Ararat Rural City

MINUTES

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 24 November 2026

Held in the Council Chambers, Shire Offices
(Livestreamed)

Commenced 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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PRESENT: Cr Rob Armstrong, Cr Peter Joyce, Cr Teli Kaur, Cr Bob Sanders, Cr Bill Waterston, Phuong Au – Chief Executive Officer, Chandra Willmott – Chief Operating Officer, Rebecca Rodger – Infrastructure Lead, Thomas Duncan – Theatre Technical Officer

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 – CR TELI KAUR
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 – CR* PETER JOYCE**
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 – CR BOB SANDERS
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 Jo Armstrong & Cr Luke Preston be accepted.

MOVED CR KAUR
SECONDED CR R ARMSTRONG

That the apology of Cr Jo Armstrong and Cr Luke Preston be accepted.

No Councillors spoke for or against the motion.

CARRIED 5/0
5458/26

1.4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 27 October 2026 and the Minutes of the Statutory Meeting held on 10 November 2026 be confirmed.

MOVED CR JOYCE
SECONDED CR WATERSTON

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 27 October 2026 and the Minutes of the Statutory Meeting held on 10 November 2026 be confirmed.

No Councillors spoke for or against the motion.

CARRIED 5/0
5459/26

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.

There were no Declarations of Conflict of Interest received.

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.

There were no Petitions or Joint Letters received.

SECTION 3 – REPORTS REQUIRING COUNCIL DECISION

3.1 COMMUNITY SUPPORT GRANTS PROGRAM REVIEW

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 33127

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 Community Support Grants Program provides funding to clubs, organisations and community groups for projects, activities and events that benefit Ararat Rural City. The current guidelines for this program have been in place for several years. While the program has delivered strong outcomes under its existing guidelines, there is an opportunity to review the grant criteria to ensure they continue to encourage innovation, diversity of proposals, and the submission of projects that respond to emerging community needs.

Community engagement is proposed to help understand whether the program still responds to local priorities and opportunities, and whether its requirements enable a broad range of groups to participate. Consultation would examine the existing funding categories, application process, maximum grant amounts, applicant contributions and eligibility requirements. Feedback would be sought from previous successful and unsuccessful applicants, groups that have not applied and the broader community. Findings would inform proposed improvements for Council's consideration, including any financial implications.

DISCUSSION
The program currently offers grants of up to $3000 under the sport and recreation, culture and arts, and environment and sustainability categories. Festivals and events may receive up to $5000 in seed or growth funding. Council provides two dollars for each dollar contributed by the successful applicant, with applicant contributions able to include cash or in-kind support.

Applicants must provide a completed application, a project plan and relevant financial and insurance information. Projects must be inclusive of people of all abilities. Funding excludes capital or major building maintenance works, general administration and specified operating costs, retrospective activities and other activities identified in the guidelines. Successful recipients must complete an acquittal within 12 months of receiving funding.

A review would provide an opportunity to test the program's suitability against community experience. The consultation should establish which elements work well, identify barriers, and distinguish between improvements to program administration and changes requiring additional funding or revised guidelines. It should not assume that current arrangements are unsuitable or that higher funding limits are necessary.

Four areas are proposed for community feedback:

- **Priorities & Opportunities**: Whether the existing categories support local community priorities and innovative opportunities, whether important types of community activity fall outside the program and whether the timing and frequency of rounds suit groups planning projects and events.

- **Application accessibility**: Whether the guidelines, forms and supporting documentation are clear and proportionate; whether online and hard-copy options meet applicant's needs; and what practical assistance would help groups apply and complete acquittals.

- **Funding arrangements**: Whether the $3000 or $5000 limits remain appropriate for the projects groups which to deliver, and whether the two-for-one arrangement or requirements for cash and in-kind contributions affect participation.

- **Eligibility requirements:** Whether the eligibility criteria and exclusions are clear and appropriate and whether any requirements prevent otherwise beneficial community projects from being considered.

Proposed Engagement
A four-week consultation period is proposed, with dates to be confirmed. A short survey would be available online via Engage Ararat and in hard copy, supported by direct invitations to community clubs, organisations, township associations and previous applicant's Council's website, social media and usual communication channels would promote participation. Written submissions and assistance by telephone or in person would provide additional ways to contribute.

Direct outreach would include smaller volunteer groups and organisational that have not previously or recently applied, as their experiences may reveal barriers not apparent from successful applications. Participation should be encouraged across the municipality and across the programs' funding categories. This topic will be discussed during the Council's face-to-face community engagement sessions in December 2026.

Consultation materials would explain what participants can influence, how their feedback will be used and the limits of the available grants budget. Questions would invite views on both retaining and changing existing arrangements. Participation would not affect the assessment of an individual grant application and can be provided anonymously.

Following consultation, officers would analyse the feedback to identify common themes, barriers to participation and suggest improvements. The findings would be presented to Council with options for retaining or amending parts of the program, including financial implications and proposed implementation timeframe. A summary of the findings and Council's response would be communicated to participants and the broader community.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

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

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
Consultation can be accommodated within existing resources.

Policy/Relevant Law
Local Government Act 2020
Gender Equity Act 2020
Disability Act 2006

Sustainability Implications
The proposed engagement would provide an opportunity to assess whether the program continues to support community participation, volunteer capacity, and local environmental initiatives. Consultation would also consider whether the funding arrangements and application requirements remain appropriate, accessible, and manageable for community organisations.

