

LODDON SHIRE COUNCIL

Notice of an Ordinary Meeting of the Loddon Shire Council to be held in the Council Chambers, Serpentine on Monday 23 September 2013 at 3.30pm.

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1. APOLOGIES

Nil

2. PREVIOUS MINUTES

2.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

SUMMARY

Approval of the Forum Minutes of 26 August 2013.
Approval of Ordinary Minutes of 26 August 2013
Approval of the Special Forum Minutes of 10 September 2013

Author: John McLinden - Chief Executive Officer

File No: 02/01/001

Attachment: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council confirm:

1. *the minutes of the Council Forum of 26 August 2013*
2. *the minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting of 26 August 2013*
3. *the Special Forum Minutes of 10 September 2013*

2.2 REVIEW OF ACTION SHEET

SUMMARY

Approval of Action Sheet.

Author: John McLinden - Chief Executive Officer

File No: 02/01/001

Attachment: 2.2 Action Sheet

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Action Sheet.

3. **INWARDS CORRESPONDENCE**

SUMMARY

Relevant correspondence received by Council since previous meeting.

Author: John McLinden - Chief Executive Officer

File No: various

Attachment: Copies of inwards correspondence

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Inwards Correspondence.

Date	From	Subject
6/9/13	Loddon Vale Landcare Group	Control of noxious weeds (Response from council staff is also attached.)

4. COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

4.1 MAYORAL REPORT

SUMMARY

Approval of the Mayoral Report.

Author: John McLinden – Chief Executive Officer

File No: 02/01/001

Attachment: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Mayoral Report.

4.2 COUNCILLORS' REPORT

SUMMARY

Approval of Councillors' Reports.

Author: John McLinden – Chief Executive Officer

File No: 02/01/001

Attachment: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Councillors' Report.

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

5.1 DOCUMENTS FOR SIGNING AND SEALING

SUMMARY

This report provides Council with a list of documents signed and sealed during the month.

Author:	John McLinden - Chief Executive Officer
Council Plan ref:	Core business 8: Compliance
File No:	02/01/001
Attachment:	Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. receive and note the 'Document for Signing and Sealing' report*
- 2. endorse the use of the seal on the documents listed*

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Nil

BACKGROUND

N/A

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Interest free loan agreement between Loddon Shire Council and Wedderburn Golf Club for installation of solar panels

Deed of surrender of lease between Victorian Rail Track and Loddon Shire Council for Railway Lot 12, Inglewood

Contract 282 Coutts Street Drainage Improvement Works and Armstrong Street Kerb and Channel Works between Loddon Shire Council and Danspec Investments Pty Ltd

Instrument of Delegation for Inglewood Riding Club Committee of Management

5.2 REGIONAL GROWTH PLAN

SUMMARY

Council is asked to endorse the final draft Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan

Author:	John McLinden - Chief Executive Officer
Council Plan ref:	Core business 3: Planning for Future Needs
File no:	19/01/004
Attachment:	Final draft Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Councillors received a briefing on the development of the Plan at its March Council Forum.

BACKGROUND

The Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan was developed from July 2011 to September 2013. Stakeholders and the broader community were involved at various phases of the Plan's development. Councillors have earlier been provided a copy of the consultation report detailing the consultation and engagement undertaken and providing a summary of submissions and responses.

The direction and content of the plan was guided by the Loddon Mallee South Project Steering Committee and Technical Working Group comprising these project partners. The project was managed by the Department of State Development, Business and Innovation (formerly Department of Planning and Community Development) project team based in the Loddon Mallee Regional Office in Bendigo.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

The Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan provides a long-term regional approach to strategic land use planning across the Loddon Mallee South region. Covering the municipalities of Greater Bendigo, Macedon Ranges, Mount Alexander, Central Goldfields and Loddon, the Plan will provide a high level framework to manage growth and change across the region to 2041.

The Project Steering Committee endorsed the final Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan in August. Each member Council is now asked to endorse the final plan.

COSTS/BENEFITS

The Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan will provide the means to implement the strategic land use and infrastructure components of the Southern Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Plan 2010. It will do this by:

- providing broad direction for regional land use and development including detailed planning frameworks for key regional centres
- providing direction to accommodate growth and change in residential, employment, industrial, commercial, agricultural and other rural activities
- identifying important economic, environmental, social and cultural resources to be preserved, maintained or developed
- broadly mapping which areas of land can accommodate growth and which are to be maintained, including consideration of the infrastructure needed to support growth or change
- helping councils by streamlining planning policy as well as potentially reducing the amount of strategic work councils have to do.

Costs and benefits of work undertaken by Council in line with the Plan will be determined for individual projects.

RISK ANALYSIS

Adoption and application of the Plan will reduce potential risks to Council resulting from ignoring strategic land use planning directions that have been developed and agreed at a regional level.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The draft Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan was made available for public comment from 4 April to 17 May 2013, with the comment period extended a further two weeks until 31 May 2013 in response to requests from the public for more time to consider the draft plan. This provided an extensive range of feedback and suggestions which have assisted in the Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan's development and refinement. Generally, consultation and engagement activities included a website, brochures, newsletters, face-to-face briefings, online questionnaires, and advertisements placed in locally circulating newspapers across the region.

5.3 COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE 2013

SUMMARY

Council to approve a change to the locations for the remaining 2013 Council Meetings to Serpentine.

Author:	John McLinden - Chief Executive Officer
Council Plan ref:	Core business 1: Leadership
File no:	02/01/002
Attachment:	Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. *amend the Council Meeting Schedule 2013 so that all the remaining Council Meetings for 2013 are located at the Serpentine Council Chambers*
2. *advertise the change in location for the October 2013 Council Meeting.*

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Nil

BACKGROUND

In 2013, Council meetings have been held at different locations around the Shire, according to an agreed schedule of meetings, to encourage community members to attend and observe Council meetings in their local community.

This schedule of meetings and locations has been advertised in local newspapers.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

The 2013 Council Meeting Schedule had set the location of the October 2013 meeting in Boort, however a meeting was held in Boort in September 2012 as a result of the Serpentine Council Chambers being used as the Council election administration office.

As Council has visited the Boort community within the last year, Councillors may wish to change the location of the October meeting so that it is held centrally in Serpentine.

COSTS/BENEFITS

This change has no material cost to Council.

RISK ANALYSIS

No risks are identified.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Nil

5.4 REAPPOINTMENT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

SUMMARY

Council to consider reappointment of the current Chief Executive Officer for a further four year term.

Author:	John McLinden - Chief Executive Officer
Council Plan ref:	Strategic enabler: Sound recruitment practices
File no:	02/04/001
Attachment:	Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council, having published a notice in the Loddon Times and Bendigo Advertiser in accordance with Section 94 (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1989, reappoint Mr John Brian McLinden as its Chief Executive Officer for the period 19 December 2013 to 18 December 2017

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

26 August 2013 – Council resolved to advertise its intention to put a resolution to renew the contract of employment of the Chief Executive Officer.

BACKGROUND

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has been employed under a four year contract which expires on 18 December 2013. The employment contract, when read in conjunction with the Local Government Act 1989, provides the CEO with the ability to ask Council to advise whether it intends to reappoint the CEO for a further term within 6 months of the expiry of the contract.

The CEO has recently written to the Mayor advising of his willingness to continue his employment with the Council and requesting to be advised whether Council intends to extend the contract. Council is obliged to respond within three months of the termination of the contract.

Council considered this request at its meeting of 26 August 2013 and resolved to give public notice in accordance with Section 94 (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1989 of its intention to put a resolution to renew the contract of employment of the CEO.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

The passing of the resolution contained within this report will result in the reappointment of the CEO effective 19 December 2013 under a contract of employment which will expire on 18 December 2017.

COSTS/BENEFITS

Costs are included within the employment contract.

RISK ANALYSIS

No risks identified.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Nil

6. DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES' REPORTS

6.1 FINANCE REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31 AUGUST 2013

SUMMARY

This report provides Council with financial information for the period ending 31 August 2013.

