



## Ararat Rural City Council Response to Recommendations – August 2017



Commission of Inquiry Recommendations	Minister's Recommendations	Council Actions	Who	When	Status
<p>2. The Commission recommends that the Minister recommends to the Mayor of the Council:</p> <p>a. Council appoint an external Interim CEO to the Council for a fixed period of 12 months to undertake an organisational restructure of responsibilities and reporting lines, with a capacity to extend the term.</p> <p>b. The interim CEO works with the Monitor to achieve contemporary good governance practices within the Council senior staff.</p>	<p>1 External Interim Chief Executive Officer</p> <p>a. Appoint an external interim CEO to the Council for a fixed period of 12 months to undertake an organisational restructure of responsibilities and reporting lines, with a capacity to extend the term.</p> <p>b. Ensure the Interim CEO works with any municipal Monitor to the Council to achieve contemporary good governance practices within the Council Senior staff.</p>	<p>A report was prepared for the 15 August 2017 Council meeting extending the current Interim CEO until 31 October 2017 or until an external Interim CEO has been appointed.</p> <p>Council will undertake a recruitment process for the external Interim CEO. The Mayor will provide all Councillors with the work history/resumes of suitable applicants and an interview process will be conducted by all Councillors. All processes associated with the recruitment of the external Interim CEO will be closely overseen by the Monitor.</p>	<p>Interim CEO</p>	<p>15 August 2017 Council Meeting</p> <p>Following the appointment of the Monitor by the Minister for Local Government</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>In Progress</p>
<p>3. The Commission recommends to the Minister that the Minister recommends to Mayor that the Council retain the 2016 rating strategy as the 2017 rating strategy.</p> <p>4. The Commission recommends to the Minister that the Minister recommends to the Mayor of the Council that the Council establish a Rating Strategy Advisory Group that:</p>	<p>2 Rating Strategy</p> <p>a. Retain the Council's 2016 rating strategy as the 2017 rating strategy and reflect this in the Council's 2017/2018 budget.</p> <p>b. Establish a rating strategy advisory group that:</p> <p>i. Has terms of reference to assist the Council develop its rating strategy by:</p>	<p>Draft Rating Strategy 2017 was presented to the 15 August 2017 Council Meeting for consideration. This document was developed using the differentials of the Rating Strategy 2016, with a 2% increase in rates and Municipal Charge.</p> <p>Director contacted Wyndham City Council on 14 August 2017 to arrange a meeting for Executive Manager Community Life and</p>	<p>Director Assets, Finance and Corporate Services</p>	<p>15 August 2017 Council Meeting</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>In Progress</p>



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<p>a. Has Terms of Reference to assist the Council develop its rating strategy by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Identifying and recommending principles for formulating a rating strategy.</li> <li>ii. Advising on the residential rate and consideration of differential rates</li> <li>iii. Advising on the equitable sharing of the rates revenue and changes to current charges and rebates</li> <li>iv. Proposing improvements to communication and engagement on the budget and rating strategy</li> <li>v. Producing a discussion paper with recommendations for Council before public comment</li> </ul> <p>b. Comprises an independent non-voting Chair with knowledge of local government rating and representatives of key groups of rate payers with voting rights.</p> <p>c. Is assisted by an external rating expert and Council staff in administration and management support</p> <p>d. In approaching its task has regard to the operation of the Wyndham</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Identifying and recommending principles for formulating its ratings strategy.</li> <li>2 Advising on the residential rate and consideration of differential rates</li> <li>3 Advising on the equitable sharing of the rate revenue and changes to current charges and rebates</li> <li>4 Proposing improvements to communication and engagement on the budget and rating strategy</li> <li>5 Producing a discussion paper with recommendations for Council before public comment.</li> </ul> <p>ii. Comprises an independent non-voting Chair with knowledge of local government rating, and representatives of key groups of</p>	<p>himself to meet with the Director in relation to the Wyndham City Council's Rating Strategy Advisory Group. Date to be confirmed.</p> <p>Mayor and Interim CEO met with CEO of the MAV on 9 August 2017 to discuss the external rating expert as noted in Minister's 2(b)(iii)</p> <p>2(b) Rating Strategy Advisory Group – implementation of the Group to be carried out by Monitor and external Interim CEO</p>			



