



GANNAWARRA

Shire Council

Wednesday, 27 November 2024

6:00 PM

Kerang Senior Citizen Community Rooms

Kerang

AGENDA

Council Meeting

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Geoff Rollinson
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

1 WELCOME TO COUNTRY

Playing of the Welcome to Country video clip.

2 OPENING DECLARATION

We, the Councillors of the Shire of Gannawarra, declare that we will undertake the duties of the office of Councillor, in the best interests of our community, and faithfully, and impartially, carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in us, to the best of our skill and judgement.

3 APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE**4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

- Ordinary Meeting – 16 October 2024
- Special Council Meeting – 18 November 2024

5 DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

General conflict of interest

Unless exempt under Section 129 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) or regulation 7 of the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020, a Councillor or member of Council staff has a general conflict of interest in a matter if an impartial, fair-minded person would consider that the person's private interests (as defined in Section 127(2) of the Act) could result in that person acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty.

Material conflict of interest

Unless exempt under Section 129 of the *Local Government Act 2020* or regulation 7 of the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020, a Councillor or member of Council staff has a material conflict of interest in respect of a matter if an affected person (as defined in Section 128(3) of the Act) would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter.

Disclosure of a conflict of interest

A Councillor who has a conflict of interest and is attending a meeting of the Council must make a full disclosure of that interest by either advising:

- a) the Council at the meeting immediately before the matter is considered at the meeting; or
- b) the Chief Executive Officer in writing before the meeting –

whether the interest is a general conflict of interest or a material conflict of interest; and the nature of the interest.

Note: If a Councillor advises the Chief Executive Officer of the details under b) above, the Councillor must make a disclosure of the class of interest only to the meeting immediately before the matter is considered at the meeting.

In accordance with Section 130 of the Act, a councillor who has disclosed a conflict of interest in respect of a matter must exclude themselves from the decision making process in relation to the matter, including any discussion or vote on the matter at any Council meeting, and any action in relation to the matter.

Failure to comply with Section 130 of the Act may result in a penalty of 120 penalty units

6 BRIEFING SESSIONS

6.1 RECORDS OF COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS - 9 OCTOBER 2024 TO 20 NOVEMBER 2024

Author: Jodie Basile, Executive Assistant to CEO

Authoriser: Geoff Rollinson, Chief Executive Officer

Attachments:

- 1 Council Briefing Record - 15 November 2024**
- 2 Council Briefing Record - 18 November 2024**
- 3 Council Briefing Record - 20 November 2024**

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the records of Councillor Briefings 9 October 2024 to 20 November 2024.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents to Council written records of Councillor Briefings in accordance with Clause 31 of the Gannawarra Shire Council Governance Rules.

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in regard to this matter.

COUNCIL PLAN

Council Plan 2021-2025:

- Be a creative employer of choice through our adherence to good governance and our inclusive culture.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In accordance with Clause 32 of the Gannawarra Shire Council Governance Rules, a written record of a meeting held under the auspices of Council is, as soon as practicable, reported at a meeting of the Council and incorporated in the minutes of that Council meeting.

The record must include:

1. The names of all Councillors and members of Council staff attending
2. The matters considered
3. Any conflict-of-interest disclosures made by a Councillor attending
4. Whether a Councillor who has disclosed a conflict of interest left the meeting.

CONSULTATION


Consultation with Councillors and staff has occurred to ensure the accuracy of the Councillor Briefing records.

CONCLUSION

To ensure compliance with Clause 32 of the Gannawarra Shire Council Governance Rules, it is recommended that Council note the Councillor Briefing records as attached to this report.

RECORD OF A COUNCILLOR BRIEFING



Type of Meeting	Councillor Induction Training Session with Shawn Price from <i>Positive Intelligence</i>	
Date:	Friday 15 November, 2024	
Time:	10.00am – 4.00pm	
Location:	Council Chambers, Kerang	
In Attendance: (Councillors)	Cr Daniel Bolitho Cr Lisa Farrant Cr Charlie Gillingham Cr Keith Link Cr Pat Quinn Cr Garner Smith Cr Ross Stanton	
Apologies:	Nil	
In Attendance: (Officers)	Amanda Wilson	
In Attendance: (Other)	Shawn Price – <i>Positive Intelligence</i>	
Matters Discussed:	Building an effective team and relationship Creating a positive culture from the top	
Conflict of Interest Disclosures		
Matter No.	Councillor/Officer making disclosure	Councillor/Officer left meeting Yes/No
Nil		
Completed By:	Geoff Rollinson – Chief Executive Officer 	

RECORD OF A COUNCILLOR BRIEFING



Type of Meeting	Councillor Induction Training Session with Tony Raunic from <i>Hunt & Hunt Lawyers</i>	
Date:	Monday 18 November, 2024	
Time:	10.30am – 5.30pm	
Location:	Council Chambers, Kerang	
In Attendance: (Councillors)	Cr Daniel Bolitho Cr Lisa Farrant Cr Charlie Gillingham Cr Keith Link Cr Pat Quinn Cr Garner Smith Cr Ross Stanton	
Apologies:	Nil	
In Attendance: (Officers)	Geoff Rollinson, Jodie Basile, Amanda Wilson, Dylan Taylor, Wade Williams, Paul Fernee	
In Attendance: (Other)	Tony Raunic – <i>Hunt and Hunt Lawyers</i>	
Matters Discussed:	Understanding Governance Overview of The Local Government Act 2020 Roles and Functions Decision Making Councillor Conduct Framework Model Code of Conduct Governance Rules and Social Media Integrity and Accountability Requirements	
Conflict of Interest Disclosures		
Matter No.	Councillor/Officer making disclosure	Councillor/Officer left meeting Yes/No
Nil		
Completed By:	Geoff Rollinson – Chief Executive Officer 	

RECORD OF A COUNCILLOR BRIEFING



Type of Meeting	November Council Briefing Session	
Date:	Wednesday 20 November, 2024	
Time:	9.00am – 5.00pm	
Location:	Council Chambers, Kerang	
In Attendance: (Councillors)	Cr Daniel Bolitho Cr Lisa Farrant Cr Charlie Gillingham Cr Keith Link Cr Pat Quinn Cr Garner Smith Cr Ross Stanton	
Apologies:	Nil	
In Attendance: (Officers)	Geoff Rollinson, Jodie Basile, Amanda Wilson, Wade Williams, Paul Fernee, Dylan Taylor, Roger Griffiths, Leigh Hollingworth, Kellie Burmeister, Scott Bourne, Rebecca Hollingworth	
In Attendance:	Nil	
Matters Discussed:	Year in Review and Strategic Projects Overview Economic Development Team Overview on the Gannawarra brand Map of the Area Tourism, Marketing, Population Growth, Agriculture, Industrial, Housing, Mining, ART PowerPoint The History of Cohuna Aerodrome – presentation by Cohuna Aerodrome Redevelopment Board 2025 Council Meeting Dates, Times and Locations 2025 Citizenship Ceremony Dates Committee Memberships 2024/2025 Quarterly Budget report – Quarter Ending 30 September 2024 Annual Financial Statements – Cash Analysis Records of Councillor Briefings – 9 October 2024 to 19 November 2024 Capex Update – November 224 Storm Water Update Building and Planning Activity – Quarterly Update Future Listing Report Councillor/CEO Issues CEO Only Councillor Only	
Conflict of Interest Disclosures		
Matter No.	Councillor/Officer making disclosure	Councillor/Officer left meeting Yes/No
1. Stormwater Update – Geoff Rollinson – Chief Executive Officer declared a Material Conflict of Interest. Geoff left the room for the discussion.		
2. Building and Planning Activity Update – Paul Fernee – Director Community Wellbeing declared a General Conflict of Interest. Paul left the room for the discussion.		

3. Cohuna Aerodrome Discussion – Jodie Basile – EA to CEO declared a General Conflict of Interest. Jodie left the room for the discussion.	
Completed By:	Geoff Rollinson – Chief Executive Officer 



7 BUSINESS REPORTS FOR DECISION

7.1 ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - CASH ANALYSIS

Author: Rebecca Hollingworth, Acting Chief Financial Officer

Authoriser: Amanda Wilson, Director Corporate Services

Attachments: 1 Policy 110 Investments
2 Policy 126 Council Future Use Investments

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Annual Financial Statement – Cash Analysis report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is in response to a resolution at the September Council Meeting to provide a dedicated report of the cash position contained in the Annual Financial Statements of Council as at 30 June 2024.

There are restrictions imposed both internally and externally on the cash that the Council has in its financial accounts that are identified in this report. This report explains the negative result for the unrestricted cash balance as at 30 June 2024. The report also identifies Council policies around cash investment and cash future use purposes.

PURPOSE

This report is to provide further detail on the cash position detailed in the Annual Financial Statements to 30 June 2024.

ATTACHMENTS

- Policy 110 Investments
- Policy 126 Council Future Use Investments

DISCUSSION

The Annual Financial Statements were audited by VAGO appointed audit providers RSD Audit. The Financial and Performance Statements were endorsed by the Audit and Risk Committee at the 10 September 2024 meeting and were adopted by Council at the 16 September 2024 meeting.

The resolution of Council included a request for a report at the November Council meeting containing:

- a. Details on what areas cash, cash equivalents and other financial assets, under note 5.1 on page 27 of the financial statement, are allocated.
- b. A detailed explanation on the circumstances that led to a negative unrestricted cash balance as at June 30 2024 on page 13 in the service performance indicators; and
- c. Any policies of the Gannawarra Council regarding backing provisions in the balance sheet with cash.

a) Cash Allocation

Detailed below is a summary of the total cash, cash equivalents and other financial assets as at 30 June 2024.

The annual report is listed on Council's website, the direct link can be accessed [here](#). The annual report contains the information on the cash amounts, current liabilities and unrestricted cash results.

Gannawarra Shire Council				
Cash & Investments Statement				
Cash & Investments				
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
(\$000's)	Jun-21	Jun-22	Jun-23	Jun-24
	figures	figures	figures	figures
Externally Restricted ⁽¹⁾				
Unexpended Grants	954	3,768	5,466	4,746
Trust Fund	559	430	430	1,415
Total Externally Restricted	1,513	4,198	5,896	6,161
(1) Funds that must be spent for a specific purpose				
Internally Restricted ⁽²⁾				
Future Use Investment				
Land and Buildings	410	797	1,580	804
Innovation Fund/Major Projects	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Plant and Equipment	834	936	896	430
Long Service Leave	2,500	2,707	3,092	2,032
Provisions				
Annual Leave	-	-	-	1,226
Waste management	-	-	-	707
Other				
Koondrook Caravan Park Lease	2	2	2	3
Financial Assistance Grant	2,953	3,077	6,807	-
Carry Over Works	837	448	784	786
Unexpended Grants - Flood Money unspent	-	-	2,685	2,976
Loan Repayment				53
Total Internally Restricted	8,536	8,967	16,846	10,017
(2) Funds that Council has earmarked for a specific purpose				
Unrestricted (ie. available after the above Restrictions)	4,964	5,654	5,479	5,701
Total Cash & Investments	15,013	18,819	28,221	21,879
Cash and cash equivalents	12,510	13,110	16,074	6,671
Other financial assets	2,503	5,709	12,147	15,208
Total Cash & Investments	15,013	18,819	28,221	21,879

The above table details that as at 30 June 2024 Council had a combined cash total of \$21.879 million.

Cash and cash equivalents relates to any bank accounts or deposits that are redeemable to cash within 90 days. Other financial assets relate to investments on a term of between 91 and 365 days.

With the \$21.879 million there is \$6.161million for externally restricted assets and \$10.017 million on internally restricted assets.

Externally restricted assets are assets that have conditions on them that require expenditure on a specific purpose in accordance with legislation, an accounting standard and or a grant condition.

Internally restricted assets are decisions of the Council to earmark funds for specific future purposes or specific issues that if they were not discounted would distort the financial position of the Council.

The residual of funds shown as Unrestricted cash is the remainder of cash funds that the Council has to run its operations and fund the works program until cash becomes available. For example, rates payments are received in instalments and then the major component in February. This is eight months into the financial year. This figure is shown at \$5.701 million.

The above shows the allocation of cash, cash equivalents and other financial assets allocation as at 30 June 2024.

b) Unrestricted cash balance

The aim of the unrestricted cash balance is to highlight the available cash that the Council has after commitments have been met and to indicate Council's ability to deal with any unforeseen financial issues.

The calculation of the unrestricted cash balance in the Financial Statements to 30 June 2024 and balancing to the service performance indicators is detailed below.

Unrestricted Cash Ratio		
	2024	2023
	\$'000	\$'000
<u>Numerator</u>		
Cash and cash equivalents	6,671	16,071
<i>less</i>		
Trust funds and deposits	1,415	497
Carried forward cash - capital	786	784
Conditional grants unspent (Capital and Operating)	7,722	7,931
Unrestricted cash	-3,252	6,859
<u>Denominator</u>		
Total current liabilities	12,696	14,423
Unrestricted Cash ratio	-25.62%	47.56%

The ratio is calculated by dividing the Numerator figure to the Denominator figure $(-3,252/12,696 = -25.61\%)$.

In the 2024 scenario Council has \$6.671m in Cash and cash equivalents. From this figure, the ratio deducts commitments for grants and trust fund deposits. These are commitments that will need to be honoured or paid for out of Council's cash funds and usually within twelve months. It is based on Council receiving the income but there is a requirement to utilise the funds on a particular purpose that has not been paid for yet.

The above deductions show the abnormally high level of “Conditional grants unspent” \$7.722m. These funds primarily relate to capital, operating and flood recovery funding and are expected to decrease significantly over the 2024/25 period.

The ratio works on the “Cash and cash equivalents” total and excludes “Other financial assets”. Therefore, if Council changes the placement of an investment from less than 90 days to greater than 90 days this will shift funds between “Cash and cash equivalents” and “Other financial assets”. It will also lower the unrestricted cash balance.

As can be seen in the below figures the “Cash and cash equivalents” figure has reduced as a percentage of total investments and this partly explains the deterioration in the figure.

	2024		2023	
	\$'000	%	\$'000	%
Cash and cash equivalents	6,671	30%	16,071	57%
Other financial assets	15,208	70%	12,147	43%
Total Investments	21,880	100%	28,217	100%

Other factors that have negatively impacted the Unrestricted cash balance include:

- Financial Assistance Grant - In the past few years the Financial Assistance Grant has been paid early and this has bolstered the cash position. In 2023/24 the early payment did not occur.
- Flood expenditure – recognition of unclaimable expenses for flood works was made in 2023/24 which reduced Council’s cash position; and
- Other variances to the budget as disclosed on pp 82 – 86 of the annual report.

c) Policies of Council

The Council has the following policies in relation to the investment of funds and they are attached to this report:

- Policy 110 – Investments – this policy provides guidance of how to invest surplus funds to create the best advantage for Council, whilst managing the associated risk and maintaining appropriate levels of transparency and security. This policy was reviewed in 2021 and is next scheduled for review in 2025.
- Policy 126 – Future Use Investments – this policy provides guidance on the creation, purpose and movement of funds for specific purposes. This policy was reviewed in 2022 and is next scheduled for review in 2026.

In addition, the Accounting Standards and specific grant agreements will dictate the treatment of various income sources and when money received can be treated as income.

RELEVANT LAW

- Section 98, 99 and 100 *Local Government Act 2020* – Annual Report requirements; and
- Section 101, 102 and 105 *Local Government Act 2020* – Financial management principles, policies and accounts and records.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

The cash position reflects the audited Financial Statements that were adopted by Council on 16 September 2024.

OPTIONS

The report is for information, and it is at Council's discretion on any further options or discussion.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The unrestricted cash position does have an economic impact on the Council and is one of many key financial performance indicators to assess the financial sustainability of the Council.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Financial Statements and the Performance Statements are analysed by the Audit and Risk Committee through the annual audit process.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable.

COLLABORATION

The cash position of Council forms part of the Financial Statements and the Performance Statements which are analysed by VAGO through the annual audit process.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The unrestricted cash position is one of many key financial performance indicators to assess the financial sustainability of the Council.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

The Financial Statements must comply with the *Local Government Act 2020*, the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020, the Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Council policies 110 and 126 are applicable and considered in the report.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in regard to this matter.



Investments

COUNCIL POLICY NO. 110

1. POLICY PURPOSE

To provide guidance of how to invest surplus funds to create the best advantage for Council, whilst managing the associated risk and maintaining appropriate levels of transparency and security.

2. BACKGROUND

Any funds not required to fulfil short term operational commitments are considered surplus and should be invested to generate interest revenue. Criteria must be set to achieve maximum return on investments that minimise risk and ensure the ongoing sustainability of Council funds.

The *Local Government Act 2020* sets out requirements for the investment of Council funds and compliance with these requirements is mandatory.

This policy sets out the requirements to achieve a balance between the points outlined above.

3. SCOPE

This policy covers the investments of any Council funds.

4. POLICY

4.1 Authority for Investment

Section 103 *Local Government Act 2020* sets out the guidelines in relation to the Financial Institutions with whom a Council may invest.

