Ararat Rural City

AGENDA

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 29 September 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

Ararat Rural City

A recording of this meeting is being made for the purpose of verifying the accuracy of the minutes of the Council Meeting.

The recording is being streamed live via Facebook, to improve transparency between council and the community and give more people the opportunity to view what decisions are being made. You do not require a Facebook account to watch the live broadcast, simply enter www.facebook.com/araratruralcitycouncil into your address bar.

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

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SECTION 1 – PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1.1 LIVE STREAMING

Council is keen to engage with members of the community and live streams the formal Council Meetings to make them accessible. The stream is available to view on Council's Facebook page from 6pm and on Council's website following the Council Meeting.

1.2 TRADITIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT/OPENING PRAYER/COUNCILLORS PLEDGE

Traditional acknowledgement

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today, and pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging.

Opening Prayer

Almighty God, we humbly ask you to help us, as elected Councillors of the Ararat Rural City Council. Guide our deliberations. Prosper what is your will for us, to your honour and glory and for the welfare and benefit of the people whom we serve in the Ararat Rural City.

Councillors Pledge

We will faithfully and impartially carry out and exercise the functions, powers, authorities and discretions invested in us under the *Local Government Act 2020* and any other Act to the best of our skill and judgement.

1.3 APOLOGIES

RECOMMENDATION

That the apology of Cr be accepted.

1.4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 25 August 2026 be confirmed.

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1.5 DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A Councillor who has a conflict of interest in a matter being considered at a *Council meeting* at which he or she:

1. is present must disclose that conflict of interest by explaining the nature of the conflict of interest to those present at the *Council meeting* immediately before the matter is considered; or
2. intends to be present must disclose that conflict of interest by providing to the *Chief Executive Officer* before the *Council meeting* commences a written notice:
   (a) advising of the conflict of interest;
   (b) explaining the nature of the conflict of interest; and
   (c) detailing, if the nature of the conflict of interest involves a Councillor's relationship with or a gift from another person, the:
      - name of the other person;
      - nature of the relationship with that other person or the date of receipt, value and type of gift received from the other person; and
      - nature of that other person's interest in the matter,

   and then immediately before the matter is considered at the meeting announcing to those present that he or she has a conflict of interest and that a written notice has been given to the *Chief Executive Officer* under this sub-Rule.

The Councillor must, in either event, leave the *Council meeting* immediately after giving the explanation or making the announcement (as the case may be) and not return to the meeting until after the matter has been disposed of.

SECTION 2 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

2.1 PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

1 Unless *Council* determines to consider it as an item of urgent business, no motion (other than a motion to receive the same) may be made on any petition, joint letter, memorial or other like application until the next *Council meeting* after that at which it has been presented.

2 It is incumbent on every Councillor presenting a petition or joint letter to acquaint himself or herself with the contents of that petition or joint letter, and to ascertain that it does not contain language disrespectful to *Council*.

3 Every Councillor presenting a petition or joint letter to *Council* must:

- write or otherwise record his or her name at the beginning of the petition or joint letter; and
- confine himself or herself to a statement of the persons from whom it comes, the number of signatories to it, the material matters expressed in it and the text of the prayer or request.

4 Every petition or joint letter presented to *Council* must be in *writing* (other than pencil), typing or printing, contain the request of the petitioners or signatories and be signed by at least 12 people.

5 Every petition or joint letter must be signed by the persons whose names are appended to it by their names or marks, and, except in cases of incapacity or sickness, by no one else and the address of every petitioner or signatory must be clearly stated.

6 Any signature appearing on a page which does not bear the text of the whole of the petition or request may not be considered by *Council*.

7 Every page of a petition or joint letter must be a single page of paper and not be posted, stapled, pinned or otherwise affixed or attached to any piece of paper other than another page of the petition or joint letter.

8 If a petition, joint letter, memorial or other like application relates to an operational matter, *Council* must refer it to the *Chief Executive Officer* for consideration.

SECTION 3 – REPORTS REQUIRING COUNCIL DECISION

3.1 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2025/26

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**
DEPARTMENT: **CEO'S OFFICE**
REFERENCE: **31668**

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:
Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
The Financial Statements and Performance Statement (the statements) have been prepared for the period ended 30 June 2026. The Victorian Auditor-General is required to audit the statements but cannot issue his report unless Council approves the statements.

The Audit and Risk Committee reviewed the statements on 15 September 2026 and recommended that Council authorises Councillor Bob Sanders, Councillor Peter Joyce and Dr Tim Harrison to certify the Financial Statements and the Performance Statement in their final form.

DISCUSSION
Pursuant to the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) Council is required to give "in principle approval" to the 2025/26 Financial Statements and Performance Statement and submit the statements to the auditor for reporting on the audit.

The Act recognises that further changes may be made to the statements and therefore Council must authorise two Councillors to certify the Financial Statements and Performance Statement in their final form after any changes recommended by the auditor have been made.

The Auditor-General's agent conducted the offsite audit during August and September 2026.

Key Financial information:

Financial Statements – Income Statement
The Comprehensive Income Statement measures how well Council has performed from an operating nature. It reports revenue and expenditure from the activities and functions undertaken, with the net effect being a surplus or deficit. Capital expenditure is excluded from this statement, as it is reflected in the Balance Sheet. Depreciation is included in this statement, as depreciation is the accounting method of allocating the cost of an asset over its useful life.

The draft Comprehensive Income Statement shows total income in 2026 of $46.232 million compared with $37.526 million in 2025. Rates & Charges income increased by $0.417 million, Government Grants for operations decreased by $1.052 million, and Government Grants for capital works increased by $7.709 million.

Council recognised income for several grants that were not budgeted including the following:

- Council Support Fund – Streatham Bushfire Recovery - $0.400 million
- Disaster Recovery Funding (Fires Dec 2024) - $0.162 million
- Mount William Road Reconstruction - $4.360 million
- Jack & Jill Kindergarten Upgrade - $0.669 million

Total expenses in 2026 were $37.326 million compared with $36.369 million in 2025, an increase of $0.957 million. A breakdown of expenses reveals an increase in employee costs of $0.455 million.

There has been a decrease of $0.041 million in materials and services to deliver the outcomes for the additional operating grants and to complete projects carried forward from the previous financial year.

Depreciation expenses have increased by $0.347 million as a result of the revaluation completed as at 30 June 2026.

The net result for 2026 was a surplus of $8.906 million compared with a surplus of $1.157 million in 2025. The revaluation and indexation of property and infrastructure assets at 30 June 2026 have resulted in an increase in asset values of $31.133 million.

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

Council's current assets have increased by $9.125 million, from $17.978 million as at 30 June 2025 to $27.103 million as at 30 June 2026. Cash and cash equivalents have increased by $6.425 million and current trade and other receivables decreased by $0.164 million. Rate debtors have decreased by $0.345 million.

Total liabilities have increased by $5.578 million from $16.464 million in 2025 to $22.042 million in 2026.

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

The Cash Flow Statement shows a net increase in cash and cash equivalents of $6.425 million compared with a net increase of $11.792 million in 2025. Cash and cash equivalents excludes funds transferred to a term deposit investment which are classified as an other financial asset.

The Cash Flow Statement shows net cash provided by operating activities was $22.535 million in 2026 compared with $21.875 million in 2025, representing an increase of $0.660 million.

Net cash used in investing activities (e.g. payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment) was $15.408 million in 2026. In comparison the net cash used in investing in 2025 was $9.503 million, which included $3.040 million transferred from a term deposit investment with a six-month maturity period.

Net cash used in financing activities was $0.702 million in 2026 compared with $0.580 million provided by financing activities in 2025.

Financial Statements – Capital works
The Statement of Capital Works details the capital works completed during 2026. It shows $15.063 million invested in 2026 compared with $11.704 million in 2025, an increase of $3.359 million. Total property works increased by $2.318 million which includes works undertaken on the Jack & Jill Kindergarten and the Ararat Pony Club Sports Arena. Total Infrastructure works increased by $0.803 million with several projects completed from funds carried forward from the previous year.

Highlights in the property area included works undertaken on the Jack & Jill Kindergarten and the Ararat Pony Club Sports Arena.

Highlights in the infrastructure area included additional use of the innovative Otta sealing to a number of rural and urban gravel roads, works on Buangor-Ben Nevis Road Bridge, and Mount William Road.

Funded safety upgrades, including raised pedestrian crossings, were completed in High Street and Barkly Street.

Performance Statement
The Victorian Government has introduced a mandatory system of performance reporting which prescribes performance information to be included in Council's annual reports.

"Councils must describe the prescribed indicators and measures in the performance statement so it is clear to the audience what is being measured. In addition, the performance statement must include the results achieved in relation to the prescribed service performance outcome, financial performance and sustainable capacity for the financial year and three preceding years".

For the financial performance indicators and measures, the performance statement must also include the forecast results for four years based on the financial statements included in Council's budget.

Reporting trend information helps the reader understand changes in Council performance over time and acts as a point of reference for results. The regulations require that Councils must also provide an explanation of any material variations in the results between the current year and other years disclosed, to enable the reader to form an understanding of the reason for the variation".

The performance reporting framework requires Councils to load the indicators included in this performance statement, as well as a number of other indicators that are required to be included in the report of operations, onto the "Know your Council" website - www.vic.gov.au/know-your-council, which will allow the community to compare the performance result of Councils across Victoria.