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<p>City Council Rating Strategy Advisory Group; the findings of the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) <i>Rating Practices in Local Government</i>; and the findings of the VAGO <i>Audit of Public Participation and Community Engagement in Local Government</i>.</p> <p>5. The Commission recommends to the Minister that the Minister recommends to the Mayor of the Council that Council thereafter considers the recommendations of the Rating Strategy Advisory Group and public comment on the recommendations before developing a draft rating strategy.</p> <p>6. The Commission recommends to the Minister that the Minister recommends to the Mayor of the Council that Council prepare a rating strategy in accordance with the Local Government Better Practice Guide to determine the rating structure that will provide the most equitable imposition of rates and charges. The strategy should be developed after the results of the 1 January 2018 general revaluation of properties is known.</p>	<p>ratepayers with voting rights.</p> <p>iii. Is assisted by an external rating expert and Council staff in administration and management support.</p> <p>iv. In approaching its task has regard to the operation of the Wyndham City Council Rating Strategy Advisory Group; the findings of the <i>Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) Rating Practices in Local Government</i>; and the findings of the VAGO <i>Audit of Public Participation and Community Engagement in Local Government</i>.</p> <p>v. Gives significant regard to being informed by the outcomes of a Citizens' Jury-type approach involving</p>				



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<p>7. The Commission recommends to the Minister that the Minister recommends to the Mayor of the Council that Council develop an implementation plan, which will transition the current rating structure to the proposed rating structure with the aim of providing a reasonable degree of stability in the level of the rates burden.</p>	<p>members of the local community.</p> <p>c. Consider the recommendations of the Rating Strategy Advisory Group and public comment on the recommendations before developing a draft rating strategy.</p> <p>d. Prepare a rating strategy in accordance with the <i>Local Government Better Practice Guide</i> to determine the rating structure that will provide the most equitable imposition of rates and charges. The strategy should be developed after the results of the 1 January 2018 general revaluation of properties is known.</p> <p>e. Develop an implementation plan, which would transition the current rating structure to any proposed new rating structure, with the aim of providing a reasonable degree of stability in the lever of the rates burden.</p>				
<p>9. The Commission recommends that the Minister recommends to the Mayor of the Council that Council</p>	<p>3 Financial Stability</p> <p>a. Undertake a review of its current range and level of</p>	<p>Awaiting the appointment of the Monitor and External Interim CEO.</p>	<p>Monitor and</p>	<p>To be advised</p>	<p>Pending</p>



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<p>undertake a review of its current range and level of service provision to the community with a view to making structural changes that ensure it can fully fund its asset renewal requirements and remain financially viable over the long term.</p>	<p>service provision to the community with a view to making structural changes that ensure it can fully fund its asset renewal requirements and remain financially viable over the long term.</p>	<p>Review the existing Service Review documentation and develop an implementation plan</p> <p>Finalising and implementing the current Service Review program</p> <p>Council adopted the 2017-2012 Council Plan at the 15 August 2017 Council Meeting. Included in the Council Plan under the foundation of 'Our Organisation' there is an ongoing commitment to service reviews. The relevant sections are:</p> <p>5.4 – Professional and skilled staff in a safe and supportive environment; and 5.5 – Sustainable, long term financial management</p>	<p>External Interim CEO</p> <p>Executive Leadership Group</p> <p>Council</p>	<p>End of October 2017</p> <p>15 August 2017 Council Meeting</p>	<p>In Progress</p> <p>Completed</p>
<p>10. The Commission recommends that the Minister recommends to the Mayor of the Council that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Council reviews its community engagement policy</li> <li>b. Council processes for documenting and evaluating community engagement be included in the policy</li> </ul>	<p>4 Community Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Review its community engagement policy</li> <li>b. Include processes for documenting and evaluating community engagement in its community engagement policy</li> <li>c. Consider the findings of the <i>VAGO Audit of Public</i></li> </ul>	<p>Executive Manager Community Life has contacted Wangaratta City Council to discuss their approach to Community Engagement.</p> <p>Director Assets, Finances &amp; Corporate Services contacted Wyndham City Council on 14 August 2017 to arrange a</p>	<p>Executive Manager Community Life</p>	<p>Email sent 14 August 2017</p> <p>Phone contact made 14 August 2017</p>	<p>In Progress</p>



