



Notice is given that a Meeting of Council will be held on:

Date: Tuesday, 25 February 2025
Time: 3.00pm
Location: Loddon Shire Council Chambers, Wedderburn

AGENDA

Council Meeting

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OPENING COMMENT

This meeting is being recorded and audio streamed via the Council website and Facebook.

1 OPENING AFFIRMATION

“We, the Councillors of the Loddon Shire, declare that we will carry out our duties in the best interests of the community, and through collective leadership will maintain the highest standards of good governance.”

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

“The Loddon Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we are gathered and pays its respects to their Elders both past and present.”

3 APOLOGIES**4 DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

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.

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	1. Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer 2. David Stretch, Acting Director Community Wellbeing 3. Steven Phillips, Director Operations 4. Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate 5. Lisa Clue, Manager Governance David Southcombe, Manager Assets and Infrastructure – item 3 below
Item(s) discussed.	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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer 2. David Stretch, Acting Director Community Wellbeing 3. Steven Phillips, Director Operations 4. Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate 5. Lisa Clue, Manager Governance 6. Deanne Caserta, Manager Financial Services – Item 1 below <p>Peter Walsh MP, Member for Murray Plains and Andrew Mole, Advisor – Agenda item 2 below</p> <p>David Southcombe, Manager Assets and Infrastructure and Daniel Lloyd, Manager Works – item 3 below</p> <p>Tim Markwell, Doug Winzar and Adam Place, Falcon Metals Ltd – item 4 below</p>
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

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).

Resolutions acted upon since the January 2025 Council meeting

Meeting	Officer/Director	Section	Subject
Council 26/11/2024	Colls, Renae Fitzgerald, Lincoln	Decision Reports	Newbridge Water and Sewerage Update
RESOLUTION 2024/148			
Moved: Cr Nick Angelo Seconded: Cr Gavan Holt			
That Council			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. acknowledge that following the 2024 Council elections there has been minimal time to brief the incoming Council on this item; and 2. defer consideration of this matter until March 2025. 			
CARRIED			
09 Dec 2024 3:35pm Colls, Renae			
In accordance with the resolution, a report will be provided to Council at a meeting in March 2025.			

Meeting	Officer/Director	Section	Subject
Council 28/01/2025	Clue, Lisa Stedman, Michelle	Decision Reports	Governance Rules Review
RESOLUTION 2025/5			
Moved: Cr Miki Wilson Seconded: Cr David Weaver			
That Council:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acknowledge that due to the scheduling of mandatory Councillor training and the Christmas/New Year holiday period, there has been limited time to brief incoming Councillors on this matter or discuss in detail other elements of the Governance Rules, and 2. Defer consideration of this matter until April 2025. 			
CARRIED			
14 Feb 2025 3:07pm Clue, Lisa			
A report is being prepared to commence review of the Governance Rules at the March Council Forum. It is anticipated the review will be complete by April 2025 in accordance with the resolution.			

Resolutions acted upon since the January 2025 Council meeting

Meeting	Officer/Director	Section	Subject
Council 28/01/2025	Southcombe, David Phillips, Steven	Decision Reports	Annual Infrastructure Program 2024-25 - Amendment to Allocations
RESOLUTION 2025/6			
Moved: Cr Gavan Holt			
Seconded: Cr Nick Angelo			
That Council approves the reallocation of funds within the 2024-2025 Annual Infrastructure Program as shown in Table 1.			
CARRIED			
13 Feb 2025 11:42am Southcombe, David - Completion			
Completed by Southcombe, David (action officer) on 13 February 2025 at 11:42:24 AM - Recommendation has been acted on. Further update to be provided at the February Council meeting.			

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 will present a verbal report at the meeting.

Loddon Campaspe Councils	
Loddon Healthy Minds Network	
Murray River Group of Councils	
North Central Local Learning and Employment Network	
Rural Councils Victoria	
Section 65 Community Asset Committees:	
East Loddon Community Centre	
Pyramid Hill Memorial Hall	
Other Council activities	
Date	Activity

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 Angelo

Australia Day Committee	
North Central Goldfields Regional Library	
Other Council activities	
Date	Activity

Cr Holt

Audit and Risk Committee	
Municipal Association of Victoria	
Section 65 Community Asset Committees:	
Donaldson Park	
Hard Hill Tourist Reserve	
Wedderburn Community Centre	
Wedderburn Engine Park and Market Square Reserve	
Wedderburn Mechanics and Literary Institute Hall	
Other Council activities	
Date	Activity

Cr Weaver

Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee	
Rail Freight Alliance	
Section 65 Community Asset Committees:	
Boort Aerodrome	
Boort Memorial Hall	
Boort Park	
Korong Vale Mechanics Hall	
Korong Vale Sports Centre	
Little Lake Boort	
Yando Public Hall	
Other Council activities	
Date	Activity

Cr Wilson

Calder Highway Improvement Committee	
Section 65 Community Asset Committees:	
Campbells Forest Hall	
Inglewood Community Sports Centre	
Inglewood Community Elderly Persons Units	
Inglewood Town Hall Hub	
Other Council activities	
Date	Activity

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.

LODDON SHIRE COUNCIL

AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE CHARTER 2025-2027



DOCUMENT INFORMATION

DOCUMENT TYPE:	Controlled document
DOCUMENT STATUS:	Approved
POLICY OWNER POSITION:	Director Corporate
INTERNAL COMMITTEE ENDORSEMENT:	Audit and Risk Committee
APPROVED BY:	Council
DATE ADOPTED:	[Date adopted by Council]
VERSION NUMBER:	12
REVIEW DATE:	
DATE RESCINDED:	
RELATED STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS, POLICIES OR PROCEDURES:	Risk Management Framework Risk Management Policy Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy
RELATED LEGISLATION:	Local Government Act 2020
EVIDENCE OF APPROVAL:	

Signed by Chief Executive Officer

FILE LOCATION: K:\EXECUTIVE\Strategies policies and procedures\Strategies - adopted PDF and Word\STR Audit and Risk Committee Charter v12docx.docx

Strategic documents are amended from time to time, therefore you should not rely on a printed copy being the current version. Please consult the Loddon Shire website to ensure that the version you are using is up to date.

This document is available in alternative formats (e.g. larger font) if requested.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Loddon Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land comprising the Loddon Shire Council area. Council would like to pay its respect to Elders both past and present.

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1 PURPOSE

Loddon Shire Council has established an Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) pursuant to Section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) to support Council 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. It acts in this capacity by monitoring, reviewing, endorsing and advising on the above matters as set out in this Charter. This Charter has been developed in accordance with Section 54 of the Act.

The appointment of independent members to the Committee as outlined in this Charter enables the Committee to provide advice to Council on matters related to its responsibilities based on broader skills and experience than might otherwise be the case and in so doing bring additional benefits to Council.

The Committee has no executive authority and no delegated financial responsibilities and is therefore independent of management.

2 BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The ARC is funded from the operational budget.

3 RISK ANALYSIS

The risks of implementing this charter are low and outweighed by the benefits of compliance and good governance.

4 AUTHORITY

The ARC is directly responsible to Council for discharging its responsibilities as set out in this Charter. The Committee has no delegated authority from Council unless specifically provided by Council from time to time and any such authority shall be temporary and may only relate to specific matters as directed by Council.

The Committee has the authority to:

- 4.1 endorse key documents and reports that must be approved by Council, including annual financial reports, annual performance statements, new or revised policies and other documents that assist in maintaining a strong internal control environment
- 4.2 approve internal and external audit plans, including internal audit plans with an outlook of greater than one year
- 4.3 provide advice and make recommendations to Council on matters within its areas of responsibility
- 4.4 retain counsel of relevant independent experts where it considers that is necessary in order to execute its responsibilities, subject to prior agreement with the Chief Executive Officer
- 4.5 seek any relevant information it requires from Council, Council Officers and external parties
- 4.6 meet with Council Officers, internal and external auditors and other parties as required to discharge its responsibilities.

The Committee will, through the Chief Executive Officer, have access to appropriate management support to enable it to discharge its responsibilities effectively.

5 MEMBERSHIP AND TENURE

5.1 Composition

The ARC will consist of five members appointed by Council, four of whom must be independent members. Terms of appointment are set out in **APPENDIX 1**.

5.2 Independent Members

5.2.1 Independent members:

- a) will be appointed by the Council, for four-year terms following a recruitment process undertaken by a recruitment panel consisting:
 - i. ARC Chairperson
 - ii. Mayor
 - iii. Chief Executive Officer
 - iv. Director Corporate
- b) may be reappointed for two additional four-year terms subject to satisfactory performance, that is, a maximum of twelve years
- c) must collectively have expertise in financial management and reporting, risk management and public sector management experience.
- d) term of appointment will be set so that as far as possible only one member retires at a time.
- e) remuneration will be paid as approved by Council from time to time
- f) must not be employees of Loddon Shire Council.

5.2.2 Council will indemnify and keep indemnified each independent member of the ARC against all actions or claims whether arising during or after their term of appointment in respect of anything necessarily done or reasonably done or omitted to be done in good faith:

- a) in the performance of a duty or function or the exercise of any matter under the Act, regulations, a local law or this Charter
- b) in the reasonable belief that the action or omission was in the performance of a duty or a function or the exercise of a matter under the Act, regulations, a local law or this Charter

5.2.3 A letter of offer must be signed by the Council and co-signed by the Independent Member acknowledging acceptance of the role. The letter must describe any remuneration arrangements and be signed prior to appointment to the Committee.

5.2.4 Upon appointment to the ARC, independent members are required to complete an online ARC Induction module.

5.3 Councillor Members

5.3.1 A substantive and alternate Councillor member will be appointed to the ARC by Council at its meeting to elect the Mayor held annually

5.3.2 Should the appointed Councillor member be unable to attend an ARC meeting, the alternate member must attend, either on a meeting by meeting basis or for the entire year

5.3.3 Councillors appointed to the ARC for the first time will also be invited to complete the online ARC Induction module.

5.4 Chairperson

- 5.4.1 The Chairperson of the ARC must be an independent member
- 5.4.2 Council will appoint the Chairperson of the ARC following a recommendation of the ARC.
- 5.4.3 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.

5.5 Role of the Chairperson

The Chairperson of the ARC will:

- 5.5.1 in consultation with the CEO (or delegate), set the matters to be included on the agenda for each meeting of the ARC.
- 5.5.2 chair all meetings of the ARC
- 5.5.3 be responsible for ensuring that meetings are conducted in an appropriate manner
- 5.5.4 participate in the appointment of Council's internal audit service provider
- 5.5.5 participate in the recruitment of new independent members
- 5.5.6 approve the summary of ARC meetings to be provided to Council
- 5.5.7 lead the annual evaluation of the ARC's performance and report on the outcomes to Council through the CEO.

5.6 Obligations

The ARC members are expected to be aware of their legislative obligations including those listed in **APPENDIX 2** to this Charter.

5.7 Remuneration

Councillors appointed to the ARC by Council will not receive additional remuneration for this role.

Remuneration will be paid to each ARC Independent Member in accordance with Section 53(6) of the Act.

6 MEETINGS

6.1 General

- 6.1.1 The ARC will meet at least four times a year, with authority to convene additional meetings, as circumstances require.
- 6.1.2 A schedule of meetings will be developed annually and agreed by members.
- 6.1.3 All ARC members are expected to attend each meeting in person, although in special circumstances members can attend through electronic means
- 6.1.4 Relevant staff involved or responsible for the latest Internal Audit review and its recommendation/s will attend ARC meetings for the presentation of the Internal Audit, as appropriate.
- 6.1.5 ARC members and the internal and external auditors may request the Chairperson to convene additional meetings to address unexpected matters.
- 6.1.6 Meeting agendas and appropriate briefing materials will be compiled and provided to members at least one week before each meeting.
- 6.1.7 Minutes will be prepared for all meetings.
- 6.1.8 A report on the status of actions generated during meetings will be presented to each Committee meeting.

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6.2 Quorum for Meetings

A quorum shall comprise three independent members.

6.3 Preparation for Meeting

The ARC members are obligated to prepare for participation in meetings. If a Committee member is attending via video/audio conferencing they will retain full voting rights.

6.4 Required attendance

The Chief Executive Officer and/or the Director Corporate (or their delegate in exceptional circumstances) will attend all meetings in full, except when relevant confidential matters are being considered.

7 RESPONSIBILITIES

The ARC's responsibilities are documented below and in the Audit and Risk Committee Annual Work Plan (**APPENDIX 3**). This Plan includes frequency and timing of reports to the Committee. The Committee's Charter reference numbers appear in the Annual Work Plan illustrating the relationship between the Work Plan and Charter. The Annual Work Plan is supported by the Internal Control Environment Plan (**APPENDIX 4**).

7.1 Financial and Performance Reporting

- 7.1.1 Keep abreast of significant changes in accounting standards and reporting
- 7.1.2 Review changes to the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) / Local Government Model Sector Performance Report (LGMSPR)
- 7.1.3 Review outcomes of the external audits with management and the auditors
- 7.1.4 Review and recommend to Council the adoption of the annual financial statements and annual performance statements
- 7.1.5 Review quarterly finance report (including Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flow and Statement of Capital Works) – September, December and March quarters
- 7.1.6 Review reimbursement of Councillor expenses in accordance with section 40(2) of the Act.

7.2 Internal Control Environment

- 7.2.1 Review the adequacy and effectiveness of key policies, systems and controls for providing a sound internal control environment
- 7.2.2 Determine whether systems and controls are reviewed regularly and updated where required (Refer to the Work Plan and Audit and Risk Committee Internal Control Environment (ICE) Plan in **APPENDIX 4**)
- 7.2.3 Review significant changes to key systems and consider impact of changes on Council's risk profile
- 7.2.4 Ensure a program is in place to test compliance with systems and controls

7.3 Risk Management

- 7.3.1 Review the effectiveness of Council's Risk Management Framework
- 7.3.2 Review Council's Risk Appetite Statement and the degree of alignment with Council's risk profile
- 7.3.3 Review and approve strategic risks to Council's operations, including their likelihood and consequence of occurring and risk mitigation strategy
- 7.3.4 Review and endorse Council's overall risk profile, including very high and high rated risks and risk treatment plans in place and new and emerging risks
- 7.3.5 Review operational risks
- 7.3.6 Review the insurance programme annually
- 7.3.7 Review the Business Continuity Framework and testing regime

7.4 Fraud Prevention Systems and Controls

- 7.4.1 Review Council's Fraud Prevention policies and controls
- 7.4.2 Review Council's fraud control plan and awareness programme
- 7.4.3 Review reports on any instances of unethical behaviour, fraud or corruption
- 7.4.4 Review actions taken to report any incidents of fraudulent or corrupt behaviour to the appropriate integrity bodies

7.5 Internal Audit

- 7.5.1 Review and approve the strategic and internal audit plans
- 7.5.2 Review status of delivery of strategic internal audit plan
- 7.5.3 Review scopes of proposed internal audit reviews
- 7.5.4 Review reports on internal audit reviews
- 7.5.5 Meet with internal auditor in the absence of management
- 7.5.6 Review progress by management on open audit recommendations
- 7.5.7 Review the effectiveness of the internal audit function
- 7.5.8 Recommend to Council, if necessary, the termination of the internal audit contractor.

7.6 External Audit

- 7.6.1 Review and approve the external audit scope and plan
- 7.6.2 Discuss any audit issues encountered during the course of the interim audit
- 7.6.3 Discuss any audit issues encountered during the course of the final audit
- 7.6.4 Ensure that management responses to any audit findings are appropriate and timely
- 7.6.5 Review the effectiveness of the external audit function
- 7.6.6 Review other VAGO performance audit reports for impacts on Council
- 7.6.7 Meet with the external auditor in the absence of management.

7.7 Compliance Management

- 7.7.1 Review systems and processes to monitor compliance with legislation and regulations and management follow up of instances of non-compliance
- 7.7.2 Obtain briefings on any significant compliance matters
- 7.7.3 Review Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Register
- 7.7.4 Consider reports on investigations undertaken by regulatory and integrity agencies relevant to Council (whether related to investigations at Loddon Shire Council or other councils/organisations), such as the Ombudsman, IBAC, Local Government Inspectorate, etc. and monitor Council's responses

8 PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

The ARC shall undertake a process to evaluate its performance annually in accordance with the survey in **APPENDIX 5** and report the outcomes of the evaluation process to Council through the Chief Executive Officer, including recommendations for any opportunities for improvement.

The evaluation will include feedback from both Committee members and senior officers who have regular interactions with the Committee.

9 REPORTING TO COUNCIL

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

A biannual audit and risk report including the activities of the Committee and its findings and recommendations, will be tabled at the next meeting of Council in accordance with section 54(5) of the Act.

10 REVIEW OF THE CHARTER

The ARC shall review and assess the adequacy of this Charter every two years or earlier if necessary and submit a revised document to Council for approval.

11 COSTING AND FUNDING OF ACTIONS

Table 1: Audit and Risk Committee Costs

Action	Cost of project	Total expected funding	Net cost to Council	Proposed funding source	Completion timeframe
Maintain appropriately skilled and experienced independent members	Remuneration as approved by Council Travel reimbursement as approved by Council Catering costs Training costs	0	As approved in budget	Not applicable	Annually
Engage internal auditors	4 year contract	0	As approved in budget	Not applicable	Annually

APPENDIX 1: TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

1. CHAIRPERSON

The current Chairperson is Rod Poxon.

The term of the current Chairperson is to 28 February 2025.

2. COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Details of membership and tenure are set out below:

Table 2: Details of membership

Member	Appointment date	End of current term
Rachelle Tippett	1 May 2021	30 April 2025
Rod Poxon	1 May 2015	30 April 2026
Marg Allan	26 July 2023	30 June 2027
Amber Currie	1 May 2024	30 April 2028

**These are four-year terms to ensure only one committee member term expires per year.*

3. COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

The current Councillor representatives are:

- **Substantive:** Councillor Gavan Holt for the period 19 November 2024 to the date of the special meeting of Council to elect the Mayor in 2025.
- **Alternate:** Councillor Miki Wilson for the period 19 November 2024 to the date of the special meeting of Council to elect the Mayor in 2025.

4. REVIEW

Appendix 1 is updated in approximately April each year following the confirmation by Council of:

- the appointment of the Chairperson and
- the appointment of the new independent member and
- appointment of the substantive and alternate Councillor.

APPENDIX 2: COMMITTEE MEMBER LEGISLATIVE OBLIGATIONS

Guidance to Members

LGA Section	LGA Requirement
Misuse of Position	
123(1)	A Committee member must not intentionally misuse their position to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Gain or attempt to gain, directly or indirectly, an advantage for themselves or for any other person; or b) Cause, or attempt to cause, detriment to the Council or another person
123(3)	Circumstances involving misuse of a position by a member of the Committee include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Making improper use of information acquired as a result of being a member of the Committee; or b) Disclosing information that is confidential information; or c) Directing or improperly influencing, or seeking to direct or improperly influence, a member of Council staff; or d) Exercising or performing, or purporting to exercise or perform, a power, duty or function that the person is not authorised to exercise or perform; or e) Using public funds or resources in a manner that is improper or unauthorised; or f) Participating in a decision on a matter in which the member has a conflict of interest.
Confidential Information	
125	A member of the Committee must not intentionally or recklessly disclose information that the member knows, or should reasonably know, is confidential information. There are some exemptions to this requirement, the key one being that if the information disclosed by the member has been determined by Council to be publicly available.
Conflicts of Interest	
126	A member of the Committee has a conflict of interest if the member has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A general conflict of interest as described in Section 127; or b) A material conflict of interest as described in Section 128.
127	A member of the Committee has a general conflict of interest in a matter if an impartial, fair-minded person would consider that the members private interests could result in that member acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty as a member of the Committee.
128	A member of the Committee has a material conflict of interest in a matter if an affected person would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter.
<p>Please Note</p> <p><i>The above guidance is not verbatim from the Act and does not include all details as explained in Part 6, Division 1 of the Act. For a full understanding of the requirements of the Act in relation to the matters summarised above, members are expected to make themselves fully aware of the requirements of the Act.</i></p>	

APPENDIX 3: 2025-26 ANNUAL WORK PLAN

No.	Charter Requirement	Charter Ref.	Timing	2025			2026
				May	Sept	Nov	Feb
Membership and tenure							
1	Appointment of Chair (for current year)	5.4.2	Annually				✓
Meetings							
2	Develop annual schedule of meetings	6.1.2	Annually	✓			
3	Review status of actions generated during ARC meetings	6.1.8	Quarterly	✓	✓	✓	✓
Financial & Performance Reporting							
4	Review Council's annual asset valuation approach and likely outcomes for the upcoming valuation cycle. ¹	7.1	Annually	✓			
5	Review significant changes in accounting standards and reporting ²	7.1.1	Annually				✓
6	Review changes to Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) ³	7.1.2	Annually	✓			
7	Review and recommend to Council the adoption of the annual financial statements and annual performance statements	7.1.4	Annually		✓		
8	Assess the reasonableness of the valuation and fair value assessment outcomes.	7.1	Annually		✓		
9	Review quarterly finance report	7.1.5	Quarterly	✓		✓	✓
10	Review reimbursement of Councillors expenses	7.1.6	Quarterly	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internal Control Environment							
11	Review the effectiveness of Council's Risk Management Framework	7.3.1	Annually	✓			
12	Review Council's Risk Appetite Statement	7.3.2	Annually	✓			
13	Review and endorse Council's overall risk profile	7.3.4	Half Yearly	✓		✓	
14	Review the Business Continuity Framework and testing regime	7.3.7	Annually				✓
15	Review the Disaster Recovery and Incident Response planning and testing regimes	7.3.7	Annually				✓
16	Review Council's fraud prevention policies and controls	7.4.1	Two-yearly		✓		
17	Review Council's fraud control plan and awareness programme	7.4.2	Annually		✓		
18	Review systems and processes to monitor compliance with legislation, regulations and Council policies	7.7.1	Annually			✓	
19	Review key policies and plans supporting the internal control environment as listed in Appendix 4	7.7.1	Quarterly	✓	✓	✓	✓
20	Review Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Register	7.7.3	Annually			✓	
Risk Management							
21	Review and approve strategic risks to Council's operations	7.3.3	Half Yearly	✓		✓	
22	Review operational risks	7.3.5	Annually	✓			
23	Review the insurance programme ⁴	7.3.6	Annually		✓		

¹ As recommended by VAGO through its '2022/23 Performance Audit Outcomes - Local Government' (That the ARC is made aware of Council's approach to valuation and fair value assessment policy and outcomes). As such, this has been included in the Charter Work Plan (Reference numbers 4 and 8).

