



Pyrenees
Shire Council

Minutes

Ordinary Meeting of Council

6:00 pm Monday 17 February 2025

Council Chambers

Beaufort Council Offices,
5 Lawrence Street, Beaufort

Wadawurrung Country

Members of the public may view the meeting virtually via the livestream

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. WELCOME	3
2. STREAMING PREAMBLE	3
3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY	3
4. APOLOGIES.....	3
5. NOTICE OF DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS	3
6. CONFIRMATION OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES.....	3
7. BUSINESS ARISING	3
8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.....	4
9. COUNCILLOR ACTIVITY REPORTS.....	9
9.1. Councillor Activity Reports - December 2024 / January 2025	9
10. ASSEMBLY OF COUNCILLORS.....	11
10.1. Assembly of Councillors - December 2024 / January 2025	11
11. ITEMS FOR DECISION	14
11.1. Economic Development and Tourism.....	14
11.1.1. Application for Funding - Active Transport Fund.....	14
11.1.2. Economic Development Update	18
11.2. Asset and Development Services.....	28
11.2.1. GATT Seal Program	28
11.2.2. Planning and Development Update - February 2025	31
11.2.3. Victoria’s Climate Science Report 2024	39
11.3. Corporate and Community Services	43
11.3.1. Mid Year Financial Review	43
11.3.2. NP47: Proposal to Name Unnamed Road in Avoca Between Rutherford Street and Barnett Street.....	46
11.3.3. NP48: Proposal to Name Unnamed Road Off Racecourse Road Beaufort as Kirkland Court	48
11.3.4. Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF)	50
11.4. Chief Executive Office	53
11.4.1. 2025 Council Meeting Schedule	53
11.4.2. Australian Local Government Association - National General Assembly	55
11.4.3. Pyrenees Acquisitive Art Prize	57
11.4.4. Advocacy Program	59
11.4.5. External Grant Funding	61
12. COUNCILLOR REPORTS AND GENERAL BUSINESS	65
13. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS	69
14. CLOSE OF MEETING	69

1. WELCOME

Mayor Cr Tanya Kehoe welcomed all to the meeting.

PRESENT

Mayor: Cr Tanya Kehoe

Councillors: Megan Phelan, Simon Tol, Rebecca Wardlaw, Damian Ferrari

Chief Executive Officer: Jim Nolan

Director Asset and Development Services: Douglas Gowans

Director of Corporate and Community Services: Kathy Bramwell

EA to CEO and Councillors: Chantelle Sandlant (minutes)

Senior Communications Officer: Leah Heinrich

2. STREAMING PREAMBLE

Mayor Cr Tanya Kehoe read the livestream preamble.

3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Mayor acknowledged the people past and present of the Wadawurrung, Dja Dja Wurrung, Eastern Maar and Wotjobaluk tribes, whose land forms the Pyrenees Shire. We pay our respect to the customs, traditions and stewardship of the land by the elders and people of these tribes on whose land we meet today.

4. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

5. NOTICE OF DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

6. CONFIRMATION OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

Cr Simon Tol / Cr Megan Phelan

That the Minutes of the:

- Statutory Meeting of Council held on 12 November 2024;
- Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 10 December 2024; and
- Closed Meeting of Council held 10 December 2024,

as previously circulated to Councillors, be confirmed.

CARRIED

7. BUSINESS ARISING

There was no business arising from the previous meeting held 10 December 2024.

8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Jocelyn Campbell of Beaufort

Question one:

Given the age of all Pyrenees Pools and the recent closure of the Beaufort Pool. what is the proposed timeline and current progress of Councils' Strategic Plan for the future of all Pyrenees Shire swimming pools? Further, what opportunities will the community be given for input into the development of this plan?

Response:

Mr Nolan thanked Ms Campbell for the question and provided the following response:

Council commenced a strategic review of the three Council Pools in 2024. The review seeks to understand the current condition, and the renewal and maintenance requirements for the various assets within each of the facilities. The process will undertake a needs assessment, and investigate long term options that best services that community now and in the future within councils financial capability.

A very important part of the development of this strategic plan, will be to seek input from those that use the pool as well as the general public. We will also be seeking expert advice from within the industry. At key milestones completed, we will seek to share that with the community and provide details about how you can have involvement during the course of that process.

John Hanley of Rathscar

Question one:

I would like council to consider making all roads in the Shire to allow B-doubles and Road Trains to access them, especially during the harvest season, and could I discuss possible options available.

Response:

Mr Gowans thanked Mr Hanley for the question and provided the following response:

Council understands the importance of road assets and access for higher mass vehicles to support the Pyrenees economy and specifically the agricultural sector.

Council has responsibility for just over 2,000km of roads and 150 bridges on those roads on the network.

Of the 150 bridges, Council currently has 25 of those bridges that are load limited. This basically means that they can't go beyond a certain mass for each individual bridge and those load limits are likely soon to be posted on those bridges which will make it quite obvious to the community, which of the bridges are load limited. Predominately the load limits are due to the age of the assets and that many of these bridges were not designed for higher mass loads.

Council has been investing in its road and bridge network over many years and Council has been upgrading bridges and culverts to achieve higher load limits.

As of 2024 Council has pre-approved approximately 240km of its 2,000km road network. Other rods can be used by B-doubles on a case-by-case basis through application to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator.

However, the bridge structures that are currently load limited are non-negotiable and need to be restricted to the posted/agreed load limit to ensure safety.

Council continues to prioritise replacement of load limited bridges that provide the greatest benefit to the transport and agricultural sectors. As we progress with upgrading bridges, we will in turn, make those roads

available for the agricultural sector so Council will continue to look at which ones should be done in what order because on average, each bridge replacement costs in the order of \$1m, it depends on a number of factors, but it starts adding up when you try to get larger vehicles on our network over time but we understand that that is one of the purposes of the network to help support the industries that the community has here.

Question two:

Asking council to gravel at least 500 metres of Evans Road Homebush so I can access my paddocks with trucks and equipment in all seasons.

This request has been asked previously, and I don't want to hear that this road is not on your road register. Looking forward to discussing these questions at the meeting as I will be in attendance.

Response:

Mr Gowans thanked Mr Hanley for the question and provided the following response:

Evans Lane Homebush is on the Council road register as a Local Access 2 road for approximately 241m to service the residence at 18 Evans Lane.

Beyond this point Council acknowledges that there is a natural surface track/informal track, that Council currently does not have on its road register.

There may be a strong case for this to be added to the register as a Local Access 3 road. The fact that it is not on the road register does not prevent it from being used for access by the general public.

A local access 3 road is not inspected and maintained and any maintenance is only undertaken at Council's discretion to maintain serviceability.

A Council decision is required in order for a road to become part of the road register along with its road classification.

It would be highly unusual for a local access 3 road to be constructed to an all weather access road. These are generally restricted to Local Access 2 or above roads which generally service residential properties.

Council has a limited budget and a request such as this, if supported, generally would be taking funds away from maintaining higher road classes.

Question three:

In response to that one about the road trains and everything I think council needs to look at it a little bit differently, so far as I am a farmer and we get other people cart our grain and we don't know what truck is going to come so we need to be able to get them in, like all the municipalities north of us do. I think council needs to look, the engineering department needs to look at putting speed limits on the bridges, if it was 60km/hr a road train would be prepared to go over that at 60km/hr instead of doing a 20km run around. You have only got to get the police or VicRoads there a couple of times to book a couple of them and they will all soon slow down to that speed, that way you are going to protect your bridges. It is not a matter of fixing every bridge in the shire, you have got to look at what other places are doing.

Response:

Mr Gowans thanked Mr Hanley for the question and provided the following response:

I think the suggestion about lower speed limits is absolutely in the mix of suggestions, in fact we have an example of where council put a speed limit on a bridge to extend its life prior to us getting funding to build that bridge and that was on the Beaufort Carngham Road so speed limitation is absolutely in the mix but it is not the only factor at play.

Mr Hanley made the following statement:

In response to that one about the road trains and everything I think council needs to look at it a little bit differently, so far as I am a farmer and we get other people cart our grain and we don't know what truck is going to come so we need to be able to get them in, like all the municipalities north of us do. I think council needs to look, the engineering department needs to look at putting speed limits on the bridges, if it was 60km/hr a road train would be prepared to go over that at 60km/hr instead of doing a 20km run around. You have only got to get the police or VicRoads there a couple of times to book a couple of them and they will all soon slow down to that speed, that way you are going to protect your bridges. It is not a matter of fixing every bridge in the shire, you have got to look at what other places are doing.

Response:

Mr Gowans thanked Mr Hanley for the question and provided the following response:

I think the suggestion about lower speed limits is absolutely in the mix of suggestions, in fact we have an example of where council put a speed limit on a bridge to extend its life prior to us getting funding to build that bridge and that was on the Beaufort Carngham Road so speed limitation is absolutely in the mix but it is not the only factor at play.

Mr Hanley made the following statement:

I have been asking for this road to be upgraded for about ten years and I fork out about \$19,500 every year on rates and I just think, a little bit of return, you all sat around on the Australia day thing and you listened to Rowan Martin talk about what's fair and I think sometimes that has to come back to people that are paying the bulk of the rates in this shire. I've asked for this road, I did a little bit on the road myself, and I was going to keep the rates out and use some rates money and council did the wrong thing by me in that, anyway, that's another story.

Response:

Cr Kehoe thanked Mr Hanley and advised that Mr Hanley's comments would be taken on notice and investigated further.

Julie Bartlett of Rathscar

Question one:

Can council please advise what they are doing to give people access to water standpipes for stock and domestic water as access seems to have been blocked on the 3 that are located close to Avoca / Rathscar area and when will infrastructure be upgraded?

Response:

Mr Gowans thanked Ms Bartlett for the question and provided the following response:

Council has two emergency water supply points in the Avoca - Rathscar area. One, bore number 18, is located approximately 1.8km north-east of Avoca off Homebush Road. The other, is bore number 11, is located on private property to the south of Bradshaw Swamp Road and about 700m west of Homebush Road.

Number 18 has a solar powered pump and gravity feed from a storage tank. Bore number 11 requires the user to supply fuel and start the diesel pump to draw directly from the bore if the tank is empty. This supply does not have an automated control system.

None of these emergency water supply points have water treatment and the water should be considered to be non-potable. Bore number 11 has high total dissolved solids and may not be suitable for some stock – particularly lambs.

Both of these water supplies are for emergency purposes and are not provided for purposes other than watering stock. Users need to obtain a permit prior to accessing the supplies.
The bore and tanks at the Avoca Recreation Reserve are not owned or managed by PSC.

Subsequent to this particular question, if the community is looking to seek water from the Avoca township supply, ultimately that rests with Central Highlands Water and typically, they will only allow registered water carters to access that supply via metered hydrants, that's generally not available to the public.

Cr Kehoe advised that the question would be taken on notice and investigated further.

Trevor Davey of Waterloo

Question one:

When will the monthly schedule for the highly successful and community liked Cuppa and Chat program be announced?

Response:

Mr Nolan thanked Mr Davey for the question and provided the following response:

I appreciate how valued the community cuppas are from various members of the community. At this point in time, there has been no decision made around the setting of the dates for community cuppas. Council is considering as part of the Council Plan, an engagement plan, a broader engagement plan around how to best engage with the community in the long term and that is all under consideration of the council at this stage.

Question two:

For transparency and community support the following question impacts the community a lot. Has the councillor for the Landsborough ward taken a full-time position in Melbourne and if so, what is the impact on the duties of a councillor for the constituents of that ward?

Response:

I am happy to respond on behalf of the council and the councillor in question, yes Cr Megan Phelan has been successful in her employment and of course, employment is necessary for councillors to have because the allowance that a councillor gets is highly inadequate for someone to sustain a lifestyle. It is important for councillors to have other employment and certainly in a small rural council, it is an important aspect of their livelihood so yes, Cr Phelan, because she is highly sort after with her skills has managed to secure employment and that employment does take her out of this shire and is Melbourne based. However, Cr Phelan is completely committed to fulfil her role as a councillor as she committed to on election and to participate in councillor activities and to represent the constituents of the De Cameron ward and the interest of the whole of the community.

Cr Phelan provided the following response:

Thanks for the question Mr Davey, I can add that very fortunately, I do have access to flexible working arrangements, and for your level of comfort, I am in Moonambel more days than I am not on any given working week. Thankfully my place of employment has given me that flexibility which is excellent, it will certainly be a big balancing act but I am very committed to both roles and you will see on the next agenda item, the level of engagement I have had across the De Cameron ward and have really great engagements with the community which I intend to continue doing.

Mr Gary Swann of Brewster commented as follows:

Just following up, probably as you are aware, the latest development with the Brewster Wind Farm come as a bit of a shock at 7 minutes to 5 on Friday night. We've gone through due diligence and truth all the way through this matter and ever since the last so called community meetings on October 10 and 17, there has

been no communication back at all to any of our members and all of a sudden, bang, that's it. It's disappointing, a statement for the council from now on, is to be aware of the procedure that is happening, I hope you're on your A game with this because some of the mis-truths that have been told, well we don't know what has been told to the Department of Transport and Planning and unfortunately what has occurred, and they really stipulate we have no reinforcement, they are really strong in that statement on their email. So the council will have to be aware of the terms and conditions. I know there are 17 pages of them and I am not across them all but you will just have to be in communication a lot if there are any questions and you will need to have your wits about this proponent, I am sorry but they have not been very forthcoming with us. We have been respectful and engaged with them.

Cr Kehoe provided the following response:

Thank you for your comments, Your community is supporting your community and doing it in such a respectful way and we are here to support your community.

Mr Swann provided the following response:

If there are ever any questions that anyone would like to know, please come and talk to us because there is a lot of information, I could go on for hours and the data that has been put in our submissions, I don't know how it hasn't been checked or replied to, it is disappointing.

Cr Kehoe provided the following response:

We will take that information on notice because we do need to be aware of this, even though there has been a decision made there is a process that we follow and we want to make sure that the guidelines are followed.

Mr Swann advised:

There are 17 pages of conditions and you just need to be aware. We just haven't had any information.

Cr Kehoe advised:

We can take that on notice and ask where that communication might be coming from.

Mr Nolan provided the following response:

Thank you Mr Swann for speaking to council tonight, just for the benefit of those that might be online and other members of the gallery, Mr Swann is referring to a planning application that was lodged with the Minister for Planning for a wind farm at Brewster. The process enabled submissions to be lodged, Council lodged a submission seeking that a permit not be issued for the wind farm following engagement with the community and councils' assessment of the information that was available. Members of the community made submissions to the Minister as well, those submissions were due in late October and that was during the council caretaker period. Council and the community were notified in the last couple of days of a decision by the Minister to grant a permit with a number of conditions on it. There are contained within those conditions, a number of what is called secondary consents which require plans and documents to be prepared and submitted to the Ministers satisfaction, and council will continue to engage with the community where there is a role for council and where that might be beneficial as part of the future construction and implementation of the permit conditions and happy to continue to advocate on behalf of the community. It is important for the community to understand that this is a decision of the Minister and council's role is very limited in this instance.

