



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

Date: Tuesday, 28 May 2024

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 23 April 2024
2. Council Meeting of 23 April 2024
3. Council Forum of 14 May 2024.

REPORT

This report seeks Council confirmation of Minutes from the April 2024 Council Briefing and Council Meeting, and the May 2024 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 records of the following as detailed within this report:

1. Council Briefing 23 April 2024
2. Council Forum 14 May 2024.

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 following Council auspiced meetings as detailed within this report:

1. Council Briefing 23 April 2024
2. Council Forum 14 May 2024.

Meeting details	Briefing
Date	23 April 2024
Councillor Attendees	Cr Holt (Mayor) Cr Beattie Cr Jungwirth Cr Murphy Cr Straub
Staff/ Stakeholder representatives	1. Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer 2. Brett Flavell, Acting Director Community Wellbeing 3. Steven Phillips, Director Operations 4. Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate 5. Lisa Clue, Governance Manager 6. Christine Coombes, Executive Services Officer – Item 1 and 2 below
Item(s) discussed.	1. Objections to be heard, 2 – 6 Kerr Street Wedderburn 2. Objection to be heard, 12 – 14 Allen Street, Korong Vale 3. Federal Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability 4. General Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit and Risk Committee Recruitment • 2024/25 Draft Budget • Inglewood Community Sports Centre Master Plan
Conflict of Interest Disclosures – Councillor/ officer making disclosure	Nil
Councillor/officer left room	n/a

Meeting details	Forum
Date	14 May 2024
Councillor Attendees	Cr Holt (Mayor) Cr Beattie Cr Jungwirth Cr Straub
Staff/ Stakeholder representatives	<p>7. Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer</p> <p>8. Wendy Gladman, Director Community Wellbeing</p> <p>9. Glenn Harvey, Acting Director Operations</p> <p>10. Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate</p> <p>11. Lisa Clue, Manager Governance</p> <p>David Stretch, Manager Tourism and Economic Development – Items 1, 2 and 9 below</p> <p>Christine Coombes, Executive Services Officer – Item 1 below</p> <p>Carolyn Stephenson, Senior Strategic Planner and Louise Johnston, Statutory Planning Officer – Item 2 below</p> <p>Inece Bray and Ian Gumley (LG Valuation Services) and Justin Ryan (Valuer General Victoria – Item 3 below</p> <p>Deanne Caserta, Manager Financial Services and Julie Ritchie, Revenue Coordinator – Items 3 and 4 below</p> <p>Ben Bainbridge, Kate Maddock and Sae Patil (Otium Planning Group) – Item 5 below</p> <p>Orrin Hogan, Manager Community Partnerships – Items 5 – 8 below</p> <p>Claire Harrison, Recreation Officer – Item 5 below</p> <p>Laura Naughton, Recreation Officer – Items 5 and 8 below</p> <p>Danai Fadgyas and Christian Demetriou, CoFutures – Item 6 below</p> <p>Nicole Taylor, Aged Care and Inclusive Communities Coordinator – Items 6 and 7 below</p>
Item(s) discussed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Economic Development Strategy – Project Update 2. Loddon Planning Scheme Review, 2023 3. 2024/25 Property Valuations 4. Section 181 Sales Update – Sale of properties for unpaid rates and charges 5. Recreation, Open Space and Aquatic Strategy – Engagement Findings Report 6. Inclusive Communities Plan Update 7. Fair Access Policy 8. Aquatic Facilities Management Contract Extension 9. Tourism and Economic Development – Quarterly Activity Report 10. General Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 years of Loddon • Federal Budget 2024-25 • Inquiry into local government funding and services • Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Bill 2024 • General 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: Christine Coombes, Executive Services Officer
Authoriser: Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer
Attachments: 1. Resolutions acted upon since the April 2024 Council Meeting

RECOMMENDATION

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

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

REPORT

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

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

Of the ten actions generated from April 2024 Council meeting resolutions, nine have been completed and one is progressing.

Resolutions acted upon since the April 2024 Council Meeting

Meeting	Officer/Director	Section	Subject
Council 23/04/2024	Coombes, Christine Fitzgerald, Lincoln	Decision Reports	2-6 Kerr Street, Wedderburn - Intention to sell
RESOLUTION 2024/57			
Moved: Cr Dan Straub			
Seconded: Cr Wendy Murphy			
That Council:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acknowledge the community submissions received; 2. Remove the property at 2-6 Kerr Street, Wedderburn from the property disposal list; 3. Note that Council periodically reviews its entire property portfolio and this property will be considered again at the next review; and, 4. Write to the submitters advising them of Council's decision. 			
CARRIED			
06 May 2024 8:52am Colls, Renae - Reallocation			
Action reassigned to Coombes, Christine by Colls, Renae - Responsible Officer			
06 May 2024 3:57pm Coombes, Christine			
Submitters were notified of the Council resolution. The property has been removed from the current disposal of surplus land listing, with a notation added for the property to be included in the next review, with reference to the Council resolution date and detail.			
06 May 2024 4:00pm Coombes, Christine - Completion			
Completed by Coombes, Christine (action officer) on 06 May 2024 at 4:00:16 PM - Complete			

Resolutions acted upon since the April 2024 Council Meeting

Meeting	Officer/Director	Section	Subject
Council 23/04/2024	Coombes, Christine Fitzgerald, Lincoln	Decision Reports	12-14 Allen Street, Korong Vale - Intention to sell
RESOLUTION 2024/58			
Moved: Cr Neil Beattie			
Seconded: Cr Dan Straub			
That Council			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sell 12-14 Allen Street, Korong Vale, within 10% of the independent valuation price as attached to this report, and Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to undertake the necessary administrative actions to complete the sale. 			
CARRIED			
06 May 2024 8:53am Colls, Renae - Reallocation			
Action reassigned to Coombes, Christine by Colls, Renae - Responsible Officer			
06 May 2024 3:49pm Coombes, Christine			
Notification of the Council resolution has been provided to objectors. The property has been listed for sale. Administration sale proceedings will be undertaken by the GEO.			
06 May 2024 3:55pm Coombes, Christine - Completion			
Completed by Coombes, Christine (action officer) on 06 May 2024 at 3:55:04 PM - Complete			

Resolutions acted upon since the April 2024 Council Meeting

Meeting	Officer/Director	Section	Subject
Council 23/04/2024	Clue, Lisa Stedman, Michelle	Decision Reports	Delegation Review - Council to the Chief Executive Officer
RESOLUTION 2024/59			
Moved: Cr Linda Jungwirth			
Seconded: Cr Neil Beattie			
That Council resolves:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To delegate to the person holding, acting in or performing the duties of Chief Executive Officer the powers, duties and functions set out in the attached <i>Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer</i>, subject to the conditions and limitations specified in that instrument. 2. The instrument comes into force immediately when signed by the Chief Executive Officer and Mayor. 3. On the coming into force of the instrument, all previous delegations to the Chief Executive Officer are revoked. 4. The duties and functions set out in the instrument must be performed, and the powers set out in the instrument must be executed, in accordance with any guidelines or policies of Council that it may from time to time adopt. 			
CARRIED			
02 May 2024 5:05pm Clue, Lisa - Completion			
Completed by Clue, Lisa (action officer) on 02 May 2024 at 5:05:17 PM - Delegation document has been signed and witnessed, captured into Loddon Content Manager (LCM) and communicated to relevant staff.			

Resolutions acted upon since the April 2024 Council Meeting

Meeting	Officer/Director	Section	Subject
Council 23/04/2024	Caserta, Deanne Stedman, Michelle	Decision Reports	Fees and Charges for the Year 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
<p>RESOLUTION 2024/60</p> <p>Moved: Cr Dan Straub Seconded: Cr Wendy Murphy</p> <p>That Council</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Approves the Fees and Charges for the year spanning 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 for the purposes of seeking public comment with the Draft Budget; Provide preliminary notification of residential accommodation charge changes to tenants. <p style="text-align: right;">CARRIED</p> <p>30 Apr 2024 1:39pm Caserta, Deanne Document placed on website for public comment and advertisements placed in relevant newspapers.</p> <p>30 Apr 2024 1:40pm Caserta, Deanne - Completion Completed by Caserta, Deanne (action officer) on 30 April 2024 at 1:40:57 PM - Document placed on website for public comment and advertisements placed in relevant newspapers.</p>			

Resolutions acted upon since the April 2024 Council Meeting

Meeting	Officer/Director	Section	Subject
Council 23/04/2024	Caserta, Deanne Stedman, Michelle	Decision Reports	Seeking Feedback for the 2024/25 Draft Annual Budget
RESOLUTION 2024/61			
Moved: Cr Linda Jungwirth			
Seconded: Cr Wendy Murphy			
That Council:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. seek feedback on the Draft Annual Budget in accordance with the Community Engagement Policy 2. adopt the proportion of rates raised within various valuation categories as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Production to have a differential rate 12% lower than the General (Residential, Commercial and Other) differential rate 3. agree that the above distribution of rates raised demonstrates fairness and equity across the municipality 4. implement a differential rate to be struck between categories of Rural Production and General as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General (Residential, Commercial and Other) - 0.19408 Cents in the Dollar of Capital Improved Value • Rural Production - 0.17083 Cents in the Dollar of Capital Improved Value 5. apply a Municipal Charge of \$243 to all properties, except where an exemption has been granted for a Single Farm Enterprise under the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i> 6. apply a Garbage Charge of \$401 per Residential Garbage Service (140 Litre Bin) and \$545 per Commercial Garbage Service (240 Litre Bin) 7. apply a Kerbside Recycling Service Charge of \$151 per service (240 Litre Bin) 8. create a 'Flood Restoration Reserve' within the Financial Reserves Policy v11, using the transfer to and from detailed within this Council Report 9. alter the Draft Annual Budget to include a transfer to the 'Flood Restoration Reserve' of \$2.50 million. 			
CARRIED			
30 Apr 2024 1:40pm Caserta, Deanne			
Document placed on website for public comment and advertisements placed in relevant newspapers.			
30 Apr 2024 1:41pm Caserta, Deanne - Completion			
Completed by Caserta, Deanne (action officer) on 30 April 2024 at 1:41:02 PM - Document placed on website for public comment and advertisements placed in relevant newspapers.			

Resolutions acted upon since the April 2024 Council Meeting

Meeting	Officer/Director	Section	Subject
Council 23/04/2024	Colls, Renae Fitzgerald, Lincoln	Decision Reports	ESTABLISHING FORMAL POSITIONS OF COUNCIL POLICY V1
<p>RESOLUTION 2024/62</p> <p>Moved: Cr Dan Straub Seconded: Cr Neil Beattie</p> <p>That Council adopts the Establishing Formal Positions of Council Policy.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">CARRIED</p> <p>29 Apr 2024 11:39am Colls, Renae - Completion Completed by Colls, Renae (action officer) on 29 April 2024 at 11:39:53 AM - Policy finalised and published onto Council's website.</p>			

Meeting	Officer/Director	Section	Subject
Council 23/04/2024	Fitzgerald, Lincoln Fitzgerald, Lincoln	Decision Reports	Federal Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability
<p>RESOLUTION 2024/63</p> <p>Moved: Cr Dan Straub Seconded: Cr Wendy Murphy</p> <p>That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Authorise the Mayor to finalise a submission to the Federal Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability on behalf of Loddon Shire Council; and, 2. That the submission be generally in accordance with the issues outlined within this report. <p style="text-align: right;">.CARRIED</p> <p>20 May 2024 10:54am Colls, Renae Draft submission is in progress</p>			

Resolutions acted upon since the April 2024 Council Meeting

Meeting	Officer/Director	Section	Subject
Council 23/04/2024	Cooper, Adam Phillips, Steven	Decision Reports	C606 - Tarnagulla Footpath Renewal Project
<p>RESOLUTION 2024/64</p> <p>Moved: Cr Linda Jungwirth Seconded: Cr Wendy Murphy</p> <p>That Council</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Award Contract 606 – Tarnagulla Footpath Renewal Project to Maine Civil Pty Ltd; Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to undertake the necessary administrative actions to complete the contract documents. <p style="text-align: right;">CARRIED</p> <p>07 May 2024 8:48am Cooper, Adam Advice on awarding passed onto procurement. Award letter sent and agreement being created to be sent out for signing.</p> <p>07 May 2024 8:49am Cooper, Adam - Completion Completed by Cooper, Adam (action officer) on 07 May 2024 at 8:49:49 AM - Award of contract passed to procurement, award letter sent out and agreement being created for signing by both parties.</p>			

Resolutions acted upon since the April 2024 Council Meeting

Meeting	Officer/Director	Section	Subject
Council 23/04/2024	Stedman, Michelle Stedman, Michelle	Confidential Items	Appointment of Audit and Risk Committee Independent Member
RESOLUTION 2024/51			
Moved: Cr Linda Jungwirth Seconded: Cr Neil Beattie			
That Council appoint Amber Currie as an Independent Member of the Audit and Risk Committee for a four-year term from 1 May 2024 to 30 April 2028.			
CARRIED			
13 May 2024 4:32pm Stedman, Michelle - Completion			
Completed by Stedman, Michelle (action officer) on 13 May 2024 at 4:32:14 PM - Ms Amber Currie appointed as Independent Member of the Loddon Shire Council Audit and Risk Committee via formal letter 26 April 2024.			

Meeting	Officer/Director	Section	Subject
Council 23/04/2024	Colls, Renae Fitzgerald, Lincoln	Confidential Items	First Right of Refusal - 2 St Arnaud Road, Wedderburn
RESOLUTION 2024/52			
Moved: Cr Dan Straub Seconded: Cr Wendy Murphy			
That Council:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. authorise the Chief Executive Officer to purchase the former Wedderburn Police Station at 2 St Arnaud Road, Wedderburn in accordance with the Valuer General Victoria's final valuation; and, 2. authorise the purchase of this property to be funded from the Land and Buildings reserve. 			
CARRIED			
29 Apr 2024 10:58am Colls, Renae - Completion			
Completed by Colls, Renae (action officer) on 29 April 2024 at 10:58:38 AM - progress has been made with the purchase of the property			

8 MAYORAL REPORT

8.1 MAYORAL REPORT

File Number: 02/01/001
Author: Lisa Clue, Manager Governance
Authoriser: Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer
Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Mayoral Report.

REPORT

Mayor Holt will present a verbal report at the meeting.

Loddon Campaspe Councils	
Municipal Association of Victoria	
Murray River Group of Councils	
Rural Councils Victoria	
Audit and Risk Committee	
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

9 COUNCILLORS' REPORT

9.1 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

File Number: 02/01/001
Author: Lisa Clue, Manager Governance
Authoriser: Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer
Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Councillors' reports.

REPORT

Each Councillor will present a verbal report at the meeting.

Cr Beattie

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 Straub

North Central Local Learning and Employment Network	
Section 65 Community Asset Committees:	
East Loddon Community Centre	
Pyramid Hill Memorial Hall	
Other Council activities	
Date	Activity

Cr Jungwirth

Australia Day Committee	
Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance	
Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee	
North Central Goldfields Regional Library	
Other Council activities	
Date	Activity

Cr Murphy

Calder Highway Improvement Committee	
Local Government Women’s Charter	
Healthy Minds Network	
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 FINANCE REPORT FOR THE QUARTER ENDING 31 MARCH 2024**

File Number: FOL/22/4399
Author: Deanne Caserta, Manager Financial Services
Authoriser: Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate
Attachments: 1. Finance Report for the quarter ending 31 March 2024

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

1. receives and notes 'Finance Report for the quarter ending 31 March 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 2023/24 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 2023/24.

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

A report was presented and adopted in April 2021 that recommended that Council be provided with finance reports on a quarterly basis. The only exception is when changes to the Council Meeting timetable result in the Council Meeting occurring before the completion of the end of month finance procedures.

The last quarterly report presented was for the December 2023 quarter at the February 2024 Council Meeting. The 2022/23 full financial result was presented to Council at the August 2023 Council Meeting.

BACKGROUND

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

The information is in the format provided in the adopted 2023/24 Budget, and includes operating results, capital expenditure and funding sources. The report also includes a cash flow statement and the 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

Budgeted Surplus

Council's budgeted cash surplus has increased by \$1.06M from December 2023 to **\$7.93M**. The main variations include the increase to the Local Roads Program for 2023/24 of \$1.5M.

Income Statement (revenue)

Council's year to date (YTD) operating revenue received (\$25.59M) is at 46% of total revised budget, and 55% of the revised YTD budget. Revenue brought to account for the third quarter was **\$3.39M**. Fees and charges, non-recurrent operating grants and recurrent capital grants actuals are lagging behind YTD budget, whereas other income types such as reimbursements, recurrent operating grants and interest income are leading ahead of YTD budget.

Income Statement (expenditure)

Council's YTD operating expenditure of \$28.27M is at 44% of total revised budget. Expenditure for this quarter totalled **\$6.99M**, including \$2.15M in payments to creditors and contractors. Creditors, contractors and utilities are tracking behind expected budget expenditure and no areas at the moment are tracking ahead. The most significant variances are contractors and creditors.

Capital Works

The revised budget for capital works is \$29.9M and is 31% (\$9.34M) expended in financial terms for the current financial year, and 45% expended against the revised YTD budget. Works for the quarter totalled **\$1.71M**.

The main variations within capital expenditure relate to:

- 'Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program' (LRCIP) projects (\$2.12M) which have not yet started; some contractors have been engaged and are expected to commence soon.
- Plant and fleet replacement program (\$750K) with many items on order but delivery has been delayed due to supply issues.
- Council funded infrastructure projects (\$834K) have started, however due to priority of flood restoration work and weather conditions during 23/24 summer period, this has put some projects behind.

Balance Sheet

Council has a cash total of \$41.3M with \$5.1M in general accounts. Total debtors at the end of the March 2024 are \$1.74M (December 2023 were \$1.8M), this includes \$1.76M in rates. Sundry debtors total \$93K with invoices outstanding for 90 or more days relating to community wellbeing debtors and local community groups totalling approximately \$91K. Towards the end of the month Council received the next Roads to Recovery income payment of \$1.83M, at the time of reporting, the invoice was yet to be raised to offset this payment. This is why the full debtors balance is low at the end of March 2024.

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 2023/24.

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

RISK ANALYSIS

The provision of regular and accurate finance reports to Council minimises the risk of Council not delivering projects 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 has resulted in many operational staff being diverted to respond or 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 variance between budget and delivery.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

There has been considerable consultation internally 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 MARCH 2024



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INTRODUCTION

At the start of March, the Civica Altitude product, councils new finance system, went live. This is a big milestone in a process that has taken many months and implementation of some parts will continue to roll out. The 2024/25 Draft Budget has also been underway with Council resolving to advertise for public comment at the April Council Meeting.

1 CASH SURPLUS POSITION

1.1 Budget revisions

Since 31 December 2023, the surplus has increased from \$6.88M to \$7.93M. Notes around major variances are included below:

Opening Surplus (Position as at 31 December 2023)	\$ 6,878,336
Local Roads Program adjustments	\$ 1,541,395
Department Salaries to suit changed structure	-\$ 640,000
Infrastructure program adjustments	\$ 154,326
Closing Surplus (Position as at 31 March 2024)	\$ 7,934,057

2 INCOME STATEMENT

Variance reporting has been included in this report where variations of either 10% or \$30K occur between YTD Actuals and YTD Budget i.e where Council's financial position is compared to where Council expected to be.

2.1 Operating revenue

Total revenue brought to account for this quarter was \$3.39M. The total income raised is 46% of the total revised budget income for 2023/24. Total operating revenue YTD is \$25.59M.

2.1.1 Fees and charges

Fees and charges are behind budget by \$59K or 13%, there are no significant individual variations, rather many small amounts that add up to the variance listed.

2.1.2 Reimbursements

Reimbursements are ahead of budget by \$251K; the main variation being insurance claims received related to flood damage.

2.1.3 Non-recurrent grants (operating)

Non-recurrent grants are behind budget by \$13.68M. The main variance in this income type is the funding for the flood recovery. Initial income was received but further income will only be received as submitted claims are approved through DRFA; approvals for which Council are experiencing significant processing delays. These assessments ultimately delay expenditure also. The program is currently behind where expected therefore the income is also behind budget.

2.1.4 Recurrent grants (operating)

Operating recurrent grants are ahead of budget by \$160K, the main variation to budget is within the kindergarten activity, with higher funds received than budgeted due to an increase in enrolments and additional grant allocations for early start and school readiness funding.

2.1.5 Recurrent grants (capital)

Capital recurrent grants are behind budget by \$2.2M. The main variation to budget is for Roads to Recovery funding with the payment of \$1.8M received during late March but an invoice to

offset still to be completed. Works are underway and claims submitted as the milestones are completed.

2.1.6 Non-recurrent grants (capital)

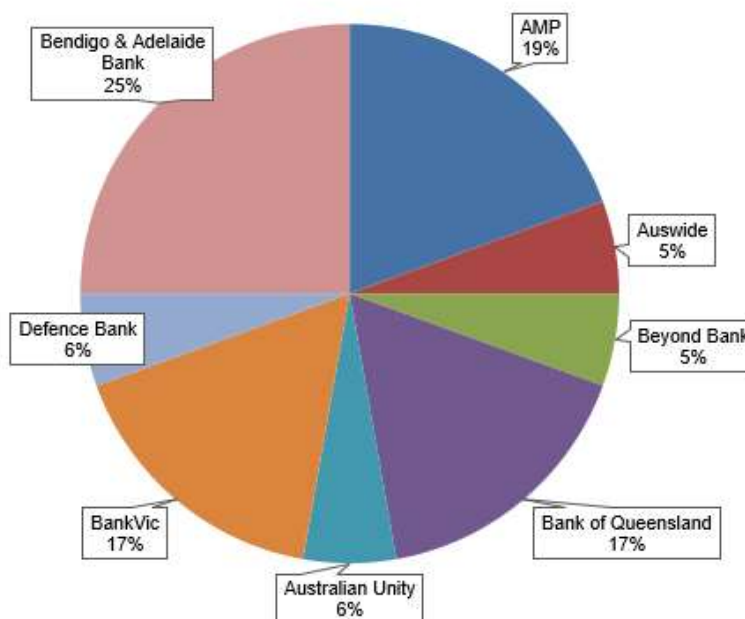
Non-recurrent grants are behind budget by \$5.7M or 47%. The main variations in this area relate to grant funded Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program (LRCI) with works well underway but a claim not made until April.

2.1.7 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 \$1.49M. Interest raised on unpaid rates amounts to \$30K. Year to date represents 93% of the total Revised Budget amount of \$1.6M. Council have increased the Revised Budget in this area but are still expected to exceed this revised amount for the financial year.

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+					\$ 7,000,000 19.4%
Auswide	A1/A					\$ 2,000,000 5.6%
Beyond Bank	A2/BBB					\$ 2,000,000 5.6%
Bank of Queensland	A2/BBB					\$ 6,000,000 16.7%
Australian Unity	A2/BBB+					\$ 2,000,000 5.6%
Westpac	AA3/AA-					\$ - 0.0%
BankVic	A2/BBB+					\$ 6,000,000 16.7%
Defence Bank	A2/BBB					\$ 2,000,000 5.6%
Bendigo & Adelaide Bank	A2/BBB+					\$ 9,000,000 25.0%
Council Funds on Term Deposit					\$36,000,000	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 on TD	Interest accrual 2022/23	YTD accrued interest	Total interest accrual	YTD interest received	Total YTD interest earned
AMP	14/07/2022	Closed	14/07/2023	365	4.35%	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 43,500	\$ 41,832	\$ 1,668	\$ -	\$ 43,500	\$ 1,668
AMP	25/07/2022	Closed	25/07/2023	365	4.45%	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 133,500	\$ 125,453	\$ 8,047	\$ -	\$ 133,500	\$ 8,047
Bank of Queensland	14/09/2022	Closed	14/08/2023	334	4.10%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 75,036	\$ 64,926	\$ 10,110	\$ -	\$ 75,036	\$ 10,110
Westpac	22/02/2023	Closed	22/08/2023	181	4.66%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 46,217	\$ 32,684	\$ 13,533	\$ -	\$ 46,217	\$ 13,533
AMP	6/09/2022	Closed	6/09/2023	365	4.35%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 87,000	\$ 70,792	\$ 16,208	\$ -	\$ 87,000	\$ 16,208
Bendigo & Adelaide Bank	12/04/2023	Closed	12/09/2023	153	4.35%	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 18,234	\$ 9,415	\$ 8,819	\$ -	\$ 18,234	\$ 8,819
Westpac	22/02/2023	Closed	22/09/2023	212	4.70%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 27,299	\$ 16,482	\$ 10,816	\$ -	\$ 27,299	\$ 10,816
Bendigo & Adelaide Bank	3/10/2022	Closed	3/10/2023	365	4.30%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 86,000	\$ 63,616	\$ 22,384	\$ -	\$ 86,000	\$ 22,384
Bendigo & Adelaide Bank	13/10/2022	Closed	13/10/2023	365	4.15%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 83,000	\$ 59,123	\$ 23,877	\$ -	\$ 83,000	\$ 23,877
Bank of Queensland	15/02/2023	Closed	15/11/2023	273	4.60%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 68,811	\$ 34,027	\$ 34,784	\$ -	\$ 68,811	\$ 34,784
Bank of Queensland	1/06/2023	Closed	30/11/2023	182	4.90%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 48,866	\$ 7,786	\$ 41,079	\$ -	\$ 48,866	\$ 41,079
Bank of Queensland	15/02/2023	Closed	13/12/2023	301	4.65%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 76,693	\$ 34,397	\$ 42,296	\$ -	\$ 76,693	\$ 42,296
AMP	11/07/2023	Closed	19/12/2023	161	5.55%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 48,962	\$ -	\$ 48,962	\$ -	\$ 48,962	\$ 48,962
Defence Bank	1/06/2023	Closed	3/01/2024	216	4.95%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 58,586	\$ 7,866	\$ 50,721	\$ -	\$ 58,586	\$ 50,721
AMP	10/01/2023	Closed	10/01/2024	365	4.60%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 92,000	\$ 43,101	\$ 48,899	\$ -	\$ 92,000	\$ 48,899
Defence Bank	13/02/2023	Closed	13/02/2024	365	4.95%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 99,000	\$ 37,159	\$ 61,841	\$ -	\$ 99,000	\$ 61,841
AMP	11/07/2023	Closed	20/02/2024	224	5.65%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 69,348	\$ -	\$ 69,348	\$ -	\$ 69,348	\$ 69,348
BankVic	1/03/2023	Closed	29/03/2024	365	5.15%	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 51,500	\$ 17,073	\$ 34,427	\$ -	\$ 51,500	\$ 34,427
AMP	18/04/2023	Closed	13/03/2024	330	4.95%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 89,507	\$ 19,800	\$ 69,707	\$ -	\$ 89,507	\$ 69,707
BankVic	18/04/2023	Open	17/04/2024	365	4.80%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 96,000	\$ 19,200	\$ 72,329	\$ 91,529	\$ -	\$ 72,329
Bank of Queensland	24/10/2023	Open	22/04/2024	181	5.10%	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 25,290	\$ -	\$ 22,216	\$ 22,216	\$ -	\$ 22,216
BankVic	4/07/2023	Open	2/05/2024	303	5.60%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 92,975	\$ -	\$ 83,156	\$ 83,156	\$ -	\$ 83,156
Bank of Queensland	24/10/2023	Open	21/05/2024	210	5.10%	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 29,342	\$ -	\$ 22,216	\$ 22,216	\$ -	\$ 22,216
Beyond Bank	6/09/2023	Open	5/06/2024	273	5.15%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 77,038	\$ -	\$ 58,414	\$ 58,414	\$ -	\$ 58,414
Bank of Queensland	24/10/2023	Open	20/06/2024	240	5.10%	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 33,534	\$ -	\$ 22,216	\$ 22,216	\$ -	\$ 22,216
Defence Bank	4/07/2023	Open	3/07/2024	365	5.75%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 115,000	\$ -	\$ 85,384	\$ 85,384	\$ -	\$ 85,384
Auswide	13/12/2023	Open	10/07/2024	210	5.35%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 61,562	\$ -	\$ 31,953	\$ 31,953	\$ -	\$ 31,953
AMP	25/07/2023	Open	24/07/2024	365	5.65%	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 169,500	\$ -	\$ 116,096	\$ 116,096	\$ -	\$ 116,096
AMP	10/01/2024	Open	10/08/2024	213	5.10%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 59,523	\$ -	\$ 22,636	\$ 22,636	\$ -	\$ 22,636
Bendigo & Adelaide Bank	21/03/2024	Open	19/08/2024	151	4.90%	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 20,271	\$ -	\$ 1,342	\$ 1,342	\$ -	\$ 1,342
BankVic	4/07/2023	Open	3/09/2024	427	5.70%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 133,364	\$ -	\$ 84,641	\$ 84,641	\$ -	\$ 84,641
AMP	19/12/2023	Open	19/09/2024	275	5.25%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 79,110	\$ -	\$ 29,630	\$ 29,630	\$ -	\$ 29,630
Bank of Queensland	21/03/2024	Open	19/09/2024	182	5.05%	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 25,181	\$ -	\$ 1,384	\$ 1,384	\$ -	\$ 1,384
Bendigo & Adelaide Bank	13/02/2024	Open	14/10/2024	244	5.02%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 67,117	\$ -	\$ 12,928	\$ 12,928	\$ -	\$ 12,928
Bank of Queensland	21/03/2024	Open	24/10/2024	217	5.05%	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 30,023	\$ -	\$ 1,384	\$ 1,384	\$ -	\$ 1,384
Bendigo & Adelaide Bank	13/02/2024	Open	13/11/2024	274	5.04%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 75,669	\$ -	\$ 12,980	\$ 12,980	\$ -	\$ 12,980
Bank of Queensland	21/03/2024	Open	21/11/2024	245	5.05%	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 33,897	\$ -	\$ 1,384	\$ 1,384	\$ -	\$ 1,384
Bendigo & Adelaide Bank	20/02/2024	Open	16/12/2024	300	5.04%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 82,849	\$ -	\$ 11,047	\$ 11,047	\$ -	\$ 11,047
Bendigo & Adelaide Bank	20/02/2024	Open	15/01/2025	330	5.02%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 90,773	\$ -	\$ 11,003	\$ 11,003	\$ -	\$ 11,003
Australian Unity	20/02/2024	Open	20/02/2025	366	5.12%	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 102,681	\$ -	\$ 11,222	\$ 11,222	\$ -	\$ 11,222
Total Interest on Investments								\$ 704,733	\$ 1,333,085	\$ 734,760	\$ 1,303,058	\$ 1,333,085
Interest on General Accounts												\$ 152,661
Total Interest												\$ 1,485,745
Interest transferred to/from externally funded projects												\$ -
Net interest on investments												\$ 1,485,745

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 shows the employee provisions (annual leave, long service leave and time in lieu) investment separately.

2.2 Operating expenditure

Total operating expenditure for the quarter was \$6.99M. The total expenditure for the quarter takes the total spend to 45% of the total revised budget expenditure for 2023/24.

2.2.1 Fuel

Fuel is currently 11% or \$112K behind budget due to some March invoices still to be entered into the system, however this is expected to still remain within YTD budget.

2.2.2 Creditors

Creditors are currently 43% or \$7.2M behind budget. The main variation to budget is flood recovery restoration works. There are projects underway, some have contracts that have been awarded but not yet commenced. To date all costs have been allocated to creditors.

2.2.3 Contractors

Contractor expenditure to date is \$1.65M which is \$9.5M behind YTD budget. The main variation within this expenditure relates to the delivery of flood restoration works (\$5.94M) via contractors. There is a budget of almost \$22M for the financial year however all works to date have been costed as creditors. Works on this restoration program have commenced with many contracts awarded and further projects out for quote.

2.2.4 Utilities

Utilities are 33% or \$159K behind YTD budget. The main variation is the pool water usage with accounts yet to be received for the last operational period.

2.3 **Operating surplus**

As a result of the variances as explained in the previous pages, the operating surplus to date is \$922K compared to a revised budget deficit amount of \$12.2M.

3 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Total capital works expenditure for the quarter was \$1.7M with the program now 31% complete in financial terms.

The total revised budget amount for 2023/24 is \$29.9M.

The main variation within capital expenditure relate to LRCI projects which have not yet been started, some contractors have been engaged and are expected to commence soon.

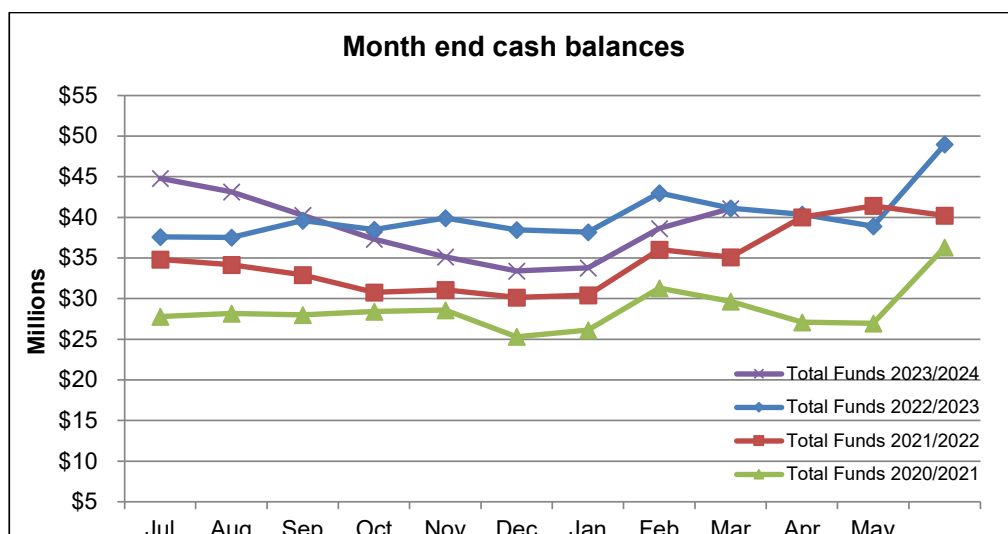
A full capital works report in detail is included in Appendix 5.

4 BALANCE SHEET

4.1 **Cash**

At the end of the month, Council’s overall cash total was \$41.3M, which includes a balance of \$5.1M in general accounts.