² Changes advised through provision of Local Government Victoria Practice Note, no officer report required

³ Changes advised through provision of Local Government Victoria Practice Note, no officer report required

⁴ Learnings from claims, variance in premiums, cover, uninsured exposures

Internal Audit							
24	Review and approve the strategic and internal audit plans	7.5.1	Annually	✓			
25	Review status of delivery of strategic internal audit plan	7.5.2	Quarterly	✓	✓	✓	✓
26	Review scopes of proposed internal audit reviews	7.5.2	Quarterly	✓	✓	✓	✓
27	Review reports on internal audit reviews	7.5.4	Quarterly	✓	✓	✓	✓
28	Meet with internal auditor in the absence of management ⁵	7.5.5	Annually		✓		
29	Review progress by management on open audit recommendations	7.5.6	Quarterly	✓	✓	✓	✓
30	Review the effectiveness of the internal audit function	7.5.7, 7.5.8	Annually	✓			
External Audit							
31	Review and approve the external audit scope and plan	7.6.1	Annually				✓
32	Discuss any audit issues encountered during the course of the interim audit	7.6.2	Half Yearly	✓		✓	
33	Review the outcomes of the external audit and discuss any audit issues encountered during the course of the final audit	7.1.3 7.6.3	Half Yearly		✓		✓
34	Ensure that management responses to any audit findings are appropriate and timely	7.6.4	Quarterly	✓	✓	✓	✓
35	Review the effectiveness of the external audit function	7.6.5	Annually			✓	
36	Review other VAGO performance audit reports for impacts on Council	7.6.6	Quarterly	✓	✓	✓	✓
37	Meet with the external auditor in absence of management ⁶	7.6.7	Annually		✓		
Compliance Management (including fraud)							
38	Obtain briefings on any significant compliance matters, and reports on any fraud related incidents, including those reported to integrity bodies	7.4.3 7.4.4 7.7.2	Quarterly (as required)	As required			
39	Consider reports on investigations undertaken by regulatory and integrity agencies relevant to Council	7.7.5	Quarterly	✓	✓	✓	✓
Performance Evaluation							
40	Evaluate Committee performance and report outcomes to Council	8	Annually	✓			
Reporting to Council							
41	Report summary of Committee activities to Council	9	Quarterly	✓	✓	✓	✓
42	Biannual audit and risk report of activities	9	Half Yearly	✓		✓	
Review of Charter							
43	Review the ARC Charter and submit to Council for approval	10	Two-yearly	✓			

Appendix 3 will be reviewed annually in preparation for the upcoming financial year.

⁵ Time allocated within Agenda, no officer report required

⁶ Time allocated within Agenda, no officer report required

APPENDIX 4: INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT (ICE) PLAN

Document requiring ARC review/endorsement	Year 1 2024/25	Year 2 2025/26	Year 3 2026/27	Year 4 2027/28
Finance & Accounting				
Investment Policy	✓			
Financial Reserves Policy	✓	✓	✓	✓
Procurement Policy	✓		✓	
Borrowing Policy				✓
Risk Management				
Risk Management Policy				✓
Risk Management Framework				✓
Risk Management Implementation Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓
Business Continuity Management Policy				✓
Fraud Prevention Systems & Controls				
Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy			✓	
Fraud Control Plan	✓			
Fraud Risk Self-Assessment		✓		
Compliance Management				
Compliance Management Policy		✓		
Compliance Management Framework		✓		
Compliance Management Plan		✓		

Appendix 4 will be reviewed annually in preparation for the upcoming financial year.

APPENDIX 5: AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE SELF-ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Performance for the Year Ended 30 June 2022

<i>Rating Scale</i>	1 = <i>Strongly Disagree</i>	2 = <i>Disagree</i>	3 = <i>Neutral</i>	4 = <i>Agree</i>	5 = <i>Strongly Agree</i>	N/A = <i>Not Applicable</i>
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Your Ratings of Performance

Comments are expected from respondents in the spaces provided at the end of each section where Ratings of 1. or 2. are given. This will assist in the identification of opportunities for improvement. It is expected that all questions will be applicable, so use of N/A ratings should be avoided wherever possible.

ID	Questions	Ratings [Tick boxes as appropriate]					
		1	2	3	4	5	N/A
A. Audit Committee Charter							
1	The Charter clearly articulates the Committee's roles and responsibilities and provides it with the necessary authority to discharge them						
2	The Charter facilitates and supports the effective operation of the Committee						
3	During the past year, the Committee has adequately addressed all of its responsibilities as detailed in the Charter						
4	The Charter ensures the Committee is sufficiently independent from the management of Council						
	Totals						
<i>Comments / Suggestions for Improvement</i>							
•							
B. Skills and Experience							
5	The Committee has the desired mix of skills to allow it to effectively discharge its responsibilities						
6	The Committee has been able to analyse and critically evaluate information presented to it by management						
7	There is a clear process that Committee members can follow to access advice and /or training to improve their skills and knowledge						
8	The Committee's collective skills are adequate in light of its responsibilities						
9	The Committee has responded appropriately where significant risks and/or control breakdowns have been brought to its attention						
10	The Committee has shown an openness to new ideas and different views in its deliberations						
11	The Committee has been sufficiently probing and challenging in its deliberations.						
	Totals						
<i>Comments / Suggestions for Improvement</i>							
C. Understanding the Business							
12	The Committee has an adequate understanding of Council's:						
	- Risk management framework and risk profile						
	- Internal control framework to mitigate significant risks						
	- Financial and statutory reporting requirements						
13	The Committee receives appropriate briefings on:						
	- Current and emerging business risks						
	- Changes in financial reporting requirements						
	- Changes in performance reporting requirements						
	- Integrity Agency reports						
	- Changes in the business/regulatory environment						
	Totals						
<i>Comments / Suggestions for Improvement</i>							
•							
D. Meeting Administration and Conduct							
14	The Committee has had an appropriate number of meetings to properly discharge its responsibilities						
15	Agendas are structured to allow sufficient time to discuss all critical issues						

ID	Questions	Ratings [Tick boxes as appropriate]					
		1	2	3	4	5	N/A
16	The Committee receives agendas and supporting papers in sufficient time prior to meetings						
17	Agendas and supporting papers are of sufficient clarity and quality to enable the Committee to make informed decisions						
18	Committee meetings are well run and productive						
19	Committee minutes are appropriately maintained and provided to Council on a timely basis						
Totals							
<i>Comments / Suggestions for improvement</i>							
•							
E. Communications with Council							
20	Committee communications to Council about its deliberations and decisions are appropriate.						
21	Committee reports to Council on its activities are appropriate						
Totals							
<i>Comments / Suggestions for improvement</i>							
•							
F. Management Commitment & Support							
22	Information and briefing papers presented by management meet the Committee's expectations in respect of:						
	- Council's risk profile and mitigating actions for key risks						
	- Maintenance of a strong internal control environment that is effective in mitigating key risks						
	- Management of Council's compliance and regulatory obligations						
	- Council's external reporting requirements						
23	The Committee has a positive attitude to continuous improvement in its dealings with management						
Totals							
<i>Comments / Suggestions for improvement</i>							
•							
G. Internal Audit							
24	The Committee reviewed and approved the internal audit plan						
25	The Committee considered the adequacy of internal audit resources						
26	The Committee reviewed and approved any significant changes to the internal audit plan						
27	The Committee considered the performance of the internal audit function						
28	The Committee reviewed all internal audit reports and monitored management responses to recommendations						
29	The Committee reviewed the Audit and Risk Committee Charter to ensure that appropriate structures, authority, access and reporting arrangements are in place for the internal audit function						
Totals							
<i>Comments / Suggestions for improvement</i>							
•							
H. External Audit							
30	The Committee reviewed and approved the external audit plan						
31	The Committee reviewed external audit reports and management letters and monitored management responses to findings and recommendations made by external audit						
32	The Committee provided feedback on the performance of external audit						
Totals							
<i>Comments / Suggestions for improvement</i>							
•							
I. Other Comments [Please phrase your comments as opportunities for improvement]							
Please note here any other comments you would like to make about the Committee's performance:							
•							
Grand Totals for all Responses							

[Factsheet: IIA Australia Skills based audit committee](#)

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.

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/DISCUSSIONAmendment 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: <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 	In Progress

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.

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Attachment 1 - Annual Infrastructure Program 2023-2024

Category	Project No.	Project Name	Project Details	% Activity	Comments
Local Road Resheet	LRS1240	Bartletts Rd, Boort	100mm Sheet	0%	Not started
	LRS1338	Clay Gully La, MCINTYRE	Resheet 1.9km x 5.0m x 100mm	100%	Complete
	LRS1339	Ward St, INGLEWOOD	Resheet 0.55km x 4.5m x 100mm	5%	In Progress
	LRS1344	Fentons Creek Wehla Rd, WEHLA	Resheet 3.0km x 5.0m x 100mm	100%	Complete
	LRS1351	Wychitella Quambatook Rd, TERRAPPEE	Resheet 5.52km x 4.5m x 100mm	100%	Complete
	LRS1360	Auchmore Rd, SERPENTINE	Resheet 2.1km x 4.6m x 100mm	100%	Complete
Local Road Shoulder Sheet	LRSS0379	Wedderburn Serpentine Rd, SALISBURY WEST	Shoulder resheet 6.5km x 2.0m x 100mm x 2 sides	100%	Complete
	LRSS0380	Charlton Borung Rd, BORUNG	Shoulder resheet 6.0km x 2.0m x 100mm x 2 sides	100%	Complete
	LRSS0378	Logan Kingower Rd, WEHLA	Shoulder resheet 1.3km x 2.5m x 100mm x 2 sides	100%	Complete
Local Road Construction Asset Preservation	LRC0518	Echuca Serpentine Rd, POMPAPIEL	Reconstruct and widen - 5.29km	75%	In Progress
	LRC0543	Ottrey St, Pyramid Hill	Reconstruct road and kerb	0%	Not started
	LRC0544	Newbridge Rd, WOODSTOCK	Reconstruction of road and seal	0%	Not started
Local Road Construction - Amenity	AMN323053	Tarnagulla Community Centre	Car Park sealing works	100%	Complete
Local Road Construction - Safety	SAF022043	Safety signage restricted structures	Installation of signage on restricted structures	20%	In Progress
Township St Improvement	TSI0585	Barber St, PYRAMID HILL	Renewal of existing footpath	5%	In Progress
	TSI0586	Boort footpath crossing (in front of Butcher)	Replace existing crossover to IDM standard	5%	In Progress
	TSI0587	Pyramid Hill Bowling Club Pedestrian Access Improvement	Replace layback at front of bowling club	5%	In Progress
	TSI0588	Tantalla St	Renewal of existing footpath	5%	In Progress
	TSI0599	Hospital St	Renewal of existing footpath	5%	In Progress
	TSI0513	Commercial Rd, TARNAGULLA	Footpath construction between Wayman Road and Poverty Street	100%	Complete
	TSI0516	Commercial Rd, TARNAGULLA	Footpath construction between King and Poverty Street.	100%	Complete
	TSI0517	Commercial Rd, TARNAGULLA	Footpath construction between Old Tarnagulla Road and Poverty Street	100%	Complete
	TSI0535	Commercial Rd, TARNAGULLA	Footpath construction between Poverty Street and Old Laanecoorie Road	100%	Complete
Urban Drainage	TSD0152	North and Southey St Drainage	Install underground stormwater drainage	15%	In Progress
Local Bridges and Culverts	LBCC0400	Chamberlains Road Culvert Replacement	Culvert Replacement	90%	In Progress
	LBCC0414	Ottreys Bridge Road Bridge Replacement	Bridge Replacement	100%	Complete
	LBCC0415	Sidney Watsons Road Bridge Replacement	Bridge Replacement	10%	In Progress
		Sidney Watsons Road Bridge Replacement			
	LBCC0479	Small Culverts Allocation	Allocation to replace small culverts	100%	Complete
Reseals	28 Projects	Multiple	Resealing of Council roads	20%	In Progress
Parks and Gardens	PGC059	Jacka Park Soldiers Memorial Playground replacement	Replace playground	0%	Not started
	PGC063	Dingee Progress Park Tables and chars replacment	Replace tables and chairs	100%	Complete
	PGC064	Boort Planter boxes x7	Replace planter boxes, removal of palm trees	0%	Not started
Buildings	BLD097	Wedderburn (Korong) Historial Society, WEDDERBURN	Additional allocation - New toilet	0%	On Hold
	BLD101	Dingee EPU, DINGEE	Replace and Upgrade Waste water system	100%	Complete
	BLD112	Boort Memorial Hall Footpath, BOORT	Footpath	20%	In Progress
	BLD115	Boort Historical Society, BOORT	Replace Roof	100%	Complete
	BLD116	Inglewood Hall, INGLEWOOD	Replace Roof	100%	Complete
	BLD125	Ag & Pastoral Building	Refurbish building	0%	Not started
	BLD126	Inglewood Hall refurbish walls	Repaint walls, repair damaged windows, repair damaged skirting	100%	Complete
	BLD124	Dingee Memorial Hall, DINGEE	Install disabled toilet	25%	In Progress
	BLD137	Emulsion Tank Project	Install emulsion tank at Wedderburn depot	0%	Not started
Major Projects		Pyramid Hill Streetscape	Pyramid Hill Steetscape works	100%	Complete
		Caravan Park Improvement Project	Continue works at caravan Parks	100%	Complete
		Pyramid Hill Community Centre Stage 1	Construction of Pyramid Hill Community Centre Stage 1	90%	In Progress
		Boort Flood Mitigation Project	Installation of flood mitigation levee	65%	In Progress
		Pyramid Hill Flood Mitigation Project	Installation of flood mitigation levee	95%	In Progress

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Flood Program 2022 - 2025								
Claim Number	Immediate Response Operations			Flood Restoration Program				Comments
	Relief & Recovery Claim	Counter Disaster Operations Claim	Emergency Works Claim	Immediate Restoration Works Claim	Restroation of Essential Public Assets Claim	Amount Reimbursed	Amount Rejected	
LODCC-1037-Claim-0008	\$42,949					\$37,213	\$5,736	Completed
LODCC-1037-Claim-0009		\$254,392				\$254,164	\$228	Completed
LODCC-1037-Claim-0010			\$113,021			\$113,021		Completed
LODCC-1037-Claim-0011			\$81,965			\$81,965		Completed
LODCC-1037-Claim-0012			\$80,084			\$80,084		Completed
LODCC-1037-Claim-0013			\$24,392			\$24,392		Completed
LODCC-1037-Claim-0014				\$1,456,168		\$1,456,168		Completed
LODCC-1037-Claim-0015		\$24,412				\$24,412		Completed
LODCC-1037-Claim-0016			\$82,430			\$76,631	\$5,799	Completed
LODCC-1037-Claim-0017		\$4,018				\$4,018		Completed
LODCC-1037-Claim-0018				\$1,198,877		\$1,195,728	\$3,149	Completed
LODCC-1037-Claim-0019				\$100,166		\$100,166		Completed
LODCC-1037-Claim-0020				\$1,090,586		\$1,090,586		Completed
LODCC-1037-Claim-0021				\$51,439		\$51,439		Completed
LODCC-1037-Claim-0022					\$97,620	\$97,187	\$433	Completed
LODCC-1037-Claim-0023					\$82,476			Lodged
LODCC-1037-Claim-0024					\$52,602			Lodged
	\$42,949	\$282,822	\$381,892	\$3,897,236	\$232,698	\$4,687,174	\$14,911	

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.

LODDON SHIRE COUNCIL

FINANCE REPORT FOR QUARTER ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2024



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INTRODUCTION

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 back in 2024. This is expected to give a good solid financial base before preparation of the first full budget process to be completed within this system.

1 CASH SURPLUS POSITION

1.1 Budget revisions

Since 1 July 2024, the surplus has increased from \$0.4M to \$5.6M. This main change was the adjustment for the year end actual carried forward surplus of \$5.1M. Due to this large adjustment amount, the table for quarter one detail has remained within this report.

There have been no further movements within the October – December 2024 quarter. The balance remains at \$5.583M.

Notes around major variances for quarter two:

Opening Surplus (Position as at 1 October 2024)	\$5,582,754
Nil	\$ -
Closing Surplus (Position as at 31 December 2024)	\$5,582,754

Notes around major variances for quarter one:

Opening Surplus (Position as at 1 July 2024)	\$ 408,212
Adjustment for actual carried forward surplus from 2023/24	\$5,099,544
Clear reserve amounts carried forward	\$ -
Addition of the approved annual infrastructure program	\$ 75,000
Other minor adjustments / rounding	-\$ 2
Closing Surplus (Position as at 30 September 2024)	\$5,582,754

2 INCOME STATEMENT

With parts of the system implementation still underway and issue resolution the main focus, timing has not been completed with staff. This process is underway but with further work needed, no variance reporting is included within this report.

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

2.1 Operating revenue

Total revenue brought to account during this quarter was \$1.42M with total income raised being 50% of the total revised budget income for 2024/25. Total operating revenue YTD is \$28.3M.

Significant items to note include interest, reimbursements and rates. For reimbursements there is an actual amount of \$0.6M against a revised budget of \$0.5M. The variation for this income type is the funds received relating to insurance claims. This assessor needed time to review and approve this claim and the funds now received. A budget revision will be completed in the next quarter to reflect this change.

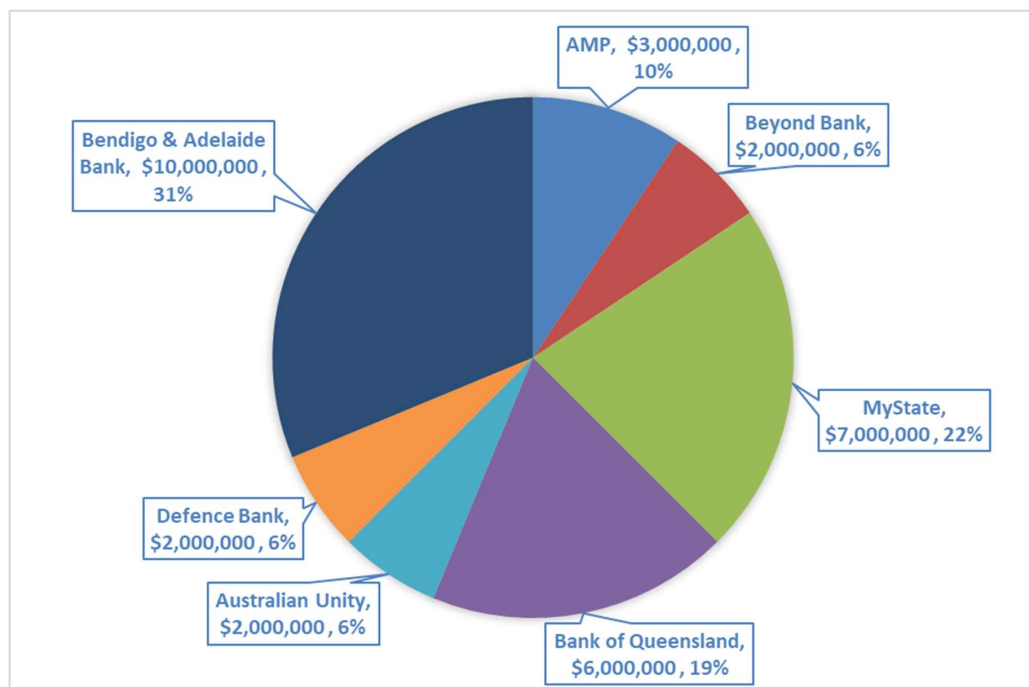
Rates are raised within the first quarter of the year, with a significant amount of income recognised for Council at this time. The payment of rates shows on the balance sheet as debtors and will reduce throughout the year in line with the payment options available.