Part of the performance reporting framework includes the State Government setting expected ranges for each indicator. Based on the draft financial statement and performance statement, Council is within the expected range for most indicators. The reasons for the material variations are included in the performance statement.

Audit and Risk Committee Review
The draft Financial Statements and Performance Statement were considered by the Audit and Risk Committee on 15 September 2026. Mr Ryan Schischka from Johnsons MME presented the Auditors Closing Report at that meeting, and discussed the audit progress with the Audit and Risk Committee members. Further changes may be required after the Victorian Auditor General's Office has reviewed the statements and before the nominated Councillors certify the accounts in their final form.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

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

Budget Implications
There are no budget implications arising from approving the statements.

Policy/Relevant Law
Section 99 (2) of the Local Government Act 2020 states that: "the Council, after passing a resolution giving its approval in principle to the performance statement and financial statements, must submit the statements to the auditor for reporting on the audit".

Section 99 (3) of the Local Government Act 2020 states that: "The Council must ensure that the performance statement and financial statements, in their final form after any changes recommended or agreed by the auditor have been made, are certified in accordance with the regulations by—

(a) 2 Councillors authorised by the Council for the purposes of this subsection; and
(b) any other persons prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this subsection."

Section 99 (5) of the Local Government Act 2020 states that: "the auditor must not sign a report under subsection (4) or under Part 3 of the Audit Act 1994 unless the performance statement or the financial statements (as applicable) have been certified under subsection (3)."

Sustainability Implications

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

Risk Assessment

Council is required to approve the statements before the Auditor-General can issue the audit report

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Various Council officers have been involved with the preparation of the statements. The statements will be included in the Annual Report that will be made available to the public.

Gender Impact Assessment

N/A

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. **Pursuant to Section 99 of the Local Government Act 2020, Council gives approval in principle to the Financial Statements and Performance Statements for the year ended 30 June 2026; and**
2. **Pursuant to Section 99 of the Local Government Act 2020, Council authorises the Chief Executive Officer, Councillor Bob Sanders and Councillor Peter Joyce to certify the 2025/26 Financial Statements and Performance Statement in their final form.**

ATTACHMENTS

The Financial Statements and Performance Statement are provided as Attachment 3.1

3.2 MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORT – JUNE 2026

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**
DEPARTMENT: **CEO'S OFFICE**
REFERENCE: **31669**

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:
Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
The financial statements and performance indicators have been prepared for the period ended 30 June 2026. The actual year-to-date figures included in this report have been used to compile Council's "in principle" Financial Statements, which are subject to audit by the Victorian Auditor-General.

The unaudited figures show Council's overall financial performance is more favourable than the Original Budget, finishing with an operating surplus of $8.906 million rather than an operating surplus of $2.050 million. The financial performance is also more favourable than the Current Budget figures for 2025/26 which includes adjustments for the projects carried forward from 2024/25 and grant funds received in advance.

DISCUSSION
Council must establish and maintain a budgeting and reporting framework that is consistent with the principles of sound financial management.

Key Financial information:

Income Statement (Attachment 1)

The Income Statement measures how well Council has performed from an operating nature. It reports revenues and expenditure from the activities and functions undertaken, with the net effect being a surplus or deficit. Capital expenditure is excluded from this statement, as it is reflected in the Balance Sheet.

Attachment 1 shows that Council generated $46.232 million in revenue and $37.326 million in expenses to 30 June 2026. This has resulted in an operating surplus of $8.906 million for the year ended 30 June 2026.

Income
Rates and charges account for 54% of the total budgeted income for 2025/26. Rates and charges are recognised when the rates have been raised, not when the income has been received. An amount of $18.510 million has been recognised as income for the year ended 30 June 2026.

User fees account for 4.74% of the total budgeted income for 2025/26 and $1.792 million has been received to 30 June 2026. The majority of this relates to transfer station fees, fitness centre income and commercial waste management charges.

Recurrent Operating Grants total $12.082 million to 30 June 2026, including $6.806 million from the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission for general purpose grants and $4.348 million for the local roads grants.

Non-recurrent Operating Grants total $1.209 million to 30 June 2026. Council has been successful in obtaining several grants that had not been budgeted for, as detailed in the table below. The amounts shown as unearned income will be treated as income in future accounting periods once the performance obligations of the grant have been met.

Non-Recurrent Operating Grants	**Budget 2025/26 $'000**	**Income 2025/26 $'000**	**Unearned Income $'000**
Ararat Housing Transition	-	-	300
Digital Twin Victoria	-	-	950
Free Public WiFi Services	-	-	1,289
Supported Playgroups	67	69	-
Ararat Rural City Sport, Active Recreation & Open Space Strategy	-	40	-
CALD Outreach Workers Initiative	129	129	-
Tiny Towns Fund - Pomonal Community Hub	-	119	-
Natural Disaster Relief	-	162	-
Council Support Fund – Streatham Fires	-	400	-
Streatham CRO & Hub	-	-	90
Engage - Youth Events Activities & Happenings	55	55	-
Centenary Park Dog Park	100	-	75
Queen Street Housing Program	-	-	5,697
Ararat Hills Adventure Sports Precinct	-	-	400
Early Career Educators	-	-	103
Ararat Active Bike Network	266	-	128
Ararat City Tennis Sports Lighting and Accessibility	-	-	504
Primary Producer Support Payment	-	125	-
Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund	-	50	-
Moyston Multi-Use Court Upgrade	-	-	203
Other Minor Grants (under $30,000)	-	60	17
	617	**1,209**	**9,756**

Non-recurrent Capital Grants total $7.134 million to 30 June 2026, as detailed in the table below. The amounts shown as unearned income will be treated as income in future accounting periods once the performance obligations of the grant have been met.

Non-Recurrent Capital Grants	**Budget 2025/26 $'000**	**Income 2025/26 $'000**	**Unearned Income $'000**
Pedestrian Infrastructure Program	-	50	0
Tiny Towns Fund - Buangor Recreation Reserve Pavillion Redevelopment	-	-	50
Tiny Towns Fund - Buangor Cobb & Co Stables	-	54	-
Pony Club Sports Arena	1,490	1,283	-
Queen Street Housing Program	-	45	1,638
Ararat Library Lighting & Exterior Upgrade	-	51	-
TAC Safe Local Roads and Streets Program	-	262	426
Jack & Jill Kindergarten Upgrade	-	669	2
Mount William Road Reconstruction	-	4,360	-
Footpath-Ararat Retirement Village & Sports Precinct	-	35	-
Barkly St Raised Crossing	-	312	-
Buangor-Ben Nevis Road Upgrade	-	-	2,000
Other Minor Grants (under $30,000)	-	13	-
	1,490	**7,134**	**4,116**

Note
It is important to note the following:

1. The Grants Operating (recurrent) figure in the Original Budget was $8.909 million and in the Current Budget is recorded as $4.721 million, as $4.188 million was paid to Council in 2024/25 by the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission (VLGGC) for the 2025/26 financial year. Council has still received the expected VLGGC income, to be spent in 2025/26, however it will be reported over two financial years.
2. Unearned revenue received in prior years has been adjusted between the Original Budget and Current Budget with an additional $6.659 million for Grants Operating (non-recurrent), $0.386 million for Grants Capital (recurrent) and $2.282 million for Grants Capital (non-recurrent) included in the Current Budget on the assumption that each of the grant projects will be completed during the 2025/26 financial year.
3. These changes in the budget, plus the note reported under expenses, create a change in the reported surplus position from a projected surplus of $2.050 million to a surplus of $3.028 million for 2025/26. The year-end variance is a surplus of $5.878 million when the actual year to date expenses are compared to the year to date budget.

Expenses
Employee Costs account for approximately 37% of the total budgeted expenditure for 2025/26. For the year ended 30 June 2026 Council has incurred $12.696 million in employee costs. These costs include several grant-funded positions not budgeted for, and organisation restructure costs. Council has also incurred capitalised salary costs of $0.967 million, which are included in capital works reporting rather than the income statement, as they are treated as part of the cost of creating or improving Council assets.

Materials and Services account for approximately 36.94% of the total budgeted expenditure for 2025/26. For the year ended 30 June 2026, Council has incurred $12.181 million in materials and services costs. There are a number of projects, including those carried forward from 2024/25 that were completed before the end of the financial year.

Depreciation totals $11.436 million to 30 June 2026. The higher than budgeted depreciation has resulted from increased asset valuations being received for 30 June 2025 after the budget for 2025/26 was finalised.

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

Balance Sheet (Attachment 2)
The Balance Sheet is one of the main financial statements and reports Council's assets, liabilities and equity at a given date, in this case 30 June 2026. Comparative figures have been provided as at 30 June 2025.

Council's current assets have increased by $9.125 million from $17.978 million as at 30 June 2025 to $27.103 million as at 30 June 2026. Cash and cash equivalents have increased by $6.425 million from $14.841 million to $21.266 million. Trade and other receivables have decreased by $0.164 million from $3.066 million as at 30 June 2025 to $2.902 million as at 30 June 2026.

Total liabilities have increased from $16.464 million in 2024/25 to $22.042 million in 2025/26. Trade and other payables have increased by $1.396 million and trust funds and deposits have increased by $0.066 million. Unearned income increased by $4.542 million, which includes grants received by Council, where in accordance with accounting standards, they are held as a liability until grant-related performance obligations have been met.

