emergency risk assessment outcomes and priority hazards.
- Mitigation and resilience-building activities.
- Response arrangements and emergency coordination structures.
- Relief and recovery arrangements.
- Roles and responsibilities of Council and partner agencies.
- Supporting sub-plans and complementary emergency management plans.

The Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) identifies several high-priority risks for the municipality, including bushfire/grassfire, flood, extreme temperatures, transport incidents, human disease (pandemic), aircraft incidents and hazardous materials incidents.

The Plan has been developed through consultation and collaboration with core and non-core MEMPC members including Victoria Police, CFA, VICSES, Ambulance Victoria, Australian Red Cross,

Department of Health, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, East Grampians Health Service and other relevant agencies.

Councillor endorsement is sought to acknowledge Council's commitment to supporting emergency management planning and community resilience within Ararat Rural City.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

6. STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

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

Budget Implications

There are no direct budget implications arising from endorsement of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan.

Implementation of actions and emergency response activities will be managed through existing operational budgets and any future budget considerations will be addressed through Council's annual budget process.

Policy/Relevant Law

Relevant legislation includes:

- Emergency Management Act 2013.
- Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018.
- Local Government Act 2020.
- State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP).
- Grampians Regional Emergency Management Plan (REMP).

Sustainability Implications

The Municipal Emergency Management Plan contributes to:

- **Social sustainability** by strengthening community resilience and preparedness for emergencies.
- **Economic sustainability** by supporting coordinated recovery arrangements following emergency events.
- **Environmental sustainability** through mitigation planning and consideration of environmental impacts within emergency management arrangements.

Risk Assessment

Failure to maintain a contemporary Municipal Emergency Management Plan may result in:

- Non-compliance with legislative obligations.
- Reduced emergency preparedness across the municipality.
- Increased risk to community safety and wellbeing.
- Reduced effectiveness of response, relief and recovery arrangements during emergencies.

Endorsement of the MEMP demonstrates Council's commitment to effective emergency management governance and continuous improvement.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

The MEMP has been developed through the Ararat Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee, which comprises Council, emergency services, government agencies, health services and community representatives. The collaborative planning process ensures that a broad range of expertise and local knowledge informs emergency management arrangements.

The Plan will be publicly available following approval and publication, supporting community awareness of local emergency management arrangements.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Endorse the Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2026-2029 prepared by the Ararat Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee.**

ATTACHMENTS

The Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2026-2029 is provided as Attachment 3.6

3.7 MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 29677

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

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

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The financial statements and performance indicators have been prepared for the period ended 31 May 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 \$34.236 million in revenue and \$33.878 million in expenses to 31 May 2026. This has resulted in an operating surplus of \$0.358 million for the eleven months ended 31 May 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 \$18.471 million has been recognised as income for the eleven months ended 31 May 2026.

User fees account for 4.74% of the total budgeted income for 2025/26 and \$1.604 million has been received to 31 May 2026. The majority of this relates to transfer station fees, fitness centre income and commercial waste management charges.

Recurrent Operating Grants total \$4.956 million to 31 May 2026, including \$2.506 million from the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission for general purpose grants and \$1.626 million for the local roads grants.

Non-recurrent Operating Grants total \$2.216 million to 31 May 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.

Non-Recurrent Operating Grants	Budget 2025/26 \$'000	Income 2025/26 \$'000	Unearned Income \$'000
Ararat Housing Transition	-	-	300
Digital Twin Victoria	-	-	950
Free Public WiFi Services	-	-	1,289
Supported Playgroups	67	64	-
Ararat Rural City Sport, Active Recreation & Open Space Strategy	-	36	-
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	68	7
Queen Street Housing Program	-	715	4,982
Ararat Hills Adventure Sports Precinct	-	-	400
Early Career Educators	-	91	12
Ararat Active Bike Network	266	22	-
Ararat City Tennis Sports Lighting and Accessibility	-	192	312
Primary Producer Support Payment	-	125	-
Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund	-	50	-
Other Minor Grants (under \$30,000)	-	50	-
	617	2,216	8,310

Non-recurrent Capital Grants total \$3.897 million to 31 May 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.

