

AGENDA

ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL

Tuesday, 15 October 2019

To be held Swan Hill Town Hall
McCallum Street, Swan Hill
Commencing at 6pm

COUNCIL:

Cr A Young – Mayor

Cr LT McPhee

Cr J Benham

Cr C Jeffery

Cr L Johnson

Cr B Moar

Cr N McKay

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SECTION A – PROCEDURAL MATTERS

- **Open**

- **Acknowledgement of Country**

- **Prayer**

- **Apologies**

- **Confirmation of Minutes**
 - 1) Ordinary Meeting held on 17 September 2019

- **Declarations of Conflict of Interest**

- **Receptions and Reading of Petitions, Memorials, Joint Letters and Deputations**

- **Public Question Time**

SECTION B – REPORTS

B.19.106 COUNCIL POSITION IN RESPECT OF THE MANAGEMENT OF THE MURRAY DARLING BASIN

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer
File Number: S14-04-07-02
Attachments: 1 Management of the Murray Darling Basin

Declarations of Interest:

John McLinden - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

This is a report in relation to Council's position paper on the Murray Darling Basin.

Discussion

The effective management of the Murray Darling Basin and its natural resources has a significant impact on the well-being of the Swan Hill community. Management decisions with respect of the natural resources within the Murray Darling Basin affect our communities' health and well-being, our economic prosperity and the environmental health of our region.

Council has for some time been considering the many issues intertwined in the management of the Murray Darling Basin and its effects on the Swan Hill community and has developed a position paper in relation to a number of these issues.

The attached position paper includes statements spelling out the way Council would like to see the Murray Darling Basin managed. It also calls on regulators to ensure that the basin plan is implemented in a way that contributes to the health, prosperity and strength of our communities and the position paper also calls for equity for all basin communities in a way that the basin is managed and in the way that the basin plan is implemented.

The position paper calls upon Governments and their instrumentalities to take action on numerous basin management issues that have a direct bearing on the communities of the Swan Hill region.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Environment - Sound policies and practices that protect and enhance our environment.

Options

Council may choose to adopt or make any alterations to the recommendation.

Recommendation

That Council

- 1. Adopts the “Management of the Murray Darling Basin” position paper October 2019 as its basis for advocacy.**
- 2. Forward copies of the position paper to appropriate members of parliament.**
- 3. Develop an advocacy campaign based on the 20 calls to action.**



Management of the Murray Darling Basin

Position paper - October 2019



Executive summary

There are many competing interests for the water resources of the Murray Darling Basin. As in all complex matters where trade-offs occur, it's all a matter of balance.

The Murray Darling Basin Plan was developed through significant political negotiation between the states, the Commonwealth and various interest groups, including agricultural and environmental. The plan was seen as the basin communities' best attempt at striking a balance between the competing demands on the basin's water resources.

At Swan Hill Rural City Council, we want to see a system that is operated at its optimum level to maximise benefits to our communities, to the agricultural sector, to those who consume our food both locally and across the globe, and to the eco systems of our region and the basin in general.

This position paper has been developed to help us advocate on behalf of our community for improved Murray Darling Basin management. This paper explains Council's position, based on three key areas.

1. **Swan Hill Rural City Council wants the Murray Darling Basin managed in a way that:**
 - Provides water for agricultural production;
 - Supports a healthy ecosystem;
 - Allows for a range of recreational pursuits; and
 - Supports the many urban communities within the basin.
2. **Swan Hill Rural City Council wants to ensure Basin Plan implementation contributes to the health, prosperity and strength of our communities. We believe:**
 - There is insufficient consideration of the socio-economic impacts of the plan on basin communities, both at the community-wide and enterprise level.
 - Buyback practices are threatening communities and the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District's (GMID) financial viability.
 - The accumulation of environmental water is disrupting irrigation delivery, leading to an inefficient system.
 - Environmental flows cannot be delivered because physical constraints in the system have not been dealt with.
 - The effectiveness of environmental water use is questionable.
3. **Swan Hill Rural City Council wants equity for all basin communities. We want:**
 - Greater transparency in the water market.
 - COAG to ensure that all states and their agencies do their fair share of reform and that this reform is done in a timely fashion.
 - Our community to be informed on the use of environmental water and the effectiveness of environmental watering programs.
 - Regulation to guard investment in high value horticulture against the indiscriminant issuing of licenses within an already strained system.

Introduction

Local Government plays a critical role in advocating for the interests of its community. It is clear that communities in the Swan Hill Rural City Council municipality are concerned about the management of the Murray Darling Basin.

Council is aware of the many competing interests in relation to the Murray Darling Basin's management. We are aware that the basin's management will be about compromise.

In developing this position paper, Council is also trying to strike a balance that best represents the views of its community.

Council understands that it is unrealistic to expect a return to a natural system within the Murray Darling Basin.

The basin now operates in a highly modified environment.

Since the time of European settlement the Murray Darling Basin has been drastically modified and developed. The arrival of agriculture has seen significant landscape change, including mass vegetation clearing, land forming and the development of drainage and irrigation systems. The basin is dotted with heavily settled urban communities and the system has numerous storage dams, flood mitigation dams, irrigation systems and highly modified stream channels.

There are many dependencies on our river systems.

The Murray Darling Basin provides water for human consumption that sustains the large population of the Murray Darling Basin.

The basin produces enormous quantities of food for the people of Australia and for export markets across the world. The waters that are shed from the basin and its fertile soils have been used for agricultural production very successfully.

The rivers of the basin also provide important active and passive recreation for local communities, and create tourism opportunities. The many reservoirs and dams constructed on our rivers and the natural lakes and wetlands provide numerous recreation opportunities.

With all this in mind, a return to a natural system could never be achieved.

Instead, our communities are calling for equitable outcomes for all competing interests.

Background

The management of water resources in the Murray Darling Basin is extraordinarily complex, involving different regimes in the four states through which the Murray and Darling rivers flow.

In times of plenty, all water entitlements can be taken up to sustain human life and for agricultural production, and enough water remains to keep our rivers and streams flowing and delivering a healthy environment for the Murray Darling Basin.

However, it is generally accepted that water resources of the Murray Darling Basin have been over allocated, and this becomes most obvious during times of low rainfall and drought.

This was evident during the millenium drought, which generally extended for the first decade of this century. At this time, different allocation practices in different states meant different economic and social outcomes for communities. Over allocation combined with drought also resulted in environmental stress in almost all of the Murray Darling Basin.

Prior to the implementation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan, in times of scarcity, it was the entitlement holders who took first rights to the water, and the environment only received any water left over. This meant that ecosystems that depend on our rivers and streams suffered greatly.

It is widely recognised among communities and water resource managers that the basin had been over allocated well before the millenium drought took hold. Work to develop a basin wide approach to managing water resources started in the 1990s. The Commonwealth's Water Act was passed in 2007, in the middle of the millenium drought, and its objectives are to optimise social, economic and environmental outcomes. The Murray Darling Basin Plan was developed to advance those objectives.

The Basin Plan and its operation are extremely complex. By way of summary though, the Murray Darling Basin Authority measured environmental values throughout the basin and identified just over 100 icon sites, chosen as representative of the ecosystems throughout the basin and on the basis of their ability to be studied and measured. An environmental plan was established to ensure the health of these icon sites and, ultimately, the health of the entire basin.

The plan identified that 2,750GL needed to be taken from productive consumption and returned to the environment. Many mechanisms have been used to obtain this water, including significant on-farm efficiency programs and irrigation system modernisation to reduce system losses, and an extensive campaign of entitlement buybacks by the Commonwealth and State governments.

The target for the return of water to the environment has been carved up between various sub-catchments and on a state-by-state basis. Returned water is used in line with environmental watering plans that are being, or have been, developed by each state.

In Victoria, Catchment Management Authorities and public land managers have significant input into the way in which environmental water is allocated.

Council's position

1. Swan Hill Rural City Council wants the basin managed in a way that:

- Provides water for agricultural production;
- Supports a healthy ecosystem;
- Allows for a range of recreational pursuits; and
- Supports the many urban communities within the basin.

Providing water for agricultural production

Agricultural production supported by water from the Murray Darling Basin is enormous. Australians have been very innovative and successful in harnessing water resources from the basin to produce food and fibre for the world on an enormous scale.

Victoria's water allocation policies have been more conservative than some others in the Murray Darling Basin, leading to a system that delivers high reliability in the supply of water to irrigators and urban communities. This has resulted in the growth of irrigated agriculture that is highly dependent on this water supply, and it has allowed permanent plantings to flourish.

This responsible approach to water allocation could now be seen as sowing the seeds of our own demise. When the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH) enters the market looking to buy water for the environment from the consumptive pool, it is only natural that it would go to a market where reliability of supply is high.

For this reason, we have seen the CEWH target the GMID and extract enormous quantities of water from the consumptive pool. The CEWH ceased water buybacks in December 2012 as a condition of the Murray Darling Basin Plan being approved. Water transfer since December 2012 has been from agriculture to agriculture.

Goulburn-Murray Water (G-MW) now delivers approximately 1000GL of water per annum. This is down on about 1700GL that it delivered a decade ago. While G-MW has undertaken significant work to reduce its footprint and attempt to reduce its operating costs, G-MW has not been able to halve operating costs. This means that the cost of irrigation water and the cost of running the GMID continues to increase on a per megalitre basis. Ultimately, this reduces the viability of irrigation farms that still operate in the GMID.

We should all be concerned when the viability of our economy is threatened.

The loss of water from the GMID cannot be attributed solely to the purchase of water for the environment. The high reliability of GMID water delivery has also been targeted by irrigators outside of the GMID as a good value proposition. Large quantities of water have been purchased and transferred to irrigators outside GMID. This has typically been the practice of high-value horticulturalists who can afford the premium for high reliability water out of the GMID.

Council calls for:

- Water buyback from the consumptive pool should not be resumed.
- An inquiry into the contribution made to environmental flows from water buybacks on a valley-by-valley basis, with the aim of equalising the amount taken from each catchment.
- *A statewide approach to addressing the issues caused by dewatered land (regardless of the cause of the dewatering).*

Supporting a healthy ecosystem

Substantial irrigation developments and increasing urbanisation of the Murray Darling Basin has meant that the water available for environmental use has been reduced substantially.

Construction of dams on many of the rivers and streams to capture water for irrigation purposes, and the release of that water timed to meet irrigation demands has seen a significant upheaval of the rivers' flow regimes, leading to significant environmental degradation in parts of the basin.

It should be said that flow regimes, even within the natural ecosystems, are continually changing. Throughout northern Victoria there are many examples of wetlands where change can be seen over the course of the past 200 years. The vegetation within and surrounding wetlands has changed from box trees to river red gum, which require significantly different wetting and drying regimes to box trees. This demonstrates that the ecosystem is not static.

That said, the impact of the regulation of rivers and streams within the Murray Darling Basin has had a significant impact on environmental values within the basin. The development of environmental watering plans is key to ensuring that the water that has been made available to the environment as part of the Murray Darling Basin Plan is used in a way that is most effective for the environment throughout the whole of the basin.

Council calls for:

- A public information campaign to educate the basin community on all aspects of Environmental Watering Plans.
- An inquiry into the effect of the delivery of environmental water on other entitlement holders.

Allowing for a range of recreational pursuits

The waters of the Murray Darling Basin provide recreational and tourism opportunities that are vital to local communities. Many communities along the banks of the rivers and their tributaries depend upon fishing, camping, canoeing, walking, riding and various other leisure pursuits that people enjoy on the water.

A number of these communities are also geared up for tourism, which is invariably seasonal and which depends on the river system being healthy. For example, tourism experienced along the Murray River during holiday periods like Easter and during summer depend on strong river flows. In recent times, poor stream management has seen blackwater events (and in the Darling system this has led to mass fish kill). This damages river health and the supported ecosystem, as well as tourism and, in turn, the health and wellbeing of communities along the streams.

The release of water for irrigation purposes can and does deliver environmental benefits as it makes its way downstream, and it can also deliver benefits for recreational pursuits and tourism.

There needs to be more local consultation in relation to the use of our rivers and streams for recreational pursuits and tourism, and this needs to be factored into the management of water delivery.

Council calls for:

- A mechanism to allow the needs of tourism operators to be heard and considered by water system managers and regulators.

Supporting the many urban communities within the basin

Urban communities depend heavily on plentiful supplies of water for human consumption, and to support parks and gardens, playing surfaces and privately owned residential gardens, all of which contribute to the health and wellbeing of our communities.

In recent years we have observed stressed river systems suffering from declining environmental health and water quality, water rationing and a reduction in water quality. This has had significant impacts on the desirability of some urban locations within the basin. It is imperative that the Murray Darling Basin is managed in a way that never jeopardises the availability and the quality of water that supports our urban communities.

Urban communities within the basin are integral. Most people living within the Murray Darling Basin live in urban environments. Much of the debate on how to manage the basin is focused on irrigation and the environment, often to the exclusion of the importance of the urban communities that also depend on the basin's resources.

Within the hierarchy of water resource allocation in all states there are precedents for the supply of water for human consumption. In times of scarcity, rationing is applied to ensure that urban communities minimise their water consumption and that this consumption is pulled down to human needs above recreational and amenity values. This should be supported and maintained.

Council calls for:

- The implementation of environmental watering plans that also ensure that water quality is protected for urban communities.

2. Swan Hill Rural City Council wants to ensure that Basin Plan implementation contributes to the health, prosperity and strength of our communities. We believe:

There is insufficient consideration of the socio-economic impacts of the plan on basin communities

The removal of water from irrigation inevitably leads to a reduction in the region's irrigated agricultural outputs and reduces overall wealth of communities. As discussed earlier, the CEWH has targeted the GMID, removing a large volume of water from the district. It is predicted that, if buybacks are allowed to resume, this will eventually lead to the collapse of more vulnerable communities within the GMID, and perhaps to the collapse of some agricultural sectors such as dairying. These communities will undergo significant restructure and hardship as populations decline and the viability of services like health, education and police is jeopardised. Decreasing populations also negatively impact on a community's capacity for volunteerism and recreational pursuits.

In the past year, both sides of Federal politics have threatened to re-enter the water market. But there is a feeling that decision-makers are far removed from the basin and fail to fully grasp the impact on individual communities.

The recent Royal Commission by the South Australian Government called on more water to be provided to the environment, equal to the entire remaining consumption of the GMID. Such findings demonstrate a lack of understanding by decision-makers and some commentators.

This position paper started out discussing the need for balanced outcomes and no one doubts that prior to the implementation of the Murray Darling Basin plan, additional water was required for the environment. But, obtaining this water needs to be done in such a way so as to not jeopardise the communities still living in the Murray Darling Basin.

The Basin Plan has been in its implementation phase for five years, and communities are still calling for an improved understanding of the socio-economic impacts of the removal of water for environmental purposes. There is little evidence that enough work has been done in this area and without an adequate understanding of the socio-economic impacts, it is unlikely that government policy will be developed to assist these communities. This must occur if we are to see an equitable implementation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

Water becoming a tradable commodity has caused hardship to some communities and benefit to others. The economics of the free market system have driven water from use on lower value crops to higher value crops. Communities like Swan Hill, Woorinen and Robinvale are flourishing as a result. While some choose to blame the Basin Plan, this is not entirely accurate. The unbundling of water from land, which occurred prior to the Basin Plan, has allowed this trade to occur.

Council calls for:

- The Commonwealth Government to research and report on the socio-economic impacts of the Basin Plan's implementation on basin communities.
- Policy to be developed and implemented to assist communities that are negatively impacted by the Basin Plan's implementation and the unbundling of water.
- Financial support for communities negatively impacted by the implementation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

Buyback practices are threatening communities and the GMID's financial viability

The indiscriminate purchase of water and targeting irrigation systems to obtain water from the consumptive pool for the environment will continue to have significant negative impact on communities unless there is change.

The GMID has been significantly reduced and now delivers only 1000GL per annum compared to 1700GL only 10 years ago. GMID's operating costs have not reduced in line with this, and so the per megalitre cost of water is now significantly higher in real terms than it was 10 years ago. This threatens the viability of lower value crops and will in time threaten the viability of individual farming enterprises, whole industries and the entire GMID system.

Only a small part of the Swan Hill Rural City Council community is supplied by the GMID but there will no doubt be a knock-on effect to our community.

The indiscriminate buyback of water has also drastically reduced populations in a number of small communities in northern Victoria. The buyback program started on the back of the millenium drought. Individual farming operations were carrying higher debt due to drought, and a number chose (or were forced to) to sell their water entitlements. Those enterprises now rely on temporary water on an annual basis to grow their crops and feed. This water comes at a substantially higher price and reduces overall viability to the point where many in the lamb, beef and dairy sector have exited.

Those who have exited are typically family farming operations and so our community is losing families as well. We have seen in some smaller communities a general winding down of the population, community activity and viability.

While the CEWH's practice of purchasing water from the consumptive pool is the most price efficient method for the Federal Government, it has caused significant damage to many communities in northern Victoria. Council does not support a return of buybacks in any form.

Council calls for:

- Water buyback from the consumptive pool should not be resumed.

The accumulation of environmental water is disrupting irrigation delivery.

Environmental water is held within the dams and storages across the Murray Darling Basin in the same way that any other entitlement holder stores water. Concerns have been expressed about the inequity of storing environmental water in the system storages, but these are largely based on an incorrect premise that the Federal Government has the right to store its environmental water free of charge.

Water purchased from the consumptive pool but held in storage is subject to the same rules and costs as irrigators - the same spill rules apply, the same storage fees are charged.

Environmental water is generally not delivered through the irrigation channel system, however, and so delivery shares and delivery charges are not born by the environmental water holder. If they were to use irrigation systems for any component of their water delivery, they too would pay, in turn supporting the irrigation system's financial viability.

The real impact of storing environmental water in the system storages is that it generally reduces the amount of water available to be stored for irrigation, increasing the likelihood of a spill, and decreasing the ability of individual irrigators to carry over water for future years.

Environmental water holders typically wish to build up large volumes of water and release them when they will have the most environmental benefit.

When they occur, spills do contribute to environmental outcomes. There is an argument that environmental water allocations should be reduced following a spill event as the environment has had its benefit. This would allow for additional storage volumes for irrigation in the year following a spill, ie. a wet year.

Council calls for:

- An inquiry into the effect of the delivery of environmental water on other entitlements holders

Environmental flows cannot be delivered because physical constraints in the system have not been dealt with

The environmental water holder now holds so much water in the Murray system that it is not possible to deliver all that water without causing significant man-made flooding.

The Barmah choke restricts the amount of water that can be delivered downstream of Barmah forest to a flow of 8600 ML per day. River operators report that with the water demands of high-value horticulture in the Riverland and Sunraysia, plus the demand for environmental flows to South Australia, the river system is operating at its limit.

There are concerns that in times of high demand (like extended periods of hot weather) that it will not be possible to deliver adequate water beyond the Barmah choke.

The Murray Darling Basin Plan was predicated on the assumption that significant environmental water would come to South Australia from the Darling system, but in practice, we are seeing the Murray doing all the heavy lifting. This, if not remedied, will cause environmental degradation to the banks and waterways of the Murray River. It will also cause significant economic losses to some of our high-value horticulture businesses, who will not be able to have water delivered during times of high demand.

Council calls for:

- Constraints management to be implemented as a matter of urgency.
- Water held for environmental purposes that cannot be delivered due to system constraints to be put on the market for irrigation.
- Revenues from the sale of environmental water to be used for implementing constraints solutions and improving river health.
- The mandating of environmental flows in the Murrumbidgee, Darling, Wakool and other tributaries to deliver environmental benefits where constraints cannot be effectively dealt with.

The effectiveness of environmental water use is questionable

There has been little reporting available to the public about environmental benefits being achieved through the use of environmental flows. Our community is demanding detail on the environmental benefits derived from the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

We have seen some high profile, disastrous environmental outcomes with blackwater events and fish kills, and reports of extended high river levels causing bank erosion, loss of vegetation and disruption to fish habitat.

There does not appear to be great transparency in how decisions are made for the provision of environmental flows. Council believes that much could be gained by providing localised input into the decision-making on the use of environmental flows.

Council accepts that decision-making in relation to environmental flows is particularly complicated and community consultation would be a difficult exercise, but that doesn't mean it is not necessary.

Our community wishes to have input into and get an understanding of how environmental water is used and would like to see reporting on the benefits that are coming from these environmental flows.

Council calls for:

- An inquiry into the effect of the delivery of environmental water on other entitlements holders
- A public information campaign to educate the basin community on all aspects of the Environmental Watering Plans.

3. Swan Hill Rural City Council wants equity for all basin communities. We want:

Greater transparency in the water market

Water has been scarce in the southern basin in recent times. This has resulted in higher temporary and permanent water prices, with significant trading activity. Irrigators feel at a disadvantage due to a significant lack of information in the market and an inability to find out whether individuals own water and how much.

There are suspicions around so-called water barons purchasing and hoarding water, and driving up the price.

Water and land were unbundled in 2007. This unbundling was intended to allow water to be traded as a commodity and to go to its highest value and best use. Many irrigators have taken advantage of this, and many entrepreneurial and horticultural developments have been made possible only through the trading of water.

Council calls for:

- All State and Federal politicians to publicly declare their water holdings.
- A published list of the top 20 water holders in each irrigation system.
- An inquiry into transparency in the water market.

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to ensure that all states and their agencies do their fair share of reform

There is plenty of evidence that Victoria has led the way in implementing the reform measures necessary to see the Murray Darling Basin Plan implemented. Victoria has contributed far more water to the environmental pool through buybacks than any other state.

Victoria has achieved significant savings by piping the previously channelised domestic and stock systems.

Victoria has modernised the GMID channel system through the Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP).

Victoria has implemented a very broad scale on-farm modernisation system aimed at saving water and returning the savings to the environment.

Our community should be concerned that Victoria appears to do the heavy lifting. While other states lag behind, the heavy lifting comes at significant economic cost and a loss of prosperity for our communities.

It's incumbent upon COAG to ensure that all states do their fair share of reform and that they do it in a timely way, so that those who are trying to do the right thing aren't unfairly disadvantaged.

Council calls for:

- A basin-wide audit of each state's compliance with its obligations under the Murray Darling Basin Plan, and this would be publicly reported. Its recommendations should be implemented by COAG.

Our community to be informed on the use of environmental water and the effectiveness of environmental watering programs

There is very little information around about the decision-making processes that lead to the release of environmental flows. There is also very little reporting on the effectiveness of these environmental watering programs.

While much of the debate during the plan's development focussed on the Lower Lakes, including Lake Alexandria, the Coorong and the Murray mouth, it is important that the whole of the basin receives benefits from environmental watering.

There appears to be a focus on ensuring that the Murray flows to the sea at all times, despite there being evidence that historically this was not the case.

What's important is that all communities, all ecosystems and all regions of the Murray Darling Basin receive a fair slice of the environmental benefits that come from the implementation of the plan, and that the community is informed at all times.

Council calls for:

- A public information campaign to educate the basin community on all aspects of the Environmental Watering Plans.

Regulation in the Murray delivery system to guard investment in high value horticulture against the indiscriminant issuing of licenses within an already strained system

The past 20 years have seen significant investment in permanent horticultural plantings. These plantings are high value crops and can afford the cost of water, even when the price is high. Permanent plantings must have water to survive and thrive. If water is not available upon demand, yields can be severely reduced and plants can die, resulting in economic loss.

With a significant increase in proposed plantings along the Murray from Swan Hill to Mildura on both sides of the river, there is a real fear among established horticulturalists that the Murray River delivery system will be strained beyond its capacity. Constraints in delivery might mean that water rationing is necessary. It is unreasonable to issue additional extraction licenses if it could jeopardise the health of existing investments.

The Victorian Water Minister recently called in all new water extraction licenses on the Murray system downstream of the Barmah Choke. Council supports this and calls on the NSW Water Minister to take similar action.

We seek a mechanism to ensure that all three states that abut the Murray downstream of the Barmah Choke act responsibly and in a way that promotes further development but not at the cost of existing horticulture.

Council calls for:

- Regulation of the Murray delivery system to guard against the indiscriminate issuing of licenses that could damage existing horticultural developments (until delivery constraints are dealt with).
- Compliance, metering and regulation to be uniformly implemented throughout the Murray Darling Basin.

Summary

Swan Hill Rural City Council calls for:

- Water buyback from the consumptive pool should not be resumed.
- An inquiry into the contribution made to environmental flows from water buybacks on a valley-by-valley basis, with the aim of equalising the amount taken from each catchment.
- A state-wide approach to addressing the issues caused by dewatered land (regardless of the cause of the dewatering).
- A public information campaign to educate the basin community on all aspects of Environmental Watering Plans.
- An inquiry into the effect of the delivery of environmental water on other entitlement holders.
- A mechanism to allow the needs of tourism operators to be heard and considered by water system managers and regulators.
- The implementation of environmental watering plans that also ensure that water quality is protected for urban communities.
- The Commonwealth Government to research and report on the socio-economic impacts of the Basin Plan's implementation on basin communities.
- Policy to be developed and implemented to assist communities that are negatively impacted by the Basin Plan's implementation and the unbundling of water.
- Financial support for communities negatively impacted by the implementation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan.
- Constraints management to be implemented as a matter of urgency.
- Water held for environmental purposes that cannot be delivered due to system constraints to be put on the market for irrigation.
- Revenues from the sale of environmental water to be used for implementing constraints solutions and improving river health.
- The mandating of environmental flows in the Murrumbidgee, Darling, Wakool and other tributaries to deliver environmental benefits where constraints on the Murray cannot be effectively dealt with.
- All State and Federal politicians to publicly decline their water holdings.
- A published list of the top 20 water holders in each irrigation system.
- An inquiry into transparency in the water market.
- A basin-wide audit of each state's compliance with its obligations under the Murray Darling Basin Plan, and this would be publicly reported. Its findings should be implemented by COAG.
- Regulation of the Murray delivery system to guard against the indiscriminate issuing of licenses that could damage existing horticultural developments (until delivery constraints are dealt with).
- Compliance, metering and regulation to be uniformly implemented throughout the Murray Darling Basin.

B.19.107 SMALL BUSINESS FRIENDLY COUNCIL CHARTER

Responsible Officer:	Director Development and Planning
File Number:	S12-22-23
Attachments:	1 Small Business Friendly Council Charter Agreement 2 Better Approvals overview 3 Australian Supplier Payment Code

Declarations of Interest:

Heather Green - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

This report recommends Council adopt the Small Business Friendly Council (SBFC) initiative by signing the charter and working in partnership with the Victorian Small Business Commission (VSBC) to achieve the commitments of the Charter within 12 months.

Discussion

The Small Business Friendly Council (SBFC) initiative has been developed by the Victorian Small Business Commission (VSBC) to encourage best practice in Victorian councils to support development of a fair and competitive trading environment for small business to prosper. By signing the Charter, Council and the VSBC agree to meet the following commitments within 12 months:

- Work with small business disrupted by infrastructure projects
- Support the creation of small business networks across Victoria
- Faster permit approval processes for small business
- Prompt payment to small business
- Easy to read, easy to understand information for small businesses
- Open channels of communication between the VSBC and local councils

By signing the Charter, Council is demonstrating that the Swan Hill municipality is striving for best practice in serving the business community.

In May 2019, SBFC was launched to initiate a partnership between local councils and the VSBC to ensure small businesses receive the support they need to run their businesses. Since the launch of the initiative, fifteen Victorian councils including rural and metropolitan councils have signed the Charter indicating a pledge to achieve best practice and making business aware of the resources available from the VSBC. The Charter clearly outlines the expectations from both the VSBC and Council.

Benefits of signing the Charter:

- It recognises Council's commitment to servicing the business community

- Identifies areas of improvement within Council procedures
- Builds Council's relationship with the VSBC
- May provide support for future funding applications when citing Council has signed the Charter

Charter requirements align with current work being undertaken by Council. Signing of the Charter will support continuance or initiate commencement of Council activities in the following areas:

1. Work with small business disrupted by infrastructure project:

Refer to the VSBC's Small Business Engagement Guidelines when planning new works	Current practice
Provide small businesses with the VSBC's guide for small businesses on managing disruption	In progress

2. Support the creation of small business networks across Victoria:

Distribute the VSBC's guide to building stronger networks	Completed
Engage with small business networks and identify new opportunities for development	Current practice
Include representatives of associations in conversations concerning small business	Completed

3. Faster permit approvals processes for small business:

Registering with the Better Approvals process	Commencing in January 2020
OR	
Implementing strategies to streamline permit approvals process for small business	

4. Prompt payment to small business:

Initiate processes to ensure correct invoices from small businesses are paid within 30 days	Current practice
Commit to signing up to the Australian Supplier Payment Code to pay small business within 30 days	Under investigation

5. Easy to read, easy to understand information for small businesses:

Provide a link to business resources available at www.business.gov.au	Completed
Provide the VSBC Retail Lease Checklist to prospective tenants	In progress
Identify opportunities for the development of new resources for business	Current practice

6. Open channels of communication between the VSBC and local councils:

Notify the VSBC of issues affecting local small business communities	Current practice
Refer commercial disputes to the VSBC dispute resolution team as appropriate	Current practice
Provide details of the VSBC's dispute resolution service on Council's website	In progress

Consultation

To introduce the commitments within the Charter, internal consultation has taken place with the following departments:

- Corporate Services (Finance, Information Technology)
- Infrastructure (Capital and Engineering Projects)
- Development
- Public Health and Regulatory Services
- Economic and Community Development

Consultation in some instances will be a courtesy contact as departments are already working to achieve the best practice outcomes as identified within the Charter. The Charter was also presented to all Directors on 26 August 2019. The current Development Group consisting of staff from across these departments has been identified as the mechanism for achieving some commitments to be addressed, as the Charter aligns with the purpose of this group.

Financial Implications

Not applicable.

Social Implications

Not applicable.

Economic Implications

Economic benefits are anticipated for both Council, local business and potential new investors.

Environmental Implications

Not applicable.

Risk Management Implications

The initiative aligns with the intended best practice of Council services to small businesses. Failing to adhere to the principles outlined with the Charter could lead to the perception of Council not reaching the benchmark set by other Victorian councils and not being business friendly.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Economic growth - Encourage and attract new business to our region.

Options

- 1. Adopt the Small Business Friendly Council Charter**
- 2. Does not adopt the Small Business Friendly Council Charter**

Recommendation

That Council adopt the Small Business Friendly Council charter as attached.



Charter Agreement

Introduction

This Charter is a commitment between your council and the Victorian Small Business Commission (VSBC) to work together to create a fair and competitive trading environment for Victorian small businesses. It also tells you what you can expect as a business owner from your local council and the VSBC. By signing the charter, the VSBC and local councils agree to meet these commitments within 12 months.

Commitments and what you can expect from us

Part 1 | Work with small businesses disrupted by infrastructure projects

The VSBC will:

- a. provide councils with VSBC resources for managing the impacts of disruption
- b. provide dispute resolution services in relevant matters
- c. advocate on behalf of small businesses with authorities who undertake major works
- d. work collaboratively with council to develop practical initiatives that benefit small businesses

Your council will:

- a. refer to the VSBC's Small Business Engagement Guidelines when planning new works and request that external project managers do the same
- b. provide small businesses with the VSBC's guide for small businesses on Managing Disruption

Part 2 | Support the creation of small business networks across Victoria

The VSBC and your council will:

- a. distribute the VSBC's guide to building Stronger Networks
- b. actively engage with small business networks and identify new opportunities for development
- c. include representatives of associations in conversations concerning small businesses

Part 3 | Faster permit approvals processes for small businesses

Your council will:

- a. work towards faster permit approvals for new small businesses. This may mean:
 - i. registering with the Better Approvals Project and completing this as scheduled; or
 - ii. implementing strategies to streamline permit approvals processes for small businesses

Part 4 | Prompt payment to small businesses

The VSBC will:

- a. raise awareness of the Australian Supplier Payment Code¹ across Victoria to ensure your business is paid within 30 days of issuing an invoice

Your council will:

- a. initiate processes to ensure invoices from small businesses are paid promptly; or
- b. commit to signing up to the Australian Supplier Payment Code to pay small businesses within 30 days

Part 5 | Easy to read, easy to understand information for Victorian small businesses

The VBSC will:

- a. liaise with Small Business Victoria on the development of new resources for your business and communicate requests from your council about what is needed
- b. refer your council to new resources as they are made available

Your council will:

- a. link your business with the resources available at business.vic.gov.au
- b. provide the VSBC [Retail Lease Checklist](#) to prospective tenants

Both parties will:

- a. identify opportunities for the development of new resources for your business

Part 6 | Open channels of communication between the VSBC and local councils

The VSBC will:

- a. advocate on behalf of small business when your council notifies VSBC of key issues of concern
- b. work with relevant agencies to progress matters of concern to local councils and small businesses

Your council will:

- a. notify the VSBC of issues affecting local small business communities
- b. refer commercial disputes to the VSBC dispute resolution team as appropriate
- c. provide details of the VSBC's dispute resolution services on its website

¹ Further information on the Australian Supplier Payment Code can be found on the website of the Business Council of Australia | www.bca.com.au

Additional commitments

Promotion of Initiative

The VSBC will:

- a. provide all participating councils with the Small Business Friendly Council Initiative logo to use in their own materials
- b. provide all participating councils with an animated video promoting the benefits of having a small business friendly council to Victorian small businesses
- c. share success stories and case studies from participating councils in the VSBC eNewsletter and on social media
- d. list all participating councils on the VSBC website

Your council will:

- a. utilise the Small Business Friendly Council Initiative and videos in relevant communications
- b. provide VSBC with case studies and success stories associated with the initiative

Quality assurance and review

The VSBC will:

- a. contact your council 12 months after signing the charter to assess their status on each commitment
- b. review feedback from your council about the value of the charter and modify it as appropriate after 12 months

Your council will:

- a. work towards fulfilling each commitment within the first 12 months of signing the charter
- b. work with the VSBC to amend the charter if required

Acceptance

On behalf of we agree to the terms outlined in this Charter and agree to implement the Small Business Friendly Council Initiative.

Name
Position
Signature

.....

Date / /

Name Judy O’Connell
Position Victorian Small Business Commissioner
Signature

.....

Date / /

Please provide the contact details for the CEO for your organisation, and the details of a contact person that we can use as matters for discussion arise.

	CEO	Point of contact
Name		
Position		
Phone		
Email		
Postal address		





Jobs, Precincts and Regions




An introduction to the Better Approvals Project



What is the purpose of this project?

The **Better Approvals Project** reduces the time it takes for a small business to get the regulatory permits they need. It also reduces the administrative burden on both business and councils.

How does the project work



The project brings together council staff, Small Business Victoria and design consultants who work together onsite at councils over a 6-week period.

Small businesses share their experience of the approvals process and reforms are designed with a strong focus on customer experience.




The result is a suite of reforms that streamlines council processes, puts the customer first and delivers value for Victoria's small business community.

What does council need to provide?

To participate in the project, council needs to:

-  have its executive management team's endorsement
-  form a project team made up of representatives from Economic Development, Planning, Environmental Health, Local Laws, Business Improvement and Communications, Customer Service or IT who will be available for two days a week for a six-week period.

The reforms to be implemented during the project are:

	Introduce a business concierge model
	Introduce a single application process
	Concurrent processing of applications
	Simplify footpath trading and events

The reforms have had an immediate impact. As a result of participating in the Better Approvals project, small businesses have:

	opened faster	saved money	reduced stress
			

For more information about the project contact:

Corey Limon-Durand, Senior Project Relationship Manager

T: 03 9651 9461 | M: 0437 469 237
E: corey.limon-durand@ecodev.vic.gov.au



Australian supplier payment

CODE

supplierpaymentcode.org.au



Australia needs competitive businesses with healthy cash flows to grow our economy and future prosperity.

For small businesses particularly, prompt and on-time payment is crucial. A reliable cash flow and working capital enhances a business's ability to grow, create jobs and plan for the future. The stress and uncertainty of lengthy or late payments can take a direct personal toll on employees, direct owners and shareholders.

No business exists in isolation. We believe everyone – including larger purchasing businesses, governments and the communities in which employees and business owners live – benefits when we have a viable and productive small business supplier base.

The ***Australian supplier payment code*** is a voluntary, industry-led initiative to enshrine the importance of prompt and on-time payment for suppliers through a set of best practice standards.

The performance of the Code will be subject to regular independent review.

THE CODE

Signatories to the Code commit to the following payment policies and practices:

PROMPT AND ON-TIME PAYMENT

1 Pay eligible Australian small business suppliers within **30 days** of receipt of a correct invoice or receipt of a correct product from the supplier (whichever is the later), or on mutually agreed terms, or on terms that are consistent with a standard industry practice.¹ (Signatories can choose to pay within shorter timeframes.)

2 Pay suppliers on-time, following receipt of a correct invoice and receipt of a correct product.

WORKING WITH SUPPLIERS

3 Provide clear guidance to suppliers about the signatory's payment procedures.

4 Work with supplier businesses, where practicable, to apply technologies and practices that will improve the efficiency and accuracy of invoicing and payment processes (*eg online portals, electronic invoicing, Electronic Funds Transfer, payment cards, etc*).

COMPLIANCE

5 Put in place clear, fair and efficient processes for dealing with complaints and disputes about payment times and practices (*eg create a point of contact, issue clear procedural guidelines, set timeframes for the investigation and response, report on actions taken*).

6 Publish a set of policies and practices that give effect to the signatory's commitments under the Code on the signatory's website.

ELIGIBILITY

Any business or government entity operating in Australia can be a signatory to the Code.

The definition of a small business is to be determined by the signatory. Signatories can adopt the following criteria:

- ☒ an Australian business with annual turnover up to \$10 million (*exceptions may be applied for supplier businesses that are part of a consolidated group of companies*); **OR**
- ☒ an Australian business that supplies goods and services to the signatory up to a maximum annual level of expenditure. The maximum annual level of expenditure is to be set by the signatory and must be published. (*Exceptions may be applied for supplier businesses with annual turnover greater than \$10 million or supplier businesses that are part of a consolidated group of companies.*)

The definition of a small business adopted by the signatory must be consistently applied to all small business suppliers.

A signatory commits to apply the Code to its small business suppliers where it is able to verify their eligibility.

Companies will use best endeavours to ensure all eligible suppliers are paid in accordance with the Code.

PUBLICATION OF THE CODE AND SIGNATORIES

The ***Australian supplier payment code***, a list of current signatories and additional guidance materials are available at:
www.supplierpaymentcode.org.au

Signatories will publish their payment policies and practices in plain English and enforce their own compliance with the obligations in the Code. Any additional reporting on payment time performance is optional.

Signatories will have 6 months from date of signing to work towards full compliance with the Code. Longer implementation periods may be permitted if a signatory can demonstrate exceptional circumstances due to the complexity and size of their supply chain or payment systems.

1 The 'mutually agreed terms' and 'standard industry practice' exemptions should only apply in exceptional circumstances.

'Mutually agreed terms' reflect an arrangement where both parties agree it is in their mutual interest to apply payment terms longer than 30 days. Mutually agreed terms should be consistent with the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman's position that "longer terms could be agreed providing not grossly unfair to one party".

The application of exemptions for 'mutually agreed terms' or a 'standard industry practice' is subject to a 'good faith and fair dealings' requirement to ensure that suppliers are afforded both fairness of process (good faith) and fairness in outcomes (fair dealings). The Food and Grocery Code, currently before government, is expected to provide a detailed framework for applying the good faith and fair dealings provision. Once finalised, it is anticipated that this framework will be incorporated in this Code.

To recognise standard industry practice in the construction sector, if the payment relates to construction work or related goods and services, the relevant payment period is 45 days of receipt of a correct invoice.



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In partnership with



B.19.108 MURRAY REGIONAL TOURISM BOARD – ONE YEAR EXTENSION OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Responsible Officer: Director Development and Planning
File Number: S12-22-03
Attachments:
1 Victorian Regional Tourism Review 2019
Murray Regional Tourism Submission Final
2 Final 2017-2029 LGA MOU

Declarations of Interest:

Heather Green - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

This report recommends that Council approves a one year extension to the funding agreement with Murray Regional Tourism Board.

Discussion

The Murray Regional Tourism Board (MRT) was formed in 2010 to establish an overarching organisation to contribute to the development and growth of tourism in the Murray region.

MRT is a cross- border organisation and is made up of the following partner Councils:

NSW Local Government Partners	Victorian Local Government Partners
Albury	Wodonga
Greater Hume	Moira
Federation	Campaspe
Berrigan	Gannawarra
Edward River	Swan Hill
Murray River	Mildura
Wentworth	

Since 2010 the MRT model has proved highly effective for improving tourism visitation within the Murray region. Supported by investments from NSW and Victorian State governments, local government, and industry, the MRT cross-border model has delivered:

- Reversal of a 10-year decline in visitation which existed prior to the establishment of MRT and the cross-border model
- Increased total visitation by 42 per cent since inception, from 4.5 million visitors to 6.4 million visitors

- Increased total nights by 31.5 per cent since inception, from 7.6 million to 9.6 million
- Increased total direct expenditure by 86 per cent, from \$1 billion to \$1.9 billion
- Increased direct and indirect expenditure by 26 per cent from \$2.43 billion to \$3 billion
- Generated an additional \$372 million in expenditure on tourism-related projects between 2012-2017, which enhance visitor experience and appeal
- Added an additional 4,569 tourism related jobs (direct and indirect) across the region
- Record visitation to the Murray region across all measures, Domestic Overnight, Domestic Day Visitors and International as evident from Tourism Research Australia NVS/IVS reports 2019

All existing Council partners have three-year funding agreements with MRT. These agreements run from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2020. As per clause 9.2 of the agreement, negotiations to renew or renegotiate the agreement must be completed by 31 December 2019.

At MRT's August Board meeting, the Board resolved to approach all member Councils and seek a one-year extension to the current funding agreement. This decision and request was made on the basis of the following:

- In Victoria the Regional Tourism Review is underway. Outcomes from this review aren't expected to be known until 2020 and the outcomes from this review may alter the approach to regional tourism in Victoria and as a result impact on MRT
- In NSW MRT is currently renegotiating a three to four year funding agreement with the State Government. Outcomes from this negotiation may also impact on the operations of MRT

As a result of these two factors MRT has resolved to seek the support of each partner Council to extend the current funding agreement by one year. It is expected that this extension will allow the work being undertaken in Victoria and NSW to be completed and for MRT and all Councils to have a clear picture of the regional tourism environment going forwards.

A one year extension would result in a roll-over of the current funding agreement until 30 June 2021 and require MRT to complete negotiations with all member Councils on a longer term funding agreement by 31 December 2020.

Consultation

At MRT's August Board meeting, the Board resolved to approach all member Councils and seek a one-year extension to the current funding agreement.

Financial Implications

It is proposed that the funding agreement document would remain the same and all clauses and conditions would still apply. Each Council's financial contribution would be calculated as per the current agreement and there would be a 2% increase on the 2019/20 figure.

PARTNER COUNCIL	2017-2018 \$	2018-2019 \$	2019-2020 \$	Visitors ('000) 3yr Avg (YE Dec 2009-12)
Swan Hill Rural City Council	24,738	25,232	25,737	594

Social Implications

The cross-border approach to tourism in the Murray region has been highly effective. Entering into a one-year agreement with MRT allows this good work to continue whilst also protecting Council's interests. This extension provides Council with flexibility to review and understand the outcomes from work currently being undertaken by the State Governments in both Victoria and NSW.

Economic Implications

It is expected that activities supported by Murray Regional Tourism will increase external awareness of the Swan Hill region leading to higher levels of visitation and potential attraction of new residents.

Environmental Implications

Not applicable.

Risk Management Implications

Not applicable.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Economic growth - Assist existing businesses to expand and increase their efficiency.

Options That Council

1. Approve the one year extension from July 1 2020 to 30 July 2021 to the funding agreement with Murray Regional Tourism Board.
2. Does not approve the one year extension from July 1 2020 to 30 July 2021 to the funding agreement with Murray Regional Tourism Board.

Recommendations

That Council approve the one year extension from July 1 2020 to 30 July 2021 to the funding agreement with Murray Regional Tourism Board.



Regional Tourism Review
August 2019

Submission from

Murray Regional Tourism



Murray Regional Tourism (MRT) commends the Andrews Labor Government's review program which aims to enable improved outcomes for tourism and regional communities along with seeking to find new ways to grow tourism and support regional Victoria.

MRT welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Victorian Government's Regional Tourism Review 2019 and we believe the real opportunity to grow Victoria's visitor economy will be through growing the regional tourism contribution given the opportunity for growth in Melbourne is limited by capacity constraints.

As a prelude to addressing the specific themes and recommendations of the review, we would make the following points:

1. As referenced in the Discussion Paper, regional tourism spend in Victoria is currently less than competitor states and has potential to grow.

<p style="text-align: center;">Victoria 36 cents of every tourism dollar is spent in regional areas</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Competitor States 43 cents of every tourism dollar is spent in regional areas</p>
---	--

If Victoria could increase from 36 cents to 43 cents it would generate an **additional \$3.8 billion dollars** in Regional Victoria based on 2018 expenditure.

2. 25% of Victoria's population live in Regional Victoria yet Regional Victoria receives proportionately less funding. This must change if there is to be a significant change in tourism.

3. The Regional Tourism Board model works in the Murray Region.

<p style="text-align: center;">Tourism in the Murray 2000 to 2010 (Pre RTB) - 11.5% Decline in total visitation to region Limited investment in product or experiences</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Tourism in the Murray 2011 to 2019 (Post MRT) + 42% Growth in total visitation to region Over \$370 million invested in product and experiences</p>
--	--

MRT was established in 2011 under a new approach to regional tourism and has delivered a well-coordinated strategic approach including strong long-term plans and growth targets resulting in the following:

- Reversal of a 10-year decline in visitation which existed prior to the establishment of MRT and the cross-border model
- Increased total visitation by 42 per cent since inception, from 4.5 million visitors to 6.4 million visitors
- Increased total nights by 31.5 per cent since inception, from 7.6 million to 9.6 million
- Increased total direct expenditure by 86 per cent, from \$1 billion to \$1.9 billion
- Increased direct and indirect expenditure by 26% from \$2.43 billion to \$3 billion
- Generated an additional \$372 million in expenditure on tourism-related projects between 2012-2017, which enhance visitor experience and appeal
- Added an additional 4,569 tourism related jobs (direct and indirect) across the region with the visitor economy now accounting for 1 in every 5 jobs within the Murray region.
- Record visitation to the Murray region across all measures, Domestic Overnight, Domestic Day Visitors and International as evident from Tourism Research Australia NVS/IVS reports 2019 (see Tables 1 and 2 in the report).

As evidenced from these results, the visitor economy is a vital component of the region's economy, and a key driver for growth. However, there is still latent capacity within the region and we need to increase both visitor numbers and yield, across the region and throughout the calendar year. With enhanced resourcing of MRT, the Murray's visitor economy would deliver even greater benefits to the state's economy.

MRT urges the government to adopt the following critical priority recommendations in order to deliver on the plan to improve regional tourism and ensure Victoria remains competitive within the Australian economic context.

MRT Recommendations

- 1. Retain the Regional Tourism Board (RTB) structure of MRT**
- 2. Provide security of tenure, and an increase in long term investment and resourcing for Regional Tourism Boards**
Our closest competitor in NSW invests over \$1 million directly into each of their Destination Networks (equivalent to Victoria's RTB organisations) per annum with long term agreements in place.
- 3. With 36 per cent of Victorian tourism dollars spent in the regions and 25 per cent of Victoria's population living in regional Victoria we recommend, from a whole of government perspective, the dedication of 25 per cent of all government expenditure and resourcing to regional Victoria.**
We believe this collective approach would deliver significant advantage to the regional economy and ensure the state's broader objectives are delivered upon.
- 4. The state government invests in the total cost of regional structures such as RTBs and strategic tourism development initiatives.**
In order to achieve the desired outcome by the state for greater collaboration and increased investment by local government, we recommend the state fund the cost of the RTBs. The local government investment would then be directed for example towards implementation of projects and campaigns which provide greater localised benefit. This would simplify the current complex structure and increase the likelihood of increased long-term investment by local government.
- 5. Develop a dedicated, 5-year regional tourism plan and funding for regional Victoria, which aligns whole of government regional and state priorities; is adequately resourced; and contains clear measurements and targets for the government and industry to collectively aspire.**
- 6. Allocation of quarantined event funding for regions. The distribution of these funds locally is managed by the board structure.**

These six key strategic recommendations, if adopted by government, will fundamentally change the regional visitor economy and provide the positive shift required to ensure the desired contribution to states economy is achieved.

In addition to these six primary recommendations, through our extensive consultation with Local Government and Industry on the review, MRT has identified a series of additional more detailed measures addressing the specific questions in Regional Tourism Review Discussion Paper July 2019.

We are pleased to provide the following submission which outlines the key findings and further expands and strengthens the proposed recommended approach.

Background

Murray Regional Tourism (MRT) is a cross-border regional tourism board servicing a wide tourism region covering both sides of the Murray River, which forms the majority of the Victorian-NSW border (Fig. 1 below). It provides an overarching strategic plan, destination management plan and marketing plan for the visitor economy in the region, with the aim of making the Murray a must-visit destination for domestic and international visitors alike.

MRT was established in November 2010, creating for the first time an organisational structure which enabled two state governments and 13 local governments to work collaboratively to grow the visitor economy in a holistic manner, with funding from both levels of government.

The cross-border nature of MRT and its funding arrangements are both complex and unique.

The Murray region covers the following Local Government areas (LGAs):

NSW LGAs	Victorian LGAs
Albury	Wodonga
Greater Hume	Moira
Federation	Campaspe
Berrigan	Gannawarra
Edward River	Swan Hill
Murray River	Mildura
Wentworth	

Table 1: Local Government Areas within the Murray Regional Tourism area

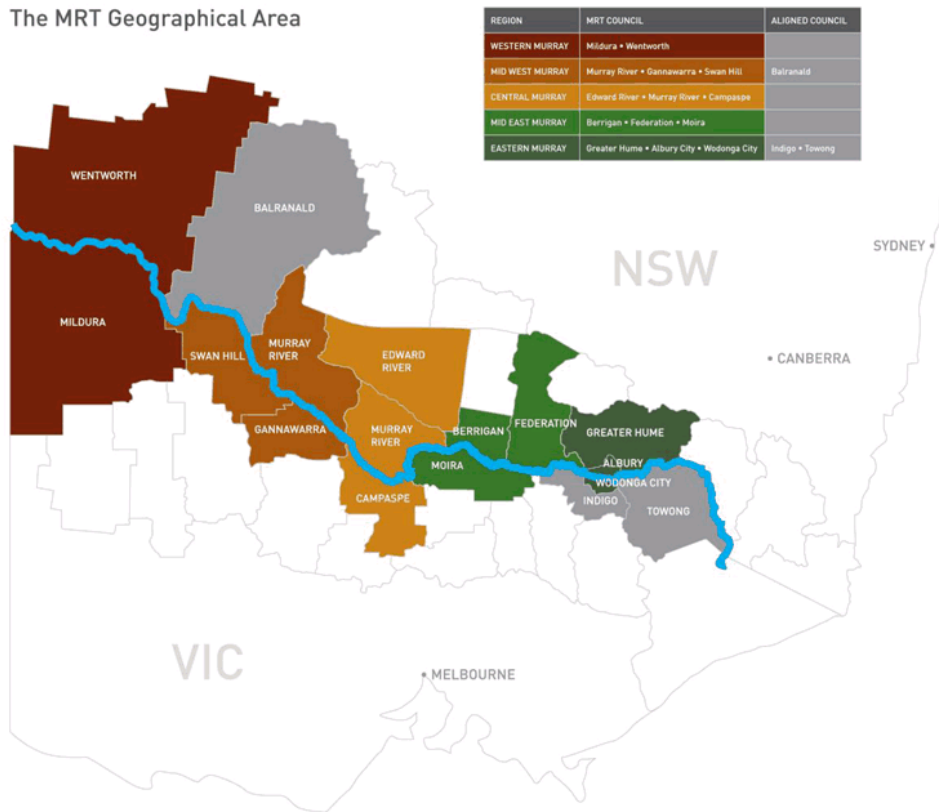


Figure 1: Map of the region covered and serviced by Murray Regional Tourism

The organisation's operational structure is a company limited by guarantee, a requirement of the dual state operating environment. This necessarily increases the governance and compliance burden of MRT. Despite the administrative complexities MRT has not only been able to arrest an alarming decline in visitation; it has also achieved remarkable success in growing visitation and economic contribution across the region. This has been done through energetic, cohesive leadership and collaboration, and by improving the supply and quality of tourism experiences, and increasing awareness of destinations, products, experiences and events within the region.

Despite the strong results shown in Tables 1 and 2 below, there is still plenty of untapped potential across the Murray region's visitor economy. A better resourced MRT could build on the current model to address major strategic issues, investment attraction opportunities, and industry capacity through skills development and product development to meet key supply and demand gaps.

Measure	YE Dec 2000	YE Dec 2010	% Change
Total visitation to Murray Region	5.2 million	4.6 million	-11.5%
Overnight Visitors	2.7 million	2.3 million	-15%
Daytrip Visitors	2.4 million	2.3 million	-4%
International Visitors	62,000	46,000	-26%

Source: Tourism Research Australia National Visitor Survey

Table 2: Visitation Tracking Data for the Murray Region prior to formation of Murray Regional Tourism, 2000-2010

Measure	YE Dec 11	YE March 19	% Change
Total visitation to Murray Region	4.5 million	6.4 million	+42%
Total Nights	7.6 million	10 million	+31.5%
Total Expenditure	\$1.02 billion	\$1.9 billion	+86%
Domestic Overnight Visitors	2.1 million	2.9 million	+38%
Domestic Overnight Nights	6.5 million	8.5 million	+30%
Domestic Overnight Expenditure	\$750 million	\$1.3 billion	+73%
Domestic Daytrip Visitors	2.4 million	3.5 million	+46%
Domestic Daytrip Expenditure	\$252 million	\$537 million	+113%
International Visitors	50,200	69,000	+39%
International Nights	1.1 million	1.5 million	+36%

Source: Tourism Research Australia NVS/IVS December 2011 and March 2019

Table 3: Visitation Tracking Data for the Murray Region since the formation of Murray Regional Tourism, 2011-2019

Realising the region's potential will also require investment in both infrastructure and marketing; policy and regulatory reform; and structural change in the industry that allows for greater flexibility to enable greater industry participation.

This review presents an excellent opportunity to build on MRT's strong track record as a successful and accomplished destination manager and industry leader. MRT believes that structural improvements to the management of Victoria's regional tourism (on both supply and demand sides) will lead to continued growth and strengthening of the visitor economy for the Murray region as a whole.

Acknowledgements

In preparing this submission MRT has consulted with over 110 individual industry and local government stakeholders across our region, from both Victoria and New South Wales. We would like to acknowledge and thank the diverse organisations for their contribution and participation and through the valuable insights a range of recommendations have been developed

At a high level the following key issues were identified as areas of focus if the Victorian government is to truly address the barriers impeding the regional visitor economy and ensure the sector can continue to be one of the top performing industries for regional Victoria.

The barriers which need to be addressed include:

1. Inadequate supply and quality of tourism experiences due to limited long term investment by both the public and private sector
2. Limited range and quality of the regions accommodation offer
3. Skills and capacity of our tourism industry
4. Limited awareness and appeal of our tourism experiences and destination
5. Fragmented investment by the tourism industry in the region
6. Lack of long term strategic focus and vision at all levels of government
7. Significant gaps in telecommunication infrastructure, both black spot and capacity in the region
8. Insufficient financial and human resources
9. Red tape across all levels of government
10. River Management and water reliability
11. Current awards and penalty rate structure
12. Community education on value and importance of tourism as a key driver of the economy

To further expand on the above, the following section of the submission provides further detail and recommended actions which could be implemented to address the barriers and opportunities identified.

Theme One: Strengthening our tourism offering

The long-term economic health of the Murray Region needs both vision and commitment that's longer than the four year cycle of state politics, for big infrastructure projects, employment generation, investment in education and skills building, and enhanced economic opportunities.

In particular, we will need to address the regions considerable supply side issues. The Victorian Government has a significant role to play from both a leadership and investment perspective. Our LGA stakeholder's consistently report an inability to secure investment in enabling infrastructure projects which drive both industry confidence in the region and often lead to private sector investment. Investment which is critical to growing the region's visitor economy.

To overcome these barriers we would ask the committee consider:

- Review current framework for Investment by government in key enabling infrastructure within the region aligned to our Destination Management Plan (DMP)
- Continue to provide funding opportunities to encourage private sector investment in regional areas
- Establish an investment team within the Victorian government for RTB's and investors to work with to connect investment with opportunities identified in regions DMP's
- Simplify the planning framework in Victoria to reduce time delays and associated barriers for investors
- Review of rate capping practice in Victoria which severely impacts our partners ability to raise capital for both new and recurrent funding of critical infrastructure projects

We believe the revised future strategy needs to create opportunities for further infrastructure investment and be expanded to fund feasibility studies which are critical to achieving funding for enabling key projects.

How can regions and communities leverage their natural assets?

Many businesses, services and products throughout the Murray region (whether these be in tourism, agriculture, or other sectors) are based around the region's largest natural asset – the iconic Murray River, which draws together a community of interest. The issue here is not a lack of leverage, but rather poor management and maintenance of the asset.

The health of the Murray River is critical not only to the natural environment and a broader system of waterways, but also to the operating environment of businesses across a wide range of industries.

The detrimental impacts of poor water policy and management are evident in the River itself, and keenly felt by tourism and event operators, who require reliable water levels in the Murray River in order to deliver their service or event.

We know from our annual industry survey conducted to assist us understand the health of the industry, water issues impact over half of the businesses within the region. These impacts relate to algae, drought, river heights and negative media publicity relating to water levels.

For example, a multi-day water-skiing event can only take place if the River height is at a certain level, and can confidently be predicted to remain at that level for the duration of the event.

In Yarrawonga, stakeholders noted that consistency in the water and river levels has direct impact on the visitor numbers of Lake Mulwala. If the river levels are low, visitors are forced to seek alternative activities.

Case Study: PS Pyap at Pioneer Settlement

The Pioneer Settlement in Swan Hill can host weddings, utilising its historic chapel and offering a unique experience of holding the reception on the paddlesteamer. At the moment the business cannot take wedding bookings because operating requires a certain water level, as does increased passenger capacity. Currently, water levels cannot be predicted due to continual changes in water flows and hence this severely impacts on the business.

Poor water management practices also jeopardise the feasibility of future products and services that are based on using the Murray River (such as the Murray River Adventure Trail), and will deter much needed investment.

While the Murray-Darling Basin Plan is clearly out of scope of this review, MRT urges the Victorian government, as part of the work of the [recently announced independent expert panel](#) to examine the deliverability of water in the Murray Darling Basin and consider the impacts of the current water management practices on tourism businesses in the Murray region.

Land management and access issues are a common theme throughout the Murray region, which covers numerous national parks, state forests, and riverside reserves, managed by a variety of land managers. Industry consultations revealed extensive red tape issues related to running an event on crown land. Tour operator licensing systems also differ between Victoria and New South Wales.

The inability to leverage natural assets such as national parks, due to restrictions on private development on public lands, is well-known and well-documented through other reviews, for example, the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission's 2010 study "Unlocking the Potential of Regional Tourism". Also well-documented is Tasmania's success at leveraging its national parks for tourism purposes, thanks to favourable policy settings led by the Tasmanian government.

In addition to the restrictions relating to development in parks, a further critical issue evident in the Murray region is the lack of resources and investment to maintain or enhance existing assets. There are many examples of tracks which are unsuitable for use due to lack of maintenance budgets, poor and aging infrastructure which does not provide a satisfactory visitor experience or provide encouragement for tour operators to develop product on park. This is a critical area which must be addressed if we are to leverage the natural assets within the region.

Case Study: Cohuna Caravan Park

This caravan park owner's plans to expand operations has been hindered due to a lack of power for additional caravan sites. The caravan park's energy supplier is unable to perform the necessary upgrades to its infrastructure, which is located on crown land, access to which has been unavailable due to red tape and bureaucracy. In the meantime, the caravan park operator has brought in their power generators to provide adequate power during peak times, at their own expense. Clearly, this is not a sustainable, long-term solution.

Where are the opportunities to partner with and support Traditional Owners and contemporary Aboriginal communities to develop tourism products?

Although Tourism Victoria produced "Victoria's Aboriginal Tourism: Development Strategy 2013-2023", Victoria is lacking in Indigenous tourism product. While this is also true of the Murray region, we have considerable potential to develop our Indigenous tourism offerings, thanks to the numerous Aboriginal communities located along the Murray. Indigenous tourism is particularly appealing to international markets, and the development of culturally sensitive and engaging Indigenous products and attractions would help to boost international visitation to the Murray region.

Industry consultations indicated a recognition of the lack of, and potential for, Indigenous product development in the region. They also highlighted the need to strengthen engagement with Indigenous communities and leaders, and the fact that as well as facing the same red tape challenges that the broader tourism sector experiences, Indigenous tourism operators and proponents may also face a form of "cultural red tape", if elders hold differing, or less supportive, views on tourism. Often the impediment to Aboriginal tourism development comes from within the community and elders who while understanding the opportunities tourism could generate are also conflicted or have higher priorities such as health, education which take precedent from a prioritization perspective.

We would also refer the review team to the Hume Aboriginal Cultural Trail strategy work we completed in partnership Tourism North East /Regional Development Victoria /Regional Development Australia which highlights challenges and opportunities in developing Aboriginal Tourism experiences in the Hume region.

Case Study: Dhanya Centre Barmah National Park

The Dhanya Centre in Barmah National Park is a real example of the challenges and barriers to the development of Aboriginal tourism experiences and product. The Dhanya Centre has sat idle for many years while government works through lease and management agreements for the Yorta Yorta to develop a tourism experience. We have worked with Yorta over several years to identify potential opportunities for Aboriginal tourism experiences on park and obtaining the lease on the Dhanya centre is pivotal to the development of these. Based on our understanding there has been two business cases developed for this project and as yet it has still not been resolved.

What role can share accommodation (such as Airbnb) play in regional communities?

Accommodation supply is an issue across most of regional Victoria. Existing accommodation stock tends to be old; renovations and refurbishments are costly, and reduce the number of rooms available for a given period; and attracting investment to build new accommodation is difficult, due to low and/or slow return-on-investment, and planning red tape.

For these reasons, the proliferation of AirBnB properties in regional areas tends to be viewed positively, by consumers and by non-accommodation operators, i.e. event organisers, attractions, tour operators, and hospitality businesses. Regional events and festivals in particular can attract more attendees if there is more accommodation available, beyond the traditional options of hotels, motels, caravans and campsites.

AirBnB and short-stay properties can be great for families, which are an important market for the Murray region. Short-stay operators who offer hosted accommodation also provide the opportunity to meet locals, which adds a different dimension to the visitor experience.

However, the presence of AirBnB in a regional destination may also be another deterrent to investment in new accommodation. There is also the risk of AirBnB properties being used as a “party houses”, and the potential for short-stay accommodation to impact long-term rental and overall residential housing supply.

In Victoria, there is currently a lack of policy guidance in relation to AirBnB. The Murray tourism region takes in 13 local governments across two states. While not necessarily advocating greater regulation, what industry does want to avoid is a patchwork of differing regulatory approaches to short-stay accommodation, particularly at local government level. As a cross-border region, establishing how short-stay accommodation is treated from a policy or regulatory perspective is just one example of where greater clarity, and parity, is required to ensure an equitable operating environment for all stakeholders.

MRT emphasises that a regulatory approach to AirBnB that is appropriate for Melbourne’s CBD is unlikely to be suitable for regional destinations where, as noted above, short-stay accommodation can play an important role in boosting accommodation supply and diversification, especially during peak periods.

We would actively encourage the government to develop a policy in relation to AirBnB to assist formalise the contribution to the industry and in doing so seek to ensure the policy in development creates a consistent approach with our state neighbours so we do not create more confusion for operators in the border regions.

Where should the state prioritise facilitating boutique and high-end accommodation and any other types of accommodation?

Some operators expressed concern at the prioritization of boutique accommodation over other types of accommodation:

“If the state is focused on supporting the development of high-end accommodation, and AirBnB continues to encroach on the market share of mid- to lower-range accommodation, where does that leave small operators, particularly those offering hosted accommodation?”

Rather than focusing solely on high-end accommodation, greater consideration must be given to the overall product mix of a destination. A critical mass of excellent restaurants, cafés, museums, galleries, and retail offerings, as well as a range of accommodation styles, is essential for the success of a destination.

We believe it is not simply the investment in the infrastructure alone, it is critical to have the marketing investment and programs in place to generate a suitable return on investment.

What are the key journey experiences for Victoria or your area that will drive visitors to come and stay?

Well-structured and promoted touring routes encourage longer trips and higher yield, taking visitors beyond main destinations and inspiring a sense of discovery. While the geography of the Murray region can be challenging, it also provides ample scope for multi-day touring, both on land and water. Canoe trails, bike trails, 4WD trails and hiking trails – all can be experienced in one region, either all in one trip, or as distinct experiences over repeat visits.

As well as river-based activities such as water sports (motorised and non-motorised), house boating, and paddle steamer cruises, the Murray region offers other nature-based activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding, and camping.

Signature events in the region include Riverboats Music Festival in Echuca-Moama, the Massive Murray Paddle, Club Marine Southern 80, Top of the Murray Classic Golf Tournament, Winter Blues Festival, and the Mallee Almond Blossom Festival. These event along with a large array of other events are a key driver for a distant region such as the Murray region and assist in overcoming some of the known barriers such as distance and lack of awareness of available experiences.

What can we do together to support greater event visitation?

Successful event delivery requires long-term planning and coordination, promotion, and smart allocation of typically limited resources. Reducing the red tape related to the planning and delivery of events is key to reducing delays and expenses. Savings can be directed to marketing efforts; to event infrastructure and facilities, or to training staff and volunteers, to ensure a better visitor experience.

Better coordination of events calendars at local, regional and state levels is also critical to ensuring that one event does not cannibalise the audience of another. It is also important for workforce planning, availability of equipment hire, and availability of resources such as St John's Ambulance, SES, and police services.

Given the high volume of events delivered in regional Victoria are generated from volunteer organisations, dedicated industry training, marketing support and resourcing would be of assistance in order to generate increased event visitation.

How can we facilitate cross-sector partnerships?

It is our experience that cross-sector partnerships tend to happen informally and in an ad hoc fashion, with some sectors more than others (e.g. business events, farming, etc.).

A whole-of government approach that recognises the importance of the visitor economy would help facilitate cross-sector and cross-portfolio engagement, and identify key opportunities for tourism businesses to connect to different sectors.

Developing thematic strategies such as Aboriginal Tourism would also assist in activating cross sector partnerships. The opportunities for sector growth will require collaboration from many agencies and parts of industry to deliver a high-quality visitor experience.

How can regions and businesses better cater to diverse visitor needs? What are the key accessibility challenges?

Addressing accessibility can be particularly challenging in a region as widespread as the Murray, and where the key attraction is a long body of water. As one example, NSW Parks and Wildlife Services have taken the initiative to create accessible canoeing experiences along the Murray. However, more needs to be done, especially as there is the growing number of retirees relocating to the Murray region, who make regular use of the tourism facilities and leisure activities available.

To inform any investment in accessible infrastructure we need to undertake further research to identify specific needs of visitors and locals alike, to ensure that the facilities, treatments and measures put in place are appropriate to consumer needs.

How can we improve visitor servicing?

First, reliable mobile connectivity, as well as fast and consistent broadband internet, are essential services that visitors have come to expect, regardless of their destination.

Second, rather than focusing on the in-person services available in a visitor center, visitor servicing should also be considered as part of the broader visitor journey mapping, particularly in the journey planning phase of a visitor's decision-making process. Visitor servicing needs to be reimaged to be customer centric and deliver on customer needs.

Third, visitor servicing is not solely the responsibility of visitor centre staff, or front-of-house personnel. It is incumbent on workers across the gamut of the visitor economy to take visitor servicing seriously and understand the role they play in contributing to a positive visitor experience.

Suggested measures to strengthen our tourism offering

1.1 Encourage the independent expert panel appointed to examine the deliverability of water in the Murray Darling Basin to also consider the impacts of the current water management practices on tourism businesses in the Murray region.

1.2 Encourage the Victorian government to review its policy regarding development of public lands and consider planning reforms that would facilitate access to crown land for the staging of approved events, and for the purposes of maintaining essential infrastructure; and that would allow for appropriate and environmentally-sensitive tourism developments adjacent to national parks.

1.3 Review status of "Victoria's Aboriginal Tourism: Development Strategy 2013-2023" and develop and implement an updated strategy that aligns with Victoria's Visitor Economy Strategy.

1.4 Connect agencies such as Aboriginal Victoria, and the Victorian Aboriginal Economic Board, Visit Victoria, the Tourism, Events & Visitor Economy division and Regional Tourism Boards to help facilitate engagement and business and tourism product development in regional areas.

1.5 In identifying locations for boutique and high-end accommodation, the state should consider carefully the visitor profile of the destination and the surrounding region, as well as the overall strength of the destination's tourism offering. Existing accommodation business should be encouraged to reinvest and not be adversely affected by the introduction of new supply.

1.6 Government develop a policy (considering cross border implications) in relation to AirBnB to ensure the sector complies with other commercial operators and creates an equal playing field.

1.7 Task Victoria's Red Tape Commissioner with investigating opportunities to reduce tourism red tape, with a focus on regional events. Areas for investigation should include land management and access; liquor licensing; and a range of local government permits associated with staging an event.

1.8. Ensure dedicated funding for regional events, which are a key driver of visitation to the Murray region.

1.9 Support research to identify accessibility infrastructure needs across the Murray.

1.10 Based on research and gap analysis, apply dedicated funding for the installation of Changing Places facilities at key attractions in regional Victoria.

1.11 Ensure continued funding of the Federal Government's Mobile Black Spot Program to progressively eliminate black spots across regional Victoria.

1.12 Develop a statewide visitor servicing strategy and invest in regional pilot programs which enhance current visitor servicing approaches.

Theme Two: Making the most of our marketing spending

- *How can we better leverage marketing spend to promote regional visitation?*
- *How can Visit Victoria, other areas of government, boards and local councils work more closely on agreed priorities?*
- *How can we ensure marketing activity is better aligned and that effort is not duplicated?*

Securing long-term funding for Visit Victoria is critical from several perspectives. It is very difficult to convince investors to invest in a region when there is no long-term marketing investment or strategy. One-year funding also severely limits the agency's ability to create long-term campaigns. The recent drip feed of regional marketing campaigns such as *Wander* and *Happy Place*, while well-executed, does not provide the consumer with consistency of message that reinforces regional destinations as the next place to visit or provide industry with time to react and leverage from these programs.