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.

2.1.1 Interest income

Council’s Investment Policy requires investment of funds with authorised deposit taking institutions rated AAA+ to BBB- with a maximum of 40% of funds at any one institution and a maximum of \$2M in any one transaction.

The total investment interest received and accrued to date is \$1.1M. Interest raised on unpaid rates amounts to \$21K. Year to date investment interest has already exceeded the adopted budget amount of \$400K with a revised forecast due to be captured in the Revised Budget for Q3 and continued growth expected across Council’s cash surplus position.



All investments are term deposits and are currently with banks that meet Council’s Investment Policy as per the following graph and table:

Current investments:				
AMP	A2/BBB+		\$ 3,000,000	9.4%
Beyond Bank	A2/BBB		\$ 2,000,000	6.3%
MyState	A2/BBB		\$ 7,000,000	21.9%
Bank of Queensland	A2/BBB		\$ 6,000,000	18.8%
Australian Unity	A2/BBB+		\$ 2,000,000	6.3%
Defence Bank	A2/BBB		\$ 2,000,000	6.3%
Bendigo & Adelaide Bank	A2/BBB+		\$ 10,000,000	31.3%
Council Funds on Term Deposit			\$ 32,000,000	100%

The below table shows all investments for the financial year to date (interest on unpaid rates is not included):

LODDON SHIRE COUNCIL INVESTMENT SCHEDULE										
Bank	Establishment date	Status	Maturity date	Term (day)	Interest rate	Investment amount	Total interest receivable	FY2025 YTD accrued interest	Total Interest Accrual	FY2025 interest received
Defence Bank	4/07/2023	Closed	3/07/2024	365	5.75%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 115,000	\$ 945	\$ -	\$ 945
Auswide	13/12/2023	Closed	10/07/2024	210	5.35%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 61,562	\$ 2,932	\$ -	\$ 2,932
AMP	25/07/2023	Closed	24/07/2024	365	5.65%	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 169,500	\$ 11,145	\$ -	\$ 11,145
AMP	10/01/2024	Closed	7/08/2024	210	5.10%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 58,685	\$ 10,619	\$ -	\$ 10,619
Bendigo & Adelaide Bank	21/03/2024	Closed	19/08/2024	151	4.90%	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 20,271	\$ 6,712	\$ -	\$ 6,712
BankVic	4/07/2023	Closed	3/09/2024	427	5.70%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 133,364	\$ 20,301	\$ -	\$ 20,301
AMP	19/12/2023	Closed	19/09/2024	275	5.25%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 79,110	\$ 23,301	\$ -	\$ 23,301
Bank of Queensland	21/03/2024	Closed	19/09/2024	182	5.05%	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 25,181	\$ 11,207	\$ -	\$ 11,207
Bendigo & Adelaide Bank	13/02/2024	Closed	14/10/2024	244	5.02%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 67,117	\$ 29,157	\$ -	\$ 29,157
Bank of Queensland	21/03/2024	Closed	24/10/2024	217	5.05%	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 30,023	\$ 16,049	\$ -	\$ 16,049
Bendigo & Adelaide Bank	13/02/2024	Closed	13/11/2024	274	5.04%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 75,669	\$ 37,558	\$ -	\$ 37,558
Bank of Queensland	21/03/2024	Closed	21/11/2024	245	5.05%	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 33,897	\$ 19,923	\$ -	\$ 19,923
Bendigo & Adelaide Bank	20/02/2024	Closed	16/12/2024	300	5.04%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 82,849	\$ 46,672	\$ -	\$ 46,672
MyState	22/05/2024	Closed	18/12/2024	210	5.20%	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 29,918	\$ 24,362	\$ -	\$ 24,362
Bendigo & Adelaide Bank	20/02/2024	Open	15/01/2025	330	5.02%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 90,773	\$ 50,613	\$ 86,647	\$ -
MyState	22/05/2024	Open	17/01/2025	240	5.20%	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 34,192	\$ 26,214	\$ 31,770	\$ -
Australian Unity	20/02/2024	Open	20/02/2025	366	5.12%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 102,681	\$ 51,621	\$ 88,373	\$ -
Beyond Bank	5/06/2024	Open	5/03/2025	273	5.20%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 77,786	\$ 52,427	\$ 59,550	\$ -
Bendigo & Adelaide Bank	8/07/2024	Open	7/03/2025	242	5.20%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 68,953	\$ 50,148	\$ 50,148	\$ -
Bendigo & Adelaide Bank	8/07/2024	Open	8/04/2025	274	5.20%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 78,071	\$ 50,148	\$ 50,148	\$ -
Bendigo & Adelaide Bank	8/07/2024	Open	8/04/2025	274	5.20%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 78,071	\$ 50,148	\$ 50,148	\$ -
MyState	8/07/2024	Open	8/05/2025	304	5.25%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 87,452	\$ 50,630	\$ 50,630	\$ -
AMP	24/07/2024	Open	21/05/2025	301	5.20%	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 128,647	\$ 68,384	\$ 68,384	\$ -
MyState	8/07/2024	Open	4/06/2025	331	5.25%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 95,219	\$ 50,630	\$ 50,630	\$ -
Bank of Queensland	19/09/2024	Open	16/06/2025	270	4.85%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 71,753	\$ 27,373	\$ 27,373	\$ -
Bank of Queensland	21/11/2024	Open	19/06/2025	210	5.05%	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 29,055	\$ 5,534	\$ 5,534	\$ -
MyState	8/07/2024	Open	8/07/2025	365	5.25%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 105,000	\$ 50,630	\$ 50,630	\$ -
Bank of Queensland	19/09/2024	Open	15/08/2025	330	4.70%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 84,986	\$ 26,526	\$ 26,526	\$ -
Bendigo & Adelaide Bank	13/11/2024	Open	12/09/2025	303	5.10%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 84,674	\$ 13,414	\$ 13,414	\$ -
Bank of Queensland	19/09/2024	Open	19/09/2025	365	4.65%	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 46,500	\$ 13,122	\$ 13,122	\$ -
Defence Bank	30/10/2024	Open	29/09/2025	334	4.95%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 90,592	\$ 16,816	\$ 16,816	\$ -
Total Interest on Investments						\$32,000,000	\$ 1,354,405	\$ 654,377	\$ 739,842	\$ 260,884
Interest on General Accounts										\$ 191,882
Total Interest										\$ 1,107,144
Interest transferred to/from externally funded projects										\$ -
Net interest on investments										\$ 1,107,144

Due to the short-term nature of the term deposits, those deposits which have not reached maturity are included as cash in the Balance Sheet. They are adjusted during the year-end financial report process if required.

The highlighted row indicates Council's employee provisions investment (annual leave, long service leave and time in lieu) separately.

2.2 Operating expenditure

Total operating expenditure for the quarter was \$6.3M taking total YTD spend to 21% (\$13.19M) of the total revised budget expenditure for 2024/25. Flood restoration project areas remain significantly underspent against budget due to delayed timing of approvals. Of the \$21.34M revised budget, only \$0.6M has been spent. Further significant works are expected to commence once approvals have been granted.

2.3 Operating surplus

The above variances combined with the absence of the year-end \$10M adjustment for depreciation, results in a YTD operating surplus of \$15.1M compared to the end of year revised budget deficit amount of \$6.8M.

The depreciation expense allocation within the new system requires a separate module to be used and this will be a focus of work in the next quarter.

3 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Total capital works expenditure for the quarter was \$2.68M with the program now 30% complete in financial terms.

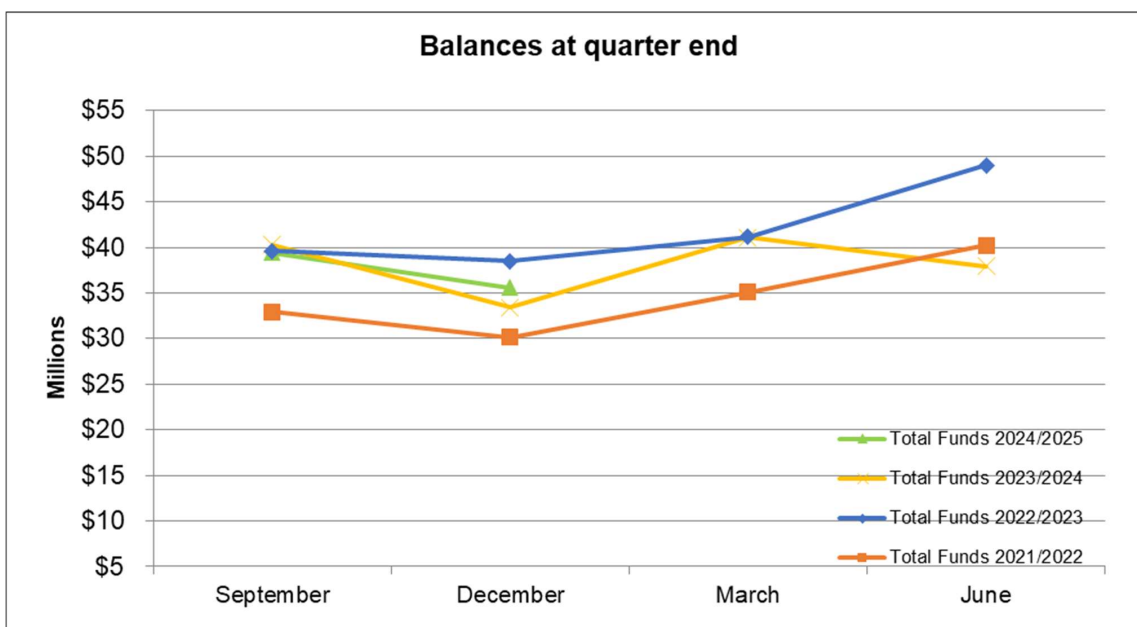
The total revised budget amount for 2024/25 is \$15.5M. This includes all carried forward projects which have been added into the financial system.

4 BALANCE SHEET

4.1 Cash

At the end of the month, Council’s overall cash total was \$35.6M, which includes a balance of \$3.3M in general accounts.

Quarter end balances for Council’s cash are reflected in the following graph, from July 2021 until the current quarter:



4.2 Receivables

4.2.1 Debtors

Balances of the various categories of debtors for the quarter end are provided in the following table. Of note is that 72% of the near \$1M in sundry debtors for the quarter relates to Government agencies (State Government, ATO, etc).

Debtor category	December 2023	March 2024	June 2024	September 2024	December 2024
Rates	9,401,646	1,500,488	482,901	11,780,558	9,846,774
Fire Services Property Levy	1,296,344	256,577	119,736	2,202,585	1,864,275
Total rates and Fire Services Property Levy	10,697,989	1,757,065	602,637	13,983,143	11,711,049
Sundry debtors	2,141,959	92,738	1,245,537	2,381,412	998,827
Community loans/advances	-	-	-	-	-
Long term loans/advances	-	-	-	-	-
Magistrates court fines	96,108	96,108	96,108	96,108	96,108
LESS provision for doubtful debts	(205,470)	(204,644)	(267,319)	(267,319)	(267,319)
Total	12,730,586	1,741,267	1,676,963	16,193,344	12,538,665

4.2.2 Rates debtors

Outstanding rates and Fire Services Property Levy at the end of selected months were:

Rating year	December 2023	March 2024	June 2024	September 2024	December 2024
Rates - Overdue	176,866	223,229	482,901	519,378	360,764
Fire Services Property Levy - Overdue	53,131	52,992	119,736	80,372	73,715
Sub-total: arrears	229,997	276,221	602,637	599,750	434,479
Current year (outstanding but not due)	9,224,780	1,277,259	1,836,898	11,261,180	9,486,011
Fire Services Property Levy	1,243,213	203,585	281,382	2,122,213	1,790,560
Total outstanding	10,467,994	1,480,844	2,118,280	13,383,393	11,276,570
SUMMARY					
Total rates	9,401,646	1,500,488	2,319,799	11,780,558	9,846,774
Total FSPL	1,296,344	256,577	401,118	2,202,585	1,864,275
Total arrears	10,697,990	1,757,065	2,720,917	13,983,143	11,711,049

4.2.3 Sundry debtors

Outstanding sundry debtors at the end of the quarter consist of:

Current	\$111,318	39%
30 days	\$97,490	34%
60 days	\$4,594	2%
90 + days	\$70,987	25%
Sub total routine debtors	\$284,390	100%
Government departments	\$591,437	
ATO return	\$123,001	
Other debtors	\$0	
Total	\$998,827	
90 + days consists of:		
Community support debtors	\$3,904	
Compliance debtors	\$11,043	
Others	\$56,040	
Total	\$70,987	

The mainstream sundry debtors (\$284K) have been broken into the amount of time they have been outstanding. At the time of this report, \$71K or 25% of that total has been outstanding for more than 90 days.

Total outstanding sundry debtors as of 31 December 2024 just below \$1M.

4.3 Other assets

4.3.1 Property valuations

All rateable and non-rateable supplementary valuations are included in this report and are split for ease of reading.

Valuation type	Properties	Valuation	Rateable properties	Rateable valuation	Non-rateable	Non-rateable valuation
Capital Improved Value - July 1 2024	8,407	5,524,061,100	8,039	5,392,999,500	368	131,061,600
Capital Improved Value - September 2024	8,423	5,535,351,300	8,056	5,403,685,700	367	131,665,600
Capital Improved Value - December 2024	8,425	5,537,338,300	8,058	5,401,134,700	367	136,203,600
Net change	2	1,987,000	2	-2,551,000	0	4,538,000

The total rateable CIV at the end of December 2024 decreased from \$5.404B to \$5.401B. During this time there was changes as a result of formal objections lodged against the valuation provided in the 2024/25 rates notice.

4.3.2 Vision Super Defined Benefits Plan update

This report includes the 30 June 2024 actual Vested Benefit Index (VBI) for the sub-plan being 105.4%. This is a slight decrease from the previous estimate and remains above the required 100%.

Currently, under the superannuation prudential standards, VBI's must be kept above a fund's nominated shortfall, currently 97%. When an actuarial review/investigation is in progress the fund's VBI must be at least 100% as it was on 30 June 2024.

Below is the sub-plan's recent VBI history:

As at	30 July 2023 (actual)	30 Sept 2023 (est)	31 Dec 2023 (est)	31 Mar 2024 (est)	30 June 2024 (actual)
LASF DB	104.6%	102.3%	103.8%	106.3%	105.4%

5 COMMUNITY PLANNING FINANCIALS

5.1 Boort community plans

Boort ward carried forward \$285K into 2024/25. With the additional \$50K allocation, \$335K was available for Boort Community Planning in the 2024/25. Of this amount, \$335K remains unspent, with \$335K available for the community planning group to allocate toward projects. Current community planning projects planned for 2024/25 are tabled below:

Boort Community Plans					ACTUALS			BUDGET		
YEAR	LEDGER	LEDGER	JOB CODE	PROJECT	2024/25 FINANCIAL YEAR			2024/25 FINANCIAL YEAR		
					INCOME	EXPENDITURE	NET COST	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	NET COST
				Income						
				Unspent allocation from previous years	\$284,684	\$0	\$284,684	\$284,684	\$0	\$284,684
				This years allocation	\$50,000	\$0	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$0	\$50,000
				Equity adjustment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
				Strategic Fund	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
				Total amount available	\$334,684	\$0	\$334,684	\$334,684	\$0	\$334,684
CURRENT	16975	W231		Boort Community Plans Unallocated	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$334,684	\$334,684
				Total expenditure for the year	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$334,684	\$334,684
				Total amount not spent at the end of the year, and available for next year			\$334,684			\$0

5.2 Inglewood community plans

Inglewood ward carried forward \$262K into 2024/25. With the additional \$50K allocation, \$312K was available for Inglewood Community Planning in the 2024/25. Of this amount, \$312K remains unspent, with \$189K available for the community planning group to allocate toward projects. Current community planning projects planned for 2024/25 are tabled below:

Inglewood Community Plans					ACTUALS			BUDGET		
YEAR	LEDGER	LEDGER	JOB CODE	PROJECT	2024/25 FINANCIAL YEAR			2024/2025 FINANCIAL YEAR		
					INCOME	EXPENDITURE	NET COST	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	NET COST
				Income						
				Unspent allocation from previous years	\$261,649	\$0	\$261,649	\$261,649	\$0	\$261,649
				This years allocation	\$50,000	\$0	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$0	\$50,000
				Strategic Fund	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
				Equity adjustment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
				Total amount available	\$311,649	\$0	\$311,649	\$311,649	\$0	\$311,649
				LESS expenditure for the year						
2019/20	W842	2242954315XX	CP2200012242954315	Inglewood Eucy Museum Annex Alloc 2	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$79,429	\$79,429
2020/21	W843	2242954315XX	CP2210022242954315	Inglewood Eucy Tractor Annex	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$33,185	\$33,185
2021/22	W873	2242214305XX	CP2220022242214305	Campbelle Forest Hydrology Report	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000
CURREN	W232	2242214305XX		Inglewood Community Plans Unallocated	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$189,035	\$189,035
				Total expenditure for the year	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$311,649	\$311,649
				Total amount not spent at the end of the year, and available for next year			\$311,649			\$0

5.3 Tarnagulla community plans

Tarnagulla ward carried forward \$190K into 2024/25. With the additional \$50K allocation, \$240K was available for Tarnagulla Community Planning in the 2024/25. Of this amount, \$240K remains unspent, with \$169K available for the community planning group to allocate toward projects. Current community planning projects planned for 2024/2025 are tabled below:

Tarnagulla Community Plans					ACTUALS			BUDGET		
YEAR	LEDGER	LEDGER	JOB CODE	PROJECT	2024/25 FINANCIAL YEAR			2024/25 FINANCIAL YEAR		
					INCOME	EXPENDITURE	NET COST	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	NET COST
				Income						
				Unspent allocation from previous years	\$190,471	\$0	\$190,471	\$190,471	\$0	\$190,471
				This years allocation	\$50,000	\$0	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$0	\$50,000
				Strategic Fund	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
				Equity adjustment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
				Total amount available	\$240,471	\$0	\$240,471	\$240,471	\$0	\$240,471
				LESS expenditure for the year						
2019/20	W888	2243218605XX	CP3190012243218605	TaCPSF Laanecoorie Hall Paint	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,818	\$1,818
2020/21	W988	2243958620XX	CP3200092243958620	TaCPSF Soldiers Memorial Park Toilets	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$30,000	\$30,000
2020/21	W892	2243218605XX	CP3200112243218605	TaCPSF Laanecoorie Hall Paint Alloc 2	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$16,591	\$16,591
2020/21	W849	2243958620XX	CP3210032243958620	Progress Park Fitness Station	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$15,000	\$15,000
2021/22	W850	2243958620XX	CP3220022243958620	Disabled Carpark Newbridge Hall	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$8,500	\$8,500
CURREN	W234	2243218605XX		Tarnagulla Community Plans Unallocated	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$168,562	\$168,562
				Total expenditure for the year	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$240,471	\$240,471
				Total amount not spent at the end of the year, and available for next year			\$240,471			\$0

5.4 Terrick community plans

Terrick ward carried forward \$172K into 2024/25. With the additional \$50K allocation, \$222K was available for Terrick Community Planning in the 2024/25. Of this amount, \$221K remains unspent, with \$206K available for the community planning group to allocate toward projects. Current community planning projects planned for 2024/25 are tabled below:

Terrick Community Plans					ACTUALS			BUDGET		
YEAR	LEDGER	LEDGER	JOB CODE	PROJECT	2024/25 FINANCIAL YEAR			2024/25 FINANCIAL YEAR		
					INCOME	EXPENDITURE	NET COST	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	NET COST
				Income						
				Unspent allocation from previous years	\$172,106	\$0	\$172,106	\$172,106	\$0	\$172,106
				This years allocation	\$50,000	\$0	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$0	\$50,000
				Equity adjustment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
				Strategic Fund	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
				Total amount available	\$222,106	\$0	\$222,106	\$222,106	\$0	\$222,106
				LESS expenditure for the year						
2018/19	W865 / W1014	2244958680XX	CP4160012244958680	P/H Lions Park Redevelopment	\$0	\$1,235	\$1,235	\$0	\$6,000	\$6,000
2019/20	W1018	2244218665XX	CP4200012244218665	Miamo Sporting Rooms Floor Upgrade	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000
CURRENT	W235			Terrick Community Plans unallocated	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$206,106	\$206,106
				Total expenditure for the year	\$0	\$1,235	\$1,235	\$0	\$222,106	\$222,106
				Total amount not spent at the end of the year, and available for next year			\$220,871			\$0

5.5 Wedderburn community plans

Wedderburn ward carried forward \$290K into 2024/25. With the additional \$50K allocation, \$340K was available for Wedderburn Community Planning in the 2024/2025. Of this amount, \$340K remains unspent, with \$340K available for the community planning group to allocate toward projects. Current community planning projects planned for 2024/25 are tabled below:

Wedderburn Community Plans					ACTUALS			BUDGET		
YEAR	LEDGE	LEDGER	JOB CODE	PROJECT	2024/25 FINANCIAL YEAR			2024/25 FINANCIAL YEAR		
					INCOME	EXPENDITURE	NET COST	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	NET COST
				Income						
				Unspent allocation from previous years	\$290,233	\$0	\$290,233	\$290,233	\$0	\$290,233
				This years allocation	\$50,000	\$0	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$0	\$50,000
				Equity adjustment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
				Strategic fund	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
				Total amount available	\$340,233	\$0	\$340,233	\$340,233	\$0	\$340,233
				Expenditure						
CURRENT	W236			Wedderburn Community Plans Unallocated	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$340,233	\$340,233
				Total expenditure for the year	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$340,233	\$340,233
				Total amount not spent at the end of the year, and available for next year			\$340,233			\$0

APPENDIX 1: INCOME STATEMENT

Element	2024/25 Original Budget	2024/25 Revised Budget	2024/25 December Actuals	% YTD Actuals vs Revised Budget
Income				
Statutory Fees	302,766	302,766	183,519	61%
Fees and Charges	608,640	608,640	318,009	52%
Contributions	0	2,031	17,989	886%
Interest	435,000	435,000	1,128,010	259%
Reimbursements	357,523	462,853	560,303	121%
Rates	13,115,030	13,115,030	13,043,020	99%
Non Recurrent Grants (Operating)	20,241,225	20,723,335	366,973	2%
Recurrent Grants (Operating)	12,721,281	12,721,281	10,706,894	84%
Recurrent Grants (Capital)	2,507,112	3,113,605	400,000	13%
Non Recurrent Grants (Capital)	0	5,279,491	1,593,905	30%
Total Income	50,288,577	56,764,032	28,318,622	50%
Expenses				
Salaries and Labour Related Costs	15,826,022	15,826,022	7,363,600	47%
Materials and Services	17,756,684	22,464,272	4,068,893	18%
Stores	13,839	13,839	0	0%
Fuel	1,404,481	1,404,481	447,271	32%
Contractors	12,279,105	12,292,105	960,944	8%
Depreciation	10,514,934	10,514,934	0	0%
Utilities	682,020	682,020	239,570	35%
Grants Expenditure	400,928	400,928	104,971	26%
Bad Debts Expense	0	0	36	0%
Total Expenses	58,878,013	63,598,601	13,185,285	21%
Net Result Surplus / (Deficit)	(8,589,436)	(6,834,569)	15,133,337	-221%

*Income and expense items required by Australian Accounting Standards (AAS)

APPENDIX 2: CAPITAL WORKS STATEMENT

Element	2024/25 Original Budget	2024/25 Revised Budget	2024/25 December Actuals	% YTD Actuals vs Revised Budget
Funding Decisions				
Reserves - Transfer From	1,680,577	9,874,312	0	0%
Reserves - Transfer To	(4,387,273)	(5,729,493)	0	0%
Asset Sales (Capital)	212,418	212,418	364,138	171%
Total Funding Decisions	(2,494,278)	4,357,237	364,138	8%
Capital Expenditure				
Capital Expenditure - Expansion	0	2,192,391	947,625	43%
Capital Expenditure - New	1,475,501	2,341,593	504,107	22%
Capital Expenditure - Renewal	5,481,563	8,433,863	1,615,758	19%
Capital Expenditure - Upgrade	0	2,520,601	1,587,384	63%
Total Capital Expenditure	6,957,064	15,488,448	4,654,873	30%
Non Cash Adjustments				
Depreciation	10,514,934	10,514,934	0	0%
Bad Debts Expense	0	0	36	0%
63 - Reversal of Impairment Losses	0	0	0	0%
Total Non Cash Adjustments	10,514,934	10,514,934	36	0%
Accumulated Surplus B/FWD	7,934,056	13,033,600	0	0%
Net Cash Surplus / (Deficit)	408,212	5,582,754	10,842,638	194%

APPENDIX 3: BALANCE SHEET

	December 2024 As per trial balance	June 2025 As per adopted budget	June 2024 As per financial statements	December 2023 As per trial balance
ASSETS				
CURRENT ASSETS				
Cash and cash equivalents	\$35,551,624	\$15,114,814	\$2,759,134	\$33,607,891
Other financial assets	\$0	\$0	\$31,197,145	\$0
Trade and other receivables	\$12,538,665	\$989,920	\$1,676,962	\$12,730,586
Financial assets	\$849,843	\$0	\$1,327,867	\$722,829
Inventories	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Non-current assets classified as held for sale	\$491,806	\$311,958	\$491,805	\$311,958
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	\$49,431,938	\$16,416,692	\$37,452,913	\$47,373,264
NON-CURRENT ASSETS				
Trade and other receivables	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Financial assets	\$293,630	\$292,782	\$293,630	\$292,782
Intangible assets	\$2,705,783	\$2,807,790	\$2,705,783	\$2,807,790
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	\$421,058,523	\$421,509,675	\$416,767,788	\$377,315,393
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	\$424,057,936	\$424,610,247	\$419,767,201	\$380,415,965
TOTAL ASSETS	\$473,489,874	\$441,026,939	\$457,220,114	\$427,789,229
LIABILITIES				
CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Trade and other payables	\$378,230	\$976,111	\$1,641,590	\$483,415
Trust funds and deposits	\$2,967,731	\$331,910	\$554,792	\$1,709,323
Unearned income	\$1,422,500	\$0	\$1,422,500	\$0
Provisions	\$3,187,798	\$2,598,013	\$2,528,041	\$3,247,534
Interest bearing loans and borrowings	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$7,956,259	\$3,906,034	\$6,146,923	\$5,440,272
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Provisions	\$1,062,599	\$2,499,446	\$1,735,513	\$1,246,284
Interest bearing loans & borrowings	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$1,062,599	\$2,499,446	\$1,735,513	\$1,246,284
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$9,018,858	\$6,405,480	\$7,882,436	\$6,686,556
NET ASSETS	\$464,471,016	\$434,621,459	\$449,337,678	\$421,102,674
EQUITY				
Accumulated Surplus	\$115,848,209	\$97,425,806	\$100,714,871	\$107,280,702
Asset Revaluation Reserve	\$330,338,083	\$325,729,347	\$330,338,083	\$301,850,014
Other Reserves	\$18,284,724	\$11,466,306	\$18,284,724	\$11,971,957
TOTAL EQUITY	\$464,471,016	\$434,621,459	\$449,337,678	\$421,102,674

APPENDIX 4: CASH FLOW STATEMENT

Cash flows from operating activities	December 2024
Rates and charges	1,934,607
Statutory fees and fines	328,909
User fees	318,009
Grants - operating	11,175,187
Grants - capital	1,993,905
Contributions - monetary	17,989
Contributions - non monetary	-
Reimbursements and subsidies	560,303
Interest received	1,416,970
Net GST refund (payable)	245,954
Trust funds and deposits taken	2,412,939
Payments to employees	(7,376,757)
Payments to suppliers	(7,141,898)
Net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	-
Share of net profits of associates and joint ventures	-
Other income	-
Reversal of impairment of assets	-
Depreciation and amortisation	-
Finance costs	-
Bad debts expense	(36)
Other expenses	-
Councillors' emoluments	-
Internal audit remuneration	-
External audit remuneration	-
Impairment of interest free loans	-
Net cash provided (used in) investing activities	5,886,081
Cash flows from investing activities	
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(4,290,735)
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	-
Term deposits	31,197,145
Payment for intangible assets	-
Loans and advances to community organisations	-
Repayment of loans and advances from community organisations	-
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities	26,906,410
Cash flows from financing activities	
Repayment of interest bearing loans and borrowings	-
Borrowing costs	-
Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities	-
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	32,792,491
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	2,759,134
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	35,551,625

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.

Visitor Economy Strategy 2030

Final

▶ **Loddon Shire Council**





► Acknowledgement of Country

Loddon Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land comprising the Loddon Shire Council area. Council would like to pay respect to their Elders both past and present.

We see this Visitor Economy Strategy as a chance to strengthen our relationship with the Traditional Custodians, to learn from their wisdom and experience, and to collaborate on initiatives that benefit both parties.

We are open to exploring new and innovative ways of working together, such as co-design, co-delivery, and co-evaluation of programs and services.

Loddon Shire Council will continue to build its relationship with Traditional Custodians to inform its key initiatives for tourism and the visitor economy.

Council believes future tourism initiatives can be enhanced and enriched by the involvement and participation of the Traditional Custodians organisations and that they will create mutual benefits for all.



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The Visitor Economy Strategy was developed by Sparrowly Group on behalf of Loddon Shire Council in close consultation with community, tourism industry and government. The content within this Strategy is based on comprehensive research and engagement within the Loddon Shire. Data and insights were collated from July to December 2024 to develop the Visitor Economy Strategy.

The Strategy underwent public consultation in January 2025. The feedback received has been considered in the Final Strategy.

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Executive summary



► Executive summary

The **Loddon Visitor Economy Strategy 2030** outlines a community-centric approach to building a sustainable and thriving visitor economy for the Loddon Shire. With a small population of under 8,000, this Strategy is grounded in a **grassroots framework**, empowering local residents, businesses and community associations to lead and shape the Shire's tourism development. The Visitor Economy Strategy aims to enhance the well-being of residents and visitors by adopting a **destination stewardship model** that prioritises **social, cultural, environmental and economic** outcomes. By aligning with community aspirations, it redefines success beyond visitor numbers, focusing on the lasting positive impact on people and places. Key to this is ensuring the community is kept updated on the implementation of this Strategy and opportunities for their involvement for continuous stakeholder and industry engagement with bi-annual and updates (as needed).

► Regional governance

The Visitor Economy Partnerships (VEPs) that were introduced in the 2021 Visitor Economy Recovery and Reform Plan will replace Regional Tourism Boards and provide enhanced leadership, collaboration and flexibility for Victorian regions. As Bendigo Regional Tourism (BRT) transitions into a VEP, it provides a significant opportunity for Loddon Shire Council to leverage its links with the City of Greater Bendigo for maximising and accessing resources and programming, especially capability building and marketing promotion. Work is underway to officialise this process and structure.

BRT recently delivered their regional Destination Management Plan (DMP) and Local Area Action Plan (LAAP) for Loddon Shire. The Loddon Shire LAAP has guided the development of this Visitor Economy Strategy, which aligns with the Loddon Shire Economic Development Strategy for a cohesive approach to visitor economy and economic growth.

► Destination positioning and long-term growth

Leveraging the 'Bendigo region' brand, the Visitor Economy Strategy positions Loddon Shire within a larger tourism ecosystem, benefiting from Bendigo's proximity and resident and visitor base. Product and experience development is seen as a long-term journey, with a focus on starting small and gradually building momentum. The existing calendar of events provides a foundation for growth, allowing for the expansion and enhancement of cultural, food and wine and community-based events.

► Collective visitor servicing

A key challenge identified in the development of this Strategy was the need for improved and cohesive visitor servicing across the Shire. To address this, the Visitor Economy Strategy focuses on a coordinated approach to visitor servicing in collaboration with local businesses to improve visitor engagement and drive greater dispersal and economic impact

▶ Executive summary (cont'd).

The **Loddon Visitor Economy Strategy 2030** includes the following sections.

▶ Setting the scene

Aligns the audience with guiding principles in understanding the visitor economy and its role in driving local economic growth, community resilience and environmental sustainability, and an overview of the visitor journey.

▶ Where are we now?

Reviews the current state of the visitor economy, including key assets and experiences, visitor markets and community sentiment.

▶ Where do we want to be?

Sets the vision for the Loddon Shire as a thriving visitor destination that supports the well-being of residents and visitors.

▶ Strategic Framework

Outlines the strategic objectives, which include enhancing the visitor experience, destination marketing and storytelling, and stewardship through leadership and community involvement.

▶ Action Plan

Provides detailed actions to achieve the Strategy, including short, medium and long-term initiatives. Outlines a framework for measuring success and reporting on activities.

▶ Appendices

Includes supporting data and further context for understanding the strategic priorities and action plans, offering insights into community sentiment and the current tourism landscape. Outlines aspirational case studies for destinations, events and experiences for Loddon Shire to learn from and guide future inspiration.

Through this **Visitor Economy Strategy 2030**, the Loddon Shire aims to build a resilient visitor economy that not only attracts more visitors but also supports the long-term sustainability and prosperity of the community.



► Strategy on a page

BENDIGO REGIONAL VISION	Enriching People and Place through Tourism.					
LODDON VISION	<i>To create a thriving visitor economy that supports a vibrant, resilient community while promoting environmental, cultural and social sustainability, as well as the overall wellbeing of both residents and visitors.</i>					
GUIDING PRINCIPLES	We are grassroots , with the community at the heart of everything we do.	We enjoy the journey , taking appropriate steps and a focused and intentional approach.	We play to our strengths , and nurture our essence – which we are unapologetically proud of.	We work together , in true partnerships to leverage and grow collectively.		
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Enhancing the visitor experience		Destination marketing and storytelling		Stewardship - management and resourcing	
FOCUS AREAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced visitor assets and infrastructure Developing key experience pillars Improved business resilience and visitor services Enhanced visitor information signage Support and expand local events. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted destination marketing plan Consistent branding and storytelling Collaboration and partnerships Local storytellers Align storytelling with regional experiences. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure external funding Professional development Engaging community, including First Nations, in decision-making Foster collaboration Track KPIs for continuous improvement. 	
EXPERIENCE PILLARS	Nature, outdoors and adventure	Arts and culture	History and heritage	First Nations	Food and drink	
OUR AUDIENCES	Loddon locals	Bendigo locals and visitors	Melbourne and Regional Victoria	Visiting friends and relatives	Special interest visitors	Transit route visitors

► Key definitions and glossary

BRT	Bendigo Regional Tourism
DJAARA	Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation
DJSIR	Victorian State Government - Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
DMP	Destination Management Plan
LAAP	Local Area Action Plan
LSC	Loddon Shire Council
RTB	Regional Tourism Board
RTO	Regional Tourism Organisation
TRA	Tourism Research Australia
VEP	Visitor Economy Partnership
VES	Visitor Economy Strategy
VIC	Visitor Information Centre
VTIC	Victorian Tourism Industry Council

► Strategic alignment

The Visitor Economy Strategy is a practical roadmap for the growth of the visitor economy in the Loddon Shire.

Much work has already been undertaken with many plans and strategies in place for tourism and economic development at a state, regional and local level. To maximise limited resources, alignment with existing plans is essential.

This Strategy builds on these plans, distilling key themes and identified projects for the local visitor economy. Importantly, this strategy is one that is collectively owned and combines community and industry sentiment and a realistic understanding of resources. This strategy has been designed so that the visitor economy sector of Loddon along with Council can own own it and succeed together.

Focussed on a grass roots, collaborative approach to deliver actions that will shift the dial for Loddon Shires’ visitor economy and provide positive outcomes for both tourism and the community.

The **Visitor Economy Strategy** aligns to a destination stewardship framework, marking a shift from traditional tourism planning by adopting a community-centric approach that prioritises civic pride, succession planning, and the integration of economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits.

By fostering local engagement and preserving cultural and environmental assets, it ensures a sustainable and inclusive future for tourism that benefits both visitors and residents alike.

Loddon Shire is a community of communities. So, it is vital to the success and authenticity of this Strategy that each township and village is able to



Setting the scene



► Tourism and the Visitor Economy

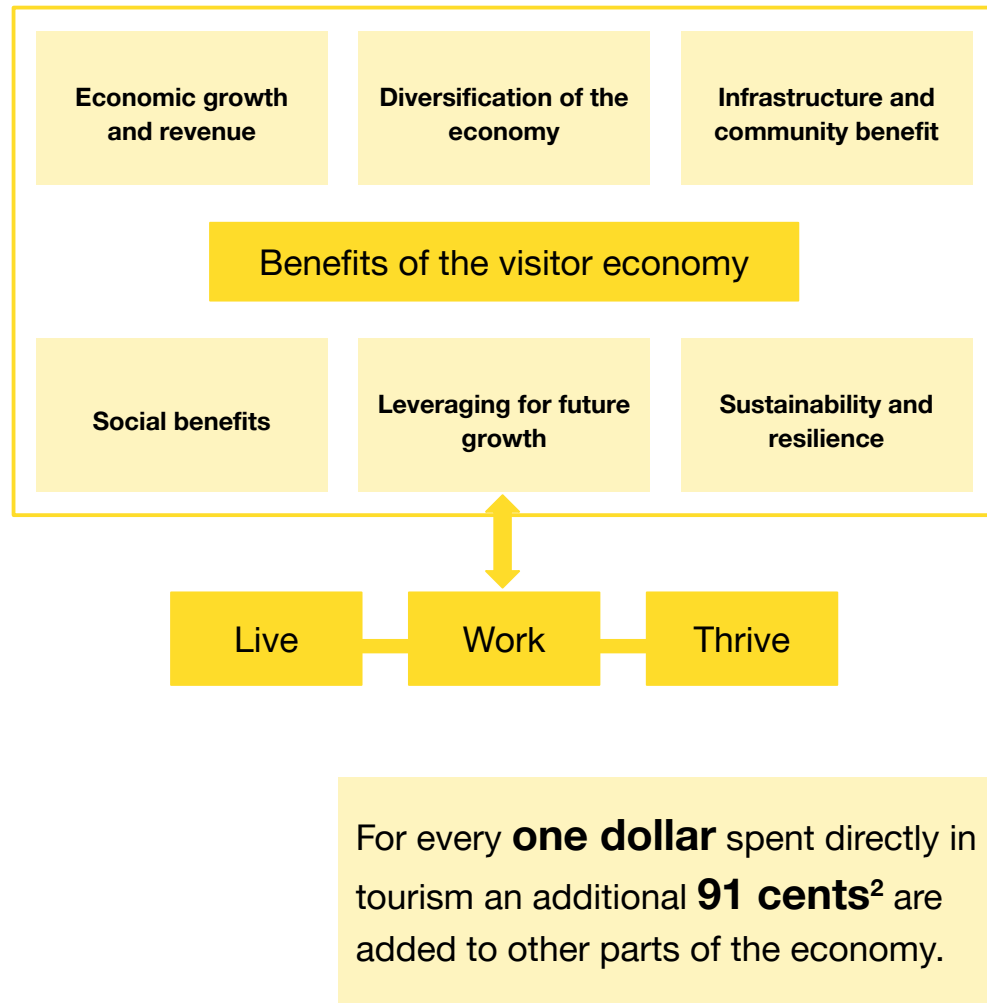
Tourism involves people traveling outside their usual environment for personal or business purposes, including all related activities and spending.¹

The **visitor economy** is broader, covering the entire travel experience and its contribution to economic and socio-economic growth. It recognises spending with businesses beyond traditional tourism such as petrol stations, pharmacies, hairdressers and butchers and the flow on multiplier effect that it creates in communities.

This leads to vibrant towns and sustainable businesses, as well as community benefits that lead to improved livability and investment in infrastructure.

For Loddon Shire the visitor economy can play an important role in building business and community resilience, fostering place-making and township viability.

