

# Council Meeting

## Agenda

**Date:** Wednesday 11 September 2024

**Time:** 5.30pm

**Venue:** Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room)  
13 Mair Street, Benalla

Any person wishing to participate in Question Time or Public Submissions in accordance with Rule 7.2 and 7.3 of the *Governance Rules 2020* should contact the Council by emailing [council@benalla.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@benalla.vic.gov.au) or telephoning the Governance Coordinator Jess Pendergast on (03) 5760 2600.

In accordance with Rule 6.4 of the *Governance Rules 2020* the Council Meeting will be livestreamed via the Council's website and an audio recording will be made of the proceedings.

Members of the public are encouraged to watch the live broadcast of the meeting at [www.benalla.vic.gov.au](http://www.benalla.vic.gov.au)

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# Agenda

<b>Chair</b>	Councillor Danny Claridge (Mayor)	
<b>Councillors</b>	Councillor Peter Davis	
	Councillor Don Firth	
	Councillor Bernie Hearn	
	Councillor Punarji Hewa Gunaratne	
	Councillor Justin King	
	Councillor Gail O’Brien	
<b>In attendance</b>	Dom Testoni	Chief Executive Officer
	Robert Barber	General Manager Corporate
	Cathy Fitzpatrick	Manager Finance
	Grant Banks	Interim Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
	Greg Robertson	Manager Facilities and Information Technology
	Tom Arnold	Community Development and Recreation Coordinator
	Nathan Gasperoni	Environment and Sustainability Coordinator
	Jess Pendergast	Governance Coordinator

## Opening and Acknowledgment of Country

The Chair will open the meeting and recite the following Acknowledgement of Country.

*We, the Benalla Rural City Council, acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we are meeting. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and to Elders from other communities who may be here today.*

## Apologies

**Recommendation:**  
**That the apology/ies be accepted.**

### **Statement of Commitment**

The Councillors will recite the following Statement of Commitment:

*I declare,*

*that as a Councillor of Benalla Rural City*

*I will undertake on every occasion*

*to carry out my duties in the best interests of the community*

*and that my conduct shall maintain the standards of our Councillor Code of Conduct*

*so that I may faithfully represent*

*and uphold the trust placed in the Council*

*by the people of Benalla and District.*

### **Governance Matters**

This Council Meeting is conducted in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Benalla Rural City Council Governance Rules 2020*.

### **Recording of Council Meetings**

In accordance with Rule 6.4 of the *Governance Rules 2020* the Council Meeting will be livestreamed via the Council's website and an audio recording will be made of the proceedings and made available for public access, with the exception of matters identified as confidential items in the agenda.

### **Behaviour at Meetings**

Members of the public present at a meeting must remain silent during the proceedings other than when specifically invited to address the Committee.

The Chair may remove a person from a meeting for interjecting or gesticulating offensively after being asked to desist, and the chair may cause the removal of any object or material that is deemed by the Chair to be objectionable or disrespectful.

The Chair may call a break in a meeting for either a short time, or to resume another day if the behaviour at the Council table or in the gallery is significantly disrupting the Meeting.

### **Disclosures of Conflict of Interest**

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, a Councillor must declare any Conflict of Interest pursuant to Section 130 of the Act in any items on this Agenda.

At the time indicated in the agenda, a Councillor with a conflict of interest in an item on that agenda must indicate they have a conflict of interest by clearly stating:

- the item for which they have a conflict of interest;
- whether their conflict of interest is general or material; and
- the circumstances that give rise to the conflict of interest.

Immediately prior to the consideration of the item in which they have a conflict of interest, a Councillor must indicate to the Meeting the existence of the conflict of interest and leave the Meeting.

### **Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes have been circulated to Councillors and posted on the Council website [www.benalla.vic.gov.au](http://www.benalla.vic.gov.au) pending confirmation at this meeting.

**Recommendation:**

**That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 7 August 2024 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.**

## 1. Public Question Time

The Council's *Governance Rules 2020* provide the opportunity for members of the public to lodge written questions of broad interest to the Council and the community.

Questions of the Council will not be allowed during any period when the Council has resolved to close the meeting in respect of a matter under section 66 (1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act).

A question may be on any matter except if it:

- is considered malicious, defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial, or objectionable in language or substance;
- relates to confidential information as defined under the Act;
- relates to the personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer; or
- relates to any other matter which the Council considers would prejudice the Council or any person.

No more than two questions will be accepted from any person at any one meeting. All questions and answers must be as brief as possible, and no discussion may be allowed other than by Councillors for the purposes of clarification.

Like questions may be grouped together and a single answer provided. The Chair may nominate a Councillor, the Chief Executive Officer or another member of Council staff to respond to a question.

**Recommendation:**

**That the question(s) and answer(s) be noted.**

## 2. Petitions

## Record of Committees

### 3.1 Recommendations from Finance and Planning Committee

The recommendations of the Finance and Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 28 August 2024 are attached as **Appendix 1**.

**Recommendation:**

**That the recommendations of the Finance and Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 28 August 2024 be adopted.**

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## Business

### 1. Planning Application For The Use and Development Of Land For A Sawmill At 232 Mt Samaria Road, Samaria

This report assessed a planning application received for the use and development of land for a sawmill at 232 Mt Samaria Road, Samaria.

It is noted that Troy Spencer made a submission on the item and spoke in support of the planning permit.

#### Cr Davis / Cr Firth:

That Council having caused notice of Planning Application No. P0143/22 to be given under Section 52 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and having considered all the matters required under Section 60 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* decides to issue a Notice of Decision to Grant a Permit under the provisions of the Benalla Planning Scheme in respect of the land known and described as 232 Mt Samaria Road, Samaria for the use and development of the land for a Sawmill (Industry) in accordance with the endorsed plans and subject to the following conditions:

1. Within three months of the issue of the planning permit, amended plans to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority must be submitted to and approved by the Responsible Authority. When approved, the plans will be endorsed and will then form part of this permit. The plans must be drawn to scale with dimensions and three copies must be provided. The plans must be generally in accordance with the plans submitted but modified to show:
  - a. Wall system of corrugated metal to provide attenuation around both milling machines
  - b. A 3m wide landscape buffer, prepared by a qualified person, detailing the location of planting or establishment, botanical and common names, height at maturity of the vegetation (locally indigenous species that will grow to bushy/shrub proportions) and ongoing management of the vegetation to be planted for the purposes of landscaping and screening. All works constructed or carried out must be in accordance with the endorsed plans to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.
2. Within six months of the issue of the planning permit, landscaping must be completed in accordance with the endorsed plan to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.
3. Within six months of the issue of the planning permit, the works required by Condition No. 1(a) of the permit, must be completed to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

4. **Within three months of the issue of the planning permit, an updated Environmental Management must be submitted to and approved by the Responsible Authority. When approved, the plan will be endorsed and will then form part of this permit. The plan must be updated to correct mistakes identified as part of the assessment process.**

#### **Hours of Operation**

5. **The permitted use (including the arrival and departure of heavy vehicles) must operate only between the following hours, except with the prior written consent of the Responsible Authority**
  - a. **Monday to Friday 7.30am – 5.30pm**
  - b. **Saturday 9.00am – 4.00pm**
  - c. **Sunday Closed**
  - d. **Public holidays Closed**
6. **The use must be managed, to the satisfaction of the responsible authority, so that the amenity of the area is not detrimentally affected through the:**
  - a. **Transport of materials, goods or commodities to or from the land;**
  - b. **Appearance of any building, works or materials;**
  - c. **Emissions of noise, artificial light, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, vapour, steam, soot, ash, dust, waste water, waste products, grit or oil;**
  - d. **Presence of vermin; or**
  - e. **Other matters.**
7. **Appropriate measures must be implemented throughout any construction activities and/or operation of the sawmill to rectify and/or minimise mud or other debris being carried onto public roads from the subject land, to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.**
8. **Transport movements generated by the sawmill shall accord with the Transport Impact Assessment Report by One Mile Grid dated 29 August 2023 submitted with the application. The maximum sized vehicle permitted on Mt Samaria Road is a 19m semi-trailer.**
9. **Within six months of the issue of the planning permit, the provision of carparking (six spaces) must be provided as detailed on Drawing 22054-2 Rev B. The carparking bays shall be:**
  - a. **all weather surface,**
  - b. **constructed and completed to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority,**
  - c. **suitably drained,**
  - d. **marked to indicate each car space.**
10. **No additional vehicle crossings may be constructed apart from those endorsed on the approved plan.**
11. **Within six months of the issue of the planning permit, all stormwater and surface water discharging from the site, buildings and works must be controlled and managed on site to the satisfaction of the responsible Authority. No effluent or polluted water of any type may be allowed to enter nearby waterways.**

12. Within three months of the issue of the planning permit, a properly prepared drainage discharge plan with computations to the satisfaction of the responsible authority must be submitted to and approved by the Responsible Authority. When approved, the plans will be endorsed and will then form part of the permit. The plans must be drawn to scale with dimensions and a minimum of three copies must be provided. The information submitted must show the details listed in the council's Infrastructure Design Manual and be designed in accordance with the requirements of that manual.

13. The information and plan must include:

- a. details of how the works on the land are to be drained,
- b. computations on discharge emanating from the sawmill area,
- c. measures to enhance stormwater discharge quality from the sawmill area and protect downstream waterways including design calculation summaries of treatment elements,
- d. maintenance schedules for treatment elements.

Within six months of the issue of the planning permit, all works must be constructed in accordance with those plans to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

14. The loading and unloading of goods from vehicles must only be carried out on the land subject to this permit.

#### Goulburn Murray Water Conditions

15. All construction and ongoing activities must be in accordance with EPA Publication 1834.1 Civil Construction, Building and Demolition Guide (September 2023).

16. All uncontaminated stormwater from impervious surfaces and roofed areas must be directed to the legal point of discharge as identified by the Responsible Authority. Pollution control devices must be installed to prevent the discharge of contaminated stormwater (including spilt fuel and oils) to the environment and stormwater system.

17. Any works to discharge stormwater to any waterway must be in accordance with the relevant Works on a Waterway Licence as issued by the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority.

18. An application for a Works Licence and/or Licence to Take and Use Water must be obtained where groundwater supplies are taken and used for commercial purposes.

#### Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority

19. The logging works and activities (such as stockpiling) should not extend north or west of the perimeter table drain.

#### Permit Expiry

20. In accordance with the Planning and Environment Act 1987 a permit for the use expires if:

- a. the use does not start within two years after the issue of the permit (where a use permit only is issued); or
- b. the use is discontinued for a period of two years.

The Responsible Authority may extend the commencement date if a request is made in writing by the owner or the occupier of the land to which the permit applies before the permit expires or within 6 months afterwards.

The Responsible Authority may extend the time within which the development is to be completed if the development has commenced and a request in writing is made by the owner or the occupier of the land to which it applies within 12 months after the permit expires.

#### General Notes

- The granting of this permit does not obviate the necessity for compliance with the requirements of any other authority under any act, regulation or local law.
- An asset protection permit is required prior to the commencement of any works on site.
- Before undertaking any works that cross onto public land or roads, the permit holder must obtain a permit from the relevant authority giving Consent to Work within a Road Reserve.
- This permit does not authorise the commencement of any demolition works. Before any such development may commence, the applicant must apply for and obtain appropriate building permit approval.

Carried

## 2. Building and Planning Approvals – July 2024

The report detailed planning permit applications and building approvals for July 2024.

Cr Claridge / Cr O'Brien:

That the report be noted.

Carried

## 3. Development Department Activity Report For The Quarter Ended 30 June 2024

The report presented the activities of the Development department for the quarter ended 30 June 2024.

Cr Davis / Cr King:

That the report be noted.

Carried

**4. Economic Development and Sustainability Activity Report For The Quarter Ended 30 June 2024**

The report presented the activity of the Economic Development and Sustainability Department for the quarter ending 30 June 2024.

**Cr King / Cr O'Brien:**

**That the report be noted.**

**Carried**

**5. Assets and Infrastructure Department Activity Report For The Quarter Ended 30 June 2024**

The report presented the activities of the Assets and Infrastructure department for the quarter ended 30 June 2024.

**Cr Davis / Cr Firth:**

**That the report be noted.**

**Carried**

Councillor Justin King declared a material conflict of interest in the following item and left the meeting at 6.22pm.

**6. *Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee Terms of Reference Amendments***

The report presented the amended *Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Project Steering Committee Terms of Reference*.

**Cr Claridge / Cr Firth:**

**That the amended *Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Project Steering Committee Terms of Reference* be adopted.**

**Carried**

Councillor Justin King returned to the meeting at 6.24pm.

**7. Facilities and Information Technology Department Activity Report For The Quarter Ended 30 June 2024**

The report presented the activities of the Facilities and Information Technology Department for the quarter ended 30 June 2024.

**Cr King / Cr Claridge:**  
**That the report be noted.**

**Carried**

**8. Finance Department Activity Report For The Quarter Ended 30 June 2024**

The report presented an overview of the functions of the Finance Department for the quarter ended 30 June 2024.

**Cr Claridge / Cr O'Brien:**  
**That the report be noted.**

**Carried**

**9. Community Department Activity Report For The Quarter Ended 30 June 2024**

The report presented the activities of the Community Department for the quarter ended 30 June 2024.

**Cr Firth / Cr Davis:**  
**That the report be noted.**

**Carried**

**10. 2024/2025 Quick Response Grants Program**

The report presented funding applications for 2024/25 Quick Response Grants.

**Cr O’Brien / Cr Claridge:**

**That \$500 grants from the 2024/2025 Quick Response Grant program be allocated to the Carers and Parents Support Group and to the Benalla RSL.**

**Carried**

**11. People and Performance Department Activity Report For The Quarter Ended 30 June 2024**

The report presented the activities of the People and Performance Department for the quarter ended 30 June 2024.

**Cr Davis / Cr King:**

**That the report be noted.**

**Carried**

**12. Urgent Business**

No urgent business was submitted to the meeting.

**Closure of Meeting**

The Finance and Planning Committee meeting closed at 6.58pm.

**The minutes were confirmed on the sixteenth day of October 2024.**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Cr Bernie Hearn (Chair)**





### 3.2 Assemblies of Councillors, Advisory and External Committees

Under Council's *Governance Rules 2020* the Chief Executive Officer is required to provide a written record of the Assemblies of Councillors at a scheduled Council Meeting.

The record of Assemblies of Councillors, Advisory and External Committees are attached as **Appendix 1**.

Copies of the Minutes from the following meetings have been provided to councillors under separate cover.

#### August 2024

1 August 2024	Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment (BIRC) Steering Committee
5 August 2024	Benalla Local Safety and Traffic Liaison Committee
6 August 2024	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee
7 August 2024	Communications Advisory Committee
12 August 2024	Benalla Festival Advisory Committee
15 August 2024	Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment (BIRC) Steering Committee
20 August 2024	Audit and Risk Committee
21 August 2024	Assembly of Councillors – Briefing Review

**Recommendation:**

**That the report be noted.**

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## Record of Assemblies of Councillors, Advisory and External Committees

August 2024

### Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre (BIRC) Redevelopment Project Steering Committee

5.30pm Thursday 1 August 2024, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room), 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

<b>Chair:</b>	Adrian Gasperoni	Manager Assets and Infrastructure
<b>Committee:</b>	Councillor Don Firth	Councillor Representative
	Councillor Bernie Hearn	Councillor Representative
	Wally Armstrong	Benalla Basketball Association
	Noel Baumgarten	Community Member
	David Booth	Community Infrastructure and Place, Sport and Recreation Victoria
	Jake Keogh	Basketball Victoria
	Terry Nowland	BIRC Committee of Management
	Simone Sammon	Community Member
<b>In attendance:</b>	Tom Arnold	Community Development and Recreation Coordinator
	Keith Biglin	Project Manager
	Dean Steegstra	Open Space Coordinator
	Bree Glass	Administration Officer
	Laura Heyning	Brand Architects
	Peter Muhlebach	Brand Architects
<b>Apologies:</b>	Keith Biglin	

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

#### Items discussed:

1. Introductions
2. Terms of Reference
3. Project Plan and Schedule
4. Project Site, Concept Ideas and Opportunities
5. Project Design, Community Consultation and Next Steps
6. Petition: The Council to Include Squash Courts in the Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project
7. Information Sharing
8. Actions

**Benalla Local Safety and Traffic Committee**

2pm Monday 5 August 2024, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room), 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

<b>Chair:</b>	Adrian Gasperoni	Manager Assets and Infrastructure
<b>Committee:</b>	Councillor Bernie Hearn	Council Representative
	Councillor Justin King	Council Representative
	Lisa Aitkinson	Victoria Police
	Mark Byers	Victoria Police
	Kylie Cotter	Benalla P-12 College
	Gavin Duncan	Victoria Police
	Edward Graham	Victoria Police
	Shaun Mason	FCJ College Benalla
	David Morrow	Cooinda Village
	John Stafford	Regional Roads Victoria
	Cristy Webb	Regional Roads Victoria
<b>In attendance:</b>	Briana Beggs	Administration Officer
	Sam Strano	Victoria Police
	Stephen Dowe	Senior Projects and Technical Services Engineer

**Apologies:** Shaun Mason and Mark Byers

**Not in Attendance** Kylie Cotter, Gavin Duncan and David Morrow.

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

**Items discussed:**

1. Inland Rail Project Update
2. Review of Action Sheet
3. Project Updates
4. Opportunities to Work Together and General Business

### **Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee**

5.40pm Tuesday 6 August 2024, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

<b>Chair:</b>	Raelene Stratton	Community Representative
<b>Committee:</b>	Councillor Don Firth	Council Representative
	Councillor Gail O'Brien	Council Representative
	Toby Benador	Community Representative
	Ian Gonzaga	Community Representative
	Alex Ross	Community Representative
	Joel Spencer	Community Representative
	Grant Banks	Interim Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
	Catherine Macmillan	Business Development Coordinator
<b>In attendance:</b>	Dom Testoni	Chief Executive Officer
	Charlie Vincent	Tourism North East Victoria
	Bridget Moran	Tourism and Events Officer
<b>Apologies:</b>	Councillor Don Firth and Catherine Macmillan	

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

#### **Items discussed:**

1. Address by Chief Executive Officer Dom Testoni
2. Roles and Responsibilities of the Committee
3. Future of the Benalla Street Art Festival
4. General Business

### **Communications Advisory Committee**

1.30pm Wednesday 7 August 2024, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

<b>Chair</b>	Councillor Danny Claridge (Mayor)	Councillor Representative
<b>Councillors</b>	Councillor Bernie Hearn	Councillor Representative
	Councillor Peter Davis	Councillor Representative
<b>In attendance</b>	Dom Testoni	Chief Executive Officer
	Grant Banks	Communications and Engagement Coordinator
	Tracey Beaton	Executive Coordinator

**Apologies:** Nil

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

#### **Items discussed:**

1. Review of Actions From The Previous Meeting
2. Media Highlights
3. Current Community Engagement Projects
4. Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey
5. General Business

**Benalla Festival Advisory Committee**

5.30pm Monday 12 August 2024, Customer Service Centre (Geoff Oliver Meeting Room) 1 Bridge Street EAST, Benalla

**Chair:** Councillor Justin King Council Representative

**Committee:** Councillor Bernie Hearn Councillor Representative  
Caroll Bolitho Community Representative  
Vince Branigan Community Representative  
Stephanine Brack Community Representative  
Grant Banks Interim Manager Economic Development and Sustainability Tourism and Events Officer

**In attendance:** Bridget Moran Youth Engagement Officer  
Will Smith

**Apologies:** Vince Branigan

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

**Items discussed:**

1. Planning for the 2024 Benalla Festival (1-10 November 2024)
2. General Business

**Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre (BIRC) Redevelopment Project Steering Committee**

11am Thursday 15 August 2024, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room), 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

**Chair:** Adrian Gasperoni Manager Assets and Infrastructure

**Committee:** Councillor Don Firth Councillor Representative  
Councillor Bernie Hearn Councillor Representative  
Wally Armstrong Benalla Basketball Association  
Noel Baumgarten Community Member  
David Booth Community Infrastructure and Place, Sport and Recreation Victoria  
Tom O'Connor Basketball Victoria  
Terry Nowland BIRC Committee of Management  
Simone Sammon Community Member

**In attendance:** Tom Arnold Community Development and Recreation Coordinator  
Dean Steegstra Open Space Coordinator  
Bree Glass Administration Officer

**Apologies:** Councillor Bernie Hearn

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

**Items discussed:**

1. Project Opportunities
2. Project Design and Community Consultation
3. Information Sharing
4. Actions

**Audit and Risk Committee Meeting**

5pm Tuesday 20 August 2024, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room), 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

**Chair** Mr Cameron Gray

**Committee** Councillor Peter Davis  
Councillor Bernie Hearn  
Ms Rita Ruyters

**In attendance** Dom Testoni Chief Executive Officer  
Robert Barber General Manager Corporate  
Cathy Fitzpatrick Manager Finance

**Internal Auditor** Brad Ead AFS

**External Auditor** Jason Gilbert Crowe

**Apologies:** Nil

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

**Items discussed:**

1. Meeting with Auditors
2. Benalla Rural City Council Interim Management Letter For The Financial Year Ending 30 June 2024
3. 2023/24 Year End Status Report
4. Internal Audit Program
5. Risk Management Update
6. Procurement Process Exemptions
7. Reports From Regulatory and Integrity Agencies
8. Audit and Risk Compliance Management Items
9. General Business

## **Assembly of Councillors – Business Review**

5.15pm Wednesday 21 August 2024, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

**Chair** Councillor Peter Davis

**Councillors** Councillor Danny Claridge (Mayor)

Councillor Don Firth

Councillor Bernie Hearn

Councillor Punarji Hewa Gunaratne

Councillor Justin King

Councillor Gail O'Brien

**In attendance** Dom Testoni Chief Executive Officer

Robert Barber General Manager Corporate

Grant Banks Interim Manager Economic Development and Sustainability

Tom Arnold Community Development Coordinator

Nathan Gasperoni Environment and Sustainability Coordinator

Joel Ingham Planning Coordinator

**Apologies:** Cr Punarji Hewa Gunaratne

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

### **Items discussed:**

1. *Benalla Fawckner Drive Precinct Masterplan Project Update*
2. *Benalla Rural City Council Open Space Strategy Update*
3. Planning Application for the Use and Development of Land for a Sawmill at 232 Mt Samaria Road, Samaria
4. Draft *Benalla Rural City Council Climate and Environmental Strategy* – Consideration of Submissions
5. Taungurung Memorandum of Understanding
6. Meeting Schedule
7. Funding Submission



## Officer Reports

### 4.1 Benalla Rural City Council Climate and Environment Strategy 2024-2029

SF/1893

Nathan Gasperoni – Environment and Sustainability Coordinator  
Grant Banks – Interim Manager Economic Development and Sustainability

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents for consideration the *Benalla Rural City Council Climate and Environment Strategy 2024-2029*.