In addition to long-term marketing funding, dedicated and quarantined funds for regional tourism marketing are essential to achieving a strong, consistent and targeted promotion of regional Victoria.

Case Study: DNSW Regional Cooperative Tourism Marketing Program

DNSW through dedicated quarantined funding have a Regional Cooperative Marketing program. MRT has been able to apply to this program for the delivery and implementation of destination marketing initiatives. The funding is matched dollar for dollar and requires a minimum of \$100,000 investment by the partner which provides the solid foundation for a quality campaign. DNSW in addition to the direct financial contribution, provide access to internal resources and expertise to develop, manage and review the performance of the campaign. This type of investment provides RTB's with the ability to implement high quality campaigns which deliver on the objectives of the marketing strategy along with providing direction and amplification opportunities for the industry.

If the current budget for Visit Victoria remains unchanged in the short- to medium-term, consideration must be given to how existing funds are distributed. Regional Victoria needs consistent strategy and execution with tangible measures if we are to achieve greater leverage. Greater efficiencies could be achieved by having dedicated regional specialists within Visit Victoria who RTB's could access and work more closely on programs which will activate our industry and local government.

In addition to regional campaigns, promotional activity based around experience and product, rather than geography, would enable greater buy-in from across the state, and encourage cross-regional travel.

Case Study: Victorian Golf Tourism Strategy

The current Victorian Golf Tourism Strategy which focusses on this pillar is a good example of a thematic based regional approach. Through this strategy it is enabling three different regions (and RTB's) of Victoria to partner with Visit Victoria to raise the profile of golf and drive visitation.

This strategic approach will provide the opportunity to align investment across State, RTB and local levels which provides economy of scale and delivers consistency of message and brand to the consumer.

Within the Murray region, and the same would apply for much of regional Victoria, the biggest challenge is lack of awareness by consumers.

To overcome the challenge of awareness and appeal, we would like to highlight the following items for consideration:

- Increase investment in research and consumer trends at both macro and micro levels
- Develop a structured program of sharing key insights across all levels of the industry to influence investment
- Increase the focus on understanding both current and future visitor needs
- Invest in infrastructure projects both enabling and product specific by the public and private sector

- Continue to invest in content creation and diversification to meet needs of current and future channels
- Encourage greater alignment of hero experiences or key attributes to consumer audience targets
- Invest in both brand and tactical messaging over a sustained period of time
- Increased investment and diversification of existing programs for events beyond marketing activation
- Invest in training to address customer expectations particularly value of service
- Stronger focus of resources on packaging and bundling experiences and regions
- Greater emphasis on development of touring itineraries and opportunities
- Further development of sector programs including international for regions

Suggested measures to make the most of our marketing spending

2.1 Provide dedicated and quarantined funds for regional tourism marketing.

2.2 Establish dedicated regional specialists within Visit Victoria, working closely with industry, RTBs, and local government, to improve alignment of marketing activities, and reduce duplication of effort.

2.3 Provide quarantined event funding for RTB's to better leverage events and or distribute locally to assist events deliver enhanced and more coordinated marketing programs.

Theme Three: Supporting industry

What are the barriers to investing in regional Victoria? How could the system be improved?

There are numerous barriers to investment in regional tourism. These include:

1. Inadequate supply and quality of tourism experiences due to limited long term investment by both the public and private sector
2. Limited range and quality of the regions accommodation offer
3. Fragmented investment by the tourism industry in the region
4. Lack of long term strategic focus and vision at all levels of government
5. Significant gaps in telecommunication infrastructure, both black spot and capacity in the region
6. Red tape across all levels of government

The dismantling of Tourism Victoria led to a disconnect between the demand side agency (Visit Victoria) and the supply side group within the Department (TEVE). From an industry perspective, Tourism Victoria provided a "one-stop shop" for queries about tourism product development and investment facilitation. Under the divided structure and with the advent of Visit Victoria, and its mandate to focus on demand, this important function no longer exists.

At a local government level, planning and building permits are a source of frustration and delays for tourism businesses and potential investors in tourism infrastructure. At a state level, some planning zones and schemes restrict the ability of land and business owners to diversify their activities.

Greater understanding, across both state and local governments, of the planning requirements and the economic significance of tourism infrastructure investment would help expedite the approvals process for tourism investors and developers, significantly reducing delays and associated financial imposts.

In order to highlight the regulatory and fragmented approach within government, the following case study is provided:

Case Study: Mildura Riverfront Redevelopment

The Mildura Riverfront redevelopment is a game changing public and private sector partnership which will revitalize the riverfront and create a key activation precinct. To date across all levels of government there has been significant public infrastructure investment in stage 1 which the government should be commended. However in order to realise the vision and take advantage of this investment there is a need to unlock unrequired land for commercial development. While identified by all parties, this remains untapped while internal departments of government (Victrack and Regional Development Victoria) endeavor to resolve by who and how this land will be developed. As we understand Victrack wish to develop this as a commercial project and are requesting funding from Regional Development Victoria to fund site rehabilitation. This is a clear example of the need for government to take a whole of government approach to achieving the intended outcome for the project and facilitate investment.

A second key example which highlights the need for a more streamlined and concierge investment service is a significant tourism development adjoining the Barmah National park known as Yielima Station.

The current lack of both financial assistance programs and or access to a centralised investment unit within government who could project manage these types of developments would remove the barriers currently hindering these types of developments.

Case Study: Yielima Station Resort Development estimated \$50 - \$80 million depending on final development

The Yielima Station resort development is a vision of three local land owners to create a resort precinct consisting of various accommodation styles and standards, education / interpretative experience, Aboriginal experience, retail and food and beverage opportunities. The land adjoins the Barmah National park and would provide an ideal link and access for visitors to take advantage of the natural environment. The vision was developed with the intent to create local employment and economic opportunities to assist with the decline in the dairy industry.

The landowners while having some experience in commercial development, have not previously developed tourism experiences. They are clear with their intent which is to have a tourism planning overlay secured on the land so they can then seek joint venture or private investment opportunities to develop the precinct. The local government is supportive of the concept and it is identified in the Murray Destination Management Plan. Based on current estimates it will cost over \$300,000 to go through the zoning process which is not guaranteed to be successful, the majority of costs are reported to be liaison with various government departments and authorities which the matter would need to be referred.

A further recommendation to assist remove barriers to investment is the implementation of a dedicated tourism development funding program. Based on the success of similar programs in other states we would strongly urge the government to establish a grant program to unlock private sector investment.

We believe a grant program assists in both removing a level of risk for proponents along with fast tracking potential developments resulting in a more sustainable industry and better visitor experience.

By way of example, DNSW have consistently invested in the Regional Tourism Product Development Program which provides grants matched dollar for dollar to business currently up to \$150,000.

We have experienced the benefit of this program within the Murray region with several businesses being the recipients of this grant. Having the grant on offer stimulated a number of investments which would not otherwise have occurred, even when the applicant was not successful in securing a grant. The scheme was an incentive for the planning work to be undertaken (which would not have occurred without a grant) and enabled operators to secure investment through financial institutions to implement projects. For those who secured grant funding, in most instances it resulted in additional investment being made in projects.

The grant funding needs to be flexible to ensure it can contribute towards for example accommodation upgrades and refurbishment as this remains a critical issue for operators to fund and as a result often results in a very long drawn out process with 1-2 rooms being upgraded per year. A small grant can see this work completed quickly and increase viability of operators who then reinvest in the future.

Case Study

Case Study: Cadell on the Murray

Cadell on the Murray was a typical 26 room leased motel operating with aging infrastructure, limited opportunities for growth and challenges on retaining average room rates. In working with the leasee, it was clear the rooms required refurbishment just to retain room rates and occupancy levels let alone grow the business. The leasee at best planned to implement an upgrade program which could see all rooms upgraded over 10 year period and would not necessarily improve the sustainability of the business.

Through the DNSW Regional Tourism Product Development grant this enabled exploration into how they could grow the business along with achieving refurbishment. They identified an opportunity with new markets through the development of a small meeting room and secured the grant to assist deliver this. As a result of the grant, the leasee also secured co investment from the owners of the motel along with access to finance from a commercial lender. The property has grown significantly with 1-2 meetings a week, increased occupancy over the slow winter period along achieving an increase in room rates.

How can we use education and training, including TAFE, to address barriers impacting staffing of regional businesses?

Tourism employment now accounts for 20 per cent of all jobs in the Murray region (approx. 25,000 FTE equivalent)¹. But despite the economic significance of tourism to the state and to the region, there is still a lack of value placed on tourism as a career of choice. There is also a long-standing need to better align TAFE education and qualifications with industry needs.

In a competitive and highly mobile labour market, and with record low unemployment in regional areas, retaining skilled, high quality workers is difficult and expensive. Today's visitor economy is also a much broader church than the tourism sector of 30 years ago, when tourism based courses and qualifications began to emerge. Skills in the areas of digital marketing, media and communications, business, and accounting, are all in-demand within the visitor economy; along with people skills such as customer service, and stakeholder engagement. A greater focus on transferable skills and qualifications, taught within the context of the visitor economy, would provide students with a wider skill set and broader range of career and job opportunities within the tourism industry.

We believe there are a number of opportunities to further enhance the current training framework which include:

- Invest in a business program for start-up enterprises
- Develop business mentoring programs to assist in addressing the skills gaps and realise unfilled potential
- Create an environment which foster innovation and entrepreneurial spirit
- Focus on building leadership capabilities and human capital
- Investigate the opportunity to increase the level of coordination across government agencies to develop a centralised training calendar
- Review the funding criteria currently in place in tourism and business related formal training programs across government
- Consider linking minimum training levels and benchmarks to potential government funding or access to programs
- Develop stronger partnerships between industry and educational institutions to ensure training meets industry needs

¹ Source: Murray Region Destination Management Plan.

What support does industry require to address the challenges and opportunities that technology and disruptors present?

Online travel agencies (OTAs) and disruptors such as AirBnB and AirBnB Experiences place increasing commercial pressures on the tourism industry. In the face of such competition, having business basics firmly in place (e.g. website that is search engine optimised and has seamless booking functionality) and executing core activities well (delivering memorable visitor experiences, and offering excellent customer service) is imperative.

In order for this to occur, we recommend their needs to be flexible training and education delivery systems in place to meet industry requirements. We would also like to see greater leadership from the State in relation to research and strategy which will make it easier to communicate the benefits to industry and actively encourage upskilling and or adoption of programs to take advantage of the opportunities.

A simple example for tourism businesses in the Murray region, there is a lack of parity for access to basic marketing resources such as the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW), the national platform for digital tourism information on Australia, which enables businesses to increase their digital distribution and online exposure. In New South Wales, tourism operators are able to list on ATDW for free as this is subsidised by Destination NSW. This is not the case in Victoria or most other states. As a result, Victoria's tourism business listings are under-represented on this national database, and business not listed are at a disadvantage, as listing on the Visit Victoria consumer website along with the Visit the Murray sites are drawn from ATDW listings. This issue severely impedes operators ability to leverage marketing opportunities MRT delivers as we also draw from ATDW as do our cooperative campaigns with DNSW.

Suggested measures to support industry

3.1 Re-establish a tourism investment advisory and facilitation function as a single point of contact for industry, and to coordinate between relevant government agencies and departments, such as Visit Victoria, Regional Development Victoria, Invest Victoria and Global Victoria.

3.2 As part of the Red Tape Commissioner's Investigation into Tourism Red Tape (see Measure 1.6), and in support of Measure 1.2, include a review on planning and building approvals for tourism infrastructure.

3.3 Establish a dedicated long-term Regional Tourism Product Development funding program to stimulate private sector investment in product development and or renewal.

3.4 Provide funding support (full subsidy) for ATDW listings for Victorian tourism businesses.

3.5 Undertake review of existing investment in training and mentoring services to identify opportunities for better utilisation and provision of flexible training delivery.

3.6 Provision of dedicated funding to the RTB's for training would enable specialist trainers to be in region working directly with operators to build skills and capacity.

Theme Four: Enhancing Regional Tourism Boards

- *Which governance structures are the most effective for boards to achieve outcomes for regional tourism?*
- *How can we best help different sized councils (such as regional cities and small rural councils) to leverage tourism as part of their broader development goals?*
- *Are there changes we can make to boards (geographic or otherwise) that would increase local government and industry buy-in?*

As a cross-border region covering a large geographic area, MRT has arguably the most complex governance structure and operating environment of any RTB. MRT benefits from a cohesive and supportive board, and strong local government collaboration, and continues to perform strongly, making the most of its limited resources.

MRT demonstrates that a fit for purpose approach to regional tourism boards, rather than a universal, one-size fits-all approach, can deliver better outcomes. While this may be borne out of necessity, with the cross-border circumstances of the Murray region, the river itself is the strong and unifying brand; and this may well provide a clue to the question of what differentiates the strong performing RTBs from those that perform less well.

Further effort could be gained through even modest increases in funding, to support organisational initiatives such as centralising functions (e.g. digital marketing support) that are replicated across LGAs/LTOs throughout the region, and which could be delivered independent of location.

Nevertheless, the best way to ensure long-term success is to provide security of tenure, and an increase in long-term investment and resourcing for Regional Tourism Boards.

If the Murray Region is to maximise its contribution to the State Governments long term objective of growing overnight visitor expenditure then the dollars and resources which already exist throughout the Region will need to be more efficiently and effectively coordinated.

For example, in the Murray Region (both sides of the river), our LGAs invest around \$7 million in tourism every year. We have also estimated, conservatively, that tourism businesses in the region invest a further \$5 million in to marketing activities (2,500 tourism businesses spending \$2,000 each).

\$12 million more efficiently and effectively coordinated would have a significant impact on addressing at least some of the barriers preventing the region from achieving greater tourism success.

However, before more efficient and effective coordination of regional dollars and resources can take place the people who hold the 'purse strings' in region - LGAs and industry - need to be convinced there is a better way for them to invest their dollars and resources. That requires leadership, which in turn requires resources.

Resources to:

- secure investment for the development of quality tourism experiences and infrastructure
- increase awareness and appeal of destinations, products, experiences and events
- enhance skills and capacity of tourism industry participants
- facilitate and coordinate tourism activities within the region

In short, the right level of resources to not just identify where change is needed but why change is needed and how change can benefit both individual stakeholders and the region as a whole is required.

In the case of the MRT, we believe we have a strong corporate governance structure. We also believe our organisation has demonstrated strong leadership which is evidenced by the positive relationships we have with the regions operators, tourism associations and local government. Through the research we have undertaken and our DMP, we have a depth of understanding of the region's supply and demand issues. And through our industry training programs we have begun to address some of the supply side issues which exist and are critical to the growth of our industry.

What we do not have are sufficient resources to take our level of leadership and regional collaboration to a higher level without further investment.

A better resourced MRT could build on the current model to address major strategic issues, investment attraction opportunities industry capacity through skills development and product development to meet key supply and demand gaps.

MRT would suggest that the other critical consideration in determining the ideal enhanced RTB structure for Victoria is dependent on two key fundamental areas. These we believe are, clearly defining a RTBs role and responsibilities and secondly have this agreed taking into account the expectations of all relevant stakeholders – RTB itself, State Government, State Tourism Organisations, Local Government, Local Tourism Association, and industry operators.

By way of example, below is the current overview of expectations of an RTB by many:

- Management of RTB membership ranging from Local Government and Local Tourism Organisations /Associations to industry associations and tourism operators
- Development and implementation of Destination Management Plans
- Development of destination and regional marketing plans
- Development of industry development strategies
- Development of the RTBs business plan
- Stakeholder communication and reporting including the State Tourism Organisation
- Tourism industry engagement workshops and networking functions
- Communication and partnerships with other RTBs
- Visitor information services, which in some cases includes managing the operations of Visitor Information Centre's (VIC)
- Product, Experience and Event development projects
- Whole of Government consultation
- Assistance in accessing and/or managing Federal and State government funding programs
- Public Relations development and management
- Hosting famils to their region
- Tourism research analysis
- Keeping abreast of relevant technology developments
- Review whole of state and specific region visitation and visitor expenditure trends and communicate to regional stakeholders
- Manage natural disaster response strategies

With the breadth of expectations listed above, it is little wonder there is performance issues across the state of RTB's. At this point in time, we are not sufficiently resourced to deliver all of these responsibilities, or would we consider some of the items to fall in the remit of MRT. Until this is agreed at state level the region is not in a position to fulfil the full potential of our role to help maximize the performance of tourism in the Murray Region.

4.1 Retain the Regional Tourism Board Structure of MRT

4.2 Provide security of tenure and an increase in long term investment and resourcing for Regional Tourism Boards

4.3 State government invest in the total cost of regional structures such as Regional Tourism Boards along with strategic development initiatives

4.4 Clearly define the role and responsibilities of Regional Tourism Boards and the various components of the industry more broadly, ensure this is clearly communicated within all areas of Government and the industry.

Theme Five: Better coordinating effort

- *How do we best coordinate the work of different actors across regional tourism? What are the most important points of collaboration?*
- *Are we allocating resources efficiently? Could we better coordinate investment in regional tourism?*
- *How could a state-wide strategy or Destination Management Plan best connect to and leverage local strengths and priorities?*

A state-wide Destination Management Plan, which builds on Regional Destination Management Plans, would help identify product and infrastructure gaps. It should be the product of a collaboration between Visit Victoria, TEVE, Parks Victoria, RTBs, and industry.

To ensure a whole-of-government approach, a state-wide DMP should also be shared widely, within the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions; and also with the Department of Transport; the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning; and the Department of Treasury and Finance; the Department of Economic Development; and with agencies, such as the Victorian Planning Authority.

In the same way that the Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy galvanised the government's efforts to work with industry to achieve the targets of visitor expenditure of \$36.5 billion and sector employment of 320,700 jobs, a state-wide Destination Management Plan that included regional targets for visitation and spend, would help concentrate industry efforts, government resources, and provide a basis for more transparent accountability.

Industry development is a key area which could be delivered far more efficiently than is currently the case. Each RTB delivers an industry development program that typically covers topics such as SEO, social media marketing, customer service, yield management, or dealing with OTAs. This function could be centralised through an industry body such as the Victoria Tourism Industry Council and rolled out to all regions (following the QTIC model). This would free up RTB resources to focus on regional marketing activities.

Additionally, if we are to galvanise the industry and local government, it will be a requirement to provide long term funding agreements to Visit Victoria. The current situation of annualised funding does not allow for clear strategies to be developed and these to be filtered down to industry throughout regional Victoria. This is a clear impediment within the current structure and one which we would advocate for change.

There should also be a state-wide Industry Development Plan to address skills gaps, ensure that training and education offerings are aligned with industry requirements, and provide more coordinated delivery of industry programs such as the Quality Tourism Framework, the Victorian Tourism Awards, and ATDW training.

A more ambitious initiative would be to establish a Regional Tourism Centre of Excellence, bringing together multi-disciplinary education providers to deliver a coordinated and holistic training program that meets the needs of the modern visitor economy.

The Tourism, Events and Visitor Economy (TEVE) group in the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions is under-utilised. The research and data collated and analysed by the team is highly valuable to industry. The TEVE team should be encouraged and empowered to conduct more stakeholder engagement activities, such as regional seminars and webinars, to better communicate this information to industry.

From our perspective, the review needs to explore the whole of government approach and consideration of investment which distinctly falls in two streams being, the government has a responsibility to invest in growing the Victorian visitor economy (government obligations) and the second being, the investment of Victorian government to achieve the best return on investment (commercial and measurable).

If we look in the first instance at the idea of government obligation, then we would suggest an allocation of funding and adequate resourcing be made to assist in growing the visitor economy and could include such areas of:

- Funding operations of RTB's
- Research and market intelligence
- Whole of state destination appeal and awareness campaign framework and funding for regional campaigns
- Event development and procurement
- Investment attraction
- Workforce planning and development
- Strategic planning
- Further enhance the transition of the delivery model from a centralised model via Visit Victoria to a collaborative joint model with the RTB's working across whole of government framework. An example is the opportunity for private businesses to access government grant assistance for infrastructure upgrades which may not be facilitated via Visit Victoria
- Sharing of information and research in key areas where MRT has 'knowledge' gaps but has limited capacity to acquire this 'knowledge' on its own. Touring /Drive Tourism is one such example which is impeding investment.
- In the area of product development, information and insights on global and national trends to assist with genuine advancement of world-class experiences for the current and future visitor.
- Grow capacity of a dedicated government area to focus on providing strategic advice and guidance required to make informed decisions, and implement in partnership, plans to achieve the strategic goals. Visit Victoria will continue to be critical to growing the visitor economy through demand activities, however strong leadership is needed to continue to ensure Victoria strengthens our national position.
- Investment in strategic planning and development projects which often are not considered in the current funding program
- Industry training programs, within the Victorian government lies a great deal of expertise which through a collaborative program could be integrated into existing training programs in regions
- Investment which enables infrastructure to provide the opportunity to create and or refresh product offering in the region.
- Continue to invest in the development of sector plans. As an example, the work Visit Victoria has done in the Victorian Golf Tourism Strategy is to be commended.
- Continue to provide investment in regional projects and services which encourage regional collaboration and or joint resourcing of programs.
- Instigate a review into the constraints of current awards and penalty rate structure
- Develop a whole of state approach to increasing the community understanding of the value and importance of Tourism to the state of Victoria

All of the above is an investment in the long-term growth of the visitor economy and falls within the remit of government.

Suggested measures to better coordinate efforts

5.1 Develop a state-wide Destination Management Plan, based on industry and government collaboration; ensure whole-of-government understanding and cooperation in the implementation of the DMP.

5.2 Establish long term funding commitments for Visit Victoria to ensure the objectives of the Destination Management Plan, particular Regional strategic objectives are achieved in collaboration with industry.

5.3 Develop and implement a state-wide Industry Development Plan, in conjunction with industry, TAFEs and tertiary institutes.

5.4 Establish an exploratory committee of tourism industry leaders and tourism education specialists to investigate the feasibility of, and options for, establishing a Regional Tourism Centre of Excellence.

5.5 Provide greater support and resourcing for TEVE to make better use of the valuable research and data analysis undertaken by this team.

Concluding comments

Through participating in the Regional Tourism Review, and having conducted our own extensive consultations to inform this submission, it is clear that the government has a sound understanding of the deficiencies and challenges in the current government and industry structures.

It is also clear that while budget may currently be limited, there are other methods for tackling many of the problems that have been identified, through organisational re-structure; greater engagement and communication between industry and government; and policy and regulatory reform. Importantly, the prompt implementation of any recommendations and reforms must deliver on the intent of growing and supporting regional tourism in Victoria.

MRT appreciates the opportunity to contribute to this important process for the future of regional tourism in Victoria and look forward to the outcomes of the Review.

For further information regarding this submission, please contact Mark Francis, CEO, Murray Regional Tourism via email ceo@mrtb.com.au or mobile 0429 509 455.

2017-2020 PARTNER COUNCILS' FUNDING AGREEMENT

Between

MURRAY REGIONAL TOURISM BOARD

And

**Albury City Council
Berrigan Shire Council
Campaspe Shire Council
Federation Council
Edward River Council
Gannawarra Shire Council
Greater Hume Shire Council
Mildura Rural City Council
Moirra Shire Council
Murray River Council
Swan Hill Rural City Council
Wodonga City Council
Wentworth Shire Council**

(Insert date of execution)

Murray River Region Tourism Limited

(ACN 150 739 647) of 2 Heygarth Street, Echuca in the State of Victoria ('the Company')

Murray Regional Tourism Board
AGREEMENT

I. Parties to the Agreement

The Parties to this Agreement are:

Murray River Region Tourism Limited trading as Murray Regional Tourism Board.

Partner Councils established under the Victorian Local Government Act 1989 or the NSW Local Government Act 1993:-

- **Albury City Council**
- **Berrigan Shire Council**
- **Campaspe Shire Council**
- **Federation Council**
- **Edward River Council**
- **Gannawarra Shire Council**
- **Greater Hume Shire Council**
- **Mildura Rural City Council**
- **Moira Shire Council**
- **Murray River Council**
- **Swan Hill Rural City Council**
- **Wodonga City Council**
- **Wentworth Shire Council**

2. Preamble

- 2.1.** In order to grow and promote tourism in the Murray Region, it is proposed to continue funding the Murray Regional Tourism Board over the three year term 2017-2020.
- 2.2.** This Agreement may be renewed or renegotiated by further agreement between the parties to this Agreement.
- 2.3.** The Murray Regional Tourism Board is a Company Limited by Guarantee and is maintained as a financially autonomous body with responsibilities for its strategy, budget and financial sustainability.
- 2.4.** The Directors of the Company are appointed and must operate in accordance with the Company Constitution.

Murray River Region Tourism Limited
(ACN 150 739 647) of 2 Heygarth Street, Echuca in the State of Victoria ('the Company')

Murray Regional Tourism Board
AGREEMENT

3. Murray Regional Tourism Board

3.1. History

The Murray Regional Tourism Board formed in 2010 following extensive industry consultation which highlighted the need to establish an overarching organisation to contribute to the development and growth of tourism in the region.

3.2. Role of the Murray Regional Tourism Board

The Murray Regional Tourism Board provides:

- **A United Voice** - a strong unified voice on all issues relating to tourism in the region.
- **Leadership** – a lead role in supporting, guiding and mentoring.
- **A Funding Channel** - all State Government (NSW & Victoria) tourism funds are channelled through the Murray Regional Tourism Board so all stakeholders are closer to the point of decision-making.
- **A Partnership** - an opportunity for local government authorities to work together on tourism issues rather than in isolation.
- **Coordination** - greater cooperation to avoid duplication of effort resulting in greater efficiencies for the industry.
- **Regional Ownership** - the strategic direction for tourism is managed by the region and not state government tourism offices.

The Murray Regional Tourism Board is responsible for the holistic development of tourism for the Murray Region. Its **Purpose** is:

- Industry development
- Product development
- Regional marketing
- Leadership and advocacy

The Partner Councils recognise the independent role, structure and **Purpose** of the Murray Regional Tourism Board including in its advocacy for regional tourism as an independent voice to local, state, national and international media.

The Murray Regional Tourism Board:

- Plays a critical role in creating a platform for the future growth of tourism within the region.
- Identifies region-wide tourism issues and develops initiatives and solutions for the Partner Councils.

Murray Regional Tourism Board
AGREEMENT

- Sets the overarching strategic direction for tourism across the entire Murray Region.
- Communicates with key stakeholders such as Destination New South Wales, Local Government, Tourism Victoria and industry participants.

4. Role Of Partner Councils

The Partner Councils support Murray Regional Tourism Board activities through the involvement of local government personnel and departments: tourism; economic development; Visitor Information Centre.

5. Resourcing

- 5.1. The Partner Councils agree to three year funding to the Murray Regional Tourism Board as per Schedule A of this Agreement. Annual payments are to be made following the receipt of an invoice from the Murray Regional Tourism Board. Payments are to be made no later than 1 September each year.
- 5.2. The Partner Councils agree to this funding to enable Murray Regional Tourism Board to deliver against its **Purpose** and meet its agreed obligations in Schedule B. Partner Councils agree to meet their Schedule B obligations in return.
- 5.3. The funding commitment commences on 1 July 2017 and concludes on 30 June 2020. By mutual agreement, it may continue beyond that date subject to Clause 9.
- 5.4. Additional funding may be provided by the Partner Councils, upon agreement, for the delivery of specific programs.
- 5.5. As a condition of funding, the parties to this Agreement expect that Murray Regional Tourism Board will consult with each of them in the development of Murray Regional Tourism Board's Strategic Plan and annual business plans.

6. Performance Review

- 6.1. Murray Regional Tourism Board will undertake a review (as per Schedule C) of its performance in the period July – September 2019 to determine its effectiveness in delivering its Strategic Plan.

Murray Regional Tourism Board
AGREEMENT

7. Dispute Resolution

- 7.1. Any disputes arising from this Agreement will be first referred to a meeting of the Chair of Murray Regional Tourism Board, two Partner Council representatives and a representative of each of Tourism Victoria and Destination New South Wales. Tourism Victoria or Destination New South Wales will convene and manage this process.
- 7.2. Final dispute resolution, if required, will be referred to a Committee consisting of one representative from – a) Partner Councils, b) Murray Regional Tourism Board, c) Tourism Victoria, and d) Destination New South Wales and e) an independent, industry representative. Tourism Victoria or Destination New South Wales will convene the meeting and chair the Dispute Resolution Committee.
- 7.3. The independent industry representative will be appointed by a group consisting of a representative from –
- a) Partner Councils,
 - b) Murray Regional Tourism Board;
 - c) Tourism Victoria, and
 - d) Destination New South Wales.

8. Indemnity

- 8.1. This Agreement does not constitute a guarantee or indemnity by Partner Councils in regard to activities undertaken by the Murray Regional Tourism Board.

9. Term of Agreement

- 9.1. This Agreement lapses on 30 June 2020 and may be renewed or renegotiated by further agreement between the parties.
- 9.2. Negotiations to renew or renegotiate the Agreement must be completed by 31 December 2019.

10. Parties Agree to be Bound

- 10.1. It is the intention that this Agreement be binding on all of the parties which have signed this Agreement without the right of withdrawal from the arrangement except where there is a fundamental breach of any material term or condition of this Agreement by another party.

Murray Regional Tourism Board
AGREEMENT

II. List of Schedules

- A. Partner Council Funding**
- B. Agreed Obligations**
- C. Review Process**

Murray Regional Tourism Board
AGREEMENT

SCHEDULE A.

A. Partner Council Funding

It is agreed that the following funding commitments will apply for the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2020.

The Partner Council contributions are based on a flat fee per participating Council plus a payment of 3 cents per Domestic Visitor night (based on 3 year average of the National Visitor Survey for the period ending December 2009-2012).

The annual contribution is indexed at CPI (2%) per annum.

PARTNER COUNCILS	2017-2018 \$	2018-2019 \$	2019-2020 \$	Visitors ('000) 3yr Avg (YE Dec 2009-12)
Albury City Council	45,454	46,363	47,290	1,231
Berrigan Shire Council	14,103	14,385	14,673	267
Campaspe Shire Council	42,364	43,211	44,076	1,136
Federation Council	16,185	16,509	16,839	331
Edward River Council	11,111	11,334	11,560	175
Gannawarra Shire Council	14,981	15,281	15,587	294
Greater Hume Shire Council	9,095	9,277	9,462	113
Mildura Rural City Council	46,234	47,159	48,102	1,255
Moira Shire Council	31,828	32,464	33,113	812
Murray River Council	18,233	18,598	18,970	225
Swan Hill Rural City Council	24,738	25,232	25,737	594
Wodonga City Council	16,249	16,574	16,906	333
Wentworth Shire Council	9,843	10,039	10,240	136

Murray Regional Tourism Board
AGREEMENT

SCHEDULE B.

B. Agreed Obligations

To achieve its Purpose, Murray Regional Tourism Board agrees to:

- Maintain, implement and review a Strategic Plan which clearly outlines strategic goals and quantified success measures for each goal.
- As part of its Strategic Plan, facilitate access to state and federal government funding for tourism in the region.
- As part of its Strategic Plan, facilitate operator investment and reinvestment in new or existing products and facilities.
- Develop and implement annual plans which align with the Strategic Plan and its success measures.
- Consult with Partner Councils and representative stakeholders in the development and review of the Strategic Plan and annual business plans.
- Provide Partner Councils with the Strategic Plan and annual business plans.
- Annually report on its performance against the quantified success measures from the annual business plans (which align with the Strategic Plan) to Partner Councils and other key stakeholders.
- Provide to Partner Councils and key stakeholders detailed quarterly visitation research data for the region as a whole and key sub-destinations.
- Provide to Partner Councils and key stakeholders quarterly reports on key issues and activities for the region as a whole and for key sub-destinations.
- Undertake a formal Murray Regional Tourism Board performance review in 2019.

Partner Councils agree to:

- Facilitate, where relevant, the involvement of Partner Council personnel in Murray Regional Tourism Board activities.
- Work with Murray Regional Tourism Board to determine the relevance of specific activities;
- Integrate Murray Regional Tourism Board initiatives into the annual work plans of Partner Council personnel.
- Advocate Murray Regional Tourism Board to industry and government, as appropriate.
- Allocate, where agreed, funding for partnering on projects and programs.
- Make available opportunities for Murray Regional Tourism Board representatives to present to, and engage with, Partner Councils.
- Include, where relevant, Murray Regional Tourism Board in key industry programs and strategic developments.
- Partner with Murray Regional Tourism Board in the sharing of necessary information relevant to the development of the regional tourism industry.
- Partner with Murray Regional Tourism Board for visits and forums within Partner Council areas.

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Murray River Region Tourism Limited
(ACN 150 739 647) of 2 Heygarth Street, Echuca in the State of Victoria ('the Company')

Murray Regional Tourism Board
AGREEMENT

SCHEDULE C.

C. Review Process

1. An independent review will be undertaken by the Murray Regional Tourism Board. An independent contractor will be appointed by the Murray Regional Tourism Board to conduct the review.
2. The independent review of Murray Regional Tourism Board will be undertaken in the period July – September 2019 to determine the effectiveness of the delivery of the strategic goals and success measures set out in the Strategic Plan.
3. The reviewer will provide a report with findings and recommendations to the Murray Regional Tourism Board, Partner Councils and major stakeholders by 30 September 2019.
4. The reviewer will consider the:
 - performance of the Murray Regional Tourism Board against its role as set out in Clause 3.2 and its agreed obligations (Schedule B);
 - governance and management of the Murray Regional Tourism Board;
 - level of stakeholder satisfaction with the Murray Regional Tourism Board.

B.19.109 REGIONAL TOURISM VICTORIA REVIEW

Responsible Officer:	Director Development and Planning
File Number:	S12-22-18
Attachments:	1 Regional Tourism Victoria Review - SHRCC Submission 2 Regional Tourism Victoria Review - SHRCC Aboriginal Culture Submission 3 Regional Tourism Victoria Review MRT Submission

Declarations of Interest:

Heather Green - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

This report is to advise Council of the submission (in three parts) made in response to the Regional Tourism Victoria Review discussion paper, July 2019.

Discussion

Murray Regional Tourism submitted a response on behalf of the Victorian local governments they represent of which Swan Hill Rural City Council is one. Its response drew on information collected during a series of workshops held across the Murray Region. Swan Hill hosted one of these workshops on Thursday, 8 August. Attending the workshop was Councillor Lea Johnson, Council staff, tourism operators, and Swan Hill Incorporated Chair and marketing officer. There were also two representatives from the Murray River Council. To assist Council to formulate its response Murray Regional Tourism provided Council with the information collected at the Swan Hill workshop.

The Economic and Community Development Manager also attended the Victorian Government - Tourism Victoria workshop held in Mildura on Thursday, 1 August. At this workshop Mary-Ann Thomas MP requested that a submission be lodged that focused on Swan Hill Aboriginal culture and in particular "Our Place" Interpretive Centre.

Council's CEO also requested that a submission be lodged from Swan Hill Rural City Council in addition to the Murray Regional Tourism submission.

The submission conveyed a consistent message based on the following.

- Retain and adequately resource the Murray Regional Tourism Board
- Equity of the distribution of Tourism Victoria financial resources to the regions
- Financial support for localised events in Regional Victoria

- Branding of the region (Murray)
- Support for existing and new tourism operators
- Advocacy to reduce red tape across all levels of government
- River management and water reliability

Consultation

Invitations were sent to Councillors, tourism industries and operators within the municipality inviting them to attend the Swan Hill workshop facilitated by Murray Regional Tourism.

Information was also forward to the aforementioned in regards to the workshops being hosted by Tourism Victoria and the online submission.

Financial Implications

The Victoria Government will consider future resources based on the outcomes of the Victoria Tourism Review discussion paper, July 2019. The submissions Swan Hill Rural City Council was associated with all had a consistent message, requesting equity of financial resource distribution across the State.

Social Implications

It is anticipated that the activities supported by Tourism Victoria, in the future, will lead to an increase in employment and population, stimulate business activity and attract investment contributing to improved social outcomes for the community.

Economic Implications

It is expected that activities supported by Tourism Victoria will increase external awareness of the Swan Hill region leading to higher levels of visitation and potential attraction of new residents.

Environmental Implications

Not applicable.

Risk Management Implications

Not applicable.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Economic growth - Assist existing businesses to expand and increase their efficiency.

Recommendation

That Council notes the information within the submission and use it as the basis for any future advocacy in regards to tourism.

Swan Hill Rural City Council participated in the Victoria Regional Tourism Review session held in Mildura and the MRT workshop held in Swan Hill. Please be advised that Council fully support the submission from Murray Regional Tourism.

The information in this submission is also fully supported by Swan Hill Rural City Council.

1. What can be done to strengthen Victoria's Regional Tourism Offering?

- Development of the regional tourism brands. The Murray, Australia's greatest river, is overshadowed by negative media – Murray Darling Basin Plan. We would like to see restoration of the Murray brand as a National icon.
- Support for existing operators to develop with capital funding to renew dated assets.
- Assist to facilitate new investment.
- There needs to be a greater engagement, awareness and presence in region from the State of regional destinations - walk the talk.
- Swan Hill, as a regional destination, attracts a high percentage of visitors from NSW and South Australia. It is well positioned to attract interstate expenditure into Victoria. We currently receive over 1 million visitors per annum.
- Support to capture and develop our regions unique and authentic local stories.

2. What would improve Victoria's regional tourism marketing efforts?

- We would like increase the recognition of regional Victoria particularly, Murray region, as we have a lot to offer in regional Victoria's tourism market.
- Equity in the allocation of resources to Regional Tourism Organisations
- Improve Victorian product listing on Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW)

3. How can Regional Tourism Boards best work to achieve outcomes for Victoria regional tourism?

Council support the continuation of RTBs, which have representation from each local area on the Board. Board members are accountable for providing leadership, advocacy and facilitating when required. This will ensure consistency of messages and equity across the region of resources. Representatives must have a high level of knowledge and connection within the tourism networks, for who they are representing.

Equity and allocation of resources to the RTBs. This is to reinforce the branding of Murray Regional Tourism.

In the Murray region a cooperative partnership with NSW and SA should exist to the exposure of the region, whilst ensuring the best use of Victorian, NSW and SA State funding. This could be achieved by engaging with the State Cross Boarder commissioners.

4. How can we better co-ordinate regional tourism planning and strategy across government, industry and the community?

A five year funding commitment, to allow for strategy development.

There needs to be a mechanism for ongoing grassroots contribution, to the development of high level planning.

There needs to be representatives in regions affiliated with a variety of agencies, such as Regional Development Victoria. The Regional Development Australia facilitates assemblies with communities in their regions, to ensure a grassroots approach.

State Departments such as Parks, are under resourced and this impacts on our perceptions and real experiences in our region e.g. signage, track maintenance and waste disposal, etc.

To undertake infrastructure development there is a significant additional cost such as CHMP and native vegetation removal, in comparison to other regions. This is exemplified by the Activating Swan Hill Riverfront project which is aiming to connect the CBD to the Murray River, Swan Hill Millloo Street boat ramp / Boundary Bend walking track. There is always a need for additional permits and licenses when working on or near the Murray River and in the Mallee region.

It is our experience that cross-sector partnerships tend to happen informally and in an ad hoc fashion, with some sectors more than others (e.g. business events, farming, etc.).

The Our Region Our Rivers was lead by the Swan Hill City Rural Council and engaged two States (Vic and NSW), seven Councils in a project that when delivered will transform the region, creating new tourism products and experiences. In total a \$34 million, \$17 million in Commonwealth funding and \$17 million in matching funds from State Governments and individual Councils. This project will provide even more reasons for people to visit the region and stay longer. It is important that moving forward, Tourism Victoria and RTBs support more of this type of collaboration between multiple partners.

A whole-of government approach that recognises the importance of the visitor economy would help facilitate cross-sector and cross-portfolio engagement, and identify key opportunities for tourism businesses to connect with different sectors.

5. How can we work together to make sure that regional communities benefit from tourism?

- RTBs to facilitate, develop tourism routes, via clustering experiences across the region i.e paddle steamers, silos, Skate Park competitions. State to fund initial development.
- Regions are provided with opportunities and access to resources and funding, to enable the development and marketing for communities of all sizes. Communities such as Robinvale and their Mallee Almond Blossom Festival or Woorinen's Winter Festival need to be able to access funding to grow into significant State events.
- Swan Hill is a host to the Victoria Tennis Country Week event. This event draws a large number of visitors and participants. Sporting events like this need to be supported to continue to be held in our region. Our region, particularly Swan Hill and Robinvale have amazing sporting facilities, which have the capacity to be improved to allow further growth of major sporting events.
- In Swan Hill and Robinvale there is a shortage of high-end accommodation on offer. This is an area which need to be addressed to support visitors to the areas and encourage longer stays in the region. There is potential for increasing the number of senior travellers to the areas who like all the comforts of home and more (our new target) and in particular, with increased international visitors to the region.
- Improved telecommunications across the whole region

- River management and water reliability, particular during the peak tourism times; i.e Easter and school holidays.
- Support and resources to up skill tourism attraction, hospitality and accommodation providers.
- Community education on value and importance of tourism, as a key driver of the economy.
- For further information regarding this submission, please contact Fiona Gormann Economic and Community Development Manager Swan Hill Rural City Council on 0429 138 309 or email fgormann@swanhill.vic.gov.au.

1. What can be done to strengthen Victoria's Regional Tourism Offering?

Aboriginal knowledge - Make the most of our natural and cultural sites (pg19)

Swan Hill Rural City Council along with Wandarrah Action Committee (WAC) would like to inform Tourism Victoria of a major project being developed in Swan Hill. This project is designed to create new Aboriginal tourism products and experiences and will support the Aboriginal economy. **Recognition of this major project *Our Place – Aboriginal Interpretive Centre* within the Victoria's Regional Tourism review is requested.** Please note WAC has been established by Council as an Aboriginal advisory group to ensure consultation with the broader Aboriginal community is achieved when decisions and projects are developed.

Through recognition and supporting this project key tourism aims will be achieved via, supporting industry, labour and skill development and TAFE institutions.

The major project

*Swan Hill Rural City Council (Council) by 2022 will have a new facility which will be located on the Little Murray River in Swan Hill and form part of our Indigenous, Art and Cultural Precinct. This facility, **Our Place** will also accommodate the Regional Art Gallery, Information Centre and the Pioneer Settlement Front of House. These three services provided by Council are currently being delivered as separate identities, each having their own program managers, staff and operational budgets.*

*In 2013, Council adopted a Riverfront Master Plan which sought to locate an Aboriginal Interpretive Centre on the riverfront. Since then the completion of a feasibility study and commercial development strategy have strongly recommended that an **Aboriginal Interpretive Centre** collocate with the aforementioned Council services.*

*In 2019 Council was successful with a Commonwealth Grant which will provide 50 per cent of the funds required to build the **Our Place** facility with Council contributing the other 50 per cent. Currently Council is in the process of finalising designs prior to an open tender process to construct the facility.*

It is so important that Victoria Tourism support us to develop our regions unique and authentic Aboriginal local stories.

2. What would improve Victoria's regional tourism marketing efforts?

Aboriginal knowledge - Make the most of our natural and cultural sites (pg19)

Once the facility is operational, marketing efforts through local branding, campaigns and financial resources to each region will assist to promote our new tourism facility and the new Aboriginal tourism products and experiences within.

Support for Local Aboriginal run and organised event that have a culture theme which will have the capacity to attract visitors to our region particularly from Victoria, NSW and SA.

3. How can Regional Tourism Boards best work to achieve outcomes for Victoria regional tourism?

Through better resourcing the Regional Tourism Board could establish much needed dialogue with Aboriginal Victoria and other State Government agencies/departments to assist with engagement, communication and red tape. In our region this is particularly challenging as there is no Recognised Aboriginal Party for Council to have direct dialogue with. This would assist when Council is working on infrastructure development; as there is currently a significant additional cost (such as CHMP and native vegetation removal), in comparison to other regions. This is exemplified by a recent project in Lake Boga – the Flying Catalina Museum Cafe and Playground development.

Supporting grants for our natural environment is also very important to the Tourism industry i.e Fishing Infrastructure Grants for boat ramps, camping facilities, walking trails, better off road tracks, etc.

4. How can we better co-ordinate regional tourism planning and strategy across government, industry and the community?

Long term funding commitment to allow for strategic development –

Council and WAC have identified **Our Place** facility through long term strategic planning. In the future there will be potentially to develop a stage 2 to further strengthen and grow additional Aboriginal Tourism products and experiences by utilising the natural environment within Swan Hill and along the Murray River through to Robinvale. A stage 2 project would need to be supported by Tourism Victoria to position themselves in an advocacy role with other Government Departments such as Planning, VicRoads, VLine, VTrack, Park, etc. As these departments often hinder or make difficult the development and improvement of tourism products and experiences in our regions. This is exemplified by Activating Swan Hill Riverfront project designed to connect the CBD to the Murray River. In particular the difficulty Council has had in achieving an *at grade* pedestrian crossing over the rail line.

5. How can we work together to make sure that regional communities benefit from tourism?

Regional communities will benefit from clustering experiences in regional areas. To achieve Aboriginal knowledge - Make the most of our natural and cultural sites, it is important to support the development of an Aboriginal trail, in a similar way to the silo trail. (Although careful consideration is needed to make sure we don't take a cookie cutter approach to this. Each trail has its own authentic story to tell. If this is undertaken well the Aboriginal economy will be strengthened.

- Our region has the opportunity to cluster with Tyrrell Lakes, the Murray River Trail and once constructed the inclusion of Our Place – Aboriginal Interpretive Centre's new products and experiences; and then a stage 2 in the coming years.

A local example which is in its establishment phase and will continue to be developed prior to Our Place – Aboriginal Interpretive Centre opening in January 2023, is explained below

A launch of a display and sale of local aboriginal artwork at the Swan Hill Region Information Centre which occurred on Tuesday, 16 July and has since sold a number of pieces on

consignment. Sales have benefited local Aboriginal artists and the Information Centre works on a commission.

After many comments and requests from visitors and locals alike, Council recognised the lack of aboriginal artwork available both on display and for sale in our Region. Around the same time Council was approached by a representative of WAC who asked whether Council would be interested in selling local aboriginal artwork and so the journey began...after weeks of hard work in collaboration with WAC's representative who worked tirelessly on behalf of local Aboriginal artists to put together a display of 7 canvas and hardboard prints, and 8 soft canvas pieces which launched our Aboriginal artwork. There have been a high number of locals and visitors popping in to check out the display. Council have since expanded the range on offer and have relocated the display to a bigger space within the Information Centre. Council will continue to use our social media presence to promote the artwork and aim to be the first point of call for all aboriginal artwork enquiries, ensuring that our customers know that even if we don't have what they are looking for in store, we can assist them in finding their perfect piece. Each art piece comes with its own authentic story.

- These authentic local Aboriginal artworks become the stories that are told on the Aboriginal Trail journey and will support our boutique producers and cross – sector partnerships



Regional Tourism Review
August 2019

Submission from

Murray Regional Tourism



Murray Regional Tourism (MRT) commends the Andrews Labor Government’s review program which aims to enable improved outcomes for tourism and regional communities along with seeking to find new ways to grow tourism and support regional Victoria.

MRT welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Victorian Government’s Regional Tourism Review 2019 and we believe the real opportunity to grow Victoria’s visitor economy will be through growing the regional tourism contribution given the opportunity for growth in Melbourne is limited by capacity constraints.

As a prelude to addressing the specific themes and recommendations of the review, we would make the following points:

1. As referenced in the Discussion Paper, regional tourism spend in Victoria is currently less than competitor states and has potential to grow.

Victoria 36 cents of every tourism dollar is spent in regional areas	Competitor States 43 cents of every tourism dollar is spent in regional areas
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If Victoria could increase from 36 cents to 43 cents it would generate an **additional \$3.8 billion dollars** in Regional Victoria based on 2018 expenditure.

2. 25% of Victoria’s population live in Regional Victoria yet Regional Victoria receives proportionately less funding. This must change if there is to be a significant change in tourism.

3. The Regional Tourism Board model works in the Murray Region.

Tourism in the Murray 2000 to 2010 (Pre RTB) - 11.5% Decline in total visitation to region Limited investment in product or experiences	Tourism in the Murray 2011 to 2019 (Post MRT) + 42% Growth in total visitation to region Over \$370 million invested in product and experiences
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MRT was established in 2011 under a new approach to regional tourism and has delivered a well-coordinated strategic approach including strong long-term plans and growth targets resulting in the following:

- Reversal of a 10-year decline in visitation which existed prior to the establishment of MRT and the cross-border model
- Increased total visitation by 42 per cent since inception, from 4.5 million visitors to 6.4 million visitors
- Increased total nights by 31.5 per cent since inception, from 7.6 million to 9.6 million
- Increased total direct expenditure by 86 per cent, from \$1 billion to \$1.9 billion
- Increased direct and indirect expenditure by 26% from \$2.43 billion to \$3 billion
- Generated an additional \$372 million in expenditure on tourism-related projects between 2012-2017, which enhance visitor experience and appeal
- Added an additional 4,569 tourism related jobs (direct and indirect) across the region with the visitor economy now accounting for 1 in every 5 jobs within the Murray region.
- Record visitation to the Murray region across all measures, Domestic Overnight, Domestic Day Visitors and International as evident from Tourism Research Australia NVS/IVS reports 2019 (see Tables 1 and 2 in the report).

As evidenced from these results, the visitor economy is a vital component of the region's economy, and a key driver for growth. However, there is still latent capacity within the region and we need to increase both visitor numbers and yield, across the region and throughout the calendar year. With enhanced resourcing of MRT, the Murray's visitor economy would deliver even greater benefits to the state's economy.

MRT urges the government to adopt the following critical priority recommendations in order to deliver on the plan to improve regional tourism and ensure Victoria remains competitive within the Australian economic context.

MRT Recommendations

- 1. Retain the Regional Tourism Board (RTB) structure of MRT**
- 2. Provide security of tenure, and an increase in long term investment and resourcing for Regional Tourism Boards**
Our closest competitor in NSW invests over \$1 million directly into each of their Destination Networks (equivalent to Victoria's RTB organisations) per annum with long term agreements in place.
- 3. With 36 per cent of Victorian tourism dollars spent in the regions and 25 per cent of Victoria's population living in regional Victoria we recommend, from a whole of government perspective, the dedication of 25 per cent of all government expenditure and resourcing to regional Victoria.**
We believe this collective approach would deliver significant advantage to the regional economy and ensure the state's broader objectives are delivered upon.
- 4. The state government invests in the total cost of regional structures such as RTBs and strategic tourism development initiatives.**
In order to achieve the desired outcome by the state for greater collaboration and increased investment by local government, we recommend the state fund the cost of the RTBs. The local government investment would then be directed for example towards implementation of projects and campaigns which provide greater localised benefit. This would simplify the current complex structure and increase the likelihood of increased long-term investment by local government.
- 5. Develop a dedicated, 5-year regional tourism plan and funding for regional Victoria, which aligns whole of government regional and state priorities; is adequately resourced; and contains clear measurements and targets for the government and industry to collectively aspire.**
- 6. Allocation of quarantined event funding for regions. The distribution of these funds locally is managed by the board structure.**

These six key strategic recommendations, if adopted by government, will fundamentally change the regional visitor economy and provide the positive shift required to ensure the desired contribution to states economy is achieved.

In addition to these six primary recommendations, through our extensive consultation with Local Government and Industry on the review, MRT has identified a series of additional more detailed measures addressing the specific questions in Regional Tourism Review Discussion Paper July 2019.

We are pleased to provide the following submission which outlines the key findings and further expands and strengthens the proposed recommended approach.

Background

Murray Regional Tourism (MRT) is a cross-border regional tourism board servicing a wide tourism region covering both sides of the Murray River, which forms the majority of the Victorian-NSW border (Fig. 1 below). It provides an overarching strategic plan, destination management plan and marketing plan for the visitor economy in the region, with the aim of making the Murray a must-visit destination for domestic and international visitors alike.

MRT was established in November 2010, creating for the first time an organisational structure which enabled two state governments and 13 local governments to work collaboratively to grow the visitor economy in a holistic manner, with funding from both levels of government.

The cross-border nature of MRT and its funding arrangements are both complex and unique.

The Murray region covers the following Local Government areas (LGAs):

NSW LGAs	Victorian LGAs
Albury	Wodonga
Greater Hume	Moira
Federation	Campaspe
Berrigan	Gannawarra
Edward River	Swan Hill
Murray River	Mildura
Wentworth	

Table 1: Local Government Areas within the Murray Regional Tourism area

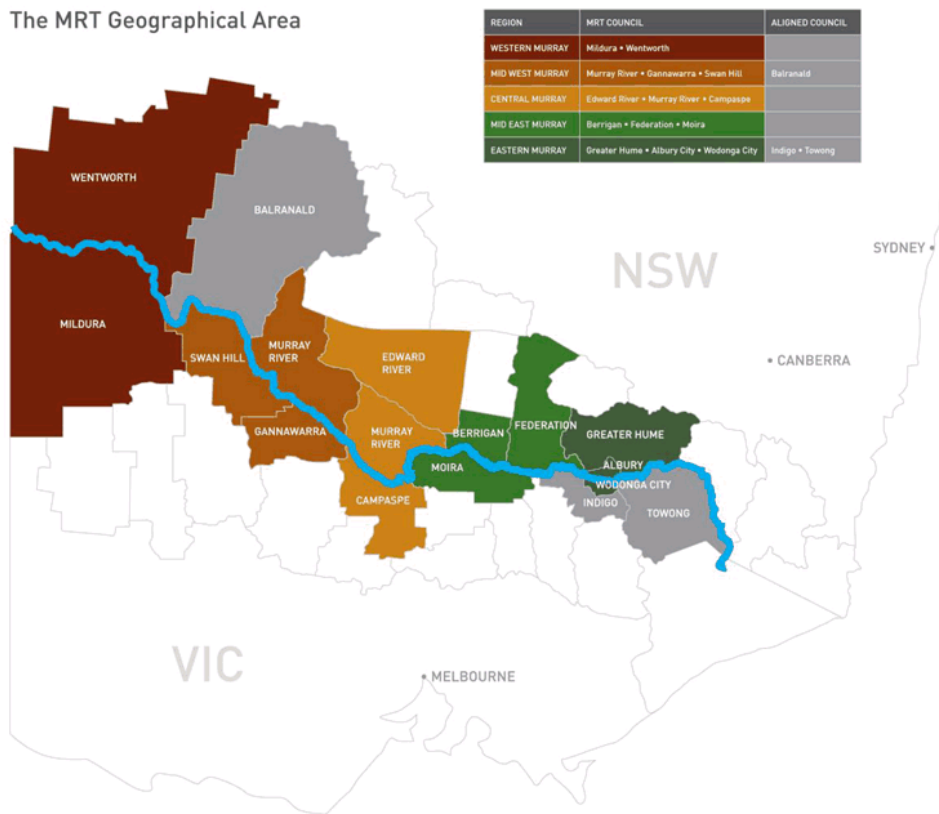


Figure 1: Map of the region covered and serviced by Murray Regional Tourism

The organisation's operational structure is a company limited by guarantee, a requirement of the dual state operating environment. This necessarily increases the governance and compliance burden of MRT. Despite the administrative complexities MRT has not only been able to arrest an alarming decline in visitation; it has also achieved remarkable success in growing visitation and economic contribution across the region. This has been done through energetic, cohesive leadership and collaboration, and by improving the supply and quality of tourism experiences, and increasing awareness of destinations, products, experiences and events within the region.

Despite the strong results shown in Tables 1 and 2 below, there is still plenty of untapped potential across the Murray region's visitor economy. A better resourced MRT could build on the current model to address major strategic issues, investment attraction opportunities, and industry capacity through skills development and product development to meet key supply and demand gaps.

Measure	YE Dec 2000	YE Dec 2010	% Change
Total visitation to Murray Region	5.2 million	4.6 million	-11.5%
Overnight Visitors	2.7 million	2.3 million	-15%
Daytrip Visitors	2.4 million	2.3 million	-4%
International Visitors	62,000	46,000	-26%

Source: Tourism Research Australia National Visitor Survey

Table 2: Visitation Tracking Data for the Murray Region prior to formation of Murray Regional Tourism, 2000-2010

Measure	YE Dec 11	YE March 19	% Change
Total visitation to Murray Region	4.5 million	6.4 million	+42%
Total Nights	7.6 million	10 million	+31.5%
Total Expenditure	\$1.02 billion	\$1.9 billion	+86%
Domestic Overnight Visitors	2.1 million	2.9 million	+38%
Domestic Overnight Nights	6.5 million	8.5 million	+30%
Domestic Overnight Expenditure	\$750 million	\$1.3 billion	+73%
Domestic Daytrip Visitors	2.4 million	3.5 million	+46%
Domestic Daytrip Expenditure	\$252 million	\$537 million	+113%
International Visitors	50,200	69,000	+39%
International Nights	1.1 million	1.5 million	+36%

Source: Tourism Research Australia NVS/IVS December 2011 and March 2019

Table 3: Visitation Tracking Data for the Murray Region since the formation of Murray Regional Tourism, 2011-2019

Realising the region's potential will also require investment in both infrastructure and marketing; policy and regulatory reform; and structural change in the industry that allows for greater flexibility to enable greater industry participation.

This review presents an excellent opportunity to build on MRT's strong track record as a successful and accomplished destination manager and industry leader. MRT believes that structural improvements to the management of Victoria's regional tourism (on both supply and demand sides) will lead to continued growth and strengthening of the visitor economy for the Murray region as a whole.

Acknowledgements

In preparing this submission MRT has consulted with over 110 individual industry and local government stakeholders across our region, from both Victoria and New South Wales. We would like to acknowledge and thank the diverse organisations for their contribution and participation and through the valuable insights a range of recommendations have been developed

At a high level the following key issues were identified as areas of focus if the Victorian government is to truly address the barriers impeding the regional visitor economy and ensure the sector can continue to be one of the top performing industries for regional Victoria.

The barriers which need to be addressed include:

1. Inadequate supply and quality of tourism experiences due to limited long term investment by both the public and private sector
2. Limited range and quality of the regions accommodation offer
3. Skills and capacity of our tourism industry
4. Limited awareness and appeal of our tourism experiences and destination
5. Fragmented investment by the tourism industry in the region
6. Lack of long term strategic focus and vision at all levels of government
7. Significant gaps in telecommunication infrastructure, both black spot and capacity in the region
8. Insufficient financial and human resources
9. Red tape across all levels of government
10. River Management and water reliability
11. Current awards and penalty rate structure
12. Community education on value and importance of tourism as a key driver of the economy

To further expand on the above, the following section of the submission provides further detail and recommended actions which could be implemented to address the barriers and opportunities identified.

Theme One: Strengthening our tourism offering

The long-term economic health of the Murray Region needs both vision and commitment that's longer than the four year cycle of state politics, for big infrastructure projects, employment generation, investment in education and skills building, and enhanced economic opportunities.

In particular, we will need to address the regions considerable supply side issues. The Victorian Government has a significant role to play from both a leadership and investment perspective. Our LGA stakeholder's consistently report an inability to secure investment in enabling infrastructure projects which drive both industry confidence in the region and often lead to private sector investment. Investment which is critical to growing the region's visitor economy.

To overcome these barriers we would ask the committee consider:

- Review current framework for Investment by government in key enabling infrastructure within the region aligned to our Destination Management Plan (DMP)
- Continue to provide funding opportunities to encourage private sector investment in regional areas
- Establish an investment team within the Victorian government for RTB's and investors to work with to connect investment with opportunities identified in regions DMP's
- Simplify the planning framework in Victoria to reduce time delays and associated barriers for investors
- Review of rate capping practice in Victoria which severely impacts our partners ability to raise capital for both new and recurrent funding of critical infrastructure projects

We believe the revised future strategy needs to create opportunities for further infrastructure investment and be expanded to fund feasibility studies which are critical to achieving funding for enabling key projects.

How can regions and communities leverage their natural assets?

Many businesses, services and products throughout the Murray region (whether these be in tourism, agriculture, or other sectors) are based around the region's largest natural asset – the iconic Murray River, which draws together a community of interest. The issue here is not a lack of leverage, but rather poor management and maintenance of the asset.

The health of the Murray River is critical not only to the natural environment and a broader system of waterways, but also to the operating environment of businesses across a wide range of industries.

The detrimental impacts of poor water policy and management are evident in the River itself, and keenly felt by tourism and event operators, who require reliable water levels in the Murray River in order to deliver their service or event.

We know from our annual industry survey conducted to assist us understand the health of the industry, water issues impact over half of the businesses within the region. These impacts relate to algae, drought, river heights and negative media publicity relating to water levels.

For example, a multi-day water-skiing event can only take place if the River height is at a certain level, and can confidently be predicted to remain at that level for the duration of the event.

In Yarrawonga, stakeholders noted that consistency in the water and river levels has direct impact on the visitor numbers of Lake Mulwala. If the river levels are low, visitors are forced to seek alternative activities.

Case Study: PS Pyap at Pioneer Settlement

The Pioneer Settlement in Swan Hill can host weddings, utilising its historic chapel and offering a unique experience of holding the reception on the paddlesteamer. At the moment the business cannot take wedding bookings because operating requires a certain water level, as does increased passenger capacity. Currently, water levels cannot be predicted due to continual changes in water flows and hence this severely impacts on the business.

Poor water management practices also jeopardise the feasibility of future products and services that are based on using the Murray River (such as the Murray River Adventure Trail), and will deter much needed investment.

While the Murray-Darling Basin Plan is clearly out of scope of this review, MRT urges the Victorian government, as part of the work of the [recently announced independent expert panel](#) to examine the deliverability of water in the Murray Darling Basin and consider the impacts of the current water management practices on tourism businesses in the Murray region.

Land management and access issues are a common theme throughout the Murray region, which covers numerous national parks, state forests, and riverside reserves, managed by a variety of land managers. Industry consultations revealed extensive red tape issues related to running an event on crown land. Tour operator licensing systems also differ between Victoria and New South Wales.

The inability to leverage natural assets such as national parks, due to restrictions on private development on public lands, is well-known and well-documented through other reviews, for example, the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission's 2010 study "Unlocking the Potential of Regional Tourism". Also well-documented is Tasmania's success at leveraging its national parks for tourism purposes, thanks to favourable policy settings led by the Tasmanian government.

In addition to the restrictions relating to development in parks, a further critical issue evident in the Murray region is the lack of resources and investment to maintain or enhance existing assets. There are many examples of tracks which are unsuitable for use due to lack of maintenance budgets, poor and aging infrastructure which does not provide a satisfactory visitor experience or provide encouragement for tour operators to develop product on park. This is a critical area which must be addressed if we are to leverage the natural assets within the region.

Case Study: Cohuna Caravan Park

This caravan park owner's plans to expand operations has been hindered due to a lack of power for additional caravan sites. The caravan park's energy supplier is unable to perform the necessary upgrades to its infrastructure, which is located on crown land, access to which has been unavailable due to red tape and bureaucracy. In the meantime, the caravan park operator has brought in their power generators to provide adequate power during peak times, at their own expense. Clearly, this is not a sustainable, long-term solution.

Where are the opportunities to partner with and support Traditional Owners and contemporary Aboriginal communities to develop tourism products?

Although Tourism Victoria produced "Victoria's Aboriginal Tourism: Development Strategy 2013-2023", Victoria is lacking in Indigenous tourism product. While this is also true of the Murray region, we have considerable potential to develop our Indigenous tourism offerings, thanks to the numerous Aboriginal communities located along the Murray. Indigenous tourism is particularly appealing to international markets, and the development of culturally sensitive and engaging Indigenous products and attractions would help to boost international visitation to the Murray region.

Industry consultations indicated a recognition of the lack of, and potential for, Indigenous product development in the region. They also highlighted the need to strengthen engagement with Indigenous communities and leaders, and the fact that as well as facing the same red tape challenges that the broader tourism sector experiences, Indigenous tourism operators and proponents may also face a form of "cultural red tape", if elders hold differing, or less supportive, views on tourism. Often the impediment to Aboriginal tourism development comes from within the community and elders who while understanding the opportunities tourism could generate are also conflicted or have higher priorities such as health, education which take precedent from a prioritization perspective.

We would also refer the review team to the Hume Aboriginal Cultural Trail strategy work we completed in partnership Tourism North East /Regional Development Victoria /Regional Development Australia which highlights challenges and opportunities in developing Aboriginal Tourism experiences in the Hume region.

Case Study: Dhanya Centre Barmah National Park

The Dhanya Centre in Barmah National Park is a real example of the challenges and barriers to the development of Aboriginal tourism experiences and product. The Dhanya Centre has sat idle for many years while government works through lease and management agreements for the Yorta Yorta to develop a tourism experience. We have worked with Yorta over several years to identify potential opportunities for Aboriginal tourism experiences on park and obtaining the lease on the Dhanya centre is pivotal to the development of these. Based on our understanding there has been two business cases developed for this project and as yet it has still not been resolved.

What role can share accommodation (such as Airbnb) play in regional communities?

Accommodation supply is an issue across most of regional Victoria. Existing accommodation stock tends to be old; renovations and refurbishments are costly, and reduce the number of rooms available for a given period; and attracting investment to build new accommodation is difficult, due to low and/or slow return-on-investment, and planning red tape.

For these reasons, the proliferation of AirBnB properties in regional areas tends to be viewed positively, by consumers and by non-accommodation operators, i.e. event organisers, attractions, tour operators, and hospitality businesses. Regional events and festivals in particular can attract more attendees if there is more accommodation available, beyond the traditional options of hotels, motels, caravans and campsites.

AirBnB and short-stay properties can be great for families, which are an important market for the Murray region. Short-stay operators who offer hosted accommodation also provide the opportunity to meet locals, which adds a different dimension to the visitor experience.

However, the presence of AirBnB in a regional destination may also be another deterrent to investment in new accommodation. There is also the risk of AirBnB properties being used as a “party houses”, and the potential for short-stay accommodation to impact long-term rental and overall residential housing supply.

In Victoria, there is currently a lack of policy guidance in relation to AirBnB. The Murray tourism region takes in 13 local governments across two states. While not necessarily advocating greater regulation, what industry does want to avoid is a patchwork of differing regulatory approaches to short-stay accommodation, particularly at local government level. As a cross-border region, establishing how short-stay accommodation is treated from a policy or regulatory perspective is just one example of where greater clarity, and parity, is required to ensure an equitable operating environment for all stakeholders.

MRT emphasises that a regulatory approach to AirBnB that is appropriate for Melbourne’s CBD is unlikely to be suitable for regional destinations where, as noted above, short-stay accommodation can play an important role in boosting accommodation supply and diversification, especially during peak periods.

We would actively encourage the government to develop a policy in relation to AirBnB to assist formalise the contribution to the industry and in doing so seek to ensure the policy in development creates a consistent approach with our state neighbours so we do not create more confusion for operators in the border regions.

Where should the state prioritise facilitating boutique and high-end accommodation and any other types of accommodation?

Some operators expressed concern at the prioritization of boutique accommodation over other types of accommodation:

“If the state is focused on supporting the development of high-end accommodation, and AirBnB continues to encroach on the market share of mid- to lower-range accommodation, where does that leave small operators, particularly those offering hosted accommodation?”

Rather than focusing solely on high-end accommodation, greater consideration must be given to the overall product mix of a destination. A critical mass of excellent restaurants, cafés, museums, galleries, and retail offerings, as well as a range of accommodation styles, is essential for the success of a destination.

We believe it is not simply the investment in the infrastructure alone, it is critical to have the marketing investment and programs in place to generate a suitable return on investment.

What are the key journey experiences for Victoria or your area that will drive visitors to come and stay?

Well-structured and promoted touring routes encourage longer trips and higher yield, taking visitors beyond main destinations and inspiring a sense of discovery. While the geography of the Murray region can be challenging, it also provides ample scope for multi-day touring, both on land and water. Canoe trails, bike trails, 4WD trails and hiking trails – all can be experienced in one region, either all in one trip, or as distinct experiences over repeat visits.

As well as river-based activities such as water sports (motorised and non-motorised), house boating, and paddle steamer cruises, the Murray region offers other nature-based activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding, and camping.

Signature events in the region include Riverboats Music Festival in Echuca-Moama, the Massive Murray Paddle, Club Marine Southern 80, Top of the Murray Classic Golf Tournament, Winter Blues Festival, and the Mallee Almond Blossom Festival. These event along with a large array of other events are a key driver for a distant region such as the Murray region and assist in overcoming some of the known barriers such as distance and lack of awareness of available experiences.

What can we do together to support greater event visitation?

Successful event delivery requires long-term planning and coordination, promotion, and smart allocation of typically limited resources. Reducing the red tape related to the planning and delivery of events is key to reducing delays and expenses. Savings can be directed to marketing efforts; to event infrastructure and facilities, or to training staff and volunteers, to ensure a better visitor experience.

Better coordination of events calendars at local, regional and state levels is also critical to ensuring that one event does not cannibalise the audience of another. It is also important for workforce planning, availability of equipment hire, and availability of resources such as St John's Ambulance, SES, and police services.

Given the high volume of events delivered in regional Victoria are generated from volunteer organisations, dedicated industry training, marketing support and resourcing would be of assistance in order to generate increased event visitation.

How can we facilitate cross-sector partnerships?

It is our experience that cross-sector partnerships tend to happen informally and in an ad hoc fashion, with some sectors more than others (e.g. business events, farming, etc.).

A whole-of government approach that recognises the importance of the visitor economy would help facilitate cross-sector and cross-portfolio engagement, and identify key opportunities for tourism businesses to connect to different sectors.

Developing thematic strategies such as Aboriginal Tourism would also assist in activating cross sector partnerships. The opportunities for sector growth will require collaboration from many agencies and parts of industry to deliver a high-quality visitor experience.

How can regions and businesses better cater to diverse visitor needs? What are the key accessibility challenges?

Addressing accessibility can be particularly challenging in a region as widespread as the Murray, and where the key attraction is a long body of water. As one example, NSW Parks and Wildlife Services have taken the initiative to create accessible canoeing experiences along the Murray. However, more needs to be done, especially as there is the growing number of retirees relocating to the Murray region, who make regular use of the tourism facilities and leisure activities available.

To inform any investment in accessible infrastructure we need to undertake further research to identify specific needs of visitors and locals alike, to ensure that the facilities, treatments and measures put in place are appropriate to consumer needs.

