



Ararat Rural City



MINUTES

STATUTORY MEETING OF COUNCIL

Tuesday 30 October 2018

To be held in the
Council Chamber, Shire Hall,
233-235 Barkly Street, Ararat
Commencing at 6.00pm

Council:

**Cr Gwenda Allgood
Cr Jo Armstrong
Cr Peter Beales
Cr Bill Braithwaite
Cr Frank Deutsch
Cr Fay Hull
Cr David Pettman**

Our Vision

Our communities, our opportunities

Our Mission Statement

We will demonstrate leadership through social responsibility, openness and transparency by actively working with our community to achieve shared goals.

Our Values

Respect - Respect for each other and the wider community.

Excellence - Striving for ongoing professionalism and organisational excellence.

Passion - Passion for our people, community and services.

A recording of this meeting is being made for the purpose of verifying the accuracy of the minutes of the Council Meeting, Special Council Meeting or Assembly of Councillors.

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.

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

ITEM 1	OPENING OF MEETING.....	2550
ITEM 2	LIVE STREAMING.....	2550
ITEM 3	TRADITIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT/OPENING PRAYER/COUNCILLORS PLEDGE.....	2550
ITEM 4	APOLOGIES.....	2551
ITEM 5	DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS	2551
ITEM 6	ELECTION OF MAYOR	2552
ITEM 7	ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR.....	2554
ITEM 8	APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL DELEGATES TO COMMITTEES/ORGANISTIONS	2555
ITEM 9	FIXING OF MEETING CYCLE 2018/2019.....	2560
ITEM 10	CLOSURE OF MEETING	2562

The Statutory Meeting of Council commenced at 6.00pm.

PRESENT

Crs Gwenda Allgood, Jo Armstrong, Peter Beales, Bill Braithwaite, Frank Deutsch, Fay Hull and David Pettman, Ms Janet Dore, Municipal Monitor, Dr Tim Harrison, Chief Executive Officer (Temporary Chairperson), Mrs Angela Hunt, Acting General Manager Community Services, Mr Tim Day, Acting General Manager Infrastructure, Mrs Jenny Woolcock, Manager Governance, Ms Jaiden Bach, Executive Services and Councillor Support Officer, and Mr Sam Shalders, Media and Communications Coordinator.

ITEM 1 OPENING OF MEETING

Under Section 72(2) of the Local Government Act 1989, the office of Mayor becomes vacant at 6am on the day of a general election whether or not the Mayor has completed his or her term of office as resolved by the Council under Section 71(1).

Under Governance Local Law 2012 Section 9(1)(b) The Chief Executive Officer must conduct the election of Mayor.

The Chief Executive Officer (Temporary Chair), Dr Tim Harrison declared the meeting open.

ITEM 2 LIVE STREAMING

Council is keen to engage with members of the community and now live streams the formal Council Meetings to make them accessible. The stream will be available to view on Ararat Rural City Council's Facebook page from 6pm and on Council's website, www.ararat.vic.gov.au from Wednesday morning following the Council Meeting.

You do not require a Facebook account to watch the live broadcast, simply enter www.facebook.com/araratruralcitycouncil into your address bar.

ITEM 3 TRADITIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT/OPENING PRAYER/COUNCILLORS PLEDGE

Traditional acknowledgement – read out by Temporary Chairperson, Dr Tim Harrison

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 – read out by Cr Armstrong

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 – read out by Cr Deutsch

We will undertake the duties of the office of Councillor in the best interests of the people of the municipal district of the Ararat Rural City Council and faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in us under the local government act 1989 or any other act to the best of our skill and judgment.

ITEM 4 APOLOGIES

There were no Apologies.

ITEM 5 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Under Section 79C of the Local Government Act 1989 a Councillor does not have a conflict of interest if the matter relates to the election of the Mayor or a decision in relation to the payment of allowances to the Mayor or Councillors.

There were no Disclosure of Interests.

ITEM 6 ELECTION OF MAYOR

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: EXECUTIVE SERVICES
REFERENCE: 13047340

Section 71 of the Local Government Act 1989 provides for the election of the Mayor after the fourth Saturday in October and no later than 30 November each year.

