



# MINUTES

## UNSCHEDULED MEETING OF COUNCIL

Tuesday, 30 May 2023

Held at the Swan Hill Town Hall  
53-57 McCallum St, Swan Hill  
Commenced at 1pm

### **COUNCIL:**

Cr LT McPhee – Mayor

Cr B Moar  
Cr A Young  
Cr C Jeffery  
Cr S King  
Cr N McKay  
Cr J Kelly

Confirmed 20 June 2023

Chairperson.....

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## **SECTION A – PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

- **Welcome**

Mayor, Councillor Les McPhee assumed the chair and declared the meeting open at 1.00pm.

- **Acknowledgement of Country**

Mayor, Councillor Les McPhee read the Acknowledgement of Country.

*“Swan Hill Rural City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, and pays its respects to their elders, past and present.”*

- **Prayer**

Cr Nicole McKay read the prayer.

**We beseech you Lord, that we may be granted wisdom, understanding and sincerity of purpose, in the decisions we are called on to make for the welfare of the people of the Rural City of Swan Hill.**

- **Apologies/Leaves of Absence**

Cr Chris Jeffery

### **57/23 Motion**

**MOVED Cr McKay**

**That the apologies be accepted.**

**SECONDED Cr King**

**The Motion was put and CARRIED**

- **Directors/Officers Present**

Scott Barber, Chief Executive Officer  
Bruce Myers, Director of Community and Cultural Services  
Bhan Pratap, Director of Corporate Services  
Leah Johnston, Director of Infrastructure  
Heather Green, Director of Development and Planning  
Ash Free, Finance Manager  
Sharon Lindsay, Executive Assistant

- **Disclosures of Conflict of Interest**

Nil

## **SECTION B – REPORTS**

### **B.23.37 RECEIVE AND HEAR SUBMISSIONS TO THE PROPOSED 2023/24 BUDGET**

**Responsible Officer:** Director Corporate Services  
**File Number:** S15-06-15  
**Attachments:** 1 Submissions

#### **Declarations of Interest:**

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

#### **Summary**

The purpose of this report is to enable Council to receive and hear submissions for the Proposed 2023/24 Annual Budget.

At the close of the submission period 12 submissions were received, 10 of which were public and 2 internal. Four submitters requested to speak to their submission.

#### **Discussion**

Council advertised for submissions to its Proposed 2023/24 Annual Budget in the Swan Hill Guardian on 21 April 2023, the Robinvale Sentinel on 27 April 2023 and online through let's talk, Council's community engagement platform. Submissions were invited from 21 April 2023 to 19 May 2023.

The Statutory period for making submissions has now passed. As required under the Local Government Act 1989. Council must now formally receive, hear and then consider all submissions. Consideration of submissions will occur at a Special Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 6 June 2023.

At the close of the submission period, 12 submissions were received. Four submissions (submission numbers 1, 2, 9 and 10) requested to speak to their submission.

#### **Summary of Submission 1**

The submitter questions the reason for the Alan Garden Reserve Scoreboard Upgrade project being moved from the 2023-24 budget year as advised previously.

#### **Summary of Submission 2**

The submitter expressed their concern over the proposed increase in rates for the Dry Land Farming class of rates and asked Council to reconsider the draft budget so that rate increases are shared amongst all ratepayers.

### **Summary of Submission 3**

The submitter questions Council's spending on climate related action, highlighting areas of purchasing electric vehicles for Council fleet, electrification infrastructure for council facilities, electric vehicle charging infrastructure and more renewable energy related projects.

### **Summary of Submission 4**

The submitter highlights that the fee's and charges for dog and cat registrations need to be changed to comply with the Domestic Animals Act.

### **Summary of Submission 5**

The submitter questions the difference in fees paid for the hire of the Swan Hill Recreation Reserve, compared to other recreation reserves within the municipality.

### **Summary of Submission 6**

The submitter highlights that the fee's and charges for the Leisure Centre's and Swan Hill Outdoor Pool have been reviewed and require adjustment.

### **Summary of Submission 7**

This submitter asked for some detail on the Data and Technology Strategy.

### **Summary of Submission 8**

The submitter asks a number of questions regarding projects within Robinvale with a comment made on the Swan Hill Drag Strip and its inclusion in the 10 Year Major Projects Plan.

### **Summary of Submission 9**

The submitter expressed their concern over the proposed increase in rates for the Dry Land Farming class of rates and asked why the rates for this class has increased 20.8% which is much higher than all other class of rates. The submitter was also asking why only 1% of major project spend is within small towns, and acknowledgement by Council that dry land farmers have difficulty accessing the full range of Council services.

### **Summary of Submission 10**

The submitter expressed their concern over the proposed increase in rates for the Dry Land Farming class of rates and asked Council to reconsider the draft budget so that rate increases are shared amongst all ratepayers.

### **Summary of Submission 11**

The submitter requested an extension of an irrigation line to the Robinswood Homestead and highlighted concerns surrounding the accuracy of information on the signage at the Robinswood Homestead and requests funding for a replacement sign/plaque.

### **Summary of Submission 12**

The submitter expressed their concern over the proposed increase in rates for the Dry Land Farming class of rates and asked Council to reconsider the draft budget so that rate increases are shared amongst all ratepayers.

### **Consultation**

The submission process is part of the consultation process for the budget.

### **Financial Implications**

The hearing of submissions has no financial implications.

### **Social Implications**

The hearing of submissions allows for community participation in Councillor decision making leading to improved social outcomes.

### **Economic Implications**

The hearing of submissions has no economic implications.

### **Environmental Implications**

The hearing of submissions has no environmental implications.

### **Risk Management Implications**

The hearing of submissions has no risk management implications.

### **Council Plan Strategy Addressed**

**Leadership** - Transparent communication and engagement.

### **Options**

After considering the submissions Council can choose to adopt or amend the 2023/24 Annual Budget.