How can we improve visitor servicing?

First, reliable mobile connectivity, as well as fast and consistent broadband internet, are essential services that visitors have come to expect, regardless of their destination.

Second, rather than focusing on the in-person services available in a visitor center, visitor servicing should also be considered as part of the broader visitor journey mapping, particularly in the journey planning phase of a visitor's decision-making process. Visitor servicing needs to be reimaged to be customer centric and deliver on customer needs.

Third, visitor servicing is not solely the responsibility of visitor centre staff, or front-of-house personnel. It is incumbent on workers across the gamut of the visitor economy to take visitor servicing seriously and understand the role they play in contributing to a positive visitor experience.

Suggested measures to strengthen our tourism offering

1.1 Encourage the independent expert panel appointed to examine the deliverability of water in the Murray Darling Basin to also consider the impacts of the current water management practices on tourism businesses in the Murray region.

1.2 Encourage the Victorian government to review its policy regarding development of public lands and consider planning reforms that would facilitate access to crown land for the staging of approved events, and for the purposes of maintaining essential infrastructure; and that would allow for appropriate and environmentally-sensitive tourism developments adjacent to national parks.

1.3 Review status of "Victoria's Aboriginal Tourism: Development Strategy 2013-2023" and develop and implement an updated strategy that aligns with Victoria's Visitor Economy Strategy.

1.4 Connect agencies such as Aboriginal Victoria, and the Victorian Aboriginal Economic Board, Visit Victoria, the Tourism, Events & Visitor Economy division and Regional Tourism Boards to help facilitate engagement and business and tourism product development in regional areas.

1.5 In identifying locations for boutique and high-end accommodation, the state should consider carefully the visitor profile of the destination and the surrounding region, as well as the overall strength of the destination's tourism offering. Existing accommodation business should be encouraged to reinvest and not be adversely affected by the introduction of new supply.

1.6 Government develop a policy (considering cross border implications) in relation to AirBnB to ensure the sector complies with other commercial operators and creates an equal playing field.

1.7 Task Victoria's Red Tape Commissioner with investigating opportunities to reduce tourism red tape, with a focus on regional events. Areas for investigation should include land management and access; liquor licensing; and a range of local government permits associated with staging an event.

1.8. Ensure dedicated funding for regional events, which are a key driver of visitation to the Murray region.

1.9 Support research to identify accessibility infrastructure needs across the Murray.

1.10 Based on research and gap analysis, apply dedicated funding for the installation of Changing Places facilities at key attractions in regional Victoria.

1.11 Ensure continued funding of the Federal Government's Mobile Black Spot Program to progressively eliminate black spots across regional Victoria.

1.12 Develop a statewide visitor servicing strategy and invest in regional pilot programs which enhance current visitor servicing approaches.

Theme Two: Making the most of our marketing spending

- *How can we better leverage marketing spend to promote regional visitation?*
- *How can Visit Victoria, other areas of government, boards and local councils work more closely on agreed priorities?*
- *How can we ensure marketing activity is better aligned and that effort is not duplicated?*

Securing long-term funding for Visit Victoria is critical from several perspectives. It is very difficult to convince investors to invest in a region when there is no long-term marketing investment or strategy. One-year funding also severely limits the agency's ability to create long-term campaigns. The recent drip feed of regional marketing campaigns such as *Wander* and *Happy Place*, while well-executed, does not provide the consumer with consistency of message that reinforces regional destinations as the next place to visit or provide industry with time to react and leverage from these programs.

In addition to long-term marketing funding, dedicated and quarantined funds for regional tourism marketing are essential to achieving a strong, consistent and targeted promotion of regional Victoria.

Case Study: DNSW Regional Cooperative Tourism Marketing Program

DNSW through dedicated quarantined funding have a Regional Cooperative Marketing program. MRT has been able to apply to this program for the delivery and implementation of destination marketing initiatives. The funding is matched dollar for dollar and requires a minimum of \$100,000 investment by the partner which provides the solid foundation for a quality campaign. DNSW in addition to the direct financial contribution, provide access to internal resources and expertise to develop, manage and review the performance of the campaign. This type of investment provides RTB's with the ability to implement high quality campaigns which deliver on the objectives of the marketing strategy along with providing direction and amplification opportunities for the industry.

If the current budget for Visit Victoria remains unchanged in the short- to medium-term, consideration must be given to how existing funds are distributed. Regional Victoria needs consistent strategy and execution with tangible measures if we are to achieve greater leverage. Greater efficiencies could be achieved by having dedicated regional specialists within Visit Victoria who RTB's could access and work more closely on programs which will activate our industry and local government.

In addition to regional campaigns, promotional activity based around experience and product, rather than geography, would enable greater buy-in from across the state, and encourage cross-regional travel.

Case Study: Victorian Golf Tourism Strategy

The current Victorian Golf Tourism Strategy which focusses on this pillar is a good example of a thematic based regional approach. Through this strategy it is enabling three different regions (and RTB's) of Victoria to partner with Visit Victoria to raise the profile of golf and drive visitation.

This strategic approach will provide the opportunity to align investment across State, RTB and local levels which provides economy of scale and delivers consistency of message and brand to the consumer.

Within the Murray region, and the same would apply for much of regional Victoria, the biggest challenge is lack of awareness by consumers.

To overcome the challenge of awareness and appeal, we would like to highlight the following items for consideration:

- Increase investment in research and consumer trends at both macro and micro levels
- Develop a structured program of sharing key insights across all levels of the industry to influence investment
- Increase the focus on understanding both current and future visitor needs
- Invest in infrastructure projects both enabling and product specific by the public and private sector

- Continue to invest in content creation and diversification to meet needs of current and future channels
- Encourage greater alignment of hero experiences or key attributes to consumer audience targets
- Invest in both brand and tactical messaging over a sustained period of time
- Increased investment and diversification of existing programs for events beyond marketing activation
- Invest in training to address customer expectations particularly value of service
- Stronger focus of resources on packaging and bundling experiences and regions
- Greater emphasis on development of touring itineraries and opportunities
- Further development of sector programs including international for regions

Suggested measures to make the most of our marketing spending

2.1 Provide dedicated and quarantined funds for regional tourism marketing.

2.2 Establish dedicated regional specialists within Visit Victoria, working closely with industry, RTBs, and local government, to improve alignment of marketing activities, and reduce duplication of effort.

2.3 Provide quarantined event funding for RTB's to better leverage events and or distribute locally to assist events deliver enhanced and more coordinated marketing programs.

Theme Three: Supporting industry

What are the barriers to investing in regional Victoria? How could the system be improved?

There are numerous barriers to investment in regional tourism. These include:

1. Inadequate supply and quality of tourism experiences due to limited long term investment by both the public and private sector
2. Limited range and quality of the regions accommodation offer
3. Fragmented investment by the tourism industry in the region
4. Lack of long term strategic focus and vision at all levels of government
5. Significant gaps in telecommunication infrastructure, both black spot and capacity in the region
6. Red tape across all levels of government

The dismantling of Tourism Victoria led to a disconnect between the demand side agency (Visit Victoria) and the supply side group within the Department (TEVE). From an industry perspective, Tourism Victoria provided a "one-stop shop" for queries about tourism product development and investment facilitation. Under the divided structure and with the advent of Visit Victoria, and its mandate to focus on demand, this important function no longer exists.

At a local government level, planning and building permits are a source of frustration and delays for tourism businesses and potential investors in tourism infrastructure. At a state level, some planning zones and schemes restrict the ability of land and business owners to diversify their activities.

Greater understanding, across both state and local governments, of the planning requirements and the economic significance of tourism infrastructure investment would help expedite the approvals process for tourism investors and developers, significantly reducing delays and associated financial imposts.

In order to highlight the regulatory and fragmented approach within government, the following case study is provided:

Case Study: Mildura Riverfront Redevelopment

The Mildura Riverfront redevelopment is a game changing public and private sector partnership which will revitalize the riverfront and create a key activation precinct. To date across all levels of government there has been significant public infrastructure investment in stage 1 which the government should be commended. However in order to realise the vision and take advantage of this investment there is a need to unlock unrequired land for commercial development. While identified by all parties, this remains untapped while internal departments of government (Victrack and Regional Development Victoria) endeavor to resolve by who and how this land will be developed. As we understand Victrack wish to develop this as a commercial project and are requesting funding from Regional Development Victoria to fund site rehabilitation. This is a clear example of the need for government to take a whole of government approach to achieving the intended outcome for the project and facilitate investment.

A second key example which highlights the need for a more streamlined and concierge investment service is a significant tourism development adjoining the Barmah National park known as Yielima Station.

The current lack of both financial assistance programs and or access to a centralised investment unit within government who could project manage these types of developments would remove the barriers currently hindering these types of developments.

Case Study: Yielima Station Resort Development estimated \$50 - \$80 million depending on final development

The Yielima Station resort development is a vision of three local land owners to create a resort precinct consisting of various accommodation styles and standards, education / interpretative experience, Aboriginal experience, retail and food and beverage opportunities. The land adjoins the Barmah National park and would provide an ideal link and access for visitors to take advantage of the natural environment. The vision was developed with the intent to create local employment and economic opportunities to assist with the decline in the dairy industry.

The landowners while having some experience in commercial development, have not previously developed tourism experiences. They are clear with their intent which is to have a tourism planning overlay secured on the land so they can then seek joint venture or private investment opportunities to develop the precinct. The local government is supportive of the concept and it is identified in the Murray Destination Management Plan. Based on current estimates it will cost over \$300,000 to go through the zoning process which is not guaranteed to be successful, the majority of costs are reported to be liaison with various government departments and authorities which the matter would need to be referred.

A further recommendation to assist remove barriers to investment is the implementation of a dedicated tourism development funding program. Based on the success of similar programs in other states we would strongly urge the government to establish a grant program to unlock private sector investment.

We believe a grant program assists in both removing a level of risk for proponents along with fast tracking potential developments resulting in a more sustainable industry and better visitor experience.

By way of example, DNSW have consistently invested in the Regional Tourism Product Development Program which provides grants matched dollar for dollar to business currently up to \$150,000.

We have experienced the benefit of this program within the Murray region with several businesses being the recipients of this grant. Having the grant on offer stimulated a number of investments which would not otherwise have occurred, even when the applicant was not successful in securing a grant. The scheme was an incentive for the planning work to be undertaken (which would not have occurred without a grant) and enabled operators to secure investment through financial institutions to implement projects. For those who secured grant funding, in most instances it resulted in additional investment being made in projects.

The grant funding needs to be flexible to ensure it can contribute towards for example accommodation upgrades and refurbishment as this remains a critical issue for operators to fund and as a result often results in a very long drawn out process with 1-2 rooms being upgraded per year. A small grant can see this work completed quickly and increase viability of operators who then reinvest in the future.

Case Study

Case Study: Cadell on the Murray

Cadell on the Murray was a typical 26 room leased motel operating with aging infrastructure, limited opportunities for growth and challenges on retaining average room rates. In working with the leasee, it was clear the rooms required refurbishment just to retain room rates and occupancy levels let alone grow the business. The leasee at best planned to implement an upgrade program which could see all rooms upgraded over 10 year period and would not necessarily improve the sustainability of the business.

Through the DNSW Regional Tourism Product Development grant this enabled exploration into how they could grow the business along with achieving refurbishment. They identified an opportunity with new markets through the development of a small meeting room and secured the grant to assist deliver this. As a result of the grant, the leasee also secured co investment from the owners of the motel along with access to finance from a commercial lender. The property has grown significantly with 1-2 meetings a week, increased occupancy over the slow winter period along achieving an increase in room rates.

How can we use education and training, including TAFE, to address barriers impacting staffing of regional businesses?

Tourism employment now accounts for 20 per cent of all jobs in the Murray region (approx. 25,000 FTE equivalent)¹. But despite the economic significance of tourism to the state and to the region, there is still a lack of value placed on tourism as a career of choice. There is also a long-standing need to better align TAFE education and qualifications with industry needs.

In a competitive and highly mobile labour market, and with record low unemployment in regional areas, retaining skilled, high quality workers is difficult and expensive. Today's visitor economy is also a much broader church than the tourism sector of 30 years ago, when tourism based courses and qualifications began to emerge. Skills in the areas of digital marketing, media and communications, business, and accounting, are all in-demand within the visitor economy; along with people skills such as customer service, and stakeholder engagement. A greater focus on transferable skills and qualifications, taught within the context of the visitor economy, would provide students with a wider skill set and broader range of career and job opportunities within the tourism industry.

We believe there are a number of opportunities to further enhance the current training framework which include:

- Invest in a business program for start-up enterprises
- Develop business mentoring programs to assist in addressing the skills gaps and realise unfilled potential
- Create an environment which foster innovation and entrepreneurial spirit
- Focus on building leadership capabilities and human capital
- Investigate the opportunity to increase the level of coordination across government agencies to develop a centralised training calendar
- Review the funding criteria currently in place in tourism and business related formal training programs across government
- Consider linking minimum training levels and benchmarks to potential government funding or access to programs
- Develop stronger partnerships between industry and educational institutions to ensure training meets industry needs

¹ Source: Murray Region Destination Management Plan.

What support does industry require to address the challenges and opportunities that technology and disruptors present?

Online travel agencies (OTAs) and disruptors such as AirBnB and AirBnB Experiences place increasing commercial pressures on the tourism industry. In the face of such competition, having business basics firmly in place (e.g. website that is search engine optimised and has seamless booking functionality) and executing core activities well (delivering memorable visitor experiences, and offering excellent customer service) is imperative.

In order for this to occur, we recommend their needs to be flexible training and education delivery systems in place to meet industry requirements. We would also like to see greater leadership from the State in relation to research and strategy which will make it easier to communicate the benefits to industry and actively encourage upskilling and or adoption of programs to take advantage of the opportunities.

A simple example for tourism businesses in the Murray region, there is a lack of parity for access to basic marketing resources such as the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW), the national platform for digital tourism information on Australia, which enables businesses to increase their digital distribution and online exposure. In New South Wales, tourism operators are able to list on ATDW for free as this is subsidised by Destination NSW. This is not the case in Victoria or most other states. As a result, Victoria's tourism business listings are under-represented on this national database, and business not listed are at a disadvantage, as listing on the Visit Victoria consumer website along with the Visit the Murray sites are drawn from ATDW listings. This issue severely impedes operators ability to leverage marketing opportunities MRT delivers as we also draw from ATDW as do our cooperative campaigns with DNSW.

Suggested measures to support industry

3.1 Re-establish a tourism investment advisory and facilitation function as a single point of contact for industry, and to coordinate between relevant government agencies and departments, such as Visit Victoria, Regional Development Victoria, Invest Victoria and Global Victoria.

3.2 As part of the Red Tape Commissioner's Investigation into Tourism Red Tape (see Measure 1.6), and in support of Measure 1.2, include a review on planning and building approvals for tourism infrastructure.

3.3 Establish a dedicated long-term Regional Tourism Product Development funding program to stimulate private sector investment in product development and or renewal.

3.4 Provide funding support (full subsidy) for ATDW listings for Victorian tourism businesses.

3.5 Undertake review of existing investment in training and mentoring services to identify opportunities for better utilisation and provision of flexible training delivery.

3.6 Provision of dedicated funding to the RTB's for training would enable specialist trainers to be in region working directly with operators to build skills and capacity.

Theme Four: Enhancing Regional Tourism Boards

- ***Which governance structures are the most effective for boards to achieve outcomes for regional tourism?***
- ***How can we best help different sized councils (such as regional cities and small rural councils) to leverage tourism as part of their broader development goals?***
- ***Are there changes we can make to boards (geographic or otherwise) that would increase local government and industry buy-in?***

As a cross-border region covering a large geographic area, MRT has arguably the most complex governance structure and operating environment of any RTB. MRT benefits from a cohesive and supportive board, and strong local government collaboration, and continues to perform strongly, making the most of its limited resources.

MRT demonstrates that a fit for purpose approach to regional tourism boards, rather than a universal, one-size fits-all approach, can deliver better outcomes. While this may be borne out of necessity, with the cross-border circumstances of the Murray region, the river itself is the strong and unifying brand; and this may well provide a clue to the question of what differentiates the strong performing RTBs from those that perform less well.

Further effort could be gained through even modest increases in funding, to support organisational initiatives such as centralising functions (e.g. digital marketing support) that are replicated across LGAs/LTOs throughout the region, and which could be delivered independent of location.

Nevertheless, the best way to ensure long-term success is to provide security of tenure, and an increase in long-term investment and resourcing for Regional Tourism Boards.

If the Murray Region is to maximise its contribution to the State Governments long term objective of growing overnight visitor expenditure then the dollars and resources which already exist throughout the Region will need to be more efficiently and effectively coordinated.

For example, in the Murray Region (both sides of the river), our LGAs invest around \$7 million in tourism every year. We have also estimated, conservatively, that tourism businesses in the region invest a further \$5 million in to marketing activities (2,500 tourism businesses spending \$2,000 each).

\$12 million more efficiently and effectively coordinated would have a significant impact on addressing at least some of the barriers preventing the region from achieving greater tourism success.

However, before more efficient and effective coordination of regional dollars and resources can take place the people who hold the 'purse strings' in region - LGAs and industry - need to be convinced there is a better way for them to invest their dollars and resources. That requires leadership, which in turn requires resources.

Resources to:

- secure investment for the development of quality tourism experiences and infrastructure
- increase awareness and appeal of destinations, products, experiences and events
- enhance skills and capacity of tourism industry participants
- facilitate and coordinate tourism activities within the region

In short, the right level of resources to not just identify where change is needed but why change is needed and how change can benefit both individual stakeholders and the region as a whole is required.

In the case of the MRT, we believe we have a strong corporate governance structure. We also believe our organisation has demonstrated strong leadership which is evidenced by the positive relationships we have with the regions operators, tourism associations and local government. Through the research we have undertaken and our DMP, we have a depth of understanding of the region's supply and demand issues. And through our industry training programs we have begun to address some of the supply side issues which exist and are critical to the growth of our industry.

What we do not have are sufficient resources to take our level of leadership and regional collaboration to a higher level without further investment.

A better resourced MRT could build on the current model to address major strategic issues, investment attraction opportunities industry capacity through skills development and product development to meet key supply and demand gaps.

MRT would suggest that the other critical consideration in determining the ideal enhanced RTB structure for Victoria is dependent on two key fundamental areas. These we believe are, clearly defining a RTBs role and responsibilities and secondly have this agreed taking into account the expectations of all relevant stakeholders – RTB itself, State Government, State Tourism Organisations, Local Government, Local Tourism Association, and industry operators.

By way of example, below is the current overview of expectations of an RTB by many:

- Management of RTB membership ranging from Local Government and Local Tourism Organisations /Associations to industry associations and tourism operators
- Development and implementation of Destination Management Plans
- Development of destination and regional marketing plans
- Development of industry development strategies
- Development of the RTBs business plan
- Stakeholder communication and reporting including the State Tourism Organisation
- Tourism industry engagement workshops and networking functions
- Communication and partnerships with other RTBs
- Visitor information services, which in some cases includes managing the operations of Visitor Information Centre's (VIC)
- Product, Experience and Event development projects
- Whole of Government consultation
- Assistance in accessing and/or managing Federal and State government funding programs
- Public Relations development and management
- Hosting famils to their region
- Tourism research analysis
- Keeping abreast of relevant technology developments
- Review whole of state and specific region visitation and visitor expenditure trends and communicate to regional stakeholders
- Manage natural disaster response strategies

With the breadth of expectations listed above, it is little wonder there is performance issues across the state of RTB's. At this point in time, we are not sufficiently resourced to deliver all of these responsibilities, or would we consider some of the items to fall in the remit of MRT. Until this is agreed at state level the region is not in a position to fulfil the full potential of our role to help maximize the performance of tourism in the Murray Region.

4.1 Retain the Regional Tourism Board Structure of MRT

4.2 Provide security of tenure and an increase in long term investment and resourcing for Regional Tourism Boards

4.3 State government invest in the total cost of regional structures such as Regional Tourism Boards along with strategic development initiatives

4.4 Clearly define the role and responsibilities of Regional Tourism Boards and the various components of the industry more broadly, ensure this is clearly communicated within all areas of Government and the industry.

Theme Five: Better coordinating effort

- *How do we best coordinate the work of different actors across regional tourism? What are the most important points of collaboration?*
- *Are we allocating resources efficiently? Could we better coordinate investment in regional tourism?*
- *How could a state-wide strategy or Destination Management Plan best connect to and leverage local strengths and priorities?*

A state-wide Destination Management Plan, which builds on Regional Destination Management Plans, would help identify product and infrastructure gaps. It should be the product of a collaboration between Visit Victoria, TEVE, Parks Victoria, RTBs, and industry.

To ensure a whole-of-government approach, a state-wide DMP should also be shared widely, within the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions; and also with the Department of Transport; the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning; and the Department of Treasury and Finance; the Department of Economic Development; and with agencies, such as the Victorian Planning Authority.

In the same way that the Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy galvanised the government's efforts to work with industry to achieve the targets of visitor expenditure of \$36.5 billion and sector employment of 320,700 jobs, a state-wide Destination Management Plan that included regional targets for visitation and spend, would help concentrate industry efforts, government resources, and provide a basis for more transparent accountability.

Industry development is a key area which could be delivered far more efficiently than is currently the case. Each RTB delivers an industry development program that typically covers topics such as SEO, social media marketing, customer service, yield management, or dealing with OTAs. This function could be centralised through an industry body such as the Victoria Tourism Industry Council and rolled out to all regions (following the QTIC model). This would free up RTB resources to focus on regional marketing activities.

Additionally, if we are to galvanise the industry and local government, it will be a requirement to provide long term funding agreements to Visit Victoria. The current situation of annualised funding does not allow for clear strategies to be developed and these to be filtered down to industry throughout regional Victoria. This is a clear impediment within the current structure and one which we would advocate for change.

There should also be a state-wide Industry Development Plan to address skills gaps, ensure that training and education offerings are aligned with industry requirements, and provide more coordinated delivery of industry programs such as the Quality Tourism Framework, the Victorian Tourism Awards, and ATDW training.

A more ambitious initiative would be to establish a Regional Tourism Centre of Excellence, bringing together multi-disciplinary education providers to deliver a coordinated and holistic training program that meets the needs of the modern visitor economy.

The Tourism, Events and Visitor Economy (TEVE) group in the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions is under-utilised. The research and data collated and analysed by the team is highly valuable to industry. The TEVE team should be encouraged and empowered to conduct more stakeholder engagement activities, such as regional seminars and webinars, to better communicate this information to industry.

From our perspective, the review needs to explore the whole of government approach and consideration of investment which distinctly falls in two streams being, the government has a responsibility to invest in growing the Victorian visitor economy (government obligations) and the second being, the investment of Victorian government to achieve the best return on investment (commercial and measurable).

If we look in the first instance at the idea of government obligation, then we would suggest an allocation of funding and adequate resourcing be made to assist in growing the visitor economy and could include such areas of:

- Funding operations of RTB's
- Research and market intelligence
- Whole of state destination appeal and awareness campaign framework and funding for regional campaigns
- Event development and procurement
- Investment attraction
- Workforce planning and development
- Strategic planning
- Further enhance the transition of the delivery model from a centralised model via Visit Victoria to a collaborative joint model with the RTB's working across whole of government framework. An example is the opportunity for private businesses to access government grant assistance for infrastructure upgrades which may not be facilitated via Visit Victoria
- Sharing of information and research in key areas where MRT has 'knowledge' gaps but has limited capacity to acquire this 'knowledge' on its own. Touring /Drive Tourism is one such example which is impeding investment.
- In the area of product development, information and insights on global and national trends to assist with genuine advancement of world-class experiences for the current and future visitor.
- Grow capacity of a dedicated government area to focus on providing strategic advice and guidance required to make informed decisions, and implement in partnership, plans to achieve the strategic goals. Visit Victoria will continue to be critical to growing the visitor economy through demand activities, however strong leadership is needed to continue to ensure Victoria strengthens our national position.
- Investment in strategic planning and development projects which often are not considered in the current funding program
- Industry training programs, within the Victorian government lies a great deal of expertise which through a collaborative program could be integrated into existing training programs in regions
- Investment which enables infrastructure to provide the opportunity to create and or refresh product offering in the region.
- Continue to invest in the development of sector plans. As an example, the work Visit Victoria has done in the Victorian Golf Tourism Strategy is to be commended.
- Continue to provide investment in regional projects and services which encourage regional collaboration and or joint resourcing of programs.
- Instigate a review into the constraints of current awards and penalty rate structure
- Develop a whole of state approach to increasing the community understanding of the value and importance of Tourism to the state of Victoria

All of the above is an investment in the long-term growth of the visitor economy and falls within the remit of government.

Suggested measures to better coordinate efforts

5.1 Develop a state-wide Destination Management Plan, based on industry and government collaboration; ensure whole-of-government understanding and cooperation in the implementation of the DMP.

5.2 Establish long term funding commitments for Visit Victoria to ensure the objectives of the Destination Management Plan, particular Regional strategic objectives are achieved in collaboration with industry.

5.3 Develop and implement a state-wide Industry Development Plan, in conjunction with industry, TAFEs and tertiary institutes.

5.4 Establish an exploratory committee of tourism industry leaders and tourism education specialists to investigate the feasibility of, and options for, establishing a Regional Tourism Centre of Excellence.

5.5 Provide greater support and resourcing for TEVE to make better use of the valuable research and data analysis undertaken by this team.

Concluding comments

Through participating in the Regional Tourism Review, and having conducted our own extensive consultations to inform this submission, it is clear that the government has a sound understanding of the deficiencies and challenges in the current government and industry structures.

It is also clear that while budget may currently be limited, there are other methods for tackling many of the problems that have been identified, through organisational re-structure; greater engagement and communication between industry and government; and policy and regulatory reform. Importantly, the prompt implementation of any recommendations and reforms must deliver on the intent of growing and supporting regional tourism in Victoria.

MRT appreciates the opportunity to contribute to this important process for the future of regional tourism in Victoria and look forward to the outcomes of the Review.

For further information regarding this submission, please contact Mark Francis, CEO, Murray Regional Tourism via email ceo@mrtb.com.au or mobile 0429 509 455.

B.19.110 DISSOLUTION OF ALAN GARDEN NETBALL CENTRE SPECIAL COMMITTEE

Responsible Officer:	Director Development and Planning
File Number:	S11-20-03
Attachments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Letter from Alan Garden Committee of Management to Council.2 Letter Central Murray Football Netball League3 Letter Swan Hill Football Netball Club4 Letter Swan Hill City and District Netball Association5 Letter Tyntynder Football Netball Club6 Minutes from November 2018 Alan Garden Netball Centre Special Committee meeting (revised in February 2019)7 Summary of income and expenses8 Bank Reconciliation9 Instrument of Delegation10 Minutes from 13 June 2017 Alan Garden Netball Centre Special Committee meeting

Declarations of Interest:

Heather Green - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

This report is to advise Council of the Alan Garden Netball Centre Special Committee's request to dissolve the Committee of Management.

Discussion

The Alan Garden Netball Precinct in Swan Hill is the municipalities' premier netball sporting facility. The facility boasts eight netball courts (resurfaced in 2014), netball change rooms, a kiosk and meeting space.

The precinct is the home of netball for the Swan Hill Football Netball Club, Tyntynder Football Netball Club and Swan Hill City and District Netball Association (SHCDNA). The precinct is also used by other stakeholders including schools and for key events such as a night series competition, interleague try outs and matches.

Alan Garden Netball Centre Special Committee (COM) was established in 1986 and is governed by Section 86 of the Local Government Act. The current committee members include representatives from the following:

- Swan Hill Football Netball Club
- Tyntynder Football Netball Club
- Swan Hill City and District Netball Association
- Central Murray Football Netball League

- Council – Cr Jeffery

A Council staff representative attends meetings intermittently in an advisory role and to keep abreast of committee undertakings and decisions.

Over the past two years, the committee has struggled with a number of issues including lack of continuity of members and difficulty in identifying new members. Added to this, there has been an increase in compliance requirements resulting in members needing a higher level of skills, knowledge, expertise, time and commitment; which has proved challenging.

The committee is suffering volunteer fatigue and after much consideration and consultation has decided to request Council to dissolve the Alan Garden Netball Special Committee.

Instrument of Delegation

The action required to dissolve the committee is outlined in Section 6 – Dissolution, in the Alan Garden Special Committee Instrument of Delegation (attached). It states;

6. DISSOLUTION

6.1 The committee may at any meeting, agree to disband and hand over its responsibilities to Council.

6.2 If the committee does not fulfill its obligations as laid down by the Instrument of Delegation, the Council may disband the Committee upon notice to the effect being given by Council to the Committee members.

6.3 The Chairman shall, in either case, within one month arrange for:

- a) An audited financial statement to be prepared and presented to Council
- b) The committee's bank account to be closed and the balance to be paid to Council
- c) All keys to the building formerly under the management of the committee to be handed over to Council.

The COM has provided a letter to Council advising of its decision to disband (attached). The committee has also provided the following documentation to Council;

- A copy of the November 2018 minutes; which were amended in February 2019 to accurately reflect the motion to dissolve the committee (attached).
- Letters of support from Tyntynder Football Netball Club, Swan Hill Football Netball Club, Swan Hill City and District Netball Association and Central Murray Football Netball League (attached).

Swan Hill City and District Netball Association (SHCDNA) request for reimbursement of lighting project contribution.

The committee has requested that Council uphold an agreement between COM and the SHCDNA to provide ten years' usage of the lighting infrastructure installed in

2016, at no charge, in recognition of the SHCDNA financial commitment to the lighting project; (a grant project between Council, the State Government and SHCDNA).

According to Council documents, the SHCDNA committed approximately \$40,000 to the project. The COM has absorbed the SHCDNA's lighting costs since the lights were installed in 2016 (no charge for lighting usage).

While it has been the practice of the COM to provide free lighting to SHCDNA for the past three years, it does not appear that any discussion took place regarding how this would be funded (E.g. funded by other user group hire fees) or for what length of time.

Agreeing to this request will result in Council funding the SHCDNA use of lighting at the netball precinct until 2026 essentially, more than repaying the association its original financial contribution to the grant project. It is estimated that on average it will cost approximately \$6,000 per annum for lighting running costs and capital maintenance; not including unplanned maintenance and globe replacement.

Request for use of storage cupboards

The COM has also requested that the primary user groups (Swan Hill Football Netball Club, Tyntynder Football Netball Club and Swan Hill and City District Netball Association) are provided continued access to storage cupboards inside the netball building and storage shed, as per current arrangements.

This arrangement works well and there is no reason to discontinue this practice. An agreement with the clubs will be put in place to formalise this arrangement.

Fees and Charges

In addition, the COM has advocated that the current Council fees and charges for the Centre do not increase beyond the current user groups' capacity to pay. Council's fees and charges are expected to be reassessed annually and will be presented to Council for adoption as part of fees and charges schedule.

Centre Management

Netball court bookings and invoicing will be undertaken by Council's Splatt Street main reception office. This will ensure consistency in the hiring of Council's assets and facilities.

It is reasonable that centre bookings, invoicing and key/lighting management will be coordinated through Council reception; as are all other recreation reserves.

Consultation

Committee members consulted with their individual home team clubs (Swan Hill Football Netball Club, Tyntynder Football Netball Club, Swan Hill City and District Netball Association, Central Murray Football Netball Association) and gained their support to dissolve the committee.

Council officers have had preliminary discussions with user group representatives regarding establishing an advisory committee at the Centre that may meet twice per year (before netball season and end of netball season). Users are supportive of this proposal.

Financial Implications

2017 Netball Season Summary of Income and Expenses – (See attached)

In the 2017 year, the Committee had a trading profit of \$2,579.05. This is based on \$10,206.20 income from hire fees and \$7,627.15 running expenses.

The Committees bank statement indicates there is \$12,255.40 remaining in their bank account, which has been dispersed to Council.

These funds will be utilised to manage the Centre operations.

Social Implications

- Netball provides residents the opportunity to experience personal achievement, enhanced self-esteem, social co-operation, maximum participation and skill development in a safe and welcoming environment.
- Sport also provides health and wellbeing benefits such as:
 - Development of motor skills and confidence.
 - Physical fitness.
 - Reduction of health issues, such as childhood obesity, through physically active involvement.
 - Fun for all participants, regardless of ability.
 - Increased junior participation and life-long involvement in an active lifestyle.

Economic Implications

Netball activities including game days and events such as regional championships and interleague matches, attract visitors to Swan Hill from outside the municipality. This provides positive economic flow on effects to hosting Clubs and local businesses.

Environmental Implications

Nil

Risk Management Implications

The risk will be reduced if the Centre is managed by Council.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Community enrichment - Develop a community with a sense of pride and responsibility/ownership that strives to achieve its aspirations.

Options

That Council:

1. Dissolve the Section 86 Alan Garden Netball Centre Special Committee.
2. Not dissolve the Section 86 Alan Garden Netball Centre Special Committee and call for new members.

Recommendations

That Council:

1. **Dissolve the Section 86 Alan Garden Netball Centre Special Committee.**
2. **Provide Swan Hill City and District Netball Association with free lighting usage for two years, concluding at the end of Netball Season - 30 September 2021.**
3. **Provide the Swan Hill Football Netball Club, Tyntynder Football Netball Club and Swan Hill and City District Netball Association with continued access to storage cupboards inside the netball building and storage shed.**
4. **Determine user fees as part of the annual budget process.**

Chief Executive Officer John McLinden
Swan Hill Rural City Council
council@swanhill.vic.gov.au

January 16, 2019

Dear Mr McLinden

I write to advise Swan Hill Rural City Council that members of the Alan Garden Reserve Committee of Management voted unanimously at the November 12 meeting to dissolve the committee and hand responsibility for managing the facility back to council, as provided under Section 6.1 of the instrument of delegation.

This decision was not taken lightly and follows a process of extensive consultation with our major stakeholder groups which have provided written support for the move.

There are a number of reasons for taking this step.

- The committee is expected to carry out a long list of duties, which include: managing the netball centre to provide a first-class facility, promoting recreational activities to the community, providing a diverse range of quality activities at minimal cost to the users, raising sufficient funds to maintain the centre and maximising use of the centre.
- Last year's budget process showed the committee would have to raise at least \$25,000 a year to properly maintain and improve the courts.
- The committee's only source of income is court hire fees, mostly paid by Swan Hill Football Netball Club, Tyntynder Football Netball Club and Swan Hill City and District Netball Association. Fees received in 2017 amounted to \$10,200, minus expenses of \$7627, which left a profit of \$2579.
- The committee is made up of volunteers who lack the resources – including expertise and time – to undertake further income-raising activities.
- Committee members are of the opinion that they are no longer able to properly carry out the increasingly onerous list of duties required by council.
- In May 2018, the council adopted a Recreation Reserves Masterplan which outlines major changes to the Alan Garden Reserve as part of the redevelopment of the Swan Hill Showgrounds in coming years.

We think this is the right time to dissolve the committee and hand responsibility for managing the netball complex back to the council. We are confident this would result in a better service to the community, that council would continue to consult with the current major user groups, and that fees would not be increased beyond their capacity to pay.

On behalf of our stakeholders, we ask that the four groups be given continued access to storage in the building and shed. The committee also asks that council uphold our existing agreement with Swan Hill City and District Netball Association to provide 10 years' usage at no charge, in recognition of the club's significant financial contribution to the cost of the 2016 lighting upgrade.

Attached is a copy of the minutes from the November meeting and the letters and emails of support from Swan Hill City and District Netball Association, Central Murray Football Netball League, Swan Hill Football Netball Club and Tyntynder Football Netball Club.

We await your instructions on the next steps that are required to formalise and finalise these matters.

Kind regards



Sandra Godwin
President/Chairperson
Alan Garden Reserve Netball Centre
Committee of Management



Central Murray Football & Netball League Inc.

Worksafe AFL Victoria Country

Registration No: A0059256U | All correspondence Regional Administration Centre Manager Sheridan Harrop
PO Box 376 Swan Hill 3585 | Mob: 0408 807 325 | Email: gm@aflcm.com.au

Monday 22nd October 2018

To Whom it May Concern,

Re: Alan Garden Committee of Management

I am writing on behalf of Central Murray Football Netball League (CMFNL) to offer my support to the Alan Garden Committee of Management on their request to disband their committee at the end of 2018 and refer all management of the Alan Garden Reserve back to the Swan Hill Rural City Council.

CMFNL understand the reasons behind the request to disband by its members and believe it to be the best solution moving forward.

CMFNL though wish to maintain their cupboard at the facility for their use throughout the year as well as continue to hold keys to the facilities. However, CMFNL wish to add a lighting key to the current set as well as have access to casual user's code for their annual bookings.

If you need any more information, please don't hesitate to call me.

Kind Regards
Sheridan Harrop
Regional Administration Centre Manager
AFL Central Murray
0408 807 325
gm@aflcm.com.au



----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Secretary Swan Hill Football Netball Club** <secretary@swanhillfnc.com>

Date: Sat, 6 Oct. 2018, 10:11 am

Subject: RE: Request for comment on the future of the Alan Garden Reserve Committee of Management

To: Alan Garden <alangardenreserve@gmail.com>

Hi Sandra,

Many apologies for the long delay in responding.

The Swan Hill Football Netball Club have met and discussed this issue and are in favour of dissolving the current committee and returning management of the netball centre to the Swan Hill Rural City Council.

Please let me know if you need anything further.

Regards,

Carl Hufer

Administration

Swan Hill Football Netball Club

Email: secretary@swanhillfnc.com

Telephone/Mob 0427 227 144

Postal address: P.O. Box 17, SWAN HILL 3585

From: Alan Garden <alangardenreserve@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, 13 June 2018 9:39 PM

To: Tyntynder FC <tyntynderfc@bigpond.com>; swanhillnetball@gmail.com;
secretary@swanhillfnc.com

Subject: Request for comment on the future of the Alan Garden Reserve Committee of Management

The Secretary

The Alan Garden Reserve Committee of Management is investigating a proposal to wind up the committee and return management of the Netball Centre in High Street to the Swan Hill Rural City Council.

There are a number of reasons for taking this step.

- The committee is expected to carry out a list of duties, which include: managing the netball centre to provide a first-class facility, promoting recreational activities to the community, providing a diverse range of quality activities at minimal cost to the users, raising sufficient funds to maintain the centre and maximising use of the centre.
- Last year's budget process showed the committee would have to raise at least \$25,000 a year to properly maintain and improve the courts.
- The committee's only source of income is court hire fees, mostly paid by Swan Hill Football Netball Club, Tyntynder Football Netball Club and Swan Hill City and District Netball Association. Fees received in 2017 amounted to \$10,200, minus expenses of \$7627, which left a profit of \$2579.
- The committee is made up of volunteers who lack the resources – including expertise and time – to undertake further income-raising activities on top of the volunteer work they already do on behalf of their clubs.
- Committee members are of the opinion that they are no longer able to properly carry out the increasingly onerous list of duties required by council.
- In May, the council adopted a Recreation Reserves Masterplan which outlines major changes to the Alan Garden Reserve as part of the redevelopment of the Swan Hill Showgrounds in coming years.

We think this is the right time to dissolve the committee and hand responsibility for managing the netball complex back to the council.

We are confident this would result in a better service to the community and that council would not increase fees beyond the reach of the current major user groups.

We have asked your representatives on the committee to seek feedback from you about the proposal to dissolve the committee of management.

Please also let us know if there are any "rights" you would like us to try to negotiate with council.

We will be asking that clubs be given continued access to storage at the facility and that Swan Hill City and District Netball Association's contribution to the cost of the new lights be recognised with a commitment to 10 years' usage at no charge.

We would appreciate your response by July 20.

Kind regards,

Sandra Godwin
President
Alan Garden Reserve Committee of Management

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Tyntynder FC** <tyntynderfc@bigpond.com>
Date: Thu, 4 Oct. 2018, 4:32 pm
Subject: AGR COM to be Dissolved - TFNC formal response.
To: Leanne Bibby <sldgj@hotmail.com.au>, <alangardenreserve@gmail.com>
Cc: Michael Crowe <microdevelopments@gmail.com>, Caitlin Bartalotta <caitlin.wattie@gmail.com>

Hi Leanne & Sandra,

CC: Michael Crowe (TFNC President) Caitlin Bartalotta (Vice President).

Sorry I haven't followed through on this as previously discussed.

I have searched archive email files as was certain we replied directly at the time, however I cannot locate that correspondence.

It was unanimously voted **in favour** to dissolve COM and consequent closure of netball canteen facilities.

This was decision was reached during TFNC's general committee meeting - **Tues 19th June 7:00pm**

Regards,

Scott Zambelli

Club Secretary

Tyntynder Football Netball Club

Address: Pritchard Street, Swan Hill Vic 3585

Mail: P.O. Box 431 Swan Hill 3585

Mob: 0438332824

Email: tyntynderfc@bigpond.com.au



From: Tyntynder FC [mailto:tyntynderfc@bigpond.com]

Sent: Thursday, 14 June 2018 8:34 AM

Subject: AGR COM Proposal

Discussion topic @ TFNC committee meeting.

Next Meeting – Tues JUNE 19th (put in your diaries/calendar) 7:00pm

From: Alan Garden [mailto:alangardenreserve@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, 13 June 2018 9:39 PM

To: Tyntynder FC <tyntynderfc@bigpond.com>; swanhillnetball@gmail.com; secretary@swanhillfnc.com

Subject: Request for comment on the future of the Alan Garden Reserve Committee of Management

The Secretary,

The Alan Garden Reserve Committee of Management is investigating a proposal to wind up the committee and return management of the Netball Centre in High Street to the Swan Hill Rural City Council.

There are a number of reasons for taking this step.

- The committee is expected to carry out a list of duties, which include: managing the netball centre to provide a first-class facility, promoting recreational activities to the community, providing a diverse range of quality activities at minimal cost to the users, raising sufficient funds to maintain the centre and maximising use of the centre.
- Last year's budget process showed the committee would have to raise at least \$25,000 a year to properly maintain and improve the courts.
- The committee's only source of income is court hire fees, mostly paid by Swan Hill Football Netball Club, Tyntynder Football Netball Club and Swan Hill City and District Netball Association. Fees received in 2017 amounted to \$10,200, minus expenses of \$7627, which left a profit of \$2573.
- The committee is made up of volunteers who lack the resources – including expertise and time – to undertake further income-raising activities on top of the volunteer work they already do on behalf of their clubs.
- Committee members are of the opinion that they are no longer able to properly carry out the increasingly onerous list of duties required by council.
- In May, the council adopted a Recreation Reserves Masterplan which outlines major changes to the Alan Garden Reserve as part of the redevelopment of the Swan Hill Showgrounds in coming years.

We think this is the right time to dissolve the committee and hand responsibility for managing the netball complex back to the council.

We are confident this would result in a better service to the community and that council would not increase fees beyond the reach of the current major user groups.

We have asked your representatives on the committee to seek feedback from you about the proposal to dissolve the committee of management.

Please also let us know if there are any "rights" you would like us to try to negotiate with council.

We will be asking that clubs be given continued access to storage at the facility and that Swan Hill City and District Netball Association's contribution to the cost of the new lights be recognised with a commitment to 10 years' usage at no charge.

We would appreciate your response by July 20.

Kind regards,

Sandra Godwin
President
Alan Garden Reserve Committee of Management



Swan Hill City & District Netball Association
PO Box 21
Swan Hill
3585
October 8, 2018

To the Swan Hill Rural City Council,

I write on behalf of the Swan Hill City & District Netball Association regarding the proposal to dissolve the Alan Garden Reserve Committee of Management. Swan Hill City & District Netball Association have discussed this at our committee meetings and we are happy to support the COM in their decision to dissolve.

Over the years we have found it more and more difficult to get enough volunteers to help run our own club. Our families are working more on a full-time basis and struggle to help their children get to netball, let alone giving up their time to volunteer on our committee and another committee to run the Alan Garden Netball Reserve.

Our City & District representatives on the COM Alan Garden have also found that we lack the knowledge and expertise required to complete some tasks, such as creating user hire agreements. Those of us who volunteer do it so our children can play netball, not because we want to manage a netball court facility. In some cases we are required to chase money from other people and organisations in our community, which is very difficult for volunteers who don't feel they have the support of the council.

We understand and share the frustration of the Alan Garden COM after members do the research and groundwork needed to make decisions, only to have the Council indicate it's not up to their standards and has to be redone. There are a number of ongoing issues which have not been resolved to the satisfaction of either Council or the COM.

While City & District is supportive of the COM proposal to be dissolved, we request that Council honour our agreement with the COM for:

- Use of the lights at Alan Garden Reserve at no charge for a period of 10 years, in recognition of the club's contribution of \$46,920.50 towards the 2016 lighting upgrade project.
- Access to storage cupboards in the building and the shed
- A contribution towards court hire fees for the 2018 season.

We look forward to discussing this further and moving ahead towards 2019.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Barbara Perry".

Barb Perry
President
Swan Hill City & District Netball Association

Minutes General Meeting of the Alan Garden Netball Centre Committee of Management

DATE: 12/11/2018

Present: Leanne Bibby (TFNC), Kelly Atkinson (SHFNC), Barb Perry (SHC&DNA) Sandra Godwin (SHCDNA), Naomi Dullard (SHFNC), Sally Hammet (SHC&DNA) incoming representative

Apologies: Sheridan Harrop (AFLCM), Jayne Hatcher (TFNC), Meagan Monk (SHRCC)

Moved: Sandra Godwin **Seconded:** Barb Perry

Minutes of previous meeting held Monday 8th October 2018

Minutes distributed and read. Typo corrected.

Moved that the minutes be accepted

Moved: Kelly Atkinson **Seconded:** Naomi Dullard

Business Arising:

- **Canteen:**

Inspection: Awaiting confirmation from SHRCC and/or Canteen Manager that the kitchen inspection has occurred and the result. Sandra had received some preliminary phone calls but nothing confirmed

- **User Hire Agreement:** Carry forward

- **Booking Process:** Functional

- **Community Grant Score Board:** Manuals and warranty printed, placed with the score board and copy sent to email address. Noted 2 year warranty: Future monitoring of Wi-Fi component.

Trolley: Invoice paid

Discussed a portable ramp to be used to mobility the scoreboard.

Moved by Kelly, Seconded by Barb that CJM attachments be approached to manufacture a ramp up to the value of \$500, All in favour, motion carried

- **Key Register:** Templates for TFNC and SH City and District Netball Association pending, will be forwarded to Barb Perry. AFL CM and SHFNC completed.

- **Future of COM:** Letters received from stakeholders TFNC, SHFNC and SHC&DNA stating their support for Dissolution of Committee of Management. AFLCM have submitted a letter of support. Letter of intent to

dissolve Alan Garden Reserve Committee of Management is currently in draft format, once completed will be emailed to the committee members for approval prior to the final submission to SHRCC. It will be sent with the letters of support from stakeholders.

- **Motion To Dissolve Committee of Management:**

Motion moved by Kelly Atkinson that: The Alan Garden Committee of Management is dissolved, returned to SHRCC with details provided as per Instrumentation of Delegation: Schedule 2, Section 6
Seconded by Barb Perry, unanimously carried

- **Dissolution:** Investigation of the requirements for Dissolution per Section 6 of the SHRCC Instrumentation of Delegation to Alan Garden Netball Centre Special Committee Resolution of Council.

Financial: Naomi will organise the financial statement to present to council.

Bank Accounts: Currently functional, aware of requirements to close them once COM Dissolved.

Keys: Key Registers to be finalised for presentation to council, stakeholders to keep the keys at this time.

Notifications: Compiling appropriate paperwork for submission to council

- **Maintenance:**

Bins: Additional/Relocation: Ongoing, waiting for response from SHRCC.

Correspondence:

SHRCC: Instrumentation of Delegation, Section 6 Dissolution

Invoices, Bank Statements

TFNC letter, SHFNC letter, SHC&DNA Letter

Scoreboard Manual, Warranty

Treasurer's report:

Naomi provided and presented the Treasurers Report:

Canteen Distributions for 2018 presented and cheques distributed

SHFNC: \$3210.11

TFNC: \$3162.30

SHC&DNA: \$1000.47

Balances as of November 12th, 2018:

General Account: \$14,064.76

Canteen account: \$0.75

Once canteen distributions have been banked

Moved by Naomi, seconded by Barb the treasurers report be accepted

.

General Business:

Resources:

Netball Pump: Leanne reported she had sourced a couple of pump options from outside companies. Kelly suggested utilising a local business. All agreed local businesses be explored and a pump purchased. Syd Wilson will be approached first with an agreed budget up to \$1000.

Ramp: As in Business Arising, budget up to \$500

Moved by Barb and seconded by Kelly that 20 new chairs be purchased and a blower vac for the premises. All in favour: Motion carried.

Barb will source the chairs

Sally will source the blower vac from Swan Hill Stihl similar to the BGA56 Kit \$349

Sandra thanked outgoing SHC&DNA President Barb Perry for her service and welcomed Sally Hammet.

Sandra thanked the remaining members for their continued service to COM .

Meeting Closed: at 7.10pm

ALAN GARDEN RESERVE NETBALL CENTRE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT				
SUMMARY OF INCOME AND EXPENSES				
	ACTUAL 2017 Netball Season 1/1/17 - 31/12/17		ACTUAL 2018 Netball Season 1/1/18 - 31/1/19	
Income			Income	
Hire Fees:			Hire Fees:	
2016 Fees received in 2017				
Murray Region	\$	210.00		
Mallee Eagles	\$	660.00		
2017 Fees received				
Tytynder FNC	\$	1,722.00	CMFNL	\$ 1,026.00
Swan Hill FNC	\$	1,632.00	Moulamein FNC	\$ 54.00
SHC&DNA	\$	2,754.00	Mackillop College	\$ 450.00
CMFNL	\$	2,479.20	Swan Hill College - 2018 fees	\$ 270.00
Moulamein FNC	\$	24.00	Swan Hill College - 2017 fees	\$ 360.00
Mackillop College	\$	450.00	Loddon Mallee Sports	\$ 140.00
Swan Hill College	\$	-	Small Schools Winter Sports	\$ 70.00
Nyah District PS / Small Schools	\$	70.00	Nullawil Netball Club	\$ 18.00
Loddon Mallee Sports	\$	70.00	Mallee Eagles	\$ 180.00
Katherine Bissett	\$	135.00	Murrabit Netball Club	\$ 24.00
Total Hire Fees Income		\$ 10,206.20	Katherine Bissett	\$ 175.50
				\$ 2,767.50
Grant Funds - Score board	\$	3,000.00	Grant Funds Received - Community Grant SHRCC	\$ 1,500.00
- Contribution SHFNC	\$	1,210.40		
- Contribution TFNC	\$	1,210.40	Other income - SHRCC Reimbursement lights metre	\$ 585.10
		\$ 5,420.80		
Total Income Received		\$ 15,627.00	Total Income Received	\$ 4,852.60
Expenditure			Expenditure	
Capital items			Capital items	
Scoreboard - AusSports	\$	5,420.80	Various - see below	\$ 3,413.80
		\$ 5,420.80		\$ 3,413.80
Canteen Wage	\$	1,215.54	Canteen Wage*	\$ -
Utilities - Gas	\$	88.00	Utilities - Gas	\$ 390.70
Utilities - Electricity	\$	2,289.86	Utilities - Electricity	\$ 1,673.76
Insurance	\$	727.50	Insurance	\$ 712.35
Cleaning - Wage	\$	1,370.00	Cleaning - Wage	\$ 940.00
Supplies - Cleaning & Stationary	\$	880.68	Supplies - Cleaning & Stationary	\$ 929.25
Waste Removal	\$	103.40	Waste Removal	\$ 165.33
Repairs & Maintenance			Repairs & Maintenance	
- Strip & Seal Floors (Northern Vic Cleaning)	\$	440.00	- Court Repairs (B&T Pool Painting & Maint.)	\$ 4,950.00
- Toasted Sandwich Machine	\$	110.00	- Other Repairs	\$ 1,128.31
SHRCC Fees	\$	197.50	SHRCC Fees	\$ 197.50
Advertising - Positions / AGM	\$	204.67	Advertising - Positions / Post Box Renewal	\$ 264.00
Total expenses		\$ 7,627.15	Costs in relation to Master Plan, 2HM Consulting	\$ 380.00
				\$ 11,731.20
Total Expenditure incl Capital items		\$ 13,047.95	Total Expenditure incl Capital items	\$ 15,145.00
Trading profit / (loss) for 2017 Season		<u>\$ 2,579.05</u>	Trading profit / (loss) for 2018 Season	<u>-\$ 10,292.40</u>
			Capital Expenditure:	
			Scoreboard Costs	
			- Insurance for Transport of s'board	\$ 275.00
			- Trolley for s'board	\$ 1,375.00
			- Ramp for s'board	\$ 374.00
			Ball pump & accessories	\$ 361.80
			Blower Vac	\$ 314.10
			Plastic chairs	\$ 713.90
			Total capital items purchased	\$ 3,413.80

*Canteen wage paid from Canteen Bank acct in 2018

ALAN GARDEN RESERVE NETBALL CENTRE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT
Bank Statement Summary at 27-Feb-2019

Accounts paid / credits to date are:

General Account: BSB: 633 000 Acct: 153232137

DATE	DETAILS	PAYMENTS	DEPOSITS	BALANCE
11/11/2018	BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD			\$ 14,064.76
13/11/2018	Chq 49 Barb Perry - reimbursement staorage containers	\$ 31.40		\$ 14,033.36
14/11/2018	Mackllop College 2018 Court Usage		\$ 450.00	\$ 14,483.36
14/11/2018	Swan Hill College - 2018 Court Usage		\$ 270.00	\$ 14,753.36
26/11/2018	Origin Eneregy -electricity	\$ 613.16		\$ 14,140.20
17/12/2018	Murray Valley Bearings - ball pump & acces.	\$ 361.80		\$ 13,778.40
7/01/2019	Stihl Shop Swan Hill - blower vac	\$ 314.10		\$ 13,464.30
8/01/2019	Origin - Gas	\$ 88.00		\$ 13,376.30
8/01/2019	Veolia - waste removal	\$ 25.74		\$ 13,350.56
20/01/2019	CJM Attachments - ramp for scoreboard	\$ 374.00		\$ 12,976.56
22/01/2019	Nurfurn - plastic chairs	\$ 713.90		\$ 12,262.66
27/02/2019	Veolia - waste removal	\$ 7.26		\$ 12,255.40
27/02/2019	CLOSING BALANCE OF GENERAL ACCOUNT			\$ 12,255.40

Outstanding Invoices yet to be received:

Murray Region - invoice issued 30-31 Oct 2018	\$ 36.00
Nullawil Netball Club - invoice issued 6 Feb 2019	\$ 18.00

Adjusted closing balance at 27/2/19 \$ 12,309.40

Credit at Baker and Glen of \$140.91 - acct ALGACA

SWAN HILL RURAL CITY COUNCIL
INSTRUMENT OF DELEGATION
TO THE
ALAN GARDEN NETBALL CENTRE SPECIAL COMMITTEE
RESOLUTION OF COUNCIL

In the exercise of the powers conferred by sections 86 and 88 of the Local Government Act 1989 ("the Act") Swan Hill Rural City Council RESOLVES THAT:

1. There be established a special committee to be known as the Alan Garden Netball Centre Special Committee "the Committee".
2. The quorum for meetings of the Committee is a whole number that is an absolute majority of members of the Committee.
3. All members of the Committee have voting rights on the Committee.
4. Members of the Committee are exempted under section 81(2A) of the Act from being required to submit a primary return or an ordinary return.
5. The purposes of the Committee are set out in the Schedules to this resolution.
6. There be delegated to the Committee the powers, functions and duties set out in the attached Instrument of Delegation.
7. The Instrument of Delegation –
 - 7.1. comes into force immediately the Common Seal of Council is affixed to it; and
 - 7.2. remains in force until Council decide to vary or revoke it.
8. The powers and functions conferred, and the duties imposed on the Committee must be exercised or performed in accordance with any guidelines or policies that Council may from time to time adopt.
9. Any act of the Committee shall be deemed to be an act of the Council with the subsequent responsibilities and obligations.
10. The Instrument of Delegation be sealed.
11. The Committee is required to report to Council by the end of October on activities for the preceding season;
 - 11.1 the performance of its functions and duties and the exercise of its powers;
 - 11.2 the financial performance of the Alan Garden Netball Centre;
 - 11.3 the development of aims and objectives for the Centre for approval by Council;

11.4 any issues relating to the management of the facility which the Committee considers should be reported to Council, or which Council directs should be dealt with in the report.

SWAN HILL RURAL CITY COUNCIL

INSTRUMENT OF DELEGATION

TO THE

ALAN GARDEN NETBALL CENTRE SPECIAL COMMITTEE

Swan Hill Rural City Council ("Council") delegates to the Special known as the "Alan Garden Netball Centre Special Committee ("the Committee"), the powers and duties set out in the attached Schedules, and declares that:

- 1. this Instrument of Delegation is authorised by a resolution of Council passed on 27 June 2017
- 2. the delegation:
 - 2.1. comes into force immediately the Common Seal of Council is affixed to this instrument Delegation;
 - 2.2. remains in force until Council resolves to vary or revoke it; and
 - 2.3. is to be exercised in accordance with the guidelines or policies which Council from time to time adopts; and
- 3. all members of the Committee eligible to vote will have voting rights.

THE COMMON SEAL OF THE SWAN HILL RURAL CITY COUNCIL was hereunto affixed in the presence of:



.....Councillor

.....Councillor

..... Chief Executive Officer

SCHEDULE 1

**Purposes Alan Garden Netball Centre
Special Committee**

The purposes of the Committee are, on behalf of Council –

1. To manage the Alan Garden Netball Centre in order to provide a first class facility for sport and recreation within the municipality.
2. To promote recreational activities to the community.
3. To maintain the Alan Garden Netball Centre with revenue obtained by the management.
4. To provide a diverse range of quality recreation activities at a minimal cost to the users of the Centre.
5. To maximise the use of the Centre.
6. To ensure equitable access to the Centre by each of the participant sports bodies.
7. To ensure representation and participation of all user groups on the Committee.

SCHEDULE 2
Powers of Delegation of Alan Garden Netball Centre
Special Committee

1. POWERS AND FUNCTIONS

To exercise Council's functions and powers to perform Council's duties in relation to the management of the Alan Garden Netball Centre, and for those purposes:

- 1.1. to enter into contracts, and to incur expenditure within the authorised budget, as ratified by Council.
- 1.2. to do all the things necessary or convenient to be done for or in connection with the performance those functions, duties and powers.
- 1.3. to allocate times of use for the user groups, set fees and charges as determined by the authorised budget, resolve disputes between user groups and draw up rules or conditions under which use of the facilities is permitted.
- 1.4. to hire the facility out for use by members of the community.
- 1.5. to collect fees for use of the facility from the users of the facility.
- 1.6. to undertake the maintenance (running repairs) requirements specified in Schedule 3 noting that Council is responsible for major building and structural maintenance items.
- 1.7. to ensure that all maintenance is undertaken in accordance with Australian Standards and Regulations.
- 1.8. to ensure the facility is kept in a clean, tidy and safe state at all times.
- 1.9. to ensure that the Committee of Management/staff take adequate care to secure the facility after use.
- 1.10. to take action as is necessary to maintain and arrange for security of the facility during periods when the facility is not in use and unoccupied.
- 1.11. to report any breach of security to Council within forty eight (48) hours of the event.
- 1.12. to be responsible for obtaining a police report for any breach of security involving the repair of the facility, i.e. external doors and windows.
- 1.13. to maintain at all times, an up to date register of persons who have access and keys to the facility. A copy of the register shall be supplied to the Council as requested.
- 1.14. to replace any lost or stolen keys.
- 1.15. to ensure the provision of utilities to the facility.

- 1.16. to prepare and distribute and sell or otherwise dispose of any publicity designed to promote the use of the premises in accordance with Council policy.
- 1.17. to submit to Council after due consideration any recommendations for alterations or additions to the premises.
- 1.18. to ensure all user groups/clubs/associations of the facility possess Public Liability Insurance to the value of \$5M.
- 1.19. to ensure that user groups/clubs/associations of the facility understand that they are responsible for maintaining their own Contents Insurance.
- 1.20. to develop appropriate hire agreements with users which detail conditions of use and include appropriate indemnity clauses as stipulated by Council.
- 1.21. to observe and comply with the provisions of any Statute, by-law or regulation (including any regulation for the care, protection and management of the facilities made from time to time) which are applicable to the facilities or to any matter or thing done or occurring thereon.
- 1.22. to develop and maintain an annual budget to be approved by Council by the end of April each year.
- 1.23. to permit the Council by its servants and agents at all reasonable times to enter upon the Centre with a view to inspecting the condition of the Centre.

2. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

- 2.1. The Committee shall be responsible for meeting the cost of managing the facility and shall meet that cost from the fees collected from users of the facility and any other income.
- 2.2. Council will be responsible for payment of the cost of the facility's Building Insurance and Building Contents Insurance up to the value of \$50,000.
- 2.3. The Treasurer shall receive all monies and issue receipts and shall pay all accounts which shall have been passed for payment by the Committee.
- 2.4. All accounts must be paid by cheque or by electronic funds transfer. Cheques are to be signed by the Chairperson and countersigned by the Treasurer or authorised member of the Committee. Online banking accounts must require two members of the committee to confirm any payments made via electronic funds transfer. All payments are to be reported to the committee at its next meeting.
- 2.5. The Committee must ensure that all monies received from the operation of the facility are promptly paid into a bank account in the name of the Alan Garden Netball Centre Special Committee. Amounts shall only be drawn from that account by signature of the Committee Chair and another authorised person or authorised member of the Committee.

- 2.6. Adequate books of account are to be submitted to the Swan Hill Rural City Council with an Annual Report and financial statement at the end of October each year. This financial statement is to be audited. The report should set out in adequate detail income and expenditure (including income owing but not received and debts owing but not paid) in respect of the use, operation and maintenance of the facility for the preceding season.
- 2.7. The Committee is to submit to Council an annual budget showing the proposed operations of the Committee and detailing proposed fees and charges by October each year.
- 2.8. The Committee is required to make provision for future repairs by setting aside funds which in the opinion of the Committee will be required to finance or partly finance repairs to be carried out by it at some time in the future.
- 2.9. The Committee shall invest any surplus funds or funds set aside pursuant to clause 2.7 in such investment or investments as are allowed by law for the time being for the investment of trust funds.
- 2.10. The Committee may conduct fundraising activities and the proceeds shall be used to achieve the objectives set in this Instrument of Delegation.

3. EXCEPTIONS, CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS

- 3.1. In accordance with Section 86(4) of the Act, the Committee shall not have the power to:
 - a) Delegate any of its functions, duties or powers,
 - b) Declare a rate or charge,
 - c) Borrow money, or
 - d) Enter into contracts for an amount which exceeds the budget as authorised by Council.
- 3.2. The Committee is not permitted to display upon the Centre any notices, placards, advertisements or bills of any description connected with tobacco or alcohol and to immediately comply with all reasonable direction issued in writing by the Council relating to the manner of display and content of notices, placards, advertisements or bills of any description.
- 3.3. The Committee shall not make any alteration or addition to the Centre except and in accordance with the written consent or direction of the Council.
- 3.4. The Committee shall not install upon the Centre without the written consent of the Council any fixtures or fittings other than those reasonably required for the permitted use.
- 3.5. The Committee is not to allow the Centre to be used in a manner which may cause a nuisance.

4. FORMAT AND OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE

- 4.1. The Committee will consist of eight (8) members which shall comprise:
 - a) two Swan Hill Football Netball Club representatives;
 - b) two Tyntynder Football Netball Club representatives;
 - c) two City and District Netball Association representatives;
 - d) one Central Murray Football Netball League representatives; and
 - e) one of the Swan Hill Rural City Council Councillors (the Councillor will not have voting rights)
- 4.2. Any future sporting organisation that becomes a principal user body will have the right to make application to the Committee for representation on the Committee and a recommendation on this application is to be made to the Council by the Special Committee.
- 4.3. The Committee shall meet for ordinary business on a minimum bi-monthly basis. The Committee may meet on a monthly basis if required.
- 4.4. The Committee shall at each Annual General Meeting nominate representatives via an election process. These nominations are to be submitted to Council for approval. No person nominated shall become a member of the Committee until the Council has been given advice in writing of his or her name and address and has passed a resolution appointing them as a member.
- 4.5. A member of the Committee appointed under Clause 4.4 shall hold office for a period not exceeding one year but shall be eligible for re-appointment.
- 4.6. If any appointed member of the Committee –
 - a) Is absent without apology from three consecutive meetings of the Committee;
 - b) Is convicted of an indictable offence or of an offence which, if committed in Victoria, would be an indictable offence;
 - c) Becomes incapable of performing the duties of his or her office;
 - d) Has his or her appointment revoked;
 - e) Resigns his or her office; or
 - f) Dies

That person's position as a member of the Committee shall become vacant.

- 4.7. Written or email notice of each meeting of the Committee shall be served by the Secretary on each member of the Committee by either delivering it to the member at least forty eight (48) hours before the meeting or by sending it by pre-paid post addressed to him or her at his or her usual or last known place of abode at least three business days before the date of the meeting.
- 4.8. The Committee shall not proceed to the transaction of business unless there be at least five (5) members of the Committee present.
- 4.9. Each member present at a meeting of the Committee eligible to vote is entitled to one vote. In the event of an equality of votes on any question the Chairman may exercise a second or casting vote.

- 4.10. The Committee shall advise Council, Committee Members and all Stakeholder groups of the date and venue of the forthcoming Annual General Meeting, at least three (3) weeks prior to the meeting, to enable the meeting to be publicised in the local newspaper.
- 4.11. At the Annual General Meeting of the Committee, members of the Committee shall elect:
 - a) Chairperson
 - b) Treasurer
 - c) Secretary, and
 - d) Such other officers as the Committee deems necessary;
- 4.12. The Committee shall provide the Council with a copy of the minutes of each Annual General Meeting, including reports submitted by the Chairperson and Treasurer.
- 4.13. The Committee shall be responsible for filling any casual vacancy which occurs on the Committee. The person who fills the vacancy shall hold office until the next Annual General Meeting.
- 4.14. In the event that Committee members cannot attend general meetings of the Committee, they may note their absence via an apology or nominate another member of their group to act as proxy in their absence.
- 4.15. The Chairperson, in accordance with Section 93(3) of the Local Government Act, shall arrange for the minutes of each meeting to be kept, but may delegate this task to the Secretary.
- 4.16. Under Section 89 (1) of the Act, the Committee is required to ensure that general meetings are to be opened to the public. The Committee, under Section 89(2), has the discretion to close a general meeting or a proportion of the meeting to discuss any of the following matters:
 - a) Personnel matters.
 - b) The personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer
 - c) Industrial matters
 - d) Contractual matters
 - e) Proposed developments
 - f) Legal advice
 - g) Matters affecting the security of Council property,
 - h) Any other matter which the Council or Committee considers would prejudice the Council or any person, or
 - i) A resolution to close the meeting to members of the public.
- 4.17. If the Committee resolves to close a meeting to members of the public the reason must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- 4.18. The Secretary of the Committee, shall:
 - a) Accurately record the minutes of each meeting and distribute them after the meeting;

- b) Organise meetings of the Committee, including advising Committee members of the meeting, preparing and distributing meeting agendas and minutes and organising the venue;
- c) Report on incoming correspondence to the Committee and conduct outgoing correspondence according to the instructions of the Committee;
- d) Be the contact person for the Council, correspondence and other business.

4.19. The Treasurer shall:

- a) Ensure that receipts are issued for all money received;
- b) Ensure that all income and outgoing money is correctly recorded;
- c) Ensure that money is deposited within three (3) days of receipt;
- d) Ensure that accounts are paid on time and reconciled with each bank statement;
- e) Prepare a monthly financial statement for presentation to the Committee;
- f) Prepare the annual financial reports for auditing and presentation at the Annual General Meeting.
- g) Prepare annual financial reports to Council. Such reports are to clearly specify progress made towards the approved budget targets.

4.20. The Chairperson of the Committee shall:

- a) Preside over meetings and ensure the proper and orderly conduct of meetings;
- b) State the time, date and venue of the next meeting;
- c) Work with the Secretary to prepare agendas and minutes;
- d) Assist the Treasurer to prepare the budget and the annual financial report;
- e) Prepare an annual report to Council.

4.21. The Committee's Chairperson shall chair all meetings of the Committee. If the Chairperson is absent at any meeting or not present within fifteen (15) minutes of the appointed meeting commencement time, the Committee shall nominate one of the members to chair the meeting.

5. SUB COMMITTEES

The Committee may at any meeting, appoint sub committees for any purpose. The Chairperson shall be appointed from the Special Committee. Such sub committees shall consist of members of the Special Committee and have the power to recommend proposals as it thinks fit.

6. DISSOLUTION

- 6.1. The Committee may at any meeting, agree to disband and hand over its responsibilities to the Council.
- 6.2. If the Committee does not fulfil its obligations as laid down by the Instrument of Delegation, the Council may disband the Committee upon notice to the effect being given by Council to the Committee members.
- 6.3. The chairman shall, in either case, within one month arrange for:
 - a) A financial statement to be prepared, audited and presented to Council.
 - b) The Committee's bank account to be closed and the balance paid to Council.

- c) All keys to the building formerly under the management of the Committee to be handed over to Council.