9. COUNCILLOR ACTIVITY REPORTS

9.1. COUNCILLOR ACTIVITY REPORTS - DECEMBER 2024 / JANUARY 2025

Cr Tanya Kehoe – Mount Emu Ward		
03/12/2024	Council Briefing	Snake Valley
03/12/2024	Councillor Cuppa and Chat	Snake Valley
06/12/2024	Pyrenees Primary School Pen Presentation	Snake Valley
06/12/2024	Beaufort by Twilight	Beaufort
10/12/2024	Council Briefing	Beaufort
10/12/2024	Council Meeting	Beaufort
12/12/2024	MAV Mayoral Training Program	Melbourne
13/12/2024	MAV Mayoral Training Program	Melbourne
13/12/2024	Mag Dam Reserve CoM Meeting	Snake Valley
14/12/2024	Carols in the Valley	Snake Valley
17/12/2024	Councillor End of Year event	Mount Mitchell
18/12/2024	Beaufort Skipton Health Services AGM	Skipton
08/01/2025	Council Integrated Strategic Planning Workshop & Briefing	Beaufort
14/01/2025	Housing Infrastructure Briefing – Dan Tehan	Virtual
24/01/2025	Rural Council's Victoria Meeting	Virtual
26/01/2025	Pyrenees Shire Australia Day Event	Lexton
31/01/2025	Rural Councils Victoria (RCV) Meeting with Catherine King MP	Ballarat
Cr Damian Ferrari – Beaufort Ward		
03/12/2024	Council Briefing	Snake Valley
03/12/2024	Councillor Cuppa and Chat	Snake Valley
10/12/2024	Council Briefing	Beaufort
10/12/2024	Council Meeting	Beaufort
11/12/2024	Pyrenees Primary School Pen Presentation	Beaufort
17/12/2024	Councillor End of Year event	Mount Mitchell
08/01/2025	Council Integrated Strategic Planning Workshop & Briefing	Beaufort
26/01/2025	Pyrenees Shire Australia Day Event	Lexton
31/01/2025	WHAC Meeting	Virtual
Cr Simon Tol – Ercildoune Ward		
03/12/2024	Council Briefing	Snake Valley
03/12/2024	Councillor Cuppa and Chat	Snake Valley
05/12/2024	Dr Anne Webster – Federal Member for Mallee	Avoca
10/12/2024	Council Briefing	Beaufort
10/12/2024	Council Meeting	Beaufort
11/12/2024	Pyrenees Primary School Pen Presentation	Trawalla
17/12/2024	Councillor End of Year event	Mount Mitchell
01/01/2025	Burrumbeet Races – Waubra Football Club BBQ	Burrumbeet
08/01/2025	Council Integrated Strategic Planning Workshop & Briefing	Beaufort
15/01/2025	DeCameron / Ercildoune Ward Meeting	Lexton
17/01/2024	Community Grant Information Session	Lexton
26/01/2025	Pyrenees Shire Australia Day Event	Lexton

Cr Megan Phelan – De Cameron Ward		
02/12/2024	Pyrenees Primary School Pen Presentation	Lexton
03/12/2024	Council Briefing	Snake Valley
03/12/2024	Councillor Cuppa and Chat	Snake Valley
05/12/2024	Dr Anne Webster – Federal Member for Mallee	Avoca
10/12/2024	Council Briefing	Beaufort
10/12/2024	Council Meeting	Beaufort
11/12/2024	Moonambel Recreation Reserve CoM Meeting	Moonambel
17/12/2024	Councillor End of Year event	Mount Mitchell
04/01/2025	Constituent Meeting	Lexton
06/01/2025	Landsborough Resource Centre Meeting	Moonambel
08/01/2025	Council Integrated Strategic Planning Workshop & Briefing	Beaufort
13/01/2025	DeCameron Ward Meeting	Landsborough
14/01/2025	DeCameron Ward Meeting	Moonambel
14/01/2025	DeCameron Ward Meeting	Redbank
15/01/2025	DeCameron / Ercildoune Ward Meeting	Lexton
17/01/2025	Landsborough Historical Society Meeting	Landsborough
18/01/2025	Moonambel Gap	Moonambel
26/01/2025	Pyrenees Shire Australia Day Event	Lexton
Cr Rebecca Wardlaw – Avoca Ward		
03/12/2024	Council Briefing	Snake Valley
03/12/2024	Councillor Cuppa and Chat	Snake Valley
04/12/2024	Dr Anne Webster – Federal Member for Mallee	Avoca
10/12/2024	Council Briefing	Beaufort
10/12/2024	Council Meeting	Beaufort
11/12/2024	Avoca Men’s Shed Christmas Morning Tea	Avoca
12/12/2024	Avoca Senior Citizens Luncheon	Avoca
12/12/2024	Pyrenees Primary School Pen Presentation	Maryborough
17/12/2024	Councillor End of Year event	Mount Mitchell
21/12/2024	Advance Avoca Christmas Street Party	Avoca
08/01/2025	Council Integrated Strategic Planning Workshop & Briefing	Beaufort
21/01/2025	Meeting with Casablanca Movie Club	Avoca
26/01/2025	Avoca Men’s Shed Australia Day Breakfast	Avoca
26/01/2025	Pyrenees Shire Australia Day Event	Lexton

Cr Damian Ferrari / Cr Rebecca Wardlaw

That Council notes this report.

CARRIED

10. ASSEMBLY OF COUNCILLORS

10.1. ASSEMBLY OF COUNCILLORS - DECEMBER 2024 / JANUARY 2025

MEETING INFORMATION			
Meeting Name	Councillor Briefing – Induction Day 4		
Meeting Date	3 December 2024 commenced at 2.30pm and closed at 4.30pm		
Meeting Location	Snake Valley Hall, Snake Valley		
Items Discussed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reconciliation & Traditional Owner Engagement 2. Gender Equality / Diversity / Inclusion 3. Communication / Engagement / Deliberative Engagement 4. Integrated Strategic Planning 5. Financial 6. Disaster Management 7. Administrative Items 		
ATTENDEES			
Councillors	Mayor Cr Tanya Kehoe Cr Damian Ferrari Cr Rebecca Wardlaw	Cr Megan Phelan Cr Simon Tol	
Apologies	Nil.		
Staff	Jim Nolan (Chief Executive Officer) Douglas Gowans (Director Assets and Development Services) Kathy Bramwell (Director Corporate and Community Services) Glenn Kallio (Manager Finance) – item 5		
Visitors	Nil.		
CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES			
Item No:	Councillor making disclosure	Particulars of disclosure	Councillor left meeting
Nil.			

MEETING INFORMATION			
Meeting Name	Councillor Briefing – Induction Day 5		
Meeting Date	10 December 2024 commenced at 2.30pm and closed at 5.40pm		
Meeting Location	Council Chamber, Beaufort		
Items Discussed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planning Permit PA24040 – 325 Waubra – Talbot Road, Waubra 2. Letter from Minister Horne to Councillors 3. Local Government Performance Reporting 4. Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Services 5. Procurement 6. Natural Disaster Recovery 7. CEO Update 		
ATTENDEES			
Councillors	Mayor Cr Tanya Kehoe Cr Damian Ferrari Cr Rebecca Wardlaw		Cr Megan Phelan Cr Simon Tol
Apologies	Nil.		
Staff	Jim Nolan (Chief Executive Officer) Douglas Gowans (Director Assets and Development Services) Kathy Bramwell (Director Corporate and Community Services)		
Visitors	Mr James Isles - Item 1		
CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES			
Item No:	Councillor making disclosure	Particulars of disclosure	Councillor left meeting
1	Cr Tanya Kehoe	Cousin is landowner	2.32pm to 3.00pm

MEETING INFORMATION			
Meeting Name	Council Integrated Strategic Planning Workshop & Briefing		
Meeting Date	8 January 2025 commenced at 10.00am and closed at 4.00pm		
Meeting Location	Council Chamber, Beaufort		
Items Discussed	1. Service Plans 2. Council Plan 2025-2029 – Early Shaping of the Plan 3. CEO Update		
ATTENDEES			
Councillors	Mayor Cr Tanya Kehoe Cr Damian Ferrari Cr Rebecca Wardlaw	Cr Megan Phelan Cr Simon Tol	
Apologies	Nil.		
Staff	Jim Nolan (Chief Executive Officer) Douglas Gowans (Director Assets and Development Services) Kathy Bramwell (Director Corporate and Community Services)		
Visitors	Nil.		
CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES			
Item No:	Councillor making disclosure	Particulars of disclosure	Councillor left meeting
Nil			

Cr Megan Phelan / Cr Simon Tol

That Council notes this report.

CARRIED

11. ITEMS FOR DECISION

11.1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

11.1.1. APPLICATION FOR FUNDING - ACTIVE TRANSPORT FUND

Presenter: Jim Nolan - Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Ray Davies – Manager Economic Development and Tourism

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 32/13/08

PURPOSE

To seek Councils' endorsement of an application for funding to extend footpath connections in Beaufort to support safer pedestrian outcomes and encourage more active and connected lifestyles.

BACKGROUND

Council adopted the "Beaufort Walkability Plan" in 2016.

In July 2019 the Beaufort community raised a petition seeking Councils investment in footpaths to better connect the town's residents.

The petition highlighted a shortage of footpaths in town by stating a *"lack of suitable walking paths around the township of Beaufort is placing the lives of our residents (young and old) at risk."*

- *One from the cars whom they currently share the road*
- *Two from a lack of exercise due to the insufficient safe surfaces on which to use mobility aids, bikes, scooters, roller skates or even walk/run".*

According to the National Road Safety Action Plan there is a 90% chance of death if a pedestrian is struck at 50km/h.

Council acknowledged the gaps in the footpath network at the time and committed to building additional paths with a priority of linking pedestrians to education and health facilities, town centre and railway station, and has progressively been extending its footpath network as external funds have become available (e.g. Building Better Regions Fund).

Council has subsequently constructed footpaths along Lawrence St/Park Road, Gregory and South Streets from Correa Park to Park Road and more recently the eastern end of Neill Street.

The funding sought currently from the Commonwealth Governments' Active Transport Fund, targets construction of footpaths along the northern section of Gregory Street, Stuart Street, Speke Street and Burke Street as outlined in the map attached to this report.

The Commonwealth Governments \$100 million Active Transport Fund is being delivered over the period 2024-25 to 2028-29 with applicants invited to lodge submissions for amounts of up to \$5 million.

The program aims to improve road safety outcomes for cyclists and pedestrians with the guidelines requiring responses to one or more of three focus areas:

- Improve road safety and reduce road trauma for pedestrians and cyclists
- Reducing transport emissions; to support commuters to choose more efficient, healthy, affordable and sustainable modes of transport including walking and cycling.

- Active and Liveable Communities; To invest in projects which better connect people and where they live and work, reduce traffic related noise pollution, promote outdoor physical activity, while also providing better opportunities in lower socio-economic areas.

Councils' submission responded to all three of the programs abovementioned focus areas.

While the guidelines generally seek dollar for dollar matching funds from the applicant, they note that some LGA's in regional areas may have limited capacity to provide a 50% co-contribution and alternative co-contributions can be sought as part of the application.

In this instance the project budget (which includes a 20% contingency allowance) is \$625,000- with Council seeking \$384,000 from the Commonwealth and a Council co-contribution of up to \$241,000-.

At the time of developing the submission to this program Council is seeking alternative sources of funding for the Gregory Street footpath under the Victorian Governments Safer Local Roads and Streets Program, which may form part of Councils co-contribution. In addition, Council has already committed to invest funds in the Burke Street footpaths as a component of the residential subdivision development there.

The estimated costs for these two paths including a 20% contingency were:

- \$151,053- for Gregory St and
- \$75,012 for Burke Street

A sum of \$12,500- in kind value in officer time to complete detailed designs and for project management also forms part of Councils contribution.

Applications for the Active Transport Fund closed 13 January, and the program guidelines indicate the assessment and approval process will take a period of up to ten weeks.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

The petition by Beaufort residents highlighted a shortage of footpaths in town by stating a *“lack of suitable walking paths around the township of Beaufort is placing the lives of our residents (young and old) at risk.*

Completing footpaths along the streets identified in the submission will provide safer passage to pedestrians and mobility scooter users etc. and encourage more active lifestyles of Beaufort residents.

The National Road Safety Strategy identifies vulnerable people including pedestrians and cyclists as a priority.

An objective of this Strategy is to:

*Fund infrastructure and non-infrastructure programs to **reduce risks to cyclists, pedestrians and motorcycle riders and future proof the system for new types of vulnerable road users.***

The proposed footpaths for this project will get pedestrians off roads and incorporate wombat style pedestrian crossings to act as traffic calming to reduce vehicle speeds where pedestrians are considered to be most at risk.

Beaufort also has an ageing community with the median age being 53 years in 2021 (38 for Australia). Constructing the proposed footpaths will both encourage greater mobility and improve safety of the towns' ageing population where 28% of residents are older than 55 years of age.

The Commonwealth Governments **National Preventative Health Strategy 2021-2030** illustrates the risks of leading physically inactive lives which contributes to obesity and cardiovascular diseases and includes the following objective:

- *Prioritise urban design, land use and infrastructure to support physical activity by providing Australians with access to natural environments, public open spaces and green areas, and active transport networks*

The Pyrenees Shire **Council plan** incorporates pillars of people and place and has objectives including:

- Improve accessibility and inclusivity
- Promote health, wellbeing, engagement and connection
- Improve social outcomes
- Enhance liveability of our communities

Councils **Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan** states that increasing active living is a key priority. Health statistics within the plan advise that 49% of residents have insufficient physical activity (Vic 44%) while 62.2% of males have insufficient physical activity (Vic 42.8%).

Objectives of **Councils Beaufort Walkability Plan 2016** are:

- To make the Beaufort Town Centre more pedestrian and bicycle friendly and make walking and cycling a safer form of transport for residents and visitors.
- To connect places that people want to get to including the central shopping area, train station, schools, pool, skate park and playgrounds, Lake Beaufort and Recreation Reserve / Caravan Park and Camp Hill.
- To extend existing path and trail facilities to provide a comprehensive and connected network of circuits for recreation and functional use

Creating the new footpaths under this project will support Councils aspirations to deliver the key objectives of the abovementioned plans. This will be achieved by providing pedestrian linkages to the town centre and public transport without residents relying on vehicles and alleviating present unsafe practices of pedestrians walking along roads or avoiding walking at all due to the current risks.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 1 - People

- 1c. Improve accessibility and inclusivity.
- 1d. Promote health, wellbeing, engagement and connection.
- 1e. Improve social outcomes.

Priority 2 - Place

- 2b. Enhance the liveability and resilience of our communities.
- 2c. Promote responsible development.

Enabling Principles

- a. Motivate and inspire community involvement
- c. Use resources efficiently and effectively

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

Community consultation occurred during the development of the Beaufort Walkability Plan 2016.

