



Ararat Rural City

AGENDA

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 28 July 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	2
1.1 LIVE STREAMING	2
1.2 TRADITIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT/OPENING PRAYER/COUNCILLORS PLEDGE	2
1.3 APOLOGIES.....	2
1.4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES	2
1.5 DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST.....	3
SECTION 2 - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	4
2.1 PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS.....	4
SECTION 3 - REPORTS REQUIRING COUNCIL DECISION	5
SECTION 4 - INFORMATION REPORTS	6
4.1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM 25-26 - JUNE 2026.....	6
4.2 PRESTIGE MILL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT - JUNE 2026 UPDATE.....	14
4.3 ANNUAL PLAN 2025/26 UPDATE (JUNE 2026)	16
4.4 2025/2026 CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM - JUNE 2026.....	23
4.5 2026/2027 CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM - ANNUAL WORKS PLAN 2026/27	34
4.7 COMMUNITY ASSET COMMITTEES' HALF YEAR REPORT	41
SECTION 5 - COMMITTEE MINUTES/REPORTS	44
SECTION 6 - INFORMAL MEETINGS.....	45
6.1 COUNCIL BRIEFINGS	45
SECTION 7 - NOTICES OF MOTION	47
SECTION 8 - URGENT BUSINESS.....	48
SECTION 9 - CLOSE SESSION (CONFIDENTIAL)	49
CLOSURE OF COUNCIL MEETING TO THE PUBLIC.....	49
OPEN COUNCIL MEETING RECOMMENCEMENT	49
LIFTING OF CONFIDENTIALITY OF CLOSED SESSION RESOLUTIONS	49

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 30 June 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

There are no Reports requiring Council decision

SECTION 4 - INFORMATION REPORTS

4.1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM 25-26 - JUNE 2026

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 30309

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

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

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

DISCUSSION

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

The latest round of community engagement sessions occurred between 29 June to 02 July 2026 in Ararat, Lake Bolac, Moyston, Pomonal, Streatham, Warrak, Wickliffe, Willaura. 36 people attended the sessions and raised 82 issues, and as at 16 July 2026, 69 have been resolved or referred for action, as appropriate. Below is a summary of the issues raised and their status.

Table 1. Issues raised and their progress to date.

#	Issues Raised	Progress as of 23 July 2026
	Ararat	
1	Wooden seating in Barkly St needs varnishing	Service request lodged to investigate and action, as appropriate. Re-varnishing is likely to occur when the weather is warmer.
2	Concern expressed about a property with an accumulation of items, incl. on the nature strip, potential pest infestation and other hazards	Concerns were noted and some of the financial and legal challenges councils face in addressing these types of matters were discussed during the session.
3	Suggestion to plant trees at the eastern entrance of Ararat to block the view of unsightly areas instead of any fencing options	Suggestion noted and passed to the relevant team. Council had resolved at the June 2026 Council Meeting to engage with the Department of Transport and Planning and other stakeholders, as appropriate, on general landscaping improvements to the eastern entrance of Ararat.
4	Concerns raised about people who appear to be homeless, potentially under the influence of drugs and staying for prolonged periods in a public reserve	These topics were discussed during the engagement session. Managing these situations requires consideration for the circumstances and wellbeing of the vulnerable individuals, and there are limited homeless support services currently available. Illegal drug use should be reported to the police.
5	Reported a vehicle that appears to be abandoned.	Council is aware of the vehicle. It is currently registered so it cannot be towed away immediately.

		Council will continue to monitor the matter in accordance with Local Laws.
6	Brilliant to see the old Orchid House removed from Alexandra Gardens. Asked when the fencing around the site was going to come down.	Fence removal is pending works to underground services at the site.
7	Several suggestions were put forward for alternative uses for Aradale, including a research hospital for Alzheimer's and dementia, housing for nurses and doctors, a welfare centre for homeless people, a retirement village, or turning it into a casino.	Discussion occurred during the session around the scarcity of government funds for the proposals, and uncertainty around the level of interest from private investors.
8	Drainage issues on Golf Links Road	Issues reported for investigation and action, as appropriate
9	Issue with barking dogs on neighbouring property	On many occasions, dog owners are not aware that their dogs are causing any nuisance. Options for trying to work with dog owners to resolve the issue was discussed. If these fail, the barking dog can be reported via Snap Send Solve or by contacting Council directly.
10	Would like to see the historical plaques and signage around town and the lake restored	This request is unable to be accommodated in this financial year's budget. It will be considered as part of future project planning and budgeting.
11	Who manages McDonald Park?	Answer provided during the engagement session. This reserve is managed by DEECA
12	Fencing at the top of One Tree Hill has gone?	This issue has been reported to DEECA
13	Can Council get a Building Inspector?	Council has recently appointed a Municipal Building Inspector to issue permits for small structures.
14	What the green parts in the bike lanes mean	These are used to highlight areas where cyclists may be at greater risk of conflict with vehicles, such as intersections, roundabouts, etc.
15	Asked about the North-South Heavy Vehicle Bypass Route advocacy priority	This initiative seeks to remove large trucks from the Ararat CBD. Council are seeking \$5m in its Advocacy Program 2026 for studies and preliminary works.
16	Timing of Valorify development	The project is aiming for gas production by 2028.
17	Complimented Council on how the tips are being run and how they look	Compliment noted with appreciation
18	The increase in tip fees	Due to the increasing cost of landfill fees that Council is required to pay, the Fees and Charges related to the disposal of waste at transfer stations has also had to be increased. The changes were shown in the Draft Budget released in March 2026, were communicated during the budget consultation process and are shown in the adopted budget in the Schedule of Fees and Charges section.
19	Status of the Mininera Extension of the East Grampians Rural Pipeline	Council continues to strongly advocate for this project, it is one of six priorities in the Council's Advocacy Program 2026.
20	Thanked Council for the new footpath between Albert Street near Gorrinn Village to Gordon Street Recreation Reserve	Feedback has been noted with thanks
21	Asked about grubbing out the gorse and clearing prickly bushes at new footpath above	Service request lodged to investigate and action, as appropriate

