



Date: Tuesday, 22 October 2024
Time: 3.00pm
Location: Loddon Shire Council Chambers, Wedderburn

MINUTES

Council Meeting

**MINUTES OF LODDON SHIRE COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE LODDON SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEDDERBURN
ON TUESDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2024 AT 3.00PM**

PRESENT: Cr Gavan Holt (Mayor), Cr Dan Straub, Cr Neil Beattie, Cr Linda Jungwirth and Cr Wendy Murphy

IN ATTENDANCE: Lincoln Fitzgerald (Chief Executive Officer), Wendy Gladman (Director Community Wellbeing), Glenn Harvey (Acting Director Operations), Michelle Stedman (Director Corporate) and Lisa Clue (Manager Governance)

1 OPENING AFFIRMATION

The Mayor read the Opening Affirmation.

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Chief Executive Officer read the Acknowledgement of Country.

3 APOLOGIES

Nil

4 DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Nil

5 PREVIOUS MINUTES**5.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES****File Number:** FOL/19/45615**Author:** Lisa Clue, Manager Governance**Authoriser:** Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer**Attachments:** Nil**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council confirm the Minutes of the following meetings as previously circulated to Councillors:

1. Council Briefing of 16 September 2024
2. Council Meeting of 16 September 2024.

REPORT

This report seeks Council confirmation of Minutes from the September 2024 Council Briefing and Council Meeting, as previously circulated to Councillors.

RESOLUTION 2024/125**Moved:** Cr Wendy Murphy**Seconded:** Cr Neil Beattie

That Council confirm the Minutes of the following meetings as previously circulated to Councillors:

1. Council Briefing of 16 September 2024
2. Council Meeting of 16 September 2024.

CARRIED

6 COUNCIL AUSPICED MEETINGS

6.1 RECORD OF COUNCIL AUSPICED MEETINGS

File Number: 02/01/001

Author: Lisa Clue, Manager Governance

Authoriser: Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer

Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council confirm the record of Council Briefing held 16 September 2024 as detailed within this report.

Rule 35 of Council's Governance Rules requires a record of meetings conducted under the auspices of Council to be presented to the next available scheduled Council meeting for confirmation that must include:

- a) a record of which Councillors and officers attended the meeting;
- b) a summary of the matters considered in the meeting; and
- c) a record of any conflicts of interest disclosed by Councillors and officers and any Councillors or officers that left the meeting whilst a matter that their conflict of interest related to was being discussed.

Section 3 of the Governance Rules defines meetings conducted under the auspices of Council to mean a meeting of the kind described in section 131(1) of the Local Government Act 2020 and includes a meeting which:

- a) is schedule or planned for the purpose of discussing the business of Council or briefing Councillors;
- b) is attended by a majority of Councillors;
- c) is attended by at least one member of Council staff; and
- d) is not a Council meeting or delegated committee meeting.

As no Forum was held in October, this report seeks confirmation of just the Council Briefing held on 16 September 2024.

Meeting details	Briefing
Date	16 September 2024
Councillor Attendees	Cr Holt (Mayor) Cr Beattie (virtual) Cr Jungwirth Cr Murphy Cr Straub
Staff/ Stakeholder representatives	1. Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer 2. Wendy Gladman, Director Community Wellbeing 3. Steven Phillips, Director Operations 4. Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate 5. Lisa Clue, Manager Governance
Item(s) discussed.	1. Review of Council Meeting Agenda 2. General Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flood Recovery Funding
Conflict of Interest Disclosures – Councillor/ officer making disclosure	Nil
Councillor/officer left room	n/a

RESOLUTION 2024/126

Moved: Cr Dan Straub

Seconded: Cr Linda Jungwirth

That Council confirm the record of Council Briefing held 16 September 2024 as detailed within this report.

CARRIED

7 REVIEW OF ACTIONS**7.1 REVIEW OF ACTIONS****File Number: 02/01/002****Author: Lisa Clue, Manager Governance****Authoriser: Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer****Attachments: 1. Resolutions acted upon since the September 2024 Council meeting****RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receive and note resolutions acted upon since the September 2024 Council meeting as attached to this report.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest for any Council staff member involved in the preparation of this report, or involved in the subject matter of the report.