Consultation activities which informed the Beaufort Walkability Plan included:

- Two community meetings

- A workshop with year eleven secondary college students and teaching staff
- Seeking submissions from community members unable to attend consultation events

Community representatives included school representatives, business, Country Fire Authority, cyclists, lunch time walkers and members of the Community Action Plan Group.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Beaufort Pathways Map [11.1.1.1 - 2 pages]
2. 2019 Beaufort Township Footpath Network [11.1.1.2 - 1 page]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

Council has applied for \$384,000- from the Commonwealth towards this \$625,000- project.

Councils' co-contribution to the project of \$241,000- includes:

- \$12,500- in officer time to complete detailed designs and project manage delivery of the project
- \$151,053- for Gregory St. Funding for this footpath is being sought from the Victorian Government under the Safer Local Roads and Streets Program
- \$75,012 committed to by Council for the Burke Street section as a component of the residential subdivision development.

Risks identified with delivering this project include potential cost increases. Council has recently constructed paths along Neill St providing a strong level of confidence in budget estimates, and a twenty percent contingency allowance has been made to cater for unforeseen circumstances.

The grant timelines expect applicants to commence projects within 24 months of approval of the project and to complete construction within 48 months of approval.

CONCLUSION

The Active Transport Fund submission will (if successful) enable Council to continue to expand the footpath network and build on other recent footpath developments since adopting the Beaufort Walkability Plan 2016 and receiving the Beaufort community's petition in 2019.

Cr Megan Phelan / Cr Damian Ferrari

That Council:

1. Endorses the application for funding to the Commonwealth Governments Active Transport Fund.
2. Continues to seek external funding opportunities to deliver pedestrian and cycle infrastructure across the Pyrenees Shire.

CARRIED

11.1.2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Presenter: Jim Nolan - Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Ray Davies – Manager Economic Development and Tourism

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 22/02/02

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform councillors of the activities undertaken by the Economic Development and Tourism team over the December 2024 quarter.

BACKGROUND

Projects focused on by the Economic Development team during the December quarter have included:

- Southern Wimmera and Northeast Pyrenees Water Supply Project (SWNP)
- Beaufort Linear Masterplan
- Beaufort Lake Caravan Park redevelopment
- Digital Connectivity Plan actions

Southern Wimmera and Northeast Pyrenees Water Supply Project (SWNP)

The current drought conditions are illustrating the importance of this project to support the farming, and viticulture sectors and their communities during drought, and to unlock the potential opportunities for future economic development and growth in agriculture.

The draft business case for the project was reported to and endorsed by Council in November 2024. Further economic analysis is presently being completed to compliment the business case to provide estimates of the number of new ongoing jobs and uplift in economic output the project will create in the agriculture sector.

An advocacy planning meeting was held at Moonambel in November last year with representatives of project partners, Northern Grampians and Central Goldfields Shire Councils, GWMWater and the VFF. A list of proposed actions has been formulated across the three municipalities. They include joint briefings of Regional Development Victoria (RDV) Regional Directors; DEECA senior management regarding both Victorian Government and Commonwealth Government (via the National Water Grid program) on status and joint funding needs; Regional Development Australia (Grampians); and Greater Ballarat Alliance of Councils (GBAC).

Approaches are also to be made by the three Councils, to advocate for the project with local members of parliament and the relevant Ministers for Water, Regional Development and Agriculture at state and federal levels.

Briefings of the State Government agencies has now occurred.

Correspondence countersigned by CEO's and mayors from Northern Grampians, Central Goldfields and Pyrenees Shire Councils has recently been issued to Dr Anne Webster the Federal Member for Mallee and Martha Haylett the State Member for Ripon seeking their support for the project.

Correspondence is also being drafted to the relevant federal and state Ministers and Shadow Ministers for Water, Regional Development and Agriculture at the time of developing this report.

Further advocacy actions will be pursued in the coming weeks.

Beaufort Linear Masterplan

The Beaufort Linear Masterplan was adopted by Council in November 2024 following completion of hydrological studies.

A dog park was one element of the Masterplan and an application for funding of this park was submitted to the Victorian Governments “New and Upgraded Dog Park Program” in October which was endorsed by Council in December 2024.

There is currently a funding option available through Sport and Recreation Victoria which may enable further elements of the Beaufort Linear project to be delivered. This is being scoped out at the time of developing this report to determine from the guidelines what elements of the project may be deliverable, and a further report will be brought to the March Council on this matter.

Beaufort Lake Caravan Park Development

Delivery of phase one of the project is now well advanced, and a funding submission remains pending for phases two and parts of phase three of the parks development.

Phase One

With the support of a \$500,000- Regional Infrastructure Fund grant approved by the Victorian Government and \$500,000- Council contribution, phase one of the redevelopment of the Beaufort Lake Caravan Park is well advanced at this time.

Phase one comprises new accommodation facilities and internal upgrades to the park valued at \$1M. These include:

- a. One 2BR Disability and Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant cabin.
- b. One duplex facility comprising two 2BR units
- c. One block of four motel rooms with ensuites
- d. Changes to the internal road network to provide access to the motel block and new powered sites
- e. Updating the sewerage system.

Contracts for construction of the accommodation facilities were issued to two firms in October 2024. It is anticipated all civil works for power, water and sewer will be completed in readiness for delivery of cabins with the motel block being the first accommodation facility due for delivery in the latter half of February.

Phase Two and Three

The outcome of a funding application of \$1.5- million to the Victorian Governments Regional Tourism Infrastructure Program lodged in mid-July 2024 remains pending currently.

Should the application be successful this funding will deliver phase two and parts of phase three of the project as follows:

Phase Two -

- a) Three new 2BR cabins
- b) Refurbish ensuites
- c) Change the internal road network and finalise the layout of the area allocated for new powered sites.

Phase Three -

- a) Replace the existing camp kitchen and upgrade the amenities block for DDA compliance. The new camp kitchen will be DDA compliant and incorporate an indoor recreation room overlooking the lake
- b) Demolition of the existing camp kitchen and ensuites which will become obsolete with the expansion of powered sites
- c) Improvements to the internal road network

Shop Façade Program

The Shop Façade program was initially allocated a \$90,000- budget by Council to assist landowners and lessees to refresh the frontages to retail properties in the commercial precincts of towns across the Shire.

There have been:

- Seven Shop Façade applications approved in round one
- Ten applications in round two and
- Six projects totalling \$20,456- in round three of this program.

Of the original \$90,000- budget, \$89,098- in funding was approved in the three previous grant rounds and a number of premises have now been upgraded as a result.

With shortages of trades being experienced by some applicants to undertake some of the proposed works, follow up is continuing with those who have yet to finalise their projects.

Digital Connectivity

The Digital Connectivity Plan was reported to Council in December and highlighted the comparatively low “Digital Ability Score” on the Australian Digital Inclusion Index of 56.6 compared to 66 for Victoria overall and which identified a number of actions.

Regular contact has been maintained with Telstra since this time and following the switch off of the 3G network. Contact has also been made with a number of residents from known mobile phone problem areas.

Telstra has recently established a 3G help line to respond to customers who have raised issues that their mobile connectivity has declined.

<https://www.telstra.com.au/support/mobiles-devices/3g-closure#:~:text=Call%20us%20on%201800%20990,your%20location%20on%20a%20map.>

In the meantime, residents are being provided details of Regional Tech Hub should they wish to get a second opinion for their connectivity options.

Council has also submitted details under the Commonwealth Governments “Mobile Black Spots Program” for telecommunications upgrades in the Yalla Y Poora/Stoneleigh area and Moonambel and surrounds.

Mobile coverage along the Sunraysia Highway between Waubra and Lamplough is also patchy and there are currently ongoing conversations with Telstra following the installation of an OPTUS tower at Lexton under an earlier round of MBSP and a proposed new NBN tower scheduled to be installed at Lexton in Q2 2025/26.

Events Overview

Events in the Pyrenees Shire continue to thrive despite ongoing economic challenges. While visitation remains consistent with previous years, event organizers have observed a slight decline in average spend per attendee.

Event Highlights

The last quarter of 2024 saw a diverse and vibrant array of events across the Shire:

- **Daniher’s Drive:** This major fundraising event for research into Motor Neurone Disease stopped at Springs Hotel Waubra for lunch, followed by a morning tea hosted at the Avoca RSL Hall by the Avoca CWA. Activities on Avoca’s High Street included participation from Avoca Primary School, pop-up wineries, and a BBQ by Avoca FOP.
- **Lake Goldsmith Steam Rally:** A successful turnout was bolstered by favourable weather conditions.
- **Blue Pyrenees Estate Avoca Cup:** Continued to attract strong attendance as a key event in our event calendar.
- **Avoca Kaleidoscope:** Featured the return of the Avoca Arts Show, a whole-town garage sale, the Makers Market, the 10th birthday of the Chinese Garden, and the Avoca Market. Collaboration among community groups such as Avoca Arts & Gardens, Advanced Avoca, and the Avoca Chinese Garden was a standout feature.
- **Other Notable Events:**
 - Daybreakers Car Show & BBQ, Snake Valley
 - Barkly Outdoors
 - Avoca Open Triples Petanque
 - Beaufort Show
 - Landsborough Christmas Event
 - Eel Skinners & Duck Pluckers B&S Ball
 - Avoca Christmas Party
 - Carols at the Rotunda
 - Carols in the Valley
 - Beaufort by Twilight
 - Seasonal Beaufort Market (Spring and Christmas)
 - Monthly Avoca Market
 - Rotundone Road Festival: Celebrating music, wine, and food.
 - **The Flywheel:** This venue continues to enrich the Shire’s cultural offerings with a growing calendar of events, including the Tattoo Flash Day, weekly live music, open mic nights, and local wine and gin tastings.

- **Cellar doors and hospitality venues** remain key contributors to the Shire's vibrant events calendar, showcasing local talent and unique workshop experiences such as Gin blending Masterclasses and Paint and Sip classes.

Beaufort by Twilight 2025

The Beaufort by Twilight event returned for another year, with an earlier date set for the first Friday in December. This change was made in response to feedback from businesses in 2023, as it was noted that many visitors had already completed their Christmas shopping by the time of last year's event.

Attendance was lower compared to 2023, primarily due to persistent rain throughout the day. However, the weather cleared in time for the event, and those who attended enjoyed a pleasant evening.

A total of 21 businesses participated, opening their doors for Beaufort by Twilight. Most businesses reported increased trade and expressed their willingness to participate again in future events, recognizing the potential benefits despite the weather challenges. The market was particularly well-received, with stallholders expressing satisfaction with the turnout.

A variety of community groups contributed to the success of the event, including:

- Pyrenees Community House – Hosting the Beaufort Twilight Market
- Business 4 Beaufort – Coordinating Christmas decorations
- Beaufort Secondary School – Organizing a scavenger hunt and providing musical performances
- Rotary Club of Beaufort – Managing traffic at the Old Beaufort Primary School Oval
- Apex Beaufort
- Pyrenees Chorale
- Art Trax Gallery

The event was funded by the following funding allocations from Council budgets:

- Youth Activation Funding – \$2,000
- Economic Development, – \$7,500

Looking ahead to the 2025 event, the team will explore additional funding opportunities to enhance event activations and further support community and business participation. Ideally a budget of \$15,000 would assist in further activations to increase participation and visitation.

Overview of 2024 events

In 2024, Council supported a total of 121 events across the Shire.

- **42 events** submitted formal event applications.
- **32 events** required local law permits for events/filming and traffic management approvals.
- **79 events** did not require formal applications but received support through our marketing and promotional efforts.

Marketing channels included:

- **Visit Pyrenees** Website and Instagram/Facebook pages
- **Pyrenees Shire** Facebook page and website
- Community Noticeboard
- **What's On** Newsletter (monthly):
 - 1,392 recipients
 - January 2024 achieved a 48.7% open rate

- **Eventful Newsletter** (monthly, direct email to tourism businesses): Shared upcoming events across the Shire.
- **ATDW (Australian Tourism Data Warehouse) Event Listings:** These listings were syndicated to Visit Ballarat, Visit Victoria, and Ballarat in the Know platforms.

Business Support Overview

The latter part of the year posed challenges for workshop participation. For instance, the *Generating Cashflow* workshop, scheduled for 27 November 2024 in Avoca, was cancelled due to insufficient registrations.

Upcoming Workshops:

- 1. Pasture Recovery Workshop**
 - Date: 12 February 2025, 2:30 PM
 - Venue: Raglan Hall
- 2. Social Media and Content Marketing Workshop**
 - Date: 4 March 2025, 2:30 PM
 - Venue: Beeripmo Development Centre

Tourism

Anecdotal feedback from business operators in Beaufort indicates business has been quieter over the recent holiday period which has been attributed to:

- Impact of the Grampians fires and lower volumes of passing trade
- Economic conditions and cost of living pressures
- Roadworks causing delays along the Western Highway which have extended travel times, and people choosing to keep travelling rather than stop for meals etc. on the way through Beaufort.

The free Social Media Workshop on Tuesday 4 March 2025 is aimed at assisting hospitality venues and tourism operators raise their profile to their markets.

Marketing

The damage caused by the Bayindeen fire to nature-based areas limited the number of experiences able to be actively promoted during the spring period which is one of the more popular times for visitors coming to the Pyrenees.

The inability to include the fire damaged walks and camping sites in our content combined with cost of living pressures have seen traffic to our digital platforms decline compared with the same time in 2023.

There is also a shift being observed in social media interest on Councils' Visit Pyrenees tourism marketing platforms. In the past, Facebook was more popular with viewer interactions whereas there are now a growing number of Instagram followers engaging with our content. This can be attributed to a number of factors including the standard of content and imagery being more inspirational and engaging and Instagrams algorithm changing so viewers receive 'suggested content' based on their interaction on other posts. There was a 33% increase in Instagram content interaction from people that weren't initially following our page.

Facebook

	Organic Posts Reached	Organic Page Visits	New Followers	Content Interactions
Oct – Dec 2023	52,044	1,623	85	2180
Oct – Dec 2024	40,640	1,187	44	928

Instagram Organic Posts

	Posts Reached	Page Visits	New Followers	Content Interactions
Oct – Dec 2023	1,661	239	24	463
Oct – Dec 2024	2219	144	39	749

Visit Pyrenees Website

As with Facebook, less activity occurred on the Visit Pyrenees website compared to the previous year. This was also due to a more limited range of events during the “Play in the Pyrenees” summer campaign period resulting in less content being available for social media posts and people directed to the website.

Oct – Dec 2024

- 7.8K Users
- 7.7K of those users were new users
- 335 visits have been through social media posts, 1352 from direct search and 7192 from organic search
- Most visited pages were Pyrenees Wineries 1070, Winery Accommodation 413, Top 10 Things to do in Beaufort 395 and What’s On 391.

