



Pyrenees
Shire Council

ANNUAL *Report*

2023-24



Pyrenees

Shire Council

Three strong elements make up the Pyrenees Shire Council logo: wool, the Pyrenees mountain range and wine. The logo embraces all three images in an elegant and stylised representation, intertwining as a consolidated unit.

We acknowledge the people past and present of the Wadawurung, Dja Dja Wurrung, Eastern Maar, and Wotjobaluk tribes whose land forms the Pyrenees Shire. We pay our respects to the customs, traditions and stewardship of the land by the elders and people of these tribes on whose land we meet and work on.

Cover image: the Avoca River as seen from Greenhill Creek Road near Amphitheatre. Photograph by Jayne Newgreen.

Photography in this Annual Report by Pyrenees Shire Council, Preface Films, Jayne Newgreen and Tess Astbury



CONTENTS

Section 1: INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Report of Operations 2023-24	03
Snapshot of Council	04

Section 2: OUR YEAR

The year in numbers	07
Mayor and Chief Executive Officer's message	08
Highlights of the year	10
Review of operations	14
Financial overview	24

Section 3: OUR COMMUNITY

Our history	27
Our future	28
Our geography	30
Our municipality snapshot	32
Our health	34
Our economy	34

Section 4: OUR COUNCIL

Our Council	41
Councillors	42

Section 5: OUR PEOPLE

Organisational structure	45
What Council does	46
Council staff	49
Management structure	50
Staff spotlight	52
Other staff matters	53
Health, safety and wellbeing	54

Section 6: OUR PERFORMANCE

Our performance	57
Council plan	58
Council plan – Enabling Principles	59
Council plan priority 1 – People	65
Council plan priority 2 – Place	71
Council plan priority 3 – Environment	76
Council plan priority 4 – Economy	81
Community satisfaction survey outcomes 2024	86

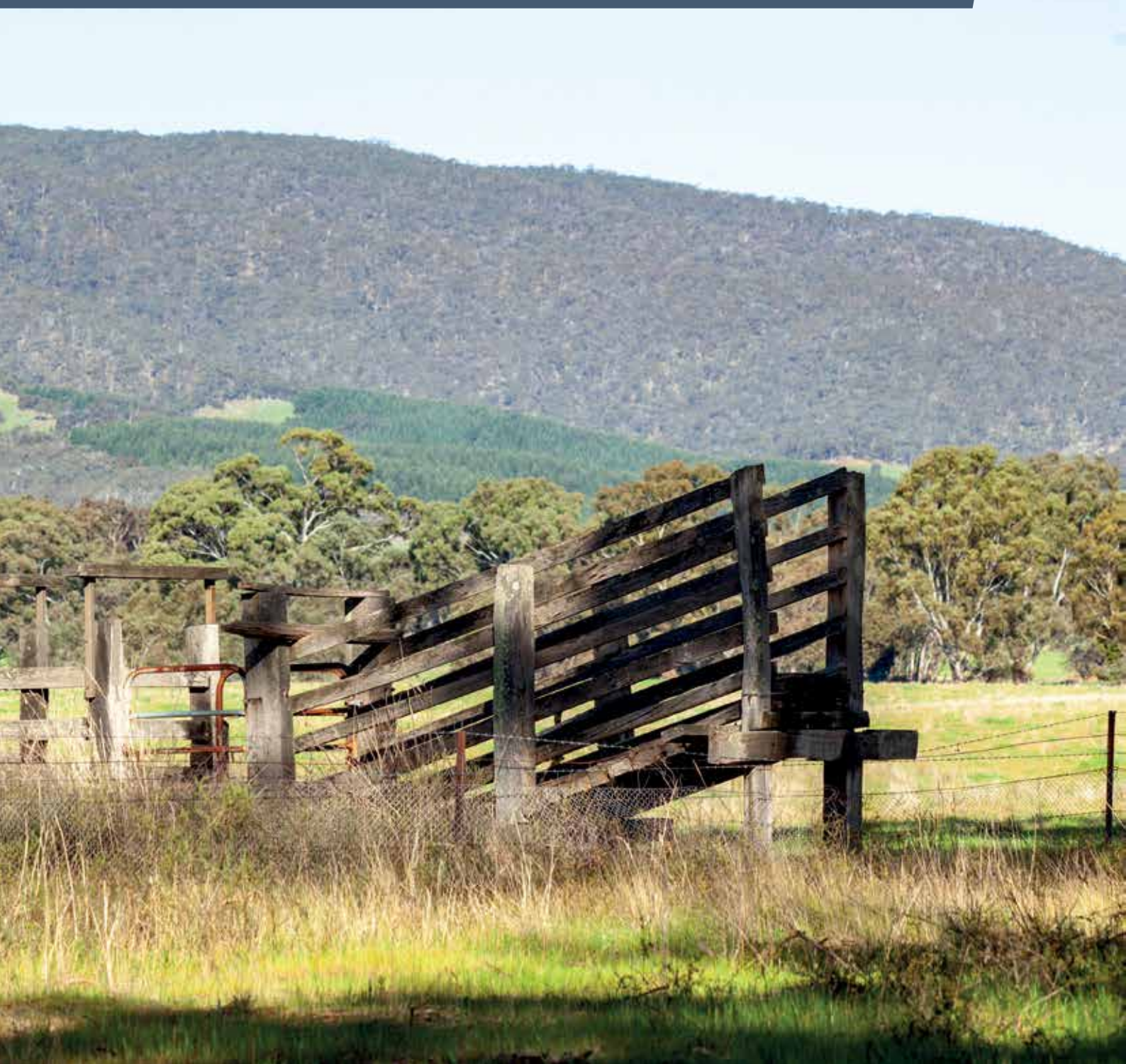
Section 7: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governance, management and other information	91
Statutory information	99
Glossary	106

Section 8: OUR FINANCIALS

About Council revenue and expenses	109
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Section 1: INTRODUCTION





WELCOME TO THE REPORT OF OPERATIONS 2023-24

The Annual Report of Operations – or Annual Report – is the primary means of advising the Pyrenees Shire Community about Council's operations and performance during the previous financial year, demonstrating our ongoing commitment to transparent reporting and accountability to the community.

Council's performance is measured against strategic goals and objectives contained within the existing Council Plan. The Council Plan 2021-2024 was adopted in 2021 with a focus on the following areas:

- People
- Place
- Environment
- Economy

These focus areas are supported by internal Enabling Principles as outlined on the following page.

This report includes Council's audited financial statements, an audited performance statement and other details as required by the *Local Government Act 2020*.

To reduce environmental impact, a limited number of printed copies of this Annual Report have been produced. Residents and interested parties are encouraged to access the report via Council's website www.pyrenees.vic.gov.au. If you would like a printed copy of the Annual Report, please visit your local Council office or ask for a copy via pyrenees@pyrenees.vic.gov.au or by phoning 1300 PYRENEES (797 363).

This report has not yet been reproduced into languages other than English. If you or your community would find this to be of value in increasing accessibility for future productions, please let us know at pyrenees@pyrenees.vic.gov.au or by phoning 1300 PYRENEES (797 363).

Community Snapshot

Population **7,786**

Jobs **2,219**

Annual economic output **\$835.8m**

Building approvals 2023-24 **\$32.7m**

Gross regional product 2023 **\$442.9m**

Largest employer sector **agriculture, forestry and fishing with 651 jobs**

Largest export sector **\$261.9m from agriculture, forestry and fishing**

Visitor spend per trip **\$762**



SNAPSHOT OF COUNCIL

Community Vision

Our vision is for **inclusive, happy and healthy connected** communities that create **sustainable and welcoming** townships, natural environments and rural areas.

We attract diversity through promotion, innovation, growth and partnerships while addressing climate and community needs such as reliable and responsive infrastructure, affordable services and housing whilst protecting our natural environment.

Council Vision

Sustainable and welcoming places and natural environments that create inclusive, happy and healthy connected communities.

Enabling Principles

- Motivate and inspire community involvement
- Provide transparency and accountability
- Use resources efficiently and effectively

About Pyrenees Shire Council

Pyrenees Shire Council was formed on 23 September 1994 with the amalgamation of the Shires of Ripon, Avoca and Lexton, by an Order of the Governor. It operates in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The role of Council is to:

- Act as a representative government by considering the diverse needs of the local community in decision making.
- Provide leadership by establishing strategic objectives and monitoring their achievement.
- Maintain the viability of the Council by ensuring that resources are managed in a responsible and accountable manner.
- Advocate the interests of local communities to other communities and governments.
- Act as a responsible partner in government by considering the needs of other communities.
- Foster community cohesion and encourage active participation in civic life.



Council offices

Council's administrative office is located in Beaufort and its two works depots are located in Avoca and Beaufort. Council also has two community resource centres, one in Beaufort and one in Avoca, where residents can access libraries, tourism information, meeting rooms, public access computers and Wi-Fi. Landsborough Resource Centre and Lexton Rural Transaction Centre also provide public access to computers and Wi-Fi.

Pyrenees Shire Council – administrative office

5 Lawrence Street, Beaufort VIC 3373

T 1300 797 363

E pyrenees@pyrenees.vic.gov.au

Avoca Information and Community Centre

122 High Street, Avoca VIC 3467

T 03 5465 1000

E aic@pyrenees.vic.gov.au

Beaufort Community Resource Centre and Library

72 Neill Street, Beaufort VIC 3373

T 03 5349 1180

E bcrcl@pyrenees.vic.gov.au





Section 2:
OUR YEAR



THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

Bayindeen Rocky Road fire
**Around 22,000 hectares burnt
in February and March 2024**

Citizenship ceremonies
3 Pyrenees residents became Australian citizens

Community Cuppa and Chat sessions
12 held with Councillors and community members

Council meetings
**13 held including 1 statutory and
1 special council meeting**

Babies born
60

Children seen by the Family and Child Health Team
276

Percentage of infants and children fully immunised
More than 90%

Registered library members
1,275

Mobile library stops
12 per fortnight

Outdoor public pools
3

Total number of visits to Pyrenees swimming pools
8,053

Local roads maintained
More than 2,000km

Bridges maintained
158



MAYOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S MESSAGE

It is a pleasure to present the 2023-24 Annual Report on behalf of Pyrenees Shire Council. This year has been one of both achievement and challenge.

As we enter the final year of the four-year Council Plan 2021-2025, it's timely to highlight some of the activities that have progressed the Council Vision.

In October 2023, Council invited those community members that were engaged in preparing the community vision to a "reporting back" event to consider what Council had delivered to date and what had changed. While infrastructure upgrades reported were many, the changes have been significant – managing natural disasters and global economic factors impacting on cost of living highlighted the need for us to remain agile and responsive.

The devastating bushfire in February this year saw the loss of seven homes, and the destruction of both public and private property and some of our magnificent natural forests at Mount Cole and Mount Buangor. Communities were placed on high alert, and evacuation orders issued including for residents in our main town of Beaufort. Relief centres were established at Ballarat, Ararat and Maryborough with the assistance of our neighbouring councils.

Bushfire-impacted areas were visited by the Australian Governor General David Hurley and the Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan, both dignitaries committing to support Council and our residents, providing reassurance that our leaders were with us through the disaster and recovery phases.

Trauma and loss were plentiful, and our communities were supported by many agencies in the initial relief and recovery efforts – Council is ever grateful for the work of these amazing organisations. While the fire itself burnt for a period of weeks, the recovery will take much longer.

One of the challenges of recovery for Council has been the removal of many hazardous trees from the roadsides affected by the fire. This difficult decision was made to ensure Council

met its responsibilities in keeping our road users and our community safe. While this was not a popular decision for some, and exacerbated the trauma for others, it was nevertheless necessary in the interest of public safety and to restore safe access for residents and businesses.

Meanwhile the recovery from the 2022 flood event is ongoing, and Council remains committed to our communities in our recovery efforts from this devastating event.

Roads and bridges are our biggest expenditure item and the service that our community regularly says is the most important. June 30, 2024, marked the end of a four-year Roads to Recovery funding period with all funds allocated under this federal program being fully expended.

The reconstruction of a section of the Snake Valley-Smythesdale Road and the Trawalla-Waterloo Road were among the significant road upgrades completed this year, and a new bridge to cater for higher mass vehicles on the Beaufort-Carngham Road was one of several bridge and major culvert upgrades completed.

Upgrades to sport and recreation facilities were also a highlight with the official opening of the new Beaufort cricket nets and the power upgrade and lighting project at the Goldfields Recreation Reserve. The challenge of inadequate power supply in our townships and at our recreation facilities will be an area Council will continue to advocate for to ensure greater investment on behalf of our sporting clubs and communities.

It was a major achievement to hand over the new \$3.8 million Lexton Community Hub to the committee and to have the facility officially opened by Federal Infrastructure Minister Catherine King, along with Member for Ripon Martha Haylett MP, in April. The importance of this asset was further highlighted by the closure of the Lexton Pub and the establishment of the Hub-Pub at the new facility to provide a critical social gathering space.

Renewal of public toilets is an essential service in each of our towns, and the importance of clean and functional facilities is one aspect of a welcoming community. The rejuvenation of the Beggs Street precinct in Beaufort as a popular comfort stop for travellers with new toilets, barbeque shelter, car parking and landscaping has been well received.

Our community said it wanted Council to be more environmentally progressive, so we have invested in significant new tree planting in our streets and commissioned electric vehicle charging stations in Beaufort, Avoca and Amphitheatre as examples of this commitment.

The Victorian Government released its housing statement in early 2024 announcing targets for new dwellings for each local government area, including a target of 1200 new homes in Pyrenees by 2051. Following the success of the Correa Park estate in Beaufort, Council has further committed to play its part in stimulating housing by purchasing additional land in Burke Street, Beaufort, and High Street, Avoca, for future residential development. While Council has funded these purchases through borrowings, it is expected that once developed, this investment will be repaid with significant uplift in the local economies. These purchases will also assist Council to secure government funding towards the housing and the enabling infrastructure.

Engaging the community in planning for the future has included the development of a feasibility study and business case for a future rural water pipeline in the northern section of Pyrenees Shire. A master plan was also completed for the Beaufort Goldfields Recreation Reserve as well as for a linear park along the Garibaldi Creek. Funding has been obtained to deliver flood mapping in Lexton and to develop mitigation measures for future flooding at the Avoca Recreation Reserve.

Investment in our tourism sector has seen Council take up a new partnership with Tourism Midwest Victoria and the adoption of a 10-year destination management plan, which provides a pathway for Council, along with other regional councils, to continue to support and grow the visitor economy. The highlight of this is our magnificent vineyards, world-class wine and wonderful natural assets.

The establishment of the Greater Ballarat Alliance of Councils (GBAC), officially launched by Federal Local Government Minister Catherine King, will give the region a united voice when advocating to government on key policy matters and for funding.

It is also important to recognise the committed and talented staff who deliver Council services and support our communities. This workforce is one of, if not the, smallest workforce of any local government in Victoria, which is reflective of Council's small rate base.

After an extensive review process, Council recently made a decision to reappoint our current Chief Executive Officer for a further term, which will provide continuity for the organisation and in the transition to a newly elected Council.

As we move towards the 2024 Council Elections, there are significant opportunities as well as challenges for the new Council as our population continues to grow both locally and nationally.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robert Vance'.

Cr Robert Vance
Mayor



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jim Nolan'.

Jim Nolan
Chief Executive Officer



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

Strategic Objective: People

Australia Day

The Pyrenees Shire Australia Day 2024 event was held at the Avoca Recreation Reserve. At the event, Mayor Cr Robert Vance announced Beaufort's George Kirsanovs as the 2024 Citizen of the Year for his many years of volunteer work. Other awards presented on the day were the Young Citizen of the Year awarded to Harrison Grant and Naomi Gerrard (joint), the Community Event of the Year to the Beaufort Show, and the Leadership Award to the Beaufort Service Group.



2024 Australia Day Awards recipients with Mayor Cr Robert Vance.

Citizenship ceremonies

As part of the Australia Day event in Avoca in January, Mayor Cr Robert Vance also bestowed Australian citizenship on three Pyrenees Shire residents. The citizenship ceremony was, as usual, a moving and important part of the day, and provided the three new citizens a fitting official welcome to their adopted homeland.

Community Cuppa and Chat sessions

All five Pyrenees Shire Councillors again took part in the popular Community Cuppa and Chat sessions, which rotate locations around the Shire and are held monthly. The sessions give locals a chance to sit down with their Councillors and Council officers in an informal setting, having a chat about issues that are important to them while sharing a cuppa. This year, there were 12 sessions held in locations including Lexton, Redbank, Waubra, Landsborough, Stoneleigh and Natte Yallock.



Councillors and residents at the Cuppa and Chat session held in Landsborough in April 2024.

Progress reporting on the Community Vision 2031

In October 2023, Council invited community members who were engaged in preparing the community vision to a "reporting back" event to consider what Council had delivered to date and what had changed. While infrastructure upgrades reported were many, the changes have been significant. Managing natural disasters and global economic factors impacting on cost of living highlighted the need for us to remain agile and responsive.

Arts, music and culture

The Pyrenees hosts an active arts community including several art galleries in Avoca and Beaufort. Live music performances are held regularly across the Shire in businesses and venues including our wonderful wineries and local cafes.

Pyrenees Shire Council provided community grants for a range of arts and cultural activities this year including:

- Art Trax High Tea held by the Pyrenees Arts Council
- Entertainment at the Beaufort Town Market
- The *Let the Season Begin* community event run by the Friends of the Avoca Pool
- The *Let's Dance Avoca* event
- The Christmas Carols community connection event
- The Lake Goldsmith Steam Rally
- The Beaufort Tattoo Exhibition



Street performers were popular at Beaufort by Twilight in Dec 2023.

Strategic Objective: Place

Lexton Community Hub official opening

In April, Council celebrated the official opening of the Lexton Community Hub with Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government Catherine King, Federal Wannon MP Dan Tehan, State Ripon MP Martha Haylett, and the Lexton community. A multi-purpose space for social events and activities, the Hub is a \$3.8 million project completed with financial contributions

from the Commonwealth Government's Building Better Regions Fund, Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program, and Lexton Bushfire Recovery; The Lexton Recreation Reserve Committee of Management; The Victorian Government's 2018-19 Female Friendly Facilities Fund, Community Support Fund and Lexton Bushfire Recovery; and Pyrenees Shire Council.

More details: story page 13.



Pictured at the Lexton Community Hub celebration is (L-R) Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government Catherine King, Federal Wannon MP Dan Tehan, State Ripon MP Martha Haylett, Pyrenees Shire Council Mayor Cr Robert Vance and Lexton Community Hub Secretary and Lexton Golf Club President Rob Hopcroft.

Bridge renewal program

Council continued to renew bridges across the Shire as part of a program aimed at improving safety and increasing the capacity of our local road network, providing a boost to our transport and agricultural sectors.

Several bridge projects were completed this year including:

- Bridge 11 on Beaufort-Carngham Road
- Bridge 139 on Raglan-Elmhurst Road
- Bridge 110 on Moonambel-Warrenmang Road (approaches)
- Floodways in various locations

Strategic Objective: Environment

Bayindeen-Rocky Road Fire Feb 2024

The devastating bushfire in February/March 2024 saw the loss of seven homes, and the destruction of public and private property and some of our magnificent natural forests at Mount Cole and Mount Buangor. Communities were placed on high alert, and evacuation orders issued including for residents in our main town of Beaufort. Relief centres were established at Ballarat, Ararat and Maryborough with the assistance of our neighbouring councils.



Many roads were closed due to hazards caused by the Bayindeen-Rocky Road fires in February and March.

Removal of fire-damaged trees on roadsides

After the fires, Council set to work to remove hazardous trees along impacted roadsides for the safety of all road users. This was a difficult decision but one that was necessary to ensure Council met its responsibilities under the Road Management Act, keeping road users and our community safe. This was not a popular decision with some residents but was necessary in the interests of public safety and to restore access for residents and businesses.

Flood recovery infrastructure works

Work to repair public infrastructure that was damaged in the 2022 flood event continued, with Council steadily progressing through the extensive works program. Bridges, roads, culverts and drainage infrastructure were just some of the assets impacted in the flood event, with the damage estimated around \$8 million. Flood repair works are expected to continue until mid-2025.

Strategic Objective: Economy

The impact of natural disasters

The compounding nature of the flood event from 2022 and the Bayindeen-Rocky Road bushfire continued to impact the Pyrenees economy this year. Many residents and businesses have been affected by one or both of these events, and Council's bottom line is continuing to be impacted, as explained in our financial statements later in this report.

Major road projects

Council continued its maintenance and upgrades on our road network, with some of the larger projects including:

- Trawalla-Waterloo Road, Trawalla, road construction – \$599,000
- Beaufort-Carranballac Road, Stoneleigh, road construction – \$529,000
- Smythesdale-Snake Valley Road, Hillcrest, road construction – \$486,000
- Sealed roads re-sealing program – \$785,000
- Unsealed road re-sheeting program – \$580,000



Roads crews continued Council's re-sealing program during the year.



Infrastructure and asset upgrades

Council's work to upgrade its infrastructure and assets continued during 2023-24 including expenditure on the following:

- Roads – \$3.3 million
- Bridges, major culverts and floodways – \$582,000
- Footpaths – \$340,000
- Drainage – \$395,000
- Kerb and channel – \$255,000

Land development for housing

Council continued its work on identifying and developing plans to secure land for housing in towns such as Beaufort and Avoca. In early 2024, Council purchased a 7.5 hectare parcel of land in Avoca's north, preserving it for future residential development. This follows the success of the Correa Park residential development in Beaufort, which was completed in 2021 after Council developed a parcel of land over seven years. These projects come in light of the Victorian Government's Housing Statement, which sets a target of 800,000 new homes across the state over the next decade in conjunction with housing and planning reforms.

Lexton Celebrates New Community Hub

The Lexton community celebrated the official opening of their brand-new facility, the Lexton Community Hub, in April. The Hub was opened by Commonwealth Government Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government and Member for Ballarat Catherine King, with Ripon MP Martha Haylett and Federal Member for Wannon Dan Tehan also in attendance.

Mayor Robert Vance acknowledged the hard work of Council staff, contractors, and the Lexton community in bringing the project to life. The state-of-the-art facility includes a commercial kitchen, upgraded sports change rooms, and spaces for childcare and playgroups.

It is anticipated the hub will enable and grow local participation in sports such as football, cricket and golf. It will also host a range of activities and events, providing direct and indirect economic benefits to the community, local groups and associations.

The Hub project was completed in 2023 at a cost of \$3.8 million, with financial contributions from State and Federal Government departments, local organisations and Council.



REVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Pyrenees Shire Council is responsible for more than 150 services, from family and children's services, open space, waste management and community facilities, to business support and development, planning for appropriate development and ensuring accountability for Council's budget and financial sustainability.

This broad range of community services and infrastructure support the wellbeing and prosperity of our community. Pyrenees Shire Council's vision, strategic objectives and strategies to further improve services and facilities are described in the Council Plan 2021-25 and associated Budget 2023-24 and are reported on in this document.

The delivery of services, facilities, support and advocacy to achieve our strategic objectives is measured by a set of service performance indicators and measures. Council also has a wide range of responsibilities under Victorian and Australian legislation.

Service review – Frontline / Library Services

In late 2023, a service review was conducted of the services provided by Council's Frontline Service Team. This team provides a wide range of services focused on three key pillars: customer service, libraries and visitor information.

The review included consideration of service trends and recommendations included investigation of a potential model of "Open Libraries" where services and registered user access could be expanded without increasing cost to Council and ratepayers.

Council approved in principle the development of this concept and consultation with staff and the community will be conducted in the next financial year to develop an acceptable model.

Advocacy

Financial sustainability and the associated reimbursement of disaster recovery expenditure have been at the centre of Council's advocacy work during 2023-24. Indeed, financial sustainability has been a constant topic of conversation during the year at all levels of government. Council relies heavily on peak bodies such as the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) at a state level, the Association of Local Government (ALGA) at a federal level, and Local Government Finance Professionals (FinPro) at both state and federal levels with regard to financial sustainability, to present a strong and consistent case for sustained and increased funding to renew our assets, building our communities and supporting our economy.



A trip to Canberra mid-year saw Mayor Cr Robert Vance (pictured right) advocating for the Pyrenees with National Party Leader the Honourable David Littleproud and Nationals MP the Honourable Dr Anne Webster.

Economic factors

Council continued to deliver on repairs to public infrastructure damaged by the spring 2022 floods, costing more than \$8 million, with works expected to continue until mid-2025.

In February 2024, the Pyrenees Shire was again impacted by natural disaster with the Bayindeen-Rocky Road bushfire impacting much of the Shire north of the Western Highway. The compounding factors associated with both these natural disasters will have an impact for several years into the future, and Council is working on strategic measures to ensure financial sustainability in light of this.

Early Years – Family and Child Health

The Family and Child Health Service had another successful year as the Shire experienced a high birth rate. A total of 60 new births were recorded with 276 children seen by staff this year, with 82 phone calls to or from families as phone consultations. The service also provided support to families through the Supported Playgroup Program, parents' groups and children's story time delivered by the libraries.

Council ran three first-time parents' groups that included 24 people attending over the year, with each group running for approximately seven weeks. These groups met in the Beaufort Resource Centre and Library, providing a welcoming, warm and safe environment for new families. This has also resulted in a few families joining the library.