REPORT

A document containing the status of actions from September Council meeting resolutions is attached to this Agenda report.

There were no outstanding actions from Council meeting resolutions prior to September 2024.

Of the eight actions generated from the September Council meeting resolutions, six have been acted upon and two are progressing. Both progressing actions relate to resolutions for reports to be provided to Council at meetings in November 2024, and December 2024 or January 2025.

RESOLUTION 2024/127**Moved: Cr Linda Jungwirth****Seconded: Cr Wendy Murphy**

That Council receive and note resolutions acted upon since the September 2024 Council meeting as attached to this report.

CARRIED

8 MAYORAL REPORT**8.1 MAYORAL REPORT****File Number:** 02/01/001**Author:** Lisa Clue, Manager Governance**Authoriser:** Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer**Attachments:** Nil**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receive and note the Mayoral Report.

REPORT

Mayor Holt presented a verbal report at the meeting.

Council activities	
Date	Activity
11/10/2024	Rural Press Council of Victoria Awards Night - Bendigo

RESOLUTION 2024/128

Moved: Cr Neil Beattie

Seconded: Cr Linda Jungwirth

That Council receive and note the Mayoral Report.

CARRIED

9 COUNCILLORS' REPORT**9.1 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS****File Number:** 02/01/001**Author:** Lisa Clue, Manager Governance**Authoriser:** Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer**Attachments:** Nil**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receive and note the Councillors' reports.

REPORT

Each Councillor will present a verbal report at the meeting.

Cr Beattie

Council activities	
Date	Activity
16/09/2024	September Council Meeting - Virtual
12/10/2024	Boort Annual Show
17/10/2024	Boort Grain Co-Op Annual General Meeting
21/10/2024	Boort Resource and Information Centre (BRIC) Annual General Meeting
22/10/2024	October Council Briefing and Council Meeting - Wedderburn
25/10/2024	To be interviewed by Boort College students

Cr Murphy

Council activities	
Date	Activity
19/09/2024	Bridgewater On Loddon Development Committee Meeting
22/09/2024	Inglewood Ward Candidate Forum
05/10/2024 06/10/2024	Loddon Valley Arts Trail - Inglewood, Newbridge and Tarnagulla
12/10/2024	Inglewood CFA 160th Celebrations
17/10/2024	Bridgewater On Loddon Development Committee Annual General Meeting
22/10/2024	October Council Briefing and Council Meeting - Wedderburn

Cr Straub

North Central Local Learning and Employment Network	
09/10/2024 – Finance and Risk Committee Meeting - Online 15/10/2024 – Board Meeting - Charlton	
Section 65 Community Asset Committees: 17/09/2024 - Pyramid Hill Memorial Hall Meeting	
Other Council activities	
Date	Activity
16/09/2024	September Council Briefing and Council Meeting - Wedderburn
	Pyramid Hill Historical Society Meeting
18/09/2024	Discussion with members of the Pyramid Hill Bowls Club
	Pyramid Hill Progress Association Monthly Meeting (meeting prior? With PH bowls club)
19/09/2024	East Loddon P12 College Biannual Fete
01/10/2024	Community Meeting with Catalyst Metals - Mitiamo

Cr Jungwirth

Council activities	
Date	Activity
16/09/2024	September Council Briefing and Council Meeting - Wedderburn
17/09/2024	One Foot Forward Debrief Meeting – Tarnagulla
04/10/2024	Loddon Valley Arts Trail Opening – Tarnagulla
10/10/2024	Woodstock Hall Annual General Meeting
14/10/2024	Telstra and NBN meeting – Newbridge
19/10/2024	Tarnagulla Primary School 150th anniversary
21/10/2024	Newbridge Recreation Reserve Annual General Meeting

RESOLUTION 2024/129

Moved: Cr Dan Straub

Seconded: Cr Neil Beattie

That Council receive and note the Councillors' reports.