22	There was previously access through at the end of McGibbony Street but that has been fenced off	There appears to be private property with no easements in the location. Attendee to be contacted to clarify before completing issue.
23	Idea for community to plant and share in the care of fruit trees and vegetable plants in nature strips to help with food security and sense of community.	Council is guided by the Ararat Landcare Group Urban Trees booklet and other resources, which considers the challenges of a changing climate and the management and maintenance requirements of different trees. Option of using the Ararat Community Garden at the back of J Ward was discussed, or smaller community gardens in pocket parks.
24	Volunteering was discussed in general, including the issue of burn out and people's lack of time. Other blockers discussed by community, including the need to do all of the courses and red tape.	Challenges around volunteering was discussed by attendees at the meeting. Attendees encouraged each other to volunteer and contribute what they can.
25	Would like to see another Multicultural Community Garden Party event	Attendee was encouraged to contact the Ararat Community Garden directly about the possibility of a repeat event
Lake Bolac		
26	Lake Bolac Hall Community Asset Committee would like to work together with Council to get back on track with maintenance needs at the Hall and surrounding area	Council welcomes the Committee's willingness to work together and will continue to work with the Committee to address the maintenance needs
27	Gordons Bridge Road - is a bus route and also a main road that people use and would like to see some works done on this road.	Road grading service request lodged to investigate and action, as appropriate. Possibility of a road upgrade will be considered as part of future capital works planning and budgeting.
28	Discussed the Ararat to Lake Bolac road (Mortlake-Ararat Road) and that it is lacking white lines and that Council should be advocating to DTP to have the lines marked.	Issue reported to VicRoads via their online form: https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/traffic-and-road-use/report-a-road-issue
29	Swimming pool upgrades and query about the solar heating on the roof	Resurfacing of pools in Lake Bolac and Willaura has been included in this year's Budget. Request lodged to inspect solar heating on the roof.
30	Kinnersley Road - is only a dry weather road and is used quite a bit to get to farms and would like to see it improved.	Road grading service request lodged to investigate and action, as appropriate. Possibility of a road upgrade will be considered as part of future capital works planning and budgeting.
31	Also, Settlement Road, McMasters Road would like to see more works done on it.	Road grading service request lodged to investigate and action, as appropriate. Possibility of a road upgrade will be considered as part of future capital works planning and budgeting.
32	Rabbits under the Scout Hall in Lake Bolac	Possible options are being investigated.
33	Wanted to know why Council was not using gravel from a specific supplier on the roads and believes that it's a very good product.	Council procures materials from a range of suppliers, including local suppliers where possible, subject to competitive pricing, delivery timeframes and comparable quality of products.
34	Discussed roads have been graded to the point on no gravel left and need to be resheeted.	Feedback noted, condition of gravel roads will be assessed as part of the annual asset inspection program.
35	There was extensive discussion about a windfarm and that Council should be taking a stance	Council understands that there are people in the community who feel strongly about this topic. Council has no say in the planning, positioning or vetoing of wind turbines. This all falls under

		federal or state government jurisdiction, both have been democratically elected on the basis of pursuing a path of renewable energy, and it is their decision to make. Council's role is to represent all residents in our locality, not just people against wind turbines or potential hosts, but to get the best result for our region as a whole.
	Moyston	
36	Some customers are not getting responses back on their Snap Send Solve requests.	Council will review our Snap Send Solve requests to identify what the potential issue may be. In the meantime, if the request has been resolved, a response should be able to be found by going to 'My Snaps' in the app, select the report and then select the incident, there should see a report timeline with the outcome and response. See this link for an example: Where do I find my report timeline?
37	Request to clear trees and provide fire access on Bare Hill Road	Request lodged for investigation and action, as appropriate
38	A metal collection skip would be more beneficial than a general waste skip service	Feedback noted and will be considered as part of the rural skip bin review later this year.
39	Request for flashing 40km signs at Moyston Primary School on Ararat-Halls Gap Road, due to the high traffic from tourists and visitors	Council will continue advocating to the Department of Transport and Planning for this outcome.
40	Are there 40km during school hours signs on School Road?	Yes, these are already installed.
41	Community were interested in the health of the trees on the Moyston Avenue of Honour.	Information will be summarised and shared with the Moyston Progress Association and other interested community groups.
42	There's a men's walking group that go around the oval. There's a small section towards the south east of the oval that needs some leveling	Request lodged for investigation and action, as appropriate
	Pomonal	
43	Feedback provided on the draft Rural Roads Safety Plan, including wildlife on Ararat-Halls Gap Road, and adding shared paths as priorities in Pomonal.	Feedback noted and will be considered as part of the finalisation of the draft Rural Road Safety Plan.
44	Speed limit review for Ararat-Halls Gap Road, turning lanes in the sections where the speed limit is higher than 80km/hour and rumble strips leading up to the town.	Ararat-Halls Gap Road is managed by the Department of Transport and Planning/VicRoads. Suggestions have been submitted via their online form: https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/traffic-and-road-use/report-a-road-issue
45	Query about land subdivisions	Resolved during the engagement session
46	Disabled carparking outside the Hall for the Victorian Election	Request has been investigated, as this is a gravel carpark linemarking is not possible and so a disability carpark that is compliant with the required standards is not possible. The Deputy CEO will liaise with the local community to identify possible workarounds the community could implement on election day if needed.
47	Accessibility of the disabled toilets at the Hall was raised, community would like to speak to person working on the Disability Action Plan	The Deputy CEO will reach out to person who raised this query. There will also be a Pomonal Community Listening Workshop at the Hall for the Disability Action Plan at 5pm - 6pm, Tuesday 1 st September.