SCHEDULE 3
Maintenance Responsibilities of the Alan Garden Netball Centre Special Committee

DESCRIPTION	COMMITTEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES	COUNCIL'S RESPONSIBILITIES
Maintenance Program	To prepare annually for approval by Council a program of building maintenance including a monetary allocation for running repairs.	None
Normal Service Agreements/Contracts	Maintain any existing formal service agreement and contract entered in to by Council for such items as: servicing of air-conditioning systems, pest control, fire alarm systems testing, fire service/fire extinguisher testing/emergency lighting/exit sign testing, goods lift maintenance etc. No other agreements can be entered into where Council already has a formal service agreement.	None
Running Repairs	<p>Running repairs are generally categorised as those repairs which are considered to be of a minor nature and generally do not exceed \$1,000 for any one repair, for example:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial tradesman service calls, • burst/leaking water pipes, • changing light fittings, • leaking roof/box gutters, • door/door lock repairs, • toilet repairs (e.g.) cisterns/toilet seats etc., • removal of graffiti, • reinstatement of vandalism damage, • broken windows, • repair of hot water services, • components of air-conditioners/heating, • repair of curtains. <p>Financial assistance for running repairs in excess of \$1,000 for any one repair will be subject to negotiation with Council where Council may contribute the required funds in excess of \$1,000.</p>	None
Periodic Maintenance	<p>Repairs which can be programmed and readily identified during the annual maintenance inspection regime for inclusion in the budgetary process e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduled internal and external painting, • servicing of air-conditioning units, • carpet-floor coverings, 	All

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • roof plumbing, • gas heater • internal/external wall cladding repairs, • removal of asbestos linings, • re-blocking, • re-sanding and resealing of timber floors, • replacement of defective plumbing fixtures/fittings, • upgrading of security lighting. 	
Major Maintenance	<p>Those items which may constitute a significant impact upon the overall fabric and use of a particular building e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-roofing of buildings, • removal of significant quantities of asbestos linings, • replacement of air-conditioning plant and equipment, • complete re-paint of a building both internal and external, • removal of wall/remodelling, • underpinning, re-blocking, • repair/replacement of floors 	All
Capital Works	<p>New buildings and facilities, major building improvements including extensive remodelling/renovation, additions, upgrade of amenities including court repairs/resurfacing.</p> <p>Will require reference to Council's annual Capital Works Programme or Community Assistance Schemes for consideration.</p>	All in collaboration with Special Committee

Alan Garden Reserve: Committee Of Management
Minutes of General Meeting: Monday

Present:

Leanne Bibby TFNC (Scribe), Naomi Dullard SHFNC, Lou Angus SHDNA, Barb Perry SHDNA, Sherridan Harrop CMFNL, Tori Gorringe CMFNL Fiona Gorman SHRCC, Mayor Les McPhee SHRCC

Apologies:

Nicole Hawkins TFNC, Veronica Smith Ralph TFNC, Kelly Atkinson SHFNC, Chris Jeffery SHRCC,

Minutes from Previous Minutes:

Moved: Lou Angus, **Seconded:** Sherridan Harrop

That minutes of the May meeting be accepted

Business Arising:

- MASTER PLAN: Nearly at a Draft Plan stage. Consultant will attend Reserves to liaise with stakeholders and feed back to council where ideas can be compiled and revised
- USER HIRE AGREEMENT: Lou enquired re: development of a template and possibility of a direct electronic link for Hire Agreements. Fiona Gorman will liaise with Council and then advise further action. Council may then work with COM to formulate a document. COM rep to assist will be Lou Angus
- SHELTERS: Pending Master Plan developments
- COURT SURFACE: Engineers have observed concerns but no action at this stage. COM expressed concerns about the current cracks and general state of the court and the waiting time. General discussion on Liability occurred. Also discussed negotiations for court repairs not being discussed in corporation of the Master Plan to expedite repairs. With no one from SHRCC able to answer, a representative will refer to council to follow up with engineers
- ELECTRONIC SCORE BOARD: Discussed proposal for the score board and grant form SHRCC. All agreed to purchase (as per quote)
 1. Score Board
 2. Wireless Remote Scoring
 3. Rechargeable Battery Pack

Moved Leanne Bibby, Seconded Naomi Dullard that COM purchase the score board, submit appropriate paperwork to SHRCC to receive the \$3000 grant and then invoice SHFNC and TFNC the appropriate equal amounts.

- LIGHTING UPGRADE: Potential clash identified as courts booked by Manangatang District Schools whilst query work still being completed. Lou will follow up with contractors and the school to confirm usability
- CENTRAL MURRAY COURT BOOKING POLICY: Resolved
- SANDWHICH PRESS: COM purchased a sandwich press from SHCNA for use by all stakeholders

Correspondence:

- Lighting Upgrade
- Quote from Aussport for electronic scoreboard
- Extension for SHRCC grant
- Agreement that SHCNA will be subsidised light fee usage for 10 years

Treasurers Report:

Presented by Naomi Dullard

Balances as of 12th June:

- General Account: \$17,773.42
- Canteen Account: \$5,774.47

Report attached. Moved By Naomi Dullard and Seconded by Sherridan Harrop

General Business:

- Discussion about an email Lou received regarding required repairs. To fix toilet holder in 1st cubicle. Outside ladies toilet not flushing. Naomi to see Michael Carter to repair
- Fiona Gorman updated Instrumentation of Delegation adjustments for fees update and setting of fees. These proposed changes will be presented to council to be accepted and signed off on before they can be implemented into the IOD.
- Night series bookings: Leanne presented case in point that the courts were always booked for these nights that were for the whole community, usage was incorporated into the preseason bookings and didn't require a separate invoice and retrospective invoices shouldn't be issued. No objections.
- Grants: Presentation of ESP Solutions as a grant writing service with no cost to COM. Identifies grants and prepares and submit grants on committees behalf. Bernice Foott is working for this group and is offering services to assist the committee. All agreed tha COM will utilize ESP Solutions to formulate and carry out grants on our behalf as deemed appropriate
- Keys: Casual user groups to receive a key that opens a back toilet not the cub rooms
- Keys: Les McPhee suggested a Key Register that is reviewed at the AGM and keys allocated at that time
- Keys: An audit of keys available at the meeting, results as follows:

Meeting Closed: 7.30pm

B.19.111 ROAD SAFETY (GENERAL) REGULATIONS 2019

Responsible Officer: Director Development and Planning
File Number: S24-02-01
Attachments: Nil

Declarations of Interest:

Heather Green - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

The Road Safety (General) Regulations 2019 commenced on 27 September 2019, replacing the Road Safety (General) Regulations 2009. The General Regulations are substantially the same with no change to Schedule 6 - Parking Infringements.

To ensure Council can continue to issue penalties for parking infringements at the current rate it is recommended that a resolution be passed for any penalties where the penalty is greater than 0.2 but not more than 0.5 penalty units.

Discussion

Under Section 87 Road Safety Act 1986 Section 4, a Municipal Council may, by resolution, fix a penalty for a parking, if the penalty to be fixed is not more than 0.5 penalty unit and is not more than the penalty prescribed by the regulations.

There are six parking offences that Council has currently fixed a penalty fee of 0.4 of a penalty unit (\$65) instead of the default 0.2 of a penalty unit (\$33).

The offences are;

- Parked – failed to pay fee and obey instructions on sign/meter/ticket-vending-machine
- Parked for period longer than indicated
- Parked contrary to requirement of parking area
- Parked not completely within the parking bay
- Stopped contrary to a no parking sign
- Stopped on a motor bike parking area

As part of the changes to the regulations, Council is now required to pass a new resolution to retain the 0.4 penalty unit fee for these offences. In future, it is proposed that Council would review the resolution alongside the determination of the annual fees and charges.

Consultation

The Department of Transport contacted Council on 12 September 2019 to notify that the Road Safety (General) Regulations 2019 will replace the 2009 Regulations on 27 September 2019 and recommended the course of action proposed in this report

Financial Implications

The 19/20 Budget forecast was based on 0.4 of a penalty unit (\$65 infringement).

Social Implications

Not applicable.

Economic Implications

Parking zones were created to ensure that parking spaces were available for customers to access local businesses. Authorised Officers monitor parking in Swan Hill and Robinvale to ensure that drivers are following directions, regulations and signage. Drivers who fail to follow the parking conditions are issued with an infringement notice.

Environmental Implications

Not applicable.

Risk Management Implications

Failure to pass the resolution may result in fines being challenged.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Community enrichment - Provide services and support initiatives that create a Healthy and Safe Community.

Options

Council can choose to adopt the recommendation or make amendments.

Recommendations

That Council fix a fee of 0.4 of a penalty unit for the following 6 offences prescribed in schedule 6 of The Road Safety (General) Regulations 2019 -

- Parked – failed to pay fee and obey instructions on sign/meter/ticket-vending-machine
- Parked for period longer than indicated
- Parked contrary to requirement of parking area
- Parked not completely within the parking bay
- Stopped contrary to a no parking sign
- Stopped on a motor bike parking area

B.19.112 ADVENTURE AND ACTIVE PLAY PRECINCT

Responsible Officer: Director Development and Planning
File Number: S01-27-13-54
Attachments: Nil

Declarations of Interest:

Heather Green - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

This report is to seek approval from Council for \$29,000 from Council's Resort and Recreation Reserve budget to support the implementation of stage 2 priorities activities for the active and adventure play precinct.

Discussion

In June 2018, Council was successful in receiving \$1.215M from the Federal Government under the Building Better Regions Fund for a new active play precinct in Riverside Park in Swan Hill. This included a new skate park, adventure and active play zones. Due to the nature of these developments, their implementation has been staged into two separate projects, with the following Council budget allocation.

- **Skate park \$388,650**
- **Active / Adventure play \$1,016,350**

The skate park has just been successfully completed within a set budget and timeframe.

Detailed designs have been finalised by Thomas Hay Landscape Architects, supported by itemised rates for each activity to be undertaken by Whitfield Excavation (awarded contractor).

As per the final detailed design plans, the total cost for the active and adventure play project is \$830,931.

The Project Control Group has evaluated these activity items, itemised rates and costings provided by Whitfield Excavation, with the following items being allocated to a future stage 2. This will achieve the active and adventure play construction budget of \$750,000 for stage 1.

Stage 2 items are:

- Item 27 -Under-story plant reduced by approx half schedule rate
- Item 32 – Cooling mister to shade structure area
- Item 36 - Shade Sail over exercise equipment area
- Item 38 - Picnic tables reduce by 2

- Item 44 - Drinking fountain
- Items 59 – Cooling misters over sandpit
- Items 65 - Welcome posts
- Items 66-68 - Exercise area including seating, set up

The total cost for stage 2 is \$83,650.

Recommended Stage 2 items

It is recommended that Council allocate \$29,000 to enable the implementation of additional priorities of the active and adventure play precinct to be achieved. These priorities include:

STAGE 2 PRIORITIES
Item 27: Understory plantings
Item 44 Drinking fountain
Item 59: Misters over sandpit
Item 65: Welcome Posts

This funding is available from the Resort and Recreation Reserve. This reserve contains funds received when subdivisions are approved and contributions are made to fund either the purchase of land or the development of land for recreational purposes. This new play precinct is for the use of the whole community of Swan Hill and region so it is reasonable to use a component of the reserve for this purpose.

Financial Implications

- Funding provided for the project under the Building Better Regions Fund and Regional Development Victoria - \$ 826,350
- Council's allocation of \$190,000 for new playground equipment at Riverside Park in the 2018/19 budget
- An additional allocation of \$29,000 from the Resort and Recreation Reserve

Social Implications

- Increased social interactions
- Support liveability factors
- Support community health and wellbeing
- Increase community pride

Economic Implications

- Will create new jobs during the construction phase of the project
- Support business growth and development along the riverfront precinct
- Ongoing maintenance cost for Council

Environmental Implications

- Native vegetation/tree removal - an independent tree assessment has been undertaken

Risk Management Implications

- Not completing the project to budget and set schedule - Project Control Group established to monitor all stages of the project's implementation.
- Infrastructure not complying with specification and/or community satisfaction - external project manager with engineering experience engaged to oversee all stages of the project's implementation.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Community enrichment - Develop a community with a sense of pride and responsibility/ownership that strives to achieve its aspirations.

Options

1. Approve \$29,000 from Council's Resort and Recreation Reserve budget to support the implementation of stage 2 priorities activities for the active and adventure play precinct.

Item 27: Understory plantings

Item 44: Drinking fountain

Item 59: Mistert over sandpit

Item 65: Welcome Posts

2. Do not provide any additional funding for stage 2 priorities activities for the active and adventure play precinct.

Recommendation

That Council approve \$29,000 from the Resort and Recreation Reserve to implement the following action for the active and adventure play precinct at Riverside Park, Swan Hill:

- **Item 27: Understory plantings**
- **Item 44: Drinking fountain**
- **Item 59: Mistert over sandpit**
- **Item 65: Welcome Posts**

B.19.113 GILLESPIE STREET SPECIAL CHARGE SCHEME - CONSIDER SUBMISSIONS AND DETERMINE THE SCHEME

Responsible Officer: Director Infrastructure
File Number: S32-02-01, AST-RD-22072
Attachments: Nil

Declarations of Interest:

Svetla Petkova - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

Council received submissions at the September Ordinary Council Meeting. This report now considers the submissions and seeks Council approval to abandon the scheme.

Discussion

Following Council's resolution on 25 June 2019, a Notice of Intention to Implement a Special Charge Scheme in accordance with Section 163 of the Local Government Act 1989 was issued to residents on 5 July 2019. Included in this correspondence was a Notice of Intention response form. Residents were given until the 9 August 2019 to respond to that notice. The letter outlined the contributions payable by each residence based on an estimated project cost of \$161,200 and a 50 percent Council contribution.

1. The 50 percent contribution being \$9482.35.
2. The quarter contributions \$2370.60.

The response form asked residents to declare if they;

1. Supported the Special Charge Scheme.
2. Were happy to pay the contribution outlined in the letter.

Submissions received have included comments such as; "the Council should do it, without us as ratepayers"; "cost imposed on residents is beyond reasonable"; "too expensive"; "maintain its current state".

Submissions were received from all ten residents.

A total of two residents support the scheme in its proposed state and an additional two supported the scheme, however not the contribution as outlined in the letter.

Six residents did not support the scheme and the contribution.

All correspondence with Gillespie Street residents stated that if more than 50% of the residents do not support the scheme it would not proceed.

If Council wishes to proceed with the Scheme in its current form then the residents will have the right to appeal that decision to VCAT.

On the 17 September Council received and heard submissions as part of the process to declare a Special Charge Scheme. As none of the submitters had expressed a desire to speak to their submissions Council received the written submissions and referred the matter to the October Council Meeting for consideration.

Consultation

The residents have been consulted extensively through the development of this proposal. A letter will be sent to all the landowners providing them with details of the outcome following Council's decision.

If Council decides not to proceed with the sealing of Gillespie Street based on residents' feedback, this project should only be revisited if a majority of residents support the scheme and are committed to paying the charges, evident through a submission signed by those residents.

Financial Implications

To this date Council has contributed \$3162.50 towards the cost of the project in the form of consultant design fees.

Notification of Intention to implement the proposed Street Scheme was placed in the Guardian at a cost of \$308.

Staff costs have not been included in this calculation.

Social Implications

Some of the residents will be disappointed due to their long standing request for this project. Others will be pleased it will not proceed.

Economic Implications

Not applicable.

Environmental Implications

Not applicable.

Risk Management Implications

Not applicable.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Infrastructure - Infrastructure that appropriately services community needs.

Options

1. Do not proceed with the proposed sealing of Gillespie Street.
2. Proceed with sealing Gillespie Street despite objections.
3. Increase Council's share of the costs.

Recommendations

That Council:

1. **Having considered the submissions determine not to proceed with the sealing and upgrade works for Gillespie Street as a Special Charge Scheme.**
2. **Will only revisit this project provided that a majority of residents support the scheme and are committed to paying the charges, evident through a submission signed by those residents.**

B.19.114 PRESENTATION OF ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2019

Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services
File Number: S15-28-09
Attachments: 1 2018/19 Annual Report

Declarations of Interest:

David Lenton - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

Council's Annual Report incorporating the Financial and Performance Statements and the Audit Opinions, were completed and delivered to the Minister on 26 September 2019.

Following the expiry of the statutory advertising period, the Annual Report is now presented for Council's consideration and endorsement.

Discussion

Following the completion of all statutory requirements, Swan Hill Rural City Council's Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2019 is presented for consideration and endorsement by Council. The format of the Annual Report is consistent with the model recommended by Local Government Victoria.

Some of the highlights of the 2018/19 year were:

- Commenced the redevelopment of the Swan Hill Livestock Exchange.
- Released Stage 11 of Tower Hill Estate.
- \$16.8 million grant application approved by Federal Government for the Our Region, Our Rivers package of works.
- \$2 million grant funding approved for active play precinct in Swan Hill Riverside Park.
- Started an L2P program in Robinvale.
- Successfully held the Fairfax Youth Initiative
- Resurfaced Perrin Street, Robinvale with a product that incorporated recycled tyres.
- Commenced the Robinvale Housing Strategy and Robinvale Population Study.
- Supported the community campaign for a new Swan Hill Hospital which attracted a Federal funding commitment of \$30 million.
- Successfully lobbied for a review of Heritage controls on Swan Hill Bridge.
- Constructed e-waste drop off points in Swan Hill and Robinvale and constructed new recycling shed at Robinvale landfill.
- Hosted 81,954 visitors at the Pioneer Settlement

- Conducted 2,457 Maternal & Child Health consultations.
- Replaced 1,120 meters of footpaths.
- Collected 7,117 tonnes of garbage and recycling
- 16,497 people attended events and performances at Swan Hill Town Hall PACC
- Reconstructed 10.1 kilometers of roads.

All of Council's Financial Accountability Statements again received clear audit opinions.

Council remains in a good financial position, achieving an Accounting Surplus of \$7.4 million for the year. This is the tenth successive annual surplus. Council needs to continue to achieve operational surpluses to ensure sufficient cash is available to fund future capital works like the replacement of roads and other community assets. The adjusted rates determination surplus was \$270,000 better than budget.

The Statement of Financial position continues to indicate Council's good financial base. Current assets exceed current liabilities by \$24 million and exceed total liabilities by \$15 million. The sum of \$494,557 was repaid to lending institutions during the year.

I take this opportunity to formally thank the Finance Department, the Leadership Team, Councillors and Council auditors for all contributing to a successful year and completion of the annual reporting process for the 2018/19 financial year.

Consultation

The availability of the Annual Report for inspection has been advertised in accordance with the Local Government Act.

The Annual Report is a key element of Council's communication with the community.

Financial Implications

Council remains in a good financial position.

Social Implications

Not applicable.

Economic Implications

Not applicable.

Environmental Implications

Not applicable.

Risk Management Implications

It is important that Council continue to generate an operational surplus in order to help ensure ongoing financial sustainability including the ability to replace assets when necessary.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Effective and efficient utilisation of resources. - Effective and efficient utilisation of resources.

Options

Not applicable.

Recommendation

That Council consider and endorse the 2018/19 Annual Report of Swan Hill Rural City Council as presented.



Annual Report

2018/19



About our Annual Report

Swan Hill Rural City Council is pleased to present its 2018/19 Annual Report, which provides a detailed account of our performance from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019.

Documenting Council's performance against the 2018/19 Budget and the Council Plan, the Annual Report highlights achievements and challenges faced within key service areas and programs.

Council seeks to achieve community engagement and an understanding of Council's operations by conducting its affairs openly and with integrity.

Transparency in our decision-making and accountability are core values of Council, reflecting high levels of good governance.

This report provides information to a variety of audiences including community groups, businesses, ratepayers, visitors, investors, government agencies and other interested stakeholders.

Acknowledgement

Swan Hill Rural City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, and pays its respects to their elders, past and present.

Our offices

Swan Hill office

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Welcome to the report of operations

We are committed to transparent reporting and accountability to our community. The Annual Report is our primary means of advising residents within the Swan Hill Rural City Council region about our operations and performance during the 2018/19 financial year.

How to read our Annual Report

Introduction

Provides a snapshot of our region and highlights what we have accomplished.

The year in review

Messages from our Mayor and CEO, a financial summary and major projects highlights.

Our Council

Our region's history and profile, and information on our Councillors.

Our people

Information on Council's employees, including our organisational structure, occupational health and safety, equal opportunity, and appreciating our staff.

Our performance

Results against our Council Plan key strategic initiatives, Local Government performance reporting indicators, and major initiatives and services identified in the 2018/19 Budget.

Corporate governance

Governance and statutory information including decision-making, elected members, risk management, benchmarking and accountability.

Performance statement

Local Government performance reporting indicators for sustainable capacity, service performance and financial performance.

Financial performance

Council's general purpose financial statements.



Part one

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

Snapshot of Council

Swan Hill Rural City Council covers 6,116 square kilometres and is home to 20,759 people. It includes the townships of Swan Hill, Robinvale, Lake Boga, Nyah, Nyah West, Piangil, Woorinen, Ultima, Manangatang, Boundary Bend and Tresco.

Agriculture and manufacturing drive the Swan Hill Rural City economy.

Almost 20 per cent of the total economic output from the region comes from agricultural production.

Irrigated farming (including stonefruit, grapes, nuts, olives and vegetable production) accounts for over 11 per cent of the total economic output for the municipality, while traditional livestock and broadacre farming accounts for almost four per cent.

More than 18 per cent of all jobs in the city are directly related to agriculture.

Food manufacturing (processing) accounts for almost 10 per cent of the municipality’s economic output.

Located along the Murray River, tourism plays an important role in our region’s economy as well. Our climate and natural beauty attracts about 750,000 visitors each year.



Our municipality: fast facts

- 20,759** Our population
- 6,116km2** Our area
- 3,508km** The length of our local roads (sealed and unsealed)
- 12,010** Our rateable properties
- \$1.35 billion** Gross regional product
- 9,126** People working

Our Vision

A prosperous and healthy community enjoying quality facilities and services.

Our Mission

We will lead, advocate, partner and provide efficient services and opportunities for growth and the wellbeing of our community and environment.

Our Values

Council values our residents and community and will be responsive to their needs. In pursuing our objectives, we believe in, and are committed to, the following values:

Community engagement

We will ensure that our communities are consulted, listened to and informed.

Leadership

We will be at the centre of our community and by actively engaging our community, we will form the collective view on strategic issues and will then express our views through strong advocacy.

Fairness

We will value and embrace the diversity of our community and ensure that all people are treated equally.

Accountability

We will be transparent and efficient in our activities and we will always value feedback.

Trust

We will act with integrity and earn the community's trust by being a reliable partner in delivering services and providing facilities.



INTRODUCTION

Highlights of the year

Economic Growth

- Awarded more than \$1.64 million of work to Swan Hill-based contractors for the Swan Hill Regional Livestock Exchange upgrade.
- Released Stage 11 of Tower Hill estate in December, including 24 residential lots.
- Introduced a Special Rate for the Swan Hill and Lake Boga regions to provide financial support to Swan Hill Incorporated, after community consultation.
- Sold surplus land at the Swan Hill Regional Livestock Exchange. A service station is expected to be built on the site.

Community Enrichment

- Adopted the Creative Strategy 2018-22.
- Started an L2P Learner Driver pilot program in Robinvale with the Robinvale College Clontarf Foundation.
- Ran the successful Fairfax Youth Initiative, which included a pop-up community choir.
- Commissioned photographer Mick Cullin to photograph Ultima and district, with an exhibition at the Ultima Hall. The Gallery also hosted Swan Hill Biggest Print, a community engagement and art project.
- Co-ordinated a visit from renowned journalist and commentator Stan Grant for Reconciliation Week.
- Halved hire costs at the Robinvale, Lake Boga, Nyah, Manangatang and Woorinen community centres, making them more accessible to community groups.
- Supported a successful Harmony Day community event in March.

Infrastructure

- Received \$1.96 million in Federal funding for Swan Hill's riverfront project, which will include a pedestrian crossing linking the Swan Hill CBD with the riverfront, and an active play space and skate park.
- Received \$16.8 million in Federal funding for Our Region, Our Rivers – a joint infrastructure project of seven local councils.
- Resurfaced Perrin Street, Robinvale, using a new technology that repurposes recycled tyres.
- Started work on the new Milloo Street boat ramp.
- Started work on the new Swan Hill skate park, at Riverside Park.
- Completed the final stage of the Lake Boga-Ultima Road upgrade.

Governance and Leadership

- Elected Cr Ann Young as Mayor.
- Councillors Gary Norton and John Katis resigned as Councillors. By-elections were held in the Robinvale and Murray Mallee wards, resulting in the election of Cr Jade Benham (Robinvale) and Cr Nicole McKay (Murray Mallee).
- Endorsed the Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy 2018.
- Appointed consultancy firm Holmes Dyer to complete the Robinvale Housing Strategy, with funding from State Government and Mallee Regional Partnership.
- Appointed consultancy firm Geografia to determine a true Robinvale population.
- Supported the community campaign for a new Swan Hill Hospital.

- Lobbied RMS New South Wales and Environment and Heritage New South Wales to review heritage controls on the Swan Hill Bridge.
- Called on the State Government to confirm its commitment to standardising the Manangatang rail line, and to re-consider proposed changes to the line further south.
- Adopted the Swan Hill Rural City Council 2019-2022 Communication and Engagement Strategy.
- Adopted the Swan Hill Rural City Council Advocacy Strategy.

Environment

- Launched The Big Green Shed's Facebook page.
- Constructed e-waste drop off points in Swan Hill and Robinvale, with funding from Sustainability Victoria, and started an education campaign about the 1 July e-waste ban.
- Authorised the signing of a joint Memorandum of Understanding for waste and recycling services with Loddon Mallee Waste and Resource Recovery Group.

Challenges for 2019/20

- Work with State Government to deliver the pedestrian crossing linking the Swan Hill CBD with the riverfront.
- Complete the Robinvale Housing Strategy, and work with local and state organisations to start implementing priorities.
- Continue leading a consortium of councils, and work with Federal Government, to deliver projects from Our Region, Our Rivers, including Our Place in Swan Hill - the new art gallery and interpretive centre.
- Fill key positions in Council's Infrastructure Department to ensure successful project delivery.
- Plan for the significant aged care sector reforms that will continue having a profound impact on Council's ability to deliver services and, ultimately, on our community members.
- Deliver efficient waste and recycling services in an increasingly challenging environment.



INTRODUCTION

Statistics for 2018/19

<p>12,010 rateable properties</p>	<p>7,117 tonnes of garbage, recycling and organics collected from kerbside bins</p>	<p>2,897 immunisations administered</p>
<p>81,954 visits to the Pioneer Settlement</p>	<p>167 planning permits and 332 building permits issued</p>	<p>20,765 hours of community care provided</p>
<p>2,885 registered animals</p>	<p>10.1 kilometres of reconstructed roads</p>	<p>3,508 active library members</p>
<p>16,497 people attended 229 events and performances at Swan Hill Town Hall PACC</p>	<p>750,000 visitors to the Swan Hill municipality</p>	<p>1,120 metres of footpath replaced</p>
<p>232 inspections of food businesses</p>	<p>\$12.1 million spent on capital works projects</p>	<p>2,457 maternal and child health consultations</p>

Year at a glance

July

Robinvale Housing Strategy

The State Government awarded \$50,000 from the Stronger Regional Communities Plan to Council to develop the Robinvale Housing Strategy. The project was also supported by the Mallee Regional Partnership. The strategy will outline short and long term initiatives to improve the availability of housing in the area.

Federal Government funding for riverfront



Member for Mallee Andrew Broad announced \$1.96 million for Swan Hill's riverfront project.

Along with \$982,500 from Council, \$1 million from State Government and \$30,000 from VicRoads, it will allow for the construction of a pedestrian crossing linking the Swan Hill CBD with the riverfront, and an active play space and skate park.

Robinvale L2P Program

An L2P pilot program started in Robinvale in partnership with the Robinvale College Clontarf Foundation. With enough interest from learner drivers and availability of mentors, it is hoped it will become a permanent program.

Community and event grants

Council announced successful applicants to the Community Development Fund (25 projects worth \$100,054) and Event Support Fund (32 events with \$70,000 cash and \$16,300 in-kind).

Blackwire Solar Farm opening



The Swan Hill Blackwire Reserve Solar Farm was officially opened. The 50,000 panel, 19MW solar farm will produce enough clean electricity to power 6,050 Australian homes and has a lifespan of around 30 years.

Successful exhibition opening

Eighty-five people attended the opening of a new exhibition at Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery, which included the 1960s Australian-made Goggomobil Dart.

JPs busy at Library

The Justice of the Peace service at Swan Hill Regional Library started. During its first month, 50 people used the service.

Thanks to Friends

Council officially thanked the Friends of the Pioneer Settlement for their contribution to the Heartbeat of the Murray and Paragon Cafe. The volunteer group made their final payment, reaching their commitment of \$250,000 to the projects.

Well done Robinvale

Councillors congratulated the volunteer group and Council staff who co-ordinated the Robinvale Villers Bretonneux 100 Years commemoration.

INTRODUCTION

Year at a glance continued

August

Mallee Almond Blossom Festival

The Mallee Almond Blossom Festival was a success, with an estimated crowd of more than 4,000 people. Nine bus tours of local almond farms and the Bannerton Solar Farm were booked out.

Cenotaph memorials installed

Two new memorials were installed at Swan Hill Cenotaph, recognising ex-servicewomen and servicemen from the region.

Pre-school funding

Council provided an additional \$50,000 to the Robinvale Pre-school for an undercover play area, storage shed and concreting. The new pre-school, on the College grounds, opened in May 2019.

Pony Club site

The former Lake Boga Tennis Club and Junior Football Club on Lalbert Road, Lake Boga was confirmed as the preferred site for the Swan Hill Pony Club's relocation.

Joining the hospital campaign

Council staff and Councillors got behind the Swan Hill Needs A New Hospital campaign, including the community rally.

MCH re-opens

The Nyah West Maternal and Child Health Centre re-opened. It had been closed since October due to a state-wide MCH nurse shortage.

September

Sale of surplus land at saleyards

The sale of surplus land at the Swan Hill Regional Livestock Exchange was completed. A service station is expected to be developed on the site.

Great survey response

More than 300 community members completed a survey about the future of local swimming pools and other aquatic facilities. The results are informing an Aquatics Strategy.

Huge week for youth

Council was one of five councils to share in \$2.5 million from the State's Youth Empower Program. Youth Support Co-ordinator Kane Sparks was also announced as the first inductee to the Youth Affairs Council Hall of Fame.

Phenomenal Fairfax

The Fairfax Youth Initiative was a huge success. It included the Proud and Deadly opening night, a pop-up community choir, and a vocal ensemble performance at the gallery, alongside the usual youth workshops and performances.

October

Playground upgrades in Manangatang

Council building staff installed new pre-schoolers' playground equipment in Lowan Park, Manangatang, initiated by MIG.

Transport strategy endorsed

Council endorsed the Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy, which will be used to advocate for major road and rail projects in the Balranald, Buloke, Gannawarra, Mildura, Murray River, Swan Hill and Wentworth municipalities.

Locals awarded saleyards work

More than \$1.64 million of work was awarded to Swan Hill-based contractors for the Swan Hill Regional Livestock Exchange upgrade.

Local businesses built new cattle yards and 10-way draft, altered the selling ring and building, installed cattle troughs, the scale house building, sheep laneways and the three-bay truck wash.

Work started in December and was mostly complete when sales returned in March.

Friends of the Settlement acknowledged



The entry to the Pioneer Settlement’s Paragon Cafe was upgraded with recycled and engraved pavers. The 80 plus pavers included the names of volunteers that have worked at the Pioneer Settlement.

Waste initiatives

Hard waste collections took place in Nyah, Nyah West, Manangatang, Chinkapook, Vinifera, Boundary Bend, Piangil and Wood Wood.

Council also hosted a free greenwaste weekend in Swan Hill and Robinvale, where greenwaste could be disposed of at landfills for free.

November

New Mayor

Councillor Ann Young was elected Mayor of Swan Hill Rural City Council. Councillors chose not to elect a Deputy Mayor.

Free microchips

Pet owners were given the chance to have their pets microchipped for free in Swan Hill. The program ran in Robinvale in May.

Record numbers for storytime



Swan Hill Regional Library held its annual Roving Storytime, which has become a signature event during Children’s Week. A record 60 children and 30 adults attended.

Ultima photography stars

Ultima locals became the stars of the show in Ultima District Uncovered - a photography exhibition at their hall. Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery commissioned former Swan Hill resident Mick Cullin to photograph the Ultima community and its people as an artist in residence.

Planning for Robinvale library

The Robinvale community was asked to contribute to planning for a new community library by completing a survey about services and opening hours. In total, 146 community members responded to the survey, and that information was used when concept designs were put together.

Cross border issues discussed

Council’s final business breakfast of the year featured the recently appointed Victorian Cross Border Commissioner Luke Wilson as guest speaker.

Drainage work in Swan Hill

The third and final stage of the Swan Hill CBD drainage upgrade took place. Over five weeks, an additional drainage pipe was installed along the south side of McCallum Street between Beveridge and Splatt streets.

INTRODUCTION

Year at a glance continued

New bridge lobbying

Council agreed to step up lobbying for a new Swan Hill bridge by writing to RMS New South Wales and Environment and Heritage New South Wales about reviewing, and ultimately removing, heritage controls on the Swan Hill Bridge.

December

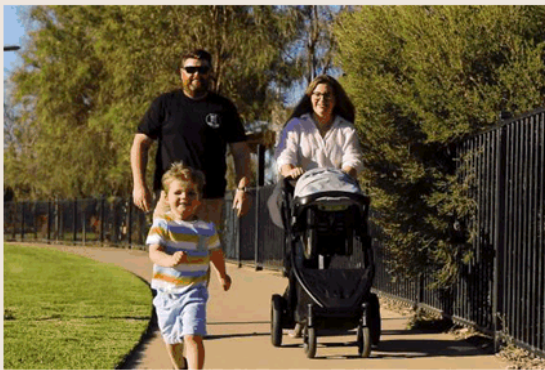
Bromley Road land sale

Council determined that the land at 71-77 Bromley Road, Robinvale was surplus to need, and that the process of disposing of the land should start. A community consultation process ran until the end of February 2019. In May, Councillors agreed to sell the land by request for proposal, for commercial use.

Rail line advocacy

Council called on the State Government to confirm its commitment to standardising the Manangatang rail line. Council also urged the State to re-consider proposed changes to the line further south, which Council says will jeopardise the effectiveness of the Murray Basin Rail Project.

Tower Hill Stage 11



Stage 11 of Tower Hill estate was released in December, and an advertising campaign rolled out. Stage 11 comprises 24 residential lots.

New cricket nets

Council staff completed the installation of new cricket nets at Swan Hill Showgrounds. New nets will also be installed at Gurnett Oval and Robinvale Riverside Park thanks to a partnership between Council, the State Government and user groups.

Communication strategy

Council adopted the Swan Hill Rural City Council 2019-2022 Communication and Engagement Strategy.

Robinvale population

Consultancy firm Geografia was appointed to conduct a study aimed at determining the actual Robinvale population.

January

Councillors resign

Councillors John Katis and Gary Norton tendered their resignation as Councillors. Cr Katis had represented the Robinvale Ward since 1997, while Cr Norton represented the Murray Mallee Ward since 2003.

By-elections were called, with candidate information sessions in February, followed by nominations and then the close of voting on 29 March.

Performing Arts Program Launch

The Swan Hill Town Hall opened the doors to the venue, and set up outdoor seating to host a launch party for the 2019 performing arts program.

Citizens of the Year

Australia Day Award winners were announced - Citizen of the Year was Sonia Cunning, Young Citizen of the Year was Chelsea Tofful, and the joint Community Event of the Year went to Swan Hill Country Week Tennis and the Robinvale Euston Villers Bretonneux 100 Years Commemoration.

Jaycee Park upgrades

Work started to upgrade Jaycee Park in Swan Hill. The upgraded park, bordered by Harrison and Domaille crescents in Swan Hill, now includes new junior and senior play spaces, a flying fox and a gaga ball pit.

Cool days at the Library



Animals of Oz brought a snake, saltwater crocodile, kookaburra and other Australian animals into the Swan Hill Regional Library. It was part of the Library's extensive school holiday program.

February

Boga pre-school makeover

Work to upgrade the Lake Boga Pre-school building started, a partnership between the pre-school, Lake Boga Primary School, the State Government and Council. Students returned for Term 3.

Planning for rec reserve upgrades

Council adopted the Recreation Implementation Plan 2019-2028 as a working document. The plan outlines and prioritises upgrades to recreation reserves across the municipality.

Robinvale levee funding

An extra \$410,000 was secured through the Natural Disaster Recovery Grant Scheme for the Robinvale levee. This funding will help mitigate increased project costs due to extra native vegetation assessments.

March

Our Region, Our Rivers success



Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack announced that the Federal Government would contribute \$16.8 million to Our Region, Our Rivers – a joint infrastructure project of seven local councils. Councils will contribute matched funding.

In Swan Hill Rural City, projects will include Our Place - the new gallery, interpretive centre, information centre and Pioneer Settlement entrance; the Bromley Road beautification; a walking track for Boundary Bend; and others.

First cattle sale



The first cattle sale using the redeveloped Swan Hill Regional Livestock Exchange was held.

Upgrading Robinvale changerooms

Council allocated \$20,000 to upgrade changerooms at Robinvale's Riverside Park. The Robinvale Euston Football Netball Club also contributed funding to achieve the upgrade.

INTRODUCTION

Year at a glance continued

Green waste service hits 1,000

The number of residential green waste kerbside collection services in Swan Hill hit 1,000. Since the service started in 2012, numbers have been steadily increasing, but jumped significantly in the past 12 months.

Perrin Street resurface



Perrin Street, Robinvale was resurfaced using a new technology that repurposes recycled tyres. In a first for Victoria, Council worked with Tyre Stewardship Australia - a company that is testing new mixes of crumbed rubber asphalt that can improve road durability and offer a significant recycling use for the millions of used tyres Australia generates each year.

Animal registrations get tech savvy

Pet owners received text message reminders about animal registration renewals. It is hoped the new service will remind people whose circumstances have changed to contact Council and update their details.

Rural road done

The final five kilometres of Lake Boga-Ultima Road was reconstructed, widened and sealed, thanks to the Fixing Country Roads Program.

New Councillor for Robinvale

Cr Jade Benham was elected unopposed as the new Robinvale ward Councillor.

Big month for Town Hall



The Swan Hill Town Hall hosted five major performances in March - Leo Sayer, the Chamber Philharmonia, By A Thread, and two children's shows - Picasso and His Dog and Splash Test Dummies (at Robinvale).

April

Special Rate for marketing

Council declared a Special Rate for marketing and business development. The rate will apply to eligible commercial, industrial, tourism and hospitality properties in Swan Hill and Lake Boga for a further seven years.

New Councillor for Murray Mallee



Cr Nicole McKay was declared as the successful candidate in the Murray Mallee Ward by-election.

Bridge funds welcome

Council welcomed the Federal Government's \$60 million contribution to a new Swan Hill bridge, announced in the Federal Budget.

Family Day Care shift

Council announced that rural community organisation Intereach would take over the Family Day Care Service from 1 July.

Yamagata exchange

Applications for students to attend the 2020 Yamagata student exchange and the 2020 citizen exchange opened. It will be the 40th anniversary of the City Sister Relationship.

Intersection upgraded

The intersection at Woorinen Road and Lake Road was fully reconstructed, thanks to the Federal Roads to Recovery. The road surface had sustained damage due to heavy vehicle traffic and flooding.

L2P funding renewed

VicRoads announced that funding for the TAC L2P Learner Driver program would continue for another four years, from 30 June 2019.

May

Catalina playground go ahead



Work started on the much-anticipated playground outside the Catalina Museum at Lake Boga. The playground opened early July.

Advocacy tick

Council adopted its Advocacy Strategy. The strategy sets out key issues for our communities and how Council can advocate for their improvement.

Future for SES sites

Council agreed to enter into a five year lease with VicSES for the use of a premises on Crown Land in Robinvale. This will give SES and Council time to advocate to State Government for funding to relocate next to the CFA and Police Station in Bromley Road.

Council also agreed to advertise its intention to sell the land occupied by Swan Hill SES. If no submissions are received, Council will sell the land to VicSES.

Roads push

Council agreed to write to various State Government bodies about the conditions of state-controlled roads, intersections and railway crossings in the municipality.

These included a roundabout for Murlong and McCallum streets, Swan Hill; the Murray Valley Highway from Boundary Bend to Robinvale; the Robinvale-Sea Lake Road between Manangatang and Robinvale; the Hattah-Robinvale Road from Hattah to Robinvale; the intersections of Waitchie Road and Sea Lake-Swan Hill Road; and the intersection of Gray and Campbell streets, Swan Hill.

June

Stan Grant visit



Renowned journalist and commentator Stan Grant visited the municipality for Reconciliation Week. He attended public events, as well as events with local school students and Aboriginal elders. An estimated 200 people attended his keynote address in Robinvale, 110 at the Swan Hill dinner, and nearly 60 at the Swan Hill Business Breakfast.

INTRODUCTION

Budget adopted

Council's 2019/20 Budget was adopted. It includes a rate rise of 1.02 per cent, well below the State rate cap of 2.5 per cent.

Fees reduced

Council halved hire costs at the Robinvale, Lake Boga, Nyah, Manangatang and Woorinen community centres, making them more accessible to community groups.

Electoral review views

Council agreed to make a submission to the Victorian Electoral Commission's review of the electoral structure. The submission stated that Council believes the appropriate number of Councillors for this municipality is seven, but that Council should move to an unsubdivided municipality.

The Big Green Shed is on Facebook

Council launched The Big Green Shed's Facebook page. The page will promote Council's reduce, reuse and recycle principles and is aiming to encourage more people to purchase pre-loved goods.

Swan Hill boat ramp



Work started on the new Milloo Street boat ramp. The project will include a new two-lane concrete ramp, long vehicle parking and toilets.

Skate park work begins

Work started on the new Swan Hill skate park. The skate park, which local skaters helped to design in 2017, is being built at Swan Hill's Riverside Park. It is expected to be open in September.

Coffee with a Councillor



Councillors started their new initiative – Coffee with a Councillor. Councillors will travel to different locations around the municipality to chat informally with local residents.

Robinvale and Lake Boga playgrounds



The Robinvale and Lake Boga recreation reserve playgrounds were completed, thanks to grants from Sport and Recreation Victoria.

Robinvale Art Centre facelift

The Robinvale Community Art Centre has received part one of an interior facelift. Window coverings have been replaced throughout the hall and foyer spaces.

Leisure Centre win

The Swan Hill Leisure Centre won the Aquatics and Recreation Victoria Medium Facility Management award at the 2019 Aquatic and Recreation Victoria Awards.



Part two

Year in review

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Mayor's message

I am pleased to present the 2018/19 Annual Report to our community.

As you will see throughout the document, we have continued our work on project and service delivery, advocacy and planning for the future.

We completed the \$1.94 million upgrade at Swan Hill Regional Livestock Exchange, with local contractors completing much of the work. It was a win-win.

We re-sealed Perrin Street in Robinvale using innovative new technology, started work on the much anticipated Swan Hill boat ramp and skate park, and adopted Our Game Plan – a 10 year plan to upgrade recreation reserves across the municipality.

Advocacy and engagement

An Advocacy Strategy was adopted this year, setting out key issues for our communities and how Council can advocate for their improvement.

We were key supporters of the Swan Hill Needs a New Hospital Committee, and continued to lobby state governments for a solution on the Swan Hill bridge. Most recently we have sought to have the heritage listing removed from the current bridge to make way for a new one in the same location.

Studies were commissioned to determine Robinvale's true population and to come up with solutions to housing shortages. Once complete, these will give us evidence to push for improved services in Robinvale and better housing.

Councillors have also enjoyed Coffee with a Councillor and will continue visiting areas across the municipality to hear from you in relaxed settings.

Funding

We have had strong funding support from Federal and State governments this year.

One of the highlights was our role in achieving \$16.8 million from the Federal Regional Growth



Fund for Our Region, Our Rivers, which includes seven councils in Victoria and New South Wales. I was proud that our Council led the charge, bringing the other councils on board and presenting an attractive suite of river and lake front projects to this funding application process.

We were also successful in Federal and State grants for the Swan Hill active play and skate park, and pedestrian crossing from CBD to riverfront.

Thank you

I want to thank fellow Councillors for their commitment to improving our municipality for all. It is timely here for me to acknowledge the work of long-time Councillors John Katis and Gary Norton, who resigned during the 2018/19 year. They were passionate supporters of the Robinvale and Murray Mallee wards respectively.

I also thank residents, community groups, businesses and Council officers for contributing to the successes of 2018/19. I look forward to working with you again in 2019/20 and encourage you to get involved wherever you can.

Cr Ann Young
Mayor

The role of Council includes:

- Acting as a representative government by taking into account the diverse needs of the local community in decision making.
- Providing leadership by establishing strategic objectives and monitoring their achievement.
- Maintaining the viability of the council by ensuring that resources are managed in a responsible and accountable manner.
- Advocating the interests of the local community to other communities and governments.
- Acting as a responsible partner in government by taking into account the needs of other communities.
- Fostering community cohesion and encouraging active participation in civic life.

CEO's message

This Annual Report provides a great overview of Council's performance and areas for improvement in the 2018/19 year.

In Part 5 of this report, you will see our performance measured against Key Result Areas from our Council Plan, and Service Performance Indicators as set out by the State Government.

Some of the highlights from our Key Result Areas were:

- Determining the long-term site for the Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery – it will be one part of the new building on Monash Drive, Swan Hill, as part of the Our Region, Our Rivers project.
- Adopting the Recreation Reserves Masterplan – a 10-year plan for upgrades of recreation reserves across the municipality.
- Adopting a new Communication and Engagement Strategy and starting to implement actions, including Coffee with a Councillor.
- Implementing Child Safety Standards across the organisation, in response to recommendations and legislation from the Royal Commission.

It is also worth noting some of the achievements against our Service Performance Indicators, including a reduction in the amount of time it has taken us to finalise planning applications.

The Annual Report shows that all key financial ratios – debt commitment, working capital, revenue and debt servicing – remained steady and healthy.

Of our \$52.2 million in revenue, 53.1 per cent was drawn from rates and garbage charges, 27.9 per cent from grants, 8.7 per cent from user fees, and the balance from other sources.

We used \$12.2 million for capital works, including completion of the Lake Boga-Ultima Road



widening, Lake Boga Early Years Education Hub, Swan Hill Livestock Exchange redevelopment and Swan Hill CBD drainage.

As you will see throughout the report, there are many projects that started in 2018/19 and we look forward to working with you to complete and celebrate them in 2019/20.

This includes the vital studies into population and housing in Robinvale, the roll-out of projects from Our Region, Our Rivers funding, continued advocacy for the Swan Hill hospital and bridge, and new infrastructure like the Swan Hill boat ramp and skate park.

You can stay up to date with these projects throughout the year by following us on social media, and on Council's website. Of course, you can get in touch with Council to discuss your ideas or concerns via these channels too, at our regular Council meetings or in person.

John McLinden
Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for:

- Establishing and maintaining an appropriate organisational structure for Council
- Ensuring that the decisions of the Council are implemented without undue delay
- The day to day management of the Council's operations in accordance with the Council Plan
- Developing, adopting and disseminating a code of conduct for Council staff
- Providing timely advice to Council

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Financial Summary

Operating result

On a full accrual basis the surplus for the year was \$7,395,186. It is important to note that this is an accounting profit after recognising non-cash items such as depreciation of \$8.53 million and the receipt of infrastructure assets created by developers.

Major revenue and expenditure items included in the operating result can be identified from the following graphs.

For more information on the comprehensive income statement, balance sheet and cash flows for the year, please refer to the audited General Purpose Financial Report in Part Eight of this Annual Report.

Revenue

Council's total revenue for 2018/19 was \$52.2 million as per the Comprehensive Income Statement. A breakdown of Council's revenue sources highlights that 89.6 per cent of Council's income comes from four income categories.

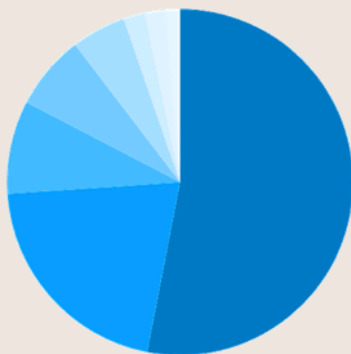
- Rates and garbage charges 53.1%
- Grants - operating 20.9%
- User fees 8.7%
- Grant - capital 7.0%

Expenditure

Council's total expenses for the 2018/19 year were \$44.8 million as per the Comprehensive Income Statement. A breakdown of Council's expenses highlights that 95.8 per cent relates to three expenditure categories.

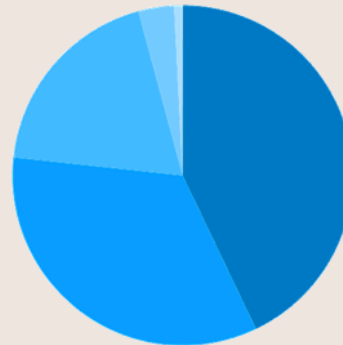
- Employee costs 42.9%
- Materials and services 33.8%
- Depreciation 19.1%

Total revenue (\$50.8 million)



- Rates and garbage charges 53.1%
- Grants - operating 20.9%
- User fees 8.7%
- Grants - capital 7.0%
- Other revenue 5.1%
- Statutory fees and fines 2.0%
- Net gain on disposal of assets 1.9%
- Contributions 1.4%

Total expenditure (\$45.0 million)



- Employee costs 42.9%
- Materials and services 33.8%
- Depreciation 19.1%
- Other expenses 3.4%
- Finance costs 0.7%
- Bad and doubtful debts 0.1%

Purchase and creation of assets



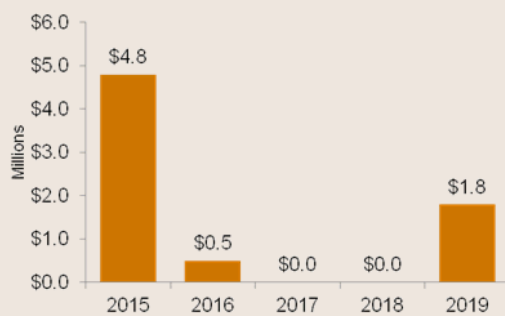
Capital expenditure

During the financial year, Council spent \$12.2 million on capital works and asset purchases, bringing the five-year total of expenditure on fixed assets to over \$58.5 million.

The graph at right shows the level of expenditure spent on new and redeveloped assets over the past five years.

Major capital expenditure items were road networks, construction works at Tower Hill, construction of the Chisholm Reserve drag strip and the Livestock Exchange redevelopment.

New borrowings



Borrowings (excluding financial leases)

Loans are used to fund major capital projects and asset purchases. Loan funding allows the community to pay for the asset (such as a leisure centre) over some of the time that it is being used.

At 30 June 2019, Council had a loan liability of \$7.84 million. This is a planned and responsible level of debt, achieved in accordance with Council's borrowing strategy. Loan repayments are currently \$0.49 million per annum.

Loan balance at 30 June each year



Loan repayments



THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Total equity



Equity

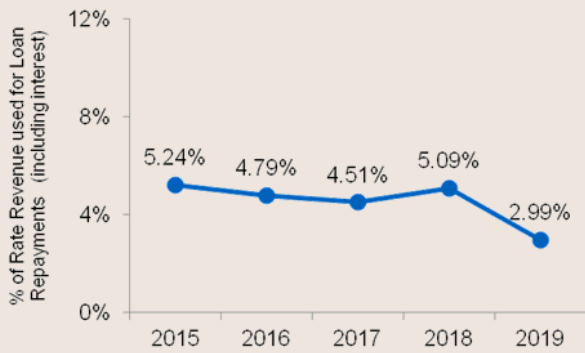
The Balance Sheet shows total community equity of \$477 million, represented by accumulated surplus and asset revaluation reserve.

The increase in equity is due to the revaluation of Council's land and building assets, and a \$7.4 million surplus in 2018/19.

This graph shows the movement in equity over the past five years.



Financial indicators



Debt commitment ratio

The debt commitment ratio identifies the percentage of rate revenue required to pay interest and principal on Council's loans.

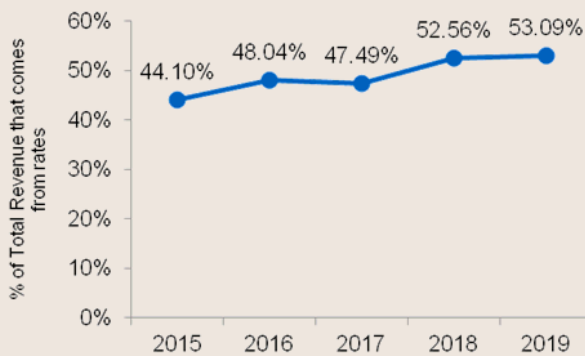
Closely tied to the Borrowing Strategy, the ratio shows that Council is in a healthy position and that it decreased marginally in 2019 due to the payout of a loan that fell due and due to the reduction of principal and interest loans Council now holds. Of the \$7.84 million in loans, \$5.3 million are interest only repayment.



Working capital ratio

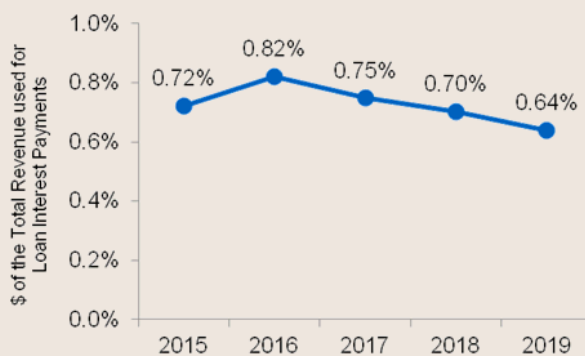
Working capital ratio shows the level of current assets Council has available to meet its current liabilities. The graph shows that the ratio is healthy and has increased over the past three years due to increased levels of cash holdings.

The ratio is expected to increase marginally in future years.



Revenue ratio

The revenue ratio shows rate revenue as a proportion of total revenue and seeks to measure Council's reliance on property rates. It is influenced by other revenue sources such as government grants, contributions, user fees and charges. This ratio remained steady for the past five years.



Debt servicing ratio

The debt servicing ratio shows the amount of rates required to pay the interest on Council's loan liability. This ratio documents that loan interest does not place a burden on finances.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Description of operations

Swan Hill Rural City Council plays a vital role in shaping the future prosperity, health and wellbeing of our municipality. Council aims to be progressive, dynamic and committed as we aim to achieve this.

Swan Hill Rural City Council delivers more than 100 services to our community.

These range from waste and road management, to managing and improving open space and community buildings.

We deliver services and facilities for children, young people, families and our elderly. We offer business development, town and strategic planning and community health initiatives.

Council's vision, strategic objectives and strategies to improve services and facilities are described in our Council Plan 2017-21 and the associated Budget.

The progress of these strategies and their delivery against the Budget is reported in this Annual Report. Refer to the section on Our Performance for more information about delivery of Council services.

The delivery of core services and facilities are measured by a set of Service Performance Indicators, as you will see in this report. We also track progress on the Initiatives set out in our Council Plan.

Council also has a wide range of responsibilities under both Victorian and Commonwealth legislations.

Economic factors

Council delivered its third budget under the 'Fair Go' rates system, with a state-wide rate cap of 2 per cent for the 2018/19 year.



Services provided

Council receives funding from a number of sources and had a budgeted income of over \$54.6 million in 2018/19. Below is a breakdown of the services Council delivered and what these cost, for every \$100 of expenditure.

- \$12 Recreation and Community Facilities**
Halls, parks, reserves, pools, playgrounds, sporting facilities and street beautification.
- \$22 Transport Services**
Maintaining over 3,000km of roads, footpaths, signs, street cleaning, tree maintenance and the aerodrome.
- \$14 Governance and Administration**
Municipal offices in Swan Hill and Robinvale, Councillor support, Council depots and plant equipment.
- \$5 Community Care**
Domestic assistance and property maintenance for our seniors.
- \$7 Environmental and Waste Management**
Recycling services, garbage collection, landfills, drainage and environmental management.
- \$5 Cultural Services**
Performing Arts, Libraries, Art Gallery and Indigenous Affairs.
- \$4 Family, Youth and Children's Services**
Services and support for families, children and youth.
- \$6 Pioneer Settlement**
Managing, marketing, maintaining and developing this premium tourist attraction, including Heartbeat of the Murray.
- \$9 Economic Development and Marketing Services**
Business development and investment, marketing of the region and leases of caravan parks.
- \$9 Public Health, Safety and Regulatory Compliance**
Animal control and registrations, parking, immunisations, emergency management, lighting and community health.
- \$7 Other**
Livestock Exchange, Tower Hill, property acquisitions and disposal, commercial works, planning and building services



Major capital works

During 2018/19 the major capital works included:

Swan Hill Regional Livestock Exchange redevelopment

Budget: \$1.94 million

The redevelopment included:

- new cattle yards and 10-way draft
- altered selling ring and building
- cattle troughs
- the scale house building
- sheep laneways and ramps
- three-bay truckwash

Tower Hill residential estate development

Budget: \$1.31 million

Stage 11 of the Tower Hill residential estate development, consisting of 24 blocks of residential land, was launched in December 2018.

Road reconstruction, sealing and maintenance

Budget: \$6.53 million

Roads around the municipality were reconstructed and/or resealed during 2018/19 including:

- Annuello-Wemen Road reconstruction - 3.8km
- Lake Boga-Ultima Road reconstruction - 5km
- Pentel Island Road Floodway reconstruction - 1.65km
- Perrin Street resurfacing
- Coonimur-Piangil Road resheet - 3.8km
- Moondah Road reseal - 8km
- Bolton-Kooloonong Road reseal - 6km

Funding from the Federal Roads to Recovery program contributed to a number of these projects, as did the State Government's Local Roads to Market and Fixing Country Roads programs.

Lake Boga Pre-school



Budget: \$420,000

The redevelopment of the Lake Boga Pre-school included:

- Building extension to house Council's Maternal Child Health service, and increase capacity for the pre-school
- New kitchen, office and storage and bathroom facilities.

E-waste sheds



Council teamed up with Sustainability Victoria to build new e-waste drop-off points at the Swan Hill and Robinvale landfills.

Funding of \$200,000 was received from Sustainability Victoria for this project.

Perrin Street, Robinvale, reconstruction

Budget: \$405,000

Perrin Street, Robinvale was resurfaced using a new technology that repurposes recycled tyres.

In a first for Victoria, Council worked with Tyre Stewardship Australia - a company testing new mixes of crumbed rubber asphalt that can improve road durability and offer a use for the millions of used tyres generated each year.

This technology saved time and minimised disturbance in the area during construction. The project was also delivered well under budget.

Major changes

Family Day Care Service

Council ceased operating Family Day Care services on 30 June 2019. Experienced, rural community organisation Intereach will take over the service and continue providing Family Day Care to local families.

Councillor by-elections

Two new Councillors were elected following by-elections - Cr Jade Benham in the Robinvale ward and Cr Nicole McKay in the Murray-Mallee ward.

Major achievements

Swan Hill Regional Livestock Exchange redevelopment

Work started in December and was mostly complete when sales returned in March. More than \$1.64 million of work was awarded to Swan Hill-based contractors.

Our Region, Our Rivers

The Our Region, Our Rivers funding application, led by Swan Hill Rural City Council on behalf of seven local councils, was successful.

The Federal Government will contribute \$16.8 million to waterfront projects across the region, councils matching it.

Upgrading our rec reserves

The Recreation Reserves Masterplan and Recreation Implementation Plan were adopted.

These offer a 10-year, \$33 million plan to upgrade recreation reserves across the municipality.

Swan Hill boat ramp

Work started on the much-anticipated new boat ramp in Swan Hill. This project had faced challenges, having to achieve multiple approvals and dealing with timing issues related to river heights.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Advocacy campaigns

One of Council's key roles is to advocate on behalf of its community. In 2018/19, Council adopted an Advocacy Strategy, which sets out key areas of need and how Council can advocate for improvements. Some of the key projects within that strategy and our progress in 2018/19 include:

Swan Hill Bridge



Council is leading the conversation on the Swan Hill bridge replacement and working with VicRoads, RMS and Murray River Council to explore replacement options.

The group is now awaiting a decision from the NSW Government on removing the heritage listing on the existing Swan Hill bridge so that a new bridge can be built alongside it.

In 2018/19, Council also lobbied Federal Government for action on the bridge.

Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack saw the bridge firsthand when he visited Swan Hill to announce the Our Region, Our Rivers infrastructure funding in March (pictured). In April, \$60 million was allocated to the new bridge in the Federal budget.

Mayor Ann Young was also chair of the Central Murray Regional Transport Forum, whose strategy lists the replacement of the Swan Hill and Tooleybuc bridges as one of its priorities.

This strategy will be launched in 2019/20 and will be used to advocate for improved transport outcomes around the region.

Increased housing

The housing shortage in Robinvale is well known. Workers find it hard to get accommodation, and in some cases, end up living in sub-standard conditions.

The housing shortage also makes it challenging for industry to source workers.

Council hosted a housing forum summit in February 2018, bringing together industry, government and private sector to discuss the issues and possible solutions.

In July 2018, the State Government awarded Council a \$50,000 grant to develop the Robinvale Housing Strategy. This work is expected to be complete early in the 2019/20 year. The strategy will be used to plan and advocate for improvements, and will set out goals for all levels of government and the private sector.

Swan Hill Needs a New Hospital

Council's Advocacy Strategy sets out a goal to 'Participate in the community based Swan Hill Needs a New Hospital Committee at Councillor and senior officer level'.

This occurred in 2018/19, with Councillors and officers sitting on the committee and providing logistical support to the campaign.

Councillors used every opportunity to raise awareness with State and Federal government representatives (pictured).

In April 2019, Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt and Member for Mallee Andrew Broad announced a \$30 million commitment to a new hospital.

The committee and Council will continue to lobby State Government to complete masterplanning and to make a funding commitment.

Completion of Murray Basin Rail

In 2018/19, Council called on the State Government to confirm its commitment to standardising the Manangatang rail line.

Following a Council resolution in December 2018, Council wrote to Minister for Transport Infrastructure Jacinta Allan, calling on her to confirm the government's commitment to the Manangatang rail line standardisation, and to clarify the timeframes for delivery of a minimum 80km/h, 21 tonne axle load freight service to our region.

Council maintained its membership and involvement with the Rail Freight Alliance, which also lobbied the State on this issue.

Mayor Ann Young was also chair of the Central Murray Regional Transport Forum, whose strategy lists the completion of the Murray Basin Rail Project as one of its priorities.

This strategy will be launched in 2019/20 and will be used to advocate for improved transport outcomes around the region.



THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Australia Day
Local Government Awards

Citizen of the Year -
Sonia Cunning



Sonia has lived in Ultima for 17 years and is known for her community spirit and willingness to always help those in need.

She is the President of the Ultima Progress Association, the secretary of both the Ultima Golf Club and Ultima CFA and volunteers countless hours to these and other community based groups.

Sonia has played an integral role in seeing a number of community projects come to fruition in Ultima including the community garden and recently installed pump track.

She is passionate about bringing more people to the township of Ultima, and created the Bull Chuckers Not-for-a-sheep station Darts Weekend, which is now in its 14th year, and the Ball Whackers Not-for-a-sheep station Golf Weekend, now in its 12th year.

Sonia has volunteered countless hours at local football matches and assisted in fundraising for the Ultima Primary School, Ultima Football Netball Club and many more. Last year, in Bunnings barbecues alone, she helped raise close to \$10,000 for various Ultima community groups.

Young Citizen of the Year -
Chelsea Tofful



Chelsea has been passionate about athletics from a young age.

She has proudly represented Swan Hill Little Athletics Club, Swan Hill Primary School and MacKillop College at a number of high level competitions including the Stawell Gift, State School Athletics Championships, State Relay Championships and Victorian Country Championships.

Chelsea has shown commitment to her success by undertaking the extensive travel needed to attend training and events, all while ensuring she rarely misses school and undertakes all the necessary work to complete her VCE.

Off the athletics field, Chelsea is also an avid gymnast and, for the past 12 months, has worked as a gymnastics coach after school.

Chelsea is also a passionate advocate for the Australian Red Cross Blood Service and championed a blood donation campaign in primary school, urging school teachers to become blood donors.

Community Events of the Year

Robinvale Euston 2018 Working Group

The 1918 Battle of Villers-Bretonneux in France was described as a crucial turning point of World War 1. The people of Villers-Bretonneux have never forgotten the role that Australian soldiers played in saving their town and forcing back German forces. Because of the strong connections between Robinvale and Villers-Bretonneux, and Euston's connection to France, the two communities united to commemorate the battle's centenary in 2018 – on 24 April.

Country Week Tennis

Country Week is the largest grassroots tennis event in Australia. The week-long round robin event attracts as many as 1500 competitors and injects up to \$1.5 million into the local economy. 2018 was the 16th time that Swan Hill had hosted Country Week, and feedback from participants and Tennis Victoria was overwhelmingly positive.



Student Achievement award winners

Jethro Edullantes	St Mary MacKillop College
Hana Roberts	St Mary MacKillop College
Lachlan Caffrey	Swan Hill College
Chandelle Hazlett	Swan Hill College
DJ Weaver	Swan Hill Specialist School
Jai Robinson	Son Centre Christian College
Gabby Atkinson	Swan Hill Primary School
Nghia Nguyen	Swan Hill North Primary School
Sofie Mazzotta	St Mary's Primary School
Emilie Ward	Woorinen District Primary School
Amy Van Liessum	Beverford Primary School
Jacob Thompson	Lake Boga Primary School
Tyson Mitchell	Ultima Primary School
Haidee Maher	Nyah District Primary School
Jorja Plant	Manangatang P-12 College
Emma Templeton	Manangatang P-12 College
Pala Kuma	Robinvale St Mary's Primary School
Tusi Fuanaki	Robinvale Secondary College





Part three

Our Council

Our history

For thousands of years, the traditional owners of the lands that now form the Swan Hill Rural City Council lived in the region, with the land providing abundant food sources and a permanent water supply.

In 1836, led by explorer Major Thomas Mitchell, the first Europeans arrived. Settlers started to arrive soon after, establishing large sheep stations next to the Murray River.

In 1871, the Shire of Swan Hill was proclaimed and was located in Kerang (which now forms part of the Gannawarra Shire).

In 1893, the Shire of Castle Donnington was created and centered around the town of Swan Hill. By 1904 it had assumed the name Shire of Swan Hill.

The Borough of Swan Hill was formed in 1939 and in March 1965 became the City of Swan Hill.

Thirty years later, in January 1995, the Shire and the City were amalgamated to form Swan Hill Rural City Council.

Our municipality's profile

The municipality covers 6,116 square kilometres and is home to 20,759 people.

It includes the townships of Swan Hill, Robinvale, Lake Boga, Nyah, Nyah West, Piangil, Woorinen, Ultima, Manangatang, Boundary Bend and Tresco.

Featuring a modern and thriving regional centre, the Swan Hill municipality also boasts the characteristics of rural living, including a strong community and relaxed lifestyle.

With more than 40 commercially grown products – including almonds, olives, stonefruit, grapes, vegetables, cereals, legumes, lucerne, sheep, beef and dairy – it is easy to see why our municipality is an important part of Victoria's food bowl.

Located on the Murray River, tourism also plays an important role in our region's economy. Our climate and natural beauty attracts about 750,000 visitors each year, injecting \$95 million into the local economy.

Our municipality is also proud to have more than 40 nationalities among its community and a population that is welcoming and resilient.

Continued investment and a strong focus on long-term growth and sustainability remain high priorities for Council.

The Council sets a number of initiatives and targets through each four-year Council Plan, which helps establish the foundations to achieve our vision during the next 30 years.



OUR COUNCIL

Councillors

The Council is elected to provide leadership and good governance for the municipal district and the local community.

The municipality is divided into four wards, however the seven Councillors are elected as representatives for all residents and ratepayers across the municipality.

They have responsibility for setting the strategic direction for the municipality, policy development, identifying service standards and monitoring performance across the organisation.



**Cr Ann
Young -**

**Mayor
Central Ward**
Elected 2016
(M) 0409 503 711



**Cr Lea Johnson
Central Ward**
Elected 2016
(M) 0487 770 456



**Cr Bill Moar
Central Ward**
Elected 2016
(M) 0429 496 194



**Cr Chris Jeffery
Central Ward**
Elected 2016
(M) 0429 447 802



**Cr Les McPhee
Lakes Ward**
Elected 2008
(M) 0427 319 394



**Cr Jade Benham
Robinvale Ward**
Elected 2019
(M) 0436 804 012



**Cr Nicole McKay
Murray Mallee Ward**
Elected 2019
(M) 0436 299 842



**Cr Gary Norton
Murray Mallee Ward**
Elected 2003, retired 2019



**Cr John Katis
Robinvale Ward**
Elected 1997, retired 2019

Community Satisfaction Survey

Each year, Local Government Victoria coordinates a state-wide Local Government community satisfaction survey. The survey measures the community's perceptions of their local council's performance in key areas.

During February and March 2019, a total of 400 residents from across the municipality provided their feedback via a telephone survey.

Overall performance

The overall performance index score of 54 for Council represents a significant decrease on the 2018 result. Overall performance remains five points down on the peak performance experienced both last year and in 2015 (index scores of 59).

Top performing areas

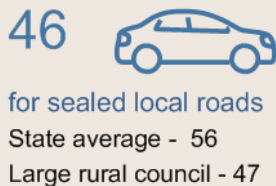
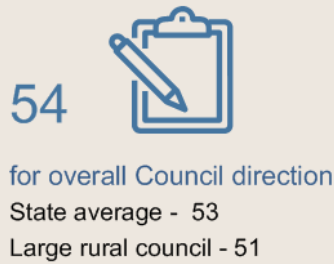
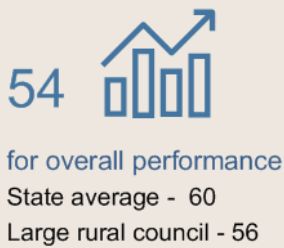
Council's three highest performing services are:

- Customer service
- Community consultation and engagement
- Lobbying and advocacy

Areas for improvement

Council's two poorest performing services are:

- Sealed local roads
- Community decisions



Full survey results are available on Council's website - www.swanhill.vic.gov.au



Part four

Our people

OUR PEOPLE

Executive Leadership Team

Council is the governing body that appoints a Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO is responsible for the day-to-day management of operations, in accordance with the strategic directions of the Council Plan. Four Directors and the CEO form the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and lead the organisation.



John McLinden - Chief Executive Officer

John joined Council as its Chief Executive Officer in March 2016. He was previously the Chief Executive Officer of Loddon Shire Council, a position he held since 2005. John, who has a wealth of experience in Local Government, was previously the Director Operations (and formerly Director Technical Services) at Loddon Shire Council since local government amalgamations in 1995. A qualified engineer, he has also held engineering positions at the Shire of Rosedale, City of Broadmeadows and the Shire of Colac.



Heather Green - Director Development and Planning

Heather started as Council's Director Development and Planning in July 2017. She has extensive local and state government experience across Australia. During her nine years as a manager and director at Victoria's Alpine Shire Council, she focused on sustainable development, planning, tourism and economic development. Heather was at Toowoomba for 15 years as the Manager of Strategic Planning. And during her time working for the Northern Territory Government as the Katherine Land Manager, she oversaw planning, Crown leases and grazing licences. Heather has a Bachelor of Applied Science (Planning).