Risk Assessment
Consultation may raise expectations of increased funding or broader eligibility. Engagement materials would clearly explain the scope of the review and that any amendments remain subject to Council consideration and available resources. To reduce the risk of limited participation, consultation would include online and hard-copy options, assisted participation and direct invitations to groups across the municipality, including organisations that have not previously or recently applied.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement
A four-week consultation period is proposed through Engage Ararat, hard-copy surveys and direct invitations to community organisations and previous applicants. Written submissions and assistance by telephone or in person would also be available. Engagement would seek participation from successful and unsuccessful applicants, groups that have not previously or recently applied and the broader community.

Gender Impact Assessment
Community members may require accessible application formats, language assistance, culturally safe engagement and alternatives to online participation. Consultation timing, venue accessibility, transport, caring responsibilities and religious observances may also affect participation. Inclusive communication and confidentiality are important for people of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations. The review should examine how these needs intersect with gender and whether application requirements, contribution arrangements or funding exclusions create additional barriers. Consultation will help identify appropriate support and potential program improvements.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. Council authorises the Chief Executive Officer to commence community engagement for the Community Support Grants Program review.

MOVED CR WATERSTON
SECONDED CR KAUR

That:

1. Council authorises the Chief Executive Officer to commence community engagement for the Community Support Grants Program review.

Cr Waterston and Cr Kaur spoke for the motion.

CARRIED 5/0
5460/26

ATTACHMENTS
There are no attachments relating to this item.

3.2 INSTRUMENT OF APPOINTMENT AND AUTHORISATION (PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT ACT) S11A

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF OPERATNG OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 33128

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.

This report seeks Councils endorsement of the S11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation under the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

DISCUSSION
The Local Government Act 1989 provides for the appointment of Authorised Officers for the purpose of the administration and enforcement of any Act, Regulations or local laws which relate to the functions and powers of the council.

The Chief Executive Officer, by authority conferred by instrument of delegation from Council makes these appointments. Under the Planning and Environment Act 1987, however Authorised Officers can only be appointed by Council resolutions as the Act prohibits delegation of the power to appoint Authorised Officers under the Act.

This report identifies changes since the S11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation was adopted on the 25 November 2025. A review of current appointments to this Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation has been carried out.

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.

Budget Implications
There are no budget implications arising from the Appointment of Authorised Officers.

Policy/Relevant Law
Section 244 of the Local Government Act 1989 is a provision that remains in force and continues to the be authorising provision for the S11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation.

The power to commence proceeding s – Section 313 of the Local Government Act 2020

Sustainability Implications
There are no economic, social or environmental implications in relation to the appointment of Authorised Officers.

Risk Assessment
The regular updating of the Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation ensures ongoing legislative compliance for Ararat Rural City Council and that staff members are properly empowered to undertake their roles.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement
The Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation has been updated by referencing the Maddocks Lawyers Delegation Services.

Gender Impact Assessment
A Gender Impact Assessment is not required for this briefing. The proposed update to the S11 Instrument of Delegation is administrative and relates to how delegated powers and functions are exercised on behalf of Council. It does not change how Council services are accessed or delivered.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

In the exercise of the powers conferred by Section 147(4) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (the Act) and the other legislation referred to in the attached instruments of appointment and authorisation (S11A) (the instrument), Ararat Rural City Council (Council) resolves that –

1. *The members of Council staff referred to in the instrument be appointed and authorised as set out in the instrument;*
2. *The Instrument comes into force immediately the common seal of Council is affixed to the instrument, and remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it; and*
3. *The instrument be signed under the seal of the Council.*

MOVED CR R ARMSTRONG
SECONDED CR JOYCE

That:

In the exercise of the powers conferred by Section 147(4) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (the Act) and the other legislation referred to in the attached instruments of appointment and authorisation (S11A) (the instrument), Ararat Rural City Council (Council) resolves that –

1. **The members of Council staff referred to in the instrument be appointed and authorised as set out in the instrument;**
2. **The Instrument comes into force immediately the common seal of Council is affixed to the instrument, and remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it; and**
3. **The instrument be signed under the seal of the Council.**

Cr R Armstrong and Cr Joyce spoke for the motion.

CARRIED 5/0
5461/26

ATTACHMENTS
The Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (Planning and Environment Act 1987) S11A is provided as Attachment 3.2

S11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (Planning and Environment Act 1987)

Ararat Rural City

Ararat Rural City Council

Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation

(*Planning and Environment Act 1987* only)

Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation
(*Planning and Environment Act 1987*)

In this instrument "**officer**" means -

MDR	Manager Development and Regulation
PO3	Planning Officer 1
PO2	Planning Officer 2
PO1	Planning Officer 3
CSO1	Community Safety Officer 1
CSO2	Community Safety Officer 2
CSO3	Community Safety Officer 3
CSO4	Community Safety Officer 4
PDO1	Planning and Development Officer
PDO2	Planning and Development Officer
PDO3	Planning and Development Officer
EHO1	Environmental Health Officer
EHO2	Environmental Health Officer
EHO3	Environmental Health Officer
EHO4	Environmental Health Officer
EHO5	Environmental Health Officer

By this instrument of appointment and authorisation Ararat Rural City Council -

1. under s 147(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* – authorises the officers to carry out the duties or functions and to exercise the powers on an authorised officer under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and

2. under s 313 of the *Local Government Act* 2020 authorises the officers either generally or in a particular case to institute proceedings for offences against the Acts and regulations described in this instrument.