### **Recommendations**

#### **That Council:**

- 1. Receive and hear submissions to the Proposed 2023/24 Annual Budget.**
- 2. Prepare responses to the submissions and table at an Unscheduled**

**Meeting of Council for consideration on 6 June 2023.**

**58/23 Motion**

**MOVED Cr King**

**That Council:**

- 1. Receive and hear submissions to the Proposed 2023/24 Annual Budget.**
- 2. Prepare responses to the submissions and table at an Unscheduled Meeting of Council for consideration on 6 June 2023.**

**SECONDED Cr Moar**

**The Motion was put and CARRIED**

**59/23 Motion**

**MOVED Cr Young**

**That standing orders be suspended at 1.04pm to hear submissions.**

**SECONDED Cr Moar**

**The Motion was put and CARRIED**

Andrew Merrett, Brian and Donna Barry and Christine Plant spoke to their submissions.

**60/23 Motion**

**MOVED Cr Moar**

**That Standing Orders be resumed at 1.43pm.**

**SECONDED Cr King**

**The Motion was put and CARRIED**

**Date:** 12 May 2023

**Time:** 01:20pm

**Feedback tool:** Online, Lets Talk

### Submission 1

I am writing to you on behalf of Tyntynder Football Netball Club of which I am the secretary.

TFNC was disappointed to see the provision of an electrical scoreboard pushed from the 2023/24 budget. The money for the electronic scoreboard was part of the Recreation Reserves Masterplan, listed as a key project. SHRCC have advised on many occasions that the money for the new scoreboard is allocated in the 2023/2024 budget.

The current scoreboard is ageing and is not safe. TFNC have children volunteers to keep scores and the metal numbers often blow off in the wind into the scoreboard. The whole structure sways in the wind which indicates the structural integrity is in doubt. The stairs are not built to regulation and it is difficult / dangerous to enter.

It was disappointing to hear that we may need to wait for a new precinct plan to be adopted before proceeding with a new scoreboard, we feel that this was a part of the previous plan and should be honoured.

TFNC do not have a current preference for the location of a new scoreboard and are happy to work with council to achieve the best location.

With consideration of the above we ask that the Alan Garden Reserve scoreboard monies be re-allocated to the 2023/24 budget.

If you have any queries do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,  
Andrew Merrett  
TFNC Secretary

**Date:** 11 May 2023

**Time:** 02:36pm

**Feedback tool:** Online, Lets Talk

### Submission 2

To Swan Hill Rural City Councillors

This submission is to express our deep concern regarding the proposed exorbitant rise to the SHRC Shire dryland farming rates.

The proposed rate increase of 20.8% is 5.94 times higher than the Andrews Labour Government's Fair Go Rates System cap of 3.5%.

The extra burden of such an outrageously inequitable tax is not in line with SHRC Council's claimed value of "Fairness". – We will value and embrace the diversity of our community and ensure that all people are treated equally.

The % rise to dryland farmers of 20.8% is huge compared to all other categories.

Where is the "Fairness" when Swan Hill and Robinvale residents' and businesses rates will not increase proportionately?

Why are Dryland Farming Businesses expected to pay higher rates than urban businesses within the municipality, when all businesses are facing the same issues associated with running a business?

Business inputs and overheads have increased dramatically in recent times resulting in very slim profit margins. Dryland farmers have been particularly adversely affected. Their costs in many cases have doubled. Both urban and rural asset classes have had valuation rises, but one good agricultural season out of the past 3 does not justify this disproportionate rate rise.

Agricultural industries are one of the main drivers of the municipalities economy, with Robinvale and Swan Hill residents already enjoying far greater ease of access to services and facilities within these towns.

Why are the Robinvale and Swan Hill resident's rates not increased proportionately in relation to their far greater ability to easily access facilities within these towns?

We ask that Council reconsider its 2023/2024 draft budget so that any rate increase is shared more equitably amongst all stakeholders.

Yours sincerely,

Brian and Donna Barry

**Date:** 30 April 2023

**Time:** 09:14 pm

**Feedback tool:** Online, Lets Talk

### Submission 3

Why isn't there funding for emergency climate action, not limited to but including decarbonising council operations? This includes switching to electric vehicle fleets (saving council fringe benefits taxes also!), electrification infrastructure for council facilities (getting off gas, installing heat pumps, solar and battery systems), installing electric vehicle charging infrastructure (the current one is insufficient going into 2023/24 for such a large town. For comparison tooleybuc have more EV chargers than Swan Hill. It's a disgrace) In the long run it is financially better to be fully electrified and Council could be enjoying those savings over the next decade. The benefits are outlined on <https://www.rewiringaustralia.org/>

Council should be leading the way setting a progressive example for the rest of the town to see that it is possible and in fact cost saving in the long run. Why can't we lead the way instead of falling behind more and having to play catch up.

As part of this managing the changing climate effects in our region, we should also be dealing with the urban heat island effect and protecting (the existing trees) and increasing the urban tree canopy urgently.

Jana Sarantis



**Date:** 26 April 2023

**Time:** 01:41 pm

**Feedback tool:** Online, Lets Talk

#### Submission 4

Two changes need to be made to the Fees and Charges for the Regulatory Services Department. The changes need to be made to align with the State Government prescribed statutory fee structure as part of the Domestic Animals Act.

Fees to be altered:

Entire dog or cat registration is proposed as \$134 but should now be \$135.

Pension fee is proposed as \$67 but should now be \$67.50.

Kelsey Corrie

SHRCC

**Date:** 23 April 2023

**Time:** 05:55 pm

**Feedback tool:** Online, Lets Talk

#### Submission 5

I have a question in relation to the recently published council draft budget in regards to the submission of fees for the various recreation reserves

We note that there is a big difference in the fees we pay at the Swan Hill rec reserve compared to other similar facilities competing in the same league.

Can you please explain the reason why we have a higher cost - thank you

Reference council draft budget:

22/23 Fees

Page 97:

Swan Hill rec reserve

SHFNC. \$ 4,570

Page 96:

Alan Garden reserve

Tyntynder FNC \$ 1,730

Lake Boga reserve

Lake Boga FNC \$ 1,120

Nyah Rec Reserve

NNW FNC. \$ 2,850

Chris Craig-Neal

President

Swan Hill Football Netball Club

**Date:** 19 May 2023

**Time:** 10:54 am

**Feedback tool:** Online, Lets Talk

#### Submission 6

2023/2024 fees and charges as set out in the budget are incorrect and require alterations as indicated in spreadsheet supplied. These increases are based on a 5% increase on 2023/2023 fees and charges and have been rounded up or down to indicate best value.

Please refer to supplied spreadsheet.