David Lenton - Director Corporate Services

David is a qualified accountant who joined Swan Hill City Council (now Swan Hill Rural City Council) as Finance Manager in December 1992. Since the amalgamation of the City and Shire of Swan Hill in January 1995, David has held the positions of Financial Controller and Finance and Administration Manager. In 2001 David was appointed as Group Manager Corporate Services, later being reclassified as Director Corporate Services. Before joining Local Government, David worked for 14 years in various finance roles with a large multi-national company in the private sector.



Bruce Myers - Director Community and Cultural Services

Bruce is a qualified librarian who started his career at the Swan Hill Regional Library, managing the mobile library, in 1994. From 1998 until 2007 Bruce was Manager of the Library. Bruce became the Director Community and Cultural Services in 2007. He now heads a team of about 90 people involved with a wide range of community services, including community-based aged care, children's and youth services and cultural experiences.

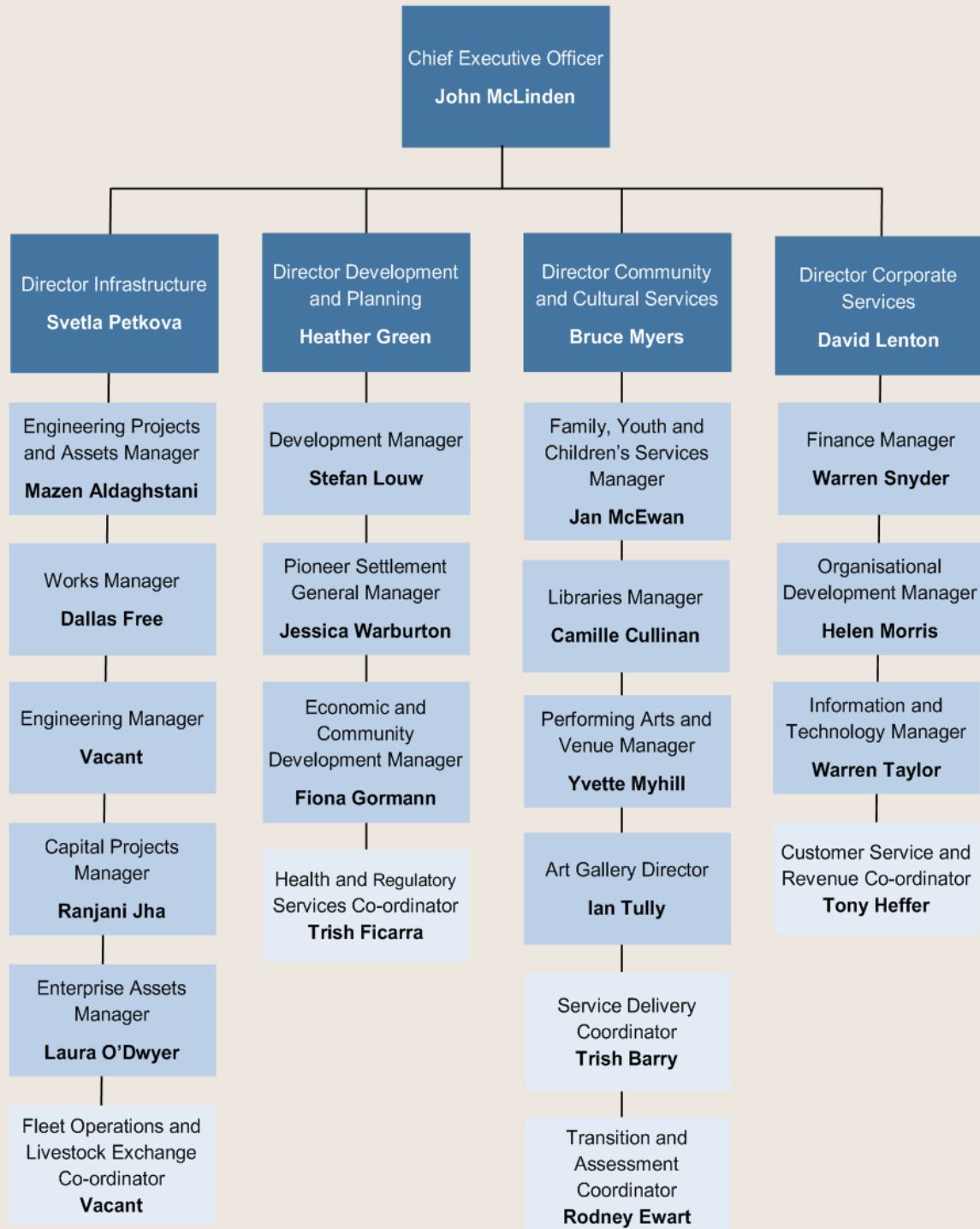


Svetla Petkova - Director Infrastructure

Svetla began as Director Infrastructure at Council in December 2017. Svetla is a qualified engineer with a Bachelor of Engineering, a Masters in Engineering, and a PhD in Fluid Mechanics. Before joining Council, Svetla spent more than a decade working in asset management and project delivery in the Victorian water industry, and enterprise asset management within local government in Queensland. As Director Infrastructure, she oversees infrastructure projects and services, manages Council's environmental and natural resource programs, and manages and maintains Council assets.

OUR PEOPLE

Organisational structure

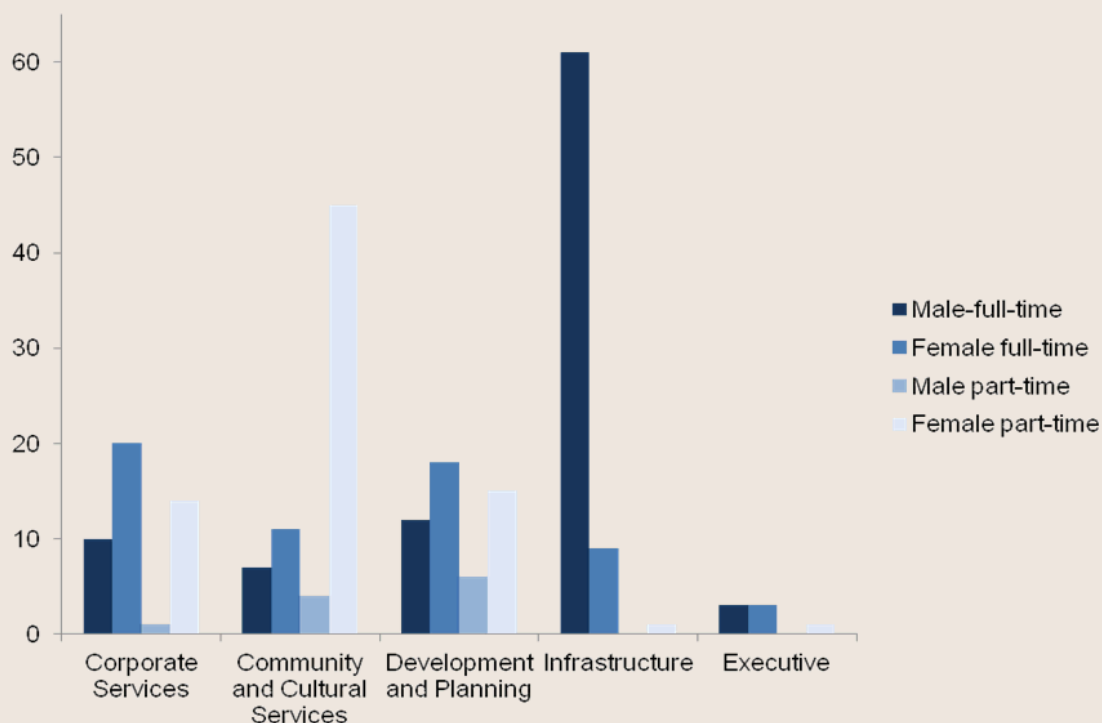


Council employees

A summary of the number of full time equivalent (FTE) Council staff by organisational structure, employment type and gender is set out below.

Directorate	Male full-	Female full-	Male part-	Female part-	Casual	Total staff	Male total	Female total	EFT total
Corporate Services	10.0	20.0	1.0	14.0	-	45.0	10.7	30.5	41.1
Community and Cultural Services	7.0	11.0	4.0	45.0	16.0	83.0	10.3	40.8	51.1
Development and Planning	12.0	18.0	6.0	15.0	9.0	60.0	14.9	29.6	44.4
Infrastructure	61.0	9.0	-	1.0	-	71.0	61.0	9.3	70.3
Executive	3.0	3.0	-	1.0	-	7.0	3.0	3.7	6.7
Total	93.0	61.0	11.0	76.0	25.0	266.0	99.9	113.9	213.8

Number of staff (FTE)



OUR PEOPLE

Council employees

A summary of the number of full time equivalent (FTE) staff categorised by employment classification and gender is set out below.

Employment Classification	Male EFT	Female EFT	Total EFT
Band 1	-	0.7	0.7
Band 2	1.7	2.1	3.8
Band 3	41.2	25.2	66.4
Band 4	10.9	26.9	37.8
Band 5	8.7	21.5	30.2
Band 6	11.4	12.8	24.2
Band 7	3.0	3.7	6.7
Band 8	-	1.0	1.0
Non-banded positions (includes salary packages)	23.0	20.0	43.0
Total	99.9	113.9	213.8

Valuing our people

At Swan Hill Rural City Council, we recognise the importance that each individual plays in achieving our goals.

Our aim is to ensure that Council is a great place to work, where the capability of our people is nurtured and performance is focused on delivering exceptional service for our communities.

These priorities drive the activities, policies and procedures implemented to ensure that Swan Hill Rural City continues to be a great place to work.

Council's staff strategies include:

- A focus on extending the skills of staff to increase efficiency.
- Ongoing implementation of the workforce strategy including: succession planning, recruitment and retention of staff, apprenticeships, traineeships and/or scholarships, and accessing non-customary employment pools.
- Offering phased retirement options to extend the careers of higher skilled staff.
- Ongoing development of systems and processes to continually improve productivity.

Other staff matters

Equal Employment Opportunity Program

As an equal opportunity employer, we are dedicated to providing a workplace where diversity is embraced and decisions are merit-based. This includes ensuring fair, equitable and non-discriminatory consideration being given to all job applicants, regardless of age, sex, disability, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation, race, religious beliefs or other irrelevant factors.

We recognise our pro-active duty to ensure compliance with equal opportunity and Council ensures all staff undertake mandatory equal opportunity training every three years.

Our Equal Employment Opportunity Policy and Procedure supports our organisation in fulfilling its obligations under the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. In 2018/19, 119 employees undertook Equal Opportunity training, as well as 151 employees successfully completing Culture at Work training.

Council also has an online bullying and harassment course, with 117 staff completing this training. Equal opportunity is also covered in policy and procedure training and all staff are informed of Council's dedication to equal opportunity during staff induction. We have six equal opportunity contact officers available to provide guidance and assistance.

Scholarship Program

Council's Scholarship Program supports up to seven local students who are completing undergraduate or TAFE studies during the school year. In addition to financial support, students receive valuable on-the-job experience by working at Council during semester breaks.

Students participating in the program are:

- James Schifferle, Bachelor of Computer Science in the IT Department.
- Jacob Mathieson, Bachelor of Environmental and Conservation Science at the Swan Hill Depot.
- Tessa Myers, Bachelor of Psychological Science in the Economic Development Department.
- Meg Garvie, Bachelor of Human Services / Masters of Social Work at Youth Inc
- Noah Angus, Bachelor of Civil Engineering (Honours), in the Engineering Department
- Anna Quinn, Bachelor of Commerce in the Economic Development Department.



OUR PEOPLE

Enterprise bargaining agreement

In July 2018, the Consultative Committee comprising management representatives, nominated workplace union delegates and union industrial officers negotiated a new Enterprise Agreement for Council employees. As a result, a new Enterprise Agreement was successfully negotiated and approved by Fair Work Australia, with an operative date of 22 March 2019 for a period until 30 June 2021.

Professional development

Council continues to be at the forefront of professional development and training options for staff. More than 4,500 hours of organisational training was provided to staff during the year, or 22 hours per EFT.

Social and Emotional Intelligence Profile (SEIP) training was offered to a number of officers, identifying an individual's social and emotional intelligence strengths and development opportunities. In addition, staff completed three coaching and mentoring sessions.

Council also offers study assistance for staff undertaking relevant undergraduate or postgraduate studies.

Fast facts

More than **4,500** hours of organisational training was provided during 2018/19.

That equates to **22** hours of training per EFT employees

187 online E3 learning courses are available to Council employees

Online training

Council continued to offer an expanded suite of compliance courses through e3learning - an online learning program.

All internal courses are developed with industry experts and the courses are delivered in an engaging and easy to use format.

Courses are designed in line with relevant legislation, are fully customisable and are suitable for Council.

The system also allows both administrators and end users to record attendance and completion of in-person training (accredited and non-accredited).

Health, safety and wellbeing

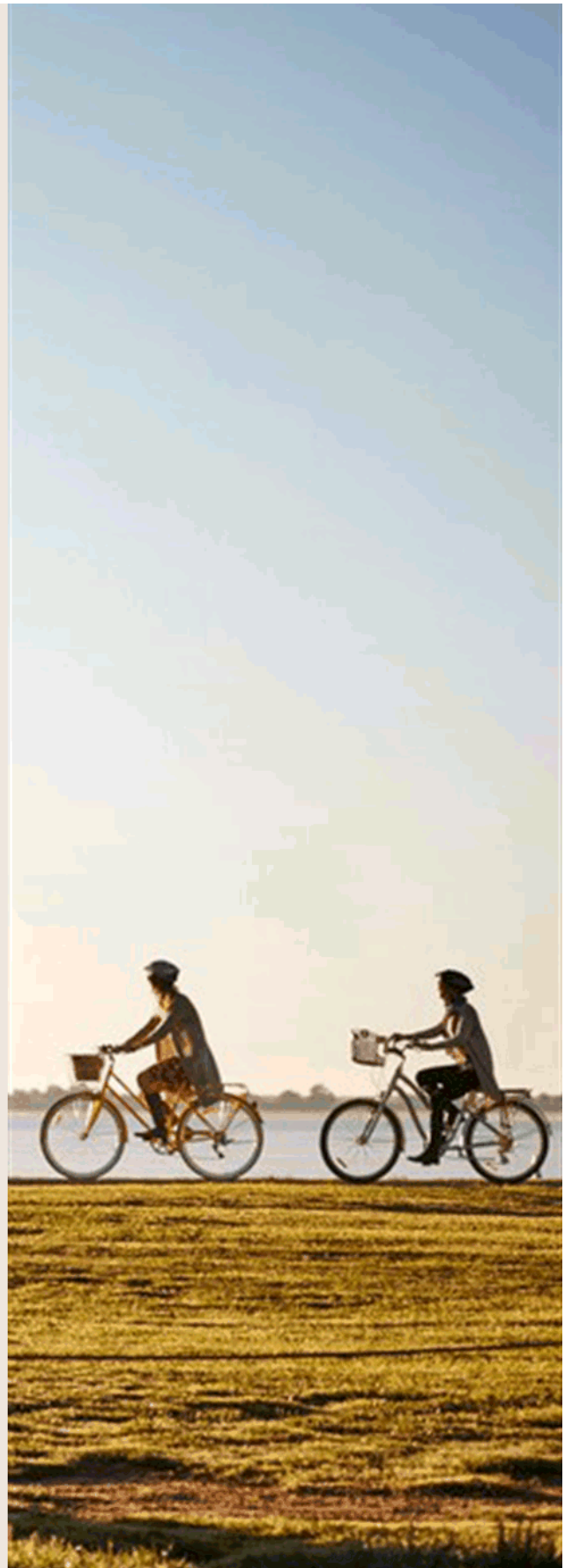
Council continued its commitment to staff health, safety and wellbeing by continuing several programs to encourage a healthy lifestyle and improved work/life balance. Programs include:

- Ergonomic assessments
- OHS and manual handling training
- Providing sunscreen and insect repellent
- Six-weekly issues of the HR Newsletter outlining Council policies and procedures, professional development and wellbeing
- Council's first inventory of first aid kits along with auditing to ensure in-date contents
- Employee wellbeing initiatives including the flu vaccination program undertaken by Council's Public Health Unit, and subsidised gym memberships
- Ongoing compliance with the MAV WorkCare Self-insurance Scheme
- Ongoing provision of Council's Employee Assistance Program for employees requiring support and/or counselling for work and non-work related matters.

OHS Committee

Council's OHS Committee consists of management and staff representatives. The committee meets every two months to review policies, review hazard and injury incidents, discuss workplace OHS issues and identify opportunities to improve Council's OHS performance. The committee met six times during 2018/19.

In 2018/19 there were 23 reported injuries compared to 19 in the previous year. There were five lost time injuries (standard WorkCover Claims), compared to six in the previous financial year.



OUR PEOPLE

Staff service awards

Every year Council acknowledges service and presents awards to staff who have reached service milestones. Ten staff were presented with Staff Service Awards at the annual all-staff function in August 2018.

10 years
Camille Cullinan
Katie Mathieson



20 years
Ainslie Guymer
Robyn Leslie
Bryan Donhardt
Leanne Moroney



25 years
Mark Smith
David Lenton
Leah Farrow

35 years
Graham Jarvie

Staff Recognition Awards

Pioneer Settlement General Manager Jessica Warburton won the overall 2018 Staff Recognition Award.

She lead change at the Pioneer Settlement that resulted in improvements in resource use, and putting in place actions to increase income, reduce costs, improve customer service, improve merchandising, and increase site usage by schools, and for weddings.





Part five

Our performance

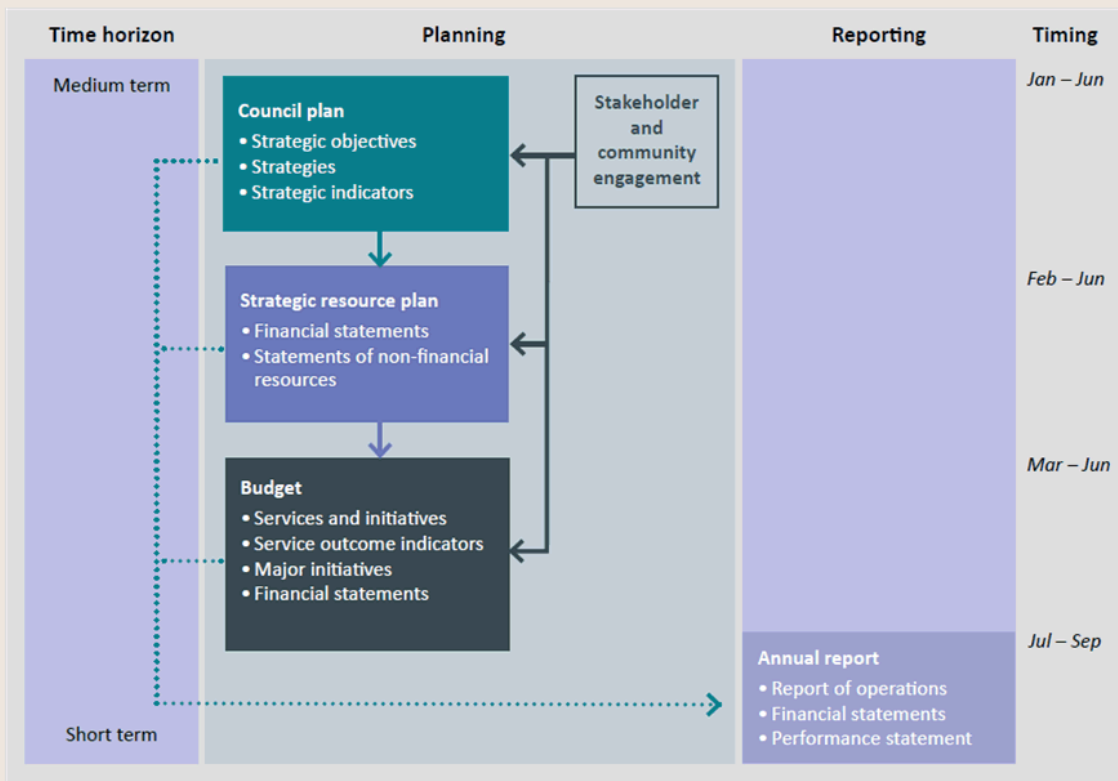
OUR PERFORMANCE

Our performance

The Planning and Accountability Framework is found in part 6 of the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act). The Act requires councils to prepare the following planning and reporting documents:

- A council plan within the six months after each general election or by 30 June, whichever is later
- A strategic resource plan for a period of at least four years and include this in the council plan
- A budget for each financial year
- An annual report in respect of each financial year.

The following diagram shows the relationships between the key planning and reporting documents that make up the planning and accountability framework for local government. It also shows that there are opportunities for community and stakeholder input and feedback at each stage of the planning and reporting cycle.



Council Plan

The Council Plan 2017-21 includes strategic objectives, strategies for achieving these for the four year period, strategic indicators for monitoring achievement, and a strategic resource plan.

Performance

Council's performance for the year has been reported against each Key Result Area to demonstrate how Council is performing in relation to the 2017-21 Council Plan.

Performance has been measured as follows:

- Results achieved in relation to the strategic indicators in the Council Plan.
- Progress in relation to the major initiatives defined in the Budget.
- Services funded in the Budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided those services.
- Results against the prescribed Service Performance Indicators and measures.

Our key result areas	
Economic Growth	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and attract new business to our region. • Assist existing businesses to expand and increase their efficiency. • Have a region with an equipped and productive workforce. • Provide land use planning that is responsive and which proactively encourages appropriate development.
Community Enrichment	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help all people to find a place in our community. • Provide services and support initiatives that create a healthy and safe community. • Develop a community with a sense of pride and responsibility/ownership that strives to achieve its aspirations.
Infrastructure	<p>We will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure that appropriately services community needs. • Infrastructure that is provided and appropriately maintained in accordance with agreed standards. • A strong focus on asset management systems and planning.
Governance and Leadership	<p>We will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive community engagement through appropriate and constructive consultation. • Effective and efficient utilisation of resources. • Effective partnerships and relationships with key stakeholders and staff. • Effective advocacy and strategic planning.
Environment	<p>We will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound policies and practices that protect and enhance our environment. • A waste management program that is environmentally and financially sustainable.

OUR PERFORMANCE

Key Result Area 1: Economic Growth

Council Plan Initiatives

The following statement reviews the performance of Council against the Council Plan, including results achieved in relation to the strategic initiatives included in the Plan.

✓ Completed >> In progress/continuing in 2019/20 - Carried over to 2019/20

Council Plan Initiative	Action	Status
Identify the types of businesses suited to this region and develop investment prospectuses	Perform an industry gap analysis	>>
Investigate and identify potential export opportunities and facilitate connections	Analyse the region's products and identify where we have competitive advantages that may provide opportunities for growth	>>
Pursue new businesses that are upstream processors for our local produce	Engage with local industry to identify opportunities	>>
Increase the availability of appropriate housing to support growth of industry and agriculture	Investigate the housing needs and identify appropriate solutions	>>
Encourage the growth of agriculture through appropriate advocacy and strategic planning	Advocate for improved transport links	✓
Investigate opportunities for agricultural businesses to establish new enterprises	Engage with local industry to identify opportunities, for example clean energy on farms	✓
Encourage organisations to joint tender for works and services	Investigate and where possible implement shared contracts and services with the region's councils	>>
	Conduct workshops and provide advice to local business and tenderers to improve their tendering processes	>>
Actively pursue opportunities for regionally focused infrastructure	Advocate for additional and upgraded infrastructure that will improve efficiency of local businesses e.g. rail freight	>>
	Advocate for adequate and alternative utilities supplies	>>

Council Plan Initiative	Action	Status
Encourage and assist existing business to pursue value adding to their industry	Undertake forums and discussions with industry to understand opportunities	>>
	Complete an analysis of relevant industry data	>>
Improve the commercial position of the Pioneer Settlement	Enhance the Heartbeat of the Murray night time product by improving operational effectiveness and adding additional elements to the visitor experience	✓
	Review the promotion plan	✓
Encourage the development of appropriate accommodation for various workforces	Review the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) and Planning Scheme to ensure diverse housing and land is available	>>
	Investigate opportunities for improved public transport	>>
Review of the availability and suitability of industrial land in Swan Hill and Robinvale	Completed an Industrial Zones Strategy	>>
Formulate new ways to encourage new business development	Develop a business expansion strategy	✓
	Commence an Investment Attraction campaign	>>
Investigate and identify potential export opportunities and facilitate connections	Investigate what role Council can play with development of new markets	-
Promote new technologies and ways of working	Investigate and market opportunities for internet based businesses	-
Investigate opportunities for Agricultural businesses to establish new enterprises	Investigate opportunities for agri-tourism products and experiences e.g. paddock to plate, farm stays	>>

OUR PERFORMANCE

Council Plan Initiatives continued

✓ Completed >> In progress/continuing in 2019/20 - Carried over to 2019/20

Council Plan Initiative	Action	Status
Investigate options for investment in renewable energy technologies for the municipality	Complete and adopt a study	>>
Assist local businesses to up-skill and retrain their workforce	Identify skills shortages and training gaps	>>
	Advocate for support for regional training opportunities	-
Implement the Workforce Development Strategy	Complete a project to quantify labour force data from within the municipality, with a particular focus on agricultural sector	>>
Investigate and develop options for de-watered farming land	Complete audit of areas with de-watered land	✓
Review of the availability and suitability of industrial land in Swan Hill and Robinvale	Amend planning scheme as appropriate	>>

Major Initiatives

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2018/19 Budget.

Major Initiative	Progress
Provide seed funding for economic development initiatives (Budget: \$80,000 Actual: \$83,145)	Complete
Upgrade the Pioneer Settlement day product (Budget: \$150,000 Actual: \$122,300)	Complete
Tower Hill residential estate development (Budget: \$1,313,170 Actual: \$392,120)	Incomplete. Project to be completed in 2019/20
Conserve and restore the PS Gem (Budget: \$35,395 Actual: \$95,650)	Complete. Additional \$50,000 grant funding received for the project.
Livestock exchange redevelopment (Budget: \$1,152,000 Actual: \$2,120,485)	Complete. Actual includes carried forward funds from the 2017/18 Budget



OUR PERFORMANCE

Services funded in 2018/19 Budget

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2018/19 Budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service Area	Description of services provided	Budget <u>Actual</u> Variance \$000
Building and planning statutory services	Provide statutory planning services including processing all planning applications, providing advice and making decisions about development proposals that require a planning permit. Representing Council at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal where necessary. Monitor Council's Planning Scheme and prepare major policy documents shaping the future of the municipality. Provide statutory building services to the community, including processing building permits, emergency management responsibilities, fire safety inspections, swimming pool barrier audits and complaints, and illegal building works investigations.	522 <u>378</u> (144)
Caravan parks	Provide and maintain caravan park facilities to a standard that promotes local tourism and supports a high quality of life.	(67) <u>(115)</u> (48)
Economic development	Assist the organisation with economic development to facilitate an environment that is conducive to a sustainable and growing local business sector, and provides opportunities for local residents to improve their skill levels and access employment.	357 <u>488</u> 131
Livestock exchange	Provide a livestock selling facility and associated services to primary producers, purchasers and stock agents.	894 <u>1466</u> 572
Pioneer Settlement	Care for and conserve the Pioneer Settlement and its collection. Market and promote the Settlement as a tourist destination, provide quality visitor programs and promote the sale of merchandise as an additional source of income.	835 <u>1000</u> 165

Service Performance Indicators

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures.

Service/Indicator/Measure	Results 2016	Results 2017	Result 2018	Result 2019	Material Variation
Statutory Planning					
Timeliness					
<i>Time taken to decide planning applications</i> [The median number of days between receipt of a planning application and a decision on the application]	53	53	57	47	In 2018/19, Council's planning department was fully staffed allowing for faster processing times.
Service standard					
<i>Planning applications decided within 60 days</i> [Number of planning application decisions made within 60 days / Number of planning application decisions made] x 100	76%	82.69%	70.55%	82.63%	In 2018/19, Council's planning department was fully staffed allowing for faster processing times.
Service cost					
<i>Cost of statutory planning service</i> [Direct cost of statutory planning service / Number of planning applications received]	\$3,372.75	\$2,559.57	\$2,867.51	\$2,540.06	The direct cost of the statutory planning service has reduced as Council did not engage contractors in 2018/19.
Decision making					
<i>Council's planning decisions upheld at VCAT</i> [Number of VCAT decisions that did not set aside Council's decision in relation to a planning application / Number of VCAT decisions in relation to planning applications] x 100	-	50%	-	-	

OUR PERFORMANCE

Key Result Area 2: Community Enrichment

Council Plan Initiatives

The following statement reviews the performance of Council against the Council Plan, including results achieved in relation to the strategic initiatives included in the Plan.

✓ Completed >> In progress/continuing in 2019/20 - Carried over to 2019/20

Council Plan initiative	Action	Status
Review and implement the Aboriginal Partnership Plan	Undertake initiatives with the intent to work toward developing a Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP)	>>
Investigate opportunities to develop Aboriginal leadership capabilities	Investigate leadership opportunities e.g. scholarship, grants, host a forum with young people and local service providers	>>
Establish and maintain partnership with organisations that support Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities	Review of service access plans to ensure inclusion	✓
Strengthen our connection with youth	Review the structure of the Youth Council with young people	✓
	Develop work placement and work experience programs	>>
Develop and implement Cultural Services Plan	Develop and adopt a plan	✓
Plan for the development of the Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery precinct	Determine the long-term site for Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery	✓
	Prepare final Gallery designs for approval and costed	>>
Strategically position Council's ongoing role regarding the community-based aged care reforms	Produce an options paper on integration of Commonwealth Home Support Program to National Standards	✓
	Develop Positive Ageing Plan	-

Council Plan initiative	Action	Status
Review and determine Council's role in early years and child care services	Review early years services	>>
	Produce a report on outcomes and provide recommendations	>>
	Develop an Early Years Plan (EYP)	>>
Improve personal and community safety by working with partners on community safety issues	Promote awareness of the Community Charter for the Prevention of Violence against Women	>>
	Implement the requirements of Child Safety Standards	✓
Expand library services in Robinvale and review the delivery of library services in our small communities.	Develop an effective partnership arrangement with Robinvale P-12 College	>>
Investigate the need for an off leash dog park	Develop a project scope if the community need is identified	>>
Support the capacity of communities to self-manage and self-regulate.	Implement ways to encourage all communities to actively participate in the community grants program	>>

OUR PERFORMANCE

Major Initiatives

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2018/19 Budget.

Major Initiative	Progress
Prepare designs for the Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery extension (Budget: \$300,000 Actual \$32,775).	Incomplete. To be completed in 2019/20.
Continue to engage a Rural Access Co-ordinator with the aim of creating inclusive communities (Budget: \$163,670 Actual: 113,835).	Complete.
Continue implementing Community Plans and projects (Budget: \$591,440 Actual \$158,980).	Incomplete.
Host the Fairfax Festival (Budget: \$101,350 Actual: \$70,335).	Complete.
Implement Youth Strategy – FREEZA activities (Budget: \$42,025 Actual \$25,170).	Incomplete. To be completed in 2019/20.



Services funded in 2018/19 Budget

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2018/19 Budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service Area	Description of services provided	Budget <u>Actual</u> Variance \$000
Aged and disability services	A range of home and community care services for the aged and people with a disability including home delivered meals, personal care, transport, dementia care, home maintenance, housing support and senior citizen clubs.	97 <u>(65)</u> (162)
Family and children services	Family oriented support services including pre-schools, maternal and child health, youth services, family day care, out of school hours, and holiday programs.	853 <u>596</u> (257)
Community development	Effective and ongoing liaison with, and support to, community and recreation groups. Support for the development and implementation of Community Plans and liaison with our Indigenous community.	1,191 <u>1,592</u> 401
Leisure centres	A wide range of programs and services giving the community a chance to participate in cultural, health, education, and leisure activities that contribute to the community's general wellbeing.	1,340 <u>922</u> (418)
Public health and regulatory services	Co-ordinating food safety, immunisations and management of public health concerns to ensure an acceptable state of physical, mental and social wellbeing is maintained within the community. This service also provides staff at school crossings throughout the municipality, animal management services, parking control and enforcement and provides education, regulation and enforcement of the general Local Law and relevant state legislation.	560 <u>461</u> (99)
Cultural services	Performing arts, art gallery and library services. This is a customer-focused service that caters for the cultural, educational and recreational needs of residents, while offering a place for the community to meet, relax and enjoy the facilities and services. Includes the operation and maintenance of the Swan Hill Town Hall and Performing Arts Centre.	1,951 <u>1,554</u> (397)

OUR PERFORMANCE

Service Performance Indicators

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures.

Service/Indicator/Measure	Results 2016	Results 2017	Result 2018	Result 2019	Material Variation
Maternal Child Health					
Satisfaction					
<i>Participation in first MCH home visit</i> [Number of first MCH home visits / Number of birth notifications received] x 100	96.69%	96.25%	90.35%	94.90%	
Service standard					
<i>Infant enrolments in the MCH service</i> [Number of infants enrolled in the MCH service (from birth notifications received) / Number of birth notifications received] x 100	100.00%	100.63%	100.00%	100.00%	
Service cost					
<i>Cost of the MCH service</i> [Cost to Council of the MCH service / Hours worked by MCH nurses]	\$72.16	\$73.87	\$94.60	\$81.12	The Maternal Child Health service engaged fewer agency and temporary staff in 2018/19, and employee costs were lower than in 2017/18.
Participation					
<i>Participation in the MCH service</i> [Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of children enrolled in the MCH service] x 100	75.38%	73.28%	73.03%	73.14%	
<i>Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children</i> [Number of Aboriginal children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of Aboriginal children enrolled in the MCH service] x 100	43.73%	41.88%	62.18%	60.08%	

Service/Indicator/Measure	Results 2016	Results 2017	Result 2018	Results 2019	Material Variation
Animal Management					
Timeliness					
<i>Time taken to action animal requests</i> [Number of days between receipt and first response action for all animal management requests / Number of animal management requests]	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	Council received 2306 animal complaints in 2018/19 compared with 1453 animal complaints in 2017/18 resulting in longer processing times.
Service standard					
<i>Animals reclaimed</i> [Number of animals reclaimed / Number of animals collected]	21.90%	25.75%	31.16%	21.88%	In 2017/18 Council did not include surrendered or feral animals to the total of collected animals. If they were included in 2017/18, the calculated measure would have been $91/351 = 25.92\%$
Service cost					
<i>Cost of animal management service</i> [Direct cost of the animal management service / Number of registered animals]	\$68.55	\$69.83	\$67.01	\$69.73	
Health and safety					
<i>Animal management prosecutions</i> [Number of successful animal management prosecutions]	6	1	2	-	Council had no animal prosecutions in 2018/19.
Aquatic Facilities					
Service standard					
<i>Health inspections of aquatic facilities</i> [Number of authorised officer inspections of Council aquatic facilities / Number of Council aquatic facilities]	1	1	0	1	Health inspections were completed at all municipal aquatic facilities in 2018/19.
<i>Reportable safety incidents at aquatic facilities</i> [Number of WorkSafe reportable aquatic facility safety incidents]	0	1	1	0	No reportable safety incidents occurred during 2018/19.

OUR PERFORMANCE

Service Performance Indicators continued

Service/Indicator/Measure	Results 2016	Results 2017	Result 2018	Results 2019	Material Variation
Service cost					
<i>Cost of indoor aquatic facilities</i> [Direct cost of indoor aquatic facilities less income received / Number of visits to indoor aquatic facilities]	\$6.39	\$6.58	\$7.85	\$7.13	
<i>Cost of outdoor aquatic facilities</i> [Direct cost of outdoor aquatic facilities less income received / Number of visits to outdoor aquatic facilities]	\$14.72	\$16.08	\$18.11	\$22.57	Extensive maintenance work was carried out at the Robinvale Leisure Centre and Swan Hill Outdoor Pool in 2018/19. The Robinvale Leisure Centre maintenance included painting the pool and the replacement of tiles. The Swan Hill Outdoor Pool waterslide columns and stairs were repainted, and wet deck drain covers were replaced around the 50 metre and waterslide pools.
Utilisation					
<i>Utilisation of aquatic facilities</i> [Number of visits to aquatic facilities / Municipal population]	6.76	6.15	5.51	5.57	
Food safety					
Timeliness <i>The time taken to action food complaints</i> [Number of days between receipt and first response action for all food complaints / Number of food complaints]	1.43	1.00	1.82	1.10	

Service/Indicator/Measure	Results 2016	Results 2017	Result 2018	Result 2019	Material Variation
Service standard					
<i>Food safety assessments</i> [Number of registered class 1 food premises and class 2 food premises that receive an annual food safety assessment in accordance with the Food Act 1984 / Number of registered class 1 food premises and class 2 food premises that require an annual food safety assessment in accordance with the Food Act 1984] x 100	95.18%	94.44%	87.15%	93.17%	
Service cost					
<i>Cost of food safety service</i> [Direct cost of the food safety service / Number of food premises registered or notified in accordance with the Food Act 1984]	\$872.83	\$850.09	\$498.68	\$455.11	
Health and safety					
<i>Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications</i> [Number of critical non-compliance notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises followed up / Number of critical non-compliance notifications and major non-compliance notifications about food premises]	84.44%	100.00%	94.74%	81.25%	Follow up inspections in three incidences did not occur. One premise ceased trading after the initial inspection meaning a follow up could not be conducted.

OUR PERFORMANCE

Service Performance Indicators continued

Service/Indicator/Measure	Results 2016	Results 2017	Result 2018	Result 2019	Material Variation
Libraries					
Utilisation					
<i>Library collection usage</i> [Number of library collection item loans / Number of library collection items]	1.38	1.59	1.67	1.61	
Resource standard					
<i>Standard of library collection</i> [Number of library collection items purchased in the last five years / Number of library collection items] x 100	41.81%	45.28%	53.41%	54.28%	
Service cost					
<i>Cost of library service</i> [Direct cost of library service / Number of visits]	\$11.90	\$13.34	\$16.23	\$14.21	The reduction in the direct cost to operate the library service in 2018/19 is due to a staff position changing from full time to part time, and the alteration of the mobile library service timetable which reduced the number of days the vehicle was on the road each week thus reducing the operating costs of the vehicle.
Participation					
<i>Active library members</i> [Number of active library members / Municipal population] x 100	19.24%	19.91%	18.08%	16.90%	

Community funding

Swan Hill Rural City Council recognises, respects and values the contribution that community, sporting and not-for-profit organisations make within our community. One of the ways Council does this is through the annual Community Grants program. Recipients of the 2018/19 Community Grants are detailed in the tables below:

Community Development Fund

The Community Development Fund offers up to \$5,000 to suitable community groups and organisations. Funding may be given for projects including minor repairs or upgrades to community facilities; water conservation and environmental innovations; OHS or risk management issues; new equipment; new programs or activities; local festivals and events with wide community benefit; and protection, conservation and restoration of heritage items and assets.

Organisation	Approved amount	Project description
1st Lake Boga Sea Scouts	\$5,000	Kitchen upgrade
Lake Boga Junior Sporting Club	\$2,200	Tumbling tracks
Lakeside Golf Club	\$5,000	Golf cart shed
Manangatang Swimming Pool	\$3,000	Storage facility
Mid Murray Pistol Club	\$5,000	Upgrade and extension of shooting range
Nyah District Men's Shed Incorporated	\$3,000	OHS safety equipment
Nyah Nyah West United Football and Netball Club	\$5,000	Netball court upgrade
Robinvale and District Cricket Association	\$2,500	Synthetic cricket pitch replacement
Robinvale Euston Football Netball Club and Robinvale Netball Association	\$5,000	Riverside Park netball tennis court, lighting and changerooms design
Robinvale Pistol Club Incorporated	\$5,000	Reactive targets and ground works
Rotary Club of Robinvale Euston	\$500	Rotary Park
Speewa Heritage Collectors Club	\$4,000	Airconditioner
St Mary's Tyntynder Cricket Club Incorporated	\$1,965	Replacement cricket pitch roller
Swan Hill Bowls Club Incorporated	\$3,700	Installation of access ramp, upgrade toilets and new bar benchtop

OUR PERFORMANCE

Community Development Fund continued

Organisation	Approved amount	Project description
Swan Hill Cemetery Trust	\$5,000	Upgrade to toilets
Swan Hill Clay Target Club	\$5,000	Kitchen upgrade
Swan Hill Junior Soccer League	\$5,000	Soccer nets, coaches and referee development program
Swan Hill Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club Incorporated	\$5,000	Playground upgrade
Swan Hill Neighbourhood House	\$5,000	Irrigation system
Swan Hill Sporting Car Club	\$5,000	New water tanks
Swan Hill Theatre Group	\$5,000	Roller door
Tyntynder Football Netball Club	\$3939.70	Ball catching nets
Ultima Lions Club	\$1,500	Re-cladding of rotunda and upgrade to barbecue
Ultima Progress Association	\$5,000	Replace roofing
Woorinen South Pre-School Incorporated	\$3,750	Install swing frame, seating, planter boxes and upgrade garden edging

Event Support Fund

The Event Support Fund provides grants and in-kind support to community groups and event organisers to develop new events, or existing events that provide significant economic and/or social benefit to the region

Event	In-kind support	Approved amount	Total value
2019 Robinvale Euston 80 Ski Race	Traffic management, signage, cleaning, subsidised venue hire	\$1,300	\$3,000
Bowls Victoria Women's Region Sides Championship		\$1,000	\$1,000
Chinkapook Christmas Tree		\$250	\$250
Film Festival		\$1,000	\$1,000
International Tabletop Day		\$500	\$500
Lake Boga Yacht Club Easter Regatta 2019		\$1,000	\$1,000
Life Explosion free community day		\$500	\$500
Mallee Home Business Expo 2018		\$500	\$500
Mallee Almond Blossom Festival	Traffic management, signage, cleaning and subsidised venue hire	\$3,500	\$5,000
Manangatang Cup		\$1,500	\$1,500
Massive Murray Paddle		\$2,000	\$2,000
Men's Health Night	Subsidised venue hire		\$500
Mental Health Week Event	Subsidised venue hire		\$500
Moon Festival	Street banners, traffic management, signage	\$1,000	\$1,500
NAIDOC Dreamtime Ball	Subsidised venue hire	\$500	\$1,000
Nyah District Christmas Carnival	Signage	\$1,250	\$1,500
New Year's Eve family concert	Signage, cleaning	\$30,000	\$30,650
Robinvale NAIDOC Week	Subsidised venue hire	\$500	\$1,000

OUR PERFORMANCE

Event Support Fund continued

Event	In-kind support	Approved amount	Total value
SHBA Veteran's badminton tournament		\$1,000	\$1,000
Speewa Heritage Collector's Club 8th Annual Rally		\$750	\$750
Swan Hill Bowls Autumn Carnival		\$1,000	\$1,000
Swan Hill Community Carols by Candlelight	Waste removal	\$200	\$400
Swan Hill Field and Game 30th Anniversary two-day event		\$500	\$500
Swan Hill Jockey Club three-day racing carnival		\$2,000	\$2,000
Swan Hill Junior Invitational Basketball Tournament	Subsidised venue hire		\$3,000
Swan Hill Kart Club Golden Power Series event		\$1,000	\$1,000
Swan Hill Region Food and Wine Festival	Pioneer Settlement venue hire	\$5,000	\$10,000
Swan Hill Things With Strings Festival	Traffic management, signage	\$9,000	\$10,000
Victorian Association Croquet Country Regional Championships		\$500	\$500
Voyage Fitness Riverside Tri	Provision of bollards, cleaning, street sweeping	\$1,500	\$2,000
Western Vic Association of Historical Societies AGM		\$250	\$250
Woorinen Winter Solstice Festival		\$1,000	\$1,000

Key Result Area 3: Infrastructure

Council Plan Initiatives

The following statement reviews the performance of Council against the Council Plan, including results achieved in relation to the strategic initiatives included in the Plan.

✓ Completed >> In progress/continuing in 2019/20 << Delayed due to funding/budget

Council Plan Initiative	Action	Status
Actively pursue opportunities from decommissioned irrigation infrastructure	Work with Goulburn Murray Water to decommission channel number 9	✓
	Identify opportunities for land parcels taken over by Council	>>
Review current use of Council facilities	Produce usage report, including analysis of non-Council facilities that provide similar services	-
	Identify opportunities to rationalise Council assets	>>
Plan and deliver assets for the current and future needs of our growing community and changing environment	Develop and update policies, strategies and registers	>>
	Implement an effective asset management system	>>
	Complete a centralised asset register	>>
Advocate for funding for an active trail between Lake Boga and Swan Hill.	Complete project scope and plan to enable future funding submission	✓
Review the Swan Hill Active Transport Strategy	Review the Strategy	>>
	Adopt the reviewed Strategy	-
Review the way that we procure and maintain our Infrastructure	Identify opportunities to rationalise assets and facilities that do not have an identified service need	>>
	Conduct a review of public facilities including public toilets (included as part of 18/19 review)	>>

OUR PERFORMANCE

Council Plan Initiatives continued

✓ Completed >> In progress/continuing in 2019/20 - Carried over to 2019/20

Council Plan Initiative	Action	Status
Upgrade Swan Hill Livestock Selling Complex	Implement upgrade project	>>
	Identify funding opportunities for future stages	>>
Review the road network and classify each road	Complete a service review of the road network	✓
Complete the Recreation Reserve Masterplan	Adopt the Recreation Reserves Masterplan	✓
	Establish a long term operational maintenance program for Council managed reserves	>>
	Review and update user agreements between Council and recreation reserve users groups	>>
Ensure developers comply with the Infrastructure Design Manual where relevant to local standards	Improve internal and external stakeholders' understanding of the Infrastructure Design Manual	>>
	Develop a local policy position in areas where the Infrastructure Design Manual can be varied	>>

Major Initiatives

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2018/19 Budget.

Major Initiative	Progress
Design and construct the Robinvale town levee (Budget: \$600,000 Actual \$58,205).	Incomplete. To be completed in 2019/20.
Re-seal sealed roads (Budget: \$1,120,000 Actual \$1,105,828).	Complete.
Re-sheet sealed road shoulders (Budget: \$205,000 Actual \$211,510).	Complete.
Re-sheet unsealed gravel roads (Budget: \$700,000 Actual \$562,005).	Incomplete. Two projects carried forward to 2019/20.
Reconstruct Swan Hill Aerodrome lighting and runway (Budget: \$230,000 Actual \$6,000).	Incomplete. To be completed in 2019/20.
Lake Boga early learning education hub (Budget: \$420,000 Actual: \$438,495).	Complete.
Complete road works funded by the Federal Roads to Recovery program (Budget: \$1,175,220 Actual: \$1,025,110).	Complete.
Complete Bromley Road Robinvale beautification project (Budget: \$805,075 Actual: \$26,285).	Incomplete. To be completed in 2019/20.
Undertake projects as identified in the Swan Hill Riverfront Masterplan (Budget: \$1,871,035 Actual: \$65).	Incomplete. Funds to be used in 2019/20 - Our Region, Our Rivers project.
Build new soccer pavilion at the Ken Harrison Sporting Complex (Budget: \$520,000 Actual \$11,675).	Incomplete. To be completed in 2019/20.

OUR PERFORMANCE

Services funded in 2018/19 Budget

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2018/19 Budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service Area	Description of services provided	Budget
		Actual Variance \$000
Amenity and safety	Provide the community with well-maintained public areas with a focus on community access and safety. Maintain urban streets and public areas, including footpaths, in a clean and litter-free state and provides access to public conveniences and lighting of public areas. Provide and maintain efficient and effective open and underground drainage systems.	3,843 <u>2,819</u> (1,024)
Community buildings	Maintain and renew community buildings and facilities. It covers community centres, public halls and preschools.	1,352 <u>1,122</u> (230)
Infrastructure planning and management	Provide for the planning, design and project management of Council's capital works program, and manage Council's plant and fleet assets and depot operations.	124 <u>303</u> 179
Recreation	Maintain Council's parks, reserves, playgrounds and streetscapes in a functional and visually pleasing landscape.	5,347 <u>2,028</u> (3,319)
Swimming pools	Provide quality, accessible aquatic facilities that support a high quality of life for residents and visitors.	394 <u>386</u> (8)
Traffic and transportation services	Manage Council's roads and associated infrastructure assets. Ongoing maintenance and renewal work to municipal infrastructure assets including sealed roads, unsealed roads, footpaths and aerodromes.	4,823 <u>4,855</u> 32

Service Performance Indicators

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures.

Service/Indicator/Measure	Results 2016	Results 2017	Result 2018	Result 2019	Material Variation
Roads					
Satisfaction of use					
<i>Sealed local road requests</i> [Number of sealed local road requests / Kilometres of sealed local roads] x 100	9.93	13.43	8.47	5.54	In 2018/19 Council received 49 sealed local road requests compared with 75 requests in 2017/18.
Condition					
<i>Sealed local roads below the intervention level</i> [Number of kilometres of sealed local roads below the renewal intervention level set by Council / Kilometres of sealed local road] x 100	98.42%	98.31%	98.31%	98.76%	
Service cost					
<i>Cost of sealed local road reconstruction</i> [Direct cost of sealed local road reconstruction / Square metres of sealed local roads reconstructed]	\$26.93	\$29.04	\$45.45	\$25.14	A decrease in costs to reconstruct a sealed road is due to roads reconstructed in 2018/19 being rural roads. Rural roads are significantly cheaper to construct and also utilise local quarry products which are also cheaper.
<i>Cost of sealed local road resealing</i> [Direct cost of sealed local road resealing / Square metres of sealed local roads resealed]	\$4.05	\$3.96	\$5.72	\$6.84	An increase in resealing sealed roads is due to a greater percentage of urban streets being sealed this year with a two coat seal. The two coat application is more expensive and is becoming the preferred option in urban streets.
Satisfaction					
<i>Satisfaction with sealed local roads</i> [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on the condition of sealed local roads]	48	49	50	46	

OUR PERFORMANCE

Key Result Area 4: Governance and leadership

Council Plan Initiatives

The following statement reviews the performance of Council against the Council Plan, including results achieved in relation to the strategic initiatives included in the Plan.

✓ Completed >> In progress/continuing in 2019/20 << Delayed due to funding/budget

Council Plan Initiative	Action	Status
Champion a culture that values strong community engagement	Implement a project management system	>>
	Conduct training for staff	>>
Continually improve workplace safety and staff health and wellbeing	Develop and implement an OHS framework	>>
	Review and develop Council's Risk Framework and Strategy	>>
Implement a Project Management System	Review and improve current processes	>>
	Implement a centralised project management system utilised throughout the organisation	>>
Review council services for efficiency, effectiveness and quality	Prioritise services for a detailed review	>>
	Identify relevant benchmarks for a service review	-
Council to lead the conversation on Swan Hill bridge placement with the community	Represent Council's views at stakeholder meetings	>>
	Conduct public engagement and awareness campaign	>>

Council Plan Initiative	Action	Status
Establish new and alternative methods of consultation	Research and report to council on contemporary consultation methods	✓
	Increase the use of social media, online survey tools	✓
	Review Council's Communication strategy	✓
Develop Council's systems and processes to improve our customer service, efficiency and effectiveness of our operations	Undertake Council Services Review	>>
Use social media as a medium for community consultation and communication	Increase the use of online survey tools	>>
Engage and partner with organisations, business and individuals to increase co-operation and avoid duplication of resources when common objectives are identified	Conduct skills audit of community organisations	>>
Advocate to State and Federal governments to fund priorities in Community Plans, Major Projects Plan and other key Council plans and strategies	Develop marketing material on key issues	✓
Encourage and support Council representatives to obtain positions on relevant boards that support council's activities, providing these duties do not conflict with Council responsibilities	Identify key board positions	>>
	Develop advocacy strategies	✓
	Train staff and Councillors on Governance responsibilities and industry based awareness	>>

OUR PERFORMANCE

Major Initiatives

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2018/19 Budget

Major Initiative	Progress
Implement a project management system (Budget: \$30,000 Actual \$0).	Incomplete. To be completed in 2019/20.
Further develop Council IT processes as identified in the IT Strategy (Budget: \$125,000 Actual: \$79,725).	Incomplete. To be completed in 2019/20.
Install solar energy production services on Council buildings (Budget: \$200,000 Actual \$59,305).	Incomplete. To be completed in 2019/20.
Scan building and planning files to be stored digitally (Budget: \$38,190 Actual \$31,960).	Incomplete. To be completed in 2019/20.

Services funded in 2018/19 Budget

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2018/19 Budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service Area	Description of services provided	Budget <u>Actual</u> Variance \$000
Councillors and corporate management	Governance includes the Mayor, Councillors, Chief Executive Officer, Executive Leadership Team and associated support, which cannot easily be attributed to the direct service provision areas.	2,313 <u>2,260</u> (53)
Community relationships	Proactively communicate Council decisions, programs and events to the community using a range of methods, and assist the organisation to respond to community issues as they arise.	189 <u>177</u> (12)
Management of resources	Manage Council's offices along with human and financial resources to effectively and efficiently fulfil Council objectives, including areas like rate raising and collection, customer service, human resource management, depot and office site management, Council finances, information technology and records management.	(25,321) <u>(27,457)</u> (2,136)

Service Performance Indicators

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures.

Service/Indicator/Measure	Results 2016	Result 2017	Result 2018	Result 2019	Material Variation
Governance					
Transparency					
<p><i>Council decisions made at meetings closed to the public</i></p> <p>[Number of Council resolutions made at an ordinary or special meetings of Council, or at meetings of a special committee consisting only of Councillors, closed to the public / Number of Council resolutions made at ordinary or special meetings of Council, or at meetings of a special committee consisting only of Councillors] x 100</p>	13.46%	9.26%	7.73%	5.56%	12 resolutions were made in 2018/19 compared to 15 resolutions in 2017/18, at Council meetings closed to the public.
Consultation and engagement					
<p><i>Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement</i></p> <p>[Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on community consultation and engagement]</p>	55	58	55	54	

OUR PERFORMANCE

Service Performance Indicators continued

Service/Indicator/Measure	Results 2016	Result 2017	Result 2018	Result 2019	Material Variation
Attendance <i>Councillor attendance at Council Meetings</i> [The sum of the number of Councillors who attended each ordinary and special Council Meeting / (Number of ordinary and special council meetings) x (Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election)] x 100	95.24%	97.62%	97.96%	96.64%	
Service cost <i>Cost of Governance</i> [Direct cost of the Governance service / Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election]	\$103,733	\$40,441	\$41,456	\$43,621.26	
Satisfaction <i>Satisfaction with Council decisions</i> [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with the performance of Council in making decisions in the interest of the community]	53	53	54	51	

Key Result Area 5: Environment

Council Plan Initiatives

The following statement reviews the performance of Council against the Council Plan, including results achieved in relation to the strategic initiatives included in the Plan.

✓ Completed >> In progress/continuing in 2019/20 << Delayed due to funding/budget

Council Plan Initiative	Action	Status
Seek to influence how environmental water is used within the municipality	Attain membership to Catchment Management Authorities (CMA)	>>
	Seek a position on CMA committees	>>
Investigate alternative energy for council buildings, and a community solar option	Prepare a business case for each option	>>
Review our work methods to reduce the environmental impact of what we do	Review our fuel usage	>>
	Review plant and corporate fleet requirements	✓
	Investigate and use where possible sustainable building practices	>>
Review and implement the Waste Management Plan	Approve a revised and updated Waste Management Plan	>>
Advocate for improved control on private and public land of feral pests and weeds	Engage with local Landcare groups	>>
	Identify and reduce boxthorn infestations	>>
	Extend fruit fly program	>>
Investigate opportunities for green waste and organic collection service	Review data for current green waste service	✓
	Develop and implement a green waste information campaign	✓

OUR PERFORMANCE

Major Initiatives

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2018/19 Budget

Major Initiative	Progress
Deliver the roadside weeds and pest management program (Budget: \$75,000 Actual: \$26,750).	Incomplete. To be completed in 2019/20.
Implement projects as identified from the Waste Management Strategy (Budget: \$200,000 Actual \$2,785).	Incomplete. To be completed in 2019/20.
Construct a sealed service road at the Swan Hill Transfer Station (Budget: \$150,000 Actual \$0).	Incomplete. To be completed in 2019/20.
Construct a reuse shed at the Robinvale Landfill (Budget: \$75,000 Actual \$0).	Incomplete. To be completed in 2019/20.

Services funded in 2018/19 Budget

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2018/19 Budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service Area	Description of services provided	Budget <u>Actual</u> Variance \$000
Environmental management	Advocate for, and assist to deliver environmental projects as part of Council's aim to become more sustainable in both built and natural environments.	241 <u>148</u> (93)
Waste management	Provide waste collection services, including kerbside collection of garbage, hard waste and green waste from all households and some commercial properties.	(3) <u>(418)</u> (421)

Service Performance Indicators

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures.

Service/Indicator/Measure	Result 2016	Result 2017	Result 2018	Result 2019	Material Variation
Waste Collection					
Satisfaction					
<i>Kerbside bin collection requests</i> [Number of kerbside garbage and recycling bin collection requests / Number of kerbside bin collection households] x 1000	16.27	25.38	22.86	30.88	Council received 262 bin collection requests in 2018/19 compared to 193 in 2017/18. Many of these requests were for the replacement of damaged or aged bins, and upgrades to larger waste bins.
Service standard					
<i>Kerbside collection bins missed</i> [Number of kerbside garbage and recycling collection bins missed / Number of scheduled kerbside garbage and recycling collection bin lifts] x 10,000	2.29	2.23	3.19	2.37	Scheduled bin lifts were reported incorrectly in 2017/18. If reported accurately in 2017/18 the calculation would of been $680000/530027=1.28\%$. In 2018/19 there were 129 bins missed compared to 68 bins missed in 2017/18.
Service cost					
<i>Cost of kerbside garbage collection service</i> [Direct cost of the kerbside garbage bin collection service / Number of kerbside garbage collection bins]	\$54.45	\$55.31	\$55.79	\$57.09	
<i>Cost of kerbside recyclables collection service</i> [Direct cost of the kerbside recyclables bin collection service / Number of kerbside recyclables collection bins]	\$27.32	\$27.74	\$27.81	\$28.49	
Waste diversion					
<i>Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill</i> [Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins] x 100	35.26%	34.53%	30.55%	30.26%	



Part six

Corporate Governance

Governance

Swan Hill Rural City Council is constituted under the *Local Government Act 1989* to provide leadership for the good governance of the municipal district and the local community. Council has a number of roles including:

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

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

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



CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Meetings of council

Council conducts open public meetings on the third Tuesday of each month. Members of the community are welcome to attend these meetings and observe from the gallery. Council meetings also provide the opportunity for community members to submit a question of Council, make a submission or speak to an item.

For the 2018/19 year, Council held the following meetings:

- 11 Ordinary Council Meetings
- 6 Special Council Meetings.

Below are the dates and locations of the Ordinary Council Meetings held in 2018/19:

Month	Location	Month	Location
17 July 2018	Swan Hill	19 February 2019	Swan Hill
21 August 2018	Swan Hill	19 March 2019	Swan Hill
18 September 2018	Robinvale	16 April 2019	Swan Hill
16 October 2018	Swan Hill	21 May 2019	Robinvale
20 November 2018	Swan Hill	25 June 2019	Swan Hill
18 December 2018	Swan Hill		

Councillor attendance at Council meetings

The following table provides a summary of Councillor attendance at Council Meetings and Special Council Meetings for the 2018/19 financial year.

Councillor	Ordinary Council Meetings	Special Council Meetings
	Attended	Attended
Cr Les McPhee	10	4
Cr Ann Young	10	5
Cr Bill Moar	11	5
Cr Lea Johnson	10	5
Cr Chris Jeffery	10	5
Cr Jade Benham	4	2
Cr Nicole McKay	3	2
Cr John Katis	6	1
Cr Gary Norton	6	3

Special committees

The Local Government Act allows Councils to establish one or more special committees consisting of:

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

The following table contains a list of special committees established by Council that are in operation and the purpose for which each committee was established.

Special Committee	Councillors	Officers	Other	Purpose
Swan Hill Indoor Sports and Recreation Centre Committee of Management	1	0	4	To oversee the external management of the Swan Hill Indoor Sports and Recreation Centre.
Swan Hill Leisure Centre Committee of Management	2	2	5	To oversee the external management of the Swan Hill Leisure Centre.
Alan Garden Reserve Committee of Management	1	0	6	To oversee the management of the Alan Garden Reserve.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Council representation on other Committees

Councillors are representatives on Special Committees of Council, as well as other external committees, associations and groups.

Cr Ann Young

- Bigger Better Beverford Group
- Woorinen Progress Association
- Murray River Group of Councils
- Chisholm Reserve Inc
- Event Support Fund
- Community Development Fund
- Central Murray Regional Transport Forum
- Chief Executive Officer Performance Review Committee
- Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery Advisory Committee
- Murray River Group of Councils

Cr Les McPhee

- Lake Boga Land on Water Committee of Management
- Municipal Association of Victoria
- Lake Boga Inc
- Ultima Progress Association
- Local Aboriginal Network Swan Hill (sub delegate)
- Joint Bridge Committee
- Asset Naming Sub-Committee (of Council)
- Chief Executive Officer Performance Review Committee
- Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
- North West Municipalities Association (from April 2019)

Cr Lea Johnson

- Swan Hill Inc
- Bigger Better Beverford
- Woorinen Progress Association
- Local Aboriginal Network Swan Hill
- Murray Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network (MLLEN)
- Rural Councils Victoria
- Audit Committee
- Chief Executive Officer Performance Review Committee
- Swan Hill Leisure Centre Committee of Management
- Municipal Association of Victoria (sub delegate) (from April 2019)

Cr John Katis / Cr Jade Benham

- Robinvale Aboriginal Elders Committee
- Robinvale Euston Business Association
- Wemen Progress Association
- Local Aboriginal Network Robinvale
- Robinvale Improvement Group
- Asset Naming Sub-Committee (of Council)

Cr Chris Jeffery

- Bigger Better Beverford Group
- Woorinen Progress Association
- Event Support Fund
- Community Development Fund
- Audit Committee
- Swan Hill Indoor Sport and Recreation Centre Committee of Management
- Alan Garden Reserve Committee of Management
- Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (sub-delegate)

Cr Bill Moar

- Loddon Mallee Waste and Resource Recovery
- Bigger Better Beverford
- Woorinen Progress Association
- Joint Bridge Committee
- Swan Hill Regional Livestock Exchange
- Swan Hill Leisure Centre Committee of Management (sub-delegate)
- Agribusiness Advisory Committee
- North Central Catchment Partnership (Forum) (from April 2019)

Cr Gary Norton / Cr Nicole McKay

- Manangatang Improvement Group
- Nyah Action Group
- Piangil Community Group
- Boundary Bend Progress Association
- Rural Councils Victoria (sub delegate)
- Rail Freight Alliance
- Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water Advisory Committee

Cr Gary Norton

- Municipal Association of Victoria (sub delegate)
- North West Municipalities Association
- North Central Catchment Partnership (Forum)

Conflict of interest

During the course of dealing with matters that come before Council for decision, individual Councillors and members of staff might find that they, or their immediate family, have a financial or some other advantage that could be interpreted as having undue influence on the outcome.

To ensure transparency in the decision-making processes of Council, both Councillors and staff are required to declare and document their interest in a matter. Where Councillors have declared an interest, they take no part in the decision-making process.

During 2018/19, ten conflicts of interest were declared at Council and Special Committee meetings.

Copies of the document Conflict of Interest: A Guide for Councillors, October 2012, published by the Department of Planning and Community Development, has been provided to Councillors for their reference.

Code of Conduct

As a result of changes to the *Local Government Act 1989*, councils must prepare, adopt and maintain a Councillor Code of Conduct. Swan Hill Rural City Council's Councillor Code of Conduct was reviewed and adopted on 21 February 2017.

After the review on 21 February 2017, Councillors signed the Code of Conduct declarations.

A copy of the code is available at www.swanhill.vic.gov.au/about/overview/policies.



CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Councillor allowances

In accordance with Section 74 of the *Local Government Act*, Councillors are entitled to receive an allowance while performing their duty as a councillor. The Mayor is also entitled to receive a higher allowance.

The State Government sets the upper and lower limits for all allowances paid to Councillors and Mayors. Councils are divided into three categories based on the income and population of each council. In this instance Swan Hill Rural City Council is recognised as a category two council.

For the period 1 July 2018 to 23 December 2018, the councillor annual allowance for a category 2 council (as defined by the Act) was fixed at \$22,405 per annum and the allowance for the Mayor was \$69,325 per annum. The Minister for Local Government approved an annual adjustment of two per cent to take effect as from 1 December 2018. The annual allowances were adjusted for the period 1 December 2018 to 30 June 2019 at \$22,965 per annum for the councillor allowance and \$71,058 per annum for the mayoral allowance.

The following table contains details of current allowances fixed for the mayor and councillors during the year.

Councillor	Allowance
Cr Ann Young (Mayor November 2018 - June 2019)	\$55,565.04
Cr Les McPhee (Mayor July 2018 - November 2018)	\$43,483.79
Cr Bill Moar	\$27,116.17
Cr Lea Johnson	\$27,115.17
Cr Chris Jeffery	\$27,115.17
Cr Jade Benham	\$8,150.00
Cr Nicole McKay	\$5,619.58
Cr John Katis	\$16,404.12
Cr Gary Norton	\$20,280.54

Councillor expenses

In accordance with Section 75 of the *Local Government Act*, Council is required to reimburse a councillor for expenses incurred whilst performing his or her duties as a councillor.

Council is also required to adopt and maintain a policy in relation to the reimbursement of expenses for councillors.

The policy provides guidance for the payment of reimbursements of expenses and the provision of resources, facilities and other support to the mayor and councillors to enable them to discharge their duties.

Council also publishes in its Annual Report the details of the expenses, including reimbursement of expenses for each councillor and member of a council committee paid by the council.

The details of the expenses, including reimbursement of expenses for each councillor and member of a council committee, paid by Council for the 2018/19 year are set out in the following table.

Councillor	Travel	Car Mileage	Childcare	Information and Communication	Conference and Training	Total
Cr Ann Young	\$370.00	\$3,776.42		\$972.77	\$5,187.55	\$10,306.74
Cr Les McPhee	\$63.80	\$3,010.08		\$2,396.64	\$1,056.05	\$6,526.56
Cr Bill Moar				\$885.58		\$885.58
Cr Lea Johnson	\$445.05	\$930.60		\$1,065.93	\$679.51	\$3,121.09
Cr Chris Jeffery		\$217.60		\$1,080.62	\$131.67	\$1,429.89
Cr Jade Benham	\$61.70	\$1,461.32	\$57.48	\$2,915.39	\$2,951.31	\$7,447.20
Cr Nicole McKay		\$149.60		\$1,305.41		\$1,455.01
Cr John Katis		\$3,385.04		\$773.29	\$113.64	\$4,271.97
Cr Gary Norton		\$312.80		\$1,261.55	\$396.21	\$1,970.56

Note: No expenses were paid by Council, including reimbursements, to members of Council Committees during the 2018/19 year.



CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Management

Council has implemented a number of statutory and better practice items to strengthen its management framework.

Having strong governance and management frameworks leads to better decision making by Council.

The *Local Government Act 1989* requires Council to undertake an assessment against the prescribed governance and management checklist and include this in its report of operations.

Council's Governance and Management Checklist results are set out in this section. The following items have been highlighted as important components of the management framework

Audit committee

The Audit Committee is an independent Advisory Committee to Council and is formed under Section 139 of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

The primary objective of the Audit Committee is to assist Council in the effective conduct of its responsibilities for:

- Enhancing the credibility and objectivity of internal and external financial reporting
- Effective management of financial processes, to ensure integrity and transparency
- Effective management of risks and the protection of Council assets
- Compliance with laws and regulations as well as use of best practice guidelines
- The effectiveness of the internal audit function
- The provision of an effective means of communication between the external auditor, internal auditor, management and the Council
- Facilitating the organisation's ethical development
- Maintaining a reliable system of internal controls

The Audit Committee consists of five members, three of whom are independent experts in a range of areas including financial management, business, and project management.

Audit Committee Members

The members of the committee during the 2018/19 financial year were:

Warren Pollock (Chairman) - third term appointment expires 21 August 2019.

Rod Saville - third term appointment expires 21 February 2021.

Robert Jardine - first term appointment expires December 2020

Cr Lea Johnson - appointed for one year at the Statutory Council Meeting in November 2018.

Cr Chris Jeffery - appointed for one year at the Statutory Council Meeting in November 2018.

Cr Ann Young - appointed for one year at the Statutory Council Meeting in November 2017.

The following table contains details of attendance at audit committee meetings during 2018/19.

Member	Eligible to attend	Attended
Warren Pollock, Independent member and Chairman	4	4
Rod Saville, Independent member	4	4
Robert Jardine, Independent member	4	4
Ann Young, Councillor	2	2
Lea Johnson, Councillor	4	2
Chris Jeffery, Councillor	2	0

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Internal Audit

Council's internal audit function is externally resourced to provide independent and objective assurance that appropriate processes and controls are in place across Council.

A three-year risk based Strategic Internal Audit Plan (SIAP) is revised annually to ensure the audit resources remain focused on the nominated areas.

The review process considers Council's risk framework, the Council Plan, the impact of any change on our operations, systems or the business environment, prior audit coverage and outcomes, and relies heavily on management directional input. The SIAP is revised and approved by the Audit Committee annually.

The Internal Auditor attends Audit Committee meetings to report on the status of the SIAP and to present findings of completed reviews.

The responsible Director and Manager for each area reviewed is required to attend the Audit Committee meeting to respond to questions in relation to the review. All audit issues identified are risk rated.

Recommendations are assigned to responsible managers and tracked through the Audit Committee agenda until all recommendations have been completed.

Quality assurance is measured through completion of the review recommendations and completion of the nominated annual SIAP reviews.

The SIAP for 2018/19 was completed with the following reviews conducted:

- Staff awareness of Council's Policies and Procedures.
- Setting of Council's fees and charges.

In order to attain a wider review of internal audit coverage, a mix of 'detailed' and 'insight' reviews are identified.

'Detailed' reviews typically include walk throughs, identification of key controls and sample testing of key controls to form a conclusion, resulting in a detailed report.

'Insight' reviews are high level discussions with those officers responsible for managing the area of focus, resulting in a brief report of observations and insights.

External Audit

Council is externally audited by the Victorian Auditor-General. For the 2018/19 year the annual external audit of Council's Financial Reports and Performance Statement was conducted by the Victorian Auditor-General's representative, Danielle MacKenzie of Crowe Horwath (Albury).