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c. Council consider the findings of the VAGO Audit of Public Participation and Community Engagement in Local Government in reviewing its community engagement policy.	<i>Participation and Community Engagement in Local Government</i> in reviewing its community engagement policy.	meeting for Executive Manager Community Life and himself to meet with the Director in relation to the Wyndham City Council's Rating Strategy Advisory Group. Date to be confirmed.			
12 The Commission recommends that the Minister recommends to the Mayor of the Council that it adopt best practice and restrict Councillor access only to the minutes of the Audit Committee meetings and Councillors no longer approve recommendations of the Internal Auditor	5 Audit Committee a. Adopt best practice by: i. Restricting access by Councillors who are not Audit Committee members, to only the minutes of Audit Committee meetings, and ii. Ensure Councillors no longer approve recommendations of the Internal Auditor.	The next scheduled Audit Committee is 6 September 2017. The proposal is to incorporate the minutes of the Audit Committee into the information report 7.1.2 – Council Committees.  Council will conduct a review of the current Audit Committee reporting process and benchmark best practice for inclusion a new process that will be endorsed by the Audit Committee	Director Assets, Finance and Corporate Services	September 2017	In Progress
	6. Code of Conduct a. Take steps under its Councillor Code of Conduct to address the Commission's findings in relation to potential breaches of the Code of Conduct.	Council will commence the disciplinary process outlined in the Councillor Code of Conduct and the Councillor Code of Conduct Support Guide as soon as practicable.	Mayor	To be advised	
1 The Commission recommends to the Minister that at a minimum, she appoint a Monitor to the Council for the next two years to:		N/A	This role is a Ministerial appointment	To be advised	



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry on the rating strategy</li> <li>b. Undertake an assessment of individual capability to deliver good governance and develop a program of improvement for each Councillor</li> <li>c. Conduct and oversee the implementation of an induction and education program for the Councillors elected in 2016 as a group on contemporary good governance practice</li> <li>d. Work with the Interim CEO to achieve contemporary good governance practices by senior staff</li> <li>e. Monitor the rebuilding of community harmony and community trust in Council and Council's ability to make decisions in the best interest of the community</li> <li>f. Attend Assemblies of Council and Council Meetings to review and provide advice</li> <li>g. Report to the Minister monthly and immediately report any issues to the</li> </ul>					



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<p>Minister that may require urgent attention</p> <p>h. Monitor the recruitment and appointment of a permanent CEO at the conclusion of the interim CEO's appointment.</p> <p>i. Provide a report at the end of the Monitor's term containing details on actions taken and outcomes achieved in regard to the Monitors Terms of Reference</p>					
<p>8. The Commission recommends to the Minister that accountability to the community be improved by amending the <i>Act</i> to require a Council to justify the use of a uniform rate as a method for the equitable imposition of rates as it currently requires for the use of differential rates</p>		N/A	Minister for Local Government	As part of LG Act Review	
<p>11. The Commission recommends that the Minister recommends to the Electoral Commission that prior to its next statutory review it undertake a review of the unsubdivided electoral structure at the Council in light of the findings of this report.</p>		N/A	VEC	As part of VEC's statutory review	
<p><b>Other Items</b> Report writing – contemporary and meeting modern standards</p>					





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Minutes – Authors		<p>Council currently has an Author/Peer/Authorised process for all agenda items, but this table is removed from the agenda on approval of report. Council will include the Author (title) from the September 2017 Council Meeting.</p> <p>Council will conduct a benchmarking process to determine current best practice in report writing and will commit to an education program for all employees who write or contribute to Council reports</p>	<p>Interim CEO</p> <p>Interim CEO</p>	<p>September 2017</p> <p>Immediately</p>	<p>In Progress</p>