It is declared that this instrument -

(a) comes into force immediately upon its execution;
(b) remains in force until varied or revoked.

This instrument is authorised by a resolution of the Ararat Rural City Council on 24 November 2026

The COMMON SEAL of the
ARARAT RURAL CITY COUNCIL
was affixed hereto in accordance with
the resolution of Council made on
24 November 2026

Mayor _____

Chief Executive Officer _____

3.3 MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 33129

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 October 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 $21.665 million in revenue and $13.528 million in expenses to 31 October 2026. This has resulted in an operating surplus of $8.137 million for the four months ended 31 October 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 $18.493 million has been recognised as income for the four months ended 31 October 2026.

User fees account for 4.4% of the total budgeted income for 2026/27 and $0.726 million has been received to 31 October 2026. The majority of this relates to transfer station fees, fitness centre income and commercial waste management charges.

Non-recurrent Operating Grants total $0.362 million to 31 October 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	24	-
CALD Outreach Workers Initiative	133	133	-
Streatham CRO & Hub	-	-	270
Engage - Youth Events Activities & Happenings	55	55	-
Centenary Park Dog Park	-	100	-
Queen Street Housing Program	-	-	5,697
Ararat Hills Adventure Sports Precinct	-	-	400
Early Career Educators	-	-	103
Ararat Active Bike Network	-	-	208
Ararat City Tennis Sports Lighting and Accessibility	-	-	519
Moyston Multi-Use Court Upgrade	-	-	203
Conna Wilson Reserve Lighting Upgrade	-	-	225
Other Minor Grants (under $30,000)	-	50	17
	257	**362**	**10,181**

Non-recurrent Capital Grants total $0.210 million to 31 October 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	-	121	72
Queen Street Housing Program	-	-	1,638
TAC Safe Local Roads and Streets Program	-	31	439
Jack & Jill Kindergarten Upgrade	-	1	-
Buangor-Ben Nevis Road Upgrade	5,000	-	2,000
Other Minor Grants (under $30,000)	-	7	-
	5,000	**210**	**4,149**

Gain on disposal of property, plant & equipment totals $0.535 million which includes a parcel of Council land sold in July 2026.

Note

It is important to note the following:

1. 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.
2. 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.
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 $4.624 million to a surplus of $4.261 million for 2026/27. The year-end variance is a surplus of $0.896 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 four months ended 31 October 2026 Council has incurred $4.210 million in employee costs. Council has also incurred capitalised salary costs of $0.179 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 four months ended 31 October 2026, Council has incurred $5.345 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 October 2026. Comparative figures have been provided as at 30 June 2026.

Council's current assets have increased by $7.181 million from $27.103 million as at 30 June 2026 to $34.284 million as at 31 October 2026. Cash and cash equivalents have decreased by $6.479 million from $21.266 million to $14.787 million. Trade and other receivables have increased by $14.113 million from $2.902 million as at 30 June 2026 to $17.015 million as at 31 October 2026.

Total liabilities have decreased from $22.042 million in 2025/26 to $20.018 million in 2026/27. Trade and other payables have decreased by $2.408 million and trust funds and deposits have increased by $0.077 million. Unearned income/revenue increased by $0.458 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 $6.479 million to $14.787 million as at 31 October 2026.

Net cash of $4.331 million was used in operating activities, $1.967 million was used in investing activities, and $0.181 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	31/10/2026
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%	182%
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%	6.05%
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%	86.21%
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	$1,799
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	$2,088

Indicator	30/06/2026	31/10/2026
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 October 2026 the outstanding Rates Debtors totalled $16.401 million compared to $2.121 million as at 30 June 2026, an increase of $14.280 million. In percentage terms 21.9% of the rates raised have been collected at 31 October 2026 compared to 31.0% up to 31 October 2025. The increased percentage at 31 October 2025 included payments totalling $2.491 million received under the Victorian Government's Drought Support Package for Primary Producer Support Payments, which represented a 40% rate reduction on farm-rated properties. 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%	21.9%
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.	113.93%	72.58%

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.

Gender Impact Assessment
This report provides Council with a summary of the organisation's financial performance and position as at the reporting date. No differential gender impacts have been identified and the report is considered to have a neutral impact from a gender equality perspective.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

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

MOVED CR WATERSTON
SECONDED CR KAUR

That:

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

Cr Waterston and Cr Kaur spoke for the motion.

