



Date: Tuesday, 25 February 2025
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, 25 FEBRUARY 2025 AT 3.00PM**

PRESENT: Cr Dan Straub (Mayor), Cr Nick Angelo, Cr Gavan Holt, Cr David Weaver and Cr Miki Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE: Lincoln Fitzgerald (Chief Executive Officer), David Stretch (Acting Director Community Wellbeing), Steven Phillips (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 28 January 2025
2. Council Meeting of 28 January 2025
3. Council Forum of 11 February 2025

REPORT

This report seeks Council confirmation of Minutes from the January 2025 Council Briefing and Council Meeting, and the February 2025 Council Forum, as previously circulated to Councillors.

RESOLUTION 2025/8**Moved: Cr Nick Angelo****Seconded: Cr David Weaver**

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

1. Council Briefing of 28 January 2025
2. Council Meeting of 28 January 2025
3. Council Forum of 11 February 2025

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 records of the following auspiced meetings as detailed within this report:

1. Council Briefing held 28 January 2025
2. Council Forum held 11 February 2025.

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.

This report seeks confirmation of the Council Briefing held on 28 January 2025 and the Council Forum held 11 February 2025.

Meeting details	Briefing
Date	28 January 2025
Councillor Attendees	Cr Straub (Mayor) Cr Angelo Cr Holt Cr Weaver Cr Wilson
Staff/ Stakeholder representatives	Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer David Stretch, Acting Director Community Wellbeing Steven Phillips, Director Operations Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate Lisa Clue, Manager Governance David Southcombe, Manager Assets and Infrastructure – item 3 below
Item(s) discussed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CEO Mid-Year Performance Update 2. Review of Council Meeting Agenda 3. Annual Infrastructure Program 2024-2025 – Amendment to Project Allocations 4. Inglewood & Districts Community Enterprise – Childcare 5. Introduction to the Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework 6. General Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit and Risk Committee • Murray River Group of Councils • Enterprise Agreements • 30 Years of Loddon • Customer Experience – Community Engagement • February Forum
Conflict of Interest Disclosures – Councillor/ officer making disclosure	Nil
Councillor/officer left room	n/a

Meeting details	Forum
Date	11 February 2025
Councillor Attendees	Cr Straub (Mayor) Cr Angelo Cr Holt Cr Weaver Cr Wilson
Staff/ Stakeholder representatives	Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer David Stretch, Acting Director Community Wellbeing Steven Phillips, Director Operations Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate Lisa Clue, Manager Governance Deanne Caserta, Manager Financial Services – Item 1 below Peter Walsh MP, Member for Murray Plains and Andrew Mole, Advisor – Agenda item 2 below David Southcombe, Manager Assets and Infrastructure and Daniel Lloyd, Manager Works – item 3 below Tim Markwell, Doug Winzar and Adam Place, Falcon Metals Ltd – item 4 below
Item(s) discussed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Section 181 Sales Update – Sale of Properties for Unpaid Rates and Charges 2. Discussion with Peter Walsh MP, Member for Murray Plains 3. Road Network Management Fundamentals 4. Introduction to Falcon Metals Ltd 5. General Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General discussion and updates
Conflict of Interest Disclosures – Councillor/ officer making disclosure	Nil
Councillor/officer left room	n/a

RESOLUTION 2025/9

Moved: Cr Gavan Holt
Seconded: Cr Miki Wilson

That Council confirm the records of the following auspiced meetings as detailed within this report:

1. Council Briefing held 28 January 2025
2. Council Forum held 11 February 2025.

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 January 2025 Council meeting**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receive and note resolutions acted upon since the December 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 the two actions arising from January Council meeting resolutions; and one action from a November Council meeting resolution, is attached to this Agenda report.

One action generated from January Council meeting resolutions has been acted upon and one action (relating to a review of Council's Governance Rules) will be acted upon at the April Council meeting in accordance with the resolution.

One action reported on as progressing at the January Council meeting relates to a report on Newbridge Water and Sewerage, which will be presented to the March 2025 Council meeting (in accordance with the resolution).

RESOLUTION 2025/10**Moved:** Cr Miki Wilson**Seconded:** Cr David Weaver

That Council receive and note resolutions acted upon since the January 2025 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 Straub presented a verbal report at the meeting.

Loddon Campaspe Group of Councils	
21/02/2025 – Regional Forum - Bendigo	
North Central Local Learning and Employment Network	
04/02/2025 - New Board Member Induction	
12/02/2025 - Finance and Risk Committee Meeting followed by catch-up with CEO	
18/02/2025 - Bi-monthly Board Meeting – Charlton	
Other Council activities	
Date	Activity
05/02/2025	Pyramid Hill Community Centre Site Visit
11/02/2025	February Council Forum - Wedderburn
13/02/2025	Ray Tonkin hosted lunch - Wedderburn
14/02/2025	Pyramid Hill Art Show
19/02/2025	Meeting with Dr Anne Webster MP – Boort
	Goldfields PSA Neighbourhood Policing Forum - Maryborough
20/02/2025	VNI West Project Forum for Councils - Charlton

RESOLUTION 2025/11

Moved: Cr David Weaver

Seconded: Cr Nick Angelo

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 presented a verbal report at the meeting.

Cr Holt

Audit and Risk Committee	
03/02/2025 – Meeting - Wedderburn	
Section 65 Community Asset Committees:	
24/02/2025 - Donaldson Park - Meeting	
Other Council activities	
Date	Activity
11/02/2025	February Council Forum - Wedderburn
13/02/2025	Ray Tonkin hosted lunch - Wedderburn
21/02/2025	Loddon Campaspe Group of Councils - Mayors, Councillors and CEOs Regional Forum - Bendigo

Cr Angelo

Other Council activities	
Date	Activity
11/02/2025	February Council Forum - Wedderburn
21/02/2025	Loddon Campaspe Group of Councils - Mayors, Councillors and CEOs Regional Forum – Bendigo
25/02/2025	Tarnagulla Neighbourhood Watch Meeting

Cr Wilson

Section 65 Community Asset Committees:	
29/01/2025 - Campbells Forest Hall - Meeting	
02/02/2025 - Inglewood Community Sports Centre - Meeting	
Other Council activities	
Date	Activity
29/01/2025	Regional Australia Institute – Building the Future of Community Engagement Workshop - Virtual
	Meeting with Dr Anne Webster MP - Bridgewater
31/01/2025	Meeting with Council Officers re Inglewood Recreation Reserve Precinct Concept Plan
04/02/2025	Inglewood Streetscape Community Advisory Group Meeting
05/02/2025	Meeting with residents of Inglewood Elderly Person Units
20/02/2025	VNI West Project Forum for Councils - Charlton
21/02/2025	Loddon Campaspe Group of Councils - Mayors, Councillors and CEOs Regional Forum - Bendigo

Cr Weaver

Integrated Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee	
20/02/2025 – Meeting - Bendigo	
Section 65 Community Asset Committees:	
11/02/2025 - Boort Memorial Hall - Meeting	
Other Council activities	
Date	Activity
13/02/2025	Meeting with Council Officers regarding location of Boort Town Levee
19/02/2025	Meeting with Dr Anne Webster MP – Boort

RESOLUTION 2025/12

Moved: Cr Nick Angelo

Seconded: Cr David Weaver

That Council receive and note the Councillors' reports.

CARRIED

10 DECISION REPORTS

10.1 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE CHARTER

File Number:**Author:** Lisa Clue, Manager Governance**Authoriser:** Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate**Attachments:** 1. Draft Audit and Risk Committee Charter 2025 - 2027 (v12)

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the Audit and Risk Committee Charter 2025 – 2027 (v12).

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 most recently approved the Audit and Risk Committee Charter at its meeting held 23 May 2023.

BACKGROUND

Preparation and approval of an Audit and Risk Committee Charter (Charter) is required under Section 54 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act). The Charter is the governing document for the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC), ensuring that all ARC roles and responsibilities under the Act are met.

The Charter requires the ARC to review and assess its adequacy every two years, or earlier if necessary.

Whilst not scheduled for review until May, a number of improvements and enhancements to the Charter were identified and discussed at ARC meetings during 2024 including appropriate timing and content of reports presented to the ARC for both decision and information.

