

AGENDA

MEETING OF THE
HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL

To be held on

23 March 2026

At 5.30pm

In the

Roberts Avenue Kindergarten

23 Roberts Avenue, HORSHAM



**COUNCILLORS are respectfully requested to attend the Council Meeting
of the Horsham Rural City Council to be held on 23 March 2026
in the Roberts Avenue Kindergarten, 23 Roberts Avenue, 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 Brian Klowss 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 February 2026 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.

8. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

REPORTS FOR COUNCIL DECISION 6

9. OFFICERS REPORTS 6

9.1 RELEASE OF DRAFT 2026-2027 FEES AND CHARGES REGISTER FOR COMMENT6

9.2 INDICATIVE FOUR-YEAR CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM FOR THE 2026-27 BUDGET 10

9.3 HORSHAM MUNICIPAL PLAY SPACES STRATEGY 13

9.4 ACTIVE HORSHAM 21

9.5 RESOURCE READY: NORTH-WESTERN VICTORIA ENERGY AND MINING AND READINESS STRATEGY..... 26

9.6 MAV STATE COUNCIL – MAY 2026 - MOTIONS 32

9.7 SUBMISSION TO AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT’S – HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES 36

9.8 HORSHAM REGIONAL LIVESTOCK EXCHANGE – ADVISORY COMMITTEE – TERMS OF REFERENCE 40

10. COUNCILLOR REPORTS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 43

11. URGENT BUSINESS..... 45

12. PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS 46

13. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS..... 47

13.1 INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS – RECORD OF MEETINGS..... 47

13.2 COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES 47

14. NOTICE OF MOTION 48

15. CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

15.1 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MINUTES
Defined as confidential information in accordance with Local Government Act 2020 - Section 3(1)(f) - Personal Information

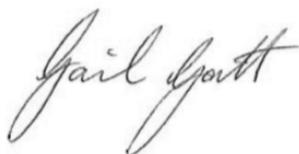
15.2 CEO EMPLOYMENT AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE REPORT: FEBRUARY 2026
Defined as confidential information in accordance with Local Government Act 2020 - Section 3(1)(f) - Personal Information

15.3 HORSHAM BYPASS PLANNING PROJECT – COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP NOMINATIONS
Defined as confidential information in accordance with Local Government Act 2020 - Section 3(1)(f) - Personal Information

16. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

16.1 INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS – RECORD OF MEETINGS.....
Defined as confidential information in accordance with Local Government Act 2020 - Section 3(1)(h) - Confidential Meeting Information

CLOSE



GAIL GATT
Chief Executive Officer

REPORTS FOR COUNCIL DECISION

9. OFFICERS REPORTS

9.1 RELEASE OF DRAFT 2026-2027 FEES AND CHARGES REGISTER FOR COMMENT

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Director: | Kim Hargreaves |
| Directorate: | Corporate Services |
| File Number: | F18/A14/000001 |

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

Draft 2026-27 Fees and Charges Register (**Appendix 9.1A**)

Purpose

To approve the release of the 2026-27 Fees and Charges Register for a period of community engagement.

Summary

- The 2026-2027 Budget is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and is prepared through a process of consultation and discussion with Council Officers and Councillors. It aligns with objectives set out in the 2025-2029 Council Plan.
- The disclosure of fees and charges to be levied for various goods and services provided during the budget year is optional and is not required by legislation however it is considered best practice and good governance to set user fees and charges as part of the budget process.
- The fees and charges document sets out the amounts that will be charged in respect to various goods and services during the 2026-2027 financial year.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorse the release of the draft 2026-2027 Fees and Charges Register to inform the community of council's planned charges.
2. Confirm that a period of community engagement will be undertaken by placing the documents on Council's website for a period of 3 weeks from 25 March to 16 April 2026
3. Will consider the 2026-2027 Fees and Charges Register and community feedback, for adoption at its meeting in May 2026.

REPORT

Background

The Local Government Victoria (LGV) Better Practice Guide Model Budget 2025-26 provides that '*the disclosure of fees and charges to be levied for various goods and services provided during the budget year is optional and is not required by legislation. While not required it is considered best practice and good governance for disclosure purposes to consider the setting of user fees and charges set by Council as part of the budget process*'.

LGV also provides a recommended format for the Fees and Charges in the Model Budget 2026-27 provided to the sector. The format is considered better practice by LGV, so the draft HRCC Fees and Charges Register has been prepared in accordance with that guidance.

The Register also includes fees and charges set by statute in accordance with legislative requirements. All fees and charges included in the document are based on information available at the time of publishing and may vary during the financial year subject to any changes in Council's policy or legislation. The Register is therefore presented as a document separate to the budget to make it easier to present any required changes for consideration by Council.

Discussion

The draft Fees and Charges Register is presented to Council for approval to release the document for a period of community engagement. The intention of releasing the document is to provide the community with the opportunity to provide feedback while ensuring the community and customers are aware of the changes to fees in advance of any changes being made.

It is proposed that the document be provided for community feedback for a period of three weeks from 25 March to 16 April 2026. The engagement will be undertaken by placing the documents on Council's website. Feedback received will then be presented to Councillors for consideration before the final draft document is presented to Council for adoption at the Council Meeting on 25 May 2026.

Options to Consider

1. Council do not provide the draft Fees and Charges Register to the community for their feedback as there is no legislative requirement to do so.
2. Council provide the draft Fees and Charges Register to disclose the fees and charges they intend to levy for various goods and services in advance of the charges taking effect and seek community feedback on those fees and charges.

Recommended noting the provision of such information is considered best practice and good governance.

Sustainability Implications

Rate capping continues to place restrictions on Council's ability to raise its own source income and creates an ever-increasing reliance on grants from other tiers of government, the availability of which can change over time. Council's share of the overall tax revenues across all tiers of government is also a factor as additional responsibilities and obligations are shifted to Council without adequate consideration of the implications. These issues mean that Council must be mindful of its own financial sustainability and therefore carefully consider the impact of user fee revenue, balancing recovering funds to contribute to the financial operations of council with customers capacity to pay.

Community Engagement

The draft Fees and Charges Register has been discussed with Councillors at a Briefing. Council is now being asked to release the document to the community for their consideration in advance of the adoption of the budget for the reasons outlined in this report.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The provision of the draft the draft Fees and Charges Register to the community in advance of any adoption of those Fees and Charges represents Council's commitment to continuous improvement, in this instance by improved transparency through engagement with the community.

Collaboration

The draft Fees and Charges document is prepared in accordance with sector guidance provided by Local Government Victoria and other key sector entities to ensure Council meets its legislative responsibilities. Whilst there is no specific model provided for Fees and Charges, there is a recommendation for format presented in the Model Budget that is considered better practice by LGV so HRCC have prepared their register in accordance with that guidance.

Financial Implications

The fees and charges directly affect the Budget as they represent both statutory and user fees. On that basis they represent a form of revenue within the budget. Council's methodology for fees and charges pricing is set out in the Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

The fees and charges have been developed in accordance with the requirements of the Better Practice Guide which accompanies the Local Government Model Budget provided by Local Government Victoria. Relevant statutory charges set by other levels of government and collected by Council have been included in the Register to assist the community in navigating this complex area.

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

The document has been prepared with reference to Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029.