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



4.2 Receivables

4.2.1 Debtors

Monthly balances of the various categories of debtors for the financial year are:

Debtor category	March 2023	June 2023	December 2023	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024
Rates	1,352,514	282,458	9,401,646	8,431,449	2,149,390	1,500,488
Fire Services Property Levy	238,175	81,825	1,296,344	1,167,935	349,381	256,577
Total rates and Fire Services Property Levy	1,590,689	364,283	10,697,989	9,599,384	2,498,770	1,757,065
Sundry debtors	594,506	1,770,643	2,140,886	2,049,479	2,189,993	92,738
Community loans/advances	-	-	-	-	-	-
Long term loans/advances	-	-	-	-	-	-
Employee superannuation	-	-	1,073	4,125	1,622	1,986
Magistrates court fines	96,420	96,108	96,108	96,108	96,108	96,108
LESS provision for doubtful debts	(151,188)	(205,470)	(205,470)	(205,470)	(205,470)	(204,644)
Total	2,130,427	2,025,564	12,730,586	11,543,625	4,581,023	1,743,252

4.2.2 Rates debtors

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

Rating year	March 2023 (3/4/2023)	June 2023 (1/6/2023)	December 2023 (5/1/2024)	January 2024 (2/2/2024)	February 2024 (29/2/2024)	March 2024 (3/4/2024)
2006/07 to 2016/17	20,069	18,273	18,661	19,091	21,629	22,616
2006/07 to 2016/17 FSPL	2,684	2,509	2,517	2,563	2,592	2,587
2017/18	13,684	12,357	12,462	12,683	13,866	20,614
2017/18 Fire Services Property Levy	3,100	3,003	2,905	2,954	2,990	2,981
2018/19	18,446	17,002	16,949	17,256	17,561	26,457
2018/19 Fire Services Property Levy	4,576	4,484	4,012	4,080	4,135	4,131
2019/20	37,213	35,106	30,249	30,732	30,362	39,036
2019/20 Fire Services Property Levy	7,063	6,879	6,047	6,111	6,093	6,064
2020/21	55,416	51,469	41,255	41,829	42,193	50,835
2020/21 Fire Services Property Levy	9,601	9,179	6,851	6,968	7,013	6,981
2021/22	82,101	69,411	57,291	56,478	55,737	63,671
2021/22 Fire Services Property Levy	15,607	13,522	10,238	10,093	10,054	9,687
2022/23	1,157,099	78,839	156,113	150,857	143,961	141,138
2022/23 Fire Services Property Levy	164,029	42,248	24,085	23,213	22,304	20,561
Sub-total: arrears	269,561	243,195	209,436	210,836	214,225	255,661
Current year (outstanding but not due)	1,157,099	78,839	9,081,349	8,115,181	1,836,898	1,197,912
Fire Services Property Levy	164,029	42,248	1,227,006	1,099,298	281,382	198,734
Total outstanding	1,321,129	121,088	10,308,356	9,214,478	2,118,280	1,396,646
SUMMARY						
Total rates	1,384,028	282,458	9,414,327	8,444,105	2,162,207	1,505,339
Total FSPL	206,661	81,825	1,283,662	1,155,279	336,563	251,727
Total arrears	1,590,689	364,283	10,697,989	9,599,384	2,498,770	1,757,065

4.2.3 Sundry debtors

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

Current	\$63,616	51%
30 days	(\$83,121)	-67%
60 days	\$52,211	42%
90 + days	\$91,482	74%
Sub total routine debtors	\$124,188	100%
Government departments	(\$87,462)	
ATO return	\$56,013	
Total	\$92,738	
90 + days consists of:		
Community Wellbeing debtors	\$4,040	
Local community groups	\$10,118	
Others	\$77,325	
Total	\$91,482	

The mainstream sundry debtors (\$124K) have been broken into the amount of time they have been outstanding. At the time of this report, \$91K or 74% of that total has been outstanding for more than 90 days. Late in the quarter there was a large payment received for the next instalment of the Roads to Recovery program of \$1.8M which needs an invoice yet to be raised, this does skew results provided above. All debtors are contacted as a matter of routine.

Total outstanding sundry debtors as at 31 March 2024 are \$93K.

4.3 **Other assets**

4.3.1 Property valuations

All rateable and non-rateable supplementary valuations are included in this report.

There were 93 supplementary valuations during the third quarter of 2023/24.

Change type	Number	Site Value	Capital Improved Value	NAV
Change AVPCC	1	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Consolidation	6	\$ 1,601,000	\$ 1,665,000	\$ 83,250
Correction of area	3	\$ 90,000	\$ 91,000	\$ 4,550
Curtilage	1	\$ 10,000	\$ 357,000	\$ 17,850
Demolition	2	\$ -	-\$ 901,000	-\$ 45,050
Dwelling destroyed by fire	2	\$ -	-\$ 222,000	-\$ 11,100
Improvement	40	-\$ 1,000	\$ 23,192,000	\$ 1,159,600
New property	10	\$ 2,228,000	\$ 2,808,000	\$ 140,400
Objection	15	-\$ 841,000	-\$ 6,023,000	-\$ 303,650
Split	11	-\$ 3,201,000	-\$ 3,788,000	-\$ 189,400
Transfer	2	\$ 89,000	\$ 89,000	\$ 4,450
Grand Total	93	-\$ 25,000	\$ 17,268,000	\$ 860,900

The total rateable CIV at the end of March 2024 is now just over \$4.90B.

Valuation type	Opening Balances 1 December 2023	Supplementary Changes	Closing Balance
Site Value	\$ 3,692,252,400	-\$ 25,000	\$ 3,692,227,400
Capital Improved Value	\$ 4,886,892,300	\$ 17,268,000	\$ 4,904,160,300
NAV	\$ 246,431,515	\$ 860,900	\$ 247,292,415

4.3.2 Water rights

Council-owned water rights are valued at \$2.81M at 30 June 2023.

The rights are revalued to market at the end of each financial year.

There has been no purchases or sales of water rights for the year to date.

5 COMMUNITY PLANNING FINANCIALS

5.1 Boort community plans

Boort ward carried forward \$235K into 2023/24. With the additional \$50K allocation, \$285K was available for Boort Community Planning in the 2023/24 financial year. Of this amount, \$285K remains unspent, with \$285K available for the community planning group to allocate toward projects. Current community planning projects planned for 2023/24 are outlined below:

Boort Community Plans					ACTUALS			BUDGET		
YEAR	LEDGER	LEDGER	JOB CODE	PROJECT	2023/24 FINANCIAL YEAR			2023/24 FINANCIAL YEAR		
					INCOME	EXPENDITURE	NET COST	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	NET COST
				Income						
				Unspent allocation from previous years	\$234,684	\$0	\$234,684	\$234,684	\$0	\$234,684
				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	\$284,684	\$0	\$284,684	\$284,684	\$0	\$284,684
CURRENT	16975			Boort Community Plans Unallocated	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$284,684	\$284,684
				Total expenditure for the year	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$284,684	\$284,684
				Total amount not spent at the end of the year, and available for next year			\$284,684			\$0

5.2 Inglewood community plans

Inglewood ward carried forward \$222K into 2023/24. With the additional \$50K allocation, \$272K was available for Inglewood Community Planning in the 2023/24 financial year. Of this amount, \$262K remains unspent, with \$139K available for the community planning group to allocate toward projects. Current community planning projects planned for 2023/24 are outlined below:

Inglewood Community Plans					ACTUALS			BUDGET		
YEAR	LEDGER	LEDGER	JOB CODE	PROJECT	2023/24 FINANCIAL YEAR			2023/24 FINANCIAL YEAR		
					INCOME	EXPENDITURE	NET COST	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	NET COST
				Income						
				Unspent allocation from previous years	\$221,649	\$0	\$221,649	\$221,649	\$0	\$221,649
				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	\$271,649	\$0	\$271,649	\$271,649	\$0	\$271,649
2011/12	24804	2242954315XX	CP2110012242954315	LESS expenditure for the year						
				Bridgewater Streetscape	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2019/20	26856	2242954315XX	CP2200012242954315	Inglewood Eucy Museum Annex Alloc 2	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$79,429	\$79,429
2020/21		2242954315XX	CP2210022242954315	Inglewood Eucy Tractor Annex	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$33,185	\$33,185
2021/22		2242214305XX	CP2220022242214305	Campbells Forest Hydrology Report	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000
2021/22		2242954315XX	CP2220032242954315	Inglewood Town Hall Roof Replace	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000
CURRENT	2242214305XX			Inglewood Community Plans Unallocated	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$139,035	\$139,035
				Total expenditure for the year	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0	\$271,649	\$271,649
				Total amount not spent at the end of the year, and available for next year			\$261,649			\$0

5.3 Tarnagulla community plans

Tarnagulla ward carried forward \$244K into 2023/24. With the additional \$50K allocation, \$294K was available for Tarnagulla Community Planning in the 2023/24 financial year. Of this amount, \$190K remains unspent, with \$119K available for the community planning group to allocate toward projects. Current community planning projects planned for 2023/24 are outlined below:

Tarnagulla Community Plans					ACTUALS			BUDGET		
YEAR	LEDGER	LEDGER	JOB CODE	PROJECT	2023/24 FINANCIAL YEAR			2023/24 FINANCIAL YEAR		
					INCOME	EXPENDITURE	NET COST	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	NET COST
				Income						
				Unspent allocation from previous years	\$243,980	\$0	\$243,980	\$243,980	\$0	\$243,980
				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	\$293,980	\$0	\$293,980	\$293,980	\$0	\$293,980
				LESS expenditure for the year						
2019/20	18704	2243218605XX	CP3190012243218605	TaCPSF Laanecoorie Hall Paint	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,818	\$1,818
2019/20	18706	2243218605XX	CP3190022243218605	TaCPSF Tarnagulla Community Centre Asphalt	\$0	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$0	\$50,000	\$50,000
2019/20	26859	2243958620XX	CP3200082243958620	Newbridge Progress Park BBQ and Shelter	\$0	\$10,509	\$10,509	\$0	\$10,509	\$10,509
2020/21		2243958620XX	CP3200092243958620	TaCPSF Soldiers Memorial Park Toilets	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$30,000	\$30,000
2020/21		2243218605XX	CP3200112243218605	TaCPSF Laanecoorie Hall Paint Alloc 2	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$16,591	\$16,591
2020/21		2243958620XX	CP3210032243958620	Progress Park Fitness Station	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$15,000	\$15,000
2020/21		2243958620XX	CP3220012243958620	Grahams Lane Intersection	\$0	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$0	\$13,000	\$13,000
2021/22		2243958620XX	CP3220022243958620	Disabled Carpark Newbridge Hall	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$8,500	\$8,500
2021/22		2243958620XX	CP3220032243958620	Pavement Wimmera Hwy Newbridge	\$0	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$0	\$30,000	\$30,000
2021/22		2243958620XX	CP3220042243958620	Newbridge Hall Restoration	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
CURRENT		2243218605XX		Tarnagulla Community Plans unallocated	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$118,562	\$118,562
				Total expenditure for the year	\$0	\$103,509	\$103,509	\$0	\$293,980	\$293,980
				Total amount not spent at the end of the year, and available for next year			\$190,471			\$0

5.4 Terrick community plans

Terrick ward carried forward \$183K into 2023/24. With the additional \$50K allocation, \$233K was available for Terrick Community Planning in the 2023/24 financial year. Of this amount, \$172K remains unspent, with \$156K available for the community planning group to allocate toward projects. Current community planning projects planned for 2023/24 are outlined below:

Terrick Community Plans					ACTUALS			BUDGET		
YEAR	LEDGER	LEDGER	JOB CODE	PROJECT	2023/24 FINANCIAL YEAR			2023/24 FINANCIAL YEAR		
					INCOME	EXPENDITURE	NET COST	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	NET COST
				Income						
				Unspent allocation from previous years	\$182,569	\$0	\$182,569	\$182,569	\$0	\$182,569
				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	\$232,569	\$0	\$232,569	\$232,569	\$0	\$232,569
				LESS expenditure for the year						
2010/11	16279	2244218665XX	CP4100012244218665	Pyramid Hill Rural Water Community Areas	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2018/19	27907	2244958680XX	CP4160012244958680	P/H Lions Park Redevelopment	\$0	\$26,075	\$26,075	\$0	\$32,075	\$32,075
2019/20	18712	2244218665XX	CP4200012244218665	Mitiamo Sporting Rooms Flood Upgrade	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000
2019/20	18713	2244218665XX	CP4200022244218665	Dingee Memorial Hall Toilet	\$0	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$0	\$20,000	\$20,000
2020/21		2244218665XX	CP4210012244218665	Calivil Rec BBQ & Shelter	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2020/21		2244218665XX	CP4210022244218665	Dingee Hall Disabled Toilet	\$0	\$14,388	\$14,388	\$0	\$14,388	\$14,388
CURRENT				Terrick Community Plans unallocated	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$156,106	\$156,106
				Total expenditure for the year	\$0	\$60,463	\$60,463	\$0	\$232,569	\$232,569
				Total amount not spent at the end of the year, and available for next year			\$172,106			\$0

5.5 Wedderburn community plans

Wedderburn ward carried forward \$240K into 2023/24. With the additional \$50K allocation, \$290K was available for Wedderburn Community Planning in the 2023/24 financial year. Of this amount, \$290K remains unspent, with \$290K available for the community planning group to allocate toward projects. Current community planning projects planned for 2023/24 are outlined below:

Wedderburn Community Plans					ACTUALS			BUDGET		
YEAR	LEDGE	LEDGER	JOB CODE	PROJECT	2023/24 FINANCIAL YEAR			2023/24 FINANCIAL YEAR		
					INCOME	EXPENDITURE	NET COST	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	NET COST
				Income						
				Unspent allocation from previous years	\$240,233	\$0	\$240,233	\$240,233	\$0	\$240,233
				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	\$290,233	\$0	\$290,233	\$290,233	\$0	\$290,233
				Expenditure						
CURRENT				Wedderburn Community Plans Unallocated	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$290,233	\$290,233
				Total expenditure for the year	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$290,233	\$290,233
				Total amount not spent at the end of the year, and available for next year			\$290,233			\$0

APPENDIX 1: INCOME STATEMENT

Element	2023/24 Original Budget	2023/24 Revised Budget	2023/24 YTD Revised Budget	2023/24 YTD Actuals	2023/24 YTD Variance (YTD Budget vs YTD Actual)
Income					
69 - Statutory Fees	294,310	272,543	216,749	213,503	99%
70 - Fees & Charges	1,005,450	594,435	451,095	391,749	87%
71 - Contribution	0	30,000	32,503	40,000	123%
73 - Interest	435,000	1,635,000	1,226,247	1,516,329	124%
77 - Reimbursements	317,451	398,152	298,612	549,263	184%
80 - Rates	12,713,535	12,756,419	12,680,831	12,704,120	100%
81 - Non Recurrent Grants (Operating)	20,023,000	20,340,759	15,327,990	1,951,808	13%
82 - Recurrent Grants (Operating)	3,564,960	1,492,804	1,159,555	1,319,245	114%
83 - Recurrent Grants (Capital)	2,387,726	2,948,523	2,211,396	0	0%
84 - Non Recurrent Grants (Capital)	2,387,726	14,708,696	12,240,664	6,547,750	53%
90 - VicRoads	261,774	357,882	357,882	357,882	100%
Total Income	43,390,932	55,535,213	46,203,523	25,591,648	55%
Expenses					
01 - Labour	12,987,138	12,453,894	9,176,854	9,010,595	98%
04 - Creditors	9,168,228	23,549,354	16,578,148	9,393,774	57%
05 - Stores	46,666	47,094	34,525	12,150	35%
06 - Fuel	1,360,925	1,360,925	994,587	882,372	89%
07 - Contractors	22,491,688	14,767,011	11,165,470	1,647,434	15%
08 - Depreciation	10,308,760	10,308,760	6,872,507	6,872,507	100%
09 - Utilities	652,810	601,139	483,203	324,027	67%
25 - Grants Expenditure	392,040	392,040	289,877	126,066	43%
45 - Bad Debts Expense	0	0	0	1,560	0%
63 - Reversal of Impairment Losses	0	0	0	0	0%
Total Expenses	57,408,256	63,480,217	45,595,172	28,270,485	62%
Net Result Surplus / (Deficit)	(14,017,324)	(7,945,004)	608,352	(2,678,837)	-440%

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

APPENDIX 2: CAPITAL WORKS STATEMENT

Element	2023/24 Original Budget	2023/24 Revised Budget	2023/24 YTD Revised Budget	2023/24 YTD Actuals	2023/24 YTD Variance (YTD Budget vs YTD Actual)
Funding Decisions					
88 - Reserves Transfer From	10,443,502	27,214,038	23,044,455	23,057,731	0%
89 - Reserves Transfer To	(2,293,631)	(2,256,953)	(1,300,000)	(1,314,263)	0%
74 - Asset Sales (Capital)	471,333	682,688	682,688	598,245	88%
Total Funding Decisions	8,621,204	25,639,773	22,427,143	22,341,713	100%
Capital Expenditure					
12 - Economic Development	0	18,000	18,000	18,000	0%
21 - Caravan Parks	0	221,912	166,437	605,925	364%
41 - Community Planning - Boort	0	0	0	0	0%
42 - Community Planning - Inglewood	0	112,614	0	0	0%
43 - Community Planning - Tarnagulla	0	53,500	21,372	0	0%
44 - Community Planning - Terricks	0	11,000	11,000	5,000	45%
45 - Community Planning - Wedderburn	0	0	0	0	0%
47 - Grants & Community Planning	500,000	5,687,032	4,965,752	2,021,326	41%
49 - Swimming Pools	250,000	280,000	0	0	0%
65 - Information Technology	190,700	190,700	190,700	21,472	0%
70 - LRCI Projects	2,387,726	8,703,675	3,895,781	1,507,058	39%
71 - Council Engineering and Technical Services	0	0	0	0	0%
72 - Project & Contract Management	2,515,762	7,089,651	4,511,498	1,894,966	42%
73 - Roads to Recovery	2,387,726	2,914,478	2,665,213	640,989	24%
75 - Local Laws and Animal Management	0	102,121	0	0	0%
82 - Building & Property Maintenance	5,000	547,329	419,314	153,424	37%
84 - Plant and Fleet	2,490,440	3,990,299	3,685,299	2,372,199	64%
90 - Parks & Townships	0	0	0	96,710	0%
96 - Waste Management	0	0	0	0	0%
98 - Waterways Management	0	0	0	0	0%
Total Capital Expenditure	10,727,354	29,922,311	20,550,366	9,337,069	45%
Non Cash Adjustments					
08 - Depreciation	10,308,760	10,308,760	6,872,507	6,872,507	100%
45 - Bad Debts Expense	0	0	0	1,560	0%
63 - Reversal of Impairment Losses	0	0	0	0	0%
Total Non Cash Adjustments	10,308,760	10,308,760	6,872,507	6,874,067	100%
Accumulated surplus brought forward	0	9,852,839	9,852,839	9,852,839	100%
Net Cash Surplus / (Deficit)	(5,814,714)	7,934,057	19,210,476	27,052,715	141%

APPENDIX 3: BALANCE SHEET

	March 2024 As per trial balance	June 2024 As per adopted budget	June 2023 As per financial statements	March 2023 As per trial balance
ASSETS				
CURRENT ASSETS				
Cash and cash equivalents	\$41,301,072	\$12,560,553	\$15,992,321	\$41,320,279
Other financial assets	\$0	\$0	\$33,188,401	\$0
Trade and other receivables	\$1,743,252	\$412,696	\$2,025,564	\$2,130,427
Financial assets	\$735,180	\$0	\$717,000	\$617,491
Inventories	\$0	\$21,768	\$0	\$0
Non-current assets classified as held for sale	\$311,958	\$222,784	\$311,958	\$311,958
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	\$44,091,463	\$13,217,801	\$52,235,244	\$44,380,155
NON-CURRENT ASSETS				
Trade and other receivables	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Financial assets	\$292,782	\$284,783	\$292,782	\$295,154
Intangible assets	\$2,807,790	\$2,674,570	\$2,807,790	\$2,713,090
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	\$375,597,266	\$387,872,483	\$382,469,773	\$336,169,890
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	\$378,697,838	\$390,831,836	\$385,570,345	\$339,178,134
TOTAL ASSETS	\$422,789,301	\$404,049,637	\$437,805,589	\$383,558,289
LIABILITIES				
CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Trade and other payables	\$518,472	\$427,527	\$2,375,392	\$107,612
Trust funds and deposits	\$1,709,706	\$329,567	\$367,767	\$1,405,332
Unearned income	\$0	\$0	\$3,176,276	\$0
Provisions	\$3,259,837	\$2,730,218	\$2,836,372	\$2,864,934
Interest bearing loans and borrowings	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$5,488,015	\$3,487,312	\$8,755,807	\$4,377,878
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Provisions	\$1,246,284	\$2,156,202	\$1,773,183	\$1,246,284
Interest bearing loans & borrowings	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$1,246,284	\$2,156,202	\$1,773,183	\$1,246,284
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$6,734,299	\$5,643,514	\$10,528,990	\$5,624,162
NET ASSETS	\$416,055,004	\$398,406,123	\$427,276,599	\$377,934,128
EQUITY				
Accumulated Surplus	\$102,233,032	\$94,893,756	\$91,709,883	\$105,034,537
Asset Revaluation Reserve	\$301,850,014	\$294,682,747	\$301,850,014	\$262,232,789
Other Reserves	\$11,971,957	\$8,829,620	\$33,716,702	\$10,666,801
TOTAL EQUITY	\$416,055,004	\$398,406,123	\$427,276,599	\$377,934,128

APPENDIX 4: CASH FLOW STATEMENT

Cash flows from operating activities	Revised Budget 2023/24	YTD Actual March 2024
Rates and charges	13,267,190	11,254,396
Statutory fees and fines	255,711	158,515
User fees	1,438,587	1,724,978
Grants - operating	22,270,234	3,574,215
Grants - capital	14,834,087	3,371,474
Contributions - monetary	30,600	40,000
Contributions - non monetary	-	-
Reimbursements and subsidies	771,155	907,145
Interest received	2,346,733	786,836
Net GST refund (payable)	(208,270)	1,268,707
Trust funds and deposits taken	(18,388)	1,341,939
Payments to employees	(14,537,836)	(9,590,095)
Payments to suppliers	(40,576,569)	(14,198,007)
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	-	149,073
Other expenses	-	-
Councillors' emoluments	-	-
Internal audit remuneration	-	-
External audit remuneration	-	-
Impairment of interest free loans	-	-
Net cash provided (used in) investing activities	(126,766)	789,176
Cash flows from investing activities		
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(29,239,623)	(8,668,828)
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	-	-
Term deposits	-	33,188,401
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	(29,239,623)	24,519,573
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	(29,366,389)	25,308,749
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	49,180,722	15,992,321
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	19,814,333	41,301,072

APPENDIX 5: FULL CAPITAL WORKS

NEED TO ADD ORIGINAL BUDGET AND REVISED BUDGET INTO THIS REPORT

Account Number	2023/24 YTD Actuals March
11 - Commercial Services	293,281
12 - Economic Development	18,000
2475 - Council Land&Build Sales&Purch	18,000
21 - Caravan Parks	275,281
1910 - Caravan Park Improvement Prog	275,281
22 - Community Support	1,217,568
42 - Community Planning - Inglew ood	0
4315 - Inglew ood Community Plans - Ca	0
43 - Community Planning - Tarnagulla	0
8620 - Tarnagulla Community Plans - C	0
44 - Community Planning - Terricks	5,000
8680 - Terrick Community Plans - Capi	5,000
47 - Grants & Community Planning	1,212,568
2340 - Community Plans Strategic Fund	0
3000 - Donaldson Park Grants	1,043,674
4520 - Inglew ood Sports Centre Grants	8,300
4748 - Lake Boort Park Prec S2	27,410
5720 - Mitiamo Lighting Project	55,381
7252 - Pyramid Hill Com Centre Grants	77,803
49 - Swimming Pools	0
6500 - Pool Capital Works	0
33 - Information Management	21,472
65 - Information Technology	21,472
4245 - Information Security Baseline	21,472
6180 - PC Replacement	0
41 - Assets & Infrastructure	5,367,055
70 - LRCI Projects	2,117,948
1695 - Asbestos Removal	24,799
1590 - Bridges and Culverts Capital W	0
1725 - Building Asset Project-Capital	0
1910 - Caravan Park Improvement Prog	330,645
3000 - Donaldson Park Grants	1,199,399
3655 - Footpaths Capital Works	270,247
5720 - Mitiamo Lighting Project	175,297
7250 - Pyramid Hill Streetscape	0
7600 - Road Construction Capital Work	106,294
7630 - Road Resheets Capital Works	36,067

APPENDIX 5: FULL CAPITAL WORKS (Continued)

Account Number	2023/24 YTD Actuals March
72 - Project & Contract Management	2,562,992
1590 - Bridges and Culverts Capital W	173,897
1725 - Building Asset Project-Capital	63,560
3025 - Drainage Capital Works	3,182
3585 - Flood Mitigation PH	8,083
3586 - Flood Mitigation Brt	0
3655 - Footpaths Capital Works	74,948
4503 - Inglewood Streetscape	0
6270 - Plan & Strategy Implementation	98,981
7250 - Pyramid Hill Streetscape	659,881
7585 - Road Amenity Capital Works	0
7600 - Road Construction Capital Work	899,467
7630 - Road Resheets Capital Works	277,533
7660 - Road Safety Capital Works	0
7675 - Road Shoulder Sheet Capital Wo	303,461
73 - Roads to Recovery	661,316
1590 - Bridges and Culverts Capital W	270,484
7600 - Road Construction Capital Work	470
7620 - Road Reseals	1,203
7630 - Road Resheets Capital Works	389,159
7660 - Road Safety Capital Works	0
42 - Development & Compliance	0
75 - Local Law s and Animal Management	0
6735 - Pound Livestock	0
44 - Works	2,437,694
82 - Building & Property Maintenance	65,495
1725 - Building Asset Project-Capital	65,495
2520 - Council Property Fencing	0
84 - Plant and Fleet	2,372,199
3550 - Fleet Replacement	312,640
5685 - Minor Plant & Equipment	0
6435 - Plant Replacement	2,059,559
Grand Total	9,337,069

10.2 PLANNING APPLICATION 5957: USE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAND FOR TWO DWELLINGS AND AN ASSOCIATED OUTBUILDING IN THE RURAL LIVING ZONE

File Number: FOL/24/486
Author: Darcy Jackson, Statutory Planning Officer
Authoriser: Glenn Harvey, Acting Director Operations
Attachments: 1. **Decision Report 5957**
2. **Proposed Plans**
3. **Objection - Confidential**

This attachment is designated as confidential in accordance with Section 3(1)(f) of the *Local Government Act 2020*. It contains personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs.

contains personal contact information

RECOMMENDATION

That the Responsible Authority having considered all matters which the Planning and Environment Act, 1987, requires it to consider, decides to issue a Notice of Decision to grant a Permit for the use and development of the land for two dwellings and an associated outbuilding subject to the following conditions:

1. Layout not altered

The use and development as shown on the endorsed plans must not be altered or modified unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Responsible Authority.

2. Materials

All external materials must be non-reflective and finished in muted tones to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

3. Drainage

All stormwater discharged from the subject land shall be connected to the legal point of discharge to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority. No concentrated stormwater shall drain or discharge from the land to adjoining properties.

4. Services

Each dwelling must be connected to reticulated sewerage.

Each dwelling must be connected to a reticulated potable water supply or have an alternative potable water supply, with appropriate storage capacity, to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

Each dwelling must be connected to a reticulated electricity supply or have an alternative energy supply to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

5. Erosion

Building construction must be carried out in accordance with Construction Techniques for Sediment Pollution Control (EPA May 1991) and Control of Erosion on Construction Sites to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

6. North Central CMA Conditions

- 6.1.** The finished floor level of any new dwelling must be constructed no lower than 191.2m AHD.
- 6.2.** The area beneath the dwellings must remain unenclosed and must not be used for storage.
- 6.3.** Any new development must be setback a minimum of 30 metres from the top bank of all designated waterways in accordance with Clause 14.02-1 of the State Planning Policy Framework of the Planning Scheme.
- 6.4.** Water resistant building materials that minimise the physical effects of flooding on the sheds and their contents must be used for foundations, footings, floor and walls up to the Nominal Flood Protection Level of 191.2 metres AHD. In addition:
- a. Electrical fittings must be fixed above the Nominal Flood Protection Level of 191.2 metres AHD.
- b. All chemicals, oil, fuel, grease, waste or other potential pollutants must be stored above the Nominal Flood Protection Level of 191.2 metres AHD. Adequate storage areas and shelving should be provided for this purpose.

7. Expiry

This permit will expire if the permitted development is not started within two years of the date of this permit, or is not completed within four years of that date, or the permitted use is not started within two years of the completion of the development, or is discontinued for a period of two years. The responsible authority may extend these periods if a request is made in writing before the permit expires, or:

- Within six months afterwards if the development has not been started, or the development is complete but the use has not started, or the use has been discontinued for a period of two years.
- Within twelve months afterwards if the development started lawfully before the permit expired.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

There have been no previous Council discussion on this matter.

BACKGROUND

The application was lodged on the 27 February 2024 proposing to use and develop the land for two dwellings and associated outbuilding at Lot 10K Calder Highway Wedderburn.

The application was advertised to surrounding landowners; with one objection received.

The application was also referred internally to the Councils Environmental Health Officer with an external referral to North Central Catchment Management Authority.

In response to objections and a North Central CMA request, the application was amended on 19 April 2024 with changes to the proposed plans.

The amended application was sent to the objector with no further comments received as well as the Environmental Health Officer and North Central CMA both provided conditional consent and advice.

Officer recommendation is to issue a notice of decision to grant a planning permit.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act) the Minister of Planning delegates a municipal council power to become the planning authority for any planning scheme in force in its municipal district.

A municipal council is obligated to enforce and administer the relevant Planning Scheme and must use the scheme to determine applications. The Loddon Planning Scheme is the relevant Planning Scheme for Council. An application is referred to Council for determination, which:

- receive one or more objections, and/or
- are to be recommended for refusal by the Planning officer.

Pursuant to Section 52 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, notices were sent to owners and occupiers of adjoining land. Council has received one objection as the result of the public notification and as such, the matter is being brought to Council for determination. A decision report detailing this application has been prepared and can be found in attachment 1, the plans can be found at attachment 2. The objection is included in the decision report with the personal information removed. Attachment 3 is the same objection with the personal information intact.

The objection has been included twice, once without any personal information and a second time in confidential items including the personal information. This is to insure Council complies with its obligations for handling personal information under the *Privacy and Data Protections Act 2014*. A complete copy of the objection can be made available to the public via an appointment.

COST/BENEFITS

There are various costs associated with having a delegated Planning officer consider an application and make a recommendation as well as with the time of the Councillors to consider this recommendation.

The benefits associated with this report is the ability of Council to fulfil its requirement under law and provide the community with a statutory service that delivers well-managed and appropriate development.

RISK ANALYSIS

The risks of Council not fulfilling its statutory obligation under the Act include:

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

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Refer to the decision report (attachment 1) for further detail on the application.

LODDON SHIRE COUNCIL

DECISION REPORT 5957: Use and development of the land for two dwelling's and an associated outbuilding in the Rural Living Zone.



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SUMMARY

Application Number:	5957
Applicant:	Karanjit Singh Goraya
Subject Land:	Lot 10K, Section 5, Calder Highway Wedderburn
Owner:	Karanjit Singh Goraya
Zone:	Rural Living Zone
Overlay(s):	None
Existing use:	Vacant
Proposal:	Use and development of the land for two dwelling's and associated outbuilding in the Rural Living Zone

The following dot points provide a summary of the application:

- The application was lodged on the 27 February 2024 proposing to use and develop the land for two dwellings and associated outbuilding at Lot 10K Calder Highway Wedderburn.
- The application was advertised to surrounding landowners; with one objection received.
- The application was also referred internally to the Councils Environmental Health Officer with an external referral to North Central Catchment Management Authority.
- In response to objections and North Central CMA request, the application was amended on 19 April 2024 with changes to the proposed plans.
- The amended application was sent to the objector with no further comments received.
- North Central CMA and the Environmental Health Officer provided conditional consent and advice.
- Officer recommendation is to issue a notice of decision to grant a planning permit.

1 RECOMMENDATION

That the Responsible Authority having considered all matters which the Planning and Environment Act, 1987, requires it to consider, decides to issue a Notice of Decision to grant a planning permit 5957 for use and development of the land for two dwellings and an associated outbuilding subject to the following conditions:

1. Layout not altered

The use and development as shown on the endorsed plans must not be altered or modified unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Responsible Authority.

2. Materials

All external materials must be non-reflective and finished in muted tones to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

3. Drainage

All stormwater discharged from the subject land shall be connected to the legal point of discharge to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority. No concentrated stormwater shall drain or discharge from the land to adjoining properties.

4. Services

Each dwelling must be connected to reticulated sewerage.

Each dwelling must be connected to a reticulated potable water supply or have an alternative potable water supply, with appropriate storage capacity, to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

Each dwelling must be connected to a reticulated electricity supply or have an alternative energy supply to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

5. Erosion

Building construction must be carried out in accordance with Construction Techniques for Sediment Pollution Control (EPA May 1991) and Control of Erosion on Construction Sites to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

6. North Central CMA Conditions

6.1. The finished floor level of any new dwellings must be constructed no lower than 191.2m AHD.

6.2. The area beneath the dwellings must remain unenclosed and must not be used for storage.

6.3. Any new development must be setback a minimum of 30 metres from the top bank of all designated waterways in accordance with Clause 14.02-1 of the State Planning Policy Framework of the Planning Scheme.

6.4. Water resistant building materials that minimise the physical effects of flooding on the sheds and their contents must be used for foundations, footings, floor and walls up to the Nominal Flood Protection Level of 191.2 metres AHD. In addition:

a. Electrical fittings must be fixed above the Nominal Flood Protection Level of 191.2 metres AHD.

b. All chemicals, oil, fuel, grease, waste or other potential pollutants must be stored above the Nominal Flood Protection Level of 191.2 metres AHD. Adequate storage areas and shelving should be provided for this purpose.

7. Expiry

This permit will expire if the permitted development is not started within two years of the date of this permit, or is not completed within four years of that date, or the permitted use is not started within two years of the completion of the development, or is discontinued for a period of two years.

The responsible authority may extend these periods if a request is made in writing before the permit expires, or:

- Within six months afterwards if the development has not been started, or the development is complete but the use has not started, or the use has been discontinued for a period of two years.
- Within twelve months afterwards if the development started lawfully before the permit expired.

2 DISCUSSION

2.1 The Site & Locality

The subject site adjoins the Calder Highway on the northern approach to the Wedderburn township area. It is zoned Rural Living and is not affected by any overlays. The total area of the site is approximately 7540sqm with a 40 metre wide frontage with the Calder Highway on its eastern boundary. The Nardoo Creek runs through the middle of the property splitting the site in two and inundating the property during flood events. There is some large trees and dense vegetation along the creek and on the western side. The eastern side of the creek is relatively cleared and is where the development is proposed.



Figure 1: Subject Site (Source- Loddon Pozi)

The land surrounding the site varies with typical rural living style layout on lots to the north, west and directly to the south, while to the east are several higher density allotments containing mainly single dwellings and associated outbuildings. The main township area and commercial precinct of Wedderburn is situated approximately 1.5 kilometres south of the site.