At its meeting on 3 February 2025, the ARC resolved to '*endorse the Draft Loddon Shire Council Audit and Risk Committee Charter v12, as presented, ahead of its presentation to Council to be considered for approval.*'

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

The Draft Charter, as attached and presented for the consideration of Council, incorporates the following amendments:

1. Expanded 5.2.1 to include reference to recruitment panel consisting ARC Chairperson, Mayor, CEO and Director Corporate
2. Added new point for role of Chairperson to participate in the recruitment of independent members [5.5.5]
3. Condensed point 5.6 – Obligations now points to Appendix 2 – Committee Members Legislated Obligations (previously duplicated some content of the appendix)
4. Paragraph within 5.7 Remuneration relating to letter of offer, moved to 5.2 Independent Members [5.2.3]
5. The Quorum for meetings amended to comprise three independent members (previously one Councillor and two independent members) [6.2]

6. Removal of point 7.2.5 ('After Council's Governance Principles have been defined, assess whether the internal control environment is consistent with Council's Governance Principles') which was deemed a duplicate of related matters addressed within the Charter.
7. Updated Appendix 1 to reflect current membership and terms
8. Updated Appendix 3 – Annual Work Plan as follows:
 - a. Combined 7.1.3 (Review outcomes of the external audit with management and the auditors) with 7.6.3 (Discuss any audit issues encountered during the course of the final audit) – Under the External Audit heading, resulting in just one required report.
 - b. Added new items to Annual Work Plan (No. 4 and 8) related to 7.1 Financial and Performance Reporting per request from Victorian Auditor General's Office as a result of recommendations from their '2022/23 Performance Audit Outcomes – Local Government'. Item refers to ARC's requirement to review Council's valuation and fair value policies and movements ahead of balance date and in line with their review of Council's Financial Statements.
 - c. Replaced the broad ICE charter requirements with specific relevant charter requirements relating to risk management, fraud prevention, and compliance (taken from elsewhere in the Work Plan) and new requirements for disaster recovery and incident response planning reports.
 - d. Adjusted the timing of reports within the ICE so 3-4 are presented each quarter.
 - e. Realigned risk report scheduling to provide a holistic view of risk, annually in May (but retaining the half yearly review of strategic risks).
 - f. Combined 7.4.3 and 7.4.4 (Fraud Prevention Systems and Controls) with 7.7.2 (Compliance Management) – enabling both to be presented within one report, as required
 - g. Removed the requirement to review processes for communicating Council's Employee Code of Conduct
 - h. Included footnotes for charter requirements that will not be presented to the ARC as an officer report
 - i. Scheduled meetings include a meeting in September rather than August.
9. Updated Appendix 4 – Internal Control Environment to include policies/plans/frameworks aligned to the Charter and Work Plan that are currently endorsed by the ARC following their scheduled review.

COST/BENEFITS

The reviewed Charter and associated work plan provide a clear roadmap for ARC activities.

There is no expectation that this report will incur any costs.

RISK ANALYSIS

There are no risks associated with this report.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

A number of Council Officers have been involved in reviewing the current Audit and Risk Committee Charter.

The ARC discussed the Charter at each meeting during 2024 and endorsed the Audit and Risk Committee Charter 2025-2027 at its meeting on 3 February 2025.

RESOLUTION 2025/13

Moved: Cr Gavan Holt

Seconded: Cr Nick Angelo

That Council approve the Audit and Risk Committee Charter 2025 – 2027 (v12).

CARRIED

10.2 APPOINTMENT OF AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE CHAIR

File Number: FOL/20/612
Author: Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate
Authoriser: Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer
Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council, on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee, appoint Marg Allan as Chairperson of the Loddon Shire Council Audit and Risk Committee for the period 1 March 2025 to 28 February 2026.

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 appoints an Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Chairperson annually, with the most recent appointment being made by Council at its meeting in February 2024.

BACKGROUND

Clause 5.4 (Chairperson) of the Audit and Risk Committee Charter v11 states:

- *The Chairperson of the Committee must be an independent member*
- *Council will appoint the Chairperson of the Committee on recommendation of the Committee*
- *If the Chairperson is unable to attend a meeting, the members in attendance at the meeting will appoint a Chairperson by resolution for that meeting from among the attending members.*

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

At its meeting held 3 February 2025, the ARC resolved 'That a recommendation be presented to Council to appoint Marg Allan as Chairperson of the Loddon Shire Audit and Risk Committee for the period 1 March 2025 to 28 February 2026'.

Marg Allan has been a member of Council's Audit and Risk Committee since 26 July 2023 and holds a number of qualifications including in Business, Public Policy and Governance. Marg has held a number of executive level roles at Victorian Councils, a regional director role in State Government and has undertaken Local Government Minister appointed Municipal Monitor roles across the state. Marg is also a current board member of the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission.

COST/BENEFITS

The benefit of an annual process to select an ARC Chairperson (including election if required) is providing all Committee Members with the opportunity to lead the Committee in its work for and on behalf of Council.

Clause 5.2.5 of the Audit and Risk Committee Charter states that remuneration is paid to each independent member as approved by Council from time to time. At its meeting on 26 March 2024, Council resolved to increase the quarterly remuneration paid to independent members of the Audit and Risk Committee to \$570, effective the quarter commencing 1 May 2024, and maintain payment of an extra quarter remuneration to the Chairperson during a one year term.

RISK ANALYSIS

An annual appointment of Chairperson provides all members with the opportunity to lead the Committee.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Members of the Committee nominate the Chairperson of the ARC and recommend appointment to Council.

RESOLUTION 2025/14

Moved: Cr Gavan Holt
Seconded: Cr David Weaver

That Council, on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee, appoint Marg Allan as Chairperson of the Loddon Shire Council Audit and Risk Committee for the period 1 March 2025 to 28 February 2026.

CARRIED

10.3 ANNUAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM AND FLOOD PROGRAM QUARTERLY REPORT UPDATE

File Number:

Author: David Southcombe, Manager Assets and Infrastructure

Authoriser: Steven Phillips, Director Operations

Attachments:

1. Annual Infrastructure Program 2024-2025
2. October 2022 Flood Program Update

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. note the progress of the Annual Infrastructure Program 2024-2025 and Flood Restoration Program as at December 2024
2. approves the reallocation of funds within the 2024-2025 Annual Infrastructure Program as shown in Table 1.

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

The Annual Infrastructure Program was presented at the June 2024 Council Meeting.

The last quarterly report on progress of the Annual Infrastructure Program and Flood Restoration Program was provided at the November 2024 meeting.

At the January 2025 Council Meeting a report was made to update allocations within the Annual Infrastructure Program and create a new emulsion tank project.

BACKGROUND

This report is produced quarterly and is provided to Council for the purpose of reporting progress of the Annual Infrastructure Program and the Flood Restoration Program. The information in this report covers progress up until the end of December 2024.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Amendment to Allocations

At the January 2025 Council Meeting a paper was presented to update annual infrastructure program allocations, allowing for the creation of new gravel resheet projects and a new emulsion tank project. The reallocation of funding within the annual infrastructure program included reallocating unspent funds from the 2019-2024 Roads to Recovery Program. However, Council has not yet received formal approval to reallocate the remaining balance from this program. Without the formal approval, the gravel resheet projects cannot proceed. However, the emulsion tank project is a high priority and can be funded through a revised reallocation of existing infrastructure program funds, as shown in Table 1. The gravel resheet projects will be reconsidered if approval to reallocate the 2019-2024 Roads to Recovery funds is obtained or if additional savings within the annual infrastructure program are identified.

Table 1 – Current and Proposed Allocations

Current Allocations	Amount
TSD0152 - North and Southey Street Drainage	\$352,000
LBCC0415 - Sidney Watsons Road Bridge Replacement	\$300,000
BLD0097 – Wedderburn (Korong) Historical Society	\$113,750
Total	\$765,750
Proposed Allocations	Amount
TSD0152 - North and Southey Street Drainage	\$140,000
LBCC0415 - Sidney Watsons Road Bridge Replacement	\$225,750
BLD0097 – Wedderburn (Korong) Historical Society	\$0
BLD0137 Works Depot Emulsion Tank Project (New project)	\$400,000
Total	\$765,750

This reallocation includes withdrawing funding for project BLD0097 – Wedderburn (Korong) Historical Society. This project was created at the 2021-22 Annual Infrastructure Program and involves installing a toilet at the historical society building in Wedderburn. This project was put on hold while the option of relocating the Historical Society to the old Wedderburn Police Station is explored. Given this, it is proposed to relocate this funding and should the need arise, this or any new projects for the Wedderburn (Korong) Historical Society can be considered as part of future annual infrastructure programs.

Annual Infrastructure Program

There are currently 72 individual projects, including carryovers from previous financial years that form part of the Annual Infrastructure Program 2024-2025. 21 projects have been completed and 44 projects are in progress.

Table 1 provides a progress summary for the end of the first quarter of the 2024–2025 financial year of the Annual Infrastructure Program.

Table 1: Annual Infrastructure Program progress

Program Category	Total number of projects listed in Annual Infrastructure Program 2024 - 2025	Total number of projects carried over from previous year(s)	Total number of projects	Total number of projects completed to date	Total number of projects in progress	% Complete
Local Roads Gravel Resheet	6	0	6	4	1	67%
Local Roads Gravel Shoulder Resheet	3	0	3	3	0	100%
Local Road Construction - Asset Preservation	2	1	3	0	1	0%
Local Road Construction – Amenity	0	1	1	1	0	100%
Local Road Construction - Safety	0	1	1	0	1	0%
Township Street Improvement	5	4	9	4	5	44%
Urban Drainage	1	0	1	0	1	0%
Local Bridges and Culverts	4	0	4	2	2	50%
Reseals	28	0	28	0	28	0%
Parks and Gardens	3	0	3	1	0	33%
Buildings	2	6	8	4	2	50%
Major Projects	1	4	5	2	3	40%
TOTAL	55	17	72	21	44	29%

As at the end of quarter two, 21 projects or 29% of projects are completed with 44 out of the remaining 51 projects in progress. Attachment 1 contains a detailed list of projects that forms the Annual Infrastructure Program.

Flood Restoration Program – October 2022 event

All packages of work to rectify the damages as a result of this flood required submission to the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) for assessment by 31 March 2024. These submissions have all been completed. The Flood Restoration program works must be completed by June 2026.