A Council may invest any money: -

- (a) In Government securities of the Commonwealth; and
- (b) In securities guaranteed by the Government of Victoria; and
- (c) With an ADI; and
- (d) With any financial institution guaranteed by the Government of Victoria; and
- (e) On deposit with an eligible money market dealer within the meaning of the Corporations Act; and
- f) In any other manner approved by the Minister, either generally or specifically, to be an authorised manner of investment for the purposes of this section.

4.2 Delegation of Authority

The Manager Finance and the Team Leader Financial Services have the authority to invest surplus funds, under the supervision of the Director Corporate Services and the Chief Executive Officer, in accordance with Council's policies.

4.3 Authorised Investments

(a) The only authorised investments that council staff can invest in under this policy without prior approval are:

- i. Cash deposits which fulfil the requirements set out in section 4.1 above and falling within the rating guidelines outlined under section 4.4 of this policy. Investments are to be held in Australia and denominated in Australian Dollars.

(b) Other than an investment under 4.3(a), council staff can only invest in the following authorised investments by first having Audit and Risk Committee approval and a council resolution passed, authorising investment in the following investment vehicles:

Council may invest any money: -

- (a) In Government securities of the Commonwealth; and
- (b) In securities guaranteed by the Government of Victoria; and
- (c) With an ADI; and
- (d) With any financial institution guaranteed by the Government of Victoria; and
- (e) On deposit with an eligible money market dealer within the meaning of the Corporations Act; and
- f) In any other manner approved by the Minister, either generally or specifically, to be an authorised manner of investment for the purposes of this section.

4.4 Guidelines

(a) Council's investments with Fund Managers

Type of Fund	Maximum time Horizon	Maximum % of Total Investment Portfolio
Cash Funds (at Call)	24 Hours	0 – 100
Cash Funds (Term Deposits)	7 days – 12 months	0 – 95
Fixed Interest	At call – 2 years	0 – 25

The asset structure and features of the fund are to be consistent with the desired outcomes of Council's Investment Strategy.

(b) Council's direct investments

- (i) Quotations on Managed Fund Investments
Not less than two (2) quotations shall be obtained from authorised institutions when an investment in a managed fund is proposed.
- (ii) Term to Maturity
The term to maturity of any of Council's direct investments may range from "at call" to five years, unless specifically approved by the Chief Executive Officer.
- (iii) Other Factors

Investments which meet all other requirements of this policy but also provide indirect benefits for the Gannawarra Shire community are to be the preferred investment all other matters being equal.

(c) General Policy Guidelines

Diversification / Credit Risk

(i) Guide to Account limits

Council should generally limit the total amount invested with any one fund manager to a maximum of \$2,000,000. In instances where this is not practical, the funds must be invested with an institution which has a long term rating (Standard & Poors) of BBB+ to BBB- or higher.

(ii) Direct Investments

The Amounts shall be invested with any one of the following rated institutions:

Long Term Rating (Standard & Poor's)	Short Term Rating (Standard & Poor's)
AAA to AA-	A1+
A+ to A-	A1
BBB+ to BBB-	A2

Guide: -

- AAA – Highest credit quality – This rating indicates the lowest expectation of credit risk. They are assigned only in the case of exceptionally strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is highly unlikely to be adversely affected by foreseeable events.
- AA – Very high credit quality – This rating indicates expectations of very low credit risk. They indicate very strong capacity for payment of financial commitments. This capacity is not significantly vulnerable to foreseeable events.
- A – High credit quality – This rating indicates expectations of low credit risk. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered strong. The capacity may, nevertheless, be more vulnerable to changes in circumstances or in economic conditions than is the case for higher ratings.
- BBB – Good credit quality – this rating indicates that there is currently an expectation of low credit risk. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered adequate, but adverse changes in circumstances and in economic conditions is more likely to impair this capacity. This is the lowest investment-grade category.
- A1+ - Extremely strong degree of safety regarding timely payment.
- A1 – A strong degree of safety.
- A2 – A satisfactory capacity for a timely payment.

(iii) Credit Ratings

If any of the Council's investments are downgraded such that they no longer fall within these investment policy guidelines, they will be divested as soon as is practicable.

(d) Reporting

- (i) A quarterly report will be provided to Council detailing investment income versus budget year to date, for all investments which are invested as prescribed under authorised investment Section 4.3 paragraph (b).
- (ii) For Audit Purposes, certificates must be obtained from the banks/fund managers confirming the amounts of investment held on Council's behalf at 30th June each year.

(e) Variation to Policy

The Chief Executive Officer or their delegated representative is authorised to approve variations to this policy if the investment is to Council's advantage and/or due to revised legislation.

All significant changes to this policy are to be reported to the Audit and Risk Committee within 2 months.

5. POLICY REVIEW

Council will review this policy as required but always within twelve months after a general election of the Council. At the time of review, this policy was compliant with the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act* 2006.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

Members of the public may inspect all Council policies at Gannawarra Shire Council's Kerang and Cohuna Offices, or online at www.gannawarra.vic.gov.au.

Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be directed to the Director Corporate Services on (03) 5450 9333.

Records – 3.000518
Originally adopted: 17/09/2014
Reviewed: 20/09/2017
Reviewed: 21/04/2021
To be reviewed

Minute Book Reference: 12584
2025





Council Future Use Investments

COUNCIL POLICY NO. 126

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define the creation and purpose of Council Future Use Investments.

2. DEFINITIONS

Future Use Investment: an allocation of Council's Cash and cash equivalents or Other financial assets that are set aside by Council resolution for a specific purpose.

Cash and cash equivalents: as shown in Council's Financial Statements on the Balance Sheet and they include:- Cash on hand, Cash at bank and Term deposits.

Other financial assets: -as shown in Council's Financial Statements on the Balance Sheet and they consist of Term deposits.

3. POLICY

Council will set aside a component of Cash and cash equivalents and Other financial assets for specific purpose in accordance with 'Council transfers to Future Use Investment' as detailed in this policy. Amounts to be transferred from the Future Use Investments will be in accordance with 'Council transfers from the Future Use Investment' as detailed in this policy.

4. USE OF FUTURE USE INVESTMENTS

Amounts to be transferred to and from the various Future Use Investments will be decided during the annual budget process and at any other time by Council resolution.

4.1. Purpose of reserves

The purpose of Future Use Investment accounting is to put aside funds in the current year for capital and operating purchases to be made in future years.

This practice helps to eliminate fluctuations in Council's annual budget by enabling Council to better plan for capital and large operating purchases, and provides more consistency in the level of rates required to be raised in any given year.

4.2. Movement of Future Use Investments

Future Use Investment Name and Purpose	Council transfers to the Future Use Investment	Council transfers from the Future Use Investment
Land and Buildings: is used to fund the purchase and improvement of land and buildings.	Proceeds from the sale of Council owned land and buildings.	The cost of purchase or improvement cost for Council owned land and building.
Innovation Fund/Major Projects is used to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● assist in attracting grant funding for major projects not identified in the current capital works plan and Council resolves to financially support; and ● future major projects that need to be funded in future years 	Annually an amount determined during the budget process will be allocated to the Future Use Investment to replenish funds used in the previous year and to fund future major projects.	The cost of major project by Council resolution.
Plant and Equipment : is to assist with the funding of Council's new and replacement plant and equipment program.	Net proceeds from the sale of plant and equipment, supported by an annual amount determined during the budget process, be allocated to the Future Use Investment to fund new and replacement plant and equipment.	Funds required for new and replacement items of plant and equipment in accordance with the plant replacement program.
Long Service Leave: is to offset a component of the Long Service Liability	Annually an amount determined during the year end process will be allocated to the Future Use Investment to fund a component of the long service leave liability.	Funds in excess of liability may be transferred out.
Unfunded Superannuation Liability Investment: is to assist with funding any call that may be made on Council as a result of shortfall in the Local Authorities Superannuation Fund Defined Benefits Plan.	Annually an amount determined during the budget process will be allocated to the Future Use Investment to fund potential future calls by the superannuation authority in relation to Council's unfunded superannuation liability.	Funds required to finance a call made upon Council by the superannuation authority.

5. RELATED PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES

Defined Benefit Funding Guideline

6. REFERENCES/LEGISLATION

Australian Accounting Standards

7. POLICY REVIEW

Council will review this policy as required but always within two years after a general election of the Council.

At the time it was developed, this policy was compliant with the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

Members of the public may inspect all policies at Gannawarra Shire Council's Kerang and Cohuna office or online at www.gsc.vic.gov.au.

Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer on (03) 5450 9333.

Altus Folder – 3.000518

Originally adopted: 2014

Reviewed: 20/02/2019

Reviewed: 20/04/2022

To be reviewed: 2026

Minute Book Reference: 10913



7.2 QUARTERLY BUDGET REPORT - QUARTER ENDING 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

Author: Rebecca Hollingworth, Acting Chief Financial Officer

Authoriser: Amanda Wilson, Director Corporate Services

Attachments: 1 Quarterly Budget Report – 30 September 2024

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the 2024/2025 Quarterly Budget Report as at 30 September 2024.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council continues to focus on long-term sustainability and working to build a foundation to support our community's needs well into the future, whilst navigating current financial challenges.

Council's projected income forecast shows a variance of \$0.736 million, while expenditure reflects a forecasted variance of \$2.920 million. The budgeted Operating Result of \$20.696 million surplus will decrease by \$1.853 million to an anticipated Operating Result of \$18.843 million surplus. This decrease is due to flood funding expenditure carried over to 2024/25 to completed activities related to supporting local recovery as well as clean-up and restoration of community services after the October 2022 flood event.

Council's Capital Works program is progressing with an anticipated variation in scheduled works of \$1.429 million. The adopted capital budget for 2024/25 is \$29.158 million and it is expected to increase to \$30.587 million by 30 June 2025. This increase is due to multiyear projects carried over to facilitate completion of these major project.

As of 30 September 2024, Council is anticipating an underlying result deficit of \$1.796 million. Notably, all outstanding loans have been fully repaid, leaving Council in a debt-free position.

PURPOSE

Council prepares a quarterly financial report as at 30 September, 31 December and 31 March each year. The purpose of the report is to ensure that the financial position of the Council is being managed and that Council remains financially sustainable.

ATTACHMENTS

Quarterly Budget Report – 30 September 2024

DISCUSSION

The Quarterly Budget Report presents the interim financial position to 30 September 2024 and is consistent with the budget.

Indicator	Budget (\$'000)	Forecast (\$'000)	Variance (\$'000)
Underlying result	389	(1,796)	(2,185)
Comprehensive Income result	20,696	18,843	(1,853)
Capital works	29,158	30,587	1,429
Cash position	10,564	9,705	859

This report involves some variations to the forecasts due to the flooding event, unearned income transferred from the previous year, carry over items into next year.

Operating Budget

The 'Summary of Adjustments' details the changes between the approved budget and the forecast to 30 September 2024. The major changes in the operating budget are:

- Necessary room closures and a temporary decrease in demand for childcare services in the 3 to 5 age group have led to a \$108k adjustment in budgeted user fees, with no additional expenditure required.
- Additional income due to recognition of unearned income at 30 June 2024 of \$416k in addition to \$440k anticipated to be received in 2024/25 for the Local Development Strategies for Koondrook and district grant. This income is matched with corresponding strategic expenditure to ensure grant objectives are achieved effectively.
- The Community Recovery Officer grant had a balance of \$253k as of 30 June 2024. An additional \$107k has been allocated to the 2024/25 budget, with \$49k already in the approved budget for a temporary flood position. The remaining \$97k is designated to fund existing budgeted staff positions that are supporting flood recovery activities.
- The Community Recovery Hubs grant carried a balance of \$644k as of 30 June 2024. Of this, \$595k has been allocated to the operational budget and \$49k to the capital budget, facilitating continued recovery efforts.
- Council received \$1.5m in Council Flood Support Funding to support local recovery, clean-up, and restoration of community services following the October 2022 flood event. Of this, \$1.139m has been included in the 2024/25 budget as council continues to address flood-related expenditures not covered by DRFA funding.
- An additional \$250k has been earmarked from the Council Flood Support Funding to support council activities in response to the December 2023 Victorian Flood and storm event.
- Adjustments to unearned grant funding have been made to better align with forecasted capital income for the 2024/25 period.

Capital Budget

At the end of September 2024, 24% of the forecasted capital works budget of \$30.587 million had been spent or committed. The capital budget adopted by Council was \$29.158 million.

There is an increase in the forecasted capital works budgeted of \$1.429 million to recognise prior year budgeted spend on major multi-year projects. The anticipated budgeted spend on capital works by 30 June 2025 is \$30.587 million. A detailed listing of variations is included in the attachment.

The major variations relate to:-

- Several multi-year projects have been carried over from 2023/24, scheduled for completion in the 2024/25 fiscal year.

Further detailed explanation of the variations is contained in the attachment to this report.

RELEVANT LAW

Section 97 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires a quarterly report be presented to Council at a Council meeting which is open to the public showing a comparison of the actual and budgeted results to date and an explanation of any material differences.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Quarterly Budget Report links to the budget process and the Council decision relating to the budget adoption on 26 June 2024.

OPTIONS

This report is presented for receiving and noting of the financial position at the end of the first quarter.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The key risks are financial and compliance risks.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Budget went through extensive consultation. No further community engagement has been undertaken.

COLLABORATION

Council Officers with responsibility for line budgets have had input into the report.

The Quarterly Budget Report to 30 September 2024 is being presented to Council's Audit and Risk Committee meeting on 12 December 2024.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

The budget and annual financial statements are prepared in accordance with the accounting standards. Provision of financial reports on at least a quarterly basis is a requirement of the Local Government Act.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

This report aligns to the Council Plan strategy to pursue initiative to achieve long term financial sustainability.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares they have no conflict of interest in regard to this matter.




Quarterly Budget Report

for the Quarter Ending 30 September 2024



Comprehensive Income Statement

		As at 30 September 2024				Projected Year End			
		Note	YTD Budget \$000	YTD Actual \$000	YTD Variance \$000	FY Budget \$000	FY Forecast \$000	FY Adjustments \$000	
Income									
Rates and Charges	1		15,881	15,880	(0)	16,145	16,213	68	
Statutory Fees and Fines			63	62	(1)	348	348	-	
User Fees	2		702	771	70	3,015	2,907	(108)	
Grants Operating	3		8,161	8,230	69	12,224	13,032	808	
Contributions and Donations			11	34	23	44	44	-	
Reimbursements	4		21	58	37	92	92	-	
Sale of Assets	5		311	311	-	660	618	(42)	
Cost of Assets Sold	5		(259)	(259)	-	(327)	(318)	9	
Interest Earned	6		89	91	2	522	522	-	
Other Income			77	91	14	340	340	-	
Total income			25,057	25,271	214	33,062	33,797	736	
Expenses									
Employee Costs	7		(3,525)	(3,427)	98	(13,880)	(13,961)	(81)	
Operational Materials and Services	8		(3,168)	(2,434)	733	(9,893)	(12,732)	(2,839)	
Bad and Doubtful Debts			-	(0)	(0)	(1)	(1)	-	
Borrowing Costs			-	(1)	(1)	(2)	(2)	-	
Depreciation	9		(2,061)	(2,038)	23	(8,246)	(8,246)	-	
Other Expenses			(51)	(51)	(1)	(652)	(652)	-	
Total expenses			(8,805)	(7,951)	853	(32,673)	(35,593)	(2,920)	
Underlying surplus/(deficit)			16,253	17,320	1,067	389	(1,796)	(2,185)	
Grants Capital and Major Projects	10		3,022	4,090	1,067	20,307	20,639	331	
Surplus/(deficit) for the year			19,275	21,409	2,134	20,696	18,843	(1,853)	

Favourable greater than 10% 
 Constant between plus or minus 10% 
 Unfavourable less than 10% 

Rounding

Unless otherwise stated, amounts in financial reports have been rounded to the nearest thousand dollars. Figures in the financial statements may not equate due to rounding.

Overall Result

At 30 September 2024 Council is showing an underlying surplus YTD of \$17.320 million, this is \$1.067 million more than budgeted for the same period. Income has a variance of \$0.214m and there is a \$0.853m variance for expenditure YTD.

Council is forecasting a \$1.796 million underlying deficit for 30 June 2025 which is a decrease in the surplus of \$2.185 on the 2024/25 adopted budget.

