

AGENDA

MEETING OF THE **HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL**

To be held on

28 July 2025

At 5.30pm

In the

Council Chamber, Civic Centre

18 Roberts Avenue, HORSHAM



**COUNCILLORS are respectfully requested to attend the Council Meeting
of the Horsham Rural City Council to be held on 28 July 2025
in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Horsham at 5.30pm**

Order of Business

PRESENT

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

1. PRAYER

Almighty God, we pledge ourselves to work in harmony for, the social, cultural and economic well-being of our Rural City. Help us to be wise in our deliberations and fair in our actions, so that prosperity and happiness shall be the lot of our people. AMEN

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY STATEMENT

Horsham Rural City Council acknowledges the five Traditional Owner groups of this land; the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk people. We recognise the important and ongoing place that all Indigenous people hold in our community.

We pay our respects to the Elders, both past and present, and commit to working together in the spirit of mutual understanding and respect for the benefit of the broader community and future generations.

3. OPENING AND WELCOME

Chairman, Cr Ian Ross formally welcomed those in attendance to the meeting. The Mayor advised that the meeting will be recorded to maintain a video archive, which will be available on the Horsham Rural City Council website as soon as practicable.

4. APOLOGIES

5. LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS

6. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Recommendation

That the minutes emanating from the Council Meeting of the Horsham Rural City Council held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Horsham at 5.30pm on 23 June 2025 be adopted.

7. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest

A Councillor who has declared a conflict of interest, must leave the meeting and remain outside the room while the matter is being considered, or any vote is taken.

Members of Staff

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, officers or people engaged under contract to the Council providing a report or advice to Council must disclose any conflicts of interests in the matter, including the type of interest.

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<i>Defined as confidential information in accordance with Local Government Act 2020 - Section 3(1)(g) - Private Commercial Information</i>	

CLOSE



GAIL GATT
Chief Executive Officer

REPORTS FOR COUNCIL DECISION

9. OFFICERS REPORTS

9.1 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE BIENNIAL REPORT TO COUNCIL – 1 JANUARY TO 30 JUNE 2025

Director:	Kim Hargreaves
Directorate:	Corporate Services
File Number:	F18/A13/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Audit and Risk Committee's Biannual Report to Council Jan – Jun 2025 (**Appendix 9.1A**)

Purpose

To present the Audit and Risk Committee's Biannual Report for the period January to June 2025 to Council.

Summary

The report outlines key activity during the reporting period.

- Audit and Risk Committee meetings – 100% attendance rate by Committee members (independent members and Councillor Representatives).
- Two Committee meetings held during the reporting period – 20 March 2025 and 19 June 2025
- Appointment of new Internal Auditor, AFS & Associates Pty Ltd
- End of financial year preparation
- Interim Management Letter as provided by the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO)

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the Biannual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee for the period January to June 2025.

REPORT

Background

This report is prepared in accordance with the Horsham Rural City Council's Audit and Risk Committee Charter 2025 (section 4.2.2) and fulfils the obligations under the *Local Government Act 2020* (s 54(5)).

The specific requirements of that section are that:

(5) An Audit and Risk Committee must—

- a) prepare a biannual audit and risk report that describes the activities of the Audit and Risk Committee and includes its findings and recommendations; and
- b) provide a copy of the biannual audit and risk report to the Chief Executive Officer for tabling at the next Council meeting.

The biannual report covers the period January to June 2025 and includes the Committee meetings held on 20 March and 19 June 2025. The minutes of the March meeting were tabled at the April 2025 Council Meeting and the minutes of the June meeting have been tabled as a separate report to this Council Meeting.

Discussion

This report provides a summary of the work the Committee performed to discharge its responsibilities. It also includes a summary of Council's progress in addressing the results of internal and external audit reports.

For the topics covered in the period under review, the report includes an overall assessment of risks, controls, and compliance processes, including consideration of a wide range of reports that indicated Council's continued monitoring of developments.

Options to Consider

There are no options other than to consider as the report is required by legislation (section 54(5) of the *Local Government Act 2020*).

Sustainability Implications

Not applicable

Community Engagement

Council's Audit and Risk Committee is comprised of Councillors and independent members. Consultation is undertaken with Internal Auditors and external (Victorian Auditor-General's Office – VAGO) Auditors.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Council applies the principles of continuous improvement in the operation of the Audit and Risk Committee with a strong process of regular review and evaluation of the Committee's operations. From this regular review and evaluation, processes and practices are changed as required to deliver improved and effective outcomes. The biannual report represents one such mechanism of evaluation of operations.

Collaboration

Not applicable

Financial Implications

Costs associated with Council's Audit and Risk Committee for the reporting period are within the 2024-25 operational budget allocation.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Nil

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2021-2025 Council Plan: Theme 5 – Leadership

1. Good governance, through leadership and connection with community
2. Good management for financial sustainability
4. Accountable and transparent decision making

Risk Implications

An Audit and Risk Committee is required under the *Local Government Act 2020* so having a properly functioning or constituted committee ensures Council meets its legislative obligations and is well placed to mitigate risk noting the Committee's responsibilities. These include monitoring compliance with Council policies and procedures, Council's financials and performance, risk management and fraud prevention systems and controls, and overseeing internal and external audit functions.

Conclusion

The Audit and Risk Committee is a legislated requirement under the *Local Government Act 2020*. Other obligations are placed on the Committee by the Audit and Risk Committee Charter. This report meets our obligations under the Act that requires the Audit and Risk Committee to prepare a biannual audit and risk report that describes the activities of the Audit and Risk Committee and includes its findings and recommendations; and provide a copy of that report to the next Council meeting.

9.2 COMMUNITY EVENTS GRANTS 2025-2026

Director:	Kim Hargreaves
Directorate:	Corporate Services
File Number:	F20/A01/000016

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

☒ Yes ☐ No

Reason:

At all levels of the assessment process, those on the assessment panels and at briefings have been requested to declare any conflict of interest and are instructed to not discuss or vote on any applications where there may be a real or perceived conflict of interest. Details of conflict-of-interest declarations made by Officers and others involved in the process is attached (Appendix 9.2B)

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Community Events Grants 2025-2026 (**Appendix 9.2A**)

Community Events Grants Conflict of Interest Declarations (**Appendix 9.2B**)

Community Events Grants Guidelines 2025-2026 (**Appendix 9.2C**)

Purpose

To provide Council with recommendations for events to be funded from the 2025-2026 Community Events budget.

Summary

- Council approved the allocation of \$73,000 for Community Events Grants as part of the Community Grants budget for 2025-2026 at the May 2025 Council meeting.
- Two funding rounds are offered each year with the first application round opened in May and a second to be opened in November if funds are not exhausted at round one.
- Council received a total of 37 Community Event Grant applications in the first round requesting \$168,073.
- Of the total number of applications, 43% funding requests are recommended for allocation.
- It is recommended that 27 Community Event Grants to the value of \$72,938 are approved by Council (Appendix A).

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Approve \$61,900 to the following the Community Event Grants (noting nil Councillor conflicts of interest):

Applicant	Amount
Beyond Community Inclusion Inc	\$1,500
Black Hole Theatre	\$6,000
Gariwerd Artists Inc	\$800

Horsham & District Orchid Society	\$500
Horsham Agricultural Society Inc	\$4,000
Horsham Calisthenics College	\$1,200
Horsham Fire Brigade	\$2,000
Horsham Girl Guides	\$1,000
Horsham Rockers Inc	\$2,000
Horsham Rural City Band	\$3,000
Horsham Spring Garden Festival Inc	\$2,000
Laharum Hall committee of management	\$3,800
Mother's Day Classic-Horsham	\$900
Old Skool Hotrod and Custom Club	\$4,000
Operation 19:14	\$4,000
Rotary Club of Horsham East	\$6,000
SmartArtz Theatre Inc	\$6,700
Toolondo Golf club	\$1,000
Wimmera Against Cancer in Kids	\$2,500
Wimmera Mallee Historical Vehicle Society	\$500
Wimmera Music Eisteddfod Inc.	\$4,500
Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly	\$2,000
Wimmera Rockers Danceworld Inc.	\$2,000
Total	\$61,900

2. Approve \$11,038 to the following community grant allocations (noting Councillor conflict of interest):

Applicant	Amount
Arapiles Community Theatre Inc	\$6,538
Arapiles Historical Society Inc	\$2,000
Natimuk Agricultural and Pastoral Society Inc	\$500
Natimuk and District Gymnastics Club	\$2,000
Total	\$11,038

3. Advise all Community Event Grant applicants of the outcome of their applications by the end of August 2025.

REPORT

Background

Council approved a revised Community Grants Policy on 18 December 2023 that split the community grants program into four streams:

1. Community Development Grants - annual program open in February each year
2. Community Events Grants – open in May and November each year
3. Youth Grants – open continuously from 1 July each year until funding is exhausted
4. Quick Response Small Grants - open continuously from 1 July each year until funding is exhausted (now called Urgent Need Small Grants).

At the Council meeting held on 26 May 2025, Council allocated \$231,684 in the 2025-26 Budget for approved community grants and donations across the following categories:

- Community Development Grants	\$137,684
- Community Events Grants	\$ 73,000
- Youth Grants	\$ 10,000
- Urgent Need Small Grants	\$ 11,000

The policy to support the Grants program is subject to an annual review process with Council approving a revised Community Grants Policy on 28 January 2025. The 2025-2026 Community Events Grants Round complies with the revised policy.

Discussion

In accordance with the 2025-26 Community Grants Policy, the community were invited to submit applications for event grant funding in May with applications open 1 May to 2 June 2025. At the closing date, Council had received 37 Community Event Grant applications requesting \$168,073 for 2025-2026 compared to 29 applications requesting \$131,317 in 2024-2025.

These 37 applications underwent the following assessment process using the new SmartyGrants platform:

- an initial eligibility assessment to ensure applications meet eligibility criteria for further assessment (reflecting eligibility requirements in the Community Grant Policy and Guidelines)
- individual assessments by the internal assessment panel as per the provisions of the Community Grants Policy with each application assessed against the criteria and weighting outlined in the Grant Guidelines (Appendix C).
- final moderation and approval of projects by the internal assessment panel (Appendix A)- which included calculated of the moderated score. The assessment panel then met to review the scores and noting the funding available to finalise the recommendations for funding - refer below for the additional assessment considerations).
- recommendations were then reviewed by the Executive Management Team and
- recommendations were reviewed at a Council Briefing.

Additional assessment considerations

Upon review of the moderated assessment scores against the available budget, only 11 of the 37 applications would have received their requested allocation if the full amount requested had been allocated. The assessment then considered the moderated score against an allocation of the minimum grant requested. This process resulted in an outcome whereby only 17 of the 37 applications would have received funding.

To provide more applicants with funding, noting the funding sought was from across all applications was \$168,073 and the budget allocation is \$73,000, the assessment panel considered the following:

1. Reducing the minimum requested amount in most instances
2. Examining the applicant's ability to self-fund (including ability to make a profit without provision of a grant)
3. Further distribution of funding to ensure more projects would receive some level of funding
4. Geographic distribution of events
5. Consideration of the application of a similar for one-day annual events that Council are asked to support (generally \$2000 per event)

Of the 37 eligible applications, 27 applications totalling \$72,938 are recommended for funding from the \$73,000 Community Events Grants Program budget thereby exhausting the funding allocation. On that basis there would be no second round of funding available.

The ten applications not recommended to receive funding were excluded for several reasons including:

- Receipt of other financial support from Council
- Ability to generate a large profit
- Multiple applications from the same applicant
- Proposed grant to be used for a fund-raising event
- Request not considered a request for grant funding (workshop or goods)
- Low scoring application

It is proposed that all applicants be advised of the outcome of their grant application as soon as practicable following the Council decision as to allocation of Community Events Grants for 2025-2026. Successful applicants should be advised as soon as possible to assist the respective groups in preparing for the implementation of their projects for the 2025-2026 financial year.

Options to Consider

That Council accept the recommendations of the assessment panel and endorse the allocation of funds as per the amounts specified in the report. Alternatively, Council may decide not to support the panel recommendations noting that the recommendations exhaust the budget allocation for Event Grants.

Sustainability Implications

Nil

Community Engagement

Applications for the event grants were advertised extensively in Council's e-newsletter, the Weekly Advertiser and Council's website during the month of May.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The use of the new SmartyGrants software platform has enabled improved grants program management and will be used for the administration of all Council grant programs from 2025-2026 onwards.

Collaboration

Not applicable

Financial Implications

Council received 37 Community Event Grant applications in the first round requesting a total of \$168,073 in funding. Of these 37 applications, 27 have been recommended for funding to a total of \$72,938 thereby exhausting the 2025-2026 budget allocation for Events Grants of \$73,000.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

- 2021-2025 Council Plan (including the Health and Wellbeing Plan)
- Community Inclusion Plan
- Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan
- Youth Strategy
- Age-Friendly Communities Implementation Plan
- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2023-2026

Risk Implications

In December 2023 Council resolved to distribute the Community Grants via four separate funding streams. Since that change, the full annual allocation of funds for the Community Events grants has been exhausted in the first funding round with the result that no second round is offered. Noting successful projects have eighteen months from the grant notification date to complete their projects this should mitigate potential risks associated with events being funded in the first half of the financial year only however the program will need to consider this issue as part of the annual review process to ensure Council objectives are still being achieved.

Conclusion

The 2025-2026 Community Events Grants program will release significant money into the local community and economy to support a variety of diverse, inclusive and vibrant community events. The local expenditure resulting from this Council support will provide both an important economic stimulus to our not-for-profit sector as well as enable opportunities for participation and social connectivity.

9.3 ROAD MANAGEMENT PLAN

Director:	John Martin
Directorate:	Infrastructure
File Number:	F02/A01/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with Local Government Act 2020 – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with Local Government Act 2020 – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Amended Draft Road Management Plan (**Appendix 9.3A**)

Road Hierarchy Map - Urban (**Appendix 9.3B**)

Road Hierarchy Map - Rural (**Appendix 9.3C**)

Purpose

To provide Council with an update on the review of the Road Management Plan prior to commencing formal consultation on the Plan.

Summary

- The Road Management Plan (RMP) sets the minimum standards for maintenance of roads with a focus on road safety.
- The Road Management Act (2004) limits Council's liability for road incidents where a Road Management Plan is in place and is being complied with by Council.
- Road Management Plans are required to be reviewed each four years, following a Council election.
- This report provides an update on the proposed amendments to the Plan in advance of the formal consultation process.

Recommendation

That Council approve the commencement of consultation on the revised version of the Road Management Plan included as **Appendix 9.3A**, for a period of four weeks, including conduct of drop-in sessions in rural parts of the municipality, and with the provision for the community to make submissions on the draft Plan.

REPORT

Background

The Road Management Plan is a document that describes the maintenance systems and standards in place for Council's road and footpath network to facilitate their safe and serviceable use for vehicles, pedestrians and other users. Safety of road users is the number one priority for Council.

In addition, where Council has an RMP in place, and is compliant with it, Council's liability for claims relating to road incidents is limited. This provides significant protection against insurance claims.

Council has periodically reviewed and updated its Road Management Plan, as required under the provisions of the Road Management Act 2004 and related regulations. The Plan was reviewed as required by legislation in 2021 following the previous Council election. There have also been two minor reviews since, as follows:

- An improved process for addressing footpath defects and a changed classification for some minor tracks (June 2023);
- A clarification in the terminology for urgent defects in contrast to emergency events. (August 2024).

The purpose of the review is to ensure that the standards and priorities for the inspection, maintenance and repair of roads remain appropriate.

The process for review of the Road Management Plan is prescribed in regulations. The key steps in the process are:

- Conduct of a review of the existing RMP document to determine if an update is required.
- Formal notification that the review process is underway, including a Government Gazette notice.
- Conduct of a community engagement process on the plan.

There are two key aspects of the RMP review, these relate to:

- The service standards described in the plan, e.g. the frequency of inspections and response times when defects are identified (either as a result of inspections, or through public requests)
- The road hierarchy classification, which sets the standard of service for different roads.

Discussion

The reviewed draft Road Management Plan is now included as an attachment, in advance of its circulation for community and stakeholder consultation.

The main changes to the Plan relate to consideration of the Rural Road Network Plan, and its introduction of three separate overlays to the hierarchy outlined in the Road Management Plan, as follows:

- Freight Routes
- Farm Machinery Routes
- Tourism Routes.

Mostly, the inclusion of these overlays does not change the framework for the service standards in the Road Management Plan, but they do impact on the classification of roads in the hierarchy, once a

particular section of road is upgraded. Note that it is not practical to re-classify the identified routes until funding is obtained to perform the relevant upgrade works.

The one change in service standard relates to the vegetation clearance envelope for farm machinery routes. It is proposed to adopt a wider, 7m x 6m, envelope, however that is still subject to:

- Approval from DEECA in relation to its guidelines for native vegetation clearance. It is understood that DEECA is reviewing these guidelines, and a submission has been made to DEECA in relation to this.
- Funding for the upgrade works.

Other changes in the Road Management Plan are primarily to improve clarity of the text.

The next phase in the process is community engagement. This had been deferred from earlier in the year to avoid overlap with Council's broader Community Vision engagement.

Options to Consider

Council is not required to have a Road Management Plan, but if it does, then its liability to claims for road incidents from the public is limited under the provisions of the Road Management Act 2004.

Sustainability Implications

Nil

Community Engagement

Engagement requirements for the review of the Road Management Plan are defined in the Road Management Act 2004 and its related regulations. Key elements of this engagement include publishing details of the review on or in:

- Council's website (including a copy of relevant documents)
- The Government Gazette
- Council's public notices in the print media.

Additional engagement will occur as follows:

- Letters to stakeholders, including those identified as potential stakeholders in an MAV guide on updating Road Management Plans, such as emergency services and school bus operators.
- Letters to landholders on roads should it be proposed that a reduced standard of maintenance might apply.
- The planned period for engagement is proposed to exceed the minimum 28-day period required under the regulations.

This engagement is planned to occur during August, leading to consideration of an updated Road Management Plan, and any proposed changes to road hierarchies by Council during September (and October if required).

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The revised RMP incorporates new directions from the Rural Road Network Plan

Collaboration

Council is engaging with MAV to ensure our amended RMP satisfies our insurer's requirements.

Financial Implications

Changes to road hierarchies need to consider the potential for increased costs.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

A Road Management Plan needs to be prepared in accordance with the Road Management Act 2004.

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

Council has had a Road Management Plan since 2004.

Risk Implications

The Road Management Plan's focus is on managing the risk of not maintaining roads in a suitable condition.

A critical aspect of this is that the RMP needs to establish service standards that are considered appropriate from a safety perspective, but which we can guarantee that we can resource. An over-commitment of service standards in the RMP could lead to non-compliance with the plan, which could lead to loss of Council's. Hence, the RMP is referred to as our minimum service standard, and we aim to achieve better than that.

Currently, public claims for road related damage, e.g. a tyre blowout due to a pothole, have a threshold of \$1681 before Council is considered potentially liable.

Conclusion

The report provides information about the process for review of the Road Management Plan, with the next planned step being community and stakeholder consultation.

9.4 HORSHAM REGIONAL LIVESTOCK EXCHANGE FEES – 2025-26

Director:	John Martin
Directorate:	Infrastructure
File Number:	F04/A01/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

HRLE New Fees 2025-26 (**Appendix 9.4A**)

Purpose

To update the Horsham Rural Livestock Exchange (HRLE) fees and charges for the 2025-26 financial year.

Summary

- The 2025-2026 Livestock Exchange fees presented to Council in June did not include a CPI increase.
- These fees need to be increased by CPI to ensure ongoing financial viability of the HRLE.
- The fees are proposed to be increased by 3% as per other increases reflected in the register.
- The HRLE Advisory Committee resolved to support the application of this increase at its recent meeting on 10 July 2025.
- A new list of fees is attached as **Appendix 9.4A** – HRLE New Fees 2025-26.

Recommendation

That Council adopt the fees/charges proposed for Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange for the 2025-26 financial year, as presented in **Appendix 9.4A**, with effect from 29 July 2025.

REPORT

Background

The CPI increase to fees/charges at Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange was not applied in this year's budget process.

Fees and charges for the HRLE need to be increased yearly to ensure it continues to be viable to operate this important community facility. The proposed increase to fees have been closely based around a 3% increase as far as possible reflective of the increases applied to other fees and charges.

Discussion

The proposed fees are appropriate to allow the livestock exchange to operate without needing to draw on funds from the capital reserve.

While the setting of some fees is subject to Council delegations, these amendments relate to a variation to fees and therefore are presented to Council for consideration and adoption. The updated fees will be incorporated in the Register of Fees and Charges and take effect following the Council resolution.

Options to Consider

- Leave the fees as they are in the current register, which would reduce the livestock exchange income.
- Approve a higher rate increase to boost the livestock reserve, but this may impact usage by local vendors, and resulting in reduced income.