Inspections following the October 2022 flood event initially identified approximately 1,200 items of damage. This data is continually being assessed as it is processed into DRFA claimable packages of work. Any double ups, errors, ineligible work and non-Council assets are being removed. This process will be ongoing until all items are submitted and reviewed for eligibility through the DRFA process. The remaining list totals 675 items of damage which Council officers will continue to work with the DRFA to progress their rectification.

Table 2 provides a summary of progress for the Flood Restoration Program.

Table 2: Flood Restoration Program summary

Treatment category	Total number of damages recorded	Total number of damages rectified	Number of damage rectifications currently seeking approval	Number of damage rectifications in progress	% Complete
Unsealed pavements	453	81	372	1	18%
Sealed pavements	174	23	108	43	13%
Clearing and earthworks	3	0	2	0	0%
Road furniture and delineation	1	1	0	0	100%
Drainage structures	44	13	31	12	30%
Total	675	118	513	56	17%

Attachment 2 summarises the reimbursement claims for works so far (October 2022 to 31 December 2024), covering event response and restoration of essential public assets. To date Council has expended \$4,837,597 with \$4,687,174 reimbursed through the DRFA program and \$14,911 of the claim value rejected. Two additional claims were made during the second quarter of 2024-2025. As works progress further claims for reimbursement will be added.

There are several non-essential public assets that were damaged during the October Flood event, these have been summarised in Table 3. The approximate value of the works listed in Table 3 is \$2.8 Million.

Table 3 Insurance items

Item	Asset Owner	Activity	Comments
Newbridge Recreation Reserve	DEECA	100%	Complete.
Bridgewater Caravan Park	Council	100%	Complete
Durham Ox Hall	DEECA	100%	Complete.
Fentons Creek Hall	DEECA	100%	Complete.
Miscellaneous assets	Council	100%	Donaldson Park fencing has been replaced.

Council has also received \$1.5 million State Government funding to assist with flood restoration through the Council Flood Support Fund. Several projects have been funded by this program, Table 4 summarises their progress.

Table 4 Council Flood Support Fund projects

Item	Activity
Emergency repairs to Skinners Flat Reservoir	Completed – 100%
Lake Lyndger outflow doors	Completed – 100%
Various Flood Mitigation Works	Completed – 100%
Hydrographical survey of the Loddon River at Bridgewater	Completed – 100%
Bridgewater boat ramp repairs	Completed – 100%
Bridgewater Swimming Hole pontoon	Completed – 100%
Skinners Flat Reservoir Flood damage remediation detailed engineering design	In Progress – 35%
Repairs to Loddon River, river side walking tracks	Completed – 100%
Additional Staff to support Flood Restoration Program:	In Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director Operations, part funded existing role for 21 months - Program Manager - Asset Accountant - Project Manager/Engineer (1) - Project Manager/Engineer (2) - Program Works Coordinator - Road Network Auditor - Design Engineer as required 	

Flood Restoration Program – December 2023 event

Inspections following the December 2023 flood event initially identified approximately 199 items of damage. This data is still being reviewed for accuracy and will be updated as Council officers review each damage as part of scoping process before submitting to the DRFA for funding. Table 5 provides a summary of progress for the December 2023 Flood Restoration Program.

Table 5: December 2023 Flood Restoration Program summary

Treatment category	Total number of damages recorded	Total number of damages rectified	Number of damage rectifications currently seeking approval	Number of damage rectifications in progress	% Complete
Unsealed pavements	67	0	67	0	0%
Sealed pavements	17	0	17	0	0%
Clearing and earthworks	0	0	0	0	0%
Concrete	1	0	1	0	0%
Road furniture and delineation	0	0	0	0	0%
Drainage structures	11	0	11	0	0%
Others	1	0	1	0	0%
Total	97	0	97	0	0%

COST/BENEFITS

The Annual Infrastructure Program expenditure in the second quarter of the 2024–2025 financial year was \$2,261,682 for a total expenditure of \$5,111,721 in the 2024-2025 financial year. Attachment 1 lists all projects in the program which have an allocated budget of \$13,223,504 for the 2023-2024 financial year.

RISK ANALYSIS

There is still some uncertainty around the methodology adopted by the DRFA for the funding of gravel road resheets. Currently the DRFA is assessing each damage scope of works on a case by case basis to make an evaluation of the claimable amount of funding. Council will be required to fund the gap between the cost of undertaking a 100mm gravel resheet versus the amount funded by the DRFA. Given the significant financial risk of this funding gap, this risk is being managed and reported regularly to Council's independent Audit & Risk Committee.

Long term rectification of the Skinners Flat Reservoir wall and spillway is not eligible for funding under the DRFA. This work is also likely to be beyond the financial capacity of Council without significant financial assistance from State and/or Federal governments. Council has approval to utilise funding from the LGV Council Flood Support Fund for detailed design and costing. In the interim, a range of risk management and monitoring processes are in place to minimise risk.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The report has been completed in consultation with officers from the Works Department, Community Support Department, Manager Governance, Finance Department and other external government agencies.

RESOLUTION 2025/15

Moved: Cr Miki Wilson
Seconded: Cr David Weaver

That Council:

1. note the progress of the Annual Infrastructure Program 2024-2025 and Flood Restoration Program as at December 2024
2. approves the reallocation of funds within the 2024-2025 Annual Infrastructure Program as shown in Table 1.

CARRIED

10.4 FINANCE REPORT FOR THE QUARTER ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2024

File Number: FOL/22/4399

Author: Deanne Caserta, Manager Financial Services

Authoriser: Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate

Attachments: 1. Finance Report - Quarter to 31 December 2024

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

1. receives and notes the Finance Report for the quarter ending 31 December 2024
2. approves budget revisions included in the report for internal reporting purposes only
3. approves the supplementary valuations of rateable and non-rateable properties in respect of the 2024/25 financial year, as returned by the Shire Valuer, LG Valuations Pty Ltd, and endorses them being incorporated into the Register of Rateable and Non-Rateable Properties and Rate Book for 2024/25
4. notes that a revised budget under s97 (3) of the *Local Government Act 2020* is not required.

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

The last quarterly report presented was for the September 2024 quarter at the December 2024 Council Meeting. The 2023/24 full financial result was presented to Council at the October 2024 Council Briefing and the Annual Report 2023/24 was adopted at the October Council Meeting including the audited Financial and Performance Statements.

BACKGROUND

Section 97 of the Local Government Act 2020 outlines that a quarterly budget report is to be presented:

- 1) *As soon as practicable after the end of each quarter of the financial year, the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a quarterly budget report is presented to the Council at a Council meeting which is open to the public.*
- 2) *A quarterly budget report must include—*
 - (a) *a comparison of the actual and budgeted results to date; and*
 - (b) *an explanation of any material variations; and*
 - (c) *any other matters prescribed by the regulations.*
- 3) *In addition, the second quarterly report of a financial year must include a statement by the Chief Executive Officer as to whether a revised budget is, or may be, required.*

The Finance Report for the quarter ended 31 December 2024 includes standard quarterly information about budget variations, cash, investments, interest, debtors and creditors. It provides a comparison of year-to-date actual results to year-to-date budget (by dollars and percentage) and total revised budget (by percentage), where the data is available.

The information is in the format provided in the adopted 2024/25 Budget, and includes operating results, capital expenditure and funding sources. The report also includes community planning program financials.

This Finance Report also includes reporting on supplementary valuations. Each year Council makes a number of additions, subtractions and alterations to the valuations contained in the annual rate book. These changes arise from various sources including:

- splitting of parcels into new rateable assessments
- development of vacant or unproductive land (urban and rural)
- consolidation of separate rateable assessments into one assessment
- re-assessment of property valuations arising from objections to the initial valuation
- additions and cancellations of licences (grazing and water frontages)
- change of use
- covenant on Title
- area amendment
- change of Australian Valuation Property Classification Code (AVPCC)
- supplementary valuation corrections.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Opening Statement

During the first half of 2024/25, work has been underway with further implementation and system process improvements needed after the initial 'go live' of Altitude in March 2024. This is expected to provide a solid financial base before preparation of the first full budget process to be completed within this system.

Due to the timing of this report and with only partial work underway within the timing allocation of the projects, no Year to Date (YTD) variance reporting is included within this report.

There has also been a slight change to the reports to show the YTD expenditure percentage against the full revised budget.

Budgeted Surplus

Council's budgeted cash surplus has remained steady at **\$5.56M**.

Income Statement (revenue)

Council's YTD operating revenue received is **\$28.3M** or 50% of total revised budget.

Rates are raised within the first quarter of the year, and a significant amount of income is recognised for Council at that time. However, payment of rates debtors is split throughout the year which can be tracked through debtors in the Balance Sheet. There also remains significant income to be received for flood restoration and Roads to Recovery programs during the remaining half of the year which will bring the actuals closer to 100% received.

Income Statement (expenditure)

Council's YTD operating expenditure is **\$13.19M** or 21% of the total revised budget. Most of the expenditure for the quarter has occurred within salaries and related costs along with materials and services. Flood restoration projects are the key areas in which Council are significantly underspent against budget. Of the \$21.34M revised budget, only \$0.6M has been spent. Further significant flood restoration works are expected to commence as a result of recently awarded contracts and with further applications for restoration works pending. The end of financial year position for flood restoration works will be significant but there will be a significant carry over of income and expense into the next financial year.

Capital Works

The revised budget for capital works of \$15.5M is 30% (**\$4.65M**) expended in financial terms for the current financial year.