#### BACKGROUND

The Council at its meeting on Wednesday 19 April 2023, resolved to develop a draft *Benalla Rural City Council Climate and Environment Strategy* following the review of the *Environment Strategy 2016-2020* and *Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan 2013-2025*.

Council officers began the development of the draft *Benalla Rural City Council Climate and Environment Strategy 2024 – 2029* (Climate and Environment Strategy) by holding community consultation and workshop session at the following locations:

- Baddaginnie Hall on 15 June 2023
- Swanpool Hall on 20 June 2023
- Goorambat Hall on 22 June 2023
- Benalla CWA Hall on 26 June 2023.

The *Climate and Environment Strategy* outlines the proactive and strategic approach to environmental matters and identifies priorities for management for Benalla Rural City over the next five years. The strategic direction of the draft *Climate and Environment Strategy* is accompanied by key actions the Council will seek to take over the next five years as well as highlighting important recent projects within Benalla Rural City.

Both the Strategy and the accompanying Net Zero Action Plan are framed as aspirational yet attainable. The Strategy enables the Council to demonstrate robust leadership through actions that are not only aspirational but also constitute sound business practice. This underscores the key principle, that exhibiting strong environmental stewardship is not just beneficial for the environment but is also good for business.

The draft *Climate and Environment Strategy* was presented to the Council at its meeting on 29 May 2024, where it resolved that the document be placed on public exhibition for a period of at least 28 days. Community consultation opened on Thursday 30 May 2024. A public notice was placed on the Council's website on 31 May 2024 and in the *Benalla Ensign* on 5 June 2024.

Community feedback was invited via the Council's website and social media channels and through a formal public notice in the *Benalla Ensign*. The submission period closed Thursday 27 June 2024.

At the close of the submission period 12 submissions had been received. Four written submissions and eight online submissions were received.

In accordance with the Council’s *Governance Rules 2020*, submitters were invited to address the Finance and Planning Committee on Wednesday 31 July 2024 in support of their submissions. Howard Bartlett and David Blore spoke in support of their submissions.

**DISCUSSION**

An analysis of the submissions and general themes are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1 - Analysis of submissions and general themes**

Theme	Public Submissions	Officer Comments
Land management and sustainable house design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>There is no room in current subdivisions for trees in owners' blocks. This would greatly enhance the cooling of houses.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>I see several problems with new subdivisions that will create less livable if not un-livable housing, and more expensive to operate.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Five submissions suggested more improvements to planning and development regulations in terms of sustainable design.</li> <li>▪ A common theme through the consultation was for large improvements in sustainable design requirements for housing and subdivisions.</li> </ul>
Climate leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Lacks the declaration of a Climate Emergency as eagerly sought by the community which is an easy symbolic first step to demonstrate leadership to the local community.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Declaring a Climate Emergency, as many other LGA's across Australia have done, will give notice to the BRCC community that Council is serious about Climate Change.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Three submissions were received suggesting Council needs to show more leadership on climate change with two of those submissions calling for a declaration of a climate emergency.</li> <li>▪ This theme followed on from previous stages of consultation and community feedback.</li> </ul>
Climate change and net zero target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>We do not want to see council waste taxpayer funds on virtue signalling projects such as net zero.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>I am concerned with, yet another net-zero plan that will ultimately cost ratepayers more with less value for dollar.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Three submissions were received either wanting Council not to waste money on climate change and/or net zero targets.</li> <li>▪ Some submissions discussed the lack of belief in climate change and whether Council should be spending in this area.</li> </ul>
Electric vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>All other actions look good, especially transitioning the fleet to low carbon.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The number of public charging stations is well below comparable or smaller towns.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Has there been a ROI study been conducted on the purchase of EV's by council.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Multiple submissions discussed low emission vehicles and EV chargers.</li> <li>▪ There was support for increasing Council's low emission vehicle fleet and the need for more public chargers.</li> <li>▪ Some submissions also discussed the financial viability of EV's and the consideration of hybrid vehicles over EV's.</li> </ul>

Theme	Public Submissions	Officer Comments
Natural cooling and canopy coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>More shade trees are desperately needed to be planned for and planted in new subdivisions, lower socio-economic areas and open public spaces in Benalla.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>It would be easy to increase green areas which absorb carbon dioxide from the air and provide shade to lower temperatures.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Five submissions discussed the importance and support for increasing canopy cover across the municipality.</li> <li>▪ This theme was also tied in with sustainable design and biodiversity related feedback.</li> </ul>

Following the consideration of submissions, Councillor and Council staff input, the following changes were made to the *Climate and Environment Strategy*:

- Two actions have been added to the Strategy in the *sustainable communities* section, on Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles and engaging with those who are culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and those who are socially and economically disadvantaged, to build understanding and resilience to climate change.
- Some sections of the Strategy have also been slightly altered to reduce excess and unnecessary wording to improve the flow of the strategy.

The *Benalla Rural City Council Climate and Environment Strategy 2024-2029* is attached as **Appendix 1**.

***COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025***

**Community**

- *A connected, involved and inclusive community.*

**Environment**

- *Healthy protected and natural environment.*
- *Sustainable practices.*

**Leadership**

- *Good governance.*
- *Engaged and informed community.*
- *Effective and responsive advocacy.*

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

In accordance with the Council’s *Community Engagement Policy*, community engagement on the *Benalla Rural City Council Climate and Environment Strategy 2024-2029* was undertaken at the ‘consult’ level under the International Association for Public Participation’s IAP2 public participation spectrum.

The adopted *Benalla Rural City Council Climate and Environment Strategy 2024-2029* will be published on the Council’s website.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The *Climate and Environment Strategy* is supported by two documents. The *Benalla Rural City Council Corporate Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report* and the *Benalla Rural City Council Net Zero Action Plan*. The three documents were developed in consultation with Ironbark Sustainability.

Implementation of the actions recommended in the Action Plan should result in significant cost savings and emissions reduction over the lifetime of the Council's assets.

A cost-benefit analysis of identified actions was also undertaken as part of the development of the Action Plan. In total, the implementation of all actions within the Action Plan is estimated to require a capital investment of \$3.2 million and return net savings of \$6.8 million to the Council across the lifetime of all assets.

## GENDER EQUALITY ACT

Under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* the Council is required to undertake a gender impact assessment when developing or reviewing any policy, program or service that has a direct and significant impact on the public.

A gender equity assessment found the strategy has an overall neutral gender impact.

## LEGISLATIVE AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

It is considered that the report is consistent with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

## OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any general or material conflicts of interest in this matter.

## CONCLUSION

The *Benalla Rural City Council Climate and Environment Strategy 2024-2029* has been developed using a comprehensive deliberative engagement program. All stakeholders who participated in the process are thanked for their valuable contribution.

**Recommendation:**

**That the *Benalla Rural City Council Climate and Environment Strategy 2024-2029* be adopted.**

# BENALLA

RURAL CITY COUNCIL

BENALLA RURAL CITY COUNCIL

# CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

2024-2029

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## **Acknowledgement of Country**

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and to Elders from any other communities who may be here today.

## **Message from the Mayor**

I am pleased to present Benalla Rural City Council's first *Climate and Environment Strategy 2024-2029* — a pivotal document that charts our course towards a more sustainable and resilient future. This Strategy is a testament to our commitment to environmental stewardship.

The Council takes pride in our commitment to achieving net zero for corporate operations, enhancing biodiversity, and progressing towards a circular economy. Furthermore, our dedication to developing a water-sensitive community, fostering sustainability, and promoting inclusion reflects our collective vision for a resilient and harmonious community.

As part of our commitment, to deliver this Strategy the Council will actively participate in regional partnerships, networks, committees, and groups focused on vegetation planning, land and biodiversity planning, waterway management, training, education, and community engagement.

I express my gratitude to the community members and stakeholders who have contributed their insights and feedback in shaping this Strategy. Your involvement has been invaluable and we are confident that, together, we can build a more sustainable, resilient, and inclusive Benalla Rural City.

Cr Danny Claridge

**Mayor, Benalla Rural City**

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## Executive Summary

The Benalla Rural City Council's *Climate and Environment Strategy 2024-2029* is a comprehensive strategy designed to address the environmental challenges and opportunities the area will face in the coming decades.

This Strategy was developed in consultation with the community of Benalla Rural City, agencies, stakeholders, and Council staff. The strategy is guided by extensive community consultation and feedback and aims to align with the *Council Plan 2021-2025* and the *Community Plan*, including the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and the wider goals of sustainability and climate resilience.

The first section of this Strategy details Benalla Rural City's environmental context, internal and strategic context, briefly discusses climate change in Victoria and the region specific to Benalla. It then identifies six key focus areas and delves deeper into Council's vision and commitment to each: achieving net zero for corporate operations, increasing biodiversity across the municipality, advancing towards a circular economy, developing a water-sensitive community, fostering a sustainable community, and promoting inclusion with the local Aboriginal Advisory Group. These focus areas were chosen as the most impactful and pressing issues by the community.

This Strategy aims at achieving our community vision which is to: regenerate biodiversity in natural environment and green spaces, reach zero carbon emissions, create a circular economy, have an active and sustainable transport network, support sustainable food systems and have water sensitive places and communities. It sets a clear direction for the next five years, aiming to make Benalla Rural City a more resilient, sustainable and inclusive community.



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## Introduction to the Strategy

This Climate and Environment Strategy (the Strategy) has been developed by Benalla Rural City Council (Council) as part of our role in protecting our environment and safeguarding its ability to support our community into the future.

To achieve this goal, the Strategy outlines a proactive and strategic approach to environmental matters and identifies priorities for management. In adopting this Climate and Environment Strategy, Council aims to respond to environmental concerns held by the community.

Council is involved in a number of regional partnerships, networks, committees and groups that aim to address environmental issues, responsibilities, deliver projects and meet environmental objectives that require a collaborative approach.

These groups focus on vegetation planning and retention controls, land and biodiversity planning, roadside and waterway management, training, education and skills development, and community engagement.

The many achievements to date are testament to the collaborative approach fostered within our region. Involvement in these groups has given the Council the opportunity to undertake activities that otherwise may not have been possible.

The Climate and Environment Strategy identifies a number of key areas and actions that we plan to undertake over the next five years to meet the objectives of the *Council Plan 2021-2025*.

The Strategy has been developed using feedback and insights from community members and various stakeholders throughout the municipality.

## About Benalla Rural City Council

Benalla Rural City is located in north-eastern Victoria, 193 kilometres north-east of the Melbourne CBD, and is centred in the Broken River valley. The population according to the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data from the 2021 census is 14,528, with approximately 9,000 living in urban areas and the remaining in and around the Benalla town.<sup>1</sup> The total land area is 2,352 square kilometres.

The area's economic sectors reflect Benalla's role as a regional centre: agricultural production, tourism and manufacturing. It is dominated by employment in the manufacturing, retail trade, health and community services sectors.

The proportion of people employed in agriculture is above the state average. The rural areas of the municipality are recognised for their quality soils and many areas have access to good irrigation.

The major agricultural industries are prime lamb and beef production, some dairying and broad acre cropping. Recent agricultural diversification has seen a rise in viticulture, more intensive forms of horticulture and forestry.

The main tourism attractions include, but are not limited to, the Benalla Art Gallery, Winton Wetlands, State Gliding Centre (Benalla Airport), Benalla Gardens and Showgrounds, Aboriginal Gardens and Winton Motor Raceway.

Benalla Rural City

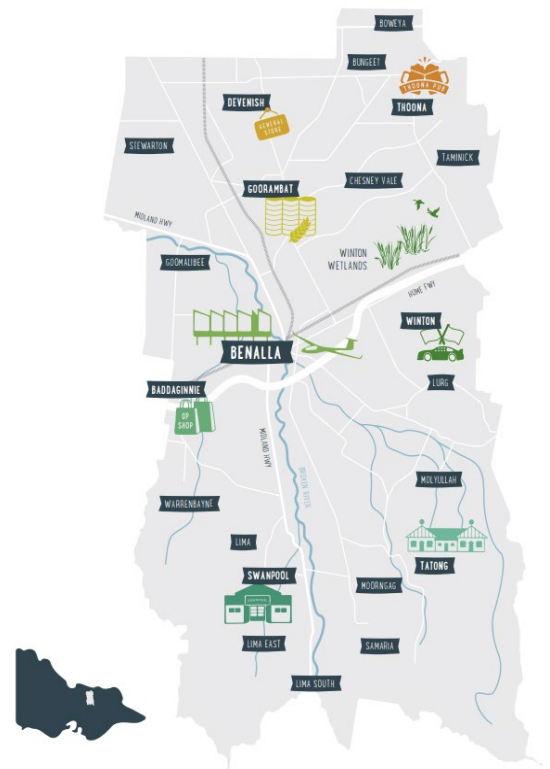


Figure 1: Winton Wetlands

<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA21010>

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## Traditional Owners

Benalla Rural City was traditionally a meeting point for three distinct mobs, Yorta Yorta, Taungurung and Bangerang. They are the traditional custodians of this land, and Benalla Rural City Council recognises the importance of connection to Country and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

We recognise the importance of building respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and promoting equality, inclusivity, and diversity within our organisation and the broader community.

Promoting inclusion with the Benalla Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group within Council operations will help strengthen this tie, as the First Nations peoples of this land have deep connections and commitments to the community which they represent.

We are thankful for the knowledge and insight that Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have contributed to this Strategy.

## Community Vision

This Strategy was developed in consultation with the community. Council staff made available multiple and varied avenues for the community to share their ideas and provide input. These opportunities included:

- Two online surveys on Council's Have Your Say Benalla page.
- Four workshops at Baddaginnie, Swanpool, Goorambat and Benalla.
- A workshop with the Full Impact Squad - a youth group supported by the Tomorrow Today Foundation.
- A workshop with several members of the local Aboriginal Advisory Committee.



From this, Council staff received 61 submissions from the online survey and the workshops were well received with 90-100 attendees across all four workshops. The feedback provided invaluable information for the Environment team to structure this Strategy, and it also provided a welcoming and engaging conversation between Councillors, community members and Council staff.

Throughout this process Council sought input on five key focus areas. The most common and considered as significant input by the community were:

- net zero
- biodiversity and regeneration
- circular economy
- water sensitive communities
- sustainable communities.

Across the engagement there were several recurring themes and suggested actions. These included:

- Council to set a net zero target and acknowledge the climate is in a state of emergency.
- Transition Council's fleet to low carbon vehicles.
- Increase canopy cover.
- Increase biodiversity values across the municipality through direct intervention and community driven projects.
- Minimise the removal of existing vegetation.
- Increase protection and care for roadside vegetation.
- Increase education and awareness on all areas of waste and a circular economy.

## Internal and Strategic Context

The Strategy is an extension of the Council's values and principles which will help shape Benalla Rural City as a leading partner in providing a healthier and cleaner environment for the Benalla community. As stated in the previous Environment Strategy, the Council will employ principles that accompany the Strategy, which will enhance the ability of Council to achieve its stated vision, goals and objectives outlined in this document. These same principles apply to this new Climate and Environment Strategy.

Council (as an organisation) will facilitate:

- **Participation:** Early and honest engagement with the community around significant actions and will participate in environmentally sustainable activities where appropriate.
- **Working together:** Development and maintenance of relationships to achieve our goals – includes using local service providers where possible.
- **Justifiable:** All works will consider the environmental impact and will be subject to Council risk assessment mechanisms and legislative requirements. This includes an environmental, social, cultural and economic analysis where appropriate (i.e. for projects likely to have significant impacts or costs).
- **Empowerment:** Education and information will be designed to support individuals to take action in their own way.
- **Respect:** Council will respect different views and ideas, try to accommodate them where possible, and provide a reasonable explanation where it's not possible.
- **Accountability:** Council will be accountable for the actions it delivers and the immediate outcomes that are expected to be attained.
- **Continuous improvement:** Council will show leadership in environmental sustainability, monitor its progress, report to the community, and involve the community in planning for improvement.

This Strategy will guide Councillors, Council staff, contractors and consultants to:

- Follow all departmental environmental procedures, signage and guidance.
- Foster a culture of environmental responsibility at work by reducing consumption of resources.
- Comply with environmental regulations.
- Reuse and recycle resources, where possible, to minimise waste-to-landfill and further reduce our impact on the environment.
- Limit our greenhouse gas emissions by minimising energy use in our offices and operations and making environmentally responsible travel decisions.
- Respect all natural and cultural heritage areas - threatened species and communities, historical, cultural and Indigenous heritage and areas of high conservation value.

## Alignment with the *Council Plan 2021-2025*

The Benalla Rural City *Council Plan 2021-2025* is a guiding document that sets short- to long-term goals for Council and the community to work towards creating a vision for the future of Benalla Rural City. The Climate and Environment Strategy sits within the medium-term objectives of the Council Plan.

Collaboration with the community established five themes as the framework for the key objectives and strategies within the *Council Plan 2021-2025*. Each of these themes has a short-term objective to develop an action plan that will be reported on annually, with achievements and performance against key success measures communicated to the community.

This action plan can be found at the end of this document outlining the timelines for each action within the key focus areas demonstrating accountability for Council to meet its short-term objectives.

The key focus areas of the Climate and Environment Strategy are linked to these themes through actions that will help Council realise their goals and objectives. These themes are:



## United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015 the UN set 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to provide a blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. The target to achieve these goals was set for 2030.

This is a call to the 193 countries who committed to the target to recognise that ending poverty goes hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality and encourage economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.<sup>2</sup>



Figure 2: United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Australia is one of the 193 countries which have committed to the goals. It will require all stakeholders, state governments, LGAs and businesses to take action for Australia meet the 2030 target.

To show Council's commitment to the SDGs, each key focus area has been linked to the relevant SDGs.

<sup>2</sup> Retrieved from the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

## Environment Strategy Achievements

This is the third Climate and Environment Strategy that Council has developed in consultation with numerous stakeholders to deliver key actions to help Benalla Rural City tackle climate change.

The last strategy listed several key achievements that had been implemented since the last strategy was developed.

The actions that Council set out in the last Strategy that have been implemented are below:

- Developed a *Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2013-2025*.
- The RecLess: Less Water, Less Often, More Resilient Open Spaces Project. Partnership with Alpine Shire Council.
- The Goulburn Broken Greenhouse Alliance 'Watts Working Better' project was launched in 2014 to improve the efficiency of residential street lights across Benalla Rural City Council.
- Energy efficiency upgrades and solar PV at five Council buildings in 2018 and 2019.
- Net Zero Action plan developed in 2024.
- Working alongside the Goulburn Murray Catchment Authority (GMCA) on regional projects such as; Naturally Cooler Towns and Resilient Public Estate.