Grant Jones

SHRCC

**Date:** 01 May 2023

**Time:** 12:35 pm

**Feedback tool:** via email to council@swanhill.vic.gov.au

### Submission 7

In the 2023 budget plan the following is displayed: The bullet point for Data and Technology Strategy is included but not covered in the Draft plan pdf. I searched the web and on your page: Plans and Strategies - Swan Hill Rural City Council <[https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A\\_\\_www.swanhill.vic.gov.au\\_about\\_overview\\_plans-2Dand-2Dstrategies\\_&d=DwMFAG&c=euGZstcaTDllvimEN8b7jXrwqOf-v5A\\_CdpgnVfiiMM&r=8kb53A6VStnBIEucQ1CZJSbQmqUKmSex61wCGXw8oFQ&m=wIjH9xE8MXZV7zLTnoAfHEFdn7PYaiBzMdjYLPK8Wo&s=4pfl6jr6mPmrxZ7\\_LKa5zEXqni0\\_wmBYCzn124j8BME&e=>](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__www.swanhill.vic.gov.au_about_overview_plans-2Dand-2Dstrategies_&d=DwMFAG&c=euGZstcaTDllvimEN8b7jXrwqOf-v5A_CdpgnVfiiMM&r=8kb53A6VStnBIEucQ1CZJSbQmqUKmSex61wCGXw8oFQ&m=wIjH9xE8MXZV7zLTnoAfHEFdn7PYaiBzMdjYLPK8Wo&s=4pfl6jr6mPmrxZ7_LKa5zEXqni0_wmBYCzn124j8BME&e=>)> there is no inclusion of the Data and Technology Strategy.

Can you please point me to the strategy that you have budgeted over one million of our rate payers money for. We are delighted our 2023/24 budget will include:

- \* Robinvale Leisure Centre Splash Park (\$500K)
- \* Centenary Park Nature Play Precinct (\$1.4M)
- \* Art Gallery redevelopment (\$6.6M)
- \* Cultural and Tourism Hub development (\$5M)
- \* Waste management site compliance and improvements (\$3.86M)
- \* Empower Youth Initiative (\$210K)
- \* Swan Hill Stormwater Model & Strategy (\$162K)
- \* Street lighting upgrades (\$111K)
- \* Tower Hill Stage 16 (\$1.8M)
- \* Robinvale Skate Park (\$295K)
- \* Sealed Roads renewal works (\$5.0M)
- \* Unsealed Roads renewal works (\$1.1M)
- \* Renewal works to community buildings (\$443K)
- \* Footpath replacement (\$600K)
- \* Data & Technology Strategy (\$1.05M)
- \* Continued funding for Swan Hill Riverfront Masterplan projects (\$617K)
- \* Planning, design and consultation for Karinie Street Reconstruction (\$150K)
- \* Swan Hill Showgrounds Precinct - Master Planning (\$159K)
- \* and much more.

Cheers,

Brian Westrupp  
Piangil

**Submission 8**

Alison Black  
PO Box 1044  
Robinvale Victoria 3549

7 May 2023

VIA EMAIL

Chief Executive Officer  
Swan Hill Rural City Council  
Swan Hill Victoria 3585

Dear Scott,

**Draft Budget 2023/24 -Submission**

Please find attached a submission relating to the Draft Budget 2023/24.

Please note that throughout 2022 and 2023 I have sought guidance and a copy of the template to be completed to enable projects to be considered by Council. Although I was provided one template it was later withdrawn and I believe the document is still under review.

I do not wish to speak to Councillors about the submission as I speak with Les McPhee and Bruce Myers on a regular basis.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission.

Yours faithfully

  
Alison Black

**Budget Submission  
Draft Budget 2023/24**

**Page 45 4.5.2 – 2023/24 Budget**

**Page 45 - PROPERTY**

**Land**

**Ronald Street housing development:**

\$1.443 M - New - Council Cash

Is it likely that the expenditure will be achieved given Council has stated it will wait until the first four houses are sold before commencing the next stage? As at 2 May 2023 one house was considered 'sold' and a second was 'under offer'. And neither property has settled. While four houses may be sold through FY 23/24 how likely is it that any more houses will be built and the funds, \$1.443 M, expended in FY 23/24? This 'committed' funding could be better allocated to the provision of landscaping, seating, shade structures and water fountains to complete the skate park project for Robinvale. See item below.

**Page 46 - INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Recreational, Leisure and Community Facilities**

**Robinvale Leisure Centre Splash Park**

\$0.500 M – Upgrade - \$0.030 M Grant & \$0.470 M Council Cash

While the splash park is great news it is in the wrong location. The original concept was for a zero depth water play park to be located in Centenary Park near the skate park. This meant that children and families in the community who don't have much money would not have to pay to access a safe water play area on hot days. The water play area would have also been easily accessible for children staying in the caravan park. The location of the water play area would have kept small children away from the river, which is a prime spot for skiers and wake board riders.

Can Council confirm the design for the 'nature play precinct' in Centenary Park will include a zero depth water play area that is open to all free of charge. See attachment 1 for an example. (Refer to Strategic Objective of Liveability, connected community)

**Page 47 - Parks, Open Space and Streetscapes**

**Robinvale Skate Park**

\$0.295 M – New - \$0.025 M Grant & \$0.270 M Council Cash

Again, good news but with some concerns. The funding appears low. The Central Goldfields skate and scooter park was completed in December 2022 cost a total of \$0.395 M and took six months to complete. The costs included seating and shelters

and the skate/scooter area was about 450 sq m. (Maryborough Census of 2021 - population of about 8,000, equivalent to Robinvale)

Has the cost estimate included funds for:

1. Shade over some of the skating elements, especially important in Robinvale (Refer to Strategic Objective of Liveability)
2. Shelter for inclement weather
3. Spectator areas
4. Seating
5. Drinking fountains, especially important in Robinvale (Refer to Strategic Objective of Liveability)
6. Lighting
7. Fencing and child proof gates so children can't wander onto the skating area
8. Litter bins
9. Landscaping for the surrounds
10. Access to toilets. It is noted that the 10 Year Major Projects Plan identifies renewal of public toilets at the boat ramp in 2027/28. This is three years after the skate park is delivered. Is it possible to bring this renewal forward?