CARRIED

10 DECISION REPORTS

10.1 ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2024

File Number:

Author: Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate

Authoriser: Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer

Attachments: 1. Loddon Shire Council Annual Report 2023/24

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the Loddon Shire Council Annual Report for the Year Ending 30 June 2024.

ELECTION PERIOD STATEMENT

The decision recommended to Council within this Agenda item has been reviewed and deemed not to be a decision prohibited by section 69 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Division 2 of Council's Election Period Policy.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest for any Council staff member involved in the preparation of this report, or involved in the subject matter of the report.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council previously considered and adopted in principle the Financial Statements and Performance Statement at its meeting on 16 September 2024.

BACKGROUND

In accordance sections 98, 99 and 100 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), Council must prepare an Annual Report for each financial year.

The Annual Report serves as Council's primary reporting document to both the State Government and the community. Although the production of the Annual Report is a statutory requirement, it also provides a valuable opportunity to showcase the Council's performance and service delivery in relation to its activities over the previous financial year.

The Act requires the Annual Report to be presented to Council at a meeting open to the public, within four months of the end of the financial year. In the case of an election year, this process must be undertaken no later than the day before the Local Government Elections. As this is the case this year, the Annual Report must be presented before Friday, 25 October 2024.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

The Annual Report for the 2023/24 period has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Act, and includes:

- a Report of Operations of the Council,
- an audited Performance Statement,
- audited Financial Statements,
- a copy of the Auditor's report on the Performance Statement, and
- a copy of the Auditor's report on the Financial Statements.

The Report of Operations contains a statement of progress on implementation of the Council Plan, which includes the results of the strategic indicators; progress in relation to major initiatives within the budget, and measures and performance against prescribed indicators of service performance.

The Financial Statements included in the 2023/24 Annual Report have been prepared in accordance with regulations and have been audited by the Victorian Auditor General's Office.

COST/BENEFITS

Any cost in preparing the Annual Report is met within Council's' operational budget.

As well as ensuring Council benefits by meeting its legislative reporting obligations, preparation of the Annual Report provides Council with the opportunity to record the achievements of the organisation across the financial year.

It also offers a transparent record for the community on the performance of the organisation throughout 2023/24.

RISK ANALYSIS

Timely preparation and approval of the Annual Report ensures that Council complies with legislative requirements outlined in the Act.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

There is no longer a requirement to submit the Annual Report to the Minister of Local Government however Council must comply with its public transparency policy and the public transparency principles in section 58 of the Act.

As such, should Council adopt the Annual Report, the community will be notified through Council's website, local media and social media that the Annual Report has been prepared and is available for inspection at Council's office in Wedderburn, and on Council's website.

RESOLUTION 2024/130

Moved: Cr Linda Jungwirth

Seconded: Cr Wendy Murphy

That Council adopts the Loddon Shire Council Annual Report for the Year Ending 30 June 2024.

CARRIED

10.2 2024 OFFICE CLOSURE**File Number:** FOL/20/7226**Author:** Janine Jackson, Manager Organisation Development**Authoriser:** Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate**Attachments:** Nil**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1. approve the closure of the Wedderburn administrative centre from midday on Tuesday, 24 December 2024, reopening at 8:15 am on Thursday, 2 January 2025.
2. give notice of the amended office hours by publishing the details in the public notices section of the Bendigo Advertiser, in the Loddon Herald, on Council's website and on social media.

ELECTION PERIOD STATEMENT

The decision recommended to Council within this Agenda item has been reviewed and deemed not to be a decision prohibited by section 69 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Division 2 of Council's Election Period Policy.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest for any Council staff member involved in the preparation of this paper, or involved in the subject matter of the paper.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Nil

BACKGROUND

The Loddon Shire Council has historically closed the Wedderburn administrative centre to the public over the Christmas/New Year holiday period.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

In 2024, Christmas Day falls on a Wednesday and it is proposed that Council closes the Wedderburn administrative centre from midday on Tuesday, 24 December 2024 and reopen at 8:15am on Thursday, 2 January 2025.

