

MINUTES of the Council Meeting of the Horsham Rural City Council held in person and livestreamed at www.hrcc.vic.gov.au at 5.30pm on 22 March 2021.

PRESENT

Cr Robyn Gulline (Mayor), Cr Di Bell, Cr David Bowe, Cr Penny Flynn, Cr Claudia Haenel, Cr Les Power, Cr Ian Ross.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Sunil Bhalla, Chief Executive Officer; Graeme Harrison, Director Corporate Services; Kevin O'Brien, Director Communities and Place; Sue Frankham, Governance Officer.

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

The Horsham Rural City Council acknowledges the five Traditional Owner groups of this land; the Wotjobaluk, Wergaia, Jupagalk, Jaadwa and Jadawadjali 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 Robyn Gulline formally welcomed those in attendance to the meeting. The Mayor advised that the meeting will be recorded to maintain an audio archive, which will be available on the Horsham Rural City Council website as soon as possible.

4. APOLOGIES

Nil

5. LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS

Nil

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 22 February 2021 and 1 March 2021 be adopted.

Council Resolution

MOVED Cr Di Bell, Seconded Cr Ian Ross

That the minutes emanating from the Horsham Rural City Council Meetings held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Horsham at 5.30pm on 22 February 2021 and 1 March 2021 be adopted subject to the following amendment on page 29:

“SUSPEND STANDING ORDERS

MOVED Cr ~~Ian~~ Di Bell, Cr Claudia Haenel

That Standing Orders be suspended.”

CARRIED

7. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Cr Di Bell declared a general conflict of interest for agenda item 9.10 Living Heritage Program 2021. The nature of the interest being that Cr Bell's daughter is employed by Horsham Rural City Council as Manager of the Horsham Town Hall. Cr Bell left the meeting at 6.24pm and returned at 6.35pm. Cr Bell was absent whilst the matter was being discussed and considered.

8. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Public Question from Neville McIntyre, McKenzie Creek

At the concerned people's meeting on Thursday 11 March 2021 and Thursday's special meeting, what was clearly pointed out was the lack of understanding of Council about the operations of the saleyard.

The land in question has always been set aside for the future expansion of the saleyards and catering for the needs of the larger trucks of the near future.

Before the sale applications goes any further, will full Council meet a deputation of saleyards representatives led by Bill Ower and Bernard Gross (both were instrumental in moving the saleyards out of Horsham i.e. History Lesson), David Grimble, Past Saleyards Committee Chairman and Stephen Kelly, Stock Agent Representative as soon as possible?

Response from John Martin, Director Infrastructure

The Chief Executive Officer will invite the saleyards representatives to brief the Councillors at the April Council Briefing Meeting.

9. OFFICERS REPORTS

9.1 GIFTS, BENEFITS AND HOSPITALITY POLICY REVIEW

Author's Name:	Sue Frankham	Director:	Graeme Harrison
Author's Title:	Governance Officer	Directorate:	Corporate Services
Department:	Governance and Information	File Number:	F19/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

Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy – clean copy (**Appendix “9.1A”**)

Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy – track changes (**Appendix “9.1B”**)

Purpose

To adopt the revised Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality policy in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Summary

- Council's current Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality policy was adopted on 17 December 2018. There was no requirement under the previously *Local Government Act 1989* to have a gift policy.
- Section 138 of the new *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to adopt a Councillor gift policy by 30 April 2021.
- The Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality policy has been reviewed to reflect requirements of the new *Local Government Act 2020*.
- A number of changes to the policy are proposed including reference to new legislation and updated terminology to reflect the new legislation and other updated Council documents and processes.

Recommendation

That Council adopt the revised Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy as attached (**Appendix “9.1A”**).

Council Resolution

MOVED Cr Claudia Haenel, Seconded Cr Penny Flynn

That Council adopt the revised Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy as attached (**Appendix “9.1A”**).

CARRIED

REPORT

Background

Council's current Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy was adopted on 17 December 2018. There was no requirement under the previous *Local Government Act 1989* to have a gift policy.

Section 138 of the new *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to adopt a Councillor gift policy by 30 April 2021.

The Councillor gift policy must include:

- (a) Procedures for the maintenance of a gift register
- (b) Any other matters prescribed by the regulations.

The Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality policy is intended to support Councillors and staff to avoid conflicts of interest and maintain high levels of integrity and public trust. It supports and is consistent with behaviours outlined in the *Local Government Act 2020* and Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors and Code of Conduct for Staff.

Discussion

A review of the current Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality policy has been undertaken, taking into consideration requirements of the new *Local Government Act 2020*, *Local Government (Governance and Integrity Regulations 2020)*, Biannual Personal Interests Returns, and the Horsham Rural City Council Councillor Code of Conduct, Staff Code of Conduct, Public Transparency Policy and Freedom of Information Part II Statement.

A number of changes to the policy are proposed, as outlined below.

- Reference to new *Local Government Act 2020* and *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020* updated throughout policy.
- Conflict of interest definitions updated to "general" and "material" conflicts of interest to reflect the *Local Government Act 2020*.
- Additional examples, definitions and processes included in the policy to assist the reader to identify what is and isn't acceptable when considering offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality.
- 3.3 Council's preference for no gifts added as a new principle.
- 3.3 Receiving Offers of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality – additional paragraph in relation to avoiding situations giving rise to the appearance of attempting to gain favourable treatment. This statement is consistent with the new Councillor Code of Conduct.
- 3.3.2 Offers to be Refused – additional statement highlighting legislative requirements in relation to anonymous gifts (*Local Government Act 2020*, section 37).
- 3.3.9 Repeat Offers of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality – Councillors and staff must refuse repeat offers. Statement updated to reflect a stronger message. The Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Declaration Form will also be updated to ensure that repeat offers are recorded appropriately.

- 3.3.5.1 Recording Non-Token Offers of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality – additional statement consistent with new requirement for Councillors and nominated officers to record gifts, benefits and hospitality in their biannual personal interests return [*Local Government Act 2020*, section 134; *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020*, regulation 9(1)(k)].
- 3.3.6 Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Reporting – additional statement that summarised version of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Register will be published on the Horsham Rural City Council website (Public Transparency Policy and FOI Part II Statement).
- 3.3.11 Prohibited Gifts – additional statement that hospitality and other retail discounts offered specifically to Councillors or staff that are not commonly available to the general public are prohibited.

Options to Consider

Council has a preference for no gifts. This aligns closely with the overarching governance principle that priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations [*Local Government Act 2020*, section 9(b)].

Sustainability Implications

Not applicable

Community Engagement

Not applicable

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Examples have been included throughout the policy to assist Councillors and staff to identify what is and isn't acceptable when considering offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality. Further examples and scenarios will be provided as part of the rollout of this policy and ongoing education to Councillors and staff.

In the interests of public transparency, a summarised version of the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Register is now published on Council's website.

The Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Declaration Form has been converted to a PDF fillable form, enabling it to be completed, signed and submitted electronically.

Collaboration

Benchmarking was conducted with a number other Councils, including the Surf Coast Shire Council, however, the majority of Councils had not finalised their Councillor Gift policy at the time of reviewing this policy.

A review of the Victorian Public Sector Commission's Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy Guide and information provided on the Engage Victoria website was also considered, however, there was minimal up-to-date information available.

Financial Implications

Any offer of a gift, benefit or hospitality will have a financial impact on the organisation.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2020-2014 Council Plan

Goal 4 – Governance and Business Excellence

Four Year Outcomes:

4.2 – Manage risk to the organisation

4.4 – Achieve high standards of organisational performance

4.4.08 – Manage implementation of the major revision to the *Local Government Act 1989*

Risk Implications

Embedding a robust gifts, benefits and hospitality policy within the culture of Horsham Rural City Council is an effective way to mitigate potential risks.

Conclusion

The revised Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality policy is presented to Council for adoption.

9.2 COUNCILLOR AND STAFF INTERACTION POLICY

Author's Name:	Diana McDonald, Susan Surridge	Director:	Graeme Harrison
Author's Title:	Co-ordinator Governance, Co-ordinator Community Relations and Advocacy	Directorate:	Corporate Services
Department:	Governance and Information	File Number:	F14/A04/000001

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 Councillor and Staff Interaction policy (**Appendix “9.2A”**)

Purpose

To adopt the Councillor and Staff Interaction policy.

Summary

- The Councillor and Staff Interaction policy supports the Councillor Code of Conduct and Staff Code of Conduct, and provides clear guidance in relation to appropriate and effective interaction between Councillors and staff.
- This policy seeks to ensure that Councillors understand their responsibilities under the *Local Government Act 2020* and do not improperly direct or influence Council staff. It also ensures that Council is efficient and effective, with high standards of governance and transparency.
- The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is required to have in place policies, practices and protocols that support arrangements for interactions between members of Council staff and Councillors.

Recommendation

That Council adopt the Councillor and Staff Interaction policy as attached (**Appendix “9.2A”**).

Council Resolution

MOVED Cr Penny Flynn, Seconded Cr Les Power

That Council adopt the Councillor and Staff Interaction policy as attached (**Appendix “9.2A”**) subject to the following amendments:

- Page 2, item 4.2 first paragraph (remove second “or”)
- Page 5, item 4.9 Council staff are to inform their Director or the CEO of any improper ~~conduct~~ **contact** made directly to them by a Councillor.

CARRIED

REPORT**Background**

There is currently no policy guiding Councillors and staff on what comprises appropriate interactions in the performance of their respective duties for Council.

Council's Governance Team and the Community Relations and Advocacy Team have developed the draft Councillor and Staff Interaction policy, and as part of this process, has benchmarked the policy with other Councils to ensure best practice and current standards.

It is a requirement of the Chief Executive Officer to have policies such as this in place. It is not a requirement that they be adopted by Council but it is appropriate and good governance practice that they are.

Discussion

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and support for Councillors and Council staff in the performance of their duties. It complements the Councillor and Staff Codes of Conduct and supports compliance with the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), section 124 Directing a member of Council staff, and Section 46 (3) (1) (b)(c) Managing interactions between members of Council staff and Councillors.

The new policy details the objectives of appropriate Councillor and staff interaction and provides principles to be adhered to in the following areas:

- Allowable interaction
- Improper or undue influence
- Communication channels
- Councillor requests for the community
- Councillor requests for advice or information
- Responses to Councillors
- Personal interaction
- Verbal requests for information
- Contact contradictory to this policy.

Options to Consider

The policy could be an Administrative Policy and adopted by the Executive Management Team.

Sustainability Implications

Nil

Consultation / Community Engagement

The draft Councillor and Staff Interaction policy has been developed by the Governance Team and Community Relations and Advocacy Team, in consultation with the Executive Management Team. As this policy relates to Councillors and staff only, there is no requirement for community engagement in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* or the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation.

The draft policy was discussed with the previous Council at the Councillor Briefing held on 7 September 2020 and was put to Council at the 28 September 2020 Council Meeting, where Council at the time resolved *“That Council refer the draft Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy to the new incoming Council”*.