Author:	James Rendell - Manager Financial Services
Council Plan ref:	Strategic Enabler: Sound financial management protocols
File no:	8/06/001
Attachment:	6.1

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. *receives and notes the "Finance Report for the period ending 31 August 2013"*
2. *approves budget revisions included in the report for internal reporting purposes only.*

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council is provided with Finance Reports on a monthly basis.

BACKGROUND

The Finance Report for the period ended 31 August 2013 includes standard monthly information about budget variations, cash, investments, interest, debtors and creditors, and provides a comparison of year-to-date actual results to year-to-date budget (by dollars and percentage) and total budget (by percentage).

The information is in the format provided in the 2013/14 Budget, and includes operating results, capital expenditure and funding sources. It also provides a focus report.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Nil

COSTS/BENEFITS

The benefit to Council and the community is that accurate and regular financial reporting is being disclosed.

Provision of financial reports on at least a quarterly basis is a requirement of the Local Government Act.

RISK ANALYSIS

The provision of regular and accurate finance reports to Council minimises the risk of Council not delivering projects within the approved budget.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

There has been considerable consultation internally with respective managers in understanding their budget responsibilities and keeping within budgetary constraints.

External engagement with the community was undertaken during the submission period of the budget, and regular reporting provides a mechanism of monitoring the financial outcomes of Council against that expectation.

6.2 AUGUST 2013 AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING

SUMMARY

This report provides Council with an overview of the Audit Committee meeting held in August 2013.

Author: Jude Holt – Director Corporate Services

Council Plan ref: Enabler: Talented, motivated, professionals who gain job satisfaction from being part of our team

File no: 06/02/003

Attachment: 6.2a Audit Report – Review of Compliance and Knowledge Management

Note: As Council adopted "in principle" the Financial, Standard, and Performance Statements for the year ended 30 June 2013 at the Ordinary Meeting of Council held in August, they have not been included as attachments to this report.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. *receives and notes the:*
 - a. *August 2013 Audit Committee Meeting Report*
 - b. *Financial, Standard, and Performance Statements for the year ended 30 June 2013*
2. *endorses the performance improvement recommendations documented in the Audit Report – Review of compliance and knowledge management.*

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council was provided with a summary of the May 2013 Audit Committee Meeting at the Ordinary Meeting held on 24 June 2013.

BACKGROUND

The Audit Committee was created under Section 139 of the Local Government Act 1989, which states that "Council must establish an audit committee".

The committee is made up of four independent community members, and Cr Gavan Holt, as Council's representative. Council's Chief Executive Officer and Director Corporate Services attend the meetings in an advisory capacity.

The primary objective of the Audit Committee is to assist Council in the effective conduct of its responsibilities for:

- The enhancement of the credibility and objectivity of internal and external financial reporting
- Effective management of financial and other risks and the protection of Council assets
- Compliance with laws and regulations as well as use of best practice guidelines
- The effectiveness of the internal audit function
- The provision of an effective means of communication between the external auditor, internal audit, management and the Council
- Facilitating the organisation's ethical development
- Maintaining a reliable system of internal controls.

In order to provide a structured approach and ensure that the committee addresses each of its responsibilities, an annual calendar of actions and an internal audit review program are established each year, and these guide the activities of the committee.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

As the meeting coincided with the external auditors undertaking the end of financial year audit, this provided the opportunity for the external auditor and internal auditor to attend a meeting without officers present, in accordance with Clause 2.3(e) of the Charter. That meeting was the first item on the Agenda.

Other items on the meeting agenda were:

- Presentation of the financial, standard, and performance statements by the external auditor
- Audit report for the review of compliance and knowledge management
- Response to Local Government Investigations and Compliance Inspectorate letter
- Presentation on the implementation of the Customer Relationship Management software (Merit) and its impact on customer service by Council's Manager Financial Services
- Overview of the Victorian Auditor-General's Annual Plan 2013-2014, with emphasis on local government audits.

Other items on the agenda included the following standing items:

1. Fraud Report
2. Major Lawsuits
3. Monthly Finance Report
4. Risk Management Report.

The committee was also provided with an overview of the Outstanding Action List which showed that Council had 28 outstanding actions to be completed, with 6 added to the list from the Review of Section 86 committees, and 8 completed during the period.

The next audit review will be financial policies and procedures, and the results will be provided to the committee at the 21 November 2013 meeting.

COSTS/BENEFITS

There are costs associated with the audit committee and internal audit function.

However, in most cases, actions resulting from audit reviews do not bear any new costs as they are undertaken by current staff.

The benefits that the internal audit function provides Council are:

- Business improvement relating to the audit review areas
- Standard policy and procedure documents which are developed through the action list
- Improvement in knowledge management that will assist with succession planning over time
- A reduction in risk in areas relating to audit reviews.

RISK ANALYSIS

The internal audit program has been created and is annually updated on a risk basis, ensuring that Council's program addresses the areas of highest risk or greatest concern to audit committee members and Council officers.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Nil

6.3 CUSTOMER RESPONSE REPORT – QUERIES FROM FIRE SERVICES PROPERTY LEVY

SUMMARY

This report provides Council with information in respect of customer queries from the implementation of the Fire Services Property Levy (FSPL) introduced on 1 July 2013.

Author:	James Rendell - Manager Financial Services
Council Plan ref:	Strategic Enabler: Sound financial management protocols
File no:	8/06/001
Attachment:	Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the “Customer response report – Queries from Fire Services Property Levy”.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council has been advised of the introduction of legislation regarding the implementation of the state government Fire Services Property Levy (FSPL) to be collected by local government at Council forums held on 24 September 2012, 25 March 2013 and 27 May 2013.

BACKGROUND

Council staff distributed the rates notices early in August which included the disclosure of the FSPL charge in accordance with the legislation. Management have monitored the situation in respect of queries and this report provides the outcomes to date.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Council has levied on behalf of the State government \$1.2M (net of pension concessions) in FSPL charges.

This is not included as Council revenue but rather is allocated in the Balance Sheet under Debtors for those amounts yet to be collected, which is offset by a Liability which is the amount required to be paid by Council to the State Revenue Office. Council will remit all FSPL received from ratepayers on scheduled dates over the course of the financial year.

The \$1.2m raised by Council relates to the following categories of properties:

Land Use Classification Type	Numbers of properties	Capital Improved Value	Fire Services Property Levy
Commercial	161	\$26,121,000	\$60,424.25
Council owned	63	\$11,762,500	\$12,600.00
Industrial	211	\$60,850,400	\$146,194.15
Primary production	3,438	\$1,075,297,600	\$616,192.80
Public benefit	64	\$9,859,300	\$13,934.00
Residential	3,879	\$396,807,800	\$382,742.60
Vacant	19	\$1,017,000	\$3,917.10
Exempt	422	\$0	\$0
Total	8,257	\$1,581,715,600	\$1,236,004.90

Some statistical data based on **residential** properties are provided below:

Total FSPL charged	\$383K
Minimum charge	\$51.15
Average charge	\$98.67
Median charge (amount payable by the middle property when properties are ordered from lowest charge to highest charge)	\$105.40
Maximum charge	\$249.50

The above amounts include any pension rebates applicable to properties.

Reports extracted from Council’s Client Relationship Management (CRM) system, alternatively known as ‘Merit’ shows that over the period of two weeks since the rates have been sent out approximately 150 queries have been received in respect of the FSPL.

The table below shows the numbers of queries and the type of queries received.