Risk Implications

The *Local Government Act 2020* provides the following overarching governance principles and supporting principles at s9:

- (1) A Council must in the performance of its role give effect to the overarching governance principles.
- (2) The following are the overarching governance principles—
 - (g) the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured ((s9(2)(g)).
- (3) In giving effect to the overarching governance principles, a Council must take into account the following supporting principles—
 - (d) including the financial management principles.

The draft document presented for release to the community has been prepared in accordance with these principles and therefore complies with the legislative requirements outlined above. It has also been prepared in accordance with the model guidance provided by LGV for the sector therefore further mitigating risks to Council.

Conclusion

The draft document is proposed for release to the community for their feedback for a period of three weeks from 25 March to 16 April 2026. Feedback will be considered and used to inform the final draft document which will be presented to Council for adoption at the May meeting.

9.2 INDICATIVE FOUR-YEAR CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM FOR THE 2026-27 BUDGET

| | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Director: | John Martin |
| Directorate: | Infrastructure |
| File Number: | F18/A10/000001 |

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

Nil

Purpose

To seek pre-approval for the release of the indicative four-year Capital Works Program to the community for feedback.

Summary

- Councillors have provided guidance on the development of the indicative four-year Capital Works program through a series of workshops commencing in August 2025.
- These workshops have included consideration of projects drawn from the Council Plan and Council's Advocacy priorities.
- The process has been informed by the level of capital investment that Council can afford outlined in the adopted Long Term Financial Plan 2025-35.
- While some refinement is still required to achieve a final draft Capital Works program for inclusion in the 2026-27 budget, it is now considered timely to seek community input on the Capital Works program, to inform the final draft budget.
- It is therefore proposed to release the indicative four-year Capital Works program for the period 25 March to 16 April 2026 inclusive to seek the community's feedback.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorse the release of the indicative four-year Capital Works program for community's feedback from 25 March to 16 April 2026 inclusive, subject to a further review by Councillors before release.
2. Will consider community feedback before finalisations of the 2026-2027 Budget.

REPORT

Background

Preparation of Council's indicative four-year Capital Works program has drawn substantially on the previously approved 2025-26 Budget, which was supplemented with projections to 2028-29 including specific Capital Works programs for the later years.

Since adoption of the 2025-26 budget, Council has completed its new Council Plan and established a new set of advocacy priorities. These documents have been major contributors to the development of the 2026-27 budget. Initial Councillor workshops on the capital program were held in August and September 2025, with the outcomes from this work reviewed at briefings during January and February 2026, further shaping the Capital Works program to achieve a balance of priorities and affordability.

Discussion

A key commitment within the program has been recognition of the importance of asset renewal to enable ongoing service provision. In 2026-27, \$9.0 million is proposed to be invested in renewing Council's portfolio of assets, covering critical service delivery in the areas of roads, buildings, parks and gardens, bridges, drainage footpaths and more. Asset renewal has been assigned the highest priority in developing the Capital Works program.

Council has also made a series of commitments to a range of priority projects including:

- Refurbishment of the Wesley Performing Arts Centre, at a cost of \$2.7 m over the next two years (i.e. 2026-27 and 2027-28)
- Plans to upgrade some key roads servicing our expanding industrial areas, including Freight Terminal Road, Dooen (\$1.7m), and Kenny Road, Horsham (\$2.6m). Both are proposed to be the subject of grant applications for a significant proportion of their cost.
- Lighting upgrades at two key sporting facilities, being Haven Tennis Courts (\$0.59m) and Cameron Oval Laharum (\$0.45m), both of which are also subject to grants.
- A grant application to extend the reclaimed water system to service Council's Wotonga Basin pumps, also subject to a grant application for a total project cost of \$0.65m, of which Council's contribution is proposed to be \$0.17m.
- Planning for the upgrade to the City Oval pavilion, in partnership with the Horsham Football and Netball Club (\$0.08m).

Beyond that there are a range of projects aimed at supporting the implementation of Council strategies and delivering ongoing programs.

Options to Consider

Projects identified in the Capital Works program are sourced primarily from Council Plans and Strategies that have been informed by community input. Council has been through a series of workshops aiming to refine the program to identify the priorities it believes best addresses the needs of the community.

Council is now seeking further feedback from the community to assist the final review of the indicative four-year Capital Works program to inform the development of the budget .

Sustainability Implications

Nil

Community Engagement

This report is proposing that the indicative four-year Capital Works program be released for community feedback to assist in shaping the final budget.

A detailed Capital Works program for each of the four-years will be released, in a format similar to the final budget document. This will list individual projects across the four years, including the source of funding for the projects.

This information will be published on Council's website, and the community will be invited to make comment between 25 March and 16 April 2026 inclusive. Council will review this feedback during its final refinements to the draft budget.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

N/A

Collaboration

N/A

Financial Implications

The financial summary of the initial four-year Capital Works program is as follows:

- Proposed expenditure for the 2026-27 financial year is \$21.9 m
- Proposed four-year expenditure is \$79.1 m
- Anticipated grant revenue to support this program is estimated at \$20.1 m, including \$10.0 m from the Federal Government's Roads to Recovery program.
- Loans of \$5.3 m are proposed.
- Remaining funds from Council's specific purpose reserves and general revenue.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

N/A

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

Projects identified in the Capital Works program are drawn from a range of Council Plans and Strategies. The overall affordability of the Capital Works program is also strongly guided by the Long Term Financial Plan and Asset Plan.

Risk Implications

Community consultation is proposed to enhance the community's awareness of the draft Capital Works program to ensure that it aligns with their expectations.

Conclusion

This report proposes the release of the draft 2026-30 Capital Works program for community feedback for three weeks.

9.3 HORSHAM MUNICIPAL PLAY SPACES STRATEGY

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Director: | Brett Luxford |
| Directorate: | Communities and Place |
| File Number: | F19/A11/000001 |

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

Issues and Opportunities Report (**Appendix 9.3A**)

Site assessments review and report – Municipal wide (**Appendix 9.3B**)

Proposed Play Spaces Strategy Public Engagement Plan 2026 (**Appendix 9.3C**)

Draft Horsham Municipal Play Spaces Strategy Feb 2026 (**Appendix 9.3D**)

Purpose

To present Council with the draft Horsham Municipal Play Spaces Strategy and associated documents and seek approval to release the draft Strategy for public consultation.

Summary

The Horsham Municipal Play Spaces' Strategy has been developed to guide the future planning, development and renewal of play spaces across the municipality. Prior to its development, there was limited guidance to the management, development or improvement to play spaces across the municipality

During the initial development of the strategy, public engagement provided insight into how existing play spaces are used, current gaps in provision, and community aspirations for more inclusive, accessible and engaging play opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.

Site and condition assessments identified that many existing play spaces:

- Are of a poor standard
- Cater to a limited age range of users
- Lack diversity, creativity and inclusive play opportunities
- Are not equitably distributed across the Horsham urban area
- Do not align with a clear hierarchy of development

A draft implementation plan and draft Schedule of Capital Works have been developed prioritising upgrades to play spaces. Council has been briefed and has provided guidance on planned upgrades to reflect Council priorities and enable outcomes of the 2025-2029 HRCC Council Plan to be met.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Note the draft Horsham Municipal Play Spaces Strategy and associated documents.

-
2. Endorse release of the draft Horsham Municipal Play Spaces Strategy for public consultation for a period of 4 weeks from 25 March to 24 April 2026.