The draft policy was reviewed by the current Councillors at the Council Briefing held on 1 February 2021, and then tabled at the 22 February 2021 Council Meeting where further amendments were made.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The draft Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy is in line with Council’s continuous improvement for communications and clearly outlines appropriate Councillor and Staff interaction options and principles.

Collaboration

Not applicable

Financial Implications

This policy has been developed using existing staff resources.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

Councillor Code of Conduct

Staff Code of Conduct

2020-2024 Council Plan

Goal 4 – Governance and Business Excellence

Risk Implications

Reputational risk and OHS risk of inappropriate Councillor and staff interaction if there is no Councillor and Staff Interaction policy.

Conclusion

This policy supports the Councillor Code of Conduct and the Staff Code of Conduct and provides clear guidance as to appropriate and effective interaction between Councillors and staff.

9.3 STATE GOVERNMENT RATING SYSTEM REVIEW - OUTCOMES

Author's Name:	Graeme Harrison	Director:	Graeme Harrison
Author's Title:	Director Corporate Services	Directorate:	Corporate Services
Department:	Corporate services	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

HRCC Response to State Government Rate Review Recommendations (**Appendix “9.3A”**)

HRCC Recommendations to Raise with the Minister for Local Government (**Appendix “9.3B”**)

Purpose

To receive and note the State Government’s response to the independent rating review undertaken during 2019 and Council’s recommended response to the Minister for Local Government.

Summary

- The State Government’s independent Rate Review panel was conducted in late 2019 with a report making 56 recommendations given to the Minister for Local Government by 31 March 2020.
- The State Government’s recommendations is that 27 were supported in full (48%), nine supported in principle or part (16%) and 20 not supported (36%).
- The opportunity for Councils to rate mining, which was included in the draft of the new *Local Government Act 2020*, has now had its exemption extended. Council has over a number of years lobbied government for this change.
- A response to the Minister for Local Government will help ensure issues around the local government rating system and fairness remain on the agenda for the State Government.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Note the State Government’s Response to the independent review into the local government rating system undertaken in 2019 (**Appendix “9.3A”**)
2. Write to the Hon Shaun Leane, Minister of Local Government, to raise its concerns about the State Government’s response to the independent review into the local government rating system as expressed in **Appendix “9.3B”**.

Council Resolution

MOVED Cr Ian Ross, Seconded Cr Les Power

That Council:

1. Note the State Government’s Response to the independent review into the local government rating system undertaken in 2019 (**Appendix “9.3A”**)
2. Write to the Hon Shaun Leane, Minister of Local Government, to raise its concerns about the State Government’s response to the independent review into the local government rating system as expressed in **Appendix “9.3B”**.

CARRIED

REPORT

Background

Horsham Rural City Council experienced some significant public pressure in 2018 to address what was seen as unfairness in the rate system due to significant uplift in farm valuations increasing the contribution to rates from the farm sector significantly more than other sectors. As a result of this public action and subsequent action from the Victorian Farmers Federation and others, the State Government stated it would implement a review into the rating system.

In 2018, the Victorian Government committed to this review of the local government rating system to ensure rates are fair and equitable for all of the community. A Ministerial Panel was appointed to lead the rating system review in consultation with the community, ratepayers and councils.

The review reaffirmed the importance of the local government rating system to fund essential infrastructure and local services. It found the rating system is not broken and is in line with many of the principles underpinning a good taxation system. The panel made 56 recommendations that cover a broad range of reforms, from major legislative change to small administrative improvements, with both short- and long-term implications.

The Government response to the panel's recommendations is that 27 were supported in full (48%), nine supported in principle or part (16%) and 20 not supported (36%).

The Government say in its response that it has prioritised the reforms that will:

- Support ratepayers in financial hardship
- Improve the transparency and consistency of decision making
- Build greater equity and fairness in the rating system.

They also stated that the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) has focused efforts on supporting Victoria's post-pandemic recovery and that the Government will not substantially change the arrangements for general rates, nor will it change rate exemptions for charities or other entities or alternative rating arrangements, in order to give certainty to all ratepayers as Victoria focuses on social and economic recovery.

The following documents are available on the Engage Victoria website

<https://engage.vic.gov.au/rating-review>:

- Local Government Rating System Review Final Report
- Victorian Government Response to the Local Government Rating System Report
- Information Sheet – What it means for Ratepayers
- Discussion paper – Local Government Rating Review
- Local Government Rating System Review Consultation Report
- Presentations from public forums
- Individual submissions.

The consultation for the review took place between August 2019 and October 2019 (with a couple of sessions in Horsham), followed by public hearings of selected stakeholders. A report was submitted to the Minister for Local Government by 31 March 2020, and the State Government response to the report was issued nine months later on 21 December 2020.

Discussion

Horsham Rural City Council has summarised the recommendations of the Rate Review Panel and the State Government's response and Council's response in **Appendix "9.3A"**.

A summary of Council's response has been classified into categories as follows:

	No. of Recommendations
Check Revenue & Rating Plan	8
Maintain watching brief	13
No Action Required	7
No Change Required	16
Review Notice Information	2
Write to Minister	10
Grand Total	56

The 10 recommendations that have been identified as issues requiring a response to the Minister are:

No.	Recommendation	Gov Action
10	Recommendation 10: Replace the existing Ministerial guidelines on differential rating with a legislated requirement for councils to comply with regulations as proposed in Recommendation 2 of this report.	Do not support
19	Recommendation 19: Repeal ownership-based and lessee-based criteria for the purposes of rating exemptions, including those for mining, rail operators, and residences or places of education for ministers.	Do not support
22	Recommendation 22: In accordance with Recommendation 21 of this Report, include the following criteria for a public benefit test in the legislation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · exempt land must be used for the public benefit; and · not for the purposes of either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – distribution of profit to members or shareholders by the entity using the land, either during operation or wind-up; or – market rental return; and · for the direct provision of a service or good that is available to the public or an appreciable portion of the public free of charge or with a nominal charge. 	Do not support
24	Recommendation 24: That the regulations (see Recommendation 2) require exemptions to be reviewed at least 2 years after the election of a council and that an audit of the compliance of an exempt entity with the criteria for exemption is undertaken every two years.	Do not support
28	Recommendation 28: That the criteria for a rebate or concession under the Act be expanded to include properties providing a public benefit. Such benefits could be defined by the public benefit test for exemptions in Recommendation 22 of this report.	Support in full
29	Recommendation 29: That a rebate or concession for a public benefit must align with the Council's current Council Plan and that councils be required to report, audit, review and evaluate their decisions in relation to rebates and concessions.	Support in part
30	Recommendation 30: That the Victorian Government publish guidelines and a community communication strategy on deferral schemes aimed at supporting councils to promote deferrals to address capacity to pay issues.	Support in full
38	Recommendation 38: That in the absence of a clear policy rationale, section 94 of the <i>Electricity Industry Act 2000</i> be repealed to bring the rating of all power generation companies under the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i> .	Do not support
40	Recommendation 40: That section 4 of the <i>Cultural and Recreational Lands Act 1963</i> be repealed, removing the requirement for councils to consider services provided and community benefits relating to cultural and recreational lands when setting rates for such lands.	Do not support
56	Recommendation 56: That the improvement program outlined in the 2017 Report of the Rural and Regional Councils Sustainability Reform Program report is reviewed to inform future projects and programs to address improved equity across all councils in Victoria.	Support in full

These recommendations and the issues identified as requiring a response are detailed in **Appendix "9.3B"**.

Options to Consider

Accept the outcome of the Rate Review and the lack of response from the State Government and do not raise concerns with the Minister for Local Government.

Sustainability Implications

Rating issues are at the core of financial sustainability for all Councils and are a significant cost for many sectors of the community.

Community Engagement

There has been significant community engagement by the review panel in the process to develop its recommendations. Council, by responding to the Minister for Local Government, will provide further feedback to the process and the State Government's response.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not applicable

Collaboration

Council originally collaborated with the North West Municipality group of Councils to produce a report into the rating of mining that was a submission to the development of the new *Local Government Act 2020*. A similar collaboration could be undertaken to take some of the issues further so that matters for the rating system can be addressed.

Financial Implications

This report is prepared using existing staff resources and budget allocations.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Although rates are a tax raised by local Councils, the broad issue of taxation and the sharing of the revenue raised through taxation are matters at a national level that require the engagement of all tiers of government in determining a fairer system so that tax contributions are paid and shared equitably by all.

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2020-2024 Council Plan

Goal 4 – Governance and Business Excellence

Risk Implications

With no substantial changes being made to the rating system, there is a high degree of probability that there will be continued calls that the system is broken and that changes need to be made to address fairness. This will in turn potentially lead to conflict and division in the community between the different sectors and with Council for its perceived lack of fairness.

Conclusion

The acceptance by the State Government of only 48% of the recommendations from the Rate Review Panel, leaves this opportunity for reform sadly lacking in any substantial improvements to the system. Raising concerns with the Minister for Local Government will assist in keeping these issues on the current State Government agenda.

9.4 ADOPTION OF MAYORAL AND COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES

Author's Name:	Diana McDonald, Sue Frankham	Director:	Graeme Harrison
Author's Title:	Co-ordinator Governance, Governance Officer	Directorate:	Corporate Services
Department:	Governance and Information	File Number:	F19/A06/000002

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

Mayor and Councillor Allowances Public Submissions (**Appendix "9.4A"**)

Purpose

To adopt the Mayoral and Councillor Allowances following the receipt and consideration of public submissions.

Summary

- Council must adopt, by 30 June 2021, the Mayoral and Councillor Allowances in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989*, section 74(1).
- Following a resolution of Council on 27 January 2021, public submissions on the proposed Councillor and Mayoral Allowances were sought from 3 February to 3 March 2021.
- The community were invited to make on-line submissions through the Council website or in writing to the Chief Executive Officer.
- Twenty-five submissions were received. A summary of the feedback received is provided as an attachment to this report (**Appendix "9.4A"**).
- Twenty-two submissions did not support an increase, whilst the remaining three suggested an incremental increase over four years.

Recommendation

That Council, having considered the community submissions, set the Mayoral Allowance per annum at \$81,204 plus 9.25% for Statutory Superannuation, and the Councillors Allowance per annum at \$26,245 plus 9.25% for Statutory Superannuation per Councillor.

Council Resolution

MOVED Cr Les Power, Seconded Cr Claudia Haenel

That Council, having considered the community submissions, set the Mayoral Allowance per annum at \$81,204 plus 9.5% for Statutory Superannuation, and the Councillors Allowance per annum at \$26,245 plus 9.5% for Statutory Superannuation per Councillor.

CARRIED

Cr Di Bell called for division of Council

For the motion:

Cr Claudia Haenel
Cr David Bowe
Cr Penny Flynn
Cr Robyn Gulline
Cr Les Power

Against the motion:

Cr Di Bell
Cr Ian Ross

REPORT**Background**

Section 39(6) of the *Local Government Act 2020* states that despite the repeal of sections 73B and 74 to 74B of the *Local Government Act 1989*, those sections continue to apply in respect of allowances payable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors until the first Determination made by the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal comes into effect. Under the 2020 Act, the Minister for Local Government is required to make a request to the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal to set the values of the allowances payable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors in Victorian Councils. The Tribunal has six months to make a determination from the date requested, however, the Minister has not yet made this request.