Note	Income	
1	Rates and charges Favourable 68 Increase due to supplementary valuations and additional bin services.	68
2	User fees Unfavourable (108) Reduction in fees for service due to room closures between July and September 2024 as well as place vacancies in rooms from July to December 2024 at the Kerang Children's Centre.	(108)
3	Grants - Operating Favourable 808 Unearned grant income at 30 June 2024 recognised in 24/25 in line with the accounting standards. 416 Adjustment to reflect Victorian Grants Commission 2023/24 underpayment as well as 2024/25 allocation. No allowance for advanced payment of 2025/26 allocation has been made. (48) Grant to be received for Local Development Strategies for Koondrook and districts to support these communities in the transition away from dependence on the native forest timber industry, and towards new and sustainable industries. 440	
5	Sale of Assets & Cost of Assets Sold Unfavourable (33) Variance relates to change in budgeted industrial block lot being sold in 2024/25.	(33)
	Expenses	
7	Employee Direct Costs Unfavourable (81) Cost savings due to temporary vacant staff position. 26 Resources to ensure the development and oversight of a range of flood recovery initiatives and ensure community recovery information, events and activities are be tailored to meet local needs. Fully funded by the Community Recovery Officer grant received in 2022/23. (107)	
8	Operational Materials and Services Unfavourable (2,839) Expenditure associated with unearned grant income at 30 June 2024 carried forward for the completion of the programs. (416) Balance of Council Flood Support Fund \$250k grant provided in 2023/24 to support immediate clean-up activities on council owned and managed public land and restoration of community services after the December 2023 Victorian flood and storm event. (250) Remaining Council Flood Support Funding (\$1.5m) received in 2022/23 to support immediate clean-up activities on council owned and managed public land and restoration of community services after the October 2022 floods. (1,139) Commitment to complete activities related to the Community Recovery Hubs funding received in 2022/23 to support local recovery after the October 2022 flood event. (595) Expenditure related to the Local Development Strategies for Koondrook and districts grant funding. (440)	
10	Grants - Capital Favourable 331 Unearned grant income at 30 June 2024 recognised in 24/25 in line with the accounting standards.	331

Capital Works Report as at 30 Sep 2024

	Note	Adopted Budget \$000	YTD Actuals \$000	Hard Commitments \$000	Total Expenditure \$000	Projected Forecast - Total Cost \$000	Permanent Adjustments \$000
PROPERTY							
Land Improvements							
Denyers Quarry Expansion Feasibility assessment		\$ 100	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 100	\$ -
Apex Park Irrigation Pump Shed		\$ 40	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 40	\$ -
Building Improvements							
Buildings Renewal		\$ 100	\$ 5	\$ -	\$ 5	\$ 100	\$ -
TOTAL PROPERTY		\$ 240	\$ 5	\$ -	\$ 5	\$ 240	\$ -
PLANT AND EQUIPMENT							
Plant, Machinery and Equipment							
Heavy plant replacement	1	\$ 500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 558	\$ 58
Light plant replacement		\$ 387	\$ -	\$ 97	\$ 97	\$ 387	\$ -
Other Plant and Equipment		\$ 20	\$ -	\$ 13	\$ 13	\$ 20	\$ -
Fixtures, Fittings and Furniture							
Kerang Children's Centre 3 Year Old Kinda.		\$ 50	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50	\$ -
Computers and Telecommunications							
ICT Capital renewals	2	\$ 180	\$ 62	\$ 15	\$ 77	\$ 248	\$ 68
Library books							
Library book replacement		\$ 120	\$ 58	\$ 29	\$ 87	\$ 120	\$ -
TOTAL PLANT AND EQUIPMENT		\$ 1,257	\$ 120	\$ 153	\$ 274	\$ 1,383	\$ 126
INFRASTRUCTURE							
Roads							
Bitumen Roads Reseal Program		\$ 1,061	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,061	\$ -
Gravel Re-sheeting Program		\$ 1,210	\$ 227	\$ 45	\$ 272	\$ 1,210	\$ -
Sealed Roads Rehabilitation Program	3	\$ 1,022	\$ -	\$ 41	\$ 41	\$ 1,563	\$ 541
Flood funding works		\$ 8,000	\$ 605	\$ 1,040	\$ 1,645	\$ 8,000	\$ -
Safe Local Roads & Streets Program		\$ 2,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,000	\$ -
Bridges							
Bridge Renewal		\$ 100	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 100	\$ -
Bridge Replacement - McLeans Bridge		\$ 500	\$ -	\$ 453	\$ 453	\$ 500	\$ -
Apex Park Bridge		\$ 632	\$ -	\$ 637	\$ 637	\$ 632	\$ -
Kervins Rd Bridge Replacement		\$ 503	\$ -	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 503	\$ -
Footpaths and Cycleways							
Footpath replacement program		\$ 160	\$ 31	\$ -	\$ 31	\$ 160	\$ -
Kerb and channel							
Kerb replacement program		\$ 266	\$ 23	\$ 68	\$ 91	\$ 266	\$ -
Drainage							
Stormwater Network and Town Pump renewal		\$ 298	\$ 1	\$ -	\$ 1	\$ 298	\$ -
Recreational, Leisure & Community Facilities							
Swimming Pool Renewal Program		\$ 135	\$ 18	\$ 21	\$ 39	\$ 135	\$ -
Cohuna Waterfront Stage 2 (CBD Upgrade)		\$ 3,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,000	\$ -
Kerang & Cohuna Swimming Pool Concept Designs		\$ 80	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 80	\$ -
Parks, Open Space and Streetscapes							
Tree Planting Program - Cool It Program		\$ 30	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 30	\$ -

	Note	Adopted Budget \$000	YTD Actuals \$000	Hard Commitments \$000	Total Expenditure \$000	Projected Forecast - Total Cost \$000	Permanent Adjustments \$000
Other Infrastructure							
Southern levee acquisition		\$ 58	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 58	\$ -
Strategic Project Development and Planning		\$ 150	\$ 20	\$ 31	\$ 52	\$ 150	\$ -
Koondrook Levee Design and Construction		\$ 2,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,500	\$ -
TOTAL INFRASTRUCTURE		\$ 21,705	\$ 926	\$ 2,836	\$ 3,762	\$ 22,246	\$ 541
TOTAL NEW CAPITAL WORKS		\$ 23,201	\$ 1,051	\$ 2,989	\$ 4,041	\$ 23,869	\$ 668
Works carried forward from the 2023/24 year							
PROPERTY							
Buildings							
Living Library Projects - The Glasshouse	4	\$ 2,934	\$ 184	\$ 2,602	\$ 2,787	\$ 2,976	\$ 42
TOTAL PROPERTY		\$ 2,934	\$ 184	\$ 2,602	\$ 2,787	\$ 2,976	\$ 42
PLANT AND EQUIPMENT							
Computers and Telecommunications							
ICT - Joint Council Asset Management Software		\$ 709	\$ -	\$ 53	\$ 53	\$ 709	\$ -
TOTAL PLANT AND EQUIPMENT		\$ 709	\$ -	\$ 53	\$ 53	\$ 709	\$ -
INFRASTRUCTURE							
Roads							
Kerang CBD Stage 4 - Wellington Street	5	\$ 100	\$ 48	\$ 164	\$ 211	\$ 395	\$ 295
Waste Management							
Cell 3 capping - Gannawarra Central Landfill		\$ 640	\$ 6	\$ 77	\$ 83	\$ 640	\$ -
Parks, Open Space and Streetscapes							
Sustainable Recreational Water for Quambatook - Grant dependent		\$ 1,504	\$ -	\$ 19	\$ 19	\$ 1,504	\$ (0)
Other Infrastructure							
Southern levee acquisition		\$ 70	\$ 4	\$ -	\$ 4	\$ 70	\$ -
TOTAL INFRASTRUCTURE		\$ 2,314	\$ 57	\$ 260	\$ 317	\$ 2,609	\$ 295
TOTAL CARRIED FORWARD CAPITAL WORKS 2020/21		\$ 5,957	\$ 242	\$ 2,915	\$ 3,157	\$ 6,293	\$ 337
Other Projects							
Rfid Installation (Digital Barcoding)		\$ -	\$ 1	\$ -	\$ 1	\$ -	\$ -
Koondrook To Kerang Rail Trail - Planning & Design	6	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 56	\$ 56	\$ 251	\$ 251
Cohuna Netball Lights Upgrade		\$ -	\$ 19	\$ -	\$ 19	\$ -	\$ -
Mobile Phone Signal Booster - Dingwall, Koroop, Myall, Lake Charm & Gannawarra Halls	7	\$ -	\$ 49	\$ -	\$ 49	\$ 49	\$ 49
Quambatook Transfer Station - Boundary Security Fence	8	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ 30	\$ 30
Kerang Office Basement - Flood Damage 2023		\$ -	\$ 1	\$ 7	\$ 8	\$ -	\$ -
Koondrook Levee Design	9	\$ -	\$ 11	\$ 45	\$ 57	\$ 84	\$ 84
Kerang Drainage Land Acquisition - MV Highway		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10	\$ 10
TOTAL OTHER PROJECTS		\$ -	\$ 106	\$ 108	\$ 214	\$ 424	\$ 424
TOTAL WORKS 2024/25		\$ 29,158	\$ 1,399	\$ 6,012	\$ 7,412	\$ 30,587	\$ 1,429

Summary - Overall Result

The adopted capital budget for 2024/2025 is \$29,158m. There has been a increase in the forecasted capital works budget by \$1,429m to recognise projects carried over to 2024/25. Anticipated budgeted spend by 30 June 2025 is \$30,587m. 24% of the forecasted capital works budget had been committed by 30 September 2024.

The following projects have been reviewed -

Note		\$000
1	Heavy plant replacement carried over from 2023/24 due to new weed sprayer ordered and waiting for delivery.	58
2	ICT Capital renewals carried over from 2023/24 to complete implementation of new human resource software - Pulse	68
3	Sealed Roads Rehabilitation Program - carried over from roads and bridge program that was unspent in 2023/24 to facilitate the completion of the program.	541
4	Living Library Projects - The Glasshouse - multi-year project carried over to 2023/24 to complete this project.	42
5	Kerang CBD Stage 4 - Wellington Street - carried over from 2023/24 to complete this project.	295
6	Koondrook To Kerang Rail Trail - Planning & Design - multi year project carried over from 2023/24.	251
7	Mobile Phone Signal Booster - Dingwall, Koroop, Myall, Lake Charm & Gannawarra Halls - funded by Community Recovery Hubs grant funding.	49
8	Quambatook Transfer Station - Boundary Security Fence - carried over from 2023/24 to complete this project.	30
9	Koondrook Levee Design - project carried over from 2023/24 to complete this project.	84

Balance Sheet As at 30 September 2024

	2023/24	Year to Date	Projected Forecast To 30 June 2025
	\$000	\$000	\$000
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	6,671	20,072	6,972
Trade and other receivables	2,995	17,699	4,031
GST Receivable		-	-
Financial assets	15,208	4,437	4,437
Inventories**	242	197	382
Other Assets	1,170	54	444
Non-current assets classified as held for	-	-	-
Total current assets	26,287	42,459	16,266
Non-current assets			
Property, infrastructure, plant and	284,859	283,961	306,881
Investment Assets	1,030	1,030	1,030
Total non-current assets	285,888	284,991	307,911
Total assets	312,175	327,450	324,177
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	2,713	162	1,460
Trust funds and deposits	1,415	2,434	430
Unearned Income	4,550	-	-
Provisions (CL)*	3,964	3,965	3,964
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings (CL)	53	-	-
Total current liabilities	12,696	6,561	5,854
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions (NCL)*	1,064	1,064	1,064
Total non-current liabilities	1,064	1,064	1,064
Total liabilities	13,759	7,625	6,918
Net Assets	298,416	319,825	317,259
Equity			
Accumulated surplus	104,359	125,768	123,202
Reserves	194,057	194,056	194,057
Total Equity	298,416	319,825	317,259

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS (\$000)

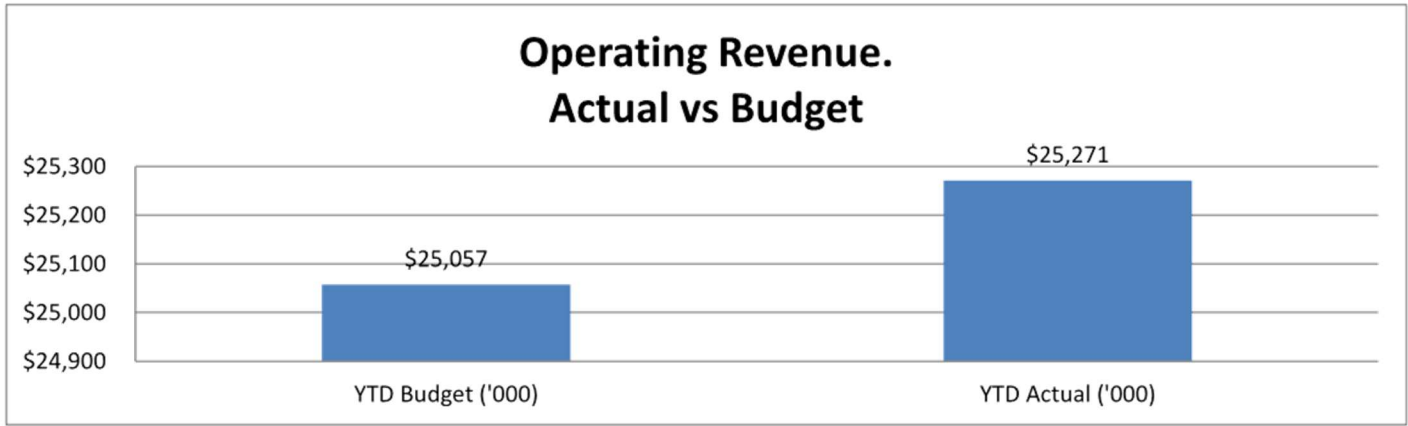
Description	2023/24	Year to Date	Projected Forecast To 30 June 2025
Cash Flows from Operating Activities			
Rates and charges	15,569	960	15,177
Statutory Fees and Fines	359	62	348
User Fees	3,031	733	3,198
Grants Operating	3,819	7,814	12,615
Grants Capital	2,581	(44)	16,505
Contributions monetary	78	34	44
Interest received	989	91	522
Trust funds and deposits taken	985	-	-
Other receipts	1,643	148	475
Net GST refund	13	386	4,068
Employee Costs	(17,210)	(3,426)	(13,961)
Materials & Services	(9,051)	(3,825)	(14,739)
Trust funds and deposits paid		1,027	(985)
Other Payments	(315)	(51)	(717)
Net Cash provided by operating activities	2,490	3,911	22,549
Cash Flows from Investing Activities			
Payment for property, infr. p&e	(8,997)	(1,539)	(33,645)
Proc. from sale property, infr. p&e	276	311	680
			-
Payment for investments	(18,113)	-	-
Proc. from sale of Investments	15,052	10,771	10,771
Net Cash used in Investing activities	(11,782)	9,543	(22,194)
Cash Flows from Financing Activities			
Proceeds from borrowings			-
Finance Costs	(6)	(1)	(2)
Loan Redemption	(102)	(53)	(53)
Net Cash used in Financing Activities	(108)	(54)	(55)
Net Increase / (Decrease) in Cash/ Invest.	(9,400)	13,400	300
Cash / Investments at beginning of year	16,071	6,671	6,671
Cash / Investments at end of financial period	6,671	20,071	6,971
Investments on Hand at Year end	15,208	4,437	4,437
Total Cash, cash equivalents and investments	21,879	24,508	11,408

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

	Year to Date		
	YTD Budget ('000)	YTD Actual ('000)	Variance ('000)
Total income	\$25,057	\$25,271	\$214
Total expenses	(\$8,805)	(\$7,951)	\$853
Underlying Surplus/(deficit)	\$16,253	\$17,320	\$1,067

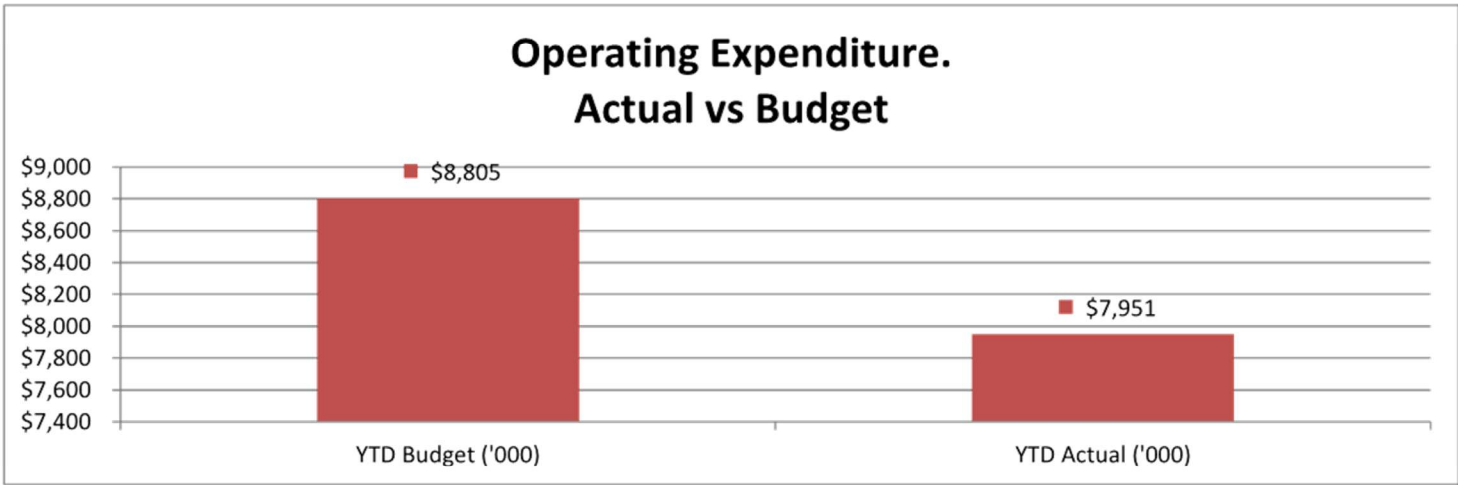
Abbreviations: YTD - Year to date EOY - End of year FY - Full year