The external auditors attend Audit Committee meetings to present the annual audit strategy and independent audit reports.

The external audit management letters and responses are also provided and discussed with the Audit Committee.



Risk Management

Council is committed to the overall management of risk to achieve its strategic and operational objectives.

The Risk Management Policy and Procedure provides a framework for identifying, analysing, controlling and reviewing risks across our organisation.

Council's risk management functions are regularly monitored and reviewed, with reports to Council's Risk Management Committee, Executive Leadership Team, and Audit Committee.

Other aspects of Council's risk management framework include the existence and management of the corporate risk register, an established internal audit regime, a reactive customer request system, and a strong asset management framework.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Governance and Management Checklist

The following are the results in the prescribed form of Council's assessment against the prescribed governance and management checklist.

Governance and Management Items	Assessment
<p>1. Community Engagement Policy (policy outlining Council's commitment to engaging with the community on matters of public interest)</p>	Date of operation of current policy: 19 December 2017
<p>2. Community Engagement Guidelines (guidelines to assist staff to determine when and how to engage with the community)</p>	Date of adoption: 19 December 2017
<p>3. Strategic Resource Plan (plan under section 126 of the Act outlining the financial and non-financial resources required for at least the next four financial years)</p>	Date of adoption: 25 June 2019
<p>4. Annual Budget (plan under section 130 of the Act setting out the services to be undertaken over the next 12 months and the funding and other resources required)</p>	Date of adoption: 25 June 2019
<p>5. Asset Management Plans (plans that set out the asset maintenance and renewal needs for key infrastructure asset classes for at least the next 10 years)</p>	Date of adoption for all plans: Road Asset Management Plan 01/09/2008, Building Asset Management Plan 01/08/2008, Footpath Asset Management Plan 01/08/2009, Irrigation Asset Management Plan 01/08/2008, Kerb and Channel Asset Management Plan 01/08/2009, Landfill Asset Management Plan 01/07/2008, Playgrounds Asset Management Plan 01/08/2008, Bridge Asset Management Plan 01/11/2005, Aerodrome Asset Management Plan 01/03/2009, Road Management Plan 27/06/2017.
<p>6. Rating Strategy (strategy setting out the rating structure of Council to levy rates and charges)</p>	Date of operation of current strategy: 20 July 2010

Governance and Management Items	Assessment
<p>7. Risk Policy (policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to minimising the risks to Council's operations)</p>	Date of operation of current policy: 19 July 2016
<p>8. Fraud Policy (policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to minimising the risk of fraud)</p>	Date of operation of current policy: 19 December 2017
<p>9. Municipal Emergency Management Plan (plan under section 20 of the <i>Emergency Management Act 1986</i> for emergency prevention, response and recovery)</p>	Date of preparation: 17 October 2017
<p>10. Procurement Policy (policy under section 186A the Act outlining the matters, practices and procedures that will apply to all purchases of goods, services and works)</p>	Date of approval: 18 December 2018
<p>11. Business Continuity Plan (plan setting out the actions that will be undertaken to ensure that key services continue to operate in the event of a disaster)</p>	Date of adoption: 1 December 2015
<p>12. Disaster Recovery Plan (plan setting out the actions that will be undertaken to recover and restore business capability in the event of a disaster)</p>	Date of adoption: 1 April 2016
<p>13. Risk Management Framework (framework outlining Council's approach to managing risks to the Council's operations)</p>	Date of operation of current framework: 19 July 2017
<p>14. Audit Committee (advisory committee of Council under section 139 of the Act whose role is to oversee the integrity of a Council's financial reporting, processes to manage risks to the Council's operations and for compliance with the applicable legal, ethical, and regulatory requirements)</p>	Date of establishment: 10 February 1998

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Governance and Management Items	Assessment
<p>15. Internal Audit (independent accounting professionals engaged by the Council to provide analyses and recommendations aimed at improving Council's governance, risk and management controls)</p>	<p>Date of engagement of current provider: 1 July 2013</p>
<p>16. Performance Reporting Framework (a set of indicators measuring financial and non-financial performance, including the performance indicators referred to in section 131 of the Act)</p>	<p>Date of operation of current framework: 12 April 2016</p>
<p>17. Council Plan Reporting (report reviewing the performance of the Council against the Council Plan, including the results in relation to the strategic indicators, for the first six months of the reporting year)</p>	<p>Reported to Council on: Quarter 1: 16/10/2018 Quarter 2: 19/03/2019 Quarter 3: 16/04/2019 Quarter 4: 16/07/2019</p>
<p>18. Financial Reporting (quarterly statements to Council under section 138 of the Act comparing budgeted revenue and expenditure with actual revenue and expenditure)</p>	<p>Date statements presented: Annual Report 2018: 25/09/2018 Quarter 1: 20/11/2018 Quarter 2: 29/02/2019 Quarter 3: 21/05/2019</p>
<p>19. Risk Reporting (six-monthly reports of strategic risks to Council's operations, their likelihood and consequences of occurring and risk minimisation strategies)</p>	<p>Date of report: 17 June 2019</p>
<p>20. Performance Reporting (annual report of indicators measuring the results against financial and non-financial performance, including performance indicators referred to in section 131 of the Act)</p>	<p>In the Annual Report 2018, 25 September 2018</p>

Governance and Management Items	Assessment
21. Annual Report (annual report under sections 131, 132 and 133 of the Act to the community containing a report of operations and audited financial and performance statements)	Date statements presented: 25 September 2018
22. Councillor Code of Conduct (Code under section 76C of the Act setting out the conduct principles and the dispute resolution processes to be followed by Councillors)	Date reviewed: 21 February 2017
23. Delegations (a document setting out the powers, duties and functions of Council and the Chief Executive Officer that have been delegated to members of staff)	Date of review: 19 March 2019
24. Meeting procedures (a local law governing the conduct of meetings of Council and special committees)	Date local law made: 7 October 2010

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



John McLinden
Chief Executive Officer

Dated: 19 September 2019



Cr Ann Young
Mayor

Dated: 19 September 2019

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Statutory information

Documents available for public inspection

In accordance with regulation 12 of the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2015* the following are prescribed documents that are available for public inspection or copies of the documents can be obtained for the purposes of section 222 of the Act:

- a document containing details of overseas or interstate travel (other than interstate travel by land for less than three days) undertaken in an official capacity by councillor or any member of council staff in the previous 12 months
- minutes of ordinary and special meetings held in the previous 12 months which are kept under section 93 of the Act, other than those agendas and minutes relating to a part of a meeting which was closed to members of the public under section 89 of the Act and are confidential information within the meaning of section 77(2) of the Act
- the minutes of meetings of special committees established under section 86 of the Act and held in the previous 12 months, other than those minutes relating to a part of a meeting which was closed to members of the public under section 89 of the Act and are confidential information within the meaning of section 77(2) of the Act
- a register of delegations kept under sections 87(1) and 98(4) of the Act, including the date on which the last review took place under sections 86(6) and 98(6), respectively, of the Act
- a document containing details of all leases involving land which were entered into by the council as lessor, including the lessee and the terms and the value of the lease
- a register maintained under section 224(1A) of the Act of authorised officers appointed under that section
- a list of donations and grants made by the council in the previous 12 months, including the names of persons who, or bodies which, have received a donation or grant and the amount of each donation or grant.

These documents can be viewed at the Swan Hill Rural City Council Municipal Offices at 45 Splatt Street, Swan Hill from 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

Best Value

The Best Value Principles within the *Local Government Act 1989* provide the basis for which councils plan, review and manage their performance in order to deliver continuous improvement in all services and to meet the needs and expectations of service users.

208B - Best Value Principles

All services provided by a council must meet the quality and cost standards required by section 208D;

Subject to sections 3C(2)(b) and 3C(2)(e), all services provided by a council must be responsive to the needs of its community;

Each service provided by a council must be accessible to those members of the community for whom the service is intended;

A council must achieve continuous improvement in the provision of services for its community;

A council must develop a program of regular consultation with its community in relation to the services it provides;

A council must report regularly to its community on its achievements in relation to the principles set out in paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e).

Carers Recognition Act 2012

Council has taken all practicable measures to comply with its responsibilities outlined in the *Carers Recognition Act 2012*. Council has promoted the principles of the Act to people in care relationships who receive Council services, and to the wider community by providing links to State Government resource materials on Council's website and providing information to organisations represented in Council networks.

Council has taken all practicable measures to ensure staff, Council agents and volunteers are informed about the principles and obligations under the Act by including information on the care relationship in Council induction and training programs for staff working in Community Care Services, and induction and training programs for volunteers working directly with the community.

Council has taken all practicable measures to review and modify policies, procedures and supports to include recognition of the carer relationship.

Community Access and Inclusion Strategy

In accordance with section 38 of the *Disability Act 2006*, as Council has prepared a Disability Action Plan and it must report on the implementation of the Disability Action Plan in its Annual Report. Council adopted its Community Access and Inclusion Strategy (CAIS) with an accompanying implementation plan in December 2017.

The four key objectives of the CAIS are to:

- Reduce barriers to Council services, programs and facilities for people with a disability.
- Reduce barriers to people with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment.
- Increase inclusion and participation in the community for people with a disability.
- Improve community attitudes and perceptions that discriminate against people with a disability.

Contracts

During the year, Council did not enter into any contracts valued at \$150,000 or more for services or \$200,000 or more for works or more of a kind specified in section 186(5)(a) and (c) of the Act. It also did not enter into any other contracts valued at \$150,000 or more for goods or services or \$200,000 or more for works without engaging in a competitive process.

Domestic Animal Act 1994

Under the *Domestic Animal Act 1994*, Council is required to create a Domestic Animal Management Plan and to evaluate its implementation in the annual report. Council reviewed its Domestic Animal Management Plan in December 2018.

Food Act Ministerial Direction

In accordance with 7E of the *Food Act 1984*, Council is required to publish a summary of any ministerial directions received during the financial year in its Annual Report. No directions were received in the 2018/19 financial year.

Road Management Act 2004

Council, as a road authority, is required under Section 22 of the *Road Management Act 2004* to publish a copy or summary of any direction received from the Minister in its Annual Report. No directions were received from the Minister in 2018/19.

Local Laws

Council has the following Local Laws in place:

Local Law	Date adopted	Date operational
Local Law No. 1 Meeting Procedures	21 September 2010	7 October 2010
Community Local Law No. 2	16 May 2017	2 June 2017

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Statutory information continued

Freedom of Information Act 1982

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* provides the opportunity for public access to Council documents.

The Act establishes a legally enforceable right for the community to request information, in document form, held by Council.

The Act has four principles:

1. The public has a right of access to documents subject to certain exceptions or exemptions.
2. Local Governments are required to publish information on the documents they hold.
3. Individuals may request that inaccurate, incomplete, out-of-date or misleading information about themselves be amended.
4. Individuals may appeal against a decision not to give access to the document(s) or not to amend personal information.

Written requests for documents must be addressed to Council's Freedom of Information Officer and should be accompanied by an application fee of \$29.60 (2019/20).

A request must specify the document(s) required or if unable to do so, give sufficient detail to enable the relevant document(s) to be located, the form of access required and include the applicant's contact details.

Council received three requests in 2018/19. One request was released in full, one request found that no documents were discovered, and the remaining request was carried forward to 2019/20.

	Number of requests	Fees and charges	Costs
2018/19	3	\$87	\$6,250
2017/18	4	\$114	\$1,928
2016/17	2	\$307	\$1,567
2015/16	2	\$27	\$170
2014/15	0	\$0	\$0

Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014

Council respects the privacy of its citizens, ratepayers and clients. Council is committed to the privacy principles prescribed by the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and the *Health Records Act 2001*.

Council has adopted a Privacy Policy that addresses the requirements of both Acts. A copy of the policy is available at the Council offices during business hours and at Council's website www.swanhill.vic.gov.au.

Council received no privacy complaints in the 2018/19 financial year.

Policies, strategies and plans

As representatives of the community, Council develops the policies that guide and inform Council activity. The following policies, strategies and plans were reviewed and/or adopted in 2018/19.

Policy/Strategy/Plan	Date reviewed/adopted
Creative Strategy 2018-2022	16 October 2018
Social Media Policy	20 November 2018
National Competition Policy	20 November 2018
Procurement Policy	18 December 2018
Communication and Engagement Strategy	18 December 2018
Control of Damage to Council Infrastructure at Building Sites Policy	18 December 2018
Domestic Animal Management Plan (Review)	18 December 2019
Civic Receptions, Receptions and the Provision of Hospitality Policy	19 February 2019
Road Management Plan (Review)	19 February 2019
Travel by Councillors Policy	19 March 2019
Recreation Implementation Plan 2019-2028	19 March 2019
Financial Hardship Policy	16 April 2019
Advocacy Strategy	21 May 2019
Recreational Vehicle Friendly Policy	21 May 2019
2019-20 Budget	25 June 2019
Child Safe Standards Policy	25 June 2019
Chain of Responsibility	25 June 2019
Private Assets in Road Reserves Policy	25 June 2019
Discontinuance and Disposal of Roads Policy	25 June 2019



Part seven

Performance Statement

Description of municipality

Swan Hill Rural City Council covers 6,116 square kilometres and is home to 20,759 people.

It includes the townships of Swan Hill, Robinvale, Lake Boga, Nyah, Nyah West, Piangil, Woorinen, Ultima, Manangatang, Boundary Bend and Tresco.

The Swan Hill Rural City economy is driven by agriculture and manufacturing.

Almost 20 per cent of the total economic output from the region comes from agricultural production.

Irrigated farming (including stone fruit, grapes, nuts, olives and vegetable production) accounts for over 11 per cent of the total economic output for the municipality and more than 18 per cent of all jobs in the city are directly related to agriculture.

Additionally food manufacturing (processing) accounts for almost 10 per cent of the municipality's economic output.

Located along the Murray River, tourism plays an important role in our region's economy. Our climate and natural beauty attracts around 750,000 visitors each year.

Sustainable Capacity Indicator definitions

"adjusted underlying revenue" means total income other than

(a) non-recurrent grants used to fund capital expenditure; and

(b) non-monetary asset contributions; and

(c) contributions to fund capital expenditure from sources other than those referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b)

"infrastructure" means non-current property, plant and equipment excluding land

"local road" means a sealed or unsealed road for which Council is the responsible road authority under the Road Management Act 2004

"population" means the resident population estimated by Council

"own-source revenue" means adjusted underlying revenue other than revenue that is not under the control of Council (including government grants)

"relative socio-economic disadvantage", in relation to a municipality, means the relative socio-economic disadvantage, expressed as a decile for the relevant financial year, of the area in which the municipality is located according to the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (Catalogue Number 2033.0.55.001) of SEIFA

"SEIFA" means the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas published from time to time by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on its Internet website.

PERFORMANCE STATEMENT

Sustainable Capacity Indicators

Service/indicator/measure	Results				Material variations
	2016	2017	2018	2019	
Own-source revenue					
<i>Own-source revenue per head of municipal population</i> [Own-source revenue/Municipal population]	\$1,663.09	\$1,736.26	\$1,680.88	\$1,776.90	
Recurrent grants					
<i>Recurrent grants per head of population</i> [Recurrent grants/Municipal population]	\$577.00	\$835.57	\$552.94	\$526.64	
Population					
<i>Expenses per head of population</i> [Total expenses/Municipal population]	\$2,454.26	\$2,311.87	\$2,159.48	\$2,156.36	
<i>Infrastructure per head of municipal population</i> [Value of infrastructure/Municipal population]	\$18,598.85	\$18,679.83	\$18,388.46	\$18,969.90	
<i>Population density per length of road</i> [Municipal population/Kilometres of local roads]	5.84	5.83	5.94	5.92	
Disadvantage					
<i>Relative socio-economic disadvantage</i> [Index of Relative Socio-economic disadvantage by decile]	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	

Service Performance Indicators

Service/indicator/measure	Results				Material variations
	2016	2017	2018	2019	
Governance Satisfaction <i>Satisfaction with Council decisions</i> [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with the performance of Council in making decisions in the interest of the community]	53	53	54	51	
Statutory Planning Decision making <i>Council's planning decisions upheld at VCAT</i> [Number of VCAT decisions that did not set aside Council's decision in relation to a planning application / Number of VCAT decisions in relation to planning applications] x 100	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
Roads Satisfaction <i>Satisfaction with sealed local roads</i> [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on the condition of sealed local roads]	48	49	50	46	
Libraries Participation <i>Active library members</i> [Number of active library members / Municipal population] x 100	19.24%	19.91%	18.08%	16.90%	

PERFORMANCE STATEMENT

Service Performance Indicators continued

Service/indicator/measure	Results				Material variations
	2016	2017	2018	2019	
Waste collection Waste diversion <i>Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill</i> [Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins] x 100	35.26%	34.53%	30.55%	30.26%	
Aquatic Facilities Utilisation <i>Utilisation of aquatic facilities</i> [Number of visits to aquatic facilities / Municipal population]	6.76	6.15	5.51	5.57	
Animal management Health and safety <i>Animal management prosecutions</i> [Number of successful animal management prosecutions]	6	1	2	0	Council had no animal prosecutions in 2018/19.
Food and safety Health and safety <i>Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications</i> [Number of critical non-compliance notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises followed up / Number of critical non-compliance notifications and major non-compliance notifications about food premises] x 100	84.44%	100.00%	94.74%	81.25%	Follow up inspections in three incidences did not occur. One premise ceased trading after the initial inspection meaning a follow up could not be conducted.

Service/indicator/measure	Results				Material variations
	2016	2017	2018	2019	
Maternal and Child Health					
Participation					
<i>Participation in the MCH service</i> [Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of children enrolled in the MCH service] x 100	72.91%	73.28%	73.03%	73.14%	
<i>Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children</i> [Number of Aboriginal children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of Aboriginal children enrolled in the MCH service] x 100	43.73%	41.88%	62.18%	60.08%	

Service Performance Indicator definitions

“Aboriginal child” means a child who is an Aboriginal person

“Aboriginal person” has the same meaning as in the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006

“active library member” means a member of a library who has borrowed a book from the library

“annual report” means an annual report prepared by a Council under sections 131, 132 and 133 of the Act

“class 1 food premises” means food premises, within the meaning of the Food Act 1984, that have been declared as class 1 food premises under section 19C of that Act

“class 2 food premises” means food premises, within the meaning of the Food Act 1984, that have been declared as class 2 food premises under section 19C of that Act

“critical non-compliance outcome notification” means a notification received by Council under section 19N(3) or (4) of the Food Act 1984, or advice given to Council by an authorised officer under that Act, of a deficiency that poses an immediate serious threat to public health

“food premises” has the same meaning as in the Food Act 1984.

“local road” means a sealed or unsealed road for which Council is the responsible road authority under the Road Management Act 2004

“major non-compliance outcome notification” means a notification received by a council under section 19N(3) or (4) of the Food Act 1984, or advice given to Council by an authorised officer under that Act, of a deficiency that does not pose an immediate serious threat to public health but may do so if no remedial action is taken

“MCH” means the Maternal and Child Health Service provided by a Council to support the health and development of children within the municipality from birth until school age

“population” means the resident population estimated by council

“WorkSafe reportable aquatic facility safety incident” means an incident relating to a council aquatic facility that is required to be notified to the Victorian Work-Cover Authority under Part 5 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004.

PERFORMANCE STATEMENT

Financial Performance Indicators

Dimension/ indicator/measure	Results				Forecasts				Material variations
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Operating position Adjusted underlying result Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit) [Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit)/ Adjusted underlying revenue] x100	(7.21%)	11.65%	5.24%	8.38%	5.56%	7.78%	8.03%	7.80%	The actual result for 2019 includes 50% of the 2019 and 50% of the early payment of 2020 Victoria Grants Commission income. This was the same scenario in 2018, with 50% of the 2018 and 50% of the early payment of 2019 Victoria Grants Commission income recognised. The 2017 actual had 150% of Victoria Grants Commission income (100% of 2017 and 50% of 2018). A similar advance in 2015 occurred which explains the deficit recorded in 2016. A combination of savings due to reduced borrowings and a return to normal grant receipts from the Victoria Grant Commission is budgeted for our underlying result in the forecast years.

Dimension/ indicator/measure	Results						Forecasts				Material variations	
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023				
Liquidity												
Working capital												
Current assets compared to current liabilities [Current assets / Current liabilities] x100	189.19%	293.45%	360.07%	380.53%	286.62%	192.23%	266.32%	280.08%				The forecast reduction in 2021 is due to an interest only loan maturing the following year. Once repaid, the ratio recovers in 2022.
Unrestricted cash												
Unrestricted cash compared to current liabilities [Unrestricted cash / Current liabilities] x100	140.43%	205.40%	258.37%	271.46%	249.97%	160.79%	212.73%	230.10%				The forecast reduction in 2021 is due to an interest only loan maturing the following year. Once repaid, the ratio recovers in 2022.

PERFORMANCE STATEMENT

Financial Performance Indicators continued

Dimension/ indicator/	Results						Forecasts			Material variations
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
Obligations Loans and borrowings										
<i>Loans and borrowings compared to rates [Interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x100</i>	33.49%	29.45%	25.22%	28.99%	28.48%	27.40%	9.06%	7.95%		Council deferred \$1.3 million in new borrowings from 2017 and 2018 until 2019. The deferred borrowings of \$1.3M along with new borrowings of \$0.5M were taken up in 2019 and restore the ratio to its previous expected level. An ongoing reduction in borrowings is planned from 2022 onwards.
Loans and borrowings repayments										
<i>Loans and borrowings compared to rates [Interest and principal repayments on interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x100</i>	4.86%	4.57%	5.16%	3.03%	3.09%	3.29%	18.24%	1.21%		Council is continuing with a strategy to progressively reduce borrowings. This reflects in a reduced loan repayment compared to rates each year. In 2022, the first LGFV interest only loan matures (\$4.795M) and Council will have sufficient cash available to repay this loan principal. The 2018 slight increase in the ratio was due to repayment in full at the eighth year of a loan originally borrowed on a ten year repayment schedule with interest rate renegotiated at the

Dimension/ indicator/ measure	Results				Forecasts				Material variations
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Indebtedness Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue [Non-current liabilities / Own source revenue] x100	27.96%	23.30%	21.54%	23.82%	23.40%	10.62%	9.69%	8.78%	Taking up deferred borrowings from 2017 (\$0.5M) and 2018 (\$0.8M) along with new borrowings of \$0.5M budgeted in 2019, has increased the ratio. The ongoing repayment of borrowings over the forecast period will then see a reduction in our interest bearing liabilities and in 2021 our first LGFV interest only loan of \$4.795M will become a current liability, with full repayment in 2022.

PERFORMANCE STATEMENT

Financial Performance Indicators continued

Dimension/ indicator/ measure	Results				Forecasts				Material variations
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Asset renewal Asset renewal compared to depreciation [Asset renewal expenses / Asset depreciation] x100	74.49%	76.92%	90.90%	116.77%	76.37%	80.10%	76.67%	83.61%	Asset renewal expenditure varies each year depending on the type and amount of renewal works required. Most of Council's assets are long lived and therefore the need to replace them varies considerably each year. Ratio for 2019 is higher than previous years due to increased grant funded works (that remain outstanding at 30/06/2019), while the ratio for 2018 was significantly higher than previous years due to increased asset renewal expenses and decreased depreciation expense.
Stability Rates concentration Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue [Rate revenue / Adjusted underlying revenue] x100	52.85%	47.87%	55.45%	55.93%	51.95%	57.45%	57.64%	57.78%	

Dimension/ indicator/ measure	Results					Forecasts				Material variations
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
Rates effort Rates compared to property values [Rate revenue / Capital improved value of rateable properties in the municipality] x100	0.74%	0.71%	0.72%	0.69%	0.66%	0.67%	0.69%	0.70%		
Efficiency Expenditure level Expenses per property assessment [Total expenses / Number of property assessments]	\$4,227.28	\$3,966.00	\$3,765.72	\$3,727.22	\$4,231.38	\$3,815.50	\$3,880.32	\$3,965.12	The increase for 2020 is due to Council being the coordinating Council for a regional project. The grant income will be received by Council and passed to other councils as an operational expense.	

PERFORMANCE STATEMENT

Financial Performance Indicators continued

Dimension/ indicator/	Results					Forecasts				Material variations
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
Revenue level Average residential rate per property assessment [Residential rate revenue / Number of residential property assessments]	\$1,596.77	\$1,586.96	\$1,636.84	\$1,690.08	\$1,708.85	\$1,745.08	\$1,785.49	\$1,825.81		
Workforce turnover Resignations and terminations compared to average staff [Number of permanent staff resignations and terminations / Average number of permanent staff for the financial year] x100	9.04%	16.29%	12.97%	12.11%	12.47%	12.53%	12.55%	12.55%		

Financial Performance Indicator definitions

"adjusted underlying revenue" means total income other than—

- (a) non-recurrent grants used to fund capital expenditure; and
- (b) non-monetary asset contributions; and
- (c) contributions to fund capital expenditure from sources other than those referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b)

"adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit)" means adjusted underlying revenue less total expenditure

"asset renewal expenditure" means expenditure on an existing asset or on replacing an existing asset that returns the service capability of the asset to its original capability

"current assets" has the same meaning as in the AAS

"current liabilities" has the same meaning as in the AAS

"non-current assets" means all assets other than current assets

"non-current liabilities" means all liabilities other than current liabilities

"non-recurrent grant" means a grant obtained on the condition that it be expended in a specified manner and is not expected to be received again during the period covered by a council's Strategic Resource Plan

"own-source revenue" means adjusted underlying revenue other than revenue that is not under the control of council (including government grants)

"population" means the resident population estimated by Council

"rate revenue" means revenue from general rates, municipal charges, service rates and service charges

"recurrent grant" means a grant other than a non-recurrent grant

"residential rates" means revenue from general rates, municipal charges, service rates and service charges levied on residential properties

"restricted cash" means cash and cash equivalents, within the meaning of the AAS, that are not available for use other than for a purpose for which it is restricted, and includes cash to be used to fund capital works expenditure from the previous financial year

"unrestricted cash" means all cash and cash equivalents other than restricted cash.

PERFORMANCE STATEMENT

Other information

1. Basis of preparation

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

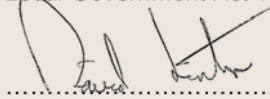
Where applicable the results in the performance statement have been prepared on accounting bases consistent with those reported in the Financial Statements. The other results are based on information drawn from Council information systems or from third parties (e.g. Australian Bureau of Statistics).

The performance statement presents the actual results for the current year and for the prescribed financial performance indicators and measures, the results forecast by Council's strategic resource plan. The Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014 requires explanation of any material variations in the results contained in the performance statement. Council has adopted materiality thresholds relevant to each indicator and measure and explanations have not been provided for variations below the materiality thresholds unless the variance is considered to be material because of its nature.

The forecast figures included in the performance statement are those adopted by Council in its strategic resource plan on 25 June 2019 and which forms part of the Council Plan. The strategic resource plan includes estimates based on key assumptions about the future that were relevant at the time of adoption and aimed at achieving sustainability over the long term. Detailed information on the actual financial results is contained in the General Purpose Financial Statements. The strategic resource plan can be obtained by contacting Council.

Certification of the performance statement

In my opinion, the accompanying performance statement has been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014*.


.....

David C Lenton CPA
Principal Accounting Officer


Dated: 19 September 2019

In our opinion, the accompanying performance statement of the Swan Hill Rural City Council for the year ended 30 June 2019 presents fairly the results of council's performance in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014*.

The performance statement contains the relevant performance indicators, measures and results in relation to service performance, financial performance and sustainable capacity.


At the date of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances that would render any particulars in the performance statement to be misleading or inaccurate.

We have been authorised by the Council and by the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014* to certify this performance statement in its final form.


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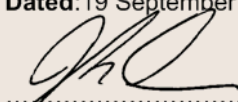
Cr Ann Young
Councillor

Dated: 19 September 2019


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Cr Lea Johnson
Councillor Lea Johnson

Dated: 19 September 2019


.....

John McLinden
Chief Executive Officer

Dated: 19 September 2019



Independent Auditor's Report

To the Councillors of Swan Hill Rural City Council

Opinion	<p>I have audited the accompanying performance statement of Swan Hill Rural City Council (the council) which comprises the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • description of municipality for the year ended 30 June 2019 • sustainable capacity indicators for the year ended 30 June 2019 • service performance indicators for the year ended 30 June 2019 • financial performance indicators for the year ended 30 June 2019 • other information for the year ended 30 June 2019 (basis of preparation) • certification of the performance statement. <p>In my opinion, the performance statement presents fairly, in all material respects, the performance of the council for the year ended 30 June 2019, in accordance with the performance reporting requirements of Part 6 of the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i>.</p>
Basis for Opinion	<p>I have conducted my audit in accordance with the <i>Audit Act 1994</i> which incorporates the Australian Standards on Assurance Engagements. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the <i>Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Performance Statement</i> section of my report.</p> <p>My independence is established by the <i>Constitution Act 1975</i>. My staff and I are independent of the council in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 <i>Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants</i> (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the performance statement in Victoria. My staff and I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.</p> <p>I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.</p>
Councillors' responsibilities for the performance statement	<p>The Councillors of the council are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the performance statement in accordance with the performance reporting requirements of the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i>, and for such internal control as the Councillors determine is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of the statement of performance that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.</p>
Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the performance statement	<p>As required by the <i>Audit Act 1994</i>, my responsibility is to express an opinion on the performance statement based on the audit. My objectives for the audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the performance statement as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion.</p> <p>Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Standards on Assurance</p>


Engagements will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the decisions of users taken on the basis of this performance statement.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Standards on Assurance Engagements, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the performance statement, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the council's internal control
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the performance statement, including the disclosures, and whether the performance statement represents the underlying events and results in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Councillors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

MELBOURNE
23 September 2019


Jonathan Kyvelidis
as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria

Appendices

Donations and contributions

Organisation	Purpose	Amount
Aeroflow Outlaw Nitro Funny Cars	Sponsorship	\$2,727
Chinkapook Christmas Tree 2018	Sponsorship	\$250
Mallee Home Business Expo 2018	Sponsorship	\$500
Western Vic Association of Historical AGM	Sponsorship	\$250
Woorinen Winter Solstice Festival 2019	Sponsorship	\$1,000
June Racing Carnival	Sponsorship	\$2,000
Lake Boga Air Show and Splash In 2019	Sponsorship	\$5,000
Lake Boga Junior Sporting Club	Contribution	\$2,200
Lake Boga Yacht Club Easter Regatta 2019	Sponsorship	\$1,000
Lake Boga Sea Scouts	Contribution	\$5,000
Life Explosion Free Community Day 2019	Sponsorship	\$500
Loddon Murray Community Leadership 2019	Contribution	\$7,000
Mallee Almond Blossom Festival 2018	Sponsorship	\$3,500
Mallee Table Top Games	Sponsorship	\$500
Manangatang and District Swimming Pool Inc	Contribution	\$3,000
Manangatang Cup 2018	Sponsorship	\$1,500
Massive Murray Paddle 2018	Sponsorship	\$2,000
Mid Murray Pistol Club Inc	Contribution	\$5,000
New Year's Eve 2018	Sponsorship	\$10,000
Nyah District Christmas Carnival	Sponsorship	\$1,250
Nyah District Men's Shed Inc	Contribution	\$3,000
Nyah Nyah West United Football Netball Club	Contribution	\$5,000
Robinvale and District Cricket Association	Contribution	\$2,500

Organisation	Purpose	Amount
Robinvale College	Contribution	\$1,000
Robinvale Euston Football Netball Club Inc	Contribution	\$5,000
Robinvale Pistol Club	Contribution	\$5,000
Robinvale Ski Race 2019	Sponsorship	\$1,300
Rotary Club of Robinvale-Euston	Contribution	\$500
RUSH Sponsorship 2018	Sponsorship	\$2,000
SHBA Veterans Badminton Tournament 2019	Sponsorship	\$1,000
Speewa Heritage Collectors Club 8th Rally	Sponsorship	\$750
Speewa Heritage Collectors Club Inc	Contribution	\$4,000
St Mary's Tyntynder Cricket Club Inc	Contribution	\$1,965
Swan Hill Bowls Club Inc	Contribution	\$3,700
Swan Hill Carols by Candlelight 2018	Sponsorship	\$330
Swan Hill Clay Target Club Inc	Contribution	\$5,000
Swan Hill College	Contribution	\$2,000
Swan Hill Field and Game 30th Anniversary	Sponsorship	\$500
Swan Hill Film Festival	Sponsorship	\$1,000
Swan Hill Food and Wine Festival 2019	Sponsorship	\$5,000
Swan Hill Invitational Basketball	Sponsorship	\$3,000
Swan Hill Kart Club - Golden Power Series 1	Sponsorship	\$1,000
Swan Hill Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club	Contribution	\$5,000
Swan Hill NAIDOC Dreamtime Ball	Sponsorship	\$500
Swan Hill Neighbourhood House Inc	Contribution	\$5,500
Swan Hill Show 2018	Sponsorship	\$1,000

Donations and contributions continued

Organisation	Purpose	Amount
Swan Hill Soccer League	Contribution	\$3,898
Swan Hill South Kindergarten	Contribution	\$200
Swan Hill Sporting Car Club	Contribution	\$5,500
Swan Hill Theatre Group Co-Operative Ltd	Contribution	\$5,000
The Trustee for Swan Hill Cemetery Trust	Contribution	\$5,000
Things with Strings Grant Funding	Sponsorship	\$9,000
Tyntynder Football Netball Club Inc	Contribution	\$3,940
Ultima Lion's Club	Contribution	\$1,364
Ultima Progress Association	Contribution	\$4,738
Vic Assoc Croquet Championships 2019	Sponsorship	\$500
Voyage Fitness Riverside Tri 2019	Sponsorship	\$1,500
Women's Region Sides Championships 2019	Sponsorship	\$1,000
Woorinen South Pre School Committee	Contribution	\$3,750

Appendix 2: Organisations of which Council is a financial member

Organisation	Amount
Australasian Fleet Managers Association	\$399
Australasian Performing Rights Association	\$84
Australian Airports Association	\$546
Australian Livestock Markets Association	\$1178
Australian Livestock Saleyards Association Inc.	\$3000
Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance	\$12,500
Community Childcare Association	\$255
Early Childhood Australia Inc	\$271
Family Day Care Australia	\$145
Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia	\$1,250
LG PRO	\$2,735.18
Local Government Infrastructure Design Association	\$500
Loddon Mallee Waste and Resource Recovery Group	\$4,000
Maritime Museum of Victoria Inc	\$300
Municipal Association Of Victoria	\$26,980.44
Municipal Works Operations Association	\$490
Murray River Regional Tourism Ltd	\$25,232
National Saleyards Quality Assurance Inc	\$520
North West Municipalities Assoc	\$909.09
Our Community Pty Ltd	\$330
Performing Arts Connections Australia	\$681.82
Play Australia (IPA Australia)	\$296
Post Office Agents Association Limited	\$60

Organisations of which Council is a financial member continued

Organisation	Amount
Public Libraries Victoria Network Inc	\$1,278
Rail Freight Alliance	\$3,075
Rural Councils Victoria Inc	\$3,000
School Crossings Victoria Inc	\$100
Vicsport	\$363.64
Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres	\$1,023
Victorian Maternal Child and Health	\$75
Victorian Tourism Industry Limited	\$587
Waste Management Associates Of Australia	\$1,018.18



Part eight

Financial Statement

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Understanding the Financial Statements

Introduction

The financial report is a key report by the Swan Hill Rural City Council. It shows how Council performed financially during the 2018/19 financial year and the overall position at the end of the financial year (30 June 2018).

Council presents its financial report in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards.

Particular terms required by the standards might not be familiar to some readers. Council is committed to accountability and it is in this context that the following explanations have been developed to assist readers understand and analyse the financial report.

What is contained in the Annual Financial Report?

Council's financial report has two main sections, namely the report and the notes. There are five statements and 35 notes. These are prepared by Council staff, examined by the Audit Committee and Council, and are audited by the Victorian Auditor-General.

The five statements included in the first few pages of the report are the Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows and Statement of Capital Works.

The notes detail Council's accounting policies and the make-up of values contained in the statements.

1. Comprehensive Income Statement

The Comprehensive Income Statement measures Council's performance over the year and shows if a surplus or a deficit has been made in delivering services.

The statement includes all sources of income, less all operating expenses incurred in delivering Council services. This includes depreciation, or the writing down, of the value of buildings, roads, footpaths, drains and all other infrastructure assets that are used to deliver Council services.

These assets are depreciated over the life of the asset or as they are consumed. Capital costs or new assets purchased or created during the year are excluded from the statement but, as indicated above, are depreciated as they are used.

The statement is prepared on an accrual basis. This means that generally all income and costs for the year are recognised even though the income may not yet be received (such as interest on bank deposits) or expenses not yet paid (invoices not yet received for goods and services already used).

2. Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet is an important financial statement. This one-page summary is a snapshot of the financial position as at 30 June 2019. It shows what the Council owns as assets and what it owes as liabilities.

The bottom line of this statement is net assets. This is the net worth of Council that has been built up over many years.

The assets and liabilities are separated into current and non-current. Current means those assets or liabilities that will fall due or be consumed in the next 12 months. The components of the Balance Sheet are described on the following page.

Current and non-current assets

- Cash includes cash and cash equivalents i.e. cash held in the bank, petty cash and term deposits.
- Receivables are monies owed to Council by ratepayers and other debtors.
- Other assets include income earned but not yet received and accounts which have been prepaid.
- Property, plant and equipment, infrastructure is the largest component of Council's worth and represents the value of all land, buildings, roads, vehicles, equipment, and other items which have been invested in by Council over many years.

Current and non-current liabilities

- Payables are those to whom Council owes money as at 30 June 2019.
- Provisions include employee benefits, which is the accounting term for accrued long service and annual leave. Landfill restoration works are also grouped under provisions.
- Interest bearing loans and borrowings, which are repaid over a set period of time, finance leases that are leases of assets where ownership of the asset is transferred to the Council.

Net assets

This term is used to describe the difference between the value of total assets and the value of total liabilities. It represents the net worth of Council as at 30 June 2019. The net value of the Council is also synonymous with total equity.

Total equity

- Asset revaluation reserve is the difference between the previously recorded value of property and infrastructure assets and their current valuations.
- Accumulated surplus is the value of all net assets accumulated over time, including other reserve allocations for specific projects.

3. Statement of Changes in Equity

During the course of the year, the value of total ratepayers equity as set out in the Balance Sheet changes. This statement shows the values of such changes and how these changes arose.

The main reason for a change in equity stem from:

- The surplus/(deficit) for the year from operations, described in the Comprehensive Income Statement as the surplus/(deficit) for the year.
- Revaluation of assets; takes on a regular schedule basis on average every three years. It also occurs when existing assets are taken up in the books for the first time.

4. Statement of Cash Flows

The Statement of Cash Flows summarises Council's cash payments and cash receipts for the year. This statement is presented according to a very specific accounting standard and needs some care in analysis.

The values may differ from those shown in the Comprehensive Income Statement because the Comprehensive Income Statement is prepared on an accrual accounting basis.

Cash in this statement refers to bank deposits and other forms of highly liquid investments that can readily be converted to cash.

Council's cash arises from, and is used in, three main areas:

Cash flow operating activities

- Receipts – all cash received into Council's bank account from ratepayers and others that owed money to Council. Receipts also include the interest earned from Council's cash investments. It does not include the costs associated with the sale of assets.
- Payments – all cash paid by Council from its bank account to staff, creditors and other persons. It does not include the costs associated with the creation of assets.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Cash flow from investing activities

The accounting term investing activities relates to payments for the acquisition and creation of assets, such as new plant, roads and other long-term revenue producing assets, and the proceeds from the sale of assets such as plant and land.

Cash flow from financing activities

This is where the receipt and repayment of borrowed funds are recorded. The bottom line of the Cash Flow Statement is the cash at end of financial year. This shows the capacity of Council to meet its debts and other liabilities.

5. Statement of Capital Works

Each year a significant portion of Council budget gets allocated to Capital Works projects. This Statement aims to give readers an understanding of what capital works assets have been built, upgraded or renewed throughout the financial year.

This Statement is broken down by asset category to provide further information as to what asset category these funds have been spent.

Notes to the Accounts

The notes are a very important and informative section of the report. The Australian Accounting Standards are not prescriptive in a lot of issues. Therefore, to enable the reader to understand the basis on which the values shown in the statements are established, it is necessary to provide details of Council's accounting policies. These are described in Note 1.

Apart from the accounting policies, the notes also give details behind many of the summary figures contained in the statements. The note numbers are shown beside the relevant items in the Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows and Statement of Capital Works.

Where Council wishes to disclose other information that cannot be incorporated onto the face of the Statements, this is shown in the notes.

The notes also include a comparison to budget (note 2). This note reports on the actual performance of Council to its adopted budget, and provides commentary to all material variances.

The notes should be read at the same time as, and together with, the other parts of the financial statements to get a clear picture of the accounts.

Statements by Principal Accounting Officer and Councillors

The Certification of the Principal Accounting Officer is made by the person responsible for the financial management of Council that, in his opinion, the financial statements have met all the statutory and professional reporting requirements.

The Certification of Councillors is made by two Councillors on behalf of Council that, in their opinion, the financial statements are fair and not misleading. The Chief Executive Officer also endorses and signs the certification.

Auditor General's Report

The Independent Audit Report is the external and independent opinion on the financial statements. It provides the reader with a totally independent opinion on the financial statements. The opinion covers both the statutory and professional requirements and also the fairness aspects of the financial statements.



General Purpose Financial Statements

**Swan Hill Rural City Council
Financial Report
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Certification of the Financial Statements

In my opinion, the accompanying financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989*, the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014*, the Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.



David Lenton CPA
Principal Accounting Officer

Date : 19 September 2019
Swan Hill

In our opinion the accompanying financial statements present fairly the financial transactions of Swan Hill Rural City Council for the year ended 30 June 2019 and the financial position of the Council as at that date.

As at the date of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances that would render any particulars in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

We have been authorised by the Council and by the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014* to certify the financial statements in their final form.



Ann Young
Councillor (Mayor)

Date : 19 September 2019
Swan Hill



Lea Johnson
Councillor

Date : 19 September 2019
Swan Hill



John McLinden
Chief Executive Officer

Date : 19 September 2019
Swan Hill

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Councillors of Swan Hill Rural City Council

Opinion	<p>I have audited the financial report of Swan Hill Rural City Council (the council) which comprises the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • balance sheet as at 30 June 2019 • comprehensive income statement for the year then ended • statement of changes in equity for the year then ended • statement of cash flows for the year then ended • statement of capital works for the year then ended • notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies • certification of the financial statements. <p>In my opinion the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the council as at 30 June 2019 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of Part 6 of the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i> and applicable Australian Accounting Standards.</p>
Basis for Opinion	<p>I have conducted my audit in accordance with the <i>Audit Act 1994</i> which incorporates the Australian Auditing Standards. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the <i>Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report</i> section of my report.</p> <p>My independence is established by the <i>Constitution Act 1975</i>. My staff and I are independent of the council in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 <i>Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants</i> (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Victoria. My staff and I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.</p> <p>I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.</p>
Councillors' responsibilities for the financial report	<p>The Councillors of the council are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i>, and for such internal control as the Councillors determine is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.</p> <p>In preparing the financial report, the Councillors are responsible for assessing the council's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is inappropriate to do so.</p>

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report

As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, my responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on the audit. My objectives for the audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the council's internal control
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Councillors
- conclude on the appropriateness of the Councillors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the council's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the council to cease to continue as a going concern.
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Councillors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

MELBOURNE
23 September 2019



Jonathan Kyvelidis

as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria

**Comprehensive Income Statement
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

	Note	2019 \$	2018 \$
Income			
Rates and charges	3.1	27,691,421	26,702,822
Statutory fees and fines	3.2	1,036,820	944,039
User fees	3.3	4,517,110	4,583,417
Grants - operating	3.4	10,881,813	10,265,430
Grants - capital	3.4	3,650,527	4,823,938
Contributions - monetary	3.5	264,508	339,453
Contributions - non monetary	3.5	475,683	327,273
Net gain on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	3.6	1,004,644	245,312
Other income	3.7	2,636,625	2,568,999
Total income		52,159,151	50,800,683
Expenses			
Employee costs	4.1	19,194,683	18,288,780
Materials and services	4.2	15,136,864	16,014,005
Depreciation and amortisation	4.3	8,534,709	8,244,117
Bad and doubtful debts	4.4	51,072	34,495
Borrowing costs	4.5	332,455	357,303
Other expenses	4.6	1,514,182	2,084,305
Total expenses		44,763,965	45,023,005
Surplus for the year		7,395,186	5,777,678
Other comprehensive income			
Items that will not be reclassified to surplus or deficit in future periods			
Net asset revaluation increment	9.1	7,906,425	6,388,520
Total comprehensive result		15,301,611	12,166,198

The above comprehensive income statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Balance Sheet
As at 30 June 2019

	Note	2019	2018
		\$	\$
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	5.1	7,989,911	2,577,351
Trade and other receivables	5.1	2,653,132	1,672,565
Other financial assets	5.1	21,589,437	21,102,583
Inventories	5.2	161,558	94,381
Other assets	5.2	389,015	702,263
Total current assets		32,783,053	26,149,143
Non-current assets			
Trade and other receivables	5.1	60,850	71,358
Other assets	5.2	50,000	50,000
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	6.1	458,720,968	448,375,475
Intangible assets	5.2	2,764,800	1,843,200
Total non-current assets		461,596,618	450,340,033
Total assets		494,379,671	476,489,176
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	5.3	2,737,383	1,781,015
Trust funds and deposits	5.3	238,715	147,046
Provisions	5.5	5,130,074	4,850,141
Interest-bearing liabilities	5.4	509,042	483,917
Total current liabilities		8,615,214	7,262,119
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	5.5	1,371,941	1,389,350
Interest-bearing liabilities	5.4	7,413,170	6,159,972
Total non-current liabilities		8,785,111	7,549,322
Total liabilities		17,400,325	14,811,441
Net assets		476,979,346	461,677,735
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		298,312,667	290,917,481
Reserves	9.1	178,666,679	170,760,254
Total Equity		476,979,346	461,677,735

The above balance sheet should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

**Statement of Changes in Equity
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

2019	Note	Total \$	Accumulated Surplus \$	Revaluation Reserve \$
Balance at beginning of the financial year		461,677,735	290,917,481	170,760,254
Surplus for the year		7,395,186	7,395,186	-
Net asset revaluation increment	9.1	7,906,425	-	7,906,425
Balance at end of the financial year		476,979,346	298,312,667	178,666,679

2018		Total \$	Accumulated Surplus \$	Revaluation Reserve \$
Balance at beginning of the financial year		449,511,537	285,139,803	164,371,734
Surplus for the year		5,777,678	5,777,678	-
Net asset revaluation increment	9.1	6,388,520	-	6,388,520
Balance at end of the financial year		461,677,735	290,917,481	170,760,254

The above statement of changes in equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of Cash Flows
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

	Note	2019 Inflows/ (Outflows) \$	2018 Inflows/ (Outflows) \$
Cash flows from operating activities			
Rates and charges		27,486,617	26,731,182
Statutory fees and fines		1,036,820	944,039
User fees		3,679,894	4,893,357
Grants - operating		10,881,813	10,265,430
Grants - capital		3,650,527	4,823,938
Contributions - monetary		254,358	339,453
Interest received		853,635	696,362
Other receipts		1,814,031	1,872,637
Net GST refund/payment		1,808,368	1,815,209
Employee costs		(19,255,459)	(18,909,138)
Materials and services		(15,560,674)	(18,379,461)
Other payments		(748,425)	(874,562)
Net cash provided by operating activities		15,901,505	14,218,446
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	6.1	(12,155,369)	(10,747,635)
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		1,180,290	461,655
Payments for investments		(486,854)	-
Proceeds from sale of investments		-	(6,530,329)
Net cash used in investing activities		(11,461,933)	(16,816,309)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Finance costs		(332,455)	(357,303)
Proceeds from borrowings		1,800,000	-
Repayment of borrowings		(494,557)	(1,001,099)
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities		972,988	(1,358,402)
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		5,412,560	(3,956,265)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		2,577,351	6,533,616
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year		7,989,911	2,577,351
Restrictions on cash assets	5.1		
Financing arrangements	5.6		

The above statement of cash flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

**Statement of Capital Works
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

	Note	2019 \$	2018 \$
Property			
Land		-	152,351
Buildings		1,091,629	583,646
Total property		1,091,629	735,997
Plant and equipment			
Plant, machinery and equipment		1,280,357	1,665,539
Fixtures, fittings and furniture		42,128	75,000
Computers and telecommunications		61,918	29,826
Total plant and equipment		1,384,403	1,770,365
Infrastructure			
Sealed roads		5,017,981	4,397,225
Unsealed roads		1,043,741	1,310,988
Footpaths and cycleways		307,463	408,244
Drainage		376,379	1,091,736
Recreational, leisure and community facilities		245,924	204,281
Parks, open space and streetscapes		263,081	65,748
Other infrastructure		2,134,211	236,855
Total infrastructure		9,388,780	7,715,077
Culture and heritage			
Library books		129,721	140,483
Artworks		2,000	2,945
Pioneer Settlement - buildings		63,188	-
Pioneer Settlement - vehicles and vessels		95,648	382,768
Total plant and equipment		290,557	526,196
Total capital works expenditure		12,155,369	10,747,635
Represented by:			
New asset expenditure		1,077,545	2,575,215
Asset renewal expenditure		9,966,264	7,493,971
Asset expansion expenditure		-	-
Asset upgrade expenditure		1,111,560	678,449
Total capital works expenditure		12,155,369	10,747,635

The above statement of capital works should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

OVERVIEW**Introduction**

The Swan Hill Rural City Council was established by an Order of the Governor in Council on 20 January 1995 and is a body corporate.

The Council's main office is located at 45 Splatt St Swan Hill.

Statement of compliance

These financial statements are a general purpose financial report that consists of a Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows, Statement of Capital Works and Notes accompanying these financial statements. The general purpose financial report complies with the Australian Accounting Standards (AAS), other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board, the *Local Government Act 1989* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014*.

Significant accounting policies**(a) Basis of accounting**

The accrual basis of accounting has been used in the preparation of these financial statements, whereby assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses are recognised in the reporting period to which they relate, regardless of when cash is received or paid.

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated judgements are based on professional judgement derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and also in future periods that are affected by the revision. Judgements and assumptions made by management in the application of AAS's that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates relate to:

- the fair value of land, buildings, infrastructure, plant and equipment (refer to Note 6.1)
- the determination of depreciation for buildings, infrastructure, plant and equipment (refer to Note 6.1)
- the determination of employee provisions (refer to Note 5.5)
- the determination of landfill provisions (refer to Note 5.5)
- other areas requiring judgements

Unless otherwise stated, all accounting policies are consistent with those applied in the prior year. Where appropriate, comparative figures have been amended to accord with current presentation, and disclosure has been made of any material changes to comparatives.

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

Note 1 Performance against budget

The performance against budget notes compare Council's financial plan, expressed through its annual budget, with actual performance. The *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014* requires explanation of any material variances. Council has adopted a materiality threshold of the lower of 10 percent or \$1,000,000 where further explanation is warranted. Explanations have not been provided for variations below the materiality threshold unless the variance is considered to be material because of its nature.

The budget figures detailed below are those adopted by Council on 26 June 2018. The Budget was based on assumptions that were relevant at the time of adoption of the Budget. Council sets guidelines and parameters for income and expense targets in this budget in order to meet Council's planning and financial performance targets for both the short and long-term. The budget did not reflect any changes to equity resulting from asset revaluations, as their impacts were not considered predictable.

These notes are prepared to meet the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1989* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014*.

1.1 Income and expenditure

	Budget 2019 \$	Actual 2019 \$	Variance 2019 \$	Variance %	Ref
Income					
Rates and charges	27,624,000	27,691,421	67,421	0%	
Statutory fees and fines	907,000	1,036,820	129,820	14%	1
User fees	4,694,000	4,517,110	(176,890)	(4%)	
Grants - operating	11,467,000	10,881,813	(585,187)	(5%)	
Grants - capital	3,357,000	3,650,527	293,527	9%	
Contributions - monetary	215,000	264,508	49,508	23%	2
Contributions - non monetary	-	475,683	475,683	100%	3
Net gain on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	295,000	1,004,644	709,644	241%	4
Other income	3,688,000	2,636,625	(1,051,375)	(29%)	5
Total income	52,247,000	52,159,151	(87,849)	0%	
Expenses					
Employee costs	19,739,000	19,194,683	544,317	3%	
Materials and services	16,519,000	15,136,864	1,382,136	8%	6
Depreciation and amortisation	9,010,000	8,534,709	475,291	5%	
Bad and doubtful debts	2,000	51,072	(49,072)	(2454%)	7
Borrowing costs	362,000	332,455	29,545	8%	
Other expenses	1,092,000	1,514,182	(422,182)	(39%)	8
Total expenses	46,724,000	44,763,965	1,960,035	4%	
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	5,523,000	7,395,186	(2,047,884)	(37%)	

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

(i) Explanation of material variations

Variance Ref	Item	Explanation
1	Statutory fees and fines	Valuation data fees for 2017/18 (\$70,000) were not received until 2018/19 and valuations data income from the Department of Treasury and Finance of \$34,000 had not been forecast.
2	Contributions - monetary	Council received assistance funding of \$60,000 from land owners to upgrade roads under the Local Roads to Market grant funding program which had not been forecast.
3	Contributions - non monetary	Donated assets were not forecast. This income comes from assets Council now controls donated by user groups.
4	Net gain on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	This variance is due to the sale of a parcel of land at the Swan Hill Livestock Exchange, forecast to be received in 2017/18 but didn't eventuate until September 2018.
5	Other income	The next stage of the Tower Hill development wasn't available for sale until January 2019, so the result reflects only six months of sales, whereas the forecast was for sales over the year.
6	Materials and services	The budget included contractor payments of \$1.6M for the McCallum St roundabout project. VicRoads undertook this project and Council wasn't required to manage the contractor payments.
7	Bad and doubtful debts	Additional provisions were taken up for the increasing balance of outstanding infringement debtors.
8	Other expenses	Asset write offs and adjustments of \$513,000 had not been budgeted.

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

Note 1 Performance against budget (cont'd)

1.2 Capital works

	Budget 2019 \$	Actual 2019 \$	Variance 2019 \$	Variance 2019 %	Ref
Property					
Land	902,000	-	(902,000)	(100%)	1
Buildings	2,305,000	1,091,629	(1,213,371)	(53%)	2
Total property	3,207,000	1,091,629	(2,115,371)	(153%)	
Plant and equipment					
Plant, machinery and equipment	1,156,000	1,280,357	124,357	11%	3
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	-	42,128	42,128	100%	4
Computers and telecommunications	248,000	61,918	(186,082)	(75%)	5
Total plant and equipment	1,404,000	1,384,403	(19,597)	(1%)	
Infrastructure					
Sealed roads	4,473,000	5,017,981	544,981	12%	6
Unsealed roads	1,098,000	1,043,741	(54,259)	(5%)	
Footpaths and cycleways	267,000	307,463	40,463	15%	7
Drainage	911,000	376,379	(534,621)	(59%)	8
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	313,000	245,924	(67,076)	(21%)	9
Waste management	270,000	-	(270,000)	(100%)	10
Parks, open space and streetscapes	3,626,000	263,081	(3,362,919)	(93%)	11
Other infrastructure	1,842,000	2,134,211	292,211	16%	12
Total infrastructure	12,800,000	9,388,780	(3,411,220)	(27%)	
Cultural and heritage					
Library books	147,000	129,721	(17,279)	(12%)	13
Artworks	-	2,000	2,000	100%	
Pioneer Settlement - buildings	-	63,188	63,188	100%	14
Pioneer Settlement - vehicles and vessels	35,000	95,648	60,648	173%	15
Total plant and equipment	182,000	290,557	108,557	60%	
Total capital works expenditure	17,593,000	12,155,369	(5,437,631)	(121%)	
Represented by:					
New asset expenditure	7,786,000	1,077,545	(6,708,455)	(86%)	
Asset renewal expenditure	8,661,000	9,966,264	1,305,264	15%	
Asset upgrade expenditure	1,146,000	1,111,560	(34,440)	(3%)	
Total capital works expenditure	17,593,000	12,155,369	(5,437,631)	(31%)	

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

(i) Explanation of material variations

Variance Ref	Item	Explanation
1	Land	\$102,000 was budgeted for land acquisitions but no land purchases were made. \$800,000 was budgeted for Tower Hill Development, but the construction of the next stage won't occur until 2019/20.
2	Buildings	\$520,000 for the Ken Harrison Sporting Complex soccer pavilion and \$400,000 for the group fitness room at the Swan Hill Leisure centre were not undertaken in 2018/19 and will be completed in 2019/20.
3	Plant, machinery and equipment	A tractor and two mowers forecast to be purchased in 2017/18 were acquired in 2018/19 (\$151,000).
4	Fixtures, fittings and furniture	Office alterations and parking meter purchases were budgeted in buildings and plant and equipment.
5	Computers and telecommunications	The majority of the forecast included costs that could not be capitalised. This included software and items that didn't meet capitalisation thresholds.
6	Sealed roads	Grant funding received via the Local Roads to Market program of \$555,000 was received and spent that had not been forecast.
7	Footpaths and cycleways	Works forecast as parks and open space was capitalised as footpath assets.
8	Drainage	Expenditure on the Robinvale Town Levee was \$542,000 below forecast. The majority of these works are yet to occur.
9	Recreational, leisure and community facilities	The Milloo Street boat ramp extensions and upgrade had only \$30,000 of the \$120,000 budget spent to 30 June 2019.
10	Waste management	The transfer station and service road at the Swan Hill Landfill project (\$150,000) was delayed, and construction of a reuse shed to the value of \$188,000 was capitalised to buildings.
11	Parks, open space and streetscapes	\$3,159,000 of the budgeted \$3,626,000 relates to the Swan Hill Riverfront Masterplan. These funds were leveraged in the successful application for the Federal Governments regional growth funding. Council was successful in obtaining grant funding of \$16.8 million for joint infrastructure projects with 6 neighbouring Councils. Of this funding, \$7.7 million will be received by Council and used to undertake \$15.53 million in capital works projects to be delivered over the next two and a half years.
12	Other infrastructure	Expenditure on the Swan Hill Livestock Exchange redevelopment was \$968,000 above forecast, primarily due to \$706,000 worth of works forecast to be undertaken in 2017/18 and carried forward to 2018/19.
13	Library books	Expenditure on library books were below forecast.
14	Pioneer Settlement - buildings	Construction of a toilet at the Paragon Café was carried forward from 2017/18.
15	Pioneer Settlement - vehicles and vessels	Completion of the PS Gem restoration project was forecast to be completed in 2017/18. The final works on the project was carried forward and completed in 2018/19.

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

Note 2.1 Analysis of Council results by program

Council delivers its functions and activities through the following programs.

2 (a) Economic growth

Economic growth will encourage new business development, provide support for business expansion and will continuously seek to help our existing businesses to prosper. This function provides, building and planning statutory services, management of caravan parks, economic development programs, regulatory services and parking control, management of the Pioneer Settlement and regional visitor information centre.

Community enrichment

Community enrichment function will provide a range of services to individuals and to the broader community that assist all in our community to live healthy, fulfilling lives. We will embrace our role as a regional centre by providing a range of cultural opportunities. The community enrichment function includes aged care services, maternal and child health, after school and vacation programs, libraries, art gallery and performing arts.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure will provide and maintain publicly accessible infrastructure that is appropriate for the community's needs in the most effective and efficient manner possible. The infrastructure function is responsible for constructing new infrastructure and maintaining existing infrastructure across the municipality.

Governance and leadership

Governance and leadership provides efficient, effective and proactive support services across council to enable the delivery of policy commitments, council vision and mission. The function will plan for our municipality's long term growth and development by committing to a robust program of strategic planning while representing our community's interests and conducting our affairs openly and with integrity, reflecting the high levels of governance our community expects.

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

Note 2.1 Analysis of Council results by program**2.1 (b) Summary of revenues, expenses, assets and capital expenses by program**

	Income	Expenses	Surplus/ (Deficit)	Grants included in income	Total assets
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
2019					
Economic growth	4,479,187	(9,760,775)	(5,281,588)	780,810	7,561,158
Community enrichment	4,451,807	(7,028,927)	(2,577,120)	3,200,417	2,441,398
Infrastructure	10,999,539	(20,754,761)	(9,755,222)	5,817,781	449,569,851
Governance and leadership	32,228,618	(7,219,502)	25,009,116	4,733,330	34,807,264
	<u>52,159,151</u>	<u>(44,763,965)</u>	<u>7,395,186</u>	<u>14,532,338</u>	<u>494,379,671</u>
	Income	Expenses	Surplus/ (Deficit)	Grants included in income	Total assets
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
2018					
Economic growth	5,517,480	(10,136,590)	(4,619,110)	1,645,488	7,500,649
Community enrichment	4,642,485	(7,076,994)	(2,434,509)	3,055,374	2,500,785
Infrastructure	10,442,806	(18,966,725)	(8,523,919)	5,839,174	437,929,907
Governance and leadership	30,197,912	(8,842,696)	21,355,216	4,549,333	28,557,835
	<u>50,800,683</u>	<u>(45,023,005)</u>	<u>5,777,678</u>	<u>15,089,369</u>	<u>476,489,176</u>

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

Note 3 Funding for the delivery of our services	2019	2018
3.1 Rates and charges	\$	\$

Council uses Capital Improved Value as the basis of valuation of all properties within the municipal district. The Capital Improved Value of a property is the value of its land, buildings and improvements.

The valuation base used to calculate general rates for 2018/19 was \$3,938 million (2017/18 \$3,630 million).

Residential	10,224,264	9,889,446
Commercial	1,741,150	1,774,224
Industrial	741,090	749,189
Farm/rural	11,301,265	10,770,131
Supplementary rates and rate adjustments	167,542	215,287
Garbage charge	3,122,662	2,983,598
Special Marketing Rates	362,347	355,569
Rate agreements - Electricity Industry Act	132,217	-
Other	(86,288)	(7,588)
Abandonments	(14,828)	(27,034)
Total rates and charges	27,691,421	26,702,822

The date of the latest general revaluation of land for rating purposes within the municipal district was 1 January 2018, and the valuation will be first applied in the rating year commencing 1 July 2018.

Annual rates and charges are recognised as revenues when Council issues annual rates notices. Supplementary rates are recognised when a valuation and reassessment is completed and a supplementary rates notice issued.

3.2 Statutory fees and fines

Infringements and costs	90,275	103,864
Building and planning fees	512,722	502,518
Valuation data fees	120,516	12,903
Animal registration and release fees	146,306	143,151
Health registration fees	122,612	131,688
Other fees and fines	44,389	49,915
Total statutory fees and fines	1,036,820	944,039

Statutory fees and fines (including parking fees and fines) are recognised as revenue when the service has been provided, the payment is received, or when the penalty has been applied, whichever first occurs.

3.3 User fees

Aged and health services	648,604	771,924
Administration fees	104,063	36,782
Child care/children's programs	136,621	192,371
Parking	255,497	261,938
Sales - admissions	1,110,595	1,128,720
Sales - merchandise, catering, other sales	540,398	451,050
Hire & leasing fees	731,127	717,903
Livestock exchange	635,366	591,122
Other fees and charges	354,839	431,607
Total user fees	4,517,110	4,583,417

User fees are recognised as revenue when the service has been provided or Council has otherwise earned the income.

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
3.4 Funding from other levels of government		
Grants were received in respect of the following:		
Summary of grants		
Commonwealth funded grants	8,414,023	10,507,144
State funded grants	6,118,317	4,582,224
Total grants received	14,532,340	15,089,368
(a) Operating Grants		
<i>Recurrent - Commonwealth Government</i>		
Commonwealth Government - health and aged care	-	1,473,745
Victoria Grants Commission - general purpose	4,732,893	4,523,424
Victoria Grants Commission - local roads	2,266,908	2,124,431
Family day care	222,649	232,796
Out of school hours care	164,353	136,331
<i>Recurrent - State Government</i>		
Employment subsidies	438	25,841
Public health	23,457	25,252
Home and community care	1,526,588	209,672
Art gallery and performing arts	150,000	150,000
School crossing supervisors	48,328	31,732
Economic development	-	(95,753)
Libraries	197,073	194,801
Maternal child health	457,008	360,068
Other	115,569	119,435
Total recurrent operating grants	9,905,264	9,511,775
<i>Non-recurrent - State Government</i>		
Community projects	228,387	213,266
Environmental protection	85,000	106,000
Waste management	800	19,200
Indigenous affairs	5,688	-
Cultural heritage	17,600	96,200
Libraries	4,726	2,345
Economic development	98,750	33,380
Home and community care	181,907	106,907
Family and children	271,182	85,177
Other	82,509	91,180
Total non-recurrent operating grants	976,549	753,655
Total operating grants	10,881,813	10,265,430
(b) Capital Grants		
<i>Recurrent - Commonwealth Government</i>		
Roads to recovery	1,027,220	2,016,417
Total recurrent capital grants	1,027,220	2,016,417
<i>Non-recurrent - State Government</i>		
Roads	679,683	396,545
Drainage	447,980	355,000
Parks playgrounds and street beautification	560,228	401,489
Art and heritage	116,731	1,376,131
Buildings	320,610	27,969
Waste management	60,000	-
Livestock exchange	438,075	-
Other	-	250,387
Total non-recurrent capital grants	2,623,307	2,807,521
Total capital grants	3,650,527	4,823,938

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
(c) Unspent grants received on condition that they be spent in a specific manner		
Balance at start of year	4,769,511	4,282,376
Received during the financial year and remained unspent at balance date	5,265,579	4,244,206
Received in prior years and spent during the financial year	(4,081,556)	(3,757,071)
Balance at year end	<u>5,953,534</u>	<u>4,769,511</u>

Grant income is recognised when Council obtains control of the contribution. Control is normally obtained upon receipt (or acquittal).

3.5 Contributions

Monetary	264,508	339,453
Non-monetary	475,683	327,273
Total contributions	<u>740,191</u>	<u>666,726</u>

Contributions of non-monetary assets were received in relation to the following asset classes.

Artwork	-	71,300
Library books	2,955	10,905
Buildings	220,000	150,000
Sealed roads	-	83,368
Plant and equipment	252,728	-
Other	-	11,700
Total non-monetary contributions	<u>475,683</u>	<u>327,273</u>

Monetary and non-monetary contributions are recognised as revenue when Council obtains control over the contributed asset.

3.6 Net gain on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment

Proceeds of sale	1,180,290	461,655
Written down value of assets disposed	(175,646)	(216,343)
Total net gain on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	<u>1,004,644</u>	<u>245,312</u>

The profit or loss on sale of an asset is determined when control of the asset has passed to the buyer.

3.7 Other income

Interest	853,635	696,362
Reimbursements	461,758	492,812
Tower Hill land sales	1,087,273	1,183,636
Less - Tower Hill costs of goods sold	(24,629)	(28,375)
Other	258,588	224,564
Total other income	<u>2,636,625</u>	<u>2,568,999</u>

Interest is recognised as it is earned.

Other income is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable and is recognised when Council gains control over the right to receive the income.

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
Note 4 The cost of delivering services		
4.1 (a) Employee costs		
Wages and salaries	15,440,504	15,005,177
WorkCover	407,707	384,917
Agency staff	665,688	602,354
Long service leave	657,937	452,467
Staff training	179,382	176,039
Superannuation	1,685,142	1,514,692
Fringe benefits tax	59,504	57,309
Other	98,819	95,825
Total employee costs	19,194,683	18,288,780
(b) Superannuation		
Council made contributions to the following funds:		
Defined benefit fund		
Employer contributions to Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Vision Super)	171,003	197,353
	<u>171,003</u>	<u>197,353</u>
Employer contributions payable at reporting date.	-	-
Accumulation funds		
Employer contributions to Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Vision Super)	1,421,610	1,295,802
Employer contributions - other funds	-	21,537
	<u>1,421,610</u>	<u>1,317,339</u>
Employer contributions payable at reporting date.	-	-
Refer to note 9.3 for further information relating to Council's superannuation obligations.		
4.2 Materials and services		
Contract payments	5,802,525	7,425,738
Community grants sponsorship and contributions	1,242,166	1,212,299
Building maintenance	794,787	812,776
General maintenance	1,911,679	1,513,483
Utilities	1,561,798	1,489,937
Office administration	817,089	823,069
Information technology	642,198	474,387
Insurance	673,426	603,669
Consultants	494,426	585,846
Other materials and services	1,196,770	1,072,801
Total materials and services	15,136,864	16,014,005
4.3 Depreciation and amortisation		
Property	760,499	820,825
Plant and equipment	1,338,027	1,267,197
Infrastructure	6,204,993	5,927,157
Culture and heritage assets	231,190	228,938
Total depreciation and amortisation	8,534,709	8,244,117
Refer to note 5.2(c) and 6.1 for a more detailed breakdown of depreciation and amortisation charges and accounting policy.		

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
4.4 Bad and doubtful debts		
Parking fine debtors	53,023	36,308
Rates debtors	(2,816)	6,543
Other debtors	865	(8,356)
Total bad and doubtful debts	51,072	34,495

Movement in provisions for doubtful debts

Balance at the beginning of the year	200,172	174,982
New provisions recognised during the year	75,912	61,837
Amounts already provided for and written off as uncollectible	(10,499)	(9,304)
Amounts provided for but recovered during the year	(24,840)	(27,343)
Balance at end of year	240,745	200,172

Provision for doubtful debt is recognised based on an expected credit loss model. This model considers both historic and forward looking information in determining the level of impairment.

- Historical rate has been used in the calculations for the rates and other debtor categories.

- A forward looking adjustment rate has been used for parking and infringement debtors. This rate factors the likely collection of continually aging debtors.

4.5 Borrowing costs

Interest - borrowings	326,443	351,291
Interest - finance leases	6,012	6,012
Total borrowing costs	332,455	357,303

Borrowing costs are recognised as an expense in the period in which they are incurred, except where they are capitalised as part of a qualifying asset constructed by Council.