Non-Recurrent Capital Grants	Budget 2025/26 \$'000	Income 2025/26 \$'000	Unearned Income \$'000
Pedestrian Infrastructure Program	-	-	50
Tiny Towns Fund - Buangor Recreation Reserve Pavillion Redevelopment	-	-	50
Tiny Towns Fund - Buangor Cobb & Co Stables	-	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	-	218	463
Jack & Jill Kindergarten Upgrade	-	372	-
Mount William Road Reconstruction	-	2,000	-
Footpath-Ararat Retirement Village & Sports Precinct	-	12	23
Barkly St Raised Crossing	-	189	123
Moyston Multi-Use Court Upgrade	-	-	203
Other Minor Grants (under \$30,000)	-	3	26
	1,490	3,897	2,652

Note

It is important to note the following:

1. The Grants Operating (recurrent) figure in the Original Budget was \$8.909 million and in the Current Budget is recorded as \$4.721 million, as \$4.188 million was paid to Council in 2024/25

by the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission (VLGGC) for the 2025/26 financial year. Council has still received the expected VLGGC income, to be spent in 2025/26, however it will be reported over two financial years.

2. Unearned revenue received in prior years has been adjusted between the Original Budget and Current Budget with an additional \$6.659 million for Grants Operating (non-recurrent), \$0.386 million for Grants Capital (recurrent) and \$2.282 million for Grants Capital (non-recurrent) included in the Current Budget on the assumption that each of the grant projects will be completed during the 2025/26 financial year.
3. These changes in the budget, plus the note reported under expenses, create a change in the reported surplus position from a projected surplus of \$2.050 million to a surplus of \$3.028 million for 2025/26. The year-end variance is a surplus of \$0.037 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 eleven months ended 31 May 2026 Council has incurred \$11.421 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 \$0.826 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 eleven months ended 31 May 2026, Council has incurred \$11.398 million in materials and services costs. There are a number of projects, including those carried forward from 2024/25 that are expected to be completed before the end of the financial year.

Note

It is important to note the following:

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

Balance Sheet (Attachment 2)

The Balance Sheet is one of the main financial statements and reports Council's assets, liabilities and equity at a given date, in this case 31 May 2026. Comparative figures have been provided as at 30 June 2025.

Council's current assets have increased by \$0.563 million from \$17.978 million as at 30 June 2025 to \$18.541 million as at 31 May 2026. Cash and cash equivalents have decreased by \$0.098 million from \$14.841 million to \$14.743 million. Trade and other receivables have increased by \$0.627 million from \$3.066 million as at 30 June 2025 to \$3.693 million as at 31 May 2026.

Total liabilities have increased from \$16.464 million in 2024/25 to \$17.945 million in 2025/26. Trade and other payables have increased by \$0.025 million and trust funds and deposits have increased by \$0.307 million. Unearned income/revenue increased by \$1.716 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 \$0.098 million to \$14.743 million as at 31 May 2026.

Net cash of \$12.532 million was provided by operating activities, \$11.973 million was used in investing activities, and \$0.657 million was used in financing activities.

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

Financial Performance Indicators (Attachment 4)

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

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

Indicator	30/6/2025	31/05/2026
<p>Working capital <i>Measure - Current assets compared to current liabilities.</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework 100% to 400% Indicator of the broad objective that sufficient working capital is available to pay bills as and when they fall due. High or increasing level of working capital suggests an improvement in liquidity</p>	122%	114%
<p>Loans and borrowings <i>Measure - Loans and borrowings compared to rates.</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework - 0% to 70% Indicator of the broad objective that the level of interest-bearing loans and borrowings should be appropriate to the size and nature of a council's activities. Low or decreasing level of loans and borrowings suggests an improvement in the capacity to meet long term obligations</p>	0.86%	0.00%
<p>Indebtedness <i>Measure - Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework - 2% to 70% Indicator of the broad objective that the level of long-term liabilities should be appropriate to the size and nature of a Council's activities. Low or decreasing level of long-term liabilities suggests an improvement in the capacity to meet long term obligations</p>	7.83%	8.09%
<p>Rates concentration <i>Measure - Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework - 30% to 80% Indicator of the broad objective that revenue should be generated from a range of sources. High or increasing range of revenue sources suggests an improvement in stability</p>	49.39%	60.95%
<p>Expenditure level <i>Measure - Expenses per property assessment</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework \$2,000 to \$10,000 Indicator of the broad objective that resources should be used efficiently in the delivery of services. Low or decreasing level of expenditure suggests an improvement in organisational efficiency</p>	\$4,936	\$4,514