Operating Revenue:



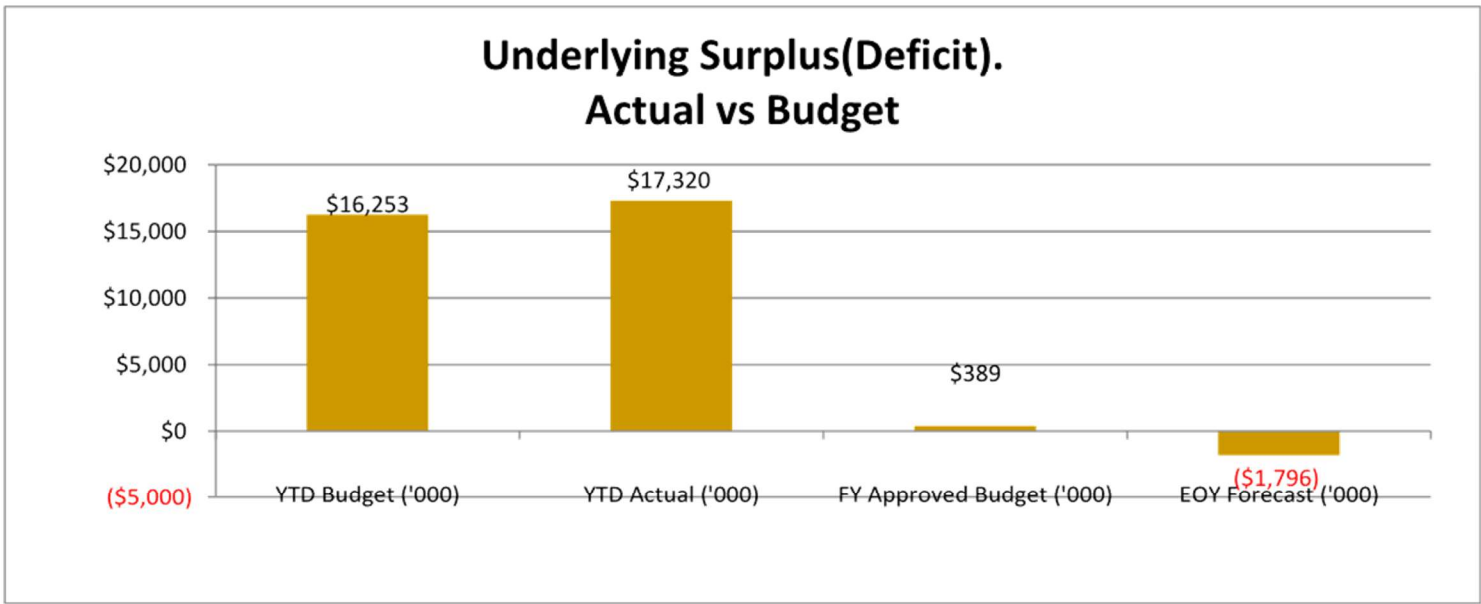
To date there is a YTD variance of \$0.214 million.

Operating Expenditure:



To date there is a YTD variance of \$0.853 million

Result from ordinary activities:

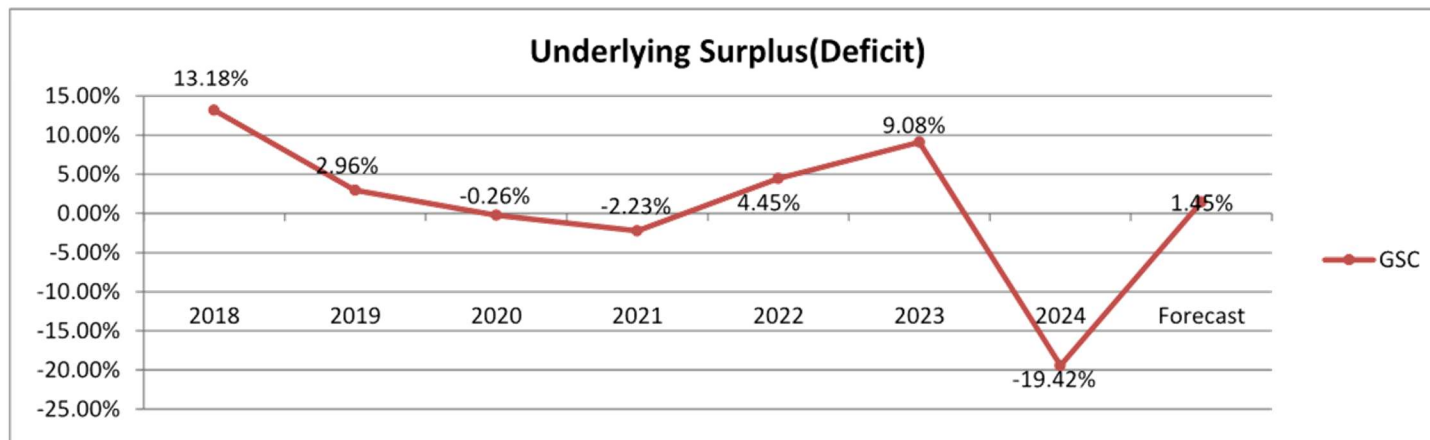


A year to date underlying surplus result has been achieved with a forecasted change on budget at 30 June 2025

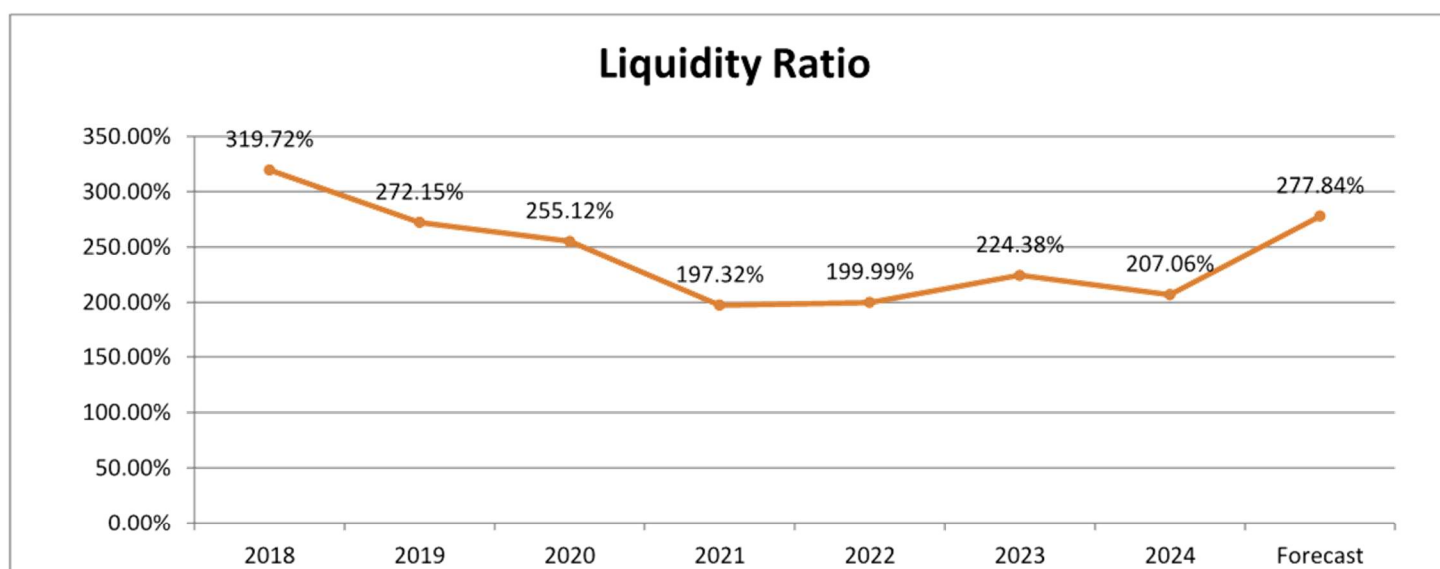
Abbreviations: YTD - Year to date FY - Full year EOY - End of year

Financial Ratios

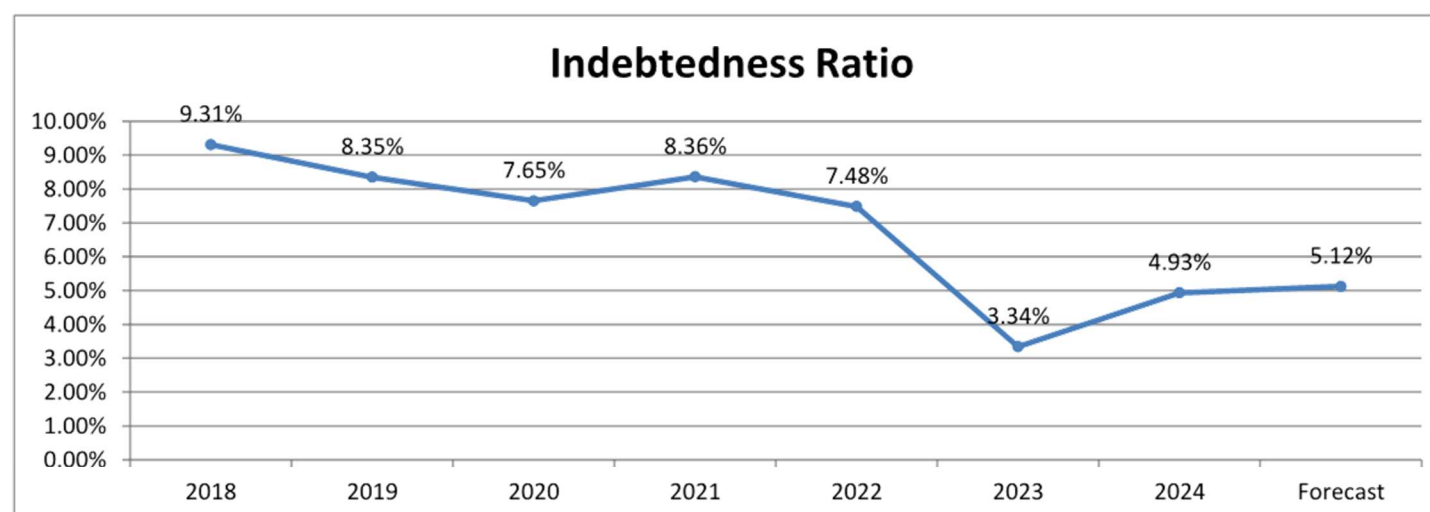
Financial Sustainability:



Underlying surplus(deficit): An indicator of the sustainable operating result required to enable Council to continue to provide core services and meet its objectives. The underlying result removes Non-Recurrent Capital grants from the surplus and reflects Council's ability to fund its operating expenditure out of all other operating income. A shift in the level of operating grants leads to a material change in the underlying result.



Liquidity ratio: Measures the level of Council's current assets to meet its current liabilities. A ratio higher than 100% indicates current assets being greater than current liabilities.



Indebtedness Ratio: Measures Council's non-current liabilities as a percentage of Council own source income.

7.3 2025 COUNCIL MEETING DATES, TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Author: Jodie Basile, Executive Assistant to CEO
Authoriser: Amanda Wilson, Director Corporate Services
Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopt the following dates as the 2025 scheduled meetings of Council, all commencing at 6pm in Kerang:

- 19 February 2025
- 19 March 2025
- 16 April 2025
- 21 May 2025
- 18 June 2025
- 16 July 2025
- 20 August 2025
- 17 September 2025
- 15 October 2025
- 19 November 2025
- 17 December 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with Council's Governance Rules, at or before the last meeting each calendar year, Council must fix the date, time, and place of all scheduled Council meetings for the following calendar year.

This report proposes scheduled Council meetings for 2025 continue to be held on the third Wednesday of each month from February to December inclusive. All meetings will commence at 6pm at the Senior Citizens Centre, Kerang.

January – No Meeting	July – Wednesday 16 @ 6.00pm
February – Wednesday 19 @ 6.00pm	August – Wednesday 20 @ 6.00pm
March – Wednesday 19 @ 6.00pm	September – Wednesday 17 @ 6:00pm
April – Wednesday 16 @ 6.00pm	October – Wednesday 15 @ 6.00pm
May – Wednesday 21 @ 6:00pm	November – Wednesday 19 @ 6:00pm
June – Wednesday 18 @ 6:00pm	December – Wednesday 17 @ 6:00pm

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to consider and adopt dates for 2025 scheduled meetings of Council.

ATTACHMENTS

Proposed dates, times, and locations for 2025 scheduled meetings of Council.

DISCUSSION

Council's Governance Rules require Council to fix the date, time, and place of all scheduled Council meetings for the following calendar year, at or before the last meeting each calendar year.

In previous years, Council meetings have been held on the third Wednesday of each month.

It is proposed that 2025 meetings commence at 6pm on the third Wednesday of each month from February to December inclusive at the Kerang Senior Citizens Centre.

There is provision in the Governance Rules for scheduled meeting dates, times, and locations to be amended if required, providing notice of the change is given to the public.

RELEVANT LAW

Local Government Act 2020 – Section 61 – Council meetings

Gannawarra Shire Council Governance Rules – Rule 12 – Date, time, and place of Council meetings.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not Applicable

OPTIONS

Council's Governance Rules require Council to fix the date, time, and place of all scheduled Council meetings for the following calendar year, at or before the last meeting each calendar year.

Council may determine any range of dates, times of places for the upcoming calendar year. Previous Councils have had meetings commencing at 6pm at night whilst others held their Council meetings during the day.

The Kerang Senior Citizens location is already established with the audio-visual equipment to enable the meetings to be recorded, there is nil cost to Council holding meetings in Kerang.

Meetings held in alternate locations require audio visual technical support to be engaged at a cost of approximately \$3,000 per meeting to enable the meetings to be recorded and publicly available online.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not Applicable

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Members of the public unable to attend or view Council meetings are able to access recordings of meeting recordings and/or meeting minutes from Council's website.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not Applicable

COLLABORATION

Not Applicable

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Council meeting costs are considered an operational cost within the 2024/2025 Budget.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not Applicable

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Gannawarra Shire Council Plan 2021 – 2025 – Be a creative employer of choice through our adherence to good governance and our inclusive culture.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in regard to this matter.

7.4 2025 CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY DATES

Author: Jodie Basile, Executive Assistant to CEO
Authoriser: Amanda Wilson, Director Corporate Services
Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Adopt the following dates for the 2025 Citizenship Ceremonies:**
 - Sunday 26 January, 2025 at 6pm
 - Monday 28 April, 2025 at 6pm
 - Monday 28 July, 2025 at 6pm
 - Monday 20 October, 2025 at 6pm.
- 2. Provide notification of the 2025 Citizenship Ceremony dates to the:**
 - Australian Electoral Commission,
 - Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, The Hon Tony Burke MP;
 - Federal Member for Mallee, Dr Anne Webster MP,
 - Leader of the Nationals in the Senate, The Hon Bridget McKenzie;
 - Leader of the Nationals, Member for Murray Plains, The Hon Peter Walsh MP

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each year Council is required to set a schedule of Australian Citizenship Ceremony dates for the Department of Home Affairs, usually three to six months in advance.

This report proposes dates for ceremonies to be held in 2025.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to establish Australian Citizenship Ceremony dates for 2025.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil.

DISCUSSION

Citizenship ceremonies fulfil legal requirements prescribed by the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007* and the Australian Citizenship Regulations 2007. They are conducted by a Presiding Officer, usually the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, or Chief Executive Officer, under the authority of the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs.

Each year Council is required to set a schedule of ceremony dates and provide this schedule to the Department of Home Affairs as soon as possible, usually three to six months in advance. Where possible, Parliamentary Sitting dates are avoided to allow for elected representatives from all three tiers of government to attend throughout the year.

According to the Citizenship Code ceremony organisers must invite all elected officials of the locality, at all levels of government, including:

- Local Federal MP and a Senator (of a different political party)
- Local State or Territory MP
- A Local Government Representative

RELEVANT LAW

- *Australian Citizenship Act 2007*

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Nearing the conclusion of each calendar year, Council receives a formal request from the Department of Home Affairs to provide confirmation of the proposed dates for Citizenship Ceremonies for the up-coming year.

Historically, this report has been provided to Council for consideration and adoption at the November Meeting of Council.

OPTIONS

Citizenship ceremonies are public ceremonial occasions which provide an important opportunity to formally welcome new citizens as full members of the Australian community and are formal occasions conducted with dignity, respect, and due ceremony. Conducting four ceremonies will ensure that Council provides this opportunity for its community throughout the year.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No formal consultation is required; however public notice will be given of the schedule.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable.

COLLABORATION

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Council adopts a budget each financial year providing allowance for Council Ceremonies and Visits by Dignitaries. The expenses associated with Citizenship Ceremonies are included within the adopted budget.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not Applicable.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Council Plan 2021-2025:

- Enhance the wellbeing and liveability of the Gannawarra through creative infrastructure and services.
- Improve the health, safety, and wellbeing of our community through partnerships, services, and programs.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in regard to this matter.