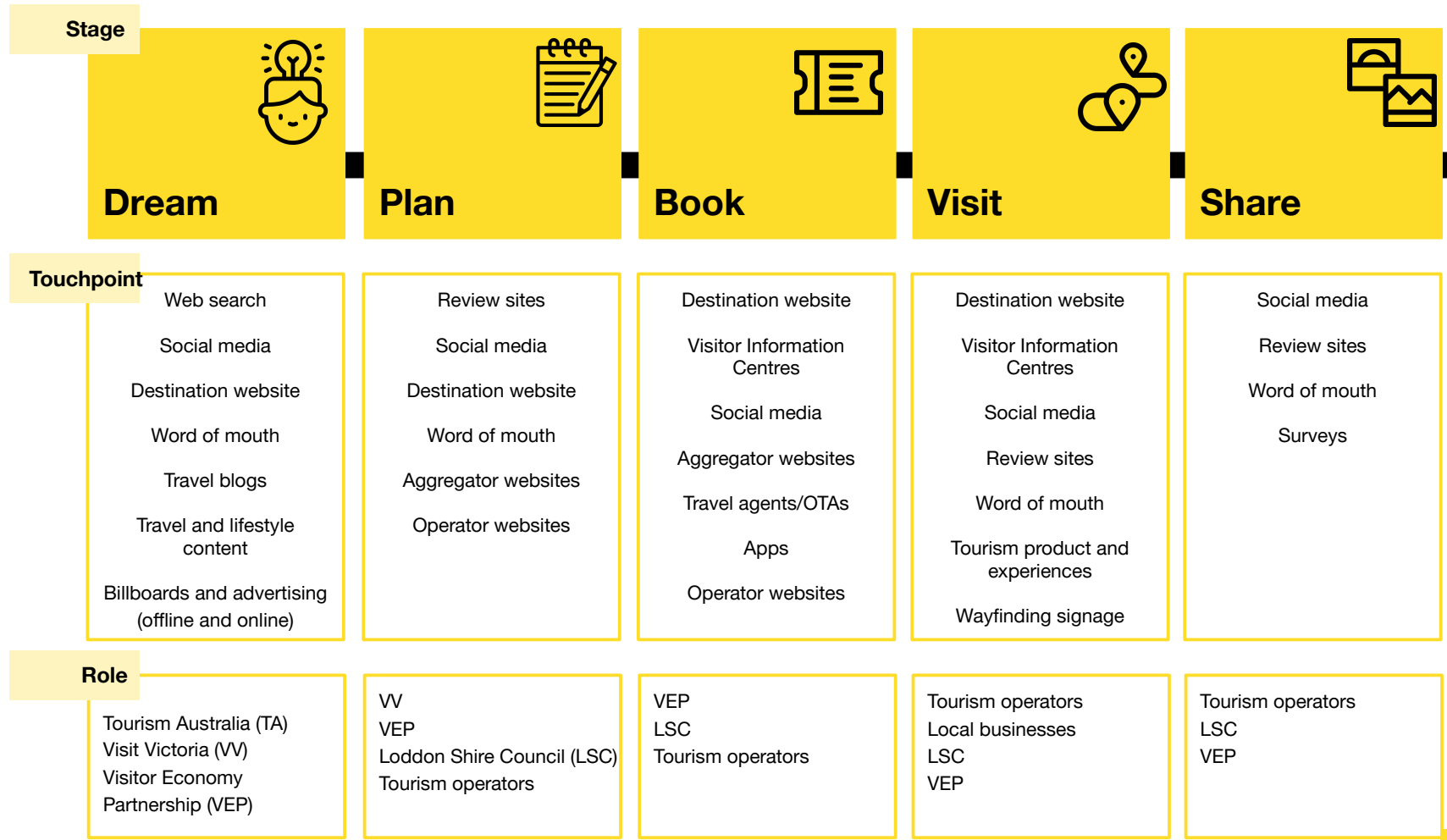
It supports the Loddon Shire Council Community Vision 2031 of being a great place to ‘live, work and thrive’. This proposition and customer facing messaging will be further informed by destination placemaking.



1 - The United Nations World Tourism Organisation 2008, <https://www.unwto.org/glossary-tourism-terms>.
 2 - Gretton. P.. "On input-output tables: uses and abuses". Productivity Commission. Commonwealth of Australia

► The visitor journey

When considering the visitor economy and the associated actions and activities, it is important to consider the five stages of travel. Travel and tourism is more than the time spent in a region, there are a number of touch points on the visitors journey to a place, all needing to be considered as part of the Strategy. The following outlines this journey, key touchpoints and roles along the journey.



Where are we now?



► Tourism in Loddon Shire

Just two hours drive northwest of Melbourne and less than an hour from the major regional hub of Bendigo, in the heart of Dja Dja Wurrung Country, the Loddon Shire is a hidden treasure of Victoria.

A picturesque destination with rivers, lakes and wetlands, state and national parks – a landscape full of surprises, visitors are attracted to the Loddon Shire for:

- **Nature** - a diverse range of geography and ecosystems home to a variety of wildlife, natural assets, trails, lookouts, birds and wildflowers.
- **Waterways** - the Loddon River, lakes and wetlands support canoeing, waterskiing and other watersports.
- **First Nations** - Boort Lakes and wetlands, with over 400 ancient scar trees, the Kooyoorra State Park and Dumawul Cultural Tours make this one of Victoria's most significant First Nations cultural heritage regions.
- **History and Heritage** - the legacy of the gold rush and pioneering past, with a unique mix of collectibles, antique emporiums, museums and galleries that reflect the rich stories, history and creativity.
- **Small town charm** - historic towns and villages that make up the Shire are filled with characters all with unique stories to tell.

A vital part of Victoria's food bowl and Bendigo's city and region gastronomy destination, the Loddon Shire boasts small-scale artisan producers, historic pubs and unique cafes serving locally sourced food reinforcing its role as an agricultural powerhouse.

The Shire's warm hospitality is showcased through annual events, art trails, food and wine festivals, town celebrations, vintage machinery rallies, collectible fairs, gold-themed events and nature-based experiences.



► Visitors to Loddon Shire

Tourism is an important economic driver for the Loddon Shire.

In 2019, the Loddon Shire generated approximately **\$21 million** in visitor expenditure from **208,000 visitors**, with \$11 million from overnight visitors and \$10 million from day trippers. The majority of domestic overnight visitors were intrastate with **58,000 visitors**.

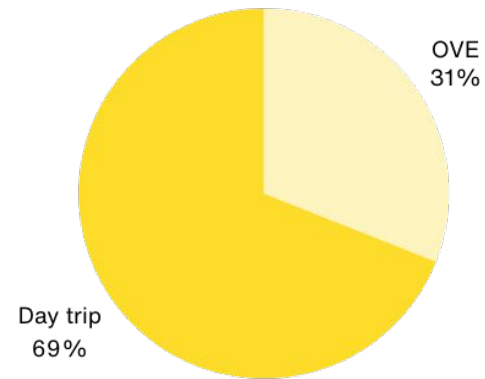
Visitors to Loddon Shire



Typically over 55

Visiting for a holiday

Day trip and overnight visitation



Average spend



Day trip visitor

\$70

Overnight visitor

\$172

Average length of stay



2 nights

Source: Loddon Local Area Action Plan (using Local Government Area Profile 2019 data from Tourism Research Australia).
More granular data is not publishable as the survey error is too high for most practical purposes.



► Local tourism landscape

Council resourcing and funding sources

The tourism team includes 2 FTE:

- Manager Tourism and Economic Development
- Tourism and Marketing Coordinator

with 1.2 FTE:

- Tourism and Marketing Officer
- Visitor Information Centre Admin Officer.

The 2024-25 budget is \$321,970 - \$346,970 (excluding staff and VIC operations).

Local associations

Local tourism and economic development committees are well established throughout Loddon Shire with numerous different tourism and community groups. Some of the more actively engaged groups are:

- Southern Loddon Tourism
- Wedderburn Tourism Inc
- Pyramid Hill Progress Association
- Bridgewater on Loddon Development
- Boort Tourism Development
- Inglewood Development and Tourism Committee.

Visitor Economy Partnership and Bendigo Regional Tourism

Loddon Shire Council was part of the Bendigo Regional Tourism Board (RTB). Bendigo Regional Tourism will transition into a Visitor Economy Partnership (VEP) set to launch in July 2025.

The VEP will likely include Loddon and City of Greater Bendigo. A close working relationship exists between City of Greater Bendigo and Loddon Shire Council.

Events and volunteering

Events are vital to economic growth and community cohesion, boosting local economies, enhancing regional identity and attracting future visitors and investment. A robust calendar of over 30 annual events highlights the Shire's experience pillars through a diverse mix of community, sporting and visitor-focused activities.

There is a strong reliance on volunteers across the Loddon Shire for the delivery of events, operations of key attractions and supporting the operations of the Visitor Information Centre. An ageing population creates a pressing need for succession planning to ensure ongoing delivery.

► Tourism operators overview

A product and experience audit was undertaken alongside a tourism readiness assessment. The following is a summary of these findings with **97** tourism operators identified in the Loddon Shire.

From the LAAP, the LGA profile identified 76 tourism operators with the majority being micro businesses with four or less employees. As at 2023, the Loddon Shire supported 98 tourism related jobs, this has declined from 111 jobs in 2019.¹

Accommodation was identified as a separate category and experience pillar in this audit, with the most common styles of accommodation being caravan and holiday parks, camping grounds, self-contained accommodation/home rental and motels.

Digital capability is low across all the businesses in the Shire with less than half of these operators having a website. Positively, more businesses have claimed Google Business and Facebook profiles which helps to build a digital footprint. Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) profiles are low, most likely due to businesses having to pay to have a profile.

32 operators have a bookable experience, however half of these (15) are managed by enquiry forms or phone call bookings, with the remainder using a booking platform (six are through Airbnb or Stayz).

The average Google review ranking for experiences is 4.6.

More insights can be found in the Appendices.

EXPERIENCE PILLAR	#
Food and drink	38
Accommodation	32
Nature, outdoors and adventure	15
Arts and culture	7
History and heritage	2
First Nations	2
Wellness	1

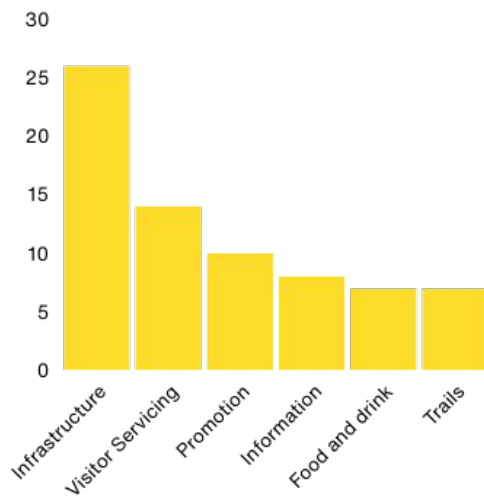
DIGITAL CHANNEL	# YES
Website	40
ATDW profile	13
Google Business profile	61
Facebook profile	69
Instagram profile	32

¹ Loddon Local Area Action Plan

► Community sentiment

A community survey and in-person consultation identified the community as a whole was aligned with the Bendigo Regional Tourism experience pillars. Most notably **nature, outdoors and adventure** were both a sense of pride within the community and how they like to spend their time in Loddon, demonstrating a direct connection to the experience development approach. Additionally, the community has identified a need for **infrastructure** followed by visitor servicing and promotion to grow further visitor economy growth.

What does the community think Loddon Shire needs more of?



Types of infrastructure include:

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| green initiatives for main streets | public transport with disability access | improvements to parks and roads | EV charging points |
| walking tracks | free town WiFi | tourist signage | parking |
| more housing | dump points | footpaths | |

What does the community love about Loddon Shire?



53% | Nature, outdoors and adventure



20% | Location

How does the community enjoy and explore Loddon Shire?



58% | Nature, outdoors and adventure



20% | Food and drink



9% | History and heritage



7% | Arts and culture

► Challenges and Opportunities for growing the Visitor Economy

CHALLENGES

- Limited digital capability amongst tourism operators and not meeting the expectations of the modern visitor e.g. opening hours, website and google listings
- Heavy volunteer reliance for:
 - Visitor servicing
 - Product delivery e.g. Wedderburn Coach House Gallery and Museum
 - Events delivery
 - Community groups and committees
- Succession planning and business sustainability
- Small population base (ie. small rate paying base)
- Lack of understanding of the visitor economy across businesses and residents
- Restricted and inconsistent operating hours for many business which do not reflect the needs of all visitor
- Supporting and coordinating community organisations and associations
- Large number of free camping options which limits economic returns
- Permanent long-term campers at camp sites impacting on visitor experience
- Multiple towns and villages, all with distinct voices, stories and priorities (there is no one central hub)
- Limited bookable products and experiences
- Lack of retail offerings for visitors (and residents) to support and buy local.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Diversify accommodation options with more boutique options and diverse price points
- Harness the support of community groups to work cohesively towards a common vision with the community benefits of tourism front of mind
- Upskill businesses to better market both their own business and the destination
- Implementation of identified priority projects (see page 29)
- Leverage strong agriculture sector to develop agritourism products and experiences
- Strengthen First Nations connections to support product and experience development
- Reimagine visitor servicing across the Shire
- Consolidate and expand on the strong existing calendar of events
- Volunteer attraction, recruitment and retention drive to reduce over reliance
- Support the enhancement of existing community infrastructure
- Economic development synergies to encourage free campers to connect and shop locally
- Further leveraging of Bendigo UNESCO Creative City and region of Gastronomy status
- Leverage and promote UNESCO Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Bid
- Engage with farming and agriculture sector to develop agritourism product and experiences
- Long term development of game-changer projects including rail and cycling trails in Boort, Inglewood and Bridgewater, Orana Park, and product and experience development showcasing local flora, fauna, landscape and environment.



Where do we want to be?



► What needs to happen for transformation?

Victoria Vision

We will work together to make Victoria a leader in the delivery of exceptional, diverse, and connected experiences for visitors. We will invest in bold, innovative, and inspiring tourism products and experiences that attract more visitors to come to Victoria, stay longer, and spend more.

We will ensure Victoria maximises the social and economic benefits of domestic and international tourism. We will – by creating a strong, resilient visitor economy – build a prosperous, sustainable future for Victoria.

Driving economic growth

Unique to place

Valuable for our communities

First Peoples focused

Innovative and outstanding

Sustainable and regenerative

Inclusive and welcoming

Bendigo Region Vision

Enriching People and Place through Tourism.

Loddon Shire Vision

To create a thriving visitor economy that supports a vibrant, resilient community while promoting environmental, cultural and social sustainability, as well as the overall wellbeing of both residents and visitors.

Enhancing the visitor experience

Destination marketing and storytelling

Stewardship - management and resourcing

We are grassroots, with the community at the heart of everything we do.

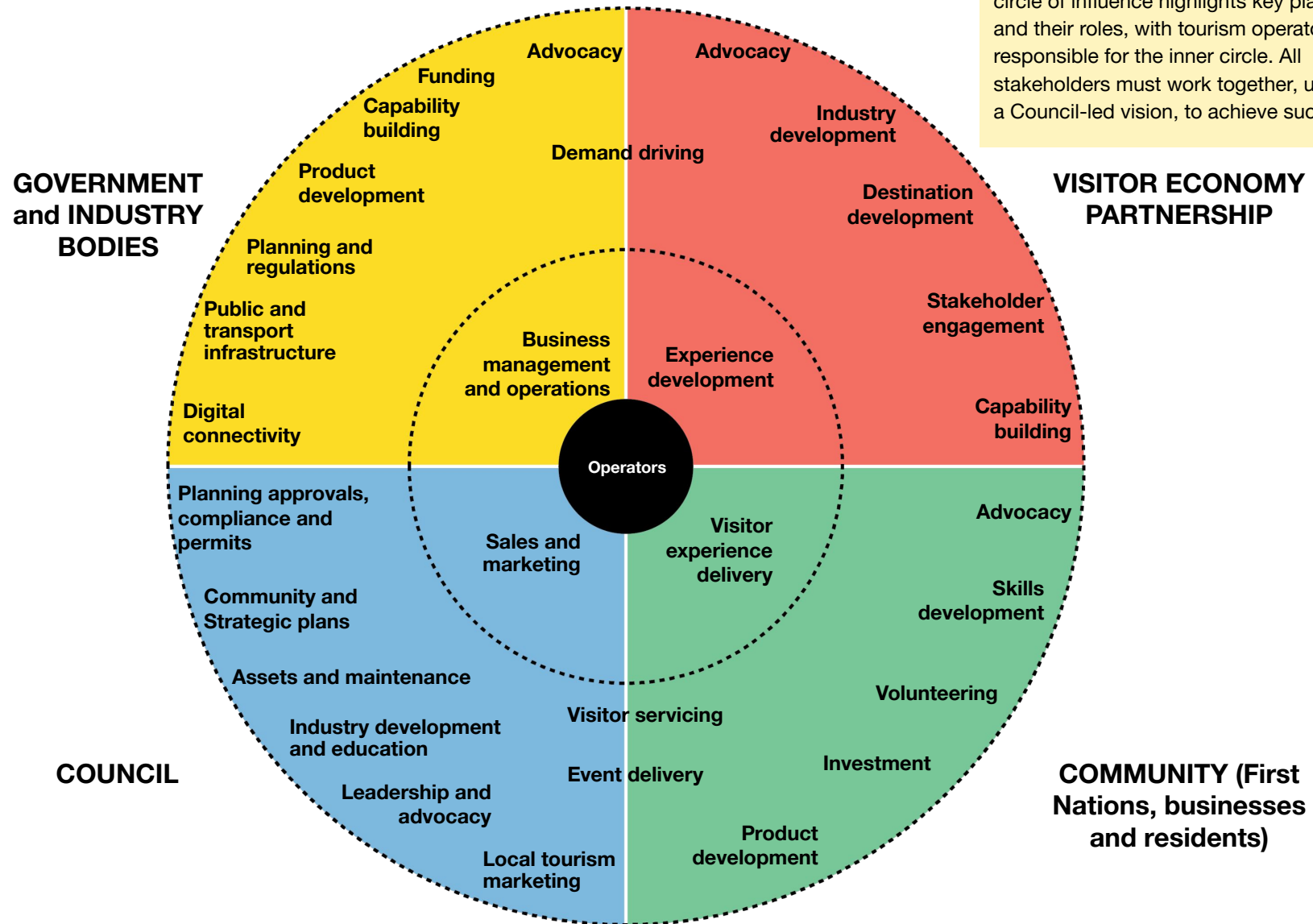
We enjoy the journey, taking appropriate steps and a focused and intentional approach.

We play to our strengths, and nurture our essence – which we are unapologetically proud of.

We work together, in true partnerships to leverage and grow collectively.

► **Enablers for transformation**

Tourism involves everyone, and this circle of influence highlights key players and their roles, with tourism operators responsible for the inner circle. All stakeholders must work together, under a Council-led vision, to achieve success



Strategic Framework



► Strategic objectives

To create a thriving visitor economy that supports a vibrant, resilient community while promoting environmental, cultural and social sustainability, as well as the overall wellbeing of both residents and visitors.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES
<p>Enhancing the visitor experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance and expand the quality and variety of visitor experiences in the Loddon Shire • Strengthen connections between visitors, local people and place through authentic experiences and events • Develop infrastructure that supports placemaking, events and visitor services to improve the overall experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased visitor satisfaction, longer stays and higher visitor spending • Improved infrastructure and accommodation that enhances the visitor experience • Strong alignment of experiences with the destination’s experience pillars, fostering authenticity and connection.
<p>Destination marketing and storytelling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the unique stories of the people and place to attract visitors who value and protect the environment, culture and lifestyle • Target the right visitor markets through effective communication and partnerships • Extend visitor engagement by enhancing visitor servicing and bringing local stories to life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased visitation from target markets who align with the values of the Loddon Shire • Greater visitor engagement and connection to local stories • Strengthened regional positioning through collaboration with Greater Bendigo and aligned marketing efforts.
<p>Stewardship - management and resourcing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster strong leadership and collaboration to drive the vision for Loddon Shire visitor economy • Engage the community, including First Nations, in tourism decision-making to build social license • Secure funding and resources to ensure stability and sustainable growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A cohesive framework supported by effective leadership and true partnerships • Increased community support and involvement, resulting in a resilient and sustainable visitor economy • Stable and well-resourced tourism initiatives that contribute to long-term sustainability.