Projects progressed within the first half of the financial year include:

- flood mitigation works at both Boort and Pyramid Hill
- Pyramid Hill streetscape
- Pyramid Hill Community Centre
- various bridge and culvert works
- various building asset management programmed works.

At the end of the quarter, the vast majority of capital projects were under contract.

Balance Sheet

Council has a cash total of **\$35.6M**. Total debtors at the end of December 2024 are \$12.54M, including \$11.71M in rates and Fire Services Property Levy (September 2024 were \$13.98M). Sundry debtors total \$1M with invoices outstanding for 90 or more days relating to community wellbeing debtors and local community groups totalling approximately \$71,000.

COST/BENEFITS

The benefit to Council and the community is that accurate and regular financial reporting is disclosed, along with an accurate representation of property valuations being reflected in Council's rating system and the distribution of rate notices for the year 2024/25.

Provision of financial reports on at least a quarterly basis is a requirement of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

RISK ANALYSIS

Quarterly Finance reports are part of a 'monitoring progress' control measure against Council's identified Strategic Risk regarding Financial Sustainability:

'Council's heavy reliance on recurrent grants and rating income, and Council's limited ability to raise additional revenue, may result in loss of services to the community and Council being financially unsustainable over time.'

The provision of regular and accurate finance reports to Council minimises the risk of Council not delivering projects, as identified in the Council Plan, within the approved budget. Council's risk exposure is also increased if the rating system does not reflect the valuation changes associated with supplementary valuations as Council will not be aware of the changes, which can alter the rate revenue in the current year and in future rating years.

During October 2022 Loddon Shire experienced significant flooding which continues to have the impact of operational staff being diverted to support flood recovery. This reallocation of human resources limits delivery of programmed services and infrastructure. There is potential that this could continue over the coming years as infrastructure is rebuilt, creating variances between budget and delivery.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Consultation occurs regularly with respective managers in understanding budget responsibilities and keeping within budgetary constraints.

Consultation with ratepayers and authorities that act on behalf of ratepayers occurs when a change to a property is required or occurs by virtue of a sale.

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.

RESOLUTION 2025/16

Moved: Cr Nick Angelo

Seconded: Cr Gavan Holt

That Council

1. receives and notes the Finance Report for the quarter ending 31 December 2024
2. approves budget revisions included in the report for internal reporting purposes only
3. approves the supplementary valuations of rateable and non-rateable properties in respect of the 2024/25 financial year, as returned by the Shire Valuer, LG Valuations Pty Ltd, and endorses them being incorporated into the Register of Rateable and Non-Rateable Properties and Rate Book for 2024/25
4. notes that a revised budget under s97 (3) of the *Local Government Act 2020* is not required.

CARRIED

10.5 VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY

File Number:**Author:** Bradd Worrell, Tourism and Marketing Coordinator**Authoriser:** David Stretch, Acting Director Community Wellbeing**Attachments:** 1. Visitor Economy Strategy - Final

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse and adopt the Loddon Shire Visitor Economy Strategy (2025-2030)

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

In September 2024 consultant Sparrowly Group and representatives from the Tourism and Economic Development team provided a project update as part of the September Council Forum. This process contributed towards the first draft of the Visitor Economy Strategy.

In November 2024 at the Council Briefing, the Tourism and Economic Development team presented a full draft of the Visitor Economy Strategy, including a time of discussion. This process included an opportunity for subsequent councillor feedback.

BACKGROUND

In January 2024 the Tourism and Economic Development team commenced planning to review and update the Loddon Shire Economic Development and Tourism Strategy (2019-2024).

It was determined that economic development and tourism strategic objectives would be presented in two separate (but connected) Council strategies, to ensure focus and clarity for Council, as well as greater relevance and therefore maximised benefit to business, industry and community.

In March 2024 economic and demographic specialist REMPLAN was engaged to lead the generation of the Loddon Shire Economic Development Strategy (2025-2029), which was adopted by Council in August 2024.

In July 2024 consultant Sparrowly Group was appointed to support the delivery of the Loddon Shire Visitor Economy Strategy, with project completion expected for early 2025.

In September 2024 Sparrowly Group provided a project update as part of the September Council Forum, on the path towards the first draft of the Visitor Economy Strategy.

In November 2024 at the Council Briefing, the full draft of the Visitor Economy Strategy was presented to Council for comment. Councillors provided verbal and written feedback at that time, and during December 2024, to the project team.

In January 2025 the Draft Strategy was advertised and exhibited for the public (13 – 31 January 2025) and further feedback was received by the project team. Feedback from Councillors and the community has resulted in changes to the document with an increased focus on Loddon Shire's existing strength and natural advantages such as food and beverage production as well as natural assets. Details of the consultation outcomes is included in the consultation section of this report.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

The final Loddon Shire Visitor Economy Strategy (2025-2030) is attached to this report, which includes:

- Executive Summary
- Setting the Scene (Context setting)
- Where we are now (Tourism landscape)
- Where do we want to be (Vision)
- Strategic Framework
- Action Plan
- Appendices

COST/BENEFITS

This project is funded by Council's operational budget, to support relevant sections of the Council Plan:

- 3.1 We will promote our unique tourism opportunities and support our local tourism industry
 - to increase visitation to our area.
- 3.1.1 Increase the volume and value of tourism visitation
- 3.2 We will support established businesses and seek to attract new businesses to grow our
 - local economy.
- 3.2.1 Provide support for economic development opportunities in the Shire
- 3.2.2 Increase the volume and value of the local economy

The Tourism sector in Loddon Shire contributes \$35M per year (direct and value-added) to the Loddon Shire economy and creates 110 FTE jobs.*

59.8% of business and consumer spending in Loddon Shire originates from people and businesses who live outside the Shire.**

Anecdotally, tourism and visitor spending is critical to the viability of many local retail businesses.

Retail viability under-pins the function, performance and aesthetic of Loddon's townships – as not only retail centres but social and community hubs.

The importance of tourism and support for the visitor economy is therefore critically important. Further, in showcasing a location's uniqueness to the Visitor, tourism gives local communities reason to reflect and value the place where they live. This civic pride is not only inherently healthy, it is attractive to visitors and promotes Loddon Shire as 'a great place to live'.

Tourism destination management, facilitated by a Visitor Economy Strategy, will promote and celebrate what makes Loddon Shire special – our community, our industry, our environment and overall liveability.

RISK ANALYSIS

A failure to invest in tourism and the visitor economy will result in a loss of potential revenue for local businesses, less business diversification and less business resilience.

In addition to missed social and cultural benefits, environmental and heritage preservation would be increasingly at risk without sustained investment and support to the visitor economy.

A Visitor Economy Strategy supports future Government funding applications, regional tourism programs and investment.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

To ensure that both tourism businesses and community members within the Loddon Shire contributed to this project, a series of consultation and engagement opportunities were provided in both the initial development stages of the strategy, and after the full draft was delivered.

First round (initial stages of project)

A: Community Consultation Sessions

Sessions were delivered across the region to provide the opportunity for the community to share insights on the strength of the local region, challenges to tourism, and prioritise opportunities for the future.

Key tourism and progress groups as well as community members attended these sessions and provided valuable input. These sessions were held in the following locations:

- Wedderburn Community House, 26 August (5.30-7pm)
- Boort Resource Centre, 27 August (5.30-7pm)
- Inglewood Neighbourhood House, 28 August (5.30-7pm)

Over 35 Loddon Shire residents (including progress, tourism and development committee members representing their membership) attended the Community Drop In Consultation Sessions throughout the municipality. This comprised of both tourism development and progress group members, and other local residents interested in supporting the visitor economy.

B: Online Surveys

The project invited community members to share their valuable perspectives, expectations, and perceptions of tourism in the Loddon Valley via a short online survey (5-10 minutes).

C: Internal consultation

Consultation took place with internal stakeholders, including Loddon Leaders, Councillors, Tourism and Economic Development colleagues and Visitor Information Centre volunteers.

D: External

Key stakeholders across the broader region have also have been engaged as part of this project including Bendigo Regional Tourism, City of Greater Bendigo, Djaara and Visit Victoria.

Second round (Full draft of Strategy)

A. Councillor Consultation

Once the Full Draft of the Visitor Economy Strategy was received, councillors were provided an opportunity to provide feedback as part of the Councillor Briefing session (26 November 2024). Councillor feedback was provided on the day, with additional time for comment provided until 5 December, 2024. Two Councillors provided additional written feedback during this period.

B. Public Exhibition

The Draft Visitor Economy Strategy was subsequently distributed for public comment in January 2025 (13 to 31 January) via the Connect@Loddon platform, social media, email campaigns, targeted emails and phone calls. A total of 8 responses were received from the public, during this period.

A summary of the key themes which informed the work, between draft and final stage, is outlined below:

- Face-to-face Visitor Servicing is valued by visitors and the local community, and especially important in Loddon Shire with towns and areas of interest spread across vast distances.
- Be more targeted in our promotion – identify key audiences and design messages accordingly and specific to that cohort.
- Alignment with the Bendigo and Region UNESCO Gastronomy designation is important, not only for artisanal producers and retailers, but it underlines Loddon's strength in agriculture and 'who we are' as a community and region.
- Loddon's history and goldfields heritage is valued by locals who are keen to see that remain a real focus of tourism product and experience development. The value of the UNESCO World Heritage bid is not yet understood.
- While promoting 'Loddon' as a visitor destination makes sense, our townships are distinct and provide diverse and individual experiences. More focus could be given to supporting and growing local tourism, progress and community groups.