Will the park cater for scooters, roller blading and BMX riding as well as skate boarding?

If additional funding is required, a portion of the underspend from the **Item Ronald Street housing development** which is funded by 100% Council cash can be used to supplement the project to ensure the skate park is completed appropriately, i.e. including those elements listed above.

Originally the skate park was listed for completion and with funds expended this financial year. What caused the delay of one year?

#### **Centenary Park Nature Play Precinct**

\$1.389 M – New - \$0.849 M Grant & \$0.540 M Council Cash

Good news. After 40 years it is good to see funding for Centenary Park and hopefully delivery.

Does the funding include an irrigation system? Does the budget include salary for the additional employees required to maintain the park? And does the maintenance budget include funding for ongoing maintenance of all the elements and structures in the park?

Will Centenary Park include a zero depth water play area that is open to all free of charge? Refer to item above.

## ADDITIONAL PROJECTS

### Robinvale Learning and Community Hub

- Garden

In August 2021 there was an item in the Council newsletter, which stated, "The new paved outdoor area is the perfect place to sit and read a book in the outdoors." The then CEO was advised by email that this was not correct. Unfortunately although some progress has been made the "perfect place to sit and read a book" has not eventuated. It is requested that funding be identified so the Robinvale Learning and Community Hub project can be completed. See attachment 2 which shows the area of concern.

- Car park

The car park associated with the hub is a disgrace. The design is poor as cars cannot make the sharp right hand turn required across the top of the car park and so track across the curb on what was supposed to be a garden bed. The bitumen has severe potholes and needs to be resurfaced. The car park is also too small and cannot meet the requirements for regular users which now include not only school employees, but visitors to the hub, participants in aqua aerobics and rehabilitation exercises in the pool. See attachment 3.

- Path and surrounds

There is a hazard located adjacent to the footpath from the car park to the hub. The dirt area should be raised and planted with shrubs to prevent the elderly from straying from the path and falling over. This is an OH&S issue. See attachment 4.

- Community access to the College pool

It is requested that Council work with Belgravia Leisure and the College to enable community access to the pool in winter for a limited number of sessions. I declare a vested interest in this request as I am a regular lap swimmer. Unfortunately the Robinvale outdoor pool is only open for five months of the year.

All these requests support the strategic objective of Liveability.

I am willing to write to the Minister and appropriate key staff within the Department of Education with regards to these requests.

### Footpath - Safety Barrier – Murray Valley Highway

The safety concern relates to the proximity of the footpath to the Murray Valley Highway, part of the High Productivity Freight Network, and the safety of the users of the footpath.

The footpath from Golf Links Estate to the southern end of Bromley Road is welcomed. However the project is not complete as users of the path are exposed to a high volume of freight vehicles, including B-Doubles and Triples.

There is a wire rope safety barrier on the opposite side of the road but there is no protection for users of the footpath. The barrier would slow down a child and give the mum a chance to stop her child from being struck by a vehicle.

The area of concern is also used as a parking area for B-doubles and Triples.

While the footpath is appreciated and well used, the job is not complete without a safety barrier.

It is requested that Council fund the installation of a safety barrier.

Refer to attachments 5,6 & 7.

#### **Footpath - Riverside Hostel**

A section of the Latje Road footpath in front of the Riverside Campus Residential Aged Care Facility is missing. People of all ages use this footpath, the aged from the aged care facility who may or may not be using walking aids, mums with bubs and prams, walkers out exercising and the general public. It is requested that funds be provided to enable the footpath to be completed. See attachment 8.

#### **Cycle paths and walking paths**

Robinvale has a short cycle path, part of the Murray Valley Highway which starts from nowhere and goes nowhere. It is never used, as it is unsafe. It is requested that Robinvale be included in all studies relating to cycle paths and walking paths. Locations for potential safe cycle and walking paths include:

- From "The Cut" along the river to the Robinvale Pumping Station to the Grove of Honour and back to town.
- As above but from the Grove of Honour continuing along the southern boundary of the Robinvale Golf Club Resort to Sea Lake Road and back to town along the eastern side of the road and linking to the footpath from Golf Links Estate to town.
- As above but extending across Sea Lake Road to Lock 15 and returning to town as for dot point 2.

Refer to attachment 9.

The paths would be used by member of the community and by tourists. The loops take users to and through a variety of historical and scenic areas with access to toilets, BBQ areas and hospitality locations.

#### **WHY?**

##### **Swan Hill Drag Racing Strip**

The Swan Hill Drag Racing Strip was considered at Council meetings of 7 December 2019, 21 April 2020 and 18 May 2021. And was recently considered at the Council Assembly of 4 April 2023.

It is noted that the drag racing strip is listed as a project outside the 10 year delivery cycle with a project cost of \$10 M and that the funds are to be secured through Grants and Contributions. It is also noted that the Robinvale Riverfront Master Plan has been given the same status but with funds of \$2 M to be sourced 50/50 from Rates, and Grant and Contributions.

Why does Council continue to accommodate the drag strip project, which commenced in late 2013/14 but is yet to deliver the required result with Council required to invest additional funds.

While it can be argued that Grants do not affect other projects they actually do. All funding sourced through grants is provided through a competitive process and any funds granted to the drag strip reduces the funding opportunities for other projects. Council assets in terms of staff hours are also expended.

If the track surface has continued to move/sink for the last ten years perhaps it is in the wrong place, on the wrong soil type with poor underlying geology. If the track hasn't been able to be repaired in over ten years then it is likely it never will. Review of the 1:250,000 Geological Map shows the Avoca Fault Line traverses through the relevant area. Numerous minor fault lines also accompany the fault. It is reasonable to conclude that the area is not and never was suitable for the construction of a drag strip. See attachment 10.

Council should therefore remove the project from all budget considerations forever. And focus on securing grant money for the construction of Robinvale Riverfront.



①

Mildura Water Play Park





\*the perfect place to sit and read a book\* (2)







(c)

See page









5





9





7











Ca = Cambrian

from 1:250,000  
geological map, 2005.

107



Ultimate  
brown dashed line  
= surface in Ravine Sand

Avoca  
Faultline  
Major fault - interpreted.

N Dredge Site

Minor fault -  
interpreted.