Oct – Dec 2023

- 9.9K Users
- 9.7K of those users were new users
- 1537 visits have been through social media posts, 1861 from direct search and 8270 from organic search
- Most visited pages were Pyrenees Wineries 1604, What’s On 804. Beaufort By Twilight, 717 and Winery Accommodation 686

Unplug and Unwind Spring Marketing Campaign

From September to October Council runs an “Unplug and Unwind” campaign. In the past, this campaign encouraged people to Unplug from their devices and Unwind in nature. There was a shift in focus this year due to a significant amount of natural product in the Pyrenees being closed due to the Bayindeen fires.

While the Unplug theme was employed again, instead of walks and camping, the focus was repositioned to spectacular views with an emphasis on accommodation with great views, dining at cellar doors overlooking vineyard vistas, open gardens and the lineup of Spring Events.

As well as our social media marketing, ads were placed in Goldfields Getaway, Ballarat Living and Eat Play Stay which are publications that have long shelf lives and include complimenting content.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

Southern Wimmera and Northeast Pyrenees Pipeline

The current drought circumstances are having a significant impact on livestock farmers and the viticulture sector, illustrating the importance and urgency of delivering this project.

Advocacy for the project with relevant members of parliament and Ministers and Shadow Ministers for Water, Regional Development and Agriculture in conjunction with Northern Grampians and Central Goldfields Shire Councils is being progressed at present.

Our advocacy messages include:

Fast Facts:

- The project covers an area of **354,000 hectares** and will cost **\$159-million to build**
- Has a **cost benefit ratio of 2.6**
- Will provide access to a reliable source of water from GWMWater storages to **over 2,500 rural landholders** on an opt in basis
- Provide access to **town water for nine towns** that currently either rely on ground water or are without a town water supply

The problem

1. Variable quality and availability of water **impacts profitability and viability of businesses**
2. Lack of convenient, affordable, clean water **exposes communities to financial, emotional and health stress**
3. Absence of water in the landscape **threatens environmental, recreational and cultural values**
4. Delayed sourcing of adequate volumes of water close to needs **diminishes the ability to control fires**

Project Benefits

1. Improved water access and productivity for farming and viticulture enterprises **contributing to higher household incomes and improved farmer health**
2. Access to environmental water for **improved waterway health**
3. **Increased property values, growing economies and more jobs**
4. **Safety and resilience**

Beaufort Lake Caravan Park

Civil works are well advanced in preparation for delivery of the new cabins.

The first of these installations is due to commence in late February and further updates will be provided in the next Economic Development Update due to council in April.

Beaufort Linear Masterplan

The Beaufort Linear Masterplan was reported previously in November 2024 with a resolution being passed that Council:

- 1 *Endorses the Beaufort Linear Masterplan and*
- 2 *Actively seeks funding opportunities to deliver construction of the Beaufort Linear Park as external sources of funding become available over a proposed ten-year period.*

Sport and Recreation Victoria currently have the “Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Fund” open with submissions due by 17 March 2025.

The program has a range of funding streams which includes grants of up to \$1million under the “Community Facilities” category. Within this category there is provision for “walking and cycling trails, particularly those easily accessible and linked to existing sports infrastructure”.

The Beaufort Linear corridor along the watercourse from Beaufort Lake provides linkages between the Beggs Street Playground, swimming pool, Croquet Club, primary and secondary schools and sports facilities, recreational areas and caravan park at Goldfields Recreation Reserve.

The funding ratios for rural LGA's is \$3- SRV:\$1 Council, with in kind contributions of up to 50% of the applicant's contribution being allowed.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 2 - Place

- 2a. Sustain and enhance unique character of our communities.
- 2b. Enhance the liveability and resilience of our communities.
- 2c. Promote responsible development.

Priority 4 - Economy

- 4a. Support our local businesses and help to strengthen key industries.
- 4b. Invest in road infrastructure to improve connectivity for commerce and community.
- 4c. Encourage and invest in assets and infrastructure for commerce and community.

Enabling Principles

- b. Provide transparency and accountability

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

Extensive community engagement has been undertaken with the projects outlined in this report and strong community support has been evident with the SWNP Water Supply project and Beaufort Linear.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

There are no new financial or other risks arising from this economic update.

CONCLUSION

That Council continues to invest in projects which meet the key objectives of the Economic Development Strategy being to:

- 1. Attract new residents, visitors and investment**
- 2. Foster the capability of key economic sectors**
- 3. Develop local business and employee capacity**

Further to the objectives outlined above, the intention of Councils economic development initiatives is to improve the living standards of residents across the Pyrenees Shire.

Cr Megan Phelan / Cr Rebecca Wardlaw

That Council:

1. Notes this report.
2. Continues to support business and grow the economy through the activities contained in this report and the implementation of Councils' Economic Development Strategy.
3. Continues to work with key stakeholders to advocate for funding for the Southern Wimmera and Northeast Pyrenees Water Supply, and for improved digital connectivity across the shire.

CARRIED

11.2. ASSET AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

11.2.1. GATT SEAL PROGRAM

Presenter: Douglas Gowans - Director Asset and Development Services

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Douglas Gowans – Director Assets and Development

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 58/08/12

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider possible locations for the 2024/25 Dust Suppression Program that is delivered via the use of GATT seal treatments on gravel roads.

BACKGROUND

GATT (Graded Aggregate Total Treatment) sealing serves as the primary treatment method used in Council's Dust Suppression Program, supported historically with a budget allocation of between \$25,000.00 - \$50,000.00. The use of GATT sealing in Council's Dust Suppression Program effectively mitigates dust and ensures the long-term durability of unsealed gravel roads throughout the Shire and has the added benefit of converting a gravel road to a sealed road. This significantly extends the lifespan and elevates the quality of many roads throughout the Shire. Examples of where GATT seals have been employed across the Shire include the following roads.

- High St Service Rd Avoca
- York St Avoca
- McIntosh St Avoca
- Camp St Avoca
- Pearson St Avoca
- Palmerston St Avoca
- Charles St Avoca
- Rutherford St Avoca
- Mountain View St Avoca
- Pascoe St Avoca
- Templeton St Avoca
- McIntosh St Avoca
- Faraday Avoca
- Napier St Avoca
- Barnett St Avoca
- York St Avoca
- Davy St Avoca
- Summers St Avoca
- Pascoe St Avoca
- Camp St Avoca
- Barnett St Avoca
- Graves St Beaufort
- Jackson St Beaufort
- Eyre St Beaufort
- Willoby St Beaufort
- Wills St Beaufort
- Pratt St Beaufort
- Sturt St Beaufort
- High St Service Rd Beaufort
- Stuart St Beaufort
- Gregory St Beaufort
- Beggs St Beaufort
- Livingstone St Beaufort
- Clapperton St Lexton
- Hall St Lexton
- School Lane Lexton

Historically, Council's Dust Suppression Program has predominantly focused on the larger towns within the Shire with Beaufort and Avoca townships benefiting the most from the program to date.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

Council has allocated \$50,000.00 for the Dust Suppression Program for this financial year. There is an opportunity to enhance the road quality and dust suppression for roads in many areas of the Shire.

Currently, contracted GATT sealing services are sourced in the Bendigo region, necessitating careful consideration of logistical costs. Each treatment application costs \$12 - \$13 per square meter, making it

imperative to strategically select project sites to maximize the budget's impact. To achieve optimal cost-effectiveness, it is essential to optimize travel distances between project locations as contractors apply a mobilization cost.

While the use of GATT sealing treatment in Council's Dust Suppression Program offers substantial benefits in extending road life and reducing maintenance costs, it also presents limitations. Factors such as traffic type and intensity can affect its long-term effectiveness.

In developing the Dust Suppression Program for this financial year, Council Officers have considered various options in townships, including localities where GATT sealing has not previously been applied. By initiating the Dust Suppression Program in these areas, Council aims to enhance road quality and mitigate dust related issues and anticipate improvements in road durability and a reduction in maintenance costs.

Council Officers propose the following recommendations for Council's consideration.

Moonambel's Woods Street, Hunter Street and Greens Lane as primary candidates for the Dust Suppression Program. Each of these roads have been nominated based on traffic volumes, resident numbers and existing road conditions. The roads represent important travel paths for the Moonambel community given their proximity to the Moonambel Primary School and the center of the township. In consideration of cost effectiveness, these roads are near to each other reducing contractor logistical costs.

Estimated Costs

Woods Street	\$11,000.00
Greens Lane	\$6,000.00
Hunter Street	\$6,000.00
Subtotal	\$23,000.00

The following localities are proposed due to the number of dust complaints Council has received.

Redbank Barkly Road in Redbank has received complaints about dust issues in the past. GATT sealing of a portion of this road would benefit a small number of residential properties.

Estimated Cost

Redbank Barkly Road Redbank	\$19,000.00
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Kellys Lane in Amphitheatre, Council has received numerous complaints regarding dust issues on this road over many years. However, GATT sealing in the proposed location will only directly benefit one residential property.

Estimated Cost

Kellys Lane in Amphitheatre	\$8,000.00
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Total Estimated Costs

Woods Street Moonambel	\$11,000.00
Greens Lane Moonambel	\$6,000.00
Hunter Street Moonambel	\$6,000.00
Redbank Barkly Road Redbank	\$19,000.00
Kellys Lane in Amphitheatre	\$8,000.00
Total	\$50,000.00

Potential substitutes for the above roads are listed below.

Gardners Lane Snake Valley, Council has received numerous dust complaints regarding this lane, dust suppression in this location would benefit a handful of residential properties.

Estimated Cost

Gardners Lane Snake Valley	\$15,000.00
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Hall Street in Waubra is a small section of road that leads to the Waubra Cemetery entrance. GATT sealing treatment here would complete the conversion from gravel to sealed road in this street. However, Council is aware of a potential future development in this location which may deem the GATT sealing treatment redundant.

Estimated Cost

Hall Street Waubra	\$7,000.00
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A full list of possible GATT seal localities and indicative costs is attached as an appendix to this report if Council wished to consider a different prioritization.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 4 - Economy

4b. Invest in road infrastructure to improve connectivity for commerce and community.

Enabling Principles

c. Use resources efficiently and effectively

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed Future Gatt Seals [**11.2.1.1** - 2 pages]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

Council only has a limited annual budget for the Dust Suppression Program with a long list of worthy project sites. Council needs to be aware that converting gravel road to seal does increase Council's sealed road renewal costs in the long-term. However, there is a benefit in reducing Councils gravel road maintenance program by reducing the total kilometers of gravel roads.

CONCLUSION

The use of the GATT sealing treatment in Council's Dust Suppression Program provides a long-term solution for dust suppression with the added benefit of converting unsealed roads to sealed roads.

Cr Simon Tol / Cr Megan Phelan

That Council supports the GATT sealing of the proposed road localities at Woods Street Moonambel, Greens Lane Moonambel, Hunter Street Moonambel, Redbank Barkly Road Redbank and Kellys Lane in Amphitheatre to be completed this financial year.

CARRIED

11.2.2. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATE - FEBRUARY 2025

Presenter: Douglas Gowans - Director Asset and Development Services

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Rachel Blackwell – Manager Planning and Development Services

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: to be added

PURPOSE

This report was prepared to give the Council a summary of activities within the Planning and Development Department, for October– December 2024.

The Planning and Development team is responsible for administering a range of regulatory functions identified within the following Acts, Regulations, Codes and Standards:

- Local Government Act 2020
- Planning and Environment Act 1987
- Planning and Environment Regulations 2015
- Building Act 1993
- Building Regulations 2018
- National Construction Codes
- Environment Protection Act 2017
- Water Act 1989
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Food Act 1984
- Tobacco Act 1987
- Domestic Animals Act 1994
- Domestic Animals Regulations 2015
- Country Fire Act 1958
- Impounding of Livestock Act 1994
- Road Safety Act 1986
- Protection of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986
- General Local Law 2019

ISSUE / DISCUSSION**PART A: PLANNING**

PLANNING PERMIT DATA	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL FOR THE QUARTER	FINANCIAL YEAR TO DATE
PERMIT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED	9	8	9	26	45
PERMITS GRANTED	10	6	13	29	45
PERMITS REFUSED	0	0	0	0	0
TIME EXTENSIONS GRANTED	1	2	0	3	7
SECONDARY CONSENTS APPROVED	2	1	0	3	8

ESTIMATED COST OF WORKS \$M				\$5M	\$11M
APPLICATIONS DECIDED WITHIN 60 DAYS (%)				72.2%	77.14%

Planning Enquiries October – December 2024

The Planning team received 270 calls for the October to December quarter. Of these calls 187 related to current planning permit applications or existing planning permit enquiries. 83 calls related to pre-purchase or pre-application enquiries. It is noted that the team responded to over 1200 calls for 2024.

Planning Team Resourcing

During the quarter, the planning team undertook recruitment for a Planning Services Lead and a Planning Assistant.

Virginia Mcleod (Senior Planner) has been appointed to the role of Planning Services Lead. Virginia will lead the delivery of both the Statutory and Strategic Planning functions of the team and the day-to-day management of planners and planning administration staff.

Ashlee Smart (Planning and Development Administration Officer) has been appointed to the role of Planning Assistant. This role will be complemented by the Rural and Regional Planning Cadet Program offered by the Regional Planning Hub (Department of Transport and Planning – DTP).

The planning team now has a full team of planners for the first time in 18 months which will ensure the ongoing efficient delivery of the statutory service, strategic planning program and continuation of bushfire recovery efforts.

Bushfire Recovery

The work of the Bushfire Planning Support Service has slowed towards the end of 2024. The planning team continues to work with several property owners within the fire affected area for assistance with their rebuild.

The planning team has been working with the owners of Belmont at Main Lead as part of its Bushfire Planning Support Service. The Minister for Planning announced in early January that Belmont had been successful in obtaining a grant through the Disaster Recovery Heritage Grants Programme. The successful projects have been published on Heritage Victoria's website, <https://www.heritage.vic.gov.au/heritage-grants/funded-disaster-recovery-heritage-grant-projects>.

The planning team also received a grant from the Regional Planning Hub to help prepare a Municipal Bushfire Plan for the municipality. The plan is a key piece of work in determining and managing risk and will assist in the implementation of the strategic work program and preparation of future settlement/township planning. This important work has commenced, a draft report has been completed. It is expected that the Council will be briefed on its findings shortly. The project will be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2025.

Creative Community Strategy

The Creative Community Strategy discussion paper was released to the public in December 2023 and workshops were held in February 2024. It is anticipated that a draft strategy will be ready for consultation in the first half of 2025.

Brewster Wind Farm

The Minister for Planning is currently considering an application for the Brewster Wind Farm. At the end of 2024 Council officers attended several consultation sessions to hear the local community's concerns. Council officers made a submission to the application which was considered and supported by council at its November meeting. It is anticipated that the Minister for Planning will make a decision soon. It is also noted that the anemometer on the property was removed at the end of January 2025.