In addition to these key strategies developed the following actions have also been implemented:

- Tree planting days.
- Community environmental education programs such as clean up Australia Day.
- Key partnerships with other environmental agencies.
- Textile recycling at the Resource Recovery Centre.
- Efficiency upgrades in Council buildings.
- Procurement of carbon accounting software to track its corporate emissions.
- Electric and hybrid vehicles added to Councils fleet.



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## Environmental Context

Benalla Rural City has a diverse and varied landscape, with beautiful state and federal parks, numerous waterways and native plant and animal species. Council has implemented projects that have contributed to reducing carbon emissions that have an impact on the Benalla environment.

Our environmental context in numbers:

- **2,472km** of managed road reserves.
- **155ha** of managed bush reserves.
- **1,500** native plants planted on average per year.
- **1,794** tonnes of FOGO diverted from landfill.
- **1,809** native flora and fauna species of which **144** are threatened under the FFA and EPBC.
- **1,277** of trees planted since the inception of the Street Tree Planting Program.
- **20** tonnes of donated textiles through the Textile Recycling Program since 2022.
- **120kW** of solar installed across five Council facilities, supplying **18 per cent** of Council annual electricity.
- **Nine per cent** of Council emissions come from electricity.
- **Four** hybrid and **two** electric vehicles in Council's light vehicle fleet.
- **Two** Council used electric vehicle charging station and **three** electric vehicle charging stations for public use.

## Landscape

Benalla's central location in regional Victoria is divided by the Hume Freeway with hills, valleys, grazing land and forests to the south and plains and rolling hills used as cropping and grazing land to the north. The south, east and north-east landscape retains a greater native vegetation cover whilst land to the north-west and west supports dry land and irrigated cropping.

Situated around Lake Benalla, which is a significant natural feature of local and regional importance, Benalla has four major reserve areas; Mount Samaria State Park, Warby-Ovens National Park, Reef Hills State Park and the Winton Wetlands, these state parks comprise of roughly five per cent of the land area. It is a predominately rural area, with the majority of the land used for agricultural purposes, including wool and meat production, dairying and crop farming, followed by parkland and residential land.



Figure 3: Lake Benalla

Thirty per cent of Benalla land is for public use, with three national parks comprising of 8,730 ha or 3.7 per cent of the total 235,264 ha of land (2,350 square kilometres). It sits within the Ovens Murray Region which borders the Murray River to the north, with access to Victoria's High Country.

## Waterways

Benalla Rural City contains a number of tributaries of the Broken River and a significant portion of the Broken River itself, which is regulated by Lake Nillahcootie, to its southern border. The Broken River is a tributary of the Goulburn River, which flows into the Murray River.

The Broken Creek is also a significant system in the area that flows out of the Broken River and joins directly with the Murray upstream of the Goulburn River, making it a part of the Murray Basin. Holland creek is another significant waterway that flows into the Broken River.

Benalla Rural City's water is sourced from the Ryans and Whiskey creeks, which fills the McCall Say Reservoir and the Loombah Reservoir. These reservoirs have a combined capacity of 1,747 megalitres, of which Benalla typically uses 1,400 megalitres each year.

## Flora and Fauna

The Benalla LGA is home to a number of rare and endangered species listed under the *Fauna and Flora Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG Act). Rare and endangered native fauna such as, Squirrel gliders, brush-tailed phascogales (Tuan) and bush stone curlews are all found within the Benalla Rural City municipality.

It's also home to species listed as endangered and critically endangered under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

This includes the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater *Anthochaera Phrygia*, which is primarily a canopy bird and is reliant on select eucalypt and mistletoe species, including Mugga Ironbark, *Eucalyptus sideroxylon* and Yellow Box, *Eucalyptus melliodora*.



Figure 4: Grey-crowned Babbler

The Benalla Planning Scheme seeks to protect and stop the removal of native vegetation that support Regent Honeyeater (Clause 42.02 Schedule 3). The Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO) covers a large area of important vegetation for the Regent Honeyeater in the eastern side of the municipality.

Another endangered species supported by the Benalla Planning Scheme is the Grey-crowned Babbler (Clause 42.02 Schedule 2). The Grey-crowned Babbler's preferred habitat is significantly fragmented and why a VPO on the west side of the municipality is so important.

Protecting vegetation in key habitat areas such as Grey Box Grassy Woodland is crucial for the species.

The Lima stringybark Eucalyptus alligatrix subspecies limaensis, which is endemic to a small area near Swanpool and listed as endangered under the EPBC Act. It is confined to a very small area and highly fragmented with higher-than-normal level of risk to common threats. Continued protection of existing mature trees and allowing for juvenile recruitment is required.

One of only a small number of remnant populations of Macquarie Perch exists within the Broken River and Holland Creek systems within Benalla Rural City. Macquarie Perch are also listed as endangered under the EPBC Act and FFG Act, after a long-term decline in abundance and a reduction in self-sustaining populations.

## Climate Change Context

Victoria's climate has changed over recent years due to changing weather systems, seasonal influences and large-scale climate drivers.

The state is becoming hotter and overall drier with extreme weather events shaping how Victorians must adapt. According to the Victorian Climate Science Report 2019, Victoria has experienced a temperature increase of over 1°C from 1910 to 2018, double the number of days over 35°C, a longer and more intense fire season and more days of heavy rain.<sup>5</sup> All of this is expected to continue to increase in the future if nothing is done to combat climate related disasters.

The area in which Benalla Rural City resides is in the Ovens Murray region. This region is also impacted by these extremes, with projections that indicate median maximum temperature rises of 1.4°C by the decade between 2030-2040 and 2.4°C by mid-century under high emission scenarios.<sup>6</sup>

This is expected to result in more extreme rainfall events, maximum daily temperature increases, and longer and earlier fires seasons since the mid-1900s. Overall, like the rest of Victoria, the Ovens Murray regions are expected to become warmer and drier, with these changes largely contingent on future increases in greenhouse gas emissions (GHG).

There are actions that can be taken now to limit these extreme dangers and avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Under a low emissions scenario, Victoria's average temperature increase could be less significant and by 2050 the state's temperature rise could be kept to below 1.5°C and 1.6°C by 2070. To realise this lower temperature, rise scenario action must be taken now.

In recent years Benalla has taken out the number one position for storm hot spot in Victoria by the SES, with flooding incidents for 2022 to 2023 increased by 130 per cent to the previous financial year.

A changing climate poses risks to the key areas within this plan: biodiversity, water resources, sustainable and thriving communities and the economy.

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## Key Areas

In the table below Council has identified five key areas that will have the most significant gains in delivering this Strategy. Each focus area has a vision and actions which Council will prioritise over the next five years.

The actions in each focus area align with the *Council Plan 2021-2025* on developing short-term action plans that sit within each theme to hold Council and the community accountable to progress in implementing these actions. The action plans will be updated to reflect any progress which has been made (Table 7). The key areas have also been linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Table 1: Five Key Focus Areas**

Net Zero
Biodiversity and Regeneration
Circular Economy
Water Sensitive Communities
Sustainable Communities

## Key Focus Area 1: Net Zero



Net zero emissions means reducing the world’s greenhouse gas emissions to as close to zero as possible with available technology. This means Australia must rapidly phase out fossil fuels (coal, oil and natural gas) and transition to renewable energy across all sectors of the economy.

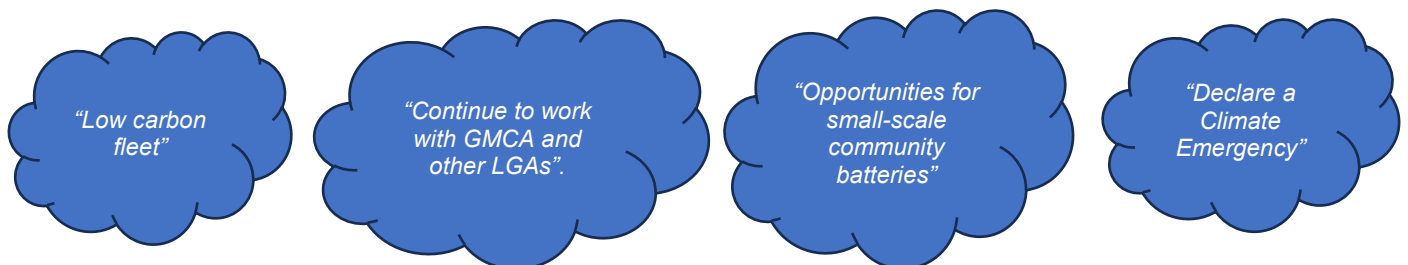
Setting an aspirational net zero target is an approach taken by all levels of government. Be it federal, state or local government, targeting net zero establishes leadership and demonstrates commitment to actions based on factors such as available budget, political will or community expectations.

By establishing a net zero target councils can work with actions that are most pressing in reducing their emissions first, while working with key stakeholders and the community to reduce emissions from actions that require more long-term planning and budget.

Given recent instances of extreme temperatures (2023 being the hottest year on record), flooding, and wildfires across the global, the urgency for the Council to take action in reducing emissions and meeting net zero has never been greater. Relying solely on the purchase of carbon offsets is insufficient in the face of these extreme natural disasters.

The Victorian Government has a net zero target of 2045, with 75 to 80 per cent reduction by 2035. The Australian Government has set a net zero target of 2050, with an interim target of 43 per cent below 2005 levels in 2030.

Other councils around BRCC have set targets between 2030-2050. The Council has recently endorsed a Net Zero Action Plan which has set a net zero target for all corporate emissions excluding waste by 2035/2036 and including waste by 2040/2041. This Action Plan -sits under the short-term planning objectives within the *Council Plan 2021-2025*.



**Figure 5: Feedback from community engagement**

In response to feedback from the community, Council has set a vision to be net zero by 2040/41. In 2024 Council developed a Net Zero Action Plan which aligns with this focus area. The actions in that plan have been added to provide continuity between the two documents.

**Table 2: Net Zero Action Plan**

Action Plan	Description	Financial year to be completed
<b>Key Focus Area 1- Net Zero</b>	Council to employ an Officer to a minimum of 0.6 FTE position to assist in the delivery of the Strategy and Net Zero Action Plan.	2025/26
	Transition to 100 per cent renewable energy (VECO 2.0).	2024/25
	Transition Council’s passenger vehicle fleet to low carbon vehicles.	2029/30
	Transition Council’s vans to low carbon vehicles.	2026/27
	Transition Council’s utes to low carbon vehicles.	2032/33
	Review the current Fleet Strategy Plan to include EVs in the replacement cycle.	2024/25
	Audit Council owned buildings to transition to net zero or lower emission buildings and facilities.	Ongoing
	Install solar PV onto all suitable Council owned buildings.	2026/27
	Explore opportunities for a community battery or microgrid.	2024/25
	Ensure changing rainfall, flooding, bushfire and drought patterns are included in all Council strategies and asset management plans where applicable.	Ongoing
	Incorporate the new Climate and Environment Strategy in the review of the planning scheme to help inform out local policy in the planning scheme.	2026/27

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## Case Study: EV Chargers and Council fleet

There is a continual rise in Electric Vehicles (EVs) on roads and hence a rising need for places to charge them. EVs are becoming more and more popular as the need and want to reduce our emissions quickly grows.

One of the issues that has slowed the rate of EV adoption is the lack of charging infrastructure. Minimal charging infrastructure has been a deterrent for many who are wanting to transition to an EV. As support and demand has increased more charging options have begun to appear and substantially more are on their way.

Benalla Rural City sits an ideal location as the gateway to North East and Goulburn Murray regions of Victoria and for travellers on the Hume Freeway. Furthermore, there is a growing need and want within the local community for EV chargers.

Currently, there are three chargers in the municipality open to the public with a dual charger located in the Denny Street Carpark in Benalla and another provided by Schnieder Electric. Council will continue to advocate for improved electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

There is also a rise in accommodation providers in the municipality offering charging to tenants, providing visitors with the opportunity to charge their vehicles overnight during their stay.

Furthermore, Benalla Rural City has brought its first EV into Council fleet in the last 12 months. This is the start of transition that will see more EVs enter Council fleet, reducing Councils future emissions.



## Key Focus Area 2: Increase Biodiversity



Biodiversity defines all life on Earth, it provides basic necessities and essential resources and services to all people.<sup>3</sup> A study conducted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) found that up to one million of Earth's estimated eight million plant, insect and animal species are at risk of extinction within the next few decades.

Climate change has a major impact on biodiversity in Australia, one that harms Australians' air and water, energy and food, health and well-being and tourism to name a few. A lack of biodiversity affects our natural areas, parks and recreation that provide numerable benefits to society, the economy and the environment. Benalla Rural City contains high value flora (plants) and fauna (animals), including roughly 85 different species of fauna that are threatened.

The *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Amendment Act 2019* lists a number of threatening processes to biodiversity. The most significant issues for Benalla Rural City are invasive species, climate change and changes to land-use which is harmful to agriculture in the area.

The Victorian Government has enacted a plan to protect its environment through the *Biodiversity 2037 Plan*. This plan outlines ways communities can start planning and regenerating biodiversity loss by:<sup>4</sup>

- Managing threats such as further loss of habitat, weeds and pest animals and inappropriate regimes.
- Increase habitat quality and extent, creating additional habitat areas and connections.
- Enhance biodiversity by directly managing native species through numerous actions.
- Provide suitable habitat for species of conservation importance- both native and non-native.
- Promoting biodiversity benefits in human-centered settings, such as soil conservation practices, carbon sequestration, and stocking waterways with native fish for recreational fishing to name a few.

Benalla's Roadside Vegetation Management Plan recognises that a high priority will be given to retain existing native vegetation, prevent decline of indigenous vegetation communities, enhance priority habitats and improve connectivity. It further states that natural regeneration of indigenous vegetation will be protected and encouraged and a priority for natural regeneration and rehabilitation programs should be roadsides that form strategic biological corridors.

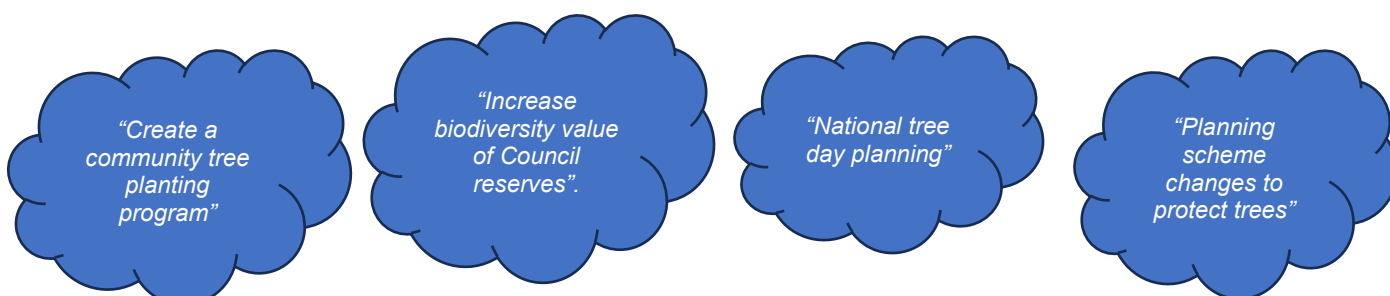
<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from the Royal Society of Victoria, Towards conservation & Recovery of Victoria's biodiversity.

<sup>4</sup> Retrieved from Victorian Government, Protecting Victoria's Environment- Biodiversity 2037

There are numerous councils within Victoria that are adopting biodiversity policies and toolkits to address this critical issue. Council has recently received a vegetation grant that can be utilised for biodiversity and regenerative projects.

In October the 2023 Street Tree Planting Program was completed, which saw 70 new trees planted in nature strips around Benalla.

The types of trees selected considered factors such as local conditions, climate and the existing streetscape. In addition, the trees planted are known for their resilience to pests and disease.



**Figure 6: Feedback from community engagement**

In response to workshops conducted earlier this year and feedback from the community, Council has set a vision to increase biodiversity across the municipality. In order to achieve this, Council has identified the below actions to help progress in this focus area.

**Table 3: Biodiversity Action Plan**

Action Plan	Description	Financial year to be completed
<b>Key Focus Area 2 – Increase Biodiversity</b>	Council to increase tree planting program to create habitat for fauna and flora.	2024/25
	Council to review the roadside management plan with consideration to pest and weed control program.	2024/25
	Council to partner with other agencies to advocate and protect wildlife.	Ongoing
	Support the Winton Wetlands restoration project where possible.	Ongoing
	Council to continue to work on rehabilitating the Holland Bioink.	Ongoing
	Council to deliver a New Pest and Weed Control Plan.	2023/24
	Map and register trees of cultural significance on public property.	2024/25
	Mapping of existing tree canopy in the Benalla Rural City.	Ongoing

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## Case Study: Holland Bio Link Channel

In November 2014 Benalla Rural City, with the assistance of the Inlet Channel Management Plan Advisory Committee, developed the Holland Bio Link Reserve Management Plan. The Management Plan outlined the strategies and desired outcomes for the reserve that contained the decommissioned Mokoan inlet channel stretching from the Winton Wetlands (formerly Lake Mokoan) to Holland Creek.

The entire approximately 13km by 110m reserve is classified as ecological vegetation class (EVC) 55 Plains Grassy Woodland. EVC 55 is classified as endangered within the Goulburn Broken Catchment and contains key canopy species such as Grey Box (*Eucalyptus macrocarpa*) and River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*).

The reserve was split into three Zones with works to rehabilitate Zone 1 beginning in 2015. Around 12,000 plants have been planted in Zone 1 since the adoption of the management plan, with plants chosen based on species naturally found in Plains Grassy Woodland areas.

BRCC has been lucky to work with the Regent Honeyeater Project (RHP) throughout the life of the management plan. RHP and their volunteers, have been a major asset to have partnering with Council on this project. Support from the GB CMA has also been an important to the success of the project.

The next steps in this project include assessment and revision the Holland Bio Link Management Plan and beginning works in Zone 2 and 3 to join the corridor with Holland Creek.

## Key Focus Area 3: Circular Economy



A circular economy is centred on the idea of resources being kept as long as possible within the economic system, where materials that have undergone an entire lifecycle, from product to the end stage, are returned to that same system. It focuses on not only finding ways to keep products in production, but sourcing products that have a longer lifespan and are produced with less impact on the environment.

Councils and communities have an opportunity to make a difference in the quantity of waste being sent to landfill using the principles of the three Rs: Reduce, reuse and recycle. If Council and the businesses within the community replace the linear take-make-waste model with a circular model based on reused, recycled, or repaired materials and products, the amount of waste sent to landfill would drastically decrease.

With the Benalla Landfill and Resource Recovery site currently accepting waste from other councils, incorporating practices of a circular economy into not only Council's own operations, but mandating other councils do the same is paramount.

Keeping materials and products in use and treating waste as a resource a circular economy in return will:

- Save costs (potentially boosts Victoria's economy by \$6.7 billion by improving material and efficiency and recycling.<sup>5</sup>
- Minimise demand on resources.
- Lower carbon emissions.
- Reduce legacy landfill emissions and pollution.

In 2020, the Victorian Government set a progressive plan for a circular economy. From that plan there are five key takeaways that Council can do to start incorporating a circular approach to their waste. They are:<sup>6</sup>

- Provide a new four-stream waste and recycling system.
- A cash for cans scheme.
- A stronger waste and recycling industry.
- New recycling laws and governance.
- A statewide ban of single-use plastics.

<sup>5</sup> Retrieved from the Victorian Government's circular economy policy and plan, <https://www.vic.gov.au/victorias-plan-circular-economy>

<sup>6</sup> Retrieved from the Victorian Government's circular economy policy and plan, <https://www.vic.gov.au/victorias-plan-circular-economy>

By implementing a more circular approach to waste Council will be able to benefit significantly. A few of those benefits are outlined below:

- Increase the quality and volume of recycling and reuse of our precious resources.
- Reduce waste, landfill and litter.
- Reduce emissions and contribute to Victoria’s net-zero emissions by 2045.
- Create new jobs.
- Build a sustainable and thriving circular economy for a cleaner, greener Victoria.



**Figure 7: Feedback from community**

In response to workshops conducted earlier this year and feedback from the community, Council has set a vision to take the lead and promote a more circular economy within the Benalla community. The actions have been identified in this action plan below.