Sustainability Implications

Nil

Community Engagement

The delay in setting the fees was presented to the HRLE Advisory Committee at its 10 July 2025 meeting. The Committee resolved as follows regarding this item:

That the Committee acknowledge that this error in not increasing the HRLE fees should be corrected, as a CPI increase was expected by the Committee. (10 July 2025)

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not applicable

Collaboration

Not applicable

Financial Implications

The delay in setting the fees will lead to a reduction of income of approx \$800 for this financial year, based on:

- Anticipated throughput for July – 20,000 sheep/lambs
- Difference in fee (\$1.27 proposed less \$1.23 current) - \$0.04
- Total = \$800

The Livestock Exchange operates as a separate, self-funding operational entity within Council.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

The setting of fees and charges is an integral part of the Council Budget process. Corrective measures have been put in place to avoid a repeat of this error.

Risk Implications

Not applicable

Conclusion

This rate adjustment is in line with previous yearly increases and is required to maintain the financial viability of the site.

9.5 WESTERN HIGHWAY ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

Director:	John Martin
Directorate:	Infrastructure
File Number:	F15/A01/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with Local Government Act 2020 – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with Local Government Act 2020 – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Western Highway Advocacy Priorities (**Appendix 9.5A**)

Purpose

To seek Councillor input and endorsement of priorities for upgrades of the Western Highway Corridor to inform preparation of an advocacy strategy by the Western Highway Action Committee.

Summary

- The Western Highway Action Committee advocates for improvements to the Western Highway between Melbourne and the South Australian border.
- The Committee is preparing a new advocacy strategy and is seeking input from member Councils to inform the strategy.
- A draft set of issues has been identified in the template provided as an attachment to this report.

Recommendation

That Council endorse the set of advocacy priorities included in **Appendix 9.5A** for inclusion in the Western Highway Action Committee advocacy strategy.

REPORT

Background

The Western Highway Action Committee comprises the 10 Councils between Melton and West Wimmera along the Western Highway Corridor. The Committee has been in existence since at least 1999 and has played a key role in advocating to the Victorian and Australian Governments on priorities for upgrading the Western Highway. The key priority of the Committee has been supporting the duplication of the Highway, which is complete through to east of Ararat.

The Committee is now preparing an updated strategy so that it can establish the priorities of member Councils for a coordinated voice to Government about the community's further priorities for the Highway. The strategy is proposed to be completed this calendar year.

The development of a common set of priorities, shared by ten Councils, carries much weight in representations to Government.

Discussion

The attachment to this report is a template provided by the Committee seeking to gain input from each Council on priorities in a number of areas, in particular:

- Long term priorities
- Short term priorities and
- Safety issues.

The priorities listed in the template include references not just to highway projects, but also rail related projects, on the basis that we should look at the highway corridor, and not just the highway itself

Where appropriate, relevant strategies have also been referenced. These will be provided to the Committee as required to support the development of the strategy.

Subsequently, there will be a one-on-one consultation with each Council to provide for further elaboration on the issues raised. Draft versions of the strategy will be presented to the Committee for review prior to finalisation.

Options to Consider

Councillors may have different views on the priorities shown, and also may wish to include further projects not yet listed in the attached template.

Sustainability Implications

Nil

Community Engagement

The input of member Councils is being sought on behalf of the Western Highway communities along its route.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Nil

Collaboration

The Western Highway Action Committee is a collaboration between the ten Councils along the highway's route from Melton to the South Australian border. The Committee gains regular input from the Department of Transport and Planning, and Major Road Projects Victoria, however the strategy would be owned by the Committee and its member Councils, not those government agencies.

Financial Implications

Funding contributions to WHAC by Councils are not sought every year, however a \$3500 contribution has been requested for 2025-26. Funding contributions are based on the population of the member Councils.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

The Department of Transport and Planning prepared its own Western Highway Corridor Strategy in 2020, and while a presentation on key outcomes from that strategy was provided to WHAC, the Strategy itself was not publicly released.

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

Relevant Council strategies include:

- The Horsham Urban Transport Strategy
- The Housing Strategy (under development)
- Framework for Managing Growth (2013)

Preliminary community output from the current Council Plan / Community Vision has identified the community's high level of interest in a Horsham bypass.

Risk Implications

Preparation of an advocacy strategy provides the opportunity to address transport risks as identified by Council and the community.

Conclusion

Development of Council's priorities for the Western Highway will support the preparation of an advocacy strategy by the Western Highway Action Committee.

9.6 SUBMISSIONS ON "PAYMENT IN LIEU OF RATES (PILOT) SCHEME FOR ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS DISCUSSION PAPER." & SEC RENEWABLE ENERGY PARK HORSHAM COMMUNITY BENEFITS FUND

Director:	Kevin O'Brien
Directorate:	Communities and Place
File Number:	F06/A13/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

HRCC Submission in response to "Payment in Lieu of Rates (PILOT) scheme for Energy Storage Systems Discussion Paper." (**Appendix 9.6A**)

Draft submission: SEC Renewable Energy Park Horsham Community Benefits Fund (**Appendix 9.6B**)

Purpose

To inform Council of the submission that has been made to DEECA regarding the Payment in Lieu of Rates (PILOT) Scheme and present the draft submission to the State Electricity Commission (SEC) regarding the proposed Community Benefits Fund for the SEC Renewable Energy Park Horsham.

Summary

This report informs Councillors of the Horsham Regional City Council's (HRCC) submission to Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) regarding the proposed "Payment in Lieu of Rates (PILOT) scheme for Energy Storage Systems Discussion Paper." Concurrently, HRCC will engage with the State Electricity Commission (SEC) to seek acceptable rates for the Horsham Energy Park project, separate to the DEECA submission, and will also provide feedback on the SEC's proposed Community Benefits Fund for the SEC Renewable Energy Park Horsham. These actions are driven by HRCC's commitment to ensuring the energy transition provides tangible and equitable benefits to our community.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Note the submission in response to DEECA's "Payment in Lieu of Rates (PILOT) scheme for Energy Storage Systems Discussion Paper," advocating for a wholesale review of the PILOT scheme and a return to standard industrial rates for energy facilities (**Appendix 9.6A**).
2. Note that Council Officers will engage directly with the State Electricity Commission (SEC) to seek the payment of acceptable rates for the SEC Renewable Energy Park - Horsham.
3. Endorse the draft submission to the SEC regarding the SEC Renewable Energy Park - Horsham Community Benefits Fund (**Appendix 9.6B**).

REPORT

Background

The PILOR scheme currently allows energy facilities to pay significantly lower rates than comparable commercial and industrial facilities. HRCC's position is that this undermines the Victorian Government's stated aim of providing local and regional community benefits from the energy transition.

The current PILOR methodology, designed for energy generators, is now being reviewed for energy storage systems. HRCC's submission to DEECA argues for a wholesale review of the PILOR scheme for all energy facilities, advocating for a return to ordinary industrial rates for these projects.

Separate to the DEECA submission, HRCC will engage directly with the SEC to seek the payment of acceptable rates for the SEC Renewable Energy Park - Horsham. This engagement will emphasize the need for the SEC to contribute equitably to the local community through appropriate rate payments, reflecting the true impact and benefits of their development.

Furthermore, it is proposed HRCC will provide feedback on the SEC's Community Benefits Fund for the Renewable Energy Park - Horsham.

The SEC is delivering the SEC Renewable Energy Park – Horsham, Victoria's first 100 per cent publicly owned, large scale renewable energy project.

The project will consist of over 212,000 photovoltaic solar panels and a 100 megawatt (MW) two-hour Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and is currently in the early stages of construction.

The project will help accelerate Victoria's energy transition to deliver renewable, affordable, and reliable energy for all Victorians. The region will benefit from local employment and supplier opportunities, community benefit sharing and best practice engagement with First Peoples.

The SEC Renewable Energy Park-Horsham is anticipated to be fully operational in late 2027. Learn more by reading the Project Fact Sheet.

The project will deliver a range of direct and flow-on benefits to the Horsham community. The SEC has committed a Community Benefit Fund of \$42,000 per year (\$126,000 total) during the three-year construction phase and \$2 million for the life of the project once operational – \$70,000 per year and adjusted with Consumer Price Index.

The SEC is calling on the Horsham community to help us shape how the fund will be designed and delivered.

Discussion

The submission to DEECA has highlighted the following points:

- *Lack of Rationale for Discounted Rates:* There is no clear justification for energy facilities receiving a substantial discount on council rates, especially when other local businesses pay rates based on the capital improved value of their land. While there may have been a historical basis for supporting a nascent renewable energy industry, this is no longer applicable given its rapid growth.
- *Fairness to Councils:* The assertion that PILOR is "fair to councils and generators" is disputed. The deep discount on council rates is not fair to councils, who bear the costs of providing services to citizens and businesses, including those impacted by new energy developments.
- *Evidence of Strong Energy Storage Investment:* The DEECA discussion paper suggests that the current PILOR methodology may deter investment in energy storage technologies. HRCC's submission will counter this by citing evidence from the Clean Energy Council's "Quarterly investment report: Large-scale renewable energy and storage Q1 2025," which indicates a "remarkable run of investment commitments to energy storage projects," with Q1 2025 being "the best annual start for new storage projects on record."
- *Decreasing Battery Costs:* Further supporting the argument against rates subsidies, CSIRO's "GenCost 2024-25: Consultation draft" notes that "Large-scale battery costs improved the most in 2024-25 falling by 20% in 2024-25." This demonstrates that the industry is becoming more cost-effective, reducing the need for financial incentives through discounted rates.
- *Local Benefits are Not Guaranteed:* While energy storage projects offer significant benefits to the state and the National Energy Market (NEM), the benefits to local communities are not inherently guaranteed. The influx of a surge workforce during construction can strain local housing and services, and post-construction, these facilities may provide limited local employment. Proper council rates are a direct and genuine mechanism to share the benefits with regional communities.
- *Battery Energy Storage Systems are Industrial Facilities:* HRCC submits that battery energy storage systems are an intensive, industrial use of land. Therefore, their rates should be determined in the same manner as other industrial land, based on the industrial rate for the capital improved value of the land. This approach offers certainty and consistency.
- *Critique of Alternative Methods:* Alternative methods suggested in the discussion paper, such as using land footprint or varying rates based on capacity factors, are seen as undermining the objective of shared benefits and introducing unnecessary complexity and inconsistency.

The SEC Community Benefits Survey for the Renewable Energy Park – Horsham, is available on the Engage Victoria website with submissions closing on Sunday 27 July 2025, however an extension to this closing date has been allowed in order to have a submission endorsed by Council.

The survey seeks community input on how a Community Benefit Fund should be utilised. Key aspects of the survey include:

- Identifying local sectors and groups that should be supported by the fund.

- Suggesting specific initiatives the fund could support.
- Addressing potential barriers that might prevent people from accessing the fund.
- Gathering preferences on the distribution method (annually or lump sum) and management of the fund.

HRCC's submission will advocate for the Community Benefit Fund to genuinely address local needs and impacts, ensuring it complements rather than replaces the revenue that should be generated through fair council rates (**Appendix 9.6B**).

Options to Consider

1. Approve the SEC Solar Park Community Benefits Scheme funding submission
2. Not approve SEC Solar Park Community Benefits Scheme funding submission

Option 1 is recommended to ensure the best outcome for the community is achieved through the community benefits scheme.

Sustainability Implications

These submissions are important in order to create a sustainable and equitable methodology regarding renewable energy projects payment of rates or payment in lieu of rates and how the community benefits fund is delivered.

Community Engagement

The PILOR discussion paper and submission questions were available on the Engage Vic website for a consultation period of 26 May – 14 July.

The SEC Renewable Energy Park consultation period was from 12 June – 25 July.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not applicable

Collaboration

Not Applicable

Financial Implications

The following example was used to understand the implications of the proposed PILOR for renewable energy facilities. The SEC's Horsham Energy Park is a \$370 million project comprising a 119 MW solar farm and a 100 MW, 200 MWh battery, serves as a compelling local example. A comparison of potential annual local benefits highlights the disparity:

Benefit Source	Annual Local Benefit
Industrial Rates	\$1,417,470
Current PILOR	\$389,849

Officers Reports

This comparison clearly demonstrates that the current PILOR rate provides less than one-quarter of the revenue that would be received under standard industrial rates, and the proposed community benefit fund is significantly lower. This underscores the urgent need for an overhaul of the rates paid by energy facilities.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Payment in Lieu of Rates (PILOR) framework

Electricity Industry Act

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

N/A

Risk Implications

N/A

Conclusion

HRCC welcomes the opportunity for genuine engagement with DEECA on the PILOR issue and has requested a meeting to discuss this important matter for our community. On behalf of the local community, HRCC needs to shape the Horsham Solar Park Community Benefits Scheme.

10. COUNCILLOR REPORTS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cr Ian Ross, Mayor

Committee Representation	
Date	Description
13/06/25	Meeting with Cr O'Loughlin re Aboriginal Roundtable
16/06/25	Aboriginal Community Round Table
9/07/25	Natimuk Economic Development Committee
Other Council Activities	
16/06/25	Meeting with Steven Kingshott Meeting with CEO Council meeting
18/06/25	Horsham Showgrounds tour with Andrea Cross Citizenship Ceremony
19/06/25	HRCC Audit and Risk Committee - meeting with CEO
20/06/25	Induction of Rev Jacob Yang
23/06/25	Meeting with Steven Kingshott Meeting with CEO Council meeting
30/06/25	Meeting with CEO Council Briefing meeting
1/07/25	Conversation with ECA CEO - Samantha Page re ECEC Challenges in Rural Communities
2/07/25	Farewell for Graeme Harrison and Fiona Kelly
3/07/25	Councillor Conference Update
4/07/25	Balmoral Bush Nursing Centre
7/07/25	Meeting with CEO Council Briefing meeting
10/07/25	Webinar: Community Benefit Fund, SEC Renewable Energy Park
13/07/25	MND Charity Shoot, Natimuk Field and Game
14/07/25	Meeting with CEO Council Briefing meeting
17/07/25	MAV Regional Meeting - Ararat
18/07/25	Call with Virginia Reddin
21/07/25	Meeting with CEO Council Briefing meeting
23/07/25	Horsham Information Forum - Mining & Renewables What's The Future?
24/07/25	Meeting with Lauren Jenry – ACE Radio Meeting with the CEO, The Wesley Redevelopment Committee (Mary Starr & Merryn Eagle)

Cr Cam McDonald

Committee Representation	
Date	Description
24/06/25	Wimmera Southern Mallee Development Association online teams meeting. 1.00-4.00pm
Other Council Activities	
2/06/25	Council Briefing
6/06/25	3.00PM Meeting with Kevin O'Brien re Parking meters. 4.00pm Meeting with Brad, Manager at Petstock re. Truck parking.
10/06/25	Council Briefing Transmission Plan
16/06/25	Council Briefing
18/06/25	Tour of Horsham Show grounds with Andrea Cross Meeting with Mr Steven Kingshott Citizenship Ceremony Council Chambers
23/06/25	Council Meeting Moved Cr Cam McDonald, Seconded Cr Angie Munn, 1. Decrease funding to WSMDA to \$100,000 2. Give notice to withdraw membership of WSMDA BY 30/06/2026, Carried. Moved Cr Cam McDonald, Seconded Cr Angie Munn, 1. Parking Meters are not reintroduced in the Horsham CBD. Carried.
26/06/25	Second meeting with Mr John Walsh Re. Arnotts Bore and Arnotts Rd. Sent submission to council re. Arnotts Bore.
29/06/25	Attended Horsham Lions Club 70 th Birthday celebrations in a private capacity.
30/06/25	Council Briefing

Cr Todd Wilson

Committee Representation	
Date	Description
	Nil
Other Council Activities	
24-27/06	NGA Canberra
30/06/25	Briefing
2/07/25	Catch up with CEO Gail Gatt
2/07/25	Farewell Morning tea for Fiona Kelly and Graeme Harrison
7/07/25	Briefing
9/07/25	Art Exhibition opening at Town Hall for NAIDOC week
11/07/25	Tour of TFI Meatworks in Stawell
14/07/25	Briefing
21/07/25	Briefing & CEO ERC meeting

Cr Bec Sluggett

Committee Representation	
Date	Description
	Nil
Other Council Activities	
24-27/06	Australian Local Government Association's National General Assembly of Local Government 2025 in Canberra <i>Report from Cr Todd Wilson & Cr Rebecca Sluggett attached.</i>
30/06/25	Council Briefing Meeting
10/07/25	<p>Webinar: Community Benefit Fund: SEC Renewable Energy Park – Horsham <i>Attendees were given the opportunity to have input and ask questions on how the Community Benefit Fund proposed by the SEC Renewable Energy Park will be spent and coordinated. SEC have also been running information sessions and an online survey which closed on Friday 25th July.</i></p> <p><i>Construction update given at start of meeting.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The build is currently on schedule, currently working on the mechanical aspect of the build which will soon move to the electrical section on the build. Currently those driving past may see a big dome in place that is used for the morning briefings by those working onsite. It is only a temporary structure. The native vegetation screening is to be planted after the winter frosts. The prototype row is now complete and once that is inspected and signed off the rest of the rows will follow. Local businesses are being used where possible and SEC (Owner), OX2 (Main Contractor) and PSP (Sub-Contractor) are liaising with neighbours as questions arise. Local and regional businesses can register with PSP to express interest in work.</i>
14/07/25	Council Briefing Meeting
21/07/25	Council Briefing Meeting

11. URGENT BUSINESS

12. PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

12.1 COMMUNITY PETITION MARDON DRIVE

Director:	John Martin
Directorate:	Infrastructure
File Number:	F14/A09/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Petition as received (**Appendix 12.1A**)

Purpose

To present the community petition received by Council regarding the planting of street trees in Mardon Drive Horsham.

Summary

- Council has a program of planting trees on vacant nature strips as part of the Greater Greening Horsham Strategy.
- Mardon Drive is one of a number of streets where gaps in nature strip trees have been identified and is planned to be planted this year
- A petition was received from 50 residents of Mardon Drive dated 12 June 2025 requesting that trees not be planted in their nature strips.
- An initial meeting with residents has been conducted to hear their concerns directly. A further report will be prepared for Council consideration taking into account the petition and consideration of the issues raised at the meeting.

Recommendations

That Council receive and note the Petition by residents of Mardon Drive requesting that trees not be planted in the street and request a further report on the matter as soon as possible.

REPORT

Background

Council's Greening Greater Horsham Strategy proposes the increased planting of street trees for a range of reasons, including increased amenity (shade) for pedestrians on footpaths and to enhance the local micro-climate to assist in mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Council received a presentation on progress with this Strategy at its 5 August 2024 briefing meeting, at which it heard that a recent inventory identified that there were 2389 vacant nature strips (i.e. no tree in them) across urban Horsham. Since 2023 approximately 980 trees have been planted in these vacant nature strips, and a further 168 trees are planned to be planted this year.

Mardon Drive is one of the many streets scheduled for this year's plantings with 18 of the 73 properties proposed to receive a new street tree in their vacant nature strip. Most of these new trees will be planted along the eastern end of Mardon Drive as other properties already have a street tree or have infrastructure that prevents the planting of a street tree.

In April 2025, all residents in the Horsham streets where tree planting will occur this year received a letter notifying of the planned planting, including information on the Greater Greening Horsham Strategy.

This letter was followed up by a further letter in May 2025 (only to those properties receiving a tree) and following works to identify the vacant nature strips suitable for new street trees. This letter outlined that a tree will be planted on their nature strip and included a fact sheet on the tree species being planted.

Subsequently, the petition as included as **Appendix 12.1A** was received by Council which summarised the residents' combined concerns.

Discussion

Council's Governance Rules state the following regarding petitions:

57. Petitions and Joint Letters

- 57.1 Unless *Council* determines to consider it as an item of urgent business, no motion (other than a motion to receive the same) may be made on any petition, joint letter, memorial or other like application until the next fixed *Council meeting* after that at which it has been presented.

As with previous petitions regarding this type of matter, a preliminary meeting has been held to hear more from the residents about their concerns and determine if an agreed way forward can be resolved. This meeting was held on 2 July 2025, in Mardon Drive. The meeting was attended by 13 residents, Cr O'Loughlin and several Council staff. Key issues raised included:

- Safety concerns relating to vehicle egress from properties, re visibility of other road users.
- The litter from some existing gum trees.
- Tree maintenance.

A further report on this matter will be presented to Council including an assessment of the matters raised in the petition and at the meeting.

Options to Consider

Options for consideration will be presented in a subsequent report to Council.

Risk Implications

Residents have identified potential risks primarily relating to road safety which need to be considered.

Sustainability Implications

The Greater Greening Horsham Strategy aims to achieve a number of outcomes which include improving character and aesthetics of the City as well as addressing a number of sustainability and climate change issues.

The Strategy discusses the benefits to the immediate environment from planting trees including:

- Providing clean air and filtering pollution
- Carbon sequestration
- Reducing urban heat within the city
- Providing shade and sun protection
- Providing biodiversity and attracting a variety of wildlife species

Planting trees is an investment in the future, the benefits from these street trees to our local environment will ensure that Council is taking all necessary steps to respond to the effects of climate change and create a sustainable and liveable environment for our community, now and into the future.