RESOLUTION 2025/17

Moved: Cr Miki Wilson

Seconded: Cr David Weaver

That Council endorse and adopt the content of the Loddon Shire Visitor Economy Strategy (2025-2030) and authorise the CEO to make administrative and formatting changes in consultation with Councillors.

CARRIED

11 INFORMATION REPORTS

11.1 LIBRARY SERVICES QUARTERLY ACTIVITY REPORT

File Number:

Author: Renae Colls, Executive Assistant

Authoriser: Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer

Attachments: 1. Loddon Q2 Activity Report October – December 2024

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Loddon Shire Council Library Services Quarterly Activity Report for October to December 2024.

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 is the second report for the 2024/25 financial year, which reviews the period 1 October 2024 to 31 December 2024.

BACKGROUND

The North Central Goldfields Regional Library Corporation (trading as Goldfields Library Corporation) consists of members from the City of Greater Bendigo, and the Shires of Loddon, Macedon Ranges and Mount Alexander.

In Loddon Shire, 15% of the population are library members and there are six library agencies located in Boort, Dingee, Inglewood, Pyramid Hill, Tarnagulla and Wedderburn.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

This report seeks to inform Council of the activities undertaken by the Goldfields Library Corporation (GLC) for October to December 2024. The attached Loddon Q2 Activity Report October – December 2024 highlights key activities, programs, customer visits, library borrowings and more.

COST/BENEFITS

Loddon Shire Council's financial contribution for quarter two 2024/25 was \$54,113.50 exc GST.

The annual contribution is based on a rate per head of population which is \$27.94 and is included in the adopted annual budget. The 2023/2024 service review and VAGO audits demonstrate that the NCGRLC is amongst the most efficient library services in Victoria according to metrics including visitation, membership, collection, staffing and cost.

For the past three years, the Victorian Government has not increased their Public Libraries funding in line with CPI which is placing financial strain on the service and transferring the cost to local government who have increased their contribution in line with the State Government rate cap.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The Goldfields Library Board is responsible for providing the best library service outcomes for the communities of the four member Councils. The Board comprises two representatives from each of the four member Councils and meet at least once every three months. The Corporation is managed by a Chief Executive Officer appointed by the Board.

Following the October Local Government elections, each member Council appointed one new Councillor representative to the Library Board. As a result of these appointments, the current board members are as follows:

- Cr Damien Hurrell- City of Greater Bendigo
- Stacy Williams – City of Greater Bendigo
- Cr Nick Angelo – Loddon Shire Council
- Lincoln Fitzgerald – Loddon Shire Council
- Cr Dominic Bonanno – Macedon Ranges Shire Council
- Maria Weiss - Macedon Ranges Shire Council
- Cr Rosie Annear – Mount Alexander Shire Council
- Lisa Knight – Mount Alexander Shire Council
- Mark Hands – North Central Goldfields Regional Library CEO

The Loddon Shire CEO, Lincoln Fitzgerald is also on the Board's Finance Committee.

RESOLUTION 2025/18

Moved: Cr Nick Angelo

Seconded: Cr David Weaver

That Council receive and note the Loddon Shire Council Library Services Quarterly Activity Report for October to December 2024.

CARRIED

11.2 LOCAL LAWS AND PLANNING COMPLIANCE QUARTERLEY ACTIVITY REPORT**File Number:** FOL/19/115192**Author:** Jordan Fraser, Community Compliance Coordinator**Authoriser:** David Price, Manager Community Services**Attachments:** Nil**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receive and note the Local Laws and Planning Compliance Quarterly Activity 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.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

This is the second report for the 2024-2025 financial year, summarising the animal control, local laws, planning compliance and enforcement actions taken within the Community Services Department for the period 1 October to 31 December 2024. It provides Council with a high-level summary for the purpose of monitoring performance.

BACKGROUND

Council is responsible for a range of advisory, compliance and enforcement services to the community and maintains powers under various legislation and Council's local law to enable effective animal management, planning enforcement and local law compliance for community and township amenity.

Key areas of focus in respect to compliance action include:

- management of local law provisions, particularly with respect to unsightly properties
- effective animal management
- control of roadside activities, occupation and utilisation
- investigating planning scheme breaches and enforce planning permit conditions

ISSUES/DISCUSSIONAdministrative

Table 1 provides a summary of administrative functions undertaken.

(*) Council provides a 24 hour emergency call out service in respect to domestic animal management, local law compliance and enforcement, and livestock wandering on council roads.

Table 1: Administrative and fire prevention activities

Quarter 2 (1 October 2024 – 31 December 2024)				
Activity	After hours call outs (*)	Littering or illegal rubbish dumping	Local law permits issued	Fire Prevention Notices Issued
No. actions	2	1	6	147

Unightly properties

A summary of activity statistics and locations that are the subject of unsightly property compliance under Council's local law is provided in Table 2. Identified unsightly properties are assessed and prioritised for compliance action.

Table 2: Summary of unsightly properties activities

Quarter 2 (1 October to 31 December 2024)																
Town/Locality	Eddington	Rheola	Newbridge	Tarnagulla	Inglewood	Bridgewater	Wedderburn	Korong Vale	Borong	Boort	Pyramid Hill	Mitiamo	Dingee	Serpentine	Rural/Other	Total
No. identified from previous report period	1	0	1	3	3	0	7	2	1	2	1	0	1	1	0	23
No. resolved during quarter	0	0	1	1	1	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	8
New action commenced	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
No. currently pursuing	1	0	0	2	3	0	4	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	17
Progress Activities																
Site meeting / discussion held	0	0	1	2	10	0	3	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	20
Letter to comply issued	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Occupier has commenced clean-up work	1	0	0	1	2	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	9
Notice to comply issued	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contractor engaged for clean-up work	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Animal management

Table 3 provides a high level summary of animal management activities.

Table 3: Summary of animal management activities

Quarter 2 (1 October 2024 – 31 December 2024)						
Activity	Wandering livestock	Trespassing livestock	Dog attack	Domestic animal at large	Distribution of cat traps	General complaints / other
No. of actions	39	18	1	3	4	0

Table 4 summarises animal management activities that resulted in impoundments, encompassing both domestic animals and livestock.

Table 4: Impoundment activities

Quarter 2 (1 October 2024 – 31 December 2024)				
Animal type	Impoundments	Returned to owners	Animals rehoused	Animals disposed
Livestock	39	14	25	0
Dogs	0	2	18	0
Cats	0	0	16	0
Feral Animals	1	0	0	1
Total	40	16	59	1

Planning Compliance and Enforcement

Table 5 provides a summary of planning compliance and enforcement activities undertaken.

Table 5: Planning compliance and enforcement activities

Quarter 2 (1 October 2024 – 31 December 2024)						
Type	No. identified from previous report period	New action	PIN's	Warning Letter	No. resolved during quarter	No. currently pursuing
Land use in contravention of planning scheme without a permit	2	0	0	0	0	2
Native vegetation removal without a permit	3	0	0	0	0	3
Breach of planning permit	1	0	0	0	0	1
Dog breeding / animal keeping	1	0	0	0	0	1
Land used as a store without planning permit	2	0	0	0	0	2
Occupation of a site without a planning permit	2	0	0	0	0	2
Total	11	0	0	0	0	11

Throughout all of the above compliance activities tabled, the Community Services Department aims to work proactively with property and animal owners to achieve a positive outcome within the legislative framework set by the State Government and Council's Local Law.

COST/BENEFITS

The expenditure for the second quarter of 2024-2025 financial year for the local laws and compliance activities contained within this report is within the expected budget expenditure for this period.

As the identified properties are escalated through the compliance process, costs associated with legal proceedings may also be incurred by Council.

The resulting cost to Council can be significant in terms of officer(s) time; particularly undertaking various site inspections across Loddon Shire Council. Direct monetary costs can be significant should a matter progress to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) or the Magistrates' Court. Therefore, it is of benefit to Council and the community that the Community Services Department work through these matters in a timely and respectful manner to reach an appropriate outcome wherever possible.

Benefits derived from investing in local law and planning compliance activities include:

- improving and maintaining township amenity
- ensuring that appropriate development occurs
- maintaining and improving public safety
- encouraging good domestic animal and livestock management
- reduced risks.

RISK ANALYSIS

Failure of Council to adequately manage the provisions associated with the Loddon Planning Scheme, *Planning and Environment Act 1987* or other applicable legislation including the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, *Impounding of Livestock Act 1994* or Council's Community Local Law is considered to pose the following risks:

- barrier to development and associated economic growth within Loddon Shire
- inappropriate development
- Council's reputation as a regulatory authority
- public safety that endangers life and property
- adverse amenity of our townships
- increased hazards.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Land and animal owners subject to compliance and enforcement actions under the abovementioned legislation and local law are consulted with at each stage of the process.

RESOLUTION 2025/19

Moved: Cr Gavan Holt

Seconded: Cr Miki Wilson

That Council receive and note the Local Laws and Planning Compliance Quarterly Activity Report.