Consequently, Local Government Victoria has advised Councils to undertake their own review of allowances in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989*. Section 74(1) of the 1989 Act states that a Council must review and determine the level of the Councillor allowance and the Mayoral allowance within the period of six months after a general election or by the next 30 June, whichever is later. Section 74(4) also states that a person has a right to make a submission under section 223 in respect of a review of allowances.

Under the 1989 Act, Council is required to set an allowance for its Mayor and Councillors within the range that is set by the Minister for Local Government. The Minister categorises each Council into one of three categories, according to revenue levels and population. Horsham Rural City Council was re-categorised from a Category 1 Council to a Category 2 Council in early 2017, after the previous Council had adopted their allowances post their election. Whilst the previous Council could have elected to review their allowances post the change in category, they chose not to at that time.

Horsham Rural City Council currently pays Councillor allowances at the top of the Category 1 level which is \$21,049 per annum for Councillors and \$62,884 per annum for the Mayor. As at October 2020, all other Category 2 Councils paid Councillor allowances at the top of their band.

The following allowances were gazetted on 13 November 2019. As no CPI increases were applied for 2020, these amounts remain current:



Victoria Government Gazette

No. S 459 Wednesday 13 November 2019
By Authority of Victorian Government Printer

Local Government Act 1989

MAYORAL AND COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES ADJUSTMENT

Pursuant to section 73B(4)(a) of the **Local Government Act 1989**, notice is hereby given that an adjustment factor of two per cent applies to Mayoral and Councillor allowances.

Pursuant to section 73B(4)(b) of the **Local Government Act 1989**, the new limits and ranges of Mayoral and Councillor allowances, adjusted in accordance with the adjustment factor, are:

Category 1	Councillors: \$8,833–\$21,049 per annum	Mayors: up to \$62,884 per annum
Category 2	Councillors: \$10,914–\$26,245 per annum	Mayors: up to \$81,204 per annum
Category 3	Councillors: \$13,123–\$31,444 per annum	Mayors: up to \$100,434 per annum

This notice does not apply to the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and Councillors of the Melbourne City Council, and the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Greater Geelong City Council.

The new adjusted limits and ranges take effect on 1 December 2019.

Dated 12 November 2019

ADEM SOMYUREK MP
Minister for Local Government

A detailed report on Mayoral and Councillor Allowances was considered at the Council meeting on 27 January 2021. At that meeting, it was resolved –

That Council:

- 1. Having reviewed the level of Councillor and Mayoral allowances and benchmarked these with other Category 2 Councils, propose that the Mayoral and Councillor Allowances be paid at the upper limits of the band for Category 2 Councils.*
- 2. Seek community submission and comment on the proposed allowances by close of business on 3 March 2021.*

Discussion

Community submissions were sought from 1 February 2021 to 3 March 2021. Details were published on the Horsham Rural City Council website throughout this period and also in the Wimmera Mail-Times on 3 February 2021, the Horsham Times on 5 February 2021 and The Weekly Advertiser on 10 February 2021.

People were invited to make on-line submissions through the Council website or in writing to the CEO. The public was also advised that Councillor and Mayoral Allowances would be tabled and considered at the Council meeting on 22 March 2021.

Twenty-five submissions in relation to Councillor and Mayoral Allowances were received and one person requested to be heard by Council, which occurred Tuesday 9 March 2021. A summary of all submissions received is provided as **(Appendix “9.1A”)**.

Of the submissions received, 21 indicated that they did not support an increase, whilst other suggestions included an incremental increase over four years, that Councillors donate 50% back to community groups and a 1.75% increase in line with the rest of the community would be more acceptable.

Key issues raised include:

- Impacts of COVID-19 and the financial impacts on local jobs, businesses and families – hold off on considering an increase until the economy has recovered
- Community groups and sporting clubs need support – one suggestion that 50% of allowance increase could be used to provide grants to small community organisations
- Roads, kerbs, channels, footpaths, rural roads, recycling services and other safety issues need to be fixed first before considering an increase – concern about how the increase would be funded
- Majority of Councillors are new to the role – perhaps review performance before increasing allowance in the following year
- Increase of 24-29% is not in line with rest of community who are receiving 1.75% increase annually or no increase at all
- Councillors were aware of current remuneration rates before taking on the role.

Options to Consider

Under the *Local Government Act 1989*, Council may determine to pay allowances anywhere within the range of \$10,914 to \$26,245 for Councillors and up to \$81,204 for the Mayor as a Category 2 Council.

Sustainability Implications

Not applicable

Community Engagement

Community submissions and comment on the proposal for Councillor and Mayoral Allowances were sought from 3 February 2021 to 3 March 2021. Details are outlined in the discussion section of this report.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not applicable

Collaboration

Not applicable

Financial Implications

To increase the Mayoral and Councillor Allowances to the top of Category 2, would see the amounts change and the full year financial impact, as follows:

	Current	Top of Category 2	% Change	Yearly Impact	Individual Councillor Impact
Councillors x 6	\$126,294	\$157,470	24.7%	\$31,176	\$5,196
Mayor	\$62,884	\$81,204	29.1%	\$18,320	\$18,320
Total	\$189,178	\$238,674	26.1%	\$49,496	

Council, in its 2020-21 Budget, provided for the possible increase in these allowances, given that the Council category had changed from category 1 to category 2 in 2017.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Councillor Expenses and Allowances: Equitable Treatment and Enhanced Integrity Report, Victorian Local Government Inspectorate – September 2020

<https://www.lgi.vic.gov.au/councillor-expenses-and-allowances-equitable-treatment-and-enhanced-integrity>

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2020-2024 Council Plan

Goal 4 – Governance and Business Excellence

Risk Implications

Not applicable

Conclusion

This report is presented to Councillors for consideration.

9.5 COMMUNITY VISION AND COUNCIL PLANS – PROJECT UPDATE

Author's Name:	Faith Hardman	Director:	Graeme Harrison
Author's Title:	Corporate Planner	Directorate:	Corporate Services
Department:	Governance	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

Nil

Purpose

To receive and note the engagement process and activities to date in the development of the 20-year Community Vision, 4-year Council Plan, Health and Wellbeing Plan, Asset Plans and Long-term Financial Plan.

Summary

- The new *Local Government Act 2020* (The Act), section 88 requires Council to maintain a Community Vision for at least the next 10 financial years
- Council is working with consultancy group ie Community and has developed a detailed community engagement process which is being delivered from March to June 2021.
- Part of that process is the Horsham Rural City Talks survey currently being delivered using Our Say and Community Conversations undertaken by groups in the Community
- Also involved is the recruitment of a community panel to undertake deliberative engagement on the plans
- This report is an update of the progress of that engagement to date and the recurrent themes emerging in feedback.

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the engagement process and activities to date in the development of the 20-year Community Vision, 4-year Council Plan, Health and Wellbeing Plan, Asset Plans and Long-term Financial Plan.

Council Resolution

MOVED Cr Les Power, Seconded Cr Di Bell

That Council receive and note the engagement process and activities to date in the development of the 20-year Community Vision, 4-year Council Plan, Health and Wellbeing Plan, Asset Plans and Long-term Financial Plan.

CARRIED

REPORT

Background

At the Council meeting on 1 March 2021, Council accepted an expanded deliberative engagement program for the 20-year Community Vision, 4-year Council Plan, Health and Wellbeing Plan, Asset Plan and Financial Plan.

A core focus of Council beyond 2020 is to improve community consultation and to align the direction and decisions made by Council with the Community Vision.

Central to building community confidence in the process and strengthening the relationship between Council and the community is ensuring that community members feel confident their input has been heard, acknowledged and valued. Transparency of this process is extremely important to ensure there is community confidence in the deliberative engagement process.

Discussion

This report does not include key themes, ideas or any specific information provided by groups or individuals. It is too early in the deliberative process to draw on these themes without improperly inflating or misrepresenting responses.

A. Promotion

Council has been encouraging participation in the process through the following means and channels:

- Facebook, YouTube and Twitter Posts x10
- Story inclusions in each Public Notices page since February 2021, with a headline feature in the last two Public Notices
- Inclusion in the regular email e-newsletter that is sent to more than 4,000 people
- Mayoral discussion with the ABC Radio
- Council Officer discussion on Community Radio
- Posters erected at prominent locations across the municipality during the week of 15 March 2021
- One media release and four features in Councillor feature columns
- Council Reports on the process x3
- On-line information sessions held on the 17 February 2021 and 10 March 2021 for community members wishing to hold a Community Conversation, with 11 registrations and eight attendances.
- The Horsham Youth Council is due to undertake a Community Conversation at their next meeting.

B. Community feedback to date

A public survey has been available on the "Our Say" page of Council's website since 25 January 2021, and has currently received 199 responses.

There have been approximately 40 Community Conversation kits distributed to date.

C. Community panel

A survey has been undertaken of Councillors and key Council operational staff to identify the issues that are at the forefront for Council that will help inform the development of the remit for the community panel process. The exact demographics sought and the details of recruitment to date will be provided to Council at the next update.

There have been 57 Community Panel applications received to date, and whilst there are only 36-40 places, it is important that we get a full range across the demographics and geography of the Council area.

D. Key dates for the future

- Nominations to participate in the Community Panel will close on Wednesday 31 March 2021.
- Community Conversations and on-line survey will be open until 15 May 2021.
- The first Community Panel is scheduled for 30 May 2021.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The municipality has commenced talking about the future of Horsham through community conversations, online engagement and campaigns. This provides a comprehensive opportunity for the community to think, discuss and debate their future. The overall project centres on continuous improvement and Councils desire to ensure community feedback is heard and appreciated, by demonstrating the process in which it is gathered and considered.

Collaboration

The development of the Community Vision and Council Plan is a collaborative arrangement between all sectors of the community, Councillors and Council officers.

Financial Implications

Council has a budget of \$50,000 in 2020-21 to undertake this process.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

The State Government's review of the *Local Government Act* has clearly set the new 2020 Act to be based around some general clear principles:

- Transparency
- Accountability Openness
- Commitment
- Fairness
- Clarity.

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

The Community Vision is the most important strategic document that informs the direction of the Council Plan, whilst the Council Plan is the centre piece of the integrated planning framework for all that Council does. The Asset Plan is in turn informed by the Community Vision and Council Plan and in turn informs the Financial Plan.

Risk Implications

Not bringing the Community and Council together effectively can give rise to community conflict and lack of confidence in the future of the community thereby leading to negative outcomes for all.

Conclusion

The process to develop the Community Vision, Council Plan, Health and Wellbeing Plan, Asset Plans and Long-term Financial Plan is a complex and lengthy process but is tracking well to date.