There is an existing access from the Calder Highway to the subject site that will be used.

2.2 Site History

Planning permit 5626 was lodged on 27 November 2020 for a 12 x 12 storage shed. The application was withdrawn on the 03 December 2020 as a storage shed on a vacant allotment in the Rural Living Zone would not be supported.

2.3 Proposal

The applicant seeks approval for use and development of land for two dwellings and associated outbuilding.

The proposal is for two identical dwellings containing, 2 bedrooms, living area, bathroom and kitchen, with an external deck. The dwellings will have a total area 37sqm each. Both dwellings will have a colourbond roof in Deep Ocean colour, with the fascia, gutters and window frames to also be finished in this colour. The weatherboard cladding will be painted white. Both dwellings will have a gable roof design starting at 15 degree pitch and increasing to a 35 degree pitch.



Figure 2: Proposed dwelling elevation

The dwellings will have clearance underneath as shown above with this area not to be enclosed to allow floodwater to disperse unobstructed. Both dwellings will also be connected to the reticulated sewer on the opposite side of the Calder Highway.

An outbuilding also proposed at the rear of the dwellings, this will consist of a 12 metre long x 4 metre wide garage with an eave height of 2.8 metres. One end of the garage will have a 2.7 metre wide roller door. The garage will be colourbond finish in Woodland Grey colour.

2.4 Loddon Planning Scheme

2.4.1 Zone

The subject site is within the Rural Living Zone. Clause 35.03 of the scheme states that the purpose of the Rural Living Zone is:

- *To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
- *To provide for residential use in a rural environment.*
- *To provide for agricultural land uses which do not adversely affect the amenity of surrounding land uses.*
- *To protect and enhance the natural resources, biodiversity and landscape and heritage values of the area.*
- *To encourage use and development of land based on comprehensive and sustainable land management practices and infrastructure provision.*

Under Clause 35.03-1, a permit is required for development of dwelling(s) on land less than 8 hectares and under Clause 35.03-4:

- Building and works associated with a Section 2 Use.

2.4.2 Overlay

No overlays covering the subject site.

2.4.3 Relevant Particular Provisions

52.29- Land Adjacent to the principle road network.

The purpose of this provision includes

- To ensure appropriate access to identified roads.

A permit is required under Clause 52.29-1 to:

Create or alter access to:

– A road in a Transport Zone 2.

There is an existing access point to the Calder Highway that will not be altered.

2.4.4 Permit trigger

Under clause 35.03-1 of the Rural Living Zone, a permit is required to use land for a dwelling(s) on lots less than 8 hectares.

Under Clause 35.03-4 of the Rural Living Zone, a permit is required to construct buildings and works associated with a section 2 use (dwelling).

2.4.5 Restrictive Covenant

No restrictive covenants exist on this site.

2.4.6 Planning Policy Framework

The following section considers the relevant sections of the Planning Policy Framework for this application.

Clause 12.03-1S- River and riparian corridors, waterways, lakes, wetlands and billabongs

To protect and enhance waterway systems including river riparian corridors, waterways, lakes, wetlands and billabongs.

The strategies for clause 12.03-1S includes:

- Avoiding impeding the natural flow of waterways and future flood events

The Nardoo Creek does inundate areas of the site during flood events. Locating the proposed buildings a minimum of 30 metres from the creek as per the policy guideline will help reduce the impact on the waterway and flood flow. This was also a request of North Central CMA.

Clause 13.03-1S- Floodplain management

- To assist the protection of:
 - Life, property and community infrastructure from flood hazard, including coastal inundation, riverine and overland flows
 - The natural flood carrying capacity of rivers, streams and floodway's
 - The flood storage function of floodplains and waterways
 - Floodplain areas of environmental significance or of importance to river, wetland or coastal health

The subject site is not covered by a Land Subject to Inundation as flood mapping has not been formalised for this area. However council planners are aware the site is inundated from the Nardoo Creek during flood and storm events.

North Central CMA flood eye tool shows the front of the property to be on the edge of the flood extent with flood depth ranging from 0.10m to 0.40m in this area. The access is not expected to be blocked by floodwater allowing the occupants to leave via the Calder Highway in the event of a significant flood event.

Clause 16.01-3 Rural Residential Development

- To identify land suitable for rural residential development.

2.4.7 Local Planning Policy Framework

The following section gives consideration to be the relevant sections of the Local Planning Policy Framework for this application.

02.03-1- Settlement

In the rural areas of the Shire, the majority of residents live on agricultural properties. Rural residential living is a popular lifestyle option in the south of the Shire, afforded by the proximity to Bendigo and attractive undulating agricultural and bush settings. Significant areas of rural residential living exist around Inglewood, Bridgewater, Wedderburn, Moliagul, Dunolly, Laanecoorie, Tarnagulla and Newbridge.

The strategic directions for settlement include:

Locate rural living development in areas close to urban centres with access to infrastructure and services.

02.03-6- Housing

There is strong demand for rural living in the Shire. Rural living must be located and managed to protect agricultural industries, agricultural land, the natural resource base and the viability of the existing townships.

Rural living use and development needs to facilitate quality residential living that is supported by necessary infrastructure, such as power and all weather road access, as well as ready access to the goods and services provided in the urban centres of the Shire. Isolated rural living development should be avoided as it imposes undue cost on Council in provision of services.

Council's strategic directions for housing include the following:

- Support rural living where agricultural industries, agricultural land, natural values and the viability of the existing townships can be protected and enhanced.
- Discourage unplanned rural living development throughout rural areas.

2.5 Referrals

Table 1: External referrals

North Central Catchment Management Authority (Sec 52)	Conditional consent and advice.
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Table 2: Internal Referrals

Environmental Health Officer (sec 52)	Conditional consent: Each dwelling must be connected to reticulated sewer.
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2.6 Public Notification

The application is not exempt from the notice requirement. Pursuant to Section 52 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, the following forms of advertising were undertaken:

- Notices were sent to owners and occupiers of adjoining land (including opposite and surrounding).

One objection was received in response to the application. The matters raised in the objection are summarised below and with Officers response in italics:

- When the area is known to be subject to flooding - as recently experienced how is it possible for the shire to even consider allowing dwellings to be constructed on the site?

Dwellings can still be considered on land that is subject to inundation, it is about managing the impacts on flooding and reducing the susceptibility of the development to flooding. The shire relies on North Central CMA as the floodplain management authority for flood levels and flood risk for the site. They have provided conditional consent with changes to the design of the dwelling including clearance underneath and construction of floor level no lower than 191.2m AHD.

- Apart from the obvious issues for the owners a flood event would likely place emergency workers attempting to assist at risk.

The dwellings are located close to the access point to the Calder Highway. Flood data shows the water does not compromise the access point to the site from the Calder Highway allowing the occupants to exit the site as well as emergency services to enter the site in a flood event. The floodwater at the front of property is of lower depth and reduced flow velocity therefore not expected to be of high risk to emergency workers.

- As stakeholders of dwellings on the opposite side of the highway we are very diligent in watching water levels during heavy rain and have in the past been on high alert and ready to act at our properties. The photos and footage we have of the recent flooding were taken because of our concern for our residents and our property. The idea of a dwelling being in direct line of what we witnessed seems inconceivable.

The proposed dwellings and outbuilding are not expected to result in the obstruction or redirection of floodwater across the Calder Highway. Development in floodplains does need to be carefully managed to minimise the potential flood risk to life, health and safety associated with development. The dwellings have been sited in an area with the lowest flood hazard on the site and the alternative design, including raised floor level and an enclosed subfloor will help reduce its susceptibility to flooding.

3 ASSESSMENT

3.1 Planner assessment

Is the land capable of accommodating the proposed dwellings and associated outbuildings?

The land has a total area of approximately 7540 square metres with only the front section of the property capable of being developed. The proposed dwellings have small footprints of 37sqm each with the proposed outbuilding having a total area of 48sqm.

The site is constrained with the Nardoo Creek cutting the property in two and reducing the area viable for building. The siting of the dwellings 5.6 metres and the garage 14 metres from the front boundary will ensure adequate setback to the creek thereby reducing flood risk and the developments impact on the waterway.

Under clause 35.03-2 of the Loddon Planning Scheme a lot used for a dwelling must meet the following requirements:

- Access to the dwellings must be provided via an all-weather road with dimensions adequate to accommodate emergency vehicles.
- Each dwelling must be connected to reticulated sewerage, if available. If reticulated sewerage is not available, all wastewater from each dwelling must be treated and retained within the lot in accordance with the requirements of the Environment Protection Regulations under the Environment Protection Act 2017 for an on-site wastewater management system.
- Each dwelling must be connected to a reticulated potable water supply or have an alternative potable water supply with adequate storage for domestic use as well as for fire-fighting purposes
- Each dwelling must be connected to a reticulated electricity supply or have an alternative energy source.

There is an existing driveway/crossover from the Calder Highway which is considered appropriate and will not be altered. Council's Environmental Health Officer has requested that the two dwellings connect to the reticulated sewerage which is available on the opposite side of the Calder Highway. The request to use a septic and wastewater treatment system on site would not be possible due to the site constraints and proximity of the Nardoo Creek. Reticulated potable water is available also on the opposite side of the Calder Highway, the applicant can connect to the reticulated or alternatively install rainwater tanks on the site. Reticulated electricity is also available on the opposite side of the Calder Highway.

The site is considered capable of accommodating the proposed dwellings and outbuilding, and can be sustained given the suitable access and availability of reticulated services to the site.

Will the dwelling be impacted by flooding from the Nardoo Creek?

The site is at risk of flooding from the Nardoo Creek, however there is no overlay covering the property to control this. The application was referred to North Central CMA for comment. Initially NCCMA requested further information which resulted in alterations to the applicant's plans and a re-referral. After the new plans were provided to the CMA conditional consent was provided.

Development in flood prone areas needs to meet four key objectives which are set out in the Guidelines for Development in Flood Prone Areas.

Objective 1: Safety

This objective seeks to protect human life and health, and provide safety from flood hazard. The depth and flow of floodwaters is not expected to be hazardous to people or vehicles entering or leaving the property. Floodwater at the access way will be approximately 0.10-0.30m at its deepest according to the North Central CMA flood eye tool. Siting of the two dwellings is on land with the lowest flood hazard possible for the site with the safety of the occupants of the dwelling to be protected given that the driveway will not be compromised by dangerous floodwaters.

Objective 2: Flood damage

Buildings and their contents are susceptible to flood damages. Raising of flood levels, and using flood resistant materials can help to reduce flood damage. North Central CMA have requested the raising of the floor level of the dwellings to above a 191.2 AHD which is one of the easiest ways to reduce flood damage. This will ensure that valuable contents within the dwelling are not damaged including carpets, furniture, electrical appliances and furnishings. NCCMA have also recommended flood resistant materials be used in the construction of the garage and any possible pollutants stored above the 191.2 AHD flood level height.

Objective 3: Flood impacts

The natural function of the floodplains and overland flow paths to convey and store floodwater must not be compromised. The proposed dwellings have a small building envelope and will have open subfloor area allowing floodwater to move underneath unobstructed and not be redirected. The floodwater will not be constricted as a result of the development and will not be diverted to land that has not previously flooded.

Objective 4: Waterway and floodplain protection

The proposed development will be setback at least 30 metres from the Nardoo Creek and is not expected to impact on the environmental values of the waterway. The creek doesn't hold water for long periods with the majority of the floodwater dispersing after a few days, however there is vital riparian vegetation along its banks. Connection to reticulated sewer means that on-site effluent disposal is not required resulting in low nutrient loads on waterway and vegetation.

4 CONCLUSION

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the Rural Living Zone and relevant State and Local Planning Policy Framework. The Loddon Planning Scheme allows consideration for the use and development of a dwelling(s) on land less than 8 hectares. For the reasons discussed above the planning officer recommends that planning application 5957 be approved, subject to the conditions listed in section 1 of this report.

5 Appendix 1:

5.1 Objection 1

I previously spoke to you with regard to the proposed plan related to CA-10K Calder Highway Wedderburn.

We have huge concerns with the proposed project.

When the area is known to be subject to flooding - as recently experienced how is it possible for the shire to even consider allowing dwellings to be constructed on the site?

Apart from the obvious issues for the owners a flood event would likely place emergency workers attempting to assist at risk.

As stakeholders of dwellings on the opposite side of the highway we are very diligent in watching water levels during heavy rain and have in the past been on high alert and ready to act at our properties. The photos and footage we have of the recent flooding were taken because of our concern for our residents and our property. The idea of a dwelling being in direct line of what we witnessed seems inconceivable.

The selection of photos attached are of the recent events- in past events the water has been even higher but we didn't record it. Unfortunately the videos we have are too large to send via email but we are happy to go to the office for them to be viewed.



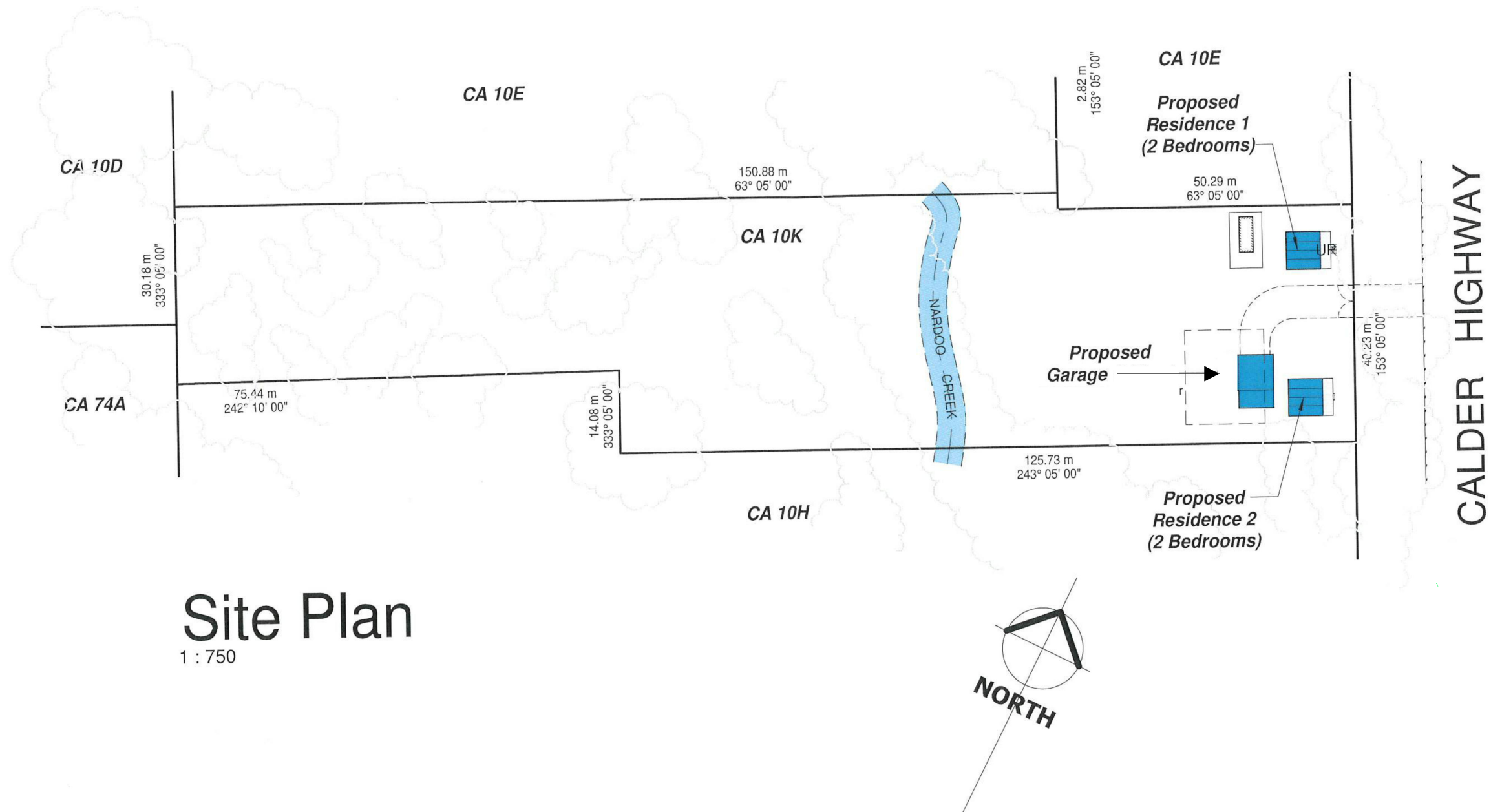






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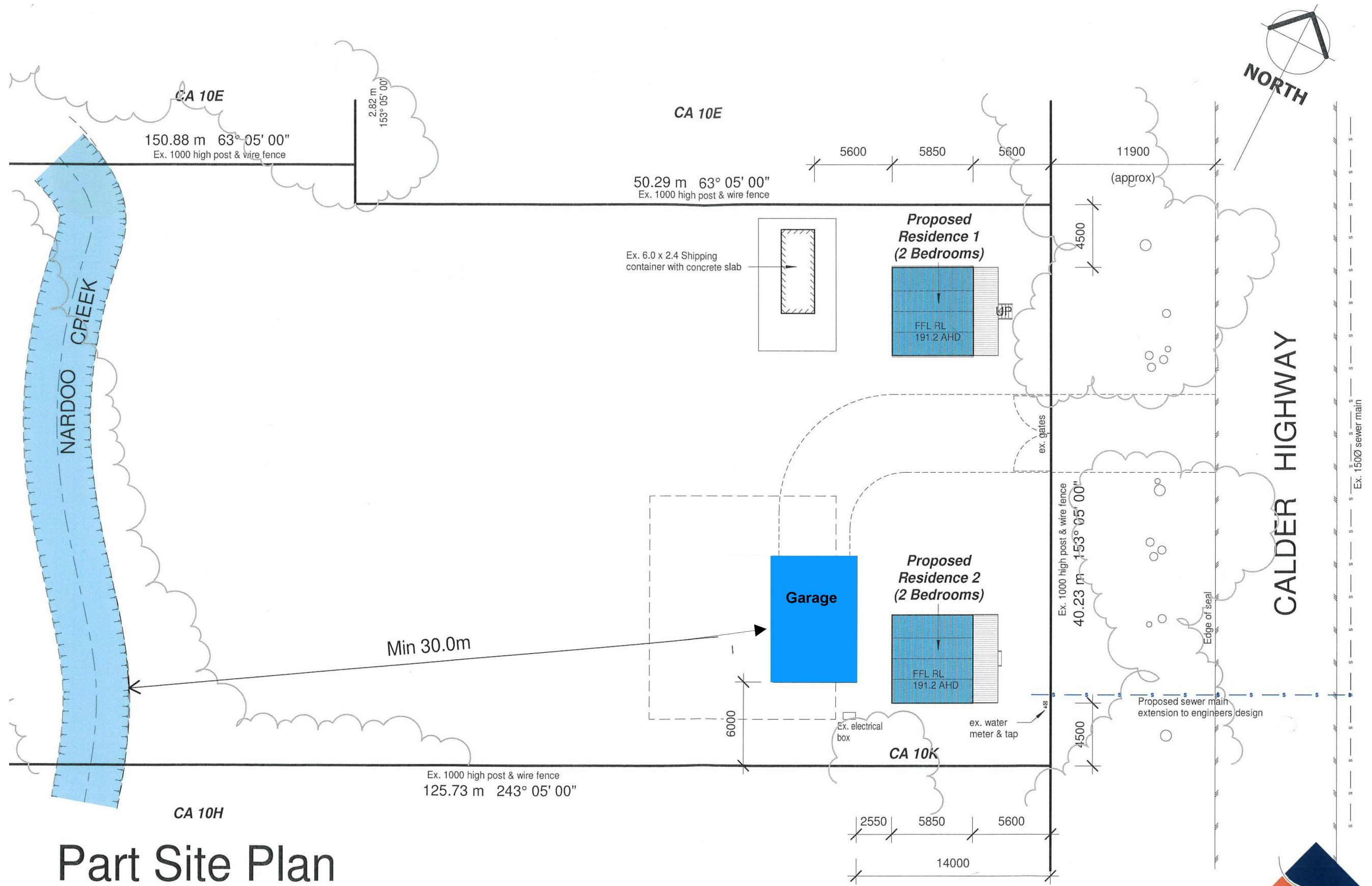


Proposed Residential Development
CA 10K Calder Highway, Wedderburn

for Karanjit Singh Goraya

112 Wills Street, Bendigo, Ph: 0434 688 779
Registered Building Practitioner DP AD 1549





Part Site Plan

1 : 250

Proposed Residential Development

for Karanjit Singh Goraya

CA 10K Calder Highway, Wedderburn

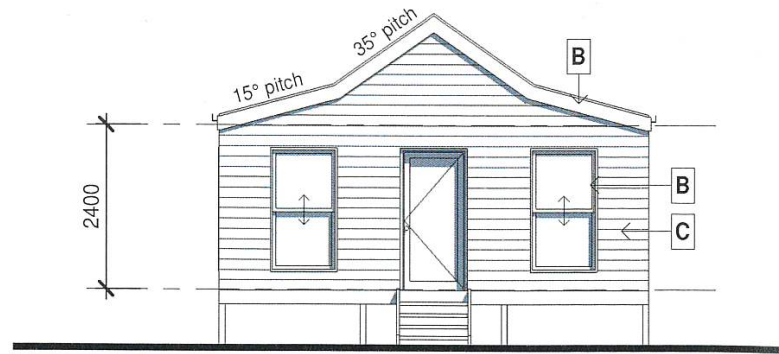
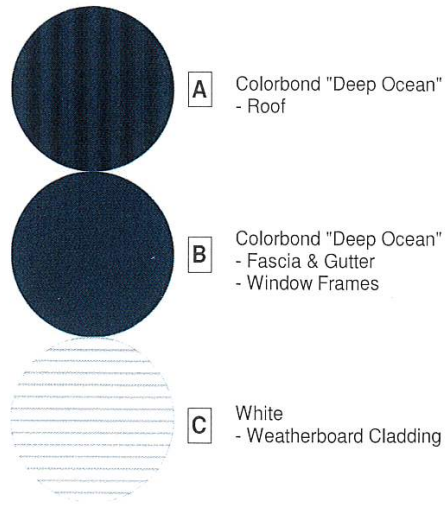
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Registered Building Practitioner DP AD 1549



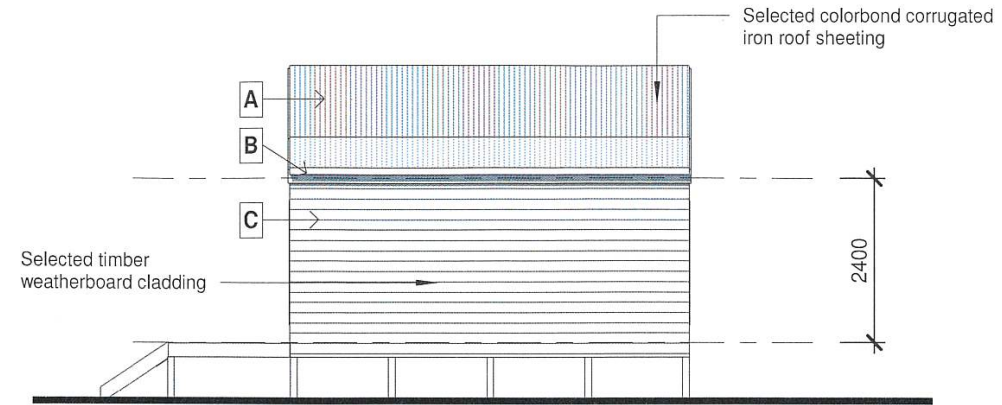
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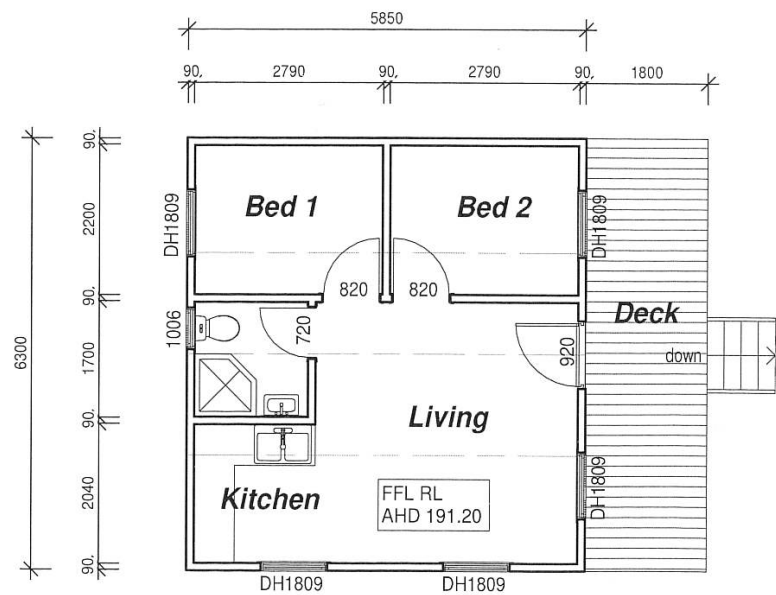
Town Planning



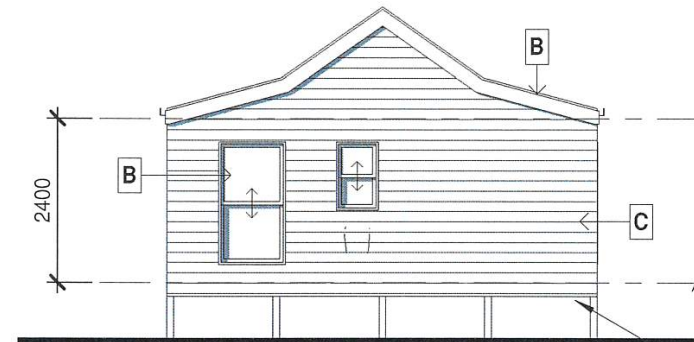
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North Elevation
1 : 100



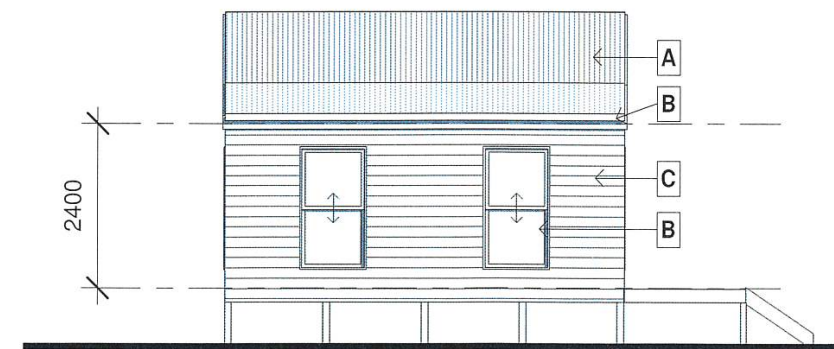
Floor Plan
1 : 100



West Elevation
1 : 100

NOTE: FFL to be no lower than RL 191.20 AHD.as per North Central Catchment Management Authority requirement.

NOTE: Sub floor to be unenclosed & must not be used for storage as per North Central Catchment Management Authority requirement.

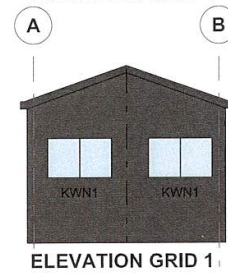
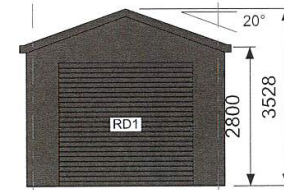
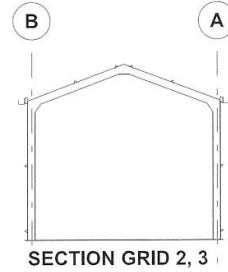
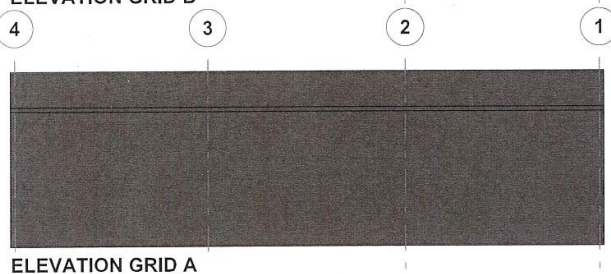
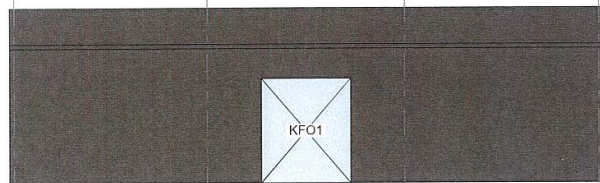
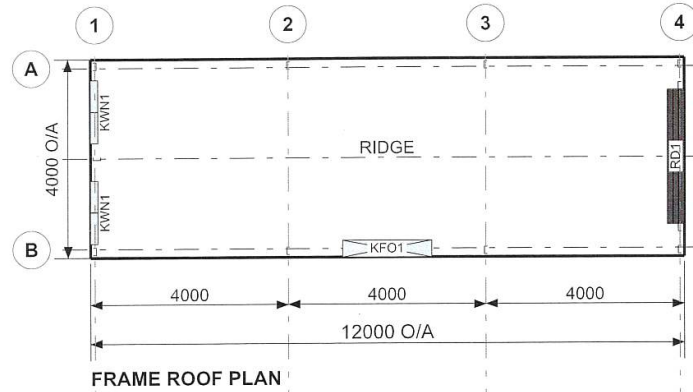


South Elevation
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CLADDING

ITEM	PROFILE (min)	FINISH	COLOUR
ROOF	CUSTOM ORB 0.42 BMT	CB	WG
WALLS	TRIMDEK 0.35 BMT	CB	WG
CORNERS	-	CB	WG
BARGE	-	CB	WG
GUTTER	HI-QUAD	CB	WG

0.35bmt=0.40tct; 0.42bmt=0.47tct; 0.48bmt=0.53tct

ACCESSORY SCHEDULE & LEGEND

QTY	MARK	DESCRIPTION
1	RD1	B&D, Firmadour, R.D, Residential "R1F", 2415 high x 2700 wide, Clear Opening C/B
1	KFO1	2100H x 1800W Framed Opening, Door must be fitted
2	KWN1	AMI - Reg A & B, 790x1274 CLR + FG Fly Screen, Window Kit (BDSP)

ARCHITECTURAL DRAWING ONLY, NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION USE

CLIENT
KARANJIT GORAYA

SITE
**10K CALDER HIGHWAY
WEDDERBURN VIC 3518**

BUILDING
**DELUXE
4000 SPAN x 2800 EAVE x 12000 LONG**

TITLE
FLOOR PLAN & ELEVATION

SCALE	DRAWING NUMBER	REV	PAGE
A4 SHEET 1:125	BEND01-18950	A	1/1

10.3 FAIR ACCESS POLICY**File Number:****Author:** Orrin Hogan, Manager Community Partnerships**Authoriser:** Wendy Gladman, Director Community Wellbeing**Attachments:** 1. Draft Fair Access Policy**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council endorses the draft Fair Access Policy for public display to receive community feedback.

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 Draft Fair Access Policy (the Policy) was presented to Council Forum on May 14, 2024.

BACKGROUND

The Victorian Government developed a reform agenda to address gender inequality in sport to occur over a period of time. An inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Recreation completed in 2015, included recommendations to ensure fair access and inclusion at all times for women and girls in sport.

The Fair Access Policy Roadmap (the Roadmap) developed by the State Government has been designed to establish a state wide commitment to improve the access to, and use of, community sports infrastructure for women and girls.

The Roadmap is being delivered through the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation in partnership with Sport and Recreation Victoria and Vic Health and aligns with Victoria's Gender Equality Act 2020.

From 1 July 2024, all Victorian Councils will need to have gender equitable access and use policies in place to be considered eligible to receive infrastructure funding.

This report provides the Policy to Council for endorsement to place on public display for community feedback.

ISSUES/DISCUSSIONS

The Policy establishes the expectation that gender equality is considered and prioritised in all current and future Council planning, policy, service delivery and practice as they relate to community sports infrastructure.

The policy is about implementing actions which address the barriers that women and girls experience in accessing and using community sports infrastructure. The policy will ensure access to all areas of active recreation either as a participant in sport or an official or spectator.

The Policy and the associated action plan are based on six (6) principles of inclusivity, full participation, equal representation, encouraging and supporting user groups, and prioritising user groups committed to equality.

It is considered that these Principles provide clear direction, provides the flexibility to be locally relevant to the Loddon Shire, whilst achieving the aims of the Fair Access Policy Roadmap.

The Policy applies to all community sports infrastructure that is owned or directly managed by Council.

RESOURCING

The Fair Access Policy has been prepared by Council's Aged Care and Inclusive Communities Coordinator.

Council, volunteers and key sports club stakeholders (for example State Sporting Associations and Regional Sporting Associations) have responsibilities associated with the implementation of the Policy and the action plan.

Council will work closely with sports clubs and facility committees of management when implementing the outcomes of the Policy and the action plan. It is considered that this work will be completed within existing budgets.

COST/BENEFITS

From 1 July 2024, Council is required to have a gender equitable access and use policy (Fair Access Policy) in place to be considered eligible to receive infrastructure funding. Council is highly reliant on state government funding to undertake sport and recreation capital works.

Modifications that are identified as being required to improve women and girl's access to sporting infrastructure may require external funding to proceed.

While acknowledging the complexities around gender equality, by adopting this Policy Council are committing to identifying and, where practical, eliminating gender inequality, and improving access and inclusion in all forms of sport and active recreation within the Loddon Shire.

Council will work closely with sports clubs and facility committees of management when implementing the outcomes of the Policy. It is considered that this work will be completed within existing budgets.

RISK ANALYSIS

Council is required to have this Policy in place to meet eligibility criteria for Victorian Government funding programs relating to community sports infrastructure and risks removing access to a significant funding stream should this Policy not be adopted.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The draft policy was developed by an internal cross department working group, provided to the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation for feedback, and presented to the Management Executive Group for review prior to presentation to Council.

Council officers will reach out specifically to sports clubs and facility committees of management during the Policy display period to gain their direct input into the policy document.



FAIR ACCESS POLICY

DOCUMENT TYPE:	Council policy
DOCUMENT STATUS:	Draft
POLICY OWNER POSITION:	Manager Community Partnerships
INTERNAL COMMITTEE ENDORSEMENT:	Not applicable
APPROVED BY:	Council
DATE ADOPTED:	Click here to enter date of approval
VERSION NUMBER:	1
REVIEW DATE:	31/08/2028
DATE RESCINDED:	Click here to enter a date.
RELATED STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS, POLICIES OR PROCEDURES:	Victorian Government Change our Game Initiative Loddon Shire Council Plan 2021-2025
RELATED LEGISLATION:	Victoria’s Gender Equality Act 2020
EVIDENCE OF APPROVAL:	

Signed by Chief Executive Officer

FILE LOCATION: Document2

Policy documents are amended from time to time, therefore you should not rely on a printed copy being the current version. Please consult the policies on the Loddon Shire website (Council Policies) or Intranet (Organisational Policies) 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.