48	There are several properties that have regrowth that appears overgrown. Residents are concerned about bushfire risk to neighbouring properties.	The process for inspections for the annual fire notices was provided during the engagement session.
49	Community would like more information on when and how to do burn offs safely, including list of people who can help with the work, help community find contractors	Availability of existing information resources are being investigated.
50	Please review tone of the fire notice letters	Feedback noted. Fire notices will be reviewed before the next fire season.
51	80 litre glass bins are quite heavy when full, not very ergonomic	Options discussed during the session, such as asking neighbour if some glass can go in their bin if room is available, or get a another glass bin for \$25 per annum (2026/27 rate). The form to request an additional bin is available on the Council website: https://www.ararat.vic.gov.au/services/waste-and-recycling/city-rural-kerbside-rubbish-collection
52	Community would like a soft plastics collection option	Council will investigate options and report back.
Streatham		
53	Footpaths on the south side of the Campbell Street as elderly people with walkers have trouble on the grass - potentially along the sealed service road area	This request is unable to be accommodated in this financial year's budget. It will be considered as part of future project planning and budgeting.
54	Would like Council to make a statement about not supporting Squadron and windfarms in general	Council understands that there are people in the community who feel strongly about this topic. Council has no say in the planning, positioning or vetoing of wind turbines. This all falls under federal or state government jurisdiction, both have been democratically elected on the basis of pursuing a path of renewable energy, and it is their decision to make. Council's role is to represent all residents in our locality, not just people against wind turbines or potential hosts, but to get the best result for our region as a whole.
55	Query about data centres and solar farms, and if Ararat was getting any	A planning application for a very small scale data centre powered by a solar farm has been submitted and is currently being assessed through the statutory planning process. This development also includes a canola crushing facility and a bioplastics manufacturing facility that will value-add to the crushing operation.
56	Would like Council to continue advocating for water pipe	Council continues to still strongly advocate for this project, it is one of six priorities in the Council's Advocacy Program 2026.
57	There is one bin in cage at the front of the toilets. There are a couple of spares around the side of the toilet. Unfortunately when the front bin is full people don't go around the side to use a second bin. Can we please have another bin at the front of the toilets	Request lodged for investigation and action, as appropriate
Warrak		

58	Could the remainder of Mount Cole Road be sealed?	This request is unable to be accommodated in this financial year's budget. It will be considered as part of future project planning and budgeting, however it is not likely to be a high priority.
59	Intersection of Warrayatkin Road and Western Hwy is a Give Way sign, should be a Stop sign	As this is an intersection with a VicRoads road, request lodged with VicRoads via their online form: https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/traffic-and-road-use/report-a-road-issue
60	The Warrak Hall lights need upgrading	Request lodged for investigation and action, as appropriate
61	Drainage off the roof and the pipe is broken	Request lodged for investigation and action, as appropriate
62	Asked about progress of works on Buangor-Ben Nevis Road	Bridge works are now complete, with next stages focused on the road widening and upgrade.
63	The pipeline works cause part of a track leading to a property to be washed away, but it is not clear who owns the track	Suggested they contact GWMWater to liaise with their contractor who did the works. Track is not on Council's road register.
64	Community member provided an update on the Warrak Recreation Reserve activities, including upgrades to the toilets, playground and future goals. The Reserve will be celebrating its 100 year anniversary in October/November 2026	Community member was thanked and the upcoming anniversary noted.
Wickliffe		
65	Looking at developing the Wickliffe Recreation Reserve as a refuge area / recovery hub for flood as this is the major disaster that Wickliffe experiences. This would include looking at a generator, water tanks due to the pipe water not fit for consumption, etc. Discussed applying for a grant for solar panels and battery for the Reserve	Grant application has been submitted for a solar panel and battery system to enable the Recreation Reserve to remain powered during an outage, supporting its function as a future refuge and recovery site.
66	They would like to build a fire pit at the Reserve	Idea noted. Conversations will continue with the Community Asset Committee on a potential fire pit.
Willaura		
67	Progress of new playground equipment installation at the Willaura Recreation Reserve	Installation still pending
68	They would like to be able to have better audio for online meetings at the Willaura Memorial Hall, using the big TV. Issue is the lack of microphones and the sound coming out of the small webcam, not the TV.	Purchase of microphone system to be considered by Council. Sound coming out of the TV may be a setting that needs to be changed. Default settings to be checked by Council staff.
69	Community were happy with the upcoming footpath upgrades in Willaura	Feedback noted with appreciation
70	The Friends of Willaura Pool would like to have an avenue to engage with Council staff	Avenue to be determined
71	Showers in the female changerooms were previously flooding, unsure if this has been fixed yet	Status still being checked. If not yet fixed, issue will be reported for investigation and action, as appropriate
72	The wet weather has impacted gravel roads everywhere and they need attention, shoulders need attention too	Council are grading as many roads as possible while roads are wet from recent rains.