**Table 4: Circular Economy Action Plan**

Action Plan	Description	Financial year to be completed
<b>Key Focus Area 3 – Circular Economy</b>	Provide educational programs in response to waste epidemic promoting reuse, recycle and repair.	Ongoing
	Council to conduct a feasibility study to go to fortnightly pickups of the red lid bin in the rural areas.	2025/26
	Council to implement a glass separation bin by 2027.	2027
	Council to consider the feasibility of organics waste bins for rural townships and properties enroute able to opt in.	2025/26
	Council to continue to attract business with a focus on renewable energy services.	Ongoing
	Council to work with businesses to promote the benefits of a circular economy.	Ongoing
	Council to attract business that can process problematic waste.	Ongoing
	Council to update procurement policy to include a focus on environment and sustainability in Council's capital works programs.	2025/26
	Council to increase resource recovery at Councils owned and operated Resource Recovery Centre, including the feasibility of a resale shop.	2026/27

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## **Case Study: Clothes swap and textile recycling**

In June 2022 Council teamed up with A Fitting Connection to host a Clothes Swap at the local CWA hall in Benalla. People could bring five items of clothing to donate and then exchange them for five new-to-them items. It was very well received by the community with around 50 attendees who wanted to see their clothes reused or appropriately recycled. A Fitting Connection works with a company called Upcycle4Better who provided a textile recycling bin at the clothes swap event for any item's leftover at the end.

Building on from this connection with Upcycle4Better a textile recycling program was then put in place at the Benalla Landfill and Resource Recovery Centre. It has been very well received with many people dropping their old clothes, shoes, soft toys, and other textiles off to be recycled or repurposed. The service is free for residents of Benalla to use. This new service means old and unusable textiles can now be diverted from landfill and repurposed or recycled.

Since installing the textile recycling unit at the Resource and Recovery Centre Council have received contact from multiple Victorian councils as well as some interstate councils. The uptake of textile recycling within Benalla Rural City has been fantastic and will hopefully continue to grow, so less makes its way to landfill.

## Key Focus Area 4: Water Sensitive Communities



Water is integral to communities throughout Australia, both in urban and rural landscapes. Having a healthy water system is crucial for human and ecological systems to thrive. It services a large range of activities, from daily residential and business uses to farmland and agricultural irrigation. Water is also a crucial resource for local flora and fauna to thrive and for sustaining our open spaces and natural environment the community uses on a daily basis.

The three most critical challenges Benalla Rural City faces in managing water are a growing population with varied and changing lifestyles, climate change and a challenging economic environment.

A long-term goal for Benalla Rural City will be to become a water sensitive community. A water sensitive community is a place:<sup>7</sup>

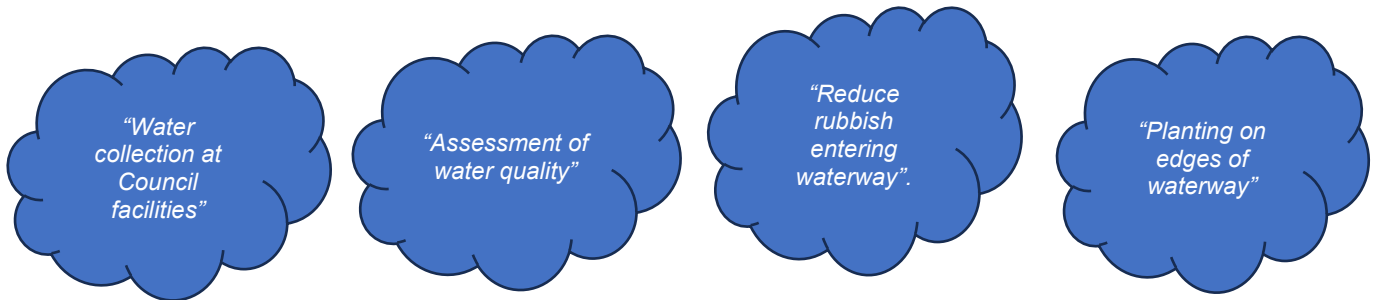
- That has the potential to serve as water supply catchment, providing a range of different water sources at a range of different scales and uses.
- That provides ecosystem services and a healthy natural environment, thereby offering a range of social, ecological and economic benefits.
- Where citizens have the knowledge and desire to make wise water choices.

Water sensitive communities can be described as resilient, liveable, productive and sustainable.

- In a water sensitive community, the way the community interacts with the water cycle plays a crucial part by<sup>8</sup>:
- Providing the water security essential for economic prosperity through efficient use of diverse available resources.
- Enhancing and protecting the health of waterways and wetlands and the river basins that surround them.
- Mitigating flood risk and damage.
- Creating public spaces that collect, clean and recycle water.

<sup>7</sup> Retrieved from CRCWSC website, What makes a city water sensitive, <https://watersensitivecities.org.au/what-is-a-water-sensitive-city/>

<sup>8</sup> Retrieved from CRCWSC website, What makes a city water sensitive, <https://watersensitivecities.org.au/what-is-a-water-sensitive-city/>



**Figure 8: Feedback from community**

In response to workshops conducted earlier this year and feedback from the community, the Council has set a vision to manage stormwater and water across the municipality. This is the first step needed in order to become a more water sensitive community, and the action outlined will help Council achieve this vision.

**Table 5: Water Sensitive Communities Action Plan**

Action Plan	Description	Financial year to be completed
<b>Key Focus Area 4 – Water Sensitive Communities</b>	Council to create a stormwater management plan in response to the contamination and weed issues in the town’s lake.	2026/27
	Council to continue to promote water reduction activities.	Ongoing
	Council to partner with lead agencies on water related issues.	Ongoing



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## Case Study: Cabomba in Lake Benalla

Cabomba (*Cabomba caroliniana*) is an introduced aquatic weed that originated from South America. Cabomba is listed as a Weed of National Significance and regarded as one of the worst weeds in Australia. Cabomba spreads rapidly, reproducing vegetatively from stem fragments which easily break away from the parent plant. Cabomba was identified in Benalla in 1990 with major treatments done in 2009, 2010, 2012, 2018 and 2021. Past treatments have included a combination of drawing down the water level in Lake Benalla to allow the Cabomba to dry out, as well as mechanical removal.

Current treatment methods are expensive, weather dependent and aesthetically unpleasant. Due to this, new treatment methods are being explored with one currently being tested on a couple of sites in Queensland. The Cabomba weevil (*Hydrotimetes natans*) is an aquatic weevil that spends its entire lifecycle on Cabomba plants, causing substantial damage to the plant both in the adult and larval stages.

Trials are currently underway at multiple sites in Queensland and NSW following positive testing results from CSIRO. Although, the Cabomba weevil is unlikely to remove the weed altogether it may prevent the frequency of large infestations and keep Cabomba at more manageable levels.

Since the last drawdown in 2021, there have been no reports of Cabomba in the Lake Benalla area. However, it is unlikely Cabomba has disappeared altogether and will likely show up again. Benalla Rural City will continue to work closely with the GBCMA to monitor Cabomba in Lake Benalla and assess potential major infestations.

## Key Focus Area 5: Sustainable Communities



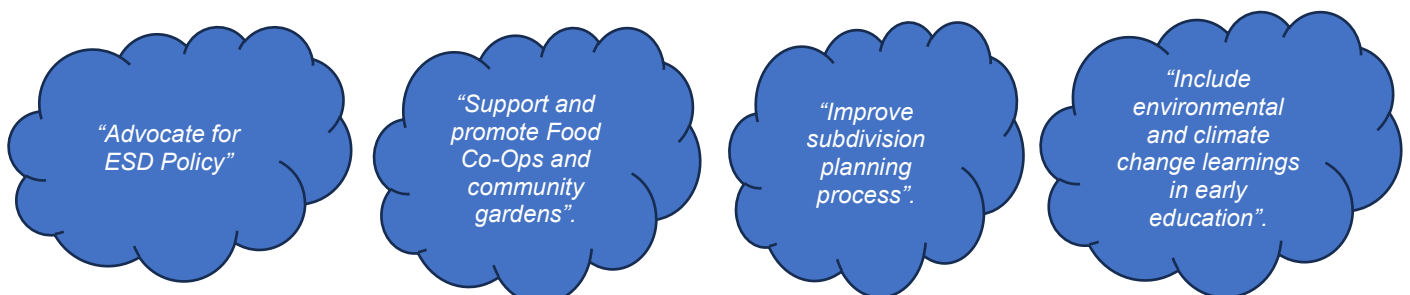
A sustainable community takes into account the five capitals models which provides a framework for sustainability at all levels. It accounts for the human, social, natural, financial and manufactured capital of a society and makes sure all are addressed fairly and equitably, while ensuring resources to sustain a community are available now and for future generations. It's a place where diverse backgrounds and perspectives are welcomed, and where all groups within that society can come together to make decisions for the betterment of their community.

Sustainable communities require long-term planning, where the decisions we make as a society today will have major impacts decades later. One of the biggest threats to sustainable communities is climate change. To that end, action needs to be taken now to build upon the work Council has already undertaken to develop a sustainable and resilient Benalla.

The Green Building Council of Australia worked with local councils and key stakeholders to identify five principles that support the sustainable transformation for a society. The five principles are:<sup>9</sup>

- Demonstrate visionary leadership and strong governance.
- Enhance liveability.
- Create opportunities for economic prosperity.
- Foster environment responsibility.
- Embrace design excellence and innovation.

These principles require a collaborative approach from all sectors within Benalla's community to see this vision achieved.



**Figure 9: Feedback from community**

In response to workshops conducted earlier this year and feedback from the community, Council has set a vision to become a more sustainable community. By incorporating these actions into this Strategy Council will be able to meet it's target and vision for this focus area.

<sup>9</sup> Retrieved from Green Building Council of Australia. Green Star- Communities Guide for Local Government

**Table 6: Sustainable Communities Action Plan**

Action Plan	Description	Financial year to be completed
<b>Key Focus Area 5 – Sustainable Communities</b>	Council to partner with health agencies to promote the benefits of home garden.	Ongoing
	Council to create a food share space	2025/26
	Consider the establishment a native food garden.	2025/26
	Recognise and protect the integrity of traditional indigenous NRM knowledge, support traditional knowledge exchange and when permitted use it with respect	Ongoing
	Embed Climate Resilient Infrastructure checklists into relevant processes for designing and maintaining infrastructure	2025/26
	Embed Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles into all new developments.	Ongoing
	Council to engage with those who are culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and those who are socially and economically disadvantaged, to build understanding and resilience to climate change.	Ongoing

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## **Case Study: Benalla Grow Your Own – Benalla Health**

Between 2016-19 the Benalla Grow Your Own (BGYO) project provided 74 wicking garden beds to vulnerable families living in Benalla. The garden beds were built in partnership with Benalla Health, St Vincent de Paul Society of Benalla, Beechworth Correctional Centre and Benalla Men's Shed.

The project was established in response to the growing issue of food insecurity from young families in Benalla. A food security scan prior to the project indicated 8.4 per cent of residents in Benalla had reported that they had run out of food and were unable to purchase more in the last 12 months. With food insecurity also correlated with low fruit and vegetable intake.

In 2021 a Survey was completed by 47.4 per cent of eligible participants to assess the results of the program. Of the surveyed, 93 per cent felt they were better able to provide for their family with 85 per cent indicating life was better because of the garden. Half indicated they had increased their gardening activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic and 63 per cent indicated improved mental health.

The garden beds continue to assist families save money, improve confidence growing their own food whilst improving nutrition, physical activity, social connection, and mental health outcomes.

## Action Plan:

**Table 7: Council Action Plan for Key Focus Areas**

Action Plan	Description	Financial year to be completed	Progress made to-date
<b>Key Focus Area 1- Net Zero</b>	Council to employ an Officer to a minimum of 0.6 FTE position to assist in the delivery of the Strategy and Net Zero Action Plan.	2025/26	
	Transition to 100 per cent renewable energy (VECO 2.0).	2024/25	
	Transition Council's passenger vehicle fleet to low carbon vehicles.	2029/30	
	Transition Council's vans to low carbon vehicles.	2026/27	
	Transition Council's utes to low carbon vehicles.	2032/33	
	Review the current Fleet Strategy Plan to include EVs in the replacement cycle.	2024/25	
	Audit Council owned buildings to transition to net zero or lower emission buildings and facilities.	Ongoing	
	Install solar PV onto all suitable Council owned buildings.	2026/27	
	Explore opportunities for a community battery or microgrid.	2024/25	
	Ensure changing rainfall, flooding, bushfire and drought patterns are included in all Council strategies and asset management plans where applicable.	Ongoing	
	Incorporate the new Climate and Environment Strategy in the review of the planning scheme to help inform out local policy in the planning scheme.	2026/27	
Council to increase tree planting program to create habitat for fauna and flora.	2024/25		

Action Plan	Description	Financial year to be completed	Progress made to-date
<b>Key Focus Area 2 – Increase Biodiversity</b>	Council to review the roadside management plan with consideration to pest and weed control program.	2024/25	
	Council to partner with other agencies to advocate and protect wildlife.	Ongoing	
	Support the Winton Wetlands restoration project where possible.	Ongoing	
	Council to continue to work on rehabilitating the Holland Bioink.	Ongoing	
	Council to deliver a New Pest and Weed Control plan.	2023/24	
	Map and register trees of cultural significance on public property.	2024/25	
	Mapping of existing tree canopy in the Benalla Rural City	Ongoing	
<b>Key Focus Area 3 – Circular Economy</b>	Provide educational programs in response to waste epidemic promoting reuse, recycle and repair.	Ongoing	
	Council to conduct a feasibility study to go to fortnightly pickups of the red lid bin in the rural areas.	2025/26	
	Council to implement a glass separation bin by 2027.	2027	
	Council to consider the feasibility of organics waste bins for rural townships and properties enroute able to opt in.	2025/26	
	Council to continue to attract business with a focus on renewable energy services.	Ongoing	
	Council to work with businesses to promote the benefits of a circular economy.	Ongoing	
	Council to attract business that can process problematic waste.	Ongoing	

Action Plan	Description	Financial year to be completed	Progress made to-date
	Council to update procurement policy to include a focus on environment and sustainability in Council's capital works programs.	2025/26	
	Council to increase resource recovery at Councils owned and operated Resource Recovery Centre, including the feasibility of a resale shop.	2027/28	
<b>Key Focus Area 4 – Water Sensitive Communities</b>	Council to create a stormwater management plan in response to the contamination and weed issues in the towns lake.	2026/27	
	Council to continue to promote water reduction activities.	Ongoing	
	Council to partner with lead agencies on water related issues.	Ongoing	
<b>Key Focus Area 5 – Sustainable Communities</b>	Council to partner with health agencies to promote the benefits of home garden.	Ongoing	
	Council to create a food share space	2025/26	
	Consider the establishment a native food garden.	2025/26	
	Recognise and protect the integrity of traditional indigenous NRM knowledge, support traditional knowledge exchange and when permitted use it with respect	Ongoing	
	Embed Climate Resilient Infrastructure checklists into relevant processes for designing and maintaining infrastructure	2025/26	
	Embed Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles into all new developments.	Ongoing	
	Council to engage with those who are culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and those who are socially and economically disadvantaged, to build understanding and resilience to climate change.	Ongoing	

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# **BENALLA**

## **RURAL CITY COUNCIL**

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2024 - 2029

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**4.2 Intention to Lease Land at Benalla Airport and 93-101 Waller Street, Benalla**

SF/3327

Greg Robertson – Manager Facilities and Information Technology

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The report finalises the matter of the intention to lease land to Mr Martin Jacobson for the development of aircraft hangarage at the Benalla Airport, and the intention to lease land to the Benalla Woodworkers Incorporated at 93 – 101 Waller Street, Benalla.

**BACKGROUND**

A briefing was made to the Assemble of Councillors on 24 July 2024, regarding the applications to lease land.

**Hangar Land Lease at the Benalla Airport**

The Council received an enquiry from Martin Jacobson to enter into a land lease agreement to construct a hangar at the Benalla Airport.

The below photo outlines the approximate footprint of the proposed hangar. The hangar will conform to the alignment, style, and colour of existing hangars in the precinct.



The photo below provides a zoomed-out view of the hangar lease land precinct in the wider context of the Benalla Airport.



**Lease of Land at 93-101 Waller Street, Benalla**

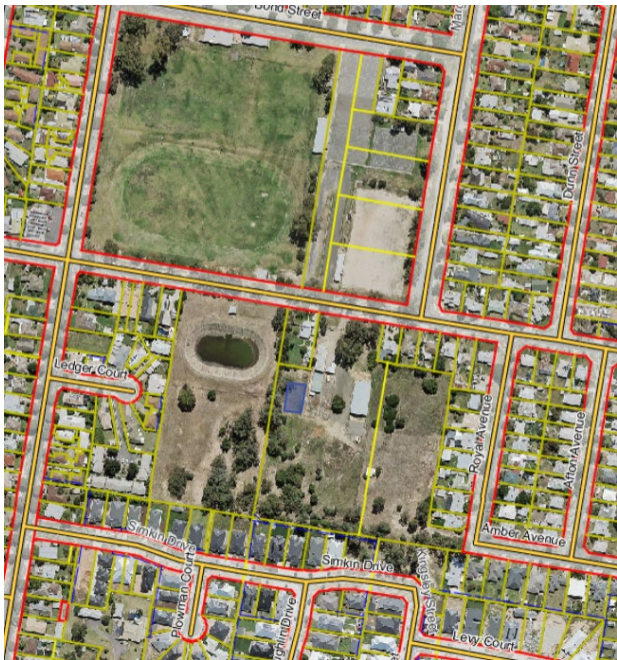
The Council received an enquiry from the Benalla Woodworkers Incorporated to lease land on the Council owned reserve located at 93 -101 Waller Street, Benalla. The request is considered appropriate given three similar community organisations already located at the reserve under lease agreements. Those organisations are:

- The Benalla Rotary Club
- The Benalla Lions Club, and
- The Benalla Men’s Shed Inc.

The club propose to construct a shed and fenced compound to house their woodworking equipment, which a modest kitchenette and toilet facilities installed at one end of the facility. The photo below shows the approximate location of the proposed shed. For comparison, it’s estimated the proposed shed will be no larger than the existing Men’s Shed.



The photo below shows a zoomed-out overview of the proposed land lease site.



## Hangar Land Lease at the Benalla Airport

The principal terms of the land lease at the Benalla Airport will be:

- A term of five years commences on 1 January 2025 with an option of four further terms of five years.
- To waive the first 12 months of lease costs, excluding the Fire Services Property Levy. After year one of the lease, all applicable lease fees will be payable for the remaining term of the lease.

The waiver recognises improvement works to be undertaken to address access track and drainage issues. Works are estimated to be valued up to \$3,000.

- Rent commencement will be calculated at \$6 per square meter (inc GST) of the area of the premises per annum, plus the Fire Services Property Levy.
- The lease will be adjusted annually by the All-Groups Consumer Price Index except for the fifth anniversary of the commencement of the lease where the fee may be reviewed to market value.
- The site is un-serviced and the proposal to lease land for hangar development is consistent with the Benalla Airport Masterplan 2015.

In recognition of the development costs, it is proposed to waive the first 12 months lease costs, excluding the Fire Services Property Levy. The lessor was required to pay costs associated with the Benalla Ensign advertising.

At a rate of \$6 (inc. GST) per square meter, the hangar land lease site would have produced a pro-rata lease income of \$585 (inc. GST) in the 2024/25 financial year, which will increase annually in line with the Consumer Price Index.

The lessee is responsible for civil works required to develop the hangar site, including building up the site, drainage works and widening the hangar access track.

After the initial 12 months of the lease, all applicable lease fees will be payable for the remaining term of the lease.

The lease will be adjusted annually by the All-Groups Consumer Price Index, except for the fifth anniversary of the commencement of the lease where the fee may be reviewed to market value.

## Lease of Land at 93-101 Waller Street, Benalla

The principal terms of the land lease for Benalla Woodworkers Incorporated at 101 Waller Street, Benalla, will be:

- A term of five years, commencing as soon the lease is approved for signing by the Council, followed by four option terms each of five years. Total lease: 25 years.
- Use of the Maddocks Land Lease template which is currently used for the three existing community groups located at the Waller Street reserve.
- No lease fees are proposed, consistent with the other community group leases at the reserve.
- The Council accepts no liability and makes no claims regarding the suitability of the land offered for their desired purpose.

- The lessor will pay for all service connections and ongoing costs.
- The lessor will extend and maintain the all-weather access track, at their cost.
- The lessor is liable for all applicable Federal, State, and Local Government fees and charges, as applicable.

Community engagement on both leases commenced Friday 26 July 2024 and ended 5pm Friday 23 August 2024. Engagement was conducted via the Council Have Your Say website, articles published on-line and via a public notice the Benalla Ensign on 14 August 2024.