FAIR ACCESS POLICY

1 PURPOSE

The Fair Access Policy (the Policy) seeks to address known barriers experienced by women and girls in accessing and using community sports infrastructure. The Policy aims to progressively build capacity and capabilities of Council in the identification, and elimination of systemic causes of gender inequality in policy, programs, communications, and delivery of services in relation to community sports infrastructure.

This Policy establishes the expectation that gender equality is considered and prioritised in all current and future Council planning, policy, service delivery and practice as they relate to community sports infrastructure.

The purpose of the Policy is to support Council to take positive action towards achieving gender equity in the access and usage of community sports infrastructure.

This complies with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, through Council's Gender Equity Strategy in that:

1. Loddon Shire Council recognises that gender equality is the attainment of equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women, men, and gender diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men, and gender diverse people will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on their gender.
2. Loddon Shire Council recognises that gender equity is the provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities based on gender. The concept recognises that people may have different needs related to their gender and these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies gender related imbalances.



FAIR ACCESS POLICY

2 INTRODUCTION

Sport is a highly visible and valued feature of Loddon's culture and identity. The sport and active recreation sector provide opportunities for enriching our communities through the promotion of respect and fair mindedness for all people, while also supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of all Victorians. Council is well positioned to design and implement place-based, integrated action plans that progress gender equality in community sport.

The Victorian Government is committed to developing an environment for all Victorians to live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal power, resources, and opportunities, and are treated with dignity, respect and fairness. A reform agenda has been developed to change the systems that have perpetuated gender inequality by designing an enduring structure that requires implementation and tacking of progress over time.

This reform agenda includes addressing the traditional structures and the way community sport and recreation organisations operate through the implementation all nine (9) recommendations from the 2015 inquiry into *Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation*. This includes recommendation six (6):

“...encourage facility owners and managers to review access and usage policies to ensure women and girls have a fair share of access to the highest quality facilities at the best and most popular times”

and

“facilitating a universal adoption of (policies, strategies and audit tools) will drive change further”.

As a defined entity of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, Council is required to conduct Gender Impact Assessments (GIA) on all new policies, programs, communications, and services, including those up for review, which directly and significantly impact the public. The access and use of community sports infrastructure is an example of policy that has a direct and significant impact on the public.

3 SCOPE

The Policy enables effective and efficient integration of the requirements of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* and other legislative frameworks.

This policy applies to the community sports infrastructure that is owned or directly managed by Council.

Adherence to this policy by Committees of Management, will support compliance for community sports infrastructure not owned by Council, where Council is the lead agency for sourcing of funding or managing infrastructure projects.



FAIR ACCESS POLICY

4 POLICY

The Policy, a requirement of the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR), is designed to comply with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, and the wider Victorian Government gender equality strategy.

Council acknowledges:

- the disadvantaged position some individuals have had in the sport and recreation sector because of their gender
- that achieving gender equality will require diverse approaches for women, men, trans and gender diverse people to achieve similar outcomes for people of all genders.

Council will:

- engage fairly and equitably with all staff, governance working groups, state sporting organisations, regional sport assemblies (where applicable) and our sport and recreation community, regardless of their gender, in a positive, respectful, and constructive manner
- engage in the process of Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs) to assess the implications for women, men, and gender diverse people of any planned action, including policies and communications. This is a strategy for making all voices, concerns and experiences, an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring of policies and programs.
- undertake the necessary and proportionate steps toward implementation of the Fair Access Policy

4.1 Fair access principles

The Fair Access Principles have been developed by the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation, Sport and Recreation Victoria and VicHealth, in consultation with representatives from local government and the state sport and recreation sector. This Policy and any resultant action plan are based on six (6) principles of inclusivity, full participation, equal representation, encouraging and supporting user groups, and prioritising user groups committed to equality.

Council considers that these Principles provide clear direction, while also enabling adaption to the specific environment of Loddon Shire Council's area.

Council has identified specific actions and are committed to progressing gender equitable access and use of community sports infrastructure in its Fair Access Action Plan.



FAIR ACCESS POLICY



Figure 1: Fair Access Six Principles

4.2 Compliance and Monitoring

4.2.1 Actions

Council commits to undertake GIAs on all current community sports infrastructure access and use policies and procedures, and to consider opportunities to strengthen gender equitable access and use of community sports facilities in alignment with the Fair Access Principles.

Council acknowledges the requirement to have a gender equitable access and use policy and action plan (or equivalent) in place, and the ability to demonstrate progress against that policy and action plan (or equivalent), will form part of the eligibility criteria for Victorian Government funding programs relating to community sports infrastructure from 1 July 2024.

A Fair Access Action plan has been developed outlining the steps council will take to meet the requirements. (see attachment).



FAIR ACCESS POLICY

4.2.2 Responsibility

Management, staff, volunteers and stakeholders (for example State Sporting Associations and Regional Sporting Associations) at Loddon Shire Council have a shared responsibility to support the policy as outlined below:

- to promote a gender-aware and gender-responsive culture and community and championing the Fair Access Policy
- to promote, encourage and facilitate the achievement of gender equality and improvement in the status of women and girls in sport and active recreation
- lead the review of sport and recreation policies and processes
- develop and adopt gender equitable access and use policies (Fair Access Policy), with a established review process
- to communicate policy updates
- to monitor compliance and issues
- undertake GIAs and submission of progress reports as per the *Gender Equality Act 2020* obligations
- support the review of sport and recreation policies and processes
- to communicate with and educate sport and recreation infrastructure user groups and users about this Policy and Fair Access Principles
- to attend training / awareness programs



FAIR ACCESS POLICY

5 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS OR ABBREVIATIONS USED

Term	Definition
Committees of Management	For the purposes of this document, refers to committees appointed by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action under the <i>Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978</i> to manage recreation reserves where community sport training and games are held.
Community Sports Infrastructure	Publicly owned local, rural, regional, or state level sport and recreation infrastructure operated and maintained primarily for the purpose of facilitating community sport activities, including sporting grounds, surfaces, facilities, and pavilions.
Gender	How you understand who you are and how you interact with other people. Many people understand their gender as being a man or woman. Some people understand their gender as a mix of these or neither. A person's gender and their expression of their gender can be shown in different ways, such as through behaviour or physical appearance.
Gender diverse	An umbrella term for a range of genders expressed in different ways. Gender diverse people use many terms to describe themselves. Language in this area is dynamic, particularly among young people, who are more likely to describe themselves as non-binary.
Gender equality	The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men and trans and gender-diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men, trans and gender diverse people will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on their gender.
Gender equity	The provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities based on gender. The concept recognises that people may have different needs related to their gender and these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies gender related imbalances.
Gender Impact Assessment (GIA)	A requirement under the <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> to be carried out on policies, programs and services which have a direct and significant impact on the public. The assessment must evaluate the effects that a policy, program or service may have on people of different genders.



FAIR ACCESS POLICY

6 HUMAN RIGHTS STATEMENT

It is considered that this Policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights Act. Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees. Council will formally involve elected employee Health and Safety Representatives in any workplace change that may affect the health and safety of any of its employees.

The Gender Equality Act 2020 requires Council to undertake Gender Impact Assessment when developing or reviewing any policy, program or service which has a direct and significant impact on the public. This policy will alter the way Council reviews and considers policy development and investment decisions to support fair access.

7 REVIEW

The Manager of Community Partnerships will review this policy for any necessary amendments no later than 4 years after adoption of this current version.

8 ATTACHMENTS

Fair Access Action Plan



FAIR ACCESS PLAN ACTION PLAN

DOCUMENT TYPE:	Action Plan
DOCUMENT STATUS:	Draft
POLICY OWNER POSITION:	Manager Community Partnerships
INTERNAL COMMITTEE ENDORSEMENT:	Not applicable
APPROVED BY:	Director Community Wellbeing
DATE ADOPTED:	Click here to enter date of approval
VERSION NUMBER:	1
REVIEW DATE:	31/03/2028
DATE RESCINDED:	
RELATED STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS, POLICIES OR PROCEDURES:	Fair Access Policy Victorian Government Change our Game Initiative Loddon Shire Council Plan 2021-2025
RELATED LEGISLATION:	Victoria's Gender Equality Act 2020
EVIDENCE OF APPROVAL:	

Signed by Director Community Wellbeing

FILE LOCATION: Document1

Procedure 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 Intranet 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.

1 PURPOSE

The Fair Access Policy (The Policy) seeks to address known barriers experienced by women and girls in accessing and using community sports infrastructure. The Policy aims to progressively build capacity and capabilities of Council in the identification, and elimination of systemic causes of gender inequality in policy, programs, communications, and delivery of services in relation to community sports infrastructure.

2 SCOPE

Council acknowledges that the requirement to have a gender equitable access and use policy and action plan (or equivalent) in place, and the ability to demonstrate progress against that policy and action plan (or equivalent), will form part of the eligibility criteria for Victorian Government funding programs relating to community sports infrastructure from 1 July 2024



FAIR ACCESS PLAN ACTION PLAN

3 ACTION PLAN

Focus Area	Action	Timeframe	Indicator of success
Infrastructure	Ensure future infrastructure projects (new or upgrades to existing facilities) are fit for purpose and suitable for women and girls' participation (e.g., No urinals, inclusion of baby change facilities where appropriate)	Annually	Safer and more inclusive infrastructure that will lead to improved training and playing experiences for women and girls
Funding and grants	Exploring relevant funding and grants to upgrade facilities. Prioritise upgrades based on identified needs	Annually	Identifying opportunities to seek relevant federal or state government community sports infrastructure funding.
Gender Impact Assessments (GIA)	Complete GIA for all relevant planning process for all new policies, plans, and strategies in alignment with councils GIA policy in alignment with councils requirements of the Gender Equality Act 2020	Annually	Minimum one GIA completed to the satisfaction of Council Executive
Fair Access Principles	Collaborate with stakeholders (e.g. Committees of Management, local sporting leagues) to ensure fair and equitable access of facilities	Ongoing (beginning of new seasons)	Provide guidance through gender equity training sessions or resources (facilitated by SSAs, RSAs or Recreation officer.)
Assessment tool	Develop an assessment tool or checklist for clubs to self-identify areas for improvement in gender equity	By July 2025	Assessment tool distributed to all clubs
Representation	Encourage and explore options for working towards gender targets on committees	By July 2025	All clubs have minimum 20 per cent women on committees



FAIR ACCESS PLAN ACTION PLAN

4 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS OR ABBREVIATIONS USED

Term	Definition
Committees of Management	For the purposes of this document, refers to committees appointed by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action under the <i>Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978</i> to manage recreation reserves where community sport training and games are held.
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Gender diverse	An umbrella term for a range of genders expressed in different ways. Gender diverse people use many terms to describe themselves. Language in this area is dynamic, particularly among young people, who are more likely to describe themselves as non-binary.
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Gender equity	The provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities based on gender. The concept recognises that people may have different needs related to their gender and these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies gender related imbalances.
Gender Impact Assessment (GIA)	A requirement under the <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> to be carried out on policies, programs and services which have a direct and significant impact on the public. The assessment must evaluate the effects that a policy, program or service may have on people of different genders.
Public land management groups	For the purposes of this document, are the Committees of Management appointed under the <i>Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978</i> and responsible for the management of recreation reserves where community sport training and games are held.
Transgender, or trans	Someone whose gender does not only align with the one assigned at birth. Not all trans people will use this term to describe themselves.



FAIR ACCESS PLAN ACTION PLAN

5 REVIEW

The Manager Community Partnerships will review this procedure for any necessary amendments no later than 4 years after adoption of this current version.

10.4 LODDON PLANNING SCHEME REVIEW, 2023

File Number: FOL/19/115205
Author: Carolyn Stephenson, Statutory / Strategic Planner
Authoriser: Glenn Harvey, Acting Director Operations
Attachments: 1. Loddon Planning Scheme Review Report

RECOMMENDATION

That Loddon Shire Council accept this planning scheme review report and forward it to the Minister for Planning as evidence Loddon Shire Council, as the planning authority for the Loddon Planning Scheme, has met its obligations in accordance with Section 12b of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

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.

INTRODUCTION/SUMMARY

A review of the Loddon Planning Scheme has been undertaken over the last year. This review is a requirement of the Planning and Environment Act (1987). The primary aim of the planning scheme review is to ensure that the scheme remains relevant and responsive to the needs and aspirations of Council, (and therefore the community), in relation to land use and development. It also seeks to ensure that the scheme is efficient and effective, and consistent with State government requirements.

The review has involved:

- Assessment of the local scheme content to ensure that it is contemporary in terms of data and trends, and current State and local policy
- Review of controls to determine if they are delivering the desired outcome
- Identification of new and emerging issues that require a planning response
- Consultation with scheme users including staff and referral agencies
- Assessment of permit applications and turnaround time.

The outcome of this review is the attached report that documents the assessment and findings. Once adopted by Council, the report is submitted to the Minister for Planning to provide information regarding the planning issues at Loddon Shire and the performance of their planning scheme. Provision of the report to the Minister also demonstrates Council's compliance with the Act.

The planning scheme review report provides recommendations to improve the planning scheme and the delivery of the planning function at Loddon Shire. Implementation of the recommendations of the planning scheme review is a subsequent and separate process from the review. The recommendations include proposed changes to the planning scheme and a number of new strategic research projects to better understand issues or the potential for changes to the scheme. Each of these recommendation will be prioritised and progressed individually as resources permit, and will involve the relevant Councillor and community involvement.

ISSUES/DISCUSSIONSBackground

The Loddon Planning Scheme identifies the following land use and development priorities for the Loddon Shire:

- Maximising urban growth and development in existing settlements and building viable small communities with strong links to regional centres.
- Enhancing the natural resource base and environmental values.
- Supporting the economy, especially agricultural production and employment opportunities.
- Providing community and recreational facilities to meet the needs of residents.
- Preserving and enhancing cultural heritage.
- Improving the presentation and amenity of the townships to attract and retain residents.

The scheme uses the Township Zone for the urban communities of the shire to provide for residential and commercial activity. The Farming Zone is applied in much of the rural areas of the shire to support agricultural land use. The Rural Conservation Zone is applied in areas where there are significant environmental values that need to be considered when determining land use. The Rural Living and Low Density Residential Zones accommodate demand for this lifestyle in and around the towns of Inglewood and Wedderburn, as well as in some other locations. The Industrial Zone has been used to support industry.

Overlay controls seek to protect heritage, manage flood, bushfire, salinity, erosion and water quality, and protect waterways, wetlands and native vegetation.

Findings

This review has concluded that the Loddon Planning Scheme is largely responsive to local issues and generally consistent with the aspirations of Council and the community. The scheme supports the key directions of the Council Plan, being population and economic growth. There is the opportunity to update information and data and incorporate new strategic work, however no significant policy shifts are required.

The planning scheme has been able to support new housing development with appropriately zoned vacant land, and this is evidenced by the development that has occurred in recent years. Nearly fifty new dwellings have been constructed in urban areas, and approximately 60 additional residential lots have been created, over the past five years. There is significantly more potential for growth provided within the existing Township zone, and a review of the Rural Living Zone schedule could provide opportunity for some further development in suitable locations.

Planning controls in the rural areas of the shire have enabled substantial investment in agriculture over the past five years. This has included an intensive dairy operation, new and upgraded piggeries, new poultry farms, irrigation set ups, hay storage sheds, new farm dwellings and grain storage. A significant endorsement of the value of the rural planning controls in Loddon Shire is the ability to support intensive animal businesses, where this is a challenge in adjoining municipalities. This is due to strong policy and consistent application of it that has minimised housing and land fragmentation in farming areas. Rigorous management of subdivision and dwellings in the Farming Zone has also supported the ability of farms to continue to expand, and acquire additional land to improved productivity and viability to the benefit of the local and regional economy. A review of the schedule to the Farming Zone could improve efficiency through ensuring that permit triggers are relevant and beneficial. There is no foundation for a change to subdivision and dwelling triggers, however there may be an opportunity to reduce main road setbacks and permit requirements for extensions and outbuildings.

Efficiency of the scheme could also be improved through a review of the environmental overlay controls. Improved mapping and tighter drafting of the schedules could enable these controls to be more targeted and responsive, which could reduce permit requirements.

Flooding has been a significant challenge in recent years. The scheme currently includes flood controls, but the North Central Catchment Management Authority has produced updated flood information for some areas based on more recent events. Incorporation of this new mapping into the planning scheme is important to ensure that the mapping accurately identifies flood risk. There

are currently examples of land included in the flood overlay that is not subject to flooding and other places that are subject to flooding that are not included in the flood overlay. The controls associated with the overlay are also outdated, and there is the opportunity to update them to ensure that they only trigger permits for development that could be affected by flooding, or impact flood water.

The review has identified that the key emerging issues and opportunities that the scheme will need to respond to over the next planning period are:

- Provision of housing, including affordable housing and housing for key workers
- Continued growth and facilitation of agriculture
- Responding to the needs of industry
- Support for tourism growth through protection of assets such as heritage (including Aboriginal cultural heritage) and natural resources
- Managing significant weather events including flooding
- Efficient use of infrastructure.

The recommendations of the review include changes to the scheme and further strategic work to enable management of these issues.

The review has further found that implementation of the Loddon Planning Scheme is consistent and efficient. The median number of days taken between receipt of an application and a decision on an application is currently 30 days in Loddon Shire. The average for other similar municipalities (small and medium regional) is 85 days.

RESOURCING

The primary recommendation of the planning scheme review is an “update” amendment that introduces recent strategic work (for example the Settlement Strategy), updates information and data and addresses some issues with referrals that are not required. This amendment would be completed in house within existing budget.

The recommended strategic work is to be considered in conjunction with other projects that have already been identified. Some of these projects that have previously been identified have been further endorsed in the planning scheme review as being of value. A strategic planning action plan is currently being developed to enable a coordinated and considered response to the many opportunities for improvement to the planning scheme and system.

COST/BENEFITS

Delivery and implementation of this planning scheme review will enhance the scheme’s ability to support Council’s population growth and economic development aspirations as expressed in the Council Plan, and improve the efficiency of the local planning function. Undertaking the review and subsequent work from the review uses strategic planning resources.

RISK ANALYSIS

Failure to undertake a planning scheme review and implement the findings will risk the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the planning scheme.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Direct community consultation was not undertaken as a part of this project. Community views are fed into the review via involvement in other relevant projects. For example community ideas on growth and settlement have been incorporated via the Settlement Strategy, and community perception of the performance of the planning department has been considered in this review via the Community Satisfaction Survey. Direct community consultation is not a requirement of the review (however can be conducted if Council determines it to be necessary). Changes that are not

policy neutral arising from the review would subject to future public consultation and exhibition through the planning scheme amendment process.

CONCLUSION

This review of the Loddon Planning Scheme has identified the following opportunities for improvement to the content of the scheme and the delivery of the planning function. The recommendations for changes to the scheme and further strategic work has been based on the need to ensure that the scheme is contemporary and supportive of Council's aspirations for population and economic growth.

Implementation of these recommendations will be undertaken as stand alone projects following conclusion of the scheme review process and submission of the report. These recommendations below and in the report provide an overview of the general intention of the suggested changes or projects, with the details to be developed as a part of the subsequent work. There will be councillor and community involvement in the delivery of these recommendations.

Planning scheme amendment

Prepare a planning scheme amendment to:

- a) Amend the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) at Clause 02.01 - Context to include recent data and trends, to recognise the traditional owners of the land on which the Loddon Shire is located and to remove outdated information.
- b) Amend the MPS at Clause 02.02 - Vision to reflect the current Council Plan.
- c) Amend the MPS at Clause 02.03 - Strategic Directions to incorporate the Settlement Strategy and refine directions to ensure they are current and locally specific in relation to farming practices and commodities, flood risk, indigenous heritage, tourism, native vegetation values and wetlands.
- d) Amend the MPS at Clause 02.04 - Framework Plans to include a new framework plan that reflects current policy.
- e) Amend the Planning Policy Framework (PPF) to incorporate the Settlement Strategy (including town structure plans - Clause 11.01-L and recognition of the McIntyre rural living area - Clause 16.01-3); refine the Agriculture policy to remove repetition of State policy and to more clearly reflect Council's desire to protect agricultural land and activity (Clause 14.01); include a policy statement in relation to directing new development to existing roads where possible to minimise infrastructure liabilities (Clause 18.01); and identify and protect significant waste facilities such as tips, transfer stations and recovery and reuse facilities including Biogrow (Clause 19.03).
- f) Amend Clause 42.01s Schedule 2 – Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) – Laanecoorie Catchment to limit provisions to development that include effluent disposal.
- g) Amend Clause 66.06 to remove notice requirement to DELWP and NCCMA for Clause 4.0 of Schedule 2 to Clause 42.01 (ESO).
- h) Include an updated Clause 74.02 Further strategic work that prioritises the strategic work program based on the findings of this review.

Further strategic work

These recommendations relate to strategic planning projects that should be considered to be undertaken to enhance the effectiveness, relevance and performance of the planning scheme.

- a) Finalise the Industrial Land Review following development of the Economic Development Strategy to ensure that the planning scheme can attract and accommodate industrial land use that is determined to benefit Loddon Shire in terms of employment and business growth.
- b) Prepare a planning scheme amendment to implement the flood studies prepared by the NCCMA and update related provisions to manage flood risk.

- c) Review the schedule to the Farming Zone to ensure permit triggers are of value and relevance including determine the need for permit triggers for timber production, dwelling extension and outbuildings.
- d) Review the minimum subdivision size and dwelling trigger in the Rural Living Zone to provide for consolidation of this land use where appropriate.
- e) Review the application and role of environmental overlays (VPO, SMO, EMO, ESO 1) to ensure that they reflect the value or issue to be responded to, the mapping is accurate and evidence based and related provisions are targeted and proportionate.
- f) Review and update the Heritage Overlay to incorporate heritage places that are currently not included (including those properties identified in the Loddon Heritage Study 2000) and include relevant information in the schedule to assist with assessment.
- g) Work with Djaara to identify opportunities to recognise and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage, including places, landscapes and the associated stories in the planning scheme.
- h) Monitor the need for developer contributions to assist with infrastructure provision.

Process improvement

- a) Develop application guidelines for subdivision in the Township Zone and promote development opportunities through the media.
- b) Provide for the planning staff present their reports to the Councillors at meetings to ensure that accurate planning information is conveyed to Councillors and the community.
- c) Engage in greater consultation with Djaara where there is a risk of impact on cultural heritage, including providing the opportunity to review due diligence reports informing cultural heritage processes under the Act (as currently happens in City of Greater Bendigo).

Advocacy

- a) Advocate for the State Government to take a more significant role in the implementation and enforcement of native vegetation protection controls.
- b) Advocate for State Government support for affordable new housing through investment in water and sewer infrastructure and the sale of unused land in key towns.



Loddon Planning Scheme Review 2023



DOCUMENT INFORMATION

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RELATED LEGISLATION:	Planning and Environment Act 1987
EVIDENCE OF APPROVAL:	

Signed by Chief Executive Officer

FILE LOCATION:

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 respect to their Elders both past and present.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Why is the planning scheme being reviewed?

This review of the Loddon Planning Scheme is a requirement of the Planning and Environment Act (1987). The primary aim of the planning scheme review is to ensure that the document remains relevant and responsive to the needs and aspirations of Council, (and therefore the community), in relation to land use and development.

It is considered to be a health check of the planning scheme.

The review is not intended to be a rewrite of the scheme. The review identifies opportunities for improvement within the local scheme provisions, as well as the need for further strategic work to address a planning issue that is not adequately addressed in the scheme, or where there is a need to change a response.

The review involves:

- Assessment of the local scheme content to ensure that it is contemporary in terms of data and trends, and current State and local policy
- Review of controls to determine if they are delivering the desired outcome
- Identification of new and emerging issues that require a planning response
- Consultation with scheme users including Councillors, staff and referral agencies
- Assessment of permit applications and turn around time

The review results in recommendations for changes to the planning scheme that are policy neutral (for example updated population data) as well as changes that introduce a new policy position or control (from completed strategic work). Any changes to the scheme will require a planning scheme amendment following on from the review. The review will also identify opportunities for new strategic work.

Community views are fed into the review via involvement in other relevant projects. For example community ideas on growth and settlement have been incorporated via the Settlement Strategy, and community perception of the performance of the planning department has been considered in this review via the Community Satisfaction Survey. Direct community consultation is not a requirement of the review (however can be conducted if Council determines it to be necessary). Changes that are not policy neutral arising from the review would subject to future public consultation and exhibition through the planning scheme amendment process.

This report documents the findings of the review. Once adopted by Council, the report is submitted to the Minister for Planning. Council then commences the work to implement the findings.

1.2 Characteristics of the municipal area

Loddon Shire is located in north central Victoria, commencing approximately 180 kilometres north-west of Melbourne and immediately north-west of the City of Greater Bendigo. It has an area of approximately 6,700 square kilometres and extends over 100 kilometres from north to south and over 80 kilometres from east to west.

The traditional owners of the land on which the Shire of Loddon spans are the Dja Dja Wurrung and the Barapa Barapa people. Dja Dja Wurrung territory traverses Central Victoria. Within Loddon Shire it extends from Boort in the north of the Shire, through to the east beyond Dingee, in the south at Bridgewater, Newbridge and Tarnagulla, and to the west of Wedderburn. Barapa Barapa people have resided over extensive country, particularly in the southern parts of New

South Wales and northern Victoria. Within Loddon Shire, the Barapa Barapa area includes part of the Boort area and all of Pyramid Hill in the north east of the Shire.

The Loddon Shire is a rural municipality. It contains farmland, forest, native grasslands, lakes, rivers and wetlands interspersed with small townships and hamlets. These urban communities include Boort, Inglewood, Pyramid Hill, Wedderburn, Bridgewater, Dingee, Eddington, Korong Vale, Laanecoorie, Mitiamo, Newbridge, Serpentine, Tarnagulla and Calivil. The population of the municipality is approximately 7,700 people, with the townships ranging in size from less to 100 people to almost a 1000 people in some.

Agriculture is the economic foundation of the Shire. It is the main employer and main income generator. The Shire has significant areas of high quality agriculture land, quality affordable water supplies and a climate that is conducive to high agricultural productivity. Produce of the shire includes grain, lamb, wool, hay, wine, milk, pork and chicken meat.

After many years of population decline and stagnation, Loddon Shire has seen a growth in population in the 2021 census, and between 2016 and 2021 more people moved into Loddon than out of Loddon.

In recent years, there has been investment into urban development as well as into agricultural infrastructure. The towns are home to vibrant communities, the agricultural sector is thriving, the local environment is valued, and tourism is developing beyond European heritage and goldmining, into Aboriginal cultural heritage, flora and fauna.

Flood events from historically high rainfall have impacted urban and rural communities on a number of occasions over the past few years. These floods have also had a significant impact on the infrastructure and resources of the Loddon Shire.

Loddon Shire received 109 planning permit applications in 2022/23, down from 128 in 2021/22. Common planning permit applications processed in Loddon include rural living development (with a significant number triggered by the Bushfire Management Overlay), farm sheds in the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (predominantly hay storage), native vegetation removal, buildings and works within 100m of a waterway, urban and rural subdivision, works in the heritage overlay and intensive animal industries.

1.3 Loddon Planning Scheme

The Loddon Planning Scheme identifies the following land use and development priorities for the Loddon Shire:

- Maximising urban growth and development in existing settlements and building viable small communities with strong links to regional centres.
- Enhancing the natural resource base and environmental values.
- Supporting the economy, especially agricultural production and employment opportunities.
- Providing community and recreational facilities to meet the needs of residents.
- Preserving and enhancing cultural heritage.
- Improving the presentation and amenity of the townships to attract and retain residents.

The scheme uses the Township Zone for the urban communities of the shire to provide for residential and commercial activity. The Farming Zone is applied in much of the rural areas of the shire to support agricultural land use. The Rural Conservation Zone is applied in areas where there are significant environmental values that need to be considered when determining land use. The Rural Living and Low Density Residential Zones accommodate demand for this

lifestyle in and around the towns of Inglewood and Wedderburn, as well as in some other locations. The Industrial Zone has been used to support industry.

Overlay controls seek to protect heritage, manage flood, bushfire, salinity, erosion and water quality, and protect waterways, wetlands and native vegetation.

1.4 Assessment

This review has concluded that the Loddon Planning Scheme is largely responsive to local issues and generally consistent with the aspirations of Council and the community. There are no significant gaps that are compromising opportunities or causing concern. There is the opportunity to update some of the context to reflect more recent trends as well as refine some strategies and controls to be more targeted or locally specific.

The scheme provides opportunities for new residential development within its urban areas, and minimises non agricultural development in farming areas. Following completion of a Settlement Strategy, new structure plans can be included in the MPS and Council has a more defined narrative in relation to residential development opportunities that can be incorporated in the scheme. Further enhancement of Council's commitment to the protection and promotion of agriculture in the Municipal Planning Strategy and Planning Policy Framework sections of the planning scheme would be of benefit.

New agricultural development can be facilitated through a review and update of schedules (including FZ and LSIO) to identify opportunities to exempt some development (for example sheds) from the need for a planning permit.

Industrial zoning needs to be reviewed to ensure that it meets current demand and business requirements to ensure that new business can be accommodated. Existing industrial land supply is under utilised and is not resulting in new businesses. Traditional location of industry within or on the fringe of towns is inconsistent with Council strategies in relation to enhancing the amenity of urban areas as well as meeting threshold obligations. Future industrial zoning needs to respond to the needs of identified future business opportunities.

Environmental values and challenges, including significant native vegetation, flooding, erosion and salinity, are addressed in the scheme. Advances in mapping as well as developments in the way in which controls are drafted provide the basis for refinement of these overlays to ensure they are strategically based and targeted. Further strategic work in this regard and subsequent amendments to the scheme provides the opportunity to reduce some permit requirements.

Heritage controls in the scheme also predate digital mapping, and do not comprehensively and consistently address heritage values across the municipality. Further strategic work is required to ensure that heritage places are correctly mapped and other places of value are protected. Traditional owners should be consulted and offered the opportunity for their cultural heritage to be recognised and protected in the scheme.

Council priorities, as expressed in the Council Plan, are population growth, economic diversification, protection of environmental values and sustainable delivery of infrastructure. The review has considered the schemes response to these, as well as emerging challenges and opportunities.

- *Population growth and housing supply.* Council aspires to grow the population of Loddon Shire to maintain the viability of the communities and the economy. Provision of housing, in particular affordable housing, is critical to the aim of population growth and provision of key workers for local businesses and services. The Loddon Shire Settlement strategy supports residential infill in the larger towns to support affordable housing provision. Encouraging a diversity of housing stock is also important to respond to the

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aging population. Unlocking vacant residential land is a particular issue. Loddon Shire has significant opportunity and capacity for new housing, with a large supply of vacant residential zoned land provided through the planning scheme, however cost of servicing and development currently limits viability and availability.

- *Growing and expanding the economy.* Agriculture is the foundation of the Loddon Shire economy. Facilitation of agriculture is fundamental in Loddon. Agriculture is growing and diversifying in Loddon, and this has been supported by strong policy in the planning scheme. Non agriculture related use and development in farming areas poses a risk to the ability of agricultural businesses to expand and operate. In particular, Council needs to manage demand for dwellings in agricultural areas to ensure that any new housing is strictly ancillary to and required for the facilitation of the agricultural use of the land. Non farm dwellings will compromise agricultural activity and growth, and this is recognised and managed in the scheme and its implementation. This is a particular challenge in the east of the municipality within proximity to Bendigo. Industrial development and tourism also require support through the planning scheme to support diversification of the economy. Opportunities exist to better support growth of these sectors of the economy in the planning scheme, including enhanced protection of values that attract tourists and a clearer understanding of industrial land needs.
- *Environmental management, in particular native vegetation protection and flooding.* The economy and liveability of Loddon is dependent on the condition of the natural environment. Environmental challenges in Loddon include protection of remnant vegetation (including native grasslands and wetlands), prevention of erosion and salinity, and water quality protection in rivers, creeks and wetlands. Bushfire and flooding impacts a substantial part of the municipality and are a significant risk to be managed. The scheme includes controls that seek to manage these values and risks, however they are lacking in terms of accuracy in some places and benefit in terms of permit triggers.
- *Cost and viability of infrastructure.* The size and dispersed nature of Loddon and its communities poses a significant challenge in terms of the provision of infrastructure and the cost to Council, State and Federal government. This infrastructure includes roads, pools, halls, schools, health, water and sewer. Careful planning of settlement is required to ensure that use of existing infrastructure is maximised, and if new infrastructure is required, growth is consolidated around it. The scheme recognises this, however this could be enhanced through policy refinement and further strategic settlement planning.
- *Aboriginal cultural heritage.* Loddon Shire contains more than 1000 places of Aboriginal cultural significance. The traditional owners of much of Loddon Shire, Dja Dja Wurrung, are very active in land management in the municipality. Embracing and sharing the stories and culture is a significant opportunity for the municipality in terms of identity, community and economy. Recognition and response to Aboriginal cultural heritage needs to be enhanced in the Loddon Planning Scheme.

1.5 Recommendations

The recommendations for changes to the scheme and further strategic work has been based on the need to ensure that the scheme is contemporary and supportive of Council's aspirations for population and economic growth.

This review of the Loddon Planning Scheme has identified the following opportunities for improvement to the content of the scheme and the delivery of the planning function. These recommendations will be developed as independent projects, with Councillor and community involvement, following adoption of this report.

1.5.1 Planning scheme amendment

Prepare a planning scheme amendment to:

- a) Amend the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) at Clause 02.01 - Context to include recent data and trends, to recognise the traditional owners of the land on which the Loddon Shire is located and to remove outdated information.
- b) Amend the MPS at Clause 02.02 - Vision to reflect the current Council Plan.
- c) Amend the MPS at Clause 02.03 - Strategic Directions to incorporate the Settlement Strategy and refine directions to ensure they are current and locally specific in relation to farming practices and commodities, flood risk, indigenous heritage, tourism, native vegetation values and wetlands.
- d) Amend the MPS at Clause 02.04 - Framework Plans to include a new framework plan that reflects current policy.
- e) Amend the Planning Policy Framework (PPF) to incorporate the Settlement Strategy (including town structure plans - Clause 11.01-L and recognition of the McIntyre rural living area - Clause 16.01-3); refine the Agriculture policy to remove repetition of State policy and to more clearly reflect Council's desire to protect agricultural land and activity (Clause 14.01); include a policy statement in relation to directing new development to existing roads where possible to minimise infrastructure liabilities (18.01); and identify and protect significant waste facilities such as tips, transfer stations and recovery and reuse facilities including Biogrow (Clause 19.03).
- f) Amend Clause 42.01s Schedule 2 (Laanecoerie Catchment) – Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) to limit provisions to development that include effluent disposal.
- g) Amend Clause 66.06 to remove notice requirement to DELWP and NCCMA for Clause 4.0 of Schedule 2 to Clause 42.01 (ESO).
- h) Include an updated Clause 74.02 Further strategic work that prioritises the strategic work program based on the findings of this review.