The process of election of the Mayor will take place in accordance with Section 9(1)(a)(ii) of Council's Governance Local Law 2012.

The Chief Executive Officer (Temporary Chair), Dr Tim Harrison thanked the outgoing Mayor, Cr Gwenda Allgood and made a short Presentation.

Cr Gwenda Allgood read from her written report which is summarised below.

- Welcoming the crew of HMAS Ararat to town and granting them Freedom of Entry to the city.
The visit marked 75 years of HMAS Ararat's association with us.
It was a frosty, cold winter's day but to see our residents turned out in numbers to show their support was fantastic.
- Officially opening the Ararat Arts Precinct in August after undergoing an 18-month redevelopment – the biggest Ararat Rural City Council has seen – was a real thrill.
The weekend of celebrating the Arts was a joy with the community once again throwing their support behind the planned events.
- In September we officially opened the first stage of the Bill Waterston Skate Park – Ararat Active Link.
What has been created in that area is a fantastic new tourist attraction which has been getting attention across the state and even nationally and there will be even more exciting things happening in that space thanks to the additional funding announcement.

Funding received May 2018 – October 2018

- Reconstruction and widening of Back Bolac Road via Fixing Country Roads Program - \$633,000
- Ararat Active Link (Sate Park Stage 2) – \$250,000
- Alex Oval Netball Courts, Olver Stand improvements with indoor training space and surrounding event space - \$750,000
- Pick My Project Basketball Court upgrades - \$192,000
- Pick My Project Willaura Tennis Courts - \$129,000
- Ararat in Transition to prepare for the bypass - \$25,000
- Pomonal Speed Smart initiative - \$50,000
- Lake Bolac Resource and Recovery Centre - \$350,000
- Ararat Memorial Fountain - \$62,700
- Alex Gardens and Skate Park Lighting - \$230,000
- Graffiti Grants, Skate Park Graffiti Project - \$20,000
- Bridge Renewal Program, Elmhurst-Landsborough Rd Bridge 50/50 partnership with Pyrenees Shire for twin bridges - \$750,000
- VicRoads, Barkly St/Marian College safety improvements (safety refuges and designated bike lanes) - \$100,000

Total \$3,541,700.00 – all matched with funding by Council

The Temporary Chair called for nominations for the position of Mayor for the forthcoming year.

Cr Pettman nominated Cr Allgood for the position of Mayor

Cr Armstrong nominated Cr Beales for the position of Mayor

Cr Deutsch nominated Cr Braithwaite for the position of Mayor – Cr Braithwaite declined the nomination.

The vote for Mayor was put:

3 Votes for Cr Allgood

4 Votes for Cr Beales

Based on the vote Cr Beales was declared Mayor for the 2018/2019 Council term.

On election of the Mayor, the Temporary Chairperson, Chief Executive Officer Dr Tim Harrison vacated the Chair and the incoming Mayor, Cr Beales assumed the Chair.

Council has no obligation to elect a Deputy Mayor as per the Local Government Act 1989. Council's Governance Local Law 2012 Clause 10 (1) states "at a meeting to elect the Mayor, Council may determine to elect a Deputy Mayor".

ITEM 7 ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: EXECUTIVE SERVICES
REFERENCE: 13047340**

The Mayor, Cr Beales called for nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor for the forthcoming year.

Cr Hull nominated Cr Armstrong for the position of Deputy Mayor

As there were no further nominations, Cr Armstrong was declared Deputy Mayor for the 2018/2019 Council term.

ITEM 8 APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL DELEGATES TO COMMITTEES/ORGANISATIONS

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: EXECUTIVE SERVICES
REFERENCE: 13047340

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is to provide clarity on Council representation on the various Council Committees and external bodies that Council will be represented for 2018/2019.