Strategic Planning Program

The 2023-24 strategic planning program includes:

- Amendment C47Pyrn, which proposes to incorporate the Snake Valley, Waubra, and Lexton framework plans into the Pyrenees Planning Scheme. Exhibition of the amendment is being prepared and will commence in March 2025.
- Council has undertaken a review of the Pyrenees Planning Scheme to ensure it contemporariness and satisfaction against Councils legislative requirement under S12B of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. This includes acknowledgement of the new strategic planning program which will be taken forward by Council early in 2025.
- Amendment C52pyrn - This amendment has also progressed with the planning team receiving funding from the Regional Flood Amendments Program and DEECA to progress the planning scheme amendment to incorporate several completed flood studies into the Pyrenees Planning Scheme. Work has commenced and we will progress the amendment with public consultation to commence in April 2025.

The Strategic Planning Team are also involved in EES technical reference and consultation groups relating to state renewables projects such as the Western Renewables Link, and several Wind Farms and continue to advocate for local communities.

Improving the Planning Service

Recently the planning team undertook an audit of planning applications for the last two years as requested by Council. The planning team has also reviewed the statutory obligations under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and compared this to other like councils. The results revealing that overall Pyrenees provides a standard of services which is comparable or exceeds service delivery standard for neighbouring or other similar sized councils. The team are also preparing a customer feedback survey which will be offered to all recent and future permit applicants to understand how we may improve planning services for customers. The survey will be completed within the next six months with outcomes to be reported to Council.

PART B – BUILDING

BUILDING ACTIVITY	October	November	December	Financial YTD
Private Building Permits	12	12	10	82
'Property Info Cert' issued	25	17	6	106
Building Notice/Order issued	4	1	0	16
Building Inspections	11	10	6	62

Pool/Spa Barrier Compliance

Several spas identified as being non-compliant in the last quarter are now either registered or demolished and removed from site which is a positive outcome for addressing barrier compliance issues in the shire.

Beaufort House Fire

A house fire occurred in Beaufort in December destroying a dwelling on Sturt Street. The dwelling has been assessed by the insurance company, and we are awaiting demolition. Council officers continue to liaise with the owner/owner's family to procure demolition and assist where required.

PART C – ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Food & Health Inspections

All routine inspections of registered premises were completed by the end of 2024 enabling the Environmental Health team to complete the registration renewal process.

Renewal notices and Invoices for 104 fixed food, health and accommodation premises were sent out in November, and reminders sent out in December. Food trader temporary and mobile food premises were also due for renewal by 31st December 2024.

As of 31st December 2024, 79 fixed and 14 Food trader premises renewals had been paid. The Environmental Health team has also been notified by 8 premises of their closure. Follow up on outstanding renewals will be carried out in January.

Onsite Domestic Wastewater Management Plan

The Environmental Health team met the 110-inspection target for the 2024 year which was a significant effort. A small number of properties were found to be non-compliant. Follow up inspections will be undertaken between end of March/April to determine compliance.

DWMP Inspections in Lexton/Amphitheatre continue as we implement the inspection regime for the new Onsite Wastewater Management Plan. Amphitheatre is identified as a high-risk unsewered township, and Lexton is a medium/low risk special water supply catchment area.

Tobacco

Tobacco inspections are 50% completed for the financial year. An interim report to be submitted by end of January.

	Oct	Nov	Dec	FY Total
Wastewater				
Application to Install or Alter system	2	2	0	10
Permit to Install or Alter issued	2	1	3	15
Approval to Use issued	5	3	6	22
Wastewater inspections	6	8	5	33
Domestic Wastewater Management Plan inspections	24	12	69	105
Domestic Wastewater Service Agent reports	13	10	1	43
Wastewater related complaints	0	0	0	2
Fees Paid	\$1,406.50	\$1,406.50	\$0.00	\$ 7,737.90
Public Health				
New Premises or Transfers	2	0	1	7
Registration Renewals Completed	0	4	46	50
Premises Closures	0	0	7	9
Routine and Follow Up Inspections	14	21	23	132
Complaints about Registered Premises	0	0	1	1
Food Recalls	4	0	4	25
Mobile/Temporary Food Applications	5	7	3	19
Mobile/Temporary Food Inspections	0	0	1	1
Mobile/Temporary Food Statements of Trade	52	26	18	142
Fees Paid	\$0.00	\$10,526.00	\$15,656.72	\$ 28,281.72

PART D – COMMUNITY SAFETY AND AMENITY**ACTIVITY - Animals**

	October 2024	November 2024	December 2024	Total FYTD
Cats Registered	N/A	N/A	519	-
Dogs registered	N/A	N/A	2160	-
Cats impounded	4	3	1	24
Cats reclaimed	0	0	0	0
Cats Euthanised	2	2	1	19
Cats Adopted/Rehomed	2	1	0	5
Dogs impounded	5	1	3	20
Dogs Reclaimed	4	1	3	17
Dogs Euthanised	0	0	0	0
Dogs Adopted/Rehomed	1	0	0	2
Stock impounded	0	0	0	1

ACTIVITY - Infringements

Infringement Type	October 2024	November 2024	December 2024	Total FYTD
Domestic Animals Act	3	1	2	33
Local Laws	0	1	0	6
Road Safety Act	1	0	0	43
Environment Protection Act	0	0	0	1
Impounding of Livestock Act	0	0	0	0
CFA Act	0	0	20	20
Planning & Environment Act	0	0	0	7
Road Management Act	0	0	0	5
Other	0	0	0	0
Total Infringements Issued	4	2	22	115
Prosecutions	0	0	0	3

ACTIVITY – Customer Action Requests & Permits

Customer Action Requests	73	95	63	459
Local Law Permits	23	11	10	79

2024-2025 Fire Season

After a very dry winter and spring, vegetation in the northern part of the shire had already well cured prompting Council to start its roadside slashing program on the 30th of October 2024. The CFA also acted earlier than in previous years declaring the fire danger period for the Shire on the 18th of November 2024.

Fire Prevention Officers started inspecting properties on the 7th of November 2024. Approximately 465 properties were issued Fire Prevention Notices directing them to reduce fuel hazards (grass and weeds). Of these, 434 properties complied, with the remaining property owners being issued infringement notices.

This is a great result and a significant improvement in compliance compared to previous years. A similar number of notices were issued both years. Last season 49 properties were issued infringements, compared to only 31 properties this year. This may be attributed to the Bayindeen fire event which had substantial impacts to the shire and its local communities.

Footpath Trading Renewals

Footpath trading permits for advertising signs, outdoor dining furniture and other items placed on Council controlled land expired on the 30th of September 2024. The process is 99% complete with only a few businesses still yet to finalise the renewal of their permit.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 1 - People

- 1b. Support a vibrant community arts, culture, and heritage environment.
- 1c. Improve accessibility and inclusivity.
- 1d. Promote health, wellbeing, engagement, and connection.

Priority 2 - Place

- 2a. Sustain and enhance unique character of our communities.
- 2b. Enhance the liveability and resilience of our communities.
- 2c. Promote responsible development.

Priority 4 - Economy

- 4a. Support our local businesses and help to strengthen key industries.

Enabling Principles

- b. Provide transparency and accountability
- c. Use resources efficiently and effectively

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

Cr Megan Phelan / Cr Damian Ferrari

That Council:

1. Notes the information and endorses the activity contained in this report is report.
2. Notes the audit activities undertaken by the planning team and supports the preparation of a customer feedback survey with the survey to be completed within the next six months with outcomes to be reported to Council.

CARRIED

11.2.3. VICTORIA'S CLIMATE SCIENCE REPORT 2024

Presenter: Douglas Gowans - Director Asset and Development Services

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Douglas Gowans – Director Assets and Development

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 30/18/06

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the release of Victoria's Climate Science Report 2024 and the recent release of the Central Highlands Climate Projections 2024.

BACKGROUND

Victoria's Climate Science Report provides a comprehensive analysis of the current and projected impacts of climate change on the state of Victoria.

In November 2024 Council officers were notified of the release of the second Climate Science Report for Victoria. Building on the 2019 report, Victoria's Climate Science Report 2024 assesses the state's vulnerability to environmental shifts aiming to inform strategic planning and policy making to mitigate risks and adapt to the changing climate.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

Victoria's Climate Science report 2024 incorporates the latest climate projections for Victoria, and the science of key climate hazards, including floods, heatwaves and extreme heat, drought, bushfire, and sea-level rise.

Key findings observed in the report:

Heatwaves

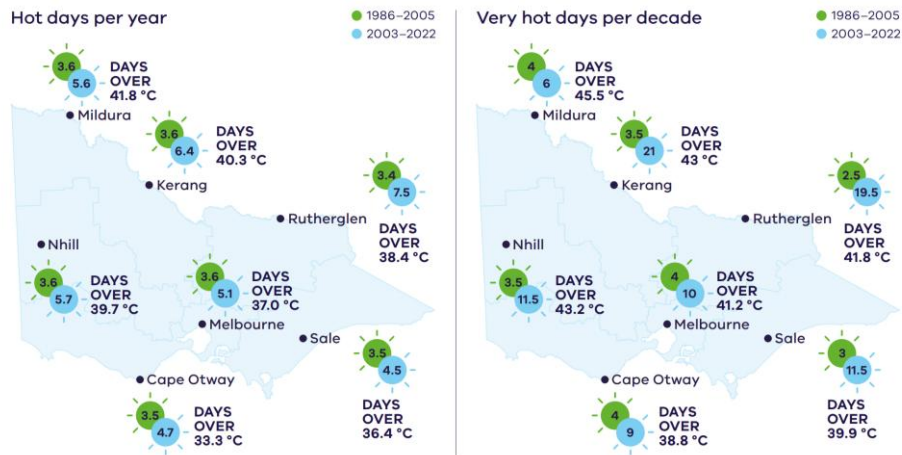
Projections indicate longer, more intense and more frequent heatwaves and the concurrent occurrence of droughts and heatwaves*.

**A heatwave is defined as at least 3 consecutive days above the 95th percentile of daily average temperatures.*

Temperature

The average annual temperature in Victoria has increased by around 1.2° since national records began in 1910, with a further increase of 1.1° likely by 2050 (compared to the 1986-2005 period), even if emissions are kept low.

The number of very hot days* has more than doubled since 2005. Inland locations have experienced larger changes with some areas of Victoria experiencing up to five times as many very hot days. Observed temperature changes in Victoria since the mid-1990s have corresponded to the upper range predicted by global climate modelling.



*Very hot days are defined as days with daily maximum temperature exceeding the 99.9th percentile.

Bushfires

Observations suggest bushfire frequency and severity are increasing. There is strong evidence that climate change affects fire weather, with Victoria experiencing longer fire seasons and more frequent days of significant fire danger. These changes are likely to escalate with increasing global temperatures creating warmer and drier conditions and increasing ignition risk across the state.

Drought

Future droughts will be significantly hotter and more frequent than past droughts due to human-caused climate change. Future droughts may develop more quickly under a thirstier atmosphere with increases in duration and intensity. Major historical droughts have affected large areas of Victoria and have occurred at least once per decade.

Rainfall

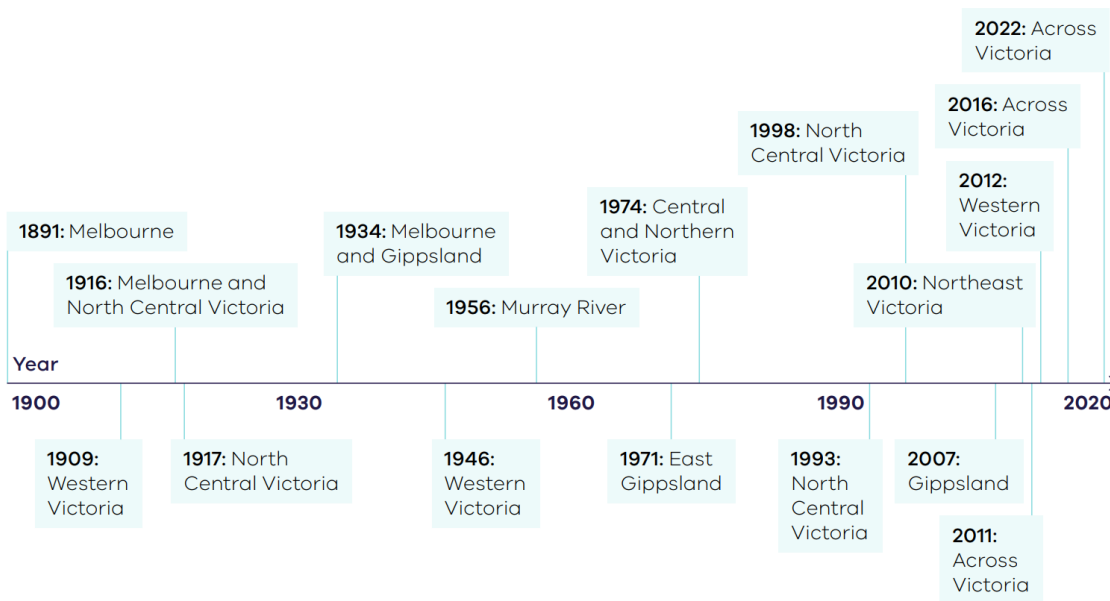
Victoria’s annual rainfall has decreased with extreme rainfall events almost doubling since 1985. Cool season rainfall has decreased by more than 10% leading to more extended dry periods and changing flood patterns. Some of the rainfall declines in Victoria during the cool season months can be attributed to climate change and approximately 90% of modelling projects further drying in the southwest of the state. While Victoria’s rainfall will continue to be variable over time, observed average cool season rainfall over the past two decades has been lower than predicted by global climate modelling.

Climate region	Rainfall decline in 1997-2018 compared to 1900-1959 average (%)	Proportion of the decline estimated to be due to climate change (%)
North (Murray Basin)	15%	18%
Southwest	8%	30%
East	11%	17%

Floods

Extreme flood events are projected to increase in magnitude in many parts of Victoria by 2100, with extreme rainfall events generally becoming more intense. There has been an almost 90% increase in intensity of extreme rainfall events and over the past 50-70 years Victoria has experienced an increase in the magnitude of large floods.

Major floods in Victoria since the 1890s



Climate projections offer insights into a spectrum of potential climate scenarios, influenced by greenhouse gas emissions and socio-economic variables. Understanding the frequency, duration, and intensity of extreme weather events is essential for supporting organizations by enabling early detection, informing planning and development strategies, and establishing emergency response procedures to enhance community resilience.

In addition to Victoria’s Climate Science Report 2024, the Central Highlands Victoria’s Climate Science Report 2024 was released in late January 2024. This report further outlines projected increases in heat extremes, minimum and maximum daily temperatures, long-term decline in rainfall and other climate-related projections specific to our region.

While Victoria’s Climate Science Report 2024 does not provide explicit guidance on adaptation planning or climate risk assessment, it emphasizes the critical integration of climate information into governance and decision-making processes. Utilizing climate science observational data and projections can mitigate current exposure to the economic and social impacts of climate change, inform strategies for emissions reduction and adaptation, and enhance preparedness for extreme weather.