9.6 PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN

Author's Name:	Lauren Coman	Director:	Kevin O'Brien
Author's Title:	Manager Community Safety and Environmental Health	Directorate:	Communities and Place
Department:	Community Safety and Environmental Health	File Number:	F25/A07/000003

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

Appendices:

Parking Management Plan (**Appendix "9.6A"**)

Parking Management Plan – Community Engagement Plan (**Appendix "9.6B"**)

Purpose

To endorse the Community Engagement Plan for the Parking Management Plan (**Appendix "9.6B"**) and release the proposed Parking Management Plan for public comment.

Summary

The Plan discusses the process undertaken in developing the Horsham Parking Management Plan. It proposes the release, for community consultation purposes, of a Parking Management Plan, a Parking Permit Policy, and maps showing the rationalisation of locations for parking time limits and specialised on-street car parking across the CAD. This rationalisation involves:

- Consolidating all one-hour (1P) car parks into two-hour parking within a prescribed 2P precinct (covering the CAD)
- Consolidating all short-term parking (10, 15, 20 minutes) into a single 30-minute short term parking time frame
- Adding an extra 17 DDA car parks across the CAD in high traffic locations nominated by the PRC
- Modifying unrestricted time limitations in three locations to 2P
- Removal of existing locations signed as Permit Parking
- Making minor modifications to the location of Loading Bays and taxi ranks
- Proposing directional signage for visitors to the City seeking long vehicle parking.

Note – this report does not consider the issue of parking fees or upgrading of parking related infrastructure.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Note the Community Engagement Plan for the Parking Management Plan (**Appendix 9.6B**).
2. Release the proposed Parking Management Plan for public comment (**Appendix 9.6A**).

Council Resolution

MOVED Cr Di Bell, seconded Cr David Bowe

That Council:

1. Note the Community Engagement Plan for the Parking Management Plan (**Appendix 9.6B**).
2. Release the proposed Parking Management Plan for public comment (**Appendix 9.6A**).

CARRIED

REPORT

Background

Council has an existing and current Municipal Parking Strategy that was reviewed and endorsed in 2017 and re-endorsed as per adoption of the Horsham Urban Integrated Transport Strategy in 2020. In 2019-20, Council budgeted for the development of a Parking Management Plan to build on the policy direction of that strategy and ensure that the objectives of the strategy were implemented 'on the ground'.

Tonkin Consulting was contracted to develop the Plan.

The project to develop the Parking Management Plan was broken into two stages:

1. Business case/cost benefit of parking fee and collection methodologies
2. Development of guiding principles for parking management and assessment of car parking time limitations and locations across the study area and development of a Parking Management Plan.

This report focuses on the second stage of the project. The first stage (a business case and proposal to replace the obsolete meters) will be considered as part of the 2021-22 budget deliberations.

A representative community-based Project Reference Committee (PRC) was established to provide initial input into the guiding principles and general outline of the Plan, to focus test the findings and recommendations of the consultant and to support the broader community engagement processes once released for comment.

Discussion

A review by Tonkin Consulting of the current parking regime within the Horsham CAD concluded that:

- On street parking restrictions are unnecessarily complex and should be simplified, for example, there are 19 different types of parking zones and six different types of restriction applying for 30 minutes or less.
 - This array of parking zones appears confusing and is difficult to enforce. There is clear opportunity to rationalise the parking zone framework throughout the city to improve customer satisfaction, support business and for parking to be easier to monitor and enforce.
- Disabled parking comprises 2% of all bays in the city centre. This is a minimum standard per Australian Standard AS289.5 (April 2020) which acknowledges that higher ranges are appropriate depending on the proportion of older and less mobile persons in the community.
 - There is an opportunity to increase the number of DDA car parking spaces, particularly in high frequented areas, and better locate DDA spaces relative to the specific building and land use.
- At its peak, more than 20 organisations have enjoyed special on-street parking arrangements in Horsham. These organisations are exempt from most of the sign-posted parking regulations applicable to other stakeholders. There is little documentation or consistency in the various permit arrangements which appear to have accumulated in *an ad hoc* fashion over a long period of time outside any policy or guidelines.

- Policy is needed to support the general principles proposed by Tonkin Consulting to ensure that the parking regime:
 - Supports retail trade
 - Provides ease of access to all types of users
 - Recognises the role of Horsham as a regional centre for business, commerce and recreation
 - Optimises available street space in an equitable, fair and transparent manner
 - Maintains access to local businesses, services and amenities
 - Balances the needs of residents, local workers, businesses, shoppers and commuters
 - Supports business activity by encouraging the turn-over (churn) of on street parking spaces, while providing a simplified zone arrangement that enables shoppers time to walk the street rather than move their cars
 - Overall, the aim is to provide a better customer experience with parking in Horsham.

The issues raised were discussed extensively with the community-based representative PRC. Revised parking locations and time limits were developed based on the consultation and further reviewed and agreed to by the PRC. Meetings were initially held via video conferencing, and once restrictions were lifted, held in person with the latter meetings being more efficient and collaborative.

Key considerations of the PRC included:

- The extensive number and scattered nature of parking restrictions were confusing, particularly to visitors to Horsham.
- One hour car parking did not give sufficient time for the full range of activities one could expect to undertake whilst visiting the CAD, for example, shopping, commerce, meals and coffee, causing inconvenience to those parked in such bays.
- Consolidating 1P and 2P into one time limit (two hours) will reduce public confusion and provide sufficient time for all activities to be completed without having to return to the meter or to move the car. Any longer than two hours will adversely affect parking turnover.
- A designated area signposted as a two-hour parking (2P) precinct would also reduce the cause of confusion to visitors and locals.
- The large number of short-term parking time restrictions was confusing and rationalising these to a single 30-minute time slot would provide the opportunity for short-term parkers to undertake any one of the full range of activities such as going to the Post Office, a dry cleaner, a bottle shop, the Library or to quickly pay a bill.
- Visitors to Horsham have difficulty locating long-vehicle car spaces and signage was needed to support these visitors.
- The *ad hoc* nature of the business and community permit system was inequitable and did not support the aim of creating churn to help maximise the number of people having access to the parking bays in the CAD.
- Employee and fleet vehicles should be managed off street where possible.
- There were many extra locations that would benefit from DDA accessible parking bays in highly frequented locations.
- DDA parking should be time limited to two hours to support churn and maximise access.
- Some DDA spaces were non-compliant and needed a full audit.
- The long-term parking spaces (unrestricted and 4P) were generally appropriately located.
- No additions or other changes to the location of metered spaces are recommended.
- Parking restrictions after 5pm are redundant because most retailers close at 5pm.

Map 1 in **Appendix “9.6A”** to this report show the following changes to parking restrictions:

- A designated 2P precinct from Darlot Street in the west to inside the western edge of Urquhart Street as the eastern edge and from McLachlan Street in the north to Hamilton Street in the south be established and signposted with all parking bays to have two-hourly time limits unless otherwise marked.
- Parking bays signposted for employees or fleet vehicles be reverted to 2P spaces and alternative off-street spaces be identified.
- Parking restrictions to apply 9am-5pm Monday to Friday and 9am-12pm Saturday.
- The extension of 2P parking outside Bunnings in Wilson Street, replacing unrestricted parking.
- An extension of 2P in the northern end on both sides of Madden Street replacing unrestricted parking.
- The replacement of 4P parking in McLachlan Street with 2P between Firebrace Street and Urquhart Street.

Map 2 shows the changes to long-vehicle parking directional signage established in strategic locations to help point visitors to these without having to do a U-turn.

Map 3 shows the following changes to parking restrictions:

- An extra 17 DDA car spaces be established across the CAD.
- The infrastructure associated with all DDA spaces to be reviewed and installed in compliance with Australian Standards. All DDA spaces to be limited to 2P to facilitate access for all.
- Community group reserved bays (Legacy and senior citizens) be converted to 2P and/or DDA parking spaces.

Map 4 shows the change of *ad hoc* short-term parking restrictions to 30 minutes.

Map 5 shows the long term parking around the CAD.

The Permit Parking Policy attached specifies the purpose for allocating parking restrictions and proposes the elimination of the ad hoc business and community group parking permits.

The Community Engagement Plan presented for endorsement proposes face-to-face or person-to-person engagement with representatives from any organisations directly affected by the proposed changes as shown above.

Options to Consider

The representative community-based Parking Reference Committee has “reality-checked” the consultant’s review on behalf of the community. The Parking Management Plan is now ready for wider exhibition to the community.

Sustainability Implications

Not applicable

Community Engagement

A Community Engagement Plan is attached (**Appendix “9.6B”**) and recommended for endorsement.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The simplification and consolidation of timed parking zones across the CAD will improve the customer parking experience. The community and visitors will benefit from improvements such as 17 extra DDA car spaces and directional signage.

Collaboration

The community-based PRC comprised representatives from retail, the ratepayers, and aged and disability groups. A Business Horsham representative was invited but declined, however they requested to be informed when the draft final product was exhibited. Whilst not everyone was able to attend all meetings, invitees were provided with the minutes. The contribution from members, particularly when meeting face-to-face was constructive and useful.

Financial Implications

There will be some financial implications regarding the installation of new signage.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

HRCC Municipal Parking Strategy 2017

2020-2024 Council Plan

Goal 2 – Sustaining the Economy

Four-Year Priority – Review Municipal Parking Strategy

Risk Implications

There is reputational risk to Council relating to the engagement process, with this risk mitigated through the Community Engagement Plan.

Conclusion

The Parking Management Plan and attachments are in a format that have been focused and tested through extensive meetings with the PRC and are now ready for exhibition to receive community feedback.

9.7 DRAFT WIMMERA REGIONAL LIBRARY CORPORATION ANNUAL BUDGET 2021-2022

Author's Name:	Kevin O'Brien	Director:	Kevin O'Brien
Author's Title:	Director Communities & Place	Directorate:	Communities & Place
Department:	Not Applicable	File Number:	F11/A02/000001

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

Wimmera Regional Library Corporation Draft Annual Budget 2021-2022 (**Appendix "9.7A"**)

Purpose

To receive and note the proposed 2021-2022 budget for the Wimmera Regional Library Corporation (WRLC) including Horsham Rural City Council's contribution to the library service.

Summary

- The 2021-2022 draft annual budget was discussed at the February Board Meeting of the WRLC.
- Horsham Rural City Councils' contribution needs to be included as a line item in Council's 2021-2022 Budget.

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the draft Wimmera Regional Library Corporation Annual Budget for 2021-2022 and refer it to Council's budget process.

Council Resolution

MOVED Cr David Bowe, Seconded Cr Ian Ross

That Council receive and note the draft Wimmera Regional Library Corporation Annual Budget for 2021-2022 and refer it to Council's budget process.

CARRIED

REPORT**Background**

The WRLC considered its draft annual budget for 2021-2022 on 12 February 2021 and resolved that the budget be referred to member Councils for consideration in accordance with the WRLC Agreement.