73	Can spraying and slashing of roadsides occur more than one a year?	One round of spraying and slashing has been budgeted this for financial year, and general budget constraints were discussed in the meeting. This possibility of two runs will be considered as part of future project planning and budgeting.
74	Asked about planning process for wind farm approvals	Council has no say in the planning, positioning or vetoing of wind turbines. This all falls under federal or state government jurisdiction, both have been democratically elected on the basis of pursuing a path of renewable energy, and it is their decision to make.
75	What happens if a windfarm is decommissioned? Who is responsible for any waste?	According to state government information for permit applicants for windfarm projects, the permit that is issued by the Minister for Planning will typically have conditions related to decommissioning and rehabilitation requirements. For more details, see the Victorian Government's Department of Transport and Planning website: Planning permit applications - information for applicants
76	Do windfarms pose fire risks?	The windfarm owner or operator is required under state government legislation and regulations to minimise the hazards and risks and bushfire danger arising from the installation. Further information can be found on the Energy Safe Victoria website: General duties of wind farm owners and operators
77	Does Council have a position on windfarms?	Council's role is to represent all residents in our locality, not just people against wind turbines or potential hosts, but to get the best result for our region as a whole.
78	Question about whether Councils can negotiate with windfarms for a different rate of community benefits.	VicGrid have recently released new guidelines for community engagement and social value (see: Community engagement and social value guidelines). Councils can advocate for local priorities and help ensure that developments contribute meaningfully to more significant initiatives, but it does not appear that councils can negotiate a different rate of community benefits.
79	Which roads are in the capital works program for 2026/27?	List is being finalised and will be confirmed at the July 2026 Council Meeting.
80	Comment that blue metal is good road base	Feedback noted with thanks
81	Can the culvert at the north end of Edgarley Estate Road be widened to accommodate farm machinery?	This request is unable to be accommodated in this financial year's budget. It will be considered as part of future project planning and budgeting.
82	Condition of the asphalt and area around the Willaura War Memorial is becoming poor. The community are looking to apply for a grant from the Saluting Their Service grants program for repair works and sought support from Council.	Letter of Support provided, with further conversations to occur on potential future works.

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.

Gender Impact Assessment

Of the 36 attendees, 20 were female and 16 were male.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- Council receives the Community Engagement Program June 2026 report**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments in relation to this item

4.2 PRESTIGE MILL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT - JUNE 2026 UPDATE

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 30310

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 up to 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

Demolition Works at Queen Street

With the return of more favourable weather, demolition works have resumed at the Queen Street site under strict environmental and safety regulations and in accordance with WorkSafe Victoria and the Environment Protection Authority requirements. Progress photos below:



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.

Gender Impact Assessment

N/A

RECOMMENDATION

That:

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

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments relating to this item

4.3 ANNUAL PLAN 2025/26 UPDATE (JUNE 2026)

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 30311

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. Seven (7) 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	37 (+4)
In progress 51-99%	3 (-4)
In progress 0-50%	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	Complete	As part of the Planning Scheme Review process, it has been identified that the Victorian Government's housing target of 1000 net new dwellings for Ararat Rural City by 2051 provides a suitable urban growth annual target of 40 homes per year.
	1.1.3 Complete the 'Unlocking Ararat North	Complete	This action was completed at the June 2026 Council Meeting.

	East' Structure Plan project		
1.2 Support innovative housing models that work to overcome market failure and create the capacity to increase the population of Ararat Rural City.	1.2.1 Deliver enabling infrastructure for well-located homes that address critical housing gaps in central Ararat, with support from the Housing Support Program: Community Enabling Infrastructure Stream.	In progress 0-50% (to be carried forward)	See 'Housing Support Program Project Update' report for further details.
	1.2.2 Continue to develop the Ararat Housing Enterprise P/L, delivering another four houses in Ararat during 2025/2026.	Complete	This action was completed at the April 2026 Council Meeting.
	1.2.3 Work with developers to submit EOI application/s to the National Housing Infrastructure Facility Crisis and Transitional Housing (NHIF CT) program	Complete	This action was completed at the January 2026 Council Meeting.
1.3 Work with other levels of government, business, educational institutions and not-for-for profits to develop programs to increase in-migration to Ararat Rural City to grow our population.	1.3.1 Complete the Jack and Jill Kindergarten Refurbishment, with support from the Building Blocks Improvement Grant	Complete	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	Complete	The CALD Outreach Initiative for 2025/26 is complete. 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	2.2.1 Work with Invest Victoria, Regional Development Victoria	Ongoing	Council is working with Invest Victoria, Regional Development Victoria and a number of private sector partners to

investors to develop a business park within Ararat Rural City, focused on agricultural value adding and advanced manufacturing, potentially leveraging "behind the meter" power.	and private sector partners to develop plans for the ARCC Circular Economy Precinct.		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	This action was completed at the June 2026 Council Meeting.
	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	In progress 0-50% (to be carried forward)	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.

	economy industrial precinct.		
	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	This action was completed at the June 2026 Council Meeting.
	3.3.2 Deliver the Roadside Weeds and Pests Program	Complete	This action was completed at the June 2026 Council Meeting.
	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% (to be carried forward)	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 mindful of intergenerational equity and enhance community wellbeing and safety. These approaches will	4.3.1 Deliver the 2025/26 Capital Works Program	Complete	This action was completed at the June 2026 Council Meeting.