QUERY	Numbers
03.How will I know how much I will be paying?	1
04.How is the FSPL calculated?	2
05.Why are there different rates for the MFB & CFA?	1
06.How do I pay for the FSPL?	1
07.Are there any concessions?	10
10.What is the capital improved value (CIV)?	5
13.What is an AVPCC?	13
15.What happens if I start or renew an insurance policy?	2
16.What protection will there be for households and small businesses during the transition?	1
18.Do businesses pay the levy?	1
19.I am a farmer with multiple land parcels: do I pay on each one?	8
20.Why is the levy charged on vacant land?	4
21.Is non-rateable land leviable?	2
22.What happens if I cannot pay FSPL?	1
24.Why are my residential investment flats classified as commercial?	1
28. General Enquiry FSPL ?	41
Land use classificaction v's planning zone?	14
Is FSPL replacing my house insurance altogether?	5
Why are there 2 charges appearing on my notice?	28

Some queries have been received that were not included in the State Revenue Office (SRO) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). These are identified as the last 3 queries on the list in the table above, and have caused most concern for both the ratepayer and council staff. These issues are briefly outlined below:

- Lucc on the rates notice and planning zone are different?
 - Explanation: This classification was not previously required on the rates notice but has been included as mandatory disclosure under the FSPL legislation. This has caused confusion as ratepayers have assumed that the planning zone has been changed. The Lucc is for rating purposes only.
- As the FSPL is now replacing the charge previously shown on my house insurance policy, does that mean that I don't have to insure my house anymore, and that it is automatically covered by the FSPL?
- Why are there two charges appearing on my rates notice, and why am I being charged twice?
 - Explanation: Under the legislation Council had the option to disclose the FSPL as either one charge combining a fixed component and a variable component, or separately as two charges. Management decided that to be more transparent the charges would be identified

separately. This also provides more clarity for properties where single farm enterprise (SFE) allows for an exemption of the fixed component.

Management have undertaken to advise the SRO of these additional issues for possible inclusion into the FAQ listing that is available on their website.

It should be noted that the queries reduced considerably after the first two weeks of issuing rates notices.

COSTS/BENEFITS

The benefit to Council and the community is that accurate charges and consistent and accurate responses are applied in accordance with the Fire Services Property Levy legislation.

RISK ANALYSIS

A risk analysis was undertaken internally to measure the possible effects associated with the introduction of the FSPL. The major risks identified were reputational and resourcing. These seem to have only had a minimal affect.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

There has been considerable consultation internally, and with the State Revenue Office with customer service and finance staff in understanding and anticipating the impact of the newly introduced Fire Services Property Levy. Council acts as an agent in the collection and submission of the FSPL on behalf of the State Government. This has required by law that the charge of the FSPL be included on the rates notices.

Council has uploaded the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) from the State Revenue Office onto the CRM system. Tracking of customer contact in respect of the FAQ's has been established and this has enabled management to monitor the types and number of queries received since the rates notices have been distributed.

External engagement with the community was undertaken through an extensive media campaign run by the State government in electronic and print media.

6.4 PROGRESS OF 2014 REVALUATION

SUMMARY

The report informs Council about the progress of the 2014 revaluation of land and buildings.

Author:	Jude Holt – Director Corporate Services
Council Plan ref:	Compliance: Ensuring we are compliant with all legislative reporting requirements
File no:	09/01/001
Attachment:	Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the "Progress of 2014 Revaluation Report."

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Nil

BACKGROUND

In accordance with Valuation Best Practice, Council undertakes a revaluation of all properties in the Shire every two years. The prescribed date for the next revaluation is 1 January 2014, and that valuation data will be used for the 2014/2105 budget.

Council undertakes its revaluation process via external contractor, LG Valuations Pty. Ltd., and they are currently in the process of revaluing properties in the Shire.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Valuation Best Practice outlines milestone dates for the return of information during the revaluation process. This is to ensure that Council has a Valuation Return by the final due date of 30 April, 2014.

The following table outlines the milestone dates for the 2014 revaluation, and progress to date on each of the stages:

Stage	Details	Due Date	Date Lodged with VGV	Date Certified by VGV
Stage 1	Statistical Analysis	28 February 2013	13 February 2013	5 March 2013
Stage 2	Residential & Rural Preliminary Valuations Rural Residential	31 October 2013 31 October 2013	7 August 2013 13 May 2013	No yet certified 11 June 2013
Stage 3A	Specialist Properties	31 August 2013		
Stage 3B	Commercial & Industrial	31 January 2014		
Stage 4	Residential & Rural Final Valuations Rural Residential	31 March 2014 31 March 2014		
Stage 5	Valuation Return	30 April 2014		

Stage 1:

Stage 1 includes preparation, planning and statistical analysis of the previous valuation against recent sales. Stage 1 was lodged with the Valuer-General Victoria (VGV) on 13 March 2013, and a 7A Certificate was received on 5 March 2013.

A 7A Certificate is authorisation of the revaluation stage by VGV and states that:

- The required documentation and evidence has been provided
- The work is in accordance with the standards required by VGV for the 2012 General Valuation
- The work is considered satisfactory by VGV

Stage 2:

Stage 2 includes the largest body of work – Rural and Residential properties. This stage is the preliminary work required for those properties, where the majority of inspections and field data verification is completed. A final review of values for these properties occurs in Stage 4.

Due to the size of the data, Stage 2 is normally lodged in two parts – Rural and Residential. Stage 2 Rural was lodged with VGV on 7 August 2013, and is yet to be certified. Stage 2 Residential was lodged on 13 May 2013 and was certified on 11 June 2013.

Stage 3A:

Stage 3A includes specialist properties that Council has nominated in the contract as being unusual, due to size or nature. It includes chicken farms, olive groves, piggeries, and other commercial properties.

Although Stage 3A was due on 31 August 2013, it is yet to be lodged with VGV.

Stage 3B:

Stage 3B is Commercial and Industrial properties. This stage is not due for lodgement until 31 January 2014.

Stage 4:

Stage 4 is a review of Stage 2 data based on an analysis of subsequent sales. This stage is due on 31 March 2014.

Stage 5:

Stage 5 is the return of the valuation to Council, and includes the valuer's final report. This stage is due on 30 April 2014.

Certification of this stage is critical for Council's budget process, as the new valuation will be used as a basis for raising rates in the first year after return. Council does not resolve to advertise the budget until certification has been received, to ensure that the valuation base does not change.

As well as gauging progress against the milestone dates, Council is able to monitor the process by the following mechanisms:

1. Council is provided with a report from Valuer-General Victoria (VGV) when each stage is approved
2. Formal and informal periodic meetings with LG Valuations Pty. Ltd. are undertaken. Under Council's contract, Council can ask for meetings with LG to discuss progress, queries, and any potential issues with return of data.

At present the revaluation is proceeding well with Stages 1 and 2 being lodged before due dates. Stage 3A is outstanding, but this is only a small sample of properties, and should not affect the overall milestone achievements. Council will be advised of any issues that may cause delays to the contractor achieving milestone dates.

Further reports on progress of the whole revaluation will be provided to Council following milestone dates.

COSTS/BENEFITS

The revaluation process has a budgetary allocation each year as the process takes a full two-year period to complete.

Council receives a contribution from the State Revenue Office for the data every second year, which assists in defraying costs associated with the revaluation process.

Council has a reserve specifically for revaluations which assists in evening out the costs over the full two-year period of the revaluation process, as one year has high costs and low income, while the other year has low costs and high income.

RISK ANALYSIS

By undertaking the revaluation process Council is ensuring:

- that it complies with the Valuation of Land Act 1960 requirements
- that valuation data is up to date and relevant so that valuations used for rating purposes are current and accurate.

This reduces the financial and reputational risk that could be experienced by Council if valuations did not reflect current levels, and a large number of ratepayers were successful in objecting to valuations.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Council advises property owners of the revaluation process in the Mayoral Column.

Information about valuations for rating purposes and how property owners can object to their valuation are included on Council's rates notices.

6.5 SECTION 86 COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT MEMBERSHIP DETAILS – BRIDGEWATER ON LODDON DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE, KORONG VALE SPORTS COMMITTEE, WEDDERBURN MECHANICS AND LITERARY INSTITUTE HALL COMMITTEE, AND YANDO PUBLIC HALL COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

SUMMARY

That Council approves the membership of the Bridgewater on Loddon Development, Korong Vale Sports, Wedderburn Mechanics and Literary Institute Hall, and Yando Public Hall Section 86 Committees of Management.

Author:	Jude Holt – Director Corporate Services
Council Plan ref:	Strategic Platform 1: Build a network of strong communities
File no:	02/01/047, 02/01/027, 02/01/038, 02/01/041
Attachment:	Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council appoints the names provided in this report as members of the Bridgewater on Loddon Development, Korong Vale Sports, Wedderburn Mechanics and Literary Institute Hall, and Yando Public Hall Section 86 committees of management, effective immediately, for the 2013/2014 reporting cycle.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council has been progressively approving committee membership of Section 86 committees of management as they are provided.