RECOMMENDATION

That the appointment of Council delegates to Committees/Organisations for the Council term 2018/2019 as listed below be approved:

<i>Committee/Organisation with Council Representation</i>	<i>Basis of Representation</i>	<i>Council Delegate</i>	<i>Support Officer</i>
<i>National/State/Regional Bodies</i>			
<i>Municipal Association of Victoria</i>	<i>One Councillor</i>	<i>Mayor Deputy Mayor (sub)</i>	<i>CEO</i>
<i>MAV Human Services Committee</i>	<i>One Councillor</i>	<i>Cr Beales</i>	<i>-</i>
<i>MAV Emergency Management Committee</i>	<i>One Councillor</i>	<i>Cr Beales</i>	<i>-</i>
<i>Central Highlands Regional Mayors and CEOs Forum</i>	<i>Mayor</i>	<i>Mayor</i>	<i>CEO</i>
<i>Central Highlands Councils Victoria Inc</i>	<i>Mayor</i>	<i>Mayor</i>	<i>CEO</i>
<i>Western Highway Action Committee</i>	<i>One Councillor</i>	<i>Cr Armstrong</i>	<i>General Manager Infrastructure</i>
<i>Grampians Central West Waste and Resource Recovery Region Local Government Waste Forum</i>	<i>One Councillor</i>	<i>Cr Hull</i>	<i>General Manager Community Services</i>
<i>Lake Fyans Recreational Area Committee of Management</i>	<i>One Councillor</i>	<i>Cr Braithwaite</i>	<i>-</i>
<i>Council Committees</i>			
<i>Ararat Regional Art Gallery Advisory Committee</i>	<i>One Councillor</i>	<i>Cr Armstrong</i>	<i>Manager Cultural Services</i>
<i>Audit Committee</i>	<i>Two Councillors</i>	<i>Cr Beales and Cr Braithwaite</i>	<i>CEO</i>
<i>CEO Employment and Recruitment Advisory Committee</i>	<i>Mayor and Two Councillors</i>	<i>Cr Allgood, Cr Armstrong and Cr Braithwaite</i>	<i>Manager Governance</i>

<i>Community Road Safety Steering Committee</i>	<i>One Councillor</i>	<i>Cr Allgood</i>	<i>Design and Project Management Coordinator</i>
<i>Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee</i>	<i>One Councillor</i>	<i>Cr Pettman</i>	<i>Waste and Sustainability Coordinator</i>
<i>Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee</i>	<i>One Councillor</i>	<i>Cr Beales</i>	<i>Manager Safety</i>
<i>S86 Special Committees</i>			
<i>Alexandra Hall Committee of Management</i>	<i>One Councillor (non-voting)</i>	<i>Cr Allgood</i>	-
<i>Buangor Community Sports Centre Committee (including Cobb & Co Building)</i>	<i>One Councillor (non-voting)</i>	<i>Cr Braithwaite</i>	
<i>Elmhurst Public Hall Committee</i>	<i>One Councillor (non-voting)</i>	<i>Cr Beales</i>	
<i>Lake Bolac Complex Committee</i>	<i>One Councillor (non-voting)</i>	<i>Cr Beales</i>	
<i>Lake Bolac Memorial Hall Committee</i>	<i>One Councillor (non-voting)</i>	<i>Cr Beales</i>	
<i>Maroona Recreation Reserve Committee</i>	<i>One Councillor (non-voting)</i>	<i>Cr Pettman</i>	
<i>Mininera Recreation Reserve Committee</i>	<i>One Councillor (non-voting)</i>	<i>Cr Beales</i>	
<i>Moyston Public Hall Committee</i>	<i>One Councillor (non-voting)</i>	<i>Cr Pettman</i>	
<i>Pomonal Hall & Reserve Committee</i>	<i>One Councillor (non-voting)</i>	<i>Cr Braithwaite</i>	
<i>Streatham Memorial Hall Committee</i>	<i>One Councillor (non-voting)</i>	<i>Cr Armstrong</i>	
<i>Tatyoan Hall and Recreation Reserve Committee</i>	<i>One Councillor (non-voting)</i>	<i>Cr Beales</i>	
<i>Warrak Public Hall Committee</i>	<i>One Councillor (non-voting)</i>	<i>Cr Allgood</i>	
<i>Westmere Progress Association Committee</i>	<i>One Councillor (non-voting)</i>	<i>Cr Armstrong</i>	
<i>Wickliffe Action Group Wickliffe Common Committee</i>	<i>One Councillor (non-voting)</i>	<i>Cr Allgood</i>	
<i>Wickliffe Recreation Reserve Committee</i>	<i>One Councillor (non-voting)</i>	<i>Cr Allgood</i>	
<i>Willaura Golf Club</i>	<i>One Councillor (non-voting)</i>	<i>Cr Beales</i>	
<i>Willaura Memorial Hall</i>	<i>One Councillor (non-voting)</i>	<i>Cr Beales</i>	