Statement of Cash Flows (Attachment 3)
The Statement of Cash Flows shows how changes in the Statement of Financial Position and Income Statement affect Cash and Cash Equivalents, and breaks down the analysis to operating activities, investing activities and financing activities.

The Cash and Cash Equivalents at the beginning of the financial year of $14.841 million have increased by $6.425 million to $21.266 million as at 30 June 2026.

Net cash of $22.535 million was provided by operating activities, $15.408 million was used in investing activities, and $0.702 million was used in financing activities.

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

Financial Performance Indicators (Attachment 4)
The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework requires Councils to report various performance indicators at the end of each financial year.

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

Indicator	30/6/2025	30/06/2026
Working capital *Measure - Current assets compared to current liabilities.* Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework 100% to 400% Indicator of the broad objective that sufficient working capital is available to pay bills as and when they fall due. High or increasing level of working capital suggests an improvement in liquidity	122%	130%
Loans and borrowings *Measure - Loans and borrowings compared to rates.* Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – 0% to 70% Indicator of the broad objective that the level of interest-bearing loans and borrowings should be appropriate to the size and nature of a council's activities. Low or decreasing level of loans and borrowings suggests an improvement in the capacity to meet long term obligations	0.86%	0.00%
Indebtedness *Measure - Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue* Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – 2% to 70% Indicator of the broad objective that the level of long-term liabilities should be appropriate to the size and nature of a Council's activities. Low or decreasing level of long-term liabilities suggests an improvement in the capacity to meet long term obligations	7.83%	5.60%
Rates concentration *Measure - Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue* Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – 30% to 80% Indicator of the broad objective that revenue should be generated from a range of sources. High or increasing range of revenue sources suggests an improvement in stability	49.39%	49.66%

Indicator	30/6/2025	30/06/2026
Expenditure level *Measure - Expenses per property assessment* Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework $2,000 to $10,000 Indicator of the broad objective that resources should be used efficiently in the delivery of services. Low or decreasing level of expenditure suggests an improvement in organisational efficiency	$4,936	$4,974
Indicator - Revenue level *Measure - Average residential rate per residential property assessment* Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework - $700 to $2,000 Indicator of the broad objective that resources should be used efficiently in the delivery of services. Low or decreasing level of rates suggests an improvement in organisational efficiency	$2,002	$2,030
Indicator – Percentage of total rates collected The internal audit conducted in 2019 on Rates Revenue and Rate Debtor Management found no routine or regular reporting of large and long outstanding rates debtors. The outstanding Rates Debtors is reported in the Annual Financial report. As at 30 June 2026 the outstanding Rates Debtors totalled $2.121 million compared to $2.466 million as at 30 June 2025, a decrease of $0.345 million. In percentage terms 89.9% of the rates raised have been collected at 30 June 2026 compared to 87.8% up to 30 June 2025. Outstanding rates are currently charged 10% interest. Council issues approximately 7,900 rate notices. In 2025/26 there are 2,495 assessments paying by instalments compared with 2,158 assessments in 2024/25.	87.8%	89.9%
Indicator – Asset Renewal & Upgrade *Measure - Asset renewal & Upgrade compared to depreciation* Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – 40% to 130% Assessment of whether council assets are being renewed or upgraded as planned. It compares the rate of spending on existing assets through renewing, restoring, replacing or upgrading existing assets with depreciation. Ratios higher than 1.0 indicate there is a lesser risk of insufficient spending on Council's asset base.	100.75%	113.93%

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

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

Transfers to and from Reserves 2025/26

The following tables represent the amounts proposed to be transferred to and from Reserves for the year ended 30 June 2026. A number of these transfers are in accordance with the budget. The transfers to the Capital Works Reserves includes funds received in 2025/26 that relate to 2026/27 and a number of specific projects included in the budget for 2025/26 that have not commenced or are in progress and proposed to be carried forward to 2026/27.

Transfers To Reserves

CAPITAL WORKS & PROJECTS RESERVE	
Grants Commission General	$4,299,933
Grants Commission Roads	$2,721,982
MERP Funding	$60,000
Ararat Housing Transition	$300,000
Free Public Wifi	$74,000
Digital Twin Victoria	$393,000
Rural Roads Support Program	$56,500
Unlocking Ararat North East	$46,000
Pomonal Council Support Fund	$507,000
Buangor Cobb & Co Heritage	$24,000
Queen St Housing Support-Op	$4,357,496
Queen St Housing Support-Cap	$1,637,791
Ararat Hills Adventure Sports Precinct	$400,000
ECE Innovations Grant	$12,000
Supported Playgroups	$16,000
Buangor Rec Reserve Pavilion Upgrade	$75,000
Barkly St Raised Crossing (IP43)	$117,000
Ararat Active Bike Network	$19,000
Ararat City Tennis Court Upgrade	$290,000
Jack & Jill Kindergarten	$27,000
Queen & Moore St Roundabout (SLRSP)	$289,000
View Point, Tobin, Taylor St Intersection (SLRSP)	$40,000
Ingor Street (SLRSP)	$9,000
King Street (SLRSP)	$14,000
Moore & Princes St Intersection (SLRSP)	$17,000
Vincent St & Alexandra Ave Intersection (SLRSP)	$68,000
Streatham Council Support Fund	$400,000
Moyston Multi-Use Court Upgrade	$201,000
Moyston Netball & Tennis Changeroom Design	$16,000
Community Grants June 2026	$32,000
Facade Kickstart Grants	$40,000
Total for Capital Works & Projects Reserve	**$16,559,702**

RECREATIONAL LANDS RESERVE	
Open Space Contributions	$93,000
Total for Recreational Lands Reserve	**$93,000**

TOTAL TRANSFERS TO RESERVE	$16,652,702

Total From Reserves

CAPITAL WORKS & PROJECTS RESERVE	
Transfer from Capital Works Reserve for 25/26 Works/Projects	$8,921,538
Total for Capital Works & Projects Reserve	**$8,921,538**

BUILDING CAPITAL RESERVE	
Transfer from Building Capital Reserve for contributions to Ararat Housing Enterprise Pty Ltd for 2025/26	$500,000
Total for Building Capital Reserve	**$500,000**

TOTAL TRANSFERS FROM RESERVES	$9,421,538

A summary of movements in reserve balances is included in the following table:

	Balance at 30 June 2025	Transfers to Reserve	Transfers from Reserve	Balance at 30 June 2026
Capital works and projects	$8,921,538	$16,559,702	$8,921,538	$16,559,702
Recreational land	$105,050	$93,000	-	$198,050
Building capital	$3,958,402	-	$500,000	$3,458,402
Environmental projects	$94,709	-	-	$94,709
Waste management	$210,696	-	-	$210,696
Total Reserves	**$13,290,395**	**$16,652,702**	**$9,421,538**	**$20,521,559**

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

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

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

Budget Implications
Council's financial performance is in line with expectations, once the original budget has been adjusted for the projects carried forward from 2024/25 and for grant funds received in advance.

Policy/Relevant Law
Section 97 – Quarterly Budget Report of the Local Government Act 2020 states:

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

3. In addition, the second quarterly report of a financial year must include a statement by the Chief Executive Officer as to whether a revised budget is, or may be, required.

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

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

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement
Council's financial performance reports will continue to be published monthly.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. **The Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Financial Performance Indicators for the period ended 30 June 2026 be received and adopted, and**
2. **Transfers to reserves totalling $16,652,702 and transfers from reserves totalling $9,421,538 be adopted.**

ATTACHMENTS
Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Financial Performance Indicators are provided as Attachment 3.2

3.3 MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORT – AUGUST 2026

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 31670

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:
Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

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

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

Based on the information provided by responsible officers and managers Council's overall financial performance is in line with budget.

DISCUSSION
Council must establish and maintain a budgeting and reporting framework that is consistent with the principles of sound financial management.

Key Financial information:

Income Statement (Attachment 1)

The Income Statement measures how well Council has performed from an operating nature. It reports revenues and expenditure from the activities and functions undertaken, with the net effect being a surplus or deficit. Capital expenditure is excluded from this statement, as it is reflected in the Balance Sheet.

Attachment 1 shows that Council generated $20.209 million in revenue and $7.062 million in expenses to 31 August 2026. This has resulted in an operating surplus of $13.147 million for the two months ended 31 August 2026.

Income
Rates and charges account for 49% of the total budgeted income for 2026/27. Rates and charges are recognised when the rates have been raised, not when the income has been received. An amount of $18.316 million has been recognised as income for the two months ended 31 August 2026.

User fees account for 4.4% of the total budgeted income for 2026/27 and $0.449 million has been received to 31 August 2026. The majority of this relates to transfer station fees, fitness centre income and commercial waste management charges.

Non-recurrent Operating Grants total $0.168 million to 31 August 2026. Council has been successful in obtaining several grants that had not been budgeted for, as detailed in the table below. The amounts shown as unearned income will be treated as income in future accounting periods once the performance obligations of the grant have been met.