CARRIED 5/0
5462/26

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

Attachment 1
Comprehensive Income Statement for the four months ended 31 October 2026

	Original Budget	Current Budget	YTD Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Variance	Variance
Income	**$'000**	**$'000**	**$'000**	**$'000**	**$'000**	
Rates and charges	18,965	18,965	18,424	18,493	69	0%
Statutory fees and fines	293	293	98	85	(13)	-13%
User fees	1,700	1,707	674	726	52	8%
Contributions - cash capital	-	-	-	5	5	0%
Contributions - cash operating	89	89	1	10	9	900%
Contributions - non-monetary assets	-	-	-	-	-	0%
Grants - operating (recurrent)	9,122	2,040	947	972	25	3%
Grants - operating (non-recurrent)	257	10,013	86	362	276	321%
Grants - capital (recurrent)	2,591	2,591	-	-	-	0%
Grants - capital (non-recurrent)	5,000	9,116	216	210	(6)	-3%
Net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, plant and equipment	20	20	33	535	502	1521%
Other income	570	570	190	267	77	41%
Fair value adjustments for investment property	-	-	-	-	-	0%
Share of net profits/(loss) of joint ventures	-	-	-	-	-	0%
Total income	**38,607**	**45,404**	**20,669**	**21,665**	**996**	
Expenses						
Employee costs	12,845	12,845	4,236	4,210	(26)	-1%
Materials and services	9,078	16,238	5,187	5,345	158	3%
Bad and doubtful debts	-	-	-	-	-	0%
Depreciation	11,089	11,089	3,696	3,658	(38)	-1%
Amortisation - right of use assets	459	459	153	153	-	0%
Borrowing costs	-	-	-	-	-	0%
Finance costs - leases	88	88	33	33	-	0%
Other expenses	424	424	123	129	6	5%
Total expenses	**33,983**	**41,143**	**13,428**	**13,528**	**100**	1%
Surplus for the year	**4,624**	**4,261**	**7,241**	**8,137**	**896**	12%
Other comprehensive income						
Net asset revaluation increment	-	-	-	-	-	
Total comprehensive result	**4,624**	**4,261**	**7,241**	**8,137**	**896**	

Attachment 2
Balance Sheet as at 31 October 2026

	31/10/2026 $'000	30/06/2026 $'000
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	14,787	21,266
Trade and other receivables	17,015	2,902
Contract assets	2,360	2,614
Inventories	119	69
Non-current assets classified as held for sale	-	249
Prepayments	3	3
Total current assets	**34,284**	**27,103**
Non-current assets		
Trade and other receivables	3	3
Investments in joint venture	2,117	2,117
Property, plant and equipment, infrastructure	684,335	685,242
Right of use assets	1,172	1,325
Investment property	2,810	2,810
Total non-current assets	**690,437**	**691,497**
Total assets	**724,721**	**718,600**
Liabilities		
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	1,345	3,753
Trust funds and deposits	458	381
Unearned Income	14,337	13,879
Provisions	2,355	2,358
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings	-	-
Lease liabilities	307	455
Total current liabilities	**18,802**	**20,826**
Non-current liabilities		
Provisions	260	260
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings	-	-
Lease liabilities	956	956
Total non-current liabilities	**1,216**	**1,216**
Total liabilities	**20,018**	**22,042**
Net Assets	**704,703**	**696,558**
Equity		
Accumulated surplus	314,673	306,536
Reserves	390,030	390,022
Total Equity	**704,703**	**696,558**

Attachment 3
Statement of Cash Flows for the four months ended 31 October 2026

	Four months to 31/10/2026 Inflows/ (Outflows) $'000	Forecast Year End to 30/06/2027 Inflows/ (Outflows) $'000
Cash flows from operating activities		
Rates and charges	4,209	18,967
Statutory fees and fines	86	293
User fees	750	1,878
Grants - operating	1,776	4,297
Grants - capital	237	7,591
Contributions - monetary	120	89
Interest received	228	400
Dividends received	-	-
Trust funds and deposits taken	122	-
Other receipts	130	187
Net GST refund/payment	725	721
Employee costs	(4,721)	(12,845)
Materials and services	(7,653)	(17,148)
Trust funds and deposits repaid	(255)	-
Other payments	(85)	(424)
Net cash provided by/ (used in) operating activities	**(4,331)**	**4,006**
Cash flows from investing activities		
Payments for property, plant and equipment, infrastructure	(2,775)	(15,797)
Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment, infrastructure	808	870
Net cash provided by/ (used in) investing activities	**(1,967)**	**(14,927)**
Cash flows from financing activities		
Interest paid - lease liability	(33)	(88)
Repayment of lease liabilities	(148)	(455)
Net cash provided by/ (used in) financing activities	**(181)**	**(543)**
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	(6,479)	(11,464)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	21,266	21,266
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	**14,787**	**9,802**

Attachment 4 Financial Performance Indicators for the four months ended 31 October 2026	Result	Material Variations
LIQUIDITY		
Dimension - Operating position		
Indicator - Adjusted underlying result		
Measure - Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit)	36.93%	
[Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit)/ Adjusted underlying revenue] x100	**Outside Expected Range**	This indicator is high as the total amount of rates & charges have been recognised as income and the expenses are only for part of the financial year.
Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework	-20% to 20%	
Indicator of the broad objective that an adjusted underlying surplus should be generated in the ordinary course of business. A surplus or increasing surplus suggests an improvement in the operating position		
Dimension - Liquidity		
Indicator - Working capital		
Measure - Current assets compared to current liabilities	182%	No material variation
[Current assets / Current liabilities] x100		
Expected range 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		
Indicator - Unrestricted cash		
Unrestricted cash compared to current liabilities [Unrestricted cash / Current liabilities] x100	-1.14% **Outside Expected Range**	The unrestricted cash indicator is below the expected range due to Council awaiting payment of $2.717 million in grant funds spent in advance.
Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework	10% to 300%	
Indicator of the broad objective that sufficient cash which is free of restrictions is available to pay bills as and when they fall due. High or increasing level of unrestricted cash suggests an improvement in liquidity		
OBLIGATIONS		
Dimension - Obligations		
Indicator - Loans and borrowings		
Measure - Loans and borrowings compared to rates	0.00%	No material variation
[Interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x100		
Expected range 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		
Loans and borrowings repayments compared to rates	0.00%	No material variation
[Interest and principal repayments on interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x100		
Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework	0% to 20%	