<i>Willaura Recreation Reserve</i>	<i>One Councillor (non-voting)</i>	<i>Cr Pettman</i>	
<i>Yalla-Y-Poora Community Centre</i>	<i>One Councillor (non-voting)</i>	<i>Cr Armstrong</i>	

**MOVED CR HULL
SECONDED CR BRAITHWAITE**

That the appointment of Council delegates to Committees/Organisations for the Council term 2018/2019 as listed below be approved:

Committee/Organisation with Council Representation	Basis of Representation	Council Delegate	Support Officer
<i>National/State/Regional Bodies</i>			
Municipal Association of Victoria	One Councillor	Mayor Deputy Mayor (sub)	CEO
MAV Human Services Committee	One Councillor	Cr Beales	-
MAV Emergency Management Committee	One Councillor	Cr Beales	-
Central Highlands Regional Mayors and CEOs Forum	Mayor	Mayor	CEO
Central Highlands Councils Victoria Inc	Mayor	Mayor	CEO
Western Highway Action Committee	One Councillor	Cr Armstrong	General Manager Infrastructure
Grampians Central West Waste and Resource Recovery Region Local Government Waste Forum	One Councillor	Cr Hull	General Manager Community Services
Lake Fyans Recreational Area Committee of Management	One Councillor	Cr Braithwaite	-
<i>Council Committees</i>			
Ararat Regional Art Gallery Advisory Committee	One Councillor	Cr Armstrong	Manager Cultural Services
Audit Committee	Two Councillors	Cr Beales and Cr Braithwaite	CEO
CEO Employment and Recruitment Advisory Committee	Mayor and Two Councillors	Cr Beales, Cr Armstrong and Cr Braithwaite	Manager Governance

Community Road Safety Steering Committee	One Councillor	Cr Allgood	Design and Project Management Coordinator
Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee	One Councillor	Cr Pettman	Waste and Sustainability Coordinator
Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee	One Councillor	Cr Beales	Manager Safety
S86 Special Committees			
Alexandra Hall Committee of Management	One Councillor (non-voting)	Cr Allgood	-
Buangor Community Sports Centre Committee (including Cobb & Co Building)	One Councillor (non-voting)	Cr Braithwaite	
Elmhurst Public Hall Committee	One Councillor (non-voting)	Cr Beales	
Lake Bolac Complex Committee	One Councillor (non-voting)	Cr Deutsch	
Lake Bolac Memorial Hall Committee	One Councillor (non-voting)	Cr Deutsch	
Maroona Recreation Reserve Committee	One Councillor (non-voting)	Cr Pettman	
Minirera Recreation Reserve Committee	One Councillor (non-voting)	Cr Beales	
Moyston Public Hall Committee	One Councillor (non-voting)	Cr Pettman	
Pomonal Hall & Reserve Committee	One Councillor (non-voting)	Cr Braithwaite	
Streatham Memorial Hall Committee	One Councillor (non-voting)	Cr Armstrong	
Tatyoan Hall and Recreation Reserve Committee	One Councillor (non-voting)	Cr Beales	
Warrak Public Hall Committee	One Councillor (non-voting)	Cr Allgood	
Westmere Progress Association Committee	One Councillor (non-voting)	Cr Armstrong	
Wickliffe Action Group Wickliffe Common Committee	One Councillor (non-voting)	Cr Allgood	
Wickliffe Recreation Reserve Committee	One Councillor (non-voting)	Cr Allgood	
Willaura Golf Club	One Councillor (non-voting)	Cr Beales	