Discussion

The draft budget includes:

- Maintaining current staff hours at each library branch
- Collections budget, including e-resources of \$155,032
- Wi-Fi environment that enables patrons and visitors 24/7 internet access
- Wage increases of 2% minimum or 90% rate cap as per WRLC Agreement
- Continuation of Public Libraries Victoria shared library arrangements
- Continuation of State Government library grants.

There are several factors that have influenced the development of the 2021-2022 budget.

These factors include:

- The Victorian State Government rate cap of 1.5% for the 2021-22 financial year (2% in 2020-2021 and 2.5% in 2019-2020)
- Grant funding from Local Government Victoria is forecast to be \$295,751
- User fee revenue is expected to be \$14,190
- Funding formulas have altered due to the change from a five-member Council Corporation to two members.

The 2021-2022 financial year brings enormous challenges with the continuation of COVID-19 restrictions and establishing changes from a five-member Council corporation to just two member Councils. The budget supports the delivery of the Library Plan which builds on the strengths of the staff, as well as move WRLC into a position of innovative services. The budget includes a four-year Strategy Resource Plan to demonstrate our sustainable service in a financially constrained environment, while considering the importance of improving and growing library services within the Wimmera region.

Options to Consider

1. Refer library budget to the 2021-2022 Council budget process.
2. If any significant concerns/ issues have been identified, refer the draft budget back to the WRLC Board.

Sustainability Implications

Nil

Community Engagement

The WRLC draft annual budget for 2021-2022 has been developed in consultation with key staff, Board members and Council officers. A draft version of the budget was presented at the December 2020 Board meeting.

The WRLC Board comprises two member Council representatives who have participated in the draft budget discussions. Cr David Bowe, Kevin O'Brien (Director Communities and Place) and Janet Hall (community representative) represent Horsham Rural City Council and are WRLC Board members.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The WRLC draft annual budget for 2021-2022 supports the delivery of the Library Plan which builds on the strengths of the staff, as well as move WRLC into a position of innovative services.

Collaboration

The WRLC has two member Councils that form the WRLC Board.

Financial Implications

The contribution required for Horsham Rural City Council for 2021-2022 is \$512,323, a decrease on the current year's contribution which is \$568,655.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2020-2024 Council Plan

Goal 1 – Community and Cultural Development

Goal 2 – Sustaining the Economy

Goal 4 – Governance and Business Excellence

2017 -2021 Health and Wellbeing Plan

2014 Early Years Plan

Risk Implications

Not applicable

Conclusion

On an annual basis the WRLC Board considers its budget and then refers the draft budget to Councils who are members of the corporation so that these Councils can consider their contribution to the library corporation as part of the annual Council budget process. The draft budget is based on contributions required from the two remaining Council members of the Corporation.

9.8 IRRIGATION PUMP SYSTEM

Author's Name:	John Martin	Director:	John Martin
Author's Title:	Director Infrastructure	Directorate:	Infrastructure
Department:	Infrastructure	File Number:	F15/A07/000019

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

Horsham CBD Irrigation Redevelopment - Consultant's Initial Report (**Appendix "9.8A"**)

Schematic Representation of Pump System Options (**Appendix "9.8B"**)

Textual Description of Pump System Options (**Appendix "9.8C"**)

Purpose

To approve the proposal to replace the irrigation pump shed and tanks to facilitate implementation of the City to River Stage 1 River Activation project, whilst also upgrading the capacity of the system to adequately meet current and future demands.

Summary

- There is an urgent need to move the pump shed and tanks located on the river frontage near the caravan park entrance to facilitate priority works for the City to River Stage 1 River Activation project, and to enhance the aesthetics of the river front area.
- Detailed investigations have occurred, involving a consultant who has engaged with the Parks and Gardens team to understand the configuration of the existing system and irrigation demands.
- The consultant's initial investigation provides broad background on the existing system configuration and needs, and included an initial option for consideration.
- Subsequently, a series of further options were developed to help identify which approach would best suit Council's short-term and long-term needs.
- The investigation ascertained that the current irrigation system is barely adequate for the current irrigation demands, and that an upgrade would be required to cater for the additional demands that will be associated with the City to River project and to improve the efficiency of the existing system.
- A recommended configuration for the irrigation system has been developed.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Approve the placement of the irrigation system with a new system referred to as Option 6 in **Appendix "9.8B"** and **Appendix "9.8C"**, with key elements being a main pump station at Wotonga Basin and an enlarged supply pipeline to connect to Firebrace Street.
2. Approve funding of \$392,000 for the irrigation system, sourced from Council's 2021-2022 Capital Works Program, uncommitted Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Stage 1 grants, City to River Stage 1 funds and a proposed Victorian Government grant application.

Council Resolution

MOVED Cr Claudia Haenel, Seconded Cr Les Power

That Council:

1. Approve the replacement of the irrigation system with a new system referred to as Option 6 in **Appendix "9.8B"** and **Appendix "9.8C"**, with key elements being a main pump station at Wotonga Basin and an enlarged supply pipeline to connect to Firebrace Street.
2. Approve funding of \$392,000 for the irrigation system, sourced from Council's 2021-2022 Capital Works Program, uncommitted Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Stage 1 grants, City to River Stage 1 funds and a proposed Victorian Government grant application.

CARRIED

Cr Di Bell called for a division of Council

For the motion:

Cr Claudia Haenel

Cr David Bowe

Cr Penny Flynn

Cr Les Power

Cr Robyn Gulline

Against the motion:

Cr Di Bell

Cr Ian Ross

REPORT

Background

Council's irrigation network servicing the general Botanic Gardens / Sawyer Park / City Oval precinct has the following key elements:

- Water is primarily sourced from Wotonga Basin, which provides a storage for good quality stormwater from parts of the CBD and adjoining areas.
- A low volume pump at Wotonga Basin feeds the six tanks near Firebrace Street. This supply is limited by the 75mm diameter supply pipeline to Firebrace Street, requiring the tanks to provide balancing storage.
- A second source pump in the pump shed at the tank site draws water from the Wimmera River. This source is less frequently used, partly due to variable salinity in the weir pool.
- A series of distribution pumps draw water from the tanks, delivering a higher flow rate to the various demands.

The consultant's initial report (**Appendix "9.8A"**) presents extensive background on the existing irrigation network, and includes plans and photos depicting the key elements of the system.

The utilisation of Wotonga Basin and the tank network increased as the Millennium drought set in. During this period, the Wimmera River had low flows, and the weir pool was at very low levels, limiting the river supply to the irrigation system, and necessitating the alternative arrangements sourced from Wotonga Basin.

It should be noted that:

- The existing irrigation system barely meets the current demands of the system.
- New demands are arising through the City to River project that would impact on the ability of the existing system to operate efficiently (for example, watering in cooler times of the day only), and could exceed the capacity of the system.

Discussion

The consultant's initial report focused on a single option with a staged approach. This involved upgrades to the source pumps at both Wotonga Basin and the river, and to the distribution pump station, including moving the pump shed and tanks to a new site, near the miniature railway area. The cost for this was assessed as being very high, so additional options were requested to be investigated. **Appendix "9.8B"** and **Appendix "9.8C"** provide schematic and textual representations of the options that were further explored.

Analysis of the options led to the conclusion that the cost of Option 1, which involves reusing and moving the existing pumps and tanks and co-locating them at a new pump shed near the miniature railway line was similar to the cost of installing an upgraded pump system which had greater capacity to meet future demands.

This upgraded configuration, shown as Option 6 in the appendices, would comprise a new pump set at Wotonga Basin that could draw from both the basin and the river, and supply that at the required pressure throughout the distribution system, via an enlarged pipe that would link to the existing pipe network in Firebrace Street. This system would offer the following advantages over moving the existing pumps and tanks:

- It removes the need for above ground tanks
- It would consist of a relatively unobtrusive pump station on the edge of Wotonga Basin
- The system would have the capacity to meet future demands.

Estimates on the pricing for Options 1 and 6, were \$401,000 and \$392,000, respectively, hence the upgraded capacity of Option 6 presents as an attractive option.

Options to Consider

The report outlines that an extensive range of options was considered.

Sustainability Implications

A key function of Council's existing irrigation system is that it reuses stormwater generated in the urban environment. This helps prevent problems with excess nutrients, for example, in the river, while being very suitable for use as irrigation water. A new irrigation system would retain this ability.

Community Engagement

The goal of this work is to fit in with Council plans already developed through community consultation.

Further engagement will be required with the Parks and Gardens team to ensure that this option is effectively implemented.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The existing irrigation system only barely keeps up with irrigation demands. A new system is required at some stage to cater to increased demands

Collaboration

In-house teams have participated in the definition of the existing system and demands, and the development of options.

Financial Implications

Funding for these works is proposed to be sourced as follows:

\$120,000	Previously un-committed Federal grant funds remaining from Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Stage 1
\$100,000	Existing allocation from City to River Stage 1 River Activation funds
\$110,000	Grant funds from a Victorian Government grant application
\$ 62,000	Council capital works program 2021-22
\$392,000	Total

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

These works are required to facilitate implementation of Council's City to River plans.

2020-2024 Council Plan

Goal 5 – Natural and Built Environments

Risk Implications

A key risk is ensuring continuity of supply in the irrigation network.

Conclusion

A cost-effective proposal has been identified which will secure the long-term security of the irrigation system, and cater to additional demands that will arise through the City to River project.

9.9 REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT VICTORIA REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND – WIMMERA SOUTHERN MALLEE CARAVAN PARK UPGRADE FUNDING ROUND

Author's Name:	Susan Surridge	Director:	Kevin O'Brien
Author's Title:	Co-ordinator Community Relations and Advocacy	Directorate:	Communities and Place
Department:	Community Relations and Advocacy	File Number:	F15/A07/000003

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 approve an application to Regional Development Victoria's Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF) targeting the five Wimmera Southern Mallee Councils for caravan park upgrades.

Summary

- On 26 February 2021, Council received a letter of invitation to apply for a targeted RIF round for caravan park upgrades from the Hon Mary-Anne Thomas, Minister for Regional Development.
- An expression of interest was required to be lodged by 5 March 2021.
- On 10 March 2021, Council lodged an application under the Federal Government's Building Better Regions Fund for upgrades to the Horsham Riverside Caravan Park following approval at the 1 March 2021 Council meeting. This project budget required \$1:\$1 funding.
- The Regional Development Victoria funding program has no matching funding requirements and additional irrigation elements have been included relating to the establishment of the café site and the Firebrace Street arrival point at the river to maximise the Regional Development Victoria funding application opportunity.
- The Expression of Interest was approved by Regional Development Victoria on 12 March 2021 and Council has now been invited to submit a full application by 31 March 2021.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Approve an application to Regional Development Victoria's Regional Infrastructure Fund, targeting the five Wimmera Southern Mallee Councils for caravan park upgrades.
2. Approve the project scope and budget as detailed in the Background and Financial Implications of this report.

Council Resolution

MOVED Cr Penny Flynn, Seconded Cr Les Power

That Council:

1. Approve an application to Regional Development Victoria's Regional Infrastructure Fund, targeting the five Wimmera Southern Mallee Councils for caravan park upgrades.
2. Approve the project scope and budget as detailed in the Background and Financial Implications of this report.