CARRIED

11.3 ROAD MANAGEMENT PLAN DEFECT RECTIFICATION COMPLIANCE REPORT

File Number: 14/01/022
Author: Daniel Lloyd, Manager Works
Authoriser: Steven Phillips, Director Operations
Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the road management plan defect rectification compliance report.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

This is the second report for the 2024-2025 financial year, summarising road network defect rectification compliance against requirements specified within the Loddon Shire Road Management Plan (RMP).

BACKGROUND

As a matter of good governance this report is produced quarterly and provides statistical data with respect to the Organisation's performance in managing the road network. Performance is measured through a comparison of actual defect rectification timeframes against requirements specified in the RMP. This is the second report of the financial year for the period 1 October to 31 December 2024.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Table 1 below provides a summary of the compliance against the schedule of road and street inspection regimes as set in the RMP.

Table 1: Inspection summary report

Quarter 2 (01/10/2024 – 31/12/2024)						
Work Group	Number of scheduled inspections	Number completed by due date	Number completed after due date	Number not completed	Compliance	Number of Defects Raised
Loddon Goldfields	51	47	4	0	92.2%	484
Loddon Plains	52	52	0	0	100.0%	387
Total	103	99	4	0	96.1%	871

During the second quarter of 2024-2025 financial year, 96.1% of the programmed inspections were completed according to the schedule. This is 3.9% below the target of 100% set in the RMP.

Table 2 below provides a summary of compliance of actual response times for rectification works of defects as detailed in the defect intervention levels and response timetables of the RMP. The defects have been identified through programmed inspections, customer requests and works crews identifying and rectifying defects as they find them, known as ad hoc work actions.

Table 2: Defect rectification summary report

Quarter 2 (01/10/2024 – 31/12/2024)								
	Number of Defects				Compliant with RMP			
Work Group	Ad hoc	Requests	Defects from inspections	Total	Yes	No	Not complete	%
Loddon Goldfields	6	15	361	382	371	11	0	97.1%
Loddon Plains	4	6	549	559	558	1	0	99.8%
Shire Wide	1	4	380	385	381	4	0	99.0%
Townscape Services	23	5	49	77	70	7	0	90.9%
Total	34	30	1339	1403	1380	23	0	98.4%

During the second quarter of 2024-2025 financial year, 98.3% of all date imposed defects were completed before their due date. This is 1.6% below the target of 100% set in the RMP. There were 23 defects completed after their due date.

Table 3 provides a summary of performance against the unsealed road maintenance grading program, defects as identified through programed inspections, customer requests and works crews identifying and rectifying defects as they find them, known as ad hoc work actions. The maintenance grading program identifies each road segment by its road hierarchy and grading frequency as detailed in the RMP.

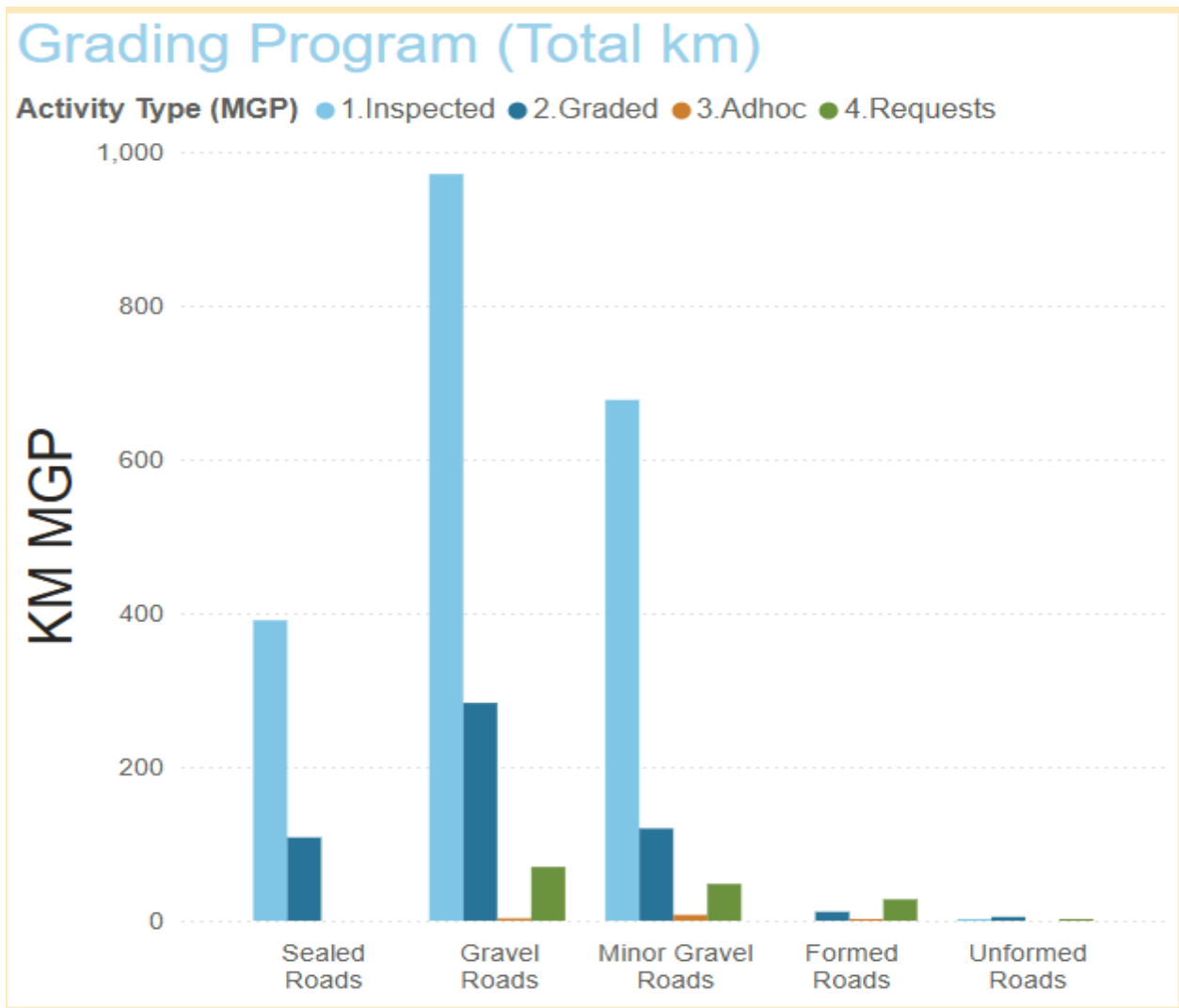
Table 3: Maintenance grading program

Quarter 2 (01/10/2024 – 31/12/2024)											
	Number of Grading Work Actions					Compliant within scheduled timeframes					
Work Group	Roads Graded	Defects	Requests	Ad hoc	Total	Yes	No	Not completed	%	KM Graded	KM Inspected
Loddon Goldfields	85	4	32	10	131	117	14	0	89.3%	346	1,411
Loddon Plains	98	0	22	6	126	126	0	0	100.0%	342	629
Shire Wide	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	100.0%	0.0	0.0
Total	183	5	54	16	258	244	14	0	94.6%	688	2,040

The data in Table 3 indicates that 258 grading work actions were completed for the second quarter of 2024-2025 financial year. There is no set level of compliance for the maintenance grading program in the RMP.

A graph has been provided in Chart 1 indicating a breakdown of the grading work actions, by road hierarchy and kilometres. The sealed roads section relates to shoulder grading work actions on the Sealed Road network. The gravel road section includes all grading work actions on Gravel Collector and Gravel Access roads. The Gravel Minor and the Formed Road sections relate directly to Council's road hierarchy and show all grading work action on roads within that hierarchy.

Chart 1: Maintenance Grading Program



COST/BENEFITS

The year to date actual expenditure to the end of second quarter of 2024-2025 financial year of the Local Road Maintenance Program is \$4,721,699. The expenditure for the second quarter was \$2,099,390

The benefits to the community in complying with the RMP are that it ensures a safe road network.

RISK ANALYSIS

Repairing 100% of all date imposed defects before their due date limits Council’s liability for any claims for damage made against Council.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

No internal or external consultation is required in the formation of this report.

RESOLUTION 2025/20

Moved: Cr Gavan Holt

Seconded: Cr David Weaver

That Council receive and note the road management plan defect rectification compliance report.

CARRIED

11.4 PUBLIC HEALTH QUARTERLY ACTIVITY REPORT

File Number: FOL/19/115173

Author: David Price, Manager Community Services

Authoriser: David Stretch, Acting Director Community Wellbeing

Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Public Health Quarterly Activity Report.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

This is the second report for the 2024-2025 financial year which reviews the period 1 October to 31 December 2024, summarising public health activities within the Community Services Department. It provides Council with a high level summary for the purpose of monitoring performance.

BACKGROUND

Loddon Shire Council is responsible for the administration and enforcement of several Acts including the:

- Food Act 1984
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Residential Tenancies Act 1997
- Environment Protection Act 2017
- Tobacco Act 1987.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Staff Resources

Council has interim arrangements in place for continued service delivery as the staff recruitment process continues for the appointment of an Environmental Health Officer. Throughout this period, Council has continued to provide a service level that is in response to community demand. Regular contact with business operators, community groups, home owners and developers has been maintained within the available resources. Activities undertaken include inspecting registered premises, issuing septic tank permits and complaint investigations.

Registered Premises

Council undertakes annual inspections of premises that are registered under the Food Act, Public Health and Wellbeing Act and Residential Tenancies Act. Inspections are also undertaken of public swimming pools and of properties that must satisfy Tobacco Act requirements. Table 1 provides a summary of the inspections undertaken during the reporting period.

