



Ararat Rural City Council Response to Recommendations 2018 Final



Commission of Inquiry Recommendations	Minister's Recommendations	Council Actions	Who	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 review of the organisation structure and responsibilities of reporting lines is being considered.</p> <p>Ongoing engagement with staff via realignment sessions and one on one meetings conducted during June 2018.</p>	<p>CEO</p>	<p>Complete</p>
		<p>External Interim CEO appointed, commenced 2 October 2017.</p>		<p>Complete</p>
		<p>CEO and Monitor meet weekly to address issues raised by Commission of Inquiry.</p>		<p>Ongoing</p>
		<p>Council appoints CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee – April 2018.</p> <p>CEO appointed 7 August 2018 to commence 1 October 2018.</p>		<p>Complete</p>
<p>3. That the Council retain the 2016 rating strategy as the 2017 rating strategy.</p> <p>4. That the Council establish a Rating Strategy Advisory Group that:</p> <p>a. Has Terms of Reference to assist the Council develop its rating strategy by:</p> <p>i. Identifying and recommending principles for formulating a rating strategy.</p> <p>ii. Advising on the residential rate and consideration of differential rates</p> <p>iii. Advising on the equitable sharing of the rates revenue and changes to current charges and rebates</p> <p>iv. Proposing improvements to communication and engagement on the budget and rating strategy</p> <p>v. Producing a discussion paper with recommendations for Council before public comment</p> <p>b. Comprises an independent non-voting Chair with knowledge of local government rating and</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>1 Identifying and recommending principles for formulating its ratings strategy.</p> <p>2 Advising on the residential rate and consideration of differential rates</p> <p>3 Advising on the equitable sharing of the rate revenue and changes to current charges and rebates</p> <p>4 Proposing improvements to communication and engagement on the budget and rating strategy</p> <p>5 Producing a discussion paper with recommendations for Council before public comment.</p> <p>ii. Comprises an independent non-voting Chair with knowledge of local government rating, and representatives of key groups of ratepayers with voting rights.</p>	<p>Rating Strategy Advisory Group (RSAG) met over a 7-month period and have presented their recommendations to the Citizens Jury and Council.</p>	<p>RSAG/ Citizens Jury/ Council</p>	<p>Complete</p>
		<p>The Citizens Jury meet on 21 and 22 April 2018 to discuss Rating Strategy Advisory Group's Discussion Paper.</p> <p>Councillors had the opportunity to listen to the discussion on Saturday 21 April and the Presentation of Citizens Jury findings on 22 April 2018.</p>	<p>Citizens Jury</p>	<p>Complete</p>
		<p>Council considered and adopted a Draft Rating Strategy for public exhibition at the Special Council Meeting held on 8 May 2018.</p> <p>Submissions heard at a Special Council Meeting held on 12 June 2018. June 2018 Council Meeting considered submissions and adopted Budget and Rating Strategy.</p>	<p>Council</p>	<p>Complete</p>



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<p>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 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 <i>VAGO Audit of Public Participation and Community Engagement in Local Government</i>.</p> <p>5. 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. 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>7. 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>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 <i>VAGO 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 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 level of the rates burden.</p>			
<p>9. That Council 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>3 Financial Stability</p> <p>a. 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>Review the existing Service Review documentation and develop an implementation plan.</p>	<p>Monitor and CEO</p>	Complete
		<p>Implementing the current Service Review program by September 2019.</p> <p>Business Analyst appointed to coordinate and support service review program.</p>	<p>Executive Leadership Group</p>	Complete



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<p>10. The Commission recommends that the Minister recommends to the Mayor of the Council that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Council reviews its community engagement policy b. Council processes for documenting and evaluating community engagement be included in the policy c. Council consider the findings of the <i>VAGO Audit of Public Participation and Community Engagement in Local Government</i> in reviewing its community engagement policy. 	<p>4 Community Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review its community engagement policy b. Include processes for documenting and evaluating community engagement in its community engagement policy c. Consider the findings of the <i>VAGO Audit of Public Participation and Community Engagement in Local Government</i> in reviewing its community engagement policy. 	<p>Council adopted C.1.10 Community Engagement Policy on 20 March 2018.</p>	<p>Executive Manager Community Life</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>5 Audit Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Adopt best practice by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>The Ministerial and Commission of Inquiry Recommendations were tabled for discussion at the Audit Committee Meeting held 18 September 2017.</p> <p>The proposed changes to Audit reporting were discussed at length and the consensus was that in moving forward the CEO will be deemed responsible for tracking and implementing all recommendations of the Internal Auditor and Council will have access to the Audit Committee minutes via an Information Report in the Council Meeting agenda.</p> <p>Revised Audit Committee Charter adopted by Council on 17 October 2017.</p>	<p>CEO and Director Assets, Finance and Corporate Services</p>	<p>Complete</p>
	<p>6. Code of Conduct</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>Crs McLean and Allgood gave a statement at the 21 November 2017 Council Meeting responding to alleged breaches of the Councillor Code of conduct.</p> <p>The Council resolved to accept both Councillors statements and proposed remedies. <i>(A copy is attached of the Council Meeting Minutes relating to this item)</i></p>	<p>CEO and Municipal Monitor</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>1 The Commission recommends to the Minister that at a minimum, she appoint a Monitor to the Council for the next two years with a specific brief.</p>		<p>Ms Janet Dore appointed Municipal Monitor on 23 August 2017.</p> <p>Monitor continues to attend all Council Meetings and Assembly of Councillors.</p>	<p>This role is a Ministerial appointment</p>	<p>Monitor appointed</p>



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8. The Commission recommends to the Minister that accountability to the community be improved by amending the Act 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		N/A	Minister for Local Government	As part of LG Act Review
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.		N/A	VEC	As part of VEC's statutory review
		In November 2017 Council wrote to the VEC to advise of Commission's recommendations regarding the future electoral structure of municipality. The last electoral review was conducted prior to the 2008 general election. The next review is due prior to the 2020 general election.	CEO	Complete
<p>Other Observations – Page 40</p> <p>“The minutes of Council meetings are also replete with information statements and reports from unnamed officers.”</p> <p>“Where strategic or policy materials appear they are almost always to the back of the agenda. It appears some staff retain the hallmarks of the old-style information and decision-making approach and are unable or unwilling to make the break into corporate strategic and policy approach to decision making the Act prescribes”</p>		<p>Council Meeting Agenda templates now includes the Author of each report.</p> <p>Revised template of the Council Meeting agenda agreed for introduction in February 2018.</p> <p>The reformatted Council Meeting Agenda now allows for ease of reading and improved decision making. This includes all strategic items now listed at the beginning of the agenda followed by information reports. Recommendations are clearly identified.</p>	CEO	Complete