Indicator	30/6/2025	31/05/2026
<p>Indicator - Revenue level <i>Measure - Average residential rate per residential property assessment</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework - \$700 to \$2,000 Indicator of the broad objective that resources should be used efficiently in the delivery of services. Low or decreasing level of rates suggests an improvement in organisational efficiency</p>	\$2,002	\$2,032
<p>Indicator - Percentage of total rates collected The internal audit conducted in 2019 on Rates Revenue and Rate Debtor Management found no routine or regular reporting of large and long outstanding rates debtors. The outstanding Rates Debtors is reported in the Annual Financial report. As at 31 May 2026 the outstanding Rates Debtors totalled \$2.976 million compared to \$2.466 million as at 30 June 2025, an increase of \$0.051 million. In percentage terms 85.6% of the rates raised have been collected at 31 May 2026 compared to 84.8% up to 31 May 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%	85.6%
<p>Indicator - Asset Renewal & Upgrade <i>Measure - Asset renewal & Upgrade compared to depreciation</i> Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework - 40% to 130% Assessment of whether council assets are being renewed or upgraded as planned. It compares the rate of spending on existing assets through renewing, restoring, replacing or upgrading existing assets with depreciation. Ratios higher than 1.0 indicate there is a lesser risk of insufficient spending on Council's asset base.</p>	100.75%	99.55%

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

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

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

6 STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

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

- 6.1** Deliver responsible budget outcomes, linked to strategy, that deliver value, innovation, and rating fairness

Budget Implications

Council's financial performance is in line with expectations.

Policy/Relevant Law

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

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

Sustainability Implications

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

Risk Assessment

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

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

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

RECOMMENDATION

That:

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

3.8 YEAR 2026 GENERAL VALUATION

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 29678

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

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

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 20 May 2026, Council received notification from the Valuer-General certifying the 2026 General Valuation to be generally true and correct.

The Valuer-General has reported to the Minister for Planning that the 2026 General Valuation is generally true and correct with respect to each of the bases of value.

Once the Minister has made a declaration that the valuation is suitable to be adopted and used, Council will be able to raise rates for the 2026/27 financial year.

DISCUSSION

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

The Valuer-General Victoria appointed Wigg and Partners as the valuer. Mr Peter Wigg has delivered valuations for rateable and non-rateable leviable properties to Council. The non-rateable leviable valuations are returned to enable Council to calculate the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund for these properties. The Valuer-General has audited the valuations to ensure they are generally true and correct. The Minister for Planning will make a declaration under the provisions of the Valuation of Land Act 1960 that allows the returned valuations to be used to raise rates for 2026/27.

	2026 Rateable Valuations	2026 Non Rateable Leviable Valuations	Total
Site Value	\$5,161,117,000	\$57,728,000	\$5,218,845,000
Capital Improved Value	\$6,651,898,000	\$427,170,000	\$7,079,068,000
Net Annual Value	\$337,562,850	\$31,638,400	\$369,201,250

The following table illustrates the change in Capital Improved Valuations (CIV) between each category of property as a result of the revaluation. The categories included in this table are based on Valuation Best Practice Guidelines which are not consistent with the classifications used for rating purposes. For example, the rural category includes urban farm land that may not necessarily be defined as farmland for rating purposes. There are several properties that are rated at the general rate but are classed as rural for the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund.

Category	2025 CIV\$	2026 CIV\$	% Change
Residential	\$1,849,175,000	\$1,918,708,000	3.76%
Commercial	\$177,520,000	\$184,285,000	3.81%
Industrial	\$64,267,000	\$67,258,000	4.65%
Rural (including Urban Farm Land)	\$4,494,606,300	\$4,481,647,000	-0.29%
Non Rateable Leviable (including Wind Farms)	\$450,865,000	\$427,170,000	-5.26%
Totals	\$7,036,433,300	\$7,079,068,000	0.61%

Residential properties

In comparison to 2025 valuations, residential property valuations have increased by 3.76%.

Commercial and Industrial properties

In comparison to 2025 valuations, commercial property valuations have increased by 3.81%. Industrial property valuations have increased by 4.65%.

Rural properties

In comparison to 2025 valuations, rural valuations have decreased by 0.29%.

Non rateable leviable properties

In comparison to 2025 valuations, non-rateable leviable property valuations have decreased by 5.26%.

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

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

	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Residential	3.76%	-2.12%	1.76%	12.18%	33.85%	14.73%	3.07%	4.32%	3.45%
Commercial	3.81%	1.98%	3.94%	12.65%	8.97%	1.17%	0.29%	1.43%	8.69%
Industrial	4.65%	0.11%	-15.38%	12.69%	-88.83%	0.36%	3.83%	0.09%	0.75%
Rural	-0.29%	-3.58%	-1.74%	7.33%	50.23%	39.00%	21.79%	2.72%	24.48%
Non Rateable	-5.26%	-5.34%	376.60%	8.50%	0.18%	5.67%	37.49%	3.06%	1.15%

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

6. STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

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

Budget Implications

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

Policy/Relevant Law

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

Sustainability Implications

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

Risk Assessment

Low.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

The valuation process is undertaken by the Valuer-General Victoria and is widely promoted to ratepayers through a range of sources, including the websites of the Department of Transport and Planning, the State Revenue Office, and Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