CARRIED

REPORT**Background**

Regional Development Victorian have provided an unexpected funding round for the five Wimmera Southern Mallee Councils targeting caravan park upgrades. This opportunity follows the recent Australian Government Building Better Regions Fund (BBRF) Round 5 – Tourism Stream (Council submitted an application on 10 March 2021).

The BBRF application was approved at the Council meeting on 1 March 2021. This will be a highly competitive funding round – it is expected that only around one in ten applications will be successful (on the basis of past federal funding programs).

The proposed Regional Development Victoria application provides another opportunity to gain funding to support important upgrades at the Horsham Riverside Caravan Park and there is no fixed funding co-contribution required.

Financial Implications

The proposed project scope and funding budget is as follows:

Item	Project Cost
3. Construct a new caretaker/park manager's residence and in addition build a residence for relief staff which will include a reception/office area	\$278,800
4. Boundary realignment and permits fees	\$14,950
5. Erect new fencing	\$21,850
6. Demolish former office, disconnection of power and water and temporary fencing	\$44,850
7. Make 1,027m ² site ready for future developments (including tree removal)	\$19,550
8. Irrigation System*	\$392,000
Total	\$772,000

Funding Sources

Regional Development Victoria (application)	\$400,000
Southern Cross Parks	\$90,000
Federal LRCI Round 1	\$120,000
C2R Riverfront Activation (Stage 1) – 2020/2021 budget commitment	\$100,000
21/22 Budget	\$62,000
Total	\$772,000

*The Regional Development Victoria project scope includes an important irrigation upgrade that is essential for development of the Firebrace Street arrival area at the riverfront and the proposed café/restaurant site linked to the re-alignment of the Caravan Park lease boundary. The details of these irrigation works are provided in a separate Council Report (**refer Agenda item 9.8**) for consideration and approval.

The inclusion of the irrigation works has increased the project budget by \$392,000. This component of the works is being funded by an existing 2020-2021 budget allocation of \$100,000 as part of the Riverfront Activation Project, a proposed new budget commitment of \$62,000 in 2021-2022 and the allocation of the remaining Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Round 1 funding of \$120,000. The balance of the irrigation works of \$110,000 will be funded through the Regional Development Victoria grant opportunity.

Options to Consider

Regional Development Victoria have approved the Expression of Interest to progress to full application stage. There are no options to consider.

Sustainability Implications

The irrigation component of this project promotes the renewal and modernisation of Council's irrigation infrastructure at the riverfront, providing for more efficient use of stormwater run-off from the CBD area.

Community Engagement

The Riverfront schematic design was developed with the community reference group for the Riverfront Precinct and there was public community engagement following the release of the draft concept designs. Council approved the Riverfront schematic design in September 2020.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The irrigation component of this project is an example of continuous improvement. Options were considered to just relocate the existing pump house and rain water tanks, but analysis showed that the best long term option was to develop a new irrigation system focused on Wotonga Basin.

Collaboration

The development of this project has involved close collaboration with Southern Cross Parks, the Caravan Park Lessees.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2020-2024 Council Plan

Goal 3 – Asset Management

Four-Year Outcome 3.4 – Deliver works to develop and maintain Council's physical assets for long term sustainability, amenity and safety

Risk Implications

This report relates to funding opportunities only. The project will not commence until funding is confirmed.

Conclusion

Council has a further targeted opportunity through Regional Development Victoria to obtain funding for caravan park upgrades and irrigation works tied to the re-alignment of the caravan park boundary and the siting of a future café/restaurant.

9.10 LIVING HERITAGE PROGRAM 2021

Author's Name:	Stephanie Harder	Director:	Kevin O'Brien
Author's Title:	Co-ordinator Strategic Planning	Directorate:	Communities and Place
Department:	Strategic Planning	File Number:	F34/A04/000003

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

Living Heritage Program – 2021 Guidelines (**Appendix “9.10A”**)

Purpose

To approve an application to the Heritage Victoria's Living Heritage Program 2021.

Summary

- Applications to the Victorian Government's Living Heritage Program close on 26 March 2021.
- The funding guidelines (**Appendix “9.10A”**) indicate that this funding will target conservation of “at risk” heritage places included on the Victorian Heritage Register.
- The Horsham Town Hall is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register and projects to protect and conserve significant heritage fabric of this building is eligible for funding.
- Council's highest priority for conservation at present is the Horsham Town Hall's Auditorium floor. The full reconstruction of the timber floor is both necessary and urgent due to its fragile state, diminished structural integrity, declining community use and potential health and safety risk to users of the space. An allowance has also been made in the costings to carry out some building structural works at the same time when the floor is replaced.
- A heritage permit exemption has been obtained from Heritage Victoria for the floor reconstruction (received in November 2020). This will be a favourable factor in Assessment Panel's evaluation of Council's application as it provides certainty that the works are acceptable and 'shovel ready'.
- The maximum grant allocation is \$200,000.
- A Council contribution of \$420,000.00 will be required over two financial years: 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Approve an application to the Living Heritage program 2021 for the Heritage Hall flooring project.
2. Provide funding of \$420,000.00 over two financial years (2021-2022 and 2022-2023) subject to a successful grant application.

Cr Di Bell left the meeting at 6.24pm.

Council Resolution

MOVED Cr Ian Ross, Seconded Cr Les Power

That Council:

1. Approve an application to the Living Heritage program 2021 for the Heritage Hall flooring project.
2. Provide funding of \$420,000.00 over two financial years (2021-2022 and 2022-2023) subject to a successful grant application.

CARRIED

Cr Di Bell returned to the meeting at 6.35pm.

REPORT

Background

The Living Heritage Program 2021 is an initiative of the Victoria Government to support the repair and conservation of 'at risk' heritage places and objects identified as being of State significance and included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) under the provisions of the *Heritage Act 2017*.

The issue

Past sanding and deterioration of the Auditorium floor over time have diminished the depth of the current flooring (from 32mm to 18mm) causing severely brittle tongue and groove floorboards as well as splintering in some locations. It has also led to exposed grooves. Minor repairs have been carried out to retain some damaged boards however the floor is now in such poor condition leaving boards vulnerable to further cracks and splits. The floor is now beyond repair having reached its end of life after playing host to hundreds of events over many years. At present, Council is unable to sand the floor due to its delicate state – diminishing its visual presentation.

In 2018, sub-floor investigations identified extensive moisture that caused a structural problem in the south-east corner of the Auditorium. It has caused a substantial incline of the floor under the balcony as well as deterioration of the timber framing and damage to the brick piers. The cause of the damage was identified and has been addressed but the sub-floor structure requires full replacing.

Formerly, the Auditorium was a much used public facility. The diminishing structural integrity of the boards, loss of aesthetic appeal and safety concerns associated with the damaged boards and uneven floor at the rear section of the Auditorium has deterred regular community groups and other users from hiring the auditorium as a venue for activities and functions. As a result the Auditorium is no longer fit for purpose.

To use is to conserve

The most effective conservation approach for a heritage building is to ensure an ongoing and compatible use (preferably its original use) as this will sustain the building into the future. If a building or part of a building becomes redundant, it is vulnerable to neglect and further decay. The ongoing use of the building will also ensure regular maintenance inspections are undertaken to the subfloor space, ensuring any future problems with sub floor drainage can be identified and rectified quickly. Council will be implementing a regular inspection regime as part of their ongoing building maintenance program. Therefore, the more appropriate and successful way to preserve the Auditorium is to continue to use it.

The solution

The conservation response Council seeks to implement reflects best practice in building conservation. It recognises the importance of the original materials used (Mountain Ash timber) and the carpentry craftsmanship (tongue and groove, end matched and secret nailing), demonstrating a strong understanding of what makes the Auditorium culturally significant at a State level.

The key conservation activities include the replacement of the 45mm x 25mm tongue and groove timber floorboards. Matching Mountain Ash timber will be sourced from timber suppliers and used in the installation of the new floor. Furthermore, the board dimensions and profile will match the existing installation. Nailing as per the existing floor and then coated in a modern system suitable for wear in a heavy public use area. The proposed stain finish will be approved by the heritage consultant prior to being carried out. The stain will match the original ensuring the iconic warm light brown yellowish appearance is achieved. The timber floorboards will be installed on new DuraGal stumps T at 1500mm centres with new joists and bearers. The sub-floor space will be increased in height to improve ventilation and access.

This “like for like” conservation approach will ensure the floors are aesthetically and architecturally correct. Traditional carpentry techniques will be employed to reproduce the quality craftsmanship of the original timber floor and architectural design features of the era.

The design of the floor reconstruction is complete and Council has received a permit exemption from Heritage Victoria to undertake these works in the described manner above. Due to the ‘like for like’ replacement of the timber boards there is approximately a six to 12 month lead time on the procurement of these boards. The boards will be sourced and procured in the 21/22 financial year. Construction and replacement will take place as soon as the entire quantity of boards required have been received.

Options to Consider

Advice from Council’s Heritage Advisor in 2018 was that the Auditorium floor is irreparably damaged (unable to be preserved or restored). As Council is unable to conserve the original floor and it represents a safety risk to users, the only available option for Council is full replacement. It has also been identified that building structural works will be required at the same time.

Sustainability Implications

Not Applicable

Community Engagement

This is a conservation project to reconstruct the Auditorium floor in a manner that matches its original design, material and installation technique. There is no aspect of this project the community can influence and engage on as this project is subject to State building conservation requirements. There has, however, been strong community support in the past for the conservation of heritage aspect of the Town Hall and Auditorium.

The community will be informed about the success of the funding application and the scope and delivery plan for the project when it commences.

The completion of this project will facilitate the hosting of a greater range of community functions and activities whilst raising awareness of the importance of this place in both Horsham’s local history and the history of Victoria.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

This project will demonstrate best practice building conservation practice, in accordance with the Burra Charter.

Collaboration

The development of this project has involved a cross-departmental collaboration i.e. Horsham Town Hall, Infrastructure, Planning and Grants. There has also been ongoing advice obtained from heritage consultants.

Financial Implications

The total cost of this project is \$620,000 which has an allowance of \$100,000 for building structural works which will also be required when the floor is replaced. The maximum grant under the Living Heritage program is \$200,000. Council requires a co-contribution of \$420,000 to fund the balance of this project over two financial years: 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

This project supports the conservation provisions of the provisions of the *Heritage Act 2017*.

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2020-2024 Council Plan

Goal 3 – Asset Management

Four-year outcome – 3.4 Deliver works to develop and maintain Council’s physical assets for long term sustainability, amenity and safety

Risk Implications

If the Auditorium floor reconstruction works are not carried out, this will present multiple risks to Council. The risks are as follows:

- The current deteriorated condition of the floor is nearing health and safety concerns which could mean the space becomes no longer publicly accessible.
- If there is no sustained use the Auditorium will be at risk of further deterioration of significant heritage fabric.
- Council will not be meeting its obligations under the *Heritage Act 2017* to maintain the Town Hall to the extent that its conservation is not threatened, and to ensure that it does not fall into a state of disrepair.
- The Town Hall loses its reputation as a key and valued asset in the municipality and region due to the degradation of the Auditorium.