Counselling has been provided to 132 families in one or more of the areas of emotional, physical, social interaction and family violence.



A new-parents' group meeting at the Beaufort Library. These groups provide a safe space for parents to share stories and ask for advice.

Scheduled immunisations

Immunisations have once again been a big part of Council's early years workload, with 932 vaccinations in the six-week to four-year-old cohort, and free influenza vaccinations to many of the six-month to five-year-old cohort. This equated to more than 90% of children in the Pyrenees Shire being fully vaccinated for their age.

Vaccinations also included years 7 and 10 at the Beaufort Secondary School – 21 for year 7 and 17 for year 10. We are working on increasing secondary school rates through catch-up programs.

Supported Playgroups

Council facilitates Supported Playgroups (SPG) in Avoca, Beaufort and Landsborough. Each small group provides a safe and nurturing space for families to connect with other families to enhance their parenting skills and have fun with their child or children. In-home coaching is also available to families where appropriate.

Community Development

The Community Development team continued its community engagement focus that partnered with local representative groups, incorporated associations, service clubs and other community networks. Engagement was delivered in a variety of forms to increase partnership and accessibility including community outreach sessions, community workshops and training sessions, and via Council's online engagement platform.



Our pools continue to be popular recreational facilities.

Our community development process enabled communities to grow and change according to their own needs and priorities. As guided by Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, this deliberately worked with specific populations such as young people (including the L to P learner driver program, and Whitten Project Youth Leadership Program), older adults (through delivery of the Regional Assessment Service and supported resident navigation of My Aged Care), leisure and recreation (ongoing advocacy and connection to other tiers of government for asset management, capital funding and better volunteer governance), history and heritage (asset management and volunteer support processes) and facilitated local empowerment and action through external funding submission support and direct provision of \$151,692 in community grants.

Pyrenees Libraries and Resource Centres

Pyrenees Shire Council Resource Centres in Avoca and Beaufort experienced increases in attendance with registered library members totalling 1,275 or 16.38% of the population. The currency of the collections remained above 50%, which, together with access to the broader range offered through the City of Ballarat and Central Highlands Libraries, means a constant supply of up-to-date books, periodicals and other materials.

The mobile library service remains popular with 12 stops per fortnight across the Shire, servicing primary school children and residents who may be more isolated or find it difficult to attend the two main libraries.

Positive Ageing

During the year, work started on developing an Active Ageing Plan designed to improve the lifestyle of older residents (aged 50+) to support and enable a healthier, active life; and to enable them to remain living at home independently for longer. The project will look at healthy eating, transport disadvantage, social isolation and chronic loneliness, digital literacy and maintaining independence.

Regional Assessment Service (RAS)

The Regional Assessment Service ceased on 30 June 2024, with the Commonwealth Government contracting new providers for the service across the state. Over the past seven years, more than 630 of our over 65-year-old residents, their carers and families have been supported by Council's service with assessments for aged care services. The RAS is now provided by APM.

Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP)

The Municipal Emergency Management Plan review was completed in late 2023. Approval was provided by the Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee and is now implemented for the Shire.

This plan is prepared by response agencies, including the CFA, SES and Victoria Police, and informs our community about what happens in the event of a natural disaster like a bushfire or flood. It is supported by a range of other plans, including operational sub-plans to inform and guide officers in the case of an emergency.

A joint bushfire resilience project, Strengthening Local Government Partnership Grant (Safer Together) with Golden Plains Shire Council, resulted in the temporary appointment of a Bushfire Resilience Project Officer. This delivered a number of projects in the Shire and focused on the towns of Lexton, Snake Valley and Redbank. This project is in the evaluation phase as it concludes in Golden Plains. New funding of \$300,000 for the continuation of this work was granted in June 2024, which will allow more towns to be included in the resilience works as well as Shire-wide Pyrenees-specific projects such as a landscape project, an expo and other community-focused outcomes.

Power and water

Western Renewables Link

The Western Renewables Link is a proposed 190km overhead high-voltage electricity transmission line that will carry renewable energy from Bulgana in western Victoria to Sydenham in Melbourne's north-west, passing through the central eastern side of the Pyrenees Shire. Council is maintaining contact with project providers to advocate on behalf of its impacted communities and to maximise local benefits that may be on offer from the government.

VNI West

VNI West is a major infrastructure project to build a vital new transmission line between Victoria and NSW. The early planning and regulatory investment process was completed, establishing the business case for the project. This project connects with the Western Renewables Link at Bulgana, and while the proposed route is not within the Pyrenees Shire, Council officers maintain a seat on the community engagement panel for this project if required.

Pipeline for reliable water supply

Investigations into the Southern Wimmera and Northeast Pyrenees Water Supply Project began in February 2023. In 2024, the project was found to be feasible and advanced to the development of a business case within the \$300,000 funding provided to the Council from the Victorian Government Investment Fast Track Fund.

The project aims to provide a secure, fit-for-purpose water supply to the districts north of Avoca and between Elmhurst, Beazley's Bridge and Glenorchy. This area covers some 354,000 hectares, which primarily relies on rainfall run-off for domestic and stock water supplies. During extended periods of drought in the past two decades, water security and access have been severely impacted. The estimated cost to deliver the full scope of the project is around \$150 million.

Beaufort Linear Park

Initiated two years ago, the Beaufort Linear Park project master planning was completed this financial year. The project aims to create a recreational corridor along the course of the Garibaldi Creek from Beaufort Lake at the southern point, to the area where the creek intersects with Yam Holes Creek north of the railway line in Beaufort.

The project was instigated by the Green Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Guidelines for Small Towns, which focuses on improving township amenities through innovative water (blue) projects. Funding was successfully obtained to work with the Beaufort community, including the traditional owners, to develop a masterplan and complete economic and financial analysis of the proposal.

Council implements Bushfire Recovery Planning Program

In response to the 2024 Bayindeen Rocky Road bushfire, Council introduced the Bushfire Recovery Planning Program (BRPP) to help residents whose homes, businesses or other structures were destroyed.

The program is designed to help navigate the often complex planning permit process for bushfire-affected properties, offering residents specialised guidance at no cost.

CEO Jim Nolan emphasised that the planning process for rebuilding after a bushfire differs from standard applications. The BRPP, funded through Council's Statutory Planning service, aims to streamline this process by providing independent planning consultants to support affected residents.

The BRPP offers tailored advice and step-by-step assistance to make the rebuilding journey less overwhelming for residents. As part of the Council's ongoing commitment to fire recovery, there will be no fees associated with the program or planning permits.

The BRPP outlines clear steps from initial contact with Council to reviewing rebuilding needs and providing ongoing guidance throughout the process.

Major Capital Works

During 2023-24, major capital works included:

Project	Overview
Smythesdale-Snake Valley Road, Hillcrest – road reconstruction \$486,500	Reconstruction of 843m near Hopes Lane was completed including reconstructed pavement, drainage improvements, intersection improvements and a new surface for a smoother driving experience.
Beaufort-Caranballac Road, Stoneleigh – road construction \$529,400	Construction of 820m south of Meadows Lane was completed including road widening from 3.8m to 6.2m, pavement reconstruction, drainage improvements and a new surface for a smoother driving experience.
Trawalla Waterloo Road and Racecourse Road, Trawalla – road construction \$599,000	Construction of 770m east of Racecourse Road including intersection safety improvements, road widening from 3.8m to 6.2m, pavement reconstruction, drainage improvements and a new surface for a smoother driving experience.
Eurambeen Streatham Road, Lake Wongan – road reconstruction \$136,500	Reconstruction of 325m south of Mount William Road was completed including pavement reconstruction and a new surface for a smoother driving experience.
Pittong Snake Valley Road, Snake Valley – road construction \$81,000	Construction of 245m near Cochrane Drive was completed including pavement widening and surface sealing.
Bridge 11 on Beaufort Carngham Road, Mena Park – bridge construction \$81,000	The new bridge is constructed to the SM1600 design loads and provides future-proofing for heavy freight movements along Beaufort-Carngham Road.
Sealed road reseal program – around \$700,000	<p>New sealed surfaces on the following roads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begg Street, Beaufort • Carngham Streatham Road, Chepstowe • Kimberley Drive, Waubra • Landsborough-Elmhurst Road, Glenlofty • Murchison Road, Beaufort • Smythesdale-Snake Valley Road, Snake Valley • Loaders Road, Glenbrae • Vaughan Street, Raglan • Avoca-Green Hill Creek Road, Avoca • Back Amphitheatre Road, Amphitheatre • Beaufort-Carngham Road, Nerring and Carngham • Evansford-Clunes Road, Evansford • Green Hill Creek Road, Amphitheatre • Lexton-Evansford Road, Burnbank • Mount William Road, Stoneleigh • Homebush Road, Avoca and Homebush
Unsealed road re-sheet program – around \$600,000	<p>New unsealed road pavement on the following roads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Musical Gully Road • Oddies Road • Lucardies Road • Old Shirley Road • Old Geelong Road • Gardners Lane • Halls Road • Slaughterhouse Lane • Sims Lane • Wareek Homebush Road • Mills Road • Simpsons Lane • Neils Road • Mountain Hut Road
Walker Street, Beaufort – drainage improvements near Beaufort Hospital \$55,000	Underground stormwater pipes and pits installed to prevent overland flash flooding towards the Beaufort Medical Centre. Works also included minor improvements to the pedestrian kerb ramps and kerb and channel.
Moonambel public toilets re-cladding \$25,000	Replacement of external cladding to Moonambel public toilets.

Project	Overview
Beaufort Goldfields Recreation Reserve oval lighting \$380,000	Installation of oval lighting towers at the Goldfields Recreation Reserve to provide appropriate lighting for night games and training.
Beaufort Goldfields Recreation Reserve electrical upgrade \$161,000	Upgrade of electrical supply to the Beaufort Goldfields Recreation Reserve to support oval lighting.
Browns Road floodway, Lexton \$30,000	Construction of floodway to prevent flood damage.
Dovecot Lane floodway, Burbank \$32,000	Construction of floodway to replace failed deck and to increase culvert capacity.
Horwills Lane floodway, Natte Yallock MC239 \$28,000	Construction of floodway to prevent flood damage.
Horwills Lane floodway, Natte Yallock MC361 \$28,000	Construction of floodway to prevent flood damage.
Rutherford Street, Avoca; Russell to Duke Streets – kerb and channel works \$27,000	Replacement of end-of-life kerb and channel.
Rutherford Street, Avoca, north of Olive Grove Road – kerb and channel works \$7,500	New kerb and channel to prevent property flooding.
Waubra Recreation Reserve changerooms – retiling \$25,000	Retiled changerooms to refresh the area.
Havelock Street toilets, Beaufort, refurbishment \$210,000	Refurbishment of public toilets on Havelock Street.
Beggs Street, Beaufort – footpath construction \$198,000	Construction of new pathway to Broadbent Street, Beaufort.
Pear Tree Lane, Ercildoune – floodway \$25,000	Construction of floodway to prevent road pavement damage.
High Street, Avoca – drainage works \$148,000	Enlargement and clearing of existing table drains to the north of Avoca to improve dispersal of stormwater during flood events.
Avoca Depot staff facilities \$360,000	Construction of new staff facilities at the Avoca depot.
Beeripmo Centre, Beaufort – façade works \$12,000	Repairs and refurbishment of panels to northern façade.
Correa Park, Beaufort – stormwater works \$50,000	Refurbishment of stormwater channels.
High Street, Avoca – kerb and channel works \$151,000	Replacement of kerb and channel to limit impacts of stormwater and flooding events.

Major changes

In-Home Aged Care Services

This financial year was the first time in more than 45 years that the Pyrenees Shire Council did not directly provide in-home care services to its community. Due to industry changes implemented by the Commonwealth Government, Council was unable to continue with the service and it was handed over to specialist providers at the start of 2023-24. Council continued to conduct assessment services during the year but this service contract with the State Government also ceased as of 30 June 2024.

Council has appointed a new Positive Ageing Coordinator who will collaboratively design and implement new active ageing programs and broader wellbeing initiatives for the community into the future. Monitoring of specialist provider performance and associated advocacy forms part of Council's ongoing activity in this area.

Major achievements

Ongoing disaster response and recovery

The cumulative effects of multiple natural disasters and emergencies over the past few years has had a lasting impact on our communities and upon the need for Council to provide support to community members and coordinate refurbishment of the Shire's critical public infrastructure. An ongoing disaster recovery team has been established outside of business-as-usual operations to lead these activities.

Council worked quickly and tirelessly to support the community after the Bayindeen-Rocky Road fires in February and March 2024, and continues to provide support for those affected by the floods in October and November 2022. The Recovery Team has six specialists to consolidate Council's efforts for recovering well and rebuilding, with a strong focus on supporting recovery agencies, visiting residents, primary producers and businesses. Council is linking people with the support they need including clean-up, financial relief, health and wellbeing, fencing, stock feed and water replacement.

The Recovery Centre is open at the Beaufort Resource Centre and Library on a Wednesday for residents to drop into. The Planning and Building Team has established a Rebuilding Program to assist residents with home and shed rebuilding following the fire. Council is supporting community-led events to bring people together and build connections. Community recovery also includes the rehabilitation of the infrastructure including roads, culverts, floodways, guardrail and signage to make the public assets safe for users.

Capital works

Pyrenees Shire Council was pleased to deliver more than \$6.7 million worth of capital works during the 2023-24 financial year. This included a range of upgrades to community assets such as sporting changerooms and halls, as well as new road construction projects, new bridges and kerb and channel construction. Large-scale projects included the installation of new oval lighting towers and power supply upgrade at Beaufort's Goldfields Recreation Reserve, and changeroom refurbishment at the Waubra Recreation Reserve.

Community Satisfaction Survey results

Council was pleased to see an improvement in its Community Satisfaction Survey results in the areas of waste management and emergency and disaster management. Council will continue to monitor results from this annual survey and ensure it implements strategies to improve scoring further.

Challenges

Some of the upcoming challenges Council will face include:

- Improving Council's performance to ensure its community satisfaction survey results improve.
- Developing an Open Libraries model that addresses community needs.
- Ongoing monitoring of aged-care provider performance.
- Long-term financial sustainability pressures.
- Impacts from ongoing and continued natural disasters.

Future outlook

Some of the issues Council will be working on over the coming year include:

- Addressing worsening fire and drought predictions, and longer-term extreme climatic events.
- Developing an Active Ageing Program that meets the community's needs.
- Finding opportunities for long-term cost savings and service improvements.
- Reducing Council's environmental footprint.
- Investigating options for better food and organic waste management with the community.
- Implementing our Strategic Plan.
- Local Government election to be held in October 2024.



Community Funding Program 2023-24

Council provides funding annually through community grants, sponsorships and subsidies to recognise the importance of providing financial assistance to community groups, services and organisations located or operating within the Pyrenees Shire. This funding is included in Council's annual budget and is designed to enable the provision of activities and events that promote community activity, achievement, participation and wellbeing.

In 2023-24, Council awarded a total of \$151,692 across all funding schemes. A total of 63 projects were funded across 44 community organisations and local businesses.

Funds are allocated under the following schemes:

Community Grants

- Up to \$2,000 for programs, projects and equipment.
- Up to \$7,000 for minor capital works.
- Up to \$2,000 for sponsorship for events.
- Up to \$5,000 for shop façade improvements.

Responsive Fund

- Up to \$750 for projects identified as being unexpected and/or having an urgent community need.

Event Signage Subsidy

- Up to \$250 for township entry promotion signage.



The Raglan Hall and Recreation Reserve Committee received a grant of \$2,794 to upgrade its amenities block and internal and external lighting.

2023-24 Community Funding Program

Amount	Awarded to	Project
\$4,097	Amphitheatre Recreation Reserve Committee of Management	Reserve fencing reinstatement.
\$7,000	Avoca Community Arts and Gardens Inc	Avoca Railway Station – hard stand project.
\$7,000	Beaufort Agricultural Society	Roller doors on the Cattle Pavilion at the Goldfields Reserve.
\$6,000	Beaufort and District Historical Society	Pyrenees Historical Societies – Better Practice Program.
\$1,500	Beaufort Community Playgroup	Beaufort Community Centre playspace upgrade.
\$7,000	Beaufort RSL	Beaufort RSL power and kitchen appliance upgrade.
\$335	Business for Beaufort	Pull-up promotional banner.
\$800	Business for Beaufort	Radio FM-88 Beaufort computer software streaming service and equipment.
\$690	Carranballac Cricket Club	Portable shade facilities and club equipment.
\$1,898	Casablanca Movie Club Inc.	Power Upgrade - 3 phase power to projection box.
\$3,500	Cyril Callister Foundation Inc.	Unique Vegemite-inspired street art.
\$3,100	Landsborough and District Historical Group Inc.	Replacement of access ramp decking boards.
\$700	Landsborough Primary School	AI fresco dining at Landsborough Primary School.
\$4,200	Lexton Community Club	Lexton local and family history collection.
\$6,545	Lexton Public Hall Inc	Lexton Public Hall floor.
\$554	Lexton Rural Fire Brigade	Protek fire-fighting branch.
\$2,000	Natte Bealiba Football Netball Club	ScoreHub: Uniting Communities, Empowering Volunteers in Netball.
\$7,000	Natte Yallock Recreation Reserve	Community Safe AFL Goal Guard: Promoting Safety and Participation.
\$1,000	Pyrenees Arts Council	Pyrenees Art Exhibition.
\$1,089	Pyrenees Arts Council	Art Trax Gallery safety and security project.
\$2,000	Pyrenees Beaufort Pantry Incorporated	Healthy eating education – Christmas / New Year.
\$2,000	Pyrenees Historical Vehicle Club Inc.	Mobile defibrillator.
\$2,794	Raglan Hall and Recreation Reserve Committee Inc.	Public toilet/shower/amenities block upgrade – internal/external lighting.
\$3,500	Snake Valley Historical Society	Document digitisation project.
\$6,000	Waterloo Community Group	Waterloo Hall external gathering space improvement.

Shop Façade Program

Amount	Awarded to	Project
\$4,000	Beaufort Family Practice	Shopfront façade refresh.
\$1,500	Bloomin Fresh Beaufort	Shop front awnings for fresh produce weather protection.
\$4,000	Gollops Garade Avoca Pty Ltd	Painting and signage building fascia.
\$4,000	Iprune Pty Ltd	103 High Street, Avoca – shopfront façade upgrade.
\$2,956	Pyrenees Hotel	Reinstatement of external heritage signage.
\$4,000	The Flywheel Bar & Café	Shop facade restoration.

Event Sponsorship

Amount	Awarded to	Project
\$2,000	Avoca Community Arts and Gardens Inc.	Art Makers Market.
\$600	Avoca Friends of the Pool	Celebrating Community Together.
\$600	Avoca Riverside Market Incorporated	Mustering Rural Communities for Carols and Conversation.
\$2,500	Avoca Riverside Market Incorporated	Market Activities to Inspire and Connect.
\$2,000	Avoca Shire Turf Club	Avoca Races.
\$2,000	Beaufort Tattoo Exhibition	Beaufort Tattoo Exhibition.
\$3,000	Lake Goldsmith Steam Preservation Association	Traffic control.
\$2,000	Landsborough Events Group Incorporated	Landsborough Community Christmas Event.
\$2,500	Pyrenees Community House	Beaufort Town Market.
\$2,000	Statewide Endurance	Snake Valley Dash – endurance ride.
\$2,000	Tour de Trails	Wild Mount Trail Run

Response Subsidy

Amount	Awarded to	Project
\$200	Casablanca Movie Club Inc.	School holiday movie screenings.
\$785	Casablanca Movie Club Inc.	2023 Seniors Festival – Avoca program.
\$92	CFA	The CFA Community Fire Guard program.
\$500	Lake Goldsmith Steam Preservation Association	Traffic control.
\$500	Lexton Public Hall Inc.	Women's fitness classes.
\$856	Pyrenees Community House	Seniors Festival – 2023 Beaufort program.

Signage Subsidy

Amount	Awarded to	Project
\$250	Lexton Public Hall Inc.	Festival of Small Halls.
\$193	Pyrenees Community House	Beaufort Christmas Twilight Market.

Community Resilience Grant

Amount	Awarded to	Project
\$2,000	Advance Avoca	Let's Dance Avoca.
\$2,000	Advance Avoca	Christmas Carols Connections.
\$2,000	Avoca Friends of the Pool	Let the season begin celebration.
\$2,000	Avoca Friends of the pool	Swimming to Reconnect Community.
\$2,000	Avoca Riverside Market Incorporated	Connecting Community and Art Space to Avoca Riverside Market.
\$1,400	Barkly Hall and Recreation Reserve	Barkly Outdoors.
\$2,000	Beaufort Men's Shed	Memberships and men's health campaign.
\$958	Mount Cole – Pyrenees Nature Group	Guided forest recovery walk and picnic.
\$2,000	Pyrenees Arts Council	High Tea at Art Trax Gallery.
\$2,000	Pyrenees Community House	Pyrenees Community House 40th Anniversary.
\$2,000	Pyrenees Community House	Pyrenees Community House bus trip 2024.
\$2,000	Pyrenees Community House	Beaufort Community Connection activations.
\$2,000	Raglan Hall and Recreation Reserve Committee Inc.	Acquisition of first aid kits.



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Pyrenees Shire Council aims to balance the expectations of the community against ensuring the financial viability of the Council now and into the future. This is becoming increasingly difficult due to the limitation of the Council's ability to raise revenue due to constraints in place via the State Government Rate Capping framework, which continues to be significantly less than the inflationary impacts on the delivery of Council services.

Over the past couple of years, Council has been reviewing not only service levels but also services in an effort to balance the overall budget. The tough economic climate with rate cap levels well below inflationary levels has proved extremely difficult for Council to navigate. In real terms, Council's capital works program, especially the infrastructure component, has not kept pace.

Factors that have impacted the financial results of Council for the 2023-24 financial year are:

- A significant fire event in February 2024, which has again seen Council suffer significant financial impacts as a result of damaged infrastructure across the municipality. To date Council has expended \$2.074 million on emergency works related to this fire.
- October 2022 flood event.
 - For the 2023-24 financial year Council expended a further \$3.152 million.
 - This has reduced the cost of assets by \$6.116 million.
 - Significantly impacted the Council's infrastructure, which will take time to repair.
 - This event and continued adverse weather conditions impacted Council's ability to deliver its works program within acceptable timeframes.
- Financial Assistance Grants – over the past few years, Council has received the future year's funding in the current financial year. This current year's grants were

received during the previous financial year (2022-23). Had this practice of issuing the grants in advance continued, there would have been no financial impact on the financial results of Council. However, for this year the timing of the grants was changed with the grants being received after the end of the financial year. With no grants being actually received during the 2023-24 financial year, the impact of this timing change means that Council received a negative impact of \$6.8 million.

- The net impact of the flood, fire, and the timing change for the receipt of the financial assistance grants, has reduced the operating result by approximately \$9 million. This has impacted the end-of-year cash position by the same amount.

It is important to review these 2023-24 financial results in the context of the long-term financial objectives developed by Council. These are:

- Maintain a strong cash position.
- Ensure that Council remains financially sustainable in the long-term.
- Continue to pursue grant funding for strategic capital works from the state and federal governments.
- Maintain the existing range and level of services available to communities within the municipality.
- Ensure adequate revenue to maintain a sustainable level of services for the community.
- Ensure appropriate levels of funding is provided to address Council's Infrastructure renewal gap.

The following is a snapshot of the 2023-24 financial position:

- Operating Surplus/(Deficit) (\$3.571) million 2023-24
\$5.162 million 2022-23
\$4.155 million 2021-22
\$3.231 million 2020-21



- Total Cash and Investments
 - \$9.202 million 2023-24
 - \$19.293 million 2022-23
 - \$15.761 million 2021-22
 - \$12.953 million 2020-21
- Total Assets
 - \$298,766 million 2023-24
 - \$303.711 million 2022-23
 - \$274.167 million 2021-22
 - \$257.851 million 2020-21
- Working Capital
 - \$5.732 million (193%) 2023-24
 - \$13.003 million (257%) 2022-23
 - \$9.896 million (240%) 2021-22
 - \$6.255 million (180%) 2020-21
- Capital Expenditure
 - \$11.020 million 2023-24
 - \$8,615 million 2022-23
 - \$9.303 million 2021-22

The overall financial position of Council for the 2023-24 financial year fell within the financial parameters of Council's 10-year Financial Plan adopted in June 2023. Council continues to face a significant challenge in funding the renewal of critical long-lived community infrastructure. In 2023-24 Council received funding under the Roads to Recovery Program, and the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program, both of which significantly improved Council's ability to maintain this infrastructure. Council will continue to advocate for more grants that will help improve the renewal of assets. Meeting the continual renewal of Council's vast asset base remains an ongoing challenge for all Councils.

Council has many current and future demands on funding, as mentioned, the discrepancy between Council's ability to raise funds during an economic period of higher levels of inflation, highlighting the need for strong, long-term planning and the targeted allocation of resources. This is achieved through the preparation and annual review process of the Council Plan, which is supported by Council's Strategic Resource Plan. Ultimately, these documents are guided by longer-term visions and plans including the Long-Term Financial Plan, which projects Council's financial direction for the next ten years. This enables Council to identify and analyse trends of significance and provide for sound financial planning and decision-making.