This is traditionally a quiet period for Loddon Shire Council services and is disjointed due to the public holidays. Office closure also allows staff to draw down annual leave with minimal service disruption.

A full time staff member will be required to access three days of accrued leave entitlements during the proposed shutdown period.

Minimum staffing levels will be maintained across the Christmas/New Year period to attend to any emergency callouts.

Kindergartens will be closed from Friday 20 December 2024 reopening on Tuesday 28 January 2025.

All landfill and transfer stations will be closed on Christmas Day, Wednesday 25 and Boxing Day, Thursday 26 December 2024.

COST/BENEFITS

The shutdown provides the opportunity to enable staff to have a refreshing break with minimum interruption to business activities at the end of the calendar year.

The office closure has no direct cost to Council as staff are required to access leave accruals for the period of leave. Staff drawing down on their leave balances can assist in reducing Council's liabilities at the end of the financial year.

RISK ANALYSIS

The Christmas/New Year period is generally a time of low customer enquiry and minimal operational deadlines in the organisation.

Staff will be on call as required to attend to any incidents that may occur during the closure.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The proposed office closure over the holiday period is endorsed by the Management Executive Group and the staff Consultative Committee were provided the opportunity to provide feedback.

RESOLUTION 2024/131

Moved: Cr Neil Beattie

Seconded: Cr Wendy Murphy

That Council:

1. approve the closure of the Wedderburn administrative centre from midday on Tuesday, 24 December 2024, reopening at 8:15 am on Thursday, 2 January 2025.
2. give notice of the amended office hours by publishing the details in the public notices section of the Bendigo Advertiser, in the Loddon Herald, on Council's website and on social media.

CARRIED

10.3 APPOINTMENT AND AUTHORISATION - PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT ACT 1987

File Number:

Author: Lisa Clue, Manager Governance

Authoriser: Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate

Attachments: 1. Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation - Planning and Environment Act 1987

RECOMMENDATION

That Council, in the exercise of the powers conferred by s147(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, resolves that:

- (a) the members of Council staff referred to in the instrument attached to this Agenda report be appointed and authorised as set out in the instrument.
- (b) the instrument comes into force immediately after it is signed by Council's Chief Executive Officer, and remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it.

ELECTION PERIOD STATEMENT

The decision recommended to Council within this Agenda item has been reviewed and deemed not to be a decision prohibited by section 69 of the Local Government Act 2020 and Division 2 of Council's Election Period Policy.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest for any Council staff member involved in the preparation of this report, or involved in the subject matter of the report.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

This Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation was most recently considered by Council in September 2024.

BACKGROUND

In order for Council officers to effectively and efficiently discharge their duties, specific delegations, appointments and authorisations are required under a range of Acts and Regulations.

This report seeks to vary the Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation of officers under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

The Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation attached to this Agenda report varies the Instrument currently in place by including one additional member of Council staff, Jordan Fraser, recently appointed to the role of Community Compliance Coordinator.

COST/BENEFITS

There are no financial impacts associated with this matter.

RISK ANALYSIS

Updating this Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation will ensure Council staff have the powers required to undertake their roles.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Staff undertaking or managing planning compliance were engaged during the preparation of this report.

RESOLUTION 2024/132

Moved: Cr Wendy Murphy

Seconded: Cr Neil Beattie

That Council, in the exercise of the powers conferred by s147(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, resolves that:

- (a) the members of Council staff referred to in the instrument attached to this Agenda report be appointed and authorised as set out in the instrument.
- (b) the instrument comes into force immediately after it is signed by Council's Chief Executive Officer, and remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it.

CARRIED

11 INFORMATION REPORTS

11.1 WEDDERBURN KINDERGARTEN ASSESSMENT AND RATING OUTCOME

File Number:

Author: Wendy Gladman, Director Community Wellbeing

Authoriser: Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer

Attachments: 1. Wedderburn Preschool Notice of Rating

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the report detailing the outcomes of the National Quality Framework assessment conducted at the Loddon Cluster Kindergarten at Wedderburn.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest for any Council staff member involved in the preparation of this report, or involved in the subject matter of the report.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

There has been no previous discussion in relation to this report.