REPORT

Background

Horsham Rural City Council currently maintains over 30 playgrounds, including 6 in surrounding townships. Council does not currently have a dedicated Play Spaces Strategy to guide the planning, renewal, responsible development and equitable distribution of these assets. The social and community value of these open space assets is well documented.

Existing strategic documents, including the *Horsham Open Space Strategy (2019)* and *Social Infrastructure Plan (2020)*, identify a hierarchy of open spaces from Local through to Regional. However, there is currently no agreed framework defining development and design expectations for contemporary, inclusive play across different age and ability levels. As a result, the selection of play equipment and supporting infrastructure has not reflected:

- Contemporary play principles
- Developmental needs across different age groups
- Social and accessibility needs of the broader community
- A consistent hierarchy of development.

The draft Play Spaces Strategy (Appendix 4) adopts a holistic approach to play, recognising that play spaces include the entire park or reserve and recommend integrating landscaping, nature-based elements, unstructured play opportunities and social gathering spaces.

Implementation of the Play Spaces' strategy requires a staged approach, with budget and resourcing sourced from the HRCC Long Term Capital plan, external funding sources, government partners and developers. A draft capital work schedule with priorities aligned to the draft strategy and audit has been developed.

Discussion

The draft Strategy has been informed by a comprehensive and staged development process, that has involved the:

- Establishment of project governance and a Project Control Group
- Development of a Project Management Plan
- Completion of a Gender Impact Assessment
- Review of Council strategies, national trends and best practice guidance
- Preparation of an Issues and Opportunities Report (Appendix 1)
- Delivery of Phase 1 public engagement (completed)
- Confirmation of the Strategy Vision and Guiding Principles (via public engagement)
- Detailed site and condition assessments of play spaces across the municipality (Appendix 2)
- Development of a draft Capital Works Schedule
- Development of a draft Implementation plan
- Preparation of a proposed Engagement Plan for the draft Strategy (Appendix 3)
- Preparation of the draft Strategy (Appendix 4)

Key Findings

Key findings from the initial engagement, site assessments and benchmarking include:

- Existing play spaces do not meet contemporary expectations for creative, imaginative or social play

-
- Limited provision of nature-based and unstructured play
 - Play equipment is generally prescriptive and caters primarily for children aged 2–8 years
 - Limited support for social interaction, all-year use and accessibility
 - Lack of diversity between play spaces across the municipality
 - Insufficient shade, seating and shelter at many sites

Outcomes

The draft Strategy delivers the following key outcomes for Council:

- A diverse and inclusive network of play spaces catering to different ages, abilities and interests
- Improved opportunities for social connection and intergenerational use
- A clear hierarchy of Local, Neighbourhood and Regional play spaces
- An efficient, considered and strategic use of Council resources

These outcomes will be achieved through the following approaches:

- a. Target Investment
- b. Referencing a Hierarchy of Play Spaces
- c. Co locating and flexibly using infrastructure

a. Targeted Investment

The Strategy prioritises the renewal of existing Local play spaces to maximise community benefit within existing budget projections, while enabling future development of Neighbourhood and Regional play spaces through staged investment, external funding and potentially new partnerships.

b. Hierarchy of Play Spaces

Implementing a hierarchy of play spaces ensures:

- Appropriate scale and level of development (local play options)
- Distinctive and complementary play experiences (sites reflect local conditions)
- Responsible use of resources (no over-development)
- Sustainable development within existing resources (reflecting annual budget processes)
- Opportunity to create a network of play experiences (encourage movement throughout the network)

c. Co-location and Flexible Use

The Strategy supports shared use of public space, community buildings and infrastructure.

Neighbourhood destinations provide a range of elements including parking, toilets, BBQ, community sport (tennis, oval, bowling green) pavilion, lighting and retail alternatives. Neighbourhood play spaces are designed to cater for broader usage of the site – not just local residents but people who visit the site for a range of reasons and who generally stay at the site for longer periods of time.

Locating a range of supporting infrastructure at a single site encourages shared activity and usage, (people go where people are) and promote a shift from single-use, club-specific venues to flexible, shared-use community infrastructure. Play spaces outside the Horsham urban area have all been categorised as being at a Neighbourhood level. This will enable broad community benefit, particularly in smaller townships and regional areas where resources are limited.

Tourism and Economic Benefit

Regional play spaces are destinations where people travel to and enjoy the space for extended periods of time.

Regional play spaces support health and wellbeing outcomes of the community, providing local destination sites that contain a diversity of experiences for different ages, abilities and interests.

Regional play spaces also create increased visitation, tourism potential and associated economic activity. While requiring higher levels of investment and maintenance, when developed strategically, regional play spaces can deliver long-term social and economic value to the community.

Implementation

The Strategy proposes a staged and considered implementation approach that involves

- Priority upgrades to Local play spaces funded through annual budget processes
- The capacity to treat the nominated annual allocation for local playspaces as a playspace 'reserve' over the 10-year period, to enable several smaller projects or planning work to be carried out with these resources in any one year, and with any underspend carried forward into the 'reserve'.
- Neighbourhood and Regional projects to be subject to further business cases, detailed planning and external funding opportunities. The level of commitment will be determined as per Council's annual budget development cycle.
- Investigating partnerships to extend the municipal network with other playground 'owners', ie: Crown and public lands, underutilised private land
- Ensuring planning approval processes require appropriate development of new residential areas.

Local play spaces provide access and community benefit across the network and will be prioritised. Resourcing will be via annual budget processes. A prioritisation framework has been developed and reflects the outcome of detailed site assessments.

Options to Consider

Council may:

1. Request further information prior to the finalisation of the draft strategy and before public engagement
2. Release the draft strategy for public feedback and engagement for a period of 4 weeks
3. Do not proceed with the Strategy

Recommendation:

Option 2: Release the draft strategy for public feedback and engagement for a period of 4 weeks

Sustainability Implications

The Strategy supports:

- **Social sustainability:** Inclusion, health, wellbeing and social connection
- **Environmental sustainability:** Shared-use infrastructure, nature-based play and climate-responsive design
- **Economic sustainability:** Efficient investment, asset optimisation and tourism potential

Community Engagement

Public engagement (Phase 1) provided a significant influence in the development of the draft Strategy. Engagement involved input from more than 600 participants. This included 567 responses to a HRCC have Your Say survey, feedback through community pop-ups (Spring Garden Festival, Nature and Waterplay Park and Haven market) and both a community and an internal workshop of HRCC officers.

Students from Horsham College (Years 8 and 11) also contributed to the development of the strategy.

Community Feedback obtained through– Phase 1

Community priorities identified through Phase 1 public engagement include:

- Increased shade and seating
- Retention and enhancement of green space and trees
- Greater emphasis on nature-based play
- More diverse play opportunities
- Play options for a wider range of ages, including teenagers and young adults
- Improved information about play locations and features
- Spaces that support social gathering and passive supervision

Below: excerpt from the Engagement Summary Report:

Top ten important features by interest in play spaces

| Children and young people n=108 | Adult family members n=357 | Community members n=144 |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Equipment for all ages | 1. Plenty of shade | 1. Toilets |
| 2. Plenty of shade | 2. Variety of play experiences | 2. Equipment for all ages |
| 3. Places to sit/rest | 3. Equipment for all ages | 3. Plenty of shade |
| 4. Toilets | 4. Toilets | 4. Places to sit/rest |
| 5. Green grass | 5. Places to sit/rest | 5. Green grass |
| 6. Access to drinking water | 6. Green grass | 6. Access to drinking water |
| 7. Challenging/adventure play | 7. Challenging/adventure play | 7. Variety of play experiences |
| 8. Close to home | 8. Close to home | 8. Outdoor fitness equipment |
| 9. Variety of play experiences | 9. Nature play | 9. Barbecue and picnic facilities |
| 10. Outdoor fitness equipment | 10. Barbecue and picnic facilities | 10. Nature play |

Phase 2 public engagement (March - April 2026) will include community pop-ups, an online survey, internal workshops and information displays across key Council facilities.