explore strategic use of debt to fund long-term assets and ensure Council's financial sustainability.			
5.1 Open up Council's arts and culture assets to greater community participation, ownership and engagement in decision-making	5.1.1 Deliver artist and community group exhibits in the Barkly St Laneway and Community Wall within the Ararat Gallery TAMA	Complete	This action was completed at the February 2026 Council Meeting.
	5.1.2 Increase participation in programs at Ararat Gallery TAMA	Complete	This action was completed at the February 2026 Council Meeting.
	5.1.3 Investigate ways to maximise scheduling of community events at the Town Hall	Complete	This action was completed at the January 2026 Council Meeting.
	5.1.4 Identify innovative ways to increase the promotion and reach of performances at the Town Hall	Complete	This action was completed at the January 2026 Council Meeting.
5.2 Develop models of volunteering that recognise, support and properly utilise the skills that community volunteers bring to community life.	5.2.1 Deliver the first of three years of the Youth Events, Activities and Happenings (YEAH) Crew	Complete	YEAH Crew program for 2025/26 is now complete. The YEAH Crew will be continuing in 2026/27.
	5.2.2 Deliver young people's programs across schools, largely through the Crazy Ideas College	Complete	Crazy Ideas College have completed their 2025/26 program and have commenced activities for 2026/27.
	5.2.3 Work with community groups to deliver an annual Volunteer Expo	Complete	This action was completed at the June 2026 Council Meeting.
	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)	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 and Wellbeing Plan 2025-29	Complete	The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-29 was adopted at the October 2025 Council Meeting.
	5.3.3 Hold quarterly meetings of the Child Friendly Cities and Communities Working Group	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.

Gender Impact Assessment

N/A

RECOMMENDATION

That:

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

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments relating to this item

4.4 2025/2026 CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM - JUNE 2026

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 30312

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 30 June 2026, 125% of the budget is expended.

Many noteworthy project have been completed within this period including McCrows Road Bridge Strengthening, Buangor Ben Nevis Road Bridge Construction (over Mt Cole Creek), Mininera Toilet Block Upgrade, Mininera and Buangor Septic Tank Replacements as well as many road safety initiatives including the installation of new raised crossings in Barkly and High Streets. Many small community-based initiatives have also been completed as well as funded projects within both property and civil realms.

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							\$178,697	\$178,697		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	\$1,236,533	\$1,325,838	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	\$93,936	\$145,230	107%	

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		\$212,874	\$213,177	34%	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		\$642,744	\$668,744	89%	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	\$279,347	224,624	\$503,971	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		\$51,691	\$51,691	10117%	External Painting and lighting have been completed.
TOTAL - PROPERTY CAPITAL	\$4,550,771	\$3,212,433	\$1,318,338	\$20,000	\$42,982	\$404,504	\$2,585,985	\$3,240,225		

PLANT & EQUIPMENT	Budget	Committed/ Contracted	Expended 25/26	%	Notes
Vehicle Purchases	\$240,000		\$208,395	80%	
Major Plant Purchases	\$260,000		\$294,372	114%	
Fixtures, Fittings & Furniture	\$100,000		\$77,509	77%	
Book stock - Library Book Replacement	\$40,000		\$41,268	103%	
TOTAL - PLANT & EQUIPMENT			\$621,544	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		\$793,492	\$793,492	116%	<i>Works completed by Moyne Shire - Council Contribution</i>
Gravel Road Sheeting, Widening & Alternative Sealing	\$1,500,000		\$1,500,000	NA	\$331,278	\$1,386,017	\$1,717,296	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	\$689,515	\$153,231	\$842,747	84%	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 (Roads to Recovery 24/25 & 25/26)	\$3,143,000		\$2,143,000 (24/25) \$1,000,000 (25/26)	\$269,592		\$228,567	\$498,159		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					\$118,111	\$198,139	\$316,250		Works have been completed to allow for traffic flow
Buangor Ben Nevis Road (SILRP Funding 25/26)	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000							Council contribution of \$1,250,000 required in 26/27 Budget
Mt William Road (HSVPP Funding 24/25)	\$6,250,000	\$5,000,000	\$1,250,000	\$217,582		\$4,714,465	\$4,932,047	78%	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 (Roads to Recovery 24/25)	\$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) Stevens Crescent View Point Street (Banksia to Temple) View Point Street (High to Lambert)						\$15,579	\$15,579		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 (Active Transport Fund)	\$399,000	\$266,000	\$133,000	\$13,525	\$117,302	\$108,861	\$239,688	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 (Roads to Recovery - 25/26)	\$1,300,000		\$1,300,000	\$68,723		\$1,229,181	\$1,297,904	99%	Works have been completed.
McCrows Road Bridge (Roads to Recovery - 24/25)	\$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					\$2,451	\$2,451		
Footpath Renewal Program	\$400,000		\$400,000			\$337,723	\$337,723		All projects complete for 25/26 Financial Year
Albert Street Footpath (Flexible Local Transport Solutions Program 25/26)	\$85,000	\$42,500	\$42,500 taken from Footpath Renewal Program above			\$86,519	\$86,519		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					\$33,221	\$33,221		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			\$217,850	\$217,850		Works are completed. Additional cost for rock removal and fuel levy.
Buangor Recreation Reserve - Septic Upgrade			\$201,000			\$209,250	\$209,250		Works are completed. Additional cost for fuel levy.
Kerb and Channel	\$0					\$112,998	\$112,988		Transferred to Gravel Road Sheeting, Widening & Alternative Sealing. Some planning work is being undertaken for the 26/27 Financial Year.
Lake Bolac Kindergarten Carpark (YMCA received funding for work)	\$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 (Road Safety Program - School Safety Improvements 20-25)	\$19,009	\$19,009		\$8,244		\$4,369	\$12,613	66%	These works are complete.
Queen Street Housing Support Program (Housing Support Program - Community Enabling Infrastructure)	\$7,380,000	\$7,380,000		\$152,580	\$351,450	\$938,016	\$1,442,047	20%	Planning Permit application has been approved. Demolition is occurring on Queen Street site.