The continued revision and refinement of the Long-Term Financial Plan enables longer-term conversations with the community, and this makes possible long-term goals that assist in creating engaged and vibrant communities.

This financial snapshot for the 2023-24 financial year gives a brief overview of Council's financial performance and the significant factors that impacted on the financial resources used to support the achievement of long-term community service and asset management objectives. A more detailed analysis of the financial performance for 2023-24 can be found in the Annual Financial Report, which is available on Council's website and is attached to Council's physical Annual Report.

Glenn Kallio
Principal Accounting Officer

Section 3: OUR COMMUNITY





OUR HISTORY

Traditional Owners

The traditional custodians of the lands that make up the Pyrenees Shire comprises the Wadawurrung, Dja Dja Wurrung (Djaara), Eastern Maar and the peoples of the Wotjobaluk Nations – the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk.

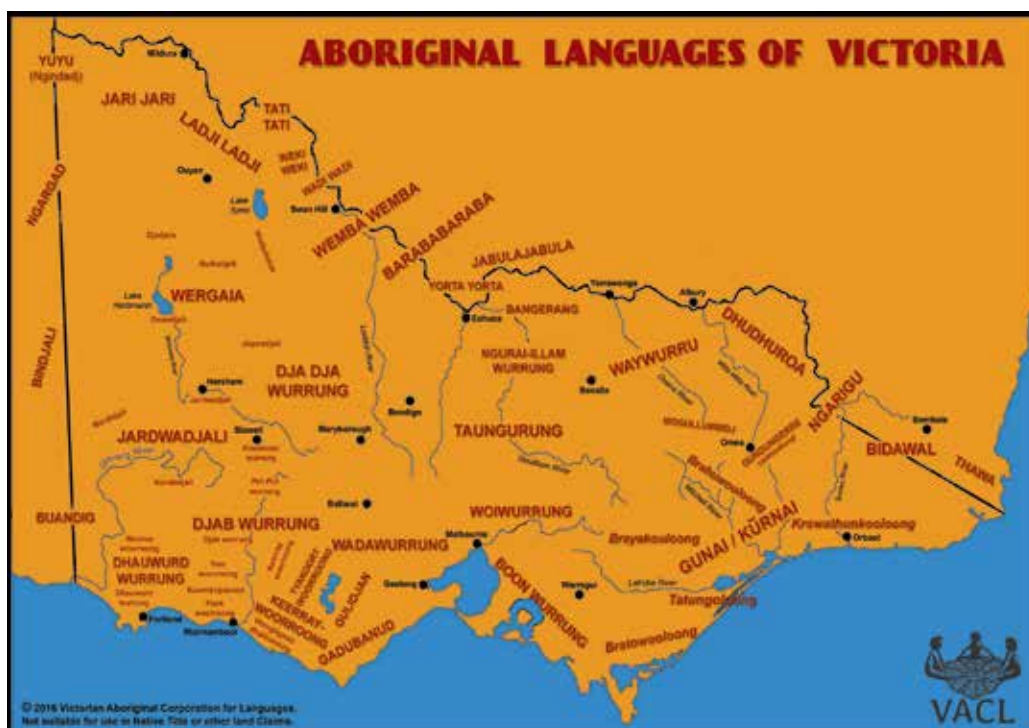
We acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands upon which the Pyrenees Shire is located, along with their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their ancestors and Elders past, present and emerging.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People currently make up almost 2% of the Pyrenees Shire population, double the Victorian percentage.

More recent past

The Shire has a strong history of pioneer settlement, gold exploration and mining, agriculture, and viticulture starting in the early 19th Century. Its community also has strong links to the men and women who served in major conflicts across the globe, including the First World War and Second World War.

The Shire is served by dedicated groups of its community who focus on the preserving, collecting and researching the history of the districts within the Shire, including the Avoca and District Historical Society, the Beaufort Historical Society, the Woody Yaloak Historical Society and the Linton & District Historical Society; the Shire's Cemetery Trusts in Avoca, Beaufort, and Elmhurst; plus the countless number of community groups and organisations with a wealth of historical knowledge.



OUR FUTURE

Reconciliation

Council is working with an advisory group of community members to implement its second Reconciliation Action Plan 2021-2024, which reaffirms and commits Council to actions for advancing reconciliation.

In this Plan we speak of partnership, recognition and empowerment and we commit to a truth-telling process to be honest about our past to support healing.

Council has developed an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocol Guide to provide Councillors and officers with advice on the appropriate use of terminology when engaging with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and assists in understanding culturally significant protocols when delivering programs and services within the Pyrenees Shire. The Guide is available on Council's website.

Working together

Today, Council works with Registered Aboriginal Parties within the Pyrenees Shire on protecting and preserving their local cultural heritage and ensuring that their representatives have a voice regarding activities that take place on public land.

This is done through notification and consultation processes as determined under relevant recognition and settlement or land use agreements such as the Dja Dja Wurrung LLUA.



My Totem Brewarrina - Bushka

Artworks

As part of its Art Collection, Council actively seeks artworks produced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of the community. Our latest acquisition is an artwork entitled 'My Totem Brewarrina' created by Bushka (see left). The painting represents the artist's totem animal.

"(The Brewarrina) is one of my family totems and I am on a journey to look for the rest of my family." Buska.

Beaufort is home to the Koori Art Trail, a walk around the Beaufort Lake populated with Indigenous art painted by Indigenous prisoners from the Langi Kal Kal prison. Each of the paintings is accompanied with its story and a virtual tour is available to view the works on Council's website and on YouTube [National Reconciliation Week 2020 Come Take a Walk With Me - YouTube]. The art trail is located on the traditional lands of the Wadawurrung People and the artwork was provided to the Beaufort Community and visitors to celebrate the Indigenous history of Wadawurrung.



Platypus Dreaming - Koori Art trail

Place naming

Council prioritises the use of local Aboriginal Language when naming or renaming roads or places within the Shire, in collaboration with Registered Aboriginal Parties within the Shire.

Over coming years Council will also include within its place naming priorities recognition of the women that have contributed to making the Pyrenees Shire the beautiful and vibrant place it is today.



Return to Country - Koori Art Trail

OUR GEOGRAPHY

Pyrenees Shire offers the best of country living, accessible healthcare, kinder to Year 12 education, and positive community life.

The Pyrenees Shire is situated in the beautiful surrounds of the Pyrenees Ranges, nestled adjacent to the popular tourist area of the Grampians National Park in Western Victoria, and situated between the regional cities of Ballarat, Ararat, Stawell and Maryborough.

The Shire covers some 3,500 square kilometres of a wide range of land types, from steep mountainous forested country to basalt plains and cropping lands. The municipality is approximately two hours' drive west of Melbourne via the Western and Sunraysia Highways, and 30 minutes from Ballarat.

Pyrenees Shire contains significant areas of publicly accessible land being the Pyrenees Ranges and Mount Cole State Forest, which form part of Australia's Great Dividing Range. Other forested areas exist in the southern and northern parts of the Shire between Moonambel and Redbank / Barkly areas, along with the Beaufort and Snake Valley districts. Other significant elements of the Great Dividing Range in or adjacent to the Shire include Mount Langi Ghiran, Mount Buangor, Mount Cole and Ben Nevis.

The Shire's countryside varies from the very steep hill areas of the Mount Cole, Mount Buangor and Pyrenees Ranges to the undulating flat open terrain around the Natte Yallock, Stoneleigh and Streatham areas. The major streams are the northerly running Wimmera and Avoca Rivers and the Bet Bet Creek, together with the southerly running Middle, Fiery and Emu Creeks.

Sections of the Shire which have been cleared have generally been improved for pasture with soil types varying from light gravel / clay soils in the north to very rich volcanic soils in the east and south.

Major water courses still contain and promote stands of native trees. Considerable areas of State forest, pine and blue gum plantations, along with private plantations exist in Beaufort, Raglan, Avoca, Landsborough, Moonambel, Waterloo, Chute and Snake Valley. Other plantations are reducing in size at Skipton, Lake Goldsmith, Trawalla, Eurambeen and Mena Park.

The climate varies between the north and south of the region. North of the Pyrenees Ranges there is a warmer, drier climate with rainfall of about 650mm per year. South of the Ranges is a cooler, wetter climate with rainfall average in excess of 750mm per year.





Our townships and localities

Townships

Beaufort Avoca Snake Valley

Localities

Amphitheatre	Glenlofty	Natte Yallock
Barkly	Glenpatrick	Nerring
Bo Peep	Glenshee	Nowhere Creek
Brewster	Hillcrest	Percydale
Bung Bong	Lake Goldsmith	Raglan
Burnbank	Landsborough	Rathscar
Carngham	Lampough	Redbank
Carranballac	Langi Kal Kal	Shays Flat
Chepstowe	Lexton	Shirley
Chute	Lillicur	Stockyard Hill
Cross Roads	Lower Homebush	Stoneleigh
Crowlands	Main Lead	Tanwood
Ercildoune	Mena Park	Trawalla
Eurambeen	Middle Creek	Warrenmang
Evansford	Moonambel	Waterloo
Eversley	Mortchup	Wattle Creek
Frenchmans	Mount Emu	Waubra
Glenbrae	Mount Lonarch	



OUR MUNICIPALITY SNAPSHOT



Population

Population **7,786**
Largest age cohort –
65-69 years **8.9%**
Largest age cohort change –
70-74 years **22.2%**

Country of Birth

Australia **81.1%**
England **3.6%**
New Zealand **1.2%**
Netherlands **0.5%**
Philippines **0.4%**
Scotland **0.4%**
Germany **0.4%**

Households that speak a language other than English at home **1.6%**



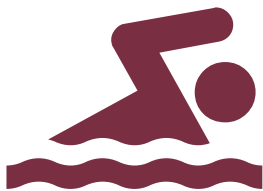
Area

3,434 square kilometres
2,009 km of local road network – 716 km sealed, 1,293 km unsealed
6,300 rateable properties



Council

5 Councillors
104 permanent employees



Pools

3 outdoor public swimming pool locations: Avoca, Beaufort and Landsborough
8,053 visits to swimming pools



Libraries

2 Library / Resource centres at Avoca and Beaufort

Mobile outreach service serviced Amphitheatre, Lexton, Avoca Hostel, Landsborough, Barkly, Redbank, Raglan, Trawalla, Snake Valley, Moonambel, Natte Yallock and Waubra.

12,419 library collection items

24,938 library items loaned



Schools

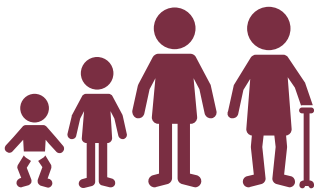
9 Government primary schools

1 Government secondary school



Family and Child Health

60 Enrolments in Maternal and Child Health Service from birth notifications



Age

Median age 50

Population over 60 years 35.8%



Income and work

Median weekly family income \$1,419

In the labour force 48.2%

Working 53.3% full-time, 34.1% part-time

Unemployed 3.8%



OUR HEALTH



In the last Census:

- **46.9%** report no long-term health conditions

Health conditions reported included:

- Arthritis **13.6%**
- Mental Health condition **11.7%**
- Asthma **9.9%**
- Cancer **4.3%**
- Diabetes **6.1%**
- Heart disease **6.1%**
- Dementia **0.6%**

OUR ECONOMY

Our Shire is home to a strong community and economy. It is host to attractive tourism and business operations including the Pyrenees Wine Region and other locally owned enterprises and agriculture.

Council has a strong record of allocating its budgets to meet areas of priority to local communities.



Community facilities

- Beaufort Goldfields Electrical upgrades and oval lighting -\$450,000



Communication improvements

- Council continuously advocates for improvements in the black spot removal program.



Critical Infrastructure

- Around \$11 million invested into infrastructure and community focused capital works projects.
- More than \$580,000 million on bridges, major culverts and floodways.



The unique features of the Shire establish it as the liveable heart of Victoria, celebrated by tourists, business and our communities, with a broad range of community interests in the arts, sport, its historical background and the numerous natural assets for those interested in bushwalking and cycling.

Tourist attractions include:

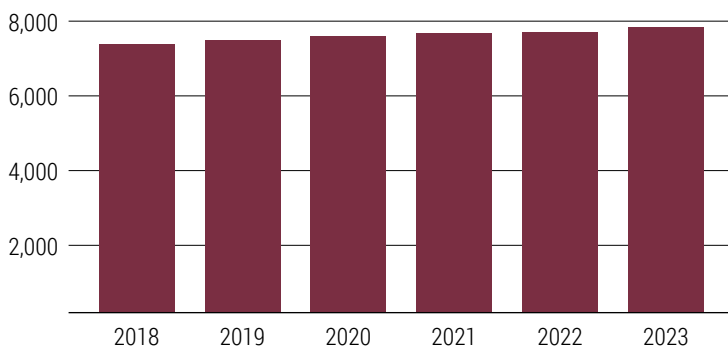
- Distinctive landscapes encompassing flat and open plains and hilly terrain, amongst which Mount Cole stands highest.
- The Pyrenees Ranges that provide for two climates to its north and south.
- The famous Pyrenees Wine Region, which hosts many established vignerons and wineries.
- A long and continuing history of gold discovery, reflected in the current bid to add the Victorian Goldfields to the UNESCO World Heritage List.

- Heritage precincts across the Shire, particularly in Avoca, Beaufort, Landsborough and Moonambel.
- Historic homesteads listed on the Victorian Heritage Register, including Mawalok, Mount Mitchell, Ercildoune and the Percydale Historic Reserve.
- A burgeoning creative sector exemplified by the Art Trax Gallery operating from the refurbished Beaufort Train Station and the Avoca Arts and Gardens Precinct operating from the former Avoca Railway Station.
- Several high-profile State Parks including Mount Buangor, Pyrenees Ranges State Forest, Mount Cole and Ben Major.

Key industry sectors include an established agricultural industry focussing on wool, meat, hay production, grain, potatoes and nurseries, grapes and forestry, plus four wind farms.

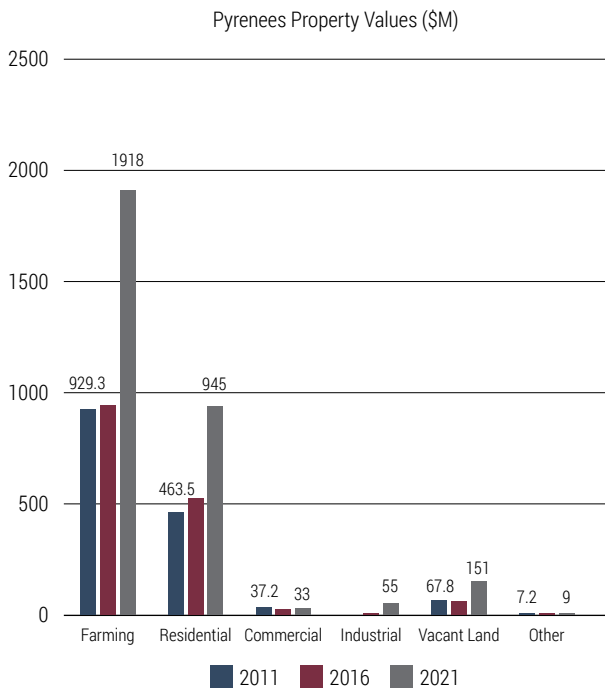
Population

Population in the Pyrenees Shire has seen small but steady growth over the past 10 years, supported by Council's Correa Park development in Beaufort and infill development in all townships.



Property values

Property values rose across the Shire during the financial year. Although the statistics are difficult to separate, the increase seen in farming valuations was greater in the southern end of the Shire.



Tourism

Tourism is an important industry in the Shire, which has a range of natural attributes that lend themselves to outdoor activities such as bushwalking, camping, cycling and sightseeing. The Shire is home to around 20 winery cellar doors operating in the Pyrenees and Grampians wine regions.

The region hosts a range of events that attract visitors year-round including the Pyrenees Unearthed wine and food festival in April and cellar door events such as live music and specialist food and art events. Moonambel hosts mid-winter bonfires and spectacular fireworks displays, and the Lake Goldsmith Steam Rally is held twice per year.

Other events throughout the year include equestrian endurance rides and races, car rallies, cycling and walking events that take advantage of the state forests and country roads of the Pyrenees. Many smaller towns showcase their area with events such as markets and vintage car rallies. Regular tournaments are held including petanque, croquet, golf and lawn bowls.



Pyrenees Shire Council partners with 12 other local governments, led by the Cities of Ballarat and Greater Bendigo, to progress a bid for the Central Victorian Goldfields to be included on the World Heritage List.

This will share the extraordinary story of the Central Victorian Goldfields with people from across the globe and create social, cultural and economic opportunities across the region.

Arts and culture

Art features prominently in the Shire with two main galleries in Beaufort (Art Trax) and Avoca (Gallery 127), a range of other art-focused communities and major art shows held in the two larger towns annually. Markets held across the Shire attract a range of visitors and locals alike and support a growing group of local artisans, food producers and makers.

Sport

Pyrenees Shire hosts football and netball clubs and leagues, junior and senior cricket, tennis, golf and lawn bowls, with many of the townships enjoying easy access to recreation and sportsgrounds. The beautiful natural environment attracts sporting pursuits including motorbike riding, cycling and hiking.



Council plans for future development in Avoca

This year, Council purchased a 7.5-hectare parcel of land in Avoca's north, preserving it for potential future residential development. The land, zoned General Residential 1, is located off High Street and is surrounded by existing residential blocks.

Council CEO Jim Nolan explained that the purchase allows Council to have greater control over future development in the town, ensuring it aligns with the wishes of the land's former long-term owners. While there are no immediate plans to develop the site, it remains a valuable asset for future housing to accommodate Avoca's growing population.

Mayor Robert Vance said the Avoca community and adjoining landowners would be engaged in discussions about how the land could be used to benefit the town as part of a broader strategic framework plan.

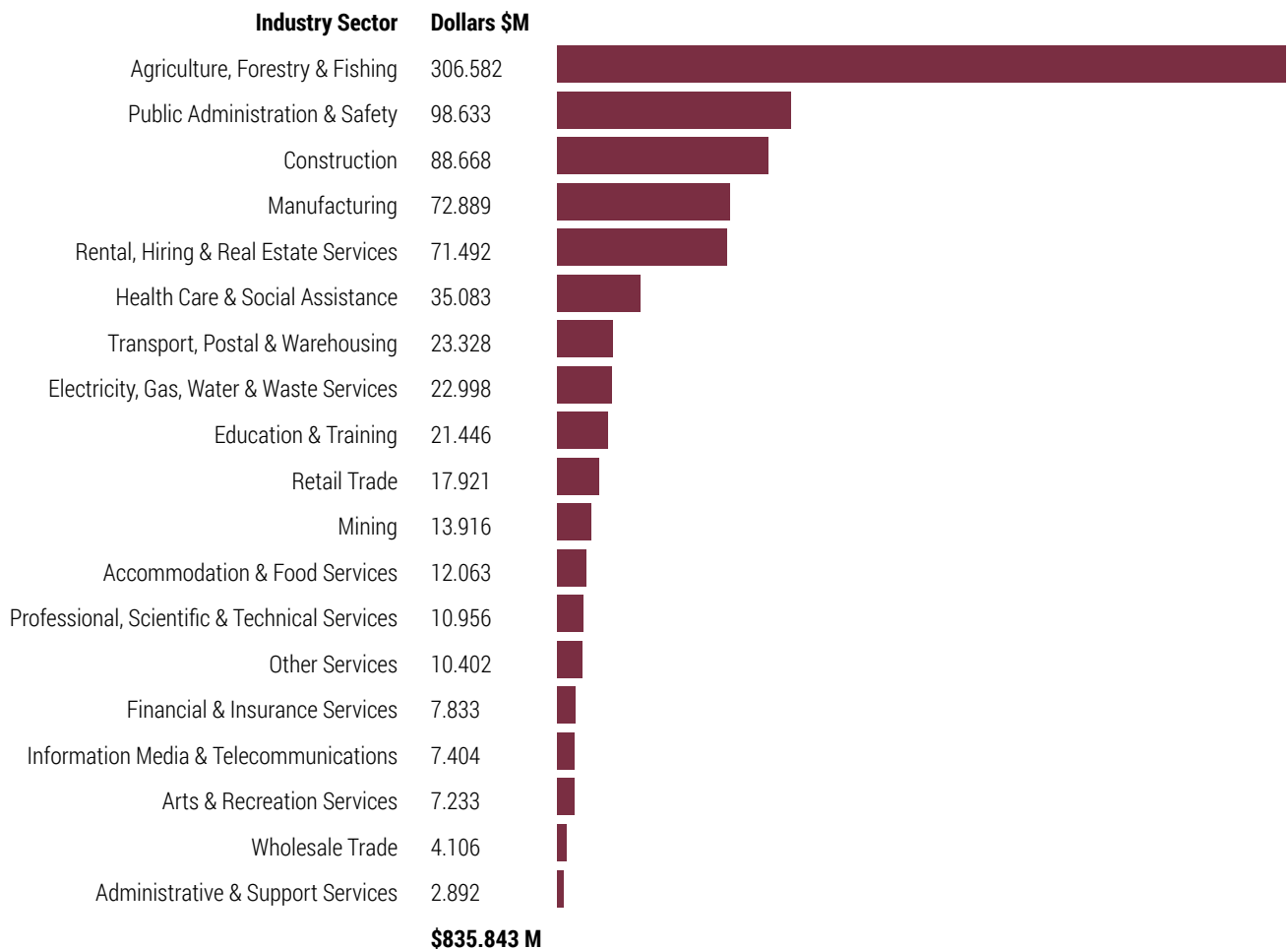
Economy

Pyrenees Shire is dependent on its agriculture and viticulture industries. It is known for wool, wine, grain, sheep and forestry activity. Businesses in the industry type "agriculture, forestry and fishing" make up nearly half the total number of businesses in the Shire, almost one third of its gross output, and almost a third of the workforce is employed in this industry. Key agriculture crops include wool, cereal, hay and meat.

Other important industries of employment include viticulture, healthcare and social assistance, electricity, gas and waste-water services, construction industry, and retail trade.

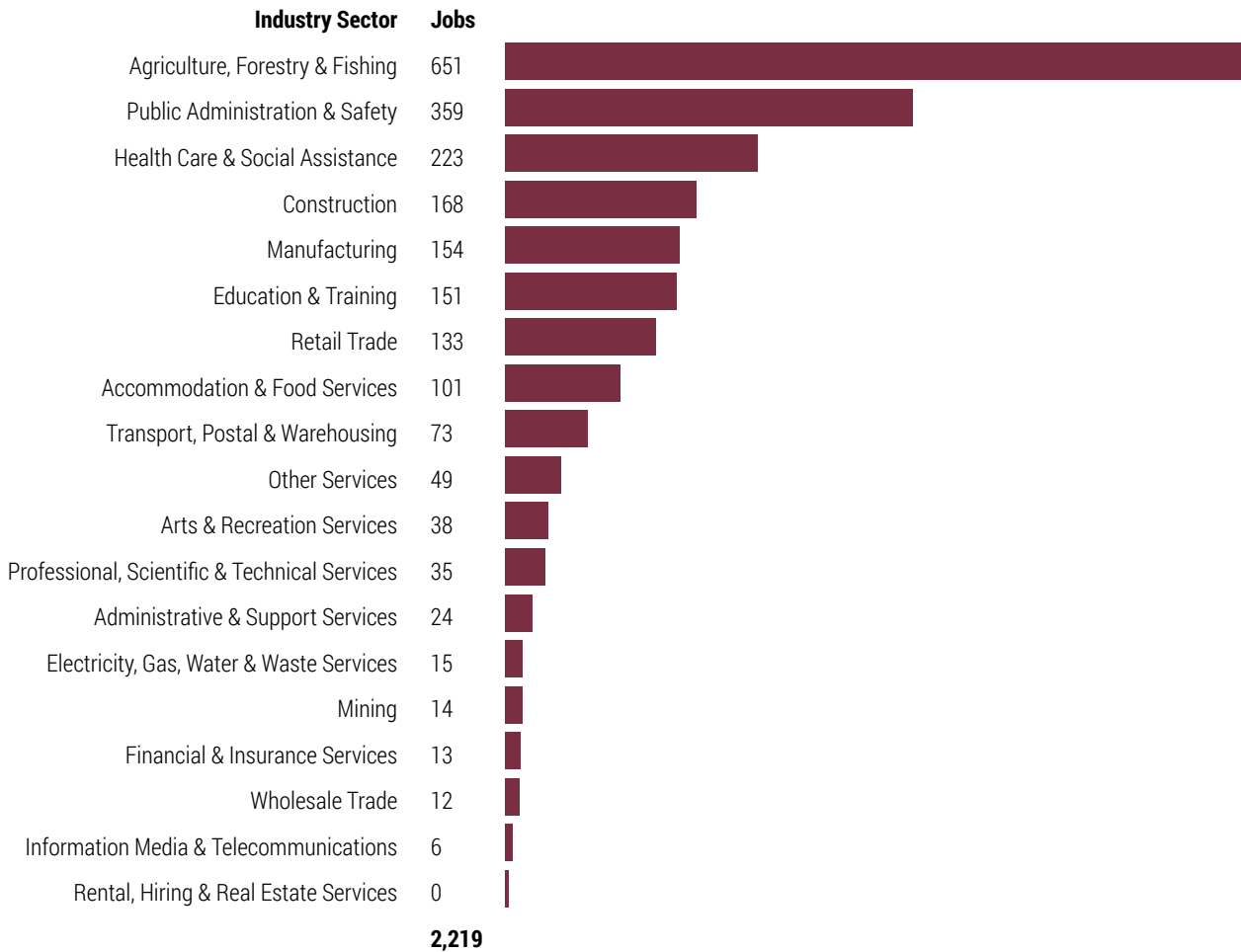
HM Prison Langi Kal Kal and Council are major employers in the region within the Public Administration and Safety sector.