BACKGROUND

Council has been progressively approving amended Instruments of Delegation for Section 86 committees of management.

Included in the amended delegations is Clause 3.6 which outlines the requirement for nomination and appointment of committee members, which is as follows:

Members and Office Bearers of the Committee

At the Annual General Meeting each year nominations shall be called for proposed members of the committee. The committee must then elect from its proposed members the following office bearers:

- *President, who shall be Chairperson of the Committee*
- *Secretary*
- *Treasurer.*

The full list of proposed members must be forwarded to Council for formal appointment at an Ordinary Meeting of Council, in accordance with section 86(2). Until this formal appointment by Council occurs, the previous committee members will continue to hold office.

As contact has been made with committees, a form has been issued to them asking them to provide their current committee members' names and contact details.

Where delegations have organisation representatives (not community representatives), the names and details of the groups being represented are provided in the list.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Clause 3.3 Membership of the committee outlines Council's preferred composition of the committee specific to each delegation, and states that Council seeks to provide broad representation to the committees.

For community based committees, that is at least 6 community representatives.

For organisation based committees, each delegation has a list of organisations that are required to provide representatives for the committee.

Bridgwater on Loddon Development Committee, Wedderburn Mechanics and Literary Institute Hall Committee, and Yando Public Hall Committee are all community based committees with representative of at least 6 community representatives. The following is a list of nominated representatives for each committee, all of which exceed the minimum requirement:

Bridgwater on Loddon Development

Name	Position
Graham Morse	President
Dave Edwards	Vice president
Chris Wattie	Secretary
Shannon Brown	Assistant Secretary
Kathryn Bowen	Treasurer
Peter Mitchell	General Committee Member
Jim Lawson	General Committee Member
Bill Littleson	General Committee Member
Rae Broadbent	General Committee Member
Steve Kerek	General Committee Member
Jan Broadbent	General Committee Member
Bryan Ryan	General Committee Member
Cecily Thomas	General Committee Member
Sue Coghlan	General Committee Member
Jenny Hoskings	General Committee Member
Steve Brown	General Committee Member
Fred Shea	General Committee Member
Judy Wilson	General Committee Member
Robert Scholes	General Committee Member
Don Wilson	General Committee Member
Roberta Foster	General Committee Member

Wedderburn Mechanics and Literary Institute Hall

Name	Position
Jude Raftis	President
Alex Holt	Vice president
Alan Mulraney	Secretary
Bob Nicholls	Treasurer
David Lockhart	General committee member
Frank Canfield	General committee member
Lance Ward	General committee member

Ray Tonkin	General committee member
Thomas Jackson	General committee member

Yando Public Hall

Name	Position
Craig Slatter	President
Roslyn Gawne	Secretary/Treasurer
Ash Gawne	Vice President
Bradley Haw	General Committee Member
Doug Haw	General Committee Member
June Darker	General Committee Member
Kel Jeffrey	General Committee Member
Ken Buchanan	General Committee Member
Rose Buchanan	General Committee Member

Korong Vale Sports Centre is an organisation based committee. The following list of nominated members represents each of the member bodies of the committee:

Korong Vale Sports Centre

Name	Group represented
Judy Matthews	Korong Vale Bowls Club
Andrew Day	Korong Vale Bowls Club
Robert Day	Korong Vale Cricket Club
Faye Day	Korong Vale Cricket Club
Joan Earl	Korong Vale Tennis Club
Peter Gibson	Korong Vale Tennis Club
Lee Day	Community representative
John Murnane	Community representative

COSTS/BENEFITS

The benefit of this project is that Council has an up to date and accurate record of current committee members to ensure that contact can be made, particularly where Council is requesting committees to comply with reporting requirements under the legislation.

RISK ANALYSIS

Section 86 Committees act for and on behalf of Council which creates a risk for Council should they ever act outside their delegated authority.

Under Section 86(2) of the Act, "Council may appoint members to a special committee and may at any time remove a member from a special committee".

Council's appointment of committee members, not only satisfies the legislation, but also provides Council with the opportunity to sight the list of committee members before formally appointing them as they are the people that will be operating the committees, and in effect, acting for and on behalf of Council over the course of the year.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Council has been advising committees in writing of the requirement to provide the list of committee members nominated at their Annual General Meeting, which requires Council approval.

7. DIRECTOR OPERATIONS' REPORTS

7.1 PLANNING APPLICATIONS CURRENTLY BEING PROCESSED

SUMMARY

Provides Council with an update on Planning applications currently under consideration and a register of planning permits issued between 9 August 2013 and 9 September 2013.

Author:	Tyson Sutton – Manager Planning & Local Laws
Council Plan ref:	Strategic platform 2 - Grow our population through appropriate development
File no:	02/01/001
Attachment:	7.1(a) List of Active Planning Applications, 7.1(b) List of Applications Approved under Delegation

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the 'Planning Applications Currently Being Processed' report:

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council is provided with a monthly report identifying the status of planning applications currently under consideration or those permits which have been issued within the preceding month.

BACKGROUND

The Loddon Shire's Planning Scheme sets out Council's objectives for the Shire with regard to land use and development via the Municipal Strategic Statement and Local Policies, and specifies which uses and developments require planning approval via zones and overlays.

As the responsible Authority it is Loddon Shire Council's duty to administer and enforce its planning scheme.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Attachments 7.1(a) and 7.1(b) provides Council with a full list of planning applications currently under consideration and those planning permits issued between 9 August 2013 and 9 September 2013.

COSTS/BENEFITS

Nil

RISK ANALYSIS

Failure to process planning applications in a timely manner or undertake rigorous assessment of development or works proposals is considered to pose the following risks:

- Barrier to development and associated economic growth within the Shire
- Proliferation of incompatible land use development
- Council's reputation as a regulatory authority
- Infrastructure, service provision or regulatory and enforcement pressures
- Protection of zones to accommodate intended activities or reduction of surrounding property amenity

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Consultation and engagement with planning permit applicants is routinely conducted at the required periods throughout the assessment and permit approval process.

7.2 NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACES (PLACES OF LAST RESORT)

SUMMARY

Provides Council with a recommendation to adopt the attached Loddon Shire Council Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan (NSPP) September 2013, which includes all designated Neighbourhood Safer Places (Places of Last Resort) (NSP's) within the municipality located in the Townships of Boort, Bridgewater, Inglewood, Pyramid Hill, Serpentine and Wedderburn.

Author: Kim Isbister – Emergency Management Co-ordinator

Council Plan ref: Core Business 2. – Provision of Wellbeing Services

File no: 11/04/001

Attachment: Loddon Shire Council Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan September 2013

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopt the attached Loddon Shire Council Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan (NSPP) September 2013, which includes designated NSP's within the municipality in the Townships of Boort, Bridgewater, Inglewood, Pyramid Hill, Serpentine and Wedderburn.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

At its ordinary meeting held on 23rd August 2010, Council adopted the initial NSPP which contains the Council NSP Assessment Criteria.

At its ordinary meeting on 11th September 2011, Council endorsed the NSP assessment process and resolved to continue identification and assessment of potential sites for NSP's and once identified report these back to Council for consideration.

At its ordinary meeting held on 27 August 2012 Council adopted the Loddon Shire Council Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan August 2012, which included designated NSP's at Boort, Bridgewater, Inglewood, Pyramid Hill, Serpentine and Wedderburn.

BACKGROUND

NSP's and the NSPP, are direct consequences of the Black Saturday fires and the interim recommendations' from the Bushfires Royal Commission. NSP's are legislated under the Emergency Services Legislation Amendment Act 2009 (Vic) ('ESLA Act') which amends the Emergency Management Act 1986 (Vic) ('EM Act') and the Country Fire Authority Act 1958 (Vic) ('CFA Act').

Councils in Victoria, under the 'ESLA Act 2009' are required to identify, certify, designate, establish and maintain NSP's within their Municipal district. Section one of the NSPP, the flow chart, sets out the process to follow in establishing a NSP.