Subject to Ministerial approval, Council adopts the General Valuation for 2026 conducted by Mr Peter Wigg for:

- 1. Total Site Value of \$5,218,845,000 (rateable Site Value of \$5,161,117,000 and non-rateable leviable Site Value of \$57,728,000);**
- 2. Total Capital Improved Value of \$7,079,068,000 (rateable Capital Improved Value of \$6,651,898,000 and non-rateable leviable Capital Improved Value of \$427,170,000); and**
- 3. Total Net Annual Value of \$369,201,250 (rateable Net Annual Value of \$337,562,850 and non-rateable leviable Net Annual Value of \$31,638,400).**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

3.9 ROAD NAMING - MCADIE LANE

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 29679

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

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

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its meeting held on 31 March 2026, Council resolved to advertise its intention to name the unnamed laneway located between Elizabeth and McGibbony Streets, running parallel to Vincent and Palmer Streets, Ararat, as McAdie Lane.

DISCUSSION

As part of the consultation process for the proposed name McAdie Lane, adjoining ratepayers were consulted and the proposal was presented to the broader community for feedback. Submissions were invited in a Yes/No format via the Engage Ararat platform, by post, or by email between 14 April 2026 and 7 May 2026.

A total of 27 submissions were received during the consultation period, with all respondents voting in support of the proposal. No objections were received.

Council is now asked to consider the feedback received and determine whether to proceed with formally adopting the name McAdie Lane.

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



KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

6. STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

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

Budget Implications

There are no budget implications arising from this report.

Policy/Relevant Law

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

Sustainability Implications

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

Risk Assessment

Low.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Council's intention to name the road was published on Engage Ararat. Abutting landowners and relevant stakeholders were also consulted as part of the process.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Consider submissions received during the consultation period;**
- 2. Adopt the name McAdie Lane; and**
- 3. Submit McAdie Lane to the Registrar of Geographic Names.**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item.

3.10 ROAD NAMING PROPOSAL - OAK LANE

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 29680

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

Due to recent developments within the laneway, the need has arisen to formally name the unnamed laneway located between George Road and Banfield Street, running parallel to Dawson and High Streets, Ararat.

This report requests Council to consider commencing the statutory consultation process to formally name the laneway.

DISCUSSION

As part of the initial processes associated with the developments, several naming suggestions were put forward as suitable options. The community have put forward the proposed name *Oak Lane* in recognition of the mature oak trees that were historically located on an adjoining property prior to subdivision.

The proposed name commemorates the old oak trees, which were considered by local residents to be a notable feature of the site. While residents acknowledged the removal of the trees as part of the approved subdivision, the proposed name provides an opportunity to retain a connection to this aspect of the site's history.

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



KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

6. STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

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

Budget Implications

There are no budget implications arising from this report.

Policy/Relevant Law

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

Sustainability Implications

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

Risk Assessment

Low.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

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

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Advertise its intention to name the unnamed laneway located between George Road and Banfield Street, running parallel to Dawson and High Streets, Ararat, as Oak Lane; and**
- 2. Consider any submissions received during the consultation period at a future Council meeting.**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item.

SECTION 4 - INFORMATION REPORTS

4.1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM 25-26 - MAY 2026

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 29681

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.

All of the concerns, feedback and suggestions received at the March 2026 round of engagement session had been actioned or referred by the May 2026 Council Meeting.

The next community engagement sessions will occur between 29 June to 02 July 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.

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 Community Engagement Program 2025/26 included 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 May 2026 report**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

4.2 PRESTIGE MILL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT - MAY 2026 UPDATE

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 29682

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

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

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a 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

Crushing for Reuse

The crushing of material that has been cleared of asbestos contamination by the certified hygienist at the offsite processing location has been hampered by rain. Crushing will be undertaken in batches as cleared material becomes available and subject to suitable weather. 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, and a new building permit for the demolition has been issued.

Demolition works at the Queen Street site have also been hampered by the wet weather. While we welcome the rain for the region, it creates safety risks on this site. Demolition works will recommence as soon as possible, subject to weather and ground conditions.

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:

- Council receives the Prestige Mill Infrastructure Project - May 2026 Update**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments relating to this item

4.3 ANNUAL PLAN 2025/26 UPDATE (MAY 2026)

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 29683

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. 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.