7.5 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS 2024/2025

Author: Jodie Basile, Executive Assistant to CEO
Authoriser: Amanda Wilson, Director Corporate Services
Attachments: 1 Committee Memberships 2024/2025

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopt the list of Committee memberships, and Councillor delegates or representatives to each, for 2024/2025 as detailed in this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council holds financial memberships for various committees, both locally and regionally, in the interests of advocating for and on behalf of the community. Membership to these and a number of other committees provides for Councillors to act as a Council delegate or representative on behalf of the Gannawarra Shire Council.

The table below lists each committee and the proposed Councillor delegate or representative to each, for 2024/2025.

COUNCILLOR COMMITTEES 2024/2025	
COMMITTEE	COUNCILLOR
Murray River Group of Councils (MRGC)	Cr Garner Smith, Mayor
Loddon Campaspe Group of Councils (LCGC)	Cr Garner Smith, Mayor
Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance (CVGA)	Cr Daniel Bolitho
Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (MFMPC)	Cr Lisa Farrant
Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC)	Cr Lisa Farrant
Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)	Cr Ross Stanton
Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)(x 2)	Cr Garner Smith Cr Ross Stanton
Transport Committee including Rail Freight Alliance	Cr Pat Quinn
Rural Councils Victoria (RCV)	Cr Charlie Gillingham
Timber Towns Victoria (TTV)	Cr Pat Quinn
Community Halls Community Asset Committee	Cr Keith Link

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is for Council to review and adopt committee memberships and assign Councillor delegates or representatives to each for 2024/2025.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

DISCUSSION

Each year Council reviews its membership for various committees within and external to our municipality and nominates Councillor delegates or representatives to each. This allows Councillors to pursue an area in which they have an interest and/or expertise and to use this knowledge to enhance their contribution to the committees on which they serve.

2024/2025 Committee Memberships detailing the composition and purpose of each committee is attached to this report.

RELEVANT LAW

Not applicable.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

At its meeting on 15 November 2023 Council adopted a list of Committee memberships and Councillor representatives for 2023/2024.

OPTIONS

That Council determine 2024/2025 committee memberships and Councillor representation to each and advise relevant committees.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council is committed to advocating in the best interest of the community and region.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

This list of Committee's represented by a Councillor can be reviewed and updated by resolution of Council as required. Memberships can be added or removed to ensure the best interests and outcomes for the Gannawarra Community.

COLLABORATION

Councillors nominated as a Council representative on a number of Committee's regularly collaborate with other councils, Governments, and statutory bodies.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The adopted 2024/2025 Annual Budget provides for expenses associated with memberships to, and Councillor representation on the various committees.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Each committee identified is governed by individual strategic plans and policies relevant to their charter and purpose.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Council Plan 2021 – 2025:

- Achieve long-term financial and environmental sustainability.
- Improve the health, safety, and wellbeing of our community through partnerships, services and programs.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in regard to this matter.

COUNCILLOR COMMITTEES 2024/2025



COUNCILLOR COMMITTEES 2025		
COMMITTEE		
Murray River Groups of Councils (MRGC)		
Overview	Meetings/Frequency	Attendee
<p>The Murray River of Councils (MRGC) comprises the Mayors and CEOs from Councils surrounding the Murray River including Mildura, Swan Hill, Gannawarra, Loddon, Campaspe and Moira. This group of CEO's and Mayors advocate advocates collectively to State and Federal decision makers, on issues of shared importance to the communities in the region. They advocate on any issue facing our communities such as Murray Darling Basin Plan, Housing, Financial Sustainability. The Chair rotates between member councils annually at the conclusion of the final meeting of the year and holds the chair for the following calendar year. Each Council takes a turn in taking the lead role and in 2025 that will be Loddon Shire.</p> <p>The MRGC Mayors and CEOs meet every quarter in one of the member councils' townships. Mayor and CEO meetings provide a forum for strategic discussion and consideration of key issues and advocacy positions. They provide a mechanism for building, strengthening and maintaining relationships with each other and with key stakeholders. Key stakeholders such as State and Federal politicians and public servants are invited to participate in meetings where their presence will facilitate discussion and further MRGC priorities.</p> <p>The Murray River Group of Councils was established in 2006 as an advocacy group around the issue of water reform. Its primary purpose is to advocate to State and Federal Governments and other decision makers, to benefit northern Victorian communities.</p>	Quarterly on a rotating basis at a different Council	Mayor
Loddon Campaspe Group of Councils		
Overview	Meetings/Frequency	Attendee
The Loddon Campaspe Group of Councils comprises all Councils including Bendigo, Mt Alexander, Gannawarra, Loddon, Buloke, Campaspe, Macedon, Hepburn, Central Goldfields. This committee is a committee that the Mayor will sit on.	Quarterly usually in Bendigo being a central location	Mayor
Rural Councils Victoria (RCV)		
Overview	Meetings/Frequency	Attendee
Rural Councils Victoria (RCV) is a representative body of the Victorian LGAs deemed to be Rural.		

<p>Of the 38 rural LGAs in Victoria, 33 are members of RCV and they see the benefit in coming together to advocate for rural communities, lift the profile of small rural councils and ensure that Ministers, Members of Parliament and Department staff understand the difference between rural and regional.</p> <p>RCV holds an annual Forum, generally in July/August/September, in a rural area. This is a sought-after event where Councillors and staff come together, learn, connect and share.</p> <p>RCV prepares submissions on behalf of its members to state and federal inquiries and the Chair has often appeared in front of Committees to support these submissions. Policy documents and election platforms are also produced by RCV to support the work of its members and elevate the voice of rural councils.</p> <p>RCV has received considerable grant funding in the past and has conducted research, developed tool kits and offered training to Councillors and staff. Currently membership subscriptions are the only source of funding for RCV. At \$5,500/year, it is the best value membership that a rural Council can purchase. Sponsorship of events was introduced in 2024 as a new and valued revenue stream.</p> <p>The RCV Committee</p> <p>RCV is a representative body and has both CEOs and Councillors on its Committee. RCV has six regions and a CEO and Councillor from each region is elected onto the Committee for a four-year term. This process will occur at the end of 2024. The Committee meets 6-8 times per year.</p> <p>Each member Council can nominate a Councillor for a position on the Committee. If more than one nominee is received for each region, then an election will be undertaken.</p>		
Community Halls Asset Committee		
Overview	Meetings/Frequency	Attendee
<p>The Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) provides for councils to establish Community Asset Committees for the purpose of managing community assets within the municipality.</p> <p>The Community Halls Asset Committee consists of representatives of the sub-committees that manage the Benjeroop, Dingwall, Koroop, Lake Charm, Murrabit and Myall community halls. These facilities are key assets to each community due to hosting community gatherings and social events.</p>		Cr
Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)		
Overview	Meetings/Frequency	Attendee
<p>The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) is a membership association and the legislated peak body for Victoria's local councils.</p> <p>The MAV's role is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent and advocate local government interests • Promote the role of local government 	Quarterly	Cr

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build the capacity of councils • Facilitate effective networks • Provide policy and strategic advice • Support councillors • Provide insurance and procurement services. 		
Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (MFMPC)		
Overview	Meetings/Frequency	Attendee
<p>This committee oversee fire management planning across the municipality, and includes representatives from various emergency management agencies, including Victoria Police, Country Fire Authority, Ambulance Victoria, Fire Rescue Victoria, VICSES, Forest Fire Management Victoria, Department of Health, Department Families, Fairness and Housing, Red Cross and Council.</p> <p>The Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee is responsible for the Municipal Fire Management Plan – a task-focused document that encompasses management of risks and vulnerabilities, reduction of the likelihood and consequence of fire hazards within our communities and works programs for the management of fires, including hazard removal and fuel management.</p>	Quarterly	Cr
Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC)		
Overview	Meetings/Frequency	Attendee
<p>These committees oversee emergency management planning across the municipality, and includes representatives from various emergency management agencies, including Victoria Police, Country Fire Authority, Ambulance Victoria, Fire Rescue Victoria, VICSES, Forest Fire Management Victoria, Department of Health, Department Families, Fairness and Housing, Red Cross and Council.</p> <p>The Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee oversees the Municipal Emergency Management Plan, which documents arrangements relating to planning for, preventing, responding to and recovering from emergency events.</p>	Quarterly	Cr
Transport Committee Role including Rail Freight Alliance and Road Transport		
Overview	Meetings/Frequency	Attendee
<p>This role involves representing Council on transport-related committees.</p> <p>This includes the Rail Freight Alliance. Consisting of rural, regional and metropolitan Councils across Victoria, the RFA was first formed in 1997 due to growing frustration with the lack of rail connectivity both within Victoria and with the neighboring State's, and the lack of investment in an antiquated 19th century rail freight system.</p> <p>The RFA currently advocates for improvements to rail freight connectivity within the State. Key topics include the standardization of key rail lines in the State, connection to the National Rail Freight Network, and seamless freight logistics that will facilitate efficient rail freight movement.</p>	Quarterly	Cr

Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance (CVGA)		
Overview	Meetings/Frequency	Attendee
The Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance (CVGA) is a network of 13 local governments working collaboratively on climate action across central and northwest Victoria. The CVGA leads and supports collaborative action by our members to decrease greenhouse gas emissions and increase the resilience of the region's communities through innovative projects, advocacy and knowledge sharing.	Quarterly	Cr
Audit and Risk Committee (x 2)		
Overview	Meetings/Frequency	Attendee
<p>The Audit and Risk Committee's role is to oversee and monitor the effectiveness of Council in carrying out its responsibilities for accountable financial management, good corporate governance, maintaining an effective system of internal control and risk management and fostering an ethical environment.</p> <p>Council's five-member Audit and Risk Committee consists of three independent members –and two Councillor representatives. Independent members are generally appointed for a three-year term. The Chair must be an independent member and is elected by the committee.</p> <p>The Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) audit service provider and the Chief Executive Officer and Director Corporate Services are invited to attend all Audit and Risk Committee meetings. Other management representatives attend as required to present reports.</p> <p>Recommendations and outcomes from each Audit and Risk Committee meeting are subsequently reported to and considered by Council.</p>	Every 3 months	Cr
Timber Towns Victoria		
Overview	Meetings/Frequency	Attendee
<p>Timber Towns Victoria represents the interests of municipal councils in relation to forestry on both public and private land. The Association's primary function is to provide a forum for local government to address the management of forests and forest industries and their impact on local communities.</p> <p>Gannawarra Shire is the only member council in the northern region.</p>	Quarterly	Cr

7.6 RESCIND COUNCIL POLICY NO. 078 - COUNCILLOR CODE OF CONDUCT

Author: Dylan Taylor, Governance Officer

Authoriser: Amanda Wilson, Director Corporate Services

Attachments: 1 Council Policy No. 078 - Councillor Code of Conduct

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Rescind Policy No. 078 – Councillor Code of Conduct;**
 - 2. Adopt the new Model Code of Conduct;**
 - 3. Makes available copies of the Model Code of Conduct and Guidance on the Model Code of Conduct for Councils website and to be added to the minutes of this meeting.**
-

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council Policy No. 078 – Councillor Code of Conduct is recommended for rescinding due to the release of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct. All Councillors are required to observe the Model Code of Conduct, which came into effect on 26 October 2024.

PURPOSE

This report addresses Council Policy No. 078 – Councillor Code of Conduct following the release of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct on 26 October 2024.

ATTACHMENTS

Council Policy No. 078 – Councillor Code of Conduct

DISCUSSION

Council officers undertake regular reviews of Council policies to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and that they are reflective of current practice. Council policies are reviewed as needed; however most policies must be reviewed within either 12 months or two years after a General Election. Reviewed policies are presented to Council for endorsement, or for rescinding if it has been determined the policy is no longer required.

Effective from 26 October 2024, all Councillors are required to observe the Model Code of Conduct which is prescribed in Schedule 1 to the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020.

Section 139 of the Local Government Act 2020 provides that the purpose of the Model Code of Conduct is to include the standards of conduct expected to be observed by Councillors in the course of performing their duties and functions as Councillors.

The Model Code of Conduct replaces the previous statutory requirement for each Council to develop its own Councillor Code of Conduct.

Before assuming office, Councillors took take an oath or affirmation of office, declaring that they will abide by the Model Code of Conduct and uphold the standards of conduct set out in the Model Code of Conduct.

The Model Code of Conduct sets out the standards of conduct expected to be observed by Councillors in the course of performing their duties and functions. The standards of conduct cover expected conduct across four key areas identified as being critical to ensuring that Councillors discharge their duties and functions, as a Councillor appropriately and in accordance with their statutory obligations:

1. Performing the role of a Councillor
2. Behaviours
3. Good governance
4. Integrity

It is recommended that Policy 078 Councillor Code of Conduct be rescinded due to the Model Code of Conduct coming into effect. Once rescinded the Policy will be removed from Council's website.

RELEVANT LAW

Not applicable.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council Policy No. 078 – Councillor Code of Conduct was last reviewed by Council in February 2021.

OPTIONS

Nil. The Model Councillor Code of Conduct came into effect on 26 October 2024 and replaces the Councillor Code of Conduct. There cannot be two codes in effect.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Council policies provide guidance to Council, staff and the community in decision making and service delivery.

Policies are reviewed as required however most policies must be reviewed within either 12 months or two years of a Council election. Regular reviews of Council policies ensure compliance with relevant legislation and that they are reflective of current practices.

COLLABORATION

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Not applicable.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Model Councillor Code of Conduct

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

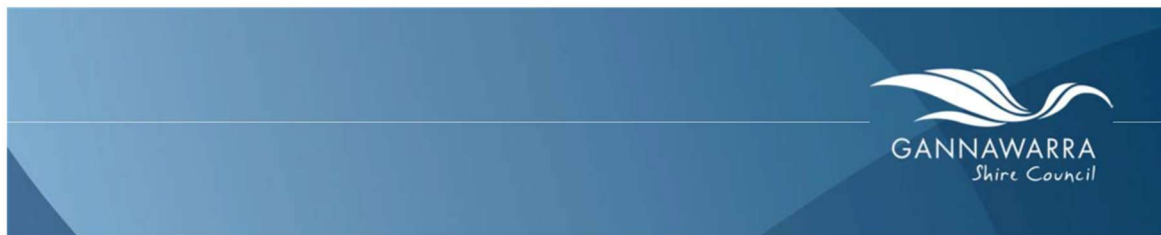
Gannawarra Shire Council Plan 2021 – 2025

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in regard to this matter.



COUNCILLOR CODE OF CONDUCT

COUNCIL POLICY NO. 078

1. INTRODUCTION

As Gannawarra Shire Councillors we are committed to working together in the best interests of the people within our municipality and to discharging our responsibilities to the best of our skill and judgment.

We recognise and respect that everyone has the same human rights entitlement to allow them to participate in, and contribute to, society and our community. We also recognise that all persons have equal rights in the provision of, and access to, Council services and facilities.

Our commitment to working together constructively will enable us to achieve the intended outcomes of the Council Plan in a manner that is consistent with our values.

The primary role of Council is to provide good governance in the Gannawarra Shire for the benefit and wellbeing of the community. A Council provides good governance if it performs its role in accordance with the overarching governance principals and supporting principles and the Councillors of the Council perform their roles in accordance with section 28 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act).

2. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

We undertake to comply with the following:

2.1 TREATMENT OF OTHERS

STANDARD OF CONDUCT

A Councillor must, in performing the role of a Councillor, treat other Councillors, members of Council staff, the municipal community and members of the public with dignity, fairness, objectivity, courtesy and respect, including by ensuring that the Councillor—

- (a) **takes positive action to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation in accordance with the Equal Opportunity Act 2010; and**
- (b) **supports the Council in fulfilling its obligation to achieve and promote gender equality; and**
- (c) **does not engage in abusive, obscene or threatening behaviour in their dealings with members of the public, Council staff and Councillors; and**
- (d) **in considering the diversity of interests and needs of the municipal community, treats all persons with respect and has due regard for their opinions, beliefs, rights and responsibilities.**

GENERAL CONDUCT

In performing the role of Councillor, we will not conduct ourselves in a manner that:

- a) is likely to bring the council or other council officials into disrepute;
- b) is contrary to statutory requirements or Council's administrative requirements or policies;
- c) is improper or unethical;
- d) is an abuse of power;
- e) causes, comprises or involves intimidation or verbal abuse;
- f) involves the misuse of our position to obtain a private benefit;
- g) constitutes harassment or bullying behaviour under this code, or is unlawfully discriminatory.

FAIRNESS AND EQUITY

- a) We will consider issues consistently, promptly and fairly, and deal with matters in accordance with established procedures, in a non-discriminatory manner.
- b) We will take all relevant facts known to us, or that we should be reasonably aware of, into consideration and have regard to the particular merits of each case. We will not take irrelevant matters or circumstances into consideration when making decisions.
- c) An act or omission in good faith, whether or not it involves error, will not constitute a breach of clauses b) and c) above.

HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

We will take positive action to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation in accordance with the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*.

Specifically, we will not harass or unlawfully discriminate against others, or support others who harass or unlawfully discriminate against others, on the grounds of age, disability, race (including colour, national or ethnic origin or immigrant status), sex, pregnancy, marital or relationship status, family responsibilities or breastfeeding, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status or political, religious or other affiliation.