Saddle

## Submission 9



Manangatang Branch VFF  
 C/O PO Box 26 Manangatang Vic 3546  
 17 May 2023

To: Councillors, Swan Hill Rural City Council  
**Submission regarding the 2023/2024 Draft Budget**

Thank you for the opportunity to present a submission to Council the 2023/2024 draft budget. As farmers growing crops on dry land, we are very concerned at the 20.8% increase in dryland farming rates in comparison to other categories. **This increase is 5.94 times the 'Fair go' rate cap of 3.5%**

**Table 1: 2023/2024 data**

Category	2023/24 year rate increase/decrease	Valuation increase
SH Residential	1.7%	9.6%
SH Commercial	-1.3%	6.3%
SH Industrial	1.1%	9.6%
Irrigated farmland	-1.7%	5.8%
<b>Dryland farming</b>	<b>20.8%</b>	<b>30.1%</b>

**Table 2: 3 year data 2021/22 to 2023/24**

Category	3 year rate increase/decrease	3 year valuation increase
SH Residential	5.7%	35.5%
SH Commercial	5.5%	20.0%
SH Industrial	-5.6%	22.9%
Irrigated farmland	-1.0%	28.3%
<b>Dryland farming</b>	<b>39.1%</b>	<b>60.8%</b>

Over the last three years, dryland farming rates have increased by 39.1%, valuations have increased by 60.80% so rates have increased by 64% of valuations.

Also of concern is the multiplying effect these rates have. A dryland farmer paying \$30,000 in rates in 2020/21, will pay \$43,174.23 in 2023/2024, an increase of 44% from 21/22. \$43,174.23 is the new base value for any further increase in the 2024/25 year.

Adding to this is that none of the new or ongoing major projects listed in the draft budget are for the dryland farming, smaller towns in the municipality.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Cost (less grants)</b>
Robinvale splash park & upgrade at SH leisure centre	\$536K
Art gallery redevelopment bush tucker garden	\$106K
Art gallery redevelopment (allowing for 50% grants)	\$3.324mil
Tourism & cultural hub (allowing for 50% grants)	\$2.25mil
SH showgrounds precinct master plan	\$160K
Robinvale skate park	\$270K
Riverfront master plan projects	\$309K
Ken Harrison reserve-little athletics & lighting plan	\$536K
Centenary Park Robinvale nature play precinct	\$540K
Shadesails George Lay & Tower Hill parks	\$54K
SH off leash dog park	\$60K
Drainage Butterworth, Graemar & Berrybank Drvs	\$20K
<b>Implementation of community plans</b>	<b>\$75K=0.9%</b>
Robinvale Community Arts Centre	\$130K
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8.37mil</b>

Small towns in the municipality such as Ultima and Manangatang service dryland farming areas. Council expenditure for implementation of small town community plans is only 0.9% of planned spend for large projects as specified in the table. Shouldn't the Swan Hill and Robinvale rates increases be higher to reflect the fact that all the major projects are in these two towns and that residents of these towns have far greater access to these facilities?

Council's draft budget papers explain the Dryland Farming Differential Rate as follows:  
The rate is to help reflect the increased difficulty in accessing the full range of Council services that dryland farming properties face, the disproportionate increase in property values over the last several years and the increased risk of seasonal income variations than faced by other properties. We understand that cost of living crisis is hitting residents but cost pressures as well as supply and labour constraints, and increasing costs of inputs are having severe impact on business profitability.

Why have dryland farming rates been raised by 20.8% when the evidence shows that:  
-this rise is disproportionately higher than all the other categories over 1 year & 3 year time periods  
-only 0.5% of major project spend is for community plans for small towns  
-dryland farmers have difficulty accessing the full range of Council services as acknowledged by Council?

We urge Council to reconsider the draft budget and to redistribute rate increases more evenly across all classes of ratepayers.

We welcome the opportunity to address Council regarding these issues on 30 May 2023

Kind regards

Brian Barry Jnr  
President Manangatang Branch VFF

Christine Plant  
VFF Grains Councillor (Northern Mallee)

**List of names supporting the submission**

Elwyn & Doug Witney  
Robyn & Lindsay Plant  
Greg Plant  
David & Sharyn Barry  
John & Debbie Arentz  
Maddison & Ben Arentz  
Sue & George White  
Margaret & Geoff Plant  
Stuart Plant  
Tim Plant  
Gerard Mackay  
Ross & Helen Bennett  
Brian & Donna Barry  
Keith & Christine Plant  
Jodi & Danny Elford  
Dianne & Trevor Walters  
Haydn & Abbie Walters  
Peter & Marnie Bull  
Trudy & Kevin Ryan  
Leeton Ryan & Katrin Haddon  
Terry & Teresa Ryan  
Kelvin & Susan Fitzpatrick  
Monika & Hillary Zanker  
Brad & Donna Plant  
Ian & Kelli Edelsten  
Mick Elford  
Murray Allen  
Matt Elford  
Adrian Curran  
Simon Craig  
Roger McQueen  
Luke Maher  
Peter & Ann Elford  
Adam O'Brien  
Jason Murphy  
Michael Murphy  
Anthony Shephard  
Sam White  
Damien Maher  
Haxel & Stephen Grant  
Liam Ryan  
Noel Templeton  
Graham Hopkins  
Ritchie Kelly  
Daniel Curran  
Brian Templeton  
Maureen & Brian Barry Snr  
Brian Fitzpatrick  
Stewart Branson  
Dianne Pook  
Vickie & Chris Merritt  
Bill Paynter  
Ron & Donna Eyres  
Dianne & Barry Plant  
Donna & Lyonel O'Shannassy  
Marj Elston  
Kiera & James Bell  
Andrew Oxley  
Daryl & Lilly Slater  
Ben Slater  
Russell & Rachael Ayres  
Paul & Nicole Fitzpatrick  
Jaiden Caccianiga & Sara Lynch  
Leane Elford  
Ross & Robyn Kentish  
Mark & Leonie Kentish  
Joan & Terry Ryan  
Kathryn & Kevin Grant  
Ben & Leah Merritt  
Faye Merritt  
Noel & Vicki Burkinshaw  
Debra & Lionel Price  
Rodney & Marion Caccianiga  
Nicholas Slater  
Lee-Anne & Peter Thompson  
Pat Kelly  
Merrilyn Grant  
Tim Gleeson

**Submission 10**

Christine Plant

Manangatang Vic 3546

May 2023

To: Councillors, Swan Hill Rural City Council  
**Submission regarding the 2023/2024 Draft Budget**

Thank you for the opportunity to present a submission to Council the 2023/2024 draft budget.