Financial Performance Indicators for the four months ended 31 October 2026	Result	Material Variations
Indicator - Indebtedness		
Measure - Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue	6.05%	No material variation
[Non-current liabilities / Own source revenue] x100		
Expected range 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		
Indicator - Asset renewal and upgrade		
Measure - Asset renewal & Upgrade compared to depreciation	72.58%	
[Asset renewal expenses / Asset depreciation] x100		
Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework	40% to 130%	
Indicator of the broad objective that assets should be renewed as planned. High or increasing level of planned asset renewal being met suggests an improvement in the capacity to meet long term obligations		
STABILITY		
Dimension - Stability		
Indicator - Rates concentration		
Measure - Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue	86.21%	
[Rate revenue / Adjusted underlying revenue] x100	**Outside Expected Range**	This indicator is high due to the total amount of rates & charges being recognised as income with minimal government grants received to 31 October 2026.
Expected range 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		
Indicator - Rates effort		
Measure - Rates compared to property values	0.28%	No material variation
[Rate revenue / Capital improved value of rateable properties in the municipality] x100		
Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework	0.15% to 0.75%	
Indicator of the broad objective that the rating level should be set based on the community's capacity to pay. Low or decreasing level of rates suggests an improvement in the rating burden		

Financial Performance Indicators for the four months ended 31 October 2026	Result	Material Variations
EFFICIENCY		
Dimension - Efficiency		
Indicator - Expenditure level		
Measure - Expenses per property assessment	$1,799.18	
[Total expenses / Number of property assessments]	**Outside Expected Range**	This indicator is below the expected range as there is only four months of expenses included in the calculation.
Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework	$2,000 to $5,000	
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		
Indicator - Revenue level		
Measure - Average rate per property assessment	$2,088.97	
[Total rate revenue (general rates and municipal charges) / Number of property assessments]	**Outside Expected Range**	The average rate per property assessment is slightly above the expected range.
Expected range 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		

SECTION 4 – INFORMATION REPORTS

4.1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM – OCTOBER 2026

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 33132

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 last round of community engagement sessions occurred 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 number of issues raised was 86 and at the October 2026 Council Meeting, 3 issues were not yet resolved. The table below provides the progress update on those remaining 3 issues, which have now been resolved or the outcome determined and will be actioned at the earliest opportunity.

The next round of community engagement sessions are planned for 7-11 December 2026 in Ararat, Lake Bolac, Mininera, Streatham, Warrak, Wickliffe and Willaura.

Table 1. The remaining issues raised in September 2026 and their progress.

#	Issues Raised	Progress as at 12 November 2026
34	Elmhurst: When the Wimmera River, Elmhurst, overflows, it floods a person's property. Can anything be done to stop the flooding?	The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action provides advice on floodplain management, including the responsibilities of different stakeholders, see: https://www.water.vic.gov.au/our-programs/floodplain-management Where flooding is the result of a natural riverine flooding of a floodplain, the property owner is generally responsible for flood preparation and management on their property. For free flood advice for properties in Elmhurst and Pomonal, contact the Wimmera Catchment Management Authority: https://wcma.vic.gov.au/advice-and-services/flood-advice/
61	Overflows from Millers Creek, Pomonal, is going into a property	Please refer to the information above.
83	There is a heritage plaque on the bluestone building at the back of Sparrows lane that is faded and needs to be replaced. The residents are happy to pay for it but asked for help to find out what was originally on the plaque.	Council officers have located copies of design files for the heritage plaques. A quote is being obtained to replace all of the faded plaques and if the cost is reasonable and if there is budget available, Council will look to replace the plaques.

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
During the September round of engagement sessions, there were 29 female and 26 male attendees.

RECOMMENDATION

That:
1. Council receives the Community Engagement Program October 2026 report

MOVED CR R ARMSTRONG
SECONDED CR JOYCE

That:
1. Council receives the Community Engagement Program October 2026 report

Cr R Armstrong and Cr Joyce spoke for the motion.

CARRIED 5/0
5643/26

ATTACHMENTS
There are no attachments relating to this item.

4.2 PRESTIGE MILL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT – OCTOBER 2026 UPDATE

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 33133

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




Images above: Views from McNeill Street. Images below: Views from Queen & Lowe Sts, respectively




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Demolition Works at Queen Street
There has been a significant amount of activity on site in recent weeks, as shown in the images above. 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 commencement of construction of new infrastructure is subject to the demolition works being completed at the required areas of the site. The demolition works were delayed by poor weather in the winter months. While every effort has been made to regain lost time, the poor weather has impacted the timeframe for the commencement of construction of new infrastructure. The estimated timeframe for the construction of new enabling infrastructure is now expected to commence in early 2027.

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 – October 2026 Update

MOVED CR WATERSTON
SECONDED CR KAUR

That:

1. Council receives the Prestige Mill Infrastructure Project – October 2026 Update

Cr Waterston and Cr Kaur spoke for the motion.