If the reconstruction works are delayed, the cost for it to be carried out in the future will most likely increase.

Conclusion

Council has the opportunity through the Living Heritage Fund 2021 to reconstruct the Auditorium floor ensuring it remains a valued and accessible public venue for the Horsham and Wimmera communities.

9.11 INVESTMENT ATTRACTION AND GROWTH REPORT

Author's Name:	Fiona Gormann	Director:	Kevin O'Brien
Author's Title:	Manager Investment Attraction and Growth	Directorate:	Communities and Place
Department:	Communities and Place	File Number:	F15/A06/000001

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 receive and note the Investment Attraction and Growth Report for January 2021.

Summary

The Investment Attraction and Growth Report provides a summary of investment attraction and growth activities in the municipality during the reporting period.

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the Investment Attraction and Growth Report for January 2021.

Council Resolution

MOVED Cr Claudia Haenel, Seconded Cr David Bowe

That Council receive and note the Investment Attraction and Growth Report for January 2021.

CARRIED

REPORT

Background

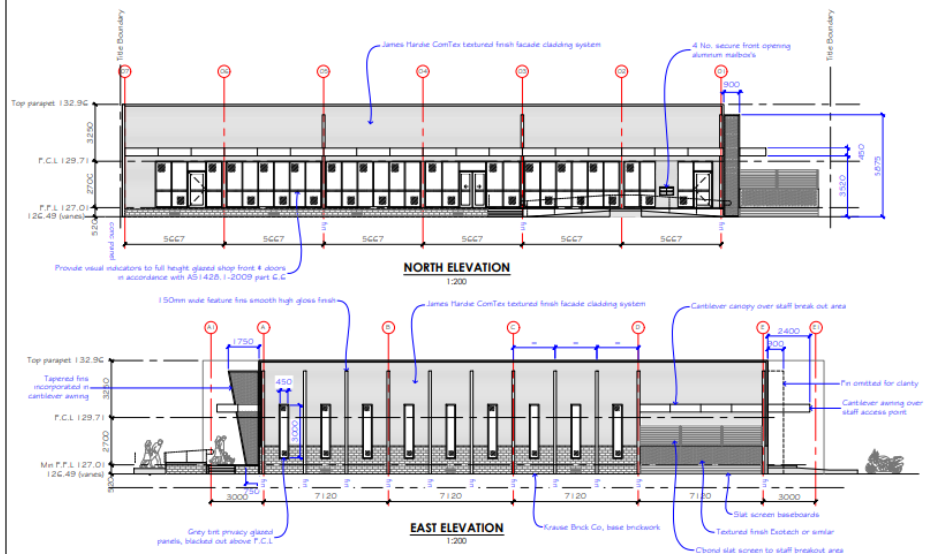
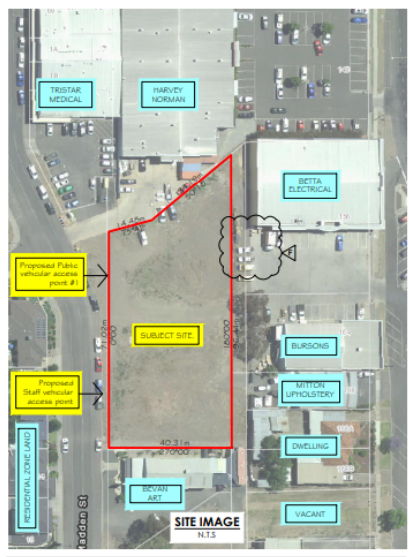
An Investment Attraction and Growth Report is tabled at monthly Council meetings.

Discussion

The work undertaken across Investment Attraction and Growth includes Statutory Planning, Building Services, Strategic Planning, Visitor Services, Business, Tourism and Events.

STATUTORY PLANNING

The Statutory Planning team have been actively processing a number of planning permits, planning enquires. There has also been a number of significant applications approved for Horsham Rural City including a \$1,800,000 office space development for 3-7 Madden Street. This development is the final vacant site which formed part of the old Horsham Saleyards.



Planning Applications Determined

Below are the number of Planning Permits issued for the month of January 2021 and a comparison with the same period last year.

Type	JAN 2021		JAN 2020	
	No.	*Value \$	No.	*Value \$
Miscellaneous Domestic	8	\$1,095,976	4	\$757,920
Industrial/Commercial	2	\$14,360,000	3	\$1,862,295
Subdivisions	2 (6 lots)	-	2 (6 lots)	-
Other	3	-	-	-
Total	15	\$15,455,976	8	\$2,620,215

(*Please note: Not all applications have a \$ figure)

Total number of planning permits issued in the Horsham Rural City Council area from 1 January to 31 January 2021 is 15 compared to 8 in 2020.

Planning permits issued for subdivision have created six new lots from 1 January to 31 January 2021, compared to 6 in 2020.

There have been a high number of planning applications appealed to VCAT for review including:

PA2000103 – Alexander Avenue, Horsham

PA2000021 – Searle Street, Horsham

PA2000093 – Rose Street, Horsham

PA2000069 – Wilson Street, Horsham

BUILDING SERVICES

Building Permits Issued

Below are the number of building permits issued for the month of January 2021 and a comparison with the same period last year.

Permits issued by Horsham Rural City Council for this Municipality

Type	JAN 2021		JAN 2020	
	No.	Value \$	No.	Value \$
Dwellings	-	-	-	-
Alterations to Dwellings	-	-	1	285,600
Dwelling resitting's	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous Domestic (Carports, Garages etc.)	2	\$9,360	4	\$65,800
Removal/Demolish	-	-	-	-
Industrial/Commercial	-	-	2	\$20,000
Signs	-	-	-	-
Total	2	\$9,360	7	\$371,400

Permits issued by other Private Building Surveyors for this Municipality or by Government Departments

Type	JAN 2021		JAN 2020	
	No.	Value \$	No.	Value \$
Dwellings	6	\$2,069,007	1	\$348,196
Alterations to Dwellings	2	\$118,400	1	\$15,500
Dwelling resitting's	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous Domestic (Carports, Garages etc.)	6	\$257,123	3	\$82,402
Removal/Demolish	-	-	-	-
Industrial/Commercial	1	\$131,923	2	\$2,922,000
Signs	-	-	-	-
Total	15	2,576,453	18	\$3,368,098

A total of two Building Permits have been issued by Horsham Rural City Council at a total value of \$9,360 from 1 January to 31 January 2021, compared to seven Building Permits at a total value of \$371,400 in 2020.

Private Building Surveyors have issued 15 Building Permits at a total value of \$2,576,453 from 1 January to 31 January 2021, compared to seven, at a total value of \$3,368,098 in 2020.

Building Services will provide a number of community engagements sessions later in the year. These sessions will be designed to provide information in relation to the new pool registration that were introduced last year.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

There are two new developments concerning planning in Victoria that the Strategic Planning Unit believes Council should be aware of.

State of Heritage Review: Local Heritage 2020 Report

Local governments have a statutory obligation to ensure that the planning schemes “conserve and enhance those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical, or otherwise of special cultural value” (*Planning and Environment Act 1987*). They do so by undertaking heritage studies and assessments of places thought to be of heritage value. Councils use this information to decide if a place’s heritage significance is enough to warrant statutory protection through the application of a heritage overlay. Councils, however, have been addressing their obligations with varying success.

The Heritage Council of Victoria has released its much-anticipated *State of Heritage Review: Local Heritage 2020 Report*. Local government is responsible for over 186,000 heritage places across the State and this report aims to acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses of the current heritage system. The key findings are:

- Local heritage is not always a primary consideration or priority within Councils, often being seen as something ‘extra’ to the core components of planning.
- There is a need for increased direction from the State Government to better enable Councils to both understand and effectively comply with their responsibilities to identify and protect local heritage. In particular, participants noted that:
 - There is no-one to speak to for consistent direction regarding their obligations for protecting and managing local heritage or for advice on how to best protect and manage their local heritage.
 - Existing guidance material to support efficient best-practice local heritage management and protection is often out of date, hard to find and does not include information required in today’s more complex planning environment
 - Council planners often operate in isolation with no prior background in heritage and struggle to know what best practice is, where to find the right information/guidance and how to assess the quality of the advice they receive from heritage consultants.
- A base-level of heritage protection is still to be achieved across the State. Four per cent of all Councils are yet to complete a Stage 2 Heritage Study; nearly 10 percent are yet to translate any studies into the Heritage Overlay; and nearly 20 percent identified geographic gaps in their studies.

Horsham Rural City Council has yet to implement its Heritage Study. Out of all 13 Rural City Councils, Horsham has the least amount of heritage protected places (total 27), behind Benalla (48), Wodonga (55) and Ararat (130). Horsham also has the least amount of heritage properties (total 52) following Wodonga (128), Ararat (284) and Swan Hill (309).

The release of this report highlights that Council has obligations to conserve heritage places under the *Planning and Environmental Act 1987*.

Key areas where Horsham Rural City Council could focus on are:

- Through the planning scheme review implement the heritage study recommendation include application of the heritage overlay
- Engagement of a heritage advisor as a preferred supplier on a three year contract basis
- Complete a geographical gaps heritage study which includes rural heritage
- Consider assessments of other heritage sites, such as industrial sites, late 20th century buildings, tree gardens, historic landscapes, and post war residential
- Develop a heritage strategy to support conservation and promotion of heritage assets
- Establish a heritage reference group and heritage incentives, such as waiving planning permit fees, free preliminary advice and a heritage grand scheme
- Councillors to undertake internal training in regards to heritage.

Guidelines for Precinct Structure Planning Melbourne's Greenfield 2020

Last year, the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) released its draft *Guidelines for Precinct Structure Planning Melbourne's Greenfield 2020*. The Guidelines provide targets for planning authorities to incorporate into the preparation of structure plans. The VPA has engaged Council to provide feedback to the targets to assist it in preparing future guidelines for peri-urban and regional areas.

Council is currently considering its feedback in the context of the Horsham South Structure Plan and key issues that are unique to our region. It is important that these issues are appropriately captured to ensure that the future guidelines “talk” to the Horsham context.

INVESTMENT ATTRACTION AND GROWTH

Through the Investment Attraction Group within Council a number of investment enquires to develop new or relocate commercial businesses within Council's industrial estates sites has occurred. As negotiations continue further industry growth is possible within our municipality.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM AND EVENTS

Business Support

Since the launch of our new “Live the Grampians Way” marketing campaign on the 1 December 2020, this program has continued to deliver great results. Below is a snapshot of performance to date across Horsham and the four local government areas.

Total users increased by 47 percent to 6,924, whilst spending only increased 15 percent. This was largely due to a lower “cost-per-click”, allowing for more clicks. Engaged sessions and page views also increased indicating users were active on the site after they arrived.

