

COUNCIL PLAN SUBMISSION			
Name	Address	Submission detail	Do you wish to be heard in support of your submission?
Tom Guthrie	366 Mafeking Rd Willaura 3379	<p>I am proposing that under capital works some funding being allocated to a study to look at the completion of the sealing of the Moyston-Dunkeld Road from where it stops at the Moyston end to the intersection of Muirhead Rd. This would make a safe, sealed section for traffic travelling north/south close to the Grampians. I raise this issue because of the frequency of accidents over the last two years in particular. Not only did we lose our son on this road, but three others were lucky to escape with their lives after running off the road.</p> <p>The current gravel section is constantly unsafe from the higher than average rainfall in winter and the amount of loose gravel which accumulates in summer. Unlike many other gravel roads in this shire, this road has thick vegetation all the way along its length making it more dangerous than most.</p> <p>The worst spot is the intersection of Moyston Rd with Andrews Lane. As a result of the change in direction of the Moyston Rd, thick gravel builds up and gets corrigated. It was there we lost our son when our daughter lost control travelling north. Earlier this year, a twenty year old girl travelling south in a Toyota 4 wheel drive lost control in the same spot and hit a tree, writing off the vehicle.</p> <p>Now we have the Pitch Festival with 6000 attendees hoping to use this road for the next 5 years.</p> <p>This road has been one of the poorest maintained roads in the shire for my 35 years living here, in fact its been a disgrace. Its one thing to leave it as such, but when it is so poor that it is</p>	No



Submission to Ararat Rural City Council in response to the Council Plan 2017-2021, incorporating the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Dear Mr Evans,

Women's Health Grampians (WHG) is a regional leader in women's health advocacy. Our role is to support a range of organisations including local government, to apply a gender lens to achieve healthy public policy and improve service provision for women.

As you would be aware in 2016 WHG led the development of the *Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE) Plan: A plan to prevent violence against women and their children in the Grampians region 2016-2020*. The Ararat Rural City Council is a member of the CoRE Alliance and has committed to supporting activities that align with this plan. We want to encourage you to ensure your commitment, and the activities you will undertake as a member, are represented in the Ararat Rural City Council Plan. The key contact person for CoRE at the Ararat Rural City Council is Colleen White, Director Corporate Strategy, Risk and Governance.

Council Plan

WHG would like to congratulate Ararat Rural City Council on the development of the Ararat Rural City Council Plan 2017-2021 which also incorporates the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan.

This plan aligns with the WHG's Strategic Plan and we were pleased to see it highlights the importance of the prevention of family violence. The Ararat Rural City Council is a member of the CoRE alliance and it was pleasing to see this commitment to the CoRE Plan highlighted in the Council Plan.

Preventing Violence Against Women

The Plan identifies supporting safety programs including programs that prevent violence against women. It specifically mentions Act @ Work, which Ararat Rural City Council has completed, as well as White Ribbon Day and the CoRE Plan. Please note that WHG are available to assist you to develop and progress initiatives that support the CoRE Plan and also to continue to implement action areas identified during the Act @ Work program. Please feel free to contact us for further support if required.

A useful reference for Council is [Free from Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women](#) which sets out the Victorian Government's response to the Royal Commission recommendations and provides a strategic direction for addressing both violence against women and family violence. The focus of this strategy is on primary prevention and long term structural and behavioural change at a population level.

Gender Equality

As you would also be aware, national and international evidence consistently reports that the key driver of violence against women is gender inequality. The Victorian Government has developed the ['Safe and Strong, A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy.'](#) This strategy outlines the vision for all Victorians to live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal power resources and opportunities, and be treated with dignity, respect and fairness. Gender equality is a whole of government and whole of community issue which requires a systematic and strategic approach to sustainable and meaningful change. Local Governments are leaders and uniquely placed to be a role model for their community, local business and organisations.