As a dryland farmer, I am very concerned at the at the 20.8% increase in dryland farming rates in comparison to other categories. **This increase is 5.94 times the 'Fair go' rate cap** which was introduced in 2016 to limit uncontrolled rate hikes. In Council's draft budget, it is estimated that the total increase in rates is \$1,370K and that the dryland farming increase is \$880K. So 64.3% of this increase will be paid by dryland farmers.

The total number of dryland farming assessments is 1,219 and the total number of assessments is 12,231. 64% of the increase in rates will be borne by 10% of assessments.

The problem is compounded by the fact that most farmers have more than 1 assessment. If the average number of assessments per farmer is 4, then 64% of the increase in rates will be borne by 2.5% of assessments.

Dryland farming rates are increasing at 20.8% after a valuation increase of 30.1% so our rates have increased by 69.1% of valuation. Compare this to other categories in the table below:

**Table 1: 2023/2024 data**

Category	Rates increase/decrease	Valuation increase/decrease	% increase
SH Residential	1.7%	9.6%	17.7%
SH Commercial	-1.3%	6.3%	
SH Industrial	1.1%	9.0%	12.2%
Irrigated farmland	-1.7%	5.8%	
<b>Dryland farmland</b>	<b>20.8%</b>	<b>30.1%</b>	<b>69.1%</b>

The dryland farming rate increase of 69.1% is nearly 4 times more than increase in the SH Residential rate & more than 5 times the SH Industrial increase.

**Table 2: 3 year data 2021/22 to 2023/24**

Category	Rates increase/decrease	Valuation increase/decrease	% increase/decrease
SH Residential	5.7%	35.5%	16%
SH Commercial	5.5%	20%	27.5%
SH Industrial	-5.6%	22.9%	
Irrigated farmland	-1%	28.3%	
<b>Dryland farmland</b>	<b>39.1%</b>	<b>60.8%</b>	<b>64.3%</b>

The dryland farming rate increase of 64.31% is 4 times more than increase in the SH Residential rate. The data in these two tables clearly show that dryland farming rates have increased disproportionately to rates of other categories. In fact, even though SH Industrial & Irrigated Farmland valuations both increased by over 20% over a 3 year period, their rates have actually decreased over this time.

It is also to be remembered that rates are paid on increases in unrealised assets. A large rate increase will affect the profitability of a dryland farming business in a dry year.

I acknowledge that cost of living pressures are making it very difficult for residents, businesses and Council. However, farming families are also trying to navigate inflationary pressures and Councillors would be well aware of huge increases in farm input costs, in particular, fertilizer, fuel and chemicals.

I ask that Council reconsider it's draft budget for 2023/24 so that the increase in rates is shared more equitably amongst the various categories.

Christine Plant



## Submission 11

**Budget Submission - SUPPLEMENTARY  
Draft Budget 2023/24****ADDITIONAL PROJECT**

'Replacement of Irrigation Pump at Robinvale' is listed in the 10 Year Major Capital Projects Plan 2023-24 to 2032-33 under Recreation – Parks and Gardens Item 123.  
Consultancy FY23-24 \$30,000.00  
Construction and Installation FY25-26 \$487,000.00

Extension of pipeline for Robinswood

Council owns and maintains another irrigation pump about 250 metres upstream of the subject irrigation pump. This small pump is used to pump water to Robinswood, a Council owned property, to water the garden. Recently there have been issues with the pump. It was also lifted during the recent floods.

The Electricity Accounts for the pump, metre number B2182692:E1 are in the vicinity of \$900 pa. About \$275 is for service charge, while the remainder is usage, both peak and off peak. Based on the capacity of the pump and the rise (five metres) and run (50 metres), and watering duration, it is estimated that Robinswood would use between one and two megalitres of water per year. The pump is an Onga OJ 700-1.

The life of type of the pump is unknown but the cost of a replacement pump of the same capacity is in the order of \$500.00. Installation costs would also be required.