Victoria’s Climate Science Report 2024 and Central highlands Climate Projections 2024 are attached to this report for further information.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 3 - Environment

3a. Continue being an environmentally progressive organisation.

3b. Foster a climate change resilient community.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Victorias- Climate- Science- Report-2024 [11.2.3.1 - 112 pages]
2. Central-Highlands-Victorias-Climate-Projections-2024 [11.2.3.2 - 12 pages]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

Victoria's Climate Science Report 2024 highlights economic risks stemming from more frequent extreme weather events which impact infrastructure resulting in increased expenses for disaster response, infrastructure maintenance and insurance.

CONCLUSION

As climate science advances, Council will play a crucial role in continuously updating and providing pertinent information to support the Pyrenees community in effectively managing risks concerning climate change.

Cr Damian Ferrari / Cr Simon Tol

That Council

1. Considers the Victoria's Climate Science Report 2024 and the Central Highlands Climate Projections 2024 in the preparation of the Council Plan 2025-2029.
2. Includes a link to the reports on the Council website.

CARRIED

11.3. CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

11.3.1. MID YEAR FINANCIAL REVIEW

Presenter: Kathy Bramwell - Director Corporate and Community Services

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Glenn Kallio – Manager Finance

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 32/08/18

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Council with an update on the financial performance for the period 1 July 2024 to 31 December 2024 and seek Council direction on rating levels for 2025-2026 financial year.

BACKGROUND

The provision of regular reports of Council's financial performance ensures that Council's financial management and associated processes are accountable, transparent, and responsible.

The attached financial report for the period 1 July 2024 to 31 December 2024 is a component of ensuring the accountability of the Council's operations. In line with good governance, it forms part of the public accountability process and reporting and includes the following Financial Statements.

- Comprehensive Income Statement
- Balance Sheet
- Cash Flow Statement; and
- Statement of Capital Works
- Capital Works Program

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

Financial Update

At the mid-year point of the financial year:

1. Forecast results indicate an improvement in the operating result of \$3.087 million due to:
 - a. Increase in capital grants
 - i. Roads to Recovery
 - ii. LRCIP Phase 4 program
 - b. Increase in Financial Assistance Grants
2. Cash and investments are forecast to finish the financial year \$0.520 million ahead of the amended budget principally due to the increase in the Financial Assistance Grants.
3. Outstanding rate debtors are in-line with forecasts, however remain significantly ahead of past years.
4. Council traditionally funds the council contribution to the Roads to Recovery program directly from capital works. This year there is a shortfall of \$126,000. Within the current budget there is an unallocated amount of \$500,000 for strategic projects, it is recommended that \$250,000 be re allocated to additional infrastructure works to cover the contribution to the Roads to Recovery program.

The review of financials for the period ending 31 December 2024 ascertained that performance for the 2024-25 year is operating within the Council's 10-year financial plan and that there is no requirement for the Council to prepare a revised budget.

Rating levels 2025-26

Before 31 December each year, the Minister for Local Government sets the local council rate cap for the next financial year. This limits the maximum amount a council can increase general rates and municipal charges.

The rate cap for the 2025-2026 financial year has been set at 3.0%.

If the rate cap does not meet a council's needs, the council can submit a higher cap application for up to four years of higher caps at a time, following a process of deliberative engagement with its community.

Council officers recommend that the Council do not apply for a higher rate cap for 2025-26.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Enabling Principles

- b. Provide transparency and accountability
- c. Use resources efficiently and effectively

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

This report forms part of the Council's mandatory quarterly financial performance reporting program to community.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Finance Report Dec 2024 [**11.3.1.1** - 24 pages]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

All financial implications are within this report and the attachment.

CONCLUSION

The review of financials for the period ending 31 December 2024, there is no requirement for Council to prepare a revised budget. The review has ascertained that the financials for the 2024/25 year are operating within the Council's 10-year financial plan.

The report advises the Council of the rate cap set for 2025-26 at 3.0% and recommends not to apply for a higher rate cap for the next financial year.

Cr Rebecca Wardlaw / Cr Megan Phelan

That Council:

1. Receives and notes the Financial Performance report for the period 1 July 2024 to 31 December 2024, and the projected forecasts for the year, and
2. Notes the CEO declaration that pursuant to section 97(3) of the Local Government Act 2020, there is no requirement that the Pyrenees Shire Council prepare a revised budget.
3. Allocates \$250,000 from the Strategic capital projects to carry out additional infrastructure works to cover the required council funding for the Roads to Recovery program.
4. Resolves not to seek a higher rate cap for the 2025-26 financial year.

CARRIED

11.3.2. NP47: PROPOSAL TO NAME UNNAMED ROAD IN AVOCA BETWEEN RUTHERFORD STREET AND BARNETT STREET AS WEBB STREET

Presenter: Kathy Bramwell - Director Corporate and Community Services

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Glenn Kallio – Manager Finance

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 58/02/08

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to finalise the naming process for an unnamed road between Rutherford Street and Barnett Street, Avoca.

BACKGROUND

At the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 19 November 2024, Council resolved to commence the process for the naming of an unnamed road between Rutherford Street and Barnett Street, Avoca.

The Council recommendation of Webb Street was advertised in the Pyrenees Advocate, Maryborough & District Advertiser, Council's Website and at the Avoca Information Centre. A letter was also sent to adjoining property owners on 4 December 2024. The advertisement also invited descendants of Emma Webb to contact Council regarding the use of the Webb family name.

During the five-week period over which submissions were sought, no submissions were received by Council.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

In review of the proposal, the following points should be noted:

1. Webb Street is a legitimate naming option, passes all the tests set by the Registrar of Geographic Names and supports the Victorian Government's Gender Equity Strategy 2023-2027. The name has a historical relationship to the area, being the surname of prestigious business and family woman Emma Webb (married name Paten) who aided in the running of the Avoca Mail newspaper and lived in Avoca (Watford Villa) from the 1860s.
2. The definition of a Street for road type allows for an open-ended road and is described as a public roadway in a town, city or urban area; especially a paved thoroughfare with footpaths and buildings along one or both sides.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 4 - Economy

4b. Invest in road infrastructure to improve connectivity for commerce and community.

This proposal complies with:

- Pyrenees Shire Council – Principles on Road Naming policy.
- Naming Rules for Places in Victoria – Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities 2022.
- Our Equal State – Victoria's gender equality strategy and action plan 2023-2027.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

1. Advertised in the Pyrenees Advocate, Maryborough & District Advertiser, Council's website, and at the Avoca Information Centre
2. Letters were sent to adjoining landowners on 4 December 2024.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attach 1 [11.3.2.1 - 1 page]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

Costs for the naming of the road can be accommodated within the limits of Council's operating budget.

The naming of new roads and accurate addressing is important to ensure that residents can be located by emergency services and to receive mail. To mitigate the risk of errors, Council needs to comply with the 'Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities, 2016,' and the Australian Standards for Signing and Rural and Urban Addressing.

CONCLUSION

To complete the naming process a name needs to be formally adopted by Council along with the recommendation to forward a report to the Registrar of Geographic Names for consideration of this name – Webb Street.

Cr Rebecca Wardlaw / Cr Megan Phelan

That Council:

1. Adopts the name Webb Street, which has historical ties to the area.
2. Forwards a report to the Registrar of Geographic Names for consideration of the name Webb Street.

CARRIED

11.3.3. NP48: PROPOSAL TO NAME UNNAMED ROAD OFF RACECOURSE ROAD BEAUFORT AS KIRKLAND COURT

Presenter: Kathy Bramwell - Director Corporate and Community Services

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Glenn Kallio – Manager Finance

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 58/02/08

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to finalise the naming process for an unnamed road off Racecourse Road, Beaufort.

BACKGROUND

At the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 19 November 2024, Council resolved to commence the process for the naming of an unnamed road off Racecourse Road, Beaufort.

The Council recommendation of Kirkland Court was advertised in the Pyrenees Advocate, Maryborough & District Advertiser, Council's Website and the Shire Office Front Counter. A letter was also sent to adjoining property owners on 4 December 2024.

The advertisement also invited descendants of Katharine Kirkland to contact Council regarding the use of the Kirkland family name. There have been no submissions received by Council during the five-week period over which submissions were sought.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

In review of the proposal, the following points should be noted:

1. Kirkland Court is a legitimate naming option and passes all of the tests set by the Registrar of Geographic Names and supports the Victorian Government's Gender Equity Strategy 2023-2027. The name has a historical relationship to the area, being the surname of an early female settler, and printed author, who purchased property in the nearby area of Trawalla in the early 1800s.
2. The definition of a Court for road type allows for a cul-de-sac and describes a short, enclosed roadway.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 4 - Economy

4b. Invest in road infrastructure to improve connectivity for commerce and community.

This proposal complies with:

- Pyrenees Shire Council – Principles on Road Naming policy.
- Naming Rules for Places in Victoria – Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities 2022.
- Our Equal State – Victoria's gender equality strategy and action plan 2023-2027.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

1. The proposal was advertised in the Pyrenees Advocate, Maryborough & District Advertiser, Council's Website and the Shire Office Front Counter.
2. A letter was also sent to adjoining property owners on 4 December 2024.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attach 2 [11.3.3.1 - 1 page]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

Costs for the naming of the road can be accommodated within the limits of Council's operating budget.

The naming of new roads and accurate addressing is important to ensure that residents can be located by emergency services and to receive mail. To mitigate the risk of errors, Council needs to comply with the 'Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities, 2016,' and the Australian Standards for Signing and Rural and Urban Addressing.

CONCLUSION

To complete the naming process a name needs to be formally adopted by Council along with the recommendation to forward a report to the Registrar of Geographic Names for consideration of this name – Kirkland Court.

Cr Megan Phelan / Cr Damian Ferrari

That Council:

1. Adopts the name Kirkland Court, which has historical ties to the area.
2. Forwards a report to the Registrar of Geographic Names for consideration of the name Kirkland Court

CARRIED

11.3.4. EMERGENCY SERVICES AND VOLUNTEERS FUND (ESVF)

Presenter: Kathy Bramwell - Director Corporate and Community Services

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Glenn Kallio – Manager Finance

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 52/06/06

PURPOSE

This report details changes being made to the Fire Services Property Levy (FSPL), the first stage of which will come into effect on 1 July 2025.

BACKGROUND

The Fire Services Property Levy (FSPL) is an annual levy collected by councils via rates notices, on behalf of the State Government. The levy ensures that Victorian property owners make an annual contribution to the State's fire services. Revenue raised by the FSPL funds 87.5 per cent of Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) and 77.5 per cent of the Country Fire Authority's (CFA) annual budget.

The FSPL was instituted in 2013 following a recommendation of the Bushfire Royal Commission.

FSPL liabilities comprise a fixed charge and a variable component.

The fixed charge is different for residential and non-residential properties and increases annually based on the consumer price index. In 2024-25 the residential fixed charge was \$132, and the non-residential fixed charge was \$267.

The variable component is based on a property's capital improved value (CIV) and a variable rate (cents per \$'000 of CIV) depending on its property classification.

Pensioner Concession Card and Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card holders are entitled to a \$50 concession on their FSPL liability for their principal place of residence (PPR). Farmers with multiple properties that operate as a single enterprise may be eligible to pay a single fixed charge under the single farming enterprise exemption.

From 1 July 2025, the Fire Services Property Levy (FSPL) will be replaced by the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF).

The change is stated to help fund a broader range of emergency services including VicSES, Triple

Zero Victoria, the State Control Centre, Forest Fire Management Victoria, and Emergency Recovery Victoria, as well as the Country Fire Authority and Fire Rescue Victoria.

The levy applied under the ESVF will be adjusted to account for the ESVF's larger remit. Councils will be notified of the new 2025-26 rates through the usual rate-setting process in May 2025.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

With the implementation of the ESVF levy several changes to the Council's property database will be required, including:

1. The existing FSPL vacant land category will be abolished, with vacant land allocated to its corresponding land use sector – for example, vacant industrial land will pay the 'industrial' levy rate.

2. Eligible CFA and VicSES volunteers will receive an exemption from the ESVF. This will increase the internal resources required to maintain this register on an annual basis. At this stage it is not known what information is to be obtained and how the approval process will operate.
3. A second phase of changes will commence from 1 July 2026, including a new PPR (principal place of residence) category for owner occupiers.

The financial impacts of the new ESVF levy are set out below:

Sector	Current rates (2024-25)			Proposed rates (2025-26)		
	Variable rate (cents per \$1,000 CIV)	Fixed charge (\$)	Median liability (\$)	Variable rate (cents per \$1,000 CIV)	Fixed charge (\$)	Median liability (\$)
Residential PPR	8.7	132	191	17.3	136	254
Residential non-PPR	8.7	132	191	17.3	136	254
Commercial	66.4	267	748	133	276	1,240
Industrial	81.1	267	859	133	276	1,247
Primary Production	28.7	267	621	83	276	1,299
Public Benefit	5.7	267	320	5.7	276	329
Vacant	29	267	503	N/A	N/A	N/A

Estimated amount to be collected:

Differential	Avg FSPL	Avg ESVF	Avg Diff\$	Avg Diff%
Farms	\$ 678.40	\$ 1,671.60	\$ 993.20	146%
Industrial	\$ 865.97	\$ 1,271.20	\$ 405.23	47%
Commercial	\$ 582.52	\$ 910.53	\$ 328.01	56%
Vacant	\$ 169.17	\$ 210.11	\$ 40.94	24%
Residential	\$ 173.39	\$ 218.70	\$ 45.31	26%
Estimated collection	\$ 2,166,403.93	\$ 4,008,061.87	\$ 1,841,657.94	85%

There has been a great deal of anger and dissatisfaction with the proposed change across communities and within the local government sector due to the impact the change will have on councils and farming communities already impacted financially by cost of living and the cost of doing business.

Advocacy on the matter has been taken up across the sector on behalf of councils by the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), Rural Councils Victoria (RCV) and the Greater Ballarat Alliance of Councils (GBAC).

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Enabling Principles

- b. Provide transparency and accountability

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

n/a

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial risks associated with the collection of these funds as the Council acts as a collection agency for the State Government, only those funds collected are passed onto the Government.

Some negative publicity is expected as ratepayers may not understand that increases seen on their rates notices are not all due to Council's increase in municipal rates. Some ratepayers may also perceive that the Council is responsible for the increase to the ESVF levy and direct their displeasure accordingly.

CONCLUSION

In 2025, the Fire Services Properly Levy (FSPL) will change to a new Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) which will support more of the Victorian emergency response services and accordingly is likely to increase substantially. As the Levy is collected on behalf of State Government via local council rates notices, the changes will attract negative publicity directed to councils. The Local Government sector should clearly publicise that the increase associated with the ESVF Levy is not subject to Council's control.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. notes the information provided in this report, and the impacts associated with the introduction of the Emergency Services Volunteer Fund
2. continues to support the advocacy by the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), Rural Councils Victoria (RCV) and the Greater Ballarat Alliance of Councils (GBAC) on the matter.