Non-Recurrent Operating Grants	Budget 2026/27 $'000	Income 2026/27 $'000	Unearned Income $'000
Ararat Housing Transition	-	-	300

Digital Twin Victoria	-	-	950
Free Public WiFi Services	-	-	1,289
Supported Playgroups	69	12	-
CALD Outreach Workers Initiative	133	133	-
Streatham CRO & Hub	-	-	90
Engage - Youth Events Activities & Happenings	55	-	-
Centenary Park Dog Park	-	-	75
Queen Street Housing Program	-	-	5,697
Ararat Hills Adventure Sports Precinct	-	-	400
Early Career Educators	-	-	103
Ararat Active Bike Network	-	-	128
Ararat City Tennis Sports Lighting and Accessibility	-	-	519
Moyston Multi-Use Court Upgrade	-	-	203
Other Minor Grants (under $30,000)	-	23	17
	257	**168**	**9,771**

Non-recurrent Capital Grants total $0.013 million to 31 August 2026, as detailed in the table below. The amounts shown as unearned income will be treated as income in future accounting periods once the performance obligations of the grant have been met.

Non-Recurrent Capital Grants	**Budget 2026/27 $'000**	**Income 2026/27 $'000**	**Unearned Income $'000**
Tiny Towns Fund - Buangor Recreation Reserve Pavillion Redevelopment	-	-	50
Pony Club Sports Arena	-	13	179
Queen Street Housing Program	-	-	1,638
TAC Safe Local Roads and Streets Program	-	-	470
Jack & Jill Kindergarten Upgrade	-	-	2
Buangor-Ben Nevis Road Upgrade	5,000	-	2,000
Other Minor Grants (under $30,000)	-	-	-
	5,000	**13**	**4,339**

Gain on disposal of property, plant & Equipment totals $0.521 million with a parcel of Council land sold in July 2026.

Note

It is important to note the following:

4. The Grants Operating (recurrent) figure in the Original Budget was $9.122 million and in the Current Budget is recorded as $2.040 million, as $7.022 million was paid to Council in 2025/26 by the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission (VLGGC) for the 2026/27 financial year. Council has still received the expected VLGGC income, to be spent in 2026/27, however it will be reported over two financial years.
5. Unearned revenue received in prior years has been adjusted between the Original Budget and Current Budget with an additional $9.756 million for Grants Operating (non-recurrent) and $4.116 million for Grants Capital (non-recurrent) included in the Current Budget on the assumption that each of the grant projects will be completed during the 2026/27 financial year.
6. These changes in the budget, plus the note reported under expenses, create a change in the reported surplus position from a projected surplus of $4.624 million to a surplus of $4.261 million for 2026/27. The year-end variance is a surplus of $0.239 million when the actual year to date expenses are compared to the year to date budget.

Expenses

Employee Costs account for approximately 37.8% of the total budgeted expenditure for 2026/27. For the two months ended 31 August 2026 Council has incurred $1.807 million in employee costs. Council has also incurred capitalised salary costs of $0.059 million, which are included in capital works reporting rather than the income statement, as they are treated as part of the cost of creating or improving Council assets.

Materials and Services account for approximately 26.7% of the total budgeted expenditure for 2026/27. For the two months ended 31 August 2026, Council has incurred $3.284 million in materials and services costs. There are a number of projects, including those carried forward from 2025/26 that are expected to be completed before the end of the financial year.

Note

It is important to note the following:
There has been an increase in expenditure on materials and services from $9.078 million in the Original Budget to $16.238 million in the Current Budget for 2026/27. This has resulted from a carry forward amount of $7.160 million from the 2025/26 financial year surplus and unspent grant funds which will be used to complete the projects in 2026/27.

Balance Sheet (Attachment 2)

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

Council's current assets have increased by $9.595 million from $27.103 million as at 30 June 2026 to $36.698 million as at 31 August 2026. Cash and cash equivalents have decreased by $4.417 million from $21.266 million to $16.849 million. Trade and other receivables have increased by $16.846 million from $2.902 million as at 30 June 2026 to $19.748 million as at 31 August 2026.

Total liabilities have decreased from $22.042 million in 2025/26 to $19.700 million in 2026/27. Trade and other payables have decreased by $2.728 million and trust funds and deposits have increased by $0.224 million. Unearned income/revenue increased by $0.238 million, which includes grants received by Council, where in accordance with accounting standards, they are held as a liability until grant-related performance obligations have been met.

Statement of Cash Flows (Attachment 3)

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

The Cash and Cash Equivalents at the beginning of the financial year of $21.266 million have decreased by $4.417 million to $16.849 million as at 31 August 2026.

Net cash of $4.509 million was used in operating activities, $0.183 million was provided by investing activities, and $0.091 million was used in financing activities.

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

Financial Performance Indicators (Attachment 4)

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

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

Indicator	30/06/2026	31/08/2026
Working capital *Measure - Current assets compared to current liabilities.* Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework 100% to 400% Indicator of the broad objective that sufficient working capital is available to pay bills as and when they fall due. High or increasing level of working capital suggests an improvement in liquidity	130%	211%
Loans and borrowings *Measure - Loans and borrowings compared to rates.* Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – 0% to 70% Indicator of the broad objective that the level of interest-bearing loans and borrowings should be appropriate to the size and nature of a council's activities. Low or decreasing level of loans and borrowings suggests an improvement in the capacity to meet long term obligations	0.00%	0.00%
Indebtedness *Measure - Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue* Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – 2% to 70% Indicator of the broad objective that the level of long-term liabilities should be appropriate to the size and nature of a Council's activities. Low or decreasing level of long-term liabilities suggests an improvement in the capacity to meet long term obligations	5.60%	6.26%
Rates concentration *Measure - Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue* Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – 30% to 80% Indicator of the broad objective that revenue should be generated from a range of sources. High or increasing range of revenue sources suggests an improvement in stability	49.66%	90.71%
Expenditure level *Measure - Expenses per property assessment* Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework $2,000 to $10,000 Indicator of the broad objective that resources should be used efficiently in the delivery of services. Low or decreasing level of expenditure suggests an improvement in organisational efficiency	$4,974	$940
Indicator - Revenue level *Measure - Average residential rate per residential property assessment* Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework - $700 to $2,000 Indicator of the broad objective that resources should be used efficiently in the delivery of services. Low or decreasing level of rates suggests an improvement in organisational efficiency	$2,030	$2,089

Indicator	30/06/2026	31/08/2026
Indicator – Percentage of total rates collected The internal audit conducted in 2019 on Rates Revenue and Rate Debtor Management found no routine or regular reporting of large and long outstanding rates debtors. The outstanding Rates Debtors is reported in the Annual Financial report. As at 31 August 2026 the outstanding Rates Debtors totalled $19.074 million compared to $2.121 million as at 30 June 2026, an increase of $16.953 million. In percentage terms 9.1% of the rates raised have been collected at 31 August 2026 compared to 6.6% up to 31 August 2025. Outstanding rates are currently charged 10% interest. Council issues approximately 7,900 rate notices. In 2025/26 there were 2,495 assessments paying by instalments compared with 2,158 assessments in 2024/25.	89.9%	9.1%
Indicator – Asset Renewal & Upgrade *Measure - Asset renewal & Upgrade compared to depreciation* Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – 40% to 130% Assessment of whether council assets are being renewed or upgraded as planned. It compares the rate of spending on existing assets through renewing, restoring, replacing or upgrading existing assets with depreciation. Ratios higher than 1.0 indicate there is a lesser risk of insufficient spending on Council's asset base.	113.93%	27.98%

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

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

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

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

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

Budget Implications
Council's financial performance is in line with expectations.

Policy/Relevant Law
Section 97 – Quarterly Budget Report of the Local Government Act 2020 states:

1. As soon as practicable after the end of each quarter of the financial year, the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a quarterly budget report is presented to the Council at a Council meeting which is open to the public.
2. A quarterly budget report must include–
    a. a comparison of the actual and budgeted results to date; and

   b. an explanation of any material variations; and
   c. any other matters prescribed by the regulations.
3. In addition, the second quarterly report of a financial year must include a statement by the Chief Executive Officer as to whether a revised budget is, or may be, required.

Sustainability Implications

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

Risk Assessment

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

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

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

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. The Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Financial Performance Indicators for the period ended 31 August 2026 be received and adopted.

ATTACHMENTS

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

3.4 S5 - INSTRUMENT OF DELEGATION FROM CEO TO COUNCIL STAFF

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 31671

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:
Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Changes to this delegation is to provide this delegation to the incoming CEO, Ms Phuong Au, to come into force on the 1 October 2026.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

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

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

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

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

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

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

Risk Assessment
The remaking of the Instrument of Delegation form Council to CEO ensures ongoing legislative compliance for Ararat Rural City Council.
It is essential that the Instrument of Delegation are kept up to date to ensure that the CEO is properly empowered to undertake the role.

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

Gender Impact Assessment
A gender impact assessment is not required.

RECOMMENDATION

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

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

ATTACHMENTS
The S5 Instrument of Delegation – Council to CEO is provided as Attachment 3.4

3.5 ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**
DEPARTMENT: **CEO'S OFFICE**
REFERENCE: **31672**

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:
Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
This report presents the Community Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2025–2030 for consideration and endorsement by Council.

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

This report requests final approval of the Community Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan.