In short this process includes:

1. Identification of potential sites by Council
2. Assessment by Council against Council's criteria
3. Assessment by CFA against CFA criteria
4. Designation by Council of the approved sites
5. Establishment and signage of site by Council
6. Annual review of existing and potential new sites by Council and CFA

Under Section 50J of the CFA Act 1958 Council must, by 31 August each year, conduct a review of each designated NSP in its municipal district to determine if it is still suitable to be designated as a NSP and ask the CFA to assess each NSP in its municipal district in accordance with the Country Fire Authority Assessment Guidelines.

Once the Council and CFA assessments have been completed and the established NSP's have been determined by each organisation as being compliant, the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer (MFPO) under section 50K of the CFA Act 1958 must provide to the Authority by 30 September in each year an up to date list of all designated neighbourhood safer places and community fire refuges in the municipal district.

In compliance to Section 50J of the CFA Act 1958, in June 2012 Council staff requested that the CFA conduct the annual inspection of the current designated NSP's in Boort, Pyramid Hill, Bridgewater, Inglewood, Wedderburn and Serpentine. In August 2012 Council Staff (Emergency Management Co-ordinator and & Municipal Fire Prevention Officer) also conducted the Council assessment of these NSP's

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Council staff have confirmed that the six current designated NSP sites were re-assessed under Section 50J of the CFA Act 1958 as compliant against Council Guidelines. Similarly, CFA assessment has also determined that the existing sites are considered suitable to remain designated as NSP's.

No new or additional NSP site have been nominated by Council staff, the local community or the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee.

Subject to Council endorsement of the attached NSPP, the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer will provide to the Authority, by 30 September (as per Section 50J of the CFA Act 1958), an up to date list of all designated NSP's within Loddon Shire.

COSTS/BENEFITS

Administration of the NSP process requires the allocation of Council and CFA resources to undertake the necessary site assessment as well as preparation of the associated reports and supporting documentation.

Costs of maintaining those NSP's contained within the boundary of recreation reserves is borne by the associated committees of management for these facilities. The remainder of NSP's are located in areas which Council maintain as a matter of routine operations.

Provision and maintenance of designated NSP's within the municipality contributes to the overall safety and wellbeing of the local community in the event of a bushfire and forms part of the response provisions within the Municipal Fire Management Plan.

RISK ANALYSIS

Failure to adequately and regularly assess the designated NSP sites for compliance against specified criteria has the potential to place members of the community utilising these sites at risk should site conditions change over time.

Failure to meet the inspection and reporting timelines may result in Loddon Shire failing to meet its legislated obligations under the CFA Act and EM Act.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Determination of the suitability to retain the designated NSP sites has been made in consultation with the CFA.

7.3 AMENDMENTS TO THE BUSHFIRE MANAGEMENT OVERLAY

SUMMARY

The Department of Transport, Planning & Local Infrastructure are undertaking Amendments to the Bushfire Management Overlay of the Loddon Planning Scheme.

Author:	Tyson Sutton – Manager Planning & Local Laws
Council Plan ref:	Core Business of Council 3 – Planning for Future Needs
File no:	13/01/003
Attachment:	Map of proposed amendments to the Bushfire Management Overlay Criteria for the Bushfire Management Overlay

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the report on proposed changes to the Bushfire Management Overlay.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council has not previously discussed this issue.

BACKGROUND

The subject of this report arises from the recommendations of the Royal commission into the Black Saturday Bushfires and forms part of the State Governments response to those recommendations.

The Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure (DTPLI) has prepared updated mapping for the Bushfire Management Overlay. Affected properties are to be notified by DTPLI prior to planning schemes being amended. Loddon Shire has had no input into the preparation of the revised mapping.

As shown in the attached map approximately equal areas are to be removed and added to the Bushfire Management Overlay. The map has been provided on a confidential basis prior to the commencement of the formal notification basis.

Notification is to commence on Tuesday 17 September 2013 by letter to affected properties. Notices will also be placed in The Age, Herald Sun and The Weekly Times. Affected property owners will have the opportunity to request a review by an advisory committee if they believe that the updated Bushfire Management Overlay has been incorrectly applied to their land. Council can also make a submission.

A submission that seeks a change to the mapping must be endorsed at a council meeting and must include an assessment against the criteria for the Bushfire Management Overlay. A copy of the Bushfire Management Overlay mapping criteria is attached. The closing date for receipt of submissions is Thursday 14 November 2013.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Council officers have reviewed the proposed changes with a particular focus on the areas to be added to the overlay. A significant proportion of the new areas are located on the periphery of the existing overlay and have been included to provide an ember attack protection buffer for new developments.

A number of isolated stands of native vegetation have been mapped for inclusion in the Bushfire Management Overlay. While the bushfire risk posed by these areas is debateable their inclusion in the overlay will not create any significant restrictions on the development of the affected land.

Given the level of information provided to date it is not possible to undertake any meaningful assessment of the proposed changes to the Bushfire Management Overlay. Officers have requested that the underlying data that identified the new areas be provided to allow the proper consideration of the proposed changes and the development of a submission.

COSTS/BENEFITS

The proposed changes to the Bushfire Management Overlay are unlikely to result in any significant financial costs to council.

RISK ANALYSIS

The proposed changes to the Bushfire Management Overlay are being made in response to the recommendations of the Black Saturday Royal Commission to address the potential risk to life and property from bushfire.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

This report provides information about a consultation and engagement program that is to be initiated by the State Government.

7.4 LIGHTING THE REGIONS PROJECT

SUMMARY

Report outlines the progress to date and proposed roll out of the Lighting the Regions Project. This project will see the replacement of over 22,000 streetlights with energy efficient globes across 16 councils in North Western and Central Victoria.

Author:	David Fry - Manager Infrastructure Program Development
Council Plan ref:	Core Business 5. Providing Quality Infrastructure
File no:	14/01/010
Attachment:	Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Lighting the Regions report.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council has allocated a budget of \$72,000 to fund the Loddon Shire Council commitment to the Lighting the Regions Project.

Council officers had previously looked at the bulk changeover of street lighting within the Municipality but had not pursued the project because of the estimated cost of more than \$300,000 and the lack of available government funds at that time.

BACKGROUND

In January 2013 Council were approached by Mr John Harvey the CEO of the Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance (CVGA) to participate in a Regional Energy Efficiency Street Lighting Replacement Project, later to be known as the Lighting the Regions Project.

The project aim was to put together a consortium of Councils along with the CVGA and the Wimmera Mallee Sustainability Alliance (WMSA) and apply for a grant through the Federal Government's Community Energy Efficiency Program (CEEP).

The final group membership was as follows:

- Greater Bendigo City Council (lead applicant and project coordinator)
- Horsham Rural City Council
- Ararat Rural City Council
- Mildura Rural City Council
- Swan Hill Rural City Council
- Loddon Shire Council
- Hindmarsh Shire Council
- Yarriambiack Shire Council
- Northern Grampians Shire Council
- Mount Alexander Shire Council
- Central Goldfields Shire Council
- Hepburn Shire Council
- Pyrenees Shire Council
- Buloke Shire Council
- Gannawarra Shire Council
- West Wimmera Shire Council
- CVGA

- WMSA

A grant application on behalf of the group was made by the Greater Bendigo City Council under the Federal Government CEEP program, to fund the replacement of a minimum of 22,000 80w Mercury Vapour street lights, with either 2x14w T5 or a single 32w compact fluorescent (energy efficient) street lights. Because of the size of the project and the potential availability of appropriate contractors the project was to be completed over a three (3) year period, with completion in planned for the end of June 2016.

In July 2013 the Federal Government advised the Greater Bendigo City Council that the project bid had been successful.

CEEP Funding	\$5,129,780
Councils Contribution	\$2,818,087
Total Project Budget	\$7,947,867

THE PROJECT

This Lighting the Regions Project is Australia's largest regional street lighting upgrade project, covering nearly half (48%) of regional Victoria and includes 16 council areas, 140,000 households and over 300,000 people.