4.6 Other expenses

Auditors' remuneration - VAGO - audit of the financial statements, performance statement and grant acquittals	54,300	53,000
Auditors' remuneration - internal	24,848	23,444
Auditors' remuneration - other	-	2,395
Councillors' allowances	236,700	238,625
Operating lease rentals	372,087	424,983
Assets written-off	513,562	1,050,303
Vehicle registrations	79,836	81,910
Bank charges	52,368	53,309
Legal costs	62,850	34,137
Fire services levy	60,916	67,324
Other	56,715	54,875
Total other expenses	1,514,182	2,084,305

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
Note 5 Our financial position		
5.1 Financial assets		
(a) Cash and cash equivalents		
Cash on hand	11,795	11,795
Cash at bank	2,941,942	2,565,556
Term deposits	5,036,174	-
Total cash and cash equivalents	<u>7,989,911</u>	<u>2,577,351</u>
(b) Other financial assets		
Term deposits - current	21,589,437	21,102,583
Total other financial assets	<u>21,589,437</u>	<u>21,102,583</u>
Total financial assets	<u>29,579,348</u>	<u>23,679,934</u>

Councils cash and cash equivalents are subject to external restrictions that limit amounts available for discretionary use. These include:

- Trust funds and deposits (Note 5.3)	238,715	147,046
Total restricted funds	<u>238,715</u>	<u>147,046</u>
Total unrestricted cash and cash equivalents	<u>7,751,196</u>	<u>2,430,305</u>

Intended allocations

Although not externally restricted the following amounts have been allocated for specific future purposes by Council:

- unspent conditional grants received	5,953,534	4,769,511
- cash held to fund carried forward capital works	4,224,515	2,479,200
Total funds subject to intended allocations	<u>10,178,049</u>	<u>7,248,711</u>

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits at call, and other highly liquid investments with original maturities of 90 days or less, net of outstanding bank overdrafts.

Other financial assets are valued at fair value, at balance date. Term deposits are measured at amortised cost. Any unrealised gains and losses on holdings at balance date are recognised as either a revenue or expense.

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
(c) Trade and other receivables		
Current		
<i>Statutory receivables</i>		
Rates debtors	1,233,077	1,028,273
Provision for doubtful debts - rates debtors	(26,339)	(29,155)
Private scheme debtors	9,834	9,750
Net GST receivable	685,184	258,482
Infringement debtors	216,484	186,736
Provision for doubtful debts - infringements	(205,947)	(158,975)
<i>Non statutory receivables</i>		
Other debtors	749,298	389,496
Provision for doubtful debts - other debtors	(8,459)	(12,042)
Total current trade and other receivables	2,653,132	1,672,565
Non-current		
<i>Non statutory receivables</i>		
Private scheme debtors	8,939	16,599
Loans and advances to community organisations	51,911	54,759
Total non-current trade and other receivables	60,850	71,358
Total trade and other receivables	2,713,982	1,743,923

Short term receivables are carried at invoice amount. A provision for doubtful debts is recognised when there is objective evidence that an impairment has occurred. Long term receivables are carried at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method.

(d) Ageing of receivables

The ageing of the Council's trade and other receivables (excluding statutory receivables) that are not impaired was:

Current (not yet due)	131,523	209,186
Past due between 31 and 180 days	533,476	108,730
Past due between 181 and 365 days	44,095	21,879
Past due by more than 1 year	40,202	49,701
Total trade and other receivables	749,296	389,496

(e) Ageing of individually impaired receivables

At balance date, other debtors representing financial assets with a nominal value of \$749,296 (2018: \$389,496) were impaired. The amount of the provision raised against these debtors was \$8,459 (2018: \$12,042). They individually have been impaired as a result of their doubtful collection. Many of the long outstanding past due amounts have been lodged with Council's debt collectors or are on payment arrangements.

The ageing of receivables that have been individually determined as impaired at reporting date was:

Past due between 31 and 180 days	3,867	677
Past due between 181 and 365 days	1,844	2,008
Past due by more than 1 year	2,748	9,357
Total trade and other receivables	8,459	12,042

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

5.2 Non-financial assets	2019	2018
(a) Inventories	\$	\$
Inventories held for distribution	30,543	18,464
Inventories held for sale	41,412	30,817
Tower Hill estate	89,603	45,100
Total inventories	161,558	94,381

Inventories held for distribution are measured at cost, adjusted when applicable for any loss of service potential. All other inventories, including land held for sale, are measured at the lower of cost and net realisable value. Where inventories are acquired for no cost or nominal consideration, they are measured at current replacement cost at the date of acquisition.

(b) Other assets

Current

Prepayments	139,244	570,694
Accrued income	249,771	131,569
Total current other assets	389,015	702,263

Non-current

Other	50,000	50,000
Total non-current other assets	50,000	50,000
Total other assets	439,015	752,263

(c) Intangible assets

Water rights	2,764,800	1,843,200
Total intangible assets	2,764,800	1,843,200

**Water Rights
\$**

Gross carrying amount

Balance at 1 July 2018	1,843,200
Asset revaluations	921,600
Balance at 1 July 2019	2,764,800

Net book value at 30 June 2018	1,843,200
Net book value at 30 June 2019	2,764,800

Water rights are valued at current market rates. The valuation is based on market transactions being the trading of water shares within the relevant water trading region. Prices are sourced from the Victorian Water Register for water traded within trading zone 7 VIC Murray - Barmah to SA.

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
5.3 Payables		
(a) Trade and other payables		
Trade payables	201,321	262,734
Salaries and wages	828,923	719,464
Accrued expenses	1,707,139	798,817
Total trade and other payables	2,737,383	1,781,015
(b) Trust funds and deposits		
Refundable deposits	82,177	90,906
Fire services levy	1,333	910
Retention amounts	155,205	55,230
Total trust funds and deposits	238,715	147,046

Amounts received as deposits and retention amounts controlled by Council are recognised as trust funds until they are returned, transferred in accordance with the purpose of the receipt, or forfeited. Trust funds that are forfeited, resulting in council gaining control of the funds, are to be recognised as revenue at the time of forfeit.

Purpose and nature of items

Refundable deposits - Deposits are taken by council as a form of surety in a number of circumstances, including in relation to building works, tender deposits, contract deposits and the use of civic facilities.

Fire Service Levy - Council is the collection agent for fire services levy on behalf of the State Government. Council remits amounts received on a quarterly basis. Amounts disclosed here will be remitted to the State Government in line with that process.

Retention Amounts - Council has a contractual right to retain certain amounts until a contractor has met certain requirements or a related warrant or defect period has elapsed. Subject to the satisfactory completion of the contractual obligations, or the elapsing of time, these amounts will be paid to the relevant contractor in line with Council's contractual obligations.

5.4 Interest-bearing liabilities

Current

Borrowings - secured (1)	481,922	456,797
Finance leases	27,120	27,120
	509,042	483,917

Non-current

Borrowings - secured (1)	7,358,930	6,078,612
Finance leases	54,240	81,360
	7,413,170	6,159,972
Total interest bearing liabilities	7,922,212	6,643,889

(1) Borrowings are secured by Swan Hill Rural City Council General Rates

(a) The maturity profile for Council's borrowings is:

Not later than one year	481,922	456,797
Later than one year and not later than five years	5,930,049	5,578,612
Later than five years	1,428,881	500,000
	7,840,852	6,535,409

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

Borrowings are initially measured at fair value, being the cost of the interest bearing liabilities, net of transaction costs. The measurement basis subsequent to initial recognition depends on whether the Council has categorised its interest-bearing liabilities as either financial liabilities designated at fair value through the profit and loss, or financial liabilities at amortised cost. Any difference between the initial recognised amount and the redemption value is recognised in net result over the period of the borrowing using the effective interest method.

The classification depends on the nature and purpose of the interest bearing liabilities. The Council determines the classification of its interest bearing liabilities at initial recognition.

	2019 \$	2018 \$
(b) The maturity profile for Council's finance lease liabilities is:		
Not later than one year	27,120	27,120
Later than one year and not later than five years	54,240	81,360
	81,360	108,480
Minimum future lease payments		
Less future finance charges	18,036	24,048
	99,396	132,528

Council has a finance lease agreement for the supply and usage of Multi Function Printers.

The term of the lease is 5 years beginning in July 2017. Lease repayments are fixed for the life of the lease agreement. Repayments are made monthly, with a lease and usage component. There is no option to purchase the assets at the end of the lease.

5.5 Provisions

	Annual leave \$	Long service \$	Landfill restoration \$	Other \$	Total \$
2019					
Balance at beginning of the financial year	1,332,138	3,716,453	1,190,900	-	6,239,491
Additional provisions	1,128,835	380,780	(535)	118,425	1,627,505
Amounts used	(1,133,752)	(283,857)	-	-	(1,417,609)
Change in the discounted amount arising because of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate	1,475	28,111	23,042	-	52,628
Balance at the end of the financial year	1,328,696	3,841,487	1,213,407	118,425	6,502,015
2018					
Balance at beginning of the financial year	1,373,603	3,715,081	1,446,140	-	6,534,824
Additional provisions	1,069,313	312,129	47,845	-	1,429,287
Amounts used	(1,102,826)	(289,830)	(292,373)	-	(1,685,029)
Change in the discounted amount arising because of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate	(7,952)	(20,927)	(10,712)	-	(39,591)
Balance at the end of the financial year	1,332,138	3,716,453	1,190,900	-	6,239,491

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
(a) Employee provisions		
Current provisions expected to be wholly settled within 12 months		
Annual leave	1,106,403	1,057,385
Long service leave	211,866	176,625
	1,318,269	1,234,010
Current provisions expected to be wholly settled after 12 months		
Annual leave	222,293	274,753
Long service leave	3,415,813	3,286,251
	3,638,106	3,561,004
Total current employee provisions	4,956,375	4,795,014
Non-current		
Long service leave	213,808	253,577
Total non-current employee provisions	213,808	253,577
Aggregate carrying amount of employee provisions:		
Current	4,956,375	4,795,014
Non-current	213,808	253,577
Total aggregate carrying amount of employee provisions	5,170,183	5,048,591

The calculation of employee costs and benefits includes all relevant on-costs and are calculated as follows at reporting date.

Wages and salaries and annual leave

Liabilities for wages and salaries, including non-monetary benefits, annual leave and accumulated sick leave expected to be wholly settled within 12 months of the reporting date are recognised in the provision for employee benefits in respect of employee services up to the reporting date, classified as current liabilities and measured at their nominal values.

Liabilities that are not expected to be wholly settled within 12 months of the reporting date are recognised in the provision for employee benefits as current liabilities, measured at the present value of the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled using the remuneration rate expected to apply at the time of settlement.

Long service leave

Liability for long service leave (LSL) is recognised in the provision for employee benefits. LSL is measured at present value. Unconditional LSL is disclosed as a current liability. Conditional LSL that has been accrued, where an employee is yet to reach a qualifying term of employment, is disclosed as a non-current liability.

Key assumptions:

- discount rate	0.96% - 1.40%	1.91% - 2.67%
- index rate	2.75%	3.63%

(b) Landfill restoration

Current	55,274	55,127
Non-current	1,158,133	1,135,773
	1,213,407	1,190,900

Council is obligated to restore the Swan Hill and Robinvale landfill sites to a particular standard. The forecast life of the site is based on current estimates of remaining capacity and the forecast rate of infill. The provision for landfill restoration has been calculated based on the present value of the expected cost of works to be undertaken. The expected cost of works has been estimated based on current understanding of work required to reinstate the site to a suitable standard. Accordingly, the estimation of the provision required is dependent on the accuracy of the forecast timing of the work, work required and related costs.

Key assumptions:

- discount rate	0.96% - 1.03%	2.00% - 2.29%
- index rate	1.30%	2.00%

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
(c) Other provisions		
Current	118,425	-
Non-current	-	-
	<u>118,425</u>	<u>-</u>
Total provisions		
Current	5,130,074	4,850,141
Non-current	1,371,941	1,389,350
	<u>6,502,015</u>	<u>6,239,491</u>

5.6 Financing arrangements

The Council has the following funding arrangements in place as at 30 June 2019.

Credit card facilities	200,000	200,000
Loans and borrowings	7,840,852	6,535,409
Total facilities	<u>8,040,852</u>	<u>6,735,409</u>
Used facilities	7,861,678	6,548,850
Unused facilities	<u>179,174</u>	<u>186,559</u>

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

5.7 Commitments

The Council has entered into the following commitments. Commitments are not recognised in the Balance Sheet. Commitments are disclosed at their nominal value and presented inclusive of the GST payable.

2019	Not later	Later than 1	Later than 2	Total
	than 1 year	year and not later than 2 years	years and not later than 5 years	
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Operating				
Building and property maintenance	642,353	438,572	-	1,080,925
Cleaning - council buildings, public toilets, barbeques	9,239	-	-	9,239
Materials and supplies	1,013,743	481,250	267,500	1,762,493
Office equipment leases	94,048	62,287	94,048	250,383
Professional services	465,468	-	-	465,468
Management & operation of the PS Pyap	185,000	190,550	196,300	571,850
Recreation, leisure and community facilities	1,086,311	1,135,024	7,500	2,228,835
Uniforms	15,215	-	-	15,215
Waste management operation and kerbside collection	1,731,005	1,672,851	77,028	3,480,884
Total	5,242,382	3,980,534	642,376	9,865,292
Capital				
Buildings	64,100	-	-	64,100
Drainage	247,151	-	-	247,151
Plant & equipment	591,211	-	-	591,211
Sealed roads	1,079,959	1,400,000	-	2,479,959
Parks and open space	263,160	-	-	263,160
Waste management	200,000	200,000	-	400,000
Other infrastructure	145,408	-	-	145,408
Cultural and heritage	48,975	-	-	48,975
Total	2,639,964	1,600,000	-	4,239,964
2018	Not later	Later than 1	Later than 2	Total
	than 1 year	year and not later than 2 years	years and not later than 5 years	
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Operating				
Building and property maintenance	145,611	77,847	-	223,458
Cleaning - council buildings, public toilets, barbeques	568,317	-	-	568,317
Environmental management	390,000	390,000	-	780,000
Materials and supplies	621,440	565,000	275,000	1,461,440
Office equipment leases	94,048	94,048	145,748	333,844
Professional services	279,956	-	-	279,956
Management & operation of the PS Pyap	159,848	-	-	159,848
Recreation, leisure and community facilities	1,061,811	1,120,024	-	2,181,835
Strategic planning	60,243	-	-	60,243
Uniforms	13,360	-	-	13,360
Valuations and rating	112,675	6,000	-	118,675
Waste management operation and kerbside collection	1,611,480	1,672,851	421,140	3,705,471
Total	5,118,789	3,925,770	841,888	9,886,447
Capital				
Drainage	231,000	-	-	231,000
Plant & equipment	150,499	-	-	150,499
Sealed roads	2,286,387	-	-	2,286,387
Unsealed roads	154,854	-	-	154,854
Waste management	200,000	200,000	-	400,000
Other infrastructure	69,040	-	-	69,040
Total	3,091,780	200,000	-	3,291,780

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

Operating lease commitments

At the reporting date, the Council had the following obligations under non-cancellable operating leases for the lease of equipment and land and buildings for use within Council's activities (these obligations are not recognised as liabilities):

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
Not later than one year	391,690	392,996
Later than one year and not later than five years	1,519,858	1,635,756
Later than five years	767,523	1,224,249
	<u>2,679,071</u>	<u>3,253,001</u>

Lease payments for operating leases are required by the accounting standard to be recognised on a straight line basis, rather than expensed in the years in which they are incurred.

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

Note 6 Assets we manage

6.1 Summary of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment

	At Fair Value 30 June 2018	Additions	Contributions	Revaluation	Depreciation	Disposal	Transfers	At Fair Value 30 June 2019
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Property	100,624,630	996,731	220,000	-	(760,499)	(70,383)	71,984	101,082,463
Plant and equipment	6,171,006	1,351,737	252,728	-	(1,338,027)	(176,022)	-	6,261,422
Infrastructure	330,894,389	8,836,648	-	6,984,825	(6,204,993)	(485,420)	297,870	340,323,319
Culture and heritage assets	9,730,060	290,557	2,955	-	(231,190)	-	-	9,792,382
Work in progress	955,390	679,696	-	-	-	(3,850)	(369,854)	1,261,382
	448,375,475	12,155,369	475,683	6,984,825	(8,534,709)	(735,675)	-	458,720,968

Summary of work in progress

	Opening WIP	Additions	Write-off	Transfers	Closing WIP
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Property	122,420	94,898	(3,850)	(71,984)	141,484
Plant and equipment	-	32,666	-	-	32,666
Infrastructure	832,970	552,132	-	(297,870)	1,087,232
Total	955,390	679,696	(3,850)	(369,854)	1,261,382

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

(a) Property	Land - specialised	Land - non specialised	Total Land	Buildings - specialised	Buildings - non specialised	Total Buildings	Total Property	Work In Progress
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	
At fair value 1 July 2018	58,567,804	6,426,600	64,994,404	101,244,948	4,284,580	105,529,528	170,523,932	122,420
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2018	-	-	-	(69,779,710)	(119,592)	(69,899,302)	(69,899,302)	-
Movements in fair value	58,567,804	6,426,600	64,994,404	31,465,238	4,164,988	35,630,226	100,624,630	122,420
Additions	-	-	-	996,731	-	996,731	996,731	94,898
Contributions	-	-	-	220,000	-	220,000	220,000	-
Disposal	-	(69,689)	(69,689)	(5,278)	-	(5,278)	(74,967)	(3,850)
Transfers	(65,406)	65,406	-	71,984	-	71,984	71,984	(71,984)
	(65,406)	(4,283)	69,689	1,283,437	-	1,283,437	1,213,748	19,064
Movements in accumulated depreciation	-	-	-	(683,130)	(77,369)	(760,499)	(760,499)	-
Depreciation and amortisation	-	-	-	4,584	-	4,584	4,584	-
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	-	-	-	(678,546)	(77,369)	(755,915)	(755,915)	-
At fair value 30 June 2019	58,502,398	6,422,317	64,924,715	102,528,385	4,284,580	106,812,965	171,737,680	141,484
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2019	-	-	-	(70,458,256)	(196,961)	(70,655,217)	(70,655,217)	-
	58,502,398	6,422,317	64,924,715	32,070,129	4,087,619	36,157,748	101,082,463	141,484

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

(b) Plant and Equipment	Plant machinery and equipment	Fixtures fittings and furniture	Computers and telecomms	Total plant and equipment	Work in Progress
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
At fair value 1 July 2018	11,226,611	4,184,797	1,250,830	16,662,238	-
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2018	(7,701,620)	(1,780,794)	(1,008,818)	(10,491,232)	-
	3,524,991	2,404,003	242,012	6,171,006	-
Movements in fair value					
Additions	1,247,691	42,128	61,918	1,351,737	32,666
Contributions	252,728	-	-	252,728	-
Disposal	(1,004,567)	(1,497)	(18,560)	(1,024,624)	-
	495,852	40,631	43,358	579,841	32,666
Movements in accumulated depreciation					
Depreciation and amortisation	(883,151)	(353,209)	(101,667)	(1,338,027)	-
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	828,919	1,123	18,560	848,602	-
	(54,232)	(352,086)	(83,107)	(489,425)	-
At fair value 30 June 2019	11,722,463	4,225,428	1,294,188	17,242,079	32,666
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2019	(7,755,852)	(2,132,880)	(1,091,925)	(10,980,657)	-
	3,966,611	2,092,548	202,263	6,261,422	32,666

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

(c) Infrastructure												
	Sealed roads	Unsealed roads	Footpaths and cyceways	Drainage	Recreational, leisure and community	Waste Management	Parks open spaces and streetscapes	Other Infrastructure	Total Infrastructure	Work In Progress		
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$		
At fair value 1 July 2018	246,270,149	100,725,235	25,503,959	56,383,850	12,582,135	6,097,092	9,913,388	9,547,036	467,002,844	832,970		
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2018	(73,608,237)	(7,942,044)	(11,022,094)	(22,609,454)	(6,275,919)	(5,216,778)	(6,482,721)	(2,951,208)	(136,108,455)	-		
	172,661,912	92,783,191	14,481,865	33,774,396	6,286,216	880,314	3,430,667	6,595,828	330,894,389	832,970		
Movements in fair value												
Additions	4,757,118	1,016,903	285,608	279,883	238,224	-	174,951	2,103,961	8,836,648	552,132		
Revaluation	7,798,528	-	4,777,307	-	-	-	-	-	12,575,835	-		
Disposal	(784,538)	-	(108,730)	(32,770)	-	-	-	(104,646)	(1,030,684)	-		
Transfers	(3,274,981)	-	-	3,182,636	28,267	-	8,287	353,661	297,870	(297,870)		
	8,496,127	1,016,903	4,934,185	3,429,749	266,491	-	183,238	2,352,976	20,679,669	254,262		
Movements in accumulated depreciation												
Depreciation and amortisation	(2,709,566)	(1,312,144)	(299,660)	(825,547)	(294,121)	(230,584)	(328,204)	(205,167)	(6,204,993)	-		
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	406,225	-	57,694	5,795	-	-	-	75,550	545,264	-		
Revaluation	(7,303,355)	-	1,712,345	-	-	-	-	-	(5,591,010)	-		
Transfers	1,616,366	-	-	(1,492,678)	-	-	-	(123,688)	-	-		
	(7,990,330)	(1,312,144)	1,470,379	(2,312,430)	(294,121)	(230,584)	(328,204)	(253,305)	(11,250,739)	-		
At fair value 30 June 2019	254,766,276	101,742,138	30,438,144	59,813,599	12,828,626	6,097,092	10,096,626	11,900,012	487,682,513	1,087,232		
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2019	(81,598,567)	(9,254,188)	(9,551,715)	(24,921,884)	(6,570,040)	(5,447,362)	(6,810,925)	(3,204,513)	(147,359,194)	-		
	173,167,709	92,487,950	20,886,429	34,891,715	6,258,586	649,730	3,285,701	8,695,499	340,323,319	1,087,232		

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

(d) Culture and heritage assets

	Artworks	Library Collection	Pioneer Settlement vehicles & vessels	Pioneer Settlement site exhibits	Pioneer Settlement buildings	Total culture and heritage assets
At fair value 1 July 2018	1,723,150	1,894,597	4,722,468	2,082,360	7,123,449	17,546,024
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2018	-	(1,279,083)	(101,260)	(48,594)	(6,387,027)	(7,815,964)
	1,723,150	615,514	4,621,208	2,033,766	736,422	9,730,060
Movements in fair value						
Additions	2,000	129,721	95,648	-	63,188	290,557
Contributions	-	2,955	-	-	-	2,955
Disposal	-	(58,573)	-	-	-	(58,573)
	2,000	74,103	95,648	-	63,188	234,939
Movements in accumulated depreciation						
Depreciation and amortisation	(17,231)	(121,686)	(47,259)	(20,829)	(24,185)	(231,190)
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	-	58,573	-	-	-	58,573
	(17,231)	(63,113)	(47,259)	(20,829)	(24,185)	(172,617)
At fair value 30 June 2019	1,725,150	1,968,700	4,818,116	2,082,360	7,186,637	17,780,963
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2019	(17,231)	(1,342,196)	(148,519)	(69,423)	(6,411,212)	(7,988,581)
	1,707,919	626,504	4,669,597	2,012,937	775,425	9,792,382

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

Acquisition

The purchase method of accounting is used for all acquisitions of assets, being the fair value of assets provided as consideration at the date of acquisition plus any incidental costs attributable to the acquisition. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset (or paid to transfer a liability) in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.

Where assets are constructed by Council, cost includes all materials used in construction, direct labour, borrowing costs incurred during construction, and an appropriate share of directly attributable variable and fixed overheads.

In accordance with Council's policy, the threshold limits have applied when recognising assets within an applicable asset class and unless otherwise stated are consistent with the prior year.

<i>Asset recognition thresholds and depreciation periods</i>	Depreciation Period	Threshold Limit \$
Land & land improvements		
land	-	1
land under roads	-	1
Buildings		
buildings	30 to 100 years	10,000
building improvements	30 to 100 years	10,000
leasehold improvements	5 to 15 years	10,000
Plant and equipment		
plant machinery and equipment		
large plant	10 years	2,500
small plant	2 to 4 years	2,500
fixtures, fittings and furniture	5 years	2,500
computers and telecommunications	3 to 5 years	1,500
Infrastructure		
sealed road formation	-	10,000
sealed road pavements	60 years	10,000
sealed road seals	15 to 20 years	10,000
road ancillary assets	20 to 25 years	10,000
unsealed road natural surface	-	10,000
unsealed road gravel surface	30 years	10,000
kerb and channel	25 to 50 years	10,000
footpaths and cycleways	20 to 50 years	10,000
drainage	20 to 80 years	10,000
recreation, leisure and community facilities	10 to 60 years	10,000
waste management	10 years	10,000
parks, open space and streetscapes	10 to 100 years	10,000
other infrastructure	10 to 100 years	10,000
Cultural and heritage		
artworks	100 years	1
library books	5 to 100 years	1
Pioneer Settlement		
- vehicles and vessels	100 years	5,000
- site exhibits	100 years	5,000
- buildings	100 years	10,000

Land under roads

Council recognises land under roads it controls at fair value.

Notes to the Financial Report For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

Depreciation and amortisation

Buildings, land improvements, plant and equipment, infrastructure, and other assets having limited useful lives are systematically depreciated over their useful lives to the Council in a manner which reflects consumption of the service potential embodied in those assets. Estimates of remaining useful lives and residual values are made on a regular basis with major asset classes reassessed annually. Depreciation rates and methods are reviewed annually.

Where assets have separate identifiable components that are subject to regular replacement, these components are assigned distinct useful lives and residual values and a separate depreciation rate is determined for each component.

Road earthworks are not depreciated on the basis that they are assessed as not having a limited useful life.

Straight line depreciation is charged based on the residual useful life as determined each year.

Depreciation periods used are listed above and are consistent with the prior year unless otherwise stated.

Finance leases

Leases of assets where substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of the asset are transferred to the Council are classified as finance leases. Finance leases are capitalised, recording an asset and a liability at the lower of the fair value of the asset and the present value of the minimum lease payments, including any guaranteed residual value. Lease payments are allocated between the reduction of the lease liability and the interest expense. Leased assets are depreciated on a straight line basis over their estimated useful lives to the Council where it is likely that the Council will obtain ownership of the asset or over the term of the lease, whichever is the shorter. Leased assets are currently being amortised over a 5 year period.

Repairs and maintenance

Where the repair relates to the replacement of a component of an asset and the cost exceeds the capitalisation threshold, the cost is capitalised and depreciated. The carrying value of the replaced asset is expensed.

Leasehold improvements

Leasehold improvements are recognised at cost and are amortised over the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful life of the improvement, whichever is the shorter. At balance date, leasehold improvements are amortised over a 5 to 15 year period.

Valuation of land and buildings

Valuation of land and buildings were undertaken by a qualified independent valuer Benjamin Sawyer AAPI Reg. 63163. The valuation of land and buildings is at fair value, being market value based on highest and best use permitted by relevant land planning provisions. Where land use is restricted through existing planning provisions the valuation is reduced to reflect this limitation. This adjustment is an unobservable input in the valuation. The adjustment has no impact on the comprehensive income statement.

Specialised land is valued at fair value using site values adjusted for englobo (undeveloped and/or unserviced) characteristics, access rights and private interests of other parties and entitlements of infrastructure assets and services. This adjustment is an unobservable input in the valuation. The adjustment has no impact on the comprehensive income statement.

Any significant movements in the unobservable inputs for land and land under roads will have a significant impact on the fair value of these assets.

The date of the current valuation is detailed in the following table.

Details of the Council's land and buildings and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 30 June 2019 are as follows:

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Date of Valuation
Land	-	6,337,417	-	June 2018
Land - specialised	-	-	58,587,298	June 2018
Buildings	-	4,087,619	-	June 2018
Buildings - specialised	-	-	32,070,129	June 2018
Total	-	10,425,036	90,657,427	

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

Valuation of infrastructure

Valuation of infrastructure assets has been determined by applying the most recent unit rates as calculated from a sample of internal and external projects.

The date of the current valuation is detailed in the following table.

The valuation is at fair value based on replacement cost less accumulated depreciation as at the date of valuation.

Details of the Council's infrastructure and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 30 June 2019 are as follows:

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Date of Valuation
Sealed roads	-	-	173,167,709	June 2019
Unsealed roads	-	-	92,487,950	June 2017
Footpaths and cycleways	-	-	20,886,429	June 2019
Drainage	-	-	34,891,715	June 2015
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	-	-	6,258,586	June 2015
Waste management	-	-	649,730	June 2015
Parks, open space and streetscapes	-	-	3,285,701	June 2015
Other infrastructure	-	-	8,695,499	June 2015
Total	-	-	340,323,319	

Valuation of cultural and heritage assets

Artworks

Valuation of artwork assets has been determined in accordance with an independent valuation undertaken by Warren Joel Auction and Valuation Services. The effective date of the valuation was 30 June 2018.

Valuation of the assets was determined by analysing comparable sales of an artist's work, knowledge of the collections history and condition of the collection.

Pioneer Settlement

Valuation of Pioneer Settlement vehicles and vessels and site exhibit assets was conducted by qualified independent valuer Mr David Freeman, member of Auctioneers and Valuers Association of Australia, and Chief Executive Officer of Amanda Adams Auctions, Bulleen, Victoria. The valuation is based on average market realisation prices that should be obtained if the items were sold via private treaty or auction sales. The effective date of the valuation is 30 June 2016.

Valuation of Pioneer Settlement buildings were undertaken by qualified independent valuer, Benjamin Sawyer AAPI Reg. 63163. The valuation is at fair value based on replacement cost less accumulated depreciation as at the date of valuation.

Details of the Council's cultural and heritage assets and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 30 June 2018 are as follows:

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Date of Valuation
Artworks	-	-	1,707,919	April 2018
Pioneer Settlement vehicles and vessels	-	-	4,669,597	June 2016
Pioneer Settlement site exhibits	-	-	2,012,937	June 2016
Pioneer Settlement buildings	-	-	775,425	June 2018
Total	-	-	9,165,878	

Description of significant unobservable inputs into level 3 valuations

Specialised land and land under roads is valued using a market based direct comparison technique. Significant unobservable inputs include the extent and impact of restriction of use and the market cost of land per square metre. The extent and impact of restrictions on use varies and results in a reduction to surrounding land values between 25% and 75% for specialised land and between 85% and 95% for land under roads. The market value of land varies significantly depending on the location of the land and the current market conditions. Currently land values range between \$0.10 and \$450 per square metre.

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

Specialised buildings are valued using a depreciated replacement cost technique. Significant unobservable inputs include the current replacement cost and remaining useful lives of buildings. Current replacement cost is calculated on a square metre basis. The remaining useful lives of buildings are determined on the basis of the current condition of buildings and vary from 10 years to 100 years. Replacement cost is sensitive to changes in market conditions, with any increase or decrease in cost flowing through to the valuation. Useful lives of buildings are sensitive to changes in expectations or requirements that could either shorten or extend their useful lives.

Infrastructure assets are valued based on the depreciated replacement cost. Significant unobservable inputs include the current replacement cost and remaining useful lives of infrastructure. The remaining useful lives of infrastructure assets are determined on the basis of the current condition of the asset and vary from 0 years to 100 years. Replacement cost is sensitive to changes in market conditions, with any increase or decrease in cost flowing through to the valuation. Useful lives of infrastructure are sensitive to changes in use, expectations or requirements that could either shorten or extend the useful lives of infrastructure assets.

Artwork assets are valued based on the market based direct comparison approach. Significant unobservable inputs include the rarity of the item, historical significance and the history of the artist. If there are events that determine certain pieces of the collection to be of historical significance, if the artist has works that have increased in popularity or the item is considered to be rare and in demand, this would result in a higher fair value.

Pioneer Settlement vehicles and vessels and site exhibit assets are valued based on the market based direct comparison approach. Significant unobservable inputs include the rarity of the item and historical significance. If there are events that determine certain pieces of the collection to be of historical significance or the item is considered to be rare and in demand, this would result in a higher fair value.

Pioneer Settlement buildings are valued using a depreciated replacement cost technique. Significant unobservable inputs include the current replacement cost and remaining useful lives of buildings. Current replacement cost is calculated on a square metre basis. The remaining useful lives of buildings are determined on the basis of the current condition of buildings and vary from 1 year to 54 years. Replacement cost is sensitive to changes in market conditions, with any increase or decrease in cost flowing through to the valuation. Useful lives of buildings are sensitive to changes in expectations or requirements that could either shorten or extend their useful lives.

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
Reconciliation of specialised land		
Land under roads	37,473,698	37,454,203
Crown land	7,826,100	7,826,100
Parks, reserves and land for community use	13,202,600	13,287,501
Total specialised land	58,502,398	58,567,804

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

Note 7 People and relationships**7.1 Council and key management remuneration****(a) Related Parties***Parent entity*

Swan Hill Rural City Council is the parent entity.

Subsidiaries and Associates

Council has no interests in subsidiaries and associates.

(b) Key Management Personnel

Details of persons holding the position of Councillor or other members of key management personnel at any time during the year are:

Councillors	Mayor Ann Young	15/11/2016 to 30/06/2019
	Cr Les McPhee	08/12/2008 to 30/06/2019
	Cr John Katis	20/03/1997 to 14/01/2019
	Cr Gary Norton	18/03/2003 to 31/03/2019
	Cr Chris Jeffery	15/11/2016 to 30/06/2019
	Cr Lea Johnson	15/11/2016 to 30/06/2019
	Cr Bill Moar	15/11/2016 to 30/06/2019
	Cr Jade Benham	19/03/2019 to 30/06/2019
	Cr Nicole McKay	16/04/2019 to 30/06/2019
Chief Executive Officer	Mr John McLinden	21/03/2016 to 30/06/2019
Directors	Mr David Lenton	21/12/1992 to 30/06/2019
	Mr Bruce Myers	28/02/1994 to 30/06/2019
	Ms Heather Green	03/07/2017 to 30/06/2019
	Ms Svetla Petkova	11/12/2017 to 30/06/2019

	2019	2018
	No.	No.
Total Number of Councillors	9	7
Total of Chief Executive Officer and other Key Management Personnel	5	6
Total Number of Key Management Personnel	<u>14</u>	<u>13</u>

(c) Remuneration of Key Management Personnel

Total remuneration of key management personnel was as follows:

Short-term benefits	1,158,541	1,169,277
Post-employment benefits	167,369	85,124
Other long-term benefits	35,697	21,140
Termination benefits	-	27,638
Total	<u>1,361,607</u>	<u>1,303,178</u>

The numbers of key management personnel whose total remuneration from Council and any related entities, fall within the following bands:

\$0 - \$9,999	2	-
\$10,000 - \$19,999	1	-
\$20,000 - \$29,999	4	5
\$30,000 - \$39,999	-	1
\$40,000 - \$49,999	1	-
\$50,000 - \$59,999	1	-
\$60,000 - \$69,999	-	1
\$70,000 - \$79,999	-	1
\$90,000 - \$99,999	-	1
\$180,000 - \$189,999	1	1
\$200,000 - \$209,999	1	-
\$210,000 - \$219,999	1	1
\$220,000 - \$229,999	-	1
\$230,000 - \$239,999	1	-
\$270,000 - \$279,999	-	1
\$280,000 - \$289,999	1	-
	<u>14</u>	<u>13</u>

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

(d) Senior Officer Remuneration

A Senior Officer is an officer of Council, other than Key Management Personnel, who:

- a) has management responsibilities and reports directly to the Chief Executive; or
- b) whose total annual remuneration exceeds \$148,000

The number of Senior Officers are shown below in their relevant income bands:

Income Range:	2019 No.	2018 No.
\$145,000 - \$149,999	1	1
\$150,000 - \$159,999	5	4
\$160,000 - \$169,999	3	2
\$170,000 - \$179,999	-	1
	9	8

Total remuneration for the reporting year for Senior Officers included above, amounted to	1,422,183	1,261,326
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7.2 Related party disclosure

(a) Transactions with related parties

There were no transactions with related parties during the 2018/19 year.

\$	\$
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(b) Outstanding balances with related parties

There were no outstanding balances relating to transactions with related parties at 30 June 2019.

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(c) Loans to/from related parties

No loans have been made, guaranteed or secured by Council to a related party during the reporting year.

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(d) Commitments to/from related parties

There are no commitments in existence at balance date that have been made, guaranteed or secured by Council to a related party.

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**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

Note 8 Managing uncertainties**8.1 Contingent assets and liabilities****(a) Contingent assets**

Council has no contingent assets at balance date (2018, \$0).

Operating lease receivables

The Council has entered into commercial property leases on its assets, consisting of surplus freehold office complexes, aerodrome facilities and caravan parks. These properties held under operating leases have remaining non-cancellable lease terms of between 1 and 15 years.

Future minimum rentals receivable under non-cancellable operating leases are as follows:

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
Not later than one year	402,344	361,136
Later than one year and not later than five years	1,315,336	1,069,624
Later than five years	885,562	824,767
	<u>2,603,242</u>	<u>2,255,527</u>

(b) Contingent liabilities**Superannuation**

Council has obligations under a defined benefit superannuation scheme that may result in the need to make additional contributions to the scheme, matters relating to this potential obligation are outlined below. As a result of the volatility in financial markets the likelihood of making such contributions in future periods exists.

Future superannuation contributions

In addition to the disclosed contributions, Swan Hill Rural City Council has paid unfunded liability payments to Vision Super totalling \$0 (2017/18 \$0). There were no contributions outstanding and no loans issued from or to the above schemes as at 30 June 2019. The expected contributions to be paid to the Defined Benefit category of Vision Super for the year ending 30 June 2020 are \$174,624.

Contingent assets and contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet, but are disclosed and if quantifiable, are measured at nominal value. Contingent assets and liabilities are presented inclusive of GST receivable or payable, respectively.

Liability Mutual Insurance (where applicable)

Council is a participant of the MAV Liability Mutual Insurance (LMI) Scheme. The LMI scheme provides public liability and professional indemnity insurance cover. The LMI scheme states that each participant will remain liable to make further contributions to the scheme in respect of any insurance year in which it was a participant to the extent of its participant's share of any shortfall in the provision set aside in respect of that insurance year, and such liability will continue whether or not the participant remains a participant in future insurance years.

Swan Hill Drag Strip

Council is aware that part of the surface of the Drag Racing Strip at Chisholm Reserve is becoming uneven. The extent, cause and effect of this unevenness is still being assessed. A full assessment is being arranged but the results are not yet available. Until the assessment is completed it is not possible to reliably estimate what, if any, costs will be incurred by Council to manage or correct the uneven surface. As this matter is yet to be finalised and the financial outcomes are unable to be reliably measured, no allowance for this contingency has been made in the financial report.

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

(c) Guarantees for loans to other entities

Council is not the guarantor for any loans.

Financial guarantee contracts are not recognised as a liability in the balance sheet unless the lender has exercised their right to call on the guarantee or Council has other reasons to believe that it is probable that the right will be exercised.

8.2 Change in accounting standards

The following new AAS's have been issued that are not mandatory for the 30 June 2019 reporting period. Council has assessed these pending standards and has identified the following potential impacts will flow from the application of these standards in future reporting periods.

Revenue from contracts with customers (AASB 15) (applies 2019/20 for LG sector)

The standard shifts the focus from the transaction-level to a contract-based approach. Recognition is determined based on what the customer expects to be entitled to (rights and obligations), while measurement encompasses estimation by the entity of the amount expected to be entitled for performing under the contract. The full impact of this standard is not known however it is most likely to impact where contracts extend over time, where there are rights and obligations that may vary the timing or amount of the consideration, or where there are multiple performance elements. This has the potential to impact on the recognition of certain grant income.

Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Deferral of AASB 15 for Not-for-Profit Entities (AASB 2016-7) (applies 2019/20)

This Standard defers the mandatory effective date of AASB 15 for not-for-profit entities from 1 January 2018 to 1 January 2019.

Leases (AASB 16) (applies 2019/20)

The classification of leases as either finance leases or operating leases is eliminated for lessees. Leases will be recognised in the Balance Sheet by capitalising the present value of the minimum lease payments and showing a 'right-of-use' asset, while future lease payments will be recognised as a financial liability. The nature of the expense recognised in the profit or loss will change. Rather than being shown as rent, or as leasing costs, it will be recognised as depreciation on the 'right-of-use' asset, and an interest charge on the lease liability. The interest charge will be calculated using the effective interest method, which will result in a gradual reduction of interest expense over the lease term.

Council has elected to adopt the modified retrospective approach to the transition to the new lease standard. This will mean that only existing operating leases for non low value assets, with remaining terms greater than 12 months, will be recognised on transition (1 July 2019). Based on our current lease commitments and an assumption of a continuation of the current leasing arrangements Council expects that the transition to the new standard will see the initial recognition of \$2,679,071 in lease related assets and an equivalent liability.

Income of Not-for-Profit Entities (AASB 1058) (applies 2019/20)

This standard is expected to apply to certain transactions currently accounted for under *AASB 1004 Contributions* and establishes revenue recognition principles for transactions where the consideration to acquire an asset is significantly less than fair value to enable a not-for-profit entity to further its objectives.

Notes to the Financial Report For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

8.3 Financial instruments

(a) Objectives and policies

The Council's principal financial instruments comprise cash assets, term deposits, receivables (excluding statutory receivables), payables (excluding statutory payables) and bank borrowings. Details of the significant accounting policies and methods adopted, including the criteria for recognition, the basis of measurement and the basis on which income and expenses are recognised, in respect of each class of financial asset, financial liability and equity instrument is disclosed in the notes of the financial statements. Risk management is carried out by senior management under policies approved by the Council. These policies include identification and analysis of the risk exposure to Council and appropriate procedures, controls and risk minimisation.

(b) Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of council financial instruments will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. The Council's exposure to market risk is primarily through interest rate risk with only insignificant exposure to other price risks and no exposure to foreign currency risk.

Interest rate risk

Interest rate risk refers to the risk that the value of a financial instrument or cash flows associated with the instrument will fluctuate due to changes in market interest rates. Council's interest rate liability risk arises primarily from long term loans and borrowings at fixed rates which exposes council to fair value interest rate risk / Council does not hold any interest bearing financial instruments that are measured at fair value, and therefore has no exposure to fair value interest rate risk. Cash flow interest rate risk is the risk that the future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. Council has minimal exposure to cash flow interest rate risk through its cash and deposits that are at floating rates.

Investment of surplus funds is made with approved financial institutions under the *Local Government Act 1989*. Council manages interest rate risk by adopting an investment policy that ensures:

- diversification of investment product;
- monitoring of return on investment; and
- benchmarking of returns and comparison with budget.

There has been no significant change in the Council's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing interest rate risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period.

Interest rate movements have not been sufficiently significant during the year to have an impact on the Council's year end result.

(c) Credit risk

Credit risk is the risk that a contracting entity will not complete its obligations under a financial instrument and cause Council to make a financial loss. Council have exposure to credit risk on some financial assets included in the balance sheet. Particularly significant areas of credit risk exist in relation to outstanding fees and fines as well as loans and receivables from sporting clubs and associations. To help manage this risk:

- Council have a policy for establishing credit limits for the entities council deal with;
 - Council may require collateral where appropriate; and
 - Council only invest surplus funds with financial institutions which have a recognised credit rating specified in Council's investment policy.
- Receivables consist of a large number of customers, spread across the ratepayer, business and government sectors. Credit risk associated with the council's financial assets is minimal because the main debtor is secured by a charge over the rateable property.

There are no material financial assets which are individually determined to be impaired.

Council may also be subject to credit risk for transactions which are not included in the Balance Sheet, such as when council provide a guarantee for another party. Details of our contingent liabilities are disclosed in Note 8.1(b).

The maximum exposure to credit risk at the reporting date to recognised financial assets is the carrying amount, net of any provisions for impairment of those assets, as disclosed in the balance sheet and notes to the financial statements. Council does not hold any collateral.

Notes to the Financial Report For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

(d) Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk includes the risk that, as a result of Council's operational liquidity requirements it will not have sufficient funds to settle a transaction when required or will be forced to sell a financial asset at below value or may be unable to settle or recover a financial asset.

To help reduce these risks Council:

- have a liquidity policy which targets a minimum and average level of cash and cash equivalents to be maintained;
- have readily accessible standby facilities and other funding arrangements in place;
- have a liquidity portfolio structure that requires surplus funds to be invested within various bands of liquid instruments;
- monitor budget to actual performance on a regular basis; and
- set limits on borrowings relating to the percentage of loans to rate revenue and percentage of loan principal repayments to rate revenue.

The Council's maximum exposure to liquidity risk is the carrying amounts of financial liabilities as disclosed on the face of the balance sheet and the amounts related to financial guarantees disclosed in Note 8.1(c), and is deemed insignificant based on prior periods' data and current assessment of risk.

There has been no significant change in Council's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing liquidity risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period.

With the exception of borrowings, all financial liabilities are expected to be settled within normal terms of trade. Details of the maturity profile for borrowings are disclosed at Note 5.4.

Unless otherwise stated, the carrying amounts of financial instruments reflect their fair value.

(e) Sensitivity disclosure analysis

Taking into account past performance, future expectations, economic forecasts, and management's knowledge and experience of the financial markets, Council believes the following movements are 'reasonably possible' over the next 12 months:

- A parallel shift of + 1.0% and -0.50% in market interest rates (AUD) from year-end rates of 1.0%.

These movements will not have a material impact on the valuation of Council's financial assets and liabilities, nor will they have a material impact on the results of Council's operations.

8.4 Fair value measurement

Fair value hierarchy

Council's financial assets and liabilities are not valued in accordance with the fair value hierarchy, Council's financial assets and liabilities are measured at amortised cost.

Council measures certain assets and liabilities at fair value where required or permitted by Australian Accounting Standards. AASB 13 *Fair value measurement*, aims to improve consistency and reduce complexity by providing a definition of fair value and a single source of fair value measurement and disclosure requirements for use across Australian Accounting Standards.

AASB 13 defines fair value as the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. Fair value under AASB 13 is an exit price regardless of whether that price is directly observable or estimated using another valuation technique.

All assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the financial statements are categorised within a fair value hierarchy, described as follows, based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole:

Level 1 — Quoted (unadjusted) market prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities

Level 2 — Valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is directly or indirectly

Level 3 — Valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is unobservable.

For the purpose of fair value disclosures, Council has determined classes of assets and liabilities on the basis of the nature, characteristics and risks of the asset or liability and the level of the fair value hierarchy as explained above.

In addition, Council determines whether transfers have occurred between levels in the hierarchy by re-assessing categorisation (based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole) at the end of each reporting period.

Revaluation

Subsequent to the initial recognition of assets, non-current physical assets, other than plant and equipment, are measured at their fair value, being the price that would be received to sell an asset (or paid to transfer a liability) in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. At balance date, the Council reviewed the carrying value of the individual classes of assets measured at fair value to ensure that each asset materially approximated its fair value. Where the carrying value materially differed from the fair value at balance date, the class of asset was revalued.

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

Fair value valuations are determined in accordance with a valuation hierarchy. Changes to the valuation hierarchy will only occur if an external change in the restrictions or limitations of use of an asset result in changes to the permissible or practical highest and best use of the asset. In addition, Council undertakes a formal revaluation of land, buildings, and infrastructure assets on a regular basis ranging from 2 to 5 years. The valuation is performed either by experienced council officers or independent experts.

Where the assets are revalued, the revaluation increments are credited directly to the asset revaluation reserve except to the extent that an increment reverses a prior year decrement for that class of asset that had been recognised as an expense in which case the increment is recognised as revenue up to the amount of the expense. Revaluation decrements are recognised as an expense except where prior increments are included in the asset revaluation reserve for that class of asset in which case the decrement is taken to the reserve to the extent of the remaining increments. Within the same class of assets, revaluation increments and decrements within the year are offset.

Impairment of assets

At each reporting date, the Council reviews the carrying value of its assets to determine whether there is any indication that these assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs of disposal and value in use, is compared to the assets carrying value. Any excess of the assets carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the comprehensive income statement, unless the asset is carried at the revalued amount in which case, the impairment loss is recognised directly against the revaluation surplus in respect of the same class of asset to the extent that the impairment loss does not exceed the amount in the revaluation surplus for that same class of asset.

8.5 Events occurring after balance date

No matters have occurred after balance date that require disclosure in the financial report.

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

Note 9 Other matters

9.1 Reserves	Balance at beginning of reporting period	Increment / (decrement)	Balance at end of reporting period
(a) Asset revaluation reserves	\$	\$	\$
2019			
Property			
Land	19,382,229	-	19,382,229
Buildings	15,889,738	-	15,889,738
	<u>35,271,967</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>35,271,967</u>
Infrastructure			
Sealed roads	83,065,693	495,173	83,560,866
Unsealed roads	15,975,607	-	15,975,607
Footpaths and cycleways	8,792,891	6,489,652	15,282,543
Drainage	15,647,453	-	15,647,453
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	1,912,153	-	1,912,153
Other infrastructure	1,923,169	-	1,923,169
	<u>127,316,966</u>	<u>6,984,825</u>	<u>134,301,791</u>
Culture and heritage assets			
Artworks	1,634,596	-	1,634,596
Pioneer Settlement	5,336,281	-	5,336,281
	<u>6,970,877</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,970,877</u>
Water rights	1,200,444	921,600	2,122,044
Total asset revaluation reserves	<u>170,760,254</u>	<u>7,906,425</u>	<u>178,666,679</u>
2018			
Property			
Land	14,372,920	5,009,309	19,382,229
Buildings	14,701,519	1,188,219	15,889,738
	<u>29,074,439</u>	<u>6,197,528</u>	<u>35,271,967</u>
Infrastructure			
Sealed roads	83,065,693	-	83,065,693
Unsealed roads	15,975,607	-	15,975,607
Footpaths and cycleways	8,792,891	-	8,792,891
Drainage	15,647,453	-	15,647,453
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	1,912,153	-	1,912,153
Other infrastructure	1,923,169	-	1,923,169
	<u>127,316,966</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>127,316,966</u>
Culture and heritage assets			
Artworks	1,477,603	156,993	1,634,596
Pioneer Settlement	5,660,682	(324,401)	5,336,281
	<u>7,138,285</u>	<u>(167,408)</u>	<u>6,970,877</u>
Water rights	842,044	358,400	1,200,444
Total asset revaluation reserves	<u>164,371,734</u>	<u>6,388,520</u>	<u>170,760,254</u>

The asset revaluation reserve is used to record the increased (net) value of Council's assets over time.

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

	2019	2018
9.2 Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities to surplus/(deficit)	\$	\$
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	7,395,186	5,777,678
Depreciation/amortisation	8,534,709	8,244,117
Profit/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(1,004,644)	(245,312)
Assets written off / asset adjustments	513,562	1,050,303
Contributions - Non-monetary assets	(475,683)	(327,273)
Reallocation of borrowing costs to financing activities	332,455	357,303
Other	19,345	(52,793)
<i>Change in assets and liabilities:</i>		
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	(970,057)	372,795
(Increase)/decrease in other assets	313,248	(390,217)
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	1,048,037	(296,135)
(Increase)/decrease in inventories	(67,177)	23,313
Increase/(decrease) in provisions	262,524	(295,333)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	15,901,505	14,218,446

9.3 Superannuation

Council makes all of its employer superannuation contributions in respect of its employees to the Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (the Fund). This Fund has three categories of membership, accumulation and defined benefit, each of which is funded differently. A third category being a clearing house for staff contributing to other funds and/or self managed Super Funds.

Accumulation

The Fund's accumulation categories receive both employer and employee contributions on a progressive basis. Employer contributions are normally based on a fixed percentage of employee earnings (for the year ended 30 June 2019, this was 9.5% as required under Superannuation Guarantee legislation. The 2018 Staff Enterprise Bargaining Agreement enables staff to elect to have an additional 0.5% in lieu of cash paid into their superannuation. This option commenced on 7 July 2018 and is applicable to the majority of staff.

Defined Benefit

Council does not use defined benefit accounting for its defined benefit obligations under the Fund's Defined Benefit category. This is because the Fund's Defined Benefit category is a pooled multi-employer sponsored plan. Council makes employer contributions to the Defined Benefit category of the Fund at rates determined by the Trustee on the advice of the Fund Actuary. For the year ended 30 June 2019, this rate was 9.5% of members' salaries (9.5% in 2017/2018). Council also matches an additional benefits contract of 1.5% for eight of its eighteen staff who commenced prior to 1995 (1.5% in 2017/18).

As at 30 June 2018, an interim actuarial investigation was held as the Fund provides lifetime pensions in the Defined Benefit category. The vested benefit index (VBI) of the Defined Benefit category of which Council is a contributing employer was 106.0%. The financial assumptions used to calculate the VBI were:

Net investment returns 6.0% pa
Salary information 3.5% pa
Price inflation (CPI) 2.0% pa.

Vision Super has advised that the estimated VBI at 30 June 2019 was 107.1%.

The VBI is to be used as the primary funding indicator. Because the VBI was above 100%, the 30 June 2018 interim actuarial investigation determined the Defined Benefit category was in a satisfactory financial position and that no change was necessary to the Defined Benefit category's funding arrangements from prior years.

**Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

Defined benefit 2018 interim actuarial investigation surplus amounts

An actuarial investigation is conducted annually for the Defined Benefit category of which Council is a contributing employer. Generally, a full actuarial investigation conducted every three years and interim actuarial investigations are conducted for each intervening year. An interim investigation was conducted as at 30 June 2018 and a full actuarial investigation was conducted as at 30 June 2017.

	2018	2017
	\$m	\$m
A VBI surplus	131.9	69.8
A total service liability surplus	218.3	193.5
A discounted accrued benefits surplus	249.1	228.8

The VBI surplus means that the market value of the fund's assets supporting the defined benefit obligations exceed the vested benefits that the defined benefit members would have been entitled to if they had all exited on 30 June 2018.

The total service liability surplus means that the current value of the assets in the Fund's Defined Benefit category plus expected future contributions exceeds the value of expected future benefits and expenses.

The discounted accrued benefit surplus means that the current value of the assets in the Fund's Defined Benefit category exceeds the value of benefits payable in the future but accrued in respect of service to the investigation date.

Council was notified of the 30 June 2019 VBI during August 2019.

An interim actuarial investigation will be conducted for the Fund's position as at 30 June 2019. It is anticipated that this actuarial investigation will be completed by October 2019.

B.19.115 RONALD STREET ROBINVALE ROAD RESERVE LAND SUB-DIVISION, DEVELOPMENT AND SALE PROPOSAL

Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services
File Number: AST-RD-31603-02
Attachments: 1 Ronald Street Subdivision Plan

Declarations of Interest:

David Lenton - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

Given the shortage of sub-divided residential land currently on the market in Robinvale this report recommends Council sub-divide, develop and sell the unused road reserve along Ronald Street, Robinvale.

Discussion

In late 1997 Council declared the unused Road Reserve which formed part of Ronald Street, Robinvale as surplus to Council's needs and authorized its sale. The sale process stalled because, being part of the road reserve, that part of road had to be formally discontinued and closed before title could be obtained and the sale process commence.

In December 2004 Council resolved to begin a process to discontinue the surplus section of the road reserve in accordance with the new Road Management Act 2004. This road discontinuation was completed however the Titles Office did not issue a title for the land at that time as the Road Management Act was a new piece of legislation and their processes did not yet allow for titles to be created from the operation of the Road Management Act. Therefore no separate title for the surplus road reserve could be obtained and the disposal of the land was not pursued.

Council officers have subsequently continued to attempt to gain separate title to the land. These efforts were finally realized on 16 July 2019 when title was issued. This now enables Council to consider the development and/or sale of the land.

Over the last few years the issue of accommodation shortages around the Robinvale area has received a high level of attention resulting in a Housing Summit, a Housing Strategy and a district "census" to look at innovative ways to address the current and emerging housing needs including that of the working population of the Robinvale district.

There are also ongoing discussions with the large Horticultural businesses and potential worker accommodation providers. The accommodation needs are both for unskilled workers, dormitory style accommodation and more conventional housing for the skilled and managerial work force. The continued expansion of the

horticultural industry near Robinvale will create a demand for additional accommodation well into the future.

Given the amount of attention the accommodation shortage in Robinvale has been receiving, it is recommended that Council re-start the process to sub-divide, develop and sell the unused section of the Ronald Street Road Reserve. This land would be sub-divided into 8 lots that would suit the development of 2-3 bedroom housing. It is proposed that following the sub-division Council would tender the design and construction of the houses on a staged basis. The houses would then be sold with the proceeds helping to fund the construction of the next stage. It is hoped that the tender for housing construction may encourage the permanent expansion of an existing building firm or bring a new builder to the town leading to an increase in the supply of building services available that would progress other developments within Robinvale.

A concept plan and preliminary costings for a sub-division on the surplus road reserve have been prepared (attached plan). The cost estimates suggest that this sub-division alone is unlikely to make a profit. If Council was to proceed just with the sub-division it would be on the basis of helping to address a social and economic need, not on the basis of a positive financial return. Given that the financial return is likely to be negative or marginally positive at best it is not considered viable to sell the land un-subdivided to a private developer. Developing housing on the land should help to improve the financial return however any profit would be small.

Officers consider the estimated net cost/low profit to be far outweighed by the social and economic benefits of the development. The development will demonstrate Councils commitment to help address the housing shortage in Robinvale. Once sold the Lots would also become rateable. The estimated Rates, once the land is built on, are \$8,000 per year in total. Any loss on the development is therefore likely to be the equivalent of a few years of additional Rate revenue generated from the development.

Funding for this proposal would come from the Land Acquisition and Development Reserve (including the proceeds from the sale of Bromley Road) and the Future Fund Reserve (if necessary). The proceeds from the sale of the properties will be used to replenish these Reserves as sales occur.

There will be several steps to follow some of which may require a strong resolve as there may be some objections to the sub-division or sale of the land.

The steps in the process will be:-

1. Council will have to advertise the intention to sell the land in a sub-divided and developed condition.
2. Receive, hear and consider Submissions to the proposed sale.
3. Determine whether or not to proceed with the sale.
4. Prepare a formal sub-division proposal for consideration by Council Statutory Planning area. This will require the preparation of preliminary engineering drawings. As part of this process adjoining land owners will have their right to

- object to the proposal. Objectors will have the right to appeal any Council decision to allow the sub-division to VCAT.
5. Prepare detailed engineering drawings for the sub-division and call for tenders for the construction work.
 6. Award the tender for the sub-division and complete the work. Obtain separate titles for each Lot.
 7. Prepare detailed tender specification for the design and construction of houses on the land.
 8. Award the tender for the house design and construction, on a staged basis. Complete each stage.
 9. Market and sell the properties.

This process could take between 18 and 30 months to complete the first stage of house construction providing there is no appeal to VCAT.

The process to have the land available for sale is extensive and will require considerable staff time and some funds for advertising, designs and lodging Statutory Planning documentation. There is also a possibility of some objections to the process at various stages. If objections are likely to cause the Council to cease any of the processes to sell the land then it is preferable that Council withdraw from the proposal to sell the land at the earliest possible stage.

Consultation

Formal consultation occurred during 1997 and 2004 but given the length of time that has passed a new consultation process is proposed. This would occur through both the submission process on the proposed sale and the sub-division Planning Permit stage.

Financial Implications

The estimated cost to sub-divide the undeveloped land is \$276,000 excluding GST. After paying sales commission, marketing and legal costs the estimated net revenue is \$252,000 excluding GST, giving an estimated loss of \$24,000 plus financing costs (interest forgone of \$5,000). It is expected that any dwellings constructed on the land may generate a small profit after costs but detailed estimates will not be obtained until Council support for this proposal had been secured.

Social Implications

Construction of houses would help to reduce the shortage of available accommodation in Robinvale.

Economic Implications

The proposal would assist the continued expansion of the Robinvale economy.

Environmental Implications

Nil

Risk Management Implications

There is a Public Relations risk of negative opinion from local residents both in proximity to the proposed development and more generally in the town. The financial risks will have to be monitored closely throughout the project.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Economic growth - Have a region with an equipped and productive workforce.

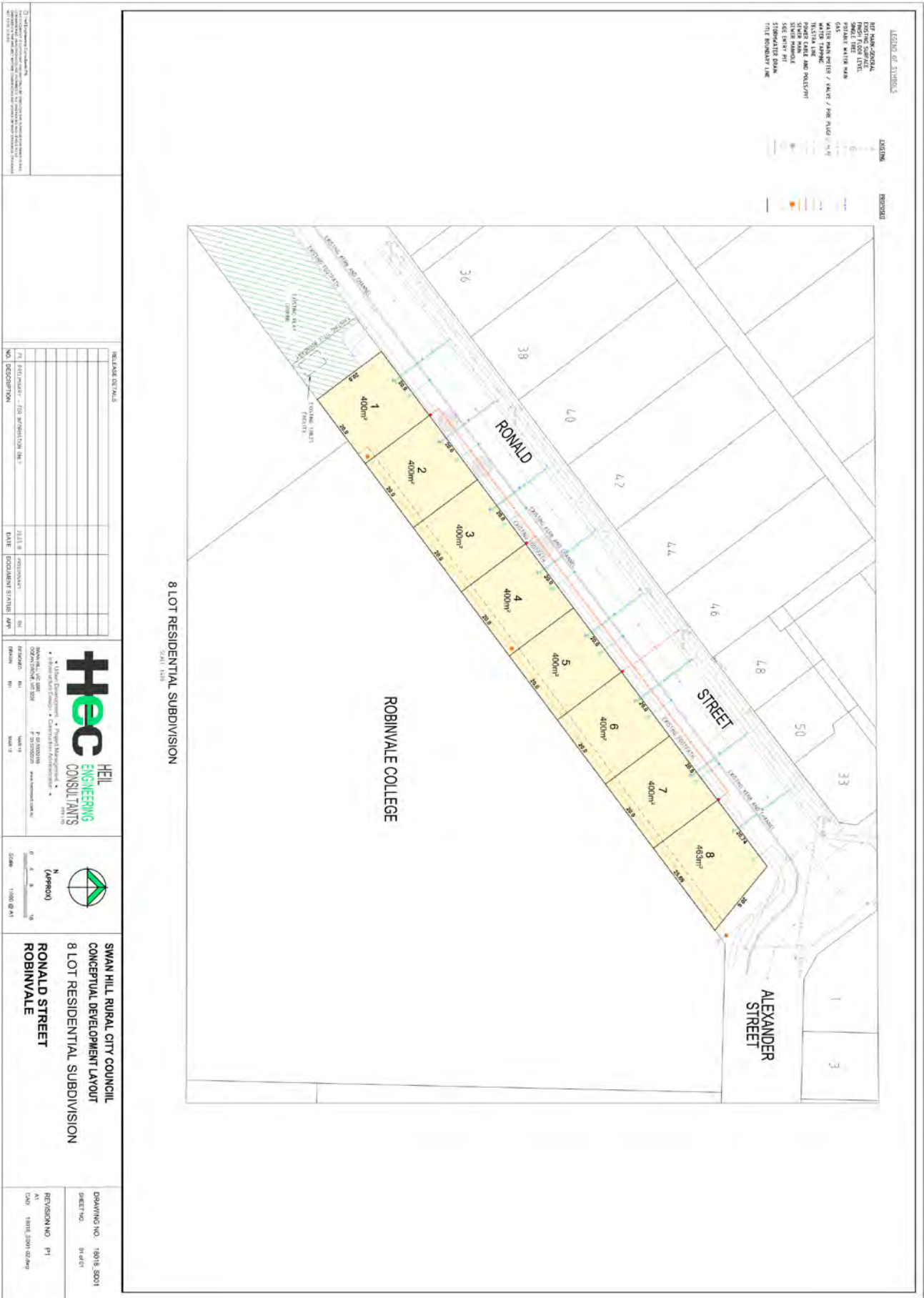
Options

1. Proceed with the proposal to sub-divide, develop and sell the land as outlined in this report.
2. Propose to sell the land as is.
3. Propose to sell the land once sub-divided but without housing.
4. Not proceed to sell the unused section of land.

Recommendations

That Council:

1. **Declares the land described as Lot 1 on Title Plan 967606E, Volume 12094 Folio 848 (former Ronald Street, Robinvale Road Reserve) as surplus to requirements.**
2. **Propose to sub-divide, develop housing and then sell each sub-divided Lot in accordance with Section 189 of the Local Government Act 1989.**
3. **Advertise Council's intention and call for public submissions for a minimum 28 day period.**
4. **If no submissions are received proceed to sub-divide, develop housing on the sub-divided land and then sell each Lot by Private Treaty utilizing funds from the Land Acquisition and Development Reserve and Future Fund Reserve.**
5. **If submissions are received to formally receive and hear submissions at a Special Council Meeting to be held on 26th November 2019 at 4pm at the Robinvale Community Centre and then consider the submissions at the 17 December 2019 Council Meeting at 4pm in the Swan Hill Town Hall.**



B.19.116 AUDIT COMMITTEE

Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services
File Number: S15-28-01
Attachments: 1 Confidential Minutes 12 September 2019

Declarations of Interest:

David Lenton - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

Council's Audit Committee met on 12 September, 2019 and this report summarises the items that were discussed at the meeting.

Discussion

The Audit Committee met on 12 June 2019 and as well as the usual procedural items the agenda items included:

1. Update on the Drag Strip progress.
2. Risk Management report was presented in a new format which was well received by the Committee.
3. Internal Audit Scope for Planning and Organisation of Capital and Maintenance works was presented.
4. Internal Audit Scope on Data Protection and Privacy Review was presented.
5. 2018/19 Asset Revaluations – Fair Value Report
6. Annual Financial Report FY2019
7. Performance Statement FY2019
8. Internal Audit Update on Fees and Charges Review
9. Outstanding and excessive Annual Leave balances for employees
10. VAGO Closing Report to Audit Committee FY2019 was discussed by Internal Auditors Crowe.
11. VAGO Final Management Letter was presented by Internal Auditors Crowe.

Consultation

Not applicable.

Financial Implications

The sitting fees paid to independent members on the Audit Committee is adjusted annually by CPI. Sitting fees are included in Councils Budget.

Social Implications

Not applicable.

Economic Implications

Not applicable.

Environmental Implications

Not applicable.

Risk Management Implications

The Audit Committee helps to oversee Councils risk management practices. Internal and other audits are routinely done to reduce the risk to Council.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Governance and leadership - Effective and efficient utilisation of resources.

Options

Not applicable.

Recommendation

That Council note the contents of this report.

Attachment

- Audit Committee Confidential Minutes
12 September 2019

B.19.117 COUNCIL PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2019/20

Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services
File Number: S16-28-03
Attachments: 1 Council Plan Progress Report

Declarations of Interest:

David Lenton - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

The purpose of this report is to present the first quarter progress update of Council's performance against the Council Plan 2017-2021. The period reported is from 1 July 2019 to 30 September 2019.

The quarterly progress report, provided as an attachment, offers a summary of progress against the five Council Plan areas; Economic Growth, Community Enrichment, Infrastructure, Governance and Leadership, and Environment. The report also provides updates for any actions carried over from previous years.

The intent of this report is to give Councillors and the community the confidence that Council is on track to meet its published commitments.

Discussion

In accordance with Section 125 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, Council developed and adopted a four-year Council Plan on 27 June 2017.

The plan is a strategic document outlining what Swan Hill Rural City Council will do to help achieve Council's and the community's vision for the municipality.

The plan describes Council's priorities and outcomes for its four-year term and how these will be resourced.

The plan has been divided into five areas:



Economic Growth



Community Enrichment



Infrastructure



Governance and Leadership



Environment

The Council Plan 2017-21 includes 92 initiatives and 232 actions through which the achievement of the Council Plan may be measured over its four-year term. Each action has a nominated responsible officer. As some objectives/actions span over a number of years they cannot be marked as completed until later years.

This report provides the first quarter update in relation to the actions taken and progress made to achieve these goals and strategic objectives in the 2019/20 financial year.

Regular reporting to Councillors and the community is a key principle of transparency and good governance. This report will be provided to Council on a quarterly basis and published online for the community to access.

Some of the key highlights from the first quarter include:

- A Special Rate for marketing and business development programs in the Swan Hill region has been implemented (2.8.1).
- A review of and development of Councils Risk Framework and Strategy has been completed (12.1.5).
- The Advocacy Strategy outlining key issues has been adopted by Council (14.1.2).
- Industrial Zones Strategy completed (4.4.1)
- Upgrade Swan Hill Livestock Selling Complex completed (9.3).
- Council has delivered a series of training programs for businesses. Information sessions and mentoring has commenced (1.5.2).
- Council has investigated options for investment in renewable energy technologies for the municipality; the Social Access Solar Garden Project led by the Institute of Sustainable Futures is now complete along with the Mallee Sun Solar Bulk Buy (2.5.1).
- Community Plans continue to be reviewed and renewed (7.1.1).
- Council Officers are meeting all timeframes set out in the RMP (8.1.1).

Council has made progress on the following:

- Development of a suite of industry and business prospectuses (1.2.3).
- Analyse of the region's products to identify where we have competitive advantages that may provide opportunities for growth (1.3.1).
- Investigate what role Council can play with development of new markets (1.3.2).
- Investigate and market opportunities for internet based business (1.5.1).
- Advocate for support for regional training opportunities (3.1.2).
- Asset Registers are all within Authority and are continually being updated to reflect capital works (10.4.3).
- Investigation and advocating for ways that skilled people can attain permanent residency has commenced (5.3.4).
- Attain membership to Catchment Management Authorities (CMA) (15.3.1).

Consultation

Council consulted the community during the development of the Council Plan 2017/21.

Financial Implications

This report contains no financial implications, however many of the initiatives contained within the Council Plan requires Council to allocate funds in its 2019/20 budget to implement the Council Plan.

Social Implications

The report is provided and made available to the community to increase awareness of the activities of Council, provide a mechanism for transparency and could increase community involvement in decision making at Council level.

Economic Implications

Implementation of the actions will improve a number of economic outcomes for our community.

Environmental Implications

Implementation of the actions will improve a number of environmental outcomes for our community.

Risk Management Implications

Council is required to be compliant with the *Local Government Act 1989* in regards to the Council Plan and annual reporting. This quarterly report supports that compliance.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Governance and leadership - Effective and efficient utilisation of resources.

Options

Not applicable for this report.

Recommendation

That Council adopts the first quarter Council Plan - Progress Report 2019/20.



Council Plan Progress Report - September 2019



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Introduction

What is the Council Plan?

The Council Plan is a strategic document outlining what the Swan Hill Rural City Council (Council) will do to achieve Council's and the community's vision for the municipality. The 2017-2021 plan describes Council's Strategic Initiatives for its four-year term.

The Council Plan is an important document that drives everything the Swan Hill Rural City Council does over a four-year period. It sets the vision, priorities and outcomes for Council's term and lists how progress will be measured. The plan guides Council's annual budget, which determines the projects, services, events and other initiatives that will be funded and delivered in the next financial year.