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

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

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

Key road safety risks identified include:

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

The community priorities identified four key points:

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

The strategic goals of the strategy are as follows:

- Reduce fatal and serious injuries on rural roads
- Prevent run-off-road crashes
- Improve safety at high-risk intersections
- Protect vulnerable road users
- Align speeds with road function and risk

- Improve safety for work-related road use
- Strengthen data, monitoring and reporting

Key performance targets for the plan are:

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

Key actions for the plan include:

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

The strategy provides clear strategic direction for Council and aligns with state and national road safety frameworks. The strategy considers community priorities and will support Council in future funding applications, building relationships with both state and federal government.

It is requested that Council approve the Community Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan (2025-2030) as presented.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

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

Budget Implications

Implementation of the plan will be through:

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

Policy/Relevant Law

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

Sustainability Implications

The strategy strongly supports social sustainability by improving community safety, well-being and liveability. By reducing trauma and improving equitable access to transport, the strategy contributes to stronger and more connected communities.

The strategy supports long term economic sustainability by reducing the economic costs of road trauma, supporting freight efficiency and safer transport routes, particularly in our municipality with strong agriculture and industry reliance, and promoting the attractiveness of the municipality for tourism and investment into the future.

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

Collaborative Tendering Opportunity
NA

Gender Impact Assessment
A gender impact assessment has been undertaken as part of this project.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement
Extensive stakeholder engagement, including community workshops and online engagement through "Engage Ararat", has been undertaken. This feedback has directly informed the priorities and actions associated with this plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. Council endorse the Community Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2030

ATTACHMENTS
Ararat Community Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2030.

SECTION 4 – INFORMATION REPORTS

4.1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM - AUGUST 2026

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 31673

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 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
The latest round of community engagement sessions occured between 14 to 18 September 2026 in Ararat, Buangor, Elmhurst, Lake Bolac, Moyston, Pomonal, Tatyoon and Willaura. In total 55 people attended across the eight session. The issues raised in the September sessions and their progress will be presented at the October 2026 Council Meeting.

Table 1. Items raised in June/July 2026 that were not yet resolved in the previous monthly update.

#	Issues Raised	Progress as of 24 September 2026
	Ararat	
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, which is subject to the availability of the relevant utility authorities. The community's desire for the fence to be removed is noted by Council and this will occur as soon as it is safe to do so.
	Lake Bolac	
32	Rabbits under the Scout Hall in Lake Bolac	A combination of pest treatments is likely to be required. Council will liaise directly with the tenant of the Scout Hall on pest management.
	Moyston	
36	Some customers are not getting responses back on their Snap Send Solve requests.	There are some requests that require more complex, long-term planning (such as design, budgeting, or specialised works). Currently, these are kept as unresolved so they can be tracked. Messaging has been developed to help communicate the status of these complex requests and will begin to be sent to pending requests.
	Pomonal	
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	Please note that all burn offs need to be registered via the link below, and a permit may be required: https://firepermits.vic.gov.au/

		The CFA have this flier available: Burn_Off_Flyer which contains a brief overview of how to do burn offs safely. Council recommends community reach out to their local CFA branch for assistance if they are new to burning material on their property.
52	Community would like a soft plastics collection option	Council is not aware of a regular soft plastics collection point for recycling currently operating in Ararat Rural City. The community's desire for a soft plastics collection item is noted and will be considered as part of future planning and budgeting.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

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

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

Budget Implications
The Community Engagement Program 2026/2027 does not have any budget implications. This Program will be delivered within the existing resources and budget. 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 2026/27 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 in June/July 2026, 20 were female and 16 were male. During the September round of engagement sessions, there were 29 female and 26 male attendees.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. Council receives the Community Engagement Program August 2026 report

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments relating to this item

4.2 PRESTIGE MILL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT – AUGUST 2026 UPDATE

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 31674

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
Considerable progress has been achieved since the previous report, with ongoing site clearance activities delivering a noticeable transformation of the area. The next phase of works will focus on the demolition and removal of below-ground structures, further preparing the site for its future use. All works are continuing to be undertaken under strict environmental and safety regulations and in accordance with WorkSafe Victoria and the Environment Protection Authority requirements.

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 – August 2026 Update

ATTACHMENTS
There are no attachments relating to this item

4.3 ANNUAL PLAN 2026/27 – AUGUST 2026 UPDATE

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 31675

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:
Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

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

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

DISCUSSION
The Annual Plan 2026/2027 contains 54 actions. Progress on these actions are summarised below.

Status	Number of Actions
Complete	2
In progress 51-99%	4 (+3)
In progress 0-50%	37 (-3)
Not Started	0
Ongoing	11

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

Actions	Progress	Officer Comment
1. GROWING OUR PLACE		
1.1 Develop a strategic land use planning framework with annual targets to support sustainable urban growth.		
1.1.1 Champion coordinated planning between housing development and major project delivery to support a well-timed, market-responsive supply pipeline.	In progress 0-50%	Better coordination between major project delivery and housing development was raised with the Victorian Treasurer and Regional Development Victoria during a visit to Ararat on 18 August 2026
1.1.2 Position the municipality to attract investment in sustainable industries, including agribusiness, circular economy and tourism, to grow the local economy over the long term.	In progress 51-99%	This work is being undertaken as part of the Ararat Planning Scheme Review and is expected to be completed by October 2026.
1.1.3 Advance policy and strategic planning work to promote well-planned, thoughtful infill and townhouse style housing that makes efficient use of existing infrastructure.	In progress 0-50%	This has commenced as part of the Ararat Planning Scheme Review, with further work to continue after the Review is complete.
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 Advocate for investment in enabling infrastructure to unlock development-ready land and support housing and employment growth.	In progress 0-50%	Council continues to support local proposals submitted to Regional Development Victoria's Industrial Trunk Infrastructure Fund
1.2.2 Encourage and support the activation and adaptive reuse of underutilised land and buildings to deliver additional housing supply.	In progress 0-50%	Planning assistance and advice is being provided to landowners and developers who are interested in delivering housing in underutilised buildings and areas of land
1.2.3 Foster partnerships between developers and community organisations to deliver	In progress 0-50%	Council is continuing to engage with community housing providers and other

diverse, community-responsive housing solutions.		organisations on finding solutions to meet affordable and social housing needs.
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 Elevate Ararat as the leading destination for lifestyle and work-from-home movers by showcasing the Ararat Digital Hub & Co-Working Space to visitors and tourists	Complete	This action was completed at the August 2026 Council Meeting. We will continue to seize other opportunities to boost this visitor stream throughout the year.
1.3.2 Improve family liveability, local workforce participation and early childhood education outcomes in Lake Bolac by delivering a new childcare centre	Ongoing	Council officers are continuing to liaise with potential childcare providers to deliver this project
1.3.3 Strengthen partnerships across local community, health, education, and State and Federal Governments to attract, expand and sustain migrant settlement capacity in Ararat Rural City	In progress 0-50%	The CALD Outreach and settlement support team supported CALD communities to complete the 2026 Census. Council also provided digital literacy support to residents needing help. Completing Census ensures that State and Federal services funding is appropriate for the population of the LGA
2. BUILDING ROBUST LOCAL ECONOMIES		
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 Partner with Federation University, industry and government to develop and progress a strategic roadmap to expand the Precinct as a regional innovation hub.	In progress 0-50%	Initial engagement with Federation University has occurred to frame the scope and development of the roadmap.
2.1.2 Activate the Precinct as a knowledge hub through delivery of a series of public research talks and events	In progress 0-50%	Planning and identification of research topics and institutions that has begun, with a focus on areas that would generate discussion and local value.
2.1.3 Drive the expansion of TAFE course delivery at the Precinct to meet emerging regional skills needs and support local industry growth.	Ongoing	The 3rd face to face session of the Ararat Best Start Workshop Series has been delivered on 19 August at the Ararat Jobs and Technology Precinct
2.2 Work with other levels of government, local business, and private investors to develop a business park within Ararat Rural City, focused on agricultural value adding and advanced manufacturing, potentially leveraging "behind the meter" power.		
2.2.1 Engage with Invest Victoria, Regional Development Victoria and private sector partners to develop plans for the ARCC Circular Economy Precinct.	Ongoing	Council is working with Invest Victoria, Regional Development Victoria and a number of private sector partners to make a case for a state significant circular economy hub in Ararat
2.2.2 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 Accelerate the evolution of the Ararat Renewable Energy Park into a regional hub for renewable and circular economy industries through targeted investment attraction and strategic partnerships	Ongoing	Ongoing collaboration and engagement through the Central Highlands Regional Partnerships as well as Council's own investment attraction activities will continue to contribute towards transforming the Ararat Regional Energy Park into a regional hub
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 Collaborate with Grampians Wimmera Mallee (GWM) Tourism to curate, package and promote Ararat Rural City's unique visitor experiences to increase visitation, length of stay and visitor spend.	In progress 51-99%	GWM Tourism and Council has established a strong collaborative partnership to support the tourism sector in Ararat Rural City. This has so far produced and promoted itineraries for Ararat and Pomonal (links below). Council will continue to work with GWM Tourism to promote other key destinations in the municipality. • Ararat's Past in the Present