Table 1: Registered premises inspections

Quarter 2 – 1 October to 31 December 2024		
Governing Legislation	Inspection Outcome	Number of inspections
Food Premises	Compliant*	17
	Major Non Compliance	1
Temporary Food Stall	Compliant*	2
Health Premises	Compliant*	5
	Major Non Compliance	0
Caravan Parks	Compliant*	5
	Major Non Compliance	0
Total number of inspections for reporting period		30

* Compliant includes sites that were fully compliant and some sites that required minor actions to become compliant

Council officers liaise further with non-compliant premises to address identified issues.

Tobacco Act

Council is funded to undertake Tobacco Act inspections throughout the year. Most inspections are carried out in conjunction with food premises inspections, however other properties also include non-smoking public outdoor venues such as kindergartens, schools, playgrounds and sporting reserves. Table 2 summaries the Tobacco Act activities undertaken during the reporting period.

Table 2: Tobacco Act inspections

Quarter 2 – 1 October to 31 December 2024	
Inspection Type	Number
Tobacco Retailer (including vending machine)	1
Tobacco – Indoor Dining and drinking area	4
Tobacco – Outdoor Dining and drinking area	1
Outdoors & Other locations	0
Total number of inspections	6

Septic Systems

Table 3 summarises septic system permit applications processed during the reporting period.

Table 3: Septic system permits

Quarter 2 – 1 October to 31 December 2024	
Permit Type	Number
Installation or alteration	6
Certificate to use	8
Total number of permits for reporting period	14

Public Health Complaints

Council is responsible to investigate nuisance complaints under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act. Complaints of nuisance can be complex and time consuming. Table 6 summarises the complaints during the reporting period.

Table 6: Public health complaints

Quarter 2 – 1 October to 31 December 2024				
Nature of complaint	Number carried over from previous reporting period	Number received	Number resolved	Number currently pursuing resolution
Food Premises	0	0	0	0
Wastewater	2	0	1	1
Other	0	1	0	1
Total	2	1	1	2

COST/BENEFITS

The expenditure for the second quarter of the 2024-2025 financial year for the activities contained within this report is within the expected budget expenditure for this period.

Administration of the Acts that Council has responsibility for includes significant fieldwork, with staff regularly in the field engaging with business operators, developers, residents and ratepayers. This investment increases significantly when compliance issues are identified within registered premises and when complaints are received.

The benefits that stem from this investment include:

- improved public health and safety within registered premises
- improved local amenity
- full implementation by Council of our responsibilities under the various Acts and regulations.

RISK ANALYSIS

Failure of Council to adequately administer and enforce the provisions of the applicable legislation would pose the following possible risks:

- the spread of infectious diseases through the community including food poisoning
- a barrier to the new developments and economic growth within Council
- Council's reputation as a regulatory authority
- contamination of the local environment
- failure to meet obligations set within the relevant legislation.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The Environmental Health Officer regularly engages with business operators, developers, residents and ratepayers during the administration of the various Acts which can range from annual assessments/inspections to the provision of advice when processing septic tank permits.

Any business operator, developer, residents or ratepayer that is subject to enforcement action is regularly consulted with during the enforcement process.

RESOLUTION 2025/21

Moved: Cr David Weaver

Seconded: Cr Nick Angelo

That Council receive and note the Public Health Quarterly Activity Report.

CARRIED

11.5 BUILDING SERVICES QUARTERLY ACTIVITY REPORT

File Number: 13/06/001, 13/08/001, 13/08/003
Author: Glenn Harvey, Manager Development and Compliance
Authoriser: Steven Phillips, Director Operations
Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Quarterly Building Services Activity Report.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council is provided with information quarterly summarising building services activities relating to permits, certificates and statutory enforcement activity undertaken within the Development & Compliance Department. This report covers the second quarter of this financial year.

BACKGROUND

Council provides a range of building services through the Municipal Building Surveyor including the following:

- issuing relevant permits and certificates
- issuing report and consent determinations on matters not complying with the Building regulations
- building advisory and information services including legal point of discharge requests
- consultancy and building control functions
- administrative functions prescribed by the Building Act and Regulations including keeping records relating to the activity of private building surveyors issuing permits within Loddon Shire
- regulatory enforcement of relevant Acts.

The number of building permits, occupancy permits and final inspections is a basic indicator of building development and investment within the Loddon Shire Council area.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Throughout the second quarter of the 2024-2025 financial year, items of significance relating to the activity of Council's building services include:

- swimming pool registration requirements and registration of the Complying Barrier Certificates.
- issuing of demolition consents and variations to sitting under Part 5 of the Building Regulations.
- follow up on enforcement activities including following up Court and Building Appeals items
- ongoing implementation and improvement of software system changes.

Building permits

Table 1 provides the number and total value of building permits issued for the last two quarters of 2023-2024 and the first two quarter of 2024-2025. There is variation in the value of permits throughout any given financial year and this is attributable to the scale and cost of individual projects.

Table 1: Summary of new building permits issued

	Quarter 3 2023-24 (01/01/2024 – 31/03/2024)	Quarter 4 2023-24 (01/04/2024 – 30/06/2024)	Quarter 1 2023-24 (01/07/2024 – 30/09/2024)	Quarter 2 2024-25 (01/10/2024 – 31/12/2024)
No. of new Permits	30	31	43	32
Value of Works	\$14,035,638	\$5,859,102	\$7,252,713	\$8,848,017

Table 2 provides a summary of the number of final inspections and certificates of occupancy issued for building permits for each quarter.

Table 2: Summary of final inspections and occupancy permits

	Quarter 3 2023-24 (01/01/2024 – 31/03/2024)	Quarter 4 2023-24 (01/04/2024 – 30/06/2024)	Quarter 1 2023-24 (01/07/2024 – 30/09/2024)	Quarter 2 2024-25 (01/10/2024 – 31/12/2024)
Certificates of final inspection	23	37	34	26
Occupancy Permits	11	8	16	8

Council Building Services staff continue to work proactively with Council issued permit holders, sending follow up letters to notify building owners approximately two months before their building permits are due to lapse. This allows owners to arrange a final inspection/occupancy permit or apply for an extension of time for their building permit.

Statutory enforcement

Table 3 provides a high level summary of statutory enforcement activities undertaken by the Municipal Building Surveyor.

Table 3: Summary of statutory enforcement activities

Type	Actions incomplete from previous report period	New action started	Total actions	Building notice issued	Building order issued	Appeal to Building Appeals Board	Legal action / solicitors letter started this quarter	Legal action ongoing	No. resolved during this quarter
Building damaged by fire	4	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0
Works required to make building safe (including pools)	24	0	24	3	4	0	0	0	0
Carrying out building works without a permit	23	0	23	18	2	0	0	0	0
Works not in accordance with building permit	2	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Illegal occupation of non-habitable building	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Building with non-complying essential safety measures	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

Whilst new issues requiring enforcement are identified regularly, it is also noted there are some longstanding enforcement activities that are ongoing. The time spent on individual items can be significant particularly when it requires escalation to Court. Council officers work to try to resolve matters without legal intervention.

COST/BENEFITS

The expenditure for the second quarter of the 2024-2025 financial year for building services activities was \$23,133.

The cost to Council of enforcement activity can be quite significant, particularly in terms of Council officers' time. This in turn impacts on other activities such as the timeframe for building permits. Direct monetary costs significantly escalate if matters progress to a Magistrate's hearing or the Municipal Building Surveyor needs to arrange for the work associated with any order to be completed by Council. As such, the Municipal Building Surveyor, together with other Development & Compliance Department staff endeavour to work through enforcement matters in a manner that engages with property owners/occupiers to have required works completed.

RISK ANALYSIS

There are risks associated with all building and development works. As such, it is vital that Building legislation, standards and controls are administered effectively. Failure of Council to adequately enforce the provisions of applicable legislation poses the following possible risks:

- unsafe development and building works which may affect the safety of property owners, occupiers and the general public within Loddon Shire
- Council's reputation as a regulatory authority
- Council being held liable for failure to act in a matter which results in damage to other property, or injury or death to a person
- failure to meet statutory obligations set within relevant legislation.

As part of the risk management process when undertaking enforcement work, the Municipal Building Surveyor makes reference to the building enforcement intervention filter criteria, developed by the Victorian Municipal Building Surveyors Group and which forms part of the procedures covered in Loddon Shire Council's Building Control Policy.

A significant risk within Loddon Shire is unregulated developments, in particular small allotments which are sold to purchasers that have expectations of using it for a cheap home or "weekender". Often the landholder is unable or unwilling to meet the regulatory requirements to safely utilise the site as they desire. This has led to a number of undesirable and potentially unsafe outcomes of unregulated developments. This remains a matter of concern for Council's Municipal Building Surveyor and Local Laws & Planning Compliance Officer.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The Municipal Building Surveyor regularly engages with business operators, developers, residents and ratepayers during the administration of the various Acts, which can range from essential safety measures assessments/inspections to the provision of advice relating to the need for building permits and other functions administered by the Municipal Building Surveyor under the Building Act and Building Regulations. Any business operator, developer, resident or ratepayer that is subject to enforcement action is regularly consulted with during the enforcement process to give them the opportunity to avoid the escalation of enforcement action.