Community Engagement

A preliminary meeting was held on 2 July 2025 to hear more about the residents' concerns.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not applicable

Collaboration

Not Applicable

Financial Implications

The street tree planting program is part of Council's current budgeted operation. Any changes to the scope of the program as a result of the petition will be presented in the subsequent report.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

The DELWP (now DEECA) publication "Trees for Cooler and Greener Streetscapes – Guidelines for Streetscape Planning and Design" identifies a series of key policy drivers for cooler and greener streetscapes consistent with the principles developed in Council's Greening Greater Horsham Strategy.

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

As part of the development of the Greening Greater Horsham Strategy, a supporting policy was also prepared which was adopted at the same time as the Strategy.

The Tree Management Policy includes the following principles derived from the Strategy:

4.1 Tree Planting and Establishment

HRCC will proactively carry out annual tree planting in nature strips, parks and reserves and other Council managed land to meet the following objectives:

-
- To improve shade cover over our townships and contribute to the canopy cover targets set within
 - Greening Greater Horsham
 - To preserve and enhance the local character of the distinct areas within our townships
 - To reinforce plantings along entrance ways and main streets into our townships
 - To reinforce habitat links and improve biodiversity outcomes across the Shire
 - To ensure that every urban residence has at least one healthy street tree on the nature strip.

This policy indicates that all nature strips should have a tree.

Conclusion

A further report will be presented to Council to discuss the considerations for the matters raised in the Mardon Drive Street Tree Petition and the on-site meeting.

13. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

13.1 INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS – RECORD OF MEETINGS

- Council Briefing Meeting held on 30 June, 7, 14 and 21 July 2025.

Refer to **Appendix 13.1A**

13.2 SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

Nil

13.3 INWARD CORRESPONDENCE

Nil

13.4 COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

- Natimuk Economic & Social Plan Project Advisory Committee meeting held on 11 June 2025

Refer to **Appendix 13.4A**

Recommendation

That Council receive and note agenda items:

- 13.1 Informal Meetings of Councillors – Record of Meetings
- 13.2 Sealing of Documents
- 13.3 Inward Correspondence
- 13.4 Council Committee Minutes.

14. NOTICE OF MOTION



AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

BIANNUAL REPORT

For the Period 1 January 2025 to 30 June 2025

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1. PURPOSE OF THIS BIENNIAL REPORT

This report meets requirements under s54(5) of the *Local Government Act 2020* to “prepare a biannual audit and risk report that describes the activities of the Audit and Risk Committee and includes its findings and recommendations”.

This report covers the Audit and Risk committee meetings held on 20 March 2025 and 19 June 2025 and meets the Committee’s requirements under the Act to report to Council twice each year.

2. BACKGROUND

A Council must establish an Audit and Risk Committee to comply with section 53(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*. The Committee must include members who are Councillors of the Council plus a majority of members who are not Councillors but who collectively have expertise in financial management and risk, and experience in public sector management (s53(3)).

Once established the Committee must prepare and approve an Audit and Risk Committee Charter (s54(1)) that specifies the functions and responsibilities of the Audit and Risk Committee as well as an annual work program (s54(3)).

In line with the requirements of the 2020 Act, the Horsham Rural City Council’s Audit and Risk Management Committee Charter established under the Local Government Act 1989 was reviewed in 2020. The Council resolved to adopt the Audit and Risk Committee Charter 2020 in accordance with the requirements of the 2020 Act on 24 August 2020.

The Charter adopted included provision for review on a biennial basis, or as required following changes to the Act or other relevant legislation. An updated Charter was adopted by Council in September 2022, with a further update to the Charter adopted by Council in January 2025.

3. MEMBERSHIP

The Audit and Risk Committee comprises two appointed Councillors (one of whom is the Mayor) and three independent members with technical expertise and industry experience.

Members over the previous six months were:

- Marilyn Kearney – Independent member and Chair
- Richard Trigg – Independent member
- Mark Knights – Independent member
- Cr Ian Ross – Councillor representative/Mayor
- Cr Angela Munn – Councillor representative

Ex-Officio Members:

- External Auditor - Crowe Australasia (Victorian Auditor General’s agent)
- Internal Auditor - AFS & Associates Pty Ltd
- Horsham Rural City Council:
 - CEO – Craig Niemann (March)
 - CEO – Gail Gatt (June)
 - Director Corporate Services – Kim Hargreaves

Attendance Report Table

Two meetings were held between 1 January and 30 June 2025 with member attendance as follows:

Name	20 March 2025 Meeting	19 June 2025 Meeting
Marilyn Kearney (Chair)	Attended in person	Attended in person
Mark Knights	Attended in person	Attended in person
Richard Trigg	Attended in person	Attended in person
Mayor, Cr Ian Ross	Attended in person	Attended in person
Cr Angela Munn	Attended in person	Attended in person

4. KEY ACTIVITIES

The Annual Work Plan controls timely completion of all tasks required under legislation and good governance for the reporting period.

Work undertaken by the Committee during the reporting period included consideration of a wide range of reports demonstrating Council's continued improvements and monitoring of developments.

4.1. Summary of Activities

During the reporting period, the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) undertook several key activities to ensure governance, transparency, and risk management align with Council's objectives including the provision of guidance and oversight in the development of the specification requirements for the appointment of an internal auditor. The ARC Chairperson supported staff on the tender evaluation panel.

AFS & Associates Pty Ltd was the successful tenderer and attended the June Committee meeting. The lead partner presented an overview of their service provision and advised of their risk focused internal audit function that supports Council in managing risk and achieving strategic objectives.

Other major activities included:

a) Financial Oversight:

- Monitored quarterly financial and performance reports (Q2 and Q3) providing critical feedback for continuous improvement.
- Reviewed the End of Financial Year documentation including draft 2025-2026 Budget, 2025-2026 Register of Fees and Charges, and the 2025-2029 Revenue and Rating Plan.

b) Governance Enhancements:

- Council reviewed and adopted key policies and procedures to strengthen governance, including updates to the Conflict-of-Interest Procedure (Staff), Cybersecurity Management Policy, and the Employment Related Staff Expenses and Reimbursement Policy.

c) Risk and Audit Reviews:

- External oversight of Council's work with VAGO's Interim Management Letter for the 2024–2025 audit presented to the Committee.

d) Policy and Procedure Review:

- Examined and endorsed policies and procedures including Community Grants and Donations, Live Streaming of Council Meetings, Councillor Media and Social Media Policies, and Equal Opportunity, Discrimination, and Harassment Procedures.

e) Risk and Compliance Monitoring:

- Compliance monitoring including the completion of the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Report and robust end-of-financial-year preparations.
- Monitored updates on insurance claims and risk management strategies.

4.2. External Audit

- VAGO Audit Strategy Memorandum for the financial year ending 30 June 2024
- Interim Management Letter 2024-2025 provided by the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO)

4.3. Compliance and Legislation

- Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Report
- End of Financial Year Preparation

4.4. Reporting

- Quarterly Finance and Performance Reports
 - Q2 Performance Report (Including financial performance)
 - Q3 Performance Report (Including financial performance)

4.5. Governance

- Policy and Procedure review
 - Conflict of Interest Procedure – Staff
 - Cybersecurity Management Policy
 - Employment Related Staff Expenses and Reimbursement Policy

4.6. Risk Management, Fraud Management and Other

- Insurance Report Updates to 28 Feb 2025 (March) and 31 May 2025 (June)
- Risk Management including Strategic Risk update

4.7. Policies Reporting

- Seven policies/procedure adopted or reviewed, including Community Grants Policy, Community Donations Policy, Live Streaming of Council Meetings Policy (20 March 2025)
- Six policies/procedures adopted or reviewed including Councillor Media Policy, Councillor Social Media Policy, Equal Opportunity, Discrimination and Harassment Procedure (19 June 2025)

4.8. CEO Briefing

- Councillors
 - Mayoral and Councillor training
 - Ways of Working Charter
- Grampians and Little Desert Fires
- Flood Claims
- CEO Recruitment
- Enterprise Agreement
- Budget and Council Plan
- Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund
- Drought Support Package
- Commencement of New CEO
- Visit from Minister for Climate Action, Energy and Resources

5. MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

In accordance with Section 54(6) of the *Local Government Act 2020* the Chief Executive Officer must ensure the preparation and maintenance of agendas, minutes and reports of the Audit and Risk Committee. The Chief Executive Officer must also table reports and annual assessments of the Audit and Risk Committee at Council meetings when required and when requested by the Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee. Accordingly, all minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee are presented to the next available Council meeting.

6. CONCLUSION

This report provides the tenth biannual update on the activities and recommendations from Council's Audit and Risk Committee and represents reporting for the six-month period from 1 January to 30 June 2025. It is prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 54(5) of the Act.

It is the view of the Audit and Risk Committee that the information provided to the Committee throughout the reporting period meets the required objectives of the Committee's work as outlined in the legislation, various plans reports and the A& RC Charter.

The Committee would like to thank staff and council for its support throughout the period and welcomes any feedback that Council would like to provide to improve and better support the work of the Committee.

The Committee looks forward to continuing to fulfil its role and working with Council and its auditors during the 2025-26 financial year and will provide its next Biannual report following the December 2025 Audit and Risk Committee meeting.

This report has been provided to all members of the Committee.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'M Kearney'.

Marilyn Kearney
Chair
Horsham Rural City Council
Audit and Risk Committee

APPENDIX A: HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY EVENT GRANTS 2025/2026

Applicant	Project Title	Project Description	Grant Allocation
Arapiles Community Theatre Inc	Nati Frinj Biennale 2025	The Nati Frinj Biennale is a vibrant three-day festival of visual art and performance held in Natimuk every two years. Since 2002, it has built a strong reputation for bold, innovative, and often audacious art projects that showcase local creativity and invite artists from across the country to collaborate and experiment in art projects.	\$6,538
Arapiles Historical Society Inc	A NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	A special community event during a premium time slot on the evening of Saturday 01 November 2025. This "A Night at the Museum" event will take place in the Old Garage Museum and will serve as both a community celebration and fundraiser for AHS.	\$500
Beyond Community Inclusion Inc	Social Tables Gala Event	The participants of Beyond Community Inclusion Inc. have requested to present a similar event to the past Awakenings Ball last held in Horsham in 2005. They aim to involve all interested community members, service providers, Disability Supported Enterprises, Special Development School, both locally and regionally including other interested parties. This will also give the HRCC Disability Advisory Committee, Centre for Participation and the Neighbourhood House to be involved in planning the event. The event is planned to be held on Friday evening the 28th of November 2025 at the Heritage Town Hall leading up to International Day for People With Disabilities (IDPwD) on Tuesday the 3rd of December 2025.	\$1,500
Black Hole Theatre	Stories from the Karen	STORIES FROM THE KAREN is a project initiated by Horsham's Karen community that will be performed by multicultural participants from Horsham and Nhill. It will tell the story of the Karen's past life in the Kayin State in Myanmar, their persecution by the junta, the escape to Thai refugee camps, and the decision to migrate to Australia. Written by community members, designed in collaboration with Natimuk artists Dave Jones and Mary French.	\$6,000

APPENDIX 9.2A

Applicant	Project Title	Project Description	Grant Allocation
Gariwerd Artists Inc	Light & Dark Exhibition	Annual exhibition of artwork by Gariwerd Artists Collective interpreting the theme, Light and Dark. Includes fine art, printmaking, textiles, ceramics, sculpture and photography. Local artists, resident in the foothills of the Northern Grampians, are inspired by the iconic landscapes of the mountains and the Wimmera plains.	\$800
Horsham & District Orchid Society	Horsham & District Orchid Society Annual Spring Show	The display and judging of both species and hybrid orchids grown by our members.	\$500
Horsham Agricultural Society Inc	150km Feast	The 150km Feast is a regional celebration designed to invigorate the nighttime tourism economy in the Wimmera. Features two flagship events—Dinner Under the Stars in summer and Smoke on the Water in winter	\$4,000
Horsham Calisthenics College	Horsham Calisthenics Competition	Horsham Calisthenics College host an annual competition as their major club fundraiser. The club requires sponsorship in order to support of club and fundraising event. We are requesting sponsorship to partly cover the cost of our trophies and medals that we provide to winning competitors and teams.	\$1,200
Horsham Fire Brigade	Horsham Fire Brigade open day	The Horsham Fire Brigade's 150th anniversary celebration is a major community event recognising 150 years of dedicated volunteer service to Horsham and surrounding areas. A public open day at the Horsham Fire Station will welcome the broader community, offering station tours, interactive displays, historical exhibits and fire safety demonstrations. This family-friendly event allows all members of the public to engage with the brigade, learn about its evolution and celebrate the volunteers who serve.	\$2,000
Horsham Girl Guides	Horsham 100 Years of Guiding	Celebrating 100 years of empowering girls and young women in Horsham through Girl Guides. This milestone event celebrates the dedication, achievements, and enduring spirit of our local Guides and their leaders. Event Highlights will include: a historical exhibition, guiding traditions, community recognition of long serving members and volunteers, interactive activities, special guests, and afternoon tea.	\$1,000

APPENDIX 9.2A

Applicant	Project Title	Project Description	Grant Allocation
HORSHAM ROCKERS INCORPORATED	Rockin at the Races	A full weekend of entertainment involving live music, dancing and socialising. This event attracts locals, Victorians and many Interstate visitors. It has a full calendar of dancing on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, a dancing demonstration at Horsham Plaza and a free breakfast for all attendees at angling clubrooms.	\$2,000
Horsham Rural City Band	Shrewd Brass with Greg Spence...comes to Horsham	Shrewd Brass have been invited to visit Horsham to work with the Horsham Rural City Band and present a Community Concert. Shrewd Brass are an innovative small group of professional musicians who educate and entertain, including renowned Trumpet Player Greg Spence. Shrewd Brass will lead a 'Workshop' for musicians, participate in a joint rehearsal and then join with the both the Development Program Band (learners) and the Senior Concert Band, to present a community concert in the Horsham Town Hall.	\$3,000
Horsham Spring Garden Festival Inc	Horsham Spring Garden Festival	A wide range and variety of garden and home lifestyle exhibitors will provide information and have products for sale. There will be a food court and musical entertainment throughout the festival. An excellent community outing for residents of Horsham and visitors from a very wide area, with a health mix of gardening, lifestyle and entertainment which showcases the Horsham Botanic Gardens.	\$2,000
Laharum Hall committee of management	Festival of Small halls	Laharum Hall committee would like to host a 3rd Festival of small halls event in March 2025. Having hosted 2 previous Festivals with great success we would like to continue a bi annual event. The event brings many from the Laharum and surrounding areas to our hall We have had people from SA attend as well as Melbourne people. The quality of artists that the Festival of Small Halls brings to the area allows locals to experience top quality performers that the audience would rarely get to see.	\$3,800
Mother's Day Classic-Horsham	Mother's Day Classic- Horsham	The Horsham Mother's Day Classic (MDC) is a walk/run event up to 5 km conducted on Mother's Day each year	\$900

APPENDIX 9.2A

Applicant	Project Title	Project Description	Grant Allocation
		from Sawyer Park. The Horsham event has been conducted over 15 years and attracts in excess of 300 people each year. T All funds raised are donated to breast cancer and ovarian cancer research.	
Natimuk Agricultural and Pastoral Society Inc	Natimuk Annual 134th Agricultural Show	To support the running of the annual show	\$2,000
Natimuk and District Gymnastics Club	Gymnastics Victoria West Regional Championships	Prepare to be inspired as the region's most talented young gymnasts descend on Natimuk in September for the Gymnastics Victoria West Regional Championships. This high-energy celebration of strength, skill, and spirit will see more than 200 young gymnasts compete for a place at the Junior Victorian Championships in Melbourne later in the year.	\$2,000
Old Skool Hotrod and Custom Club	Hot Summer Nights Rod Run	A gathering of hotrod enthusiasts and their vehicles for a weekend of cruising and displaying their historic vehicles in Horsham to celebrate a bygone era of hotrods and Rock and Roll. This event consists of paid entrants (hotrod owners) and spectators that gather for the weekend to watch.	\$4,000
Operation 19:14	Operation 1914 Free Family Fun Day	Operation 1914 is a cost free event for families to come together for an enjoyable afternoon of activities, food and entertainment allowing everyone no matter their age or ability to have fun regardless of their socio-economic situation. Event to be held at Sawyer Park. Activities include sideshow alley, show bags, woodworking, painting, free concert, local talent, train rides and Food. This year we will be offering opportunities for grandparents to do something with their grandchildren.	\$4,000
Rotary Club of Horsham East	Science and Engineering Challenge	The Science and Engineering Challenge (SEC) is a nationwide outreach program inspiring school students to consider a future in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.	\$6,000
SmartArtz Theatre Inc	A Midsummer Night's Dream Outdoor Performances & Pre-show Fairy Festival	SmartArtz Theatre Inc. is proud to present Horsham's first-ever large-scale outdoor theatrical production: Shakespeare's beloved comedy, A Midsummer Night's	\$6,700

APPENDIX 9.2A

Applicant	Project Title	Project Description	Grant Allocation
		Dream. This groundbreaking event will bring professional-quality theatre to life under the stars at the beautiful Horsham Botanic Gardens, offering an exciting new way for our community to experience and celebrate local artistic talent. Show dates are October 31, November 1 and November 2nd 2025	
Toolondo Golf club	Toolondo golf club Annual tournament	The Toolondo golf club tournament is a well recognised event on the region's golfing calendar. The tournament is held over two days, golfers of all abilities are invited and welcome to attend. This event is held in the southern area of Horsham Rural City Council which has very few events of any type.	\$1,000
Wimmera Against Cancer in Kids	W.A.C.K International men's day mental health and check engine night	Rae Bonney OAM coming along to talk about Suicide and prevention, men's mental health, boys health and a few other topics to help people open up and find the pathways to connect to. This event will be open to anyone in our community to hopefully give them something to take away and think about for such a difficult topic and hopefully an event than can be really impactful and meaningful for our community.	\$2,500
Wimmera Mallee Historical Vehicle Society	Wimmera Highlights Tour	Four Classic Car Clubs annual tour event to be held in Horsham and district in 2025. The event commences at Dooen Hall(Wimmera Mallee Historical Vehicle Association Clubrooms) on Friday night with a dinner and entertainment night. There will be a tour on Saturday in Horsham and surrounding district with visits to Museums and displays. Sunday will be held at Sawyer Park Soundshell with a display including breakfast and lunch.	\$500
Wimmera Music Eisteddfod Inc.	Wimmera Music Eisteddfod 2025	A yearly event in the Wimmera calendar, the Wimmera Music Eisteddfod is a competition and performance opportunity for local amateur and developing musicians. Our aim is to break down barriers and create an Eisteddfod that is very much about giving musicians an opportunity to showcase their talents, while still competing and being critiqued.	\$4,500
Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly	Sporting Summer Series	The Sporting Summer Series is a new community event	\$2,000

APPENDIX 9.2A

Applicant	Project Title	Project Description	Grant Allocation
		concept designed to activate Horsham's City Oval Netball Courts under lights on four Friday nights with a vibrant series of inclusive sporting showcases. Each evening will feature a different sport or set of sports, with a particular focus on smaller, developing, and culturally diverse sporting activities.	
Wimmera Rockers Danceworld Inc.	Rock and Roll festival - Rocky Horror Picture Show	50's and 60's three day rock and roll festival. Features two live bands, Jess and The Mighty Kings & The Vincents.	\$2,000
		Total allocation	\$72,938

HRCC COMMUNITY EVENT GRANTS 2025/2026 – CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS FOR COMMUNITY EVENT GRANT ASSESSMENT TEAM

Team Member	Conflict of Interest Declared
Caroline Price	Nil
Olivia Morris	Nil
Susan Surridge	Beyond Community Inclusion, Horsham & District Orchid Society Horsham Agricultural Society, Natimuk and District Gymnastics Club, Rotary Club of Horsham East

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS FOR EMT

EMT Member	Conflict of Interest Declared
Gail Gatt	Nil
Kim Hargreaves	Nil
John Martin	Nil
Kevin O'Brien	Nil

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS FOR COUNCILLORS

Councillor	Conflict of Interest Declared
Ian Ross (Mayor)	Nil
Brian Klowss	Arapiles Community Theatre Inc, Arapiles Historical Society Inc Natimuk Agricultural and Pastoral Society Inc, Natimuk and District Gymnastics Club
Cam McDonald	Nil
Angela Munn	Nil
Dean O'Loughlin	n/a
Rebecca Sluggett	Nil
Todd Wilson	Nil

Community Events Grants Program

2025/2026

Funding Guidelines



Events for our community

Horsham Rural City Council (HRCC) Community Events Grants help not-for-profit groups in the municipality to create events for more engaged and healthy communities.

Funding guidelines

GENERAL INFORMATION

The HRCC Community Events Grants Program allocates funding to local not-for-profit organisations and groups every year.

The maximum allocation per organisation is \$10,000 although most successful applications range between \$500 and \$5,000. Applications seeking a grant of \$5,000 or more will require additional documentation.

GRANT TIMING

There are two funding rounds each year to seek Community Events grants:

Assessment Round	One	Two (if fund are available)
Application round opens	1 May 2025	3 November 2025
Application round closes	2 June 2025	1 December 2025
Application assessment date	Mid-June	Mid-December
Grant notification date	30 Jun 2025	31 January 2026
Event completion date	31 Dec 2026	31 July 2027

(Noting that if all grant funds are allocated in Assessment Round One, there will be no second round)

Successful projects must take place within eighteen months of the grant notification date. This provides a longer timeframe to support planning of events.