**DISCUSSION**

One submission was received for the Benalla Airport lease and two submissions were received for the 93 – 101 Waller Street, Benalla lease.

All submissions received were in favour of the proposed leases.

**Hangar Land Lease at the Benalla Airport**

Number	Submission
1.	I support the submission. What possible reason would there be to oppose the building of another hanger in an area designated as such and already aligns with the Masterplan.

**Lease of Land at 93-101 Waller Street, Benalla**

Number	Submission
1.	Let’s make sure the landscaping is beautified, and the presence of the property is not just a shed stuck at the front. 25 years is a long time for an eye saw!
2.	I support the proposed lease of council land to allow the building of shed for the Benalla Woodworkers Association. Sensible use of the now vacant space and the community should be able (through Council) support such groups as much as we can.

***COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025 IMPLICATIONS***

**Leadership**

- Good governance
- High performance culture
- Engaged and informed community

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

In recognition of the development costs associated with the Benalla Airport land lease, it is proposed to waive the first twelve months lease costs, excluding the Fire Services Property Levy.

At a rate of \$6 (inc. GST) per square meter the hangar land lease site would have produced a pro-rata lease income of \$585 (inc. GST) in the 2024/25 financial year.

The airport land lessee will be responsible for civil works required to develop the hangar site, including building up the site, drainage works and widening the hangar access track.

After year one of the lease, all applicable lease fees will be payable for the remaining term of the lease.

The airport land lease will be adjusted annually by the All-Groups Consumer Price Index except for the fifth anniversary of the commencement of the lease where the fee will be reviewed to market value.

The 93–101 Waller Street, Benalla lease requires the applicant to meet all development and ongoing costs associated with the proposal. The lessor is liable for all Australian, Victorian, and local government fees and charges, as applicable.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In accordance with the Council's *Community Engagement Policy* community engagement was undertaken at the 'consult' level under the International Association for Public Participation's IAP2 public participation spectrum.

### LEGISLATIVE AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

The proposal to lease land for hangar development is consistent with the Benalla Airport Masterplan 2015 and both lease matters proceeded in compliance with *the Local Government Act 2020*, Section 115.

It is considered that the report is consistent with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

### OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any general or material conflicts of interest in this matter.

#### Recommendation:

1. That, in accordance with Section 115 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, a lease agreement be entered into with Martin Jacobson for Hangar Site 29 at the Benalla Airport, Samaria Road, Benalla for a term of five years commencing 1 January 2025 with an option for four further terms of five years.
2. That, in accordance with Section 115 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, a lease agreement be entered into with the Benalla Woodworkers Incorporated at 93–101 Waller Street, Benalla for a term of 25 years commencing 13 September 2024.
3. That the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to execute both lease documents on behalf of the Council.

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### 4.3 Fawckner Drive Precinct Masterplan Update

SF/1506

Tom Arnold – Community Development and Recreation Coordinator  
Jane Archbold – Manager Community

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

The *Benalla Fawckner Drive Precinct Masterplan* was adopted by the Council at its meeting on 14 February 2024.

#### BACKGROUND

Since adopting the *Benalla Fawckner Drive Precinct Masterplan* (the Masterplan), the Council has been successful in obtaining a total of \$1.3 million in funding. This is comprised of a \$300,000 funding allocation in the 2024/25 Victorian State Government budget for the new Benalla pump track and, more recently, a \$1 million grant for the pump track through the *Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Fund*.

Council officers recently met with *Sports and Recreation Victoria* and the State Government Projects team to discuss the \$300,000 Victorian State Government allocation. The Council has received in-principle support to direct funding to other elements within the Masterplan, in particular, the multipurpose hardstand area.

To support the delivery of the Masterplan, authors of the Masterplan, Playce, produced the supporting document *Opinion of Probable Cost* (OPC - refer **Appendix 1**). The OPC has broken the Masterplan into key elements with cost estimates. The total cost to deliver all elements in the Masterplan is estimated to be \$7.1 million.

#### DISCUSSION

Using the funding received, Council staff are preparing to deliver the first three key elements of the Masterplan:

- flying fox
- pump track
- multipurpose hardstand area.

These key elements will be supported by the installation and upgrade of path networks to improve access to the precinct.

The Council's current financial commitment to deliver the pump track and other Masterplan elements is:

- \$80,000 - BMX Track Upgrade (\$105,000 initial allocation with \$80,000 remaining after site survey and other preparatory works).
- \$375,000 Council contribution (to be approved).

Proposed total Council allocation: \$455,000.

As detailed within the following project breakdown, the Council has committed to allocating \$400,000 toward the pump track project. It is proposed that the \$55,000 remaining balance be made available to support the multipurpose hardstand area elements.

The installation of the flying fox and related landscaping is due for completion in November 2024. Council staff, in partnership with *Sports and Recreation Victoria*, are currently finalising scope and procurement documentation for the pump track and multipurpose area.

The *Benalla Fawckner Drive Masterplan Budget presentation* is attached as **Appendix 2**.

### **Project Breakdown:**

#### ***Department of Justice - Creating Safer Places - Flying Fox***

Total Project Budget: \$105,000

Grant funding: \$105,000

The flying fox will be installed in the open space between the Skate Park and current BMX Track and will feature two side-by-side flying foxes (one traditional ‘pommel’ seat and the other an accessible ‘bucket’ style seat).

#### ***Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Fund – Pump Track***

Total Project Budget: \$1.420 million

Grant funding: \$1 million

Council contribution: \$400,000

In-Kind: \$20,000

Key deliverables ( as detailed in the funding agreement):

- tender process to award ‘design and construct’ for pump track.
- community consultation to inform final design – taking onboard feedback received during Masterplan process and existing concept plans.
- production of final design of multi-skill pump track.
- site preparation – inclusive (but not limited to) demolition of BMX Track, earthworks, drainage and electrical work.
- construction of pump track and supporting elements including pathways, bike racks, shade structures and seating and landscaping.

#### ***Multipurpose Hardstand Area***

Proposed Total Project Budget: \$355,000

Grant funding: \$300,000

Proposed Council contribution: \$55,000

Key deliverables:

- multipurpose hardstand sports court.
- terrace seating area that will support community events, community markets and activities.
- improved accessibility to the precinct.

Other Masterplan elements currently being investigated for delivery, dependent on current funding agreement and available budget include:

- Toilets near the skate park.
- Construction of a ‘community stage’.

### **COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025 IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Community**

- *A healthy, safe and resilient community.*
- *A connected, involved and inclusive community.*

#### **Livability**

- *Vibrant public spaces and places.*
- *Connected and accessible roads, footpaths, transport and parking.*

#### **Economy**

- *Thriving business and industry.*
- *Flourishing tourism.*

#### **Environment**

- *Healthy and protected natural environment.*

#### **Leadership**

- *Engaged and informed community.*

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Council’s current financial commitments to deliver the pump track and other masterplan elements are:

- \$80,000 - BMX Track Upgrade (\$105,000 allocated in 2023/24, \$80,000 remaining in 2024/25 after payment of costs associated with site survey and other preparatory works).
- \$375,000 Council contribution.

Total Council allocation: \$455,000

#### **Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Fund – Pump Track**

Total Project Budget: \$1.42 million

Grant funding: \$1 million

Council contribution: \$400,000

In-Kind: \$20,000

**Multipurpose Hardstand Area**

Proposed Total Project Budget: \$ 355,000

Proposed Council contribution: \$55,000

Grant funding: \$300,000 (Victorian State Government Funding, pending agreement)

The Council will be asked to increase its contribution to projects in the Fawckner Drive Precinct in a separate Capital Works 2024/25 Project Funding report.

**LEGISLATIVE AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

It is considered that the report is consistent with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

In accordance with the Council’s *Community Engagement Policy*, it is proposed that community engagement be undertaken at the ‘Inform’ level under the International Association for Public Participation’s IAP2 public participation spectrum as detailed in the table below:

Level of Public Participation	Promise to the community	Techniques to be used
Inform	We will provide information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community update via the ‘Have Your Say’ project webpage.</li> <li>▪ Public report presented to the Council.</li> <li>▪ Council meeting report and appendix uploaded to Council’s website.</li> <li>▪ Publication of the Masterplan on Council’s website.</li> </ul>

Future community consultation is planned for the development of the pump track design and future works within the precinct.

**OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any general or material conflicts of interest in this matter.

**Recommendation:**

- 1. That the report be noted.**
- 2. That the Council allocate \$400,000 towards the Pump Track and supporting elements.**
- 3. That the Council allocate \$55,000 to support the multipurpose hardstand area and supporting elements.**

# Benalla Fawkner Drive Precinct

# Appendix 1

Opinion of Probable Cost

Prepared by: Playce P/L - 09/02/2024

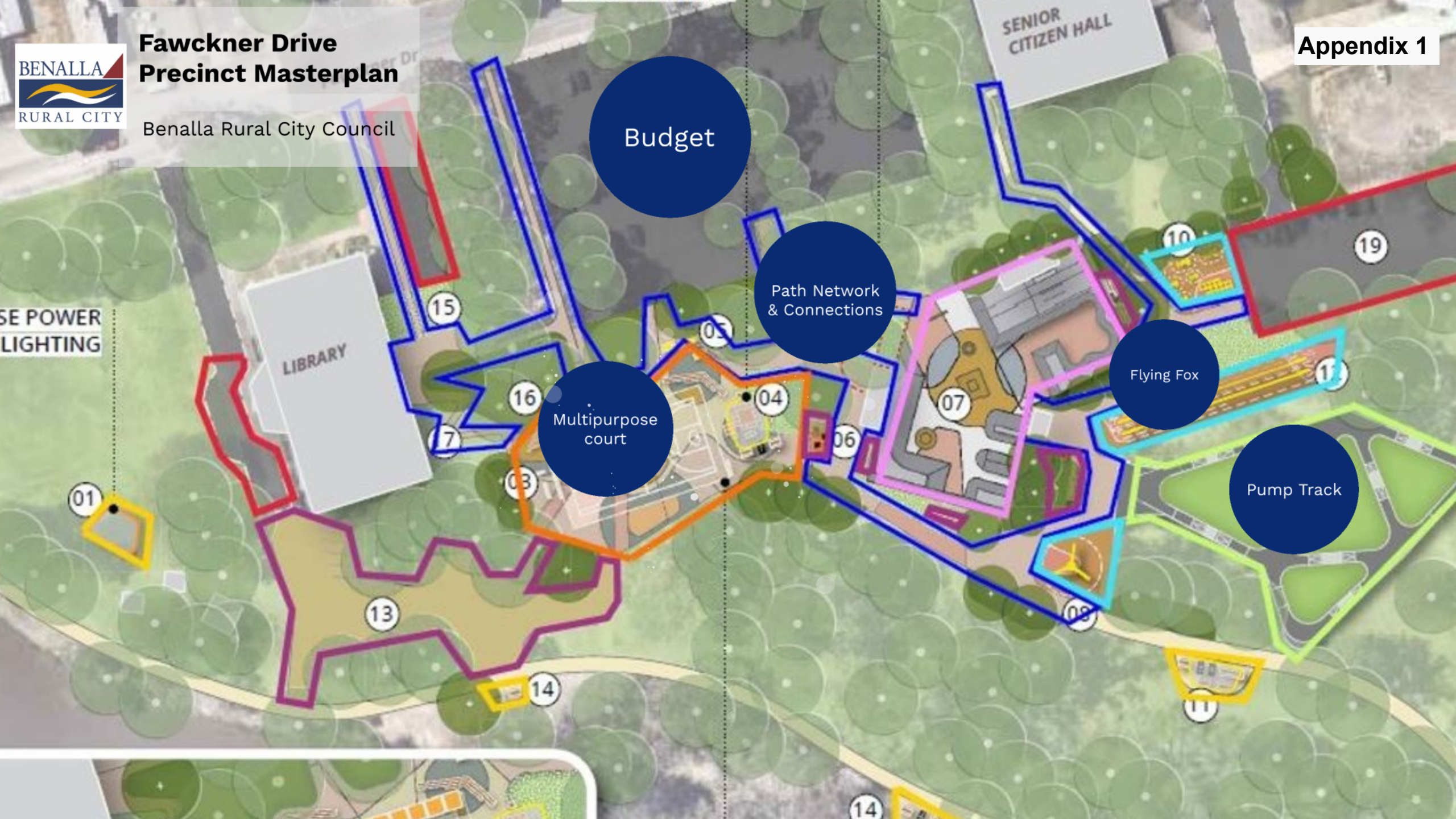
Element	Description	Qty	Unit	Rate	Total
<b>Preliminaries</b>					
	<i>Perform all works necessary to complete the items specified</i>				
	Preliminaries including: insurance, temporary fencing, tree protection, power, telephone, temporary WC, bins and mobilisation costs	0.10	%	\$4,802,930	\$480,293
				<b>subtotal</b>	<b>\$480,293</b>
<b>Demolition</b>					
	<i>Perform all works necessary to complete the items specified</i>				
	Demolition of works to achieve landscape works	5,910	allow	\$10	\$59,100
				<b>subtotal</b>	<b>\$59,100</b>
<b>Site Preparation &amp; Earthworks</b>					
	<i>Perform all works necessary to complete the items specified</i>				
	Site preparation works including excavation and filling achieve landscape works	5,910	m2	\$18	\$106,380
				<b>subtotal</b>	<b>\$106,380</b>
<b>Drainage</b>					
	<i>Perform all works necessary to complete the items specified</i>				
	Allowance for drainage including trenching, pits, hard pipes, Ag. drains and connection to existing drainage system. Allowance for entire site excluding macro drainage for retarding basin works	1	allow	\$120,000	\$120,000
				<b>subtotal</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>
<b>Path network</b>					
	<i>Perform all works necessary to complete the items specified</i>				
	PRIMARY PATHS: Primary DDA access path. Plain concrete paths @ 2m wide	1,750	m <sup>2</sup>	\$130	\$227,500
				<b>subtotal</b>	<b>\$227,500</b>
<b>Carpark and Road works</b>					
	<i>Perform all works necessary to complete the items specified</i>				
	MAINTENANCE ROAD: Secondary 6m wide compacted gravel path and access for maintenance vehicles on eastern boundary	880	m <sup>2</sup>	\$100	\$88,000
	CARPARK WORKS: Formalise eastern existing carpark with asphalt sealing, edging, drainage and line marking works	1,250	m <sup>2</sup>	\$180	\$225,000
	LIBRARY CARPARK: Consolidate existing carpark next to library	390	m <sup>2</sup>	\$80	\$31,200
	LIBRARY ROAD: Realign road past library to allow emergency vehicle access	230	m <sup>2</sup>	\$180	\$41,400
				<b>subtotal</b>	<b>\$385,600</b>
<b>Multi-Use Social Areas</b>					
	<i>Perform all works necessary to complete the items specified</i>				
	SOCIAL HANGOUT ELEMENTS: Hammocks and rope elements for social hangout	1	allow	\$120,000	\$120,000
	RUBBER SOFTFALL : Rubber soft fall on concrete and FCR base	50	m <sup>2</sup>	\$350	\$17,500
	MODULAR FURNITURE	10	no.	\$4,500	\$45,000
	SOCIAL PAVING: Paved areas to social spaces, In-situ coloured paving, 125 mm depth 32MPa stipple finish	80	m <sup>2</sup>	\$160	\$12,800
	PICNIC SETTINGS	2	no.	\$4,500	\$9,000
	BBQs: allowance incl electrical connection	1	no.	\$14,000	\$14,000
	BINS: Rubbish & Recycle bin including bin insert	2	no.	\$3,500	\$7,000
	SPILLOVER PARKING/MARKET SPACE: Gravel Paving to spill over parking/event space paving	1,200	m <sup>2</sup>	\$100	\$120,000
				<b>subtotal</b>	<b>\$345,300</b>
<b>Multipurpose Court and Small Event Space</b>					
	<i>Perform all works necessary to complete the items specified</i>				
	TERRACE SEATING: Concrete terrace seating on embankment	80	lin.m	\$1,200	\$96,000
	HOOPS / GOALS : Allowance for Basketball goals/Netball goals	1	allow	\$30,000	\$30,000
	TABLE TENNIS / FOOSBALL TABLES	3	allow	\$20,000	\$60,000
	BOULDERING/REBOUND WALL: insitu concrete freestanding climbing/rebound wall including paint and climbing holds	15	lin.m	\$3,200	\$48,000
	MULTICOURT: Acrylic surfacing with concrete base paving to multi-court areas, including line marking	1,360	m <sup>2</sup>	\$195	\$265,200
	MULTI USE STAGE: Timber Stage/platform with modular seatings	20	m <sup>2</sup>	\$2,300	\$46,000
	SHELTER: Shelter over stage	1	allow	\$60,000	\$60,000
	RUBBER SOFTFALL : Rubber soft fall on concrete and FCR base	60	m <sup>2</sup>	\$350	\$21,000
	BBQs: allowance incl electrical connection	1	no.	\$14,000	\$14,000
	PICNIC SETTINGS	2	no.	\$4,500	\$9,000
				<b>subtotal</b>	<b>\$649,200</b>
<b>Pump Track</b>					
	<i>Perform all works necessary to complete the items specified</i>				
	DEMOLITION: allow for demolition of existing dirt pump track	875	m <sup>2</sup>	\$50	\$43,750
	EARTHWORKS	800	m <sup>2</sup>	\$50	\$40,000
	PUMP TRACK PAVING : Asphalt paving to pumps circuit	650	m <sup>2</sup>	\$800	\$520,000
	ARTIFICIAL GRASS: Edging/transition zone	650	m <sup>2</sup>	\$150	\$97,500
	BIKE RACK: Bicycle leaning rails	5	no.	\$800	\$4,000
				<b>subtotal</b>	<b>\$705,250</b>
<b>Skatepark works</b>					
	<i>Perform all works necessary to complete the items specified</i>				
	EARTHWORKS	902	m <sup>2</sup>	\$50	\$45,100
	SKATEPARK: refurbish existing skatepark	670	m2	\$120	\$80,400
	PARK STYLE SKATE: New park style skate elements skate park extension	902	m <sup>2</sup>	\$1,200	\$1,082,400
				<b>subtotal</b>	<b>\$1,207,900</b>
<b>Fitness and Play</b>					
	<i>Perform all works necessary to complete the items specified</i>				
	SINGLE POINT SWING	1	item	\$25,000	\$25,000
	DOUBLE FLYING FOX	1	item	\$45,000	\$45,000
	FITNESS STATIONS : Supply and install of fitness stations in locations along circuit track	1	allow	\$80,000	\$80,000
	CLIMBING BARS COMBINATION: mix of steel bars for fitness and climbing	1	allow	\$50,000	\$50,000
	RUBBER SOFTFALL : Rubber soft fall on concrete and FCR base	270	m <sup>2</sup>	\$350	\$94,500
	SOFTFALL MULCH: Impact absorbing soft-fall mulch, 330 mm depth	460	m <sup>2</sup>	\$80	\$36,800
				<b>subtotal</b>	<b>\$331,300</b>
<b>Picnic Nodes &amp; Large Event Stage</b>					
	<i>Perform all works necessary to complete the items specified</i>				
	SECONDARY PATHS: Paved areas to social spaces, In-situ coloured paving, 125 mm depth 32MPa stipple finish	300	m <sup>2</sup>	\$160	\$48,000
	SHELTER: custom shelter allowance for 10x5m	1	item	\$60,000	\$60,000
	PICNIC SETTINGS	12	no.	\$4,500	\$54,000
	BBQs: allowance incl electrical connection	4	no.	\$14,000	\$56,000
	BINS: Rubbish & Recycle bin including bin insert	4	no.	\$3,500	\$14,000
	DRINKING FOUNTAIN: Drinking fountain including tapping	2	no.	\$10,000	\$20,000
	EVENT STAGE & STRUCTURE: Stage and shade structure in lawn space for large scale events	1	no.	\$110,000	\$110,000
	SIGNAGE/WAYFINDING: Throughout the site and at all entrances	5	no.	\$3,000	\$15,000
	BOLLARDS	8	no.	\$800	\$6,400
				<b>subtotal</b>	<b>\$383,400</b>
<b>Trees and Landscape Establishment</b>					
	<i>Perform all works necessary to complete the items specified</i>				
	TREES: Advanced tree in 45 L pot size, 1.8- 2.5 m height	30	no.	\$300	\$9,000
	ESTABLISHMENT: Maintenance of all areas within extent of works as specified	26	wk.	\$600	\$15,600
	PLANTING: Garden beds including 200mm imported topsoil, mulch, 5 No 200mm pot plants/m2	1,950	m <sup>2</sup>	\$100	\$195,000
	LAWN: New instant turf to key areas including topsoil and preparation	2,000	m <sup>2</sup>	\$35	\$70,000
				<b>subtotal</b>	<b>\$289,600</b>
<b>Lighting &amp; Electrical</b>					
	<i>Perform all works necessary to complete the items specified</i>				
	Service Upgrades	1	item	\$30,000	\$30,000
	CCTV	1	item	\$50,000	\$50,000
	Supply and install sports level lighting system (includes light pole & fitting)	10	no.	\$15,000	\$150,000
	Supply and install security level lighting system (includes light pole & fitting)	10	no.	\$12,000	\$120,000
	Supply and connection including 3 phase event power	1	item	\$28,000	\$28,000
				<b>subtotal</b>	<b>\$378,000</b>
				<b>PROJECT SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,283,223</b>
				10% Design Contingency	\$528,322
				10% Build Contingency	\$528,322
				10% Builder Overheads	\$528,322
				5% Escalation to Tender	\$264,161
				<b>PROJECT GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,132,351</b>