		• Follow that feeling to Pomonal
2.3.2 Identify and implement targeted initiatives that increase visitation and visitor yield by analysing spending trends and market data	In progress 0-50%	Analysis of visitor spending data is underway to obtain insights and develop recommendations for targeted initiatives.
2.3.3 Enhance the attractiveness, accessibility and activation of town centres to improve visitor experiences, increase dwell time, and encourage local spending	In progress 0-50%	Minor streetscape improvement works have occurred or have been arranged for delivery in September, such as tile repairs and works on Lannen's Lane, Ararat. Larger works, such as the Willaura Main St footpath upgrade are in planning for delivery this financial year.
3. PRESERVING OUR ENVIRONMENT		
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 Assess the feasibility and strategic value of becoming a sub-regional leader in the processing and management of recyclable materials	In progress 0-50%	Preliminary assessment underway, with background research and key considerations being identified
3.1.2 Explore opportunities to recover additional reusable and recyclable materials from the general waste stream to increase diversion from landfill	In progress 0-50%	Current material flows and potential improvement opportunities are being reviewed to inform future initiatives.
3.1.3 Pursue funding opportunities to install solar and battery systems across community facilities to strengthen disaster resilience and enhance sustainability.	In progress 0-50%	A grant application to install solar and battery systems at community sports facilities was submitted to the Game On grant program on 13 July 2026.
3.2 Develop innovative energy solutions utilising locally produced waste		
3.2.1 Investigate options to use municipal FOGO waste to generate energy for council facilities and reduce operating costs	In progress 0-50%	Early-stage scoping underway to understand feasibility, feedstock availability and potential biodigester options being assessed
3.2.2 Identify and quantify high-volume waste streams that may be suitable for waste-to-energy solutions to attract commercial development opportunities	In progress 0-50%	The previous years' waste data is being reviewed to better understand waste volumes and composition
3.2.3 Advocate for greater policy confidence and support for renewable gas generation	Ongoing	Council continues to advocate for this as part of its 2026 Advocacy Priorities
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 Review emergency management processes, policies and procedures with vulnerable community members to support adaptation and mitigation to climate change risks	In progress 0-50%	Community have provided feedback during the consultation process for the Disability Action Plan on this issue. Council's emergency management team will attend the Disability Action Plan Working Group meeting in October 2026 to discuss how to support people with disabilities and their carers
3.3.2 Work with Ararat Landcare Group and other groups to increase canopy cover in urban streets	In progress 0-50%	Ararat Landcare Group and Council's Sustainability Officer have commenced engagement and planning on how to increase canopy cover.
3.3.3 Investigate opportunities to embed the use of recycled and reused materials in the construction and maintenance of council assets	In progress 0-50%	Opportunities are being considered for old concrete and other infrastructure waste materials
4. DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING KEY ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE		
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 Upgrade the pool surface at the Lake Bolac and Willaura swimming pools	In progress 0-50%	The forecasted weather conditions from now until the start of the summer swimming season is highly likely to be unfavourable (ie rain, cooler temps). To avoid the risk of the outdoor

		pool not being ready in time for summer, these works have been delayed until after the outdoor pool season and are now planned for March 2027.
4.1.2 Upgrade public amenities and increase the number of accessible facilities	In progress 0-50%	Pre-construction planning for the Moyston Recreation Reserve amenities upgrade is in progress
4.1.3 Deliver the Local Roads Data Reconciliation Project	In progress 0-50%	This project is in progress
4.2 Work directly with asset users to manage and develop new and existing assets.		
4.2.1 Partner with Grampians Community Health to progress plans and advocate for the A&J McDonald Community Centre Redevelopment	Ongoing	This project is identified as one of six on Council's 2026 Advocacy Priorities, and Council continues to work closely with Grampians Community Health
4.2.2 Advocate for the delivery of priority projects identified in the Alexandra Sports Precinct Masterplan, including a new indoor sports facility and Olympic pool upgrade	Ongoing	The indoor sports facility project is identified as one of six on Council's 2026 Advocacy Priorities.
4.2.3 Reconvene the Rural Roads Group to identify strategically critical freight routes for future major upgrades	In progress 0-50%	A review of the previous terms of reference has commenced
4.3 Deliver infrastructure outcomes that support economic growth, are mindful of intergenerational equity and enhance community wellbeing and safety. These approaches will explore strategic use of debt to fund long-term assets and ensure Council's financial sustainability.		
4.3.1 Deliver safety treatments and hazard removal on high-risk rural corridors	In progress 0-50%	The Road Safety Strategy is presented to the September Council Meeting. A review of high risk rural corridors has been completed and planning now underway to prepare for potential road safety grants or council funding of future treatments.
4.3.2 Improve safety at high-risk intersections and protect vulnerable road users in townships	In progress 0-50%	A review of high risk rural intersection was also undertaken with 4.3.1 above, and planning now underway to prepare for potential road safety grants or council funding of future treatments.
4.3.3 Deliver the 2026/27 Capital Works Program	In progress 0-50%	Refer to the Capital Works report.
5. ENHANCING COMMUNITY LIFE		
5.1 Open up Council's arts and culture assets to greater community participation, ownership and engagement in decision-making		
5.1.1 Enhance and expand education outreach activities at Ararat Gallery TAMA to increase engagement, visitation and participation.	In progress 0-50%	The outreach with schools is resulting in an increase in engagement by students. Ararat College Year 11 art students and Beaufort Secondary College VCE Art Making and Exhibiting students have visited the Ararat Gallery TAMA
5.1.2 Engage with community organisations and groups to identify opportunities to activate underutilised community spaces, such as the Gum San Great Hall	In progress 0-50%	There have been multiple bookings for the Gum San Great Hall since the carpet upgrade, including the Circus & Hoop Workshops for children on 22nd September for the school holidays.
5.1.3 Strengthen regional promotion of major Ararat Town Hall events and Art Gallery TAMA exhibitions through Visit Grampians to maximise attendance and drive increased tourism and visitation.	Complete	This action was completed at the August 2026 Council Meeting. Ararat Town Hall events and Art Gallery TAMA are now featuring prominently on Visit Grampians website.
5.2 Develop models of volunteering that recognise, support and properly utilise the skills that community volunteers bring to community life.		
5.2.1 Empower young people to shape their own futures and contribute to the future of the municipality through programs such as the	Ongoing	The YEAH Crew's Youth Ignite 2026 event has been launched. This free event for young people will occur on Saturday 17 October 2026 from 2pm to 7pm at the Alexandra Oval

YEAH Crew and through the Crazy Ideas College		Precinct. There are free buses available from Lake Bolac, Willaura, Maroona, Pomonal, Moyston, Buangor and Elmhurst. Registration can be completed online: [Youth Ignite 2026]
5.2.2 Strengthen social connection and inclusion by promoting and improving access to volunteering opportunities	In progress 0-50%	A series of community events and gatherings has been supported an promoted by Council in the month of August via social media and Council's Focus Page in local newspapers, including the Streatham & District Post-Fire Gardening Workshop Series, the Dove Café in Willaura, and the Community Catch-up in Elmhurst.
5.2.3 Celebrate and acknowledge the contributions of volunteers to show our appreciation, foster community pride, and encourage greater participation in volunteering	In progress 0-50%	Another round of the Council's Community Support Grants has opened on 14 September and closes 11 October 2026.
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 Partner with Traditional Owner organisations to support the development of First Nations–led enterprises, contributing to economic self-determination, shared regional prosperity, and advancing meaningful reconciliation	Ongoing	Ararat Rural City Council staff attended an information session for local government with the Victorian Government and Barengi Gadjin Land Council on supporting reconciliation, and improving the cultural and economic wellbeing of Traditional Owners.
5.3.2 Advocate for a Changing Places facility in Ararat	Ongoing	Engagement with the Disability Action Plan Working Group is underway to confirm the preferred location and assessing its feasibility
5.3.3 Deliver and support multicultural events and initiatives that strengthen inclusion, cross-cultural understanding, and stronger community connection	In progress 51-99%	The Welcoming Week event occurred on 20 September 2026, and Council is working with the Ararat Neighbourhood House to deliver Harmony Day in March 2027
6. STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE		
6.1 Deliver responsible budget outcomes linked to strategy, that deliver value, innovation and rating fairness.		
6.1.1 Improve data accuracy and actionability through data cleansing to support cost-effective asset management and decision-making on future upgrades	In progress 0-50%	Additional traffic counters have been purchased and deployed, which will gather important data for informed decision making on prioritising roads for upgrades.
6.1.2 Develop and implement a Smart Cities Strategy that delivers optimised services and cost efficiencies	In progress 0-50%	An assessment of the possible areas to focus on for optimisation is being undertaken
6.1.3 Develop a ten-year plan for development and redevelopment of key community assets, including funding models and strategic approaches to advocacy	In progress 0-50%	This action has commenced with the identification of key community assets
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 Strengthen cyber security as a core strategic risk priority to support organisation resilience, data protection and business continuity.	In progress 0-50%	Cyber security uplift activities are being scoped and prioritised
6.2.2 Assess priority Councils assets for climate change readiness, and identify adaptation actions to improve resilience safety and service continuity	In progress 0-50%	Initial review underway to identify priority assets, climate-related risks and potential adaptation measures
6.2.3 Drive a strategic, risk-based approach to internal controls and planning, with a clear focus on high-risk areas to support robust oversight, accountability and long term organization resilience.	In progress 0-50%	Work underway to prioritise high-risk areas and inform upcoming planning activities

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 Develop digital and permit applications forms to provide more options for community to interact with Council at times and in ways that suit them	In progress 51-99%	The development of new digital forms is in progress, with a number of new online forms expected to be made available from November 2026.
6.3.2 Convene a community asset forum to support evidence-based budget planning and align investment with community-identified needs and priorities	In progress 0-50%	Event planning has commenced
6.3.3 Explore innovative approaches to community engagement in planning new and upgraded public spaces to ensure user insight and everyday use are captured in the design	In progress 0-50%	A broad mix of engagement activities are being implemented as part of the Disability Action Plan engagement process.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

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

Budget Implications
The Annual Pan 2026/2027 does not have any additional budget implications. All actions in the Annual Plan have been budgeted in the 2026/2027 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 operationalises 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
The Annual Plan 2026/27 was developed with consideration of Council's obligations under the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic). The Plan includes a range of actions that promote equitable access to services, community participation, accessibility, inclusion, health and wellbeing outcomes for all members of the community, including women, people of different genders, people with disability, young people, multicultural communities and First Nations peoples.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. Council receives the Annual Plan 2026/27 – August 2026 report

ATTACHMENTS
There are no attachments relating to this item

4.4 2026/2027 CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM – AUGUST 2026

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**
DEPARTMENT: **CEO'S OFFICE**
REFERENCE: **31676**

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:
- 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

Budget Status:
As of 31 August 2026, 6% of the budget is expended.