The project will upgrade in excess of 22,000 lights to more energy efficient technologies, reducing energy consumption by a massive 6 Gigawatt hours per year saving regional communities in the order of \$40 million over 20 years in energy costs.

It is estimated that this project will also see a reduction of greenhouse emissions in the order of 150,000 tonnes over 20 years.

In addition to the reduced cost and energy consumption the new lights will provide better lighting outcomes to the community including:

- Greater uniformity of light across and along the street
- Better colour rendering and visibility
- Less depreciation of the light output over time
- Lower glare.

As the lead council, City of Greater Bendigo will perform the project management function as well as the function of banker for the project. To manage and oversee the project and ensure communication between all participants, a project Control Group has been set up.

This group is made up of the project coordinator (Bendigo) 2 local government representatives, a representative from both CVGA and WMSA and an observer from the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency (DCCEE). This group reports back to the Local Government Coordination Committee which includes a representative from each of the member councils.

Initially the project was developed as a 6 step process ranging from preparation of a business case to the finalisation of the project and a report on outcomes:

1. Prepare

- Developing a business case for the project
- Secure Council support.

2. Fund

- Seek internal council budgets
- Seek external financing from CEEP or other programs.

3. Define

- Consult around the requirements for the new lights, in particular around safety, community need and the treatment of public transport
- Assess current lighting treatment within this context and complete a final design and specification for the project
- Prepare community education and promotional program.

4. Procure

- Procurement including tendering or direct engagement with relevant power authority.

5. Manage

- Ensure clear internal communication during the bulk change project occurs including consideration of complaint, timelines, media, invoicing and incident provisions
- Deliver educational and promotional program.

6. Finalise

- Post project follow-up
- Evaluate and report outcomes to councils and funding bodies

The project is about to enter the procurement stage and once suitably qualified and approved contractors have been appointed a roll out plan will be prepared.

At this stage it is not known if the project will move from Council to Council over the project life or have components completed concurrently at multiple locations utilising more than one contractor. The consensus after early discussions with the power authority is that it is more likely to be the latter so that the project works can be carried out as part of the contractors other obligations to the power authority.

Once a roll out schedule has been developed a payment schedule for the council approved funds will be developed. One of the early ideas was for three annual payments over the term of the project.

The number of street lights in each municipality involved in the project ranges from a low of 330 to a high of 7,411. Loddon has 519 eligible street lights identified for changeover. The aim of the project is to complete the changeover of 22,922 lights. The CEED funding requires a minimum of 22,000 to be completed.

COSTS/BENEFITS

As identified above the estimated cost to Council to participate in the Lighting the Regions project is approximately \$72,000. The total cost for those streetlights identified for replacement within Loddon Shire is expected to be approximately \$260,000 with the difference being provided via the federal government grant.

It is expected that following the replacement program Loddon Shire will realise minimum savings in the order of \$15,000 p.a. in respect of the ongoing operation and maintenance costs of light installations e.g. power. Taking the federal government grant into consideration it is expected that Councils investment in the changeover to energy efficient street lighting will become cost neutral in approximately 5 years, with further operational savings being realised into the future.

RISK ANALYSIS

Failure to modernise Councils current inventory of streetlights with energy efficient technology poses the following risks:

- Increased operating and maintenance costs over time given escalation in both power charges and labour supplied through the local government Operating and Maintenance & Replacement (OMR) agreement.
- Use of redundant or obsolete technology
- Reputation as a good corporate citizen (sustainability) and a leadership body within the community.

Participating in the Lighting the Regions project is not considered to pose any significant risk other than the potential timeframe in delivery of required changeovers given the scale of works required across the 16 municipalities. This risk is offset by the potential costs savings achieved as opposed to Loddon implementing such a program as a sole entity.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Loddon Shire representatives have been liaising with the CVGA and the City of Greater Bendigo in regards to this project and the associated funding agreement with the federal government for the past 6 months. A Loddon Shire representative also sits on the project co-ordination committee.

This project is considered to represent a shining example of regional collaboration, which in no small part has contributed to the success of the funding application.

8. **DIRECTOR ECONOMY AND COMMUNITY REPORTS**

8.1 **LODDON VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE STATISTICS**

SUMMARY

A report on visitor statistics for the Loddon Visitor Information Centre 2012-2013 financial year.

Author:	Robyn Vella Tourism Manager
Council Plan ref:	Strategic Platform 5 Grow and Diversify our Economy
File no:	16/07/003
Attachment:	Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Loddon Visitor Information Centre Statistics Report 2012/2013.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

At the November 2012 Council Meeting the Loddon Visitor Information Centre Statistical Report was received and noted.

BACKGROUND

The Loddon Visitor Information Centre is located in a shared facility at Wedderburn Community Centre situated at 24 Wilson Street Wedderburn. The other user bodies in Wedderburn Community Centre are Wedderburn Community House and Inglewood and District Health Service. The visitor centre is responsible for promoting Boort, Bridgwater, Eddington, Dingee, Korong Vale, Mitiamo, Newbridge, Laanecoorie, Inglewood, Pyramid Hill, Serpentine, Tarnagulla, Wedderburn and surrounds plus all areas throughout Victoria.

The Loddon Visitor Information Centre is accredited through the Australian Tourism Accreditation Program. An obligation of the accreditation is for the Loddon Visitor Information Centre to be open 7 days excluding Christmas Day, Good Friday and to commence operation at 1pm on Anzac Day.

This visitor information centre has paid staff and volunteers Monday to Saturday and volunteers Sundays and Public Holidays.

Monday to Friday Wedderburn Community House and The Loddon Visitor Information Centre share volunteers.

At present the Loddon Visitor Information Centre is a focal point for visitors and locals to obtain information on the region coordinates a group tour program, designs self-drive tours, assists with promotion of events, provides a referral service for accommodation and promotes local attractions and activities for the Loddon Shire Tourism Region and the wider Victoria.

As part of the Australian Tourism Accreditation Program the Loddon Visitor Information Centre must collect statistics on visitor enquiries. Statistics are collected manually for the Loddon Visitor Information Centre by requesting postcodes from walk in visitors, telephone and email enquiries. A door counter collects statistics for the entire **Wedderburn Community Centre**. Monthly the Loddon Visitor Information Centre Officer collates the statistics for the Loddon Visitor Information Centre and must forward a copy to Victorian Tourism Industry Council to be included in Tourism Victoria's visitor statistics report for the end of the financial year.

This report identifies walk in enquires to **Wedderburn Community Centre** and provides statistical data on **walk in, telephone and email enquiries** to the **Loddon Visitor Information Centre** over the 2012/2013 financial year allowing for a comparison in 2011/2012.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

The statistical data for the Loddon Visitor Information Centre

The statistical data for the Loddon Visitor Information Centre is collected manually from visitors by requesting their postcode. The manual postcode collection identifies 70% of visitors is intrastate, 25% is interstate and 5% is international. The intrastate visitor enquires to the Loddon Visitor Information Centre are investigating regional maps, events, family history, accommodation, the natural environment or nature based tourism activities such as water skiing, gold fossicking, camping and fishing locations.

Majority of the interstate visitors are looking for locations to legally detector for gold with our region. The international visitors are travelling to Mildura or returning to Melbourne.

Staff and volunteers constantly provided directions and material to visitors and locals to Regional Centres that surrounds our Municipality. This enables staff and volunteers to promote our rural communities, encouraging travellers to stop in our region on the way to their destination.

Due to Wedderburn hosting the Loddon Visitor Information Centre it is vital that local operators and event organisers support and promote the Loddon Visitor Information Centre to benefit the whole Municipality.

The initiative to connect Wedderburn operators with the Loddon Visitor Information Centre is to provide vouchers for a monthly draw. The vouchers are in accommodation, eateries and attraction venues. Local operators give the voucher to the visitor encouraging to submit at the Loddon Visitor Information Centre. On submitting the voucher staff and volunteers do promote the entire Municipality by providing a visitor guide, major events brochure and nature tourism map. The monthly prize is local products, visitor guide and Loddon Valley DVD.