For more information, please contact Council's Events Team on 5382 9777 or email events@hrcc.vic.gov.au or visit [Council's website](#).

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Events must align with the [Horsham Rural City Council Plan](#)
- Increase the range of diverse, inclusive and vibrant events
- Demonstrate social benefits that support our community
- Increase economic stimulus through event attendance
- Deliver participation opportunities for our community

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Program objectives – 20%

- How well does the event align with the program objectives?

Community outcomes – 40%

- How does the event support/benefit the community?
- How many people do you expect to attend the event?
- Is the event accessible and inclusive to all?
- Does the event support culturally significant aspects of our community?
- Does the event provide opportunities for volunteerism, collaboration and sharing of skills and resources?

Economic outcomes – 20%

- Will the event generate increased expenditure through event attendance?
- Will the event attract attendances from the wider Wimmera-Southern Mallee region?
- Will the event attract attendees from across Victoria and other states?
- Are there be opportunities for local service clubs or businesses to be involved?

Planning and management – 20%

- Does the organisation have the experience, skills and resources to manage the project?
- Is the project budget realistic and supported by quotations for any items over \$1,000?
- Have event risks been identified and mitigated?
- Has the event received Council grant assistance in previous years?
- What strategies does the organisation have to support the financial sustainability of the event without ongoing Council funding?

Handy tip:
If you include a single expense over \$1000 in your budget, make sure you attach a quote

Handy tip:
Check if you need Crown Land approval before submitting your application

Details of the program

WHO CAN APPLY?

- ✓ You must be a not-for-profit group.
- ✓ Be incorporated or have an auspice body.
- ✓ Have public liability insurance covering your proposed event.
- ✓ The event must be held within the Horsham municipality.

WHO CANNOT APPLY?

- × You are an individual or seeking funding for a for-profit event.
- × You are a group who has not reported back on any previous event grant allocation.
- × Your event is the responsibility of other sector/s of government.
- × You are seeking funding for a religious event that may exclude some members of our community.
- × Events that are a clear duplication of an existing event.

INELIGIBLE GRANT EXPENDITURE

- × Council grant funds cannot cover event expenses incurred prior to the Grant Notification date.
- × Council grant funds cannot cover expenses not directly related to the event.
- × Council grant funds cannot cover volunteer labour costs.

ALL APPLICATIONS MUST INCLUDE:

- Project Budget
- Including quotes for any budget items over \$1,000.
- Public Liability Insurance Certificate
- An Auspice Agreement form (if required)
- Land owner consent (if required)

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTS > \$5,000

- A copy of the applicant's most recent audited financial statements.

OTHER INFORMATION

- An offer of a grant by Council does not mean any ongoing funding commitment or obligation by Council.
- HRCC assistance is to be acknowledged on any promotional material or media coverage relating to the event.
- Council may only allocate part funding for the event.
- Your event budget may include showing a planned surplus, or a break-even result. Council will not fund events that are budgeted to make a loss.

Submitting an Application

The application form must be completed online.

If you require assistance to complete the on-line form, our Events Team can help, please contact Customer Service to make an appointment by calling 53829777 or email events@hrcc.vic.gov.au .

Grant payment and reporting back

Payment of grants will be made upon completion of events. Organisations must:

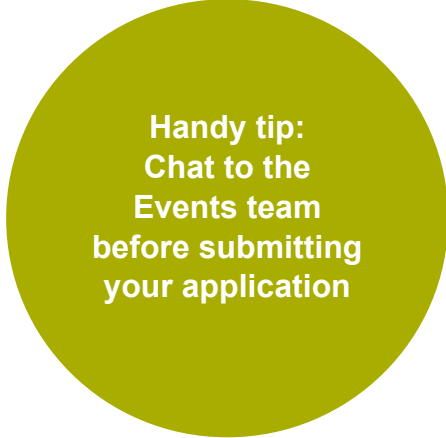
- Lodge an on-line completion report.
- Attach invoices or evidence of event payments.
- Attach invoice from your organisation to Council requesting grant payment.
- Attach 2-3 photographs of your event, which may be used in Council publications or social media.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

For more information, please contact the Events Team at events@hrcc.vic.gov.au or 5382 9777.



Handy tip:
Ensure your
project budget is
realistic and
supported by
quotations as
required



Handy tip:
Chat to the
Events team
before submitting
your application



ROAD MANAGEMENT PLAN

2024⁴⁵

FIRST ADOPTED BY COUNCIL:	6 December 2004
THIS VERSION ADOPTED BY COUNCIL:	22 June 2023
ADMINISTRATIVE AMENDMENT	July 2024
NEXT SCHEDULED REVIEW:	October 2025

Notes on Versions

Date	Editor	Comments	File
5 Jan 2021	JM	Initial review to identify issues	2021 0105 RMP v0
20 July 2021	JM	Significantly updated document, ready for community engagement	2021 0720 RMP Review tracked changes
26 Sep 2021	JM	Version for EMT review, inc insurer comments	2021 0926 RMP
19 Oct 2021	JM	Final update draft for Council endorsement	2021 1019 RMP
25 Oct 2021	JM	As adopted by Council	2021 1025 RMP
26 Feb 2023	JM	Draft to accommodate changes to minor tracks and footpath overhanging vegetation	2023 0419 RMP Update Draft v0
28 May 2023	JM	Updated following community engagement	
22 June 2023	KS	As adopted by Council	2023 0622 RMP Adopted
30 July 2024	JM	Administrative amendment to align terminology of “Urgent” and “Emergency” with other Council procedures Approved by EMT 6 August 2024	2024 0819
June 2025	JM	Four year statutory review Incorporation of Rural Road Network Plan service standards Minor other changes	

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

This Road Management Plan describes how Horsham Rural City Council manages its road and related assets in accordance with the requirements of the Road Management Act 2004 (the Act), and associated Regulations and Codes of Practice. The Plan is applicable to road and road related infrastructure, as defined under the Act, for which Council is responsible.

The Act was introduced to establish a statutory framework for the management of the road network to facilitate the coordination of the various uses of road reserves for roadways, pathways, infrastructure and similar purposes.

1.2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Road Management Plan is to establish a management system for Council to inspect, maintain and repair its public roads based on policy and operational objectives having regard to available resources.

The key elements of the Road Management Plan include:

- definition of Council's maintenance responsibilities on various infrastructure.
- the management system that Council employs for the inspection, maintenance and repair of its roads.
- inspection standards that document the nature and frequency of different type of inspections (i.e. reactive and proactive).
- maintenance standards that document intervention levels, maintenance response requirements, and maintenance response times.

1.3. SCOPE

The provisions of this Road Management Plan apply to those public roads listed in the Register of Public Roads for which Horsham Rural City Council is the coordinating road authority, and roads or parts of roads¹ that Council maintain under agreement with another road authority.

This plan applies to road infrastructure including;

- Roadways (refer to Act definition)
- Pathways (footpath and shared paths)
- Shoulders
- Bridges and culverts
- Road related infrastructure (refer to the definition in Act)
- Line marking
- Safety barriers
- Ancillary areas

¹ In accordance with the Code of Practice – Operational Responsibility for Public Roads – 2017, Council utilises some of the arterial roadsides within the urban boundary as parking lanes. Those parking lanes are maintained by the Council as per this plan.

This Plan does not apply to non-road infrastructure and non-Council owned assets. This includes assets related to water, telecommunications, gas, electricity and railway functions which are the responsibility of other authorities. The exclusion also applies to any bridge or culvert over a water supply channel, sewer or drain, other than a bridge or culvert owned by Council.

1.4. LEGAL BASIS FOR THE PLAN

This Road Management Plan has been prepared pursuant to the requirements of the following Acts, Regulations and Codes of Practice:

- Road Management Act, 2004;
- Local Government Act, 1989 and 2020;
- Road Management (General) Regulations 2005
- Code of Practice for Road Management Plans
- Code of Practice Operational Responsibility for Public Roads
- Code of Practice for Management of Infrastructure in Road Reserves

Horsham Rural City Council is a Road Authority as defined in Section 37 of the Road Management Act 2004. It is responsible for the care and maintenance of public roads within the municipality that are not the legislated or otherwise accepted, responsibility of other road authorities, persons or bodies.

Council must ensure that if a road is required for public traffic that it is kept open for public use and may, at its discretion, carry out work on the road. It is the decision of Council as to the extent and standard of any works carried out on a road.

1.5. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ROAD MANAGEMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Council has responsibility for assigning the roles and responsibilities of Council officers for the purpose of implementing the requirements of the Road Management Act and this Road Management Plan. Duties to be undertaken by Council staff shall include but are not limited to those set out in Schedule 7 of the Act.

1.6. KEY STAKEHOLDERS

This Road Management Plan is intended to demonstrate to stakeholders that Council is managing its roads and the road related assets responsibly.

Key stakeholders include -

- Residents and businesses serviced by the road network
- Pedestrians including those with disabilities and the elderly with restricted mobility
- State Government - having responsibility for Local Government
- State and Federal Governments - as fund providers for road infrastructure development
- Councillors - as stewards of Council's infrastructure assets
- Community - as users of services
- Utilities / developers - as infrastructure providers
- Employees - having responsibilities for implementation of this Plan
- Contractors / suppliers - as providers of services required in the implementation of this Plan

- Emergency agencies (Police, Fire, Ambulance, State Emergency Service)

Council recognises the following as some of the key users of Council's roads and paths:

- Users of a range of miscellaneous smaller, lightweight vehicles such as cyclists, mobility scooters, wheelchairs, prams, etc.
- Users of vehicles such as trucks, buses, commercial vehicles, cars and motor cycles.
- Tourists and visitors to the area (for example, for recreation, sport, leisure and business).

1.7. COUNCIL IS A ROAD AUTHORITY

Under the Local Government Act 1989, Council has the care and management of certain roads and under the Road Management Act, Council is a road authority. [Note that at the time of writing, most of the road related aspects of the Local Government Act remain within the 1989 version of the LG Act, and not the 2020 version LG Act.]

1.7.1. Role of a Road Authority

Under the Road Management Act, a road authority must, in performing road management functions, have regard to the principal object of road management and the works and infrastructure management principles. As defined in S 20(1) of the Act:

The principal object of road management is to ensure that a network of roads is provided primarily for the movement of persons and goods as part of an integrated transport system and that road reserves are available for other appropriate uses.

1.7.2. General Functions of a Road Authority

A road authority has the following general functions—

- to provide and maintain, as part of a network of roads, roads for use by the community served by the road authority;
- to manage the use of roads having regard to the principle that the primary purpose of a road is for use by members of the public, and that other uses are to be managed in a manner which minimises any adverse effect on the safe and efficient operation of the road and on the environment;
- to manage traffic on roads in a manner that enhances the safe and efficient operation of roads;
- to coordinate the installation of infrastructure on roads and the conduct of other works in such a way as to minimise, as far as is reasonably practicable, adverse impacts on the provision of utility services;
- to undertake works and activities above.

In seeking to achieve its functions, a road authority should—

- consult with the community and disseminate information in relation to the exercise of those functions;
- take steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure the structural integrity and safety of public roads in accordance with the Act.

1.7.3. Exercise of Functions and Powers of a Road Authority by Council

In exercising its functions and powers as a road authority, Council will consider-

- the principal object of road management (see 1.7.1);
- works and infrastructure management principles;
- the rights of road users;
- the need to exercise the functions and powers within its overall policy and budgetary context;
- laws, policies, codes of practice, and other matters and priorities in relation to road management
- any roadside management plan developed to protect flora and fauna;
- any matters arising from consultation with the community, utilities and other stakeholders.

In exercising its functions and powers as a road authority, Council will -

- determine policies and priorities for the construction and maintenance of roads
- manage its road network in cooperation with other road authorities, utilities, providers of public transport, government agencies, community organisations and the private sector;
- seek to ensure—
 - the efficient and effective management and use of the road network and infrastructure to meet the needs of the community and road users;
 - the most efficient use of the resources available for road management;
 - that the public road network and infrastructure are as safe for users as is reasonably practicable;
- in the case of a coordinating road authority, coordinate the development and use of the road reserve.

1.8. DEFINITION OF “ROAD”

The Road Management Act defines a “road” as;

- (a) *any public highway;*
- (b) *any ancillary area;*
- (c) *any land declared to be a road under section 11 or forming part of a public highway or ancillary area,*

and defines a “public highway” as;

any area of land that is a highway for the purposes of the common law.

1.9. OBLIGATIONS OF ROAD USERS

Council is limited in its ability and power to maintain the road network in a condition that provides an ideal environment for its intended use. Therefore it should be understood that road users have a responsibility when using a public road or path.

Section 17A of the Road Safety Act 1986 states the obligations of a road user as:

- (1) *A person who drives a motor vehicle on a highway must drive in a safe manner having regard to all the relevant factors, including (without limiting the generality) the –*
 - a) *physical characteristics of the road;*
 - b) *prevailing weather conditions;*

- c) *level of visibility;*
- d) *condition of the motor vehicle;*
- e) *prevailing traffic conditions;*
- f) *relevant road laws and advisory signs;*
- g) *physical and mental condition of the driver.*

(2) *A road user other than a person driving a motor vehicle must use a highway in a safe manner having regard to all relevant factors.*

(3) *A road user must-*

- a) *have regard to the rights of other road users and take reasonable care to avoid any conduct that may endanger the safety or welfare of the other road users.*
- b) *have regard to the rights of the community and infrastructure managers in relation to road infrastructure and non-road infrastructure on the road reserve and take reasonable care to avoid any conduct that may damage road infrastructure and non-road infrastructure on the road reserve.*
- c) *have regard to the rights of the community in relation to the road reserve and take reasonable care to avoid conduct that may harm the environment of the road reserve."*

(4) *In subsection (3), infrastructure manager, non-road infrastructure, road infrastructure and road reserve have the same meanings as in section 3(1) of the Road Management Act 2004.*

1.10. EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Council will make every endeavour to meet all aspects of this Road Management Plan.

Periodically there will be situations or circumstances that affect Council's business activities to the extent that it cannot deliver on the service levels of the Plan. These include but are not limited to natural disasters, such as fires, floods, or storms, or a prolonged labour or resource shortage.

In the event that the Council has considered the impact of such an event on financial and other resources of Council and its other conflicting priorities, and determined that some or all of the functions outlined in the Road Management Plan cannot be met, then in keeping with the intention of Section 83 of the Wrongs Act, the CEO will write to Council's Officer in Charge of this Plan to inform that some, or all of the timeframes and responses in Council's Road Management Plan are to be suspended.

Once the scope of the event/s have been determined, and the resources committed to the event response have been identified, then there will be an ongoing consultation between Council's CEO and the Officer in Charge of this Plan, to determine which parts of Council's Plan are to be reactivated and when.

Council's statements to residents about the suspension or reduction of the services under the Road Management Plan will include reference to how the work that will be done has been prioritised, and the period for which it is likely to be affected.

Unless otherwise advised, for the purposes of this section, the Officer in Charge of this Plan will be the Director Infrastructure, or the Officer acting in that role.

2. ASSET DESCRIPTION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1. COORDINATING ROAD AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBLE ROAD AUTHORITY

Council is both the Coordinating Road Authority and the Responsible Road Authority for municipal roads as defined in the Act.

2.2. REGISTERS OF PUBLIC ROADS AND PUBLIC FOOTPATHS

Under Section 19 of the Act, Council must keep a register of public roads specifying the roads in respect of which it is the coordinating road authority and a register of public footpaths.

The register includes (but is not limited to) the name of each public road, the classification of the road, ancillary areas, and a reference to any arrangement under which road management functions in respect of any part of a public road or ancillary area is transferred to or from another road authority.

The Register of Public Roads and Register of Public Footpaths are available for viewing on Council's website, www.hrcc.vic.gov.au, or during normal business hours at;

Municipal Offices, 18 Roberts Avenue, Horsham

During the hours of 9.00 am to 5.00 pm each working day:

The Registers are separate documents to this Plan.

2.3. ROADS REASONABLY REQUIRED FOR GENERAL PUBLIC USE

Under Section 17 of the Act, the relevant coordinating road authority must register on its register of public roads a road which the road authority has made a decision that the road is reasonably required for general public use.

A road authority must remove a road from its register of public roads if the road authority has made a decision that the road is no longer reasonably required for general public use.

2.4. ROAD HIERARCHY

A road hierarchy is a classification system which identifies the function of each road.—It provides a basis for establishing the policies which will guide the management of the road, by grouping roads together into categories according to their intended service or qualities.

The hierarchy allows a road authority to set standards, and allocate the resources to construct and maintain an efficient and safe road network through differing,

- service levels
- frequencies
- intervention levels
- design/construction standards, and
- maintenance standards.

The definition of classes for Council's road hierarchy is shown in Table A1: Road Hierarchy in Appendix A.

2.5. FOOTPATH AND PATHWAY HIERARCHY

Footpath maintenance standards are not necessarily reflected by the road classification, or the significance of the adjacent road within the network, but are instead determined by the level of pedestrian usage.

The key factor which influences the specific categories of footpath hierarchy is the volume of pedestrian traffic for that pathway with consideration given to the proximity to schools, aged care facilities, hospitals and public use establishments tending to attract greater numbers of pedestrians.

Council also maintains a network of shared paths, including those along some stream frontages. The footpath ~~(inclusive of other pathways)~~ hierarchy (inclusive of other pathways) takes into consideration the levels of estimated foot and cycling traffic.

The definition of classes for Council's footpath hierarchy is shown in Table A2: Footpath and Shared Path Hierarchy in Appendix A.

2.6. MAINTENANCE CATEGORY:

A maintenance category has been determined for each public road and footpath ~~taking into account the on the basis of the above~~ hierarchy classification, as per Appendix A. Maintenance categories are used to define the level of maintenance commitment, including inspection frequency and maintenance response times.

~~The assets within category E will not be routinely inspected or maintained by Council.~~ Council has included in its road register a category of roads identified as "Tracks". These are generally un-formed roads, that may often only be distinguished from the adjoining underlying land by the presence of wheel tracks, and which have very limited usage. In some cases they may be used for fire purposes. These tracks have been assigned category E in the hierarchy and will not be routinely inspected or maintained by Council. As per other category E assets, these will not be routinely inspected or maintained by Council, but Council will consider maintenance of these in limited circumstances, e.g. to facilitate access for fire vehicles, on request.

2.7. DEMARCATATION AND MAINTENANCE AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER ROAD AUTHORITIES

The Department of Transport and Planning is the coordinating road authority for national and state arterial roads within Victoria. Regional roads are also managed by ~~Regional Roads Victoria, a branch of~~ the Department of Transport and Planning.

Arterial roads within the municipality are:

- Western Highway
- Henty Highway
- Wimmera Highway
- Natimuk - Frances Rd
- Horsham - Noradjuha Rd
- Natimuk Hamilton Rd
- Wombelano Rd
- Horsham Kalkee Rd
- Horsham – Lubeck Rd (part)
- Horsham - Minyip Rd

- Northern Grampians Rd.

Utilisation of some parts of the arterial network by Council is managed in accordance with the Code of Practice – Operational Responsibility for Public Roads – 2017,

Council ~~will~~ has ~~established~~ formal maintenance agreements with the neighbouring municipalities ~~where some roads form shared boundaries between the municipalities of Southern Grampians Shire Council, Northern Grampians Shire Council, Yarriambiack Shire Council, Hindmarsh Shire Council and West Wimmera Shire Council, and with the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.~~ The current maintenance responsibilities on boundary roads are reflected in the register of public roads.

Council is responsible for maintenance of:

- Local roads (listed in its register of public roads)
- Boundary roads as defined in the boundary road agreements
- Parking lanes on local roads
- Parking lanes on arterial roads within township boundaries
- Service roads on arterial roads
- Footpaths and kerbs and channels on local roads
- Kerbs and channels adjacent to parking lanes on arterial roads
- Bridges and culverts over natural waterways and drainage lines
- Underground drainage pipes, pits and pit lids.

Some other agencies are responsible for infrastructure within the road reserve, e.g.

GWMWater is responsible for maintenance of:

- Underground sewer pipes, pits and pit lids.
- Water valves and water mains
- Structures (bridges and culverts) over water supply channels
- Access roads to GWMWater facilities owned by GWMWater.

The Department of Transport and Planning is responsible for maintenance of:

- Arterial roads listed above
- Bridges and culverts on arterial roads

Telstra and other communication utilities are responsible for maintenance of their pits, ~~and~~ pit lids, cabinets and buried assets.

Powercor is responsible for maintenance of power poles and power pits.

Landowners are responsible for private roads. In some cases these are listed in Council's register of public roads, noting that they are private roads, to remove uncertainty about responsibility for these roads.

Body Corporates are responsible for maintenance of any roads and footpaths constructed within their developments.

Any hazards identified in:

- Rural crossovers
- Railway crossovers and

- Utility assets

will be notified to the relevant asset owner within two weeks of Council recording a defect that exceeds the intervention level. The road shall be checked to confirm that it has been reinstated to Council's standards within four weeks of reporting the hazard to the related party.