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		\$22,261	\$22,842	10%	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		\$20,131	\$20,731	19%	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	\$18,198	\$63,900	58%	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		\$99,518	\$101,044	86%	SHS Civil have completed these works..
Moore & Princes Street Intersection	\$131,000	\$131,000		\$145		\$20,945	\$21,090	16%	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		\$27,467	\$27,706	9%	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		\$29,682	\$31,213	6%	The detailed design for this project is complete, and the lighting design is being finalised.
George Road Raised Crossing (Ararat West)						\$5,896	\$5,896		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		\$194,965	\$325,247	104%	Both Projects have been completed.
High Street Raised Crossing						\$129,884			
TOTAL - ROADS CAPITAL	\$30,312,580	\$19,661,080	\$10,639,371	\$832,886	\$1,648,656	\$12,130,884	\$14,612,426		

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 (Funding of the same name)	\$74,135	\$74,135		NA		\$80,350	\$80,350	109%	This project has been awarded to Project Platypus, all funds are expected to be expended by mid May 2026.
Sport & Active Recreation Strategy (Local Sports Infrastructure Funding 23/24)	\$55,000	\$40,000	\$15,000	\$12,452		\$41,436	\$53,888	97%	CommunityVibe is undertaking the works associated with this project. Community engagement has been undertaken, and the draft report is currently out for final consultation.
Community Road Safety Action Plan (TAC Local Govt Funding)	\$49,540	\$49,540		\$437		\$39,581	\$40,018	81%	DWB Engineering is undertaking the works associated with this project. Community engagement has been completed and draft reporting is being compiled

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.

Gender Impact Assessment

N/A

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1. That Council receive the Capital Works Program - June 2026 report.**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

4.5 2026/2027 CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM - ANNUAL WORKS PLAN 2026/27

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 30314

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 2026/2027 Capital Works Program as a fundamental component of the current budget. With a substantial capital works investment totaling \$15.797 million, the budget primarily targets infrastructure enhancements.

Key initiatives include:

- Moyston Recreation Reserve Public Toilet Upgrade
- Pomonal Recreation Reserve Walking Track
- Buangor Ben Nevis Road Construction - Stage 1
- Projects that make up part of the Safer Local Roads and Street Program
- Reconstruction of Birdswing Road in conjunction with Northern Grampians Shire Council
- Upgrade of Footpaths, Drainage, and Kerb and Channel.
- Design and Construction of Moyston Willaura Road Bridge
- Construction of a major culvert at Barton Bridge.

These projects underscore the Council's commitment to improving local infrastructure and fostering community development in the 2026/2027 fiscal year.

DISCUSSION

Council's 2026/2027 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 2026/2027 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
- Continued implementation of OTTA seals across Councils road network
- Reconstruction of Buangor Ben Nevis Road
- Roads to Recovery funded projects (Moyston-Willaura Bridge and Stevens Crescent Reconstruction)
- Safe Local Roads and Street funding projects

The current works program is allocated as follows:

	Current Budget	Notes
PROPERTY -CAPITAL		
Property Capital	\$950,000	Moyston Recreation Reserve Toilet Block Ararat Tennis Club - Disabled toilet upgrade
PLANT & EQUIPMENT		
Vehicle Purchases	\$240,000	
Major Plan Purchases	\$260,000	
Computer Equipment	\$45,000	Printer/Photocopier Upgrade
Bookstock	\$45,000	
INFRASTRUCTURE		
Roads		
Gravel Road Sheetting, Widening & Alternative Sealing	\$1,800,000	OTTA seals to be completed - - Logans Road - Tatyoan North Road - Sugarloaf Road - Noah's Ark Road - Elmhurst Township
Reseal Program	\$1,000,000	
Buangor Ben Nevis Road	\$6,250,000	Stage 1 works expected to commence in September 2026.
Road Reconstruction Program	\$1,457,000	Birdswing Road - NGSC Stevens Crescent, Ararat
Urban Road Gravel to Seal	\$1,000,000	Roads to be nominated.
Major Patching	\$100,000	
Kerb & Channel Renewal	\$300,000	Basham Street Kerb and Channel Lake Bolac - Kerb and Channel - Mortlake Ararat Road
Bridges	\$1,200,000	Moyston Willaura Road Bridge Barton Bridge replacement with major culvert
Footpaths & Cycleways	\$400,000	Albert Street, Ararat Main Street, Willaura (Warranooke to Ayrey) Grano Street, Ararat - connection to Abbatoirs
Urban Drainage Works	\$750,000	

PROJECTS CONTINUING FROM 25/26 FINANCIAL YEAR

	Notes
PROPERTY -CAPITAL	
Ararat Pony Club Arena	Completion of road entry, most other works are complete
Centenary Park Dog Park	Due for completion in August 2026 for Ministerial opening in early September
Buangor Sports Pavilion	For completion by November 2026
Jack and Jill Kindergarten	External works to be completed
Ararat City Tennis Lighting installation and accessibility upgrade.	
INFRASTRUCTURE	
Mt William Road	Due for completion 31 October 2026
Ararat Active Bike Network	
Queen Street Housing Support Program	Prestige Mill Site - works expected to be completed 2027
View point, Tobin & Taylor Street (SLRSP)	Due for completion 30/6/27