# Fawckner Drive Precinct Masterplan

Benalla Rural City Council



Budget

Path Network & Connections

Multipurpose court

Flying Fox

Pump Track

# Pump Track

\$705,000







# Multipurpose Court & Social Areas



- 02 - Multipurpose Court
- 03 - Rebound Wall
- 04 - Shelter / BBQ
- 05 - Table Tennis
- 16 - Terrace Seating
- 17 - Improved Access from Library

\$265,000 Multipurpose Court  
\$96,000 Terrace Seating

13

08

Fawckner Dr

SENIOR  
CITIZEN HALL

Path Networks  
\$227,500

LIBRARY

15

16

17

03

13

14

05

04

02

06

07

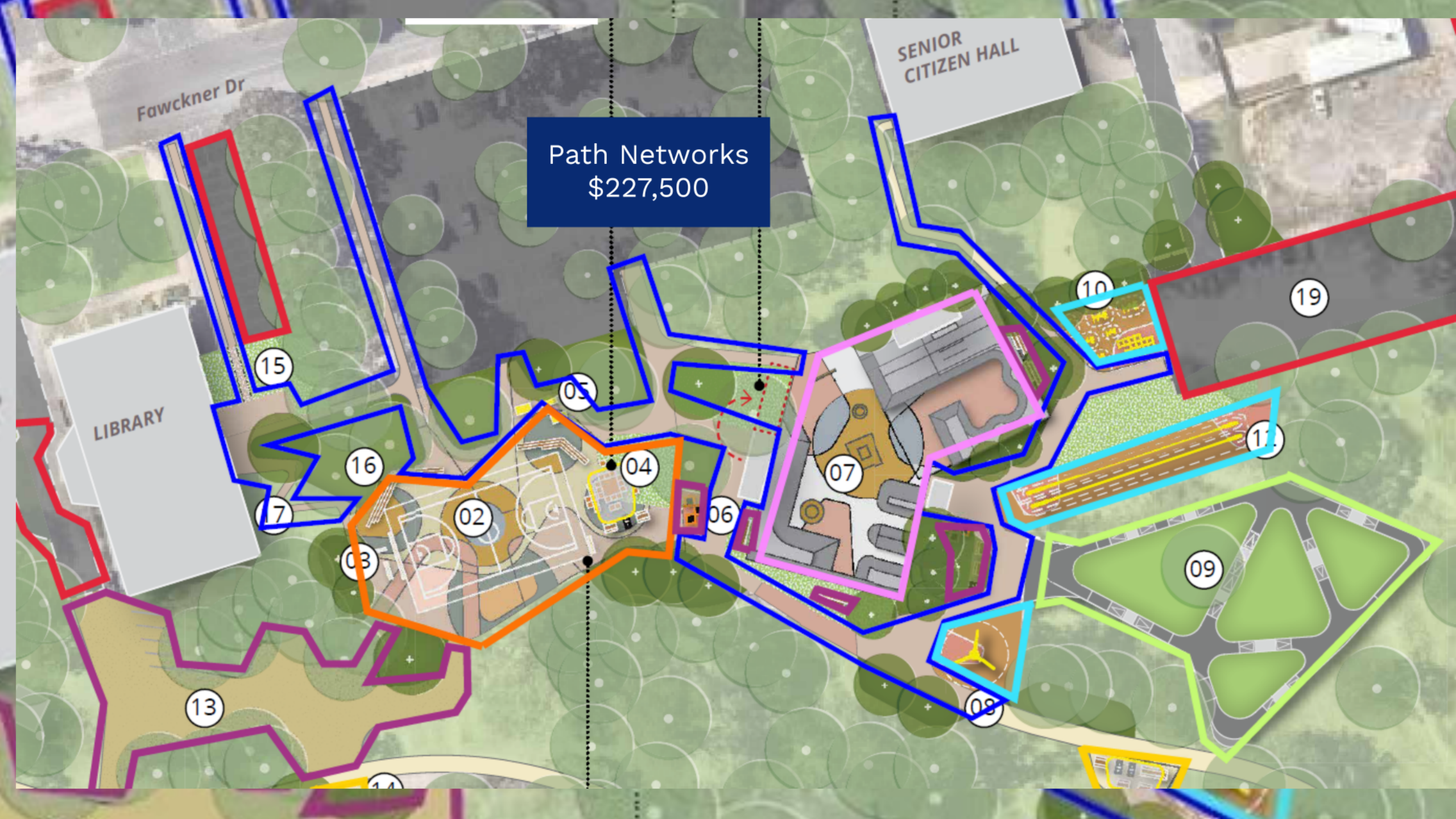
10

19

11

09

08



Fawckner Dr

SERVICES  
CITIZEN HALL

## Budget: \$1.86M

### **Council Funds - \$455,000**

\$80,000 BMX Track Upgrade

\$375,000 Council contribution

### **Grant Funding - \$1.405M**

\$1M - Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Fund

\$300,000 - Victorian State Government

\$105,000 - Creating Safer Places - Department of Justice

15

7

03

07

LIBRARY

Flying Fox + Landscaping  
\$105,000



Department of Justice  
- Creating Safer Places  
Program



#### 4.4 2024/2025 Quick Response Grants

SF/2857

Tom Arnold – Community Development and Recreation Coordinator  
Jane Archbold – Manager Community

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents funding applications for 2024/25 Quick Response Grants.

#### BACKGROUND

The Quick Response grant program enables local community groups, clubs and organisations to seek funding to increase their capacity to work in partnership with the Council and others to address local needs and enhance the local community.

The program distributes grants up to \$500 allowing local clubs, groups and organisations the opportunity to seek funds when the need arises.

#### DISCUSSION

Applications for consideration under the 2024/25 Quick Response Grant program are detailed in the table below.

Applicant	Details	Amount Requested	Proposed Assistance
The Country Women’s Association of Victoria Inc. Thoona Branch	<b>Tear drop flags</b> Tear drop flags to promote CWA. To be displayed at monthly meetings and additional functions – eg: women’s health afternoon, ukeladies entertainment afternoon and Christmas carols which are open to the community to attend. The flag could be leant to other local CWA branches for their functions	\$391	\$391
For the Good of Devenish	<b>Remembrance Day Service</b> To support the Remembrance Day service at the Devenish Silo memorial in conjunction with the Benalla RSL and hopefully horses from the VMR 20th Shepparton Light-Horse regiment (re-enactment group). Morning tea will be supplied free of charge in the Devenish Public Hall. The celebration will attract tourists especially with the silos depicting WW1 nurse, Light horseman and a current day medic.	\$400	\$400

Applicant	Details	Amount Requested	Proposed Assistance
Swanpool Community Cinema	<p><b>Swanpool Festival Matinee screening A Horse Named Winx</b></p> <p>The cinema wishes to screen the popular 2024 film A Horse Named Winx as a matinee as part of the Benalla Festival. This film will appeal to all ages and be shown during the day so people don't have to travel at night. Visitors will be treated to scones with jam and cream and a cup of tea or coffee. It will be an opportunity to showcase our Community Cinema to the general public as well as offering a real country afternoon tea.</p>	\$500	\$500
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,291</b>	<b>\$1,291</b>

**COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025 IMPLICATIONS**

**Community**

- *A healthy, Safe and resilient community.*
- *A connected, involved and inclusive community.*

**Leadership**

- *Engaged and informed community.*

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

In accordance with the Council's *Community Engagement Policy*, it is proposed that community engagement be undertaken at the 'Inform' level under the International Association for Public Participation's IAP2 public participation spectrum.

Level of Public Participation	Promise to the community	Techniques to be used
Inform	We will provide information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promotion of program via media, website and social media.</li> <li>▪ Program presented in public reports to the Council.</li> <li>▪ Outcomes advised directly to applicants.</li> <li>▪ Outcomes detailed in Annual Report.</li> </ul>

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The *2024/25 Budget* allocates \$15,000 to the Quick Response Grant program. To date, \$1,500 in Quick Response Grant funding has been allocated.

Recipients of support throughout the financial year are detailed in the Annual Report.



**OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any general or material conflicts of interest in this matter.

**Recommendation:**

- 1. That a \$391 grant from the 2024/2025 Quick Response Grant program be allocated to The Country Women’s Association of Victoria Inc. Thoona Branch.**
- 2. That a \$400 grant from the 2024/2025 Quick Response Grant program be allocated to For the Good of Devenish.**
- 3. That a \$500 grant from the 2024/2025 Quick Response Grant program be allocated to the Swanpool Community Cinema.**

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## 4.5 Benalla Rural City Council Debt Management Policy

SF/1416

Cathy Fitzpatrick – Manager Finance

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents the reviewed and updated *Benalla Rural City Council Debt Management Policy*.

### BACKGROUND

The *Debt Management Policy* (the Policy) was initially adopted by the Council in December 2018 following the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) audit of the Council's 2017/18 financial report and performance statement.

In particular, the *Benalla Rural City Council Final Management Letter 2017-18* issued by VAGO recommended:

*'That Council reviews and documents its policy and processes in respect to managing aged debtors balances to ensure these balances are regularly chased and assessed for recoverability and that a consistent approach is applied to all balances.'*

The Policy ensures the collection of debts is:

- Undertaken fairly, impartially, consistently, efficiently, effectively and in accordance with good governance; encourage any person, organisation or company having difficulty in paying an outstanding debt to contact Council and make arrangements for a payment plan to pay the debt in a reasonable and manageable timeframe.
- Consistent with the *Local Government Act 2020* and regulations, accounting standards and recognised financial practices.

The Policy is used as a guide for all staff in the management of debtor accounts.

The Policy was previously reviewed and adopted by the Council at its meeting on 23 June 2021.

### DISCUSSION

The policy is being reviewed in accordance with Council's Administration Policy *Management Guidelines Policy*.

The policy was endorsed by the Council's Leadership Team at its meeting in August 2024.

The *Policy* has served the Council well in the past and has been applied in alignment with the *Financial Hardship Policy* which was adopted by Council at its meeting on 7 August 2024.

References to the management of debtor charges for Home and Community Care (HACC) fees have been removed from the Policy as these services are no longer provided by the Council.

No other material changes have been made to the Policy. The *Debt Management Policy* is attached as **Appendix 1**.

**COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025 IMPLICATIONS**

**Community**

- *A healthy, Safe and resilient community.*
- *A connected, involved and inclusive community.*

**Leadership**

- *Good governance.*
- *High performance culture.*
- *Engaged and informed community.*
- *Effective and responsive advocacy.*

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

In accordance with the Council’s *Community Engagement Policy*, it is proposed that community engagement be undertaken at the ‘inform’ level under the International Association for Public Participation’s IAP2 public participation spectrum as detailed in the table below:

Level of Public Participation	Promise to the community	Techniques to be used
Inform	We will provide information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Policy presented in a public report to the Council.</li> <li>▪ Policy to be published on Councils website.</li> </ul>

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no material financial implications with the adoption of the Policy. The implementation of the policy will be accommodated within the existing budget allocation.

**LEGISLATIVE AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

It is considered that the report is consistent with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

**OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any general or material conflicts of interest in this matter.

**Recommendation:**

- 1. That the *Debt Management Policy* be adopted.**
- 2. That the *Debt Management Policy* be reviewed in August 2028.**

## CP 28 Debt Management Policy

<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Manager Finance
<b>Document Type:</b>	Council Policy
<b>Reference:</b>	CP 28
<b>Approved by Leadership Team</b>	2 August 2024
<b>Adopted by Council:</b>	11 September 2024
<b>Date of Next Review:</b>	August 2028

### Policy Objective

To ensure that the collection of debts is undertaken fairly, impartially, consistently, efficiently, effectively and in accordance with good governance.

To encourage any person, organisation or company having difficulty in paying an outstanding debt to contact the Council and make arrangements for a payment plan to pay the debt in a reasonable and manageable timeframe.

To ensure that the collection of debt is consistent with the *Local Government Act*, Regulations and Accounting Standards and recognised financial practices.

### Policy Scope

This Policy includes but is not limited to:

- Rates and charges
- Landfill fees
- Building fees
- Special charge scheme debts
- Facility hire fees
- Lease fees
- Unpaid grants
- Fire hazard clearance charges
- Release Fees
- Saleyards fees
- All miscellaneous fees and charges where a debt is created
- Interest penalties on outstanding fees and charges.

The Local Government Act establishes the law that applies to the declaration of rates, payment of rates, interest on outstanding rates and the collection of overdue rates.

This Policy covers:

- All debts
- Some aspects of invoicing
- The initial establishment of a debt
- Follow up actions to collect outstanding debts
- Creation of a provision for doubtful debts and write off of bad debts.

The Policy does not cover:

- Fees and charges where no debt is created (for example, applications fees that should be paid at the time the application is made and for which an invoice is not raised).
- Non-monetary debts and obligations (for example, outstanding conditions on permits).
- Infringement Management Enforcement (parking fines).
- Local Law enforcement which are taken to Court.

## **Debt Management Process**

The general principles described in this section are applicable to all debts and debtors, but they also need to be considered in conjunction with Section 2 which outlines specific requirements in relation to debt types.

### **1.1. Payment Terms**

The Council's payment terms are 30 days of the invoice being issued unless specific regulations apply or unless *Section 1.4* of this Policy applies, this does not apply to rates and charges.

Venue hire terms will require 50 percent deposit (or as agreed deposit) prior to the date of the venue use. If accounts are not settled within the Council terms, future bookings will not be available until the outstanding accounts have been settled. Future booking will also then require 50 percent deposit and settlement of the booking fee on or prior to booking occurring.

### **1.2 Invoicing**

A debt is created when the service is provided or when the invoice is created whichever occurs first. (*Note: Revenue is recognised in the Council's accounts when the invoice has been raised*).

Unless there is regulation or accepted practice to the contrary, an invoice should be produced and payment requested at the time, or in advance, of the service being provided. This practice reduces the risk of non-payment. However, it is recognised that there will be instances where invoicing and payment in advance is not practical.

The Finance Department is the Department with authority to generate and authorise the creation of the Council invoice in Synergy. Requests for preparation of invoices are to be made via '*Finance - Accounts Receivable Invoice Request Form*', available in the Council's record management system.

### 1.3 Reminder Notices

Except as specified in *Section 2*, if payment of an invoice has not been received within 14-days after the 30-day payment due date, a reminder notice will be sent out by the Finance Department.

The reminder notice will request payment within 14-days and advise of any penalties that may apply to non-payment. The reminder notice will encourage the debtor to contact the Council to discuss any concerns with the debt or reasons why the invoice has not been paid.

Reminder phone calls and other debt follow up procedures may be employed by the debt owner or the Finance Department.

If payment has not been received within 14-days of the reminder notice due date, a final notice will be sent. The final notice will request payment within seven days.

If payment is not received in the required timeframe after the final notice the debtor may be referred to a debt collection agency.

Further reminder notices will continue to be sent. A record will be kept of all attempts to contact the debtor, whether successful or unsuccessful.

The Finance Department will contact council staff member that made the funding application. Council staff are to contact the body regarding the outstanding debt and investigate if there is an issue or if payment will be made soon.

### 1.4 Payment Arrangements

Any person, organisation or company who is having difficulty in paying a debt is encouraged to contact the Council and make a personal payment arrangement to pay off the debt in a reasonable and manageable timeframe.

The Finance Department will consider requests for a payment arrangement and may agree upon a payment arrangement (for example, a fortnightly/ monthly payment of an agreed amount until the debt is paid in full).

The Compliance Coordinator may agree upon a payment plan for Local Laws fines.

Details of the payment arrangement must be recorded, and payments monitored. Any defaults (that is, payment not made by the agreed date) will be followed up by The Finance Department (except as described in *Section 2.4*) and a new payment arrangement may be made.

If the debtor defaults on the payment arrangement by missing two or more consecutive payments, debt recovery under *Section 1.8* of this Policy may be commenced, unless the debt is governed by regulations that prohibit debt collection.

## **1.5 Interest Penalties**

The Council will charge interest on unpaid rates and charges in accordance with *section 172* of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

The maximum penalty interest percentage rate is fixed by the Minister in accordance with *section 172* of the *Local Government Act 1989*, as applied on the first day of July.

## **1.6 Continuation of the Provision of services where debt is overdue**

In some cases, specific regulations or funding require the Council to continue to supply services regardless of outstanding debts.

In the case where the service is discretionary (for example facility hire charge or service fee) and is not governed by specific regulation, the relevant Department must not continue to supply service where debts are more than 60 days old, and no payment arrangement has been agreed.

In these circumstances' approval from the relevant General Manager Corporate is required to continue provision of services.

## **1.7 Financial Hardship (Rates)**

Under sections of the *Local Government Act 1989*, councils have the authority to:

- defer payment of rates and charges due to hardship (s170); and
- waive rates and charges and interest due to financial hardship (s171A); and
- enter into Payment Plans for overdue rates and charges (s171B).

## **1.8 Debt Recovery**

Unless there is a specific regulation or other requirements or unless a payment arrangement/plan has been agreed, the Council will refer a debt that is overdue by 75 days or more to a debt collection agency. Rates and Charges debts may be referred to debt collection on a case-by-case basis.

The debtor will be liable for all legal costs incurred by the Council in the debt collection process once a judgement on the debt has been processed by the Court.

The Finance Department will advise the relevant department of the intention to refer the debt to a debt collection agency.

Generally, only debts over \$1,000 will be referred to the debt collection agency. In the case of debts under \$1,000, the debt will be written off and the debtor will be advised that they are no longer eligible to receive the service until such time as the debt is paid. The relevant service provider will also be advised that no credit is to be authorised to the debtor until payment is received.

For debt recovery action not to be taken, the approval of the relevant Department Manager or the Manager Finance is required. If the initial action by the debt collection agency does not result in payment of the debt, the Finance Department will determine if it is financially beneficial to pursue legal recovery.



## **1.9 Provision Doubtful Debts**

*Section 1.9* of this Policy does not apply to Rates.

A provision for doubtful debts is a liability to reflect debt that is likely never to be collected and hence is expected to be written off in future periods.

The Finance Department will maintain a provision for doubtful debts based on expected credit losses (ECL). When a Sundry Debtor invoice is raised, the Council will review the potential for loss based on past events, current conditions, and future economic conditions.

### **1.10 Bad Debts**

*Section 1.10* of the Policy does not apply to Rates.

If debts are over one year old with no payment arrangement in place, they will be considered as bad debts.

After all avenues to collect the debt have been exhausted approval may be sought to write off a bad debt (see *section 1.11* and *1.13* of this Policy).

The Finance Department will refer all bad debts over one year old to the General Manager Corporate for approval to write off.

All approved write offs will be recorded in the nominated accounts under the Finance Department.

If a debt is written off and a client seeks to have further service provided at a future date, the written off debt will be reinstated, and the client will be required to pay the debt before the service is reinstated.

### **1.11 Approval to write off bad debts and or penalty interest**

A bad debt of up to \$500 may be written off by the Manager Finance.

A bad debt greater than \$500 and less than \$5,000 may be written off by the General Manager Corporate.

A bad debt greater than \$5,000 may be written off by the Chief Executive Officer.

Penalty interest associated with Sundry Debtors and Rates Debtors may be written off or waived by the Revenue Property and Valuations Coordinator or the General Manager Corporate in accordance with the above-mentioned limits.

### **1.12 Correction of invoicing and rating errors and issuing credit notes**

If it is discovered that an error has been made and a rate payer or debtor has been incorrectly undercharged, the Council will correct the error immediately for future billing periods and invoices and the Council will not attempt to apply the correct fee or charge retrospectively.