2.8. **CROWN LAND**

A number of roads are located on crown land managed by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA). Roads through crown land managed by Council are recorded in Council's Register of Public Roads.

2.9. **RAIL SAFETY**

A road manager must identify and assess, so far as is reasonably practicable, risks to safety that arise from the existence or use of any rail crossing that is part of the road or path infrastructure and determine measures to manage, so far as is reasonably practicable, any risks identified and assessed.

2.10. **OFF ROAD PATHS**

Council owned paths, tracks and trails that are not located on road reserves are not included in the Council Register of Public Roads as they are not covered under the Road Management Act but where appropriate Council adopts the same standards consistent with this Plan.

Commented [JM1]: Think we should reconsider this...should they be listed?

2.11. **LANDOWNERS RESPONSIBILITIES - DRIVEWAYS**

Driveways are the responsibility of the owner of the land for which the driveway provides access to and from the road. The landowner is responsible for that part of the driveway as shown in Figure 1, specifically;

- The infills between the kerb and channel and the footpath, and the footpath and property line.
- The layback through the kerb, including ensuring a sound interface to the channel / road area.
- The immediate surrounds impacted on by the driveway.
- The area bounded by red in the diagram below.

The footpath crossover is part of the footpath and is the responsibility of Council however Council may charge the landowner for the cost of repairs to damage to the footpath caused by vehicles using the driveway.

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Note that landowners are responsible for stormwater drainage pipes and kerb connections beyond their property line through to the point of discharge, as also shown in red on Figure 1.

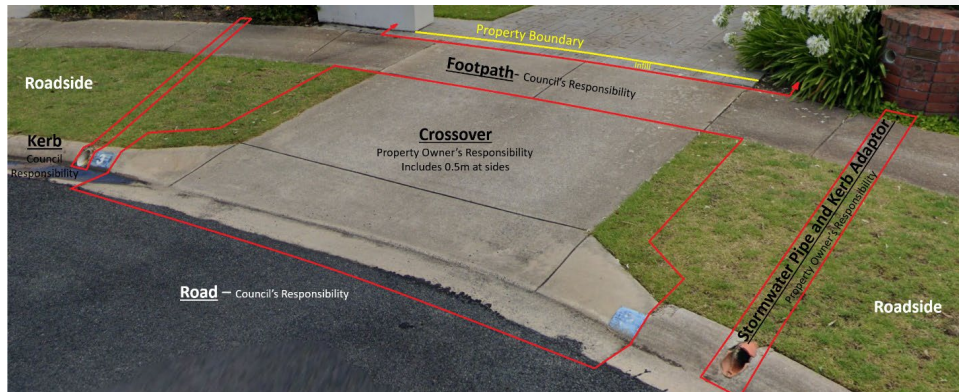


Figure 1 – Driveway responsibilities – Urban areas

Note – The Road Management Act (s107) specifically states that a road authority does not have a statutory duty or a common law duty to maintain, inspect or repair a roadside

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Arrangements are similar for culvert crossings over an open table drain (in urban or rural areas) where the owner's responsibilities are:

- Culvert and endwalls.
- Driveway infill between the road edge and the property line excluding any footpath crossover *(should there be one)*.
- Maintenance of the road seal adjacent to the driveway to be free of loose material sourced from the property or the driveway.

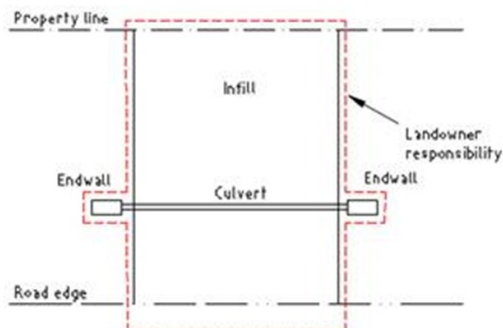


Figure 2 – Driveway responsibility – Rural areas

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When Council identifies hazards within the area of the crossover for which the property owner is responsible, the property owner will be informed of the identified hazard and provided with a timeframe in which to rectify the hazard.

However, there may be occasions where a property owner's asset is presenting *as* a hazard in an area of the road or footpath that Council is responsible for. For example, a tree branch protruding from the property owner's premises and overhanging the footpath for which

Council is responsible and is presenting a hazard to pedestrians. As above, the property owner will be informed of the identified hazard and provided with a timeframe in which to rectify it.

Failure to remove such obstructions will be referred to Council's Community Safety Unit for action under the applicable local law.

Council retains the right to direct the standard of construction, materials and location of driveways within the road reserve. Council also reserves the right to reconstruct / replace the footpath at its sole discretion. Landholders remain responsible for other private assets within the road reserve, including their stormwater connection pipes, from their property boundary through to the point of discharge as outlined above.

On grading of roads or other maintenance, Council will remedy any culverts that are inadvertently impacted by the grading, e.g. where they are blocked due to movement of road material.

3. LEVELS OF SERVICE

3.1. GENERAL

A Level of Service is the defined quality of service for a certain activity or area, (i.e. roads, kerbs and channels, footpaths) against which the performance of each asset can be measured in both function and presentation.

Levels of Service relate to quality, reliability, responsiveness, quantity, accessibility and cost. Levels of service must be meaningful and must address the issues that customers believe to be important while meeting the technical parameters within Council's resources.

The levels of service in this plan have been identified and developed from:

- Acquired knowledge of key infrastructure issues;
- Customers' expectations;
- Council's policies, goals and strategies;
- Legislative requirements and standards;
- Level of risk
- Available resources (funding levels, staffing, asset capacity).

Council has prepared its Rural Road Network Plan, adopted in April 2022, which addresses a range of aspects related to roads in the rural parts of the municipality, these include the identification of three additional classes of roads, referred to as:

- Freight Routes
- Farm Machinery Routes, and
- Tourism Routes.

Key service level aspects of these three classes are as follows:

- Freight Routes
 - Full lane width in each direction
 - Minimum 6.2 m seal width
- Farm Machinery Routes
 - All weather access
 - Sufficient clearance, height and width for large machinery, ideally 7m wide x 6m high
- Tourism Routes
 - Sealed pavement.

These classes exist as overlays on top of the established road classification hierarchy outlined in this Plan. When funding permits, Council will endeavour to upgrade selected roads identified in the Rural Road Network Plan to these standards, and this may also lead to a change in the road hierarchy classification for those roads. The road register will be updated accordingly when that occurs, leading to the implementation of the applicable service levels for those roads. At the time of writing this plan, some \$8M of investment has been completed to update some identified freight routes in the Rural Road Network Plan. The overall implementation cost of the Rural Road Network Plan was estimated at \$20.4 M when the Plan was approved by Council in 2022.

This version of the Road Management Plan is the first to include reference to these additional overlays.

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3.2. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS EXPECTATIONS

Consultation requirements for the review of the Road Management Plan are defined in the Road Management Act 2004 and its related regulations. Key elements of this engagement included publishing details of the review on or in:

- Council's website (including a copy of relevant documents)
- The Government Gazette
- Council's public notices in the print media.

Community consultation was undertaken as part of the development of the initial Council Road Management Plan to measure residents' perceptions of Council's performance on road maintenance, major construction works, street furniture, Council signs, line marking, flooding of roads and complaints and related requests made to Council.

Further consultation has been undertaken at each subsequent review of the Plan.

Two reviews of the Road Management Plan have occurred since the previous, 2021, Consultation on the statutory 2021 major review of the Plan is documented in that version of the document.

The first of these was Consultation also occurred on a minor review of the Plan, the version of which was adopted by Council in 2023, relating primarily to the classification of some minor roads, and vegetation overhanging footpaths.

A more recent This minor amendment version of the plan in 2024 is not proposed did not proceed to to be the subject of community consultation as its purpose is was primarily to align use of the terms "Urgent" and "Emergency" with other Council procedures. Some minor grammar and formatting changes awere also included. Significantly, tThere awere no changes to service standards proposed in this that amendment.

That amendment, without consultation, was in line with the Road Management (General) Regulations 2016, which provide for there to be no consultation in certain circumstances, as follows:

11 (3) A road authority is not required to give notice under regulation 10 if the Chief Executive Officer (however described) of the road authority certifies in writing that the proposed amendment to the road management plan relates to the determination under section 41 of the Act of a standard and the proposed amendment only deals with changes to administrative procedures or responsibilities of a road authority or is of a fundamentally declaratory or machinery nature.

3.3. STANDARDS OF MAINTENANCE

The standards of maintenance applicable to roads subject to this Plan are detailed in Appendix B, which sets out;

- a) the schedule of inspections to be undertaken of specified matters at specified intervals;
- b) intervention levels where action is to be taken with respect to repair or maintenance action;
- c) the rectification expected to be undertaken;
- d) the response time applicable to the intervention action under point c) above;

- e) provision, as far as practicable, for the unpredictable, i.e. emergencies, natural disasters;

3.4. ENVIRONMENT

When undertaking roadworks, Council will comply with its *Environmental Management Plan (Including Cultural Heritage Aspects) Roads Construction & Maintenance*, and with the guidelines for managing native vegetation on roadsides provided by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

3.5. MUNICIPAL FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Council undertakes mowing, slashing, grading and weedicide application on road reserves, in accordance with the Municipal Fire Management Plan, for the maintenance of strategic fire breaks.

4. ROAD MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

4.1. INSPECTIONS

Asset inspections and surveys and the resulting information are required for competent management of the road network assets. Three primary inspection systems have been implemented. The first two as per 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 are aimed at defect identification and measurement of those against stated intervention levels to determine whether remedial works are required. The third as per 4.1.3 is an overall general condition inspection of the network to assess remaining lifespan and assist with long term planning and programming of asset renewal. Condition inspections are high level inspections and are not intended to identify and measure specific defects, this is done via the other two inspections.

The primary inspection types are:

4.1.1. Reactive Safety Inspections

These inspections are to assess if a reported defect is outside the tolerable level as defined in the relevant intervention level as per Table B4 in Appendix B. These are reactive by nature and are undertaken following notification to Council by members of the community or by Council employees while undertaking their normal work duties. When identified by community members, these inspections are first recorded in Council's customer response system and transferred into the Reflect asset maintenance system for action by staff. Where identified by staff, the inspections are recorded directly into the Reflect system.

4.1.2. Programmed Proactive Inspection

These inspections are undertaken in accordance with the schedule specified in Appendix B Table B1 – to monitor asset condition and asset defects against stated intervention levels as outlined in Appendix B – Table B4. The inspection frequencies for roads have been determined on the basis of road hierarchy.

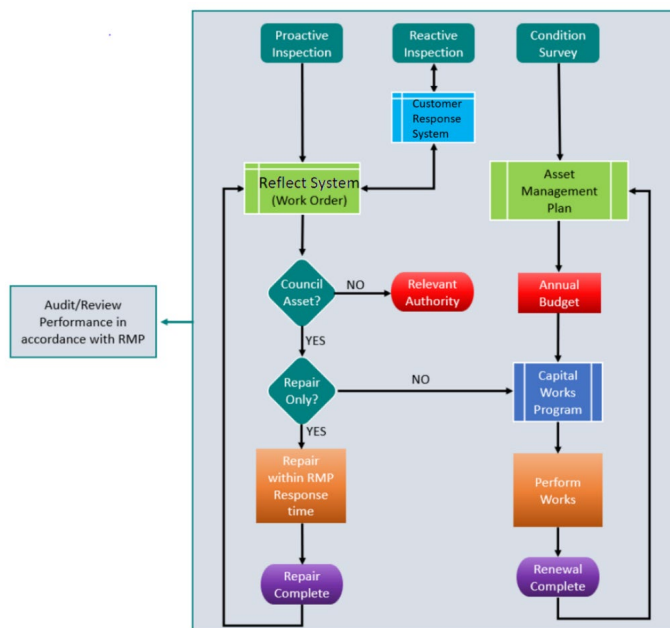
4.1.3. Condition Inspections

Condition inspections consider the overall structural integrity of the roadway (pavement, kerb and channel, table drains at a high level to assess the ability of that

asset to perform for the period of its intended life span. This condition information provides lifecycle management information essential to strategic long term planning.

Programmed and condition inspections are undertaken by way of a formal scheduled regime.

The diagram below shows the process in Council's asset and maintenance management system for managing inspections and maintenance activities relating to roads.



Staff carrying out inspections are trained in the requirements of this Road Management Plan, with periodic reviews. These staff also participate in regular review meetings to monitor performance against the requirements of the Plan.

4.2. NOTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL HAZARDS - SERVICE REQUESTS

Requests for works to be undertaken, both from external and internal customers are entered in Council's customer request system. This system has been established to receive and deal with service requests, complaints and other information from users and the community. A customer request will generate a reactive inspection task in Council's maintenance management system, depending on the level of perceived risk.

The following information is recorded and processed to determine the required priority of the responding inspection: -

- the nature, location and extent of the perceived hazard requiring investigation by Council
- name and address of person reporting the hazard.

Details of any repair and / or maintenance are recorded on completion.

This system provides for the regular monitoring and review of the community's service requests, complaints and information regarding the nature and standard of responses.

4.3. ESTABLISHING WORKS PRIORITIES

Council will establish works priorities in accordance with;

- the response times shown in Appendix B
- the level of risk associated with each hazard
- operational efficiency, i.e. aiming to remedy hazards in relative proximity to each other, and
- budget constraints.

4.4. EMERGENCY / URGENT RESPONSE

Council provides an urgent response service for maintenance issues that arise outside normal business hours. This service is provided to enable the Police, emergency services or a member of the public to report an urgent or high risk situation.

The sequence to urgent response is as follows:

- Initial safety inspection to confirm the extent of hazard
- If a public hazard is considered urgent, either perform temporary repairs or barricade immediately
- If barricades are erected, inspect on a regular basis to ensure barricades are still effective
- Attend to the rectification within the specified response times

Response times are set out in Table B4 in Appendix B

In extreme events, these response times may not be achievable due to resource limitations at the time.

Note that Council distinguishes between the terms "urgent" and "emergency" as follows:

- An Urgent situation is one that needs a rapid response
- An Emergency is an event typically managed by the emergency services Agencies, such as a fire or flood (or other).

4.5. RECORDS OF INSPECTIONS AND MAINTENANCE WORKS

Records of all inspections and maintenance works undertaken on the road and paths network are kept in the maintenance management system to meet the requirements of the Act and this Plan. In particular, defects above Intervention Levels are to be identified and prioritised before rectification/repair works are undertaken.

5. **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND REVIEW**

5.1. **PERFORMANCE MEASURING OF THE PLAN**

The following activities will be undertaken to measure the performance of the plan:

Performance Measure	Description
Customer satisfaction surveys	Telephone survey poll conducted as a part of Victorian Local Government Satisfaction Survey
Customer Service request	The quantity and type of service requests received are analysed annually to evaluate the performance of maintenance activities against the agreed level of service
Actual versus prescribed response time	The analysis of prescribed time versus the actual time taken to inspect and rectify the defect

5.2. **INTERNAL AUDITING OF PROCESSES**

Internal audits are carried out twice each year of the following processes;

- Collection and storage of condition information^{7.2}
- Recording of complaints/requests in the appropriate database in the manner required^{7.2}
- Complaint/request is inspected and/or assessed in relation to specified maintenance intervention levels^{7.2}. A sample audit of this process to be undertaken^{7.2}
- That programmed inspections are carried out as scheduled^{7.2}
- Relevant inspection reporting and recording mechanisms are in place^{7.2}
- That reported defects are being properly recorded in the system^{7.2}
- Where required, appropriate rectification responses are determined and works orders issued^{7.2}
- Where customer requests require scheduling of works onto annual maintenance programs or long-term renewal works programs, that the required listing takes place^{7.2}
- Record that maintenance works have been delivered as intended (i.e. someone has signed off on the satisfactory completion of the work)^{7.2}
- Management system in place to record and respond to customer enquiries^{7.2}

The Manager Assets and Engineering is responsible for overseeing the audit process, and for reporting the outcome of the internal audits to Council's Executive. This reporting will include the highlighting of any non-compliance and the actions already taken or required to remedy any non-compliance.

5.3. **AMENDMENT OF ROAD MANAGEMENT PLAN**

This Plan may be reviewed from time to time to reflect changes to legislation, agreed levels of service, management systems, availability of resources or other factors that affect the Plan.

Any review will be carried out in accordance with the consultation and approval processes as detailed in Section 54 of the Act.

5.4. STATUTORY REVIEW OF THE PLAN

Section 8 (3) of the Road Management (General) Regulations 2016, requires Council to conduct a review of its road management plan within the period referred to in section 125(1)(b) of the Local Government Act 1989 which states *“A Council must prepare and approve a Council Plan within the period of 6 months after each general election or by the next 30 June, whichever is later”*. However, the Local Government Act 2020 has superseded that clause, with the new LG Act now requiring Council Plans to be reviewed by 31 October in the year following a general election (section 90 (3)). This date now applies for review of the Road Management Plan, i.e. next due by 31 October 2025.

APPENDICES

Appendix A –Road and Footpath Hierarchies

Appendix B - Inspection Frequency

Appendix C - Road Management Plan Risk Management

Appendix A

Table A1: Road Hierarchy Classes

NAME	FUNCTION	Indicative Traffic Volume (VPD)	Category
Link	Roads other than arterial roads that link significant destinations ¹ and are designed for efficient movement of people and goods between and within regions. Also provide property ² access. Link roads may consist of a number of roads which form a route. <u>When upgraded, roads identified in the Rural Road Network Plan as Freight Routes will be classified as Link roads.</u>	Rural >100 Urban >1000	A
Collector	Roads other than arterial or link roads that provide movement of traffic within local areas and connect access roads to a substantial number of higher order roads. Also provide property access. <u>When upgraded, roads identified in the Rural Road Network Plan as Tourism Routes will be classified as Collector roads.</u>	Rural 50 - 100 Urban 500 - 1000	B
Access	Roads other than arterial, link or collector roads, that provide access to the street address of occupied properties ³ . <u>When upgraded, roads identified in the Rural Road Network Plan as Farm Machinery Routes will be classified at minimum as Access roads, but may be at higher levels subject to the underlying classification of the road.</u>	Rural < 50 Urban < 500	C
Minor	Roads other than arterial, link, collector or primary access roads that provide access to occupied property other than to the street address, or access to non-occupied abutting properties ⁴ , and non-residential property.	Less than 50	D
Ancillary Area	An area of land owned or managed by Council, maintained by a responsible road authority as ancillary to a public road.		C
Path	A road reserve that contains a constructed pathway but does not contain a constructed or formed roadway.		C
Paper Road	Road reserve not reasonably required for general public use		E
Tracks	Typically un-formed roads which are not generally used by the public, but which may have very limited occasional use, e.g. for fire purposes.		E

Notes:

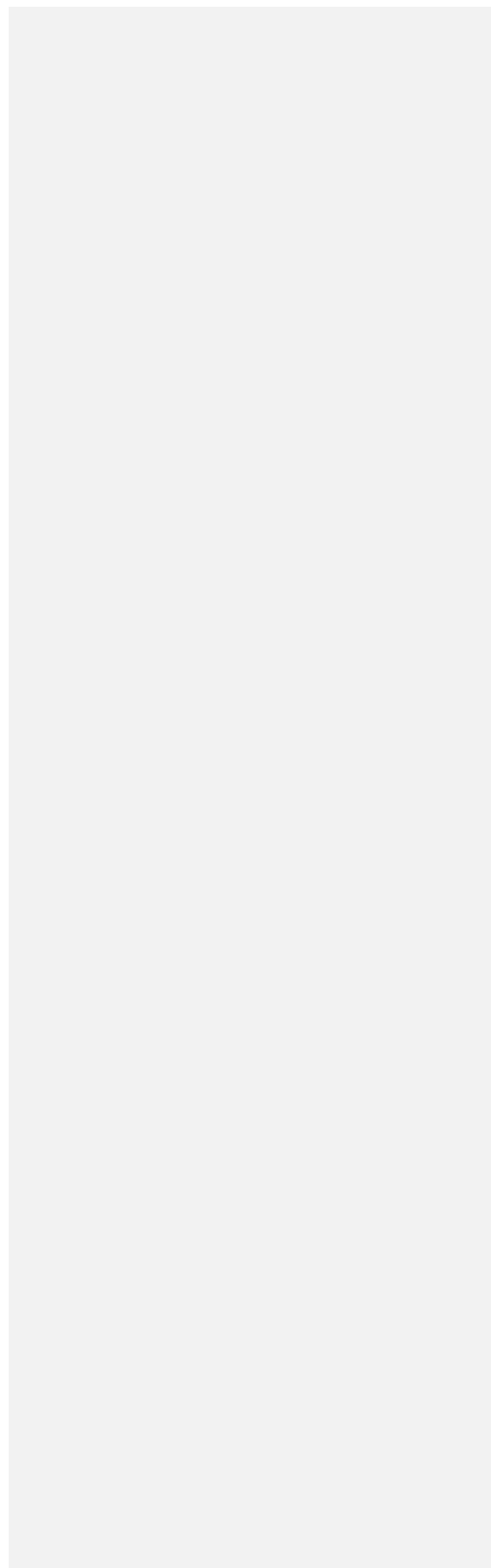
- Significant destinations
 - Rural include towns (excluding suburbs), with a minimum population of 200, major tourist attractions and places of significance.
 - Urban include arterial roads, towns, major tourist attractions, and

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2. Property means an area of land with its own title.
3. Occupied property means a property which is occupied for residential purposes or commercial purposes where workers attend for work on a number of days per week basis.
4. Non-occupied property means a property which is not occupied for residential purposes or commercial purposes where workers attend for work on a number of days per week basis.