1.5.2 Further strategic work

These recommendations relate to strategic planning projects that should be considered to be undertaken to enhance the effectiveness, relevance and performance of the planning scheme.

- a) Finalise the Industrial Land Review following development of the Economic Development Strategy to ensure that the planning scheme can attract and accommodate industrial land use that is determined to benefit Loddon Shire in terms of employment and business growth.
- b) Prepare a planning scheme amendment to implement the flood studies prepared by the NCCMA and update related provisions to manage flood risk.
- c) Review the schedule to the Farming Zone to ensure permit triggers are of value and relevance including determine the need for permit triggers for timber production, dwelling extension and outbuildings.
- d) Review the minimum subdivision size and dwelling trigger in the Rural Living Zone to provide for consolidation of this land use where appropriate.
- e) Review the application and role of environmental overlays (VPO, SMO, EMO, ESO 1) to ensure that they reflect the value or issue to be responded to, the mapping is accurate and evidence based and related provisions are targeted and proportionate.

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- f) Review and update the Heritage Overlay to incorporate heritage places that are currently not included (including those properties identified in the Loddon Heritage Study 2000) and include relevant information in the schedule to assist with assessment.
- g) Work with Djaara to identify opportunities to recognise and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage, including places, landscapes and the associated stories in the planning scheme.
- h) Monitor the need for developer contributions to assist with infrastructure provision.

1.5.3 Process improvement

- a) Develop application guidelines for subdivision in the Township Zone and promote development opportunities through the media.
- b) Provide for the planning staff present their reports to the Councillors at meetings to ensure that accurate planning information is conveyed to Councillors and the community.
- c) Engage in greater consultation with Djaara where there is a risk of impact on cultural heritage, including providing the opportunity to review due diligence reports informing cultural heritage processes under the Act (as currently happens in City of Greater Bendigo).

1.5.4 Advocacy

- a) Advocate for the State Government to take a more significant role in the implementation and enforcement of native vegetation protection controls.
- b) Advocate for State Government support for affordable new housing through investment in water and sewer infrastructure and sale of unused land in key towns.

1. PURPOSE

Council, as the planning authority for the Loddon Planning Scheme, is required to review its planning scheme every four years under Section 12(B) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (The Act).

The scope of a planning scheme review is established under Section 12(B), which sets out that planning scheme reviews should focus on:

- The **effectiveness and efficiency** of the planning scheme in achieving the objectives of planning and the planning framework in Victoria.
- Aligning the planning scheme with the **Ministerial Direction on the Form and Content of Planning Schemes**.
- Ensuring the planning scheme contains **a clear narrative about the way use and development of land will be managed to achieve the planning vision or objectives of the area**.

This report records the findings of the 2022-2023 review of the Loddon Planning Scheme. This review will be forwarded to the Minister for Planning as required under section 12(B) of the Act once complete and adopted by Council.

2 BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Recommendation 1 of the review (amendment of the Loddon Planning Scheme to update and incorporate existing adopted strategy and policy) will be undertaken in-house by the Strategic Planner.

The recommended strategic projects will be considered and prioritised in conjunction with other strategic projects that have resulted from other projects. A strategic planning work plan will cost and plan these projects.

Process improvement and advocacy recommendations will be undertaken using existing resources.

3 RISK ANALYSIS

The planning scheme review ensures that the Loddon Planning Scheme is relevant and responsive, and supports Council's vision for land use and development in the municipality. Failure to review the scheme will undermine delivery of State and local planning policy.

4 BACKGROUND

1.1 Loddon Shire

Loddon Shire is located in north central Victoria, commencing approximately 180 kilometres north-west of Melbourne and immediately north-west of the City of Greater Bendigo. It has an area of approximately 6,700 square kilometres and extends over 100 kilometres from north to south and over 80 kilometres from east to west.



The traditional owners of the land on which the Shire of Loddon spans are the Dja Dja Wurrung and the Barapa Barapa people. Dja Dja Wurrung territory traverses Central Victoria. Within Loddon Shire it extends from Boort in the north of the Shire, through to the east beyond Dingee, in the south at Bridgewater, Newbridge and Tarnagulla, and to the west of Wedderburn. Barapa Barapa people have resided over extensive country, particularly in the southern parts of New South Wales and northern Victoria. Within Loddon Shire, the Barapa Barapa area includes part of the Boort area and all of Pyramid Hill in the north east of the Shire.

The Loddon Shire is a rural municipality. It contains farmland, forest, native grasslands, lakes, rivers and wetlands interspersed with small townships and hamlets.

The predominant land use in Loddon Shire is agriculture. There are also some significant areas of public land, including Kooyoora State Park, Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve, Wehla Nature Conservation Reserve, Tarnagulla State Forest and Terrick Terrick National Park.

There is no one dominant urban centre of the Shire, rather the Shire has a number of small centres serving the surrounding rural areas. The key service centres are Boort, Bridgewater, Inglewood,

Pyramid Hill and Wedderburn. These townships provide retail, health, community and education facilities, and accommodate between 500 – 800 residents in each town. These towns have significant capacity for growth.

Other important townships are Dingee, Eddington, Korong Vale, Laanecoorie, Mitiamo, Newbridge, Serpentine and Tarnagulla. Although these settlements are small, they each play a vitally important social, service provision, residential and community focus and function in their respective districts. These are smaller residential centres with populations of 200 – 440.

Rural residential living is a popular lifestyle option in the south of the Shire, afforded by the proximity to Bendigo and attractive undulating agricultural and bush settings. Significant areas of rural residential living exist around Inglewood, Bridgewater, Wedderburn, Moliagul, Dunolly, Laanecoorie, Tarnagulla and Newbridge. Residents also live on farms to facilitate agricultural land use.

Loddon supports 2,734 jobs and has an annual economic output of \$1.010 billion. Agriculture is the economic foundation of the Shire. It is the main employer and main income generator. The Shire has significant areas of high quality agriculture land, quality affordable water supplies and a climate that is conducive to high agricultural productivity. Produce of the shire includes grain, lamb, wool, hay, wine, milk, pork and chicken meat. Other significant employment sectors are manufacturing, healthcare, retail, and education.

Loddon Shire received 109 planning permit applications in 2022/23, down from 128 in 2021/22. Common planning permit applications processed in Loddon include rural living development (with a significant number triggered by the Bushfire Management Overlay), farm sheds in the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (predominantly hay storage), native vegetation removal, buildings and works within 100m of a waterway, urban and rural subdivision, works in the heritage overlay and intensive animal industries.

Loddon Shire employs two statutory planners and a part time strategic planner.

1.2 Loddon Planning Scheme

The planning scheme provides for the management of land use and development, using a range of controls to achieve a defined strategic direction.

The strategy, policy and controls that apply at the municipal level sit within a context of state and regional planning policy.

The local strategic direction of the planning scheme is set out in the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS).

The MPS identifies the following land use and development priorities for the Loddon Shire:

- Maximising urban growth and development in existing settlements and building viable small communities with strong links to regional centres.
- Enhancing the natural resource base and environmental values.
- Supporting the economy, especially agricultural production and employment opportunities.
- Providing community and recreational facilities to meet the needs of residents.
- Preserving and enhancing cultural heritage.
- Improving the presentation and amenity of the townships to attract and retain residents.

The scheme uses the Township Zone for the urban communities of the shire to provide for residential and commercial activity. The Farming Zone is applied in much of the rural areas of the shire to support agricultural land use. The Rural Conservation Zone is applied in

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areas where there are significant environmental values that need to be considered when determining land use. The Rural Living and Low Density Residential Zones accommodate demand for this lifestyle in and around the towns of Inglewood and Wedderburn, as well as in some other locations. The Industrial Zone has been used to support industry.

Overlay controls seek to protect heritage, manage flood, bushfire, salinity, erosion and water quality, and protect waterways, wetlands and native vegetation.

1.3 Methodology

This planning scheme review was undertaken in house by the Strategic Planner. Resources from the Regional Planning Partnerships at DELWP (now Department of Transport and Planning), which has been funded to assist rural and regional municipalities, have been used to assist in this review. These resources used include templates and a methodology.

Stage	Tasks	Timing
Inception stage	Gather information (e.g. strategic plans, permit data etc) Survey of planning staff to identify performance strengths and weakness of the scheme and key issues. Email referral agencies for feedback	November 2022
Analysis stage	Review of previous 12B Review of VCAT decisions and Panel recommendations Review of Planning Permit Activity Reporting System (PPARS) data. Review of new strategic plans (regional and local) Audit planning scheme and identify changes required. Document concurrent planning scheme amendments. Ongoing consultation with internal staff. Further consultation with referral authorities if required. Consultation with DELWP – Regional Office Review community satisfaction rating for planning	November/December 2022
Consultation stage	Consultation with internal staff Briefing to Councillors and the Executive Team.	2022 – 2024
Reporting stage	Finalise planning scheme review report.	March 2024
Finalisation stage	Endorse review and send to Planning Minister as required by section 12(B) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. Proceed with planning scheme amendment to implement the review.	Mid 2024

1.4 Guidance

This planning scheme review has been prepared consistent with the following directions and guidance provided by DELWP.

Ministerial directions:

- Ministerial Direction on the Form and Content of Planning Schemes.
- Ministerial Direction No. 11 Strategic Assessment of Amendments.

Planning practice notes and advice:

- A Practitioners’ Guide to Victorian Planning Schemes.
- PPN – 46 Strategic Assessment Guidelines

- PPN32 – Review of planning schemes

1.5 Changes in State Planning Policy since the last review

The Victorian Planning Scheme is constantly being reviewed and updated at a State level with numerous VC and GC amendments occurring each year. The State also provides advice to planners in the form of updates to the Practitioners Guide and new planning practice notes.

The way in which the Loddon Planning Scheme should respond at a local level to these changes to the Victorian Planning Provision and how they should be applied has been considered in this review.

VC (Victorian) and GC (group of council) amendments.

Since the last planning scheme review, several VC and GC amendments have introduced new policy into the Loddon Planning Scheme and are directly relevant to this review:

- VC134 – Introduced the Municipal Planning Statement (MPS)
- VC138 – Updates to the Native Vegetation Framework
- VC140 – Provisions for the Planning Policy Framework transition
- VC142 – Update to the Ministerial Direction on Form and Content and clean-up of permit triggers.
- VC148 – Planning Policy Framework introduction
- VC150 – Update of animal industries controls
- VC154 - Integrated water management
- VC169 - Balanced outcomes for housing growth and built form,
- VC175 – Buffer Area Overlay introduction
- VC196 - Protection to existing extractive industries
- VC200, VC 204 and VC205 – Transport planning reforms
- VC201 – Waterway health, amenity, access and community values
- VC203 – Environment protection framework
- VC224 - Irrigation districts and solar energy facilities
- VC227 - Container deposit scheme (CDS) infrastructure facilitation
- VC216 - Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD)

New Planning Practice Notes

Since the last planning scheme review, Several Planning Practice Notes (PPNs) have been introduced which may impact on the future development of the Loddon Planning Scheme.

- PPN86 – Applying for a planning permit for a pig farm
- PPN87 – Preparing a planning permit application for animal production
- PPN88 – Planning considerations for existing residential rooftop solar energy facilities
- PPN89 – Extractive energy and resources
- PPN90 – Planning for housing
- PPN91 – Using the residential zones
- PPN92 – Managing buffers or land use compatibility
- PPN94 – Land use and transport integration
- PPN95 – Local heritage protection provisions

5 PREVIOUS REVIEW

5.1 Loddon Planning Scheme Review 2014

The Loddon Planning Scheme was last reviewed in 2014.

The 2014 review concluded that the Loddon Planning Scheme was mostly achieving its objectives and was largely relevant with some refinement required.

The following findings were made following the 2014 Planning Scheme Review.

1. The Loddon Planning Scheme provides for growth in and around the towns however the lack of a strategic basis for residential land supply and the inappropriate zoning of some rural living areas may compromise some growth opportunities.
2. The Loddon Planning Scheme provides for agricultural, industrial, retail and tourism growth and development, but as per the Rural Zones Review, housing and subdivision controls need to be reviewed to reflect current farming practice to provide for agricultural growth.
3. The Loddon Planning Scheme protects environmental and heritage assets.

The review made the following recommendations.

1. Restructure the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) to accord with the restructured State Section.
2. Update the MSS in relation to the 2011 census, 2011 Floods, MDBP, NVIRP, Carbon farming, renewable energy.
3. Adopt a new refined Planning Vision.
4. Develop new structure plans.
5. Incorporate – Rural Zones Review, Economic Development Strategy, Housing Strategy, Tourism Strategy, State and Regional Strategy, Community Plans and Council Plan.
6. Revise monitoring and review targets to ensure they are related to performance of the planning scheme.
7. Amend Clause 22.05 Development in Rural Areas to better manage rural housing and subdivision.
8. Amend the Schedule to the Farming Zone to ensure it reflects current farming practice.
9. Rezone existing rural living areas to ensure that the Rural Living Zone reflects Council's settlement plans.
10. Undertake a Settlement Strategy to ensure that all residential growth opportunities are provided for.

5.2 Progress since last review

Since the last review, Council has undertaken the following work in response to the recommendations from the last review.

1. Clause 22.05 Development in Rural Areas and the Schedule to the Farming Zone has been updated (Amendment C36).
2. A number of existing rural living areas were rezoned from Farming Zone to reflect Council's settlement plans (Amendment C36).
3. A Settlement Strategy has been undertaken.
4. Amendment C39 provided for correction of zoning anomalies and a Heritage Overlay error.

A review was undertaken and report prepared during 2019/20. As a result of staffing issues, Covid-19 disruptions and the planning policy framework translation, the report was not adopted

by Council or submitted to the Minister for Planning. The finding of that review will inform this review, along with a more recent assessment.

In May 2022, the planning scheme was restructured to insert a new Municipal Planning Strategy and local Planning Policies to replace the former Local Policy Planning Framework (LLPF). Council staff worked with DELWP staff during 2021 to translate the former MSS and set of local policies into the MPS and planning policies. This was a policy neutral amendment (C45) and was undertaken by the State government.

6 LODDON SHIRE COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

The Loddon Shire Community Vision 2031 from the Council Plan is “creating a community where everyone is welcome and has the opportunity to live, work and thrive.”

The key directions from the Council Plan that underpin this are:

- A sustainable built and natural environment
- A growing and vibrant community
- A diverse and expanding economy
- A supported and accessible community.

In terms of the planning scheme, the Council plan is seeking opportunities for new population and housing, new business development and tourism, and protection of environmental values.

7 NEW STRATEGIC WORK

Strategic work that has been conducted since the last review has been assessed to identify new information, policy and strategy that should be reflected in the Loddon Planning Scheme.

7.1.1 Regional documents

A detailed assessment of applicable Regional Documents is included in Appendix 1. The documents that were reviewed are:

- Dja Dja Wurrung Dhelkunya Dja Country Plan 2014 -2034
- North Central Regional Catchment Strategy 2021-27
- Kara Kara – Wedderburn Landscape Plan 2016-2020 (Bush Heritage, Trust for Nature)
- Loddon Mallee Waste and Resource Recovery Implementation Plan 2016–26

The planning scheme is generally consistent with these strategies. Opportunities for improvement are:

- Acknowledge the Dja Dja Wurrung in the planning scheme as the traditional owners of the land on which the Shire of Loddon spans.
- Identify support for tourism associated with Aboriginal Cultural heritage in the Municipal Planning Statement.
- Update flood mapping and schedules to ensure that it accurately reflects risk.
- Incorporate the findings of the Wedderburn Landscape Plan into a review of the Vegetation Protection Overlay as it identifies key linkages.
- Identify significant waste recovery resources in the Planning Policy Framework.

7.1.2 Council documents

A detailed assessment of applicable Council Documents is included in Appendix 1.

7.1.2.1 Loddon Shire Settlement Strategy

The Loddon Shire Settlement strategy identifies that residential growth will be specifically promoted in the towns of Boort, Bridgewater, Inglewood, Pyramid Hill and Wedderburn, with a focus on infill. This strategy has been supported as directing growth to locations where there is the greatest investment in infrastructure is considered most likely to result in viable and affordable development.

The planning scheme is generally consistent with and supportive of this strategy. The scheme does need updates in relation to structure plans, and a more defined narrative in relation to residential development.

7.1.2.2 Other local strategic documents

Other strategic documents that were reviewed are:

- Economic Development and Tourism Strategy (2019)
- Lake Boort Scarred Trees Master Plan
- Loddon Shire Council Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021 – 2025
- Loddon Shire Waste Management Strategy 2020-2030
- Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2015-2019
- Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2013 – 2018

The planning scheme is consistent with the strategic position of these documents. There is the opportunity to identify the cultural and tourism significance of the Boort Lakes and surrounds including the scarred trees in the MPS and PPF.

8 PLANNING PERMIT ACTIVITY

This section contains an analysis of planning permit activity that has taken place during the last six years. It draws on both publicly available Planning Permit Activity and Reporting System (PPARs) data and data provided by Council.

8.1 Number and nature of permits assessed

Table 1 shows the number of permit applications processed between the 2017/18 financial year and the 2022/23 financial year. The table shows that there has been a steady increase in applications over this time, with some slowing in the past year. This increase is attributed to the healthy agricultural sector, investment in farm infrastructure such as sheds and irrigation development and increased demand for residential development related to population movement. There has been a general trend across the state in increased permit activity in regional areas which has been attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 1: PPARs report for permits issued between the 2017/2018 financial year and the 2022/2023 financial year

Permits (including refusals)	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Received	88	93	109	131	128	109
Processed	81	98	113	133	126	115
Issued	72	88	98	114	107	102

Loddon Shire receives a very diverse range of planning permit applications. Applications range from small urban subdivisions, buildings and works within the Heritage Overlays, native vegetation removal, gold mining and extractive industry, dwellings in rural living and farming areas, intensive animal husbandry, buildings and works in the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay and major infrastructure development.

The most common forms of applications received and assessed in Loddon Shire are:

- Farm sheds in the LSIO or within 100m of a waterway,
- Dwellings in the RLZ or within the BMO,
- Buildings and works within the Heritage Overlay.

There have been a number of new dwellings and subdivisions in the Farming Zone. Loddon Shire has a strong policy in relation to subdivision and development in rural areas that is consistently applied to ensure that new dwellings in the Farming Zone have a solid relationship to agricultural land use and any subdivision or restructure of lot patterns results in an improved outcome for farming.

Since the last review period, Loddon Shire has received and assessed four applications for large solar farms, with all being granted approval. There have also been a number of significant intensive animal proposals including an intensive dairy farm, broiler farms and piggeries.

The increased interest in residential development has resulted in the creation of approximately 40 new lots within Bridgewater and almost 20 in Inglewood. There have also been a number of proposals for smaller housing forms in townships including Inglewood and Wedderburn.

The drive for more efficient farming practices has resulted in a number of applications for native vegetation removal over the review period. Proposals for lateral and pivot irrigators, updated irrigation layouts and the need to accommodate larger machinery has led land owners seeking to remove paddock trees. This results in a tension between the drive to support agriculture and the desire to protect biodiversity.

8.2 Service performance

The median number of days taken between receipt of an application and a decision on an application was 42 days in 2021 – 2022. It is currently 30 days. The average for other similar municipalities (small and medium regional) is 73 days and all municipalities is 86 days.

8.3 Decision making

8.3.1 Decisions by Council

Less than 10 percent of applications are determined by Council as opposed to being determined by a delegate.

Applications that have attracted objections, are recommended for refusal or are of a significant nature are determined by Council.

8.4 Geographic spread of applications

Applications are spread reasonably evenly across the municipality, and between rural and urban areas.

The majority of the agricultural type applications are located in the northern part of the municipality, and the majority of the urban type proposals are located in the southern townships.

9 PLANNING SCHEME PERFORMANCE

9.1 Planning Panel Victoria recommendations

Council has undertaken three planning scheme amendments since the last planning scheme review.

C36 implemented the Rural Zones Review. This amendment provided for ensuring that the controls in the Farming Zone responded to current agricultural practice and protected land for farming. It also provided for the protection of environmentally significant areas through use of the Rural Conservation Zone.

Amendment C36 required a Panel Hearing to consider submissions. The Panel largely supported the amendment as its strategic basis was soundly expressed through the Rural Zones Review.

C39 corrected a number of zoning anomalies largely related to the use of the PCRZ on private land. It also corrected the application of the Heritage Overlay on one property.

C40 rezoned land that was intended for industrial use to INZ3 in Serpentine.

9.2 VCAT decisions

Decisions at VCAT

Very few Loddon Shire planning permit applications result in a VCAT hearing.

This is considered to be related to community acceptance of and trust in the Council and staff, a clearly articulated position in the planning scheme and the smaller number of applications overall and associated smaller number of complex applications.

Council has had two appearances at VCAT in the review period.

The first appeal related to a proposed place of assembly (music festival) in the Farming Zone at Fernihurst (Apter v Loddon SC).

Council refused the application as it was considered to pose an unreasonable risk to agricultural activity in the area and therefore be contrary to the purpose of the Farming Zone. The proposal was also considered to be unreasonable in terms of impact on the amenity of the area through noise and traffic and there was a lack of adequate response to patron safety management. VCAT upheld the refusal as it agreed that the music festival was contrary to the purpose the Farming Zone as activities associated with the festival, including noise and the risk of weed incursion through traffic, did pose a risk to agriculture. This decision is consistent with Council's strong support for enabling agriculture to operate without constraints or risk from competing land uses as agriculture is the foundation of the Loddon economy.

The second appeal related to a proposal for the use and development of land for a dwelling in the Farming Zone near Newbridge (Phinn v Loddon SC).

Council refused the application as the dwelling was not determined to be required to support the agricultural use of the land, and therefore inconsistent with the purpose of the Farming Zone, and also that the dwelling posed a risk to the ongoing viability of the adjoining quarry. Council's decision was set aside and a permit was granted by VCAT. The appeal demonstrated that Council's support for the protection of agricultural land is clear in the planning scheme, and the

decision was arrived at as the VCAT member considered that the applicant had made the case that the dwelling was required to support the agricultural use of the land.

9.3 Community satisfaction

The Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey is conducted annually by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning on behalf of all Victorian Councils.

The survey tests community satisfaction levels across core performance measures including customer service, advocacy and overall performance, as well as 23 responsibility areas including recreational facilities, waste management and roads.

Loddon Shire is classed as a small rural Council. The average for other councils in this category are included in the table as well.

Community Satisfaction Rates for planning for the last five years are included in Table 2.

Loddon’s general planning policy performance is close to similar rural councils and consistent with State wide performance, however planning and building permit performance is noticeably lower than similar councils and State wide performance. It is considered that planning is being tainted by resourcing issues in the building approval area of Council. Council has a well resourced and responsive planning team.

Perceptions of town planning policy performance would be improved through better communication with the community. This includes provision of information on the website and in the media about planning, and through explanation of planning applications to Councillors. This information needs to be provided by the qualified planning staff to ensure its accuracy. During the review period a number of brochures about planning issues have been prepared and included on the Council website. It is considered that this has assisted to explain policy on a couple of key issues, and additional brochures should be developed.

Table 2: Community Satisfaction Survey

Indicator	Area	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
General town planning policy performance	Loddon Shire	51	54	56	55	n/a
	Average Small Rural Shire	52	56	55	50	48
	State wide	50	54	55	54	55

Indicator	Area	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Planning and building permits performance	Loddon Shire	42	44	49	49	n/a
	Average Small Rural Shire	45	48	49	46	48
	State wide	47	50	51	51	52

9.4 Consultation with stakeholders

9.4.1 Councillors and executive team consultation

A forum presentation and discussion about the planning scheme review was conducted with Councillors and staff in May 2024. Within this session, Councillors identified the following priorities to be incorporated into the review of the Loddon Planning Scheme:

- Supply of social and affordable housing.
- Alignment of economic development and planning objectives.
- Facilitation of rural residential development and other housing.
- Support for identification of opportunities to reduce planning permit applications.

9.4.2 Council planners and internal staff consultation

A meeting with the council planning team and internal stakeholders was held in November 2022.

The following issues were raised:

- Environmental overlays (SMO, VPO, EMO) are inaccurately mapped in some areas and there is a lack of value in some permit applications.
- DELWP referral in the EMO serves no purpose.
- DELWP and NCCMA referrals under ESO – Laanecoorie catchment are not relevant to the responsibilities of those agencies.
- Staff feel they have a lack of sufficient skill to assess native vegetation applications.
- More exemptions for farms sheds in LSIO are required.
- Need a policy for management of non agricultural storage in Farming Zone (shipping containers).
- Policy required to discourage shipping containers on vacant land in all locations.
- Setback permit triggers in Farming Zone schedule lack benefit / too generous in relation to TZ and waterway. Opportunity to reduce.

9.4.3 Referral agencies

Advice of the planning scheme review and request for input was sent to DELWP, North Central CMA and Goulburn Murray Water. DELWP and NCCMA were specifically asked about the proposed changes to ESO 2 (Laanecoorie Catchment). They have advised that they support this proposed change. No other matters were raised.

9.4.4 Registered Aboriginal Parties

The Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act (2006) recognises Traditional Owners as the primary guardians, keepers and knowledge holders of Aboriginal cultural heritage. At a local level, Registered Aboriginal Parties are the voice of Aboriginal people in the management and protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria.

The traditional owners of the land on which the Shire of Loddon spans are the Dja Dja Wurrung and the Barapa Barapa people. Dja Dja Wurrung People achieved Registered Aboriginal Party status, and signed their Recognition and Settlement Agreement with the State Government on the 28 March 2013.

Within Loddon Shire, Dja Dja Wurrung territory extends from Boort in the north of the Shire, through to the east beyond Dingee, in the south at Bridgewater, Newbridge and Tarnagulla, and to the west of Wedderburn.

Dja Dja Wurrung were invited to contribute to the planning scheme review. A meeting was held between representatives of Dja Dja Wurrung and Council staff, where opportunities to improve the scheme in relation to recognition, protection of heritage and culture and support for Dhelkunya (Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan) 2014-2034 were discussed.

A written submission was provided by Djaara following the meeting. The opportunities that they have identified to improve the Loddon Planning Scheme and our processes can be summarised as:

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- Recognition of the Dja Dja Wurrung as the Traditional Owners of Country in the Loddon Shire
- Inclusion of Djaara stories in Statements of Significance of existing heritage places
- Protection of places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance using the heritage overlay
- Use of the Significant Landscape Overlay to protect cultural landscapes, sight lines and significant places
- Support for cultural tourism and associated economic development
- Consultation on due diligence reports informing cultural heritage processes under the Aboriginal Heritage Act.

In response to this, it is agreed that the MPS should acknowledge the traditional owners. It is also agreed that opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal cultural heritage into our understanding and protection of heritage in the municipality should be investigated.

9.5 Audit and assessment of the current scheme

An audit of each local provision and schedule in the planning scheme has been undertaken. This audit has compared the drafting and application of each provision against the Ministerial Direction on the Form and Content of Planning Schemes, a *Practitioners’ Guide to Victorian Planning Schemes* (Version 1.5, April 2022) and relevant planning practice notes.

Each provision has also been assessed with consideration to the work it is doing in achieving the strategic objectives that are set out in the State, regional and local planning provisions.

Findings on improvements that could be made are listed below. Some of these can occur as part of a planning scheme review based on the findings in this report. Others require further strategic work to justify the change and are listed as findings.

Clause	Change	Policy neutral	Not policy neutral	Further strategic work required
MPS	Include recognition of the Dja Dja Wurrung and the Barapa Barapa people as the traditional owners of the land on which the Loddon Shire occupies.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MPS	Make minor amendments to the Context (02.01) to include updated economic and population data and the Vision (02.02) to reflect the current Council Plan (2021-2025).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MPS	Incorporate directions from the Settlement Strategy (02.03-10, 2.03-6 and 02.03-9).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MPS	Update Clause 02.03 to ensure it is more specific, local focussed and only identifies issues that can be managed by Council through the planning scheme, including more detail on local vegetation values, wetlands, Loddon River flood risk, current farming practice, indigenous heritage and ensure that strategies are more targeted.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MPS	New framework plan required (02.04)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PPF	11.01-1L Settlement Amend strategies to reflect Settlement Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Clause	Change	Policy neutral	Not policy neutral	Further strategic work required
	Replace framework plans with Settlement Strategy Framework plans			
PPF	14.01-1L Change title to Agricultural Development Ensure policy clearly articulates Council’s position of supporting agricultural growth. Include the words “and required to support” following ancillary to in general strategy first dot point. Delete strategies that repeat State provisions Include the words “able to be” following balance lot is in the first excision strategy. Include a strategy related to minimising the amount of land to be excised. Delete the policy guidelines as these requirements are repeating obligations from elsewhere (zone provisions and the Act)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PPF	15.01.6L Development in Rural Areas Add the words “where appropriate” to the end of the second strategy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PPF	16.01-1L Housing for older people Add the words “in the towns of Boort, Bridgewater, Inglewood, Pyramid Hill and Wedderburn to this strategy. 16.01-3 Rural residential Include reference to role of rural living area at Moliagul/McIntyre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PPF	18.01 Land Use and Transport Include strategy in relation to directing new development to existing roads where possible to minimise infrastructure liabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PPF	19.03-5 Waste and resource recovery Identify and protect significant waste facilities such as tips, transfer stations and recovery and reuse facilities including Biogrow (19.03).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Zones	Undertake further strategic work to review subdivision sizes and dwelling triggers in accordance with a recommendation of the Settlement Strategy in the Rural Living Zone Schedule 1 (RLZ1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Zones	Undertake further strategic work to identify appropriate setbacks in the schedule to the Farming Zone to reduce permit triggers where possible to facilitate agricultural development. Planner have identified lack of benefit of existing triggers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Overlays	Schedule 1 and 2 to VPO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Clause	Change	Policy neutral	Not policy neutral	Further strategic work required
	Undertake further strategic works to review application of the overlay to ensure it is only applied to vegetation that requires protection beyond 52.17 (including identified strategic links, rare and threatened vegetation, vegetation significant for erosion and salinity management)			
Overlays	ESO Schedule 2 Mapping Review and amend application of the overlay to reflect declared boundary of the catchment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Overlays	Schedule to Heritage Overlay Include application requirements. Mapping needs to be reviewed as there are some errors. HO needs to be applies to those properties identified in the Loddon Heritage Study (2000).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Overlays	Schedule to Erosion Management Overlay Need to review provisions and application. No objectives, risk or application requirements or decision guidelines specified. Application was based on mapping some 30-40 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Overlays	Schedule to the Salinity Management Overlay Need to review provisions and application. No objectives, risk or application requirements specified. Application was based on mapping some 30-40 years old.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Overlays	Schedule to Floodway Overlay and LSIO New mapping and provisions have been developed by NCCMA. They need to be incorporated into the scheme via amendment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
General provisions	Clause 66.06 referrals Remove notice requirement for DELWP and NCCMA associated with Laanecoorie catchment ESO.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Operational Provisions	Update Clause 74.02 Further Strategic Work to include updated works and remove expired actions			

10 RESPONSE TO PRIORITIES, KEY ISSUES, EMERGING CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This section of the report reviews the scheme’s response to Council priorities and key land use and development issues, as well as emerging challenges and opportunities.

10.1 Population growth and housing supply.

After a period of time experiencing population decline, the population of the municipality has increased between 2016 and 2021. The population grew from 7512 people in 2016 to 7759 people

in 2021 (ABS). This has been as a result of better times in the agricultural sector following favourable seasons, and broader trends related to tree change. Loddon Shire has benefitted from Covid related population shift from Melbourne. The population growth is primarily in the larger townships and rural living areas of the south of the Shire. New housing development has accompanied this growth. Despite this growth, the population of Loddon is aging, and a planning challenge is providing suitable housing for this section of the population.

Council is striving to continue to grow the population of the municipality, and this aim is documented in the Council Plan. Provision of new housing, in particular affordable housing, is critical to the aim of population growth.

The Loddon Shire Settlement Strategy determined that Loddon Shire has a significant supply of residential land (well in excess of 15 years) to accommodate new housing development within its existing townships. The key strategy for settlement and residential development is to encourage infill in the five larger towns to capitalise on existing infrastructure investment.

Unlocking vacant residential land for development is a particular issue. In 2023, Loddon Shire commissioned Villawood Properties to assess residential development opportunities in Loddon and identify why housing development is not occurring. Villawood confirmed that Loddon has significant opportunity and capacity for new housing, with a large supply of vacant residential zoned land, however cost of servicing and development currently limits viability and availability.

Inglewood and Bridgewater, due to their proximity to Bendigo, are considered to provide the greatest potential for viable development.

Key employers in the region have identified that a lack of housing is impacting their viability, and as such housing needs to be facilitated to support economic development.

The planning scheme has been able to support new housing development with zoned vacant land, and this is evidenced by the development that has occurred in recent years. Nearly fifty new dwellings have been constructed in urban areas, and nearly 60 additional residential lots have been created, over the past five years. There is significantly more potential for growth without the need for rezoning.

Villawood recommended that Council improve understanding of the planning and subdivision process, ensure growth areas enable targeted and coordinated infrastructure investment and infrastructure standards are not excessive and onerous, to assist to promote further development.

The Municipal Planning Strategy requires updating in relation to the findings of the Settlement Strategy, however this will not result in any significant policy shift. The incorporation of the Settlement Strategy findings will ensure clarity in relation to Council's position on housing growth, and the inclusion of the new structure plans will highlight key infill opportunities.

During the review period, information was produced and made available via the Council website to assist prospective residents purchase appropriate land for new housing in the Shire. It is proposed that this information be expanded to highlight opportunities for infill subdivision and dual occupancy, and the process to achieve this.

Council should also advocate in relation to investment in water and sewer infrastructure, and sale of unused government owned land in key towns to support growth.

10.2 Facilitation of agriculture and diversification of economy

Agricultural production is the foundation of the economy and community in the Shire. The Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing industry sector of Loddon is valued at \$408.5M which accounts for 40.43% of total output. This industry sector is also the largest employer with 1,186

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jobs which represents 43.38% of total employment within the region. Key agricultural industries of the area are broadacre cropping (predominantly cereals and canola), prime lamb, dairy, wool, chicken meat, hay and pork.