Ingor Street - Raised Crossing (SLRSP)	Due for completion 30/6/27
King Street - Raised Crossing (SLRSP)	Due for completion 30/6/27
Moore & Princes Street Intersection (SLRSP)	Due for completion 30/6/27
Vincent Street & Alexandra Avenue - Raised Crossing (SLRSP)	Due for completion 30/6/27
Queen & Moore Street - Roundabout - (SLRSP)	Due for completion 30/6/27
George Road - Raised Crossing (SLRSP)	Works at Ararat West PS. Due for completion 30/6/27

- SLRSP - Safer Local Roads and Streets Program

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 2026/2027 Capital Works Program represents a significant element of Council's 2026/2027 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 2026/2027 Capital Works Program complies with the program funded in the 2026/2027 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 2026/2027 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 2026/2027 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 2026/2027 Capital Works Program has been developed as an element of the 2026/2027 Budget. There was extensive community engagement undertaken prior to adoption.

Gender Impact Assessment

Each project will have its own Gender Impact Assessment completed.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1. That Council receive the Capital Works Program - Annual Works Program 2026/27 report.**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no Attachments relating to this item

4.6 COMMUNITY SUPPORT GRANTS - JUNE 2026

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 30315

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 received 13 applications for the June 2026 round of Community Support Grants. An assessment panel comprising two community members and the Deputy CEO assessed the applications and agreed to fund 10 of the applications, 5 to the full amount requested. The remainder to be offered a reduced amount as the applicants have applied for the maximum amount of event funding rather than the funding maximum of \$3000 eligible for their project. The rejected applications were due to the following reasons:

1. Event had received seed funding in previous rounds of grants and were ineligible for growth funding, therefore annual Sponsorship agreed upon instead
2. Application was not recommended for funding. The applicant will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss their plans and suitability for future grants

DISCUSSION

Community organisations are required to provide matching funding based on cash or in-kind contributions to support their project or event. Infrastructure projects are not included in the funding guidelines.

Council received 13 applications for the June 2026 round of Community Support Grants with a total amount of \$51,434.90 applied for. An assessment panel comprising two community members and the Deputy Chief Executive Officer assessed the applications and agreed to fund 10 of these. Of these applications, 5 applicants were awarded their requested amount and the other 5 awarded a reduced amount. The grants awarded totalling \$31,218.90.

The successful grants were as follows:

Community Organisation	Purpose	Amount requested	Amount granted
Ararat Golden Gateway Festival	Ararat Golden Gateway Festival Parade 2026 to be held Sunday 18 th October 2026. The grant will be awarded on the basis that the organisers increase promotion of the parade and the Ararat Show following the parade. ARCC Media can assist with this. They will also be encouraged to invite the local Primary School's participation.	\$5000	\$5000
Ararat Motorcycle Club	Scramble Track Upgrade - Bull dozer required to reform track to be made fit for purpose to cater for use for the under 18 age group which aims to bring in a younger generation of club members.	\$5950	\$3000
Ararat Rifle Club	A new digital target scoring system and construction of one new 50-yard shooting mound	\$5000	\$3000
Ararat Show Society	Crowd Control Fencing - to obtain portable crowd control fencing which will be used to control people from entering the Tractor Pull area, and other display or activity areas at the Show Grounds. It is envisaged that the fencing would also be used by other groups who use the Show Grounds throughout the year. Example CFA, Equestrian events, Woodies and others.	\$2160	\$2160

Ararat Women's Shed	Ararat Women's Shed Tuesday Threads Quilting Skillshare - to purchase a proper quilting sewing machine for the Tuesday Threads program, running from 1 May to 15 December 2026. The machine is a specialist quilting machine that allows the group to complete the final quilting stage that ordinary domestic machines cannot manage. The group will be encouraged to utilise this purchase as a potential income stream. They could finish of quilts for others who do not have the required machine to do so and charge a small amount to go back into their group.	\$4532	\$3000
Buangor Events Committee	Buangor Motor Show - On 17th October 2026, the Buangor community will host its inaugural Motor Show. Designed as an annual, or biennial inclusive event, there will be a focus on food, market stalls, live music and a fireworks display to compliment the static display of cars, trucks, tractors and bikes.	\$5000	\$5000
Elmhurst Bush Market	Elmhurst Bush Market 2026 - Coordinated by the Bush Market Group, the market is held on the spacious grounds of the Elmhurst Golf Course. The market showcases local produce, home-grown goods, artisans, and small businesses. Although an event application, it appears they want some funds to cover insurance which we are not willing to cover, as this is a requirement they should be able to meet for an annual event. Reduced amount applied for this reason.	\$3500	\$3000
Friends of Gum San Inc	Gum San Railing - To erect metal railings with metal stanchions on the right side of the steep concrete path to improve safety for those accessing the side entrance of Gum San.	\$3134	\$3000
Grampians Gariwerd Rural Australians for Refugees (RAR)	RAR - Catering for our Community - Project Aim: To purchase equipment and resources such as tongs, eski's insulated food carriers, chopping boards etc. to enable the Grampians Gariwerd Rural Australians for Refugees (RAR) group to continue to cater for multicultural and community events.	\$1058.90	\$1058.90
Lake Bolac & District Little Athletics Centre	Lake Bolac & District Athletics Elite Coaching Clinic to be held Sunday 15 th November 2026. This project aligns strongly with the Sport and Recreation category by increasing access to high quality, inclusive physical activity opportunities for children and young people across the region. The Coaching Day will provide specialised coaching across ten athletics disciplines, delivered by Athletics Australia-accredited Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4 coaches. Athletes from all 20 centres within the Western Country Region will be invited to participate, offering a rare opportunity for rural families to access elite level instruction locally.	\$3000	\$3000
TOTAL:		\$31,218.90	