RESOLUTION 2025/22

Moved: Cr Gavan Holt

Seconded: Cr Miki Wilson

That Council receive and note the Quarterly Building Services Activity Report.

CARRIED

11.6 STATUTORY PLANNING QUARTERLY ACTIVITY REPORT

File Number:**Author:** Louise Johnston, Statutory Planning Coordinator**Authoriser:** Glenn Harvey, Manager Development and Compliance**Attachments:**

1. Applications processed in the quarter
2. Applications completed in the quarter

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Quarterly Statutory Planning Permit Activity Report for October to December 2024.

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 is the second report for the 2024- 2025 financial year summarising planning application activities undertaken within the Development and Compliance Department.

BACKGROUND

This report covers the planning permit activity for the previous quarter and provides Council with a high level summary for the purpose of monitoring performance within this area.

Council maintains powers under the *Planning & Environment Act 1987*, which are delegated to Planning Officers. Applications made under these powers include but are not limited to the following:

- consideration of a planning application for a new use/development
- consideration of an amendment to an existing planning permit
- secondary consent applications (minor changes)
- extensions of time to existing planning permits.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Planning permit activities

A detailed summary of the status of planning permits can be found in Attachments 1 and 2.

Timeframes

The *Planning & Environment Act 1987* requires a 60 day timeframe for the processing of planning applications by councils. The Act details how the 60 days is to be measured following the acceptance of a planning permit application.

Table 1 provides a summary of the average timeframe in which the Development and Compliance Department assessed and issued Planning Permits during the first quarter of the 2024-2025 financial year and compares these against the small to medium regional council's average.

Table 1: Average timeframes for decisions

Month	Quarter 2 of the 2024-2025 financial year			
	Average gross days to determine	Median processing days to determine	Completed within 60 days	Rural average completed within 60 days
October	34.7	32.5	80%	71.7%
November	44.2	33	80%	69.7%
December	62	45.5	100%	67%
Total for the Quarter	48.8	35	87%	69.6%

During the second quarter of the 2024-2025 financial year 87% of all Planning Permit applications were assessed and issued within the timeframes as set in the *Planning & Environment Act 1987*. This was 17.4% above the rural average. In addition, the median processing days for Council to make a determination on applications is 35 days, well below the rural median of 57 days, a good result for Council and its planning team.

COST/BENEFITS

The expenditure for the second quarter of 2024-2025 financial year of the statutory planning activities contained within this report is \$63,806.

Benefits derived from investing in the planning process managed by the Development and Compliance Department include:

- well managed and appropriate development
- well informed community members who understand the value of planning within local government
- applications processed in a timely manner
- correct implementation of regulations and standards

RISK ANALYSIS

Failure of Council to adequately implement the planning scheme poses the following risks:

- inappropriate development which could endanger life and property
- Council's reputation as a Responsible Authority
- breaches of the *Planning & Environment Act 1987* requiring compliance action.

Insufficient investment in resources in the Development and Compliance Department may result in extended timeframes for the processing of applications.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The Planning Staff consult with a number of stakeholders on a regular basis including:

- applicants
- surrounding land owners
- regulatory authorities
- other Loddon Shire Council departments
- other municipalities

RESOLUTION 2025/23

Moved: Cr Nick Angelo

Seconded: Cr Gavan Holt

That Council receive and note the Quarterly Statutory Planning Permit Activity Report for October to December 2024.

CARRIED

12 COMPLIANCE REPORTS

12.1 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE UPDATE

File Number:

Author: Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate

Authoriser: Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer

Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the summary of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting – 3 February 2025.

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 most recently received an update on a Loddon Shire Council Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) meeting at its December 2024 meeting.

BACKGROUND

Council's ARC has been established in accordance with section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, to support it in discharging its oversight responsibilities related to financial and performance reporting, risk management, fraud prevention systems and control, maintenance of a sound internal control environment, assurance activities including internal and external audit, and Council's performance with regard to compliance with its policies and legislative and regulatory requirements.

This report is a requirement of the ARC Charter which states:

'A summary of each ARC meeting will be reported at the next meeting of the Council.'

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Below is a summary of the ARC meeting held on Monday, 3 February 2025 in the Loddon Shire Council Chambers.

Member attendees:

Rod Poxon – Independent Member (Chair)
Rachelle Tippett – Independent Member
Marg Allan – Independent Member
Cr Gavan Holt – Councillor Representative

Officer attendees:

Lincoln Fitzgerald – Chief Executive Officer
Michelle Stedman – Director Corporate
Lisa Clue – Manager Governance
Michelle Hargreaves – Administration Officer Governance
Deanne Caserta – Manager Financial Services – for Agenda items 7.1 to 7.3

Other attendees:

Brad Ead – AFS & Associates Pty Ltd

Mahesh Silva and Shivram Goel – RSD Audit – for Agenda item 7.1

Apologies:

Amber Currie – Independent Member

The following matters were considered by the ARC at the meeting:

Report	Discussion points
Status of actions generated during ARC meetings	The ARC acknowledged and noted all resolutions arising from the December 2024 Audit and Risk Committee meeting decision and compliance reports have been acted upon; and four actions requested by the Audit and Risk Committee during the course of meetings are deemed complete. Three actions are progressing and three actions have not yet started or are not yet due.
Report on new and emerging risks and fraud related incidents	The ARC received the CEO's report on new and emerging risks and fraud related incidents which also reported on matters relating to information security, financial risk, reputational risk, flood events and compliance matters.
Strategic Internal Audit Program (SIAP) status update and Internal Audit scope review	The ARC received an update on the delivery status of the Strategic Internal Audit Program and considered and subsequently approved a proposed scope and approach for an internal audit of Fleet Management.
ARC Charter Review	The ARC finalised its review of the Loddon Shire Council Audit and Risk Committee Charter, endorsing a draft of the document ahead of its presentation to Council to be considered for approval.
Progress on open audit recommendations	The ARC received a report on the status of actions from past internal audits, endorsing three audit actions deemed complete and noting progress by management on 30 remaining audit recommendations. Officers will investigate and report to the ARC at its next meeting on options to enhance system generated reports on internal audit actions.
Appointment of Chairperson – 2025/26	The CEO chaired this part of the ARC meeting and invited nominations for the position of Chairperson for the coming year. With one nomination received, being Marg Allan, the Committee resolved to recommend to Council the appointment of Marg Allan as Chairperson of the ARC for the period 28 February 2025 to 28 February 2026.
External Audit Strategy Memorandum Review	The ARC noted a presentation from representatives from RSD Audit on the strategy of the audit for 2024/25.

Report	Discussion points
Management Responses to Audit Findings	The ARC received and noted a report on two actions outstanding in relation to external audit findings, which relate to Disaster Recovery Plan testing and Grants Assessment Training.
Review reimbursement of Councillors expenses	The ARC received and noted a report on Councillor expenses, including allowances and reimbursements; and comparative quarterly data.
Quarterly review of finance reports and performance reports	The ARC received, and subsequently noted the Finance Report for the quarter ending 31 December 2024.
Council's Overall Risk Profile	The ARC received and noted a report summarising risks contained within operational and strategic risk registers with further detail provided on those risks within the register rated High or Very High.
Review of Internal Control Environment	The ARC received and noted a report on the status of documents specifically referenced in the ARC Charter, along with target review dates; programs to test compliance with systems and controls, and significant changes to key systems.
Review of Internal Control Environment Against Council's Governing Principles	The ARC noted a report on plans and strategies in place which align and support the overarching and supporting governance principles contained within the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> and timelines for their review.
Review of Council's Insurance Programme	The ARC noted a report on Council's insurance programme including the renewal process, variance in premiums, active claims, and learnings from claims.
Business Continuity Framework and Testing Regime	The ARC noted a report on Council's Business Continuity Framework and Testing Regime, including alignment with Council's Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP) currently under review.
Fraud Prevention Systems and Controls Review	The ARC noted a report on the status of Council's fraud prevention systems and controls.
Industry update – regulatory and integrity agency findings relevant to Local Government	The ARC received and noted an update on examinations and investigations undertaken by regulatory and integrity agencies, and their findings, relevant to the local government sector.
Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Register	The ARC reviewed and subsequently noted its annual review of Council's Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Register.
Matters referred by Councillor Representative	The ARC discussed and noted matters raised by Cr Holt regarding options to enhance connections between Council and the ARC.
General Business	The ARC was provided a further update on a compliance matter discussed earlier in the meeting, and a staff update from the CEO.

COST/BENEFITS

This report provides Council with oversight of the work of the ARC, providing a level of surety that services are undertaken efficiently and effectively.

There are no costs associated with development of this report, however there are modest costs associated with the Audit and Risk Committee and undertaking regular internal and external auditing of Council activities. These costs are provided for in Council's approved budget.

RISK ANALYSIS

The ARC has risk management oversight for the Council and monitors, reviews, endorses and advises Council on matters as set out in the Charter.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Officers involved in the conduct of the ARC meeting were consulted in the preparation of this report.

RESOLUTION 2025/24

Moved: Cr Miki Wilson

Seconded: Cr David Weaver

That Council receives and notes the summary of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting – 3 February 2025.

CARRIED

13 URGENT BUSINESS

Nil

14 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Nil

NEXT MEETING

The next Meeting of Council will be held on 25 March 2025 at Wedderburn commencing at 3.00pm.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 4.25 pm.

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

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CHAIRPERSON