Status	Number of Actions
Completed	33 (+5)
In progress 51-99%	7 (-1)
In progress 0-50%	4 (-4)
Not Started	0
Ongoing	9

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

Council Plan Objectives	Actions	Progress	Officer Comment
1.1 Develop a strategic land use planning framework with annual targets to support sustainable urban growth.	1.1.1 Complete a review of Council's Planning Scheme as required under Section 12B of the Planning Environment Act 1987	In progress 51-99% (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 51-99% (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 East' Structure Plan project	Complete	This project has assessed the physical capacity of the Ararat North East area and the utility services that would be

			needed if the subject site were to be developed in the future.
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	This action was completed at the May 2026 Council Meeting.
	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 broader CALD Outreach 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	This action was completed at the May 2026 Council Meeting.

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.	Complete	Council staff and Grampians Wimmera Mallee Tourism have identified that supporting the growth and development of an existing food and wine event in Ararat Rural City is likely to leverage a greater outcome with fewer resources than a new event. Work to identify and support the development of a suitable existing event will occur in the 2026/27 year.
	2.3.3 Work with operators and Grampians Wimmera Mallee Tourism to deliver 4 star and above accommodation	Complete	This action was completed at the May 2026 Council Meeting.
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	Complete	The installation of the new battery was completed on 17 June 2026
	3.3.2 Deliver the Roadside Weeds and Pests Program	Complete	The Roadside Weeds and Pest Program for 2025/26 is now complete
	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	The Federal and State Governments announced on 15 May 2026 that construction on the Western Highway Upgrade between Buangor and Ararat will begin before the end of the year, following additional investment
	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 51-99%	Basketball Victoria released new facility guidelines in May 2026. The concept designs are being reviewed against the latest guidelines. The concepts for the outdoor pool upgrade is also being reviewed in light of recent community feedback received through the Budget and the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy engagement processes.
	4.2.2 Deliver the Community Road Safety Strategy	Complete	This action was completed at the May 2026 Council Meeting.
	4.2.3 Deliver the Ararat Rural City Sport and Active Recreation Strategy	Complete	This action was completed at the May 2026 Council Meeting.
4.3 Deliver infrastructure outcomes that support economic growth, are	4.3.1 Deliver the 2025/26 Capital Works Program	Complete	Refer to the Capital Works report. As of 31 May 2026, 102% of the capital works

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.			budget is expended, so this action is marked complete.
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 finalised a 'Disability Action Plan: Discussion Paper' and this is presented at this Council Meeting. 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	This action was completed at the May 2026 Council Meeting.
	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 - May 2026 report**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments relating to this item

4.4 2025/2026 CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM - MAY 2026

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 29684

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

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

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council has approved its 2025/2026 Capital Works Program as a fundamental component of the current budget. With a substantial capital works investment 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 31 May 2026, 102% of the budget is expended with committed works expected to be completed by 30 June 2026.

Mt William Road is progressing well with the works completed and requiring sealing, line marking and armco which will occur in early spring. Buangor Ben Nevis Road Bridge strengthening works on the bridge over Billy Billy Creek progressing well with completion slightly delayed due to the wet weather, this looks to be complete by the end of June. The Pony Club arena construction is nearing completion with lighting and drainage works to be finalised in the coming months. Road construction works have commenced on the first stage of Buangor Ben Nevis Road at the Warrak end of the project.