Council is held accountable for its progress on the Council Plan's outcomes through quarterly progress reports, and annually in the Swan Hill Rural City Council's Annual Report.



How we will track and measure our progress

Each of the Council Plan Initiatives has a number of objectives that will track Council's progress. Council will report on its progress in completing the four-year priorities quarterly with updated progress commentary.

All objectives will be marked with the following symbols to represent their current status:



Complete - the objective has been completed.



Completed/Ongoing - objectives/actions that span over a number of years that cannot be marked as completed until later years.



In progress - these objections are past the planning phase, and are in progress towards completion.



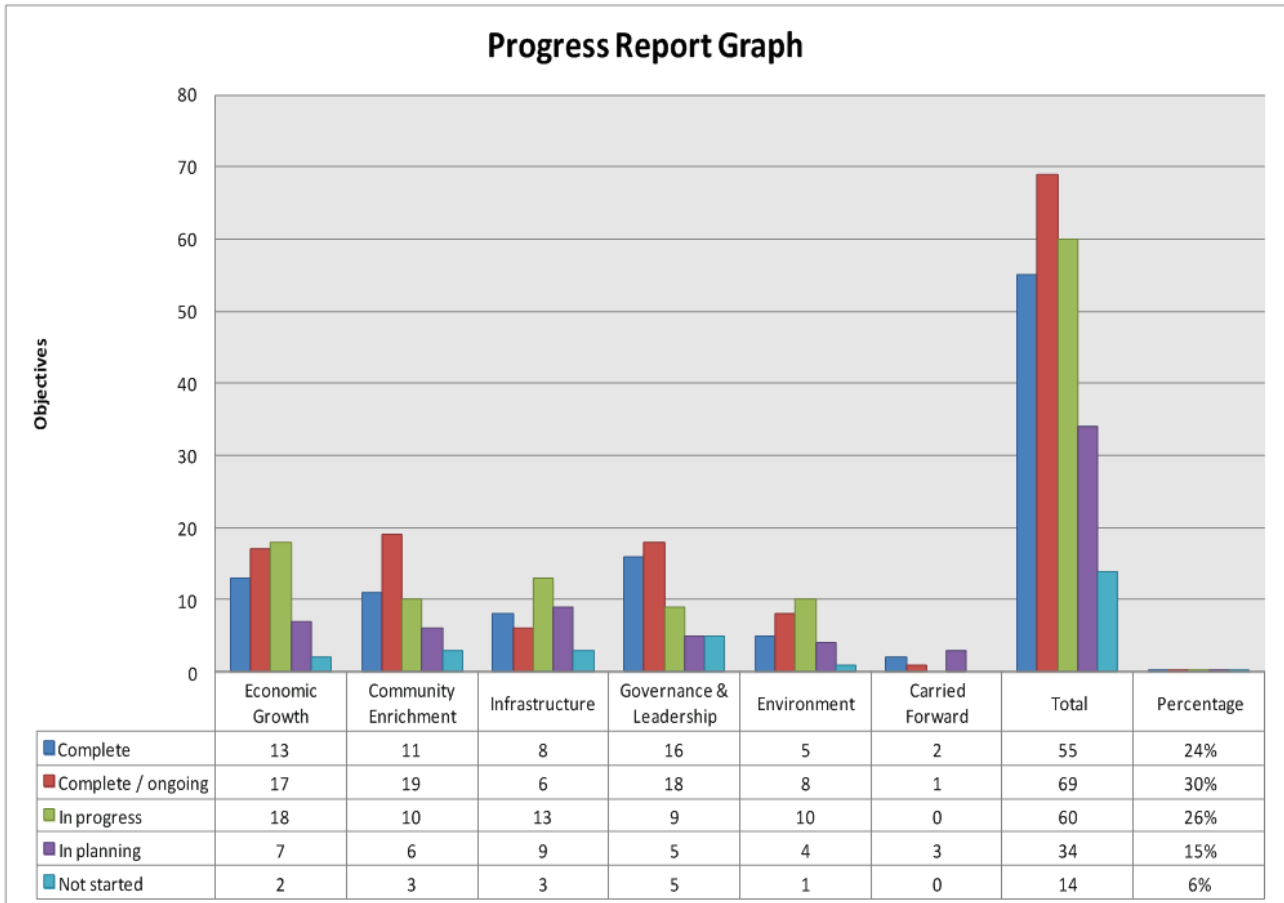
In planning - objectives that are not complete or in progress but actions have been taken are marked as in planning stage.



Not started - objectives that have not been commenced at the time of reporting.

Overall results snapshot

The Council Plan 2017-21 includes 92 initiatives and 232 actions through which the achievement of the Council Plan may be measured over its four-year term. Each action has a nominated responsible officer who is a member of the Leadership Team, reflecting the importance placed on achieving targets. As some objectives/actions span over a number of years they cannot be marked as completed until later years.



The following objectives were marked as complete during the first quarter:

- Continue agreement with Swan Hill Incorporated (2.8.1)
- Review and develop Councils Risk Framework and Strategy (12.1.5)
- Develop and implement an Advocacy Strategy (14.1.2)
- Industrial Zones Strategy completed (4.4.1)
- Upgrade Swan Hill Livestock Selling Complex completed (9.3).

The following objectives were marked as complete and ongoing during the first quarter:

- Council has delivered a series of training programs for businesses. Information sessions and mentoring has commenced (1.5..2).
- Council have investigated options for investment in renewable energy technologies for the municipality; the Social Access Solar Garden Project led by the Institute of Sustainable Futures is now complete along with the Mallee Sun Solar Bulk Buy (2.5.1).
- Community Plans continue to be reviewed and renewed (7.1.1).
- Council Officers are meeting all timeframes set out in the RMP (8.1.1).

Council has made progress on the following:





- Development of a suite of industry and business prospectuses (1.2.3).
- Analyse of the region' s products to identify where we have competitive advantages that may provide opportunities for growth (1.3.1).
- Investigate what role Council can play with development of new markets (1.3.2).
- Investigate and market opportunities for internet based business (1.5.1).
- Advocate for support for regional training opportunities (3.1.2).



- Asset Registers are all within Authority and are continually being updated to reflect capital works (10.4.3).

- Investigation and advocating for ways that skilled people can attain permanent residency has commenced (5.3.4).

- Attain membership to Catchment Management Authorities (CMA) (15.3.1).

Objectives carried forward from Council Plan 2013-17

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
12.1 Pursue funding for the redevelopment of the Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery	12.1.1 Provide final designs and all costs and contingencies	In planning 	Our Region Our Rivers funding secured. On 17 September Council endorsed Option 1 concept for further design work by architects, and the project is proceeding. Further opportunities for funding is being sought on an ongoing basis. Detailed design will commence in December 2019.
12.5 Develop and implement a Cultural Plan	12.5.3 Development continues	Complete 	October 2018 The Creative Strategy was adopted by Council
13.1 Review and implement identified actions following the review of Aboriginal Partnership Plan	13.1.2 Implement actions identified in Aboriginal Partnership Plan	Complete/ongoing 	Aboriginal Community Partnership Strategy adopted September 2017. The Actions within the Plan will continue to be implemented. New strategy in draft format. Murray River Cultural Centre Feasibility Study has commenced.
15.3 Review of the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) taking into consideration appropriate accommodation options	15.3.1 Commence MSS review	Complete 	Review of MSS is complete. Amendment C73 has been authorised by the Minister subject to conditions. C73 will go to a panel hearing on 19 November 2019.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
19.2 Actively pursue suitable alternative opportunities arising from decommissioned irrigation infrastructure	19.2.6 Modernisation undertaken, Channel decommissioned.	In planning 	Finalising options for opportunities and land ownership. Have received a contract from DHHS for purchase of land. Project scope to be developed and presented to Council in 2019: We have received legal advice concerning acquisition of deceased estates.
	19.2.7 Gain ownership of the available land for future development	In planning 	Finalising options for opportunities and land ownership. Have received a contract from DHHS for purchase of land. In discussions with GMW in regards to transfer of their land. Project scope to be developed and presented to Council in 2019: We have received legal advice concerning acquisition of







Key result area Economic growth











“We will encourage new business development, provide support for business expansion and will continuously seek to help our existing businesses”.








We will:







1. Encourage and attract new business to our region.
2. Assist existing businesses to expand and increase their efficiency.
3. Have a region with an equipped and productive workforce.
4. Provide land use planning that is responsive and which proactively encourages appropriate development.







What have we done





STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
1.1 Formulate new ways to encourage new business development.	1.1.1 Identify and investigate suitable land parcels for new business.	Complete 	March 2018. Economic and Community Development Unit continue to work with Planning to identify opportunities to expand new businesses.
	1.1.2 Apply for funding through Regional Development Victoria (RDV).	In planning 	RDV undertaking review process and there are no grants available at this time.
	1.1.3 Develop a business expansion or relocation strategy.	Complete 	April 2018 Business Expansion and Retention Strategy completed and presented to Council. Follow up work is being completed by monitoring jobs and talking to employers on barriers.
	1.1.4 Commence an Investment Attraction campaign.	Completed/ ongoing 	Through the Connect U program, businesses are being visited to identify vacant positions within these industries. This data will assist to inform the business expansion relocation strategy. Will follow the Liveability campaign.









STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
1.2 Identify the types of businesses suited to this region and develop investment prospectuses.	1.2.1 Perform an industry gap analysis.	In progress 	The industry gap analysis is scheduled to be presented to Council later this year.
	1.2.2 Review the Investment Attraction Policy.	In progress 	Currently reviewed and will be presented to Council later this year.
	1.2.3 Develop suite of industry and business prospectuses.	In progress 	Development has commenced.
	1.2.4 Market the opportunities available.	Completed/ongoing 	Working on possible investment by developers to construct residential and commercial ventures, in particular short term residential. Working with manufacturing industry to attract new businesses to the region.
1.3 Investigate and identify potential export opportunities and facilitate connections.	1.3.1 Analyse the region's products and identify where we have competitive advantages that may provide opportunities for growth.	In progress 	To be completed as part of the Liveability Campaign.
	1.3.2 Investigate what role Council can play with development of new markets.	In progress 	Assistance with agriculture export opportunities.
	1.3.3 Facilitate connections and partnerships to achieve market access.	In progress 	Organised information sessions on labour related issues.
	1.3.4 Encourage the establishment of value adding industries.	In progress 	Assisting horticulture producers to enter the export market or strengthen existing markets through assisting with sourcing funding for new infrastructure and facilitating planning processes. Identifying training and advice opportunities for the agriculture sector.
1.4 Pursue new businesses that are upstream processors for our local produce.	1.4.1 Engage with local industry to identify opportunities.	In progress 	Assisting retail businesses to expand premises. Facilitating for local goods and services industries to be competitive in tendering contracts for new developments such as solar farms.
	1.4.2 Work with industry to establish new businesses.	In progress 	Working with interstate composting business to establish new composting business in Swan Hill region. Working with new businesses in retail, hospitality and construction










STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
1.5 Promote new technologies and new ways of working.	1.5.1 Investigate and market opportunities for internet based business.	In progress 	Delivery of a series of training programs for businesses. Information sessions and mentoring also facilitated.
	1.5.2 Promote and educate industry and the community to encourage the uptake of new technologies through training and workshops.	Completed/ongoing 	September 2019 Training for job readiness delivered through Connect U. Business training in conjunction with Australian Small Business Advisory Services around Digital Solutions. Workshops held on drone technology and combat online shopping.
1.6 Increase the availability of appropriate housing to support growth of industry and agriculture.	1.6.1 Investigate the housing needs and identify appropriate solutions.	Completed/ongoing 	June 2019 Housing in Robinvale is of concern and a program of ensuring compliance has been underway for over one year. This will continue for some time as more non compliant housing is identified. A housing strategy is complete for Robinvale. A range of recommendations are being further investigated
	1.6.2 Facilitate combined public and private sector investment to diversify housing stock.	Completed/ongoing 	Officers have been liaising with owners of land ready for development to assist in progressing development - both in Swan Hill and Robinvale. Advocacy is underway with the state government to ensure diversity in housing types is achieved across the municipality. Further lots are under development at Tower Hill.
2.1 Encourage the growth of agriculture through appropriate advocacy and strategic planning.	2.1.1 Advocate for improved transport links.	Complete 	Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy draft completed.
	2.1.2 Review the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) to ensure the growth of agriculture is supported.	In progress 	Review of MSS is complete. Amendment C73 includes the implementation of the commendations within the Rural Land Use Strategy, which is used to protect agriculture. Amendment C73 has been authorised by the Minister subject to conditions. Exhibition period for C73 has ended. Received 15 submissions. Panel hearing to be held on 19 November 2019.
	2.1.3 Implement the Rural Land Use Strategy.	In progress 	Will be implemented as part of Amendment C73 excluding the Rural Living Zone areas.




STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
2.2 Investigate opportunities for Agricultural businesses to establish new enterprises.	2.2.1 Engage with local industry to identify opportunities, for example clean energy on farms.	Complete 	Working with OLAM to establish telecommunications towers in Wemen and Annuello, and looking at possibility of point-to-point laser technology. Wemen and Bannerton solar farms operating on land leased from farmers.
	2.2.2 Investigate opportunities for agri-tourism products and experiences e.g. paddock to plate, farm stays.	Completed/ongoing 	Initial audit of Farm Gates between Robinvale and Swan Hill has been undertaken. Next stage is to develop product / experiences based on seasonality and product type and location. Audit to be undertaken in other outlying areas and stage the implementation.
2.3 Encourage organisations to joint tender for works and services.	2.3.1 Investigate, and where possible implement, shared contracts and services with the region's Councils.	Completed/ongoing 	Ongoing discussion and liaison via Loddon Mallee Procurement Excellent Network. Joint procurement of waste management services underway. Council is participating in a group Purchase Agreement Tender.
	2.3.2 Conduct workshops and provide advice to local business and tenderers to improve their tendering processes.	Completed/ongoing 	Procurement Policy reviewed and adopted at December 2018 Council Meeting. Several sessions on a range of topics have been conducted by EDU with local businesses. Doing Business with Council information sessions held in June 2019.
2.4 Actively pursue opportunities for regionally focused infrastructure.	2.4.1 Advocate for additional and upgraded infrastructure that will improve efficiency of local businesses e.g. rail freight.	Completed/ongoing 	Council maintains an active role in the Victorian Rail Freight Alliance and is the coordinating member of the Central Murray Regional Transport Forum.
	2.4.2 Advocate for adequate and alternative utilities supplies.	In progress 	An advocacy document was prepared for the recent Federal government election that outlined major infrastructure requirements for the municipality. A submission has been made to Australian Energy Market Operator in relation to the construction of infrastructure to enable additional solar farms to be establish and fed into the grid.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
2.5 Investigate options for investment in renewable energy technologies for the municipality.	2.5.1 Complete and adopt a study.	Completed/ongoing 	The Social Access Solar Garden Project led by the Institute of Sustainable Futures is now complete. However more work is required on site selection and the business model SHRCC was interested in testing was not adequately tested through the project. No further investigation has taken place since November 2018. Opportunities for landholders and businesses do exist however through the Mallee Sun Solar Bulk Buy to lower energy costs.
	2.5.2 Facilitate renewable energy projects.	In planning 	Meetings have been held with State and Federal politicians to raise awareness of the need to fund a network upgrade to allow more solar energy to enter the grid and be used in Melbourne and parts of the state and interstate.
2.6 Encourage and assist existing business to pursue value adding to their industry.	2.6.1 Undertake forums and discussions with industry to understand opportunities.	Completed/ongoing 	The Connect U program has included the manufacturing industry on the website/portal. This portal has been established as an alternative to setting up a committee.
	2.6.2 Complete an analysis of relevant industry data.	Completed/ongoing 	Data recorded and analysed after each business visit.
	2.6.3 Identify and prioritise government grant applications.	Completed/ongoing 	Ongoing
	2.6.4 Develop business prospectus.	Not started 	

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
2.7 Improve the commercial position of the Pioneer Settlement.	2.7.1 Implement the Day Product Review.	In progress 	Ongoing works continue including upgrades to kitchen equipment at Lodges and Lower Murray Inn, new toilet at Paragon Café, and Installation of cool room on the Pyap. Day product improvements include major building maintenance and soundscape implementation.
	2.7.2 Review the promotion plan.	Complete 	Plan presented to Council Assembly in June 2018. Plan now in place for 2018-19 financial year onwards.
	2.7.3 Enhance the Heartbeat of the Murray night time product by improving operational effectiveness and adding additional elements to the visitor experience.	Complete 	New evening soundscapes implemented enhancing the walk to and from the Paragon. Long term plan for new entry building will include the 'Heartbeat holding area'.
2.8 Utilise Swan Hill Incorporated, market and promote the region as a place to live, work and invest.	2.8.1 Continue agreement with Swan Hill Incorporated.	Complete 	A Special Rate for marketing and business development programs in the Swan Hill region was declared at the April 2019 Council Meeting. The agreement between Council and Swan Hill Inc. was adopted by Council at the September Council Meeting.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
3.1 Assist local businesses to up-skill and retrain their workforce.	3.1.1 Identify skills shortages and training gaps.	In planning 	Connect U program funding approved by RDV. Interviews with employers ongoing.
	3.1.2 Advocate for support for regional training opportunities.	In progress 	Working with SuniTAFE, in particular the Farm of excellence project Sept 19.
	3.1.3 Create partnerships to deliver short courses and training.	Completed/ongoing 	Training for job readiness delivered through Connect U. Business training in conjunction with Australian Small Business Advisory Services around Digital Solutions.
3.2 Promote the benefits of the region as a place to live, work and invest.	3.2.1 Participate in regional expos.	Not started 	No regional expo opportunities in past three months have been applicable.
	3.2.2 Support regional promotion of the municipality.	Completed/ongoing 	Council signed new MoU with Murray Regional Tourism Board in August 2017 and continues partnership with Swan Hill Inc to leverage and collaborate on regional promotional opportunities.
	3.2.3 Advertised all job vacancies with a link to a website that outlines regional information.	Completed 	Job advertisements contain links to the New Residents Guide and Discover Swan Hill sections on Council's website.
	3.2.4 Develop New Residents Guide.	Completed 	Launched in September 2017. Media release published in The Guardian on 27/08/17. Guides available for Swan Hill and Robinvale, printed and online and updated when needed.
3.3 Implement the Workforce Development Strategy.	3.3.1 Complete a project to quantify labour force data from within the municipality, with a particular focus on agricultural sector.	In progress 	Connect U program funded by RDV. Constant monitoring via Agribusiness committee and industry visits.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
3.4 Encourage the development of appropriate accommodation for various workforces.	3.4.1 Review the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) and Planning Scheme to ensure diverse housing and land is available.	In progress 	Review of MSS is complete. Diverse housing and land availability was considered during this review. Additional land was not required due to the approval of the C58 Amendment: South West Development.
	3.4.2 Investigate opportunities for improved public transport.	Completed/ongoing 	Continued support and involvement in Mallee Local Transport Forum.
	3.4.3 Investigate alternative ways to provide accommodation.	In progress 	Robinvale Housing Strategy and Population Determination completed and implementation planned.
3.5 Improve the employability skills of the long term unemployed and unskilled in Robinvale and district.	3.5.1 Continue to facilitate the Robinvale Employment Network project.	Completed 	Council no longer facilitates the Robinvale Employment Network project.
4.1 Review of the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS).	4.1.1 Revise Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) and refer back to the Minister for approval.	Completed 	MSS has been re-written removing the need for a review in 2018.
4.2 Identify and zone appropriate land for future development.	4.2.1 Identified land through strategic work program.	Completed/ongoing 	Rural living land has been identified in the Rural Land Use Strategy to be rezoned. The Minister for Planning requested that the Rural Living Zone areas be taken out of Amendment C73. A further review of the Rural Residential land supply of the municipality will be undertaken to justify rural living re-zonings.
	4.2.2 Rezone land as approved by Council.	In planning 	Rural Living land has been identified in the Rural Land Use Strategy to be rezoned. A further rural residential review will be undertaken to justify any rezoning of land to Rural Living Zone.
4.3 Investigate and develop options for de-watered farming land.	4.3.1 Complete audit of areas with de-watered land.	Complete 	An audit was completed and further strategic work is to be undertaken.
	4.3.2 Develop and implement strategy to address issues.	In planning 	Further strategic work to be undertaken.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
4.4 Review of the availability and suitability of industrial land in Swan Hill and Robinvale.	4.4.1 Complete an Industrial Zones Strategy.	Complete 	The review has been completed and adopted by Council.
	4.4.2 Amend planning scheme as appropriate.	In planning 	No amendment required as a result of the strategy.
4.5 Review Small towns for further housing development.	4.5.1 Develop and implement Small Town Strategy.	In planning 	Further strategic work to be undertaken.





Key results area Community Enrichment







“We will provide a range of services to individuals and to the broader community that assist all in our community to live healthy, fulfilling lives. We will embrace our role as a regional centre by providing a range of cultural opportunities ”






We will:







1. Help all people to find a place in our community.
2. Provide services and support initiatives that create a healthy and safe community.
3. Develop a community with a sense of pride and responsibility/ownership that strives to achieve its aspirations.










What have we done







STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
5.1 Review and implement the Aboriginal Partnership Plan.	5.1.1 Undertake initiatives with the intent to work toward developing a Registered Aboriginal Party.	In progress 	Wandarrah Action Committee (WAC) continue to implement initiatives from the Aboriginal Community Partnership Strategy (ACPS). The ACPS was reviewed in April 2019. The reviewed document is currently out for comment. The review aimed to narrow down the WAC goals into developing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).
5.2 Investigate opportunities to develop Aboriginal leadership capabilities.	5.2.1 Investigate leadership opportunities e.g. scholarship, grants, host a forum with young people and local service providers.	Completed/ongoing 	Koori Youth Council of Victoria held their Blackout event in Swan Hill in June 2017, and was targeted at engaging young Aboriginal community members. Around 90 attended on the day. Koori traineeship in Business Administration set up in July 2017. Koori scholarships advertised in 2019 with no applications received.






STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
5.3 Establish and maintain partnership with organisations that support Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities.	5.3.1 Participate in the Settlement Services Group to provide support to new arrivals through adapting how services are provided.	Completed/ongoing 	June 2019: Council is represented on local refugee groups, including attendance at forums, consultations with Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council and other groups. Regular updates to refugee groups on Council services, guidance and assistance is provided.
	5.3.2 Assist with the delivery of multi-cultural events.	Completed/ongoing 	Annual Swan Hill Harmony Day community celebrations take place. The library meeting room is used weekly by a volunteer community group to run English conversation sessions for migrant women.
	5.3.3 Review of service access plans to ensure inclusion.	Complete 	Plans reviewed and adopted in December 2017. Quarterly reports on achievements to be presented to Councillor Assembly, with six-monthly reports to Council Meeting.
	5.3.4 Investigate and advocate for ways of skilled people attaining permanent residency (included as part of 18/19 review).	In Progress 	Council is in discussions with Sunraysia Migration Ethnic Communities (SMEC) regarding relocation of refugees and migrants within the municipality. Currently working with RDV to establish a program funded by the Commonwealth Government to settle metropolitan based refugees in the municipality.
5.4 Develop and implement Disability Action Plan.	5.4.1 Adopt the plan.	Complete 	Adopted at December 2017 Council Meeting.
	5.4.2 Implement the actions within timelines.	In progress 	The Community Access and Inclusion Strategy (CAIS) and its implementation plan was adopted by Council at the December 2017 meeting. The strategy's actions are in the process of being implemented.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
5.5 Implement actions from the Youth Strategy 2015-19.	5.5.1 Review make up and role of Youth Council.	Complete 	A review of the make up and role of Youth Council was undertaken by Youth Council and discussed at Council Assembly in July and September 2017.
	5.5.2 Implement actions in the Youth Strategy within budget and timelines.	In progress 	2017-2018 Annual Operational Plan prepared and actions for 2017-18 were implemented. 2018-19 Operational Plan prepared and actions being implemented.
	5.5.3 Improve partnerships and relationships with other youth services.	Completed/ongoing 	Youth Support Program staff record all activities undertaken on an annual reporting / evaluation template in chronological order that is cross referenced with the 2018-19 Annual Operational Plan. All events are evaluated.
	5.5.4 Hold youth specific events.	Completed/ongoing 	Youth Support Program staff record all activities undertaken on an annual reporting / evaluation template in chronological order that is cross referenced with the 2018-19 Annual Operational Plan. Events held include Youth Week Leadership Camp, Youth Ball, and Empower Project has commenced.
	5.5.5 Review Youth Strategy (included as part of 18/19 review).	In progress 	Local Logic Place has been appointed to conduct the new Youth Strategy 2020-2025






STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
5.6 Strengthen our connection with youth.	5.6.1 Review the structure of the Youth Council with young people.	Complete 	A review of the make up and role of Youth Council was undertaken by Youth Council and discussed at Council Assembly in July and September 2017.
	5.6.2 Deliver a responsive and relevant program of Youth Services.	Completed/ongoing 	Youth Support Program staff record all activities undertaken on an annual reporting / evaluation template in chronological order that is cross referenced with the 2018-19 Annual Operational Plan.
	5.6.3 Deliver the actions within the Youth Strategy.	In progress 	Events held include Youth Week Leadership Camp, Youth Ball, and Empower Project has commenced. Up Skilling and leadership opportunities have been delivered to young people.
	5.6.4 Develop work placement and work experience programs.	Completed/ongoing 	2019 - 6 Scholarship places advertised and 5 were awarded into the following workgroups: Engineering, Economic Development x 2, Youth Inc, Depot.
	5.6.5 Implement the Robinvale Employment Program in accordance with the funding agreement.	Complete 	Council has exited out of the Robinvale Employment Network program.
	5.6.6 Maintain and develop our partnerships with youth agencies.	Completed/ongoing 	YACVic Rural Officer is co-located at Youth Inc. Youth Support Program staff attend relevant network meetings including Southern Mallee Sub Regional Group, Child Youth and Family Network, Victorian Rural Youth Services, and Swan Hill College Wellbeing Team. Empower Project has started and will continue over four years.




STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
5.7 Develop and implement Cultural Services Plan.	5.7.1 Develop and adopt a plan.	Complete 	The Creative Strategy was adopted by Council at the October 2018 Council meeting.
	5.7.2 Implement initiatives within timeframes and subject to adequate resourcing.	Completed/ongoing 	Sept 2019 The Library, Art Gallery and Performing Arts programs have delivered a range of programs, activities and exhibitions.
6.1 Review and implement actions within the Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.	6.1.1 Review the Plan, including actions, to address violence against women.	Complete 	Adopted at the October 2017 Council Meeting. An annual operational action plan for quarterly reporting has been developed.
	6.1.2 Report on status of actions biannually.	Completed/ongoing 	Reporting undertaken bi-annually, beginning in February 2018. Ongoing: No formal reporting is required linked to funding, but reports to key representative groups are provided.
6.2 Strategically position Council's ongoing role regarding the community-based aged care reforms.	6.2.1 Produce an options paper on integration of Commonwealth Home Support Program to National Standards.	Complete 	Options paper completed - investigation of findings and responses to be developed.
	6.2.2 Ascertain how HACC/Commonwealth Home Support Program services can be delivered within funding levels.	In progress 	In progress, due to uncertainty and lack of definitive information from the Commonwealth.
	6.2.3 Develop positive Aging Plan.	Not started 	
6.3 Review and determine Council's role in early years and child care services.	6.3.1 Review early years services.	In planning 	Local Logic Place is the consultant appointed to undertake the Municipal Early - Middle Years Plan in August 2019. One of the objectives of this project is to define Council's role and investment in early - middle years services.
	6.3.2 Produce a report on outcomes and provide recommendations.	In planning 	A mid point project report is due in September / October.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
6.3 Review and determine Council's role in early years and child care services (continued).	6.3.3 Develop an Early Years Plan (EYP).	In planning 	Funding is scheduled for 2019-20, which is when Early Years Plan will be completed. June 2019: scoping of plan for the Municipal Early and Middle Years Plan has been completed following discussions with executive and Councillors, and request for submissions will be sought during June/July 2019 to engage an external agency to assist with this work. The engagement is set to commence in August and be completed in December 2019, allowing for Council consideration and adoption in early 2020.
	6.3.4 Implement EYP actions within timeframes and resources.	Not started 	
6.4 Improve personal and community safety by working with partners on community safety issues.	6.4.1 Promote awareness of the Community Charter for the Prevention of Violence against Women.	In planning 	Council participated in the '16 Days of Action' facilitated by the State, and undertook Orange events that were promoted on social media and in the press. Council will be undertaking a gender equity audit and assessing White Ribbon compliance during 2018-19. June 2019: gender equity audit delayed due to lack of resources, but with assistance of Women's Health Loddon Mallee, will take place during 2019-2020.
	6.4.2 Implement the requirements of Child Safety Standards.	Completed 	Revised Child Safe Standards Policy presented for adoption at the December 2017 Council meeting. Ongoing actions to remain compliant will continue. DHHS conducted an audit of Child Safe Standards in June 2018, and determined Council is compliant.
	6.4.3 Expand and continue CCTV operation.	In progress 	Requirements and opportunities are monitored and investigated with relevant stakeholders.
	6.4.4 Enforce local laws and develop a MOU with Victoria Police to support additional community crime prevention measures.	Completed/ongoing 	Council has attended Police call out sessions to educate and update Officers on the new Local Law No.2 2017 and provided resources in Robinvale and Swan Hill. Council and Police MoU has been updated.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
6.5 Plan for the future provision of sport and recreation facilities and services.	6.5.1 Support the development of sport and recreation clubs across the municipality.	Completed/ongoing 	Swan Hill Recreation Reserves Master Plan was endorsed at the Council meeting in May 2018. A Recreation Implementation Plan (working document) has been developed and was endorsed by Council on 19 March 2019. Clubs will continue to be supported through Council's Community Grants Programs. The Swan Hill Aquatics Strategic Plan is currently in progress.
	6.5.2 Complete and implement the Recreation Reserve Master Plan.	In progress 	Masterplan completed and implementation commenced.
6.6 Expand library services in Robinvale and review the delivery of library services in our small communities.	6.6.1 Scope, fund and complete Robinvale Library Project within limitations.	In planning 	The funding has been secured by the Education Department. An architectural firm has been engaged by the Education Department to manage the project. A community survey has been conducted to determine the library programming and opening hours the Robinvale community would like for the community library. The Design Brief has been developed. The project continues to remain on track with the schematic design phase completed mid June and the design development phase completed and signed off in August.
	6.6.2 Develop an effective partnership arrangement with Robinvale P-12 College.	In planning 	June 2018: Community Joint Use Agreement (CJUA) has been developed into draft form, and scoping of the project will continue. June 2019: the joint use agreement with the Education Department is nearly completed, and initial concept drawings and schematics are agreed by all parties. The next piece of work is to finalise the operational needs of the facility. Tenders to be awarded by December 2019, with works completed in late 2020 and opening in early 2021.
	6.6.3 Confirm that the new library is meeting the Robinvale community's needs.	Not started 	This can only be completed after the library opens which is expected to be in early 2021. Community consultation to determine the Robinvale community's needs was completed in late 2018 to determine the community's needs and incorporate these in the library design.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
6.7 Investigate the need for an off leash dog park.	6.7.1 Survey community needs for off-leash dog park.	Complete 	Survey completed in May 2017. The survey results were taken to Council in November 2017 and resulted in Council adopting to trial four off leash areas for two years. At the half way point of the trial, a survey was completed to assess how the community thought that the trial was working. The survey was completed online in late January 2019 .
	6.7.2 Develop a project scope if the community need is identified.	Completed/ongoing 	In November 2017, Council adopted to trial four off leash areas for two years. Signage, rubbish bins, dog waste dispensers/bags were installed in all areas. Council conducted a media campaign to educate dog and non-dog owners about the use of these areas. Over the two year trial, quarterly assessments will be undertaken to gauge use, compliance and complaints. The community had the opportunity to provide feedback through a survey at the half way point of the trial that was made available through Council's website and Facebook. 103 responses were received from the community. At the September Council meeting Council resolved to cease the trial and continue only with one off leash area. Council also resolved to budget in the future for off leash parks in Robinvale and Swan Hill.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
7.1 Support the capacity of communities to self-manage and self-regulate.	7.1.1 Review and renew Community plans as appropriate.	Completed/ongoing 	Robinvale Plan - reviewed and updated Aug 2017 Lake Boga - Plan-reviewed and updated Nov 2017 Swan Hill - No review needed, Council does not want a Swan Hill Community Plan Piangil - reviewed 2018 Woorinen - review completed 2018 Nyah - Due now Boundary Bend - review complete 2018 Beverford - working to re establishing the group, possibility of joining with Speewa and Tyntynder Ultima - completed 2017 Manangatang - review complete 2018 Wemen - review complete 2018
	7.1.2 Implement ways to encourage all communities to actively participate in the community grants program.	Completed/ongoing 	All communities are encouraged via email and by Council representatives at TRG meetings to apply for the community grants. TRG are encouraged to distribute the grant info throughout their community and networks encouraging other local community groups to be involved.
	7.1.3 Advocate on behalf of our communities for priority issues and opportunities.	Completed/ongoing 	Continue to work with the Town Representative Groups (TRG) to prioritise their projects, updating implementation plans on a yearly basis. In March Council engaged a consultant to develop a Community Infrastructure Implementation Plan, with the aim of preparing a place-making and liveability plan for each of the small towns. These plans will guide Council and the TRG for funding applications and provide a structured five year plan.
	7.1.4 Sponsor Loddon Murray Community Leadership Program.	Completed/ongoing 	Support is provided on an annual basis, subject to the Annual Budget process.
7.2 Review each of our Community Plans.	7.2.1 Develop and publish new Community Plans.	Completed/ongoing 	Robinvale Plan-reviewed and updated Aug 2017 Lake Boga-Plan-reviewed and updated Nov 2017 Swan Hill - No review needed, Council does not want a SHCP Piangil - reviewed 2018 Woorinen - review completed 2018 Nyah - review completed 2018 Boundary Bend - review complete 2018 Beverford - working to re establishing the group, possibility of joining with Speewa and Tyntynder Ultima completed 2017 Manangatang - review complete 2018 Wemen - review complete 2018

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
7.3 Plan for the development of the Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery precinct.	7.3.1 Determine the long-term site for Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery.	Complete 	December 2018 Council determined the preferred site.
	7.3.2 Prepare final Gallery designs for approval and costed.	In progress 	Sept 2019 Council endorsed Option 1 concept for further design work by architects.
	7.3.3 Secure funding and complete the project.	In progress 	Funding has been secured.






Key results area Infrastructure







“We will provide and maintain publicly accessible infrastructure that is appropriate for the community’s needs in the most effective and efficient manner possible.”







We will have:






1. Infrastructure that appropriately services community needs.
2. Infrastructure that is provided and appropriately maintained in accordance with agreed standards.
3. A strong focus on asset management systems and planning.








What have we done








STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
8.1 Manage Council's roads and road related infrastructure in line with the Road Management Plan.	8.1.1 Complete 100% of inspections outlined in Road Management Plan (RMP) by identified time frames.	Completed/ongoing 	New Road Management Plan (RMP) commenced on 1 July 2017. Council Officers are meeting all timeframes set out in the RMP.
	8.1.2 Ensure 100% defects are repaired in line with RMP timeframes	In progress 	All defect repair timeframes are being met in accordance with RMP. An internal 'Safety Action Plan' process has been implemented and shall be used in instances where appropriate warning of a defect is required until a suitable repair or treatment can be completed.
8.2 Advocate for funding for an active trail between Lake Boga and Swan Hill.	8.2.1 Complete project scope and plan to enable future funding submission	Complete 	Project scope and plan completed. Waiting on funding.






STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
8.3 Advocate for improved transport routes across the region.	8.3.1 Work with the Central Murray Regional Transport Forum (CMRTF) to identify regional priority projects.	Complete 	Strategy endorsed by Council in September 2018.
	8.3.2 Advocate with CMRTF for funding for identified projects.	In progress 	Advocacy brochures are being finalised to assist in sourcing funding.
	8.3.3 Advocate with the Rail Freight Alliance for funding for suitable rail projects.	Not started 	
	8.3.4 Advocate for the full implementation of the Murray Basin Rail Project.	In progress 	Letters have been written to relevant Ministers and the CEO has spoken with the media.
8.4 Pursue funding for a levee bank at Robinvale.	8.4.1 Complete detailed design.	Complete 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Detailed designs complete. 2. DELWP and Parks Vic are agreeable on using the land south of Smythy Road as a borrow pit (detailed design needed). 3. DELWP granted their approval for Geo-testing to the area 4. Application lodged for a planning permit with the planning department. 5. Geotechnical test confirmed the suitability of clay from south of Smythy Road. Process of designing the retarding basin for DELWP and Parks Victoria approval is underway. 6. Council's Infrastructure unit applied for extra funding from NDRGS (\$379,960). 7. Awaiting finalisation of Cultural Heritage Management Plan.
	8.4.2 Lodge funding application.	Complete 	Council secured \$710,000 through the 2016-17 NDRGS and first instalment of \$355,000 received. We have applied for additional funding through DEWLP, which was successful. Project is at planning permit stage.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
8.5 Review the Swan Hill Active Transport Strategy.	8.5.1 Review the Strategy.	In planning 	The Active Transport Strategy (ATS) is being reviewed as part of the Missing Links Strategy. Implementation table has been updated from ATS.
	8.5.2 Adopt the reviewed Strategy.	Not started 	
8.6 Review the way that we procure and maintain our Infrastructure.	8.6.1 Continuously improve the efficiency of our works and maintenance crew.	In progress 	Tablet computers are progressively being rolled out to Works teams. These enable staff to record daily completion of tasks.
	8.6.2 Identify opportunities to rationalise assets and facilities that do not have an identified service need.	In planning 	Work is progressing on a Public Convenience Facilities Strategy. Asset rationalisation strategy will be developed by Dec 2019.
	8.6.3 Conduct a review of public facilities including public toilets (included as part of 18/19 review).	In planning 	Working with the Engineering and Asset Departments to finalise a Public Convenience Strategy.
8.7 Maximise community benefits from the opportunities presented at the Chisholm Motor Sports Complex.	8.7.1 Continue to work with Community Groups of Chisholm Motor Sports complex.	Completed/ongoing 	Council is developing a draft lease agreement which will replace the Recreation Reserve Agreements that Council currently has in place with each individual user group. This lease will be between Council and the Chisholm Reserve Complex Inc. (CRC Inc.) and will have sub lease agreements with each user group. A boundary proposal to be presented by the CRC Inc. for approval in October 2019.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
9.1 Implement Swan Hill and Robinvale Riverfront Masterplan.	9.1.1 Identify and successfully apply for funding opportunities.	Completed/ongoing 	There has been three unsuccessful attempts for external funds to support the Lighting Up Riverside Park. Another application was submitted in the 2018/19 FY. Project costs \$270,000. Application to Regional Growth Fund was submitted to update Robinvale Riverfront Masterplan. This application was not successful. Funding was announced in March 2019 for implementation of Riverfront Masterplans within Swan Hill and Robinvale.
	9.1.2 Ensure projects complete in accordance with timelines.	In progress 	Play precinct and Japanese garden projects to commence in October 2019. Works on the new Swan Hill skate park completed September 2019.
	9.1.3 Identify and encourage private sector investment.	In progress 	Commercial Development Strategy completed. Currently pursuing land acquisition opportunities.
9.2 Ensure developers comply with the Infrastructure Design Manual where relevant to local standards.	9.2.1 Improve internal and external stakeholders understanding of the Infrastructure Design Manual.	Completed/ongoing 	Ongoing communication with developers and Council's Planning Department through pre-application meetings and post-application Engineering referrals to Planning.
	9.2.2 Develop local policy position in areas where the Infrastructure Design Manual can be varied.	In planning 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing discussions and consultation with key stakeholders including; IDM Author, Design and Development Consultants and Council Staff. A report was presented to Council meeting in this regard. Old policy named Footpath on Road Reserve has been cancelled and replaced by the IDM requirement. It was recommended that the current IDM is to be reviewed over time to Councils particular needs.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
9.3 Upgrade Swan Hill Livestock Selling Complex.	9.3.1 Implement upgrade project.	Complete 	Completed September 2019. Official launch being arranged.
	9.3.2 Identify funding opportunities for future stages.	In planning 	No funding opportunities identified at present. Continuing to investigate new funding sources.
9.4 Review the Road network and classify each road.	9.4.1 Complete a service review of the road network.	Complete 	Completed and incorporated in the Road Management Plan
	9.4.2 Identify and pursue funding opportunities for upgrades.	In progress 	<p>Round one grants have included: Lake Boga Ultima Road Reconstruction and Dead Horse Lane project design. The total contribution from the State Government to Swan Hill Rural City Council is \$700,000.</p> <p>Round two grants have included: - Dead Horse Lane (construct 2.3km from Sea Lake Swan Hill Road to EOS). \$336,250 has been budgeted for in the 2019/20 financial year. - Kenley Road (widen 4.1m seal to 6.2m for approximately 4km starting from MVH) \$210,000 has been budgeted for in the 2019/20 financial year. - Lutzies Road Ext (resheet 1.2km and realign intersection onto Sea Lake Swan Hill Rd) \$81,550 has been budgeted for in the 2019/20 financial year We received \$1,200,000 in extra funds from the second round to compliment SHRCC's budget.</p>
9.5 Plan and deliver Council's capital works program and Major Project Plan.	9.5.1 Minimise capital works and major project carry over from year to year.	In planning 	Work in progress.
	9.5.2 Complete Major Projects Plan review each year.	Complete/ongoing 	Major Projects Plan is reviewed annually in Nov/Dec.
	9.5.3 Minimise project budget overruns.	In planning 	Work in progress.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
10.1 Actively pursue opportunities from decommissioned irrigation infrastructure.	10.1.1 Work with Goulburn Murray Water to decommission channel number 9.	Complete 	Work on decommissioning is complete.
	10.1.2 Identify opportunities for land parcels taken over by Council.	In progress 	Initial discussions held with ELT and Council. 10-Year Major Projects Plan includes funding for scoping, design and implementation. A list of property owners, easements and GMW intentions for each separate parcel of land has been prepared. Advice has been received on the process to acquire unused land with former channels from deceased estates. A valuation on some of the parcels has been obtained to enable an estimate of the total acquisition costs to be prepared. Sept 2019 Awaiting concept plan and cost estimates on possible pathway(s).
	10.1.3 Identify funding opportunities to upgrade newly available land.	In planning 	Concept plans are being prepared for discussion with Council.
10.2 Complete the Recreation Reserve Masterplan.	10.2.1 Adopt the Recreation Reserves Masterplan.	Completed 	Completed and endorsed at May 2018 Council meeting.
	10.2.2 Establish a long term operational maintenance program for Council managed reserves.	In planning 	Working through the Recreation Reserve Masterplan to identify key areas.
	10.2.3 Investigate funding options to implement actions within the Masterplan.	Completed/ongoing 	Funding has been identified for the following projects: Robinvale Cricket Nets, Showground Cricket Nets, Gurnett Oval Cricket Nets, Showgrounds Change Rooms, Aquatics Strategic Plan, Lake Boga Recreation Reserve Playground, Riverside Park Robinvale Playground, Nyah Netball Courts.
	10.2.4 Review and update user agreements between Council and recreation reserve users groups.	In progress 	Sept 19 finalising the Recreation Reserve and Pavilion Service Agreements

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
10.3 Review current use of council facilities.	10.3.1 Produce usage report, including analysis of non-Council facilities that provide similar services.	Not started 	
	10.3.2 Identify opportunities to rationalise Council assets.	In progress 	Asset Management Plans are being developed as assets are conditioned rated for valuation purposes. Asset management plans are to ISO55000 standard and include rationalisation discussion. Toilet Strategy in Progress and is looking at opportunities to rationalise. Multi-use options are considered for all new facilities.
10.4 Plan and deliver assets for the current and future needs of our growing community and changing environment.	10.4.1 Implement an effective asset management system.	In progress 	Council engaged Pacesetter Services to conduct full review for Civica Asset Module and report provided. Aug 19 - Asset Management Working Group has been reconvened to investigate the Asset Systems used within Council. Asset Framework to be developed which will drive the asset systems.
	10.4.2 Develop and update policies, strategies and registers.	In progress 	Asset Management Plan adopted in December 2017. Further discussions and development of policy being undertake to incorporate Recreation Reserve Agreements. September 2019 The following policies, plans and strategies are being finalised - Footpath Asset Management Plan - Public Convenience Strategy - Asset Framework - Asset Naming Policy and Procedure The Asset Framework will lead to reviewed Asset Policy and strategies.
	10.4.3 Complete a centralised asset register.	In progress 	Review existing register as recommended through Pacesetter Report (once Authority upgraded to include the Pacesetter). Asset Registers are all within Authority and constantly being updated to reflect capital works. Asset Framework will identify the future requirements and therefore Council will be able to make better decision regarding what needs to be in registers.



Key results area Governance and Leadership








“We will represent the interests of our community, conduct our affairs openly, with integrity, reflecting the high levels of governance expected by our community. We will plan for the long term growth and development of our municipality by committing to a robust program of strategic planning.”







We will have:






1. Positive community engagement through appropriate and constructive consultation.
2. Effective and efficient utilisation of resources.
3. Effective partnerships and relationships with key stakeholders and staff.
4. Effective advocacy and strategic planning.









What have we done








STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
11.1 Develop Council's systems and processes to improve our customer service, efficiency and effectiveness of our operations	11.1.1 Undertake Council Services Review.	In progress 	Staff realignment occurred during November 2018. Ongoing Aged Care Reform. FDC program re-auspiced from July 2019.
	11.1.2 Implement the new IT Strategy.	In progress 	We are currently working on improved Customer Services processes for Statutory Planning applications, we remain on target for the completion of the initiatives as per the ICT Strategic plan. The Planning processes improvements will feed directly into the community portal and will provide another channel in to Council for Customer Service improvements. System currently undergoing review.
	11.1.3 Implement Customer Service Strategy actions.	Completed/ongoing 	Ongoing.









STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
11.2 Use social media as a medium for community consultation and communication.	11.2.1 Introduce Facebook advertising.	Complete 	Facebook advertising is regularly used and posts are continuing to be used to consult and communicate with the public. A new Facebook page for the Swan Hill Big Green Shed was launched in June 2019.
	11.2.2 Increase the use of online survey tools.	Completed/ongoing 	Online surveys have been used as a community consultation tool for Council's - Communication and Engagement Strategy 2019-22 - 212 responses, Off-leash Dog Park - 103 responses, and Robinvale Community Library - 146 responses.
11.3 Establish new and alternative methods of consultation.	11.3.1 Research and report to council on contemporary consultation methods.	Complete 	A discussion paper has been developed and was presented to Council Assembly in October 2017.
	11.3.2 Investigate the use of multilingual publications.	Not started 	
	11.3.3 Increase the use of social media, online survey tools.	Complete 	We have been increasing the use of social media for public information (Facebook), an online survey was used effectively for the consultation regarding the communication strategy in July 2018. This will continue to occur. We are also investigating use of other social media platforms, like Twitter and Instagram.
	11.3.4 Increase the use of current and professional networks and contacts to canvass opinion and share information.	In planning 	MRGC CEOs continues to be a useful forum.
	11.3.5 Review Councils Communication strategy.	Complete 	A Communication Survey was completed in July 2018 with 212 responses from the community. New Communication and Engagement Strategy adopted by Council in December 2018.










STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
11.4 Champion a culture that values strong community engagement.	11.4.1 Include effective community engagement processes in all planning and project delivery plans.	Completed/ongoing 	As an organisation we are increasing our commitment to engage with the community affected by our projects. Nyah Road reconstruction and line-marking are recent examples. An online survey was used to consult with the community regarding the recently adopted Communication and Engagement Strategy.
	11.4.2 Conduct training for staff.	In planning 	Internally mentoring and providing guidance for new and existing staff in effective community engagement. Investigating alternative engagement options eg. Bang the Table, Engagement HQ
	11.4.3 Implement a project management system.	In planning 	The workflow and policies and procedures are currently under review.
11.5 Develop a strong positive message and image for Council and the region.	11.5.1 Publish two community newsletters a year.	Completed/ongoing 	Winter newsletters published and distributed in July 2019. Next edition is planned for summer 2020.
	11.5.2 Use Facebook advertising and social media to promote Council.	Complete 	Promotion continues through regular use of Council's Facebook page. A new Facebook page was created for the Swan Hill Big Green Shed was launched in June 2019.
	11.5.3 Use established connections/partnerships to promote a positive Council image.	Complete 	We seek opportunities to reinforce the message that we are here for the community through our media engagement and in our Mayoral Columns in local newspapers.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
12.1 Continually improve workplace safety and staff health and wellbeing.	12.1.1 Participate in MAV Workcover self insurance scheme.	Complete 	Officially commenced in this scheme November 2017.
	12.1.2 Develop and implement an OH&S framework.	In progress 	Initial audit has been completed. OHS Management plan adopted by ELT and OHS committee in August 2018. Actions are regularly reported on to ELT and the OHS committee.
	12.1.3 Implement National Assessment Tool (NAT) auditing across the organisation.	Complete 	Auditing schedule adopted by ELT October 2017. Four internal audits completed to date.
	12.1.4 Test the Business Continuity Plan.	Complete 	Business Continuity Plan testing Completed November 2017.
	12.1.5 Review and develop Councils Risk Framework and Strategy.	Complete 	July 2019 Council's Risk Management Framework adopted by Council , Policy, and Risk Register have been reviewed. Council's Business Continuity Management Framework and plans have been reviewed and approved by ELT. Risk Management for Risk Owners training has commenced. Risk management roles and responsibilities have been included in induction training for all staff and risk management responsibility statements for position descriptions have been developed. Risk reporting to the Audit Committee continues.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
12.2 Review results of community satisfaction survey, submissions and community consultations to identify and respond to changes in service demand or expectations.	12.2.1 Participate in annual community satisfaction survey.	Completed/ongoing 	Community survey completed March 2019. Results presented to Council in August 2019
	12.2.2 Review, report and act as appropriate on survey results, formal submissions and specific consultations.	Completed/ongoing 	Community Satisfaction Survey results are analysed and reported to Council annually. Complete for 2017, 2018 and 2019.
12.3 Implement a Project Management System.	12.3.1 Review and improve current processes.	In planning 	The workflow and policies and procedures are currently under review.
	12.3.2 Implement a centralised Project Management System utilised throughout the organisation.	Not started 	
12.4 Review council services for efficiency, effectiveness and quality.	12.4.1 Prioritise services for a detailed review.	In progress 	Staff realignment occurred during November 2018. Councils involvement in Family Day Care ceased on 30 June 2019. Ongoing review of Councils role in Aged Care.
	12.4.2 Identify relevant benchmarks for a service review.	Not started 	
	12.4.3 Implement an improvement plan.	Not started 	
	12.4.4 Implement the IT Strategy.	In progress 	We are continually reviewing and improving Council's external facing business processes, the community portal, planning processes and an online payment gateway are currently being developed and are scheduled for testing in early June. In addition we have replaced paper based processes with a range of online forms.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
13.1 Engage and partner with organisations, business and individuals to increase co-operation and avoid duplication of resources when common objectives are identified.	13.1.1 Conduct skills audit of community organisations.	In planning 	
	13.1.2 Identify areas in which to increase co-operation.	In progress 	Council have engaged and partnered with organisations and businesses, holding business breakfasts and training sessions.
	13.1.3 Form strategies and partnerships for key issues / projects.	Completed/ongoing 	Some examples include the Saleyards redevelopment, advocacy for the Swan Hill Bridge replacement, housing in Robinvale, and the Swan Hill hospital.
13.2 Encourage and support Council representatives to obtain positions on relevant boards that support council's activities, providing these duties do not conflict with Council responsibilities.	13.2.1 Identify Key Board positions.	Completed/ongoing 	Council have a number of staff on boards including the Swan Hill Hospital Board, Robinvale Hospital Board, the local school boards and community sporting group boards. Councillors sit on a variety of boards which is determined following Mayoral elections each November.
	13.2.2 Discuss Board position opportunities regularly at Councillor Assemblies and Management meetings.	In progress 	As opportunities arise these are discussed and relevant officers identified.
	13.2.3 Develop advocacy strategies.	Completed 	A number of advocacy strategies have been developed including Our River – Our Region, Our Hospital, Central Murray Region Central Transport Strategy, and Our Top Five Projects. These documents are used when advocating for strategic projects with government bodies.
	13.2.4 Train staff and Councillors on Governance responsibilities and industry based awareness.	Completed/ongoing 	Presentations given to Councillors on Conflict of Interest and Principal Conduct Officer provisions of Local Government Act in November 2017, and draft new Local Government Bill in February 2018. Audit of Returns of Interest conducted in January 2018. Presentation on return of Interest forms conducted in June 2018. Training session on Local Law No. 1 delivered to Councillors in May 2019.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
13.3 Ensure regular dialogue with neighbouring municipalities and other stakeholders.	13.3.1 Schedule regular meetings with Murray River Shire, Balranald Shire and Murray River Group of Councils.	Complete/ongoing 	The CEO regularly attends Murray River Group of Councils meetings. Latest meeting was held in June 2019.
	13.3.2 Schedule meetings with State Government Representatives.	In progress 	Meeting held regularly with local members. Meetings held prior to recent elections. CEO and Councillors attend the National General Assembly in June each year.
13.4 Ensure we have appropriately skilled staff that are aligned to the organisational values of Council and are recognised accordingly.	13.4.1 Implement ongoing training and education program.	Complete 	Training needs database developed post annual performance reviews in July each year and organisational training plan implemented. More than 4,500 hours of organisational training was provided to staff during the 2018-19 year, or 22 hours per EFT, this is due to additional online learning
	13.4.2 Recognise achievements in innovation and best practice, including through the staff awards.	Completed/ongoing 	Staff awards were held in August 2017, 2018 and 2019. Commenced a regular innovation section in the Staff Matters Newsletter. Two staff recognised in December 2017 for innovative Occupational Health and Safety practices.
	13.4.3 Pursue industry and professional recognition for staff.	Not started 	
	13.4.4 Utilise management and leadership development programs.	Completed/ongoing 	The CEO, Directors and Managers are engaged in a leadership development program for 2017/18. Coordinators completed a Leadership Development program in 2017/18. Senior Accountant participating in LGFin Pro mentoring program.
	13.4.5 Increase cross-organisational awareness and resource sharing.	In progress 	Staff short term vacancies filled internally in the first instance. Resource sharing occurs on an ongoing basis. Staff filling in across different work groups to up-skill.
	13.4.6 Invite Councillors to all staff recognition events.	Completed/ongoing 	Councillors attended Staff Recognition Awards 2017, 2018, 2019 and the Staff/Councillor Christmas event in 2017, 2018.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
13.5 Council to lead the conversation on Bridge placement with the community.	13.5.1 Represent councils views at stakeholder meeting.	In progress 	Council has requested a review of the heritage values of the Swan Hill bridge and has requested authorities review the location of a new bridge in light of the BPAC Engineers Australia Report.
	13.5.2 Conduct public engagement and awareness campaign.	In progress 	Council regularly issues media releases. The Swan Hill bridge is part of Councils state and federal advocacy strategy.
14.1 Improve effectiveness of Council's advocacy.	14.1.1 Identify the key issues to be advocated for.	Complete 	The Advocacy Strategy outlining key issues was adopted by Council in May 2019.
	14.1.2 Develop and implement an Advocacy Strategy.	Complete 	The Advocacy Strategy outlining key issues was adopted by Council in May 2019.
14.2 Work with Swan Hill District Health and Robinvale District Health Services to develop joint advocacy strategies for improved health services for our community.	14.2.1 Adopt the health precinct plan into the Swan Hill Planning Scheme.	Complete 	Council adopted Health Precinct Plan into Swan Hill Planning Scheme in November 2017.
	14.2.2 Regular meetings with relevant bodies to determine needs.	Completed/ongoing 	A 'Swan Hill needs a new Hospital' group has been operational for some time and includes officers and Councillors working with the community to advocate for a new hospital. The Group will continue to advocate to the newly elected State and Federal Government as appropriate.
	14.2.3 Advocate State and Federal Government.	Completed/ongoing 	Swan Hill District Health and the proposed redevelopment is a key part of Council's Advocacy Strategy. Swan Hill Needs a New Hospital campaign was initiated in June 2018, and the process has continued with various activities, and presentation of petition/ letters to Minister, post-June.
14.3 Advocate to State and Federal governments to fund priorities in Community Plans, Major Projects Plan and other key Council plans and strategies.	14.3.1 Develop marketing material on key issues.	Complete 	A prospectus of potential government investment opportunities has been prepared and will continue to be updated.
	14.3.2 Strategically meet with key stakeholders and policy makers.	Completed/ongoing 	The Murray River Group of Councils has been particularly useful for Council in regional advocacy.







Key results area Environment






“We will adopt work practices and implement policies that reduce the environmental impact, advocate for the protection of our environment and fulfil our regulatory obligations.”



We will have:


1. Sound policies and practices that protect and enhance our environment.
2. A waste management program that is environmentally and financially sustainable.



What have we done






STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
15.1 Be actively involved in external discussions that affect the Murray River, its tributaries and lake systems.	15.1.1 Nominate a Councillor to represent Council on the Murray Darling Association.	Complete 	Swan Hill Rural City Council has withdrawn its membership to the Murray Darling Association.
	15.1.2 Lodge submissions to Federal agencies via Murray River Group of Councils and report to Council.	In progress 	CEO has contributed to the Murray River Group of Councils advocacy campaign ACT 2017. MRGC continues to have a voice on the socio-economic impacts of the Murray Darling Basin Plan.
15.2 Maintain and improve the condition of Lake Boga foreshore and its environs within our area of control in collaboration with other stakeholders.	15.2.1 Continue restoration works.	In planning 	Discussions with other stakeholders will begin on who is responsible for certain areas.
	15.2.2 Chair and attend Lake Boga Land and On Water Management Plan meetings.	Completed/ongoing 	Meetings of the committee are regular and a variety of projects are underway, including a grant for the construction of a new fishing platform.








STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
15.3 Seek to influence how environmental water is used within the municipality.	15.3.1 Attain membership to Catchment Management Authorities (CMA).	In progress 	A Council position on MDBP is under development.
	15.3.2 Seek a position on CMA committees.	In progress 	No positions were filled at the last CMA elections.
15.4 Investigate opportunities to improve stormwater runoff from townships into the River.	15.4.1 Complete an investigation.	Complete 	1. Key issues Identified with needed work scoped and costed through updating the 10 Year Major Projects Plan. 2. Concerns are captured through Sysaid, investigated with tasks assigned to the engineering design staff where needed. Ongoing.
	15.4.2 Action recommendations.	Not started 	
	15.4.3 Identify funding opportunities and submit applications.	In progress 	Successful funding application for \$410,000 from NDRGS with \$205,000 from Council.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
15.5 Investigate alternative energy for council buildings, and a community solar option.	15.5.1 Identify additional buildings to connect to renewable energies.	In progress 	Council has joined Sustainability Victoria Local Government Energy Saver Program to take advantage of initiatives targeted at identified resource constrained municipalities. Stream 1: Establish Local Government Corporate Emissions Profile and Reduction Plan. Stream 2: Local Government owned facility energy audits. Stream 3: Implementation of Retrofit Work (funding opportunities of up to \$100,000). Ongoing investigation into solar options for facilities. Investigation of natural gas connection to Council owned buildings where possible.
	15.5.2 Prepare a business case for each option.	In progress 	Sustainability Victoria has made available funding to identified resource constrained councils including the Swan Hill Rural City Council to participate in the Local Government Energy Saver Program and Council has accepted the invitation to participate. Detailed audits on selected facilities have now been completed ELT have approved priority works.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
15.6 Advocate for improved control on private and public land of feral pests and weeds (continued)	15.6.1 Engage with local Landcare groups	Completed/ongoing 	Council Officers continue to remain in close contact with Landcare Coordinators to assist groups in achieving the control targets and reporting requirements. 2018-19 The main focus of control includes Boxthorn and rabbit fumigation works around Ultima. Once these works are completed a draft control plan for 2019-20 will be developed and submitted to DELWP to access the the 2019-20 years funding. Funding amount allocated to this program is \$75,000.
	15.6.2 Identify and reduce box thorn infestations.	Completed/ongoing 	The focus of 2018/19 Weeds and Pest Program was to Boxthorn control on roadsides. Granular chemical treatment technique for boxthorn on road reserves from Piangil to Swan Hill and out to Ultima during the 2018-19 Roadside Weeds and Pests Program. The aim was to achieve the successful treatment of over 10,000 boxthorn plants which will be significantly larger than previous attempts using different methods. Works are anticipated to be complete by the end of October 2019.
	15.6.3 Extend fruit fly program.	Completed/ongoing 	New funding applied for at local and regional level. Good results with the tree removal program. SHRCC staff on executive committee board.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
15.7 Review our work methods to reduce the environmental impact of what we do.	15.7.1 Review our fuel usage.	Completed/ongoing 	Fuel consumption figures captured and reports being established within fleet management system. Consumption data provided to Council's Environmental Officer for inclusion in energy and green house gas reduction study. Preliminary report received and discussed. Main recommendation to replace 32 vehicles with electric (impractical). Other suggestions for reduction of fuel will be further investigated.
	15.7.2 Review plant and corporate fleet requirements.	Complete 	Established plant committee to review plant and equipment requirements, current and future. Utilisation of all plant and vehicles captured and reports being established. Car pool booking system established and accessible for all Council staff. Adjusted replacement program to reflect altered priorities. Identifying potentially underutilised plant, for discussion and action.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
15.7 Review our work methods to reduce the environmental impact of what we do (continued).	15.7.3 Investigate and use where possible sustainable building practices.	In progress 	We are electing to use (where possible) less obtrusive means of auguring so as to minimise damage to earth integrity and use compaction rather than concrete. Removing excess sprinklers to eliminate excessive watering, ongoing investigations into reclaiming storm water.
	15.7.4 Investigate and use where possible recycled materials.	In progress 	Recycled materials used in Nyah Road median strip, (recycled material borders, drought tolerant plants, low maintenance landscaping). In April 2019, the resurfacing of Perrin Street, Robinvale was completed with asphalt incorporating crumbed rubber, made from recycled tyres. This material comes with a predicted life span of five to 10 extra years, compared with traditional asphalt.
15.8 Define Councils approach to fulfilling our environmental enforcement obligations.	15.8.1 Develop a clear Policy.	In progress 	The planning scheme covers all the requirements for Council's environmental enforcement obligations. DELWP have developed amended native vegetation management rules which are now in force. The Planning Scheme will need to be amended to incorporate all relevant changes. Council staff have completed training to acquaint themselves with the new regulations. Additional training has been provided to field staff and Council was successful in securing the Roadside Maintenance Exemption within defined envelopes depending on classification assigned to particular roads throughout the municipality.
16.1 Review and implement the Waste Management Plan.	16.1.1 Approve a revised and updated Waste Management Plan.	Complete/ongoing 	Ongoing review. Must be timed with the renewal of the Waste Management Service Contracts due for re-tendering in 2020. Ongoing- In line with the joint procurement process regarding the Waste management Contracts through Regional Waste Management Group. Tendering will be handled by Bendigo City Council. Tender Submissions currently being assessed.
	16.1.2 Implement identified actions.	Complete/ongoing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing progressive capping 2. Ongoing investigation into relocating the Materials Recycling Facility from Gray Street to the Swan Hill Landfill site. 3. Construction of the e-waste sheds is completed. 4. Ongoing works to ensure compliance with EPA/ Licence conditions.

FOUR YEAR PRIORITY	OBJECTIVE	PROGRESS	COMMENTARY
16.2 Investigate opportunities for green waste and organic collection service.	16.2.1 Review data for current green waste service.	Complete 	Green waste service in place and it is expanding. Organics has been investigated by EDU. (Ongoing).
	16.2.2 Develop and implement a green waste information campaign.	Complete 	Council officers are running a green waste management media campaign in September each year. A plan in place for promoting free green waste disposal at Robinvale and Swan Hill Landfill one weekend per year.
	16.2.3 Investigate organic waste disposal opportunities.	Completed/ongoing 	Grant applied for to fund a business plan for regional composting facility between Buloke, Yarriambiack and Swan Hill.
16.3 Continue to lobby for a state-wide container deposit scheme.	16.3.1 Have the container deposit scheme identified as a priority in the Loddon Mallee Waste Resource Recovery Forum	In progress 	Loddon Mallee Waste Resource Recovery Forum continue to lobby government.
16.4 Develop projects that can be funded from the Victoria Sustainability Fund that provide environmental benefits for our community.	16.4.1 Identify projects.	In planning 	No viable projects identified at this stage.
	16.4.2 Secure funding for identified projects.	In planning 	No viable projects identified at this stage.
	16.4.3 Investigate opportunities for recycling industry within the municipality (included as part of 18/19 review).	In planning 	Working with a new business trying to establish a demolition recycling business in Swan Hill.



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SECTION C – DECISIONS WHICH NEED ACTION/RATIFICATION

C.19.17 SIGN & SEAL REPORT

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer

Attachments: Nil.

Declarations of Interest:

John McLinden - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

The following documents and agreements have been signed and sealed by the Councillors and the Chief Executive Officer on the respective dates. Those actions require the ratification of the Council.

Discussion

During the course of any month Council is required to sign and seal a range of documents arising from decisions made on a previous occasion(s). Examples include sale of land, entering into funding arrangements for Council programs etc.

As the decision to enter into these agreements has already been made, these documents are signed and sealed when received, with Council ratifying the signing and sealing at the next Council meeting.

The following documents were signed and sealed since the last Council meeting:

No.	Document Type	Document Description	Date signed/ sealed
951	173 Agreement – Subdivision of Land (dwelling excision) CA:61 SEC B, Parish of Bumbang, 3925 Murray Valley Highway, Robinvale	Between Swan Hill Rural City Council and B.Crispo and A.S.Crispo	17-09-2019
952	Agreement – Special Rate	Between Swan Hill Rural City Council and Swan Hill Inc.	24-09-2019

Conclusion

Council authorise the signing and sealing of the above documents.

Recommendation

That Council notes the actions of signing and sealing the documents under delegation as scheduled.

C.19.18 COUNCILLOR ASSEMBLIES - RECORD OF ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA ITEMS

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer
File Number: S15-05-06
Attachments: 1 Councillor Attendance

Declarations of Interest:

John McLinden - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

The Local Government Act 1989 requires that the details of Councillor Assemblies be reported to Council meetings on a monthly basis.

Discussion

The State Government has amended the Local Government Act 1989 which requires Council to report on Councillor Assemblies.

Whilst Minutes do not have to be recorded, Agenda items and those in attendance must be, and a report presented to Council.

An assembly of Councillors is defined as a meeting that is planned or scheduled at which at least half of the Council and one Officer are in attendance, and where the matters being considered that are intended or likely to be the subject of a Council decision.

No formal decisions can be made at an assembly but rather direction can be given that is likely to lead to a formal decision of Council.

Details of the most recent assemblies of Council are attached.

Consultation

Not applicable.

Financial Implications

Not applicable.

Social Implications

Not applicable.

Economic Implications

Not applicable.

Environmental Implications

Not applicable.

Risk Management Implications

Not applicable.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Governance and leadership - Effective advocacy and strategic planning.

Options

Council must comply with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1989.

Recommendation

That Council note the contents of the report.

COUNCILLOR ASSEMBLIES ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA
24 September 2019 at 1pm, Swan Hill Town Hall – Council Chambers

AGENDA ITEMS

- Aged Care Update
- Murray Darling Basin Position Paper
- Farm Worker Visa & Submission Regional Migration Senate Inquiry
- New Regulations for Swimming Pool Barriers
- The Regional Tourism Review Report and Vic Tourism Strategy
- Murray River Tourism Request for Extension of MOU
- Active Play
- Up-Date GrainCorp site

ADDITIONAL ITEMS DISCUSSED

- Nil

ATTENDANCE

Councillors

- Cr Ann Young
- Cr Jade Benham
- Cr Nicole McKay
- Cr Bill Moar

Apologies

- Cr Les McPhee
- Cr Lea Johnson
- Cr Chris Jeffery

OFFICERS

- John McLinden, Chief Executive Officer
- David Lenton, Director Corporate Service
- Svetla Petkova, Director Infrastructure
- Bruce Myers, Director Community & Cultural Services
- Muriel Scholz, Senior Economic Development Officer
- Fiona Gormann, Economic and Community Development Manager
- Stefan Louw, Development Manager

Other

- Nil

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- David Lenton – Murray Darling Basin Position Paper

**COUNCILLOR ASSEMBLIES ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA
1 October 2019 at 1pm, Pioneer Settlement – Rees Board Room**

AGENDA ITEMS

- Pioneer Settlement Tour
- KSI Report 1st Quarter
- Asset Naming Policy and Procedure
- Renaming of Chisholm Reserve to Swan Hill Motoplex
- Community Development Unit
- Economic Development Unit
- Road Safety (General) Regulations 2019
- Sale 71-77 Bromley Road – Presentation of Proposals
- Aged Care Update

ADDITIONAL ITEMS DISCUSSED

- GrainCorp
- Select Harvest – Meeting with manager

ATTENDANCE

Councillors

- Cr Les McPhee
- Cr Chris Jeffery
- Cr Lea Johnson
- Cr Jade Benham
- Cr Bill Moar
- Cr Nicole McKay

Apologies

- Ann Young

OFFICERS

- John McLinden, Chief Executive Officer
- David Lenton, Director Corporate Service
- Heather Green, Director Development and Planning
- Svetla Petkova, Director Infrastructure
- Bruce Myers, Director Community & Cultural Services
- Helen Morris, Organisational Development Manager
- Laura O'Dwyer, Enterprise Assets Manager
- Fiona Gormann, Economic and Community Development Manager
- Trish Ficarra, Public Health and Regulatory Services Coordinator

Other

- Nil

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- Nil

SECTION D – NOTICES OF MOTION

SECTION E – URGENT ITEMS NOT INCLUDED IN AGENDA

SECTION F – TO CONSIDER & ORDER ON COUNCILLOR REPORTS

SECTION G – IN CAMERA ITEMS

Recommendation

That Council close the meeting to the public on the grounds that the following report(s) include industrial matters and proposed development

- B.19.118 IN CAMERA CONSIDERATION OF CONFIDENTIAL REPORT**
- B.19.119 IN CAMERA CONSIDERATION OF CONFIDENTIAL REPORT**