Table A2: Footpath and Shared Path Hierarchy

Hierarchy	Broad description	Category
F1	High Use & Risk:- Major shopping centres and heavily used pedestrian areas. Horsham Central Business District; Intermittent high pedestrian use areas (examples are; sporting complexes, medical/hospital facilities, retirement complexes; etc) . {Category includes 'Sure-Walk' paths}	A
F2	Medium Use & Risk:- Busy urbanised areas and heavy use link paths. Moderately pedestrian use areas. Typical of these are small -suburban shops; walking /running and leisure tracks with high -usage, such as Wimmera River track adjacent to Barnes Blvd.	B
F3	Lower Use & Risk:- Less frequently used paths. Footpaths in less well used areas, running tracks, cycle and recreational tracks.	C



Appendix B

LEVEL OF SERVICE AND RISK REDUCTION TABLES

Table B1: Hazard Inspection Frequency

Hazard Inspection Type	Hazard Inspection Frequency by Maintenance Category				
	Link / A	Collector / B	Access / C	Minor/D	Paper and Track/E
Day-time (roads)	6 months	12 months	24 months	36 months	N/A
Night-time (roads)	24 months	48 months	N/A	N/A	N/A
Day - time footpath and shared path	4 months	12 months	24 months	N/A	N/A
Inspection following flood or fire event	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	N/A
Night inspection following fire event	8 weeks	8 weeks	8 weeks	8 weeks	N/A

Table B2 Reactive Inspection timeframes

Inspection Type	Hazard Inspection Frequency by Maintenance Category				
	Link / A	Collector / B	Access / C	Minor/D	Paper and Track/E
Urgent response	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours
All other requests	1 week	2 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks

Table B3 Infrastructure Defects to be considered by inspection type

Inspection Type	Items to be included in inspections
Night-time inspection of sealed road	Visibility of signage, line-marking, guide posts and raised reflective pavement markers (RRPMs)
Night-time inspection of unsealed road	Visibility of signage and guideposts
Day-time inspection of sealed road	Potholes, edge breaks, major cracks, shoulder drop-offs, bleeding or stripping of seal, excessive loose stones, signage, line-marking, guideposts, RRPMs, table drain, culverts, kerb and channel and vegetation clearance
Day-time inspection of unsealed road	Potholes, loose material, pavement failures, signage, guide posts, table drains, culverts and vegetation clearance
Footpath and shared paths	Vertical lips, pit lids and similar utility assets, potholes, mounds or depressions and vegetation clearance, traffic control signs at road intersections, reflectors on bollards
Reactive inspection	Inspection of the specific defect reported to Council and compared to the stated intervention levels in Table B4.

Table B4: Defect intervention levels and Response times

Description of Defect	Response Time				
	Link / A	Collector / B	Access / C	Minor/D	Paper and Tracks/E
Obstructions to Traffic					
Fallen trees and/or limbs encroaching onto the traffic lane, materials fallen from vehicles, dead animals, wet clay and other slippery substances or other obstacles	24 hrs	24 hrs	2 weeks	2 weeks	N/A
Accumulation of dirt or granular materials on the traffic lane of sealed roads (of a quantity that creates a hazard)	1 week	2 weeks	2 months	2 months	N/A
Ponding of water > 300 mm deep, oil spills, stray livestock – merge this with line 1 above.	24 hrs	24 hrs	2 weeks	2 weeks	N/A
Pavement or Surface Defects					
Sealed Roads:					
Potholes in traffic lane of road pavement greater than 300 mm in diameter and greater than 100 mm deep.	4 weeks	2 months	6 months	6 months	N/A
Deformations greater than 100 mm under a 3 m straight edge	1 month	6 months	6 months	6 months	N/A
Edge drop offs onto unsealed shoulder greater than 100 mm over the distance greater than 1 metre	2 months	2 months	6 months	6 months	N/A
Edge break exceeds 150 mm laterally over at least a 1 m length from the nominal edge of seal	4 weeks	2 months	3 months	6 months	N/A
When “bleeding” bitumen is sticking to tyres or shoes	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	N/A
Traffic islands have damaged paving or kerbing that presents a hazard to traffic and/or pedestrians	4 weeks	2 months	3 months	6 months	N/A
Unsealed Roads (Paved or Unpaved)					
Potholes in traffic lane of road pavement greater than 500 mm diameter and 150 mm deep.	2 months	6 months	6 months	12-24 months	Reactive as per request
Deformations greater than 150 mm under a 3 metre straight edge (includes rutting).	2 months	6 months	6 months	12-24 months	Reactive as per request
Loose sand greater than 150 mm deep and greater than 10 m long	6 months	12 months	12 months	12-24 months	Reactive as per request
Corrugations greater than 50mm in depth for a length >500m or total road length.	N/A	3 months	6 months	12 months	Reactive as per request
Drainage					
(Urban Roads)					
Damaged or missing drainage pit lids, surrounds, grates, broken pipes (causing hole in pavement or subsidence) in pedestrian areas or traffic lanes	24 hours	24 hours	2 weeks	2 weeks	N/A
Kerb and Channel – Vertical misalignment > 100 mm or horizontal misalignment >250 mm over less than 3m length (greater than this requires referral to Capital Works Program)	4 weeks	2 months	3 months	6 months	N/A
(Rural Roads) Blocked culverts and/or table drains, damaged headwalls	2 months	6 months	6 months	12 months	Reactive as per request

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Description of Defect	Response Time				
	Link / A	Collector / B	Access / C	Minor/D	Paper and Tracks/E
(Rural Roads) Broken or displaced pipes (causing hole in pavement or subsidence) in traffic lane	24 hours	1 week	1 month	2 months	Reactive as per request
ROADSIDE					
Vegetation – Trees, Shrubs and Grassed Areas					
Trees, shrubs or grasses that have grown to restrict design sight distance to intersections or restrict viewing of safety signs**	4 weeks	4 weeks	2 months	2 months	Reactive as per request
Vegetation intruding within an envelope over roadways from the back of shoulder and/or kerb and a minimum of 4.5 m height clearance over pavement and the trafficable portion of shoulders (Note ## - see below)	2 months	6 months	12 months	12-24 months	Reactive as per request
Vegetation which presents a physical hazard to the public over pedestrian / bicycle paths, intruding into a clearance envelope between the edges of path and a minimum of 2.5 m height clearance over path	Refer to Footpaths section below				
ROADSIDE FURNITURE/SIGNAGE/PUBLIC UTILITIES					
Safety Signs **					
Safety signs ** missing, illegible or damaged making them substantially ineffective	4 weeks	4 weeks	2 months	2 months	Reactive as per request
Regulatory Signs					
Regulatory signs missing, illegible or damaged making them substantially ineffective	1 week	1 month	2 months	3 months	Reactive as per request
Warning Signs					
Warning signs missing, illegible or damaged making them substantially ineffective	1 week	1 month	2 months	3 months	Reactive as per request
Temporary signs, associated either with works in progress or as a preliminary response to other RMP hazards	1 day	1 day	1 week	2 weeks	Reactive as per request
Tourist and Service Signs					
Tourist & Services signs missing, illegible or damaged making them substantially ineffective	1 month	1 month	2 months	6 months	Reactive as per request
Other signs					
Other signs such as street fingerboards missing, illegible or damaged making them substantially ineffective	2 months	2 months	3 months	6 months	Reactive as per request
Guideposts					
Missing or damaged making them substantially ineffective	2 months	2 months	6 months	6 months	Reactive as per request

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Description of Defect	Response Time				
	Link / A	Collector / B	Access / C	Minor/D	Paper and Tracks/E
Safety Barriers and Fencing					
Missing or damaged making them substantially ineffective	4 weeks	4 weeks	2 months	6 months	Reactive as per request
Pavement Markings / Line Marking					
Missing, illegible or confusing	3 months	3 months	6 months	6 months	Reactive as per request
Bus Shelters					
Bus shelter has broken or damaged components such as glass walls, seats, roof etc. that present a hazard to pedestrians and/or traffic	4 weeks	2 months	3 months	6 months	N/A
Non-Standard Street Lights					
Non-standard streetlights with lamp malfunction, broken or damaged components such as poles, lamp shade etc. that present a hazard to pedestrians and/or traffic	2 weeks	1 month	2 months	3 months	N/A
STRUCTURES (BRIDGES AND MAJOR CULVERTS)					
Damage affecting structural performance	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	4 weeks	Reactive as per request
TRAFFIC SIGNALS AND ON-ROAD ELECTRICAL ASSETS					
Traffic signal inoperable or confusing	24 hrs	24 hrs	24 hrs	24 hrs	N/A
FOOTPATHS AND SHARED PATHS					
Defective with a vertical step greater than 25 mm	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	N/A	N/A
Footpath mounds and depressions greater than 100 mm under a 1.2 m straight edge	4 weeks	3 months	6 months	N/A	N/A
Vegetation growing on the road reserve which presents a physical hazard to the public intruding into a clearance envelope 0.5 m from the edge of path and a minimum of 2.1 m height clearance over path.	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	N/A	N/A
Wet and slippery surface, accumulation of dirt, debris or granular material that becomes a hazard to pedestrians or cyclist	3 weeks	4 weeks	2 months	N/A	Reactive as per request
Surface cracking wider than 20 mm on footpath and/or pathways	4 weeks	3 months	6 months	N/A	N/A
Hole in asphalt or concrete path >100 mm dia. and >50 mm deep	1 week	4 weeks	2 months	N/A	N/A

** A "safety sign" is a road sign that provides the driver with advice on the safe use of the road.

It is intended to increase the envelope for farm machinery routes to 7m width and 6m height subject to approval from DEECA and as funding permits to allow upgrades of roads as identified in the Rural Road Network Plan.

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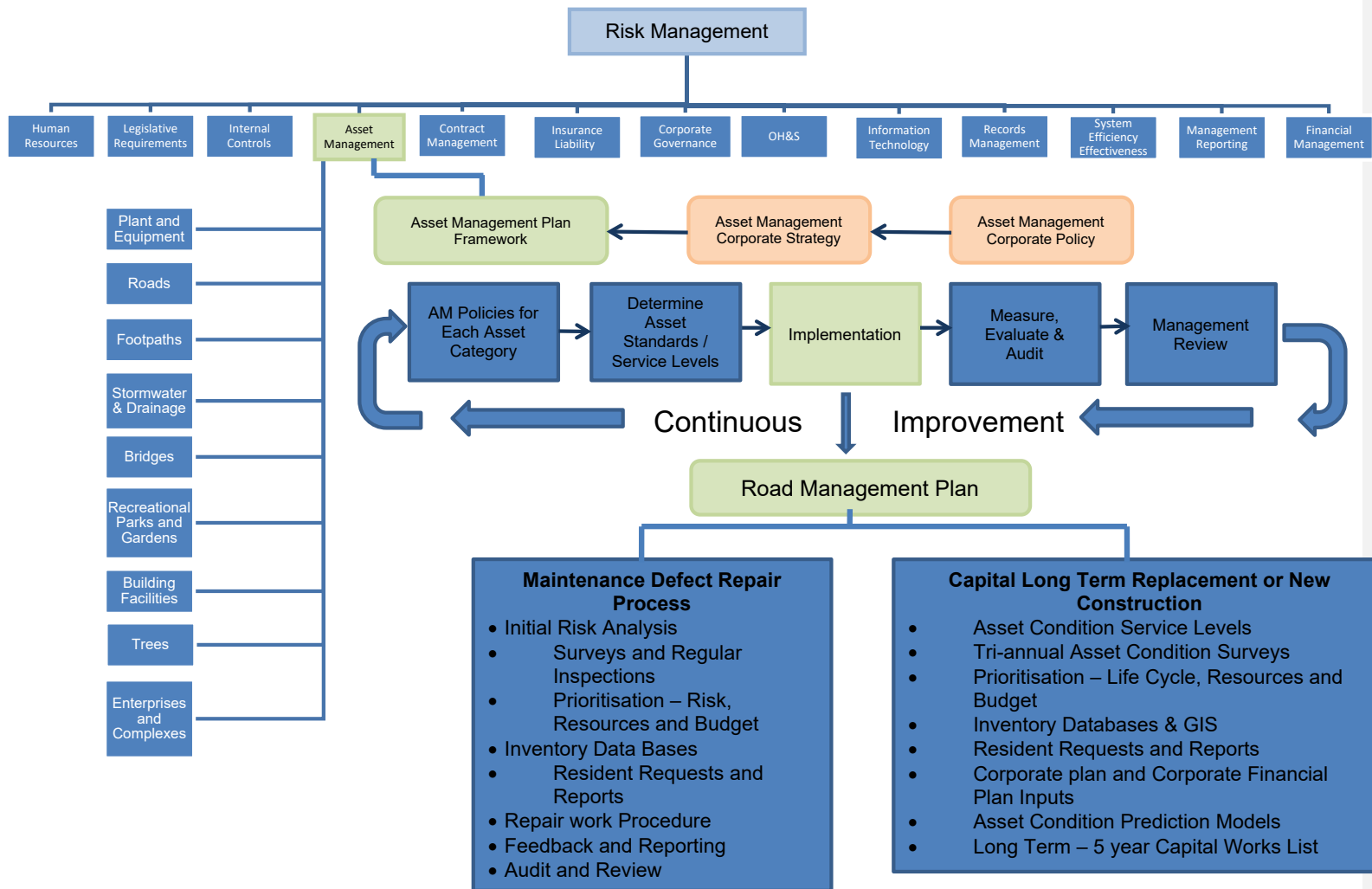
Where it is not possible to rectify the defect within the specified response time due to workload, the level of resources required, or site conditions (e.g. wet weather) appropriate warning is to be provided until the repair can be completed.

Appropriate warning could include, for example:

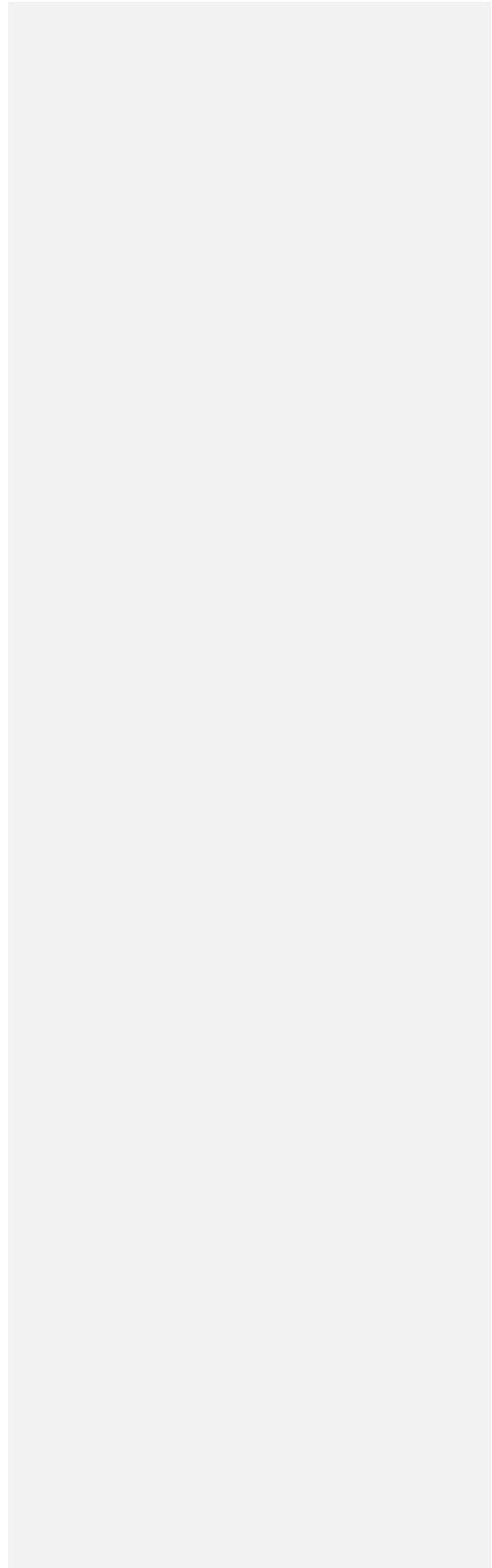
- Provision of appropriate warning signage or similar
- Traffic control action
- Diverting traffic around the site
- Installation of a temporary speed limit lane closure
- Closure of the road to use by certain vehicle (e.g. a load limit)
- Road closure
- Publicity/media advice

Response may be in the form of written advice of proposed future action or referred to Council for budget consideration with associated immediate action to reduce risk, if required.

Appendix C



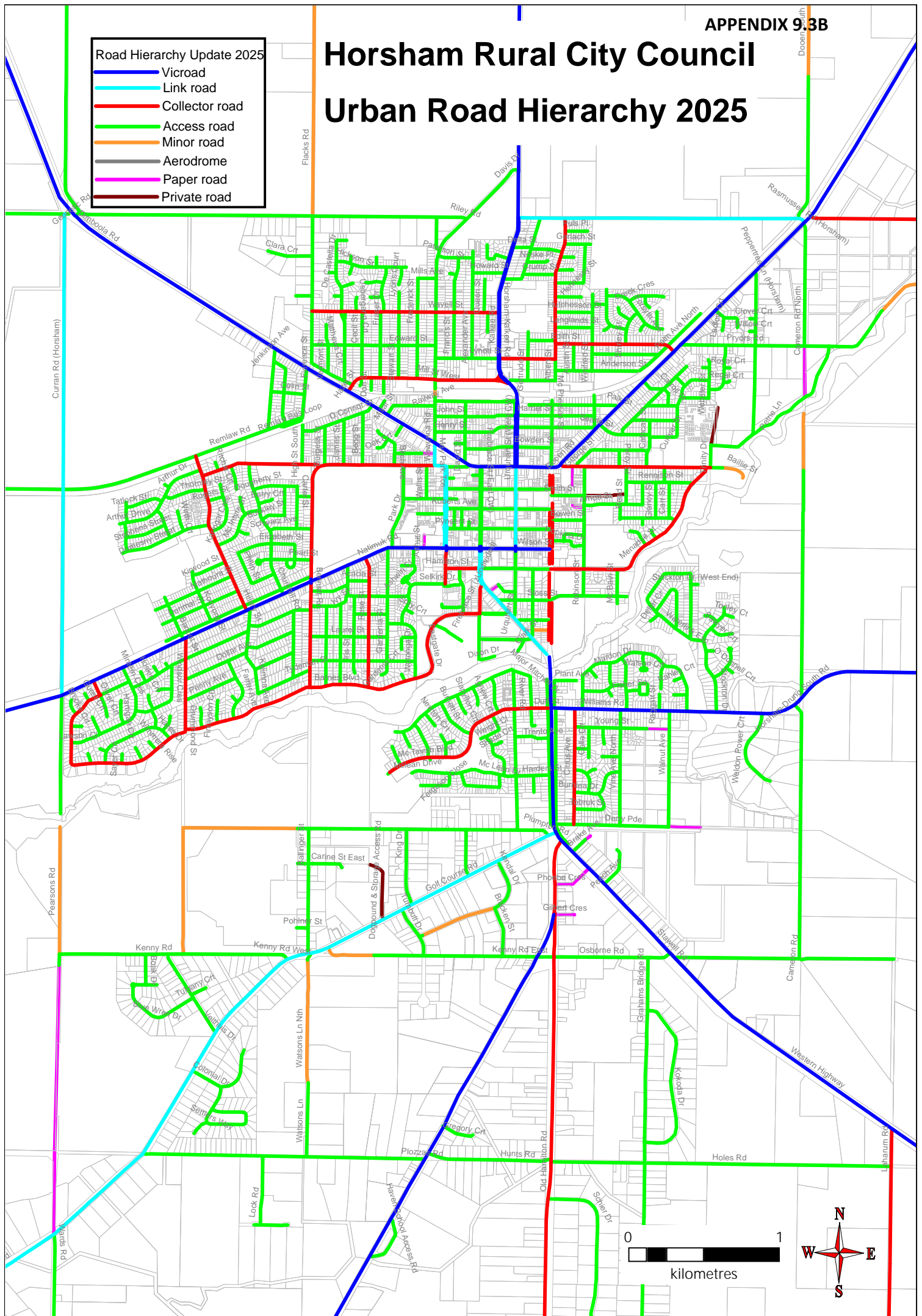
Appendix C



Horsham Rural City Council

Urban Road Hierarchy 2025

Road Hierarchy Update 2025	
—	Vicroad
—	Link road
—	Collector road
—	Access road
—	Minor road
—	Aerodrome
—	Paper road
—	Private road