PROPERTY CAPITAL PROJECTS	Budget	Funding Amount	Council Contribution	Community Contribution	Previous Years Expenditure	Committed Expenditure (25/26)	Expended (25/26)	Overall Total	%	Notes
Property Capital General	\$166,000		\$166,000							
Mininera Recreation Reserve Toilet Upgrade							\$170,427	\$170,427		Toilets have been installed onsite and only require connection to the septic.
Tatyoan Oval Upgrade							\$11,393	\$11,393		Works are completed with some final issues to be rectified before final completion is issued
Video Cameras/Security - Ararat Skate Park							\$6,421	\$6,421		These have been installed.
Video Camera/Security - Ararat Fitness Centre							\$13,203	\$13,203		These have been installed.
Lake Bolac Club Rooms - Roof Upgrade							\$23,400	\$23,400		Works have been complete
Alexandra Oval - Hot Water Service Replacements							\$22,854	\$22,854		Works have been completed
Former Cobb & Co Staging Stables <i>(Disaster Recovery Heritage Program)</i>	\$60,000	\$60,000			\$1,237		\$29,134	\$30,371	50%	Ararat Maintenance Plumbing has completed works on this project & and acquitted. A variation
Ararat Pony Club - Covered Sports Area <i>(Play our Way Program)</i>	\$1,490,000	\$1,490,000			\$14,270	\$75,035	\$1,236,129	\$1,325,434	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.
Centenary Park - Dog Park <i>(Open Space for Everyone Program)</i>	\$112,000	\$100,000	\$12,000		\$1,172	\$50,122	\$68,279	\$119,573	107%	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
Buangor Sports Pavilion Redevelopment <i>(Tiny Towns Program)</i>	\$631,000	\$50,000	\$581,000 (\$220k Property Capital) (\$361k Property Reserve)		\$303		\$161,848	\$162,151	26%	Works have commenced on-site with demolition and electrical works complete, new slabs are being laid and internal framing has commenced.
Jack and Jill Kindergarten Redevelopment <i>(Building Blocks improvement grants program)</i>	\$745,000	\$745,000			\$26,000		\$618,716	\$644,716	86%	All internal works have been completed.
Ararat City Tennis Sports Lighting Installation and accessibility upgrade <i>(Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Fund)</i>	\$700,000	\$560,000	\$120,000 (\$20,000 from Tennis Australia)	\$20,000	NA	\$302,347	\$133,750	\$436,098	62%	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.
Gordon Street Cricket Nets Upgrade <i>(Australian Cricket Infrastructure Grant)</i>	\$39,985	\$15,000	\$24,985		NA		\$37,882	\$37,882	88%	Synthetic carpet has been installed in February and concrete works have been completed, netting is nearing completion.
Pomonal Hall Battery Project <i>(Powering Resilience in the Regions Program)</i>	\$148,760	\$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.
Ararat Library Lighting and Exterior Upgrade. <i>(Living Libraries Infrastructure Program 2024-25)</i>	\$51,026	\$51,026			NA		\$45,196	\$45,196	88%	External Painting and lighting have been completed.
TOTAL - PROPERTY CAPITAL	\$4,550,771	\$3,212,433	\$1,318,338	\$20,000	\$42,982	\$427,504	\$2,585,985	\$3,056,471		

PLANT & EQUIPMENT	Budget	Committed/ Contracted	Expended 25/26	%	Notes
Vehicle Purchases	\$240,000		\$208,395	80%	Replacement of 4 x Utilities and 2 x SUV
Major Plant Purchases	\$260,000	\$183,659	\$113,000	114%	New reach mower
Fixtures, Fittings & Furniture	\$100,000		\$77,509	77%	Town Hall - New Speaker IT Capital - Core Switch and WiFi Replacement
Book stock - Library Book Replacement	\$40,000		\$41,268	103%	
TOTAL - PLANT & EQUIPMENT		\$183,659	\$440,172	97%	

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS	Budget	Funding Amount	Council Contribution	Previous Years Expenditure	Committed Expenditure (25/26)	Expended 25/26	Overall Total	%	Notes
Works By Others <i>Woorndoo Streatham Road - Completed by Moyne Shire</i>	\$683,000		\$683,000	NA	\$683,000		\$683,000	100%	Works for this road is being undertaken by Moyne Shire. The budget amount is Council's contribution
Gravel Road Sheeting, Widening & Alternative Sealing	\$1,500,000		\$1,500,000	NA	\$347,110	\$1,157,589	\$1,504,699	100%	\$1.5m budget reallocated from other line items. Additional OTTA Seal works include: - Tatyoon North Road - Logan Road - Jacksons Creek Road (complete)
Reseal Program				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
Urban Road - Gravel to Seal	\$1,000,000		\$1,000,000	NA	\$738,825	\$50,129	\$788,954	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)
ROAD RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAM									
Buangor Ben Nevis Road <i>(Roads to Recovery 24/25 & 25/26)</i>	\$3,143,000		\$2,143,000 (24/25)	\$269,592		\$145,776	\$415,368		Stage One of Road works are expected to commence in the coming months inline with the bridge works, to be undertaken by internal crew
Buangor Ben Nevis Road - Bridge Strengthening			\$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
Buangor Ben Nevis Road <i>(SILRP Funding 25/26)</i>	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000							Council contribution of \$1,250,000 required in 26/27 Budget
Mt William Road <i>(HSVPP Funding 24/25)</i>	\$6,250,000	\$5,000,000	\$1,250,000	\$217,582		\$3,944,644	\$4,162,226	66%	The scope of works has been completed to adding the rock layer. There is one final section to seal and line marking and armco to install.
Webb Street Reconstruction <i>(Roads to Recovery 24/25)</i>	\$400,000		\$400,000	\$13,822		\$152,093	\$165,915	100%	Works have been completed with sealing of the road expected in late January, early February.
Churchill Avenue Reconstruction			\$30,371			\$30,371	\$30,371		Final invoices for works completed in June 26.
Roads to Recovery (26/27) <i>Stevens Crescent</i> <i>View Point Street (Banksia to Temple)</i> <i>View Point Street (High to Lambert)</i>						\$13,406	\$13,406		Planning and design work