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

5 ENHANCING COMMUNITY LIFE

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

Budget implications

The grants were all made within existing budgetary allocations

Policy / Relevant Law

Community & Event Support Guidelines

Sustainability Implications

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

Risk Assessment

Risks have been assessed and understood by the grants committee. No unmanaged risks identified at this time.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

The outcome of each grant was made in conjunction between the two external panel members and the Deputy Chief Executive Officer.

Gender Impact Assessment

Assessment panel is majority female. Gender equality implications of the grant applications were considered as part of the assessment.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1. That Council receive the Community Support Grants - June 2026 report.**

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments relating to this item

4.7 COMMUNITY ASSET COMMITTEES' HALF YEAR REPORT

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 30316

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

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

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

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

DISCUSSION

Chief Executive Officer Update:

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

Ordinary Committee and Annual General Meetings;

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

Discussion relating to the redevelopment or development of current facilities.

Our Community Assets continue to be used for a variety of activities such as tennis, pickleball, theatre productions, high teas, comedy/musical artists, markets & flower shows.

Council provides library outreach and digital literacy sessions on a weekly basis.

Streatham Hall continues to be open on Friday afternoons as the Streatham Recovery Hub for residents affected by the January fire, to access services and connect with Agencies.

Moyston Recreation Reserve is now an official Community Asset Committee of Council. Council can now undertake repairs to these facilities in the same way it provides maintenance and repair services for our other committees.

I will continue to work with Committees to ensure that the standard of facilities are maintained for future generations. Council has a project management budget to upgrade these facilities as required, together with the Facilities Maintenance Grant for 2025/26 paid to each Committee in the past six months for anything needed to maintain or improve their facility.

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

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

1 Community Asset Committee - Meetings Minutes

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

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

Community Asset Committee	Meetings held during the report period	Meetings advised	scheduled
Alexandra Hall	26 February 2026	Quarterly scheduled.	meetings
Buangor Community Sports Centre	11 February 2026, 11 March 2026, April, May, June (no minutes supplied)	Monthly meetings scheduled.	
Elmhurst Public Hall	11 February 2026, 13 May 2026	No meetings scheduled.	
Lake Bolac Memorial Hall	No meetings held.	No meetings scheduled.	
Maroona Recreation Reserve	No meetings held.	No meetings scheduled.	
Mininera Recreation Reserve	25 March 2026 (AGM & ordinary)	No meetings scheduled.	
Moyston Public Hall	10 February 2026, 11 May 2026	Regular meetings scheduled.	
Pomonal Hall and Recreation Reserve	9 February 2026, 16 March 2026, 20 April 2026, 15 June 2026	20 July 2026 & monthly meetings scheduled.	
Streatham Memorial Hall	No meetings held.	No meetings scheduled.	
Tatyoan Hall and Recreation Reserve	2 March 2026	No meetings scheduled.	
Warrak Public Hall	No meetings held.	No meetings scheduled.	
Wickliffe Recreation Reserve	No meetings held.	No meetings scheduled.	
Willaura Memorial Hall	5 February 2026, 2 April 2026, 10 June 2026	Bi-monthly scheduled.	meetings
Willaura Recreation Reserve	16 February 2026, 20 April 2026, 16 June 2026	Bi-monthly scheduled.	meetings
Yalla-Y-Poorra Community Centre	No meetings held.	No meetings scheduled.	

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

The report supports the strategic objectives of the Council Plan 2021-2025:

4 DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING KEY ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE

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

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

5 ENHANCING COMMUNITY LIFE

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

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

Budget Implications

All Community Asset Committee projects or maintenance funding are allocated in the current Council budget. Community Asset Committees report on their finances at their meetings.

Policy/Relevant Law

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

Sustainability Implications

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

Risk Assessment

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

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

The Chief Executive Officer has attended the majority of Community Asset Committees since the last report in February 2026.

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

Gender Impact Assessment

N/A

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1. That the Community Asset Committee Half Year Report be received.**

ATTACHMENTS

Community Asset Committee Meeting Minutes provided as Attachment 4.7

SECTION 5 - COMMITTEE MINUTES/REPORTS

There are no Committee Minutes/Reports

SECTION 6 - INFORMAL MEETINGS

6.1 COUNCIL BRIEFINGS

AUTHOR'S TITLE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 30317

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 21 July 2026

Matters discussed at the briefing:

- CEO Employment & Remuneration Committee
- Insurance
- Historic Land Sale issue
- New Local Government Regulation
- Monthly Community Engagement Report
- Monthly Performance Report - Prestige Mill Infrastructure Project Update - May 2026
- Monthly Progress Report - Council Plan - Annual Plan
- Capital Work Program - June 2026
- Capital Works - Annual Works Plan
- Building approvals
- Planning approvals under delegation
- Community Grants - June 2026
- Community Asset Committee Half Year report

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
- Item 9.2 - Historic Land Sale issue

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 and 9.2 not be lifted on adoption of the motion.**