CARRIED 5/0
5464/26

ATTACHMENTS
There are no attachments relating to this item

4.3 ANNUAL PLAN 2026/27 - OCTOBER 2026 UPDATE

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 33134

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	6 (+3)
In progress 51-99%	9 (+2)
In progress 0-50%	28 (-5)
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%	One of the Regional Worker Accommodation Fund Round 2 projects in Ararat is nearing completion and are liaising with the contractors working on the Western Highway duplication for worker housing
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, which has encountered an unforeseen delay. Council officers are continuing to work closely with the Victorian Government's Regional Planning Hub to complete this action.
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

Actions	Progress	Officer Comment
1.2.3 Foster partnerships between developers and community organisations to deliver diverse, community-responsive housing solutions.	Complete	Council has partnered with community organisations and developers to submit an application to the NHIF-CT program. Council officers have also connected with Community Housing Industry Association Victoria (CHIA Vic), the peak body for community housing in Victoria, for possible future collaboration opportunities.
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 continue to work with local employment agencies, community and health services, education and service providers, and local volunteer groups to support settlement capacity and activities
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

Actions	Progress	Officer Comment
		• 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 51-99%	Plans for Christmas decorations are in progress, which will bring some colour and festive cheer to our communities as we approach the end of the year and promote a festive atmosphere for visitors
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 51-99%	A grant has been secured to install solar panels, a battery and new air conditioners at the Elmhurst Hall. This will be delivered in partnership with the Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance.
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	Complete	Council officers attended the 'Ready Together: Connecting Communities Before Emergencies' workshop, and Council has updated its internal policy for catastrophic and extreme fire danger preparedness. This marks this action complete, however this work is ongoing and Council will continue to continuously improve its delivery of emergency relief and recovery in response to each event and their unique circumstances.
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

Actions	Progress	Officer Comment
		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 public toilet upgrade is in progress
4.1.3 Deliver the Local Roads Data Reconciliation Project	In progress 0-50%	Recruitment for a GIS Officer is underway to support the delivery of this project.
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%	Rural road safety upgrades will be delivered as part of the road projects identified in the Capital Works program
4.3.2 Improve safety at high-risk intersections and protect vulnerable road users in townships	In progress 0-50%	A range of high-risk intersections will be upgraded this financial year with support from the Victorian Government's Safe Local Roads and Streets Program
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.	Complete	The 2026 school year is nearing completion, with the program having been implemented successfully throughout the year. Planning is now underway to deliver the program again in 2027 to support engagement, visitation and participation activities for the 2027 school year.
5.1.2 Engage with community organisations and groups to identify opportunities to activate underutilised community spaces, such as the Gum San Great Hall	Complete	There have been multiple bookings for the Gum San Great Hall since the carpet upgrade, including first aid training, school assemblies, school holiday programs, etc. This underutilised space has effectively been activated and its usage is increasing.
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 YEAH Crew and through the Crazy Ideas College	Ongoing	The YEAH Crew have continued to receive development opportunities to support their growing capabilities to deliver events and activities for young people in 2027.
5.2.2 Strengthen social connection and inclusion by promoting and improving access to volunteering opportunities	In progress 51-99%	A range of local community events have been supported by Council this past month, these

Actions	Progress	Officer Comment
		provide opportunities for community to volunteer and connect. These include the Pomonal Flower Show, Grampians Brass Festival, Buangor Motor Show, Youth Ignite 2026 and Diwali.
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 51-99%	Council continues to promote nominations for the Australia Day Awards for 2027. Online form for nominations is available via this link and closes at 5pm, 4th January 2027: https://engage.ararat.vic.gov.au/2027-australia-day-awards-nominations
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 first of two multicultural events has been delivered with Welcoming Week in Sept 2026. Council officers have begun working with numerous community groups and organisations 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 51-99%	Development of the Smart Cities Strategy is progressing, with work focused on short-listing opportunities that will enhance service delivery, improve operational efficiencies and achieve long-term cost savings.
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 and priorities
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.		

Actions	Progress	Officer Comment
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 following new digital forms are now live on Council's website: • Request for Stormwater Legal Point of Discharge • Ararat Wind Farm Grants Acquittal • Facade Grants Acquittal • Ararat Fitness Centre Venue Booking • Playgym Attendance Form New forms were also used for the East Grampians Business Awards and People's Choice Award, and the Ararat Wind Farm Sustainable Grants. Other new online forms are in development and will be launched soon.
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 were implemented as part of the Disability Action Plan engagement process. Their effectiveness is being reviewed alongside the development of the Plan

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

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

Budget Implications
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 is a document related to operationalising the Council Plan.

Sustainability Implications
The Annual Plan provides specific actions that will be undertaken for the key theme 5. Preserving Our Environment.

Risk Assessment
Implementing the Annual Plan has some inherent risks around project and program delivery on time, at cost and at an acceptable quality. These risks are managed through careful budget monitoring, a focus on effective project management and appropriate stakeholder engagement. Council has a commitment to improved performance across all of these areas.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement
Stakeholders and community groups will be engaged during the development and delivery of the actions, where applicable.

Gender Impact Assessment
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 – October 2026 report

MOVED CR KAUR
SECONDED CR R ARMSTRONG

That:

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

Cr Kaur and Cr Sanders spoke for the motion.

CARRIED 5/0
5465/26

ATTACHMENTS
There are no attachments relating to this item.