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS	Budget	Funding Amount	Council Contribution	Previous Years Expenditure	Committed Expenditure (25/26)	Expended 25/26	Overall Total	%	Notes
Ararat Active Bike Network <i>(Active Transport Fund)</i>	\$399,000	\$266,000	\$133,000	\$13,525	\$117,302	\$108,698	\$239,525	60%	Shoulder Sealing works have been completed. Line Marking will be undertaken when weather permits.
Buangor Ben Nevis Road - Bridge 7001.14 Design and Construct <i>(Roads to Recovery - 25/26)</i>	\$1,300,000		\$1,300,000	\$68,723		\$1,220,029	\$1,288,752	99%	Contract No. 731 - Awarded July 2025 \$1.109m - Road and Bridge Pty Ltd \$100,000 allowance for Permits and Vegetation offsets. Works have been completed
McCrows Road Bridge <i>(Roads to Recovery - 24/25)</i>	\$350,000		\$350,000	\$17,738		\$446,899	\$464,637		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.
Major Patching	\$100,000		\$100,000			\$116,262	\$116,262	116%	
Bridges	\$0					\$1,710	\$1,710		Transferred to Gravel Road Sheeting, Widening & Alternative Sealing
Footpath Renewal Program	\$400,000		\$400,000			\$323,040	\$323,040		All projects complete for 25/26 Financial Year
Albert Street Footpath <i>(Flexible Local Transport Solutions Program 25/26)</i>	\$85,000	\$42,500	\$42,500 taken from Footpath Renewal Program above		\$13,977	\$41,207	\$55,184	65%	Improving Pedestrian Accessibility to the Ararat Retirement Village and Sports Precinct - New Grant received September 2025. This project is currently in construction.
Urban Drainage Works	\$350,000					\$37,545	\$37,545		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
Mininera Recreation Reserve - Septic Upgrade			\$206,000		\$64,000	\$145,750	\$209,750		Works to be undertaken by Alford Drainage. Money from Building Reserve
Buangor Recreation Reserve - Septic Upgrade			\$201,000		\$59,000	\$145,750	\$204,750		Works to be undertaken by Alford Drainage, commencing week of 23 February 2026. Money from Building Reserve
Kerb and Channel	\$0					\$109,351	\$109,351		Transferred to Gravel Road Sheeting, Widening & Alternative Sealing Some planning work is being undertaken for the 26/27 Financial Year
Lake Bolac Kindergarten Carpark <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.
Banfield Street - School Crossing <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>
Queen Street Housing Support Program <i>(Housing Support Program - Community Enabling Infrastructure)</i>	\$7,380,000	\$7,380,000		\$152,580	\$351,450	\$839,739	\$1,343,769	18%	<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
SAFE LOCAL ROADS AND STREETS PROGRAM									
View Point, Tobin & Taylor St Intersections	\$224,000	\$224,000		\$581		\$11,300	\$11,881	5%	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.
Ingor Street - Raised Crossing	\$110,000	\$110,000		\$600		\$19,664	\$20,264	12%	The detailed design for this project is complete, and procurement commencing in February 2026.
King Street - Raised Crossing	\$110,000	\$110,000		\$4,702	\$41,000	\$17,135	\$62,837	54%	Tenders have been awarded to SHS Civil. Works to be undertaken outside of school term.
View Point & High St Intersection	\$117,000	\$117,000		\$1,526		\$99,451	\$100,977	68%	SHS Civil have completed these works..
Moore & Princes Street Intersection	\$131,000	\$131,000		\$145		\$19,153	\$19,298	15%	The detailed design for this project is complete, and procurement will commence in February 2026.
Vincent Street & Alexandra Avenue - Raised Crossing	\$321,000	\$321,000		\$239		\$21,926	\$22,165	6%	The detailed design for this project has been received; some alterations are being requested to make the works more amenable to the location.
Queen & Moore Street Roundabout	\$548,000	\$548,000		\$1,531		\$23,700	\$25,231	4%	The detailed design for this project is complete, and the lighting design is being finalised.
George Road Raised Crossing (Ararat West)						\$5,409	\$5,409		New initiative for the SLRSP to include a permanent raised crossing at George Road.