PROPERTY CAPITAL PROJECTS	Budget	Funding Amount	Council Contribution	Community Contribution	Previous Years Expenditure	Committed Expenditure (26/27)	Expended (26/27)	Overall Total	%	Notes
Property Capital General	**$950,000**		$950,000							
Gum San Carpet Replacement							$20,813	$20,813	100%	Works are complete
Paint - Lake Bolac Pool										
Paint - Willaura Pool										
Moyston Recreation Reserve Replacement Gutters										
Buangor Cobb & Co. Windows and Heating						$18,600				Replacement of rotted timber windows with like for like.
Ararat Tennis Club - Disabled Toilets										
Ararat Fitness Centre Roof Laserlight Replacement						$30,356				To repair roof leaking issue over basketball courts.
Girdlestone Street Residence Renovation						$9,254	$18,167	$27,422		Painting, Rewiring & Carpeting
Ararat Pony Club - Covered Sports Area *(Play our Way Program)*	**$1,490,000**	$1,490,000			$1,250,803		$12,764	$1,263,568	90%	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. Fire Services works are being completed with Maude Street access the final part of the project
Centenary Park – Dog Park *(Open Space for Everyone Program)*	**$112,000**	$100,000	$12,000		$95,108		$61,924	$157,033	132%	The project costs have run over for this job as there have been under ground issues and water connection that was not originally included in the project costs.
Buangor Sports Pavilion Redevelopment *(Tiny Towns Program)*	**$631,000**	$50,000	$581,000 ($220k Property Capital) ($361k Property Reserve)		$213,177		$626	$213,803	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 *(Building Blocks improvement grants program)*	**$745,000**	$745,000			$668,744	$28,000	$35,616	$732,360	95%	All internal works have been completed. Gutter and fascia have been upgraded to the building. A shade structure will be completed in the September School holidays.
Ararat City Tennis Sports Lighting Installation and accessibility upgrade *(Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Fund)*	**$700,000**	$560,000	$120,000 ($20,000 from Tennis Australia)	$20,000	$224,624	$279,347	$18,990	$522,962	72%	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.

Moyston Multi-Use Court Upgrade *(2025-26 Local Sports Infrastructure Fund – Community Facilities)*	**$300,000**	$225,000	$75,000		$1,329	$14,220	$7,775	$23,324	7%	Detailed designs are currently being completed to be able to go out to tender.
Moyston Netball & Tennis Changeroom Design *(2025-26 Local Sports Infrastructure Fund – Planning)*	**$25,000**	$18,750	$6,250		$241		$2,182	$2,423	9%	RFQ is out for tender to engage an architect or draftsperson.
Ararat Library Lighting and Exterior Upgrade. *(Living Libraries Infrastructure Program 2024-25)*	**$51,026**	$51,026			$51,691		$860	$52,551	103%	Works are now complete
TOTAL – PROPERTY CAPITAL	**$5,004,026**	**$3,239,776**	**$1,744,250**	**$20,000**	**$2,504,147**	**$379,777**	**$179,717**	**$2,988,834**		

PLANT & EQUIPMENT	**Budget**	**Committed/ Contracted**	**Expended 26/27**	**%**	**Notes**
Vehicle Purchases	**$240,000**		$115,904	45%	
Major Plant Purchases	**$260,000**				
Fixtures, Fittings & Furniture	**$45,000**		$5,720	13%	

Book stock - Library Book Replacement	**$45,000**				
TOTAL - PLANT & EQUIPMENT			**$121,624**	**20%**	

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS	Budget	Funding Amount	Council Contribution	Previous Years Expenditure	Committed Expenditure (26/27)	Expended 26/27	Overall Total	%	Notes
Gravel Road Sheeting, Widening & Alternative Sealing	**$1,800,000**		$1,800,000	NA		$21,554	$21,554	**1%**	*OTTA Seal work on Logan Road and Mt William Road*
Reseal Program	**$1,000,000**		$1,000,000	NA		$2,657	$2,657	**2%**	*This years program will be going to the contractor in the coming w*
Urban Road – Gravel to Seal	**$1,000,000**		$1,000,000	NA		$4,257	$4,257	4%	*Works currently ongoing from 25/26:* • *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)	$498,159		$14,370	$512,530		*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				$198,139	$118,111		$316,250		*Works have been completed to allow for traffic flow*
Buangor Ben Nevis Road *(SILRP Funding 25/26)*	**$6,250,000**	$5,000,000	$1,250,000						
Mt William Road *(HSVPP Funding 24/25)*	**$6,250,000**	$5,000,000	$1,250,000	$5,549,659		$131,580	$5,681,239	91%	*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.*
Road Reconstruction Program 26/27	**$1,457,000**								

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS	**Budget**	**Funding Amount**	**Council Contribution**	**Previous Years Expenditure**	**Committed Expenditure (26/27)**	**Expended 26/27**	**Overall Total**	**%**	***Notes***
Stevens Crescent (R2R)				$15,466		$3,179	$18,645		*Designs are being finalised*
View Point Street (Banksia to Temple) (R2R)				$21,612		$7,454	$29,067		*Designs are being finalised*
View Point Street (High to Lambert) (R2R)				$16,585		$7,828	$24,413		*Designs are being finalised*
Green Hill Lake Drive									*Designs are in progress*
Ararat Active Bike Network *(Active Transport Fund)*	**$399,000**	$266,000	$133,000	$122,386		$119,059	$241,446		*Original scope of works is complete*
Major Patching	**$100,000**		$100,000			$13,273	$13,273	13%	
Bridges	**$1,200,000**					$788	$383		

Bellellen Road Floodway (R2R)				$24,542		$2,100	$26,624		Investigation Works being undertaken
Moyston Willaura Road Bridge (R2R) *Design and Construct*				$595			$595		Technical Reporting being undertaken
Footpath Renewal Program	**$400,000**		$400,000			$36,382	$36,382	8%	Albert Street Footpath between Currajong Ave and Grano Street is now complete.
Urban Drainage Works	**$750,000**		$750,000			$7,364	$7,364	<1%	*Works on the drainage at the rear of our SES property will take place when the weather dries.*
Kerb and Channel	**$300,000**		$300,000			$10,152	$10,152	4%	*The tender for K&C in Lake Bolac on the Mortlake Ararat Road came in well over budget and will be undertaken in house.*
Queen Street Housing Support Program (Housing Support Program – Community Enabling Infrastructure)	**$7,380,000**	$7,380,000		$1,090,597	$351,450	$366,135	$1,808,182	25%	*Demolition and site clean up are ongoing*

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS	Budget	Funding Amount	Council Contribution	Previous Years Expenditure	Committed Expenditure (26/27)	Expended 26/27	Overall Total	%	*Notes*
SAFE LOCAL ROADS AND STREETS PROGRAM									
View Point, Tobin & Taylor St Intersections	**$224,000**	$224,000		$22,842		$367	$23,209	10%	*Project is out to tender*
Ingor Street – Raised Crossing	**$110,000**	$110,000		$20,731		$799	$21,530	19%	*Project is out to tender*
King Street – Raised Crossing	**$110,000**	$110,000		$22,900	$41,000	$482	$64,382	58%	*Tenders have been awarded to SHS Civil. Works to be undertaken outside of school term.*
Moore & Princes Street Intersection	**$131,000**	$131,000		$21,090		$3,514	$23,604	18%	*Project is ready for tender.*
Vincent Street & Alexandra Avenue – Raised Crossing	**$321,000**	$321,000		$27,706		$3,783	$29,244	9%	*Project is ready to tender*
Queen & Moore Street Roundabout	**$548,000**	$548,000		$31,213		$919	$32,132	6%	*Project is out to tender.*
George Road Raised Crossing (Ararat West)				$5,896		$63	$5,959		*New initiative for the SLRSP to include a permanent raised crossing at George Road. Awaiting final approval for funding.*
Barkly Street Raised Crossing (IP43)						$347	$347		*This crossing will have a final paint for completion.*
TOTAL - ROADS CAPITAL	**$32,873,000**	**$19,818,500**	**$10,639,371**	**$7,715,255**	**$510,561**	**$757,406**	**$8,983,222**		

Ararat Rural City

FUNDED PROJECTS – MISCELLANEOUS (NOT CAPITALISED)	Budget	Funding Amount	Council Contribution	Previous Years Expenditure	Committed Expenditure (26/27)	Expended (26/27)	Overall Total	%	Notes
Unlocking Ararat North East *(Streamlining for Growth 22/23)*	**$85,000**	$85,000		$39,393	$19,691		$59,085	70%	*Beveridge Williams is undertaking the works for this project. They are working with our Planning Department and Strategic Project Lead to progress the outcomes of the funding.*
Ararat City Tennis Sports Lighting Installation and accessibility upgrade – Participation Initiative. *(Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Fund)*	**$50,000**	$50,000		NA				0%	*This grant was received in July 2025 and will run in conjunction with the infrastructure project for Sports Lighting and accessibility upgrades.*

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 2025/2026 Budget. There was extensive community engagement undertaken prior to adoption.