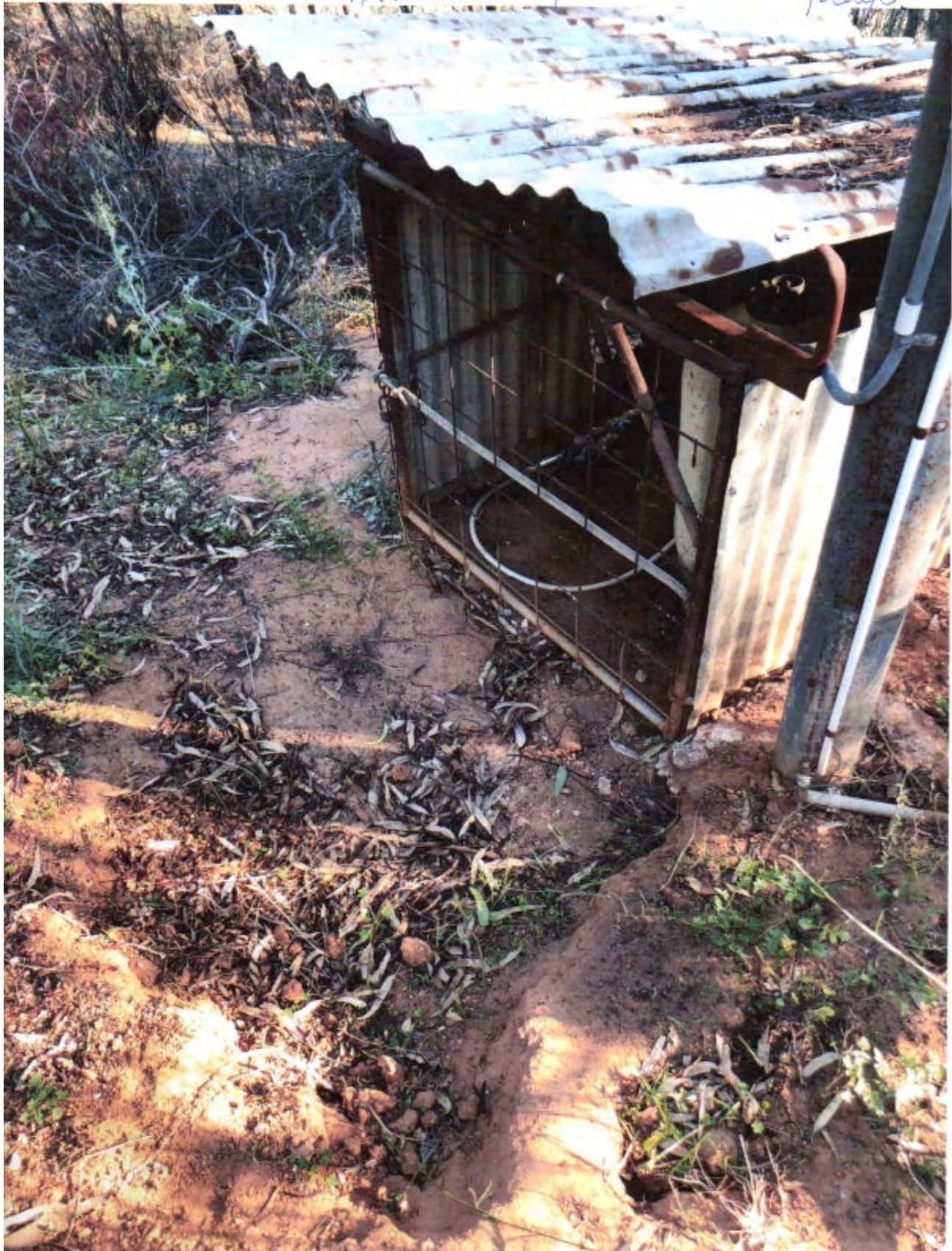
It is requested that as part of Item 123 a pipeline be extended from the town irrigation pump to Robinswood connecting into the irrigation system. There would be a one off cost but over ten years at least \$2,750.00 would be saved from the electricity service charges. And depending on the time of pumping the actual electricity usage costs would decrease as the town irrigation pump would be pumping for the town at the same time. Simultaneous use by Robinswood would have a negligible affect on the capacity of the pump to meet the needs of the town and result in a saving of \$9,000.00 across ten years.

It is requested that the extension of the pipeline be included as a requirement for the consultancy.

Refer to attached photograph of the pump site.



Attached photograph - Robin Swadlow  
Please



Dear Scott and Bruce,

As suggested by Bruce. Most of the details on the plaque are wrong.....

The errors on the plaque are as follows:

1. Herbert Edwin and Margaret Ann Cuttle built Robinswood. Bert was Herbert Edwin's eldest son. Both shared the first name of Herbert. But the son, Herbert, was known as Bert or Herbert Junior. Correction - The name Bert needs to be removed, also the brackets enclosing the word Herbert.
2. Herbert Edwin died in Robinvale. Margaret Ann did not. She moved from Robinswood to Euston Station (over the river) to live with her youngest daughter Marjorie who had married Jim Spittle, owner of Euston Station. She then moved to Balwyn in Melbourne and is buried in Kew Cemetery. Correction - Delete 'and Margaret', 'their' becomes 'his'
3. George Robin Cuttle after whom Robinvale is named was the second son not the third. He was the third child. Eva Leonora (Leonora Street) (known as Norn) was born in 1887, Herbert (known as Bert) was born in 1892, George Robin (known as Robin) was born in 1895, Ronald (Ronald Street) was born in 1899 and Marjorie was born in 1904. Correction - Delete 'third'
4. Architects design houses. Surveyors plan towns. While the house was architecturally designed, registered surveyor R.A. Black planned the town and he signed the plan on 15 September 1924.

I've attached copies of:

1. The plaque with errors noted.
2. Grave locator for Margaret Ann (her name is Ann not Anne)
3. Photo of Herbert Edwin's grave in Robinvale
4. Photo of Herbert's grave in Robinvale (It was actually Bert who founded Robinvale, not the 'Cuttle family', H.E. & M.A. had retired)
5. Photo of the relevant portion of the plan for the town. See lower right hand corner for signature of R.A. Black

History has been misrepresented and the errors perpetuated. The misinformation is of concern to the family descendants and also historians.

I have broached this issue before and have been told the plaque would be corrected as part of the Riverfront Masterplan. However, implementation is listed under Projects Sitting Outside the Ten Year Delivery Cycle as Item 42 Robinvale Riverfront Implementation. It is therefore unlikely to

happen. It is also unlikely that the current plaques would be removed as part of the riverfront development.


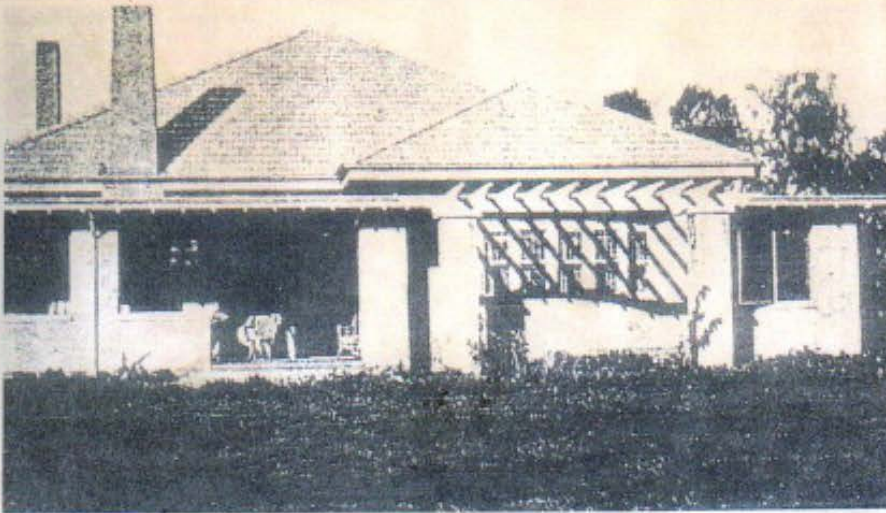
Given the multitude of errors it is requested that a replacement plaque be funded within the budget for FY23-24.