Output data represents the gross revenue (or total sales / income) generated by businesses/organisations in each of the industry sectors. The total output estimate for Pyrenees is \$704.526 million.

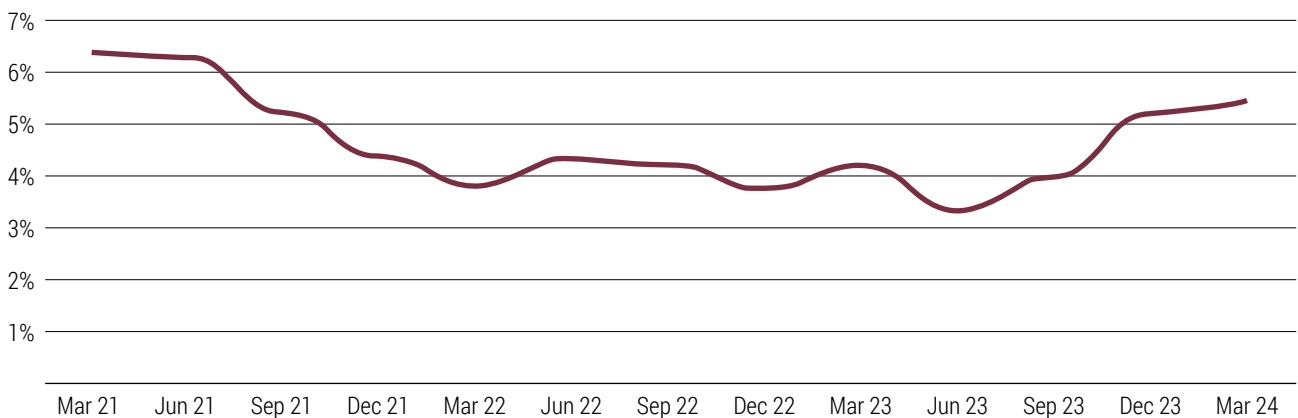


Employment

The total employment estimate for the Pyrenees Shire is 2,219 jobs. Employees whose place of work is located within the Pyrenees Shire is shown across the range of industries below.



Unemployment has dropped steadily to just over 3% in June 2023 before rising slightly to 5.5% in March 2024.



A scenic landscape featuring a river flowing through a green field with large trees and hills in the background. The river is the central focus, with water reflecting the sky and surrounding greenery. Large, mature trees with thick trunks are scattered throughout the scene, some partially submerged in the water. The background shows rolling hills under a clear blue sky. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

Section 4: OUR COUNCIL

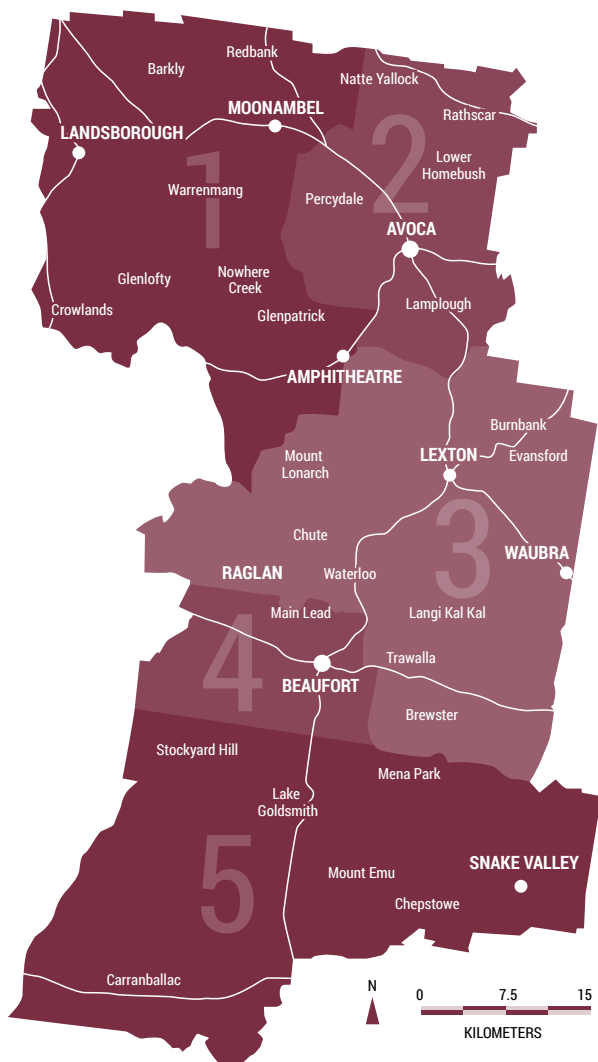


Mayor Cr Robert Vance (standing) at the 2023 Statutory Meeting with (L-R) Cr David Clark, CEO Jim Nolan and Cr Ron Eason.

OUR COUNCIL

Pyrenees Shire Council is elected by the Pyrenees Shire community to provide leadership for the good governance of the municipal district and the local community. This Council was re-elected on 24 October 2021 for a further four-year term.

The municipality is divided into five wards, represented by one Councillor in each ward. The five Councillors are the elected representatives of all residents and ratepayers across the Shire. They have responsibility for setting the strategic direction for the municipality, policy development, identifying service standards and monitoring performance across the organisation.



- 1 De Cameron Ward
- 2 Avoca Ward
- 3 Ercildoune Ward
- 4 Beaufort Ward
- 5 Mount Emu Ward



COUNCILLORS



Cr Robert Vance – Mayor

De Cameron Ward

First elected 1987 (Avoca Shire Council), re-elected 1996, 1999, 2008, 2012, 2016, 2020

T 0447 384 500 E decameron@pyrenees.vic.gov.au

Cr Robert Vance is a farmer, community lobbyist and long-serving Councillor. Cr Vance is a sheep farmer and has spent more than three decades in local government, including five years as an executive on the Rural Councils Victoria Board. He loves the natural beauty of the environment and appreciates the quality of the people that live in the Pyrenees. Cr Vance values the community's ability to come together in times of need or grief and to provide support to one another, regardless of difference. Cr Vance highlights giving back to his community as his main reason for standing for Council. This year marks Cr Vance's final year serving on Pyrenees Shire Council with the long-serving Councillor set to retire at the next Council election in October 2024.



Cr David Clark

Ercildoune Ward

First elected 1992, re-elected 1996, 1999, 2008, 2012, 2016, 2020

T 0417 374 704 E ercildoune@pyrenees.vic.gov.au

Cr David Clark is a big picture thinker and a champion for the local community. Cr Clark's breadth of experience crosses accounting, community development, public sector governance and natural resource management. He appreciates the character of the Pyrenees landscape, particularly the rolling hills, rich soils, and forests of eucalypts and other species. Cr Clark's motivation to join Council was the chance to make a difference and use his strategic skills. He highlights continuing to improve gravel roads, working towards being a more digitally-astute Council, and communities who (in general) are all after the same things for their future as his aspirations for this Council term. Cr Clark operates a mixed farming property at Glenbrae and works in Landcare. He shares his life with his wife Peta and their three children.



Cr Ron Eason

Avoca Ward

First elected 2012, re-elected 2016, 2020

T 0417 508 471 **E** avoca@pyrenees.vic.gov.au

Cr Ron Eason is a businessman and helpful character. Cr Eason's broad working experience includes manufacturing and small business. He loves the picturesque environment around Avoca and has found the community of Avoca so friendly, a big difference to his life in Melbourne and the Goulburn Valley. He highlights a desire to help people in the Pyrenees Shire as his aspiration for standing for Council. Cr Eason would like to see a more sustainable Council that serves the Shire.



Cr Damian Ferrari

Beaufort Ward

First elected 2018 (Beaufort Ward by-election), re-elected 2020

T 0437 662 295 **E** beaufort@pyrenees.vic.gov.au

Cr Damian Ferrari was born and raised in the Beaufort area and still resides in the area on a farm at Mount Cole. Cr Ferrari is community-minded and a community advocate and genuinely cares about the people in our municipality. He would like to see Council be progressive, sustainable, accountable and accessible to the community. Cr Ferrari is passionate about ensuring the long-term sustainability and progress of Beaufort, building a harmonious, resilient and connected community, and protecting our environment. He highlights providing for our elderly and nurturing our youth as his aspirations for this Council term. Cr Ferrari enjoys camping, fishing, gardening and listening to Radio 88 FM.



Cr Tanya Kehoe

Mount Emu Ward

First elected 2012, re-elected 2016, 2020

T 0439 571 480 **E** mountemu@pyrenees.vic.gov.au

Cr Tanya Kehoe is an educator and community advocate. Cr Kehoe's professional experience spans teaching, pastoral care and farming. Cr Kehoe loves the sense of community in the Mount Emu and Snake Valley area, a community that she has been part of her whole life. In her role as Councillor, she wants to use her strengths to better her community, and strongly represent her community. Cr Kehoe would like to see the continued development of the Snake Valley township, improve opportunities for young people, and advocate for better services with regards to roads and facilities. Cr Kehoe is also keen to continue to focus on how to best support farmers, services and businesses across the shire to continue to advance the local area for all residents. Cr Kehoe and her husband run a sheep property at Mount Emu and have eight children.

A person with a backpack is hiking through a lush forest. The person is seen from behind, wearing a dark jacket, blue jeans, and a backpack. They are standing on a narrow path surrounded by large, vibrant green ferns and other dense vegetation. The background shows a dense forest with tall trees and a misty atmosphere. The overall scene is a natural, outdoor setting.

Section 5: OUR PEOPLE

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The elected Council is the governing body that appoints the organisation's Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO has responsibility for the day-to-day management of operations in accordance with the strategic directions of the Council Plan, and the CEO and two directors form the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and lead the organisation.

Executive Leadership Team



Jim Nolan – *B.Eng (Civil)* **Chief Executive Officer**

Jim was appointed Chief Executive Officer with Pyrenees Shire Council in December 2014. He has over 30 years' experience in local government at Glenelg, Southern Grampians and Northern Grampians Shire Councils. Jim has extensive experience across infrastructure, project delivery, community and economic development.

As Chief Executive Officer, Jim is responsible for the day-to-day operations of Council, the delivery of the Council Plan and the implementation of Council decisions. Jim also has direct responsibility for economic development, people and culture, and communications.



Kathy Bramwell – *DipHE (Business); Grad. Cert. Risk Management* **Director Corporate and Community Services**

Kathy joined Pyrenees Shire Council in January 2017, originally working in the Governance and Risk area, and moving into the Director role in mid-2018. She has 20 years' experience in governance, risk management and compliance in the Victorian Public Sector – in local government at Brimbank City Council and, before the Pyrenees, at RMIT University in Melbourne.

Kathy is responsible for the strategic management of the Corporate and Community Services Directorate, which includes finance and administration, information technology, governance, corporate compliance, risk management/OHS, emergency management, customer service, community wellbeing, community development, and Council's libraries and information centres.

Kathy is also Council's Councillor Conduct Officer and Public Interests Disclosures Coordinator.



Douglas Gowans – *B.Eng* **Director Assets and Development Services**

Douglas joined Pyrenees Shire Council in 2015. His experience in local government spans two decades including roles at Golden Plains and Hindmarsh Shire Councils.

Douglas manages the operations and asset areas of Council. His responsibilities include the construction and maintenance of critical public infrastructure, including roads and bridges, as well as waste management and recycling, public asset maintenance, environment, town planning, building services and community safety and amenity.



WHAT COUNCIL DOES

The following gives a broad outline of the key functions undertaken by the different departments and functions within the directorates.

Office of the Chief Executive Officer

Communications	Media releases Social media Official communications Website management
Advocacy	Advocating and promoting proposals which are in the best interests of the local community
People and Culture (Human Resources)	Recruitment, retention and staff wellbeing Volunteer management Organisational training and development Industrial relations / grievance management WorkCover and return to work management Gender Equality
Economic Development and Tourism	Economic and business development Business sector monitoring, support, liaison and advice Tourism promotion and marketing Caravan Parks Events promotion

Corporate and Community Services Directorate

Community Wellbeing and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Citizens centres Supported social activities Maternal and Child Health Supported playgroups Immunisation program Community groups and action planning support Youth services and support Community grants program Community health and wellbeing Sport and recreation planning / aquatic facilities Community engagement Project management facilitation Recovery management Family Violence
Frontline Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer service / Council business Resource centres and libraries Visitor Information centres Customer Action Requests (CARs) administration
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial management, budgeting and reporting Property and revenue / accounts receivable Fleet procurement and maintenance Accounts payable
Information Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data and information security / disaster recovery Information and records management Systems development and management Customer support Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
Governance and Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance and corporate compliance Risk management and occupational health and safety Business continuity management Fraud and corruption protection Privacy and FOI management Procurement governance Complaints administration and management Organisation service and process reviews Internal audit
Emergency management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipal emergency management planning and administration Municipal relief and recovery support

Assets and Development Services Directorate

Works / Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stormwater, bridges, roads and footpath maintenance Parks and gardens, public municipal area maintenance Street tree management Litter management and graffiti removal Traffic management Conservation and bushland management Plant and equipment maintenance Asset inspection schedules and Road Management Plan management / compliance
Planning and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer service, technical advisory and issues resolution Property information Statutory planning Strategic planning (urban design / township, land use, social planning and public spaces, strategic policy and zoning, heritage management) Building control, safety and enforcement Emergency incident post-impact assessment
Community safety and public health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire prevention program Resilient communities / Pyrenees Community Safety Working Group Environmental Health (Food safety, public health and wellbeing, domestic wastewater management) Community Safety and Amenity (local law enforcement, animal & stock management, school crossing supervisors, parking enforcement, footpath trading, public amenity enforcement)
Asset Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building / facilities maintenance Asset management planning and systems Strategic assets management and lifecycle planning Asset condition inspections and reports
Engineering Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engineering design Capital works project management Contract and contractor management Roads and footpath provision / planning / construction Road infrastructure provision Stormwater drainage provision
Environmental sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land management Pest and weed management Environment sustainability and climate change Open air burning / fuel reduction burning Collection of firewood Natural resource management / native vegetation offset management Climate resilient communities Maintenance of bushland reserves and rural walking tracks Support for Friends and Landcare Groups



COUNCIL STAFF

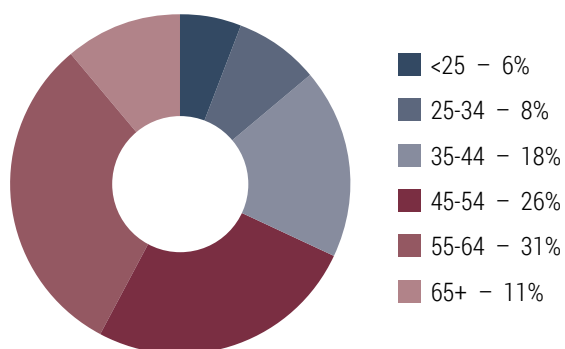
As of 30 June 2024, a summary of the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff categorised by employment classification and gender is set out below. This represents a decrease in FTE from the previous year.

Structure Classification	Band 1 FTE	Band 2 FTE	Band 3 FTE	Band 4 FTE	Band 5 FTE	Band 6 FTE	Band 7 FTE	Band 8 FTE	All other FTE	Total FTE
Permanent FT – F	0	0	0	3	4	7	2	1	2	19
Permanent FT – M	0	0	16	7	3	11	2	3	8	50
Permanent FT – X	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Permanent PT – F	0	0	0	6	0.6	2.7	0	0	0	9.3
Permanent PT – M	0	0	0	0.8	0	0	0	0	0	0.8
Permanent PT – X	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Casual – F	0.2	0	0	1.8	0	0	0	0	0	2
Casual – M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Casual – X	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0.2	0	16	18.6	7.6	20.7	4	4	10	81.1

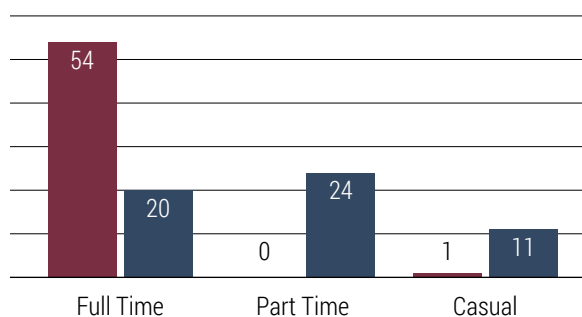
FTE = full-time equivalent; FT = full-time; PT = part-time; F = female; M = male; X = Non-binary

As of 30 June 2024, the Pyrenees Shire Council had a total permanent workforce of 81.1 equivalent full time, or 104 individuals.

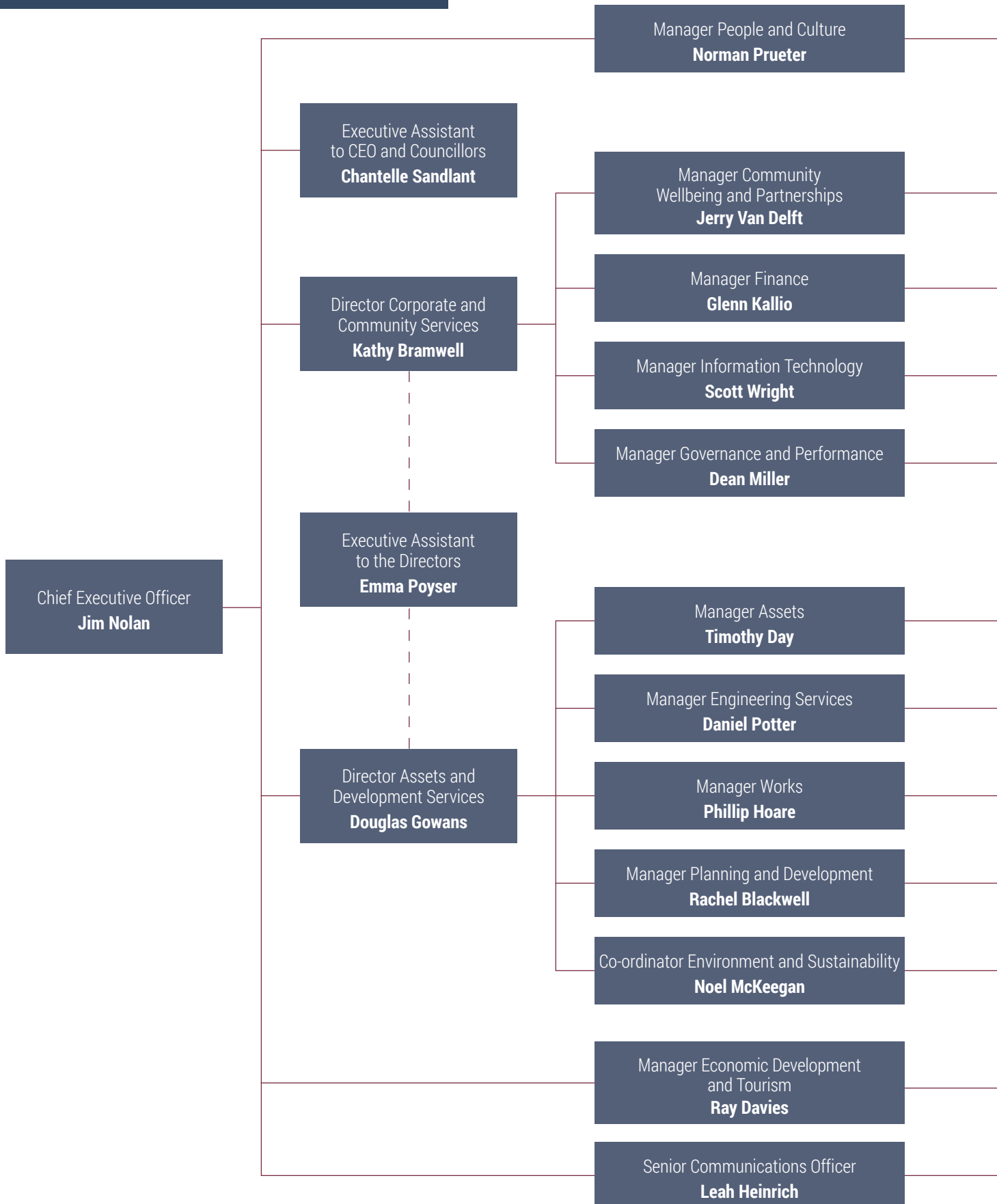
Employee's Age Composition



Staff by Gender and Employment Type



MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE



→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources Management • People & Culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment • Workforce Planning 	
→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Planning • Family & Children's Services • Community Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport & Recreation, Health Promotion • Youth • Positive Ageing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Focused Project Management • Community Engagement Support
→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Management • Financial Operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payroll • Creditor / Debtors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue (rates)
→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Technology • Computer Hardware 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Server & Software • Telecommunications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographical Information Systems
→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Systems • Risk management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Continuity • Emergency Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance • Records Management
→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Works Project Management • Asset Management Systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Maintenance • Strategic Asset Management 	
→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineering Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste Management & Recycling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracts Management
→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks & Gardens Maintenance • Road & Bridge Maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant & Equipment Maintenance • Public Infrastructure Maintenance 	
→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory Planning • Strategic Planning • School Crossing Supervisors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Enforcement • Environmental Health • Building Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Safety & Amenity • Fire Prevention
→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Referrals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weed Management
→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development • Tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor Information Centres • Events 	
→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications 		

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Kishan Shrestha Engineer

Kishan Shrestha has been a valued member of the Pyrenees Shire Council engineering team for two years, contributing his expertise and passion to our community.

Originally joining Hepburn Shire before making the transition to Pyrenees, Kishan has found the lifestyle in regional Victoria exactly as he'd hoped – warm, welcoming and the perfect place to raise his young family. Kishan's role is pivotal in road reconstruction and rehabilitation, overseeing the maintenance of the Shire's 600 kilometres of sealed roads.

"Each year, we focus on the rehabilitation and reconstruction of roads, about \$2 million in investment annually. The process involves assessing road conditions, prioritising based on damage and traffic flow, and ensuring we make the best use of resources."

Kishan finds great satisfaction in seeing the transformation once a project is complete and enjoys it when positive feedback comes in from the community.

He praises the supportive work culture at Pyrenees Shire, noting the openness and accessibility of the management team. "Everyone here is approachable, including the directors

and our CEO. It's a small shire, so you get to know everyone, and cooperation across departments is easy."

Kishan is passionate about his work, particularly the problem-solving aspects, and values the opportunity to design roads in-house with his team.

"Working here offers the best of both worlds – opportunity and challenge. The working environment is so important, and I'd definitely recommend Pyrenees Shire to anyone. There's a real sense of connection, and it's a great place to grow professionally."

Outside of work, Kishan enjoys an active lifestyle, watching AFL, and taking his family on bicycle rides. Originally from Nepal, Kishan and his family have embraced life in Australia, while still managing to stay connected to his Nepalese roots through the small community in Ballarat. He particularly enjoys sharing his culture with his colleagues, participating in international days organised by the Council to foster understanding and trust.

Kishan is proud to call Central Victoria home and continues to contribute to making it a better place for all residents.





Staff receiving their service awards in December 2023 (L-R): Philip Diprose, Brian Hayes, Camille Broadbent, Robert Millar and Margie Stratton.

OTHER STAFF MATTERS

Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP)

Council is committed to improving equality based on gender and other barriers. A progress report against the Pyrenees Shire Council Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) was submitted during the year and a new Diversity Respect Inclusion Working Group will support the work to implement the Plan.

Recruitment, attraction and retention

Council currently employs 110 members of staff. Council advertised 26 positions in 2023-24. A few positions needed to be advertised several times as Council was unable to fill positions due to labour shortages in the market. For most positions advertised, Council continues to receive multiple applications.

Traineeships and work experience

One trainee undertook their traineeship during 2023-24 in the customer services team. Furthermore, secondary school students and tertiary school students are given the opportunity to undertake work experience placements in the organisation.

Learning and development

Council continues to provide ongoing learning and development to all staff through internal and external programs.

A sample of the training undertaken in 2023-24 includes:

- First Aid/CPR
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Mental Health First Aid
- Emergency management training
- Diploma in Project Management
- Chemical management
- Contract management
- Certificate IV in Leadership and Management

Furthermore, staff attended conferences organised by the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and LGPro.

Recognition of length of service

Council recognises the length of service that staff contribute as part of its annual end of year celebrations.

- 1 staff member was recognised for 40 years of service
- 1 staff member was recognised for 30 years of service
- 2 staff members were recognised for 20 years of service
- 1 staff member was recognised for 15 years of service



HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

Council has a commitment to providing a healthy and safe workplace for all Councillors, staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors to the Pyrenees Shire Council.

Council articulates and delivers this commitment through its Health Safety and Wellbeing Policy and OHS Management System, and recognises health, safety and wellbeing as an integral part of our business.