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS	Budget	Funding Amount	Council Contribution	Previous Years Expenditure	Committed Expenditure (25/26)	Expended 25/26	Overall Total	%	Notes
SAFE SYSTEM PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM (23/24)									
Barkly Street Raised Crossing	\$312,232	\$312,232		\$398		\$189,076	\$319,311	102%	<i>Both Projects have been completed.</i>
High Street Raised Crossing						\$129,837			
TOTAL - ROADS CAPITAL	\$30,312,580	\$19,661,080	\$10,639,371	\$832,886	\$2,724,526	\$9,624,779	\$13,182,191		

FUNDED PROJECTS - MISCELLANEOUS (NOT CAPITALISED)	Budget	Funding Amount	Council Contribution	Previous Years Expenditure	Committed Expenditure (25/26)	Expended (25/26)	Overall Total	%	Notes
Roadside Weeds and Pest Program 25/26 <i>(Funding of the same name)</i>	\$74,135	\$74,135		NA	\$18,870	\$62,456	\$81,326	109%	<i>This project has been awarded to Project Platypus, all funds are expected to be expended by mid May 2026.</i>
Sport & Active Recreation Strategy <i>(Local Sports Infrastructure Funding 23/24)</i>	\$55,000	\$40,000	\$15,000	\$12,452		\$41,436	\$53,888	97%	<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>
Community Road Safety Action Plan <i>(TAC Local Govt Funding)</i>	\$49,540	\$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
Unlocking Ararat North East <i>(Streamlining for Growth 22/23)</i>	\$85,000	\$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>
Ararat City Tennis Sports Lighting Installation and accessibility upgrade - Participation Initiative. <i>(Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Fund)</i>	\$50,000	\$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 - May 2026 report.**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

SECTION 5 - COMMITTEE MINUTES/REPORTS

5.1 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING

AUTHOR'S TITLE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 29685

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

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

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report contains the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on the 2 June 2026.

DISCUSSION

The 2 June 2026 Audit and Risk Committee meeting focused on oversight of Council's financial performance, audit activities and risk management. The committee reviewed external audit progress, including a draft interim management letter with a small number of issues expected to be resolved, and considered sector-wide findings from VAGO, concluding Council has not experienced the capital underspend seen elsewhere due to strong delivery of its capital works program. Internal audit and governance matters were a key focus, with updates on the audit programs, and planned reviews, alongside enhancements to policies to strengthen controls and reduce fraud risk. The committee also reviewed the strategic risk register and ongoing risk program, confirmed policy review progress and noted actions to improve reporting.

Council Committees	Councillor representative	Current meeting (as presented)	Next scheduled meeting/s
Audit and Risk Committee	Cr Bob Sanders	02 June 2026	15 September 2026
Audit and Risk Committee	Cr Peter Joyce	02 June 2026	15 September 2026

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

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

6. STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

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

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

Budget Implications

No budget impact for the receiving of minutes.

Policy/Legal/Statutory

Section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020* states that Council must establish an Audit and Risk Committee.

Section 6.1 of the *Audit and Risk Committee Charter* states that minutes of Committee meetings will be provided to Council at the first available opportunity after clearance by the Committee Chairperson following each Committee meeting.

Risk Assessment

Council needs to be aware of issues raised in the minutes.

Stakeholder Consultation and Communication

Audit and Risk Committee members.

Councillor representation on Council Committees.

Chief Executive Officer and relevant Council officers.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1. the Audit and Risk Committee Meetings minutes of 02 June 2026 be received**

ATTACHMENTS

The Audit and Risk Committee Minutes from 2 June 2026 are provided as Attachment 5.1

SECTION 6 - INFORMAL MEETINGS

6.1 COUNCIL BRIEFINGS

AUTHOR'S TITLE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 29686

OFFICER'S DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

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

Matters discussed at the briefing:

- CEO Employment & Remuneration Committee
- PILOR Report
- Risk Policy and Framework
- Procurement Strategy
- Insurance
- Ararat Women's Shed Lease
- Municipal Emergency Management Plan
- Public Open Space Contributions
- Disability Action Plan - Discussion Paper
- Annual Plan
- Eastern Entrance Signage Engagement Report
- Planning Scheme Review
- 2026 General Valuation
- Road Naming - McAdie Lane
- Road Naming Proposal - Oak Lane
- Ararat Housing Enterprise
- Monthly Performance Report - May 2026
- Monthly Community Engagement Report

- Monthly Performance Report - Prestige Mill Infrastructure Project Update - May 2026
- Monthly Progress Report - Council Plan - Annual Plan
- Capital Work Program - May 2026
- Audit & Risk Committee Minutes
- 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 it:

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

SECTION 9 - CLOSE SESSION (CONFIDENTIAL)

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

- Item 9.1 - CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee update

CLOSURE OF COUNCIL MEETING TO THE PUBLIC

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

RECOMMENDATION

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

OPEN COUNCIL MEETING RECOMMENCEMENT

RECOMMENDATION

That the Open Council Meeting recommence.

Gallery invited to return to Council Chamber.

LIFTING OF CONFIDENTIALITY OF CLOSED SESSION RESOLUTIONS

RECOMMENDATION

That:

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