► Experience pillars

MATURITY	EXPERIENCE	OVERVIEW
Primary	<p>Nature, outdoors and adventure</p> <p><i>Visit to find yourself</i></p>	Connecting visitors with the the unique natural environment, diverse geography, waterways, lakes and rivers and enabling them to engage with the landscape in meaningful ways through activities and experiences from birdwatching, bushwalking, canoeing or stargazing.
Emerging	<p>First Nations</p> <p><i>Visit to connect</i></p>	Bringing the culture and history of the Traditional Owners and First Peoples to the forefront by supporting opportunities for all to connect, learn and engage with their heritage. The aspiration is to expand these opportunities and deepen cultural understanding by incorporating First Nations stories at all touch points.
	<p>Food and drink</p> <p><i>Visit to feast</i></p>	Celebrating the local food and beverage industry by showcasing foraged and farm produce, wineries and the emerging native foods sector. There are opportunities to develop the agritourism sector to create new visitor experiences. The regional aspiration is to elevate food and drink offerings to align with the Bendigo City and Region of Gastronomy designation.
Secondary	<p>Arts and culture</p> <p><i>Visit to create</i></p>	Extending arts and culture across the visitor experience, incorporating the gold rush heritage, murals, vintage charm of country towns, creative installations and events (e.g. Loddon Valley Arts Trail) to support a vibrant community. The focus is to grow and connect visitors with diverse, inclusive and accessible arts experiences.
	<p>History and heritage</p> <p><i>Visit to learn</i></p>	Sharing the stories of its pioneer past through museums, gold prospecting experience and local characters, with a focus on storytelling, developing engaging and immersive Victorian Goldfields experiences and rejuvenating heritage sites for contemporary visitor engagement.

Please note that while **wellness** was identified in the DMP and LAAP as an emerging experience pillar, it has been removed from here as it is not an emerging experience pillar for the Loddon Shire, however is incorporated across all experience pillars.



► Audiences

The following audiences have been identified through desktop research and stakeholder consultation. There is limited data to validate them, however these emerged as the key audiences for the Loddon Shire to leverage and attract.

Visit Victoria audience		
<i>Lifestyle Leaders</i> - Interstate Australians (aged 18+) and Melbourne drive market to regional Victoria (aged 18+)		
Geographic source markets		
<p>Loddon Locals</p> <p>Locals are the catalyst for inviting, welcoming and hosting family and friends to the Loddon Shire. Influencing locals to engage and explore their own backyards can turn them into an ‘unofficial’ ambassador on the frontline visitor servicing team.</p>	<p>Bendigo region</p> <p>The Bendigo region is a key source market for day trips due to its close proximity. With a strong visitor base in place there is an opportunity to increase day trips from the market base of residents and visitors to Bendigo, especially younger residents.</p>	<p>Melbourne locals and intrastate</p> <p>Melbourne residents and travellers across Regional Victoria provides a base for intrastate visitors. These visitors are often transiting to or from Melbourne, and seek short, regional getaways with a traditional focus.</p>
Visitor segments		
<p>Visiting friends and relatives (VFR)</p> <p>Residents (across all ages) of Loddon and Bendigo are the key driver to access the VFR market. Focus on opportunities to optimise engagement with the VFR market including the promotion of events, itineraries and experiences.</p>	<p>Special interest visitors</p> <p>The unique landscape, flora, fauna and gold rush history attracts a range of special interest visitors. These visitors will stay multiple nights and provide repeat visitation. Target them through marketing highlighting experience strengths.</p>	<p>Transit route visitors</p> <p>With major arterial roads within its boundaries, Loddon Shire is known as a transit route, a stopover point enroute to another destination. Encourage visitors to stop, spend and inspire them to come back and stay.</p>

► Enhanced priority projects

Loddon Shire Council continues to advance some key projects throughout the Loddon region. A strong annual events calendar, including the Loddon Valley Arts Trail, draws visitors and offers opportunities to further enhance existing events. Additional priority projects are in the planning stages, with others identified for delivery and advocacy, laying a foundation for future development.

PROJECT	OVERVIEW	COUNCIL ROLE	STATUS
Visitor Servicing Development Projects	Tourism Services Review: The adoption and delivery of actions from the 2023 Loddon Shire Visitor Servicing Review, including the exploration of a relocation of the Visitor Centre and an expanded network of visitor information venues across the Shire.	Deliver	Scoping (Business Case funding secured)
	Tourism Signage Audit: Implement findings from the tourism signage audit to improve visitor servicing and wayfinding across the Shire.	Deliver	Underway
UNESCO Designations	Goldfields World Heritage Bid: A state-wide bid of 20 LGAs across Central Victoria for recognition of the outstanding cultural value of gold prospecting and fossicking historical sites. The bid seeks to boost economic, cultural and social opportunities. The Bid has been added to Australia’s World Heritage Tentative List as the first formal step. An announcement is expected in 2026/27 and full recognition by 2030.	Advocate	Underway
	UNESCO Bendigo and Region Gastronomy designation: Create a strong brand alignment with the Bendigo and Region Gastronomy designation, including the the identification of new product development opportunities for visitors, e.g. tours, workshops and itineraries.	Deliver	Underway
Shire wide beautification project	This project aims to enhance the visual appeal, functionality, safety, heritage and cultural significance of towns across the Shire for residents and visitors. The streetscape project is recognised by the local community as an opportunity to facilitate visitation and encourage broader placemaking initiatives and economic growth across the Shire.	Deliver	Seeking funding (\$1 million secured)
First Nations Development	Cultural Tourism: Working collaboratively with Dja Dja Wurrung to support their plans for the scoping and development of First Nations tourism experiences. Tours exist, for example the Dumawul Cultural Tour at Mount Kooyoora, which has the opportunity to be expanded and new experiences to be developed.	Advocate	Underway
	Lake Boort Scarred Tree Master Plan: The Master Plan builds awareness about and appreciation for Lake Boort as an unparalleled destination, where over 400 scarred trees and cooking mounds can be found.	Advocate	Seeking funding
	Mount Kooyoora: A culturally important place for the Dja Dja Wurrung People. The strategic vision has been developed to improve visitor and recreational facilities in the Melville Caves Visitor Area and adjoining trail network at Kooyoora State Park.	Advocate	Underway

► Experience development opportunities

There are long term opportunities to grow and develop the experience offering across Loddon Shire to 2030 and beyond. Whilst the Experience Pillars identify experience pillar maturity, there are opportunities to grow and develop the emerging pillars.

The future UNESCO Victorian Goldfields World Heritage designation will reinforce Loddon Shire's important Goldfields heritage and contemporary gold prospecting experiences. It will provide the opportunity for trails and itineraries to leverage the broader region and encourage dispersal.

The current UNESCO Bendigo City and Region of Gastronomy designation represents a significant opportunity to connect Loddon's food producers to regional networks, as well as attracting local investment for innovative agritourism product, events and experiences.

Anticipated state government focus and investment in First Nations cultural tourism (Experience Victoria 2033) will see local Traditional Owners well-placed to continue to develop product and experiences in culturally-significant locations.

The existing primary and secondary pillars will continue to develop and grow, however Nature, Outdoors and Adventure is likely to remain the sole primary pillar.

The following page outlines these experience development opportunities.



► Experience development opportunities

PILLAR	Nature, Outdoors and adventure (primary pillar)	Arts and culture	History and heritage	First Nations	Food and drink (Gastronomy)
GROWTH POTENTIAL	<p>Enhancement of infrastructure for outdoor activities including bushwalking, canoeing, cycling, bird watching and stargazing.</p> <p>Development of adventure experiences and hosting nature-based events will attract a diverse range of visitors.</p>	<p>Expanding public art installations, activating heritage spaces and retail precincts, and connecting visitors with local artists through galleries, studios, and creative events.</p>	<p>Revitalising historic gold mining villages and buildings with contemporary, immersive experiences will enhance visitor engagement, supported by modern interpretation and improved placemaking efforts.</p> <p>Developing tours and experiences aligned with the UNESCO Goldfields Bid will further enhance this growth potential.</p>	<p>Supporting the enhancement of cultural connections through initiatives like the Lake Boort Scarred Trees Masterplan and supporting the development of new cultural experiences, events and tours.</p>	<p>Opportunities lie in expanding agritourism and farmgate experiences and promoting local provenance. Strengthening connections between local food producers and hospitality businesses, along with developing a food and wine event calendar will elevate the region's culinary reputation and align with the City and Region of Gastronomy designation.</p>
EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional low impact, nature-based accommodation e.g. glamping and camping (e.g. hipcamp) • Enhancement of the 15 identified tourism offerings, including state and national parks • Development of bookable tours and experiences including birdwatching, cycling and stargazing experiences • Improved visitor signage and infrastructure at State and National Parks • Parks and waterways infrastructure that supports events • Climate-friendly options (e.g. climate-resilient infrastructure) and storytelling • Continue to acquire new events and support existing events that showcase nature, outdoors and adventure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening and continuing to grow the Loddon Valley Arts Trail by connecting local artists and creatives • More public and community art activations - silo art, murals, sculptures, interpretative art displays • Heritage spaces and retail precincts activations - connect local makers, creatives and artists • Local artists and creatives visitor experiences including artist-in-residence programs to attract and support local and visiting artists (e.g. Festival of Small Halls and Whole Loddon Love programs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support community run heritage experiences with modern and immersive interpretation highlighting local champions • Town precinct and heritage building rejuvenation and placemaking initiatives • Activate heritage buildings and precincts through events (e.g. Open House Loddon Valley) • Development of bookable tours and experiences at the Wedderburn Coach House Gallery and Museum and the Eucalyptus Distillery Museum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the refinement of cultural heritage site protection, care, interpretation and infrastructure • Refinement of the Dumawul Cultural Tours at Kooyoora State Park to align with visitor experiences and demand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of on-farm and off-farm agritourism experiences such as cellar door experiences, farm tours, accommodation, canola field tours and farmgate retail outlets • Expand on food and drink event calendar - featuring Flavours of Loddon as a hero event for the Shire • Development of a Loddon Gastronomy Guide showcasing food and beverage hero producers.

Action Plan



▶ Action plan summary

An action plan has been developed for Loddon Shire Council to deliver and implement the Visitor Economy Strategy across short, medium and long term initiatives through to 2030 and beyond.

Council’s role will be to either **lead, partner, support** or **advocate** to deliver these actions, working in close partnership with primary partners of the Visitor Economy Partnership, City of Greater Bendigo, Dja Dja Wurrung, tourism operators and local businesses. Additional partners include Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions, Visit Victoria and Parks Victoria.

Funding for these actions can come from Council budget, VEP funding, external grants, private investment and community grants.

The action plan includes key actions against each of the three Strategic Objectives. A summary of these actions are outlined below.

A key focus of this Visitor Economy Strategy will be ensuring that it is reviewed and stress tested on an annual basis. Success measures have also been identified to track overall delivery and reporting.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Enhancing the visitor experience	Destination marketing and storytelling	Stewardship - management and resourcing
KEY ACTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced visitor assets and infrastructure • Developing key experience pillars • Improved business resilience and visitor services • Enhanced visitor information signage • Support and expand local events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted place branding • Consistent branding and storytelling • Collaboration and partnerships • Local storytellers • Align storytelling with regional experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure external funding • Professional development • Engaging community, including First Nations, in decision-making • Foster collaboration • Track KPIs for continuous improvement.

► **Business as usual actions**

The following activities reflect the day-to-day function and ongoing role of the tourism unit within Loddon Shire Council in supporting local business and operators, destination marketing, communications and advocacy. These actions are also delivered by BRT at a regional level and will continue with the new VEP. However it is important that these activities are also delivered at a local level to further disseminate messages and key information.

ACTION	OVERVIEW
Advocacy	Continue providing strong strategic leadership and advocacy for local tourism development, aligning resources, sharing information and educating stakeholders (internal and external) to maximise tourism investment and growth of the visitor economy.
Industry relations	Support industry operators with education and connections, inspiration to enhance and create authentic visitor experiences and marketing opportunities to promote them.
Communications	Create key messaging for internal and external council communications that highlight the regional and local value of the visitor economy. This messaging should enhance understanding of tourism's broader benefits to the community, aligning with local aspirations and contributions beyond just economic outcomes.
Strategic partners	Foster and nurture genuine partnerships with regional stakeholders to amplify activities, increase demand and collectively grow the visitor economy. In particular working with the VEP, City of Greater Bendigo and through authentic and ongoing engagement with Dja Dja Wurrung.



► **Action plan**

TIME FRAMES AND COUNCIL ROLE

The timeframes are aligned with the Loddon Shire Economic Development Strategy:

- **Short** - undertaken in 12 months (2025).
- **Medium** - undertaken in 2-4 years (2026-2028).
- **Long** - undertaken in 5-6 years (2029-2030).

Some actions will begin at any of these intervals and move to ongoing and remain as always-on actions (these are marked with a tick box).

Recognising that **priority projects** are currently underway with funding secured, there are some actions which have been identified that will set the foundations of growth as priority focus.

Council’s role will be to either **lead, partner, support** or **advocate** to deliver the following actions.

PARTNERS

The following will be **primary partners**:

- VEP - Visitor Economy Partnership
- COGB - City of Greater Bendigo
- Dja Dja Wurrung
- Parks Victoria
- Local business
- Tourism operators
- Associations.

The following will be **supporting partners**:

- DJSIR - Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
- VV - Visit Victoria
- BV - Business Victoria
- VTIC - Victorian Tourism Industry Council
- Neighbouring councils.

FUNDING SOURCES

Understanding the limited resourcing available for major projects, the following actions have been developed with this in mind.

Council's own budget would typically cover internal tools, staff, and local programs, as well as internal-Council bids for further funding. Additionally, VEP funding may be available for regional programs of work.

External **grant funding** can be secured for broader initiatives, infrastructure projects and larger programs. This could be funding for Council, operators or event organisers through DJSIR Flagship Projects, Regional Development Victoria, Business Victoria and Create Victoria.

Private investment (for example Cobram Estate) and progress associations applying for community grants may also contribute to the Loddon Shire.

► Enhancing the visitor experience

TIMEFRAME	ACTION	COUNCIL ROLE	PARTNERS	BUDGET	ONGOING
Short *Priority action	Using the experience development opportunities (page 40) and the findings from the tourism readiness audit, identify key gaps in experience offerings (e.g. Food and Beverage developments in alignment with the UNESCO Gastronomy designation, prospecting experiences aligned with the UNESCO Goldfields Bid, accommodation) to prioritise support for development of existing and new visitor experiences.	Lead		Operational budget	✓
Short *Priority action	Utilise the findings from the tourism signage audit to create recommendations and a priority list for signage development (medium to long-term), including destination signage at key landmarks, parks and amenities like toilet blocks, national parks signage, and working with Dja Dja Wurrung to incorporate First Nations markers and aligning with the Goldfields Signage Project.	Partner	Parks Victoria Dja Dja Wurrung VicRoads	\$35,000	✓
Short	Enhance business resilience and service quality to provide training and knowledge sharing, using existing resources to educate businesses on the value of the visitor economy and improve visitor experiences through better customer service, extended open hours, marketing and cross-promotion.	Lead	Operators BV VTIC	Operational budget	✓
Short	Continue to develop existing localised events (e.g. Inglewood Alive) and Shire wide events (e.g. Flavours of Loddon and Loddon Valley Arts Trail) to evolve and maximise success, enhancing their reach, and fostering connections to grow their impact and generate greater economic, social and cultural benefits.	Lead	VEP Businesses Operators Volunteers	Operational budget	✓
Short	Identify standout aspirational experiences and businesses leaders and connect operators for peer-to-peer learning using the industry development framework.	Lead	Associations Operators Businesses VEP	Operational budget	
Short *Priority action	Conduct an audit of existing council and non-council assets, including recreational facilities (swimming pools, parks and reserves), amenities and key sites such as national parks, to assess their current state and potential for enhancing the visitor economy.	Lead	Parks Victoria	\$10,000	

► **Enhancing the visitor experience (cont'd.)**

TIMEFRAME	ACTION	COUNCIL ROLE	PARTNERS	BUDGET	ONGOING
Medium	Deliver educational workshops and industry development programs to support the development of new and existing experiences including agritourism, nature-based experiences, food and drink, First Nations as a priority for development.	Partner	VEP Specialist consultant	\$10-15,000 (seek funding)	✓
Medium	Learn from neighbouring regions successes in business and experience development, such as Shiraz Republic, by developing case studies and implementing a 'My Business is Your Business' famil program, and maintain regular communication with the industry as part of the delivery of the industry engagement framework.	Partner	Operators	Operational budget	✓
Medium	Scope and implement the development, usage and further activation of identified Council assets such as swimming pools, toilet blocks, and EV charging stations to enhance community and visitor amenities, improve utilisation and support future growth opportunities.	Lead	Internal - Assets and Infrastructure	TBC	
Medium	Enhance local and regional placemaking through streetscape improvements, art activations, and strategic lighting to create vibrant and attractive community spaces that enhance the visitor experience, and overall livability for residents. This includes adequate parking and electric vehicle chargers across the Shire.	Support	Internal - Economic Development Businesses	TBC	
Medium	Enable planning pathways for boutique accommodation and experience development to diversify visitor options, attract niche markets and enhance the overall tourism offering in the Shire, this could include farm stay, glamping and camping.	Lead	Internal - Planning Local Businesses	Operational budget	
Medium	Conduct a feasibility study and business case for a new Visitor Information Centre at the Bridgewater on Loddon site to explore the potential development of a visitor hub, including an opportunity to explore the feasibility of a First Nations art centre or providore with farm gate retail offerings.	Lead	Dja Dja Wurrung Operators	\$100,000	
Medium	Audit the existing events calendar to identify gaps in experience alignment, locations and timing, and scope options and capacity for new events to fill these gaps (e.g. Olive Festival in Boort).	Lead	Associations Local Businesses	Operational budget	

▶ **Enhancing the visitor experience (cont'd.)**

TIMEFRAME	ACTION	COUNCIL ROLE	PARTNERS	BUDGET	ONGOING
Long	Deliver a regional product and experience development mentoring program to support the development of new experiences and enhancement of existing experiences to further develop and refine.	Advocate	VEP Specialist consultant	\$40,000	
Long	Develop a Regional Accommodation Investment Prospectus to attract quality accommodation investment to meet growing visitor demands, including enhancing and developing existing accommodation assets (e.g. caravan parks).	Support	VEP	TBC	
Long	Attract new business investment (in particular accommodation operators) by developing a tourism-focused investment prospectus, showcasing successful case studies to inspire private sector involvement, while aligning with broader economic development goals.	Lead	Internal - Economic Development Invest Victoria RDV	TBC	



► Destination marketing and storytelling

TIMEFRAME	ACTION	COUNCIL ROLE	PARTNERS	BUDGET	ONGOING
Short *Priority action	Rollout the place brand with destination marketing and brand messages for Loddon Shire. This will underpin the messaging across tourism and investment attraction while aligning industry with one voice.	Lead	VEP COGB VV	\$20,000	
Short	Undertake a content review against the experience pillars and audiences, looking at offline and online sources, identify gaps (e.g. gold prospecting) and opportunities to syndicate content across all channels (e.g. digitise brochure content through blogs).	Lead		Operational budget	✓
Short	Work with City of Greater Bendigo to educate Bendigo Visitor information Centre staff, volunteers and tourism partners on the Loddon Shire visitor experience and how it can add to the Greater Bendigo experience to create packages and itineraries, as well as allowing dual education for Loddon staff to learn about the Bendigo region.	Partner	VEP COGB Operators	Operational budget - tourism promotion	✓
Short	Continue roll out of 'Welcome Shops' approach to innovative visitor servicing, over time building on this approach educating all businesses as part of 'Everyone's an Ambassador' programming.	Lead	Tourism Operators Businesses	Operational budget	✓
Short	Identify hero events from Bendigo, such as the Gastronomy Festival, and broader regional and state events to leverage for increased day trip visitation and pass-through traffic, developing promotional strategies to encourage visitors to explore the Loddon Shire as part of their journey. Look to strengthen existing gastronomy events in the Loddon Shire to grow brand awareness, visitation and future investment.	Partner	VEP Neighbouring councils	Operational budget	✓

► Destination marketing and storytelling (cont'd.)