The Pyrenees Way

The Pyrenees Way describes how the Pyrenees Shire Council manages its health, safety and wellbeing obligations – representing a culture where safe work practices and attitudes, and a “speak up” culture are reflective of the “way we do things at the Pyrenees Shire Council – safely and without harm”.

Council works towards minimising harm by focusing on four key pillars:

1. **Leadership:** provide direction and support in the provision of high standards of health, safety, wellbeing and environmental standards; aiming to eliminate or reduce as far as is easily practicable the risk of harm and promoting a zero tolerance to workplace aggression or violence;
2. **Systematic Approach:** establish a management framework that supports a strong and compliant health, safety and wellbeing culture, inclusive of behavioural standards that promote good mental health;
3. **Active OHS and Speak Up culture:** promoting an organisational culture that accepts good health, safety and wellbeing; and encourages continuous improvement as an integral part of the way that Council and its workforce undertakes its activities; and
4. **Workplaces and equipment:** ensuring a deep understanding of the nature of hazards inherent within Councils work, activities and undertakings.

The Pyrenees Shire Council achieves these goals by:

- Ensuring that health, safety and wellbeing is adequately resourced and maintained as an integral part of business planning processes;
- Complying, as a minimum, with all relevant OHS laws and regulations;
- Identifying, eliminating or mitigating risks, as far as is reasonably practicable, to Council’s workforce;
- Implementing, maintaining and reviewing our OHS Management system;
- Continual and effective improvement of OHS performance, through the setting and review of objectives and targets, which relate to key aspects of the business;
- Providing and maintaining an effective mechanism for consultation, communication and partnership with all Councillors and staff on health, safety and wellbeing matters;
- Maintaining a culture of employee consultation and teamwork in all aspects of health, safety and wellbeing;
- Providing and maintaining an effective process and tools to encourage the reporting, management and resolution of health, safety and wellbeing hazards, risks, incidents and issues;
- Providing appropriate health, safety and wellbeing awareness and training to develop an informed and knowledgeable Council and workforce; and
- Requiring all Councillors, employees, contractors and volunteers to accept responsibility for their own actions, and to behave in a manner that reflects safe work practices.

Officers report regularly on health, safety and wellbeing to Council’s Audit and Risk Committee, OHS Committee, Staff Consultative Committee and Risk Management Committee on issues that arise.



Psychosocial safety and wellbeing

Council actively monitors the mental wellbeing of its staff and aims to create and maintain an inclusive and supportive workplace where employees feel appreciated and everyone is treated equally and fairly.

Council works under the following principles:

- Fostering a culture of respect and tolerance of people who have psychological challenges.
- Being mindful that people may have undisclosed psychological concerns that could impact on a range of interactions.
- Facilitating good mental health and psychological safety by virtue of connectedness, tolerance, and respect and through fostering productive work relationships and an inclusive workplace culture.

WorkCover claims

Council recorded three (3) WorkCover claims during the reporting period.

Section 6: OUR PERFORMANCE



OUR PERFORMANCE

Integrated strategic planning and reporting framework

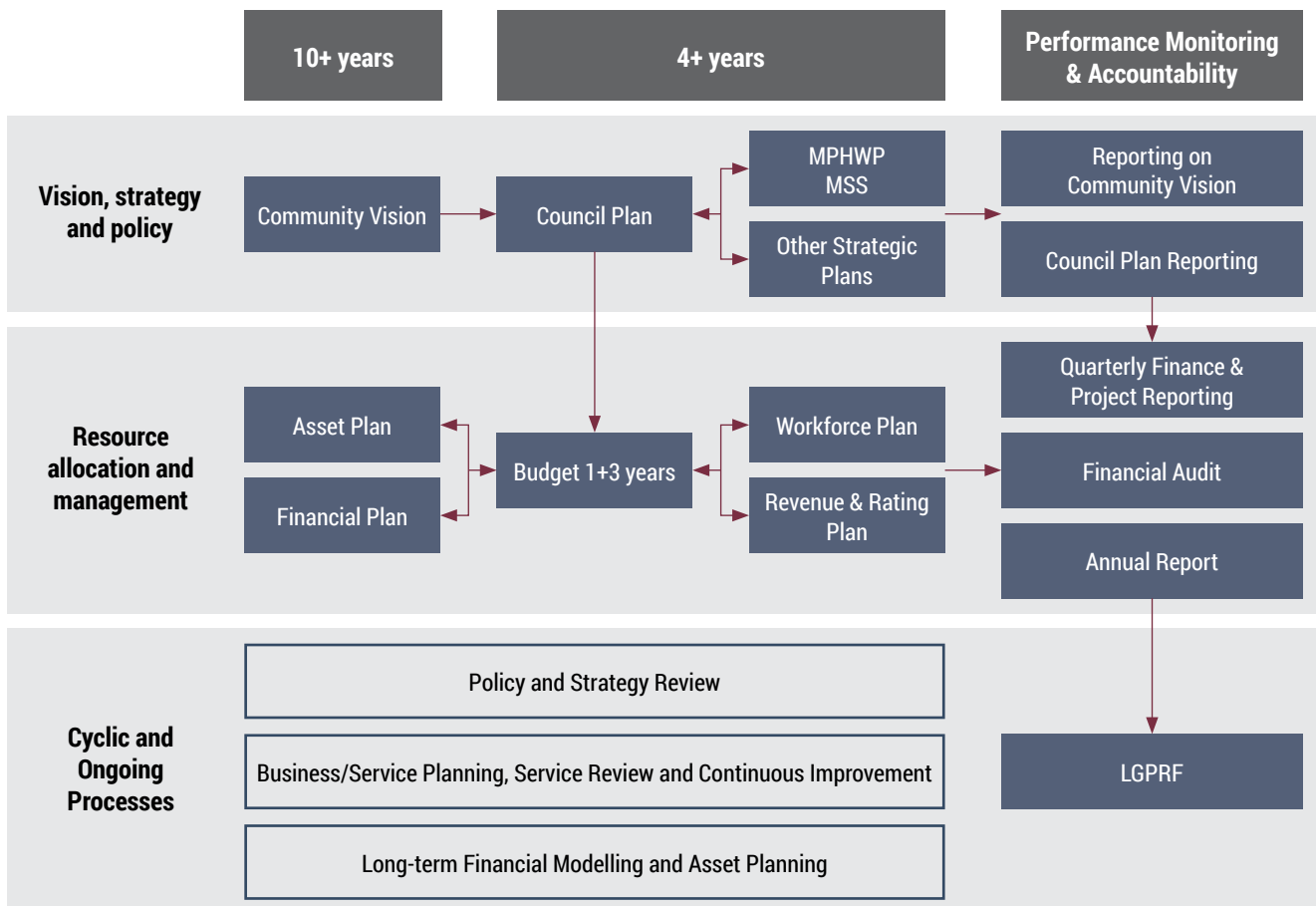
The following diagram shows the relationships between the key planning and reporting documents that make up the integrated strategic planning and reporting framework for local government. It also shows the opportunities for community and stakeholder input and feedback.

Following the development of a full suite of documents from 2021 and 2022, the following were reviewed and updated in 2023-24 financial year:

- An Annual Budget
- The Revenue and Rating Plan and the 10-year Long-term Financial Plan
- The Asset Management Plan
- The Workforce Plan

Progress and update reports were provided to the Council and Community via Council meetings on the Budget and Council Plan.

A community session was held in Lexton to report back on progress made against the Community Vision 2031.



COUNCIL PLAN

The Plan was developed and adopted in 2021, strongly based upon the community-developed Pyrenees Shire Community Vision 2021-2031 and changed the plan from an inward focus to a community focus.

The Council Plan 2021-2025 includes strategic objectives, operational strategies for achieving these for the four-year Council term, and strategic indicators for monitoring achievement of the strategic objectives.

Enabling Principles	
Motivate and inspire community involvement	Provide transparency and accountability
	Use resources efficiently and effectively

Priorities to Achieve the Vision	
People	Place
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare for emergencies and ensure community safety Support a vibrant community arts, culture and heritage environment Improve accessibility and inclusivity Promote health, wellbeing, engagement and connection Improve social outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustain and enhance unique character of our communities Support community sustainability Enhance liveability of our communities Promote responsible development
Environment	Economy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead and promote environmental sustainability Foster a climate change resilient community Encourage community care of biodiversity and natural values Improve waste management to reduce landfill and reduce harm to the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support our local businesses and help to strengthen key industries Invest in road infrastructure to improve connectivity for commerce and community Advocate for and invest in assets and infrastructure to support industry sustainability

Performance

Council's performance for the 2023-24 year has been reported below in separate sections against each strategic objective to demonstrate Council's progress against the Council Plan, separated within each section as follows:

- a. Results achieved in relation to the strategic indicators in the Council Plan
- b. Progress in relation to the priorities identified to achieve the Vision in the Council Plan
- c. Services funded in the budget
- d. Results against the prescribed service performance indicators and measures



COUNCIL PLAN – ENABLING PRINCIPLES

Our Community Panel said in 2031 that the Pyrenees Shire Council will have motivated and inspired community engagement and involvement; and provided transparency and accountability. The EOFY June 2024 marks the end of the third year of the Council Plan.

Council Plan priorities	What we have achieved so far
a Motivate and inspire community involvement	
<p>1 Embed community participation in project management framework. <i>Status: Complete and ongoing – now part of BAU.</i></p> <p>2 Work with our communities to understand and release their aspirations. <i>Status: Ongoing – now part of BAU.</i></p>	<p>Community engagement is now embedded in the project management framework and is conducted as part of all projects and activities with a public impact or that have a public interest. 16 projects were listed on the Engagement Hub over the year.</p> <p>The Community Development Team continued the schedule of working within our communities over the year, joined periodically by members of other teams, successfully building and reinforcing relationships with community members and groups.</p> <p>Some of this engagement has focused on re-invigorating community action plans and improving working relationships with members of Council's Community Asset Committees – volunteers who do great work in managing and maintaining community assets on behalf of Council.</p> <p>Community funding and grant programs were successfully expended during the year, reflecting the strong support and encouragement provided by officers to community members and groups.</p> <p>A progress update against the Community Vision 2031 was given to community members earlier in 2024.</p>
<p>3 Encourage wide representation of community in Council decision-making. <i>Status: Ongoing – now part of BAU.</i></p>	<p>Opportunities for community discussion with Councillors and senior officers are provided monthly on a 24-month rotating schedule to all parts of the Shire – generally held in the evening to allow for a greater level of community participation. In 2023-24, sessions were held at Raglan, Lake Goldsmith, Brewster, Amphitheatre, Evansford, Snake Valley, Beaufort, Redbank, Landsborough, Stoneleigh and Avoca.</p> <p>Monthly Council Meetings are open to the public, with opportunity for public participation at those meetings through questions or submissions.</p> <p>Community members can present to Councillors at briefing sessions on topics of interest or concern. During the year community members discussed issues relating to wind farms, power line proposals, environmental issues and planning matters.</p>

Council Plan priorities	What we have achieved so far
<p>4 Providing a range of opportunities for community participation, including online, in-person and through different media. <i>Status: Ongoing – now part of BAU.</i></p>	<p>The Engagement Hub application on Council's website is widely utilised as the basis of focused engagement for projects and where community input on planning activities is sought – e.g. as part of passive and active recreation master planning activities.</p> <p>In-person engagement was utilised during the year to enable community to ask questions about topical issues such as the local roads network and planning for green space areas.</p> <p>All engagement opportunities continue to be supported by Council's ongoing social media presence on Facebook, which is continually updated with information on topical matters of importance to our community.</p>
<p>5 Annually report to a community consultative group to review the implementation of the Community Vision. <i>Status: Complete.</i></p>	<p>An in-person forum was convened in early 2024 to provide an update to the community on Council's implementation of priorities identified in the Pyrenees Shire Community Vision 2031. This was held at the newly constructed Lexton Community Hub and included the strong connections between the Community Vision and the current Council Plan.</p>
<p>b Provide transparency and accountability</p>	
<p>6 Reflect community consultation and research findings in decision-making. <i>Status: Complete and ongoing – now part of BAU.</i></p>	<p>The Council report template has been amended to include a section for reporting on community engagement, creating an expectation that opportunities for engagement are maximised.</p>
<p>7 Have goals that are clear and measurable. <i>Status: Ongoing for the life of the Council Plan.</i></p>	<p>Measures to monitor the outcomes of the Council Plan are reported against annually in this progress update and the Annual Report.</p>
<p>8 Provide relevant, timely and accessible updates via a broad range of communication channels to reach groups and individuals within our community (e.g., website, email, e-newsletters, paper newsletters, notice boards). <i>Status: Complete and ongoing – now part of BAU.</i></p>	<p>The Engagement Hub on Council's website continues to be used as a primary online tool for seeking community feedback and participation in projects.</p> <p>Active projects continue to be published on an interactive dashboard on the website, which allows real-time information to be provided to the community. During the year, ongoing improvements to the dashboard included a map location facility and linking of financial data with Council's general ledger.</p> <p>Information and Shire news continues to be published in weekly newspaper media and social media where appropriate. Ongoing effort has been made over the year to improve notification to the community on projects and capital works in a timely manner.</p>
<p>9 Continue to foster a culture of accountability and transparency. <i>Status: Ongoing – now part of BAU.</i></p>	<p>Quarterly reporting is provided to Council and the community on progress against the Council Plan.</p> <p>EOFY progress on the Council Plan and other achievements and challenges is included within Annual Reports.</p> <p>Full-age media noticeboards attempt to maximise information to our community and these are published in paper format in resource centres.</p>
<p>c Use resources efficiently and effectively</p>	
<p>10 Continue to build the capability and capacity of Council employees to deliver the Council Plan. <i>Status: In progress.</i></p>	<p>Council's executive leadership team continue efforts to build organisational capacity without undue stress on limited resources and with a focus on delivery of the Council Plan.</p> <p>Dynamic workforce planning supports capacity building efforts and ensures that appropriate skills and expertise are available within the teams to ensure effective and responsive delivery of Council services and programs.</p>

Council Plan priorities	What we have achieved so far
<p>11 Promote financially responsible decisions. <i>Status: Ongoing – now part of BAU.</i></p>	<p>Strong financial management is a primary focus for the Council and its administration and remains a challenge in the face of inflationary costs (particularly for infrastructure projects using raw materials) and the growing demand for local government to do more with the same (or less in real terms) resources.</p> <p>Fiscal oversight of projects continues to improve, notwithstanding inflationary pressures, and alignment with Council strategic priorities is required for all projects.</p> <p>Fraud and corruption prevention controls were reviewed and strengthened during the year and strategic financial risks are regularly monitored and reviewed.</p> <p>Internal audit reviews continue to be used as a vital way of identifying improvements to control and performance.</p>
<p>12 Monitor staff wellbeing and satisfaction. <i>Status: Ongoing – now part of BAU continuous improvement.</i></p>	<p>Staff satisfaction surveys, including the state government People Matters Survey, are conducted annually. Results are analysed with action plans developed to address concerns raised.</p> <p>Psychosocial and psychological safety have arisen as key topics of wellbeing in 2024. The 2024 Annual All Staff Day had this as a focus through its theme of “Connection, Collaboration and Belonging”, introducing discussion on safe behaviours, feedback / speak-up safety, and cross-organisational collaboration.</p> <p>To continue developing these themes and build upon previous work on connection and belonging, Council has convened a new cross-organisational Diversity, Respect and Inclusion Working Group – designed to have a lasting change on organisational culture.</p> <p>Other strategies on strengthening psychosocial and psychological safety are under development, including a means of regular monitoring of staff wellbeing.</p>

Council Plan – Enabling Principles – Performance against Strategic Measures			
Measure	Target	Source	Status Report
1 Percentage of Council decisions made at meetings open to the public	Maintain to at least 90%	Local Government Performance Report (LGPR)	✔ 93.89% - the number of decisions made in closed Council meetings is limited to essential confidential items only.
2 Attendance by Councillors at Council meetings	95% or higher	LGPR	✔ 95.38%
3 Community satisfaction with community consultation and engagement	Maintain at 55% or above	Community Satisfaction Survey	✘ 52% - Although an improvement over the previous year, this measure is an aspirational target aimed for over the next few years.
4 Online Engagement Hub	At least 12 new engagement activities per year	Engagement Hub report	✔ 16 published on the Engagement Hub.
5 Social media activity – number of followers on Facebook	Increase to 2,500	Facebook statistics	✔ 3,700 Increase of 31% from the previous year.

Council Plan – Enabling Principles – Performance against Strategic Measures				
Measure	Target	Source	Status Report	
6	Face-to-face engagements with communities by Councillors and senior officers – community cuppa events	Held in at least 20 localities over a two-year period	Councillor calendars	✔ 20 sessions, 18 different localities.
7	Responses to Customer Action Requests (CARs) submissions	Maintain open CARs below 300	CARs report	✔ 277.42 – 2023-24 average.
8	Average rate per property assessment	Maintain below average for small rural councils	LGPR	✔ 2022-23: Pyrenees - \$1,512.42 Others - \$1,531.11 2023-24: Pyrenees - \$1,755.69 Comparisons not received until October.
9	Rates as a percentage of underlying revenue	Under 50%	LGPR	✘ 68.48%
10	Annual percentage of staff turnover	Maintain below 15%	LGPR	✘ 22.86%
11	Report to Council on health of organisation through Workforce Plan	Annually	Council meeting agenda	✔ Briefings provided: 20.6.2023 5.12.2023

Council Plan – Enabling Principles – Relevant Service Performance Indicators					
Service Performance Indicator	2021	2022	2023	2024	Comments
Governance					
Transparency <i>Council decisions made at meetings closed to the public</i>	15.47%	10.46%	12.69%	6.11%	More items are prioritised for open Council meetings to meet community expectations around transparency.
Consultation and engagement <i>Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement</i>	55	51	50	52	
Attendance <i>Councillor attendance at Council meetings</i>	93.46%	100%	98.57%	95.38%	
Service cost <i>Cost of elected representation [Direct cost of the governance service / number of Councillors]</i>	\$41,367	\$50,174	\$88,679	\$104,449	There has been a re-alignment of costs in the calculation of the 23-24 financial year.
Satisfaction <i>Community satisfaction with Council decisions</i>	54	53	50	51	

Council Plan – Enabling Principles – Financial Performance Indicators					
Service Performance Indicator	2021	2022	2023	2024	Comments
Operating Position					
Adjusted underlying result <i>Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit)</i>	1.45%	4.22%	6.16%	-38.96%	Federal financial assistance grants were received in advance in 2022-23 and with minimal financial grants received in 2023-24 and substantial expenditure incurred on the flood and fire events in 2023-24, this has resulted in the 2024 result being much lower than both prior years and forecasted indicator results.
Liquidity					
Working capital <i>Current assets compared to current liabilities</i>	179.56%	240.50%	256.64%	193.13%	Target balances assumed no carryover funds for projects not completed where the actual results included funds for projects that had not been completed. The 2024 actual indicator result is lower than 2022 and 2023 as in prior years. Federal financial assistance grants were received in 2024 resulting in a reduction in cash held.
Unrestricted cash <i>Unrestricted cash compared to current liabilities</i>	-70.94%	-66.83%	168.04%	100.68%	The 2023 result is higher than 2024 due to the 2023-24 federal financial assistance grants being received in advance in 2023. In addition, Council is carrying expenditure for floods and fire events that has not been reimbursed by the state government, resulting in lower cash levels.
Obligations					
Loans and borrowings <i>Loans and borrowings compared to rates</i>	0.00%	0.00%	4.40%	10.74%	Council borrowed funds for caravan park redevelopment and strategic land purchases. As Council has a low loan base, any increase results is a significant increase.
<i>Loans and borrowing repayments compared to rates</i>	0.00%	0.00%	0.87%	1.13%	
Indebtedness <i>Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue</i>	1.16%	0.87%	4.18%	9.11%	
Asset renewal and upgrade <i>Asset renewal and upgrade compared to depreciation</i>	109.94%	110.58%	116.06%	100.73%	Council received grants which increased the spending on asset renewal and upgrade in both the prior periods and 2024.
Stability					
Rates concentration <i>Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue</i>	46.57%	50.63%	47.19%	67.88%	The 2024 indicator result is higher than both prior years results due to a reduced 2024 adjusted underlying revenue balance as a result of the timing of federal financial assistance grants as detailed above.

Council Plan – Enabling Principles – Financial Performance Indicators

Service Performance Indicator	2021	2022	2023	2024	Comments
Rates effort <i>Rates compared to property values</i>	0.41%	0.40%	0.28%	0.25%	Property values in 2023-24 were significantly valued higher however rate capping minimised the increase in the rate revenue. The effect of the rate capping is that revenue does not increase at the same rate as property values.

Efficiency

Expenditure level <i>Expenses per property assessment</i>	\$3,962	\$3,866	\$4,109	\$4,365	The actual 2024 indicator result is higher than targets, comparative indicator results and forecast results as a result of unbudgeted expenditure on the October 2022 flood and 2024 fire events. Significant expenditure was incurred for both these events in 2024.
Revenue level <i>Average rate per property assessment</i>	\$1,463	\$1,507	\$1,512	\$1,531	

Council Plan – Enabling Principles – Sustainable Capacity Performance Indicators

Service Performance Indicator	2021	2022	2023	2024	Comments
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Efficiency

Population <i>Expenses per head of municipal population</i>	\$3,191	\$3,085	\$3,332	\$3,532	
<i>Infrastructure per head of municipal population</i>	\$31,352	\$31,852	\$35,541	\$35,120	
<i>Population density per length of road</i>	3.72	3.88	3.79	3.88	
Own-source revenue <i>Own-source revenue per head of municipal population</i>	\$1,695	\$1,817	\$1,925	\$1,956	
Recurrent grants <i>Recurrent grants per head of municipal population</i>	\$1,205	\$1,283	\$1,471	\$327	Non-receipt of the financial assistance grants within the financial year and the removal of the home care service significantly reduced the recurrent grants received by Council in 23-24.
Disadvantage <i>Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage</i>	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	
Workforce turnover <i>Percentage of staff turnover</i>	12.4%	31.0%	15.9%	22.9%	24 staff resigned during the year, of which 14 were associated with ending of the home-care service and retirement.



COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY 1 – PEOPLE

Our Community Panel said by 2031 in Pyrenees Shire the health and wellbeing of our communities will be paramount.