AN ALTERNATIVE MOTION WAS PUT FORWARD

Cr Simon Tol / Cr Megan Phelan

That Council

1. notes the information provided in this report, and the impacts associated with the introduction of the Emergency Services Volunteer Fund
2. continues to support the advocacy by the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), Rural Councils Victoria (RCV) and the Greater Ballarat Alliance of Councils (GBAC) on the matter.
3. indicate on the rate notices that the ESVF is not a charge from Council and that the money is being collected for the state government.
4. further advocate on the matter and receive further reporting on the effectiveness of the advocacy.

CARRIED

11.4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

11.4.1. 2025 COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

Presenter: Jim Nolan - Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Jim Nolan – Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 16/17/02

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is for Council to decide on the meeting schedule for Council meetings and briefing sessions for 2025.

BACKGROUND

A 2025 schedule of meetings has been prepared in consultation with Councillors and is detailed in this report.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

The schedule contains dates for Ordinary Council meetings held monthly as well as Assemblies of Councillors (Briefing Sessions) and the annual Statutory Meeting.

January			
8th	Strategic / Briefing	10.00am - 4.00pm	Beaufort
February			
3rd	Strategic / Presentations Briefing	4.00pm - 7.00pm	Beaufort
10th	Briefing	4.00pm - 7.00pm	Beaufort
17th	Briefing	4.00pm - 6.00pm	Beaufort
17th	Council Meeting	6.00pm - 8.00pm	Beaufort
March			
3rd	Briefing	4.00pm - 7.00pm	Beaufort
17th	Briefing	4.00pm - 6.00pm	Beaufort
17th	Council Meeting	6.00pm - 8.00pm	Beaufort
April			
7th	Strategic / Presentations Briefing	4.00pm - 7.00pm	Beaufort
14th	Briefing	4.00pm - 7.00pm	Beaufort
28th	Briefing	4.00pm - 6.00pm	Beaufort
28th	Council Meeting	6.00pm - 8.00pm	Beaufort
May			
12th	Briefing	4.00pm - 7.00pm	Beaufort
19th	Briefing	4.00pm - 6.00pm	Beaufort
19th	Council Meeting	6.00pm - 8.00pm	Beaufort
June			
2nd	Strategic / Presentations Briefing	4.00pm - 7.00pm	Beaufort
16th	Briefing	4.00pm - 6.00pm	Beaufort
16th	Council Meeting	6.00pm - 8.00pm	Beaufort
July			
14th	Briefing	4.00pm - 7.00pm	Beaufort
21st	Briefing	4.00pm - 6.00pm	Beaufort
21st	Council Meeting	6.00pm - 8.00pm	Beaufort

August			
4th	Strategic / Presentations Briefing	4.00pm - 7.00pm	Beaufort
11th	Briefing	4.00pm - 7.00pm	Beaufort
18th	Briefing	4.00pm - 6.00pm	Beaufort
18th	Council Meeting	6.00pm - 8.00pm	Beaufort
September			
8th	Briefing	4.00pm - 7.00pm	Beaufort
15th	Briefing	4.00pm - 6.00pm	Beaufort
15th	Council Meeting	6.00pm - 8.00pm	Beaufort
October			
6th	Strategic / Presentations Briefing	4.00pm - 7.00pm	Beaufort
13th	Briefing	4.00pm - 7.00pm	Beaufort
20th	Briefing	4.00pm - 6.00pm	Beaufort
20th	Council Meeting	6.00pm - 8.00pm	Beaufort
November			
10th	Briefing	4.00pm - 6.00pm	Beaufort
10th	Special & Statutory Meeting	6.00pm - 8.00pm	Lexton
17th	Briefing	4.00pm - 6.00pm	Beaufort
17th	Council Meeting	6.00pm - 8.00pm	Beaufort
December			
1st	Briefing	4.00pm - 7.00pm	Beaufort
8th	Briefing	4.00pm - 6.00pm	Beaufort
8th	Council Meeting	6.00pm - 8.00pm	Beaufort

Strategic / Presentations Briefing: For presentations from external parties and strategic discussion.

Notice of meeting dates is available on Council’s website and is published in Council’s Noticeboard available in the Pyrenees Advocate and Maryborough Advertiser each week.

The Ordinary Council and Statutory meetings are livestreamed providing the community, who are unable to attend in person, the ability to view the meetings in real time, provide an awareness of how Council meetings are conducted and to reach a wider audience.

Should circumstances require a change to Council Meeting dates, or the need for additional Council Meetings, then this can be done by giving appropriate note in accordance with the Governance Rules.

The attached meeting schedule provides for an optional Council Meeting to be held in January if required. At the time of preparing this report, there are no urgent matters to be decided in January, and therefore it is suggested that an Ordinary Council Meeting not be held in January. If an urgent need arises, a Special Council Meeting can be called in accordance with the Governance Rules.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 1 - People

1c. Improve accessibility and inclusivity.

ATTACHMENTS

1. DRAFT - 2025 Council Meeting Dates [11.4.1.1 - 1 page]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

Council has made provisions in its 2024-2025 budget to meet the costs associated with the meetings.

CONCLUSION

Subject to Council's agreement to the meeting schedule, it is proposed that public notice be given in accordance with Council Policy – Governance Rules 2023 of the Council Meetings.

Cr Damian Ferrari / Cr Rebecca Wardlaw

That Council:

1. Adopts the meeting schedule for 2025, as detailed in this report;
2. Gives public notice, in accordance with Council Policy – Governance Rules 2023, of the proposed Council Meeting dates.

CARRIED

11.4.2. AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION - NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Presenter: Jim Nolan - Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Jim Nolan – Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 44/04/02

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer to attend the National General Assembly (NGA) in Canberra on 24 - 27 June 2025.

BACKGROUND

The 2025 National General Assembly and Conference will be held in Canberra 24 - 27 June 2025.

The theme for the 2025 Conference is 'National Priorities need local solutions'. The NGA is an important opportunity to address national issues at the local level, and new ways the Australia Government could partner to strengthen the local government sector to advance community well-being, local economic development, create jobs, address environmental challenge, climate change and complex social issues such as housing affordability.

The Assembly also provides an avenue for the sector to consider motions from member councils to provide input into ALGAs activity and strategic direction.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

With the exception of 2017 and 2020, it has been the practice for the Mayor and CEO to attend the NGA. In the past, Council has also used the opportunity to undertake a range of advocacy work in conjunction with councils that form Greater Ballarat Alliance of Councils (GBAC).

Regional Councils have in the past advocated to state and federal governments on matters including funding, policy change and support around key regional issues such as road and rail transport funding, employment, telecommunications, health and wellbeing, waste, sport and recreation, township development and the arts.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Enabling Principles

- b. Provide transparency and accountability
- c. Use resources efficiently and effectively

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

The delegation to Canberra will require Councils to meet their own participant costs associated with attendance at the NGA, flights, accommodation, cab fares and meals. These costs have been provided for within Council's budget.

CONCLUSION

This event provides an opportunity for the Mayor and CEO to participate at a national level in matters impacting on councils and the sustainability of local communities.

It also provides an opportunity for advocacy and to engage directly with the Federal Government.

Cr Damian Ferrari / Cr Megan Phelan

That Council:

1. Supports the participation of the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer to attend the ALGA National General Assembly and conference from 24-27 June 2025.

CARRIED

11.4.3. PYRENEES ACQUISITIVE ART PRIZE

Presenter: Jim Nolan - Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Jim Nolan – Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 06/08/12

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement on the continuation of the Pyrenees Acquisitive Art Prize for Beaufort and Avoca Art Shows.

BACKGROUND

The Pyrenees Acquisitive Art Prize is for artworks depicting the Pyrenees Shire. The Acquisitive Prize is sponsored by Council. The winning artwork is included in Council's art collection and are exhibited in public buildings across the shire, including the Beaufort Council Office, Beaufort Resource Centre, Avoca Information Centre and Avoca Gunga Hub.

The award has been running for thirty years and is an important aspect of art in the region with new artists encouraged to enter their creations.

In judging the competition, the judge takes into consideration whether the entry will be a suitable addition to the Shire collection to ensure a range of artists, styles of paintings and subjects are represented.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

In the past, Council has sponsored the Pyrenees Acquisitive Art Prize for the Beaufort Agricultural Society annual art exhibition and the Avoca Community Arts and Gardens annual art exhibition. The prize is valued at \$750.00.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 1 - People

1b. Support a vibrant community arts, culture and heritage environment.

Enabling Principles

a. Motivate and inspire community involvement

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

Further consultation on how Council can support and encourage creative arts within the community will be undertaken when the Creatives Strategy is released for comment during 2025.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

The small financial contribution is budgeted annually.

CONCLUSION

Providing an Acquisitive Art Prize for the Avoca and Beaufort annual art exhibitions is one way that Council supports and encourages the creative arts in the Pyrenees.

Cr Rebecca Wardlaw / Cr Simon Tol

That Council:

1. Continues sponsorship of the Pyrenees Acquisitive Art Prize for the annual Beaufort and Avoca Art Exhibitions to the value of \$750.00

CARRIED

11.4.4. ADVOCACY PROGRAM

Presenter: Jim Nolan - Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Jim Nolan – Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 12/02/02

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide direction on proposed advocacy activity for 2025

BACKGROUND

Council and Pyrenees communities rely on other tiers of government for funding and support in the delivery of services and projects and in the delivery of the Council Vision.

Many of the services that our communities need are provided by other agencies and not by Council.

Ensuring that these services meet community needs and expectations often requires Council to speak up when these needs are not met.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

How advocacy is undertaken requires strategic consideration. Council has established relationships with several peak bodies whose role includes advocacy, and the use of these bodies is often the most effective means of being heard and achieving successful outcomes through advocacy. Getting the attention of the commonwealth government for example is challenging for one small rural council on its own, and on many federal matters, the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) is the preferred means of advocacy.

The attached draft Advocacy Program lists several matters of importance to Pyrenees Shire Council along with various peak bodies to be used to assist or lead the relevant advocacy issue. Key issues include:

- Digital Communication
- Energy
- Circular Economy
- Financial Sustainability
- Roads
- Water
- Tourism
- Emergency management
- Health
- Growth
- Arts

Key Peak bodies used to support the advocacy work include:

- Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)
- Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)
- Rural Councils Victoria (RCV)
- Tourism Midwest Victoria (TMV)
- Greater Ballarat Alliance of Councils (GBAC)
- Western Highway Action Committee (WHAC)

The draft program is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but rather to capture key current issues concerning Council and Pyrenees communities.

Included in the draft program are the following key items of advocacy ahead of the Federal Election:

- Improved telecommunications infrastructure programs and at specific sites
- Capital funding for the Southern Wimmera Northeast Pyrenees Pipeline
- Commitments to continue core funding, and to continue and expand current road and bridge programs
- Commitments to support drought, bushfire and flood recovery
- Commitments to fund specific projects including:
 - Bridge 10 on the Beaufort-Carngham road to allow the road to be open to higher mass vehicles
 - Continuation of township improvements (incl Avoca streetscape)
 - Beaufort Caravan Park

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Enabling Principles

- b. Provide transparency and accountability
- c. Use resources efficiently and effectively

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

Engagement with peak bodies is ongoing on key issues.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 2025 01 Draft Advocacy Program [**11.4.4.1** - 2 pages]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

Financial sustainability is a key issue for Pyrenees and without adequate funding achieved through advocacy, Council would not be able to deliver the services that the community needs and expects.

CONCLUSION

Advocacy is important to ensure Council attracts the funding and support necessary to meet the needs of the Pyrenees communities.

Cr Megan Phelan / Cr Damian Ferrari

That Council:

1. Endorses the draft Advocacy Program for 2025

CARRIED

11.4.5. EXTERNAL GRANT FUNDING

Presenter: Jim Nolan - Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

Report Author: Jim Nolan – Chief Executive Officer

Declaration of Interest: As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

File No: 32/13/08

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform Council and the community on various grant funding matters, and to seek support on proposed applications.

BACKGROUND

Council actively pursues funding through a variety of grant programs to deliver key elements of the Council Plan.

Below is a range of recent matters relating to grant funding activity.

ISSUE / DISCUSSION

Burke Street Housing Project

On 16 January 2025, the Albanese Government announced funding of \$2 million to sub-divide council-owned land on Burke Street to provide funding towards an additional 35 housing sites to Beaufort. Under the Government's Housing Support Program, \$35.8 million has been allocated to five projects to fast-track housing in regional and metropolitan growth areas. Funding will be used on enabling infrastructure such as roads, sewage and water – as well as supporting access to social housing and increasing housing supply.

This funding is in addition to the \$3,400,000 funding allocated to Council in the first round of the Victorian Government's Regional Worker Accommodation Fund for the Burke Street Worker Accommodation Project. The project includes construction of 10 dwellings that will result in a net increase of 24 bedrooms in appropriate and affordable regional housing or accommodation for key workers and their families. Council has also committed \$900,000 as a co-contribution towards this project.

Bayindeen – Rocky Road Bushfire

The Council Support Fund (CSF) is co-funded by the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments. It provides upfront funding for councils to undertake clean-up activities and help restore local facilities and services that are the lifeblood of communities.

Activities supported through the fund include support costs related to restoring community assets, facilities and services not funded through other programs.

This support is in addition to existing Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements which funds eligible restoration of essential public assets.

Council has been advised that it will receive up to \$500,000 under the CSF for reimbursement of eligible expenses incurred after October 2024.

Beaufort Men's Shed Project

The Victorian Governments Men's Shed Funding Program supports the construction and refurbishment of men's sheds, which are important places for men to make social connections and actively participate in their local communities.

The program aims to increase the number of men getting involved and the variety of activities provided by men's sheds.

Under this program, Council submitted an application for the Beaufort Men's Shed Relocation Project, seeking \$100,000 to contribute to a new purpose-built facility, to sustain the current and future operations and activities of the Beaufort Men's Shed.

The existing Beaufort Men's Shed, located on Albert Street Beaufort, was subject to extensive damage during a flood event in December 2022. Following this event, the building was found to have extensive structural damage, that posed significant health and safety issues. A Building Order was issued, and The Men's Shed were required to vacate the building in February of 2023.

The proposed location of the Beaufort Men's Shed is at the Beaufort Apex Club site in Audus Lane, Beaufort.

The project, which is subject to the necessary approvals process, will be undertaken in partnership with the Beaufort Men's Shed, Pyrenees Shire Council and the Beaufort Apex Club.

The expected total cost of the project is in the order of \$300,000 and funded through this grant and \$216,000 insurance funds received by Council for the flood damaged shed. \$10,000 is committed as an in-kind contribution for design, documentation, site planning, project coordination planning and administration provided by Pyrenees Shire Council.

A funding agreement is to be developed in conjunction with the Victorian Government

Sport and Recreation Grants

The Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Fund (the Fund) is a Victorian Government competitive investment program, open to Local Government Authorities in rural and regional Victoria to deliver new and upgraded community sports infrastructure.