TIMEFRAME	ACTION	COUNCIL ROLE	PARTNERS	BUDGET	ONGOING
Medium	Build on brand and township narratives and continue profiling locals to tell the stories of people and their place and foster connection with community (e.g. Destination Port Stephens Local Stories).	Lead	Operators Associations Businesses Dja Dja Wurrung	Operational budget - tourism promotion	
Medium	Implement the Marketing Plan to adopt a strategic approach to destination marketing, aligning with regional efforts to enhance visitor attraction.	Lead	VEP	Operational budget - tourism promotion	
Medium	Ensure storytelling within the Visitor Information Centre aligns with branding and key messages, providing training to staff to personalise stories for visitors.	Lead		Operational budget	
Medium	Rollout industry marketing toolkit to amplify the brand and educate businesses to become content creators, empowering them to tell destination stories and contribute to broader destination marketing efforts.	Lead	DJSIR VTIC	Operational budget	



► Stewardship - management and resourcing

TIMEFRAME	ACTION	COUNCIL ROLE	PARTNERS	BUDGET	ONGOING
Short *Priority action	Develop an annual work plan to support the delivery and implementation of this Strategy ensuring adequate staff (including volunteers) and funding (council budget and other sources) are in place, ensuring cross-council collaboration and support.	Lead	Internal - all Council	Operational budget	✓
Short *Priority action	Develop an industry engagement framework outlining audiences, purpose and objectives, engagement methods and approach, and key resources. This includes methods for providing ongoing regular updates on the implementation of this Strategy and evidence.	Lead		Operational budget	✓
Short	Undertake a skills matrix and create supporting professional development plans (including impact measurements) for the tourism team to build skills and knowledge to support the ongoing implementation and succession planning.	Lead	<i>Sparrowly Group</i>	<i>As part of project value-add</i>	✓
Short	Run regular events, provide tools for feedback and engage with tourism community groups and associations, fostering collaboration to streamline efforts and ensure focus. Additionally, this will allow them the opportunity to support on actions implementation for true collaboration. Community development staff can assist in enhancing efficiency and coordination among these groups.	Lead	Associations Internal - Community wellbeing	Operational budget	✓
Short	Support the delivery of the Volunteering Strategy and synergies with the broader visitor economy, proactively building relationships with volunteer committees and supporting opportunities for professional growth and skills development of volunteers.	Support	Internal - Community Wellbeing	Operational budget	✓
Short	Analyse and report on Spendmapp data to share with residents and all businesses to highlight both the value of visitor spend and local spending leakage (to encourage local spending). Utilise existing Council tools such as newsletters for effective communication.	Support	Internal - Economic Development	Operational budget	✓
Short	Implement regularly meeting and communication schedule with Dja Dja Wurrung to share visions, strategies and plans, identify priority projects (e.g. Lake Boort Scarred Tree Master Plan and Mount Kooyoora development) and ongoing opportunities for alignment.	Partner	Dja Dja Wurrung	Operational budget	
Short	Actively partner with and advocate for the Visitor Economy Partnership (VEP) to support regional tourism growth and collaboration.	Partner	VEP	Operational budget	

► Stewardship - management and resourcing (cont'd.)

TIMEFRAME	ACTION	COUNCIL ROLE	PARTNERS	BUDGET	ONGOING
Short	Through education and support, ensure that relevant Council Plan development and implementation incorporates a visitor economy lens and considers the visitor experience as an extension of the community needs (e.g implementation of Boort Lakes Masterplan).	Advocate	Internal - All Council Associations	-	✓
Short	Measure impact using an internal tool for tracking KPIs at the local level, contribute to regional metrics, and conduct regular reviews to ensure alignment with council and regional plans and industry stakeholders.	Lead	VEP Tourism Operators	Operational budget	✓
Medium	Support business training and development to build business resilience and support succession planning for long term business growth.	Advocate	DJSIR BV VEP Internal - Economic Development	Operational budget	✓
Medium	In alignment with the Welcome Shop program, implement an 'Everyone's an Ambassador' program to educate locals on promoting the Shire and exploring their own backyard, building social license and strengthening community connections to highlight tourism is everyone's business. Additionally this could include an incentive for residents bringing visitors into the destination for leisure.	Lead	Businesses Operators Residents	Operational budget	✓
Medium	Gauge community sentiment through quarterly communications and check-ins to ensure ongoing alignment and address concerns related to tourism initiatives.	Lead	Businesses Operators Residents	Operational budget	✓
Medium	Develop a local grant strategy to proactively secure external funding for tourism-related projects, reducing reliance on council budgets and supporting strategic initiatives.	Lead	VEP DJSIR	Operational budget	



► Measuring success

An ongoing approach to monitoring and reporting against the Action Plan is recommended for continuous improvement, using results and stakeholder feedback to refine actions and ensure a robust, grassroots-driven Visitor Economy Strategy that evolves effectively over time. The following outlines success measures against the Strategic Priorities and various sources.

Enhancing the visitor experience

Visitor satisfaction surveys: Track satisfaction levels with different experiences, services and events.

Online reputation management: Gauge visitors' likelihood to recommend the destination across online reviews.

Spending: Track average spend per visitor against key activities, as well as resident leakage spend.

Businesses: Track business product and experience development and refinement of existing experiences.

Destination marketing and storytelling

Website analytics: Track visits, click through and conversions across the website.

Social media metrics: Track engagement rates, follower growth, and content reach on Loddon Shire channels and key champion operators.

Campaign performance: Metrics like ad impressions, click-through rates (CTR) and cost per acquisition (CPA).

Stewardship - management and resourcing

Environmental indicators: Measure visitor impacts on natural sites (e.g. waste generation, wildlife impacts).

Community sentiment: Track community attitudes towards tourism growth and its impacts.

Sustainable practices adoption: Percentage of operators with sustainable certifications or initiatives.

Data collection methods may include visitor surveys at key venues (e.g. visitor information centres) or through post-visit emails (e.g. post event) to gather insights, and secondary data sources like the VEP and operator data to track metrics such as occupancy rates and booking trends.

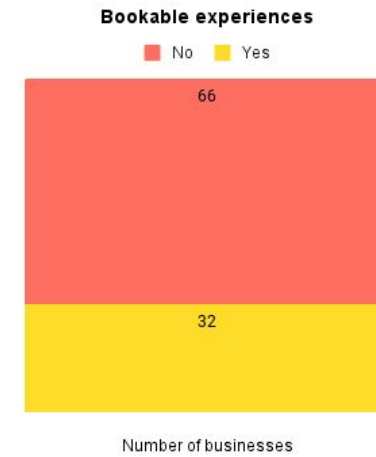
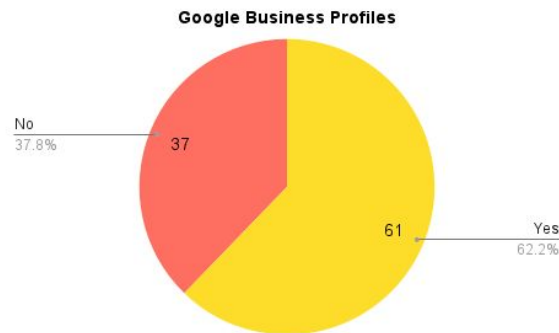
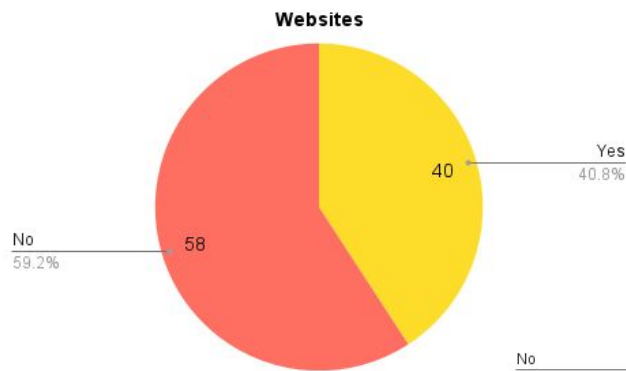
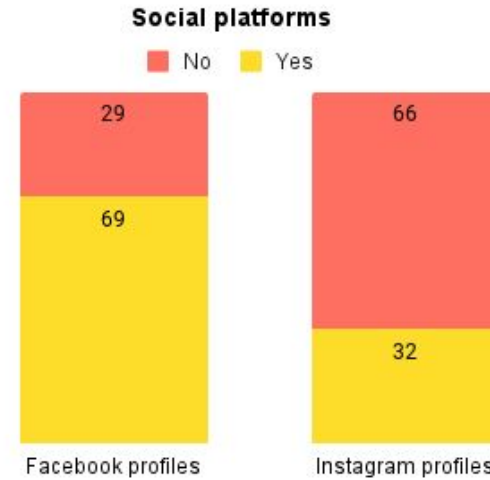
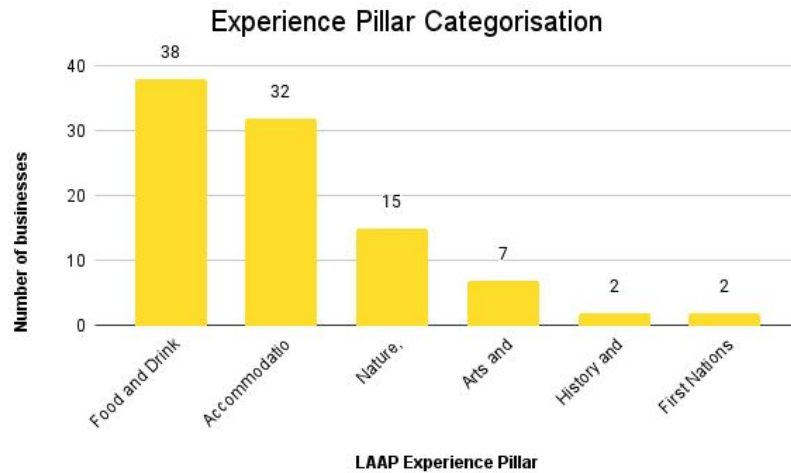
Reporting frequency includes quarterly tracking of short-term indicators, annual assessments of overall progress and community impact, and seasonal analysis to understand peak and off-peak performance. This includes developing a reporting and communication plan to share findings and outputs with external and internal stakeholders to build transparency and engagement, while sharing key metrics and showcasing successes.



Appendices

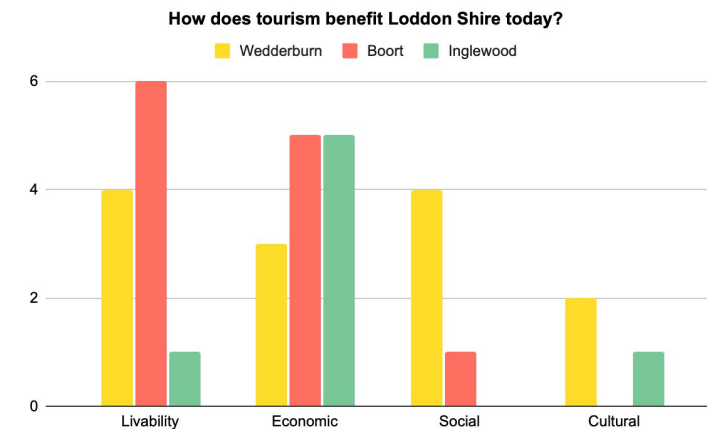
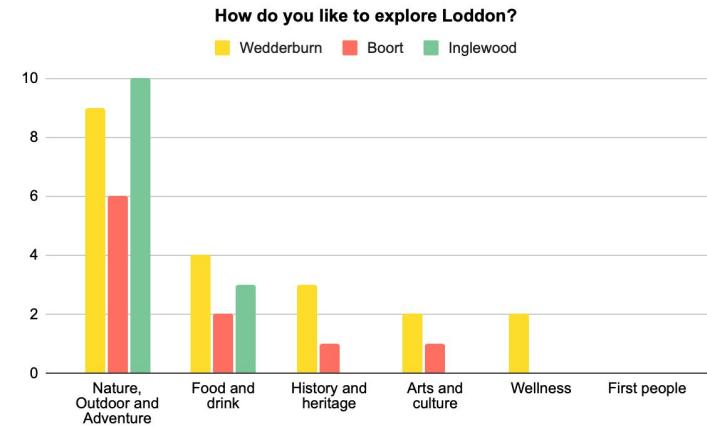


► **Product Audit and Tourism Readiness Indicator - summary charts**



► Community sentiment - additional summary

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE BENEFITS OF TOURISM IN THE LODDON SHIRE?	# YES
Improved infrastructure, facilities and services	7
Preservation and promotion of local culture and heritage	7
Opportunities for local businesses to thrive	7
Diversification of the local economy with economic growth and job creation	6
Increased visibility, reputation and recognition of the area	6
Environmental conservation and sustainability efforts	6
Enhanced community pride, cohesion and local investment	5
Increasing the appeal for people to move to the area	5
Increased demand for local food and dining options	5
Support for local events and festivals	5
Greater community engagement in planning and development	4
Development of recreational and leisure facilities	4
Attraction of investment and new businesses	4
Cultural empowerment and opportunities for inclusivity	3
Improved transportation and accessibility	3



► Visitor servicing - online and offline findings

Based on a visitor servicing review, key gaps were identified. There is inconsistency and out of date signage across the Loddon Shire, as well as a lack of signage at key attractions, for example directional and interpretative signage (e.g. Mt Coorong).

Online visitor servicing

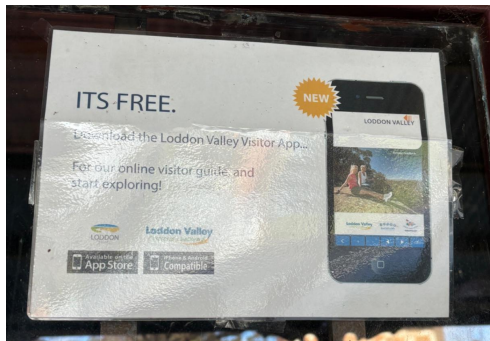
- Website:
 - Easy to use and navigate, however the information provided is not current (product availability)
 - No clear destination messaging on the home page
 - Limited bookable product.
- Social media channels:
 - Good mix of operators and experience pillars featured with an engaging content of a balanced use of video and imagery
 - Captions are well-written with consistent posting every 2-3 days
 - Engagement on comments is low.
- Google search analysis of search term phrases:
 - Bendigo frequently appears in search results for regional attractions and day trips, while Loddon Shire mentions are limited and often in specific contexts connected to other regions (e.g. Bendigo)
 - Loddon Shire natural assets, like the Loddon River and bird-watching spots, are mentioned occasionally but not as primary features
 - Loddon Shire has low visibility compared to Bendigo, highlighting the need for targeted content to boost its presence in regional tourism searches.

Offline visitor servicing (see images on next page)

- Wedderburn Visitor Information Centre (VIC):
 - The Wedderburn VIC, managed by Loddon Shire, is co-located with the Wedderburn Neighbourhood House, a block from the main street
 - Co-location creates confusion for visitors, mixing tourism information with unrelated community support materials (e.g. suicide and mental health awareness).
- Static visitor information stands and other information outlets, including Welcome Shop program:
 - Located at town entry points, points of interest, amenity blocks and major retail precincts
 - Signage, branding, maps and area information is inconsistent and outdated.
- Print collateral:
 - Official Visitors Guide
 - Loddon Valley Region Map
 - Seasonal flyers
 - Fact sheets and flyers available at the VIC.

► Visitor servicing - online and offline findings (cont'd.)

The following is a sample of photos taken from regional immersion showcasing the inconsistency in visitor information signage.



▶ Visitor servicing - Welcome Shop program

The Welcome Shop program expands the visitor servicing reach across the entire Shire to complement the accredited Visitor Information Centre in Wedderburn and support the visitor experience with the introduction of visitor information outlets.

Seven venues and businesses are currently delivering the Welcome Shop Program:

- Bridgewater Post Office
- Newbridge General Store
- Tarnagulla Cafe 101 and Post Office
- Eucalyptus Distillery Museum
- Boort Newsagency
- Mitiamo General Store
- Pyramid Hill Store.

Whilst these serve to support visitors to the region, they also act as a hub for tourist information for locals and residents who want to learn more about the Loddon Shire. The Welcome Shops are easily identified by A-frame signage and features a distinct brochure stand and specific visitor information.

Business owners have received training on how they can educate and inspire visitors to stay in the region and disperse, sharing their own stories about the experiences and providing tips and insights.



► Aspirational case studies - Destination Marketing

Orange 360, Local Tourism Organisation

The Orange 360 model takes a visitor centric approach to marketing, going beyond the LGA boundaries.

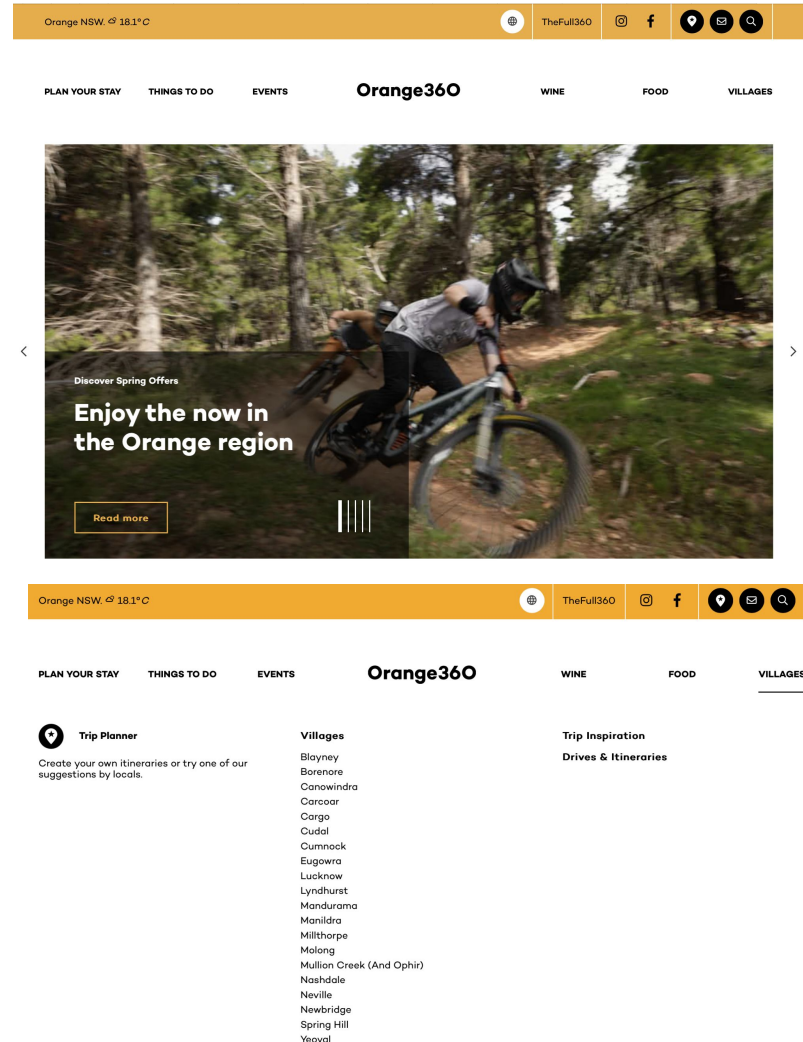
Orange is the hub, however the region is made up of a collection of small towns and villages, under multiple LGA's that come together to market under a regional umbrella.

This approach maximises resources and delivers increased cut through especially for smaller localities such as Blayney and Cabonne Shire.

The region has similar experience offerings to Loddon and Greater Bendigo, with a collection of historic towns and villages, food and wine, agriculture, arts and culture, gold prospecting and a central hub of the City of Orange.

A similar approach could be taken through the new VEP, with development of regional positioning and marketing assets to leverage off the hero destination of neighbouring Bendigo.

Being part of a collective, coordinated regional marketing approach can deliver more value and greater return than positioning as a stand alone destination. It also provides increased opportunities for industry development and capability building.



► Aspirational case studies - Destination Marketing

Berri Barmera Council, South Australia

Berri, renowned for its horticulture, is a prime water sports destination and a gateway to exploring the Riverland region of South Australia, including Barmera, known for its wartime history and agricultural innovation.

Council supports tourism through town beautification, recreational spaces, events, and two visitor information centers, costing \$354,000 annually (excluding project funding). They partner with Destination Riverland and Regional Development Australia to boost local tourism and business.

They are a larger LGA than Loddon, however are close to the border for intra and interstate visitation into South Australia. TRA research identified that Berri Barmera attracted 346,809 domestic visitors in 2021/22 which was a 42% increase in the ten years since 2011/12.

Opportunities to learn from include:

- Leveraging and maximising RTO and government funding
- Maximising investment in community infrastructure and events to benefit both residents and visitors
- Growth in visitation leveraging neighbouring hubs and pass-through or transient visitors
- Product and experience development and growth (river, agritourism and accommodation).



► Aspirational case studies - Events

Riverlights Festival, Maitland NSW

The Riverlights Cultural Festival, led by Maitland City Council, activates the levee precinct on the banks of the Hunter River and activate the Levee precinct in the Maitland CBD. Celebrating local food, music, and culture, the festival has grown from a single evening to a full week of events, engaging community groups and businesses to bring the levee to life.

Targeted at both locals and visitors, this event offers a chance to experience diverse cultures through activities such as live music and dancing, language classes, cooking demonstrations, food events, and lantern making. The event culminates with a finale including lantern flotilla, music dance and dynamic light show. Neighbour LGA, Singleton Shire, run a similar event; the [Firelight Festival](#).

Opportunities to learn from include:

- Apply this model for events showcasing the river or multicultural events (e.g. Pyramid Hill)
- Starting small as an extension of the Inglewood Alive Festival and build over time
- Evening events encourage overnight visitors stays.