Council Priorities	Role	What we have achieved so far
a Prepare for emergencies and ensure community safety		
1	Facilitate	<p>Have appropriate and up-to-date emergency management plans. <i>Status: Complete with ongoing continuous improvement – now part of BAU.</i></p> <p>The Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) update was approved by the Regional Team late 2023.</p> <p>Appropriate sub-plans have been updated and published and the internal crisis management team manual review is nearing completion.</p>
2	Support	<p>Support communities in times of emergencies and in post-emergency recovery. <i>Status: Ongoing – now part of BAU.</i></p> <p>Staff emergency management capabilities are maintained through regular training and exercises – many of which are done through collaboration with neighbouring councils and response agencies.</p> <p>Pyrenees Shire Council is fortunate to have a strong contingent of skilled and experienced emergency officers and actively maintains a team ready to respond to emergencies – clearly demonstrated in the Bayindeen Rocky Road fire in early 2024.</p> <p>The fully funded Safer Together project is nearing completion – designed to support six individual townships in the Pyrenees and Golden Plains Shires in improving resilience to bushfires.</p> <p>Funding was confirmed that this project will continue in the Pyrenees Shire until 2026.</p>
b Support a vibrant community arts, culture, and heritage environment		
3	Facilitate	<p>Develop a Creative Community Strategy. <i>Status: In progress.</i></p> <p>Although suitable external funding did not arise, officers have engaged with community members to develop an appropriate strategy which should be finalised in 2024-25.</p>
4	Facilitate	<p>Implement the Reconciliation Plan and Reconciliation Advisory Committee. <i>Status: In progress.</i></p> <p>Implementation of Council's second Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is underway and in its final year. The RAP has three pillars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership – collaboration with key local partners to guide us on our reconciliation journey. Recognition – understand, acknowledge and protect our local history, and celebrate and respectfully utilise local cultural knowledge. Empowerment – engaged and inclusive communities that embrace diversity and ensure First Nations community members thrive. <p>Implementation of the RAP is well advanced, and a collaboration of public representatives and Council officers forms an advisory committee to oversee and monitor this.</p>

Council Priorities	Role	What we have achieved so far
<p>5 Support our community groups, including historical societies, preserve and understand our region's history. <i>Status: In progress.</i></p>	<p><i>Support</i></p>	<p>Support is provided to historical societies via community grant funding upon request.</p> <p>A rates waiver was provided in 2024 to the Beaufort Historical Society to assist in reducing costs and enabling their continued activity.</p> <p>Engagement was delivered with community groups to increase partnership and accessibility, including community outreach sessions, community workshops and training sessions. Advocacy on behalf of the community included asset management, capital funding and better volunteer governance, and support included external funding submission support and direct provision of \$151,692 in community grants.</p>
<p>6 Support community events. <i>Status: Ongoing – now part of BAU.</i></p>	<p><i>Support</i></p>	<p>Events are supported via the provision of funding through Council's community grants / funding programs.</p> <p>Councillors and Council officers attend community events where opportunity arises.</p>
<p>c Improve accessibility and inclusivity</p>		
<p>7 Facilitate connectivity and increase accessibility through appropriate infrastructure. <i>Status: Ongoing – now part of BAU.</i></p>	<p><i>Advocate</i></p>	<p>Council's 10-year Asset Management Plan was reviewed and re-adopted in 2024.</p> <p>Advocacy for government funding to support improvement of road network linkages and connections, public transport, and improved telecommunications coverage is ongoing.</p> <p>Funding to upgrade sports field lighting at the Beaufort Goldfields Recreation Reserve was successful during the year.</p> <p>Extensive drainage works in Avoca were undertaken which should reduce some impacts of stormwater flooding.</p> <p>Flood studies continue to identify further potential improvements for the future.</p>
<p>8 Develop an Accessibility Strategy. <i>Status: Outstanding.</i></p>	<p><i>Pending funding</i></p>	<p>The Council Plan indicates that this was awaiting appropriate external funding opportunities, which have not arisen.</p> <p>Council officers were to convene a working party to determine what could be achieved within internal budget parameters with regard to accessibility and inclusion.</p> <p>However, opportunity to conduct this activity has not arisen during 2023-24 and a request to delete this priority will be submitted in 2024.</p>
<p>9 Progress towards improved gender equity. <i>Status: In progress.</i></p>	<p><i>Facilitate</i></p>	<p>The workplace Gender Equality Audit and development of a Gender Equality Action Plan was completed and approved by the State Government and a multi-year project to implement the Gender Equality Action Plan is underway.</p> <p>Implementation will be supported by a newly convened Diversity, Respect and Inclusion working group.</p> <p>Gender diversity and the gender pay gap were both improved within Council during the financial year.</p>

Council Priorities	Role	What we have achieved so far
d Promote health, wellbeing, engagement, and connection		
10	Have a Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan. <i>Status: Complete.</i>	<i>Deliver</i> A regional, collaborative review of the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan was completed. The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan guided work conducted with specific populations such as young people (including the LTP learner driver program and the Whitten Project Youth Leadership program), older adults (through delivery of the Regional Assessment Service and supported resident navigation of My Aged Care).
11	Assist community with access to appropriate aged care and early years services. <i>Status: In progress.</i>	<i>Partner / Deliver</i> Council exited direct service delivery of home-based care services on 30 June 2023. The transition to a new provider in the under-65 care sector was delayed due to the unpreparedness of the new provider. Council agreed to continue provision of services under contract to the new provider until 31 August 2023. Following the transition out of direct care services, a positive ageing coordinator was appointed to develop and deliver a strategy to complement direct aged care provision and support older community members in maintaining a healthy lifestyle and maintain community connections. A presentation on potential strategy inclusions was provided to Councillors in 2024. Pyrenees Shire Council is collaborating with neighbouring councils on developing a joint Early Years Strategy in 2024.
12	Work with partners to support young people to be active in our community. <i>Status: Interrupted – in progress.</i>	<i>Support</i> Successful youth programs were underway but interrupted by staff losses. This work will be re-invigorated in late 2024.
13	Support communities to have access to high quality assets, facilities, and programs to promote passive and active recreation. <i>Status: In progress.</i>	<i>Support</i> Implementation of Council's Recreation Strategy continues. Efforts to identify funding opportunities to maintain, develop and upgrade community facilities remains ongoing. Master plans for Beaufort Goldfields Recreation Reserve and Beaufort Linear Park were completed, and planning for a Waubra Community Hub Master Plan is underway.
14	Advocate for appropriate access to medical and allied health services. <i>Status: Ongoing.</i>	<i>Advocate</i> Ongoing when opportunities arise.
e Improve social outcomes		
15	Support community programs targeted at access to healthy food. <i>Status: Ongoing – now part of BAU.</i>	<i>Support</i> Council continued to support local markets and food pantries; and promoted healthier food options as part of its Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan. The risk of food security locally was identified during the year due to ongoing impacts of cost-of-living increases.

Council Priorities		Role	What we have achieved so far
16	Deliver and support activities aimed at increasing community connections and reducing social isolation. <i>Status: In progress.</i>	<i>Deliver</i>	Community grants programs directly support improving community connections. A positive ageing strategy is under development with a focus on active living and maintaining community connections for older residents.
17	Support learning through provision of knowledge services including contemporary library services. <i>Status: In progress.</i>	<i>Support</i>	A service review was completed of the services within the resource centres with a key recommendation to investigate the concept of expanding library services through an "Open Libraries" program. The mobile library outreach program continued to expand through the more remote townships, servicing isolated residents and primary schools, and including a limited home delivery service.

Council Plan Priority 1 – People – Strategic Measures				
Measure	Target	Source	Status Report	
1.1	Municipal Emergency Management Plan passes external audit	By June 2023	Audit outcome	✔ MEMP approved November 2023.
1.2	Visits to resource centres	Maintain or increase by 5% per year	Door counts	✘ Decreased by 7% from the previous year.
1.4	Participation in Maternal and Child Health Service	90% or higher	LGPR	✔ 93.71%
1.5	Community satisfaction with arts centres and libraries	Increase from 69%	Community Satisfaction Survey	✔ 70%

Council Plan Priority 1 – People – Relevant Service Performance Indicators					
Service Performance Indicator	2021	2022	2023	2024	Comments
Libraries					
Resource currency <i>Recently purchased library collection</i> <i>[purchased in <5 years]</i>	57.57%	60.86%	60.44%	57.37%	
Service cost <i>Cost of library service per population</i>	\$49.62	\$16.80	\$18.02	\$62.43	Costs have been based on operational costs for the libraries less the percentage of costs associated with visitor information services – based on 21% for Avoca and 12% for Beaufort centres. The increased reported cost from the previous two years is due to employee costs being excluded from former year calculations.
Utilisation <i>Loans per head of population</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	3.20	New measure in 2024.
Participation <i>Library membership per head of population</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	16.38%	New measure in 2024.
<i>Library visits per head of population</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	3.33	New measure in 2024. Includes visits made to branch libraries, mobile library and home delivery visits, plus visitors attending outreach activities and events. Excludes estimated visitation by tourists seeking visitor information (0.87).
Maternal and Child Health					
Service standard <i>% of infant enrolments in the MCH service</i>	100%	98.04%	101.64%	100.00%	
Service cost <i>Average cost of the MCH service per hour worked</i>	\$69.30	\$115.34	\$80.87	\$92.68	The cost of providing this service is variable depending upon demand.
Participation <i>Participation in the service / number of children enrolled</i>	78.46%	94.31%	92.95%	93.71%	
Participation <i>Participation in the service by Aboriginal children / number of children enrolled</i>	93.33%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	
Satisfaction <i>Participation in 4-week key age and stage visit</i>	105.66%	98.04%	108.20%	95.00%	The yearly changes in key age and stage visit participation is due to the timing of age checks around the start and end of each financial year. With very small numbers, any visits outside of the reporting financial year can have an impact on statistics.

Maternal & Child Health Service Overview	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Number of infants enrolled from birth notifications	53	50	62	60
Number of new enrolments	58	58	64	60
Number of active infant records	255	262	271	276
Additional consultations	170	165	173	198
Telephone consultations	22.68	87.25	155.27	82
Community strengthening activities	9	21.75	17	13
Supported playgroup sessions	26	49	100	103
In home support sessions	-	15	8	46

Council Plan Priority 1 – People – Services Budget				
Service	Description	Budget \$'000's	Actual \$'000's	Variance \$'000's
Library	Purchase of library books and resources.	\$25	\$56	-\$31
Library	Cost of providing the service.	\$520	\$486	\$34
Governance	Cost of providing the service.	\$539	\$522	\$17
Maternal & Child Health	Cost of providing the service.	\$247	\$236	\$11



COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY 2 – PLACE

Our Community Panel said by 2031 in Pyrenees Shire, communities will be thriving and growth will be underpinned by universal connectivity, access to technology, advanced services, and sustainable education facilities.

Council Priorities	Role	What we have achieved so far
a Sustain and enhance unique character of our communities		
1	Implement and develop strategic planning projects such as further progression of Pyrenees Futures or the Rural Review. <i>Status: Ongoing / Long Term.</i>	<i>Deliver</i> Pyrenees Futures will progress to a planning scheme amendment in 2024-25. The Rural Land Strategy is a long-term project for strategic planning with the main focus being placed on settlement and housing growth to align with state policy direction. Progress has been made towards structure plan implementation of townships including Snake Valley, Lexton and Waubra.
2	Identify priorities and seek support to identify, preserve, and protect heritage assets. <i>Status: Discontinued.</i>	<i>Facilitate</i> In 2023 it was identified that appropriate funding had not materialised, and it was agreed to remove this priority from the Council Plan. Although this item has been discontinued, Council continues to support and advocate for community led initiatives such as the recent heritage status of the Snake Valley Uniting Church.
3	Maintain a planning scheme that accommodates community values and guides sustainable development. <i>Status: Ongoing – part of BAU.</i>	<i>Deliver</i> Ongoing activity.
b Enhance the liveability and resilience of our communities		
4	Manage impacts of large-scale infrastructure projects (e.g., the Beaufort Bypass) on communities. <i>Status: In progress.</i>	<i>Deliver</i> <i>Advocate</i> <i>Support</i> The Planning Scheme Amendment for the Beaufort bypass was formally submitted by the Department of Transport & Planning, although there is still no funding commitment. Approval and implementation of the public acquisition overlay will create the need for a future strategic direction for Beaufort to be established via detailed township planning. Council is ensuring that community views regarding the Western Renewable Link are being represented to the proponents.
5	Actively invite and encourage investment that supports employment. <i>Status: Ongoing – part of BAU.</i>	<i>Advocate</i> <i>Support</i> Ongoing investment support is provided to potential developers in response to enquiries.

Council Priorities	Role	What we have achieved so far
6 Provide services for towns (e.g., toilets, parks, playgrounds, sports facilities, town entrance signs, etc.). <i>Status: Ongoing – part of BAU.</i>	<i>Deliver</i>	Included as part of asset renewal program. The new Lexton Community Hub was completed in 2023 and is extensively used by the community. Master planning was completed for the Beaufort Goldfields Recreation Reserve and Beaufort Linear Park projects. Council has undertaken public toilet upgrades in Beaufort at two locations. The Avoca playground and streetscape implementation and improvement to town entrance sign lighting across the Shire.
7 Maintain our streetscapes and public gathering spaces and improve and enhance where funding permits ¹ . <i>Status: Ongoing – part of BAU.</i>	<i>Deliver</i>	Maintenance programs remain an ongoing activity with an increase in resources to provide a high level of service to the community. Planning for appropriate improvement and place-making initiatives continues and implementation will be subject to funding availability.
8 Provide and maintain appropriate infrastructure ensure a high level of amenity, accessibility, and safety ² . <i>Status: Ongoing</i>	<i>Deliver</i>	Included within the 10-year asset management program which was reviewed and re-adopted in June 2024.
9 Work with our communities to understand and realise their aspirations. <i>Status: In progress.</i>	<i>Facilitate</i>	Council's community development team, supported by other officers when available, have continued the engagement activities within our communities to identify priorities and community needs, and reinvigorate the community action plans.
c Promote responsible development		
10 Adopt and apply principles around sustainable growth and development within townships. <i>Status: Discontinued.</i>	<i>Deliver</i>	This priority requires project funding to develop and deliver policy and scheme incorporation, which has not materialised, and it was agreed to remove this priority from the Council Plan. Although this priority was removed in 2023 due to lack of funding, housing has become a priority for the State Government, which and is always a priority for Council. During 2023-24 Council strategically purchased land in Beaufort and Avoca to increase housing availability within the Shire.

¹ Within current resourcing, Council has budgeted for maintaining existing level of service in these areas. However, where additional funding or grants are obtained, Council will seek to also improve, enhance and beautify public spaces further.

² Within current resourcing, Council has budgeted for maintaining existing level of service in these areas. However, where additional funding or grants are obtained, Council will seek to also improve, enhance and beautify public spaces further.

Council Plan Priority 2 – Place – Strategic Measures				
Measure	Target	Source	Status Report	
2.1	Planning applications decided within required timeframes	At least 90%	GPR	✓ 91.78%
2.2	Community satisfaction with appearance of public areas	Maintain to at least 70%	Community Satisfaction Survey	✗ 69% Although improved from last year, not quite there.
2.3	Number of townships with Framework Plans	2 key implementation actions	Strategic Planning Team	✓ Planning Scheme Amendments being progressed for Waubra, Snake Valley and Lexton.
2.4	Community satisfaction with recreational facilities	Maintain to at least 69%	Community Satisfaction Survey	✗ 68% Although improved from last year, not quite there.
2.5	Enforcement of Local Laws performance	Maintain to at least 62%	Community Satisfaction Survey	✗ 60%

Council Plan Priority 2 – Place – Relevant Service Performance Indicators					
Service Performance Indicator	2021	2022	2023	2024	Comments
Statutory Planning					
Timeliness <i>Average time taken to decide planning applications [days]</i>	100	129	100	65	Processing of statutory planning applications within the statutory timeframes is based on the extent of resources within the team, complexity of applications, and quality / experience of team members and the number of permits requiring assessment.
Service standard <i>Planning application decisions made within required time frames</i>	95.31%	91.72%	91.05%	91.78%	Former years' percentages were incorrectly calculated. These have been checked against PPARS data for previous years and have been corrected in this 2024 performance statement to accurately reflect reported data.
Service cost <i>Average cost of statutory planning service [per application]</i>	\$2,601	\$2,293	\$1,866	\$3,251	There has been a reduction in planning applications which aligns with most councils across Victoria and which is attributed to challenging economic conditions.
Decision-making <i>% of planning decisions upheld at VCAT</i>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%	Just 1 application was lodged with VCAT during the financial year which was determined in Council's favour.

Council Plan Priority 2 – Place – Relevant Service Performance Indicators					
Service Performance Indicator	2021	2022	2023	2024	Comments
Aquatic facilities					
Service standard <i>Health inspections of aquatic facilities per facility</i>	1	1	0.33	1	The number of health inspections – e.g., water quality testing – represents one inspection per pool per annum for our 3 seasonal pools.
Utilisation <i>Number of visits to aquatic facilities / population</i>	0.99	1.02	1.22	1.03	Utilisation rates are linked to weather patterns.
Service cost <i>Cost of aquatic facilities / per visit</i>	\$58.72	\$51.65	\$37.72	\$72.79	Ageing facilities are starting to cost more in reactive maintenance and repairs to keep them operational. Council's financial subsidy per visit ranges from \$55.08 at Beaufort, \$83.13 at Avoca, to \$195.99 at Landsborough – influenced strongly by a much lower patronage at Landsborough pool.
Animal management					
Timeliness <i>Average time taken to action animal management requests [days]</i>	1.00	1.16	0.00	1.00	
Service standard <i>Animals reclaimed</i>	39.29%	41.74%	52.53%	18.18%	The decrease in percentage of animals reclaimed is influenced by large numbers of cats impounded from a single household which could not be reclaimed or rehomed. The cost to reclaim and travel to the regional pound is a deterrent to reclaiming.
Service standard <i>Animals rehomed</i>	16.67%	34.78%	27.27%	14.20%	The decrease in percentage of animals reclaimed is influenced by large numbers of cats impounded from a single household which could not be reclaimed or rehomed. The cost to reclaim and travel to the regional pound is a deterrent to rehoming. The regional pound has limited holding times influenced by numbers of impounded animals.
Service cost <i>Cost of animal management service per population</i>	\$26.78	\$16.62	\$20.98	\$21.00	
Health & Safety <i>Successful animal management prosecutions</i>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	

Council Plan Priority 2 – Place – Relevant Service Performance Indicators					
Service Performance Indicator	2020	2021	2022	2023	Comments
Food safety					
Timeliness <i>Average time taken to action food complaints [days]</i>	1.25	1.25	1.00	1.00	
Service standard <i>Food safety assessments</i>	100%	104.41%	101.25%	100.00%	
<i>Food safety samples obtained</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	100.00%	New measure in 2024.
Service cost <i>Average cost of food safety service</i>	\$480.26	\$324.32	\$155.93	\$158.15	
Health & Safety <i>Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications</i>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	

Council Plan Priority 2 – Place – Services Budget					
Service	Description	Budget \$'000's	Actual \$'000's	Variance \$'000's	
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	Maintenance and renewal of recreational, leisure and community facilities	\$514	\$614	-\$100	
Buildings	Buildings and building improvements	\$185	\$271	-\$86	
Land	Land purchases for housing and recreation potential	\$700	\$705	-\$5	
Statutory Planning	Cost of providing the service	\$349	\$267	\$82	
Libraries	Cost of providing the service	\$520	\$486	\$34	
Animal management	Cost of providing the service	\$158	\$164	-\$6	
Food safety	Cost of providing the service	\$21	\$21	\$0	








COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY 3 – ENVIRONMENT

Our Community Panel said by 2031 in Pyrenees Shire we will have acted on climate change and have an abundance of conserved natural resources that are highly valued and protected by the local community and visitors.

Council Priorities	Role	What we have achieved so far
a Continue being an environmentally progressive organisation		
1	Continue to implement actions from the Climate Change response and Mitigation Action Plan. <i>Status: In progress.</i>	<i>Deliver</i> Reference to Council's Climate Change Plan continues with regard to projects. Monitoring of electric vehicle charging stations usage has shown a promising uptake of their availability. Proactive activities were suspended in 2024 to allow a focus on managing hazardous trees following the February 2024 Bayindeen Rocky Road bushfire.
2	Apply environmentally responsible design and construction principles. <i>Status: Ongoing – part of BAU.</i>	<i>Deliver</i> Staff involved in construction and design have a high level of understanding regarding appropriate design incorporating energy and resource efficiency. Internal training within the engineering team was completed during the year. Planned policy reviews will include recycled materials priorities and create incentives for inclusion of electric or hybrid vehicles within the Motor Vehicle Policy. Some use of recycled products has been introduced in streetscapes and street furniture.
3	Continue to increase the energy efficiency of all Council owned facilities. <i>Status: Ongoing / in progress.</i>	<i>Advocate</i> Council is an active member of CVGA and has identified a number of opportunities for environmental improvement which are being implemented. A full energy audit of Council facilities was completed and consideration of future monitoring strategies are in progress.

Council Priorities	Role	What we have achieved so far
b Continue being an environmentally progressive organisation		
4	Support environmentally responsible technology innovation initiatives. <i>Status: Ongoing – part of BAU.</i>	<i>Advocate</i> Council partners with Agriculture Victoria and Tourism Midwest Victoria on the delivery of innovation to the agriculture and tourism sectors. Cost and travel distances remain prohibitive to large-scale adoption of EV or hybrid light fleet vehicles, but this remains a long-term goal.
5	Ensure urban design and placemaking incorporates climate sensitive principles. <i>Status: Ongoing – part of BAU.</i>	<i>Deliver</i> Council partners with agencies to deliver recycled water projects, e.g., the Beaufort recycled water scheme and construction of the trunk pipeline. The Beaufort Linear Master Plan was finalised in 2024 which improves utilisation of the creek-side green space that travels from the Beaufort Lake to the railway line.
6	Cooperate regionally to implement initiatives identified within the Grampians Region Climate Adaptation Strategy. <i>Status: Ongoing.</i> <i>Status: In progress.</i>	<i>Partner</i> Implementation of Council's climate change mitigation and adaptation strategy is ongoing but subject to funding and resource restrictions. <i>Facilitate</i> A feasibility study and business case were completed for the Southern Wimmera and Northeast Pyrenees Pipeline project.
c Encourage community care of biodiversity and natural values		
7	Encourage ownership and leadership over natural public open space, including participation / lead by First Nations Peoples, youth, industry etc. <i>Status: In progress.</i>	<i>Facilitate</i> Master planning for the Goldfields Recreation Reserve and the proposed Beaufort Linear reserve is complete. Council completed the purchase of the open land component of the old primary school in Beaufort for future development as public open space. Council continually engages with Indigenous Land Councils regarding land use activity agreements and project development to ensure ongoing compliance. Community grants programs include an emphasis on community management / support of public open space. Council has purchased land at the former Avoca Railway Station for future open space land development.
8	Support community-led biodiversity projects. <i>Status: Ongoing – part of BAU.</i>	<i>Support</i> Ongoing activity. Support provided through combined grants programs. Council supports re-establishing original woodlands across the Victorian Volcanic Plains. Species involved include drooping sheoaks, silver banksia and sweet bursaria. This is a very important project as there are very few original remnants to collect seed from or propagate cuttings from. Increasing the diversity of the gene pool is critical to obtaining a thriving and healthy population.
9	Ensure that the implementation of Roadside Management Strategy considers and enhances biodiversity regeneration. <i>Status: In progress.</i>	<i>Deliver</i> A review of the Roadside Management Strategy is underway which will incorporate enhanced biodiversity regeneration.

Council Priorities		Role	What we have achieved so far
d	Improve waste management to reduce landfill and reduce harm to the environment		
10	Support a regional waste management community education campaign. <i>Status: Ongoing.</i>	<i>Support</i>	Council officers remain committed to working with Grampians councils on regional waste and recycling issues. Council aligns waste education with state policy.
11	Strengthen partnerships with regional and state agencies to develop innovation in services and technology. <i>Status: Ongoing.</i>	<i>Partner</i>	Council is involved in a multi-council project to facilitate interest in regional waste management and recycling.
12	Work with local partners to encourage practical waste and recycling opportunities. <i>Status: Ongoing.</i>	<i>Support</i>	A range of operational initiatives have been identified to support delivery of this priority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support local businesses in improvement of waste recycling – e.g., steel, concrete, paper, cardboard. • Where feasible, to use locally recycled products in Council's construction work. Council facilities were improved at Beaufort and Avoca to encourage recycling.
13	Provide quality and efficient waste management and recycling services for our residents. <i>Status: In progress.</i>	<i>Deliver</i>	Information is provided to residents on what can be recycled as part of annual waste calendar provision.

Council Plan Priority 3 – Environment – Strategic Measures				
Measure	Target	Source	Status Report	
3.1	Number of climate change or environmental projects involved in or supported	At least three significant actions delivered and reported on annually	Council Meeting Agenda	 2 x Integrated water projects. EV charging stations in Avoca and Beaufort. Council involvement with CVGA.
3.2	Community satisfaction with waste management and recycling	Maintain to at least 66%	Community Satisfaction Survey	 71% increased from last year.
3.3	Percentage kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill	Increase to at least 50%	LGPR	 30.41% Aim to achieve over multiple years.
3.4	Cost of kerbside garbage bin collection service per bin	Maintain below average for small rural Councils	LFPR	 22-23: Pyrenees - \$171.89 Others - \$186.37 23-24: Pyrenees - \$151.86 Comparisons not received until October.
3.5	Number of trees planted	500 per year		 100 in townships The early onset of summer 2023 cut the planting season short and bushfire resource diversion had an impact. 300 trees were planted in and around Avoca by Landcare volunteers and generously donated by Molly Hodgkinson.

Council Plan Priority 3 – Environment – Relevant Service Performance Indicators					
Service Performance Indicator	2021	2022	2023	2024	Comments
Waste collection					
Service standard <i>Average number of missed kerbside collections</i>	5.54	25.69	9.09	5.04	Contractor familiarity with routes continues to improve statistics on missed bins.
Service cost <i>Cost of kerbside garbage bin collection service</i>	\$112.39	\$126.69	\$171.89	\$186.37	
Service cost <i>Cost of kerbside recyclables bin collection service</i>	\$68.64	\$33.24	\$47.05	\$69.54	
Waste diversion <i>% kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill</i>	29.56%	24.30%	37.14%	30.41%	The diversion rate dropped from the previous year. It is believed that this is due to the introduction of the Container Deposit Scheme which was introduced in Victoria in November 2023 and is external from Council's data reporting requirements.

Council Plan Priority 3 – Environment – Services Budget				
Service	Description	Budget \$'000's	Actual \$'000's	Variance \$'000's
Waste Management	Cost of waste management provision	\$155	\$144	\$11



COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY 4 – ECONOMY

Our Community Panel said by 2031 in the Pyrenees Shire, Council will have supported significant economic development.

Council Priorities	Role	What we have achieved so far
a Support our local businesses and help to strengthen key industries		
1	Preserve and promote our built heritage and ecotourism opportunities and support tourism through promotion, marketing, and sponsorship. <i>Status: Ongoing / in progress.</i>	<i>Advocate Support</i> Work continues with regional tourism partners on industry development and support programs – in particular, the Economic Development and Tourism team work closely with Tourism Midwest, which has developed two key publications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A region-wide Destination Management Plan to inform the high priority areas for investment by both public and private sectors, and • Local Area Action Plan for each LGA within the Partnership. Implementation of the Destination Management Plan aims to facilitate investment in ecotourism products. Pyrenees Shire Council is one of 13 LGA partners to the Goldfields World Heritage Bid Project which secured funding of \$500,000 in late 2022 to progress the project. Media reports show that this is progressing satisfactorily. A successful façade improvement program was finalised during the year which will see improvements to Pyrenees streetscapes. Council is partnering with Beaufort Connect and DEECA to establish cycle trails in the Trawalla State Park.
2	Facilitate networks for industry knowledge-sharing and innovation across tourism, agriculture, and commerce. <i>Status: Ongoing – part of BAU.</i>	<i>Facilitate</i> The Economic Development and Tourism team continue to work closely with tourism partner organisations, currently focusing on supporting recovery from the impacts of natural disasters and challenges of rising living costs.
3	Build relationships with investors to unlock opportunities for development and innovation and investment that supports employment. <i>Status: Complete and Ongoing.</i>	<i>Partner</i> An Investment Attraction Strategy was adopted in 2022. Contact was maintained with local businesses to provide support for growth and development of entities within the Shire.