I declare I have a vested interest as I am a Cuttle descendant, Bert was my grandfather, and also a Black descendant, Robert Alexander Black was my great uncle.

Alison Black  
(Black/Cuttle)



# ROBINSWOOD

In 1919 <sup>Herbert</sup> Bert (Herbert) Cuttle and his wife Margaret bought the square mile of freehold (pre-emptive right) of Bum Bang Station. The Cuttles envisaged a township and had architects plan for a town and also their retirement home, here on the site of Bum Bang Station. On October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1924, the township blocks were sold by auction and the town received its name – "Robinvale". In 1926, Robinswood was built and the pioneers of Robinvale, Herbert ~~and Margaret~~ Cuttle, resided here until <sup>his</sup> their deaths.

Both Robinvale and Robinswood are named in memory of their <sup>second</sup> third son (George) Robin, who was killed in air combat over Caix, France in World War 1.

→ R. H. Blake <sup>surveyed</sup> the forest


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## Grave Locator

Here you can easily search for grave or plot via our convenient search tool.

[Read More](#)

## Grave Location

The information below is drawn from the Boroondara General Cemetery records which have been collected since 1859. If you feel the information is inaccurate in any way, please advise the cemetery staff (<http://kewcemetery.com.au/contactus.html>). Your help will be greatly appreciated.

Search again

<b>Name</b>	CUTTLE, MARGARET ANNE
<b>Date</b>	04-Jan-1961
<b>Age</b>	92
<b>Grave Location</b>	C/E C 0659
<b>Section Name</b>	(Not recorded)
<b>Grave Type</b>	Church of England
<b>Service</b>	Burial

*Ann  
not  
Anne*

### Other interments in the same grave location

Date	Service	Name	Age



04-Oct-1890

Burial

WEATHERLEY, LEONORA

53

Map showing section containing C/E C 0659



Margaret Ann  
was a  
Weatherly

Kew



430 High Street, Kew, Victoria 3101

☎ (03) 9853 7025 (tel:+61395837025)

✉ admin@kewcemetery.com.au (mailto:admin@kewcemetery.com.au)

📍 Google Maps Location (https://bit.ly/3vUG2gT)

### Quick Links

- Welcome (<https://boroondaracemetery.com.au/welcome/>)
- Planning (<https://boroondaracemetery.com.au/planning/>)
- Memorialisation (<https://boroondaracemetery.com.au/memorialisation/>)
- History (<https://boroondaracemetery.com.au/history/>)
- About (<https://boroondaracemetery.com.au/about/>)
- Contact (<https://boroondaracemetery.com.au/contact/>)
- Grave Locator (<https://boroondaracemetery.com.au/grave-locator/>)

### Resources

- Map (<https://boroondaracemetery.com.au/map/>)
- Office Hours (<https://boroondaracemetery.com.au/office-hours/>)
- Enquiries (<https://boroondaracemetery.com.au/enquiries/>)
- Public Notices (<https://boroondaracemetery.com.au/public-notices/>)
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Read Our Privacy Statement Here (<https://boroondaracemetery.com.au/privacy-statement/>)



Robin Vale cemetery photo 14 May 23

**HERBERT EDWIN CUTTLE**  
**1883 - 1945**



Shob Robinvale Cemetery 14 May 23

**HERBERT CUTTLE**

**1892 - 1959.**

**ROBINVALE FOUNDER**

**1924.**





From Blue Print of Plan plan 1927



**Submission 12**

Cr Les McPhee  
Mayor  
Swan Hill Rural City Council  
PO Box 488,  
SWAN HILL VIC 3585



18 May 2023

Dear Mayor McPhee,

**RE: Submission to Swan Hill Rural City Council on the 2023/24 Draft Budget**

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) welcomes the opportunity to put forward this submission to the Swan Hill Rural City Council on its proposed 2023/24 Draft Budget.

Disappointingly Council has yet again decided to foist a greater rate burden onto the shire's agricultural sector with a proposed 20.4% increase to the average dryland farm rate assessment.

The increase represents significant rates shock for farmers and will hurt business growth and productivity which are ultimately needed to help create local jobs, and to help protect farm businesses into the future.

What's worse is that residential ratepayers will only see the average rate assessment increase by than 2% under Council's proposed budget. This is a manifestly unfair and inequitable position that Council is choosing to take.

The inequitable position has been driven by the asymmetry in valuations between different property sectors and Council's failure to offset against these increases by using its differential rating powers. Average dryland farmland values have increased by more than 29% as opposed to average residential values increasing by 10.5% and irrigated farmland at just 5%.

Whilst there is little Council can do to affect the property valuation asymmetries for each property sector, the VFF maintains that Council can nevertheless take action to ensure the rating burden does not shift disproportionately and unfairly onto the farming sector - whilst remaining compliant with the Victorian Government's rating system.

As the VFF has suggested to Council in previous consultations on its budget and rating strategies, a dynamic rating strategy must be adopted that sees the active use of differential rating powers to counteract the valuation asymmetries between different property classes. This system has been successfully employed by other Councils such as Ararat, Mansfield and Pyrenees.

The VFF recommends that Council look at implementing a more adaptive and dynamic rating strategy that seeks to implement more equitable rate increases across property classes year on year. The principle of differential rating should be that where one property sector's value increases disproportionately to the others, the rate in the dollar should be actively adjusted to maintain the rating burden across all sectors.

The farming community cannot be expected to continue to endure the most from continued rate increases that results in less funds available to farmers to invest in their businesses, to create economic activity and to provide local jobs. The VFF implores Swan Hill Rural City Council to take action to mitigate the proposed rating increase.

As this is a particularly busy time for farmers in the region with crops being sown, the VFF is concerned that many local farmers will be oblivious to Council's proposed rate hike. They therefore have little ability to be consulted. Council must therefore give this submission considerable weight as it makes its judgment.

The VFF is committed to ensuring a fairer and more equitable rating strategy for all rural and regional ratepayers and we look forward to discussing Council's rating plans into the future. Should you wish to discuss these issues further, please contact VFF General Manager Policy & Advocacy Charles Everist on 0400 199 522 or email – [ceverist@vff.org.au](mailto:ceverist@vff.org.au) .

Yours sincerely,



**Emma Germano**  
President

There being no further business the Mayor, Councillor Les McPhee closed the meeting at 1.44pm.