An objective of the funding is to improve accessibility and participation in active recreation.

Successful applications are able to demonstrate the proposed works are supported by appropriate precinct planning and strategy backed by community engagement.

There are several streams of funding, and the following projects are being pursued for funding under the next round:

- Natte Yallock Recreation Reserve infrastructure.
- Review of Councils Recreation Strategy.
- Walking / cycling pathways associated with the Beaufort Linnear project

Consideration is also being given to seek funding for pool improvements, depending on eligibility, and noting that a Pyrenees Pools Strategy is currently in development.

Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure Program

The Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure Program (SLRIP) commenced on 1 July 2024 to provide funding for projects to address current and emerging priorities in road infrastructure needs.

The SLRIP has been created as part of the Australian Government's commitment to strengthen investment to support the delivery of safer and more productive roads across Australia. Funding of at least \$200 million per year will be available under the program.

The SLRIP consolidates the Bridges Renewal Program (BRP) and Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program (HVSPP) into a single program.

Council applied for funding under tranche 1 of the Safer Local Roads & Infrastructure Program (SLRIP) for the design and upgrade of Bridge 7 on Back Cemetery Road, Carngham. Council received notification on 28 January 2025 that this application was unsuccessful.

It is intended that future applications be made under this program for priority bridge works

- B97 & B99 – Lexton Ararat Rd
- B10 – Beaufort Carngham Rd
- B89 & B90 – Landsborough Elmhurst Rd
- B5 – Avoca Bealiba Rd

Council has insufficient capacity to fund these structures due to their high cost unless with significant external funding.

Council has approximately 30 structures on the local road network that have load limitations, many of which prevent efficient transport to get agricultural products to and from the farm gate.

COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Priority 2 - Place

2b. Enhance the liveability and resilience of our communities.

2c. Promote responsible development.

Priority 4 - Economy

4c. Encourage and invest in assets and infrastructure for commerce and community.

Enabling Principles

b. Provide transparency and accountability

c. Use resources efficiently and effectively

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

Some of the above grants have followed engagement from relevant stakeholders, while others have been developed from Councils asset planning.

ATTACHMENTS

1. List of Load Limited Bridges - Updated 11.02.2025 [**11.4.5.1** - 1 page]

FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS

Funding of various council projects and programs through external grants is necessary for Council to be financially sustainable.

CONCLUSION

Council actively pursues funding through a variety of grant programs to deliver key elements of the Council Plan. This report is intended to inform Council and the community about recent funding matters.

Cr Damian Ferrari / Cr Rebecca Wardlaw

That Council:

1. Acknowledges the funding received / committed for the various projects and activities described in this report.
2. Continues to pursue funding opportunities referenced in the report.

CARRIED

12. COUNCILLOR REPORTS AND GENERAL BUSINESS

Cr Ferrari

I attended the usual meetings and briefings; we had a cuppa down at Snake Valley a little while ago.

I attended the Western Highway Action Committee meeting and I do note that we did speak about some works that have recently happened at Beaufort in Lawrence street which is good because it has been a long time coming and the eastern entrance to Beaufort which was in really really poor condition but that's really pleasant to drive on now and of course, the works further out at Trawalla so hopefully they will continue on to Adelaide.

I had a meeting with the BPS60, the old Beaufort Primary School, they're a really good committee, they are very active and they are very passionate about that school and of course we've got that funding of \$800,000 to be put towards a plan and perhaps to do some additional works so that's well and truly in progress and that meeting was very fruitful the other day and those meetings will continue.

I have had a lot of discussions with constituents regarding the Beaufort swimming pool of course, the bubbling in the liner was the original issue and some repairs were done, and it was deemed safe for use, that was some time ago. The new issue, my understanding is that there is water in behind the liner and it's caused the liner to come away from the wall, right around the edge of the pool so it's a fairly significant issue that is getting looked at, it is not an easy fix. In short term we've been asked if we can open the pool, I am not really sure, I don't think we are at a stage where we can provide a definitive answer with that because obviously safety is paramount in relation to that. We have heard you; I have heard you and it is a shame that we are rapidly coming towards the end of the season and this could have happened after the gates were shut for the season but it is what it is and we will continue to deal with it and the council will continue to provide regular updates.

When we think about the pool, I think about not just the pool of course, I think it's a bit iconic for Beaufort and I swam there as a kid which was a few years ago, I think there is a much bigger picture to be looked at down there and not just the pool. The pool is aging but the infrastructure around there is ageing to, the change rooms are at the end of their life, the canteen all that stuff there, I think there is a real opportunity to do something really good down there, it is a great space and there is a lot of room. Stuff like a health and wellbeing, rehabilitation incorporated with it, just a multipurpose facility, I think it would be just fantastic.

The only other thing is, I would just like to go back to our Australia day event and just again say how impressed I was by our speaker, Rowan Martin and it was referenced here today about what he said about where we should be at in our community and especially thinking about moving forward as Australians on Australia Day. I think he nailed it really really well and what he said was really fitting and I think it was real Australian so I would have to say, not taking away from other ambassadors we've had but I have to say his speech is probably one of the best I've heard since I have been on council.

Cr Tol

I won't be as long as Cr Ferrari, he has mentioned most of the things that I was going to mention. We do have to get this pool up and going in some way or another, but I know they've got to do the due diligence and then find the funding for a new one or whatever but in due course that will happen and we will move on. Mr Swann, I was upset to hear about the granting of the permit to do that, that's the first I've heard of it so I think as a as an organisation we need to improve their communication on getting things out because I would have rung you otherwise, so I apologise as I am just hearing tonight.

Going back to the Australia Day awards, I think it was fantastic and for those of you that were there, Rowan was one of the groomsmen at my wedding and a hell of a nice bloke and been through a hell of a lot in his

career. As Damian said, he absolutely nailed the current point in where Australia sits at the moment and what we should be doing.

I hosted a Christmas party for fellow councillors and executive staff at home prior to Christmas and it was a great way for us all to get to know each other on a different level rather than stuck around some tables and meet families and whatever which was terrific, it was little bit windy, but it was a good night.

I have attended all of the normal briefings and whatever that we've had and bits and pieces around the traps.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the CFA members in the community that have gone up to the fires over Christmas giving up their Christmas and whatever and that is really greatly appreciated and thank you.

Cr Phelan

Again, in addition to what others have already mentioned in terms of the formal council meetings and briefings that we've been to.

A real highlight for me over the last couple of months I guess has been the De Cameron ward meetings that I've had with constituents, I've a session in Moonambel, Landsborough, Redbank and Lexton which Cr Tol shared with me, and I was so impressed to see community members engage in that process and talk about what they want to see in the council plan and not that I expected anyone would do this, but no one was saying I want my, you know, something fixed on my property, they were thinking big picture, what's good for the town, what change do they want see and they were really engaged in that process so I was hugely impressed and I look forward to holding more of those meetings with constituents.

As people know I am new to Pyrenees and so given that sometimes you have meetings where you just get so struck by the passion and commitment of some community members and I had one of those moments when I went to the Landsborough Historical Society to meet with members of that society and hear about the work they're doing and I just came away so impressed with the time and effort that they are putting in to save the history, to collect the history, they have done amazing work on a rail trail, for the lost stations of the Pyrenees and an absolutely beautiful video on their website which I encourage everyone to see, which is the story of Landsborough but it's done in a combination of some of the older residents with primary school kids and it is so creative and so clever. I have really enjoyed getting out and meeting with constituents and one other I will mention is I have had quite a few meetings again on a Landsborough related issue about getting the Resource Centre opened up and I am very pleased that next Saturday morning I will be going to the opening of the Resource Centre so thrilled to see that opening again.

Cr Wardlaw

It's been a busy couple of months as everyone would know, Christmas. So just before Christmas I got to go to the Men's Shed morning tea and in the same week the Senior Citizens Christmas lunch and then this past week, two members of our community Ron Reed and Malcolm Burns, 90 and 87 have both passed away and so you remember those moments that you got to go to something and enjoy that time with that person and I'm just glad that I was able to be part of that. They were just fantastic people in the community in every single way.

We had the Advance Avoca Christmas party where I had the pleasure of delivering Santa in my horse and carriage. I just want to commend the community and the hard working people that made the event possible, these are people that work full time jobs, their members of the CFA, their members of this event and they just put the night together flawlessly and it was packed up within 45 minutes, these are the things that just make me proud, really proud of the people in our town, in our community, whether that be Natte,

they had their big thing last year for the 100 years of the school, and that was fantastic as well. Community, it's all about the people.

We got to go to Mount Mitchell Estate thanks to Simon and his lovely wife and we had a fantastic evening where we actually got to go sit in the library and see the music room and it was just beautiful, the setting is amazing, so next time he has an open day, do go, it is just so worth doing.

Other than that, I've just been working hard, briefings, we've been getting together doing everything that needs to be done to get the strategic plan on the way and we've just been working through the items one at a time.

It has been incredibly busy and right from the start we've been having our induction training, which people may not realise as a new council and also as the Mayor I had to go away for two and half days training but it is our roles, they're very important, we may not be remunerated in a huge way but we definitely hold the responsibility and we take on these roles because we love our communities and we want to represent you and we want to make things better, so to learn that and to go through these induction programmes, we all come from a diverse range of backgrounds and a lot of these things are new for us and even after doing it over sometime, sometimes they even change and definitely my responsibility in the Mayoral role has become quite different and behold to a lot more laws now so that was really interesting.

In December, we have a beautiful Mag Dam reserve in Snake Valley and we've been working really hard on that, to bring that committee again together, it's like a lot of communities we have around the shire, there's a few people that work so hard to look after these areas for the whole community and I commend that Mag Dam committee again and there's lots of good things happening this year there.

I went to the fantastic Carols in Valley and even got to sing on stage with a group of people, it was a lot of fun and again a beautiful event that brings people together at the beautiful Carngham Uniting bluestone church which has become a real great hub for the people there.

Referring to the CFA again, thanks, I know I put it in my columns but we cannot thank all of you enough, I know there are volunteers in the audience that are part of the CFA as well, but everyone that is part of that because you've been protecting our community on and off, we've had so many people from our area helping in the Grampians in all sorts of ways, so we thank them greatly.

At the Carols in the Valley, the Snake Valley CFA did their bit and transported Santa and gave out lollies to the whole community, so it just shows just how community minded those people are, it was incredible.

We had a fabulous end of year event at Simons place, very beautifully looked after but it was very significant because it was in that the very first Council meeting for the Lexton Shire was held in that very library and we got a photo there, it was very significant to be back there in that space.

I did attend the Beaufort Skipton Health Services AGM, amazing things there, I don't have time to talk about some of the great projects they have got there, things like a garden to help activate the elderly residents who are there to keep them active while they are staying at the hospital, all these fantastic things, nurse on call online, incredibly important, if you don't know about it, jump online and find out more about it. I might try to do a blog on my Mayoral Facebook page because it is so good for us rural people to be able to access that, particularly if you need something really urgent and you can't get to a nurse or to emergency straight away and you need that immediate help.

There has been so much strategic planning, we are so so excited but also just so focused on bringing you an incredibly active and strategic council plan that really meets the community needs and puts the community first and foremost, we are just so passionate to be able to do that and really we will be looking for as much

feedback as we can get from community members to know where that needs to go. Especially on things like access roads and everything that's come up tonight, water projects, access to water, all that sort of stuff.

I was also part of a meeting with Dan Tehan in regard to the housing infrastructure opportunities and grants and we've already been looking at the Burke Street project, but we will be pushing that, and we are definitely keen on looking at Avoca and building there as well.

I've also had a Rural Councils Victoria meetings and we've also we've also met with Catherine King and again looking at those federal opportunities which are different a lot to a lot of the state ones but Catherine had also highlighted how we have already taken the lead in things like housing and providing that with Correa Park and Burke Street and how we're actually a council to be looked at to copy but we were also telling her to, we need that support to get that. We talked about the major roads, that even though they only look at the major roads, we also need help with those link roads that gets those trucks and gets our product out to market and things like that, so that was a very effective meeting.

Back to Australia Day, I totally agree, I thought Rowan Martin was someone who had that background and had the experience and really spoke from the heart and someone who definitely knows the area and has lived here and knows it and lives and breathes it so that was really awesome. Particularly though just to reiterate on the amazing local people who won those awards, Allan Streeter, I just can't speak highly enough of someone like him, he just gives so much, but everyone, the Waubra committee with an amazing event and everyone that was involved, and that received awards, it just shows how amazing our shire is and the people that are in it, it is just incredible.

Just reiterating on the pool, having used it so much, I've heard so many comments on it while I've been at the pool as well before we weren't allowed to swim in it but to see the young kids absolutely going nuts and my little one year old enjoying it just as much as my 16 year old and then seeing my auntie doing the aerobics and she tried to get there every day that they had it on because for her it was just incredible and became part of her routine. Other friends and teachers at school have been lap swimming every day, it was so well used and an asset that we definitely want to protect and be able to build up. It has been very devastating for people not to be able to use it and particularly because it's school sports time, but we definitely tried to help out, we've helped with bus transport for the two schools here that would have used it and they were very grateful and I received two votes of thanks on that.

Cr Ferrari

I just wanted to take the point that Cr Tol made a little further in relation to the wind farm and I'm very disappointed as well with the approval of the wind farm by the Minister, and I am very doubtful, there's some very important issues that were pointed out by the committee and that residents were given due consideration and that concerns me greatly. I thank the community for their dedicated committed work on this has been going on for a long time and that committee has put in so many hours we're aware of but so many hours we're unaware of, and they have submitted absolutely flawless submissions and they took us around in their own time and showed us the actual footprint of the wind farm and where the brolgas are and that was invaluable. You can look at it on a map but to see it firsthand is just invaluable and I would just like to state for the record that as a council we did oppose it, nonetheless the application was granted by the Minister which is very disappointing.

13. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

CLOSURE OF MEETING TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

That, pursuant to the provisions of Section 4.1.1(c) of Council's Governance Rules, and Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2020, the meeting be closed to the public in order to consider confidential items.

Cr Damian Ferrari / Cr Rebecca Wardlaw

That the meeting be closed to members of the public in accordance with Section 4.1.1(c) of Council's Governance Rules, and Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2020, in order to discuss the confidential reports listed below:

- 15.1 - 7 Lawrence Street Beaufort - Use of the land for food and drink premises
- 15.2 - Revised Banking Services

CARRIED

The live streaming of Ordinary Meeting of Council - 17 February 2025 stopped at 8:15 pm to consider confidential items.

The live stream re-commenced at 8:59 pm and the Mayor chose to report on confidential items discussed in closed Council which are noted below:

- *Use of 7 Lawrence Street Beaufort for food and drink premises*
- *Banking services*

14. CLOSE OF MEETING

Cr Megan Phelan / Cr Damian Ferrari

The Ordinary Meeting of Council - 17 February 2025 closed at 8.59pm.

CARRIED

Minutes of the Meeting confirmed _____

2025

Mayor Cr Tanya Kehoe