Council Priorities	Role	What we have achieved so far
4 Promote and protect agricultural sustainability through land use planning and community education. <i>Status: Ongoing.</i>	<i>Deliver</i>	Ongoing long-term multi-year projects support the delivery of this priority including the Rural Land Strategy.
5 Collaborate with business associations to facilitate localised economic development. <i>Status: In progress.</i>	<i>Partner</i>	Plans to reactivate the local Business Taskforce have been deferred to allow focus on support activities associated with the recovery from ongoing impacts of natural disasters.
b Invest in road infrastructure to improve connectivity for commerce and community		
6 Maintain and improve our roads and associated assets to ensure safe and efficient connectivity. <i>Status: In progress.</i>	<i>Deliver</i>	A 10-year asset management plan was reviewed and re-adopted by Council in June 2024. Delivery of a four-year capital works program for re-sheeting, re-sealing, road and bridge / culvert upgrades is underway.
7 Identify infrastructure constraints and facilitate solutions, including investing in access for high-productivity vehicles to support the agricultural sector and access to markets. <i>Status: In progress.</i>	<i>Deliver</i>	A 10-year Asset Plan was developed and adopted, including priorities for bridge replacement and improvement. Bridge projects were identified and priority projects started that will enable greater access to heavy vehicles. Council continues to consult with key industry stakeholders on road improvement priorities, including advocacy on state-managed roads such as the Western Highway and Sunraysia Highway. Road information workshops were delivered to community members during the year. Development of the Beaufort Lake Caravan Park will start in the near future.
c Encourage and invest in assets and infrastructure for commerce and community		
8 Work with water authorities to facilitate opportunities for secure water sources for rural areas to support agriculture, viticulture, and other economic opportunities. <i>Status: Ongoing – part of BAU.</i>	<i>Advocate</i>	A feasibility study and business case was completed for the Southern Wimmera and Northeast Pyrenees Water Supply project. The project aims to secure reliable water for industry and urban localities including Moonambel, Redbank, Landsborough, Amphitheatre and Avoca.

Council Priorities	Role	What we have achieved so far
<p>9 Work with partners to advocate for improved telecommunications service outcomes.</p> <p><i>Status: Ongoing – part of BAU.</i></p>	<p><i>Advocate Support</i></p>	<p>Advocacy continues to improve coverage throughout the Shire.</p> <p>Presentations have been provided to the Council regularly on improvements in internet coverage across the Pyrenees Shire – particularly using satellite technology where fixed tower coverage is unavailable.</p>
<p>10 Establish relationships and advocate for commitment to continued investment and growth to improve access to water / sewer / internet access / phone connectivity / transport / housing / power upgrades etc.</p> <p><i>Status: Ongoing – part of BAU.</i></p>	<p><i>Advocate</i></p>	<p>Advocacy continues regarding power upgrades for recreational facilities.</p> <p>Power upgrades and sports lighting installation were completed at the Beaufort Goldfields Recreation Reserve.</p> <p>Further funding continues to be sought for lighting upgrades at four other townships.</p> <p>Southwest and Northeast Pyrenees Water Supply Project is completed.</p> <p>Beaufort recycled water projects were completed in partnership with Central Highlands Water.</p> <p>Partnered with GBAC (Greater Ballarat Alliance of Councils) to drive advocacy on growth.</p> <p>Council has strategically purchased residential land in Avoca and Beaufort for housing development.</p>
<p>11 Develop a strategic plan for asset service improvement.</p> <p><i>Status: Complete.</i></p>	<p><i>Deliver</i></p>	<p>A 10-year asset management plan was reviewed and re-adopted by Council in June 2024.</p>
<p>12 Utilise innovation for better outcomes in asset delivery.</p> <p><i>Status: In progress.</i></p>	<p><i>Deliver</i></p>	<p>Council is working on a number of projects to improve the understanding of the lifecycle of assets owned by Council and to more efficiently extend the life of these assets.</p>
<p>13 Work with industry stakeholders to capitalise on renewable energy opportunities that will reduce consumption of fossil fuels, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and provide competitively priced energy to local industries and communities.</p> <p><i>Status: Ongoing – part of BAU.</i></p>	<p><i>Partner</i></p>	<p>Council has an ongoing partnership with Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance.</p> <p>One of the key projects was a bulk purchase of renewable energy for a 10-year period whereby all Council's electricity now comes from renewable energy.</p> <p>Council maintains networks with local groups with interests in progressing renewable energy projects.</p>

Council Plan Priority 4 – Economy – Strategic Measures				
Measure	Target	Source	Status Report	
4.1	Kilometres of roads gazetted for high-productivity vehicle accessibility	At least an additional 50km of roads per year	Government Gazette / LGPR	✔ Increase of 98.1km.
4.2	Number of new dwellings in the municipality per year	50 new dwellings per year	Victorian Building Authority	✔ 55 dwelling building permits issued.
4.3	Rate of unemployment	Maintain at 5% or lower	ABS	✔ National – 4.0% Victoria – 4.5%
4.4	Sealed local roads maintained to condition standards	Maintain to at least 95%	LGPR	✔ 99.98%
4.5	Asset renewal and upgrade as a percentage of depreciation	At least 80%	LGPR	✔ 100.73%

Council Plan Priority 4 – Economy – Relevant Service Performance Indicators					
Service Performance Indicator	2021	2022	2023	2024	Comments
Roads					
Satisfaction of use <i>Sealed local road requests</i> <i>[Number of sealed local road requests / km of sealed local roads] x 100</i>	9.89	10.70	15.65	8.52	The number of requests on our road network varies from year to year depending on the impact of natural disasters. Council has made adjustments to proactively ensure the maintenance of the sealed road network.
Condition <i>Sealed local roads maintained to condition standards</i> <i>[Number of km of sealed local roads below the renewal intervention level set by Council / km of sealed local roads] x 100</i>	99.13%	99.92%	99.93%	99.98%	
Service cost <i>Cost of sealed local road reconstruction</i> <i>[Direct cost of sealed local road reconstruction / sq m of sealed local roads reconstructed]</i>	\$88.35	\$64.83	\$64.92	\$76.30	Costs are dependent upon length and complexity of reconstruction undertaken in any year, plus the cost of raw materials continue to rise.

Council Plan Priority 4 – Economy – Relevant Service Performance Indicators

Service Performance Indicator	2021	2022	2023	2024	Comments
Service cost <i>Cost of sealed local road resealing</i> <i>[Direct cost of sealed local road resealing / sq m of sealed local roads resealed]</i>	\$6.21	\$6.26	\$4.74	\$7.24	Costs are dependent upon length and complexity of resealing works undertaken in any year, plus the cost of raw materials continue to rise.
Satisfaction <i>Satisfaction with sealed local roads</i> <i>[Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how council has performed on the condition of sealed local roads]</i>	57	50	44	42	

Council Plan Priority 4 – Economy – Services Budget

Service	Description	Budget \$'000's	Actual \$'000's	Variance \$'000's
Roads	Maintenance and renewal of the Shire's critical public assets.	\$5,971	\$7,464	-\$1,493
Bridges		\$767	\$419	\$348
Footpaths & cycleways		\$382	\$271	\$111
Drainage		\$2,282	\$1,528	\$754
Plant, machinery & equipment	Plant, machinery and equipment needed to maintain and upgrade the Shire's critical public assets.	\$1,203	\$701	\$502



COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEY OUTCOMES 2024

The Victorian Community Satisfaction Survey is commissioned annually and asks the opinions of local people about the place they live, work and play. Community satisfaction scores represent the community's perception of Council's performance over the previous 12 months. The survey is undertaken by JWS Research.

Comparisons are made with similar Victorian councils (small rural) and the State-wide average.

Overall Council performance:

Perceptions of overall performance in Pyrenees Shire Council is unchanged from 2023, halting the long-term trend of declining scores. Council's overall performance remains in line with the small rural and state-wide averages for council.



Pyrenees 55



Small Rural 53



State-wide 54










18-34 years and Avoca, DeCameron residents rate overall performance highest (58)

50-64 years rate overall performance lowest (52)


Results shown are index scores out of 100.



<p>Council's top four performing areas when compared to group average:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Waste management ▲ higher  Art centres & libraries ▼ lower  Appearance of public areas = on par  Emergency & disaster management ▲ higher
<p>Council's lowest three performing areas when compared to group average:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Unsealed roads = on par  Sealed local roads = on par  Community decisions = on par

Customer service:

The steady decline in perceptions of customer service, from a peak index score of 74 in 2017 to 62 in 2023, halted in 2024 with the score remaining at 62, the lowest level recorded since 2015. However, Council performed lower than the Small Rural group (67) and state-wide (66) averages on this core measure and it remains clear that efforts to improve in this area are still required.

 Customer service ▼ lower

Notwithstanding the low customer service scores, customer service was ranked by 15% of the respondents as being the best thing about Council, with Community Engagement (9%) and Waste Management / Emergency Management (6%) viewed as second and equal third.

Council roads:

Council’s lowest performing service areas are those that relate to the condition of roads. Unsealed roads were considered to be the most important individual service area (86%), but both unsealed and sealed local roads recorded all-time lows in performance ratings in the last 12 months, with scores declining for another year. These have always been Council’s lowest performing service areas, although past performance has been higher.

2024 individual service area performance (index scores)

Sealed local roads	 42	44	50	57	51	54	54	55	54	55
Unsealed roads	 33	35	39	44	43	43	44	44	45	43

Service areas where importance exceeds performance by 10 points or more, suggesting further investigation is necessary.

Importance (index scores)	Performance (index scores)	Net Differential
Unsealed roads  86	 33	-53

The road damage impacts seen from widespread floods in October and November 2022 greatly, and the ongoing time needed to repair the defects across the Shire – both for the Pyrenees Shire Council and Regional Roads Victoria – will continue to have significant influence in the satisfaction ratings seen in 2024.

Waste services:





Community satisfaction for waste services remained the best-performing service area (71), increasing from 2023 and performing higher than the small rural group and the state-wide average for the second year, continuing to reflect the significant increase in service provision when shire-wide universal kerbside bin collections were introduced in 2021-22.

Art centres and libraries:

Art centres and libraries is Council’s second highest-rated service area (70) maintaining the increased rating seen in 2023, however, this service area rated relatively low in importance (59).

Summary of Pyrenees Shire Council performance scores:

The following provides an overview of Council's performance scores in 2024.

Services	Pyrenees 2024	Pyrenees 2023	Small Rural 2024	State-wide 2024	Highest score	Lowest score
 Overall performance	55	55	53	54	18-34 years, Avoca, DeCameron residents	50-64 years
 Value for money	49	48	47	48	35-49 years, Avoca, DeCameron residents	Mt Emu residents
 Overall council direction	43	43	44	45	35-49 years	18-34 years
 Customer service	62	62	66	67	Avoca, DeCameron residents, 35-49 years, Women	18-34 years
 Art centres & libraries	70	70	73	73	35-49 years, Women	Mt Emu residents
 Waste management	71	69	67	67	Avoca, DeCameron residents	Mt Emu residents
 Recreational facilities	68	65	67	68	35-49 years	50-64 years, 18-34 years
 Appearance of public areas	69	65	71	68	35-49 years	Mt Emu residents
 Family support services	60	63	61	63	Men	Women
 Emergency & disaster management	69	62	66	65	18-34 years	50-64 years
 Enforcement of local laws	60	61	60	61	18-34 years	Mt Emu residents
 Bus/community dev./tourism	61	57	59	57	35-49 years	50-64 years, Mt Emu residents
 Community decisions	51	50	50	50	Women	50-64 years, Men
 Consultation & engagement	52	50	51	51	35-49 years	50-64 years
 Sealed local roads	42	44	41	45	65+ years	18-34 years, Mt Emu residents
 Unsealed roads	33	35	35	36	65+ years	18-34 years

Significantly higher / lower than Pyrenees Shire Council 2024 result at the 95% confidence interval

Section 7: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT





GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND OTHER INFORMATION

Governance

The Pyrenees Shire Council is constituted under the *Local Government Act 2020* to provide leadership for the good governance of the municipal district and local community. Council has a number of roles including:

- Considering the diverse needs of the local community in decision-making
- Providing leadership by establishing strategic objectives and monitoring achievements
- Ensuring that resources are managed in a responsible and accountable manner
- Advocating the interests of the local community to other communities and governments
- Fostering community cohesion and encouraging active participation in civic life.

Council is committed to effective and sustainable forms of democratic and corporate governance as the key to ensuring that Council and its administration meet the community's priorities. The community has many opportunities to provide input into Council's decision-making processes including community consultation, public forums, and the ability to make submissions to Council.

Council's formal decision-making processes are conducted through Council meetings. Council delegates the majority of its decision-making to Council staff and these delegations are exercised in accordance with adopted Council policies.

Council Meetings

Council generally conducts open public meetings at 6pm on the third Tuesday of each month (with the exception of December, which may be on the second Tuesday, and January, where a meeting may not be held). Details of Council meeting dates and times are published in the Pyrenees Advocate one week prior to the meeting.

Members of the community are welcome to attend these meetings and observe from the gallery. Council meetings also provide the opportunity for community members to submit a question to the Council or make a submission.

Minutes of Council meetings are available for inspection at the Beaufort Shire Office, and can be downloaded from Council's website, requested through any of our front offices, or by phoning 1300 797 363. Viewing of digital copies can be arranged at Council's resource centres in Avoca and Beaufort.

The open non-confidential section of Council meetings is generally open to the public. In 2023-24, 93.89% of Council decisions were made in open Council meetings.

The majority of Ordinary Council Meetings are held at the Council Chambers at the Council Office in Beaufort. During the year, meetings were also held in Avoca, and the Statutory Meeting, which included election of the Mayor, was held in Lexton on 31 October 2023.

In the 2023-24 financial year, the Council held 11 Ordinary Council Meetings, one Special Council Meeting, and one Statutory Meeting. The following table provides a summary of Councillor attendance at Council meetings for the financial year. Councillor attendance at Council meetings was at 95% for the year.

Councillor Attendance at Council Meetings

Date	Meeting type	Cr Kehoe	Cr Clark	Cr Ferrari	Cr Eason	Cr Vance
18 July 2023	Council Meeting	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
15 August 2023	Council Meeting	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
19 September 2023	Council Meeting	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
17 October 2023	Council Meeting	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
31 October 2023	Statutory Council Meeting	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
21 November 2023	Council Meeting	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
12 December 2023	Council Meeting	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
20 February 2024	Council Meeting	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
19 March 2024	Council Meeting	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
7 May 2024	Special Council Meeting	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
16 April 2024	Council Meeting	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
21 May 2024	Council Meeting	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
25 June 2024	Council Meeting	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Delegated Committees

The Act allows councils to establish one or more delegated committees consisting of:

- Councillors
- Council staff
- Other persons
- Any combination of the above.

The Pyrenees Shire Council has no Delegated Committees operating at this time.

Code of Conduct

The Act requires councils to develop and approve a Councillor Code of Conduct within 12 months after each general election. In February 2021, Council adopted a revised Councillor Code of Conduct which is designed to:

- Assist councillors to maintain the highest standards of conduct and behaviour as well as provide a means to deal with problems they may encounter.
- Attract the highest level of confidence from Council's stakeholders.

- Assist the Mayor and Councillors to discharge the responsibilities of their public office appropriately.

In addition to setting out the Councillor Conduct Principles, the Code also outlines:

- Other conduct definitions under the Act, such as those relating to misuse of position, improper direction, breach of confidentiality, and conflicts of interest.
- Roles and responsibilities.
- Dispute resolution procedures.

Conflict of interest

Councillors are elected by the residents and ratepayers to act in the best interests of the community. This is a position of trust that requires councillors to act in the public interest. When a council delegates its powers to a Council officer or a committee, the committee or officer also needs to act in the public interest.

A conflict of interest occurs when a personal or private interest might compromise the ability to act in the public interest. A conflict of interest exists even if no improper act results from it.

Council has a comprehensive procedure in place to accommodate the disclosure of a conflict of interest. Declaration of a conflict of interest is a standard agenda item for all Council and Committee meetings.

While the procedures vary depending on the particular role and circumstances, in general they involve disclosing the relevant interests in a specific way and then stepping aside from the relevant decision-making process or from the exercise of the public duty. A register is maintained to record all disclosed conflict of interests. During 2023-24, Councillors and Officers made six conflict of interest declarations at Council meetings and six declarations at Councillor briefings.

Councillor allowances

In accordance with section 39 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Councillors are entitled to receive an allowance while performing their duty as a Councillor. The Mayor is entitled to receive a higher allowance to reflect the level of commitment and time required to fulfil the required duties.

The Victorian Government sets the upper and lower levels for allowances paid to Councillors and Mayors. Councils are divided into three categories based on the income and population of each Council. Pyrenees Shire Council is recognised as a Category 1 Council. As a Category 1 Council, the Pyrenees Shire Council has the following Councillor allowances set by the State Government plus superannuation.

- Councillors: up to \$25,650
- Mayor: up to \$79,492

During the year, Cr Ron Eason was elected Mayor up to 31 October 2023, and Cr Robert Vance was Mayor for the rest of the year.

The following table contains a summary of the allowances paid to each Councillor during the year.

Councillor	Allowance \$
Cr Ron Eason – Mayor / Councillor	\$38,288.36
Cr Damian Ferrari	\$19,223.20
Cr David Clark	\$23,108.16
Cr Robert Vance – Mayor / Councillor	\$52,873.66
Cr Tanya Kehoe	\$19,223.20

Councillor expenses

In accordance with section 40 of the Act, a council must reimburse Councillors for expenses incurred whilst performing their duties as a Councillor. Council is also required to adopt and maintain a policy in relation to the reimbursement of expenses for councillors. The policy provides guidance for the payment of reimbursements of expenses and provision of resources, facilities and other support to the Mayor and Councillors to enable them to discharge their duties. Council also publishes in its Annual Report the details of the expenses, including the reimbursement of expenses for each Councillor and member of a council committee paid by the Council.

The details of the expenses including reimbursement of expenses for each Councillor and member of a council committee paid by the Council for the 2023-24 year are set out in the following table.

Councillor	TR \$	CM \$	CC \$	IC \$	CT \$	Total \$
Cr Ron Eason	\$1,473	0	0	0	0	\$1,473
Cr Damian Ferrari	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cr David Clark	0	0	\$963*	0	0	\$963
Cr Robert Vance	\$3,199	0	0	0	\$222	\$3,421
Cr Tanya Kehoe	\$56	0	\$6,852*	0	0	\$6,908

Legend: TR - Travel; CM - Car mileage; CC - Child care; IC - Information and communication expenses; CT - Conferences and training expenses

Note: No expenses were paid by Council including reimbursements to members of Council Delegated Committees during the year.

* Combined travel and childcare expenses claim.

Management

Council has implemented a number of statutory and better practice items to strengthen its management framework. Having strong governance and management frameworks leads to better decision making by Council. The Act requires council to undertake an assessment against the prescribed governance and management checklist and include this in its report of operations. Council's Governance and Management Checklist results are set out in the section below. The following items have been highlighted as important components of the management framework.

Audit and Risk Committee

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.

The Audit and Risk Committee consists of three independent members: Ms Wendy Honeyman (up to March 2024), Mr Rod Poxon (Chair), and Mr Brian Keane, Mr Kelvin Tori (from March 2024), and two Councillors. Independent members are appointed for a three-year term, with a maximum of three terms. The chair is elected from amongst the independent members. Councillor members are appointed at the annual Statutory Meeting for the following 12 months.

In early 2023, Ms Honeyman's tenure ended, and this position was taken by Mr Kelvin Tori.

The Audit and Risk Committee meets four times a year. The Internal Auditor, Chief Executive Officer, Director Corporate and Community Services, Director Assets and Development Services, Manager Finance, and Manager Governance Risk and Compliance attend all Committee meetings. Other management representatives attend as required to present reports. The external auditors attend in May and September each year to present the audit plan and independent audit report.

Recommendations from each Audit and Risk Committee meeting are subsequently reported to, and considered by, Council.

Quality assurance is measured through the annual Audit and Risk Committee self-assessment and completion of the internal audit plan and Committee annual work plan.

Internal Audit

Council's internal audit function provides independent and objective assurance that the appropriate processes and controls are in place across Council. Council's Internal Auditors are AFS and Associates, chartered accountants and auditors from Bendigo.

A risk-based internal audit plan is revised annually to ensure the audit resources remain focused on the appropriate areas. The review process considers Council's risk framework, the Council Plan, the impact of any change on operations, systems or the business environment, prior audit coverage and outcomes, and management input. The Plan is reviewed and approved by the Audit and Risk Committee and Council annually.

The Internal Auditor attends each meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee to report on the status of the Internal Audit Plan, to provide an update on the implementation of audit recommendations and to present findings of completed review. All audit issues identified are risk rated.

Recommendations are assigned to the responsible manager or officer and tracked in Council's performance management system. Managers provide quarterly status updates that are reviewed by the Executive Leadership Team and reported to the Audit and Risk Committee. Status updates are reviewed on an annual basis by the Internal Auditor.

Quality assurance is measured through client satisfaction surveys for each review, the annual Audit and Risk Committee self-assessment, and completion of the internal audit plan.

During the year, internal audit reviews were conducted in the following performance areas:

- Cyber security
- Purchasing cards
- Completion of past audit recommendations

AFS and Associates also periodically conduct probity audits on high risk / high value procurement activities.

External Audit

Council is externally audited by the Victorian Auditor-General. For the 2023-24 year the annual external audit of Council's Financial Statements and Performance Statement was conducted by the Victorian Auditor-General's representative – Johnsons MME. The external auditors attend the March, May and September Audit and Risk Committee meetings to present

the annual audit plan and independent Audit Report. The external audit management letter and responses are also provided to the Audit and Risk Committee.

Risk management

In 2020-21, Council reviewed and updated its Risk Management Framework and Policy in line with current AS/NZS 31000 guidelines. The Risk Management Framework and Policy addresses items such as:

- Risk management culture and branding
- Communication and training
- Workplace risk management practice
- Risk registers

Community Asset Committees

Council could not operate effectively without the assistance of the many volunteers who make up Council's Community Asset Committees.

Community Asset Committees are established, in accordance with section 65 of the Local Government Act 2020, to manage a community asset on behalf of Council. Powers and duties are delegated to members of Community Asset Committees through formal Instrument of Delegation from the Chief Executive Officer.

During the year, six Community Asset Committees operated these facilities:

- Beaufort Community Bank Complex
- Brewster Hall
- Landsborough Community Precinct
- Snake Valley Hall
- Waubra Community Hub
- Lexton Community Hub

Meetings of these committees are open to the public and minutes of the meetings are available for public inspection.

Governance and Management Checklist

Council maintains strong frameworks to provide guidance in good governance and management practice.