This will provide our community with the opportunity to provide essential feedback to ensure the Play Spaces – *Play for All* strategy reflects the needs and expectations of our community.

A draft Schedule of Capital Works and Implementation Plan will be internal documents that guide budget allocations, resourcing and operations, and will be referenced in response to community requests to upgrade or develop new play spaces.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The Strategy promotes innovation by:

- Establishing a diverse network of play experiences
- Embedding nature-based and climate-responsive design
- Encouraging co-location and shared-use models
- Supporting ongoing monitoring and annual review

Collaboration

Delivery of the Strategy will involve collaboration with:

- Other land managers
- External agencies
- Commercial partners

These partnerships will strengthen funding applications and delivery outcomes.

Financial Implications

- Local play space upgrades will be funded through existing capital works planning
- An annual allocation will prioritise upgrades to existing Local play spaces
- Neighbourhood and Regional projects will involve an initial planning investment (internally funded) and will seek external funding for capital works.

The Strategy supports future capital planning and improves Council's capacity to attract grant funding.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not Applicable

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

The Strategy aligns with:

- **Horsham Council Plan 2025–2029**

Liveability

Promote health and wellbeing for people of all ages and abilities

Create welcoming places that reflect our identity and encourage connection

Sustainability

Adapt to minimise climate impacts

Accessibility

Improve access to quality services, public space and facilities

Leadership

Make transparent and evidence-based decisions

Demonstrate sound financial and asset management

Strengthen engagement, advocacy and partnerships.

- Horsham Open Space Strategy 2019
- Social Infrastructure Plan 2020
- Central Activity District Revitalisation Plan 2023

Risk Implications

Without an endorsed Strategy supported by a staged and responsible implementation and capital plan:

- External funding opportunities will be limited

- Play provision will remain at a poor quality and be inconsistent across the municipality
- Inequities in access and distribution will continue
- Opportunities to increase usage and community benefit of existing assets will be missed

Conclusion

The Horsham Municipal Play Spaces Strategy provides a clear, evidence-based framework to improve the quality, equity and sustainability of play spaces across the municipality.

Input from Council and the wider community regarding the prioritisation of play spaces and implementation of the strategy will ensure the strategy reflects Council's priorities for community health, wellbeing and social connection.

9.4 ACTIVE HORSHAM

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Director: | Brett Luxford |
| Directorate: | Communities & Place |
| File Number: | F19/A11/000001 |

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

Draft Active Horsham Strategy (**Appendix 9.4A**)

Active Horsham Engagement Plan (**Appendix 9.4B**)

Purpose

To obtain Council's approval to release the draft Active Horsham Strategy (Appendix 9.A) for a four-week period of public engagement from 25 March to 24 April 2026.

The draft Strategy has been informed by earlier engagement, research, analysis and Council input and provides a strategic framework to guide planning, investment, partnerships and advocacy for active recreation and community sport across Horsham Rural City Council over the next ten years.

Summary

Horsham Rural City Council is developing Active Horsham, a ten-year strategy that will guide Council's approach to active recreation and community sport across the municipality.

Following the completion of the Issues and Opportunities Report in 2025, the draft Active Horsham Strategy has been prepared. The draft Strategy provides a clear vision, strategic principles, priorities and directions designed to increase participation, improve access, strengthen partnerships and support health and wellbeing outcomes for the Horsham community.

The draft Strategy is underpinned by the following Vision:

Across the Horsham communities there are diverse opportunities to participate in active recreation and community sport where everyone can move, play, connect and belong.

Five Strategic Principles provide guidance for implementation and decision-making:

1. Equity & Inclusive Access
2. Community Health & Wellbeing
3. Smart Investment & Sustainability
4. Connected Places & Quality Experiences
5. Collaboration & Partnerships

A detailed Action Plan is being developed to provide a framework of actions to support the implementation of Active Horsham. The Action Plan will include targeted actions, details of responsibilities and reporting measures so implementation can be monitored.

An updated Engagement Plan (Appendix B) has been prepared to support a targeted and inclusive public engagement process. This report recommends Council endorse the draft Strategy for public engagement and approve the proposed engagement period from 25 March to 24 April 2026.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Note the Draft Active Horsham Strategy and the Active Horsham Engagement Plan to support public engagement on the draft Strategy.
2. Endorse a four-week public engagement period from 25 March to 24 April 2026.
3. Note that feedback received during the engagement period will be considered and reported back to Council prior to final adoption of the Strategy.

REPORT

Background

Active Horsham is being developed to provide a contemporary and integrated framework for Council's planning, investment, partnerships and advocacy in active recreation and community sport.

The Strategy builds on extensive background work undertaken in 2025, including:

- A broad community and stakeholder engagement program
- Demographic, participation and trend analysis
- Review of Council, State and sector policy
- Identification of key issues, opportunities and strategic themes

Active Horsham replaces earlier sport and recreation strategies and reflects contemporary approaches to participation that recognise the growing importance of informal activity, flexible spaces and inclusive design.

The development of an endorsed active recreation and community sport strategy also supports Council's eligibility for State and Federal funding programs.

Discussion

The draft Active Horsham Strategy translates the findings of earlier project phases into a clear and practical strategic framework.

The Strategy establishes a ten-year roadmap that positions Council as a provider, facilitator, partner and advocate in supporting a physically active and connected community. It recognises the challenges of changing participation trends, resource constraints and diverse community needs, while identifying opportunities to better utilise existing assets, strengthen partnerships and expand participation pathways.

The draft Strategy is structured around the following Strategic Principles, which guide priorities, actions and future decision-making:

- Equity & Inclusive Access – reducing barriers and ensuring opportunities are available to all residents, regardless of age, ability, gender, culture or location.
- Community Health & Wellbeing – supporting physical activity, social connection and mental wellbeing through places, programs and partnerships.
- Smart Investment & Sustainability – directing resources toward evidence-based priorities that deliver long-term community benefit and sustainable outcomes.
- Connected Places & Quality Experiences – creating welcoming, safe and high-quality environments across facilities, trails, play spaces and open spaces.
- Collaboration & Partnerships – working with clubs, community organisations, schools, First Nations communities, health agencies and regional partners to deliver shared outcomes.

Public engagement of the draft Strategy provides an opportunity to test the vision, principles and directions with the broader community and stakeholders, ensuring the final Strategy reflects local aspirations and priorities.

Options to Consider

Option 1: Endorse the draft Strategy for public exhibition (Recommended)

Allows the project to progress in accordance with the agreed timeline and ensures community input informs the final Strategy.

Option 2: Request changes prior to public exhibition

May delay engagement and adoption timelines.

Option 3: Defer consideration

Would significantly delay the project and may impact funding and delivery milestones.

Sustainability Implications

The draft Active Horsham Strategy supports social, environmental and economic sustainability by promoting active lifestyles, improving access to community infrastructure, and encouraging efficient use of existing assets. The Strategy also supports long-term planning and responsible investment.