If it is discovered that an error has been made and a ratepayer or debtor has been incorrectly overcharged, the Council will correct the error immediately for current and future billing periods and invoices. The Council will apply the correct fee or charge retrospectively to 1 July of the current financial year or the date of debt, whichever is later.

Upon written application from the ratepayer or debtor who has been incorrectly overcharged, the General Manager Corporate will consider the merits of the matter and may apply the correct fee or charge retrospectively (for example in the case where an error which had previously been brought to the Council's attention and not corrected).

Any credit notes or other adjustments to amounts owed due to a correction of amounts invoiced or rates levied must be approved by an appropriate delegate in accordance with the *Benalla Rural City Council Financial Delegation of Procurement Authority*.

### **1.13 Refunds and Waiving of Debt**

There may be circumstances where refunds may be required because the service was not provided, or the service was provided in an unsatisfactory manner. The refund must be documented on a *Payment Form*. The form should be approved by the relevant Coordinator or Department Manager.

There may also be special circumstances where the Council may waive a debt as a goodwill gesture. An example may be where a debtor has suffered severe personal hardship. In such a circumstance the debt may be written off as follows:

- A debt of up to \$500 may be written off by the Manager Finance.
- A debt greater than \$500 and less than \$5,000 may be written off by General Manger Corporate.
- A debt greater than \$5,000 may be written off by the Chief Executive Officer.

## **Requirements in relation to specific types of debtors**

### **2.1 Rates**

*Section 180* and *section 181* of the *Local Government Act 1989*, outlines the Council's powers in relation to overdue rates and charges. A Rate Notice is sent on or around 1 September each year.

Rates are payable in four instalments due 30 September, 30 November, 28 February and 31 May.

As provided for in the Act, penalty interest is levied on amounts not paid by the instalment due date. Interest charges are applied to the Council charges and the Fire Services Property Levy on a consistent basis, in accordance with relevant legislation.

A reminder notice is sent between 1-2 weeks after each instalment due date. The reminder notice includes unpaid amounts from previous periods and interest payable.

Each reminder notice states that payment must be made now and advises the ratepayer of the payment options available including deferrals and payment plans.

The Council may instruct the debt collection agency or the agency's solicitors or its own solicitors to take the following steps to collect the debt:

1. Debt collection agency Final Notice letter will be issued.
2. Debt collection agency Solicitors letter will be issued.
3. Application will be made to the Magistrates Court for a Complaint to be issued.
4. Pre-Judgement warning letter will be sent to the ratepayer.
5. Application will be made to the Magistrates Court for Judgement.
6. Other options including Summons for Oral Examination, garnishing of wages, etc.

Debt collection is an expensive process, and the full cost of any action is passed onto the Ratepayer and becomes a charge against the property.

Under the relevant Act already specified in this section of policy, in relation to rates, unpaid rates remain as a charge against the property, and they must be paid first when a property is sold. Therefore, there are no doubtful debts or debt write offs in relation to Rates.

## **2.2 Sale of land to recover unpaid rates**

Under *section 181* of the *Local Government Act 1989*, the Council has the power to sell land to recover unpaid rates and charges if the rates and charges have been unpaid for more than three years.

The benefit of selling the land is that the Council will be able to recover all monies owed to it and furthermore, the property becomes a revenue producing property again. That is, the new owner is a new ratepayer.

The Council will not exercise the power it has under *section 181* of the Act:

- Until all other relevant requirements of this Policy (to recover the unpaid rates and charges, on the land in question) have been taken.
- There is a dwelling constructed on the land which is currently being used as a principal place of residence by the ratepayer.

The Council has delegated to the Chief Executive Officer all powers and authorities in respect of *Section 181* of the Act relevant to the sale of land to recover unpaid rates and charges.

In turn, the Chief Executive Officer has delegated that power and authority to the General Manager Corporate. Prior to any action being undertaken by the Council Officers in relation to *Section 181*, approval must be obtained from the General Manager Corporate.

## **2.3 Leases**

There may be terms in the lease agreement that vary from the principles outlined in *Section 3*.

## **2.4 Grants**

Final notices, interest penalties and debt collection processes will not be invoked for unpaid grants.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **3.1 Debt Owner**

The Department with responsibility for the income stream is known as the Debt Owner. The Debt Owner has overall responsibility for the management of the related debt.

The debt owner is responsible for:

- Ensuring that invoiced amounts are correct.
- Aiding Finance in follow up on overdue debts (in some cases all debts are followed up by the debt owner).
- Liaising with Finance in terms of the status of debts (e.g. whether it is likely to be recovered).
- Documenting any discussions with Debtors in relation to outstanding monies and providing the documentation to Finance.
- Ensuring further credit is not given to the Debtor with overdue debts unless there is a specific regulation.
- Gaining approval from the relevant Manager (and in some cases the General Manager Corporate) for any Debt write off and advising Finance accordingly.

### **3.2 Finance Department**

In relation to debt collection, the Finance Department is responsible for:

- Sending out invoices.
- Recording debts in the financial systems.
- Recording payments in the financial systems.
- Sending reminder letters on overdue debt (except for fines and infringement notices).
- Follow up on overdue debt (with assistance from the Debt Owner).
- Determining the level of doubtful debts (with assistance from the Debt Owner).
- Referring debts to a debt collection agency after advice from the Debt Owner.
- Advising Departments on the status of outstanding debts and making recommendations on debt recovery/write off.
- Calculating the Provision for Doubtful Debts.
- Writing off debts in the financial systems after written approval has been received from the Debt Owner. Refer *Section 1.10* and *1.11*.

## **Review**

This policy may be reviewed at any time by the Council to accommodate changes in legislation, regulations, policy gaps, new technology or systems, as well as remain consistent with industry best practice.

## **Related Policies**

*Benalla Rural City Council Financial Delegation of Procurement Authority*

#### 4.6 Benalla Rural City Council Capital Works Program Project Funding

SF/803-10

Dom Testoni – Chief Executive Officer

Adrian Gasperoni – Manager Assets and Infrastructure

##### PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report discusses items for consideration under the *2024/25 Capital Works Program*.

##### BACKGROUND

The 2024/25 Budget was adopted by the Council at its meeting on 26 June 2024.

The *2024/25 Capital Works Program* summary is listed below:

##### **Capital Works**

Capital works total \$11.016 million in 2024/25. Key areas of expenditure include:

- Buildings \$3.162 million
- Roads \$2.186 million
- Waste management \$1.350 million
- Plant, machinery and equipment \$1.160 million
- Drainage \$972,000.

New asset expenditure is \$2.822 million, asset renewal \$6.567 million and upgrade \$1.627 million.

Capital works were funded by Council cash \$6.659 million and grants \$4.357 million.

New major capital projects budgeted for in 2024/25 included:

- major plant replacement \$930,000
- reseal program \$901,000
- gravel re-sheet program \$852,000
- Drainage strategy \$534,000
- Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre roof renewal \$450,000
- Drainage – The Culdesac \$400,000.

Capital works expenditure of \$3.039 million was budgeted to be carried forward from 2023/24.

A Capital Works Program extract from the *2024/25 Budget* is attached as **Appendix 1**.

## DISCUSSION

At the time of finalising the *2024/25 Budget*, there were material, but unconfirmed, items that needed to be brought to account in the 2024/25 financial year Capital Works Program.

The Council has also been allocated \$343,000 under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements' Betterment Program. These funds will be provided during the assessment stage of the lodged emergency works submissions.

Projects to be considered by the Council for inclusion in the 2024/25 Capital Works Program are:

1. The redevelopment of the Benalla Art Gallery has received significant support from both the Victorian and Australian Governments. The Victorian Government has allocated \$3 million and the Australian Government \$2.965 million. There is an additional \$80,000 allocated for a new CCTV system via the LRCI Phase 4 funding from the Australian Government.

As presented to the Council during the formation of the *2024/25 Budget*, a further \$550,000 would be required for the completion of the project which includes a contingency allowance. This proposed \$550,000 allocation includes \$200,000 of interest earned on grant funds previously received.

2. All councils in Victoria have been allocated \$2 million to be assigned to suitable projects under the TAC Safe Local Roads Program. The Council will work closely with the Department of Transport and Planning to develop the program and present proposed projects to a future Council meeting. There is no matched funding required for this program other than staff time to develop and deliver eligible projects.
3. The *Fawckner Drive Masterplan* has been adopted by the Council and will see three projects delivered over the next 12-18 months. The Flying Fox project is fully funded by the Victorian Government and will be installed by the end of the year. The total cost of this project is \$105,000.

The second project will see the construction of a new pump track. This has been made possible by a Victorian Government \$1 million allocation from its *Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Fund – Community Facilities – Round One* program. The Council has already allocated \$80,000 in its *2024/25 Budget* to co-fund the project, however, an additional \$320,000 allocation is requested. The total project cost would be \$1.4 million.

The third project being considered is the construction of a new multi-purpose court and terrace seating. This has also been made possible with the support of the Victorian Government when it allocated \$300,000 in the 2025 State Budget. To complete the project the Council will need to co-fund the project to the value of \$55,000.

4. As previously reported the Australian Government Roads to Recovery program is set to double over the coming years. During the adoption of the *2024/25 Budget* an amount of \$975,000 was included. Post the adoption of the *2024/25 Budget* it has been confirmed that an additional \$292,576 will be allocated in the 2024/25 financial year.
5. An identified saving of \$230,000 from the Council's 2024/25 Bridge Renewal Program is recommended to be reallocated towards the construction of the Midland Highway Shared Pathway. This would increase the budget for this project to \$382,500.

6. The Council has been allocated \$232,560 for Blackspot CBD intersection work. There is no matched funding required.
7. To support the use of the Council's Jetpacher road maintenance unit, there is a need for the installation of a new emulsion tank. The Council had already allocated \$100,000 in previous budgets for this project. To complete the installation and additional \$35,000 allocation is requested.
8. A tree has been removed from the front of 11 Bridge Street, Benalla. The removal of the tree was necessary due to the roots impacting on the road, kerb and channel, and footpath. The cost to remediate this area is in the order of \$70,000. This amount was not included in the *2024/25 Budget* and will require an additional allocation.

### ***Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project***

The Victoria Government has announced a \$15 million grant for the *Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project*. The Project Steering Committee has been meeting to progress the project and a formal funding agreement is expected to be presented to the Council in the second half of the 2024/25 financial year.

### **Link Island Bridge, Benalla**

The Link Island Bridge Rebuild Project continues to present challenges mainly due to the increased requirement to design a solution that can withstand future flooding. An allocation of \$295,000 from the Victorian Government's Flood Support Fund has been confirmed, but the solution may be in the range of \$500,000-\$550,000. If additional funding can be obtained, the project may be able to be progressed once engineers have assessed an appropriate structure and height of the new structure. To complicate the project, the current bridge has key potable water infrastructure attached to it. Discussions with North East Water to progress the project continue.

### ***COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025 IMPLICATIONS***

#### **Community**

- *A healthy, safe and resilient community.*
- *A connected, involved and inclusive community.*

#### **Livability**

- *Vibrant public spaces and places.*
- *Connected and accessible roads, footpaths, transport and parking.*

#### **Economy**

- *Thriving business and industry.*
- *Flourishing tourism.*

#### **Environment**

- *Healthy and protected natural environment.*

#### **Leadership**

- *Engaged and informed community.*

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The adoption of the report will increase the Council’s financial contribution by \$1,030,310 and see an additional \$6,790,136 in funding from the Australian and Victorian Governments to support key projects for the benefit of the community.

Table 1 provides a summary of the proposed financial amendments to the 2024/25 Capital Works Program.

**Table 1 – 2024/2025 Capital Works Program Update**

Project Ref.	Project	Funding Source	Proposed Variation to 2024/25 Budget	Forecast Project Cost	Notes
1	Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment	Australian Government	\$2,965,000	\$6,595,000	Funding agreement expected to be signed in September/October 2024.
		BRCC	\$550,000		\$550,000 additional Council contribution to adopted Budget, includes \$200,000 of interest earned.
2	TAC Safe Local Roads	Victorian Government	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	Finalising potential projects.
3	Fawckner Drive Precinct - Pump Track	Victorian Government	\$1,000,000	\$1,425,000	Funding agreement expected to be signed in September/October 2024.
		BRCC	\$320,000		
	Fawckner Drive Precinct - Multipurpose Court	Victorian Government	\$300,000	\$355,000	
		BRCC	\$55,000		
4	Roads to Recovery	Australian Government	\$292,576	\$1,267,576	R2R to double in next three years. \$975,000 allocated in 2024/25 Budget.
5	Midland Highway Shared Pathway	BRCC	\$230,000	\$382,500	\$230,000 reallocated from the Bridge program. Balance carried forward from 2023/24 and a \$5,000 Benalla Racing Club contribution.
	Bridge Program	BRCC	-\$230,000	\$370,000	\$230,000 reallocation to Midland Highway Shared Pathway.
6	Blackspot CBD Intersections	Victorian Government	\$232,560	\$232,560	
7	Emulsion Tank	BRCC	\$35,310	\$135,310	\$100,00 carried forward from 2023/24.
8	Bridge Street Footpath Reconstruction	BRCC	\$70,000	\$70,000	Additional allocation.



**In summary:**

<b>Proposed increase in the 2024/25 Capital Works Program forecast</b>	<b>\$7,820,446</b>
<i>Council cash contribution</i>	\$1,030,310
<i>Additional Government grant funding</i>	\$6,790,136

If variations to projects are approved, 2024/25 capital projects expenditure will be \$18.836 million.

**LEGISLATIVE AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

It is considered that the report is consistent with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

In accordance with the Council’s *Community Engagement Policy*, it is proposed that community engagement be undertaken at the ‘Inform’ level under the International Association for Public Participation’s IAP2 public participation spectrum as detailed in the table below:

<b>Level of Public Participation</b>	<b>Promise to the community</b>	<b>Techniques to be used</b>
Inform	We will provide information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Capital Works Program presented in a public report to the Council.</li> <li>▪ Capital Works Program report to be published on Councils website.</li> </ul>

**OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any general or material conflicts of interest in this matter.

**Recommendation:**

- 1. That the 2024/25 Capital Works Program forecast be increased by \$7.82 million to \$18.836 million as detailed in Table 1.**
- 2. That an additional Council cash contribution of \$1.030 million to the 2024/25 Capital Works Program be approved.**
- 3. That an additional \$6.790 million of Australian and Victorian Government funding of the 2024/25 Capital Works Program be noted.**



## 4.5 Capital Works Program

This section presents a listing of the capital works projects that will be undertaken for the 2024/25 year, classified by expenditure type and funding source. Works are also disclosed as current budget or carried forward from prior year.

### 4.5.1 Summary

	Forecast Actual 2023/24 \$'000	Budget 2024/25 \$'000	Change \$'000	%
Property	1,237	<b>3,662</b>	2,425	<b>196.04%</b>
Plant and equipment	1,442	<b>1,556</b>	114	<b>7.91%</b>
Infrastructure	5,594	<b>5,798</b>	204	<b>6.35%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,273</b>	<b>11,016</b>	<b>2,743</b>	<b>33.16%</b>

	Project Cost \$'000	Asset expenditure types				Summary of Funding Sources			
		New \$'000	Renewal \$'000	Upgrade \$'000	Expansion \$'000	Grants \$'000	Contrib. \$'000	Council cash \$'000	Borrowings \$'000
Property	3,662	2,262	650	750	-	2,792	-	870	-
Plant and equipment	1,556	-	1,476	80	-	80	-	1,476	-
Infrastructure	5,798	560	4,441	797	-	1,485	-	4,313	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,016</b>	<b>2,822</b>	<b>6,567</b>	<b>1,627</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,357</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6,659</b>	<b>-</b>

## 4.5.2 Current Budget

Capital Works Area	Project Cost \$'000	Asset expenditure types				Summary of Funding Sources			
		New \$'000	Renewal \$'000	Upgrade \$'000	Expansion \$'000	Grants \$'000	Contrib. \$'000	Council cash \$'000	Borrowings \$'000
<b>Property</b>									
<b>Buildings</b>									
<i>Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Roof Renewal</i>	<b>450</b>	-	450	-	-	-	-	450	-
<b>Building Improvements</b>									
<i>Solar Panel Installation - Visitor Information Centre (LRC14)</i>	<b>80</b>	80	-	-	-	80	-	-	-
<i>Customer Service Centre: EV Charging Infrastructure</i>	<b>65</b>	65	-	-	-	-	-	65	-
<i>Benalla Aquatic Centre: Disabled Client Assist Alarm</i>	<b>5</b>	5	-	-	-	-	-	5	-
<i>Benalla Aquatic Centre: Chemical Storage Area</i>	<b>50</b>	-	-	50	-	-	-	50	-
<i>Customer Service Centre Lift Renewal</i>	<b>200</b>	-	200	-	-	-	-	200	-
<b>Total Property</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Plant and Equipment</b>									
<b>Plant, Machinery and Equipment</b>									
<i>Major Plant Replacement Program</i>	<b>930</b>	-	930	-	-	-	-	930	-
<i>Minor Plant Replacement</i>	<b>30</b>	-	30	-	-	-	-	30	-
<i>Vehicle Replacement Strategy</i>	<b>200</b>	-	200	-	-	-	-	200	-
<b>Fixtures, Fittings and Furniture</b>									
<i>Air Conditioner Renewal Program</i>	<b>20</b>	-	20	-	-	-	-	20	-
<i>Furniture Renewal Program</i>	<b>20</b>	-	20	-	-	-	-	20	-
<i>Benalla Art Gallery CCTV Upgrade</i>	<b>80</b>	-	-	80	-	80	-	-	-
<b>Computers and Telecommunications</b>									
<i>IT Projects</i>	<b>180</b>	-	180	-	-	-	-	180	-
<b>Library books</b>									
<i>Book stock</i>	<b>96</b>	-	96	-	-	-	-	96	-
<b>Total Plant and Equipment</b>	<b>1,556</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,476</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,476</b>	<b>-</b>

Capital Works Area	Project Cost \$'000	Asset expenditure types				Summary of Funding Sources			
		New \$'000	Renewal \$'000	Upgrade \$'000	Expansion \$'000	Grants \$'000	Contrib. \$'000	Council cash \$'000	Borrowings \$'000
<b>Infrastructure</b>									
<b>Roads</b>									
<i>Crack Sealing</i>	<b>24</b>	-	24	-	-	-	-	24	-
<i>Gravel Resheet Program</i>	<b>852</b>	-	852	-	-	-	-	852	-
<i>Kerb and Channel Renewal Program</i>	<b>132</b>	-	132	-	-	-	-	132	-
<i>Reseal Program</i>	<b>901</b>	-	901	-	-	901	-	-	-
<i>RTR Regulation Program</i>	<b>74</b>	-	74	-	-	74	-	-	-
<i>Shoulder Resheet program</i>	<b>103</b>	-	103	-	-	-	-	103	-
<i>Sealed Roads Preparation for Resealing</i>	<b>100</b>	-	100	-	-	-	-	100	-
<b>Bridges</b>									
<i>Glenrowan Boweya Rd Bridge #199</i>	<b>200</b>	-	200	-	-	-	-	200	-
<i>Glenrowan Boweya Rd Bridge #198</i>	<b>150</b>	-	150	-	-	-	-	150	-
<i>Renewal Program</i>	<b>250</b>	-	250	-	-	-	-	250	-
<b>Footpaths and Cycleways</b>									
<i>Footpath Renewal Strategy</i>	<b>100</b>	-	100	-	-	-	-	100	-
<b>Drainage</b>									
<i>The Culdesac</i>	<b>400</b>	-	-	400	-	-	-	400	-
<i>Pits and Pipes</i>	<b>38</b>	-	38	-	-	-	-	38	-
<i>Drainage Strategy R and U</i>	<b>535</b>	-	267	267	-	-	-	534	-
<b>Waste Management</b>									
<i>Rehabilitate Stage 1: Design and Construct (cell 1)</i>	<b>100</b>	100	-	-	-	-	-	100	-
<i>Rehabilitate Stage 2A: Design and Construct</i>	<b>1,250</b>	-	1,250	-	-	-	-	1,250	-
<b>Parks, Open Space and Streetscapes</b>									
<i>Mitchell Street Park (LRCI3) change to Fawckner Drive</i>	<b>75</b>	75	-	-	-	75	-	-	-
<b>Other Infrastructure</b>									
<i>Electronic Community Notice Boards (LRCI4)</i>	<b>140</b>	140	-	-	-	140	-	-	-
<i>Electronic Community Signage (LRCI4)</i>	<b>60</b>	60	-	-	-	60	-	-	-
<i>Flagpoles (LRCI4)</i>	<b>15</b>	15	-	-	-	15	-	-	-
<i>Emergency Marker Road Signage (LRCI4)</i>	<b>22</b>	22	-	-	-	22	-	-	-
<i>Streetlight Upgrade (LRCI4)</i>	<b>50</b>	-	-	50	-	50	-	-	-
<b>Total Infrastructure</b>	<b>5,570</b>	412	4,441	717	-	1,337	-	4,233	-
<b>Total New Capital Works</b>	<b>7,976</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>6,567</b>	<b>847</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,497</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6,479</b>	<b>-</b>