Road Hierarchy Update 2025

Vicroad

Link road

Collector road

Access road

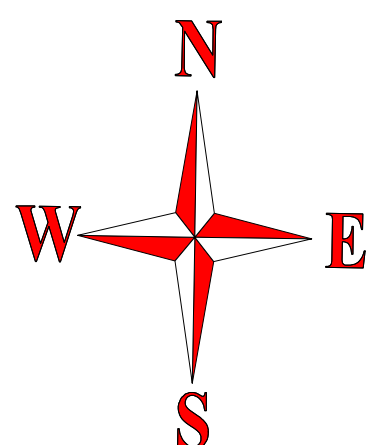
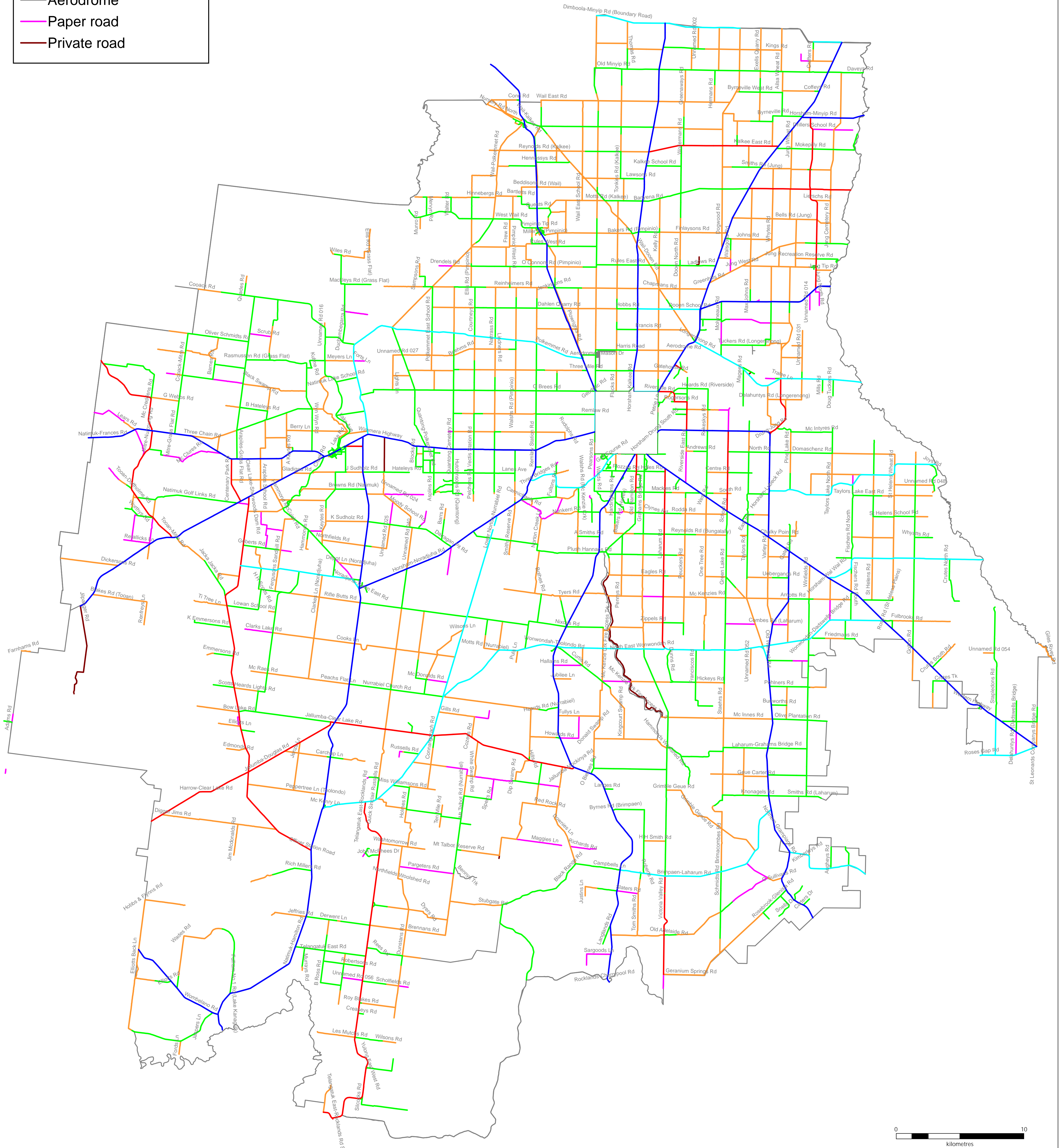
Minor road

Aerodrome

Paper road

Private road

HRCC Road Hierarchy 2025



Fee ID	Fee Name	Unit of Measure	Basis of Fee	GST Status	2024/25 Fee Incl GST \$	2025/26 Fee Incl GST \$	Fee Increase/ (Decrease) %	Notes
Regional Livestock Exchange								
Regional Livestock Exchange								
1014	Application fee	Annual		Taxable	79,000.00	81,400.00	3%	
1027	Weighing Fee Cattle (except those for sale)	Per Head		Taxable	7.74	7.97	3%	
1028	Holding Paddock fee - No charge first night. Stock removed by lunchtime Friday or an agistment fee is payable	Per Head/Day		Taxable	0.40	0.42	5%	
1029	Disposal Fee	Per Head		Taxable	42.10	43.35	3%	
1030	Ear Tagging Cattle	Per Head		Taxable	42.10	43.35	3%	
1031	Ear Tagging Sheep and Goats	Per Head		Taxable	6.03	6.22	3%	
New	Livestock Transport	Per Head		Taxable	N/A	At Cost		Minimum \$500
New	Livestock Daily Holding Fee	Per Head		Taxable	N/A	50.00		
General Sales Dues								
1019	Sales Dues - Cattle (excluding Bulls)	Per Head/Day		Taxable	17.10	17.61	3%	
1020	Sales Dues - Bulls	Per Head/Day		Taxable	17.10	17.61	3%	
1021	Sales Dues - Calves	Per Head/Day		Taxable	8.54	8.80	3%	
1022	Sales Dues - Sheep	Per Head/Day		Taxable	1.23	1.27	3%	
1023	Sales Dues - Goats	Per Head/Day		Taxable	1.23	1.27	3%	
Holding Fees - for use of pens or other accommodation provided by Council								
1024	Cattle	Per Head/Day		Taxable	1.23	1.27	3%	
1025	Sheep	Per Head/Day		Taxable	1.23	1.27	3%	
1026	Goats	Per Head/Day		Taxable	1.23	1.27	3%	
Truck Wash								
1015	Purchase Avdata Key	Per Key		Taxable	46.00	47.50	3%	
1016	Occasional users - tray trucks/trailers	Per 3 mins. (Min Charge 3 mins)		Taxable	9.68	9.97	3%	
1017	Coin in the slot	Per 2 mins		Taxable	2.00	2.00	0%	
1018	Occasional users - semi-trailers	Per Visit		Taxable	20.70	21.35	3%	

WESTERN HIGHWAY ACTION COMMITTEE (WHAC)

INDIVIDUAL COUNCIL ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

JULY 2025

Council

Horsham Rural City Council (Draft)

Q1. Long Term Strategic Priorities for the Corridor

Duplication of the Western Highway through to the South Australian Border, initially to Stawell
 Implementation of bypasses on duplicated sections of the Highway
 Return of passenger rail to Horsham (feasibility study available)
 Equitable access arrangements for freight on rail compared to road. (RFA Policy document)

Q2. Short Term Priorities/Projects for the Corridor

Identify a bypass / truck route alignment for Horsham, incorporating ring road / links to the Wimmera and Henty Highways around / outside the perimeter of the Horsham urban area. (Council Plan, Housing strategy)
 Address major congestion issues between Bacchus Marsh and Melbourne metropolitan area, bringing that section of highway to full freeway standards.
 Complete planning of Beaufort and Ararat bypasses
 Upgrading the Woodmans Hill section, east of Ballarat, to full freeway standards.
 Very short-term – completion of Stawell Rd roundabout (Horsham junction)

Q3. Safety – Any known or Perceived Safety Issues in the Corridor

Intersections with the Western Highway in the proximity of the Wail overpass, associated with short sight distances, and angled intersections. (Road Safety Audit available)
 Short-stacking for heavy vehicles on the section between Horsham and Wail where the railway line is adjacent to the Highway, in particular Geodetic Road. (Background paper available)
 Unduplicated sections of the Highway
 Pedestrian safety in Pimpinio and Dadswells Bridge
 The “Tarara” roadhouse, east of Ararat – absence of acceleration / deceleration lanes.
 Management of highway detours during emergency incidents.
 Speed limit for Western Highway (and other highways) should be 50 km/h in urban areas, not 60 km/h.

Address correspondence to: **WHAC** Secretariat, PO Box 511 Horsham VIC 3402

Phone 03 5382 9724 **Email** kiar.rook@hrcc.vic.gov.au

Western Highway Action Committee Members

Melton City Moorabool Shire Ballarat City Pyrenees Shire Ararat Rural City Yarriambiack Shire
 Northern Grampians Shire Horsham Rural City Hindmarsh Shire West Wimmera Shire

Western Highway Action Committee

Q4. Items the State Government Should be Undertaking along the Corridor (maintenance, graffiti, rubbish, grass slashing etc)

Major dips in the road associated with movement of pavement, due to highly reactive clay soils.
 Timely repair to wire rope safety barriers.
 Maintenance of amenities and rubbish removal at truck stops/rest areas.

Q5. Any Other Items

Increasing length of speed limited zones in urban areas, e.g. Stawell – highlights need for consideration of a bypass.
 Improved pedestrian safety near fast food outlets – Dimboola Road, Horsham section. (Photos available)
 Potential red light camera locations – Baillie St / Urquhart St and McPherson St / Wilson St intersections (both Western Highway).
 Hamilton St intersection – notable accident statistics – signalisation preferred.
 Congestion at Williams Rd / Duff St signals
 Truck parking / decoupling area in Horsham – to service B-doubles and A-doubles etc.
 Parking areas for heavy vehicles near healthy food options, amenities, and services.

Q6. The Highest Priority for Your Council

Planning an alignment for Western Highway bypass of Horsham, incorporating links to the Wimmera and Henty Highways.

Address correspondence to: **WHAC** Secretariat, PO Box 511 Horsham VIC 3402

Phone 03 5382 9724 **Email** kiar.rook@hrcc.vic.gov.au

Western Highway Action Committee Members

Melton City Moorabool Shire Ballarat City Pyrenees Shire Ararat Rural City Yarriambiack Shire
 Northern Grampians Shire Horsham Rural City Hindmarsh Shire West Wimmera Shire

8 July 2025

Mr John Bradley
Secretary
Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)
Via Engage Victoria

Cc Chris Miller
Chief Executive Officer
State Electricity Commission (SEC)

Dear Mr Bradley

PAYMENT IN LIEU OF RATES (PILOR) SCHEME FOR ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS

The Horsham Regional City Council (HRCC) welcomes the opportunity to make this submission on the *Payment in Lieu of Rates (PILOR) scheme for Energy Storage Systems Discussion Paper*.

As a host to current and future renewable energy projects, including the State Electricity Commission's (SEC) Horsham Energy Park, HRCC is determined to ensure the energy transition provides real benefits to our community. HRCC is directly affected by the issues raised in the consultation paper, and we are taking this opportunity to request a wholesale review of the PILOR Scheme for energy facilities.

Sharing the Benefits of the Renewable Energy Transition

The Victorian Government consistently talks about the opportunities for the energy transition to provide local and regional community benefits. HRCC strongly agrees with this aim, but it is unclear how these benefits will be achieved. While the State Government promotes the importance of shared benefits, this goal is undermined by the Payment in Lieu of Rates (PILOR) scheme. Under this scheme, energy facilities pay much lower rates than they would if they were treated like other commercial and industrial facilities.

HRCC is unaware of any rationale for the different rating treatment of energy facilities. Why should a local business pay rates on the capital improved value of its land, when an energy project developer pays much less? There may have been a basis for lower rates when the renewable energy industry was in its infancy to support its growth, but there is no longer any such need. The renewable energy industry is growing rapidly to replace traditional sources of energy, and there is no basis for it to receive a rates subsidy.

The second reading speech for the legislation that introduced PILOR claimed that it would be "fair to councils and generators". Providing energy facilities with a deep discount on their council rates is not fair to councils. HRCC submits that the State can demonstrate its commitment to shared benefits for local communities by ending PILOR and returning to the ordinary rates scheme for energy facilities, with appropriate modification to the rates cap. If the State were to do this, it would provide evidence of its genuine commitment to sharing the benefits of the transition.

The payment of proper rates for battery energy storage systems is the key mechanism whereby these projects can provide local benefits by contributing to the costs of providing council services to citizens and businesses.

Discussion Paper's Assertions about Batteries

The PILOR discussion paper states on page 5:

Stakeholders have advised DEECA that the current methodology – which was designed with energy generators in mind – may disadvantage the owners of storage technologies and deter investment.

The paper presents no evidence to support the assertion that the current PILOR methodology may disadvantage the owners of storage technologies and deter investment as there is no evidence that it is being deterred; indeed, there is good evidence that energy storage investment in Victoria is very strong. The Clean Energy Council's [Quarterly investment report: Large-scale renewable generation and storage Q1 2025](#) states (page 4):

The first quarter of 2025 saw the **remarkable run of investment commitments to energy storage projects continue...**

The report goes on to describe Q1 2025 as “the best annual start for new storage projects on record” and identifies the largest energy storage project in the country as the Wooreen battery in Victoria.

Further, battery projects are the only energy transition projects that are currently decreasing in price due to the reducing cost of battery cells. This is illustrated by CSIRO's [GenCost 2024-25: Consultation draft](#) which states (page xi):

Large-scale battery costs improved the most in 2024-25 falling by 20% in 2024-25.

The discussion paper suggests that a further reduction in PILOR would attract battery investment:

The PILOR framework could be a useful mechanism for attracting these assets that are critical for Victoria's energy system and deliver affordable and reliable energy to consumers.

The suggestion that the level of council rates has any bearing on battery investment decision making in Victoria is unsubstantiated.

The PILOR discussion paper (page 8) refers to “significant benefits to the state and to local communities” from energy storage projects. The role of batteries in the National Energy Market (NEM) are apparent to all energy users, but the benefits to local communities are not at all guaranteed. The benefits of batteries accrue in proportion to energy use; HRCC's small population is not a significant energy user, and benefits to its community depend in large part on rates paid.

Furthermore, the surge workforce required to build batteries increases demand for local housing and services, putting pressure on residents and local businesses. Once a battery is constructed, it may provide little local employment and economic activity. Applying standard council rates to battery and other energy projects provides a simple and genuine way to share the benefits of these projects with regional Victorian communities.

Battery Energy Storage Systems are Industrial Facilities

Since battery energy storage systems are an intensive, industrial use of land, HRCC submits that the correct way to determine rates for these facilities is the same as for industrial land: that is, the rate should be the industrial rate for the capital improved value of the land. This would provide certainty for council and developers and be consistent with rates for other industrial uses.

The alternative methods suggested in the paper, such as using land footprint, and varying rates in proportion to capacity factors, would undermine the objective of providing shared benefits with the communities that must host energy storage projects. They would also add unnecessary complexity and inconsistency to the rating system and could open debate about differential rates for all manner of different industries.

SEC's Horsham Energy Park as an Example

The SEC is developing the Horsham Energy Park at a cost of \$370 million. The project includes a 119 MW solar farm and a 100 MW, 200 MWh battery. The table below compares three potential, annual, local benefits from the project from industrial rates, the current PILOR scheme, and the proposed community benefit fund.

Industrial Rates	Current PILOR	Community Benefit Fund
\$1,417,470	\$389,849	\$70,000

This comparison illustrates the need for an overhaul of the rates paid by energy facilities. The current PILOR rate provides less than one quarter of the standard rate, and the proposed community benefit fund is paltry by comparison to the real benefits that HRCC would receive from properly rating the facility. Separate to this submission, HRCC will engage with the SEC to seek the payment of acceptable rates for the project.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission in response to the PILOR discussion paper. HRCC would welcome the opportunity for genuine engagement with DEECA on this issue, and we request the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this important matter for our community.

Should you wish to arrange a meeting or require further information I can be contacted via email on gail.gatt@hrcc.vic.gov.au or via mobile on 0458 833 173.

Yours faithfully

Gail Gatt
Chief Executive Officer
HRCC Rural City Council

SEC Renewable Energy Park – Horsham, Community Benefit Fund Submission

What local sector/s do you think the Community Benefit Fund could support?

- ✓ Not-for-profit organisations
- ✓ Community groups / clubs

Who do you think the fund could support?

- ✓ Children (0-12 years)
- ✓ Youth (13-24 years)
- ✓ People with a disability
- ✓ Seniors
- ✓ LGBTQ
- ✓ Farmers
- ✓ Families
- ✓ Business owners
- ✓ Unemployed
- ✓ Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities
- ✓ First Peoples

What initiatives do you think the fund could support?

- ✓ New community assets, i.e. community garden
- ✓ Community asset upgrades i.e. clubrooms
- ✓ Health/mental health programs
- ✓ Community-led events, programs and activities

What other initiatives do you think the fund could support?

Major community projects that Council is committed to delivering and have been in its Long-Term Capital Works Plan e.g. The Wesley Project, Horsham Skate Park, New Playground: Dudley Cornell Park, Lighting Upgrades at major Council Reserves. Noting to provide funds for these

projects the fund would need to be made available in lump sum combining the annual contribution.

What barriers do you think may prevent people from applying for, or benefiting from the fund?
Required

- ✓ Language
- ✓ Digital access
- ✓ Resources (such as time to make an application)

There is \$126,000 available over three years during the construction period (2025-2027). Do you want to see that money made available to the community annually (\$42,000 each year) or in a lump sum?

- ✓ Lump sum

There will be \$70,000 available every year for the life of the project from 2028 (adjusted with the Consumer Price Index). Do you think those funds should be made available annually or lumped into larger sums throughout the life of the project?

- ✓ Every three years

In your opinion, what initiatives would be best supported by a longer-term approach through the Project's \$2 million fund during project operations?

Major community projects that Council is committed to delivering and have been in its Long-Term Capital Works Plan.

Where do you want to see the fund allocated?

- ✓ Anywhere in the Horsham Rural City municipality boundary

Who do you think should manage and administer the fund? Required

- ✓ Local government (oversee the facilitation of a community led committee who will determine how the funds are allocated).

Is there anything else you'd like us to consider when developing the Community Benefit Fund for the Project

The community benefit fund needs to return value and opportunity to hosting communities.

The use of place-based decision making. Council considers that local communities are best placed to determine projects that are of regional and local strategic importance.

Eligible projects must deliver strategic, long-term/ intergenerational benefits for host communities that support greater equity and the sustainable growth of communities.

Local Government Authorities should be explicitly included as an eligible organisation, recognising their place as the service provider, maintainer and delivery agent for many community assets and services in rural and regional communities. An overwhelming majority of critical community assets are owned or managed by Local Government including open spaces, playgrounds, recreation facilities, halls, libraries, senior citizen facilities, kindergartens as well as waste and sustainability activities and Local Government exclusion would be to the wider community's detriment.

Local government could then give consideration to community benefit across the whole municipality but also in the vicinity of the proposal so that local affected people can see some benefit for the inconvenience.

The application processes for the Community Benefits Fund should be designed to ensure there is minimal burden on applicants and the focus is on best outcomes for the region such as grant categories in the program guidelines ensure that the administration requirements are consummate to the grant amount.

Key strategic planning documents, such as the Regional Economic Development Strategies and Council strategic plans, should be required as a reference for decision-making in the allocation of funds. These documents represent significant consultation with communities and articulation of regional priorities.

Flexibility in the fund, that allows for funding accruals and/or bring forward future years funding to support significant projects that are deemed a priority and require substantial investment.

Consideration should be given to a discount on energy bills or an energy bill rebate for the local government area where the project occurs. This would be an equitable way to provide community benefit and also assist in acknowledging cost of living increases.

Any additional comments or thoughts you would like to share?

The table below compares revenue form industrial rates, compared to the current PILOR scheme.

Benefit Source	Annual Local Benefit
Industrial Rates	\$1,417,470
Current PILOR	\$324,120

This comparison illustrates the need for an overhaul of the rates paid by energy facilities. The current PILOR rate provides less than one quarter of the standard rate. Separate to this submission, HRCC will engage with the SEC to seek the payment of acceptable rates for the project.

One of the most equitable ways of ensuring community benefit is for project proposals to pay Council rates applicable to what other businesses in the municipality pay to ensure local government can continue to service local communities at a level required.

June 12, 2025

Dear Mayor and Councillors

Horsham Rural City Council

RE: Street Tree Planting in Mardon Drive, Horsham

Following receipt of letter dated 30 May, 2025, from HRCC in relation to Street Tree Planning in Mardon Drive Horsham and discussions held with residents, we are contacting you to express our concerns with this matter.

We believe there has been individual addresses have lodged requests also.

All property owners in the street have been contacted except for those away and uncontactable.

We have read the HRCC Greater Greening Horsham Strategy.