Community Engagement

An updated Active Horsham Engagement Plan has been prepared to guide public exhibition of the draft Active Horsham Strategy.

Engagement will be undertaken over a four-week period from 25 March to 24 April 2026 and will include:

- Online access to the draft Strategy
- An online survey to capture feedback on key directions and priorities
- Promotion through Council communication channels

The engagement approach is designed to be inclusive, accessible and proportionate, building on earlier engagement while providing clear opportunities for the community to influence the final Strategy.

Feedback received will be analysed by the Project Control Group and reported back to Council, alongside any recommended changes, prior to final adoption.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The Strategy reflects Council's commitment to data-informed planning, inclusive engagement and continuous improvement. Ongoing monitoring and review mechanisms are proposed to ensure the Strategy remains responsive to changing participation trends and community needs over its ten-year life.

Collaboration

Development of the Strategy has been informed through collaboration with community organisations, clubs, service providers, Council officers and external partners. Continued collaboration will be critical to successful implementation and delivery of shared outcomes.

Financial Implications

Development of the Strategy and delivery of the engagement program are funded within existing project budgets. No additional funding is required to undertake the public exhibition phase.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Active Victoria 2022-2026

Strategic Framework:

-
- Establishing thriving places and communities that are safe, fair and inclusive
 - Invest in infrastructure that enables active recreation

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

Horsham Council Plan 2025-2029

Theme 1: Liveability

- Promote health and wellbeing for people of all ages and abilities

Theme 2: Sustainability

- An integrated, strategic and needs based approach to investing in our places and spaces

Theme 3: Accessibility

- **Improve access to quality services, public space and facilities**

Theme 4: Leadership

- Make transparent and evidence-based decisions
- Demonstrate sound financial and asset management
- Strengthen engagement, advocacy and partnerships

Council plans and strategies relevant to the development of the Strategy include:

- Horsham Open Space Strategy 2019
- Horsham South Structure Plan 2020
- Horsham North Local Area Plan 2023
- Community Facilities Strategy 2025

Risk Implications

Key risks relate to project timelines, stakeholder expectations and funding milestones. These risks are mitigated through a clear engagement plan, adherence to project timeframes, and ongoing reporting to Council and funding partners.

Conclusion

The draft Active Horsham Strategy represents a significant milestone in Council's commitment to supporting active recreation and community sport across the municipality.

Endorsing the draft Strategy for public exhibition will enable meaningful community input, strengthen the final Strategy, and support informed, inclusive and sustainable decision-making over the next ten years.

9.5 RESOURCE READY: NORTH-WESTERN VICTORIA ENERGY AND MINING AND READINESS STRATEGY

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Director: | Brett Luxford |
| Directorate: | Communities and Place |
| File Number: | F27/A03/000001 |

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

Resource Ready: North-Western Victoria Energy and Mining Impact and Readiness Strategy (**Appendix 9.5A**)

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement of the Resource Ready: North-Western Victoria Energy and Mining Impact and Readiness Strategy and support its implementation and advocacy.

Summary

The Resource Ready Strategy provides an analysis of the potential impacts from \$27.7 billion in planned transmission, renewable energy, and mining projects across nine north-western Victorian councils.

The Strategy identifies that potential scale of renewable energy infrastructure across the study area and identifies the significant workforce demands including 9,000 construction jobs and 2,300 ongoing operational roles, alongside critical challenges such as severe housing shortages, labour market constraints, infrastructure pressures, and potential impacts on the region's agricultural sector.

The Strategy proposes evidence-based actions across 8 priority themes to ensure regional readiness, maximise community benefits, and mitigate negative impacts should these major projects proceed following State and Federal government approval processes.

The endorsement of the Strategy does not constitute support for or opposition to any specific project and reflects Council's statutory obligations under the Local Government Act 2020 to plan strategically for the community's economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

The Strategy equips Council with the evidence base necessary to understand the economic impacts of projects, advocate effectively for State and Federal funding to address readiness gaps, coordinate with regional partners, and engage meaningfully with the community about potential changes.

Critically, implementation requires substantial external funding beyond Council's existing resources, endorsement establishes the framework for securing this support from higher levels of government and project proponents, not a commitment to self-fund all recommended actions.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorse the *Resource Ready: North-Western Victoria Energy and Mining Impact and Readiness Strategy*.
2. Commit to the implementation of the Strategy's recommended actions in partnership with other Councils, State Government, stakeholders and the community.
3. Authorise the CEO to advocate to State and Federal governments for funding to implement priority actions identified in the Strategy.
4. Acknowledge implementation will require substantial external funding and regional coordination beyond Council's existing resources.

REPORT

Background

Nine councils in north-western Victoria (Buloke, Gannawarra, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Loddon, Northern Grampians, Swan Hill, West Wimmera, and Yarriambiack) commissioned Urban Enterprise to prepare an Energy and Mining Impact and Readiness Strategy to identify the potential economic impacts and opportunities for renewable and mining projects in the region including:

- VNI West transmission project (\$7.1bn) and transmission upgrades (\$3.37bn)
- 33 renewable energy projects (13GW+ generation capacity)
- 22 mining projects (mineral sands, gold, rare earth elements)

The Study Area extends from the Murray River and Victorian / New South Wales border in the north-east to the South Australian border in the west and the Grampians in the south. The Study Area covers an area of 58,503 sq km, comprising a population of ~93,100 and 42,300 jobs.

Key Findings

The strategy acknowledges the significant investment in Mining and Renewables over the next 30 years. It identifies the different phases of project development from short, medium and long term with a number of mining projects scheduled to start in the next 5 years, transmission projects to be completed in the next 5-10 years and high number of renewable energy projects over the next 5-15 years.

The cumulative economic impact of these projects is a significant opportunity to benefit from the development of a strong local labour force and investment that will filter into other parts of the regional economy.

Economic Impacts:

- Total capital expenditure: \$27.7 billion (\$2.8bn expected locally)
- Construction: 9,000 FTE jobs over time, peaking at ~3,800 workers (9% increase in regional employment)
- Operational phase: 2,300 ongoing jobs (80% expected locally)
- Annual operational expenditure: \$888 million (67% locally captured)

Critical Challenges:

- Labour shortages: Very high workforce participation (92-97% for ages 25-54) and low unemployment (<4.5%) limit local capacity
- Housing demand: Extremely low rental vacancy (0-1.4%), declining rental stock, and low development feasibility
- Infrastructure pressure: Local roads, telecommunications, water supply, and electricity networks under strain
- Agricultural impacts: Competition for labour, water, and land from major projects threatens the region's primary economic driver
- Community readiness: Growing uncertainty and opposition to projects affecting social cohesion
- Council capacity: Low rate bases and resource constraints limit ability to assess and respond to major projects

The Strategy analyses these challenges to accommodate and create local economic benefit and provides key themes and objectives as outlined below in the below table.