Opportunities



► Aspirational case studies - Experiences

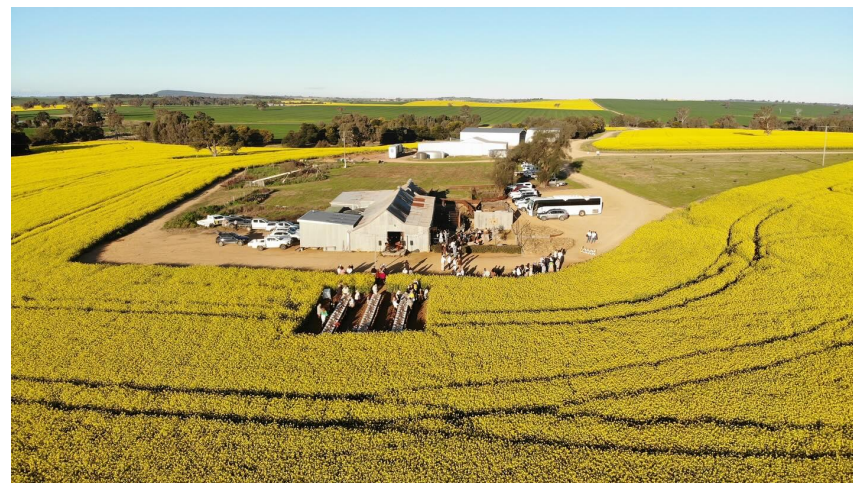
Canola field experiences, Central West NSW

Canola fields explode with vibrant yellow flowers, with great vantage points (and lots of different ways) to take in the dazzling spectacle. Across the NSW Central West, a range of experiences for visitors to immerse themselves in the fields of gold are offered. These include:

- Photograph spots canola flowers
- Rustic maze and twilight dinner ([Glencara](#))
- [Balloon Joy Flights](#)' hot air balloon journey across the fields, which finishes with a Champagne breakfast or [Goldrush Ballooning](#) offers one-hour sunrise flights over golden fields.
- [Fly Oz](#)'s Cowra Scenic Canola Flight gives visitors a bird's-eye view of the golden fields for 30, 60 or 90 minutes.
- [Canola Trail](#) - drive route itinerary.

Opportunities to learn from include:

- Sightseeing tours
- Photography
- Accommodation offerings
- Trail itineraries
- Canola field activations and activities.



Opportunities



► Aspirational case studies - Activations

Indigenous Interpretative Garden, Central Goldfields

The Indigenous Interpretative Garden, next to the Central Goldfields Art Gallery, was collaboratively designed with Dja Dja Wurrung community representatives and DJANDAK, featuring culturally significant artworks and plantings. Named *garingilang gatjin wii* (water and fire garden in Dja Dja Wurrung language), it includes traditional rockwells and grinding grooves guided by Elders (see [designs here](#)). Jointly funded by the Victorian Government and Council, the garden fosters reconciliation, inviting the community to celebrate and learn about Dja Dja Wurrung culture. It supports First Peoples-led experiences, aligning with the Experience Victoria 2033 strategy.

Opportunities to learn from include:

- Working collaboratively with Dja Dja Wurrung
- Space for residents and visitors to enjoy
- Connect with First Nations culture.



Opportunities



Public Toilet activations, National

Public toilets are staples for visitors when travelling in regional areas, with many scoping out drive trips with rest stops in mind. A key landmark for many to stop at is usually a Visitor Information Centre. This provides an opportunity to leverage and develop public amenities to make them stand out and create a fun experience for visitors and residents alike.

There are even awards for the best toilet. The [Southern Downs Dunny Dash Art Trail](#) provides visitors with a map of decorated public toilets (watch a video [here](#)).

Opportunities to learn from include:

- Expanding Birds Eye View Murals across Wedderburn and more broadly across the region
- Arts and culture activations
- Improve visitor servicing and wayfinding.



Opportunities



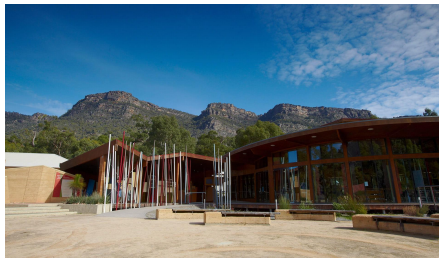
► Aspirational case studies - Visitor Servicing

Brambuk The National Park and Cultural Centre, The Grampians

Brambuk, located in the Grampians National Park (Gariwerd), offers visitors a chance to connect with the history and culture of the Jadawadjali and Djab Wurrung people. Brambuk provides park information, walking trails, and access to ancient Aboriginal rock art. Visitors can also explore the gift shop, which features Indigenous products and park maps. Brambuk works in close collaboration with five Aboriginal communities ensuring that the centres programs, cultural displays, and educational offerings authentically represent and preserve the traditions and stories of the Jadawadjali and Djab Wurrung peoples. The Centre is currently closed for upgrades.

Opportunities to learn from include:

- Co-partner visitor servicing with First Nations
- First Nations connection to culture and produce for visitors.



Opportunities



Ned Kelly Discovery Hub and Visitor Information Centre, Glenrowan

Located in Glenrowan, the Ned Kelly Discovery Hub and Visitor Information Centre is the gateway to exploring nearby townships and immersing in Australia's bushranger history. The centre offers interactive exhibits and cutting-edge technology that bring Ned Kelly's last stand to life. Visitors can explore the dramatic siege through immersive storytelling, personal accounts, and a unique viewing platform overlooking key historical sites. The hub's engaging displays and vibrant storytelling offer a deep dive into one of Australia's most iconic and debated historical events.

Opportunities to learn from include:

- Visitor information centre with connections to historical past - e.g. gold rush history
- Co-purpose located VIC
- Visitor interpretive displays and education.



Opportunities





SPARROWLY GROUP

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.

Loddon Shire Quarterly Report

October - December 2024



Highlights:

- Peter FitzSimons Author Talk
- Lee Kofman Memoir Writing Workshop
- Works of Wonder Sorcery for Seniors

Priority 1: Children and Young People

Early Years Programs

- Agency Storytime session: 8 held – 191 attendees
- Outreach Storytime session: 8 held – 117 attendees

The Christmas-themed Storytime sessions held at the the **Boort** and **Inglewood** library agencies, as well as during outreach sessions at **Pyramid Hill Playgroup**, **Serpentine Playgroup**, and **Wedderburn Playgroup** were a success. Families joined in the festive fun with stories, favourite Christmas songs, lots of jingling bells. These special events were a perfect way to wrap up a busy and rewarding year of Storytime sessions.

Loddon Shire Statistics Overview

Loddon Shire			
	Total this Quarter 2023-24	Total this Quarter 2024-25	Total YTD
Loans including eLibrary	6,958	9,193	16,221
Visits in person	4,560	3,905	7,653
New members	16	13	32
Programs & events	25	23	52
Program attendance	345	402	808

Narrative: Overall loan activity, including physical loans, auto renewals, and eLibrary usage, increased (approx. 30%) in the second quarter of 2024-25, despite fewer in-person visits compared to the same period last year. This decline in visits may be attributed to the growing popularity of the eLibrary and the implementation of auto renewals in November 2024. Program attendance also rose, reflecting successful community engagement efforts and the alignment of programs with community needs and interests.



Inglewood Library Agency, School holiday program: Robotics Coding Fun

Priority 2: Lifelong Learning

Digital Literacy

In October, the **Dingee Library Agency** hosted an engaging adult program where participants learned to design personalised greeting cards using Canva's intuitive tools, exploring tips for customising templates and incorporating their own images.

Priority 4: An Informed Community

Author Talk

In December, the **Wedderburn Library Agency** welcomed author Peter FitzSimons for an engaging talk about the local hero Albert Jacka, whose bravery during World War I made him a national icon. The event was a memorable occasion for the community, with a morning tea, book

Loddon Shire Quarterly Report

October - December 2024



sales and a signing session allowing attendees to meet the author and his wife, Lisa Wilkinson.



Peter Fitzsimons author talk



Works of Wonder: Seniors Magic Show.

Priority 5: Connecting People

Writing Workshop

In October, the **Wedderburn Library Agency** hosted the Memoir for Seniors writing workshop as part of the Loddon Shire Seniors Festival. Writer and author Lee Kofman led the session, inspiring participants to reflect on their lives and craft engaging stories from their memories. The workshop provided a supportive space for seniors to explore their personal histories, offering valuable techniques to bring their experiences to life on the page.

Magic Show

In October, as part of the Loddon Shire Seniors Festival, the **Inglewood Library Agency** was host to a Works of Wonder: Sorcery for Seniors event, presented with artistic flair by the mischievous master of magic, Elios Simonetti. The event fostered a sense of community while providing an engaging and enjoyable experience for everyone involved.

Feedback:

Works of Wonder: Sorcery for Seniors "Elio was great, we really enjoyed this, we will definitely come along to something like this again. Please send us information for any future events."; "Thanks for organising this event, it's fantastic, such a great event for the Inglewood community. It's a shame more people didn't come"

Serpentine Playgroup Storytime: "Thank you for our Storytimes, the kids are so engaged and they actually sit and listen."

Boort Storytime: David and Polly have been a wonderful fortnightly highlight for our Pre-Schoolers...Best wishes to all for Christmas and the New Year, Vikki (Boort Pre-School Teacher).

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.

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.

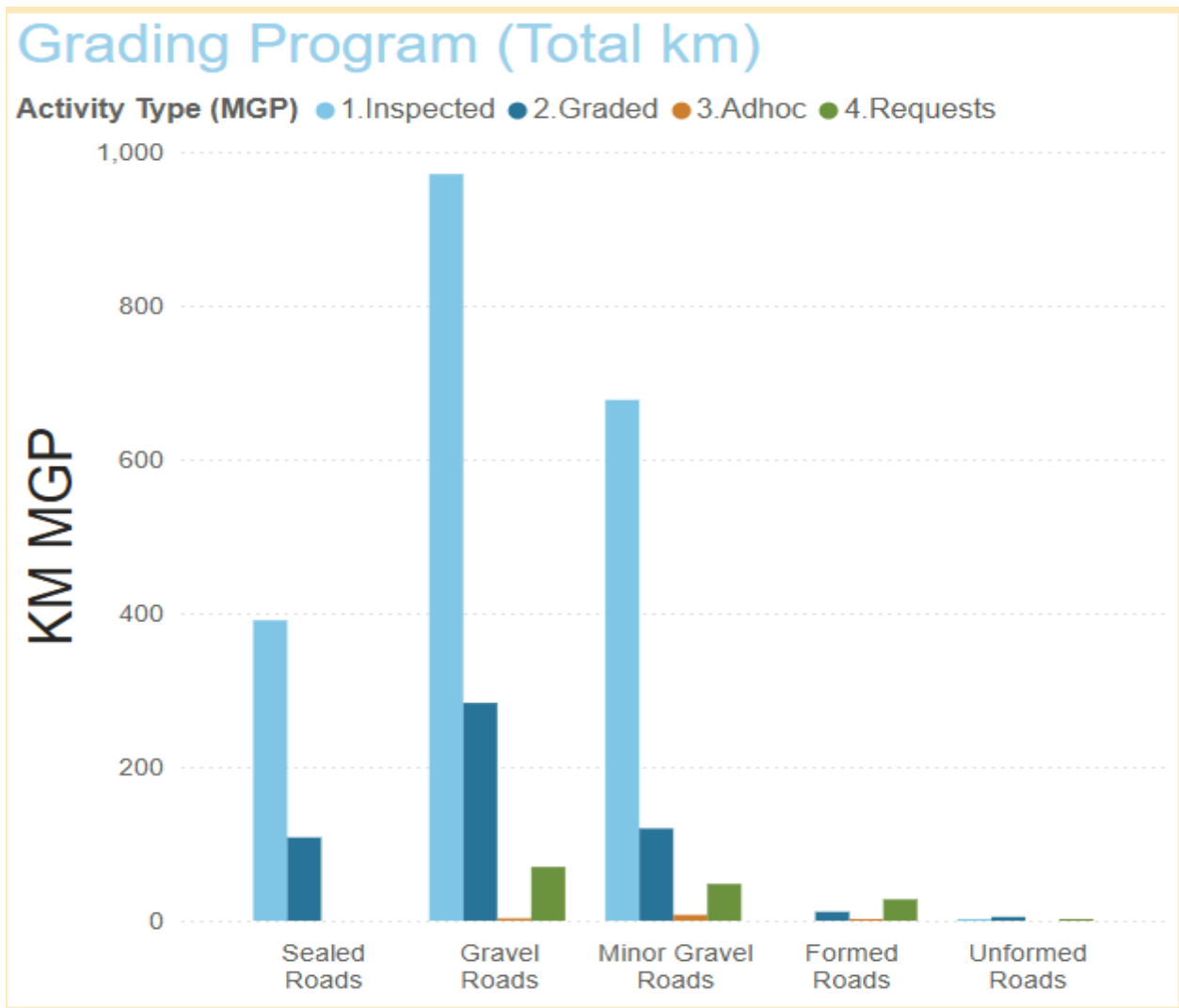
Table 3: Maintenance grading program

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.

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/DISCUSSIONStaff 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.

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

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
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.

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/DISCUSSIONPlanning 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

Quarter 2 of the 2024-2025 financial year				
Month	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

Applications being processed in the quarter

Oct to Dec 2024

Number of Applications
20

Number	Lodged	Site Address	Site Address Suburb	Status	Development Description	Applicant Name	Applicant Organisation
5407	10/12/2018	16 Park Street	Bridgewater on Loddon	Further Information	two lot subdivision and earthworks	Dave Edwards	
5808		6 Main Street	Bridgewater on Loddon	New Application	Extension and alterations to shop front	Patrick O'Toole	Bridgewater Bakehouse
5842		52 Brooke Street	Inglewood	New Application	Liquor Licence	Smyth David	
5893	10/05/2023	Road Reserve, Newbridge Road	NEWBRIDGE	Advertising Complete	Native vegetation removal (for road safety upgrades)	Bridgewater Public Caravan Park	
5909		17 Days Road	Mysia	New Application	Use and development of a dwelling	Jack Russell	
5955		292 Thompsons Road	Dingee	New Application	subdivide the land into two lots.	Shaw Land Surveys	
5970	26/08/2024	Harpers Lane	Wedderburn	Further Information	Use and development of the land for a dwelling	Jamie Constantine	
5973	16/05/2024	465 Osborne Road	Barraport	Advertising	Use and development of a poultry farm (free range broiler farm, up to 400,000 birds in eight free range broiler sheds) and associated buildings and works including a managers residence.	Mr Fernando Ferreira	Spirecom Pty Ltd
5978		Lot 39 Fenton's Creek-Whela Road	Fentons Creek	New Application	Remove and change conditions on the issued planning permit	Australian Mining and Exploration Title Services (AMETS)	
5991	21/08/2024	Lot 9A Swales Lane	Bridgewater	Further Information	Use and development of the land for a dwelling	Rod Hinton	
5996	12/08/2024	308 Yando Swamp Road	Yando	Advertising	Earthworks associated with upgrading irrigation systems and native vegetation removal	Sawers Farms	
6000	14/08/2024	4073 Bendigo-Pyramid Road	Dingee	Further Information	Replacement Machinery Shed	Neil Lister	
6011	22/10/2024	Sullivan Street	Inglewood	Ready For Decision	Construct a fence under the Heritage Overlay	Glen Ballinger	
6015	7/11/2024	Lot 1 Old Tarnagulla Road	Newbridge	Referral	Development of a Storage shed (store)	David Treharne	
6016	29/01/2025	Pyramid Hill Caravan Park & Lions Park East, 114-124 Victoria Street	Pyramid Hill	Advertising	Two lot subdivision and altering of access to Transport Zone 2	Mark Carter	Price Merrett Consulting Pty Ltd
6030	17/12/2024	Vacant Land, Boort-Wedderburn Road	Wedderburn	Further Information	Development of a storage shed	Mark Osuch	
6031	9/01/2025	27 Greens Lane	Llanelly	Referral	Extension to an existing dwelling in the Farming Zone	Penno Drafting and Design	
6032	9/01/2025	63 Newbold Street	Wedderburn	Further Information	Use and development of the land for a dwelling	Anne Johnston	
6035	30/01/2025	12 Lyndhurst Street	Bridgewater on Loddon	Preliminary Assessment	Development of two shipping containers in a Heritage Overlay	Raychelle Bartlett	
6036		163 Longs Road	Serpentine	New Application	Construction of a hay shed	Entegra Signature Structures	

Planning Applications completed in the Quarter

1 October 2024 - 31st December 2024

Decisions
17

App Number	Lodged	Site Address	Locality	Status	Development Description	Applicant Name	Applicant Organisation
5521	22/10/2024	565 Calivil Mail Road	Calivil	Application Complete	Buildings and works (new milking parlor 120-bale rotary system, holding pens, 40,000 litre milk silos x3, offices x4, toilets x3, storage rooms x3, vet room, equipment room, locker-room, breakroom, laundry room and truck loading area) associated with the use of the land for an intensive dairy farm	Calmo Farms	
5613	2/08/2024	3421 Bridgewater-Maldon Road	Newbridge	Application Complete	A changed footprint with new kitchen added on	Andrew Simpson	
5969	12/04/2024	4577 Bridgewater-Maldon Road	Bridgewater	Notice Of Decision	Retrospective application for the use and development of the land accommodation (camping and caravan - four existing cabins) and an application for the development of a storage shed, relocation of an existing shed, and creation of new access to a Transport Zone 2	Grant Austin	Austin Earthmoving
5978	1/07/2024	Lot 39 Fenton's Creek-Whela Road	Fentons Creek	Application Complete	Use of the land for an extractive industry (gravel quarry) and associated works under the Farming Zone	Australian Mining and Exploration Title Services (AMETS)	
5993	30/07/2024	110 Bobs Lane	Dunolly	Application Complete	Development of a carport under the Environmental Significance Overlay	Grant Andrews	
6004	3/09/2024	58 Fantasy Road	Bridgewater	Application Complete	Development of the land for an aircraft hangar associated with the use of the land for aircraft maintenance	Spiire Pty Ltd	
6009	18/09/2024	565 Calivil Mail Road	Calivil	Application Complete	Installation of private treated effluent pipeline	Planright Surveying Pty Ltd	
6010	19/09/2024	37 Eldon Street	Bridgewater on Loddon	Application Complete	Demolition of existing dwelling and front fence	Jay Bowen	
6012	20/09/2024	29 Sporting Flat Road	Dunolly	Application Complete	Development of a outbuilding (shed) less than 100 metres from a waterway in the Rural Living Zone and buildings and works in the Environmental Significance Overlay	Michael McHugh	
6013	24/09/2024	12 High Street	Wedderburn	Application Complete	Externally paint a dwelling under a Heritage Overlay	Vikki & Barry Woodward	
6014	18/11/2024	24 Barber Street	Pyramid Hill	Application Complete	Two lot subdivision & creation of a carriageway easement	Goulburn Murray Rural Water	
6016	4/10/2024	Pyramid Hill Caravan Park & Lions Park East, 114-124 Victoria Street	Pyramid Hill	Application Complete	Two lot subdivision and altering of access to Transport Zone 2	Mark Carter	Price Merrett Consulting Pty Ltd
6017	9/10/2024	Lot 9 Market Street	NEWBRIDGE	Application Complete	Buildings and works associated with the section 2 use (store)	CV Sheds Pty Ltd	
6018	23/10/2024	1 Verdon Street	Inglewood	Application Complete	New side Fence	Mr Samuel Marston	
6020	6/11/2024	Lot 1-4 Brooke Street	Inglewood	Application Complete	Demolition of the existing building and associated works	Loddon Shire Council	
6021	8/11/2024	84 Mileham Road	Inglewood	Application Complete	Development of a building (shed) within 100 metres of a waterway	Lynn Brain	
6022	12/11/2024	Vacant land, Lot 14 &15 Greig Street	Korong Vale	Application Complete	Use and development of the land for a store (storage shed) and water tank	Colin Elvey	

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.

Report	Discussion points
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.
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.

13 URGENT BUSINESS

In accordance with Council's Governance Rules, Clause 56 provides that at a scheduled or special meeting of Council, business that is not included in the agenda notice must only be considered if no more than one Councillor is absent and the Council resolves that the matter is urgent.

Despite this requirement, a matter that is not included in the agenda notice must not be considered at a Council meeting if it will:

- (a) directly and significantly affect the exercise of a person's rights;
- (b) alter the Council Plan or the budget; or
- (c) commit the Council to expenditure exceeding \$20,000.

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

Confirmed this.....day of..... 2025