For the purpose of this Code, 'harassment' is any form of behaviour towards a person that is not wanted by the person; offends, humiliates or intimidates the person; and creates a hostile environment.

BULLYING

We will not engage in bullying behaviour towards others.

For the purposes of this Code, 'bullying behaviour' by a Councillor means the Councillor repeatedly behaves unreasonably towards another Councillor or a member of Council staff and that behaviour creates a risk to the health and safety of that other Councillor or member of Council staff.

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY

We will comply with our duties under health and safety legislation and any relevant policies or procedures adopted by Council to ensure workplace health and safety. Specifically, we will:

- a) Take reasonable care for our own health and safety
- b) Take reasonable care that our acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons
- c) Comply, so far as we are reasonably able, with any reasonable instruction that is given to ensure compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 and any policies or procedures adopted by Council to ensure workplace health and safety
- d) Cooperate with any reasonable policy or procedure of Council relating to workplace health or safety
- e) Report accidents, incidents and near misses to the Mayor, and take part in any incident investigations if required
- f) So far as is reasonably practicable, consult, cooperate and coordinate with all others who have a duty under the Occupational Health and Safety Act in relation to the same matter.

GENDER EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVENESS

We acknowledge and commit to Council's obligation to achieve and promote gender equality.

We will support and encourage diversity in the community; provide adequate, equitable and appropriate services and facilities to the community taking into account their diverse needs and community cohesion; and encourage active participation in public and civic life.

CULTURAL AWARENESS

We acknowledge and respect the Traditional Owners of our land, in particular the Barapa Barapa, Wamba Wamba and Yorta Yorta people.

In considering the diversity of interests and needs of the Gannawarra community, we will treat all persons with respect and have due regard for their opinions, beliefs, rights and responsibilities.

FOSTERING GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

We undertake to respect the functions of the Chief Executive Officer and to comply with the policies, practices and protocols established by him or her that define appropriate arrangements for interaction between Council staff and Councillors.

2.2 PERFORMING THE ROLE OF COUNCILLOR

STANDARD OF CONDUCT

A Councillor must, in performing the role of a Councillor, do everything reasonably necessary to ensure that the Councillor performs the role of a Councillor effectively and responsibly, including by ensuring that the Councillor—

- (a) undertakes any training or professional development activities the Council decides it is necessary for all Councillors to undertake in order to effectively perform the role of a Councillor; and
- (b) diligently uses Council processes to become informed about matters which are subject to Council decisions; and
- (c) is fit to conscientiously perform the role of a Councillor when acting in that capacity or purporting to act in that capacity; and
- (d) represents the interests of the municipal community in performing the role of a Councillor by considering and being responsive to the diversity of interests and needs of the municipal community.

VALUES

As Councillors, we acknowledge and endorse Gannawarra Shire Council's values and how they relate to our roles as Councillors:

- We will work closely with our community using our collective skills and knowledge to build a positive future. Together with our partners we will deliver great things for our community.
- We will be resourceful and resilient, employing creative problem solving to our challenges. We will plan and be prepared for when opportunities present.
- We will embrace new ideas and technology to deliver quality services to our community at a lower cost. We will make time to consider the big issues and actively seek creative solutions.
- We will listen to our community and use our collective knowledge and sound judgement to respond and close the loop.

COMMITMENT TO FAIR AND TRANSPARENT DECISION MAKING

We will undertake due diligence by properly examining and considering all information provided to us, and when necessary seeking further information, relating to matters that we are required to make a decision on.

We will at all times adhere to the Gannawarra Shire Council Governance Rules including provisions regarding the conduct of meetings.

We will not participate in binding caucus votes¹ in relation to matters to be considered at a Council meeting. This does not prohibit us from discussing a matter in question at a Council meeting, or from voluntarily holding a shared view with other councillors on the merits of a matter.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITY

We recognise that as representatives of the local community, we have a primary responsibility to be responsive to community views and to adequately communicate the position and decisions of Council.

We commit to comply with Council's Media policy and respect the functions of the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer to be the spokesperson for Council.

¹ A binding caucus vote is a process whereby a group of councillors are compelled by a threat of disciplinary or other adverse action to comply with a predetermined position on a matter before Council, irrespective of the personal views of individual members of the group on the merits of the matter before Council.

We undertake that, where we choose to express a personal opinion through the media, we will make it clear that it is a personal view and does not represent the position of Council. We further undertake to ensure that any such comment is devoid of comments that could reasonably be construed as being derogatory, offensive or insulting to any person.

We also undertake that we will not quote or divulge to any third parties, including social media forums, any comments made by Councillors at Councillor briefings (assemblies of Councillors) or Councillor-only meetings or sessions. This provision does not apply to a complaint made by a Councillor to the Principal Conduct Officer alleging a contravention of the Councillor Code of Conduct relating to a Councillor's conduct at a Councillor briefing or Councillor-only meeting or session.

We commit to comply with Council's Community Engagement Policy to gain a better understanding of local issues and needs, particularly relating to decisions before Council.

SUPPORT AND RESOURCES FOR COUNCILLORS IN DELIVERY OF THEIR ROLE

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring Councillors have access to information necessary for the performance of their official functions.

Any information provided to a particular councillor in the performance of their official functions will also be made available to all other councillors, either routinely or by request.

Councillors who have a private interest only in Council information have the same rights of access as any member of the public.

Councillors who are precluded from participating in the consideration of a matter because they have a conflict of interest in the matter are not entitled to request access to Council information in relation to the matter unless the information is otherwise available to members of the public, or Council has determined to make the information available.

A decision to refuse a request by a Councillor to access information must take into account whether or not the information requested is necessary for the councillor to perform their official functions and whether they have disclosed a conflict of interest in the matter the information relates to that would preclude their participation in consideration of the matter. The reasons for a decision to refuse access will be provided to the Councillor requesting it.

CONFIDENTIAL AND RESTRICTED INFORMATION

Information obtained by Councillors in their capacity as a Council official must:

- a) not be used for private purposes
- b) not be used to seek or obtain, either directly or indirectly, any financial benefit or other improper advantage for the Councillor, or any other person or body
- c) only be disclosed in accordance section 125(3) of the Act.

USE AND SECURITY OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Councillors must maintain the integrity and security of confidential information in their possession, or for which they are responsible.

In addition to the general obligations of Councillors relating to the use of Council information, Councillors must:

- Only access confidential information that they have been authorised to access and only do so for the purposes of exercising their official functions.
- Protect confidential information.
- Only disclose confidential information if they have authority to do so.
- Only use confidential information for the purpose for which it is intended to be used.
- Not use confidential information gained through the official position of Councillor for the purpose of securing a private benefit for themselves or any other person.
- Not use confidential information with the intention to cause harm or detriment to the Council or any other person or body.
- Not disclose any confidential information discussed during a confidential session of a Council meeting or any other confidential forum.

USE OF RESOURCES

We commit to using Council resources effectively and economically. We will:

- maintain adequate security over Council property, facilities and resources provided to us to assist in performing our role and comply with any Council policies applying to their use;
- ensure any expense claims that we submit are in compliance with the relevant legislative provisions and Council policy;
- not use Council resources, including services of Council staff, for private purposes, unless legally or properly authorised to do so, and payments are made where appropriate; and
- not use public funds or resources in a manner that is improper or unauthorised.

COUNCIL RECORD KEEPING

All information created, sent and received in your official capacity is a Council record and must be managed in accordance with the requirements of the Public Records Act 1973 and Council's approved records management policies and practices.

All information stored in either soft or hard copy on Council supplied resources (including technology devices and email accounts) is deemed to be related to the business of Council and will be treated as Council records, regardless of whether the original intention was to create the information for personal purposes.

You must not destroy, alter, or dispose of Council information or records unless authorised to do so. If you need to alter or dispose of Council information or records, you must do so in consultation with the Council's Governance staff.

COUNCILLOR ACCESS TO COUNCIL BUILDINGS

Councillors are entitled to have access to the Council Chamber and Councillor lounge (subject to availability), and public areas of Council's buildings during normal business hours and for meetings. Councillors needing access to these facilities at other times must obtain authority from the Chief Executive Officer.

Councillors must not enter staff-only areas of Council buildings without the approval of the Chief Executive Officer (or their delegate) or as provided for in any protocols governing the interaction of Councillors and Council staff.

Councillors must ensure that when they are within a staff only area they refrain from conduct that could be perceived to improperly influence Council staff decisions.

COUNCILLOR MISCONDUCT

We will not make or threaten to make a complaint or cause a complaint to be made alleging a breach of this Code for an improper purpose.

A complaint is made for an improper purpose where it is trivial, frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith, or where it otherwise lacks merit and has been made substantially for one or more of the following purposes:

- To bully, intimidate or harass another Council official
- To damage another Council official's reputation
- To obtain a political advantage
- To influence a Council official in the exercise of their official functions or to prevent or disrupt the exercise of those functions
- To influence the council in the exercise of its functions or to prevent or disrupt the exercise of those functions
- To avoid disciplinary action under established procedures
- To take reprisal action against a person for making a complaint alleging a breach of this Code
- To take reprisal action against a person for exercising a function prescribed under established procedures
- To prevent or disrupt the effective administration of this Code under established procedures.

2.3 COMPLIANCE WITH GOOD GOVERNANCE MEASURES

STANDARD OF CONDUCT

A Councillor, in performing the role of a Councillor, to ensure the good governance of the Council, must diligently and properly comply with the following—

- (a) any policy, practice or protocol developed and implemented by the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with section 46 of the Act for managing interactions between members of Council staff and Councillors;
- (b) the Council expenses policy adopted and maintained by the Council under section 41 of the Act;
- (c) the Governance Rules developed, adopted and kept in force by the Council under section 60 of the Act;
- (d) any directions of the Minister issued under section 175 of the Act.

PERSONAL INTERESTS DECLARATIONS

We will disclose any information, whether of a pecuniary nature or not, of which we are aware and consider might appear to raise a conflict between our private interest and our public duty as a Councillor.

COUNCIL EXPENSES

We will abide by Council Policy No. 092 – Councillor Allowances and Support including processes for claiming reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses and use of Council vehicles, equipment and technology.

GOVERNANCE RULES

We will comply with the Gannawarra Shire Governance Rules.

GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

We will scrupulously avoid situations giving rise to the appearance that a person or body, through the provision of gifts, benefits or hospitality of any kind, is attempting to gain favourable treatment from an individual Councillor or from the Council.

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that our immediate family members (parents, spouse, children and siblings) do not receive gifts or benefits that give rise to the appearance of being an attempt to gain favourable treatment.

A gift can be accepted where the gift would generally be regarded as having a token value and could not be perceived to influence our actions as a Councillor.

It is appropriate to accept a gift where refusal may cause offence or embarrassment, in which case we will accept the gift on behalf of Council.

Where a gift is received on behalf of the Council with a value greater than \$30, the gift becomes the property of the Council. For transparency and accountability purposes, these gifts will be recorded in the Gifts Register with a notation that it is the property of the Council.

We recognise that one or more gifts with a total value of, or more than, \$500 (or another amount prescribed under section 128(4) of the Act), received by a person in the office of Councillor in the 5 years preceding a decision on a matter, that were or will be required to be disclosed as an election campaign donation, may give rise to a material conflict of interest in respect of that matter.

We will record all campaign donations in our "Campaign Donation Return".

LAND USE PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT AND OTHER REGULATORY FUNCTIONS

We will ensure that land use planning, development assessment and other regulatory decisions are properly made, and that all parties are dealt with fairly. We will avoid any occasion for suspicion of improper conduct in the exercise of land use planning, development assessment and other regulatory functions.

In exercising land use planning, development assessment and other regulatory functions, we will ensure that no action, statement or communication between ourselves and others conveys any suggestion of willingness to improperly provide concessions or preferential or unduly unfavourable treatment.

2.4 COUNCILLORS MUST NOT DISCREDIT OR MISLEAD COUNCIL OR PUBLIC

STANDARD OF CONDUCT

- (1) In performing the role of a Councillor, a Councillor must ensure that their behaviour does not bring discredit upon the Council.
- (2) In performing the role of a Councillor, a Councillor must not deliberately mislead the Council or the public about any matter related to the performance of their public duties.

MISUSE OF POSITION

We will not intentionally misuse our position to gain or attempt to gain, directly or indirectly, an advantage for ourselves or for any other person or to cause, or attempt to cause, detriment to Council or another person.

Circumstances involving the misuse of position:

- a) making improper use of information acquired as a result of the position we hold; or
- b) disclosing information that is confidential information; or
- c) directing, or improperly influencing, or seeking to direct or improperly influence, a member of Council staff; or
- d) exercising or performing, or purporting to exercise or perform, a power, duty or function that we are not authorised to exercise or perform; or
- e) using public funds or resources in a manner that is improper or unauthorised; or
- f) participating in a decision on a matter in which we have a conflict of interest.

IMPROPER DIRECTION AND IMPROPER INFLUENCE

We will not intentionally direct, or seek to direct, a member of Council staff:

- a) in the exercise of a delegated power, or the performance of a delegated duty or function of the Council; or
- b) in the exercise of a power or the performance of a duty or function exercised or performed by the member as an authorised officer under this Act or any other Act; or
- c) in the exercise of a power or the performance of a duty or function the member exercises or performs in an office or position the member holds under this Act or any other Act; or
- d) in relation to advice provided to the Council, including advice in a report to the Council.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST PROCEDURES

Council is committed to making all decisions impartially and in the best interests of the whole community. We therefore recognise the importance of fully observing the requirements of the Act and Council's Governance rules in regard to the disclosure of conflicts of interest.

For the purpose of this Code, "general conflict of interest" and "material conflict of interest", have the meanings specified in sections 127 and 128 of the Act.

We will comply with all the provisions of the Act and Governance Rules in regard to Conflicts of Interest.

In addition to the requirements of the Act and Governance Rules:

- We will give early consideration to each matter to be considered by Council or Councillor Briefing, to ascertain if we have a conflict of interest; and
- We recognise that the legal onus to determine whether a conflict of interest exists rests entirely with each of us as individual Councillors and that Council officers can only offer limited advice in relation to potential conflicts. If we cannot confidently say that we do not have a conflict of interest, we will declare a conflict of interest and comply with the relevant requirements as if we had a conflict of interest; and
- If we consider that we may be unable to vote on a matter because of a conflict of interest, we will notify, as soon as possible, the Mayor and the Chief Executive Officer.

FRAUD AND CORRUPTION

We acknowledge our obligation to report observed breaches of the prescribed standards of conduct set out in Schedule 1 to the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020 and described in this Code of Conduct.

We acknowledge that complaints concerning alleged corrupt conduct, conduct involving a substantial mismanagement of public resources, or conduct involving substantial risk to public health and safety or the environment may be referred to external agencies for investigation and such complaints may be actioned through Council Policy 107 – Public Interest Disclosure and/or referred to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Victoria.

ELECTIONS

We will take leave of absence from Council if we nominate as a State or Federal election candidate and undertake to not use Council resources for electioneering.

COMPLAINT HANDLING

We will refer complaints received by us to Customer Service or the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with Council Policy No. 117 – Complaint Handling.

We acknowledge the guiding principles that form the basis of Council's complaint handling – commitment, accessibility, transparency, objectivity and fairness, confidentiality, accountability and continuous improvement.

PERSONAL DEALINGS WITH COUNCIL AND RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNCIL OFFICIALS

When we deal with Council in a private capacity (eg as a ratepayer, recipient of a service or applicant for a permit), we do not expect, nor will we request preferential treatment in relation to any such private matter. We will avoid any action that could lead Council staff or members of the public to believe that we are seeking preferential treatment.

We will undertake any personal dealings we have with Council in a manner that is consistent with the way other members of the community deal with Council. We will ensure that we disclose and appropriately manage and conflict of interest we may have in any matter in accordance with the requirements of this Code.

2.5 STANDARDS DO NOT LIMIT ROBUST POLITICAL DEBATE

Nothing in these standards is intended to limit, restrict or detract from robust public debate in a democracy.

3. RELEVANT SECTIONS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2020

3	Definitions	125	Confidential information
8	Role of a Council	127	General conflict of interest
10	Powers of Council	128	Material conflict of interest
18	Role of the Mayor	132	Personal Interests Returns
28	Role of a Councillor	137	Gifts
30	Oath or affirmation of office	139	Councillor Code of Conduct
127	General conflict of interest	141	Internal arbitration process
123	Misuse of position	149	Functions and powers of the Principal Councillor Conduct Registrar
124	Directing a member of Council staff	151	Functions of a Councillor Conduct Officer

4. RELATED COUNCIL POLICIES

Policy No. 074 – Information Privacy and Health Records
Policy No. 083 – Email, Intranet and Internet
Policy No. 100 – Fraud and Corruption
Policy No. 101 – Media
Policy No. 107 – Public Interest Disclosure
Policy No. 117 – Complaint Handling
Policy No. 118 – Election Period – incorporated into Council's Governance Rules
Policy No. 129 - Diversity

5. POLICY REVIEW

In accordance with the Act, Council must review this policy within four months after a general election of the Council. At the time of review, this policy was compliant with the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act* 2006.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

Members of the public may inspect all Council policies at Gannawarra Shire Council's Kerang and Cohuna office or online at www.gannawarra.vic.gov.au.

Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer on (03) 5450 9333.

AltusECM Folder: 3.000518

Originally adopted: 11/06/2003

Reviewed: 28/06/2006

Reviewed: 24/06/2009

Reviewed: 16/10/2013

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Minute Book Reference: 2710

Minute Book Reference: 5034

Minute Book Reference: 7519

Minute Book Reference: 10349

Minute Book Reference: 12411

Minute Book Reference: 12489

Minute Book Reference: 12699

Internal Resolution Procedure

1. PURPOSE

This section describes the processes for Councillors who wish to report and resolve a dispute with another Councillor under the Code. Councillors recognise that the democratic process of local government involves holding, and expressing, different and sometimes opposing viewpoints. It is a normal, and vital, function of this process that these different views are shared in a considered and informed way. Although all Councillors strive to engage in positive, constructive and respectful interactions, conflict and/or disputes may arise.

All Councillors recognise that they hold an individual and collective responsibility to resolve disputes in a proactive, positive and courteous manner before they are escalated, to avoid such disputes threatening the effective operation of Council.

The primary purpose of an internal resolution procedure is to provide Councillors with support and mechanisms to resolve conflicts and disputes in a manner that enables them to move forward and establish and maintain effective working relationships. The procedure also provides avenues and guidance for escalating more serious issues and allegations where required.

This procedure:

- is not intended to resolve differences in policy or decision making, which are appropriately resolved through discussion and voting in council and committee meetings
- does not include a complaint made against a Councillor or Councillors by a member or members of Council staff, or by any other person, or a "disclosure" under the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012 .

2. SCOPE

This procedure operates alongside, and does not displace, any external avenues provided for by legislation for the reporting and resolution of issues and disputes. It should be read in conjunction with the Act which sets out avenues for reporting matters of Councillor misconduct and establishes external authorities to hear, investigate, prosecute and make findings of Councillor misconduct, serious misconduct and gross misconduct.

For the purposes of this section:

- 'Councillor Conduct Officer' refers to an appointee of the Chief Executive Officer who must—
 - (a) assist the Council in the implementation of, and conduct of, the internal arbitration process of a Council; and
 - (b) assist the Principal Councillor Conduct Registrar to perform the functions specified in section 149(1); and
 - (c) assist the Principal Councillor Conduct Registrar in relation to any request for information under section 149(3).
- This procedure does not deal with allegations of criminal misconduct as they are envisaged to be raised with Victoria Police or other relevant mechanisms.
- Nothing in this procedure prevents an individual Councillor with a specific issue or dispute from pursuing other avenues available to them under the law.

For the avoidance of doubt, a Councillor or member of the public may raise a formal complaint through any available channel external to Council as provided by law.

In particular, some allegations of Councillor misconduct under this Code may also constitute serious misconduct under the Act. In these instances, it is open to Council, a Councillor, or a group of Councillors, to make an application for a Councillor Conduct Panel. For allegations of gross misconduct, Council, a Councillor(s) or members of the public can raise complaints to the Local Government Inspectorate.

3. INFORMAL RESOLUTION BETWEEN PARTIES TO A DISPUTE

Before commencing a formal dispute resolution process, the Councillors who are parties to a dispute are encouraged to use their best endeavours to resolve their issue or dispute in a courteous and respectful manner between themselves, stop any behaviour that is causing issues, and to avoid the issue escalating and threatening the effective operation of Council.

Where the issue or dispute remains unresolved or where the circumstances make informal resolution inappropriate, the parties may resort to Council's formal dispute resolution processes set out below.

4. FORMAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND REPORTING

4.1 INTERPERSONAL DISPUTE

Interpersonal disputes between Councillors involve conflict where there may be a breakdown in communication, a misunderstanding, a disagreement between Councillors, or strained working relationships.

To report an allegation that a Councillor has breached the Code in relation to an interpersonal dispute, a Councillor(s) must prepare a written application (the application) to the Mayor, or where not appropriate (including where the Mayor is involved in the allegation) the Deputy Mayor or the Councillor Conduct Officer (where there is a request for mediation), requesting that the matter be dealt with under the formal dispute resolution procedure. Such written application should include the name of the other Councillor and the details of the issue or dispute.

The Mayor (or Deputy Mayor or Councillor Conduct Officer, where relevant), will notify the other Councillor(s) of the application, and provide them with a written copy of the request.

Approach to resolution

Where there is an interpersonal dispute between Councillors, they have the option of requesting:

- Resolution discussion - with the Mayor or Deputy Mayor in attendance and facilitating the meeting (see section 5.1 for detailed information)
- Mediation - with an external mediator, via an application to the Councillor Conduct Officer (see section 5.2 for detailed information)
- Arbitration - with an independent arbiter, via an application to the Principal Councillor Conduct Registrar (see section 5.3 for detailed information).

4.2 ALLEGATION OF CONDUCT IN BREACH OF CODE

An allegation that a Councillor has contravened the Code may include a failure to disclose a conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality, improper direction of staff, improper use of Council resources, or a breach of Council policy. Such conduct may constitute serious misconduct or misconduct under the Act.

To report an allegation that a Councillor engaged in conduct in breach of the Code, a Councillor(s) must submit an application to the Principal Councillor Conduct Registrar. The application must:

- specify the name of the Councillor who is the subject of the allegation or complaint
- specify the provision(s) of the Code and/or relevant Council policy or protocol that the allegation relates to
- include evidence in support of the allegation
- name the Councillor appointed to be their representative where the application is made by a group of Councillors
- be signed and dated by the Applicant or the Applicant's representative.

5. DISPUTE RESOLUTION OPTIONS

5.1 RESOLUTION DISCUSSION

Where Councillors who are in dispute have not been able to resolve their dispute informally between themselves, a party may request in writing that the Mayor or Deputy Mayor (the 'Convenor') convene a confidential meeting of the parties to discuss the dispute.

The Councillor requesting the meeting is to provide the Convenor with the name of the other Councillor and the details of the dispute in writing. They should also notify the other Councillor of the request and provide a copy of the written request to them.

The Convenor is to ascertain whether or not the other party is prepared to attend the meeting.

If the other Councillor is not prepared to attend the meeting, the Convenor is to advise the party seeking the meeting. No further action is required of the Convenor.

If the other Councillor consents to a meeting, the Convenor is to hold a confidential meeting of the parties.

Unless one or both parties are unavailable, this should be arranged within ten working days of receipt of the meeting request.

The Convenor may provide the parties with guidelines in advance of the meeting or at the meeting, to help facilitate the meeting.

If the parties cannot resolve the dispute at the meeting, a further meeting may be convened.

The role of the Convenor at the meeting is to assist the parties to resolve the dispute. In the process of doing this they may provide guidance about what is expected of a Councillor including in relation to the role of a Councillor under section 28 of the Act and the Code.

The Convenor is to document any agreement reached at the meeting and provide copies of the agreement to both parties.

Where the dispute remains unresolved, a party may request mediation or arbitration.

5.2 MEDIATION

A Councillor or a group of Councillors may request that their dispute be referred to mediation. The mediation would be conducted by an external accredited mediator.

The party seeking the mediation is to notify the other party of the request and details of the dispute in writing at the same time that it is submitted to the Councillor Conduct Officer.

The Councillor Conduct Officer is to ascertain (in writing) whether or not the other Councillor is prepared to participate in the mediation. If the Councillor declines to participate in the mediation, they are to provide their reasons for not doing so in writing to the Councillor Conduct Officer. These reasons may be taken into account if the matter is subsequently the subject of an application for a Councillor Conduct Panel.

If the other party agrees to participate in mediation, the Councillor Conduct Officer is to advise the party seeking the mediation, the Mayor and CEO.

The Councillor Conduct Officer will engage the services of an external mediator to conduct the mediation at the earliest opportunity.

All parties will cooperate with the dispute resolution process and provide reasonable assistance to the external mediator and the Councillor Conduct Officer.

If the parties cannot resolve the dispute at the mediation meeting, a further meeting may be convened with the consent of both parties.

The mediator is to document any agreement reached. Copies of the agreement are to be provided to both parties.

Where the dispute remains unresolved, a Councillor may request the appointment of an arbiter.

5.3 INTERNAL ARBITRATION PROCESS

Internal arbitration involves a party (the Applicant) to a dispute requesting the Principal Councillor Conduct Registrar to appoint an impartial third party (the Arbiter) to make findings in relation to allegations concerning another Councillor(s) (the Respondent) and whether they have engaged in misconduct under the Act.

An application for an internal arbitration process to make a finding of misconduct against a Councillor can be made by:

- Council following a resolution of Council; or
- a Councillor or a group of Councillors.

The application must:

- specify the name of the Councillor alleged to have breached the conduct standards
- specify the clause of the conduct standards in the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020 that the Councillor is alleged to have breached
- specify the misconduct that the Councillor is alleged to have engaged in that resulted in the breach of the conduct standards
- include evidence in support of the allegation
- name the Councillor appointed to be their representative where the application is made by a group of Councillors

- be signed and dated by the Applicant or the Applicant's representative
- be made within three months of the alleged misconduct occurring
- be given to the Principal Councillor Conduct Registrar in the manner specified by the Principal Councillor Conduct Registrar in any guidelines published under section 149(1)(c) of the Act.

After receiving an application the Principal Councillor Conduct Registrar will provide the application to the Councillor who is the subject of the application.

An Applicant may withdraw an application for arbitration at any time. Once an application has been withdrawn, the same or a similar application relating to the same issues or dispute in relation to the other Councillor cannot be resubmitted by the Applicant.

On receiving an application, the Principal Councillor Conduct Registrar will:

- advise the CEO (and the Mayor as appropriate) of the application without undue delay
- identify an Arbiter to hear the application
- obtain from the Arbiter written advice that they have no conflict of interest in relation to the Councillors involved
- notify the parties of the name of the proposed Arbiter and provide them with the opportunity (two working days) to object to the person proposed to be the Arbiter
- consider the grounds of any objection and appoint the proposed Arbiter or identify another Arbiter
- provide a copy of the Application to the Arbiter as soon as practicable after the opportunity for the parties to object to an Arbiter has expired
- after consultation with the Arbiter, advise the Applicant and the Respondent of the time and place for the hearing
- attend the hearing(s) and assist the Arbiter in the administration of the process.

The Principal Councillor Conduct Registrar, after examining an application, will appoint an arbiter to Council to hear the matter if satisfied that:

- the application is not frivolous, vexatious, misconceived or lacking in substance
- there is sufficient evidence to support an allegation of a breach of the Councillor Code of Conduct as specified in the application.

In identifying an Arbiter to hear the application, the Principal Councillor Conduct Registrar will select an Arbiter who is suitably independent and able to carry out the role fairly. The arbiter must be selected from a panel of eligible persons established by the Secretary to conduct an internal arbitration process.

The role of the Arbiter includes:

- consider an application alleging a contravention of the Code or breach of Council's policies or procedures
- make findings in relation to the application
- provide a written statement of reasons supporting the findings to the parties at the same time as providing the findings to Council
- recommend an appropriate sanction or sanctions where the Arbiter makes a finding of misconduct against a Councillor.

In considering an application alleging a contravention, an Arbiter will:

- in consultation with the Councillor Conduct Officer, fix a time and place to hear the application
- authorise the Councillor Conduct Officer to formally notify the Applicant and the Respondent of the time and place of the hearing
- hold as many meetings as they consider necessary to properly consider the application. The Arbiter may also hold a directions hearing
- ensure that the parties to and affected by an application are given an opportunity to be heard by the arbiter
- consider an application by a party to have legal representation at the hearing
- ensure that the rules of natural justice are observed and applied in the hearing of the application
- ensure that the hearings are closed to the public and held in confidence
- ensure that a Councillor who is a party to an internal arbitration process does not have a right to representation unless the arbiter considers that representation is necessary to ensure that the process is conducted fairly
- conduct the hearings with as little formality and technicality as the proper consideration of the matter permits.

Where an application to have legal representation is granted by an Arbiter, the costs of the Councillor's legal representation are to be borne by the Councillor in their entirety.

An Arbiter:

- may find that a Councillor who is a Respondent to an application has not engaged in misconduct
- may find that a Councillor has engaged in misconduct
- may hear each party to the matter in person or solely by written or electronic means of communication
- is not bound by the rules of evidence and may be informed in any manner the arbiter sees fit
- may at any time discontinue the hearing if the arbiter considers that the application is vexatious, misconceived, frivolous or lacking in substance or the applicant has not responded, or has responded inadequately, to a request for further information
- will suspend the process during the election period for a general election
- must refer the matter in writing to the Principal Councillor Conduct Registrar if the arbiter believes that the conduct that is the subject of the application for an internal arbitration process appears to involve serious misconduct and would more appropriately be dealt with as an application to the Councillor Conduct Panel under section 154 of the Act.

The Arbiter is to provide a copy of his or her findings and the statement of reasons to:

- Council
- The applicant or applicants
- The Councillor who is the subject of the allegation
- The Principal Councillor Conduct Registrar.

A copy of the arbiter's decision and statement of reasons must be tabled at the next Council meeting after Council has received the copy of the arbiter's decision and statement of reasons and recorded in the minutes of the meeting. If the arbiter's decision and statement of reasons contains any confidential information, the confidential information must be redacted before submission to the Council meeting.

If an arbiter has made a finding of misconduct the arbiter may do any one or more of the following:

- direct the Councillor to make an apology in a form or manner specified by the arbiter
- suspend the Councillor from the office of Councillor for a period specified by the arbiter not exceeding one month
- direct that the Councillor be removed from any position where the Councillor represents the Council for the period determined by the arbiter
- direct that the Councillor is removed from being the chair of a delegated committee for a period determined by the arbiter
- direct a Councillor to attend or undergo training or counselling specified by the arbiter.

A Councillor will cooperate with the arbitral process and provide reasonable assistance to the Arbiter.

An application cannot be made for an internal resolution by arbitration during the election period for a general election.

Any internal resolution procedure that is in progress is to be suspended during the election period for a general election.

If the Respondent to an application for an arbitration is not returned to office as a Councillor in the election, the application lapses. If the Respondent is returned to office in the election, the application may resume if:

- the application was made by Council and Council so resolves; or
- the application was made by a group of Councillors and any one (or more) of those Councillors who has been returned to office wishes to proceed with the application; or
- the Applicant (individual Councillor) is returned to office and wishes to proceed with the application.

5.4 FAILURE TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERNAL ARBITRATION PROCESS

A Councillor who does not participate in the internal arbitration procedure may be guilty of serious misconduct. The Act provides that serious misconduct by a Councillor means any of the following:

- failure by a Councillor to comply with the Council's internal arbitration process
- failure by a Councillor to comply with a direction given to the Councillor by an arbiter under section 147
- the failure of a Councillor to attend a Councillor Conduct Panel hearing in respect of that Councillor
- failure of a Councillor to comply with a direction of a Councillor Conduct Panel
- continued or repeated misconduct by a Councillor after a finding of misconduct has already been made in respect of the Councillor by an arbiter or by a Councillor Conduct Panel under section 167(1)(b) of the Act
- bullying by a Councillor of another Councillor or a member of Council staff
- conduct by a Councillor that is conduct of the type that is sexual harassment of a Councillor or member of Council staff
- the disclosure by a Councillor of information the Councillor knows or should reasonably know, is confidential information
- conduct by a Councillor that contravenes the requirement that a Councillor must not direct, or seek to direct, a member of Council staff
- the failure by a Councillor to disclose a conflict of interest and to exclude themselves from the decision making process when required to do so in accordance with the Act.

Allegations of serious misconduct are heard on application to the Principal Councillor Conduct Registrar.

7.7 RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION - 94

Author: Wade Williams, Director Infrastructure and Development

Authoriser: Geoff Rollinson, Chief Executive Officer

Attachments: 1 CARB History Report
2 Cohuna Aerodrome History Report

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Note the attached report from Cohuna Aerodrome Redevelopment Board in response to Notice of Motion 94 from 16 September 2024 Council Meeting.
 2. Note the attached report from Council in response to Notice of Motion 94 from 16 September 2024 Council Meeting
 3. Note that any further request for funding as per dot point 1 from Notice of Motion 94 will be deferred until further information is provided by the Cohuna Aerodrome Redevelopment Board on the intended use of the requested funds and on the current audited financial position of the Cohuna Aerodrome Redevelopment Board
 4. Note that dot point 3 from Notice of Motion 94 will be reported by Cohuna Aerodrome Redevelopment Board at a later Council Meeting advising of the \$2.5 million funding allocation
-

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with the Notice of Motion 94 from the 16 September 2024 Council meeting the Cohuna Aerodrome Redevelopment Board have provided the attached report as their presentation.

PURPOSE

To respond to the Notice of Motion 94, which Council resolved at the September 2024 meeting.

ATTACHMENTS

CARB History Report

Cohuna Aerodrome History Report

DISCUSSION

The attached reports are in response to the Notice of Motion 94 that was resolved by Council at the September 2024 meeting was:

Moved: Cr Charlie Gillingham

Seconded: Cr Travis Collier

1. That Gannawarra Shire Council request a report at the November Council meeting to make the sum of \$350,0000 available to the Cohuna Aerodrome Redevelopment Board to build a

terminal at the Cohuna Airfield that would service the needs of the Air Ambulance Victoria when transferring patients plus the needs of arriving and departing pilots and passengers.