| THEMES | OBJECTIVES |
|--|--|
| A Community readiness , including balanced information available to communities, community leadership and lasting community benefits. | Actively support local communities during a period of change and uncertainty and optimise community benefits. |
| B Transport network improvements, especially key road and rail freight network upgrades and investment. | Invest in strategic road and rail upgrades |
| C Housing development, including an increase in permanent housing, diversity and enabling infrastructure. | Increase the diversity and availability of housing and other accommodation in key areas near major projects. |
| D Labour force attraction and retention, including training programs and labour for settlement services. | Attract, retain and train labour with skills relevant to existing strengths, opportunities in energy and mining, and supporting settlement services. |
| E Local government resources, capacity to plan for impacts, and financial sustainability. | Adequately resource local government to facilitate major projects concurrent to existing responsibilities. |
| F Agricultural sector support and ongoing productivity alongside proposed project construction and operation. | Ensure local agricultural impacts are understood, avoided and mitigated. |
| G Capturing economic benefits for region (business attraction, diversification, circular economy, power security). | Capitalise on economic opportunities for the region presented by the upcoming period of major investment in energy and mining. |
| H Managing competition for resources , including water, quarry materials and telecommunications. | Actively manage competition for resources and infrastructure that are critical to both existing activities and major projects. |

Together with the 44 actions contained within the Resource Ready Strategy for implementation, *‘they are designed to identify the next steps that will assist local governments and to mitigate the impacts of proposed projects and to benefit from the opportunities for current and future generations.’* Pg 84 Resource Readiness Strategy

Implementation of the actions will be subject to the availability of funding, especially from State and Federal governments, and partnerships and contributions from various agencies, proponents and institutions.

Discussion

Horsham Rural City and the north-west region of Victoria have a significant number of Mining, Renewable and Transmission Projects under construction, in development or planned for the region that will have an impact on our community and economy in the coming years and decades.

An important part of Councils role under the Local Government Act 2020 is to *“provide good governance in its municipal district for the benefit and wellbeing of the municipal community”* and it typically does this through its Council Plan, Municipal Planning Strategy and other plans to ensure it adequately plans and responds to the challenges facing the municipality.

Whilst currently Council do not have statutory authority for the approval of many aspects of mining or renewable projects it has an important role in the advocacy and strategic planning for the social, economic and environmental sustainability of the municipal district.

The Strategy's analysis highlights significant potential risks to the region if major projects proceed without adequate preparation: workforce shortages in agriculture and essential services due to labour competition; housing and rental crises worsening as construction workers require accommodation; local road networks deteriorating under heavy vehicle traffic; existing infrastructure (water, telecommunications, energy supply) strained beyond capacity; and community cohesion damaged by inadequate engagement and benefit-sharing arrangements.

Council's endorsement of the Strategy represents a commitment to working constructively with other councils in the region and all levels of government and industry to ensure that, should major projects proceed, the region is positioned to minimise these risks and maximise benefits.

Options to Consider

Option 1. Endorse the Resource Readiness Strategy and support the implementation and advocacy recommendations (Supported as it enables the collaboration of regional councils and advocacy on economic impacts and funding support).

Option 2. Refuse to endorse the Resource Readiness Strategy and support implementation and advocacy. (Not recommended as it fails to allow for advocacy mitigation against economic impacts or take advantage of the benefits).

Sustainability Implications

The report discusses the economic, social, environmental implications and how the strategy will provide detailed analysis and actions to respond to the economic impacts of Mining and Renewable in our region. The strategy does not assess the social and environmental impacts of these projects which are generally considered under an Environmental Effects Statement or other planning process and issues regarding amenity, traffic management, human health and climate change will be considered by state and federal government.

Community Engagement

The Strategy was developed through:

- Desktop research and data analysis
- Nine council workshops
- Stakeholder consultation with proponents, RDV, WMD, and VicGrid
- Review of existing strategies and plans

The Draft was presented to the Mining and Renewables Working Group in 2025 and many of the actions will require further community and stakeholder engagement.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The Strategy demonstrates innovation through a nine-council regional collaboration that significantly strengthens advocacy and highlights the importance of regional planning that reflects the reality that pressures on labour supply, housing, and infrastructure can only be addressed through coordinated, cross-boundary action.

Collaboration

The Strategy was jointly developed by nine councils - Buloke, Gannawarra, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Loddon, Northern Grampians, Swan Hill, West Wimmera, and Yarriambiack, through the commissioning of independent regional analysis. Targeted consultation was undertaken with Regional Development Victoria, Wimmera Mallee Development, VicGrid, and project proponents.

Financial Implications

The report outlines 44 actions, some of which will require funding, further strategic planning, coordination across councils and internal staff support. The report clearly identifies the need to seek funding and support from State and Federal Governments, proponents and other agencies; and the authorises the CEO to advocate for this.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

There are wide range of Regional, State and Federal Plans that will have an influence on Mining and Renewable Energy investment including the Critical Mineral Road Map and the 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan.

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

The report and recommendation align with the following:

Local Government Act 2020 (s 9(2)(d)). - the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted https://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/lga2020182/s9.html

Council Plan

Leadership – A trusted and capable Council that leads with integrity and responsibility (Strengthen engagement, advocacy and partnerships)

Liveability - - A healthy, connected and vibrant community that supports people to live, work and thrive

Risk Implications

Council has identified the following strategic risk:

Mining-related population growth or industrial activity places pressure on housing, local roads, water, waste and emergency services. Transmission upgrades or grid connections impost costs, disruptions, or land access issues on local government and residents.

The Resource Readiness Strategy provides an opportunity to mitigate against these risks.

Conclusion

Council's endorsement of the Strategy represents a commitment to working constructively with other councils in the region and all levels of government and industry to ensure that, should major Mining Transmission or Renewable projects proceed, the region is positioned to minimise these risks and maximise benefits.

9.6 MAV STATE COUNCIL – MAY 2026 - MOTIONS

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Director: | Brett Luxford |
| Directorate: | Communities and Place |
| 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

MAV State Council – Motions (**Appendix 9.6A**)

Purpose

To seek Councils endorsement of motions to be submitted to the Municipal Association of Victoria's State Council to be held on Friday 29 May 2026.

Summary

- The MAV State Council will be held on 29 May 2026
- Councils can submit motions for debate at the State Council however these must be adopted by the individual before they will be considered
- Attached are four motions that are of particular interest to Horsham Rural City Council but are also considered of strategic importance for the State and in particular rural and regional areas of Victoria.
- This report seeks Council's adoption of the motions so they can be lodged with the MAV for consideration at the May State Council meeting.
- The closing date for submissions is 30 March 2026.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorse the four motions (as contained in **Appendix 9.6A**) to be lodged with the MAV for consideration at the May State Council Meeting on 29 May 2026

REPORT

Background

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) is the peak body representing Victoria's 79 local councils. It advocates for councils, provides policy advice, governance guidance, and sector support, and delivers services including procurement and insurance. MAV works to strengthen local government capacity, promote community wellbeing, and ensure councils can sustainably and effectively serve Victorian communities.

Held twice per year, the MAV State Council is the peak decision-making body of the Municipal Association of Victoria, comprising representatives from all 79 Victorian councils. It sets policy, endorses advocacy priorities, and guides MAV's strategic direction, ensuring local government perspectives are represented in statewide issues and policy discussions.

Individual councils can seek to influence the advocacy and policy agenda of the MAV through the submission and adoption of motions by a majority of the members. A motion to MAV State Council must be formally endorsed by the individual council, submitted by the relevant deadline, be of statewide significance or strategic relevance, not replicate recent State Council business, and meet MAV Board assessment criteria before it is accepted for consideration.

The attached four motions are considered to comply with the requirements listed above and are of significant importance to Horsham Rural City Council and other rural and regional communities across Victoria.