Recent seasons and commodity prices have been very favourable to the agricultural sector, which has supported growth and reinvestment in infrastructure. Significant investment in agriculture over the past five years has included an intensive dairy operation, new and upgraded piggeries, new poultry farms, irrigation set ups, hay storage sheds, new farm dwellings and grain storage.

The planning scheme has been able to support this activity, with all permits granted. Of interest is the ability to support intensive animal businesses in Loddon Shire, where this is a challenge is adjoining municipalities. This is due to strong policy and consistent application of it that has minimised housing and land fragmentation in farming areas. Rigorous management of subdivision and dwellings in the Farming zone has also supported the ability of farms to continue to expand, and acquire additional land to improved productivity and viability. The value of farmland has increased and remained strong in Loddon with farmers keen to grow.

Loddon Shire, like many other rural shires, faces the challenge of both attracting population growth but directing it away from agricultural areas. Management of rural housing is also important to minimise infrastructure and service delivering obligations across a dispersed area. Loddon's location adjacent to a regional city has resulted in pressure for housing on agricultural land in some areas. The planning scheme provides the opportunity for both farming land use and rural living land use in defined locations.

Agricultural land in the Shire has also been sought out for renewable energy projects. Four solar farms have been approved during the review period, and the west of Loddon Shire was considered for the VNI West connector.

Agricultural land is seen to be attractive for these projects as it is considered "vacant" and "undeveloped", when in fact it is used and developed for a valuable and significant local industry. While renewable energy is an opportunity for Loddon, its location needs to be managed to balance this industry with the needs of agriculture.

Prior to the Planning Policy Framework translation, the Loddon Planning Scheme included strong and clear policy regarding use and development in the Farming zone. This policy provided application requirements and guidelines to ensure proposals could demonstrate they would facilitate agriculture and not pose a risk to agriculture. This policy clearly articulated Council's position of protecting agricultural land for agricultural activity, and minimising the incursion of non agricultural uses.

The translation has lost some of the clear, locally based direction in relation to protection of agriculture and farmland in the Loddon Shire. There is a need to update this policy to ensure that it clearly expresses the significance of agriculture in the Loddon Shire, the prioritisation of maintaining agricultural land for agriculture and the high threshold of evidence and justification required to justify land use change or development.

Associated with the aim to facilitate agriculture, is the need to remove redundant permit triggers. It is considered that permit triggers associated with the following controls should be reviewed to ensure they provide benefit:

- Outbuilding and dwelling extension size and main road setback in the schedule to the Farming Zone
- Application of the Erosion Management Overlay and Salinity Management Overlay and associated permit triggers
- Provisions of the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay in relation to sheds.

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It is recognised that rural living is a very significant part of the settlement pattern and attractiveness of Loddon Shire, and the planning scheme seeks to support this through the use of the Rural Living Zone. It is considered that a review of the minimum subdivision size and dwelling permit trigger in the rural living zone schedule would be of benefit to identify opportunities for consolidation of this use in appropriate locations, to reduce pressure in farming areas.

Economic growth and diversification is a key objective of Council. As well as supporting agriculture, the planning scheme is required to support other business activity.

Manufacturing plays a role in the Loddon Shire economy. There are a number of significant businesses established in the municipality that provide employment outside agriculture however, the majority of these businesses have strong links to the agriculture sector. They provide for processing of agricultural product or repair and maintenance agricultural machinery. These businesses are located in a diversity of locations including urban areas and farming areas.

There have been concerns raised in the community and by Councillors that we do not have sufficient or suitable industrial land to accommodate new business to enhance and expand our industrial sector. The Council Plan identifies the need for an Industrial Land Strategy.

The planning scheme currently includes zoned industrial land, much of which is vacant, as well as policy that supports industry in the Farming Zone under certain circumstances. An industrial subdivision is currently being developed in Bridgewater. Council has previously developed and sold their own industrial estates with limited success in terms of new business development.

A review of the existing industrial land supply, as well as an assessment of potential demand for industrial land and opportunities for new industrial business, would provide an understanding about the appropriateness of existing industrial zonings and the need for change. This work would also provide a basis for Council to then determine their ability and willingness to take a proactive role in industrial land provision as a developer. This work has commenced and will be further informed during the development of the Economic Development Strategy that is currently underway.

Tourism is also a significant component of the local economy, with the potential for growth. An emerging opportunity is tourism associated with Aboriginal cultural heritage. The Lake Boort Scarred Trees Master Plan highlights the international significance and value of that area, and there are many other important sites in the municipality.

Djaara, as the traditional owners of much of the municipality, see tourism as an important economic activity and wish to work in partnership with Loddon Shire. Protection of significant places is required in recognition of their value and role in history, for traditional owners and for visitors. Places of aboriginal cultural significance are protected in the Aboriginal Heritage Act, however there is the opportunity to enhance recognition and protection through the planning scheme. There is also the potential to identify support for associated tourism businesses. In conjunction with Djaara, there is a need to investigate how best to recognise and protect places of Aboriginal cultural significance in the planning scheme.

Natural resources, for example birds at Wedderburn and lakes, rivers and wetlands, are also part of the tourism product of the Loddon Shire. The planning scheme provides some protection for natural resources such as native vegetation and habitat, however there is the opportunity for this to be updated and improved. This is discussed further below.

10.3 Environmental management, in particular native vegetation protection and flooding.

Loddon Shire includes a range of environmental values including rare grasslands, RAMSAR wetlands, habitat of threatened species and significant patches of remnant forest on private land. It also includes environmental challenges such as flooding, bushfire, erosion prone land and areas subject to salinity.

The condition and quality of the natural resources of the municipality are fundamental to the health of the agricultural sector, liveability and amenity of the municipality and attraction of tourists.

Although the need to protect native vegetation is generally supported within the community, it can be a challenge to balance the competing policies of protecting native vegetation and facilitation of agriculture. Development of irrigation and the need to increase efficiency has resulted in a number of applications for removal of native vegetation within paddocks during the review period. These applications can be complex, time consuming and require significant support from State Government (DEECA). Much of the assessment is beyond the expertise of the Council planners, despite comprehensive decision making support in the planning scheme and in other resources. Consideration should be given to such applications being solely managed and determined by State government to reduce the burden on local government, however Council should retain the opportunity for their views to be included in the assessment.

Flooding is a significant issue in parts of Loddon Shire. The shire has been subject to at least six significant flood events in the past thirteen years. It is expected that due to climate change, more flooding events could occur. Flooding has significantly impacted farming properties and townships, with substantial damage to houses, roads, community buildings, crops, livestock and fences. Areas affected by flooding include along the Loddon River and across its extensive floodplain through the north of the shire, along the Avoca River and the towns of Bridgewater, Newbridge, Wedderburn and Korong Vale. Flooding has a significant impact on the community wellbeing and economy of Loddon Shire, and appropriate identification and response is important to minimise the impact.

There is currently flood controls in the Loddon Planning Scheme, however they do not reflect current data and they do not address all areas impacted by flooding.

Flood mapping for Bridgewater and Dunolly has been updated by the NCCMA. This amended mapping needs to be incorporated into the planning scheme to ensure that this risk is appropriately identified and managed (and areas that are not at risk not impeded by unnecessary flood controls). Additional places require flood mapping, including Wedderburn.

The permit triggers of the schedules to all of the flood overlays also need to be reviewed to ensure they are reflective of risk. It is considered that there is the opportunity to remove some permit triggers that are not considered to provide significant benefit in terms of the need to assess the proposal through the planning system.

In addition to flood overlays, the areas that were considered to be of environmental significance (for example remnant vegetation, wetlands and, lakes) and risk (salinity, erosion and flooding) were mapped into the planning scheme as the basis of overlays to trigger permits for development to enable assessment.

This mapping was done prior to the availability of GIS in local government and as such this mapping is inaccurately applied in some areas. There would be benefit in reviewing the application of these overlays to ensure that they appropriately identify risk, and similar to flooding, don't unnecessarily impose permit triggers where they are not required.

10.4 Cost and viability of infrastructure.

The size and dispersed nature of Loddon and its communities poses a significant challenge in terms of the provision of infrastructure and the cost to Council, State and Federal government.

This infrastructure includes roads, pools, halls, schools, health, water and sewer services. Careful planning of settlement and development is required to ensure that use of existing infrastructure is maximised, and if new infrastructure is required, growth is consolidated around it.

The sustainability of infrastructure provision is a theme of the Council Plan.

Unlocking Loddon has reinforced the growth potential of Inglewood and Bridgewater due to the proximity to Bendigo. It has been recommended that the structure plans for these towns be refined to identified priority growth areas to enable coordinated infrastructure investment.

Loddon Shire does not have any development contributions system to enable financial contributions for new infrastructure arising from residential development. This has historically been due to a low level of development, and a Council desire to support residential development. This position may need to be revisited, should residential development rates increase.

During the review period, a procedure was developed to manage requests for road upgrades in rural areas. This procedure provided for a coordinated and consistent approach by planning and assets staff to ensure that the financial impact to Council of changes to the road network is minimised. This policy should be reflected in the PPF.

10.5 Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Loddon Shire includes more than 1,000 registered cultural heritage places including an Aboriginal cultural place, Aboriginal historical places, burials, artefact scatters, earth features, low density artefact distributions, object collections, quarries, rock art, scarred tree, a shell midden and stone features. The Lake Boort region is regarded as one of the most significant Aboriginal cultural sites not only in Victoria, but Australia. Today, there are estimated to be over 400 scarred trees in the vicinity of the lake. Kooyoora State Park, in the southern part of the municipality, is also a significant place.

The traditional owners of much of Loddon Shire, Dja Dja Wurrung, are very active in land management in the municipality. The risk and impact of land use change and development on Aboriginal cultural heritage is becoming a more significant part of the assessment process.

Protection of this heritage and timely development approvals will be assisted by better planning scheme identification and recognition as well as through improved operation, implementation and relationships. Loddon Shire and Djaara should work together to review how the scheme and its implementation can be improved to enhance protection of Aboriginal cultural values.

10.6 Use of land for storage

The relatively cheaper price of some land in Loddon Shire has resulted in properties being purchased and used for storage. This often involves the use of shipping containers. A number of permit applications and enforcement actions associated with use of land for storage have been problematic during the review period. Storage associated with an existing, legal use of the land is generally not an issue, however when storage is the sole use of the land it can displace agriculture or residential use of the land, and may be unsightly.

The need for a policy to manage this issue has been identified by the statutory planners, however it has been determined that this issue is more appropriately dealt with through the building approval system.

11 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report documents the findings of the Loddon Planning Scheme Review. A review of the Loddon Planning Scheme is a requirement of the Planning and Environment Act (1987).

The review process involved a detailed assessment of the provisions, operation and implementation of the planning scheme to ensure that it is current in terms of State requirements and policy, as well as land use issues and opportunities; it supports Council aspirations as expressed in their Council plan and other policy; and it is efficient and effective. It is an important part of the operation of local government to ensure that this important instrument remains current, and the review process provides the foundation of ongoing strategic planning.

The Loddon Shire Community Vision 2031 from the Council Plan is “creating a community where everyone is welcome and has the opportunity to live, work and thrive.”

The key directions from the Council Plan that underpin this are:

- A sustainable built and natural environment
- A growing and vibrant community
- A diverse and expanding economy
- A supported and accessible community.

These directions provide the context for this review, as the planning scheme is a significant tool for Council to deliver on its vision.

Over the past five years, Loddon Shire has seen significant change. Much of this has been positive. Many new residents have moved to the municipality, prompted by the upheaval of Covid-19 and the cost of housing in larger centres. These new residents are enjoying the lifestyle offered in Loddon, in the townships and rural areas, and now contribute to the vibrant community. Favourable farming seasons have seen substantial reinvestment into farm infrastructure, growth of existing farming businesses and new agricultural enterprises establish. Associated with the strong agricultural economy, has been the development and expansion of associated manufacturing and processing. The community has been challenged by multiple flood events which have caused damage to homes, community infrastructure, roads, fences and crops, as well as stock losses. Some places have been impacted more than once.

In response to this, the planning scheme has largely been effective and policy in the scheme is consistent with the objectives of the Council Plan. Policy supports growth of the towns, land is zoned for residential and rural living development, management of housing and subdivision in the Farming zone has protected agricultural land and activity, and industrial businesses have been supported. The scheme has provided for the protection of native vegetation, and has sought to minimise flood risk.

Moving forward, key issues for the municipality include provision of more housing, continued support for the growth and expansion of agriculture, responding to the needs to industry, and management of the environment and heritage for its role in the amenity, liveability and economy of the municipality. The review has identified opportunities to improve the response to these issues, and improve the efficiency of the scheme.

11.1 Recommendations

This section of the report outlines the recommendations and next steps for this planning scheme review.

The recommendations for changes to the scheme and further strategic work has been based on the need to ensure that the scheme is contemporary and supportive of Council's aspirations for population and economic growth.

Recommendations are grouped as follows:

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- Planning scheme recommendations.
- Further strategic work recommendations
- Process improvement recommendations.
- Advocacy recommendations

11.1.1 Planning scheme amendment recommendation

These recommendations relate to the planning scheme amendment that should be progressed to implement the findings of this review relating to administrative matters or to incorporate Council or State adopted strategic planning work into the scheme.

These recommended changes include updating information in the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) in relation to recent data and trends (for example recent census data), recognition of the traditional owners, reflecting the current Council Plan and incorporating recommendations from the Settlement Strategy.

There is no policy shift involved in these recommended changes. These changes aim for refinement, clarification and a contemporary response to the use and development of land in Loddon Shire.

The detail of these changes are to be provided during the planning scheme amendment process. This process is an independent process that follows adoption of this report.

It is recommended that Council prepare a planning scheme amendment to:

- a) Amend the MPS at Clause 02.01 - Context to include recent data and trends, to recognise the traditional owners of the land on which the Loddon Shire is located and to remove outdated information.
- b) Amend the MPS at Clause 02.02 - Vision to reflect the current Council Plan.
- c) Amend the MPS at Clause 02.03 - Strategic Directions to incorporate the Settlement Strategy and refine directions to ensure they are current and locally specific in relation to farming practices and commodities, flood risk, indigenous heritage, tourism, native vegetation values and wetlands.
- d) Amend the MPS at Clause 02.04 - Framework Plans to include a new framework plan that reflects current policy.
- e) Amend the Planning Policy Framework (PPF) to incorporate the Settlement Strategy (including town structure plans - Clause 11.01-L and recognition of the McIntyre rural living area - Clause 16.01-3); refine the Agriculture policy to remove repetition of State policy and to more clearly reflect Council's desire to protect agricultural land and activity (Clause 14.01); include a policy statement in relation to directing new development to existing roads where possible to minimise infrastructure liabilities (Clause 18.01); and identify and protect significant waste facilities such as tips, transfer stations and recovery and reuse facilities including Biogrow (Clause 19.03).
- f) Amend Clause 42.01s Schedule 2 (Laanecoore Catchment) – Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) to limit provisions to development that include effluent disposal.
- g) Amend Clause 66.06 to remove notice requirement to DELWP and NCCMA for Clause 4.0 of Schedule 2 to Clause 42.01 (ESO).
- h) Include an updated Clause 74.02 Further strategic work that prioritises the strategic work program based on the findings of this review.

11.1.2 Further strategic work recommendations

These recommendations relate to strategic planning projects that should be considered to undertaken to enhance the effectiveness, relevance and performance of the planning scheme.

It is recommended that Council consider undertaking the following strategic work as resources and capacity permit:

- a) Finalise the Industrial Land Review following development of the Economic Development Strategy to ensure that the planning scheme can attract and accommodate industrial land use that is determined to benefit Loddon Shire in terms of employment and business growth.
- b) Prepare a planning scheme amendment to implement the flood studies prepared by the NCCMA and update related provisions to manage flood risk.
- c) Review the schedule to the Farming Zone to ensure permit triggers are of value and relevance including determine the need for permit triggers for timber production, dwelling extension and outbuildings.
- d) Review the minimum subdivision size and dwelling trigger in the Rural Living Zone to provide for consolidation of this land use where appropriate.
- e) Review the application and role of environmental overlays (VPO, SMO, EMO, ESO 1) to ensure that they reflect the value or issue to be responded to, the mapping is accurate and evidence based and related provisions are targeted and proportionate.
- f) Review and update the Heritage Overlay to incorporate heritage places that are currently not included (including those properties identified in the Loddon Heritage Study 2000) and include relevant information in the schedule to assist with assessment.
- g) Work with Djaara to identify opportunities to recognise and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage, including places, landscapes and the associated stories in the planning scheme.
- h) Monitor the need for developer contributions to assist with infrastructure provision.

11.1.3 Process improvement recommendations

These recommendations are drawn from both the analysis of the planning scheme and consultation with Council staff and referral authorities.

These recommendations relate to improving the quality of information provided to the community about the planning scheme, planning system and planning permits.

The aim of improving the community understanding of planning is to improve the standard of planning permit applications to facilitate the process as well as to avoid proposals that are without merit. It is intended that supporting an improved community understanding of the reason for planning controls will increase acceptance of and compliance with these requirements.

It is recommended that Council:

- a) Develop application guidelines for subdivision in the Township Zone and promote development opportunities through the media.
- b) Provide for the planning staff present their reports to the Councillors at meetings to ensure that accurate planning information is conveyed to Councillors and the community.
- c) Engage in greater consultation with Djaara where there is a risk of impact on cultural heritage, including providing the opportunity to review due diligence reports informing

cultural heritage processes under the Act (as currently happens in City of Greater Bendigo).

11.1.4 Advocacy recommendations

These recommendations are generally beyond the scope of what Council can achieve in its planning scheme under the current Victoria Planning Provisions or scope of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. They are matters that Council may wish to discuss with the State Government to highlight the issue and advocate for change.

It is recommended that Council:

- a) Advocate for the State Government to take a more significant role in the implementation and enforcement of native vegetation protection controls.
- b) Advocate for State Government support for affordable new housing through investment in water and sewer infrastructure and sale of unused land in key towns.

11.1.5 Minister for Planning recommendation

Loddon Shire Council has prepared a planning scheme review as required by section 12B(1) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act).

In accordance with section 12B(3) of the Act this review identifies opportunities to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the planning scheme in achieving the objectives of planning in Victoria and the objectives of the planning framework established in the Act.

In accordance with section 12B(4) of the Act, the review evaluates the planning scheme to ensure that it:

- Is consistent with Ministerial Direction on the Form and Content of Planning Schemes.
- Sets out the policy objectives for the use and development of land.
- Makes effective use of state and local provisions to achieve state and local planning policy objectives.

Recommendation:

That Loddon Shire Council accept this Planning Scheme Review report and forward to the Minister for Planning as evidence Loddon Shire Council, as the planning authority for the Loddon Planning Scheme, has met its obligations in accordance with Section 12B of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 to review the planning scheme every four years.

12 COSTING AND FUNDING OF ACTIONS

Action	Cost of project	Total expected funding	Net cost to Council	Proposed funding source	Completion timeframe
Update the MPS and PPF in accordance with recommendation 1	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	Dec 2024
Strategic projects	To be determined				
Process improvements	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	Mid 2024
Advocacy	Ongoing				

APPENDIX 1: Strategic document review

The following table includes the regional documents that were reviewed; the directions that are relevant to the scheme; and an assessment of the need to amend the scheme to reflect these strategies.

Name	Relevant directions	Comments and recommended scheme changes
Dja Dja Wurrung Dhelkunya Dja Country Plan 2014 -2034	Lands and waters to be in good condition and actively managed to protect the values and to promote the laws, culture and rights of all Dja Dja Wurrung People. Protect and manage cultural landscapes and sites Undertake a feasibility study into introducing commercial activity, such as tourism, to the Aboriginal places	The Dja Dja Wurrung needs to be acknowledged in the planning scheme as the traditional owners of the land on which the Shire of Loddon spans. Work with traditional owners to identify how best to protect cultural heritage. Identify support for tourism associated with Aboriginal Cultural heritage. Directions in relation to environmental management are consistent with existing environmental strategic directions
North Central Regional Catchment Strategy 2021-27	Avoid, reduce and manage flood risk to community. Undertake a land capability assessment of the region, considering values, constraints, and land use under multiple climate change scenarios, to inform land use planning. Improve the retention and restoration of native vegetation and habitat on private land. Collaborate to increase awareness of legal requirements for cultural heritage management, and the protection of threatened species and communities, and improve compliance.	Review and improve local provisions (overlays) that protect significant remnant vegetation (linkages and viable parcels on private land, ridge and slopes, low lying areas, wetlands and water frontages), and identify erosion and salinity risk to ensure that they are evidence and strategy based. Amend flood controls to incorporate NCCMA Flood studies. This work is already identified in Clause 74.02.
Kara Kara – Wedderburn Landscape Plan 2016-2020 (Bush Heritage, Trust for Nature)	Reconnect the natural ecosystems of the Kara Kara-Wedderburn region.	Opportunity to use the VPO to protect remnant vegetation that is a part of these corridors
Loddon Mallee Waste and Resource Recovery	Protection of waste recovery resources in the Loddon Mallee Region.	Ensure waste disposal facilities are correctly zoned and review to determine if overlays are required to protect buffers

Implementation Plan 2016–26		
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The following table includes the Council documents that were reviewed; the directions that are relevant to the scheme; and an assessment of the need to amend the scheme to reflect these strategies.

Name	Relevant directions	Comments and recommended scheme changes
Loddon Shire Community Vision 2031 / Council Plan 2021-2025	Creating a community where everyone is welcome and has the opportunity to live, work and thrive. Sustainable infrastructure provision. Protect the environment. Population growth. Increase tourism. Diverse and expanding economy.	Amend the Vision (02.02) to reflect the current Council Plan (2021-2025).
Settlement Strategy 2019-2034	Facilitate population growth and build on existing communities, in particular Boort, Bridgewater, Inglewood, Pyramid Hill and Wedderburn, to support their viability and maximise infrastructure investment. This strategy provides for a range of residential forms across the Loddon Shire while also protecting the opportunity for the agricultural sector to readily operate and expand, managing Council's infrastructure liability and preserving the unique landscape and amenity of Loddon Shire.	Incorporate strategic directions and structure plans from the Settlement Strategy
Economic Development and Tourism Strategy (2019)	Facilitate population and job growth. Tourism is a key opportunity. Provide land and housing. Vibrant and attractive town centres, with quality well run shops and cafes will encourage people to stop or be destinations themselves. Enhanced turnaround times for planning and building approvals are identified as supporting Loddon as being "business ready".	Largely consistent with MPS. Industrial Strategy

Lake Boort Scarred Trees Master Plan	Build awareness and appreciation of Lake Boort as an unparalleled landscape destination, identifying how considered visitor access can create unique and immersive landscape experiences, whilst also providing greater protection of the site's significant cultural heritage values. The Lake Boort Scarred Trees Masterplan aims to position the Lake Boort site as one of the first cultural landscapes in Victoria with a distinct Indigenous visitor offer.	Identify cultural and tourism significance of Boort in MPS
Loddon Shire Council Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021 – 2025	Support child care provision Plan for extreme events and emergencies Provide shade and cooler spaces Improved digital connectivity	No change required
Loddon Shire Waste Management Strategy 2020-2030	Reduce waste going to landfill. Support recycling and reuse initiatives	Identify significance of waste resources and need to protect buffers
Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2015-2019	Develop a process for ensuring that Planning/Building applications in non sewerred areas (including on the edge of sewerred towns) are referred to the Environmental Health Department for assessment	Completed
Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2013 – 2018	Facilitate the establishment of medium/large scale renewable energy projects. Improvements in urban and agricultural water security and quality. Expansion of the reticulated water and wastewater systems throughout our Townships. Water recycling and stormwater capture and reuse Identify roadside areas of biodiversity significance Lobby Coliban Water for the establishment of a township sewer scheme in Newbridge Consider opportunities and regulations surrounding non-conventional waste water	No change to MPS required

	<p>treatment options within the Shire such as dry composting toilets which may allow further residential development where use of conventional systems have been a limiting factor.</p> <p>Explore the economic viability of establishing biogas, high temperature waste incinerators, composting and biodiesel plants so as to capitalize on the Shire assets of sun hours, low population density and low-cost land may give an economic advantage</p> <p>Explore new high value crops, alternative farming techniques and equipment.</p>	
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10.5 UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE ANNUAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM 2023-2024 AND FLOOD RESTORATION PROGRAM

File Number: FOL/19/432644
Author: David Southcombe, Manager Assets and Infrastructure
Authoriser: Glenn Harvey, Acting Director Operations
Attachments: 1. Annual Infrastructure Program 2023-24
2. October 2022 Flood Program 2022-2025
3. Emu Logan Rd Project

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Note the update on progress of the Annual Infrastructure Program 2023-2024 and Flood Restoration Program as at March 2024.
2. Approve the addition of the Emu Logan Rd Resheet project in to the Annual Infrastructure Program, to be funded from underspend in the Roads to Recovery program.

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 2023 Council Meeting.

The last quarterly report on progress of the Annual Infrastructure Program 2023-2024 and Flood Restoration Program was provided at the February 2024 meeting.

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 March 2024.

ISSUES/DISCUSSIONAnnual Infrastructure Program

There are currently 105 individual projects, including carryovers from previous financial years that form part of the Annual Infrastructure Program 2023-2024. 36 projects have been completed and 64 projects are in progress.

An additional four projects were added to the program in Quarter 3. These were three projects associated with the reconstruction of Pyramid Yarraberb Rd and one for the gravel resheet of Blows Rd.

The Roads to Recovery and Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program (LRCIP) Phases 1, 2, and 3 require construction for projects funded under these programs to be completed by June 30, 2024. Currently all projects funded under these programs are progressing and will be complete prior to June 30.

There is underspend in the Roads to Recovery Program associated with completion of projects. It is proposed to allocate this underspend to a gravel resheet project for 3km of Emu Logan Rd. Details of this project are in Attachment 3.

Table 1 provides a progress summary for the third quarter of the 2023–2024 financial year of the Annual Infrastructure Program.

Table 1: Annual Infrastructure Program progress

Program Category	Total number of projects listed in Annual Infrastructure Program 2023 - 2024	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	7	3	10	8	1	80%
Local Roads Gravel Shoulder Resheet	3	0	3	2	1	67%
Local Road Construction - Asset Preservation	3	2	5	1	4	20%
Local Road Construction – Amenity	1	0	1	0	0	0%
Local Road Construction - Safety	0	1	1	0	1	0%
Township Street Improvement	3	7	10	6	4	60%
Local Bridges and Culverts	4	4	8	4	4	50%
Reseals	36	0	36	0	36	0%
Parks and Gardens	4	3	7	6	1	86%
Buildings	9	8	17	7	7	41%
Major Projects	0	7	7	2	5	29%
TOTAL	70	35	105	36	64	34%

As at the end of quarter three, 100 projects are either completed or commenced, that accounts for 95% of the total program. 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 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 2025.

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 into DRFA claims. 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	80	373	0	18%
Sealed pavements	174	7	167	0	4%
Clearing and earthworks	3	0	3	0	0%
Road furniture and delineation	1	0	1	0	0%
Drainage structures	44	13	31	0	30%
Others	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	675	100	575	0	15%

Attachment 2 summarises the reimbursement claims for works so far (October 2022 to 31 December) in both, event response and restoration of essential public assets. To date Council has expended \$4,604,899 with \$4,361,751 reimbursed through the DRFA program, with \$9,112 of the claim amount rejected. 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	95%	Works complete, final inspection identified defects which are being rectified.
Durham Ox Hall	DEECA	100%	Complete.
Fentons Creek Hall	DEECA	20%	Cash settlement has been paid, CoM delivering the works.
Miscellaneous assets	Council	80%	Mix of minor assets on the Loddon River and at Donaldson Park.

Council has also received 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%
Repairs to Loddon River, river side walking tracks	Not yet started
Lake Lyndger outflow doors	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 – 10%

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	64	0	0	0	0%
Sealed pavements	23	0	0	0	0%
Clearing and earthworks	0	0	0	0	0%
Concrete	1	0	0	0	0%
Road furniture and delineation	0	0	0	0	0%
Drainage structures	11	0	0	0	0%
Others	1	0	0	0	0%
Total	100	0	0	0	0%

COST/BENEFITS

The Annual Infrastructure Program expenditure in the Second quarter of the 2023–2024 financial year was \$2,023,528 for a total expenditure year to date of \$7,645,736. Attachment 1 lists all projects in the program which have an allocated budget of \$17,773,018 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	LRG023292	Pyramid Cohuna Rd	Resheet - 7.5km	100%	Complete
	LRG023305	Old Leitchville Road	Resheet - 1.5km	100%	Complete
	LRG123248	Loddon River Rd	Resheet - 1.8km	100%	Complete
	LRG123274	Quambatook Wychitella Rd	Resheet - 3.8km	100%	Complete
	LRG223286	Marong Serpentine Rd	Resheet - 3.9km	50%	In Progress
	LRG223333	Graham's Ln	Resheet - 0.2km	100%	Complete
	LRG323275	Unnamed road Laanecoorie between Guiney St and Cains Rd Upgrade	Resheet - 0.3km - between Guiney St and Cains Rd	5%	Quarter 4
	LRG423260	Sylvaterre Timms Lake Rd	Resheet - 2.9km	100%	Complete
	LRG423261	Rockies Rd	Resheet - 1.7km	100%	Complete
	LRG324355	Blows Rd Calivil	Resheet - 3.0km	100%	Complete
Local Road Shoulder Sheet	LRS223374	Wedderburn Serpentine Rd, POWLETT PLAINS	Shoulder Resheet - 1.57km	100%	Complete
	LRS423375	Yallook Mail Rd, DINGEE	Shoulder Resheet - 3.12km	5%	In Progress
	LRS423377	Prairie West Rd, CALAVIL	Shoulder Resheet - 8.34km	100%	Complete
Local Road Construction Asset Preservation	LRC0516	Newbridge Rd, WOODSTOCK	Reconstruction of road and seal - 1.16km	100%	Complete
	LRC0518	Echuca Serpentine Rd, POMPAPIEL	Reconstruct and widen - 5.29km	60%	In Progress
	LRC0539	Pyramid Yarraberb Rd	Reconstruction of road and seal	10%	In Progress
	LRC0540	Pyramid Yarraberb Rd	Reconstruction of road and seal	10%	In Progress
	LRC0541	Pyramid Yarraberb Rd	Reconstruction of road and seal	10%	In Progress
Local Road Construction - Amenity	AMN323053	Tarnagulla Community Centre	Car Park sealing works	0%	Quarter 4
Local Road Construction Safety	SAF022043	Safety signage restricted structures	Installation of signage on restricted structures	10%	In Progress

Attachment 1 - Annual Infrastructure Program 2023-2024

Category	Project No.	Project Name	Project Details	% Activity	Comments
Township St Improvement	TSI001	Wimmera Highway, NEWBRIDGE	New footpath	100%	Complete
	ATSI495	Southey Street, INGLEWOOD	New Footpath - North St to School gate	100%	Complete
	ATSI499	Armstrong Street, BOORT	New Footpath - Malone St to Coutts St	100%	Complete
	ATSI500	Armstrong Street, BOORT	New Footpath - Coutts St to McMillians Rd	100%	Complete
	ATSI501	McMillians Road, BOORT	New Footpath - McMillians Rd to Holloway St	100%	Complete
	TSI0513	Commercial Rd, TARNAGULLA	Footpath construction between Wayman Road and Poverty Street	10%	In Progress
	TSI0516	Commercial Rd, TARNAGULLA	Footpath construction between King and Poverty Street.	10%	In Progress
	TSI0517	Commercial Rd, TARNAGULLA	Footpath construction between Old Tarnagulla Road and Poverty Street	10%	In Progress
	TSI0535	Commercial Rd, TARNAGULLA	Footpath construction between Poverty Street and Old Laanecoorie Road	10%	In Progress
	TSI0554	Inglewood netball courts. INGLEWOOD	100m x 1.5m footpath construction	100%	Complete
Local Bridges and Culverts	BCC390	Brenanah Wehla Road, WEHLA	Installation of floodway and cut off wall	100%	Complete
	BCC410	Long Bush Road, MCINTYRE	Culvert Replacement and Floodway Installation	100%	Complete
	BCC430	Canary Island Leaghur Rd, CANARY ISLAND	Box Culvert Replacement	10%	In Progress
	BCC432	Canary Island Leaghur Rd, LEAGHUR	Box Culvert Replacement	10%	In Progress
	BCC433	Canary Island Leaghur Rd, CANARY ISLAND	Box Culvert Replacement	10%	In Progress
	BCC437	Appin South Road, APPIN SOUTH	Replace culvert and upgrade	100%	Complete
	BCC443	Wedderburn Junction East Road, WEDDERBURN JUNCTION	Installation of Floodway	100%	Complete
	BCC477	Small Culverts Allocation	Allocation to replace small culverts	85%	In Progress
Reseals	36 Projects	Multiple	Reseal Program. 33 Roads, 80 segments	75%	In Progress
Parks and Gardens	PGC028	Malone St, BOORT	Footpath installation at Boort Park	100%	Complete
	PGC032	Progress Park, NEWBRIDGE	Progress Park BBQ and Shelter	100%	Complete
	PGC041	Lions Park East, PYRAMID HILL	Replace barbecue shelter and benches	100%	Complete
	PGC053	Boort Caravan Park, BOORT	Installation of a rotary self cleaning filter	100%	Complete
	PGC054	Godfrey Streetscape, BOORT	Instalation of plants or turf for a 40cm strip outside of tennis courts	100%	Complete
	PGC055	Bridgewater Swimming Hole, BRIDGEWATER	Extend irrigation from Hotel to swimming hole	25%	In Progress
	PGC057	Myrnong Beach, BOORT	Replace car park, irrigation, bollards, tables and chairs, bin surrounds	100%	Complete

Attachment 1 - Annual Infrastructure Program 2023-2024

Category	Project No.	Project Name	Project Details	% Activity	Comments
Buildings	BLD069	Serpentine Public Toilets, SERPENTINE	New septic field (rest stop toilets)	5%	In Progress
	BLD097	Wedderburn (Korong) Historical Society, WEDDERBURN	Additional allocation - New toilet	0%	On hold
	BLD101	Dingee EPU, DINGEE	Replace and Upgrade Waste water system	10%	In Progress
	BLD105	Boort Memorial Hall Lighting, BOORT	Lighting Replacement	100%	Complete
	BLD106	BRIC Building Restumping, BOORT	Restumping	100%	Complete
	BLD108	Wedderburn & Bridgewater Toilet Vents	Install vents in toilets	100%	Complete
	BLD108	Newbridge Public Toilet Lighing Upgrade	Upgrade lights at Newbridge public toilet	100%	Complete
	BLD110	Serpentine Public Toilets, SERPENTINE	Timber replacement	100%	Complete
	BLD112	Boort Memorial Hall Footpath, BOORT	Footpath	0%	On hold
	BLD115	Boort Historical Society, BOORT	Replace Roof	20%	In Progress
	BLD116	Inglewood Hall, INGLEWOOD	Replace Roof	20%	In Progress
	BLD117	Asbestos Removal	Boort Memorial Hall, Pyramid Hill CERT Hall, Serpentine Bowls Club, Boort Angling Club, Newbridge Hall, Pyramid Hill Golf Club, Wedderburn Pre-school	100%	Complete
	BLD118	Bridgewater Hall, BRIDGEWATER	Upgrade lighting	0%	Quarter 4
	BLD119	Public Toilets, WEDDERBURN and BOORT	Upgrade cisterns	50%	In Progress
	BLD120	Public Toilets, BRIDEWATER and NEWBRIDGE	Replace Urinals	50%	In Progress
BLD121	Pyramid Hill Preschool, PYRAMID HILL	Replace windows	100%	Complete	
BLD124	Dingee Memorial Hall, DINGEE	Install disabled toilet	15%	In Progress	
Major Projects		Pyramid Hill Streetscape	Pyramid Hill Steetscape works	50%	In Progress
		Caravan Park Improvement Project	Continue works at caravan Parks	50%	In Progress
		Calivil Lightning Project	Installation of lighting at football ovals	100%	Complete
		Mitiamo Lighting Project	Installation of lighting at football ovals	100%	Complete
		Boort Flood Mitigation Project	Installation of flood mitigation levee	30%	In Progress
		Pyramid Hill Flood Mitigation Project	Installation of flood mitigation levee	30%	In Progress
		Donaldson Park Project	Donaldson Park Facility	70%	In Progress

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Attachment 2 – October 2022 Flood Program 2022 - 2025

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					Lodged. With Assessor
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				Betterment Inc = \$12,204 Lodged & With Assessor.
LODCC-1037-Claim-0020				\$1,090,586		\$1,090,586		Completed
LODCC-1037-Claim-0021				\$51,439				Betterment Inc = \$6,855. Lodged & With Assessor.
	\$42,949	\$282,822	\$381,892	\$3,897,236	\$0	\$4,361,751	\$9,112	

Attachment 3 – Emu Logan Rd Project

Project No	Project Name	Description	Estimated Cost
LRS1363	Emu Logan Rd Resheet	Resheet Ch 7.91 – 10.91km	\$150,000

11 INFORMATION REPORTS**11.1 LOCAL LAWS AND PLANNING COMPLIANCE QUARTERLY ACTIVITY REPORT**

File Number: FOL/19/115192
Author: David Price, Manager Community Services
Authoriser: Wendy Gladman, Director Community Wellbeing
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 third report for the 2023-2024 financial year, summarising the animal control, local laws, planning compliance and enforcement actions taken within the Community Services Department for the period 1 January to 31 March 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.