As part of its mandatory performance reporting, Council provides an assessment against the governance and management checklist below. 'Act' relates to the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Governance and Management items	Assessment
1. Community Engagement Policy (policy under section 55 of the Act outlining Council's commitment to engaging with the community on matters of public interest)	Adopted in accordance with section 55 of the Act Adopted 16 February 2021 Reviewed and re-adopted 17 July 2022
2. Community Engagement Guidelines (guidelines to assist staff to determine when and how to engage with the community)	Adopted 17 July 2022 as part of the Community Engagement Policy
3. Financial Plan (plan under section 91 of the Act outlining the financial and non-financial resources required for at least the next 10 financial years)	Adopted in accordance with section 91 of the Act Adopted 19 October 2021 Reviewed and re-adopted annually - 25 June 2024
4. Asset Plan (plan under section 92 of the Act setting out the asset maintenance and renewal needs for key infrastructure asset classes for at least the next 10 years)	Adopted in accordance with section 92 of the Act Adopted 14 June 2022 Reviewed and re-adopted 25 June 2024


Governance & Management items	Assessment
5. Revenue and Rating Plan (plan under section 93 of the Act setting out the rating structure of Council to levy rates and charges)	Adopted in accordance with section 93 of the Act Adopted 15 June 2021 Reviewed and re-adopted annually – 25 June 2024
6. Annual Budget (plan under section 94 the Act setting out the services to be provided and initiatives to be undertaken during the budget year and the funding and other resources required)	Adopted in accordance with section 94 of the Act Adopted 25 June 2024
7. Risk policy (policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to minimising the risks to Council's operations)	Current policy in operation Adopted 30 September 2020
8. Fraud Policy (policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to minimising the risk of fraud)	Current policy in operation Adopted 25 June 2024
9. Municipal Emergency Management Plan (Participation in meetings of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee)	2 MEMPC meetings held during the year: 6 July 2023 and 30 May 2024
10. Procurement Policy (policy under section 108 of the Act outlining the principles, processes and procedures that will apply to the purchase of goods and services by the Council)	Adopted in accordance with section 1.8 of the Act Adopted 27 April 2022
11. Business Continuity Plan (plan setting out the actions that will be undertaken to ensure that key services continue to operate in the event of a disaster)	Current plan in operation BCM Policy adopted September 2019 BC Plan adopted 14 December 2021 COVID-Safe Plan rescinded 2024
12. Disaster Recovery Plan (plan setting out the actions that will be undertaken to recovery and restore business capability in the event of a disaster)	Current plan in operation Adopted 20 January 2015 Under review 2024
13. Complaint Policy (policy under section 107 of the Act outlining Council's commitment and approach to managing complaints)	Policy developed in accordance with section 107 of the Act Adopted 17 May 2021
14. Workforce Plan (plan outlining Council's commitment and approach to planning the current and future workforce requirements of the organisation)	Plan developed in accordance with section 46 of the Act Adopted 30 November 2023
15. Payment of Rates and Charges Hardship Policy (policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to assisting ratepayers experiencing financial hardship or difficulty paying their rates)	Current policy in operation Adopted 7 January 2022

Governance & Management items	Assessment
16. Risk Management Framework (framework outlining Council's approach to managing risks to the Council's operations)	Current framework in operation Framework & Plan 2021-2024 adopted adopted 24 February 2021
17. Audit and Risk Committee (advisory committee of Council in accordance with sections 53 and 54 of the Act)	Established in accordance with section 53 of the Act Re-established 16 June 2020
18. Internal Audit (independent accounting professionals engaged by the Council to provide analyses and recommendations aimed at improving Council's governance, risk, and management controls)	Internal auditor engaged New contract engaged 30 June 2023
19. Performance Reporting Framework (a set of indicators measuring financial and non-financial performance, including the performance indicators referred to in section 98 of the Act)	Current framework in operation Procedure adopted 2020 Updated framework 16 June 2020
20. Council Plan Report (report reviewing the performance of the Council against the Council Plan, including the results in relation to the strategic indicators, for the first six months of the financial year)	Current reporting done 4 reports done during the financial year: 15 August 2023 12 December 2023 19 March 2024 21 May 2024
21. Quarterly Budget Reports (quarterly statements to the Council under section 98=7(1) of the Act, comparing actual and budgeted results and an explanation of any material variations)	Reports presented to the Council in accordance with section 97(1) of the Act Reports presented in: 15 August 2023 12 December 2023 19 March 2024 21 May 2024
22. Risk Reporting (six-monthly reports of strategic risks to Council's operations, their likelihood, and consequences of occurring and risk minimisation strategies)	Reports presented to Council: 11 December 2023 18 July 2024
23. Performance Reporting (six-monthly reports of indicators measuring financial and non-financial performance, including the performance indicators referred to in section 98 of the Act)	Reports presented: EOFY report August 2023 No mid-year report prepared due to workload impact of bushfire
24. Annual Report (annual report under sections 98, 99, and 100 of the Act containing a report of operations and audited financial and performance statements)	Presented at a meeting of the Council in accordance with section 100 of the Act Presented 18 October 2023

Governance & Management items	Assessment
<p>25. Councillor Code of Conduct (Code under section 139 of the Act setting out the standards of conduct to be followed by Councillors and other matters)</p>	<p>Reviewed and adopted in accordance with section 139 of the Act Adopted 16 February 2021</p>
<p>26. Delegations (documents setting out the powers, duties, and functions of Council and the Chief Executive Officer that have been delegated to members of staff, in accordance with sections 11 and 47 of the Act)</p>	<p>Reviewed in accordance with section 11(7) of the Act and a register kept in accordance with sections 11(8) and 47(7) of the Act Reviewed and adopted 21 February 2023</p>
<p>27. Meeting Procedures (Governance Rules under section 60 of the Act governing the conduct of meetings of Council and delegated committees)</p>	<p>Governance Rules adopted in accordance with section 60 of the Act Adopted 18 August 2020 Reviewed and re-adopted 21 March 2023</p>

I certify that this information presents fairly the status of Council's governance and management arrangements.


 Jim Nolan, Chief Executive Officer
 Dated: 29 September 2024


 Cr Robert Vance, Mayor
 Dated: 29 September 2024



STATUTORY INFORMATION

The following information is provided in accordance with legislative and other requirements applying to Council.

Documents available for public inspection

In accordance with the former regulation 12 (repealed) of the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2015*, the following are prescribed documents that were available for public inspection or copies of the documents that could be obtained for the purposes of section 222 of the Act at 4 Lawrence Street, Beaufort:

- A document containing details of overseas or interstate travel (other than interstate travel by land for less than three days) undertaken in an official capacity by a councillor or any member of Council staff in the previous 12 months.
- Minutes of ordinary and special meetings held in the previous 12 months which are kept under section 93 of the Act, other than those agendas and minutes relating to a part of a meeting which was closed to members of the public under section 89 of the Act and are confidential information within the meaning of section 77(2) of the Act.
- The minutes of meetings of special committees established under section 86 of the Act and held in the previous 12 months, other than those minutes relating to a part of a meeting which was closed to members of the public under section 89 of the Act and are confidential information within the meaning of section 77(2) of the Act.
- A register of delegations kept under sections 87(1) and 98(4) of the Act, including the date on which the last review took place under sections 86(6) and 98(6), respectively, of the Act.
- A document containing details of all leases involving land which were entered into by the Council as lessor, including the lessee and the terms and the value of the lease.

- A register maintained under section 224(1) of the Act of authorised officers appointed under that section.
- A register of donations and grants made by the Council in the previous 12 months, including the names of persons who, or bodies which, have received a donation or grant and the amount of each donation or grant.

Contracts

For Council contracts greater than the threshold values detailed in Council's Procurement Policy (\$300,000), strategic reviews are conducted to determine:

- Whether the service is still required.
- The strategic approach for delivering and providing the service.
- How the service aligns to Council's strategic objectives.
- Analysis of the supplier market.
- The best procurement methodology and delivery.

Council issued nine (9) requests for tenders in 2023-24, covering the following service categories:

- Flood mitigation investigation
- Drainage works
- Environmental Health Officer provider
- Flood management planning
- Cleaning
- Grass slashing and weed control
- Sharps and hygiene services

During the year, Council entered into contracts valued above the thresholds detailed within Council's Procurement Policy (\$300,000), without engaging in a competitive process as follows:

- Contracts relating to post-disaster public safety works relating to hazardous trees following the February 2024 Bayindeen Rocky Road fire to ensure continuity of emergency service delivery.

Disability action plan

Council has not prepared a separate Disability Action Plan but relevant actions are included within the Council Plan 2021-2025.

Domestic Animal Management Plan

In accordance with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* section 68A, Council is required to prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan at four yearly intervals and evaluate its implementation in the annual report.

Council's Domestic Animal Management Plan 2022-2025 was prepared in mid-2022 for adoption in August 2022 and is published on Council's website. The Plan's purpose is to provide Council with a strategic framework that delivers policy direction and action plans for animal management.

- Registration of dogs and cats.
- Control of dogs and cats.
- Control of dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs.
- Control of commercial domestic animal businesses.

The Plan sets out the methods for evaluating whether the normal control services provided by Council are adequate to give effect to the requirements of the Act and the regulations and a range of programs, services and strategies which Council intends to pursue in its municipal district.

The Domestic Animal Management Plan evaluation for the year is provided below:

Activity	When	Evaluation criteria	Evaluation outcome
SECTION 2: TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS			
<i>Section 2.3 - Objective 1: Develop a training policy that clearly identifies minimum training requirements and any additional training needs that should be undertaken by animal management officers.</i>			
Identify minimum training requirements by consultation with management and staff	Year 2 / 3	Documentation to be finalised and incorporated into a Council OHS training policy.	Not yet started
Officers have undertaken training as detailed in section 2.1 and 2.2 of the Plan.	As arises	Annual review identifies training conducted when / if arises in accordance with the Plan.	In progress
New officers will be trained in Certificate IV in Government.	ASAP after start	Annual Review of successful completion of course.	Not applicable
<i>Section 2.3 - Objective 2: Develop and maintain a training register for individual officers detailing completed and proposed training.</i>			
Develop a spreadsheet listing each officer showing their completed and proposed training.	Year 2 / 3	Update and maintain training spreadsheet as needed.	Completed

Activity	When	Evaluation criteria	Evaluation outcome
SECTION 3: RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP			
Section 3.3 - Objective 1: <i>Review and update Council's Orders under the Act.</i>			
Conduct a community consultation program to determine the feasibility of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The implementation of a new updated off-leash Order that is in-line with other rural councils and community expectations. The introduction of a 24-hour cat curfew (currently only dusk to dawn). Identify possible dog off lead park areas and create fenced and un-fenced dog parks once the new and updated Order is passed. 	Year 2, 3 & 4	Determine support and appetite for change by the community and update Orders accordingly. Have at least two off-lead parks in the Shire (fenced or not fenced).	In progress
Section 3.3 - Objective 2: <i>Develop a discounted pet desexing program for concession card holders.</i>			
Apply for grants for pet desexing offered by the state government & MAV.	As they arise	Obtain grant	In progress
Section 3.3 - Objective 3: <i>Develop Standard Operating Procedures and Policies for the domestic animal management unit.</i>			
Create procedures / policies for dealing with the following matters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nuisance complaints i.e., barking dogs. Dog attacks. Excess animal permits. 	Year 2 / 3	Review the use of procedures by officers during their annual review or as arises.	Not yet started
SECTION 4: OVER-POPULATION AND HIGH EUTHANASIA RATES			
Section 4.3 - Objective 1: <i>Reduce the number of impounded and unregistered cats in the Shire.</i>			
Run education campaigns regarding feral and semi-owned cats.	Ongoing	Public feedback.	Not yet started
Run education campaigns regarding feral and semi-owned cats.	Ongoing	Public feedback.	Not yet started
Purchase more cat traps and proactively offer to residents in or close to high biodiversity areas.	Ongoing	Track impound statistics and monitor results in these areas.	Completed
Section 4.3 - Objective 2: <i>Encourage desexing of animals and assist with low cost desexing for concession card holders.</i>			
Apply for animal desexing grants through Animal Welfare Victoria and the MAV when they arise.	As arise	Successfully obtain grant and record number of animals desexed via the program.	In progress
Continue to promote desexing of pets.	Ongoing	Responsible pet ownership.	Completed
Look at further registration discount options – i.e., free first-time registration for cats and dogs under the age of six months that are desexed and microchipped.	Year 4	Compare registration statistics.	Not yet started

Activity	When	Evaluation criteria	Evaluation outcome
Participate with neighbouring Council campaigns and promotional days around microchipping and desexing if and when available.	As arise	Record number of participants and outcomes.	Not yet started
SECTION 5: REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION			
Section 5.3 - Objective 1: <i>Council will endeavour to maximise the number of registered and identifiable domestic animals to aid compliance activities and to help reunite lost pets with their owners.</i>			
Investigate the feasibility of Authorised Officers implanting microchips.	Year 4	Training complete	Not yet started
Use local newspapers, community newsletters, social media, and Council's website to promote and advertise registration requirements prior to the 10th April renewal date.	Feb/Mar/Apr each year	At least one article to be submitted before renewal date.	Completed
Council's website to provide information to residents on when and how to register their pets.	Ongoing	Review annually before the registration renewal period begins.	Completed
Investigate the use of a social media platform to list seized cats or dogs as a way of reuniting pets with their owners.	Year 4	Prepare a report proposing the initiative to management.	Not yet started
Investigate the use of Variable Message Signs in strategic areas across the municipality during the registration renewal period.	Year 1, 2, 3, and 4	Evaluate registration uptake and statistics from database to see if registration trends have increased.	Not yet started
Try and identify all deceased cats and dogs by scanning them for a microchip.	Over the next 4 years	Create a policy that outlines Council's process in managing deceased cats and dogs found in the Shire.	In progress
Review information regarding cats and dogs in Council's 'new resident' kit.	Ongoing	Review kit and information annually.	Not yet started
Council events and promotional activities. Set up a marquee/stand at local events to educate the community.	Ongoing	Capture and review data from the community i.e., how many attendees, material handed out, questions asked, registration forms handed out etc.	Not yet started
SECTION 6: NUISANCE			
Section 6.3 - Objective 1: <i>Reduce cat nuisance complaints.</i>			
Continue to enforce cat curfew.	Ongoing	Keep a register of nuisance complaints – should result in less cat nuisance complaints.	Completed
Continue to promote and enforce desexing of cats.	Ongoing	Continual promotion.	Completed
Provide education material about cat enclosures and nuisance.	Ongoing	Annual Review of website content and brochures available at Shire Office and Information Centres.	Completed

Activity	When	Evaluation criteria	Evaluation outcome
Use social media as a tool to promote responsible cat ownership.	Mar/Apr each year	Posts on social media platforms promoting responsible cat ownership – especially around renewal time.	Completed
Section 6.3 - Objective 2: Reduce dog nuisance complaints.			
Make available information about how to address barking dogs for both owners and neighbours and how to go about solving nuisance issues.	ASAP	Increased advice and information should result in less complaints. Keep a register of nuisance complaints.	Completed
Utilise Council's on-hold message facility, website and social media as a promotional tool.	Ongoing	Annual review of content.	Not yet started
Continue to promote desexing of animals via website and social media.	Ongoing	Annual review of content.	Completed
Review signage and placement of dog faeces bag dispensers in the municipality. Increase numbers in areas that require them.	Ongoing	Increased availability of bag dispensers should result in less complaints about dog faeces in public places.	In progress
Create a standard operating procedure for managing barking dog complaints.	Year 2	Adopt procedure.	Not yet started
SECTION 7: DOG ATTACKS			
Section 7.3 - Objective 1: Reduce attacks by dogs and cats on people, livestock, pets, and wildlife.			
Create and adopt a comprehensive policy and procedure around how the Pyrenees Shire Council deals with and investigates dog attacks in the municipality.	Year 2	Adopted policy.	Not yet started
Court results of successful prosecutions to be released to the media as a way of raising awareness and responsible dog ownership.	As they occur	As arise.	Not yet started
Encourage the community to report dog attacks to Council by improving public awareness through media campaigns, educational material, website, and social media.	Ongoing	Reviewed annually.	In progress
Patrol areas of reported dog attacks on livestock where the dogs were not identified. Conduct educational letter drops or speak to all surrounding dog owners advising them of the recent attack and what their responsibilities are.	Ongoing	As arise.	In progress

Activity	When	Evaluation criteria	Evaluation outcome
SECTION 8: DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREED DOGS			
Section 8.3 - Objective 1: <i>Develop a policy to assist in the decision-making process of declaring a dog, ensuring the policy is fair, reasonable, and consistent.</i>			
Review all investigations / briefs of evidence relating to dog attacks to determine if a declaration should be sought.	As occurs	Outcomes of declaration proposals.	Completed
Draft and adopt a standard operating procedure / policy for declarations which standardises the process to ensure consistency and fairness.	Year 3	Number of proposed declarations, appeals and successful declarations.	Not yet started
Section 8.3 - Objective 2: <i>Ensure declared dogs are compliant with the act and regulations.</i>			
Refer to the measures outlined in section 8.1 Context and Current Situation.	As occurs, ongoing and annually	Successful outcomes and the recording of data to show trends. Review actions and offences detected.	Completed
SECTION 9: DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES			
Section 9.3 - Objective 1: <i>Ensure all Domestic Animal Businesses (DAB) operate in accordance with statutory requirements and community expectations.</i>			
Identify non-registered Domestic Animal Businesses by monitoring social media, local advertising boards and newspapers in the municipality (or similar, including online sites) identify businesses selling pets / products and services. Cross reference results with the Pet Exchange Register.	Ongoing	Achieve compliance. Compare the number of DABs before and after activity.	Completed
Audit all current domestic animal businesses within the municipality.	Annually	Keep a register and review annually that all domestic animal businesses and breeders have been audited.	Completed
Utilise Council's database to conduct proactive inspections of properties identified as having more than 34 fertile females.	Ongoing	Achieve compliance	Not yet started
Section 9.3 - Objective 2: <i>Develop a standard operating procedure and guidelines for assessing applications and dealing with issues of non-compliance.</i>			
Outline the process for assessing new applications. Ensure the planning and building departments are consulted and included.	Year 2	Documented process and procedure.	Not yet started
Outline enforcement actions for persons found operating an unregistered domestic animal business.	Year 3	Documented process and procedure.	Not yet started

Food Act Ministerial Directions

In accordance with section 7E of the *Food Act 1984*, Council is required to publish a summary of any Ministerial Directions received during the financial year in its annual report. No such Ministerial Directions were received by Council during the financial year.

Freedom of Information

In accordance with section 7(4AA)(a) and 7(4AA)(b) of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, Council is required to publish certain statements in their annual report or separately such as on its website, concerning its functions and information available. Council has chosen to publish the statements separately however provides the following summary of the application and operation of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

Access to documents may be obtained through written request to the Freedom of Information Officer, as detailed in section 17 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and in summary as follows:

- Requests should be made in writing.
- Requests should identify as clearly as possible which document is being requested.
- Requests should be accompanied by the appropriate application fee (as detailed on the website).

Application fees may be waived in certain circumstances (e.g., financial hardship) upon request to the Freedom of Information Officer. However, a request does not become valid for processing until either payment of the application fee is made or written acceptance of a fee waiver is received.

Access charges may also apply once documents have been processed and a decision on access is made (e.g., photocopying and search / retrieval charges).

Applications for access to documents should be made addressed to Council's Freedom of Information Officer –

- By mail to Pyrenees Shire Council,
5 Lawrence Street BEAUFORT VIC 3373
- By email to pyrenees@pyrenees.vic.gov.au
(however a request does not become valid until the application fee has been paid)
- In person at any of Council's front counters.

Further information regarding Freedom of Information can be found at www.foi.vic.gov.au

Requests for information made under the Freedom of Information Act

In the 2023-24 financial year, Council received 22 requests for information pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, 20 of which were non-personal requests. This was a significant increase over previous years – Council receiving 7 requests in 2023, and an annual average of 2 requests prior to that.

Of these requests, 19 requests were processed by the end of the year and three (3) were carried over for finalisation in the following year. Of the 19 completed requests:

- Two (2) requests had access provided in full.
- Zero (0) requests had access provided in part.
- Two (2) requests determined that no documents existed.
- 13 requests were provided with information outside of the Act.

A total of fees and charges collected by Council with regard to these requests are detailed as follows:

- \$159.00 was collected as application fees
- \$Nil was collected as charges
(e.g. photocopying charges or search times)
- \$540.60 in application fees was waived

Public Interest Disclosure procedures

The *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012* aims to ensure openness and accountability in government by encouraging people to disclose improper conduct within the public sector and provide protection for people who make disclosures. Procedures on how to make a disclosure are publicly available on Council's website.

During the 2023-24 year no disclosures were notified to Council officers appointed to receive disclosures, or to IBAC (Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission).

Road Management Act Ministerial Directions

In accordance with section 22 of the *Road Management Act 2004*, Council must publish a copy or summary of any Ministerial direction in its Annual Report. No such Ministerial Directions were received by Council during the financial year.

Infrastructure and development contributions

In accordance with sections 46GM and 46 QD of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, Council that is a collecting or development agency must prepare and give a report to the Minister for Planning on infrastructure and development contributions including levies and works in kind. The report must be published in Council's Annual Report.

Council did not have any development or infrastructure contribution plans within the financial year and therefore no levies collected.

GLOSSARY

Act	means the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>
Annual Report	means a report of the council's operations of the previous financial year and contains a report of operations, audited financial statements and an audited performance statement
Appropriateness	means indicators or measures that provide users with sufficient information to assess the extent to which an entity has achieved a pre-determined target, goal, or outcome
Budget	means a plan setting out the services and initiatives to be funded for the financial year and how they will contribute to achieving the strategic objectives specified in the council plan
Council plan	means a plan setting out the medium-term strategic objectives, strategies, strategic indicators, and resources reflecting vision and aspirations of the community for the next four years
Finance performance indicators	means a prescribed set of indicators and measures that assess the effectiveness of financial management in a council covering operating position, liquidity, obligations, stability, and efficiency
Financial statements	means the financial statements and notes prepared in accordance with the Local Government Model Financial Report, Australian Accounting Standards, and other applicable standards as they apply to the general-purpose financial reports and a statement of capital works and included in the annual report
Financial year	means the period of 12 months ending on 30 June each year
Governance and management checklist	means a prescribed checklist of policies, plans, and documents that councils must report the status of in the report of operations, covering engagement, planning, monitoring, reporting, and decision making
Indicator	means what will be measured to assess performance
Initiatives	means actions that are one-off in nature and/or lead to improvements in services
Major initiative	means significant initiatives that will directly contribute to the achievement of the council plan during the current year and have a major focus in the budget



Measure	means how an indicator will be measured and takes the form of a computation, typically including a numerator and denominator
Minister	means the Minister for Local Government
Performance Statement	means a statement including the results of the prescribed service outcome indicators, financial performance indicators and sustainable capacity indicators for the financial year and included in the annual report
Integrated strategic planning and reporting framework	means the key statutory planning and reporting documents that are required to be prepared by councils to ensure accountability to local communities in the performance of functions and exercise of powers under the Act
Regulations	means the Local Government (Planning & Reporting) Regulations 2020
Relevance	means indicators or measures that have a logical and consistent relationship to an entity's objectives and are linked to the outcomes to be achieved
Report of operations	means a report containing a description of the operations of the council during the financial year and included in the annual report
Services	means assistance, support, advice, and other actions undertaken by a council for the benefit of the local community
Service outcome indicators	means the prescribed service performance indicators to be included in the performance statement which measure whether the stated service objective has been achieved
Service performance indicators	means a prescribed set of indicators measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of council services covering appropriateness, quality, cost, and service outcomes
Strategic objectives	means the outcomes a council is seeking to achieve over the next four years and included in the Council Plan
Financial plan	means a plan of the financial and non-financial resources for at least the next ten years required to achieve the strategic objectives in the Council Plan. It is also referred to as a long-term financial plan
Strategies	means high level actions directed at achieving the strategic objectives in the Council Plan
Sustainable capacity indicators	means a prescribed set of indicators measuring whether councils have the capacity to meet the agreed service and infrastructure needs of the local community and absorb foreseeable changes and unexpected shocks into the future covering financial performance, capacity, and governance and management

Section 8: OUR FINANCIALS



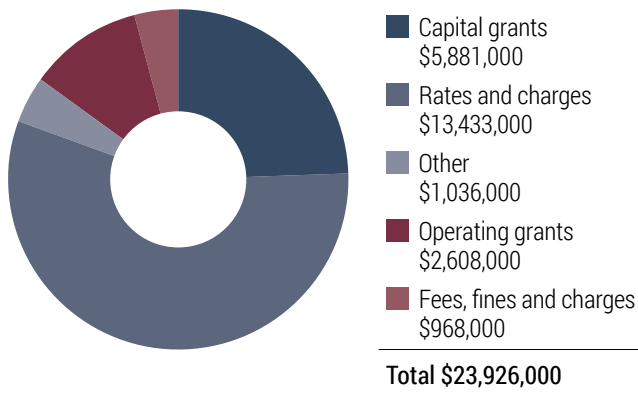
ABOUT COUNCIL REVENUE AND EXPENSES

How Council brings in money

Council activities are funded through a limited number of sources:

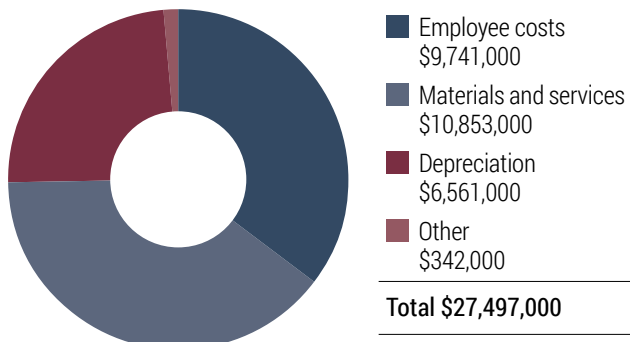
- Rates – there is an expectation that rates income collected from property owners is spent fairly and efficiently.
- Operating and Capital Grants – funding from other levels of government that have requirements for acquittal and delivery of required outcomes or service outputs.
- User charges – Council operates a range of services that charge user fees.
- Statutory fees and fines – are fees for applications and permits.

Revenue



How Council spends money

Expenditure



PERFORMANCE STATEMENT AND FINANCIAL REPORT

Council is required to prepare and include a Performance Statement within its Annual Report. The Performance Statement includes the results of the prescribed sustainable capacity, service performance and financial performance indicators and measures together with a description of the municipal district and an explanation of material variations in the results. This Statement has been prepared to meet the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1989 and 2020* and *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014*.

The Financial Report is a key report of the Pyrenees Shire Council. It shows how Council performed financially during the 2023-24 financial year and the overall position at the end (June 30, 2024) of the financial year. Council presents its Financial Report in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards.

Particular terms required by the Standards may not be familiar to some readers. Further, Council is a 'not-for-profit' organisation and some of the generally recognised terms used in private sector company reports are not appropriate to Council's Reports.

The Performance Statement and Financial Report are available to download from Council's website www.pyrenees.vic.gov.au or you can contact the office to request a printed copy.

Note: Operating grants and total operating revenue is significant lower than previous years due to the timing of the receipt of the Federal Financial Assistance Grants. The timing of these grants was delayed until July instead of being received in June, thus the grants were not recorded in the 2023/24 financial year.

ANNUAL *Report* 2023-24



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Shire Council

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