Annually Wedderburn is host to a number of successful events. A voucher thanking the visitor for attending the event is given to the event organiser to distribute on entry encouraging the visitor to submit and go in a drawn to win local product, visitor guide and Loddon Valley DVD.

The Wedderburn Travellers Rest is an important connection to the Loddon Visitor Information Centre as during school holiday period a poster is place in the amenities thanking visitors for stopping at the Travellers Rest and come to the Loddon Visitor Information Centre and enter a monthly draw to winner products of the region.

All these initiatives bring walk in visitors to the Loddon Visitor Information Centre which enables staff and volunteers to promote the whole Municipality.

The statistical data on walk in visitors below identifies a decrease of -5.33% showing numbers declined in September, November and December period other months are similar to previous year.

Walk-In Statistics			
	<u>2011/2012</u> Last year	<u>2012/2013</u> This year	<u>% Change</u>
July	333	351	5.41%
August	406	417	2.71%
September	504	491	-2.58%
October	447	494	10.51%
November	515	463	-10.10%
December	971	392	-59.63%
January	353	357	1.13%
February	388	438	12.89%
March	601	645	7.32%
April	449	482	7.35%
May	472	598	26.69%
June	379	380	0.26%
Year to Date	5818	5508	-5.33%

Telephone and Email enquiries

Statistical data is collected for telephone and email enquiries for the Loddon Visitor Information Centre. All tourism marketing material has the Loddon Visitor Information Centre as the call to action.

Currently the media marketing material encourages readers to contact the Loddon Visitor Information Centre to obtain a free Loddon Valley DVD. This DVD promotes the region as a great place to Live, Work and Visit.

Phone calls			
	<u>2011/2012</u>	<u>2012/2013</u>	<u>% Change</u>
	Last year	This year	
July	93	121	30.11%
August	89	134	50.56%
September	119	156	31.09%
October	106	112	5.66%
November	86	152	76.74%
December	136	108	-20.59%
January	79	110	39.24%
February	131	194	48.09%
March	109	151	38.53%
April	78	115	47.44%
May	119	104	-12.61%
June	95	44	-53.68%
Year to Date	1240	1501	21.05%

Emails			
	<u>2011/2012</u>	<u>2012/2013</u>	<u>% Change</u>
	Last year	This year	
July	11	69	527.27%
August	24	92	283.33%
September	41	79	92.68%
October	53	57	7.55%
November	46	126	173.91%
December	62	71	14.52%
January	39	46	17.95%
February	40	143	257.50%
March	34	52	52.94%
April	23	44	91.30%
May	73	86	17.81%
June	76	41	-46.05%
Year to Date	522	906	73.56%

The statistical data on telephone and email enquires identifies an increase from the previous year.

Frequently the Loddon Shire Tourism Manager reviews the visitor statistics making sure that the marketing of our region is meeting the trend of visitors travelling to our region.

Market Segmentation

The Loddon Shire Council segments national markets using the **Roy Morgan Value segments** that distinguish markets with the highest yield potential and their holiday requirements.

In marketing the Loddon Tourism Region - the Traditional Family Life, Conventional Family Life and Socially Aware segments are identified as the core market segments likely to be suited to the Loddon Shire and what this region has to offer.

Traditional Family Life© refers to a pattern of responses associated with the older counter parts of the Conventional Family Life© segment. The **Traditional Family Life**© segment are motivated by similar values in terms of security, reliability and providing better opportunities for their family. However, they are now, within Australia, and generally empty-nesters or extended families.

With children grown - their focus is on enjoying their relationship with one another, finding time to do all things they never could while their children were growing up. But with such a strong focus on the family, they spend a great deal of time and energy getting the family to visit them, babysitting, weekend BBQ's and buying lollies for the grandkids which their parents won't let them have.

Conventional Family Life © refers to the pattern of respondents who represent the core of "middle Australia", with values centred on the significant events in their personal and family lives. It tends to relate to people seeking greater financial security, struggling to improve their basic living standards and give their families better opportunities than they had in their own childhood.

Within the **Conventional Family Life** © segment exists the great Australian dream of owning your own home in the suburbs, driving a good, solid car having 2.5 children and going on family BBQ's on the weekend. But with this comes the worry of a mortgage, playing it safe at work so you don't risk losing your job, worrying about the safety of the children, being the family taxi service and ferrying the kids to and from sporting activities and their friends.

Socially Aware © refers to a pattern of responses offered by people who are community minded and socially active. Information vacuum cleaners, this segment are always searching for something new and different and new things to learn. They believe strongly in the concept of learning a living rather than earning a living, always seeking new opportunities for training, education and knowledge. Community minded and socially active people looking for something different, willing to spend money and learn new activities.

The Objectives for the Loddon Visitor Information Centre for 2013/2014

- To maintain accreditation with Tourism Accreditation Australia for the Loddon Visitor Information Centre
- Redesign the inside of the new Loddon Visitor Information Centre
- To continue to recruit volunteers for the Loddon Visitor Information
- To improve promotional material so all forms of visitor enquiry are directed to the Loddon Visitor information centre
- Continue Volunteer Information sessions
- Continue Volunteer & staff familiarisation tours
- Continue to grow partnerships with Regional Visitor Information Centres by attending the Visitor Information Centre Summit
- Provide input into the re development of the Wedderburn Community Centre to reach the best outcome for visitor services
- Negotiate for the Loddon Visitor Information centre to be included in the next edition of the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.
- To submit The Loddon Visitor Information Centre business plan to Council for adoption
- Further connect the Loddon Visitor Information Centre with the wider Loddon Region
- Insert tourism information on new Council website

COSTS/BENEFITS

The Loddon Visitor Information Centre is the call to action for the entire Municipality. Staff and volunteers have knowledge of the region from attending familiarisation tours organised by staff from the Loddon Visitor Information Centre. A visitor centre is similar to a website; people want to go to one location to obtain enough information.

A very conservative estimate of the direct average income to Loddon Shire for 5508 walk in enquires is \$55,080.00 (5508x\$10per person =\$55,080.00. The walk in enquires average income is based on purchase of coffee or snack. This excludes the multiple outcomes through the communities.

RISK ANALYSIS

The Loddon Visitor Information Centre is reliant on volunteers for Sundays and Public Holidays. With less people engaging in volunteering it becomes harder to recruit new volunteers. . This is a risk for the sustainability of the Loddon Visitor Information Centre.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Staff at the Loddon Visitor Information Centre coordinates 2 familiarisation tours annually to up skill volunteers in product and local knowledge. Local operators and community groups engage with the familiarisation tours informing volunteers about their daily operations of business.

The Loddon Visitor Information Centre is assisting event organisers across the Municipality by inserting details on the Loddon Shire event Calendar section on the website, coordinating the calendar of event brochure and taking enquires about their event and managing booking for stalls where required.

8.2 STATUS OF THE COMMUNITY PLANNING PROGRAM COMMENCING SEPTEMBER 2013

SUMMARY

This report provides Council with a list and the status of projects and initiatives currently active in community planning.

Author:	Tim Jenkyn, Manager Community Planning
Council Plan ref:	1.2
File no:	Click here to enter text.
Attachment:	Status of the Loddon Shire Community Planning Program September 2013

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the report.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

- Council Report January 2013 – Community Planning Program Status
- Council Report April 2013 – Community Planning Program Status
- Council Report July 2013 – Community Planning Program 2013-14

BACKGROUND

The community planning program has a number of large, medium and small scale projects underway across the Shire, as detailed in the attached report.

The attached spread sheet lists the location, type of project, funding sources, total community planning allocation, percentage complete and project management information on items initiated in community planning.

Projects approved for 2013-14 have been added to the attached report, and projects with multiple allocations over financial years have been placed on one line with information about those allocations.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Currently Loddon Shire Council's community planning program represents a total allocated value of \$1,107,000 for Loddon's communities (September 2013). This figure is based on Council's financial contribution to 39 projects, and includes those that Council and the community have invested in over previous and the current financial year.

Larger and medium scale projects that have attracted external funding will be transferred from the community planning budget to a project management budget, and noted in future reports.

Together with smaller projects numerous members of each community volunteer their time in planning, contributing funds and in kind work on the ground.