A number of organisational policies and procedures have been developed, outlining the methodology and circumstances under which Council officers will undertake compliance action. 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. The service agreement with the Department of Transport and Planning to provide services for livestock wandering on the VicRoads arterial road network concluded on 31 December 2023.

Table 1: Administrative

Quarter 3 (1 January 2024 – 31 March 2024)			
	After hours	Littering or illegal	Local law

Activity	call outs (*)	rubbish dumping	permits issued
No. actions	2	4	2

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.

Staffing vacancies have previously limited the ability for significant progress to be made in this area. Council has appointed two Community Compliance Officers to specifically address untidy and/or unsightly properties. One officer commenced on 13 December 2023 and progress has been achieved during the quarter as summarised below. A second officer commenced duties on 15 April 2024 (outside of this reporting period). The Community Compliance Team Leader role is currently still vacant.

Table 2: Summary of unsightly properties activities

Quarter 3 (1 January 2024 – 31 March 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	2	0	5	2	6	2	19	3	4	4	4	1	1	0	1	54
No. resolved during quarter	0	0	4	0	1	1	4	1	1	1	3	0	0	0	1	17
New action commenced	0	0	1	1	4	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	11
No. currently pursuing	2	0	2	3	9	1	15	3	3	4	1	2	1	2	0	48
Progress Activities																
Site meeting / discussion held	1	0	0	3	9	1	15	5	3	4	1	2	1	2	1	48
(^) Letter to comply issued	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Occupier has commenced clean-up work	1	0	0	1	5	1	5	2	2	1	0	2	0	2	1	23
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

(^) As compliance activity had not been actioned for some time, introductory letters were sent to each property owner identified on the previous report. A suitable date and time to meet on site was then arranged as necessary to discuss the current status.

Animal management

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

Table 3: Summary of animal management activities

Quarter 3 (1 January 2024 – 31 March 2024)						
Activity	Wandering livestock	Trespassing livestock	Dog attack	Domestic animal at large	Distribution of cat traps	General complaints / other
No. of actions	5	9	3	7	20	33

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

Table 4: Impoundment activities

Quarter 3 (1 January 2024 – 31 March 2024)				
Animal type	Impoundments	Returned to owners	Animals rehoused	Animals disposed
Livestock	2	2	0	0
Dogs	1	0	1	0
Cats	26	3	23	0
Feral Animals	-	-	-	38
Total	29	5	24	38

Planning Compliance and Enforcement

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

Table 5: Planning compliance and enforcement activities

Quarter 3 (1 January 2024 – 31 March 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	5	0	0	0	3	2
Native vegetation removal without a permit	3	2	0	0	3	2
Breach of planning permit	0	0	0	0	0	0
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	2	0

Total	13	2	0	0	8	7
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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 third quarter of 2023-2024 financial year for the local laws and compliance activities contained within this report is \$70,362, and 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.

11.2 ROAD MANAGEMENT PLAN DEFECT RECTIFICATION COMPLIANCE REPORT

File Number: 14/01/022
Author: Daniel Lloyd, Manager Works
Authoriser: Glenn Harvey, Acting 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 third report for the 2023 - 2024 financial year, summarising road network defect rectification compliance against requirements specified within the Loddon Shire Road Management Plan (RMP).

BACKGROUND

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.

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 3 (01/01/2024 – 31/03/2024)						
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 Plains	121	121	0	0	100.0%	302
Loddon Goldfields	129	127	2	0	98.4%	543
Total	250	248	2	0	99.2%	845

During the third quarter of 2023 - 2024 financial year, 99.2% of the programmed inspections were completed according to the schedule. This is 0.8% 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. It is important to note that flood damage is excluded from this report. In the context of the Road Management Plan these sites are considered as made safe through the utilisation of traffic management devices. Progress of the repair of flood damage on Council's road network is reported in a separate Council report titled Update on the progress of the Annual Infrastructure Program 2023-2024 and Flood Restoration Program.

Table 2: Defect rectification summary report

Quarter 3 (01/01/2024 – 31/03/2024)								
Work Group	Number of Defects				Compliant with RMP			
	Ad hoc	Requests	Defects from inspections	Total	Yes	No	Not complete	%
Loddon Goldfields	0	33	429	462	421	41	0	91.1%
Loddon Plains	0	17	508	525	520	4	1	99.0%
Shire Wide	0	13	378	391	358	13	20	91.6%
Townscape Services	0	3	17	20	20	0	0	100.0%
Total	0	66	1332	1398	1319	58	21	94.3%

During the third quarter of 2023 - 2024 financial year, 94.3% of all date imposed defects were completed before their due date. This is 5.7% below the target of 100% set in the RMP. There are 21 outstanding work actions to be completed. A plan is in place to complete the outstanding work actions in the next four weeks.

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.

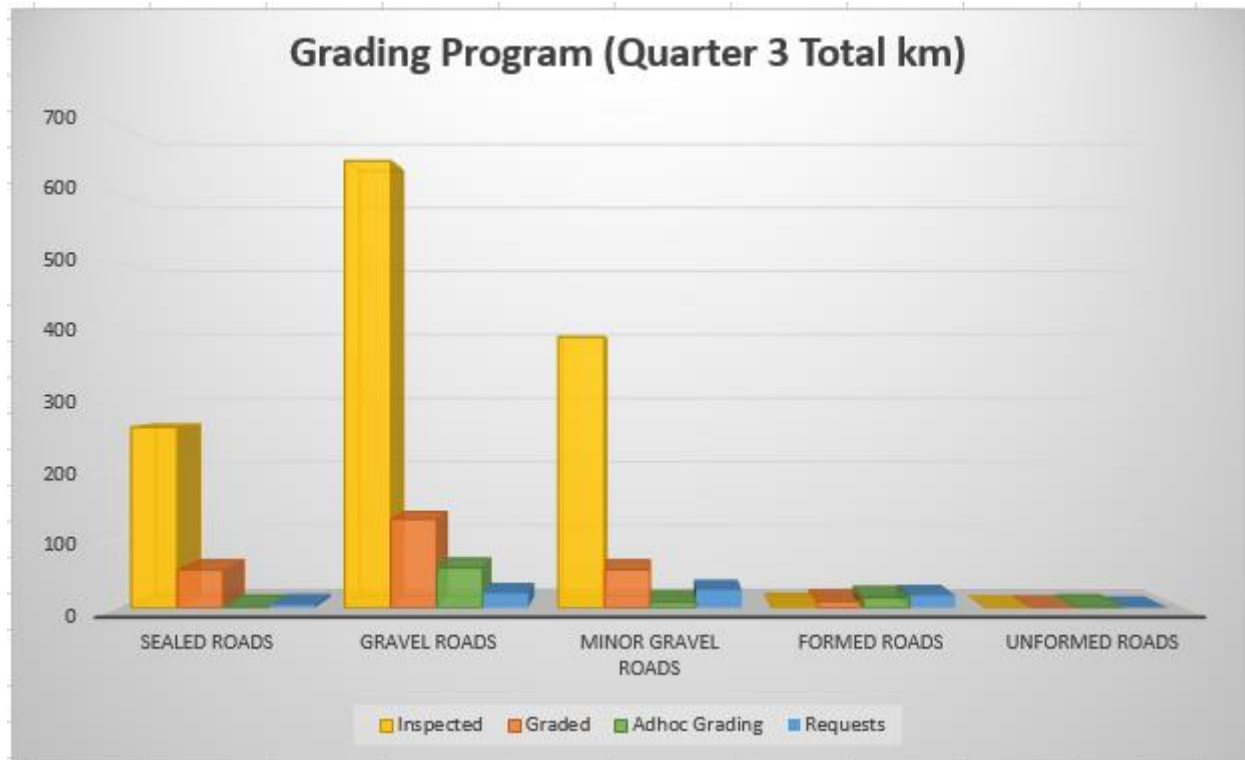
Table 3: Maintenance grading program

Quarter 3 (01/01/2024 – 31/03/2024)											
Work Group	Number of Grading Work Actions					Compliant within scheduled timeframes				KM Graded	KM Inspected
	Roads Graded	Defects	Requests	Ad hoc	Total	Yes	No	Not completed	%		
Loddon Goldfields	59	2	41	20	122	100	22	0	82.0%	143.5	298
Loddon Plains	61	2	22	18	103	103	0	0	100.0%	258.5	1009
Shire Wide	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100.0%	0.0	0
Total	120	4	63	38	225	203	22	0	90.2%	402.0	1306

The data in Table 3 indicates that 225 grading work actions were completed for the third quarter of 2023 - 2024 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 the third of 2023 - 2024 financial year of the Local Road Maintenance Program is \$5,419,283. The expenditure for the third quarter was \$1,377,576.

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.

11.3 PUBLIC HEALTH QUARTERLY ACTIVITY REPORT

File Number: FOL/19/115173
Author: Teresa Arnup, Senior Public Health Officer
Authoriser: David Price, Manager Community Services
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 third report for the 2023-2024 financial year which reviews the period 1 January 2024 to 31 March 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.

Council's Senior Public Health Officer has regular contact with business operators, community groups, homeowners and developers whilst administering the above Acts. Activities undertaken include inspecting registered premises, taking food and water samples, issuing septic tank permits and complaint investigations.

ISSUES/DISCUSSIONRegistered 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

1 January 2024 to 31 March 2024		
Governing Legislation	Inspection Outcome	Number of inspections
Food Premises	Compliant*	18
	Major Non Compliance	0
Health Premises	Compliant*	0
	Major Non Compliance	0
Total number of inspections for reporting period		18

*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

1 January 2024 to 31 March 2024	
Inspection Type	Number
Tobacco Retailer (including vending machine)	2
Tobacco – Indoor Dining and drinking area	1
Tobacco – Outdoor Dining and drinking area	0
Outdoors & Other locations	0
Total number of inspections	3

Septic Systems

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

Table 3: Septic system permits

1 January 2024 to 31 March 2024	
Permit Type	Number
Installation or alteration	6
Certificate to use	1
Total number of permits for reporting period	7

The average processing time for permits to install or alter a septic system is twelve days.

Table 4 summarises the activities associated with managing septic tank applications and installed systems.

Table 4: Septic system activity

1 January 2024 to 31 March 2024	
Activity / Inspection Type	Number
Application inspection	4
Installation inspection	3
Final inspection	2
Requested	0
Complaint	0
Total number of inspections for reporting period	9

Mosquito Surveillance Program

Following the 2022 Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV) outbreak that occurred in Victoria, Loddon Shire Council has been included in the state-wide mosquito surveillance and treatment program operated by the Department of Health. The program runs from the start of November to the end of April.

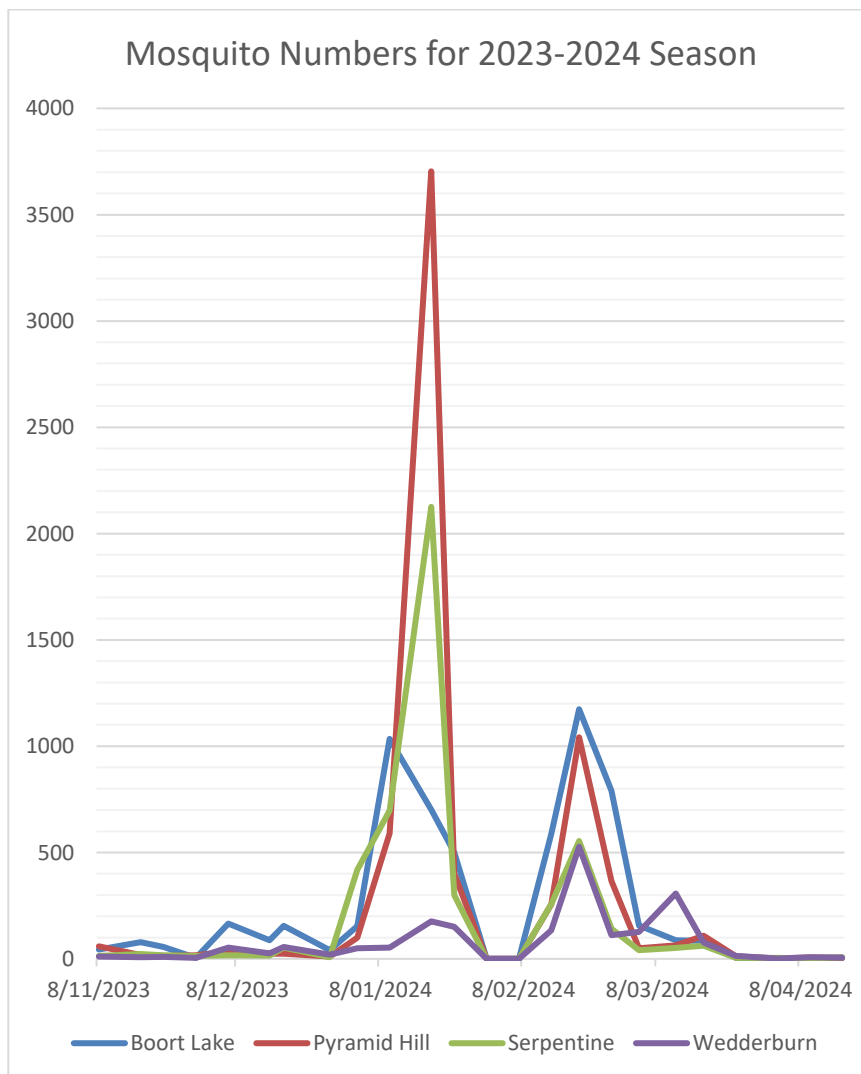
As part of this program, Council’s public health staff set traps in 4 locations across the municipality on a weekly basis. The locations are:

- Boort
- Pyramid Hill
- Serpentine
- Wedderburn

Mosquito numbers were initially low, however immediately following the significant rainfall events late December/early January, the number of mosquitoes increased significantly. As local environments dried out, the number of mosquitoes trapped subsequently decreased.

Graph 1 shows the mosquito numbers for the 2023-2024 mosquito season.

Graph 1: Mosquito Numbers



Note: No trapping occurred at the end of January / start of February due to unavailable staff resources

Along with monitoring mosquito numbers, trapped mosquitoes are tested for the presence of arboviruses. Arboviruses that are monitored include:

- RRV – Ross river virus
- MVE – Murray valley encephalitis
- WNV – West Nile/Kunjin virus
- BFV – Barmah forest virus
- JEV - Japanese encephalitis virus

In addition to the weekly trapping program, Council is also funded to conduct a spraying program that treats several council owned or managed public locations in the applicable township areas. The treatment methods include barrier treatments, adulticiding and larviciding.

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

1 January 2024 to 31 March 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	3	0	0	3
Other	0	0	0	0
Total	3	0	0	3

COST/BENEFITS

The expenditure for the third quarter of the 2023-2024 financial year for the public health unit activities contained within this report is \$41,144 and 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 Public 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.

11.4 QUARTERLY ACTIVITY REPORT - STATUTORY PLANNING**File Number:****Author:** Louise Johnston, Statutory Planning Coordinator**Authoriser:** Glenn Harvey, Acting Director Operations**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 January to March 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 third report for the 2023- 2024 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 may 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 second quarter of the 2023-2024 financial year and compares these against the small to medium regional council's average.

Table 1: Average timeframes for decisions

Month	Quarter 3 of the 2023/2024 financial year			
	Average gross days to determine	Median processing days to determine	Completed within 60 days	Rural average completed within 60 days
January	21	26	100%	54%
February	56	60	100%	56%
March	35	53	100%	60%
Total Quarterly average	44	51	100%	56%

During the third quarter of the 2023-2024 financial year 100% of all Planning Permit applications were assessed and issued within the timeframes as set in the *Planning & Environment Act 1987*. This is 44% above the rural average. In addition, the median processing days for Council to make a determination on applications is 51 days, well below the rural median of 112 days, a great result for Council and its planning team.

COST/BENEFITS

The expenditure for the third quarter of 2023-2024 financial year of the statutory planning activities contained within this report is \$85,642

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

January to March 2024

Number of Applications

19

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	
5878	27/03/2023	Calder Highway	Wedderburn	Further Information	Use and development of a dwelling and shed (within 100 metres of a waterway) and new road opening within Transport Road Zone 2	Jessica Penny	
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	
5940	29/11/2023	111 Bridgewater-Raywood Road	Bridgewater	Referred	Buildings and works associated with Southern stockfeeds expansion	Southern Stockfeeds Pty Ltd	
5942	7/12/2023	Uniting Church Eddington, 41 McCoy Street	Eddington	Ready for Meeting	Amended application - Revision 3 - Use of the site for a place of assembly for weddings/ events (one event per week) reduction from 100 patrons to 69 patrons) liquor licence and a reduction in car parking	Mario Lancellotti	
5945	3/01/2024	Laanecoorie Reservoir, Lot 1 Brownbill Reserve Road	Laanecoorie	Further Information	Laanecoorie Boat Ramp Relocation & Associated Works	Goulburn Murray Water	
5954	12/03/2024	Lot 1 Wimmera Highway	Tarnagulla	Advertising Complete	Use and development of the land for a dwelling	Matthew Carpenter	
5955		292 Thompsons Road	Dingee	New Application	subdivide the land into two lots.	Shaw Land Surveys	
5957	4/03/2024	Lot 10K Calder Highway	Wedderburn	Referred	Use and development of land for two dwellings and associated outbuilding	Karanjit Singh Goraya	
5961	15/03/2024	11 Park Street	Bridgewater on Loddon	Assessed By Planner	Variation of a restrictive covenant on title to allowing the construction of a solid fence	Andrew Ferguson	
5964	25/03/2024	Lot 40 Blackburn Lane	Inglewood	Advertising	Use and development of land for a dwelling and outbuilding	Chris Moloney	
5966	19/04/2024	44 Stuarts Road	Serpentine	Referral	Development of a 576sqm shed	Entegra Signature Structures	
5969	12/04/2024	4577 Bridgewater-Maldon Road	Bridgewater	Further Information	Development of a storage shed, relocation of an existing shed, and creation of new access to a Transport Zone 2	Grant Austin	Austin Earthmoving
5970		Harpers Lane	Wedderburn	New Application	Single Dwelling sss	Jamie Constantine	
5971	29/04/2024	3 Hospital Street	Inglewood	Ready For Decision	new deck in a heritage overlay	Penno Drafting and Design	
5972	30/04/2024	16-20 Park Street	Bridgewater on Loddon	Allocated	Retrospective application for the development of a shed	Daniel Lucas	

Planning Applications completed in the Quarter
January to March, 2024

Decisions							
16							
App Number	Lodged	Site Address	Locality	Status	Development Description	Applicant Name	Applicant Organisation
5815	6/12/2023	Lot 1 Bretts Road	Kurraca	Application Complete	Amendment to Bushfire Management Plan associated with the proposed development.	Henry Minson	Felton Grimwade & Bosisto's Pty Ltd
5860	12/01/2024	Bridgewater Public Caravan Park, Park Street	BRIDGEWATER ON	Application Complete	Change operating hours	Bridgewater Public Caravan Park	
5914	25/07/2023	Lot 14 Giffard Street	Newbridge	Application Complete	Development of a dwelling in the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay	Melinda Simmons	
5923	9/10/2023	Jordan Road	WEHLA	Application Complete	Development of a shaft and native vegetation removal associated within prospecting licence PL006367	Victoria Mining Exploration Pty Ltd	
5934	2/11/2023	Lot CA24 Somerset Lane	Newbridge	Application Complete	Use and development of the land for a dwelling	Esther & Ken Cross	
5937	9/11/2023	378 Dunolly-Inglewood Road	Inglewood	Application Complete	Subdivision of the land into 2 lots	Shaw Land Surveys	
5943	8/12/2023	Lot 10 Playfair Street	Eddington	Application Complete	Development of a dwelling in the Environmental Significance Overlay (Schedule 2)	Daniel Adams	
5947	2/01/2024	Calivil Recreation Reserve, 529 Prairie West Road	Calivil	Application Complete	New Shelter at Calivil Recreation Reserve	Rod Lea	Calivil United Football and Netball Club
5948	15/01/2024	39 Richmond Plains Wedderburn Road	Wedderburn	Application Complete	Development of two shipping containers	Gregory & Dede-jo Williams	
5949	7/03/2024	Boort-Wedderburn Road	Korong Vale	Withdrawn	Remediation of rail culvert in railway corridor.	V/Line	
5950	17/01/2024	427 Inglewood-Rheola Road	Inglewood	Application Complete	Development of a shed with a total area of more than 100 metres squared and associated with a dwelling	Daniel Whitford	
5951	22/01/2024	126 Browns Road	Bridgewater	Application Complete	Development of a shed within 100 metres of a designated floodplain	Entegra Signature Structures	
5952	24/01/2024	68 High Street	Wedderburn	Application Complete	development of a shipping container	Marijan Solc	
5953	5/02/2024	Boort Caravan Park, 186-196 Godfrey Street	Boort	Application Complete	The removal of native vegetation (1 tree) under the Vegetation Protection Overlay (Schedule 1) to allow the construction of a new cabin	Adrian Bassett Homes	
5956	4/03/2024	38 Avondale Lane	Bridgewater North	Application Complete	Development of a building (hay shed) within 100 metres of a designated floodplain	JA & SE Lawson	
5959	14/03/2024	Lot 1 Brooke Street	Inglewood	Application Complete	Buildings and works (window replacement, install hooded canopies, security doors) which change the appearance of a heritage place	Mya Ashley	

11.5 QUARTERLY BUILDING SERVICES ACTIVITY REPORT

File Number: 13/06/001, 13/08/001, 13/08/003
Author: Glenn Harvey, Manager Development and Compliance
Authoriser: Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer
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 third quarter of this financial.

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 third quarter of the 2023-2024 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 quarter of 2022-2023 and the first three quarters of 2023-2024. 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 4 2022-23 (01/04/2023 – 30/06/2023)	Quarter 1 2023-24 (01/07/2023 – 30/09/2023)	Quarter 2 2023-24 (01/10/2023 – 31/12/2023)	Quarter 3 2023-24 (01/01/2024 – 31/03/2024)
No. of new Permits	40	25	42	30
Value of Works	\$15,006,840	\$2,319,670	\$14,523,408	14,035,638

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 4 2022-23 (01/04/2023 – 30/06/2023)	Quarter 1 2023-24 (01/07/2023 – 30/09/2023)	Quarter 2 2023-24 (01/10/2023 – 31/12/2023)	Quarter 3 2023-24 (01/01/2024 – 31/03/2024)
Certificates of final inspection	17	41	33	23
Occupancy Permits	8	23	11	11

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	2	0	2	2	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)	21	1	22	2	3	1	0	1	1
Carrying out building works without a permit	12	5	17	11	2	0	0	0	1
Works not in accordance with building permit	2	0	2	0	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.

The Manager Development and Compliance is currently also performing the role of Municipal Building Surveyor whilst recruitment for the vacancy is continuing. This is impacting on progressing compliance matters as well as processing permit applications. Community members that are making Building Permit applications are being advised that there will be delays in processing their applications due to our current situation. They are also being informed of the alternative of engaging a Private Building Surveyor.

COST/BENEFITS

The expenditure for the third quarter of the 2023-2024 financial year for building services activities was \$16,094.33. The reason for the low cost is that the majority of functions associated with the delivery of the Municipal Building Surveyor service have been delivered by the Manager Development and Compliance.

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 QUARTERLY ACTIVITY REPORT (JAN, FEB, MAR 2024) TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

File Number:

Author: David Stretch, Manager Tourism and Economic Development

Authoriser: Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer

Attachments: 1. Quarterly Activity Report (Jan, Feb, Mar 2024) Tourism and Eco Dev

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Tourism and Economic Development, Quarterly Activity Report – January, February, March 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 report (attached) was tabled and discussed at the Council Forum May 14, 2024.

BACKGROUND

Quarterly Activity Reports are produced by the Manager of Tourism and Economic Development and consider current Council Plan objectives as well as preliminary focus areas, including:

- Financially and environmentally sustainable infrastructure (incl. residential development)
- Employment growth
- Population growth and diversity
- Industry development and investment attraction
- Local business development, retention, and expansion
- The unique visitor economy
- Townships and place-making
- Loddon's live-ability: amenity, affordability, community, environment.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

The Tourism and Economic Development Quarterly Activity Reports focus on operational activity under 4 key themes:

1. Support land and residential development
2. Grown business and employment
3. Grow Tourism and the Visitor Economy
4. Support Townships

COST/BENEFITS

Tourism and economic development programs and activity are funded by Council operational budget, unless stated otherwise.

The Tourism and Economic Development team is uniquely-placed with insight into local opportunities for partnerships, innovation and growth.

Council strategies provide practical and relevant goals to maximize tourism and economic development opportunities.

Place-based policies that identify local synergies and facilitate connection and partnership super-charge local economies and communities.

RISK ANALYSIS

Failure to invest in tourism and economic development programs could potentially lead to Loddon Shire Council businesses becoming more vulnerable to economic downturns and less capable of handling future challenges, thereby affecting the region's long-term sustainability and prosperity.

Negative impacts might include:

- Population decline
- Reduced visitation and losses to tourism businesses
- Limited business growth
- Reduction in local economic output
- Rise in unemployment
- Reduced liveability

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Internal and external stakeholders, influencers, enablers and participants in tourism and economic development are regularly engaged across the unit's work and activity.

The Tourism and Economic Development team regularly consults and engages with business and community stakeholders across the Shire, in Central Victoria and Melbourne, including but not limited to:

- Federal Government and agencies
- State Government departments and agencies
- Regional Development Victoria
- Regional Tourism Board
- Regional Local Governments
- Major business and employers
- Small business and retail
- Tourism, Progress and Community Groups
- Community House network
- Tourism and regional business NFPs and stakeholders

Tourism and Economic Development Quarterly Activity Reports have been presented at Council Forum Meetings since January 2023.



Tourism and Economic Development
January to March 2024 Operations Report

Key Focus Area	Project / Activity	Discussion
<p>Support Land and Residential Development</p>	<p>Unlocking Loddon's Growth Potential Project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An action plan has been generated, responding to the report recommendations and adopted by Council (March 2024) • Actions requiring lead or support from Economic Development from 2024 include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Investigate State and Federal grants to support housing development ○ Undertake market research into residential demand opportunities and develop marketing materials ○ Conduct a housing expo ○ Develop costings and options paper for residential development opportunities that could be undertaken by Council <p>Stanford Marketing (Bendigo) has been engaged to assist with identified actions.</p> <p>Project Scope</p> <p>1. Market Research: Pinpoint the demand dynamics for new housing within Loddon Shire, identify target segments and analysing demographics, housing needs, financial capabilities and other variables. This insight will direct both Council's and private sector's efforts in housing development, ensuring alignment with prospective residents' preferences and capacities.</p> <p>Approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inception: Met with Economic Development and Planning teams to clarify the scope and timeline and confirm methodology. Completed the discovery process and determine resources already to hand. Developed an agreed stakeholder list to interview (Council planning and eco dev staff, Villawood, developers already active in the local area, real estate agents, home builders, etc) - Data Collection and Analysis: Conducted desktop research to gather data on potential residents' demographics, lifestyle preferences, housing needs, and affordability thresholds. Interrogate any available insights from Villawood's community consultation, and use census data from sources such as Profile ID and ABS, as well as other data collated by government and industry such as REIV to undertake this research. - Stakeholder Engagement: After understanding the extent of Villawood's consultation, fill in any gaps in knowledge by engaging with identified stakeholders to gain insights into supply and demand trends. <p>**Research Report Due May 2024**</p>



Tourism and Economic Development
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		<p>2. Development of a Promotional Plan Objective: Leverage the insights gained from market research to craft a strategic promotional plan aimed at stimulating interest and investment in Loddon Shire's residential development opportunities. Approach: - Strategy Formulation: Design a high-level multi-channel marketing strategy that encompasses both digital and traditional media, ensuring broad and effective reach to the target audience. - Campaign Messaging: Consider the creation of a name and brand to promote the Shire's liveability. Develop compelling messaging that communicates the advantages of investing and residing in Loddon Shire, addressing the specific interests and concerns of the target demographics. - Material Requirements: The plan will recommend the marketing materials to be developed by Council to highlight the region's liveability and investment potential. The materials will showcase the unique value proposition of the Shire's communities, and inspire potential new local developers, investors and professional developers, as well as those considering moving to the area. **Promotional Plan Commences July 2024**</p> <p>3. Housing Expo Support Objective: Facilitate the conceptualisation and execution of a Housing Expo, providing a platform to implement Villawood's recommendations, showcase housing opportunities, and directly engage with the community and potential developers. Approach: - Event Concept: Collaborate with Loddon Shire's planning and economic development officers to assist them in their design and development of an expo that effectively communicates the opportunities available to harness demand identified in Section 1, available housing opportunities, the subdivision process, available government grants, etc. - Consultation: Make available market insights to the Loddon team and provide advice and consultation during the course of this project, and through their Expo development process to ensure its execution aligns with the market research findings. **Housing Expo September 2024 – Bridgewater**</p>
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Tourism and Economic Development
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<p>Grow Business and Employment</p>	<p>Economic Development Strategy</p>	<p>In March 2024 economic and demographic specialist REMPLAN was engaged to lead the generation of the Loddon Shire Economic Development Strategy (2025-2029).</p> <p>The primary objective in the development of an economic development strategy for Loddon Shire is to guide future investment and inform actions to create sustainable economic and community prosperity and opportunity.</p> <p>Objectives for the project – and the strategy itself – will be designed and developed by a project advisory group and the consultant as part of the project work, with a creative and innovative approach that reflects and responds to contemporary economic environments, challenges and opportunities.</p> <p>Strategic directions and key themes emerging prior to the development of the strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential land and housing development. • Industry development and investment attraction • Local business development, retention and expansion • The visitor economy • Townships and place-making • Loddon Live-ability: amenity, affordability, community, environment.
	<p>Workforce and employment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project collaboration with Workforce Australia, Pyramid Hill Progress Association and Goldfields LLen to deliver the Loddon Workforce Expo - in October in Pyramid Hill. The event will engage, support and connect business, students and job seekers across Loddon Shire and the region. • Supported the delivery of a successful <i>Coffee with the Boss</i> event in Bridgewater, hosted by Workforce Australia – attended by employment agencies and job seekers. Site visits and presentations from: Laucke Flourmill, Bridgewater Hotel, Bridgewater Bakery, Black Wallaby and Water Wheel wineries.
	<p>Digital connectivity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Connectivity Plans are being developed with NBN co and Telstra, to identify key threats and opportunities in digital connectivity as an economic and community enabler.



Tourism and Economic Development
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		<p>have the potential to create legacy benefits for generations to come.</p> <p>The development of a position statement seeks to help address this risk by proactively advocating for renewables to be done well and by demonstrating what that looks like in our shire through clear expectations and recommendations.</p>
	Small Business Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoted and supported Small Business Bus visit (via Business Victoria) in February • Met with Eddie Sydor (Inglewood Lions) to support the reestablishment of the Inglewood Community Market. • Supported the Zeller filming and marketing piece (after introduction from Cr. Murphy) to promote Inglewood retail businesses
	Flood Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responded to impacts of flooding and storm events in January 2024 with newsletters to business and community providing information on emergency support. • Planned and delivered a marketing and promotional campaign to encourage tourism and local spending
	Regional Development Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided written contribution and insights to RDV report on workforce training needs and priorities for local and regional tourism and hospitality sector – report to be published in June 2024. • DJSIR Tourism Development Survey submitted, for Loddon Shire – identification of strategic priorities for tourism and the visitor economy.