Discussion

Four motions have been developed for Council to consider. These relate to issues that are highly relevant to Horsham Rural City Council but have wider implications across the state and particularly within rural and regional settings.

The first motion relates to the impact of mining, renewable energy, and infrastructure projects on local housing availability, and the resulting challenges for key workers seeking accommodation. Attracting and retaining key workers is essential for community sustainability and liveability, but this is being undermined by the influx of transient workforces associated with project construction and ongoing operations.

The second motion highlights the significant impact these same industries have on Council resources. The workloads generated by mining, renewable energy, and major infrastructure projects exceed the normal capacity of most local governments, and additional support from the Victorian Government is required.

The third motion focuses on the impacts on local communities—particularly in rural and regional areas—caused by large trucks parking in inappropriate locations. The motion seeks funding support to identify suitable truck parking and rest areas and to ensure appropriate infrastructure is provided.

The fourth motion raises awareness of the challenges rural and regional communities face in attracting and retaining qualified teachers, as well as the difficulties teachers experience in maintaining their professional registration. The motion calls for a more flexible and supportive approach.

Options to Consider

Council can endorse all of the motions, some of the motions or none of the motions.

Council can also put forward alternative motions for endorsement and lodging with the MAV.

Sustainability Implications

Motion 1, 2 and 3 directly relation to the impact on communities from a financial, economic and amenity sense. Motion 4 also has significant economic and liveability implications on Council and the communities.

Community Engagement

While there has not been engagement with the community in relation to the specific proposed motions, they are informed by engagement and conversations with the community.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The motions all seek improvements in the way we are currently operating both as an individual council and as a sector.

Collaboration

The motions have been sent to all of the neighbouring Councils to seek input and gain support for the motions. The engagement through the MAV will strengthen our advocacy position and allow us to continue to raise the issues with State Government representatives and Ministers.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications with endorsing the motions and lodging them with the MAV. The report seeks to alleviate some of the financial burden that Councils bear through impacts that they cannot control.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Identify whether any regional, state or national plans or policies are applicable to the subject matter of the report, and if so, identify the relevant provisions to assist with strategic planning and decision-making. Otherwise state "Not applicable".

[LGA 2020 S.9 (h) Overarching governance principle – Regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision-making]

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

This report aligns with the Council Plan 2025-2029 in a number of areas including:

- Liveability
 - Support community leadership and local action
 - Create welcoming places that reflect our identity and encourage connection
- Sustainability
 - Support business and stimulate investment
 - Use sound planning to balance growth and protect what matters
- Accessibility
 - Ensure our community can access resilient and reliable assets and services
- Leadership
 - Demonstrate sound financial and asset management
 - Foster a high performing organisation

Risk Implications

The report seeks to address some of the risks that Councils are currently facing when dealing with elements often outside of their control This includes:

Officers Reports

- Financial Risk – Mitigating the impact of state and nationally significant on local councils as a result of increased workload on staff and drain on funding
- Reputation Risk – Councils faced with impacts from State and Federal Government decisions are required to respond without having the necessary resources or access to expert information. This places the organisation and community at risk.

Conclusion

The MAV is a key plank in Council's advocacy platform as they have strong connections to the Victorian Government and they also represent 79 Councils.

Three of the motions that Council is seeking to put before the State Council have also been submitted to the Australian Local Government Association's National General Assembly providing Horsham with a voice at both the State and National level.

9.7 SUBMISSION TO AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S – HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Director: | Brett Luxford |
| Directorate: | Communities and Place |
| File Number: | F15/A07/000024 |

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

Australian Government Social Licence and Economic Development Outcomes in Critical Minerals Projects across Australia - Submission by Horsham Rural City Council (**Appendix 9.7A**)

Purpose

To seek Council endorsement for the submission made to the Australian Government's House of Representatives Standing Committee (the committee) on Primary Industries' Inquiry (the inquiry) into factors shaping social licence and economic development outcomes in critical minerals projects across Australia.

Summary

- Australian Government Parliamentary Committees examine proposed laws, government activities, and public policy issues in detail. They gather evidence from experts, organisations and the public, and make recommendations to Parliament to improve legislation, oversight and decision-making.
- The committee is holding an inquiry into factors shaping social licence and economic development outcomes in critical minerals projects across Australia.
- Horsham Rural City Council and Yarriambiack Shire Council have combined to develop and lodge a submission to the inquiry.
- The submission identified concerns affecting our communities and suggested ways to improve approval processes. It also identified that "social licence could be earned if clear, tangible benefits are provided to the most impacted communities and their voices are heard and taken into consideration when making decisions."

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorse the submission made by Horsham Rural City Council to the inquiry.
2. Provide delegation to the CEO to represent Horsham Rural City Council in any future discussions, presentations or negotiations in relation to the inquiry.

REPORT

Background

The committee's terms of reference for the inquiry will consider:

- The effectiveness of engagement practices with local communities, Traditional Owners, and other stakeholders.
- How critical minerals projects contribute strategically to regional and national economic development.
- Opportunities to strengthen workforce participation, skills development, and employment pathways, particularly in remote and Indigenous communities.
- The role of state, territory, and local governments in supporting socially and economically sustainable development.
- Options for improved coordination between jurisdictions and the Commonwealth.
- Any other related matters that may assist the Committee.

The submission made by Council highlights both the challenges facing our community in the face of critical minerals mining projects, alongside renewable energy projects, and opportunities to improve processes. The submission has been lodged with the committee through the inquiry's portal.

Discussion

The submission notes that most of our municipal area is covered by exploration, retention or mining licences, which has generated significant concern within the community following the release of Victoria's Critical Minerals Roadmap. Residents are seeking clearer information about how mining activity will occur, how many operations may be permitted in a region, and how mining will coexist with highly productive agricultural land in the Wimmera Southern Mallee.

Council believes engagement with communities and farmers is currently limited by the absence of a clear national or state framework explaining how mineral development and agriculture will interact.

The submission also highlights that existing consultation and assessment processes are not effectively capturing the cumulative impacts of multiple projects across a region. Communities are experiencing consultation fatigue as mining and renewable energy developments overlap, while local perspectives are not always reflected in state or federal decision-making.

The current Environmental Effects Statement (EES) process is considered inequitable, as proponents may spend years preparing technical reports while communities are given only a few weeks to respond to highly complex documentation, often requiring councils to invest significant resources to represent community concerns.

The submission also further questions whether current economic modelling properly evaluates the long-term costs and benefits of mining compared with agriculture. Council strongly supports the introduction of Social Benefit Cost Analysis (SBCA) within project assessment processes to ensure environmental, social and long-term agricultural impacts are considered alongside economic returns. Without this broader analysis, there is a risk that short-term economic gains from mining could undermine sustainable industries such as agriculture that support regional communities for generations.

The submission emphasises that if mining development proceeds, governments should ensure affected regions receive targeted investment to support workforce development, housing, infrastructure and community services. Local training pathways through TAFEs and universities should be prioritised to enable local participation in the workforce rather than reliance on fly-in fly-out labour.

The submission also highlights that studies such as the regional “Resource Ready” project reinforce opportunities to strengthen skills development and employment pathways, but these opportunities will require coordinated government investment to be realised.

Our submission also calls for stronger coordination between federal, state and local governments to ensure mining development occurs in a socially and economically sustainable way. This includes recognising local governments as decision-makers in major land-use changes, ensuring up-front infrastructure investment in impacted regions, and addressing cumulative impacts on communities, including mental health pressures on farming families.