Willaura Memorial Hall	One Councillor (non-voting)	Cr Beales	
Willaura Recreation Reserve	One Councillor (non-voting)	Cr Pettman	
Yalla-Y-Poora Community Centre	One Councillor (non-voting)	Cr Armstrong	
CARRIED 3947/18			

DISCUSSION

Council is represented on a range of committees, which are convened by external bodies and on various internal committees, the 2018/2019 committees and organisations.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

- 1.1 Work with communities to develop and prosper
- 2.3 Promotion of Regional Living
- 3.1 A strong and diverse local economy
- 5.1 Good governance through leadership

Financial

Costs for Councillors attending (travel expenses) are included in the current budget allocations.

Policy/Legal/Statutory

Council representation is required on various bodies and committees, including: Municipal Association of Victoria, Rural Councils Victoria, Central Highlands Regional Councils, Western Highway Action Committee, Grampians Central West Waste and Resource Recovery Region Local Government Waste Forum. Lake Pyans Recreational Area Committee of Management and all Section 86 Committees.

Risk Assessment

A definitive list will clarify who is the Council appointed delegate/s to any particular body or Committee.

Stakeholder Consultation and Communication

Council representation on Committees and Organisations across the municipality.

CONCLUSION

That Council determines representation on the various Council committees and external bodies with which Council is associated for 2018/2019.

ITEM 9 FIXING OF MEETING CYCLE 2018/2019

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: EXECUTIVE SERVICES
REFERENCE: 13047340

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to set Council Meeting dates for 2018/2019.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1 *Adopts the Ordinary Council Meeting dates for 2018/2019 as follows:
7.00pm - Tuesday 20 November 2018;
6.00pm - Tuesday 11 December 2018 (one week earlier);
6.00pm - Tuesday 19 February 2019;
6.00pm - Tuesday 19 March 2019;
6.00pm - Tuesday 16 April 2019;
6.00pm - Tuesday 21 May 2019;
6.00pm - Tuesday 25 June 2019 (one week later);
6.00pm - Tuesday 16 July 2019;
6.00pm - Tuesday 20 August 2019;
6.00pm - Tuesday 17 September 2019;
6.00pm - Tuesday 15 October 2019; and
6.00pm - Tuesday 29 October 2019 (Statutory Meeting); and*
- 2 *Advertises the dates and times of the Council Meeting dates for 2018/2019 in the Ararat Advertiser and on Council's website.*

**MOVED CR BRAITHWAITE
SECONDED CR HULL**

That Council:

- 1 **Adopts the Ordinary Council Meeting dates for 2018/2019 as follows:
7.00pm - Tuesday 20 November 2018;
6.00pm - Tuesday 11 December 2018 (one week earlier);
6.00pm - Tuesday 19 February 2019;
6.00pm - Tuesday 19 March 2019;
6.00pm - Tuesday 16 April 2019;
6.00pm - Tuesday 21 May 2019;
6.00pm - Tuesday 25 June 2019 (one week later);
6.00pm - Tuesday 16 July 2019;
6.00pm - Tuesday 20 August 2019;
6.00pm - Tuesday 17 September 2019;
6.00pm - Tuesday 15 October 2019; and
6.00pm - Tuesday 29 October 2019 (Statutory Meeting); and**
- 2 **Advertises the dates and times of the Council Meeting dates for 2018/2019 in the Ararat Advertiser and on Council's website.**

CARRIED 3948/18

DISCUSSION

On the basis of Council continuing to meet on the third Tuesday of the month, the following dates will be the ordinary Council Meeting days for the ensuing twelve months (excluding December 2018 and June 2019).

December 2018 Council Meeting

The December 2018 Council Meeting is held one week earlier to assist employees to following up on resolutions prior to the Christmas break. Last year Council held the December meeting on the 2nd Tuesday.