Tourism and Economic Development
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	<p>Funding Opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoted Regional Worker Accommodation Fund – two submissions from Loddon Shire (that we are aware of) • Attended information sessions on Housing Australia Future Fund and National Housing Accord. Housing Support Program - Stream 2 will focus on infrastructure projects that support new housing - designed to remove barriers to housing construction by ensuring enabling infrastructure and community amenities are in place. Funding round opens May 2024, when an application will be submitted. • Enabling Tourism Fund – application submitted to seek funding for a business case for proposed developments, in response to recommendations of the 2023 Loddon Shire Visitor Servicing Review.
<p>Grow Tourism and the Visitor Economy</p>	<p>Regional Tourism Contribution</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bendigo Regional Tourism – board and operations group contribution and involvement • Visitor Economy Partnership Working Group contribution and involvement. • Continue to advocate for Loddon Shire involvement and benefit from Victorian Goldfields World Heritage bid • Continue to attend and contribute to regional UNESCO Creative City and Region of Gastronomy working group. • State Gov Visitor Servicing Fund application – successful. Stream A – Bendigo Regional Tourism leading a regional visitor servicing review. Stream B – Goldfields Gateway project, led by Tourism Mid-west Victoria and involves a project to test signage and digital technology at locations across 6 LGAs incl. Loddon Shire. Inglewood’s walking, cycling and heritage trails will be the focus for our Shire. • Working with consultant “The Tourism Collective” to develop and contribute to a Regional Destination Management Plan and a Local Area Action Plan. (Now complete). The projects are funded by Bendigo Regional Tourism and will provide the perfect jump-off point for the pending development of the Loddon Shire Tourism Strategy (2025-2029).



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	<p>Event Support and Acquisition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported the successful delivery of Flavours of Loddon Festival in Boort on Australia Day Weekend – more than 1500 attendees • Supported the acquisition and delivery of the Festival of Small Halls concert at the Pyramid Hill Memorial Hall in March • Supported the promotion and visitor experience at the Bridgewater Australian Masters Waterski event, including the provision of toilets, food truck and coffee van, visitor information stand. • Attended Southern Loddon Tourism Committee meeting and met with industry and event organisers of the proposed Loddon Food and Wine Festival, November 2024. • Met with convenor of Trove Market and Moonlight Market Bendigo to discuss Twilight Market concept for Summer in Loddon Shire. • Supported the promotion of the Wedderburn Detector Jamboree • In preliminary discussions with “Lady Adventurer” event producer and Music Victoria regarding 2024 <i>Whole Loddon Love</i> project
	<p>Tourism Industry Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed, wrote, published, launched and distributed the Loddon Shire’s Official Visitor Guide. • Hosted a Volunteer Familiarisation Tour which visited cellar doors in southern Loddon Shire, ending with lunch and certificate presentations to volunteers at the Newbridge Hotel, attended by Mayor Holt. • Met with the Inglewood Eucalyptus Distillery and Museum to discuss the proposed Traction Engine Annexe Expansion Project. • Have commenced a Loddon Shire tourism signage audit • Have worked with the Mitiamo community to replace major tourism sign in Phelan Reserve, Mitiamo.



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	Marketing and Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered Summer seasonal campaign to promote Loddon Shire tourism and visitation, including google ad campaign, paid social media, digital billboards in Bendigo and Kangaroo Flat, website blogs, itineraries, event support, video production, Dipper’s Destinations screenings and print advertising in local, regional and national publications.
Support Townships	Inglewood Streetscape Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tomkinson appointed to conduct Civil Design survey, footpath and kerb design, underground services locations Djandak appointed for urban/landscape design Manager attended IDTC meeting March 28 to provide update
Other	Economic Development Essentials for Elected Members Loddon Shed Spendmapp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loddon Shire Councillors Straub and Murphy attended the Economic Development Essentials for Elected Members course in March, hosted (online) by Economic Development Australia. The Tourism and Economic Development team has acquired Spendmapp in March 2024. <p>Spendmapp allows us to directly measure activity in the Loddon Shire economy and the impacts of initiatives and investments.</p> <p>Spendmapp measures actual spending in our economy which means we have the data to drive tangible improvements to economic wellbeing.</p>

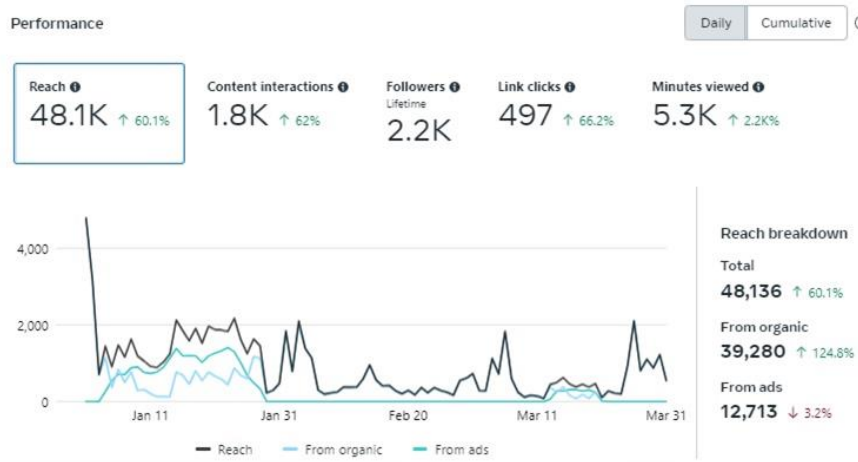
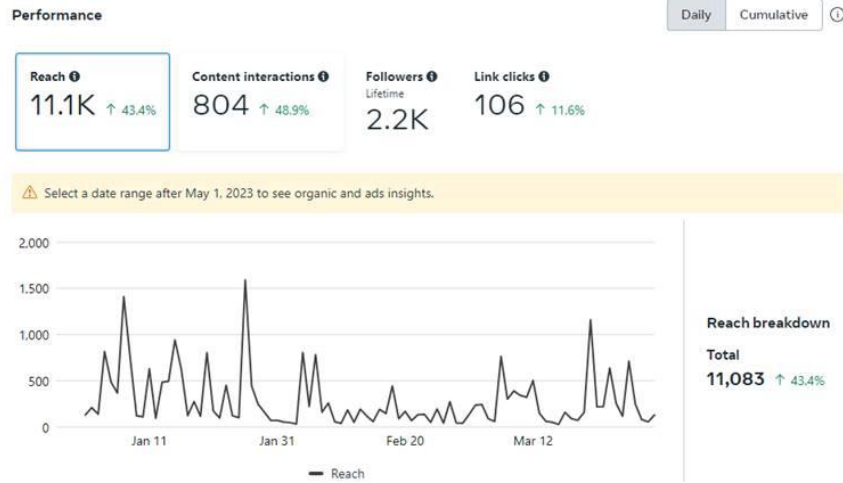
Visitor Information Centre – Visitor Numbers

	January	February	March
2023	251	259	426
2024	307	284	357*

*March 2024 VIC walk-ups reduced due to Wedderburn Detector Jamboree lower numbers due to extreme heat/fire danger



Tourism and Economic Development
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Tourism and Economic Development
January to March 2024 Operations Report

Visit Loddon Valley
Published by Bradd Worrell · March 28 · 🌐

We are thrilled to announce that the 2024 Loddon Valley Official Visitors Guide is now available. The new guide showcases leading tourism businesses, popular tours & trails and must visit experiences and attractions across the Loddon Valley. Pick up your copy at the Loddon Visitor Centre or other key venues across Loddon and Central Victoria now. 📖📍

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Visit Loddon Valley
Published by Jamie Roberts · Yesterday at 12:00PM · 🌐

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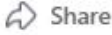
 **Visit Loddon Valley**
Published by Faith Loddon · October 4, 2023 · 🌐

Keep your eye out for AFL legend Robert Dipierdomenico 'Dipper' who is currently in the Loddon Valley region filming [Dipper's Destinations](#). Coming early 2024 📺



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Tourism and Economic Development
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Google Ads Report

17 Jan - 29 Feb



Overview

- Impressions: 2,099,413
- Clicks: 21,078
- Avg Cost Per Click: 14c
- Total Spend: \$2,894.74
- 85% of impressions were on mobile phones



12 COMPLIANCE REPORTS**12.1 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE UPDATE****File Number:****Author:** Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate**Authoriser:** Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer**Attachments:**

1. Audit and Risk Committee Biannual Report - May 2024
2. Audit and Risk Committee – Annual Performance Assessment (Survey) Report – 2023 - 2024

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the:

1. Summary of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting - 6 May 2024
2. Audit and Risk Committee – Biannual Report – May 2024
3. Audit and Risk Committee – Annual Performance Assessment (Survey) Report – 2023 - 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

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

The Audit and Risk Committee – Biannual Report – May 2023 and the Audit and Risk Committee – Annual Performance Assessment (Survey) Report – 2022-2023 were presented to Council at its May 2023 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.'

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

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

ISSUES/DISCUSSIONSummary of meeting

Below is a summary of the ARC meeting held on Monday, 6 May 2024 in the Loddon Shire Council Chambers.

Member attendees:

Rod Poxon – Independent Member (Chair)
 Rachelle Tippett – Independent Member
 Marg Allan – Independent Member
 Amber Currie – 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

Other attendees:

Brad Ead – AFS and Associates Pty Ltd
 Mahesh Silva and Shivam Goel – RSD Audit

Apologies:

Nil

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

Report	Discussion points
Status of actions generated during ARC meetings	12. The ARC acknowledged and noted all resolutions arising from the 5 February 2024 Audit and Risk Committee meeting; decision and compliance reports have been acted upon; and three actions requested by the Audit and Risk Committee during the course of meetings are deemed complete. Four actions are progressing and five actions have not yet started or are not yet due. The ARC requested target dates for completion be identified and included in future reports.
Report on new and emerging risks and fraud related incidents	13. The ARC received and noted the CEO's report on new and emerging risks and fraud related incidents and requested the review of the ARC Charter include reviewing the name of this report to better reflect required content.
Meeting Schedule 2024/25	14. The ARC resolved to endorse the following schedule of meetings for the 2024/25 financial year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 August 2024 • 11 November 2024 • 3 February 2025 • 5 May 2025 15. and communicate the schedule of meetings to Council through this summary of the meeting and the Biannual Report.

ARC Charter Review	16. The ARC commenced a review of its Charter. It is anticipated the review will be finalised at the next ARC meeting ahead of its presentation to Council to be considered for approval. Matters to be included in the review include documenting the process of independent member recruitment (including panel members), options for reporting to Council, and ensuring the Charter provides a structural perspective for agenda reports and has a focus on providing assurance.
Business Continuity Management Review	17. The ARC received a report on the recent comprehensive review of Council's Business Continuity Management Policy and Framework and the Business Continuity Plan. The ARC endorsed the Policy and Plan for consideration and adoption of Council, and supported rescission of the Framework by Council. These documents are now being prepared for presentation to Council.
Biannual Audit and Risk Report of Activities	18. The ARC considered and subsequently endorsed the Audit and Risk Committee Biannual Report – May 2024 which includes assessment against the ARC Charter. [Tabling of the Report to Council is addressed within this Agenda report.]
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 2023-2026 and considered and subsequently endorsed the internal audit planning document relating to an internal audit of Key Internal Controls – New Finance System as presented.
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 requesting a procedure be developed and implemented to guide commentary on action progress and assessment and validation of actions deemed complete.
Audit and Risk Committee Annual Performance Assessment	The ARC considered and noted responses to a survey completed by Committee members relating to Committee performance during 2023/24. [Tabling of the Annual Assessment is addressed within this Agenda report.]
Audit issues encountered during the course of the Interim Audit	19. The ARC received a report on issues encountered during the Interim Audit conducted during April.
Significant Changes in Accounting Standards and Reporting	The ARC noted there are no changes to accounting standards within the 2023/24 reporting year, and received an overview of key changes for the Local Government Model Financial Report (LGMFR) for 2024/25.

Management Responses to External Audit Findings	The ARC received a report on management responses to audit findings, noting Council has three outstanding actions.
Review reimbursement of Councillors expenses	20. The ARC received, and subsequently noted a report on Councillor expenses, including allowances and reimbursements; and comparative quarterly data.
Quarterly review of finance reports and performance reports	21. The ARC received and noted the Finance Report for the quarter ending 31 March 2024 that included information relating to budget revisions, cash, investments, interest, debtors and creditors and a comparison of year-to-date actual results to year-to-date budget.
Overview of the 2024/25 Budget	22. The ARC received a report on the Draft 2024/25 Budget and Draft Fees and Charges Schedule which Council resolved to seek community feedback on at its April meeting.
Risk Management Review	The ARC received an update on the following risk management matters: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The effectiveness of Council's Risk Management Framework 2. Council's Risk Appetite Statement 3. Strategic risks to Council's operations 4. Operational risks.
Review of key policies	23. The ARC received and noted a report on the current status of documents specifically referenced in the ARC Charter, including current target review dates.
Changes to Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF)	24. The ARC received and noted a report on changes to the LGPRF, including cost indicators for Roads and Waste Management and the re-organising of key terms and explanatory notes.
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.
Matters referred by Councillor Representative	Cr Holt passed on feedback relating to the independent member recruitment process, ensuring there is a Councillor on the panel.

Annual Performance Assessment

The survey consisted 39 statements relating to the content of the charter, skills and interactions within the ARC, training/development, risk management, statutory compliance and reporting, agendas and associated reports, conduct of meetings, internal audit function and external audit function. Opportunities for further written feedback were also provided. A report detailing survey responses is attached.

Survey responses have given officers useful feedback to inform continuous improvement on ARC functions and activities such as the Charter, agenda reports, minutes and member development/training.

Areas assessed as performing strongly were in relation to the ARC Charter, skills and experience of members, management commitment and support, meeting administration and conduct, understanding of the business and the external audit function. While the area of skills and

experience was considered high performing, further improvements have been identified in how Loddon Shire Council provides ongoing skill development to ARC members.

Further areas identified for improvements included the Internal Audit function – which will likely be enhanced as the relatively recent appointment of new internal auditors progresses with upcoming audits; and communication with Council – which will be explored for strengthening opportunities in the upcoming ARC Charter review.

Biannual Audit and Risk Report

The Biannual Report is attached to this report and encompasses the activities of the ARC for the period November 2023 to May 2024.

The Biannual Report includes details on ARC membership, meetings, governance, remuneration, internal audit plan, assessment against the Committee Charter, and focus for the next reporting period.

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 & 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.

LODDON SHIRE COUNCIL

AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE BIANNUAL REPORT: MAY 2024



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1 PURPOSE

The Audit and Risk Committee has been established in accordance with Section 53 and 54 of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act). The committee provides support to 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 the Committee's Charter.

A legislative requirement under Section 54(5) of the *Local Government Act 2020* states:

An Audit and Risk Committee must—

- a) prepare a biannual audit and risk report that describes the activities of the Audit and Risk Committee and includes its findings and recommendations; and*
- b) provide a copy of the biannual audit and risk report to the Chief Executive Officer for tabling at the next Council meeting.*

As such, Clause 9 of the Loddon Shire Audit and Risk Committee Charter refers to 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."

This report is in satisfaction of these legislative and governance requirements.

2 BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

This report does not impact the operational budget.

3 RISK ANALYSIS

Through the Council, the Audit and Risk Committee has oversight responsibilities in relation to risk management.

4 SCOPE

This report encompasses the activities of the Audit and Risk Committee for six month period from November 2023 to April 2024. There were two meetings held during the period on 13 November 2023 and 5 February 2024.

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5 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Committee consists of five members appointed by Council, four of whom are independent members. The Committee membership for this reporting period included independent members:

Member	Initial appointment date	Current term's appointment date	End of current term
Rod Poxon	1 May 2015	1 May 2022	30 April 2026
Rod Baker	1 May 2012	1 May 2020	30 April 2024
Rachelle Tippett	1 May 2021	1 May 2021	30 April 2025
Marg Allan	26 July 2023	26 July 2023	30 June 2027

Cr Gavan Holt is the Councillor Representative for the Committee, with Cr Neil Beattie as his proxy.

It is noted that recruitment activities to replace Mr Rod Baker occurred during March- April 2024 and subsequently, Ms Amber Currie was appointed at the 23 April 2024 Council meeting as Mr Baker's replacement, effective from 1 May 2024. Ms Currie's tenure will form part of future biannual reports.

6 REMUNERATION

Remuneration is reviewed annually in accordance with the Consumer Price Index for *All Groups – Melbourne for December Quarter to December Quarter*. The current remuneration for independent Committee Members as approved by Council at its 26 March 2024 Council Meeting, is as follows:

1. Remuneration payable to Independent Committee Members of the Audit and Risk Committee of \$570.00 per meeting
2. An extra quarterly payment to the Chair during a one-year term
3. Payment of a travel reimbursement for Independent Committee Members paid at the rate that Councillors are reimbursed for travel.

7 COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Committee meetings are scheduled quarterly as the first Monday in February, May, August, and November, with the allowance for special meetings or circulating resolutions where required.

7.1 Committee meeting attendance

The following outlines the Committee Members' attendances for meetings in the reporting period:

Name	November 2023 Meeting	February 2024 Meeting	Total	Percentage of Attendance
Rod Baker	✓	✓	2	100%
Rod Poxon		✓	1	50%
Rachelle Tippett	✓	✓	2	100%
Marg Allan	✓	✓	2	100%
Cr Gavan Holt	✓	✓	2	100%

In addition to Committee Members, attendance includes the following officers:

- Chief Executive Officer

- Director Corporate
- Manager Governance
- Governance Coordinator
- Governance Administration Officer.

Additional relevant officers are invited to meetings to discuss their items and any internal audit reports related to their work.

8 COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE

8.1 Committee Charter

The Committee Charter is a requirement under the *Local Government Act 2020* and it outlines the responsibilities of the Audit and Risk Committee. The charter is supported by an annual work plan that ensures all responsibilities of the Audit and Risk Committee are addressed

The Charter underwent a comprehensive review and was endorsed by the Audit and Risk Charter at its 1 May 2023 meeting. This was subsequently adopted by Council at their 23 May 2023 Council Meeting.

A further review is tabled for the Committee’s 6 May 2024 ARC Meeting.

8.2 Annual Work plan

The Annual Work Plan requirements are documented in ‘Reliansys’, Council’s compliance software, to ensure retention of corporate knowledge on reports required to be presented to the Committee, when they are due, and the responsible officer. The software also assists in the development of agendas. In the most recent review, the Annual Work Plan was aligned with financial years.

9 ASSESSMENT AGAINST COMMITTEE CHARTER

In accordance with the Committee’s Charter, the Committee is responsible for:

- Financial and performance reporting
- Internal Control Environment
- Risk Management
- Fraud Prevention Systems and Controls
- Internal Audit
- External Audit
- Compliance Management.

Each of the key responsibilities has been assessed for the current reporting period, against previous agenda items and actions, with comments provided as required.

9.1 Financial and Performance Reporting

Details	Status for second half of 23/24 ARC Year
At least annually review significant accounting and external reporting issues, including complex or unusual transactions, transactions and balances in areas where judgement is required, changes to accounting policies, recent accounting, professional and regulatory pronouncements and legislative	Complete: This report was included in the 1 May 2023 agenda.

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Details	Status for second half of 23/24 ARC Year
changes, and understand their effect on the annual financial report and the audit thereof	
At least annually review changes to the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework and understand the impact of those changes on Council’s performance indicators;	Complete: This report was included in the 1 May 2023 agenda.
Review the annual financial report and annual performance statement and consider whether they are complete, consistent with information known to Committee members, reflect appropriate accounting treatments and adequately disclose Council’s financial performance and position;	Complete: This report was included in the 7 August 2023 agenda.
Review with management and the external auditors the results of the audit, including any difficulties encountered by the auditors and how they were resolved;	Complete: This report was included in the 7 August 2023 agenda.
Recommend the adoption of the annual financial report and annual performance statement to Council; and	Complete: This report was included in the 7 August 2023 agenda.
Review the appropriateness of the format and content of periodic management financial reports and performance statements to Council as required.	Complete: Quarterly reports were included in the 13 November 2023 and 5 February 2024 agendas.
In accordance with section 40(2) of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> (Reimbursement of expenses of Councillors and members of a delegated committee) Council must provide details of all reimbursements under this section to the Audit and Risk Committee.	Complete: Reports were presented at the 13 November 2023 and 5 February 2024 meetings.

9.2 Internal Control Environment

Details	Status
Review the adequacy and effectiveness of key policies, systems and controls for providing a sound internal control environment. This should be done on a rotational basis over a three to four year period;	Complete: Policies and other strategic documents relevant to the Committee have been presented in accordance with the annual work plan, including a summary review of key Policies at the 13 November 2023 meeting.
Determine whether systems and controls are reviewed regularly and updated where required;	Complete: The internal control environment is reviewed through internal audit reviews which are provided to the quarterly Committee meetings.
Monitor significant changes to systems and controls to assess whether those changes significantly impact Council’s risk profile;	Complete: Council’s risk profile and context was reviewed at 5 February 2024 meeting.

Details	Status
Ensure that a programme is in place to test compliance with systems and controls;	Complete: Compliance with internal control environment is reviewed through internal audit review program which was last presented at 13 November 2023 Meeting
Assess whether the control environment is consistent with Council's Governing Principles.	Complete: Reports on revision of Internal Control environment against Council Governing Principles were considered at 13 November 2023 and 5 February 2024 meetings.

9.3 Risk Management

Details	Status
Review annually the effectiveness of Council's risk management framework;	Complete: This report is included within the 13 November 2023 agenda.
Review Council's risk appetite statement and the degree of alignment with Council's risk profile;	Complete: This report is included within the 13 November 2023 agenda.
Review Council's risk profile and the changes occurring in the profile from meeting to meeting;	Complete: This report is included within the 13 November 2023 agenda.
Review Council's treatment plans for significant risks, including the timeliness of mitigating actions and progress against those plans;	Complete: This report is included within the 13 November 2023 agenda.
Review the insurance programme annually prior to renewal; and	Complete: This report was presented to the 5 February 2024 meeting.
Review the approach to business continuity planning arrangements, including whether business continuity and disaster recovery plans have been regularly updated and tested.	Complete: This report was presented to the 1 May 2023 meeting. A further report is scheduled for 6 May 2024.

9.4 Fraud Prevention Systems and Controls

Details	Status
Review Council's Fraud Prevention policies and controls, including the Fraud and Corruption Control Plan and fraud awareness programme at least very two years;	Complete: Fraud Prevention Systems and Controls Review was most recently provided at the 5 February 2024 meeting.
Receive a verbal report from management about actual or suspected instances of fraud or corruption including analysis of the underlying control failures and action taken to address each event; and	Complete: Reports were presented by the CEO at the 13 November 2023 and 5 February 2024 meetings.

Details	Status
Review reports by management about the actions taken by Council to report such matters to the appropriate integrity bodies.	Complete: This forms part of the above mentioned report.

9.5 Internal Audit

Details	Status
Review the Audit and Risk Charter regularly to determine that it provides an appropriate functional and organisational framework to enable Council's internal audit function to operate effectively and without limitations;	Complete: This report was included within the 1 May 2023 agenda.
Review and approve the three year strategic internal audit plan, the annual internal audit plan and any significant changes to them;	Complete: Following the appointment of the Internal Auditors, the Strategic Internal Audit Plan for 2023-2026 was included in the 13 November 2023 agenda.
Review progress on delivery of annual internal audit plan;	Progressing: Following the appointment of the Internal Auditors, progress report scheduled for upcoming meeting in May 2024.
Review and approve proposed scopes for each review in the annual internal audit plan;	Complete: Scopes for internal Audits are presented to ARC for approval. Most recent presentations of scopes made at 5 February 2024 meeting.
Review reports on internal audit reviews, including recommendations for improvement arising from those reviews;	Complete: Review of Emergency Management was provided at the 13 November 2023 meeting.
Meet with the leader of the internal audit function at least annually in the absence of management;	Complete: Standing agenda item for August Committee Meeting.
Monitor action by management on internal audit findings and recommendations;	Complete: Reports were presented at the 13 November 2023 and 5 February 2024 meetings.
Review the effectiveness of the internal audit function and ensure that it has appropriate authority within Council and has no unjustified limitations on its work;	Complete: This was presented at the 1 May 2023 meeting.
Ensure that the Committee is aware of and appropriately represented with regard to any proposed changes to the appointment of the internal audit service provider, including being appropriately briefed on the need for any proposed change;	Complete: Reports included in the 1 May 2023 and 7 August 2023 agendas for appointment of Internal Auditors for 3 year term and development of Strategic Internal Audit Program.

Details	Status
Recommend to Council, if necessary, the termination of the internal audit contractor.	Not applicable. Tender process completed for appointment of Internal Auditor for 3 year term.

9.6 External Audit

Details	Status
Annually review and approve the external audit scope and plan proposed by the external auditor;	Complete: This report was presented at the 5 February 2024 meeting.
Discuss with the external auditor any audit issues encountered in the normal course of audit work, including any restriction on scope of work or access to information;	Complete: A report was presented at the 7 August 2023 meeting.
Ensure that significant findings and recommendations made by the external auditor, and management's responses to them, are appropriate and are acted upon in a timely manner;	Complete: A report was included in the 1 May 2023 Agenda. Further review scheduled for 6 May 2024 Meeting.
Review the effectiveness of the external audit function and ensure that the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) is aware of the Committee's views;	Complete: A report was last presented at the 13 November 2023 meeting post-external audit.
Consider the findings and recommendations of any relevant performance audits undertaken by VAGO and monitor Council's responses to them; and	Complete: VAGO and Commission Inquiry report recommendations have been reviewed at both the 1 May and 7 August 2023 meetings. Industry updates on agency findings provided at 13 November 2023 and 5 February 2024 meetings.
Meet with the external auditor at least annually in the absence of management.	Complete: Standing agenda item at August Committee meetings.

9.7 Compliance Management

Details	Status
Review the systems and processes implemented by Council for monitoring compliance with relevant legislation and regulations and the results of management's follow up of any instances of non-compliance;	Complete: A report was presented to the Committee on 13 November 2023.
Review the processes for communicating Council's Employee Code of Conduct to employees and contractors and for monitoring compliance with the Code;	Complete: A report was presented to the Committee at the 5 February 2024 meeting.
Obtain briefings on any significant compliance matters	Complete: A report was presented to the Committee at the 5 February 2024 meeting.

Details	Status
Receive reports from management on the findings of any examinations by regulatory or integrity agencies (whether related to investigations at Council or other agencies), such as the Ombudsman, IBAC, Victoria Government Inspectorate, etc. and monitor Council's responses.	Complete: Standing agenda item. Industry updates on agency findings provided at 13 November 2023 and 5 February 2024 meetings
Review reports on key policies	Complete: A report was presented to the Committee on 13 November 2023 and is next scheduled for 6 May 2024 meeting.

10 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRAM

10.1 Reports provided to the Committee

During the reporting period the Committee was provided with the following internal audit documents.

Audit Name	Audit Scope	Audit Report
Emergency Management	May 2023	November 2023
Internal Audit Risk Assessment and Proposed Strategic Internal Audit Program	-	November 2023
Review of Depot Operations	February 2024	-
Review of Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing	February 2024	-
Review of Human Resources – Workforce and Succession Planning, Recruitment and Retention	February 2024	-

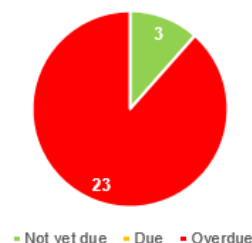
10.2 Open Actions List

At the commencement of the biannual reporting period there were 29 open audit actions, 3 were closed during the period. During the period no actions were added during the period.

Consultation occurred with relevant officers to assist in the progressing of actions and the relevance of older actions remaining on the list.

At the conclusion of the reporting period there were 26 open audit actions; 3 not yet due and 23 overdue. One of these overdue actions is high risk and related to Procurement and Contract Management. The statuses of outstanding risks are summarised below:

Audit	Not yet due	Due	Overdue	Total
Data Governance	1	-	8	9
Victorian Protective Data Security Standards	-	-	2	2
Fraud and Corruption Control Framework	-	-	-	-
Fleet Management	-	-	1	1
Governance Framework	-	-	1	1
Procurement and Contract Management	-	-	7	7
Recreation Reserves	-	-	2	2
Emergency Management	2	-	2	4
Total	3	-	23	26



11 FOCUS FOR THE NEXT REPORTING PERIOD

11.1 Open and outstanding audit actions

A strong focus will continue on progressing and completing open audit actions, for both internal and external audit, particularly those that are now overdue. Active follow up has occurred with responsible officers with overdue actions, and where possible a revised due date will be proposed for ARC consideration.

11.2 End of Year Reporting

Coming into the second half of the year, a substantial amount of work will go into preparing for the end of year statements and the external audit for the review of the ARC. Preparation of these reports will continue in earnest while navigating the Organisation's new enterprise system. ARC will see a maintained focus on ensuring accuracy and transparency of these important documents.

Results - Loddon Shire Audit and Risk Committee Self Assessment 2023-24

Topic	No.	Question	Question					Comments
			1-agree	2-unsure	3-disagree	4-N/A	Skipped	
	1	Details						
ARC charter	2	The Charter clearly articulates the Committee's roles and responsibilities and provides it with the necessary authority to discharge them.	5					
	3	The Charter facilitates and supports the effective operation of the Committee.	3	1			1	
	4	During the past year, the Committee has adequately addressed all of its responsibilities as detailed in the Charter	4	1				
	5	The Charter ensures the Committee is sufficiently independent from the management of Council.	5					
	6	Comments						It would be worth reviewing the committee charter to ensure the Audit committee's limited time is focused on the matters of greatest importance/relevance and where it can add best value. The charter is regularly reviewed to ensure it remains relevant and provides clear guidance for the committee.
Skills and experience	7	The Committee has been able to analyse and critically evaluate information presented to it by management	4	1				
	8	There is a clear process that Committee members can follow to access advice and /or training to improve their skills and knowledge	1	4				
	9	The Committee's collective skills are adequate in light of its responsibilities	4	1				
	10	The Committee has responded appropriately where significant risks and/or control breakdowns have been brought to its attention	5					
	11	The Committee has shown an openness to new ideas and different views in its deliberations	5					
	12	The Committee has been sufficiently probing and challenging in its deliberations.	4	1				
	13	Comments						I believe the committee has a good mix of skills across its members. However, there is limited focus on providing opportunities for members to improve and broaden their own skills It would be useful to have greater depth of experience in the local government context (both legal and financial) For Q,8, I'm not sure about access to training for independent committee members.
Understanding the business	14	The Committee has an adequate understanding of Council's Risk management framework and risk profile	5					
	15	The Committee has an adequate understanding of Council's Internal control framework to mitigate significant risks	5					
	16	The Committee has an adequate understanding of Council's Financial and statutory reporting requirements	4	1				
	17	The Committee has an adequate understanding of Council's legislative compliance requirements.	3	2				
	18	The Committee receives appropriate briefings on: Current and emerging business risks	4	1				
	19	The Committee receives appropriate briefings on: Changes in financial reporting requirements	5					
	20	The Committee receives appropriate briefings on: Changes in performance reporting requirements	5					
	21	The Committee receives appropriate briefings on: Integrity body reports	5					
	22	The Committee receives appropriate briefings on: Changes in the business/regulatory environment	4				1	
	23	Comments						Having good support from internal and external audit is important for the committee to be able to meet these obligations
Meeting administration and conduct	24	The Committee has had an appropriate number of meetings to properly discharge its responsibilities	4			1		
	25	Agendas are structured to allow sufficient time to discuss all critical issues	4	1				
	26	The Committee receives agendas and supporting papers in sufficient time prior to meetings.	5					
	27	Agendas and supporting papers are of sufficient clarity and quality to enable the Committee to make informed decisions	5					

Results - Loddon Shire Audit and Risk Committee Self Assessment 2023-24

Topic	No.	Question	1-agree	2-unsure	3-disagree	4-N/A	Skipped	Comments
	28	Committee meetings are well run and productive	5					
	29	Committee minutes are appropriately maintained and provided to Council on a timely basis	5					
	30	Comments						the council could consider moving to 5 meetings a year in order to adequately cover all the audit committee responsibilities including 4 internal audits required to be undertaken Agenda's and supporting papers have been condensed in recent years which is positive.
Communication with Council	31	Committee communications to Council about its deliberations and decisions are appropriate.	2	2			1	
	32	Committee reports to Council on its activities are appropriate.	3	2				
	33	Comments						I don't believe I have seen any of these reports
Management Commitment and support	34	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	4	1				
	35	Information and briefing papers presented by management meet the Committee's expectations in respect of: Maintenance of a strong internal control environment that is effective in mitigating key risks	4	1				
	36	Information and briefing papers presented by management meet the Committee's expectations in respect of: Management of Council's compliance and regulatory obligations	4	1				
	37	Information and briefing papers presented by management meet the Committee's expectations in respect of: Council's external reporting requirements	4	1				
	38	The Committee has a positive attitude to continuous improvement in its dealings with management	5					
	39	Comments						consideration could be given to further streamlining the agendas Continuous improvement should continue as a key outcome of the Committee's work. It would be beneficial for council staff subject to audit and provision of management comments to attend the committee meetings in person to present and discuss the challenges raised in the papers
Internal Audit	40	The Committee considered the adequacy of internal audit resources	4	1				
	41	The Committee reviewed and approved any significant changes to the internal audit plan	5					
	42	The Committee considered the performance of the internal audit function	3	1			1	
	43	The Committee reviewed all internal audit reports and monitored management responses to recommendations	5					
	44	The Committee reviewed the Internal Audit Charter to ensure that appropriate structures, authority, access and reporting arrangements are in place for the internal audit function	2	3				
	45	Comments						The satisfactory performance of the internal audit function is critical to the success of the ARC committee. Regular monitoring and discussion of the performance of internal audit function is extremely important for this reason I'm unsure whether we reviewed the Internal Audit Charter. We may have and I've forgotten?
External audit	46	The Committee reviewed external audit reports and management letters and monitored management responses to findings and recommendations made by external audit.	5					
	47	The Committee provided feedback on the performance of external audit	5					
	48	Comments						
	49	Other comments. (please phrase your comments as opportunities for improvement). Please note here any other comments you would like to make about Council's performance:						Just a thought bubble - is an audit of the Audit Committee worth considering? So a deeper dive into the charter, structure, performance by say the Internal Auditor? Overall I believe the Loddon ARC functions well with a good mix of member skills, effective internal/external audit advice and maintaining a focus on continuous improvement of management processes Far too many questions. Many overlapping/of doubtful value. - I have included my comments throughout the survey. - I'm keen to see the audit committee charter reviewed to assess the role and tasks of the audit committee, and whether there is adequate time to undertake all the agreed work to a high standard

13 URGENT BUSINESS

In accordance with Council's Governance Rules, Clause 53 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**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council considers the confidential report(s) listed below in a meeting closed to the public in accordance with Section 66(1) and 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020:

14.1 AQUATIC FACILITIES MANAGEMENT CONTRACT EXTENSION

This matter is considered to be confidential under Section 3(1)(g(ii)) of the Local Government Act, and the Council is satisfied that discussion of this matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest as it deals with private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

Report contains commercial inconfidence information relating to a contract extension

Closing of Meeting to the Public

RECOMMENDATION

That the meeting be closed to the public.

NEXT MEETING

The next Meeting of Council will be held on 25 June 2024 at Wedderburn commencing at 3.00pm.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at [enter time](#).

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

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