BACKGROUND

The National Quality Framework aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement in education and care services. All services approved under the Education and Care Services National Law are assessed and rated by their state or territory regulatory authority.

The National Quality Standard (NQS) is a key aspect of the National Quality Framework and sets a national benchmark for early childhood education. The NQS includes seven quality areas that provide important outcomes for children. Services are assessed and rated by the regulatory authority against the NQS, and given a rating for each of the seven quality areas and an overall rating based on those results.

The available ratings are:

- Exceeding National Quality Standard
- Meeting National Quality Standard
- Working towards National Quality Standard
- Significant Improvement Required

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Correspondence received from the Department of Education Quality Assessment and Regulation Division has advised that following a recent assessment and rating visit, the Wedderburn Preschool received the following rating outcome:

Quality Area 1	Educational program and practice <i>Educational program and practice of educators are child-centred, stimulating and maximise opportunities for enhancing and extending each child's learning and development.</i>	Meeting NQS
Quality Area 2	Children's health and safety <i>Children have the right to experience quality education and care in an environment that safeguards and promotes their health, safety and wellbeing.</i>	Meeting NQS

Quality Area 3	Physical environment <i>Physical environment is safe, suitable and provides a rich and diverse range of experiences that promote children's learning and development.</i>	Meeting NQS
Quality Area 4	Staffing arrangements <i>Qualified and experienced educators, who develop warm, respectful relationships with children, create predictable environments and encourage children's active engagement in the learning program.</i>	Meeting NQS
Quality Area 5	Relationships with children <i>Relationships with children are responsive, respectful and promote children's sense of security and belonging.</i>	Meeting NQS
Quality Area 6	Collaborative partnerships with families and communities <i>Collaborative relationships with families are fundamental to achieving quality outcomes for children, and community partnerships based on active communication, consultation and collaboration are essential.</i>	Meeting NQS
Quality Area 7	Governance and leadership <i>Effective leadership and governance of the service contributes to quality environments for children's learning and development. Effective leaders establish shared values for the service and set clear direction for the service's continuous improvement.</i>	Meeting NQS
This service is rated overall at:		Meeting NQS

The NQS aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement and consistency in services. The assessment provides service improvement suggestions that will assist Council's Kindergarten team to reflect on the assessment and rating experience and to continue to improve the quality of the service provided.

COST/BENEFITS

This assessment indicates that children attending the Loddon Cluster Kindergarten at Wedderburn receive a quality program which enhances their learning in the two years prior to primary school.

Research shows quality education and care early in life leads to better health, education and employment outcomes later in life. The early years are critical for establishing self-esteem, resilience, healthy growth and capacity to learn. Quality education and care shapes every child's future and lays the foundation for development and learning.

The work undertaken to satisfy the needs of the assessment and rating visit were undertaken within the existing budget.

RISK ANALYSIS

There are no risks associated with this report.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The Notice of Rating is displayed in each centre and is published on the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) national registers and ACECQA's family focused website, Starting Blocks.

RESOLUTION 2024/133

Moved: Cr Linda Jungwirth

Seconded: Cr Wendy Murphy

That Council receive and note the report detailing the outcomes of the National Quality Framework assessment conducted at the Loddon Cluster Kindergarten at Wedderburn.

CARRIED

12 COMPLIANCE REPORTS

Nil

13 URGENT BUSINESS

Nil

14 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Nil

Mayor Holt addressed the meeting, speaking of, and thanking retiring Councillor, Cr Neil Beattie for his contribution to the Loddon Shire during his term, which commenced in November 2005.

Cr Beattie responded, thanking those who have supported him throughout his term.

NEXT MEETING

The next Meeting of Council will be held on 26 November 2024 at Wedderburn commencing at 3.00pm.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 3.36 pm.

Confirmed this.....day of..... 2024

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CHAIRPERSON