All residents contactable have advised they do not want the trees for various reasons as noted below:

- Existing and ongoing safety concerns with Mardon Drive being a winding road. Many residents struggle to exit their driveways safely. Additional trees will further impact on their safe car access to the road.
- Due to the established services and structures, planting of additional trees now will be on an adhoc basis impacting the streetscape character the council is trying to achieve.
- Danger to the proximity to services.
- Estate was designed and developed 25+ years ago with no footpath planned along north side of Mardon Drive, therefore no need for canopy cover as there is no path.
- Residents have spent thousands of dollars on architectural designed buildings and gardens to capture views. Planting of trees after the event will impact existing landscaping and potentially buildings

The residents of Mardon Drive request an urgent meeting on site with Senior Council Staff and/or Councillors.

Attached petition evidences 100% of contactable landowners in Mardon Drive disputing the planned planting of trees in said location.

Please respond with details of meeting prior to the commencement of planting of Trees in Mardon Drive.

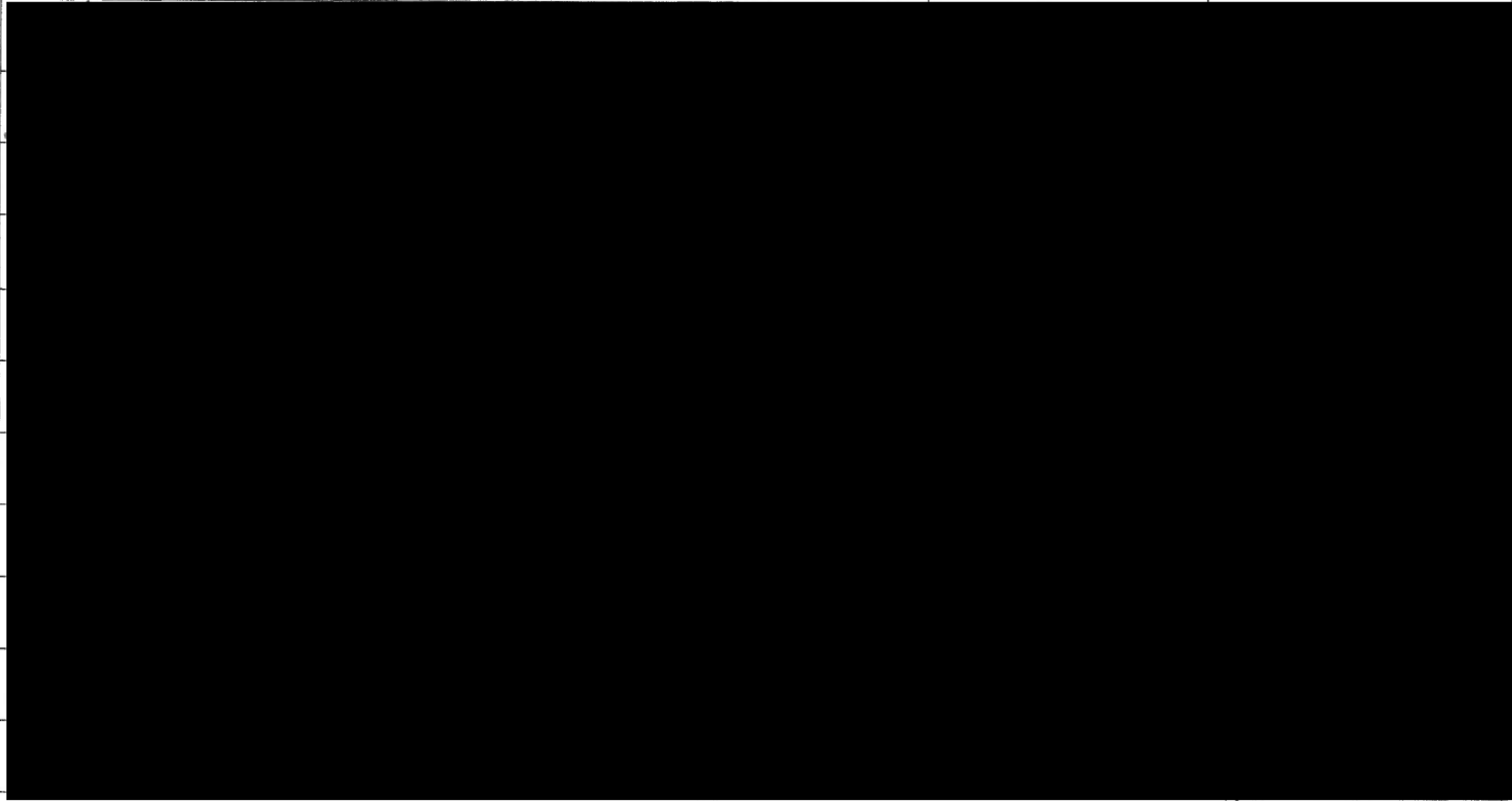
From

The Residents of Mardon Drive

[REDACTED]

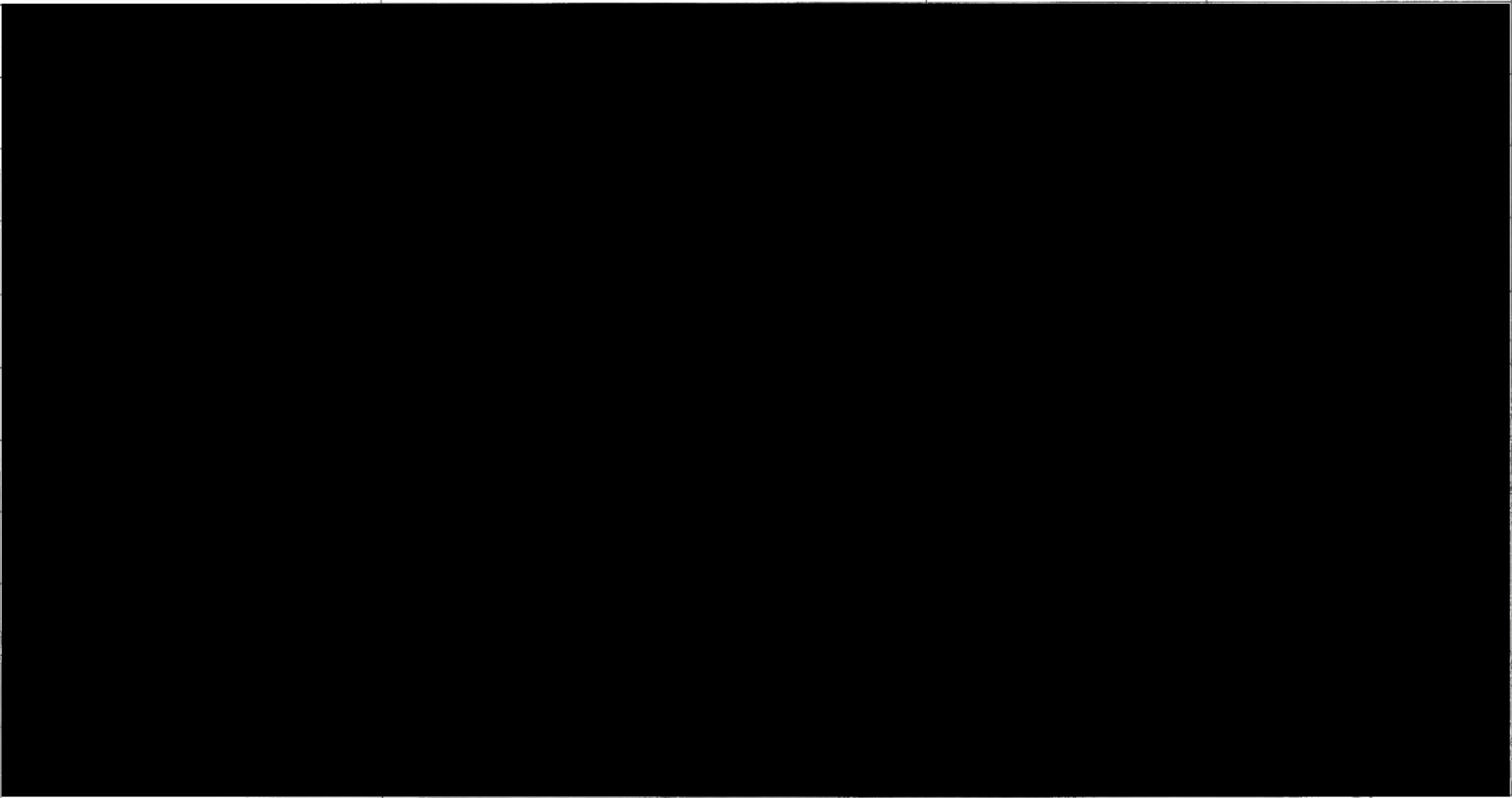
[REDACTED]

The residents of Mardon Drive, Horsham that are against the planting of trees by Horsham Rural City Council on Mardon Drive.

Name	Address	Phone	Signature
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			

12

The residents of Mardon Drive, Horsham that are against the planting of trees by Horsham Rural City Council on Mardon Drive.

Name	Address	Phone	Signature
24			
25			
26			
27			
28			
29			
30			
31			
32			
33			
34			

The residents of Mardon Drive, Horsham that are against the planting of trees by Horsham Rural City Council on Mardon Drive.

	Name	Address	Phone	Signature
35				
36				
37				
38				
39				
40				
41				
42				
43				
44				
45				
46				

The residents of Mardon Drive, Horsham that are against the planting of trees by Horsham Rural City Council on Mardon Drive.

[illegible]



MINUTES OF INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS
COUNCIL BRIEFING MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS
ON MONDAY 30 JUNE 2025 AT 5:30PM

ATTENDED: Cr Ian Ross (Mayor), Cr Brian Klowss, Cr Cam McDonald, Cr Angie Munn, Cr Dean O'Loughlin, Cr Todd Wilson, Gail Gatt, Chief Executive Officer; Kim Hargreaves, Director Corporate Services; Kevin O'Brien, Director Communities and Place; John Martin, Director Infrastructure; Steven Kingshott, Monitor

APOLOGIES: Cr Bec Sluggett

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

2. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST SEC 130 and 131, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2020 AND HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL GOVERNANCE RULES

3. PRESENTATIONS

3.1 Deliberative Engagement with Councillors **Appendix 3.1**

5:30pm – 7:00pm

Attending: Karina Dooley, Projectura

4. GENERAL DISCUSSION (Gail Gatt) **15mins**

4.1 Priority projects and readiness for grant applications

5. CLOSE

The meeting closed at 7:45pm

DINNER

GAIL GATT
Chief Executive Officer



MINUTES OF INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS
COUNCIL BRIEFING MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS
ON MONDAY 7 JULY 2025 AT 5:30PM

ATTENDED: Cr Ian Ross (Mayor), Cr Brian Klowss (left meeting at 6:45pm), Cr Cam McDonald, Cr Angie Munn, Cr Dean O'Loughlin, Cr Bec Sluggett, Cr Todd Wilson, Gail Gatt, Chief Executive Officer; Kim Hargreaves, Director Corporate Services; Kevin O'Brien, Director Communities and Place; John Martin, Director Infrastructure

APOLOGIES: NIL

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

2. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST SEC 130 and 131, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2020 AND HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL GOVERNANCE RULES

Gail Gatt declared a Conflict of Interest for Item 5.1 (Independent Member CEO ERC Recruitment) and left the room when item was discussed. Gail has completed a Conflict of Interest form.

3. COUNCIL MEETING REPORTS FOR DISCUSSION

3.1 Regfest **Appendix 3.1** **5:30pm – 6:00pm**
Attending: Annie Mintern

3.2 Road Management Plan Review Process **Appendix 3.2** **6:00pm – 6:10pm**

4. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

4.1 Reclaimed water project **Appendix 4.1** **6:15pm – 6:20pm**

5. CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS

5.1 Independent Member CEO ERC Recruitment **6:20pm – 6:50pm**
Gail Gatt, Kevin O'Brien and John Martin left the meeting at 6:15pm and returned at 6:45pm.
Kim Hargreaves left the meeting at 6:30pm and returned at 6:40pm.

6. GENERAL DISCUSSION (Gail Gatt) **15mins**

7. CLOSE

The meeting closed at 8:30pm

DINNER

GAIL GATT
Chief Executive Officer



MINUTES OF INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS
COUNCIL BRIEFING MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS
ON MONDAY 14 JULY 2025 AT 5:30PM

ATTENDED: Cr Ian Ross (Mayor), Cr Brian Klowss, Cr Cam McDonald, Cr Angie Munn, Cr Dean O'Loughlin, Cr Bec Sluggett, Cr Todd Wilson, Gail Gatt, Chief Executive Officer; Kim Hargreaves, Director Corporate Services; Kevin O'Brien, Director Communities and Place; John Martin, Director Infrastructure

APOLOGIES: NIL

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

2. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST SEC 130 and 131, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2020 AND HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL GOVERNANCE RULES

3. PRESENTATIONS

3.1 Horsham & Natimuk Housing & Affordability Study **Appendix 3.1** 5:30pm – 6:15pm

Attending: Anthony Calthorpe (*online*), Joel Hastings, and SGS Economics and Planning (Emily Hobbs and Caz Redding) (*in person*)

4. COUNCIL MEETING REPORTS FOR DISCUSSION

4.1	Event Grants Appendix 4.1 (Deferred to 21 July Briefing)	6:15pm – 6:25pm
4.2	Mardon Drive Street Trees Petition Appendix 4.2	6:25pm – 6:35pm
4.3	Western Highway Advocacy Strategy Appendix 4.3	6:35pm – 6:45pm
4.4	Gross Bridge Tender evaluation Appendix 4.4	6:45pm – 6:55pm
4.5	Payment in lieu of rates scheme for energy storage systems	6:55pm – 7:10pm

5. CONFIDENTIAL REPORT

5.1 Audit and Risk Committee Minutes **Appendix 5.1** 7:10pm – 7:20pm

6. GENERAL DISCUSSION (Gail Gatt) 7:20pm – 7:35pm

7. CLOSE

The meeting closed at 8:27pm

GAIL GATT
Chief Executive Officer



MINUTES OF INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS
COUNCIL BRIEFING MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS
ON MONDAY 21 JULY 2025 AT 5:32PM

TO ATTEND: Cr Ian Ross (Mayor), Cr Brian Klowss, Cr Cam McDonald, Cr Angie Munn, Cr Dean O'Loughlin, Cr Bec Sluggett, Cr Todd Wilson, Gail Gatt, Chief Executive Officer; Kim Hargreaves, Director Corporate Services; Kevin O'Brien, Director Communities and Place; John Martin, Director Infrastructure

APOLOGIES: NIL

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

2. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST SEC 130 and 131, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2020 AND HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL GOVERNANCE RULES

*Cr Brian Klowss declared a Conflict of Interest for Item 4.3. Cr Klowss to provide a COI form.
 Cr Bec Sluggett declared a Conflict of Interest for Item 5.2. Cr Sluggett provided a COI form.
 Gail Gatt declared a Conflict of Interest for Item 8. Gail provided a COI form.*

3. PRESENTATIONS

3.1 ARC Chair - Biannual report to Council (Kim) **Appendix 3.1** **5:30pm – 5:50pm**

Attending: Marilyn Kearney

4. COUNCIL MEETING REPORTS FOR DISCUSSION

4.1 Mining Committee ToR (Kevin) **Appendix 4.1** **5:50pm – 6:20pm**

Attending: Joel Hastings

4.2 Key Strategic Projects & Project Pipeline (John) **Appendix 4.2** **6:20pm – 7:20pm**

4.3 Events Grants (Kim) **Appendix 4.3** **7:20pm – 7:30pm**

4.4 State Government Submissions- Horsham Solar Park and PiLoR (Kevin) **Appendix 4.4** **7:30pm – 7:40pm**

5. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

5.1 VCAT, Building & Planning Permit Report and Proposed Refusals (Kevin) **Appendix 5.1**

Cr Bec Sluggett left the room at 8:15pm.

5.2 HRLE Fees (John) **Appendix 5.2**

Cr Bec Sluggett returned to the room at 8:17pm.

6. CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS

6.1 Contracts of Sale – Lots 3, 13 and 14 WAL Hub (Kim) **7:40pm – 7:55pm**

7. GENERAL DISCUSSION (Gail Gatt) 15mins

- Swearing in of Youth Council - 18 August
- Top Towns Event on Wednesday
- MAV Motions

8. CLOSE

The meeting closed at 8:40pm

Gail Gatt, John Martin and Kevin O'Brien left the meeting.

9. CEO ERC Meeting

Meeting concluded at 8:58pm

DINNER

GAIL GATT
Chief Executive Officer



Minutes

Natimuk Economic & Social Plan Project Advisory Committee

11 June 2025 at 6pm

NC2

Attending:

Annie Mintern, Caroline Price, Bill Lovel, Gary Rasmussen, Alex Williams, Ellen Cowling, Emilee Jones-Pritchard

Guests: Dianna Blake Re: location of new footbridge

Apologies: Akshay Rajput

1. Welcome/Introductions

2. Disclosure of Conflict of Interest

3. Presentation: Location of New Footbridge

Council has \$2m budget for pedestrian roadways, bike paths, to improve safety. Road safety treatments to slow down traffic.

E.g. Elm St footpath creek bridge - There were 8 proposals to council. Natimuk's submission was knocked back. It was suggested that it was in the wrong place. Is there a more suitable location or another suggestion for pedestrian safety? e.g. safety barriers for vision impaired.

Ideas: Tactile areas on the footpath for visually impaired. Pedestrian areas at the Doctor/Nursing home, seal the bike path to prevent ant hills, pipe/gutter cover, pedestrian island at the back of the milk bar and newsagent, make the road thinner, pedestrian crossing, something near the primary school and kinder? Reach out to community to find out what they need

Action: Emilee to put notice on Natimuk Community Noticeboard to get people's feedback and suggestions.

Bike path signage (different conversation – Dianna has different funding available for a variety of projects).

Action: Caroline to talk to Dianna about the bike path/Arapiles Big Sky Trail.

Are there areas that don't have footpaths?

Action: Dianna to share information about footpath fund to put something on Natimuk Community Notice Board Facebook page for people's input.

Action: Caroline to organise earlier meeting to have a walk around

4. Confirmation of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Moved: Bill **Seconded:** Emilee

5. Business arising from previous meeting

5.1 Pat Ford to share slides of Arapiles Historical Society presentation after they present to HRCC

Action: Annie to share the slides at next meeting

5.2 Annie to contact SED to get a quote for business proposal similar to the Green Lake Remediation Business Case – Buloke Shire Council Sep 2017 (SED)

Annie spoke to Bernie Dunn. He suggested to do a feasibility study first.

5.3 Annie to contact Amber about the \$100k VFA grant for lake feasibility study to include reducing size of lake and proposed pipeline to Wimmera River

Annie got a quote from Mark Carter: \$20-\$25k for feasibility study.

5.4 Annie to talk to Conor about Tiny Towns Funding

Action: Annie to follow up with Conor, Could be an option – Up to \$20k available

5.5 Annie to follow up on whether there is an option to put a cover over The Verge in the winter months

Action: Caroline to follow up with Dianna about possible cover.

5.6 Caroline to send video link of Natimuk Tiny Towns Award Submission - **Done**

5.7 Emillee to put petition in post office and pub and create a google form online to include in Natimuk socials/website

Action: Caroline -Email poster of creek for petition to Emillee and Ellen.

Action: Caroline to create QR code for progress press for creek petition.

5.8 Annie to send group the Grants Finder link – **Done**

5.9 Annie to share updated Action List with the minutes - **Done**

5.10 Annie to provide group with map for group to point out areas where seating is needed. She will then digitise and send to WCMA

Action – Bill and Ellie to collect map from Sal at the Post office to mark out seating and weed removal areas – to submit to Luke Austin (www.wcma.vic.gov.au > Advice & Services > Works on Waterways) Permit to clear weed in the creek is free to do, WCMA can come out and help devise a management plan.

5.11 Annie to share list of footpaths included in this year's program received from John Martin – **Done** – Footpath near school for next year.

5.12 Annie to follow up with DEECA with what is happening with the creek clean up –

Action: Annie to ask Luke Mitton.

5.13 Ellen to call bus driver and find out why he won't park at the shelter. **Ellen left messages but he hasn't called back.**

Action: Caroline to find out about PTV about removing sign from school bus stop

5.14 Everyone to look on the Grant Finder list when Annie sends it to see what grants might be available for different projects.

5.15 Caroline to follow up why the bollards are in the car park.

Action: Caroline to follow up with Vicroads.

6. Other Business

6.1 Action List – completed several tasks (See Action List)

6.2 EV Charging Station

Annie mentioned that the budget was used for the bus shelter due to it going over budget and not being able to find a suitable location for the EV charger at the time. It was also under budgeted.

Suggestion: That the EV charger be put near the Dog Park and Caravan Parking opposite the Historical Society. This area could also include Tourist Signage of GWMT Silo Art Trail/Grampians with QR code to Visitor App.

6.3 Parks Vic

Temporary office being set up at NC2 until Parks office opens in Elmes St. Will put on 2 Parks Rangers to educate public about Arapiles/Sacred sites – Not to be writing out fines. BGLC will also be a part of this process and will provide Indigenous Rangers in the future. Could be a great opportunity to provide cultural tourism.

Action: Bill to provide information for Newspapers to provide a positive story for Natimuk

7. Meeting Closed 7:30pm

8. Next Meeting – 9 July 6pm at NC2