Whilst the Council Plan highlights the Council's commitment to the CoRE Plan and to Act @ Work, there are no specific references to gender equality or applying a gender lens to key projects or strategies. This means using data that separates male and female information to appreciate males' and females' experiences, access to services and health outcomes are different, and/or conducting impact assessments that consider the impact projects will have on males and females as separate beneficiaries during the planning stages. Other options might be to consider how the Council engages and consults with the community and ensuring there are mechanisms in place so that both male and female voices are captured equally. There are many actions ranging from very simple to complex and multilayered that the Council could include in their plan. Please note that WHG is available to assist in identifying actions that would be suitable to your organisation.

Recommendation 1: That the Council consider extending their commitment to preventing violence against women by aiming to address the underlying driver of gendered violence: gender inequality. That the Council consider simple but meaningful actions such as using data that separates women's and men's experiences, health outcomes and use of services, and or ensuring women's voices are captured equally to those of men in community consultations. That they contact WHG for further ideas and support in this area if required.

Sexual and Reproductive Health

Another key area of interest for WHG is the sexual and reproductive health of women and girls in the Ararat local government area. The [Victorian Public Health Plan 2015-2019](#) which outlines the government's key priorities and strategies for improving health and wellbeing also highlights Sexual and Reproductive Health as a key health issue for the state. To support this, the Victorian Government recently released the first Victorian Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy, '[Women's sexual and reproductive health: key priorities 2017-2020](#)'. The strategy acknowledges that while access to sexual and reproductive health services is a fundamental right for every Victorian woman, there is often little or no access to the information, support and services that women require, particularly in rural and regional areas. It also recognises that family violence is associated with poor sexual and reproductive health outcomes with women being at greater risk of reproductive coercion, unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection.

The strategy calls for partners across the health system, including primary health, women's health services and local government, to work together to improve access to services. We are aware of particularly high pregnancy rates for teenagers in the Ararat region and very poor access to services and information that supports choices around continuing with a pregnancy. Opportunities for collaboration with local government in the strategy include working with existing youth groups to provide youth-friendly sexual health information, or to improve access to contraceptive choices, for example expanding access to condom vending machines in community-based settings.

WHG have begun work on a sexual and reproductive health plan for the Grampians region and can assist the Ararat Rural City Council to consider strategies and partnership opportunities to complement this statewide strategy.

Recommendation 2: That the Council consider including actions in their plan to improve the sexual and reproductive health of women and girls in the region. That the Council commit to considering strategies and partnership opportunities with Women's Health Grampians that will progress the state-wide strategy.

Health Profile and Data

The Ararat Rural City Council Plan has included data information about the Shire, which highlights the key areas to be addressed. The focus of this data is on physical activity and consumption of fruit/vegetable, smoking, sugary drinks, and alcohol. To support your leadership in the prevention of violence against women, and your commitment to CoRE, it would be pertinent to also include data regarding violence against women in this section of the Council Plan. In 2016 Ararat Rural City had the second highest family violence incident rate per 100,000 population in the Grampians region. The rate of family incidents in Ararat Rural City Council in 2015/2016 was **1.8 times** the Victorian average.

Whilst sexual and reproductive health has not been identified as a priority area in this Plan, it is important to note the data in this area. From 2010–2014, the birth rate for females aged 15–19 years was 25.4 per 1,000, **2.8 times** the Victorian teenage birth rate for the same period. There is a severe shortage of sexual and reproductive services available in your municipality. Highlighting local data will assist in raising the profile of this issue and potentially support action from other community and health services in your region. Local Councils also have a pivotal role in knowing what support services are available in their municipality, sharing referral pathway information and advocating to improve access to services for women. WHG can support the Ararat Rural City Council in this endeavour.

This section also offers an opportunity to consider the data you have listed by male and female. As mentioned earlier men's and women's experiences, health outcomes and access to services differ. Separating the data by male and female allows for more sophisticated analysis of the situation and for strategies to be more acutely targeted.

Recommendation 3: That the Council include data for their municipality on both family violence and teenage pregnancy and notes the poor access to family planning information and services in the region. That the data included is separated into male and female data with accompanying gender analysis to explore where there are unexpected or significant differences in the data.

WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION

Another key area for action WHG recommend the Council consider is encouraging women and girls in sport. Local Government has a key role in supporting recreation and sporting activities within the community and can have a significant influence over the representation of women in recreation and sporting groups. This work would also support the Council's commitment to physical activity more broadly, and to the prevention of violence against women as it includes addressing such barriers as negative stereotypes regarding women and sport. The Victorian Government's recommendations from the 'Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation – A Five Year Game Plan for Victoria' can provide guidance to Council in this area.

Recommendation 4: That the Council include a 'Women and girls in sport and active recreation' strategy in their plan. That the Council consider the recommendations outlined in the ['Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation – A Five Year Game Plan for Victoria'](#)

Conclusion

The Ararat Rural City Council Plan provides a comprehensive plan for the future health and wellbeing of the residents of Ararat Rural City. The plan could be strengthened by including more actions that seek to improve equality, including actions to improve the sexual and reproductive health of women and girls in the region (or at least local data to supporting raising awareness of the issue), applying a more sophisticated analysis to the data used to profile the region by separating data into male and female subsets, and including the development of a women and girls in sport strategy.

Women's Health Grampians look forward to continuing our partnership with the Ararat Rural City Council and supporting the implementation of key activities that support both the CoRE Plan and the Council Plan 2017-2021.

Please contact Kate Diamond-Keith, Regional Consultant- Grampians Pyrenees on 5322 4100 if you need any further information.

Regards,



Marianne Hendron
Chief Executive Officer
Women's Health Grampians

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June 5, 2017

ARCC
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Re: **Submission to Council Plan**

Thank you for attending the Info Session on 23 May at Lake Bolac and providing a copy of the Draft Council Plan.

On behalf of the Lake Bolac Development Association I write this letter in support of the Lake Bolac township volunteers, non-profit organisations and committees of management who tirelessly support, maintain and improve our local community assets and events. There has been an enormous contribution from our community over generations to building quality facilities. There is still a "can-do" attitude here and we seek support from council to listen to our requests, assist us to find funding sources and to follow through with actually completing projects.

If there is one thing to note from the Council Plan it is, that it is made up of and refers to scores of other individual plans and strategies – so much so that any detail is avoided and any real sense of how to achieve these plans is buried in the documents (if you can locate them).

Quite rightly, CAPs (community action plans) are first priority (Pg18 Council Plan). However getting any assistance with planning approval, development of a project, advice, or financial assistance, other than printing out the plan, has not recently been forthcoming from ARCC. We do acknowledge that other projects crop up from time to time and have been completed at Lake Bolac which we are grateful for.

Some of the projects completed entirely by the local community include:

- Community Bus - 24 seat – fund raised \$54,000 including 7 grants
- Information Centre & Community Bank - raised \$334,000 – including training 20 volunteer staff

(working 7hrs x 7 days/wk), attracting 150 local gift shop consignors, LBDA managed, maintained and insured.

We also print our own tourist brochures and have not received a visit or assistance from Grampians Tourism.

NB: this is a council owned building as it sits on land donated to the community but does not make it onto the list of highly valued building assets Pg 17.

- Purchase and installation of township play equipment.
- Eel Festival – cultural, environmental, musical entertainment
- Boatshed renovation and foreshore beautification
- Attracting new business – eg. Full time Chemist opened 1 June. No visit to LBDA/LBiBC from Economic Development Unit for over 18 months.

Other projects with some admin assistance include the \$220,000 library (now 230 users) and the \$660,000 Sporting Complex of which 40% was fundraised from Lake Bolac residents. There are many thousands of hours of local volunteer labour contributed. The facilities created have been enjoyed for many years by the sports people of the district, the book lovers, craft makers, recreation enthusiasts, travelers, children, etc. The community bonds, makes friendships and gathers in these places.

Please consider the townships carefully when allocating your resources. Consider the amount of leverage to be gained from the volunteering, fundraising and donated equipment & skills. The level of support and use of our football club for example, may well be in excess of that of the Ararat club which is having lavish sums spent on it. We look forward to working with council to achieve our community aims.

Karen McIntyre

President - Lake Bolac Development Association