4.4 2026/2027 CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM – OCTOBER 2026

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 33135

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 30 October 2026, 22% 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							$666	$666		
Buangor Cobb & Co. Windows and Heating						$18,600		$18,600		Replacement of rotted timber windows with like for like.
Replacement of Roof – Ararat Pound						$12,431		$12,431		
Ararat Tennis Club – Disabled Toilets										
Ararat Fitness Centre Roof Laserlight Replacement & Flooring Upgrade						$30,356	$7,840	$38,196		Basketball Courts have been sanded and relaqured. 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		$120,564	$1,371,368	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		$56,248	$269,425	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		$36,433	$705,177	95%	All internal works have been completed. Gutter and fascia have been upgraded to the building. A shade structure has been completed.
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	$40,075	$544,046	78%	Tenders for Civil, Lighting and Fencing have been awarded under Council Delegation. All sports lighting work has been completed.
Moyston Multi-Use Court Upgrade *(2025-26 Local Sports Infrastructure Fund – Community Facilities)*	**$300,000**	$225,000	$75,000		$1,329	$14,220	$7,982	$23,531	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	$23,700	$2,354	$26,295		AVOR Architects will be undertaking the work associated with this project.
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**	**$2,505,717**	**$387,908**	**$373,926**	**$3,236,099**		

PLANT & EQUIPMENT	**Budget**	**Committed/ Contracted**	**Expended 26/27**	**%**	**Notes**
Vehicle Purchases	**$240,000**		$303,021	126%	
Major Plant Purchases	**$260,000**				
Fixtures, Fittings & Furniture	**$45,000**		$5,720	13%	
Book stock - Library Book Replacement	**$45,000**		$26,010	57%	
TOTAL - PLANT & EQUIPMENT			**$334,751**	**57%**	

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		$180,050	$180,050	**10%**	*Resheeting work has been undertaken in various locations through the municipality. Including Yarram Gap, Moyston Dunkeld Road, Waterhole Road, Quarry Road.*
Reseal Program	**$1,000,000**		$1,000,000	NA	$84,564	$878,182	$962,747	**96%**	*Most works are complete to 31 October 2026.*
Urban Road – Gravel to Seal	**$1,000,000**		$1,000,000	NA		$247,285	$247,285	**25%**	*Works currently ongoing from 25/26:* - *Alexandra Avenue (in conjunction with SLRSP Funding)* - *Coral & McNeil Street (Early June Commencement)* *26/27 - 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		$45,836	$543,995	27%	*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	$81,071	$37,040	$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		$418,594	$5,968,253	95%	*Line Marking and final seal to be completed.*

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS	Budget	Funding Amount	Council Contribution	Previous Years Expenditure	Committed Expenditure (26/27)	Expended 26/27	Overall Total	%	*Notes*
Road Reconstruction Program 26/27	**$1,457,000**								
Stevens Crescent (R2R)				$15,466		$12,941	$28,407		*Designs are being finalised*
View Point Street (Banksia to Temple) (R2R)				$21,612		$17,674	$39,287		*Designs are being finalised*
View Point Street (High to Lambert) (R2R)				$16,585		$17,406	$33,991		*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		$162,518	$284,905	71%	*Original scope of works is complete*
Major Patching	**$100,000**		$100,000			$120,005	$120,005	120%	*Major patching works are expected to commence in October 26. The overspend is from late invoices for the 25/26 FY.*
Bridges	**$1,200,000**					$1,975	$1,975	4%	
Bellellen Road Floodway (R2R)				$24,542		$2,100	$26,642		Investigation Works being undertaken
Moyston Willaura Road Bridge (R2R) *Design and Construct*				$595		$61	$656		Technical Reporting being undertaken
Footpath Renewal Program	**$400,000**		$400,000		$94,658	$68,653	$163,311	40%	Albert Street Footpath between Currajong Ave and Grano Street is now complete.
Urban Drainage Works	**$750,000**		$750,000			$24,485	$24,485	3%	*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			$25,529	$25,529	8%	*The tender for K&C in Lake Bolac on the Mortlake Ararat Road came in well over budget and will be undertaken in house.*

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS	Budget	Funding Amount	Council Contribution	Previous Years Expenditure	Committed Expenditure (26/27)	Expended 26/27	Overall Total	%	*Notes*
Queen Street Housing Support Program (Housing Support Program – Community Enabling Infrastructure)	**$7,380,000**	$7,380,000		$1,090,597		$496,045	$1,586,642	21%	*Demolition and site clean up are ongoing*
SAFE LOCAL ROADS AND STREETS PROGRAM									
View Point, Tobin & Taylor St Intersections	**$224,000**	$224,000		$22,842	$224,000	$2,508	$249,350	111%	*Project has been awarded to Enoch Civil at October 26 Council Meeting.*
Ingor Street – Raised Crossing	**$110,000**	$110,000		$20,731	$99,500	$1,961	$122,193	111%	*Project has been awarded to Notley Civil.*
King Street – Raised Crossing	**$110,000**	$110,000		$22,900	$78,000	$10,339	$111,239	101%	*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		$8,588	$29,678	22%	*Project is ready for tender.*
Vincent Street & Alexandra Avenue – Raised Crossing	**$321,000**	$321,000		$27,706	$183,950	$4,617	$216,273	67%	*Project has been awarded to SHS Civil.*
Queen & Moore Street Roundabout	**$548,000**	$548,000		$31,213	$549,706	$2,150	$583,069	106%	*Project has been awarded to Enoch Civil at October 26 Council Meeting.*
George Road Raised Crossing (Ararat West)	**$256,000**	$256,000		$5,896		$621	$6,517	2%	*New initiative for the SLRSP to include a permanent raised crossing at George Road. Awaiting final approval for funding.*
Barkly Street Raised Crossing (IP43)						$3,160	$3,160		*Final painting has been completed.*
TOTAL - ROADS CAPITAL	**$33,129,000**	**$20,074,500**	**$10,639,371**	**$7,715,255**	**$1,395,449**	**$2,790,323**	**$11,901,027**		

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 2026/2027 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. That Council receive the Capital Works Program – October 2026 report.