June 2019 Council Meeting

The Mayor and Chief Executive Officer attend the ALGA National General Assembly in Canberra, which is held the third week of June the same week as the Council Meeting. This change allows Council representatives to attendance the National General Assembly.

Proposed times and dates:

7.00pm - Tuesday 20 November 2018;
6.00pm - Tuesday 11 December 2018 (one week earlier);
6.00pm - Tuesday 19 February 2019;
6.00pm - Tuesday 19 March 2019;
6.00pm - Tuesday 16 April 2019;
6.00pm - Tuesday 21 May 2019;
6.00pm - Tuesday 25 June 2019 (one week later);
6.00pm - Tuesday 16 July 2019;
6.00pm - Tuesday 20 August 2019;
6.00pm - Tuesday 17 September 2019;
6.00pm - Tuesday 15 October 2019; and

Proposed times and dates for Special Meetings:

6.00pm - Tuesday 29 October 2019 (Statutory Meeting).

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

5.1 Good governance through leadership

Financial

None identified.

Policy/Legal/Statutory

Schedule set for Council Meetings, and meetings advertised and placed on Council website.

Risk Assessment

None identified.

Stakeholder Consultation and Communication

Community awareness of meeting cycle for 2018/2019.

CONCLUSION

Meeting cycle set for the 2018/2019 term.

ITEM 10 CLOSURE OF MEETING

Newly elected Mayor, Cr Peter Beales read from a prepared statement, which is provided below, outlining his key priorities for the forthcoming term

"I wish to make some general comments about the status of the municipality, in my view, at the present moment. This is not a complete list.

I have been involved in local government since 1983 and I am the fourth mayor of this community in two years. In all my years in local government, I have never seen such public disdain for all three levels of government.

State and Federal Governments exist in their own right, but local government exists at the whim of State Government. We have seen that power exercised recently on local government, but in my view, not consistently.

I realise that most people can relate to local Councillors because they are much easier to contact than State and Federal politicians. This should make Councillors more in tune with their communities.

What do people think when they think of politicians? Well, I can assure you that they put State and Federal politicians and Councillors in the same light.

So where do Councillors take their guidance from? What examples do we emulate?

We have Federal politicians whose public moral positions are opposite to their actions. We have State members of Parliament (not just Victoria) rorting allowances, lying about qualifications, requesting bribes.

We have Victorian politicians citing religious reasons for not being in Parliament on Good Friday and asking the Government to excuse two of their members to even the numbers only to have the two "religious members" return to the chamber on Good Friday and vote and this decision was supported by their Parliamentary leaders. This action broke a tradition that has been held since the first Victorian Parliament.

Hypocrites all.

Where is the moral compass of our leaders? Where are the statesmen like Menzies and Curtin? Probably turning in their graves.

In the last two years Ararat Rural City Council existed in this environment and succumbed. Our issues of the time are well documented.

Things have changed for our Council. We now live stream meetings so the community can see what we actually do. I thank Cr Pettman for his efforts to make community input into meetings less onerous.

I intend before closing Council meetings to deal with confidential matters, to indicate the nature of the discussions but not the content. Council cannot bring up matters in confidential unless it has been put on the agenda days earlier.

The current Councillors are also making themselves more available to our community.

At this time can I, on behalf of this Council, apologise to the community for our actions of the past. Even though we have three new Councillors, I believe we all realise that the community is still hurting from the processes Council engaged in the past.

The current Community Satisfaction Survey points to many areas of concern in the mind of the community. I will briefly touch on a couple of areas of the survey.

The summary of the core overall performance measures shows an average of like

Councils at	56%
Ararat 2017 we were	53%

Ararat 2018 37%

Two of the key areas of concern were:

Overall Council Direction

Average 50%

Ararat 2017 47%

Ararat 2018 29%

Making Decisions in the interest of the Community

Average 52%

Ararat 2017 50%

Ararat 2018 33%

Not all areas dropped but the overall result is appalling.