Gender Impact Assessment
Gender Impact Assessments will be undertaken on a project basis.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. Council receive the Capital Works Program – August 2026 report.

ATTACHMENTS
There are no attachments relating to this item.

4.5 MAYORS, DEPUTY MAYORS AND COUNCILLORS ALLOWANCES

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 31677

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 Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal has released the "Allowance payable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors (Victoria) Determination No. 01/2026". The Determination establishes a revised framework for councillor allowances across all 79 Victorian councils and takes effect from 1 July 2026.

The review considered the changing nature of the councillor role, including increasing governance responsibilities, legislative requirements, community expectations, professional development obligations and the time commitment associated with performing the role. It also considered whether existing allowance arrangements appropriately support participation and representation within local government.

Ararat Rural City Council remains classified within the Tribunal's Category A allowance structure. The Determination also introduces revised arrangements for remote are travel allowances and confirms that allowance values will continue to be subject to annual indexation.

This briefing provides Council with an overview of the 2026 Determination, the changes relevant to Ararat Rural City Council and the associated financial and administrative implications for Council.

DISCUSSION
The Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal's 2026 Comprehensive Determination establishes a revised allowance framework for Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors across Victoria. The Determination applies from the 1 July 2026 and reflects the Tribunal's consideration of the changing nature, complexity and workload of elected representative roles, as well as the need to support effective governance and encourage participation from people who reflect the diversity of their communities.

The Ararat Rural City Council remains classified as a "Category A" council under the new Determination The revised allowances result in different levels of change across the three elected representative roles. All allowance amounts are inclusive of Council's superannuation contribution, meaning the published allowance represents the total remuneration amount rather than the cash allowance plus an additional superannuation payment.

Council's current annual allowances, inclusive of superannuation, are as follows:

Council Allowance Category A	Current	Proposed 1 July 2026
Mayor	$91,613	$103,400
Deputy Mayor	$45,807	$45,807
Councillor	$28,110	$35,000

This represents an increase of $11,787 or approximately 12.9% for the Mayor and an increase of $6,890 or approximately 24.5% for Councillors. The Deputy Mayor allowance remains unchanged at $45,807.

The more substantial increase to the Councillor allowance reflects the Tribunal's consideration of the evolving nature of the councillor role. In undertaking the review, the Tribunal considered the responsibilities and accountabilities of councillors, the skills and capabilities required to undertake the role, the community service dimension of local government and the importance of enabling a diverse range of candidates to participate in local government.

The Determination also revises the Remote Area Travel Allowance (RATA), providing additional recognition where eligible Councillors are required to travel significant distances in undertaking their duties. This is particularly relevant to rural and regional councils where elected representatives may travel considerable distances to attend Council meetings, community meetings, functions and other activities associated with their role.

Currently, eligible Councillors may receive $48.90 per day, where they normally reside more than 50km from the location of Council activities, up to a maximum of $6,112.50 per financial year. From 1 July 2026, the RATA will move to a two-tier structure based on the shortest practicable road distance between Councillor's normal residence and the eligible location. Travel of more than 50 kilometres and no more than 100 kilometres will attract an allowance of $50.60 per day, while travel of more than 100 kilometres will attract an allowance of $101.20 per day. The maximum amount payable to an individual Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Councillor will increase to $6,325 per financial year.

The new arrangements also recognise circumstances where attendance at an eligible event requires travel over more than one day. In these circumstances, the RATA may be claimed for each day on which the required travel is undertaken, including where an overnight stay is necessary before returning home. This revised approach is particularly relevant to rural and geographically dispersed municipalities, with the Tribunal acknowledging concerns that the previous single daily rate did not adequately recognise the additional time spent travelling by Councillors in large and remote municipalities.

The Determination is binding on Victorian councils and does not require Council to determine or approve the level of allowances payable. The Tribunal is responsible for setting the allowance framework and values, while matters relating to the reimbursement of Councillor expenses and the provision of resources and facilities remain the responsibility of individual councils in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020.

Election to Receive an Allowance
In accordance with the Local Government Act 2020, a Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Councillor may elect to received:

a) The entire allowance to which they are entitled
b) Receive a specified part of the allowance or
c) Elect to receive no allowance.

Accordingly, while the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal determines the applicable allowance for each role, the amount determined represents the maximum entitlement and does not require an individual Councillor to receive the full amount.

Any election by a Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Councillor to receive a reduced allowance, or no allowance, does not alter the allowance determined for the position. The applicable allowance remains the amount established by the Tribunal, with the individual office holder able to elect the proportion of that entitlement they wish to receive.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

6. STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

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

Budget Implications
Mayors, Deputy Mayor's and Councillors Allowances are allocated in the 2026/2027 budget.

Policy/Relevant Law
The Local Government Act 2020:
Section 39(1) states that a Mayor or a Deputy Mayor is entitled to receive from the Council an allowance as a Mayor or a Deputy Mayor in accordance with a Determination of the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal under the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019; and

Section 39(2) states a Councillor is entitled to receive from the Council an allowance as a Councillor in accordance with a Determination of the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal under the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019; and

Section 39(5) states that a Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Councillor may elect –

a) To receive the entire allowance to which they are entitled; or
b) To receive a specified part of the allowance to which they are entitled; or
c) To receive no allowance.

Sustainability Implications
There are no economic, social or environmental implications in relation to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors Allowances.

Risk Assessment
Council is obliged to comply with this process under the various provision of the Local Government Act 2020.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement
The Chief Operating Officer briefed Councillors on the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal's Allowance Payable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors (Victoria) Determination No. 1/2026 at the Councillor briefing held on Tuesday 22 September 2026

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. The Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors Allowances Report be received.

ATTACHMENTS
The Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal's Allowance Payable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors (Victoria) Determination No. 1/2026 is provided as Attachment 4.5

SECTION 5 – COMMITTEE MINUTES/REPORTS

5.1 AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE MINUTES

AUTHOR'S TITLE: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**
DEPARTMENT **CEO'S OFFICE**
REFERENCE: **31678**

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

DISCUSSION
The 15 September 2026 Audit and Risk Committee meeting focused on oversight of Council's financial performance, audit activities and risk management. The committee reviewed external audit progress, including a final interim management letter and closing report for the financial year. Internal audit and governance matters were a key focus, with updates on the audit programs, and planned reviews, alongside enhancements to policies to strengthen controls and reduce fraud risk. The committee also reviewed the ongoing risk program, confirmed policy review progress and noted actions to improve reporting.

Council Committees	Councillor representative	Current meeting (as presented)	Next scheduled meeting/s
Audit and Risk Committee	Cr Bob Sanders	15 September 2026	1 December 2026
Audit and Risk Committee	Cr Peter Joyce	15 September 2026	1 December 2026

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives
The report supports the strategic objective of the Council Plan 2025 - 2029:

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

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

Budget Implications
No budget impact for the receiving of minutes.

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

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

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

Stakeholder Consultation and Communication
Audit and Risk Committee members.
Councillor representation on Council Committees.
Chief Executive Officer and relevant Council officers.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. **the Audit and Risk Committee Meetings minutes of 15 September 2026 be received**

ATTACHMENTS
The Audit and Risk Committee Minutes from 15 September 2026 are provided as Attachment 5.1

SECTION 6 – INFORMAL MEETINGS

6.1 COUNCIL BRIEFINGS

AUTHOR'S TITLE: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**
DEPARTMENT **CEO'S OFFICE**
REFERENCE: **31680**

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 22 September 2026

Matters discussed at the briefing:

- Annual Performance & Financial Statements 2025/26
- Monthly Performance Report – June 2026
- Monthly Performance Report – August 2026
- Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors Allowance
- S5 – Instrument of Delegation from Council to CEO
- Road Safety Strategy
- Rural Skip Bins
- Mayoral and Councillor Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum – General Membership Fees 2026/27
- Dobie War Memorial Committee – request for financial assistance for Memorial repairs
- Monthly Community Engagement Report
- Monthly Progress Report – Prestige Mill Infrastructure Project Update – August 2026
- Monthly Progress Report – Council Plan – Annual Plan
- Capital Works Program – August 2026
- Building approvals
- Planning approvals under delegation

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives
The report supports the strategic objective of the Council Plan 2021-2025:

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.

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*.

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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*.

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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:

There are No Confidential Items