- 2. To request that Council officers provide Councillors with a presentation and full Council report, at the November Council meeting on the history of the Cohuna Airport;*
- 3. At the November Council meeting, the Cohuna Aerodrome Redevelopment Board provide a report to Councillors of the current \$2.5 million project funding that was provided by the government to upgrade the Cohuna airport.*

CARRIED

RELEVANT LAW

The aerodrome operates under the Aircraft Landing Area (ALA) classification regulated by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA).

Planning permits and land use considerations are governed by the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

On 24 June 2020, Council resolved to surrender the Cohuna Aerodrome license to Coliban Water, facilitating the transition to the Lions Club of Cohuna.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be presented in an open Council meeting to maintain transparency and accountability in decision-making.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Council officer preparing this report declares no conflict of interest in relation to this matter.

C.A.R.B**Cohuna Aerodrome Development Board****Chuggs Road, Cohuna, 3568**

Acting on behalf of Lions Australia, Cohuna

Cohuna Airport Redevelopment History

In 2013 several pilots teamed up to develop a concept to upgrade the Cohuna Aerodrome based on concerns for the future of the Air Ambulance landing there, in the near future, and to also develop tourism through aviation, promoting the upgraded airport as Gateway to the Outback. Golf tours were also part of the promotional plans.

Meetings were conducted over the next year to engage stakeholders, Pilots, Cohuna Hospital, Councillors and Cohuna Progress.

There were rumblings/rumours that the staff and some Councillors did not want to support any upgrades to Cohuna.

Gannawarra Shire Council passed a motion to support the Cohuna Airport with funding into the future.

A new Council was elected in 2016, and a major international airline was in talks with the aviation group to run an element of their flying school out of the upgraded Cohuna Aerodrome facility, based on the designs that were put forward. Gannawarra Shire CEO, Eric Braslis, was encouraging of the prospect if the group could secure such a deal.



Dr. Peter Barker spoke to the Council at a briefing regarding his concerns for the Air Ambulance landing in Cohuna without an extension. He spoke of reviving a young patient on the Kerang tarmac as the Air Ambulance was unable to land in Cohuna due to fog. The land ambulance ran out of oxygen after a busy night and the trip over used all the oxygen they could store on board. Many other concerns were raised involving the upgrade of the Air Ambulance fleet to a larger King-Air aircraft and the inability of this to land safely on Cohuna's 964 metre runway onto the future.

Unfortunately, this period for the Cohuna Aerodrome Development Board (CARB) became very tumultuous. The community was outraged by the lack of support from Council. There were many media reports and a Commission of Enquiry was requested to investigate the

actions of the CEO and Council at Gannawarra Shire in State Parliament by our local MP using parliamentary privilege. The Cohuna Airport was one of the stated concerns.

The CEO put a motion to Council to remove the Cohuna Airport as an asset of the Gannawarra Shire. It was passed.

7.5 COHUNA AERODROME - LICENCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council operates two aerodromes within close proximity to each other within the towns of Kerang and Cohuna. These two aerodromes provide access 24 hours a day, seven days a week to recreational users and emergency services as required.

Both airfields currently provide limited service and neither airfield has any regular public transport use. Whilst both airfields are operated by Council, Kerang Airfield is a registered aerodrome with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and Cohuna is classified as an Aeroplane Landing Area or ALA (unregulated strip).

The Cohuna ALA is situated on land owned by Coliban Water, licenced to Council for the purpose of operating an airfield. The Kerang airfield is located on land owned by Council.

At the November 2019 Briefing Session Councillors sought further information as to the operating costs associated with both the Cohuna ALA and Kerang Aerodromes. Councillors also requested officers undertake further research into the rationale in operating two aerodromes and what options might be available for further consideration in the interest of all Gannawarra ratepayers.

The term of the Cohuna Airfield Licence is from 1 January 2019 until 31 December for a term of 5 years. The Licensee (Council) may cease occupying the land by surrendering the licence by way of giving one months' notice in writing to Coliban Water.

Surrendering the Cohuna Airfield Licence would avoid the direct costs of operating and maintaining the aerodrome now and into the future which cumulatively, would result in significant savings for Gannawarra ratepayers. The cost to Council to operate and maintain the Cohuna ALA for the 2018-2019 financial year was \$37,105, with the cost accumulating to approximately \$400,000 over a 10 year period of the Council's Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP).

MOTION

Moved: Cr Brian Gibson

Seconded: Cr Jodie Basile

That Council:

- 1. Endorse the CEO to surrender the Cohuna Airfield Licence back to the landowner being Coliban Water.**
- 2. Work with community groups to ensure the viability of the Cohuna Airport into the future.**

FORMAL MOTION

Moved: Cr Charlie Gillingham

That the Motion now before the meeting be adjourned until Council's August meeting so that Council staff can conduct a detailed and comprehensive report following a thorough consultation process with all key stakeholders around the future operations of the Cohuna Airport.

LOST

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Brian Gibson

Seconded: Cr Jodie Basile

That Council:

- 1. Endorse the CEO to surrender the Cohuna Airfield Licence back to the landowner being Coliban Water.**
- 2. Work with community groups to ensure the viability of the Cohuna Airport into the future.**

CARRIED

Cr Brian Gibson called for a Division.

In Favour: Crs Lorraine Learmonth, Steven Tasker, Jodie Basile and Brian Gibson

Against: Crs Charlie Gillingham and Jenny Fawcett

Cr Andrew Gibbs returned to the Chambers at 7:21pm.

The Cohuna Lions Club saw this as a terrible loss to the town and a safety risk to our community and took on the management of the facility even though nobody had the experience to do so. They took this on with the hope that the Shire would reconsider this decision with the new term of incoming Councillors in 2020.

Cohuna Lions together with CARB took it upon themselves to secure funding from the Federal Government. A grant of \$2.57 million was awarded to the Cohuna Lions Club and the project was going forward.

Unfortunately, it was discovered that the CEO at the time Tom O'Reilly, and a former Councillor had both written to the Federal Government to undermine the project and to have the funding revoked. This is quite bizarre behaviour for a community led project to have so much underhanded involvement from an organisation that exists only to serve the community!

This CEO is no longer at the Gannawarra Shire and support for us to reach our end goal has slowly improved through advice given to us at CARB around planning. This has been greatly appreciated.

With Indigenous archaeological reports and vegetation reports as requirements to forge forward, along with lengthy Covid delays and a surge in costs due to inflation/covid the project is costing more and taking longer to achieve.

Unfortunately, we have had to narrow the scope of the project. The priority for us is the community's safety with an extension of the runway to 1194 and Papi lights to accommodate the Air Ambulance well into the future. We would also like to achieve a small terminal which would include a toilet (we still only have a Portaloo), table and chairs, small couch and tea and coffee facilities for not only the Air Ambulance pilot to rest while the patient is being retrieved, but as a space for family and doctor to use while the patient is secured on the aircraft. This space will also be available for all pilots to get the rest and revival they need between flights, whether business trips or recreational.

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THE HISTORY OF THE COHUNA AERODROME**Author:** Wade Williams, Director Infrastructure and Development**Authoriser:** Geoff Rollinson, Chief Executive Officer**Attachments:** Nil**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receive and note the report on the History of the Cohuna Airport as requested by Councillors via Notice of Motion at the 16 September 2024 Council Meeting.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following a notice of motion passed at the 16 September 2024 Council meeting, this report provides a comprehensive history of the Cohuna Aerodrome located at Chugg's Road Cohuna. Historically managed by Gannawarra Shire Council (Council) under a licence agreement with Coliban Water, the aerodrome has primarily supported light recreational aviation and emergency medical transfers for non-critical patients. Designated as an Aircraft Landing Area (ALA), it operates under fewer regulatory requirements than certified aerodromes. In 2020, Council endorsed Coliban Water's transfer of the licence to the Lions Club of Cohuna. A \$2.57 million grant from the Commonwealth Government has been awarded to the Cohuna Lions for upgrades to the existing strip and associated facilities.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a detailed history of the Cohuna Aerodrome, as requested in a notice of motion at the 16 September 2024 Council meeting. It includes the aerodrome's ALA classification, and the roles played by Coliban Water and Council during the licence transition to community management.

ATTACHMENTS

24 June 2020 Council Report

DISCUSSION**Establishment and early operations**

The concept for the Cohuna Aerodrome originated with the Cohuna Shire Council and was first presented at the December 1976 Council meeting. The initial discussions highlighted its potential as a training ground and a landing strip for various uses, including medical transfers. The project gained momentum, and by the late 1970s, the aerodrome was developed and constructed, managed by the Cohuna Shire Council until 1995.

During the 1995 amalgamation of the Kerang Borough Shire and Cohuna Shire, both councils' airfields—Cohuna Aerodrome and the Kerang airfield—came under the jurisdiction of the newly formed Gannawarra Shire. Management responsibilities for the Cohuna Aerodrome transferred to the Gannawarra Shire Council, where it continued to serve local aviation needs, providing space for recreational flying and medical transfers until 2019.

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ALA Classification

The Cohuna Aerodrome is classified as an Aircraft Landing Area (ALA), primarily suited for light aircraft operations. Unlike certified aerodromes, ALAs operate under fewer regulatory requirements, making them more appropriate for smaller, local aviation activities. Key conditions for ALAs include maintaining clear and safe approach and departure paths, with pilots responsible for self-regulation, as ALAs do not require air traffic control services.

The existing runway at Cohuna Aerodrome is 964 meters long, which meets basic requirements for some light aircraft but presents limitations for certain aircraft used by the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) in Victoria. For instance, the King Air B-200 model requires a take-off distance of 570 meters at maximum take-off weight (MTOW), while the King Air B350, also commonly used by RFDS, requires 1,000 meters. Newer models, including the King Air 260 and King Air 360, similarly require between 643 meters and 1,006 meters for take-off.

Gannawarra Shire Council Aerodrome Expenditure 2017 - 2020

The following table provides a breakdown of operational and depreciation costs for the Gannawarra, Cohuna, and Kerang Aerodromes over the financial years 2017/18 to 2019/20.

Shared Operating Expenditure refers to general costs incurred for managing and maintaining multiple aerodromes without being directly attributed to a specific site. These costs can include administrative expenses, training, staff wages, or general maintenance services that support the overall operation of aerodromes within the Gannawarra Shire.

		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Share Operating Expenditure	<i>Operating Costs</i>	\$ 5,195.00	\$ 5,623.51	\$ 8,787.49
	Total	\$ 5,195.00	\$ 5,623.51	\$ 8,787.49
Cohuna	<i>Operating Costs</i>	\$ 11,763.55	\$ 10,450.22	\$ 11,982.21
	<i>Depreciation</i>	\$ 26,654.84	\$ 26,654.84	\$ 33,313.86
	Total	\$ 38,418.39	\$ 37,105.06	\$ 45,296.07
Kerang	<i>Operating Costs</i>	\$ 36,087.14	\$ 38,331.66	\$ 60,083.37
	<i>Depreciation</i>	\$ 49,078.49	\$ 49,078.49	\$ 44,493.40
	Total	\$ 85,165.63	\$ 87,410.15	\$ 104,576.77
	Total All Aerodromes	\$ 128,779.02	\$ 130,138.72	\$ 158,660.33

Council concerns with the Development of the Cohuna Aerodrome

Before the transition to community-led management, Council raised significant concerns regarding the development of the Cohuna Aerodrome without formal Council endorsement. At the time, no comprehensive business case or strategic plan had been presented to Council outlining how the community or the newly formed aerodrome board would deliver the proposed upgrades. The absence of such documentation, particularly for a multi-million-dollar project, created uncertainty about the project's financial sustainability and the potential impact on ratepayers.

In October 2019, then-Mayor Lorraine Learmonth emphasised the importance of rigorous planning and consultation processes for any major development at the aerodrome. As the Council did not own the land, various planning considerations—including environmental significance

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overlays, cultural heritage concerns, and consultations with statutory authorities—had to be addressed before construction could be considered.

These concerns underscored the need for a thorough evaluation and proper community consultation to ensure any development would be in the best interests of the entire Gannawarra community.

Transition to Community-Led Management

The decision to transition the Cohuna Aerodrome to community management was based on the desire to reduce ongoing maintenance costs and operational oversight by Council. On 30 September 2020, Coliban Water officially transferred the licence to the Lions Club of Cohuna under a 20-year Head License agreement. This transition enabled the local community to assume responsibility for the aerodrome's operations, ensuring continuity with minimal disruption to its current use. The Lions Club now collaborates with local stakeholders, including the Cohuna Model Flying Club, community members, and the Cohuna Aerodrome Redevelopment Board, which has taken the lead in implementing the upgrades funded by the Federal Government grant.

Post-Transition and 2022 Developments

Since the transition in 2020, the Cohuna Aerodrome has remained fully operational under the Head License Agreement managed by the Lions Club of Cohuna. In March 2022, the Commonwealth Government of Australia re-affirmed the \$2.57 million contribution through the Community Development Grants Programme. This grant will fund several improvements, including runway extensions, enhanced safety infrastructure, fuelling terminals, and upgraded facilities for air crew.

The funding recipient is the Lions Club of Cohuna Incorporated, with the Cohuna Aerodrome Redevelopment Board overseeing the project. This significant investment will require a planning permit from Council for groundworks and associated vegetation removal. Once complete, the upgrades are expected to enhance the aerodrome's functionality and safety for both recreational and emergency services.

Current status 2024

The Cohuna Aerodrome remains focused on serving local aviation and community needs under the management of the Lions Club of Cohuna. The Cohuna Aerodrome Redevelopment Board on behalf of the Lions Club, is overseeing the project, which is currently progressing through the planning process to achieve the outcomes of the Federal funding. Council is supporting Cohuna Aerodrome Redevelopment Board through the regulatory process required for the planning permit.

References

<https://www.gannawarra.vic.gov.au/News-Media/Cohuna-Aerodrome-changes-proposed>

<https://www.gannawarra.vic.gov.au/News-Media/Up-up-and-away-for-Cohuna-Airfield>

<https://arr.news/2022/03/31/2-57m-airport-upgrade/>

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-01/cohuna-lions-club-takes-over-the-running-of-the-towns-airfield/12720900>

<https://www.coliban.com.au/statement-gannawarra-shire-cohuna-aerodrome-decision>

<https://skybrary.aero/aircraft/be20>

<https://skybrary.aero/aircraft/b350>

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RELEVANT LAW

The Cohuna Aerodrome operates under the Aircraft Landing Area (ALA) classification, which is regulated by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) for basic safety compliance.

Council's involvement in planning permits and land use is subject to the Planning and Environment Act 1987

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

On 24 June 2020, Council resolved to surrender the Cohuna Aerodrome licence to Coliban Water.

OPTIONS

1. Receive and Note: Council may receive and note the report as presented.
2. Request Further Information: Council may request additional information or clarification on specific aspects of the report before noting the report at a Council meeting.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council engaged with key stakeholders, including the Cohuna Lions Club, the Cohuna Aerodrome Redevelopment Board, and local community members, to support the transition to community management.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable

COLLABORATION

Council continues to collaborate with the Lions Club of Cohuna and the Cohuna Aerodrome Redevelopment Board to support the planning, environmental, and statutory requirements of the funded project.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Council's June 24, 2020 decision to transition the aerodrome to community-led management reduces operational costs to Councils operational expenditure.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Supports the *Sustainability* goal: "Achieve long-term financial and environmental sustainability.

Aligns with the strategic priority to "carefully monitor expenditure to ensure value for money and monitor our long-term financial plan to maintain financial sustainability.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in regards to this matter.

8 URGENT BUSINESS

Nil

9 NOTICES OF MOTION

Nil

10 QUESTION TIME

Question Time provides an opportunity for members of the public to submit questions, in advance, to gain a response at the Council meeting.

QUESTIONS FROM THE GALLERY

Completed Question Time forms must be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer via email council@gsc.vic.gov.au no later than 5:00pm on the day prior to the Council meeting.

A maximum number of two questions may be submitted in writing by any one person.

Questions will be read by the author, Mayor or Chief Executive Officer.

The Mayor or Chief Executive Officer may indicate that they require further time to research an answer. In this case, an answer will be provided in writing generally within ten (10) business days.

Questions will be answered at the meeting, or later in writing, unless the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer has determined that the relevant question seeks confidential information defined in Section 3 of the *Local Government Act 2020* such as:

- Council business information
- security information
- land use planning information
- law enforcement information
- legal privileged information
- personal information
- private commercial information
- confidential meeting information
- internal arbitration information
- Councillor Conduct Panel confidential information
- an issue outside the Gannawarra Shire Council core business

or if the question is:

- defamatory, indecent, abusive or objectionable in language or substance
- repetitive of a question already answered (whether at the same or an earlier meeting)
- asked to embarrass a Councillor or Council officer.

No debate or discussion of questions or answers shall be permitted and all questions and answers shall be as brief as possible.

11 DELEGATES REPORTS

Nil

12 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Nil