Our submission concludes that social licence for critical minerals projects can only be achieved if communities are genuinely engaged and receive clear, tangible benefits alongside development.

Options to Consider

Council can endorse the report or not endorse the report and withdraw its submission from the inquiry.

Sustainability Implications

The submission highlights cumulative impacts on the community from multiple applications and the need to manage competing land uses to ensure community sustainability.

Community Engagement

While no specific community engagement has been undertaken in the development of the submission the submission is based on lived experience and engagement with our community over an extended period of time.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not applicable

Collaboration

The submission to the inquiry was developed in partnership with Yarriambiack Shire Council.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report and the submission. The submission seeks improved outcomes for Council and the community.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

The submission and report are responding to the inquiry and seeking to influence the national policy.

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2025-2029 Council Plan

Leadership

- Strengthening engagement, advocacy and partnership

Liveability

- Supporting community leadership and local action

Risk Implications

If Council seeks to not endorse the submission and withdraw the submission, we may miss the opportunity to advocate on this important community issue

Conclusion

The inquiry provides us with an opportunity to raise concerns and identify improvements that can be made. The submission developed by Council is extensive and provides clear outcomes for the Australian Government to consider.

9.8 HORSHAM REGIONAL LIVESTOCK EXCHANGE – ADVISORY COMMITTEE – TERMS OF REFERENCE

| | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| 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

Updated terms of reference (tracked changes version) (**Appendix 9.8A**)

Updated terms of reference (clean version) (**Appendix 9.8B**)

Purpose

To recommend modifications to the Terms of Reference of the Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange (HRLE) Advisory Committee.

Summary

- Council last reviewed the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the HRLE Advisory Committee at its 27 October 2025 meeting, in relation to the criteria for member eligibility.
- Subsequently, the Committee has conducted the annual election of its Chair.
- The Committee voted for the Mayor, as Councillor representative, to be elected Chair of the Committee.
- The current ToR do not provide for the Councillor representative to be Chair, on the basis of being considered an ex-officio representative.
- The ToR are proposed to be changed to give precedence to the Councillor representative to be Chair of the Committee.

Recommendation

That Council adopt the updated Terms of Reference for the Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange Advisory Committee as included as Appendix 9.8A.

REPORT

Background

Updated Terms of Reference (ToR) for the HRLE Advisory Committee were adopted at Council's meeting on 27 October 2025. At the same meeting, Council appointed some additional (replacement) members to the Committee.

Subsequently, the Committee conducted its annual election of the Chair in accordance with the ToR and voted for the Mayor, as Councillor representative to be the Chair. In this regard, the current ToR state:

*(The) Chair will be elected annually from and by the representatives who are eligible to vote.
(Excluding ex-officio representatives)*

Yet the ToR establish that the Councillor representative is an ex-officio member, who is not eligible to vote, and therefore not eligible to be the Chair.

Discussion

Recent experience with other Committees has highlighted the benefit in having the Councillor representative on a Committee be its Chair. When the ToR for the HRLE Committee were reviewed both earlier in 2025 and at the October 2025 meeting, it was not considered necessary, as the Committee had the benefit of a long-standing highly capable community representative (and former Councillor) as Chair.

This representative has indicated his intention to stand down from the Committee during the year, leading to the Committee's desire to appoint a new Chair. The Committee had previously been chaired by the Councillor representative.

The proposed changes to the Terms of Reference are considered suitable to reflect this proposed change.

Some other minor changes are proposed to align with the Natimuk Economic and Social Plan committee which is considered to be the model form of such Terms of Reference.

Options to Consider

The options are either to retain the current ToR, which would lead to a need to have one of the other Committee members be chair, or adopt the proposed changed ToR.

Sustainability Implications

Nil

Community Engagement

The HRLE Advisory Committee has proven to be an effective means of engaging with the users of the HRLE facility. The vote for the Mayor to Chair the committee was unanimous, reflecting the support of the Committee to this change.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not applicable

Collaboration

The Advisory Committee provides an effective means of collaborating between the various groups of users of HRLE.

Financial Implications

The Advisory Committee has no financial delegation. There are negligible costs associated with operating the Advisory Committee. Importantly, the Committee provides sound advice to Council about the financial management of the Exchange, for example in relation to the setting of fees for its use.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable.

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

The Leadership theme of the draft 2025-29 Council Plan includes Commitment 15 - Strengthen engagement, advocacy and partnerships. The HRLE Advisory Committee is one of the means to address this Commitment.

Risk Implications

No adverse impacts are foreseen with the changed ToR.

Conclusion

The updated Terms of Reference for the Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange are considered to represent both sound governance, and the intent of the representatives on the Committee.

10. COUNCILLOR REPORTS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cr Brian Klowss (Mayor)

| Committee Representation | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Date | Description |
| | |
| Other Council Activities | |
| 25/02/26 | Official Opening Ceremony: Horsham City Oval Redevelopment of Netball Facilities |
| 26/02/26 | RCV General Meeting |
| 04/03/26 | Dyurrite Joint media release and photo opportunity |
| 04/03/26 | Natimuk Economic & Social Plan PAC |
| 11/03/26 | Mayor Working Lunch with RSL Vet Affairs |
| 11/03/26 | MAV "The Future is Local" |
| 12/03/26 | WSMCA Mayor & CEO Meeting |
| 14/03/26 | Horsham Diversity Day |
| 15/03/26 | "We Are One" Natimuk Community Concert |

Cr Bec Sluggett (Deputy Mayor)

| Committee Representation | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Date | Description |
| | Nil |
| Other Council Activities | |
| 18/02/26 | Rural Council Victoria Training and State Election Platform Launch |
| 02/03/26 | Council Briefing |
| 10/03/26 | International Woman's Day Events 10am-11am Horsham Neighbourhood House. 12pm-1.30pm -Find the Balance: Horsham Town Hall |
| 11/03/26 | Meeting with Constituent |
| 12/03/26 | ALGWA Masterclass – Focusing on Financials – Online |
| 16/03/26 | Council Briefing |

Cr Cam McDonald

| Committee Representation | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Date | Description |
| | Nil |
| Other Council Activities | |
| 2/02/26 | Council Briefing |
| 5/02/26 | CEO ERC Meeting Chambers |

| | |
|----------|--|
| 9/02/26 | Council Briefing |
| 16/02/26 | Council Briefing |
| 23/02/26 | Council Meeting |
| 25/02/26 | Attended Netball Courts Changeroom Opening |

Cr Dean O'Loughlin

| Committee Representation | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Date | Description |
| | Nil |
| Other Council Activities | |
| 23/02/26 | Council Meeting |
| 25/02/26 | Official Opening Ceremony: Horsham City Oval Redevelopment of Netball Facilities |
| 2/03/26 | Council Briefing |

11. URGENT BUSINESS

12. PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

13. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

13.1 INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS – RECORD OF MEETINGS

- Council Briefing Meeting held on 2, 10 and 16 March 2026.

Refer to **Appendix 13.1A**

13.2 COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

- Disability Advisory Committee Meeting held on 25 September 2025.
- Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange Board Meeting held on 20 November 2025.

Refer to **Appendix 13.2A**

Recommendation

That Council receive and note agenda items:

- 13.1 Informal Meetings of Councillors – Record of Meetings
- 13.2 Council Committee Minutes.

14. NOTICE OF MOTION