One of the key areas where Council has not performed is in putting information into the public domain. Too often we have allowed inaccurate comments to remain in the media without correction. For example, when Council received a full grant to irrigate Gordon Street oval, a letter to the editor complaining of the project expressed the view that Council had forced a cricket club to leave Richardson Oval.

Richardson Oval is not a Council facility and Council has no control over that committee. The letter in the paper was never repudiated by Council leaving everyone who read it to believe that Council evicted a cricket club. This was not the truth.

Council needs to respond and be proactive in having the truth in the public domain.

So shall we start here?

Comments about the large surplus of Council are ill informed. Council often carries money forward in a financial year for projects already started but finishing in the next financial year.

Council does have reserves, for example to repay loans, so that the burden does not arrive in one financial year.

Then, of course, you have the issue of the Federal Government paying grants for the financial year 2018 to 2019 in the previous financial year (2017/2018). This amount was \$2,879,000. With money like that of course there is a book surplus but it is money for the following year's budget.

Council this year will spend \$6.3 million on roads, bridges, footpaths and drainage. This is a substantial amount in the budget, contrary to the view of many in the public that we don't spend money on these vital infrastructure services.

Council has also received over \$6 million in one-off grants from the State Government in the past two years and most of this money has gone to improving our infrastructure. This does not count the money for the Town Hall/Arts Centre redevelopment, which was funded under the previous Council.

Rates and charges account for 53.68% of the total Council budget. The next highest area is recurrent grants at almost 22.5%. The majority of these funds are from the Federal government administered through the Victorian Grants Commission.

The commission has a formula to distribute the money to Councils. Fifteen Large Councils get \$20.83 a head and the state average is \$69.42. Ararat receives \$310.65 per head and one of our neighbours receives \$829.87.

For the past three years, the Federal government froze these grants, which placed a severe strain on the Councils that only survive through this money. Ararat fits into that category but for most large councils it would have made little difference.

Rural and regional Victoria suffered through this decision. This year the Federal government-funding freeze was lifted. Cynically, I could say there might be a Federal election due. The Victorian Government's rate cap is also placing stresses on all levels of Local Government.

Cost shifting is also major issue in Local Government

In the past, for example, State Government paid the majority of library costs at almost 80%. Now it is the other way around with State Government paying less than 20% and Ararat's library service costs about \$400,000. The library, in my view, is a key cultural and community service, which needs to be maintained.

Council recently received a full-page blast in the Ararat Advertiser for reducing the hours of home care to an elderly couple. Even though the Council had written to explain the situation, the story ran. The Federal Government funds this program. No extra money has been given as our community changes and we have more-older residents and people with disabilities in the community. Council spends hundreds of thousands of dollars subsidising this service. Council cannot continue to top up other levels of governments' programs no matter how worthy they are.

I believe with our new Chief Executive Officer, Tim Harrison, we have a once in a lifetime opportunity to change the culture of this organisation. I can already see the effect he's having on the staff and the people he meets.

I would like to publically thank our interim Chief Executive Officer, Allan Bawden, who had a particularly hard job with such a small time line. I would also like to thank our Monitor, Janet Dore, who, though we have sometimes had differences of opinion, has the same objective a Council accountable to its community and acting in the best interests of its community.

I intend to leave the Mayors vehicle in the Council pool for the use of all Councillors and staff

Finally, I would like to thank all the Councillors for their support. I would like to particularly acknowledge the work of Cr Allgood during her time as Mayor and for taking over during difficult circumstances. I agree with the comments of Cr Allgood in her comments earlier.

Ararat is a vibrant community and the gateway to Western Victoria. I believe that Ararat Rural City has unlimited potential for economic and population growth in a community that accepts individuals for who they are and what they contribute. I hope to be able to tap into the energy and enthusiasm of the community and promote Ararat as a welcoming, caring place to live and work.

Cr Gwenda Allgood requested it be recorded in the minutes that she did not agree with part of the statement read out by Cr Beales

Meeting closed at 6.26pm.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT PAGES 2549 TO 2564 ARE CONFIRMED AND ARE A TRUE AND CORRECT RECORD.

MAYOR – CR PETER BEALES