MOVED CR JOYCE
SECONDED CR KAUR

That:

1. That Council receive the Capital Works Program – October 2026 report.

Cr Joyce, Cr Kaur and Cr Sanders spoke for the motion.

CARRIED 5/0
5466/26

ATTACHMENTS
There are no attachments relating to this item

SECTION 5 – COMMITTEE MINUTES/REPORTS

There are no Committee Minutes/Reports

SECTION 6 – INFORMAL MEETINGS

6.1 COUNCIL BRIEFINGS

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**
DEPARTMENT **CEO'S OFFICE**
REFERENCE: **33136**

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 17 November 2026

Matters discussed at the briefing:

- Councillor Safety and Incident Reporting Procedure
- Major Project Update – Indoor Sports Facility
- Proposed Change to Customer Service Operating Hours
- Community Support Grants Program Review
- Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (Planning and Environment Act) S11A
- Basham Street Contract
- Monthly Performance Report – October 2026
- Monthly Community Engagement Report
- Monthly Progress Report – Prestige Mill Infrastructure Project Update – October 2026
- Monthly Progress Report – Council Plan – Annual Plan
- Capital Works Program – October 2026
- Building approvals
- Planning approvals under delegation

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

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

6. STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

We will work hard to build models of governance that place delivering public value at 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.

MOVED CR R ARMSTRONG
SECONDED CR WATERSTON

That

1. the Informal Meetings of Councillors Report be received.

No Councillors spoke for or against the motion.

CARRIED 5/0
5467/26

ATTACHMENTS

The Summary of Council Briefings are provided as Attachment 6.1.

Councillor Briefing Agenda

Ararat Rural City

Date: Tuesday 17 November 2026
Commencement: 5.00 pm
Location: Council Chamber, Shire Offices

Councillors:	Cr Bob Sanders Cr Rob Armstrong Cr Peter Joyce Cr Teli Kaur Cr Luke Preston
Officers:	Chief Executive Officer, Phuong Au Chief Operating Officer, Chandra Willmott Infrastructure Lead, Rebecca Rodger
Apologies:	Cr Jo Armstrong (approved leave) Cr Bill Waterston

Disclosure of Conflict of Interests

Disclosure of Interests are to be made immediately prior to any relevant item being discussed ***(Local Government Act 2020 - Section 131 and Chapter 5, Section 6 of the Governance Rules)***.

1. Matters to be considered

1.1	Mayor's roundup
1.2	Councillor Safety and Incident Reporting Procedure
1.3	Major Project Update – Indoor Sports Facility
1.4	Proposed Change to Customer Service Operating Hours
1.5	Community Support Grant Program Review
1.6	Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (Planning and Environment Act) S11A
1.7	Basham Street Contract
1.8	Monthly Performance Report – October 2026

2. For noting

2.1	Monthly Community Engagement Report
2.2	Monthly Progress Report – Prestige Mill Infrastructure Project Update – September 2026
2.3	Monthly Progress Report – Council Plan – Annual Plan
2.4	Capital Works Program – October 2026
2.5	Building Approvals
2.6	Planning Approvals under Delegation

Phuong Au

SECTION 7 – NOTICES OF MOTION

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

SECTION 8 – URGENT BUSINESS

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

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

SECTION 9 – CLOSE SESSION (CONFIDENTIAL)

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

- Item 9.1 – Basham Street Contract

6:21PM - CLOSURE OF COUNCIL MEETING TO THE PUBLIC

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

RECOMMENDATION

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

MOVED CR JOYCE
SECONDED CR R ARMSTRONG

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

No Councillors spoke for or against the motion

CARRIED 5/0
5468/26

6:26PM - OPEN COUNCIL MEETING RECOMMENCEMENT

RECOMMENDATION

That the Open Council Meeting recommence.

MOVED CR R ARMSTRONG
SECONDED CR JOYCE

That the Open Council Meeting recommence.

No Councillors spoke for or against the motion.

CARRIED 5/0
5470/26

Gallery invited to return to Council Chamber.

LIFTING OF CONFIDENTIALITY OF CLOSED SESSION RESOLUTIONS

RECOMMENDATION

That:

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

MOVED CR JOYCE
SECONDED CR KAUR

That:

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

No Councillors spoke for or against the motion.

CARRIED 5/0
5471/26

Meeting closed at 6:27pm

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT PAGES 14397 - 14450 INCLUDING PAGES 977 - 980 OF THE CLOSED SESSION ARE CONFIRMED AND ARE A TRUE AND CORRECT RECORD.

MAYOR – CR BOB SANDERS