### 4.5.3 Works carried forward from the 2023/24 year

Capital Works Area	Project Cost \$'000	Asset expenditure types				Summary of Funding Sources			
		New \$'000	Renewal \$'000	Upgrade \$'000	Expansion \$'000	Grants \$'000	Contributions \$'000	Council cash \$'000	Borrowings \$'000
<b>Property</b>									
<b>Land</b>									
<i>Nil</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Land Improvements</b>									
<i>Nil</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Buildings</b>									
<i>Art Gallery Redevelopment</i>	2,712	2,112	-	600	-	2,712	-	-	-
<b>Building Improvements</b>									
<i>Depot Toilet Facilities Upgrade</i>	60	-	-	60	-	-	-	60	-
<i>Depot Office Upgrade</i>	40	-	-	40	-	-	-	40	-
<b>Total Property</b>	<b>2,812</b>	<b>2,112</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,712</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-</b>

Capital Works Area	Project Cost \$'000	Asset expenditure types				Summary of Funding Sources			
		New \$'000	Renewal \$'000	Upgrade \$'000	Expansion \$'000	Grants \$'000	Contrib. \$'000	Council cash \$'000	Borrowings \$'000
<b>Infrastructure</b>									
<b>Footpaths and Cycleways</b>									
<i>Midland Highway Equestrian Precinct LRCI phase 2 FPA031</i>	45	45	-	-	-	45	-	-	-
<i>Midland Highway Equestrian Precinct FPA132 DOT</i>	103	103	-	-	-	103	-	-	-
<b>Other Infrastructure</b>									
<i>22/23 Skate Park and BMX Tack Upgrade</i>	80	-	-	80	-	-	-	80	-
<b>Total Infrastructure</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Carried Forward Capital Works 2023/24</b>	<b>3,039</b>	<b>2,260</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,860</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>-</b>

## 4.6 Summary of Planned Capital Works Expenditure

For the four years ended 30 June 2028

2025/26	Asset Expenditure Types					Funding Sources				
	Total \$'000	New \$'000	Renewal \$'000	Expansion \$'000	Upgrade \$'000	Total \$'000	Grants \$'000	Contributions \$'000	Council Cash \$'000	Borrowings \$'000
<b>Property</b>										
Land	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Land improvements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Land</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Buildings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Heritage Buildings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Building improvements	75	0	75	0	0	75	0	0	75	0
Leasehold improvements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Buildings</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Property</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Plant and Equipment</b>										
Heritage plant and equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Plant, machinery and equipment	755	0	755	0	0	755	0	0	755	0
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	188	0	188	0	0	188	0	0	188	0
Computers and telecommunications	180	0	180	0	0	180	0	0	180	0
Library books	96	0	96	0	0	96	0	0	96	0
<b>Total Plant and Equipment</b>	<b>1,219</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,219</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,219</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,219</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Infrastructure</b>										
Roads	2,686	50	2,636	0	0	2,686	975	0	1,711	0
Bridges	150	0	150	0	0	150	0	0	150	0
Footpaths and cycleways	150	0	150	0	0	150	0	0	150	0
Drainage	660	0	349	0	311	660	0	0	660	0
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Waste management	1,168	25	1,143	0	0	1,168	0	0	1,168	0
Parks, open space and streetscapes	50	0	0	0	50	50	0	0	50	0
Aerodromes	290	0	290	0	0	290	0	0	290	0
Off street car parks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other infrastructure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Infrastructure</b>	<b>5,154</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>4,718</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>5,154</b>	<b>975</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,179</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Capital Works Expenditure</b>	<b>6,448</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>6,012</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>6,448</b>	<b>975</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,473</b>	<b>0</b>

2026/27	Asset Expenditure Types					Funding Sources				
	Total \$'000	New \$'000	Renewal \$'000	Expansion \$'000	Upgrade \$'000	Total \$'000	Grants \$'000	Contributions \$'000	Council Cash \$'000	Borrowings \$'000
<b>Property</b>										
Land	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Land improvements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Land</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Buildings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Heritage Buildings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Building improvements	101	0	101	0	0	101	0	0	101	0
Leasehold improvements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Buildings</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Property</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Plant and Equipment</b>										
Heritage plant and equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Plant, machinery and equipment	770	0	770	0	0	770	0	0	770	0
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	304	0	304	0	0	304	0	0	304	0
Computers and telecommunications	180	0	180	0	0	180	0	0	180	0
Library books	96	0	96	0	0	96	0	0	96	0
<b>Total Plant and Equipment</b>	<b>1,350</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,350</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,350</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,350</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Infrastructure</b>										
Roads	2,404	0	2,354	0	50	2,404	975	0	1,429	0
Bridges	150	0	150	0	0	150	0	0	150	0
Footpaths and cycleways	150	50	100	0	0	150	0	0	150	0
Drainage	887	0	462	0	425	887	0	0	887	0
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Waste management	1,660	500	1,160	0	0	1,660	0	0	1,660	0
Parks, open space and streetscapes	50	0	50	0	0	50	0	0	50	0
Aerodromes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Off street car parks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other infrastructure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Infrastructure</b>	<b>5,301</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>4,276</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>5,301</b>	<b>975</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,326</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Capital Works Expenditure</b>	<b>6,752</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>5,727</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>6,752</b>	<b>975</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,777</b>	<b>0</b>



2027/28	Asset Expenditure Types					Funding Sources				
	Total \$'000	New \$'000	Renewal \$'000	Expansion \$'000	Upgrade \$'000	Total \$'000	Grants \$'000	Contributions \$'000	Council Cash \$'000	Borrowings \$'000
<b>Property</b>										
Land	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Land improvements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Land</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Buildings	6	0	6	0	0	6	0	0	6	0
Heritage Buildings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Building improvements	151	0	151	0	0	151	0	0	151	0
Leasehold improvements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Buildings</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Property</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Plant and Equipment</b>										
Heritage plant and equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Plant, machinery and equipment	910	0	910	0	0	910	0	0	910	0
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	71	0	71	0	0	71	0	0	71	0
Computers and telecommunications	180	0	180	0	0	180	0	0	180	0
Library books	96	0	96	0	0	96	0	0	96	0
<b>Total Plant and Equipment</b>	<b>1,257</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,257</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,257</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,257</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Infrastructure</b>										
Roads	2,569	0	2,519	0	50	2,569	975	0	1,594	0
Bridges	150	0	150	0	0	150	0	0	150	0
Footpaths and cycleways	150	0	150	0	0	150	0	0	150	0
Drainage	630	0	346	0	284	630	0	0	630	0
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Waste management	1,685	485	1,200	0	0	1,685	0	0	1,685	0
Parks, open space and streetscapes	50	0	50	0	0	50	0	0	50	0
Aerodromes	805	0	805	0	0	805	0	0	805	0
Off street car parks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other infrastructure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Infrastructure</b>	<b>6,039</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>5,220</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>6,039</b>	<b>975</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,064</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Capital Works Expenditure</b>	<b>7,453</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>6,634</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>7,453</b>	<b>975</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,478</b>	<b>0</b>



#### 4.7 Mayor and Councillors' Attendance at Committees and Civic Functions

SF/1557

Tracey Beaton - Executive Coordinator

The Mayor and Councillors, listed in alphabetical order, attended meetings and events as detailed below during the period from 29 July to 1 September 2024.

<b>Mayor Councillor Danny Claridge</b>	
31 July	Councillor Only Time
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
7 August	Recycling Victoria Local Government Advisory Committee Meeting
	Councillor Only Time
	Communications Advisory Committee Meeting
	Benalla Historical Society Committee Meeting
	Meeting with Tony Circelli, Head of Recycling Victoria
	Council Meeting
12 August	North East Local Government Waste and Recycling Forum
13 August	Country Woman's Association Moira Group Conference
14 August	Benalla Business Coffee Connections
15 August	Hands On Trades Career Expo and Lunch Event
	Lima East School Site Tri Annual Meeting
16 August	Launch - Three Echoes – Western Desert Art – Benalla Art Gallery
18 August	RSLs Annual Vietnam Day Memorial
20 August	Tour of the Foott Waste Shepparton Depot
21 August	Councillor Only Time
	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors
22 August	Municipal Association of Victoria Networking Event
23 August	Municipal Association of Victoria State Council Meeting
	Launch - Beyond the Boundary – Benalla Art Gallery
25 August	RSLs Annual Victory in the Pacific Day Lunch
27 August	IBAC Forum: Corruption Risks In Local Government
28 August	Councillor Only Time
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting

<b>Councillor Peter Davis</b>	
31 July	Councillor Only Time
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
15 August	Benalla Art Gallery Foundation Meeting
20 August	Tour of the Foott Waste Shepparton Depot
	Audit and Risk Committee Meeting
21 August	Councillor Only Time
	Assembly of Councillors
27 August	IBAC Forum: Corruption Risks In Local Government
28 August	Councillor Only Time
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting

<b>Councillor Don Firth</b>	
31 July	Councillor Only Time
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
1 August	Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee Meeting
7 August	Councillor Only Time
	Council Meeting
15 August	Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee Meeting
20 August	Tour of the Foott Waste Shepparton Depot
21 August	Councillor Only Time
	Assembly of Councillors
26 August	Benalla Street Art Festival Advisory Committee
28 August	Councillor Only Time
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting

**Councillor Punarji Hewa Gunaratne**

It is noted that Councillor Punarji Hewa Gunaratne was on an approved leave of absence from 1 August 2024 to 31 August 2024.

<b>Councillor Bernie Hearn</b>	
31 July	Councillor Only Time
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
1 August	Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee Meeting
5 August	Benalla Local Safety and Traffic Liaison Committee Meeting
7 August	Councillor Only Time
	Communications Advisory Committee Meeting
	Council Meeting
12 August	Benalla Festival Advisory Committee Meeting
15 August	Hands On Trades Career Expo and Lunch Event
18 August	RSLs Annual Vietnam Day Memorial
20 August	Tour of the Foott Waste Shepparton Depot
	Audit and Risk Committee Meeting
21 August	Councillor Only Time
	Assembly of Councillors
22 August	Municipal Association of Victoria Networking Event
23 August	Municipal Association of Victoria State Council Meeting
27 August	IBAC Forum: Corruption Risks In Local Government
	Benalla Festival Advisory Committee Meeting
28 August	Councillor Only Time
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting

<b>Councillor Justin King</b>	
31 July	Councillor Only Time
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
5 August	Benalla Local Safety and Traffic Liaison Committee Meeting
7 August	Councillor Only Time
	Council Meeting
12 August	Benalla Festival Advisory Committee Meeting
15 August	Hands On Trades Career Expo and Lunch Event
21 August	Councillor Only Time
	Assembly of Councillors
27 August	IBAC Forum: Corruption Risks In Local Government
	Benalla Festival Advisory Committee Meeting
28 August	Councillor Only Time
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
29 August	Benalla Showgrounds Committee of Management Meeting

<b>Councillor Gail O’Brien</b>	
31 July	Councillor Only Time
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
5 August	Benalla Health and Wellbeing Partnership Meeting
	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee
7 August	Councillor Only Time
	Future of Benalla Project Bus Tour
	Council Meeting
14 August	Benalla Business Coffee Connections
15 August	Hands On Trades Career Expo and Lunch Event
18 August	RSLs Annual Vietnam Day Memorial
19 August	Benalla Street Art Festival Workshop
20 August	Tour of the Foott Waste Shepparton Depot
21 August	Councillor Only Time
	Assembly of Councillors
26 August	NE Tracks LLEN Committee of Management Meeting
	Benalla Street Art Festival Advisory Committee Meeting
27 August	IBAC Forum: Corruption Risks In Local Government
28 August	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting

**Recommendation:**  
**That the report be noted.**

#### **4.8 Council Actions Pending**

Council Actions Pending are detailed in **Appendix 1**.

**Recommendation:**

**That the report be noted.**

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## Council Actions Pending

Action No.	Meeting Name	Item	Action	Officer	Status/notes
1.	F&P Committee 28-Aug-24	10	<b>2024/2025 Quick Response Grants Program</b> That \$500 grants from the 2024/2025 Quick Response Grant program be allocated to the Carers and Parents Support Group and to the Benalla RSL.	MC	Completed
2.	F&P Committee 28-Aug-24	6	<b>Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee Terms of Reference Amendments</b> That the amended <i>Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Project Steering Committee Terms of Reference</i> be adopted.	MAI	Completed
3.	Council Meeting 7-Aug-24	8.1	<b>Correspondence received: Changes to Benalla Health and Other Health Services</b> 1. That the Council seek an urgent meeting with the Benalla Health Board to discuss the issues raised in the letter. 2. That the Council write to the Hon. Mary-Anne Thomas seeking information about the proposed amalgamation and budget cuts at Benalla Health.	CEO	1. Ongoing 2. Completed
4.	Council Meeting 7-Aug-24	4.5	<b>Establishment of Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee</b> 1. That the Community Asset Committee known as the <i>Benalla Art Gallery Committee</i> be dissolved. 2. That the <i>Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee</i> be established. 3. That the <i>Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee Terms of Reference</i> be adopted. 4. That Councillor Danny Claridge and Councillor Punarji Hewa Gunaratne be appointed as the 2024 Councillor Representatives on the <i>Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee</i> . 5. That the President of the Friends of the Benalla Art Gallery Inc. and a representative of the Benalla Art Gallery Foundation be appointed to the Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee until 7 August 2027. 6. That the following nominees be appointed as general committee members of the <i>Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee</i> until 7 August 2027: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Barbara Alexander AO</li> <li>▪ Tim Abdallah</li> <li>▪ Anna Parle</li> <li>▪ Fiona Stephens</li> <li>▪ Alice Tallis.</li> </ul>	MEDAS	1. Completed 2. Completed 3. Completed 4. Completed 5. In progress 6. Completed
5.	Council Meeting 7-Aug-24	4.4	<b>Benalla Rural City Council Financial Hardship Policy Review</b> 1. That the <i>Financial Hardship Policy</i> be adopted. 2. That the <i>Financial Hardship Policy</i> be reviewed in August 2028.	MF	1. Completed 2. Noted

Action No.	Meeting Name	Item	Action	Officer	Status/notes
6.	Council Meeting 7-Aug-24	4.3	<b>2024/2025 Major Events Grant Funding Program</b> That a \$2,000 grant from the 2024/25 Major Event Funding program be allocated to the Benalla Racing Club.	MEDAS	Completed
7.	Council Meeting 7-Aug-24	4.2	<b>Audit and Risk Committee Independent Member – Vacant Position</b> That expressions of interest for vacant <i>Audit and Risk Committee</i> Independent Member positions be invited.	GMC	Completed
8.	Council Meeting 7-Aug-24	4.1	<b>Audit and Risk Committee Chair Report</b> That the <i>Audit and Risk Committee 2023/24 Activity Report</i> be accepted.	GMC	Completed
9.	F&P Committee 31-July-24	2	<b>Petition: Council to Include Squash Courts in the Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project</b> 1. That the petition be noted. 2. That the <i>Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee</i> consider the issues raised within the petition during the design stage of the <i>Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project</i> .	MAI	1. Completed 2. In Progress
10.	F&P Committee 19-June-24	4	<b>Proposal for a Mobile Phone Tower at Goorambat Recreation Reserve</b> That the Finance and Planning Committee, acting under its delegated authority of the Council, resolve: 1. That the Council enter into a lease of land with Amplitel Pty Ltd for a period of 20 years. 2. That the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to execute contract documentation.	MFIT	In progress
11.	F&P Committee 15-May-24	1	<b>Financial Report for Quarter Ended 31 March 2024</b> 1. That the report be noted. 2. That the Open Space Contribution of \$375,000 be considered as a co-contribution towards the \$300,000 allocation from the Victorian Government for the development of the pump track as part of the <i>2024/25 Budget</i> .	MF	1. Completed 2. Completed
12.	Council Meeting 14-Feb-24	4.4	<b>Fawckner Drive Masterplan</b> 1. That the <i>Benalla Fawckner Drive Masterplan</i> be adopted. 2. That the <i>Benalla Fawckner Drive Masterplan Strategy Advocacy Document</i> be drafted.	MC	1. Completed 2. In progress
13.	Council Meeting 13-Dec-23	4.4	<b>Benalla Sports and Equestrian Reserve Committee</b> That the debate on this matter be deferred until the Council Meeting on 14 February 2024 to allow the <i>Benalla Sports and Equestrian Reserve</i> user groups to endorse their representative on the <i>Benalla Sports and Equestrian Reserve Committee</i> and the <i>Instrument of Sub-Delegation from the Chief Executive Officer to Community Asset Committees</i> be updated.	CEO	Several responses not received. Report to be presented at a future Council Meeting.

Action No.	Meeting Name	Item	Action	Officer	Status/notes
14.	Council Meeting 24-April-24	4.1	<p><b>Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the Council give in principle support for the Benalla P-12 College Barkly Street Campus as the preferred site location for the <i>Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment project</i>.</li> <li>2. That the Chief Executive Officer negotiate with the Department of Education for the Council to acquire crown land at 51-54 Barkly Street, Benalla.</li> <li>3. That the <i>Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee</i> be established.</li> <li>4. That the amended <i>Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee Terms of Reference</i> be adopted.</li> <li>5. That Cr Don Firth and Cr Bernie Hearn be appointed as the Councillor representatives on the <i>Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee</i> for the remainder of the 2023/24 Council year.</li> <li>6. That invitations to join the <i>Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee</i> be extended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hume Region Community Infrastructure, Place, Sport and Recreation Victoria, Basketball Victoria, President Benalla Basketball Association, Chair of the Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Committee of Management.</li> </ul> </li> <li>7. That an expression of interest process be undertaken to obtain two community member <i>Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee</i> representatives.</li> </ol>	MAI	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Completed</li> <li>2. In progress</li> <li>3. Completed</li> <li>4. Completed</li> <li>5. Completed</li> <li>6. Completed</li> <li>7. Completed</li> </ol>
15.	F&P Committee 1-Mar-23	3	<p><b>Planning Scheme Review Amendment – Benalla Planning Scheme Review</b></p> <p>That Council resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note and forward the <i>Benalla Planning Scheme Review 2022</i> to the Minister for Planning in accordance with Section 12B (5) of the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i>.</li> <li>2. Seek assistance from Regional Planning Hubs to prepare and exhibit a planning scheme amendment to implement the <i>Benalla Planning Scheme Review 2022</i>.</li> </ol>	MD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Completed</li> <li>2. In progress</li> </ol>
16.	F&O Committee 15-Jun-22	9.	<p><b>Financial Hardship Policy Review</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the <i>Financial Hardship Policy</i> be adopted.</li> <li>2. That the <i>Financial Hardship Policy</i> be reviewed once the <i>Local Government legislation Amendment (Rating Reform and Other Matters) Bill 2022</i> becomes legislation.</li> </ol>	MF	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Completed</li> <li>2. Completed</li> </ol>



## 5. Reports by Councillors

**Recommendation:****That the report(s) be noted.**

## 6. Notices of Motion

## 7. Notices of Rescission Motion

## 8. Urgent Business

Business can only be admitted as urgent business by resolution of the council, and only then if it:

- relates to or arises out of a matter which has arisen since distribution of the agenda; and
- cannot be deferred until the next Council Meeting without having a negative impact on the Council, the municipality or the local community; and
- cannot be addressed through the Customer Request Management System.

A Councillor proposing that a matter be admitted as urgent business must lodge it in writing with the Chief Executive Officer by 4pm on the day of the meeting.

The Chief Executive Officer will advise the Mayor of any matter that the Chief Executive Officer determines appropriate for the Council to consider admitting as urgent business.

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## Confidential Business

It is proposed that the following items be considered in confidential business pursuant to the *Local Government Act 2020* as they contain personal information or private commercial information that would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about a person, their personal affairs or expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking if released:

9.1 Confidential Reports by Councillors

9.2 Confidential Council Actions Pending

**Recommendation:**

**That the meeting be closed to the public for the consideration of the confidential business item noted above pursuant to Sections 3(1) and Section 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.**

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## 10. Reopening of the meeting to the public

**Recommendation:**

**That the meeting be reopened to the public.**

## Closure of the meeting