COSTS/BENEFITS

NA

RISK ANALYSIS

NA

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

NA

8.3 LODDON VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE BUSINESS PLAN

SUMMARY

A report on The Loddon Visitor Information Centre Business Plan providing direction for the next 3 years.

Author:	Robyn Vella Tourism Manager
Council Plan ref:	Strategic Platform 5 Grow and Diversify our Economy
File no:	16/07/003
Attachment:	The Loddon Visitor Information Centre Business Plan 2013 - 2016

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopt the Loddon Visitor Information Centre Business Plan 2013-2016.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Loddon Shire Tourism Manager presented the Loddon Visitor Information Centre Business Plan at the August 2013 Council forum.

BACKGROUND

Bendigo Tourism through their membership provides a professional development program "Grow Your Business". The 8 – 10 week program is designed for business owners and key business managers to grow their business bottom line by undertaking a business plan program to review and set their business on a growth path.

With the new structure of Goldfields, Bendigo Tourism assisted Bendigo Regional Tourism by providing the Grow Your Business Program to conduct industry development training across the Municipalities of Loddon, Central Goldfields, Mount Alexander and Greater City of Bendigo.

The Grow Your Business Program was conducted in Bendigo with 12 participants and 3 from each Municipality. The 3 businesses from Loddon were The Royal Hotel in Inglewood, Roz's Treasures and the Loddon Visitor Information Centre in Wedderburn.

The Loddon Shire Tourism Manager participated in this program to develop a business plan for the Loddon Visitor Information Centre and further assist local operators in small business.

This business plan provides a new direction for the Loddon Visitor Information Centre for the next 3 years.

A business plan is appropriate for the Loddon Visitor Information Centre with the redevelopment of the Wedderburn Community Centre where visitor services are a tenant.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

The Loddon Visitor Information Centre business plan was developed through consultation with staff and volunteers.

This business plan covers a number of important areas such as the vision, business goals, our values, competitors, sales and marketing objectives.

A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis was conducted by staff and volunteers who work at the Loddon Visitor Information Centre, who also examined methods to overcome the threats and weaknesses.

The direction of this plan is to increase visitation by establishing an attractive and thriving visitor centre with a walk in retail section, an online sale that includes event ticketing, tourism experience packages and local produce. An important part of the plan is the continuous up skilling of staff and volunteers in customer service and product knowledge.

An online booking service for Loddon is being explored but with limited accommodation options Loddon Shire Tourism Manager is investigating the best options for an online booking service in our Municipality.

Majority of Victorian visitor information centres who sell accommodation packages utilise an online service which is book easy. This program is valued at \$10,000.

Loddon Shire Tourism Manager is discussing options with Bendigo Tourism for our local accommodation operators to be a part of their book easy system.

COSTS/BENEFITS

This business plan will enable more local operators to connect with the Loddon Visitor Information Centre by providing other business options other than local knowledge and distributing material.

In the 2012-2013 financial year the walk in visitors to the Loddon Visitor Information Centre was 5508. Our goal is to sell local products to 10% of walk in visitors. This example would allow the Loddon Visitor Information Centre to make sales to 550 walk in visitors.

RISK ANALYSIS

Development and implementation of the plan is a low risk with constant monitoring. For the online system relevant policies and procedures are required.

The Loddon Shire Compliant Suppliers reduces the risk when purchasing local produce as the local operator must be registered and compliant with the Shire.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The Loddon Visitor Information Centre business plan was developed with consultation of staff and volunteers who manage visitor services on a daily bases.

The SWOT analysis set the scene for the business plan allowing staff and volunteers to identify what we deliver well, areas for improvement and opportunities for visitor services in the future.

The Grow Your Business program allowed the Loddon Shire Tourism Manager to strengthen partnerships, communicate with local and regional businesses learning about success stories in small business but the major challenges each business faces on a daily bases.

The Loddon Visitor Information Centre business plan review is annually to monitor the progress.

9. **DIRECTOR COMMUNITY WELLBEING REPORTS**

9.1 **COMMUNITY CARE PRIVATE WORKS RATE**

SUMMARY

This report seeks approval to establish a private works rate for use by Council's Community Care Department.

Author:	Wendy Gladman – Director Community Wellbeing
Council Plan ref:	Core Business of Council – 2: Provision of Wellbeing services
File no:	12/07/008
Attachment:	Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the establishment of a community care private works rate.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Nil

BACKGROUND

Council's Community Care Department currently operates with two types of unit rates. A Home and Community Care (HACC) rate, with the maximum unit price determined by the Victorian Department Health, is used for recipients of services provided through the HACC program. This rate is a contribution to the total cost of the provision of service with the balance of costs supported by Department of Health funding and Council contribution.

A brokered service rate provides a full cost recovery rate for use when direct care services are purchased from Council by other funded agencies and delivered on their behalf to residents within Loddon Shire. Brokered agencies are responsible for the full cost of the hours of service delivered, any travel incurred by staff and an annual home safety check.

Prior to the introduction of the Living Longer Living Better (LLLB) and Disability Care programs these two unit rates covered the variety of direct care services provided by the Community Care Department.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

The introduction of the LLLB and Disability Care programs brings a refocus on increasing and promoting client choice and control in regards to the services that they receive and the agencies who deliver them.

Within LLLB the transition of the Home Care Program (packaged care) to a consumer directed care (CDC) model has two potential impacts. CDC requires each package of care to be operated individually, which means that individual budgets are managed for each package exclusively. Previously agencies were able to consolidate package care funds and operate with a balance of high and low level service users with the flexibility to apportion services as required by package recipients.

The Packaged Care and Disability Care programs will enable service recipient's a choice of service providers and the ability to purchase services from providers independently. Previously these services would have been purchased on behalf of the care recipient by a supporting agency and was covered by the brokered service rate.

The establishment of a private works rate will enhance Council's ability to transition to the refocused methodology surrounding the delivery of support services within the aged care and disability sectors.

The establishment of a community care private works rate will enable:

- The provision of services to Loddon residents, ensuring continuity of care.
- The purchase of additional services to supplement those able to be provided through the packaged care program.
- Recipients of packages of care (either aged or disability) to purchase services from Council when operating independent of agency support.
- Council to apply to become a registered supplier in the transition to Disability Care if this is determined as the direction that Council wishes to progress in future.

It is proposed that the ability to source services under a community care private works rate is limited to recipients of either aged or disability funded services or care packages.

If Council approves this proposal, a fee schedule will be developed. Fees will be set at a rate that seeks to recover the cost of service and a 30% premium to cover administration and to provide Council with some dividend for delivering extra service.

COSTS/BENEFITS

The establishment of a community care private rate at cost plus 30% will ensure that the service operates at no cost to Council.

A private rate ensures continuity of care for current recipients of services who wish to either purchase additional services or who will transfer to CDC or a Disability Care packaged in future.

Whilst the full impact of the LLLB, Disability Care or the transition of HACC to the Commonwealth is yet to be determined, the introduction of a private rate will position the community care department to respond to future changes. This will enable the community care department to continue to deliver services through programs other than HACC, providing opportunities to maintain or increase hours for the community care staff, thus protecting local employment.

RISK ANALYSIS

Without a private rate, the community care department will be unable to offer services to Package Care, CDC or Disability Care recipients whose preference would be for Council staff to deliver their services. This may have a direct impact on the capacity of the organisation to provide hours to direct care staff members, and maintaining the home and community care workforce.

Although both LLLB and Disability Care have bi-partisan support and have been recently legislated, with the recent change in government there is potential for modification to the implementation of both programs, although it is understood that the transition to a service system that reflects care recipient choice and control over the care that they receive is highly likely to continue.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Director Community Wellbeing has attended:

- Community Transport Conference– briefing by federal and state government aged care representatives
- Local Government Aged & Disability Consortium briefings
- Aged care in the future briefing – federal government representatives

10. GENERAL BUSINESS

11. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Closing of Meeting to the Public

RECOMMENDATION

That the meeting be closed to the public.

NEXT MEETING

The next Ordinary Meeting of Council will be held on 28 October at Serpentine commencing at 3.30pm.