Facebook advertisements were very effective with a 104 percent increase in clicks (double) for a \$116 increase in spend. Cost-per-click was \$0.11c and as low as \$0.06c for some advertisements – indicating extremely high engagement rate for the messaging, creative and targeting.

Google search had a 14 percent increase in clicks and 140 percent increase in conversions with forms submitted increased by 230 percent to 66 for the month. Outbound clicks to job sites increased by 133 percent. Paid social Facebook accounted for 42 percent of web sessions and 36 conversions, while paid search had 13 conversions and 18 percent of overall web sessions.

Stronger Business and Community Grants

Stronger Business – There were two applications received with one application referred to the Wimmera Business Centre and one applications not recommended for funding. Total value allocated \$73,986 at 9 February 2021, with \$10,006 funds remaining.

Recreation and Community Recovery – Program closed as oversubscribed.

Arts and Events Activation – One new applications was received associated with Arts and Events activities. This application requested \$5,000. At 9 February 2021, \$47,172 has been allocated with \$27,828 funds remaining.

Business Fronts and Health and Wellbeing applications will be assessed when the assessment panel meets on 16 February 2020. These grant streams promote renewing the fronts of business across our municipality. This can be the replacement of blinds, signage and potential landscaping of entrances to businesses. The Health and Wellbeing program has been designed to support the strengthening of business and community response to health and wellbeing impacts of COVID-19.



The Business Team's direct business visits will be commencing in February 2020 with hospitality businesses. This will provide an opportunity to promote the Outdoor Dining Footpath Trading Permanent Infrastructure program.

Horsham Visitor Services

	January	YTD	Previous Year
Groups recorded	379	379	N/A
Total for individuals within groups	1086	1,086	1241
Visithorsham.com.au web visits	5,672	5,672	
Emails	201	201	314
Accommodation & Tourist Operators contacts	3	3	
How many accommodation operators	48	48	
Produce Sales	\$1599	\$1599	\$2923

In January 2021, 42 percent of groups that presented to Visitor Services chose Horsham as their destination. 16 percent of groups chose The Grampians as a destination and this figure would also include some of those visitors who were visiting multiple destinations including those staying in Horsham.

Visitation peaked in the week 4 to 10 January 2021, when 106 groups requested Visitor Services information. A slow decline continued until the Australia Day public holiday weekend when another but smaller peak occurred.

Of the 5,672 visits to the Visithorsham website 5,490 were new users. There were 362 hits on 3 January 2021, the highest of any single day, and the peaks and troughs timelines were reflected in the face-to-face visitation to Visitor Services. 97.36 percent of hits were from Australians.

Events

	January	YTD
Notice of intention to hold an event application	8	8
Visitor Information Centre visits	430	430
Visithorsham.com web visits	5,212	5,212

It is pleasing to have events returning with eight notifications in January 2020 for the following events:

- Blood Bank Red Cross
- Natimuk Farmers Market Plus
- Horsham U3A
- Mother's Day Classic
- Horsham Fishing Competition
- Voice of Wimmera
- Haven Market
- Mt Arapiles Masters Ride

Options to Consider

Not applicable

Sustainability Implications

The report provides an overview of the development and business activity across the region with no direct sustainability implications.

Community Engagement

The report has been prepared in consultation with range of agencies and will be made publicly available to Business Horsham, Wimmera Development Association and on the Horsham Rural City Council website.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The report provides an overview of activities and assists with continuous improvement within the Investment Attraction and Growth department.

Collaboration

The report has been prepared in collaboration with Council officers across Strategic and Statutory Planning, Building Services and Business and Tourism Teams.

Financial Implications

The Business and Community Support package will deliver projects that make up Council's direct financial contribution of \$484,000.

Further projects will be developed to support businesses through the Local Council's Outdoor Eating and Entertaining program for \$500,000. These funds need to be fully expended by 30 June 2021.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2020-2024 Council Plan

Goal 2 – Sustaining the Economy

Risk Implications

Not applicable

Conclusion

As the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to test communities, it is important that Council maintain a close and supportive relationship with businesses within our municipality. This will be achieved through the delivery of the Stronger Business and Community Support Package, the Business and Community Grants program and the delivery of the temporary and permanent infrastructure programs to increase outdoor dining.

9.12 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S OPERATIONAL REPORT

Author's Name:	Sunil Bhalla	Director:	Not applicable
Author's Title:	Chief Executive Officer	Directorate:	Not applicable
Department:	Chief Executive Officer	File Number:	F06/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

Nil

Purpose

To receive and note the Chief Executive Officer's Operational Report for March 2021.

Summary

The Chief Executive Officer's Operational Report highlights issues and outcomes affecting the organisation's performance and matters which may not be subject of Council reports or briefings.

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the Chief Executive Officer's Operational Report for March 2021.

Council Resolution

MOVED Cr David Bowe, Seconded Cr Claudia Haenel

That Council receive and note the Chief Executive Officer's Operational Report for March 2021.

CARRIED

REPORT

Background

At the Council meeting held on 24 June 2019, it was resolved that the Chief Executive Officer provide an operational report to Council.

Discussion

Key items of interest for the report period are summarised below.

A. Advocacy/Funding Announcements

Rural Council's Corporate Collaboration (RCCC) Board Meetings: The RCCC Board, which includes the Chief Executive Officers of Hindmarsh, West Wimmera, Buloke, Yarriambiack, Loddon and Horsham met on 11 March 2021. The board received an update on the tender evaluation currently being undertaken by the Project Team to identify a preferred supplier of the Technology solution to the participating Councils.

Regional Roads Victoria: The Mayor, Chief Executive Officer and Director Infrastructure attended a Liaison Meeting between Council and the Department of Transport on Monday 15 March 2021. A range of issues were discussed including, funding for the planning investigation for the Alternative Truck Route, Community Road Safety and other Road Safety funding opportunities, Western Rail advocacy, etc.

B. Community Engagement

Pool Registration Information Session: The Building Team hosted an online information session on 10 March 2021 to explain new registration requirements for pool and spa owners. The Victorian Government has introduced new laws that regulate swimming pools and spa safety. Under the laws, owners are required to register their pool or spa with Council and obtain a Certificate of Pool and Spa Barrier Compliance for the safety of pool or spa barriers every four years. The laws apply to swimming pools and spas that can hold more than 30cm of water, which can include:

- Permanent pools, either above or below ground,
- Indoor pools
- Hot tubs
- Some types of relocatable pools.

Horsham Regional Art Gallery Education Calendar: This year the Gallery has developed an overview of the 2021 program specifically for schools and distributed an electronic and hard-copy Education Calendar. It encourages schools to visit the Gallery where students can be inspired by and choose to explore a favourite artist or artwork and improve student engagement and learning. The Gallery provides students with a relaxed opportunity to observe, ask questions, and explore how artists plan and express their ideas. Gallery staff can facilitate meaningful interactions through direct experience with artworks, in a dedicated curated space, with in-depth discussion adapted to student needs. This year's exhibitions provide opportunity for students to develop contemporary, historical and indigenous cultural understandings supported by Gallery staff. The Gallery Education Officer works with schools prior to their visits to help meet curriculum goals for that year level and enhance learning opportunities.

C. Projects and Events

Horsham Regional Livestock Association: The Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange hosted a Managers Field Day on Friday 26 February 2021 for the Australian Livestock Saleyards Association (ALSA). ALSA members from Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales attended. Workshop topics included animal welfare, electronic ear-tagging, pending loading ramp safety standards and members had wide-ranging discussions on topical issues for the industry. Due to COVID-19, all talks were held outside on the green lawns.

Victorian Small Business: The Chief Executive Officer and Councillors met with the Victorian Small Business Commissioner at the Horsham Golf Club on Tuesday 16 March 2021 where Council officially signed up to the Small Business Friendly Council initiative. The initiative, which is driven by the Victorian Small Business Commission, in partnership with local Councils, is about making it a lot easier to run and grow a small business locally.

Options to Consider

Not applicable

Sustainability Implications

Not applicable

Community Engagement

Not applicable

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not applicable

Collaboration

Not applicable

Financial Implications

Not applicable

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2020-2024 Council Plan

Goal 4 – Governance and Business Excellence

Risk Implications

Not applicable

Conclusion

That Council receive and note the Chief Executive Officer's Operational Report for March 2021.

10. COUNCILLOR REPORTS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cr Robyn Gulline, Mayor

- 19 February 2021 – Rotary Club of Horsham
- 23 February 2021 – ABC Wimmera radio interview
- 24 February 2021 – Murra Warra Wind Farm Community Fund Launch
- 24 February 2021 – Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre Q&A Session with Dr David Speakman via Zoom
- 26 February 2021 – Triple H radio interview with Di Trotter
- 26 February 2021 – Rail Freight Alliance Working Party
- 1 March 2021 – Council Meeting
- 2 March 2021 – ABC Wimmera radio interview
- 3 March 2021 – Wimmera Liveability Forum via Zoom
- 5 March 2021 – Opening of Body Language: A NGA Exhibition, Horsham Regional Art Gallery
- 10 March 2021 – ABC Wimmera radio interview
- 10 March 2021 – Youth Council meeting and tour of The Station
- 15 March 2021 – Liaison Meeting with Department of Transport
- 16 March 2021 – Signing of Small Business Friendly Council Initiative with Victorian Small Business Commissioner
- 18 March 2021 – Harmony Day
- 18 March 2021 – Audit and Risk Committee meeting
- 18 March 2021 – Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange Committee meeting

Cr David Bowe

- 23 February 2021 – Council Briefing Meeting (Council Chamber)
- 27 February 2021 – Wimmera River Parkrun
- 1 March 2021 – Victorian Local Government Grants Commission Information Session (virtual)
- 5 March 2021 – Victorian Local Governance Association – Councillor FastTrack Leadership Program
- 9 March 2021 – Council Briefing Meeting (Council Chamber)
- 10 March 2021 – Youth Council Meeting and Tour of "The Station"
- 15 March 2021 – Council Briefing Meeting (Council Chamber)

Cr Penny Flynn

- 5 March 2021 – Victorian Local Governance Association – Councillor Leadership Program
- 12 March 2021 – Victorian Local Governance Association – Governance Advisory Network Meeting

SUSPEND STANDING ORDERS

MOVED Cr Les Power, Seconded Cr Penny Flynn

That Standing Orders be suspended for Verbal Councillor Reports and Acknowledgements.

CARRIED

The time being 6.39pm, the Council meeting was suspended.

RESUME STANDING ORDERS

MOVED Cr Les Power, Seconded Cr Penny Flynn

That Standing Orders resume.

CARRIED

The time being 6.50pm, the Council meeting resumed.

MOVED Cr Claudia Haenel, Seconded Cr Di Bell

That the Councillor Reports and Acknowledgements be received.

CARRIED

11. URGENT BUSINESS

Nil

12. PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

Nil

13. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

13.1 INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS – RECORD OF MEETINGS

Council Briefing Meeting held on Tuesday 23 February 2021 at 5pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Horsham

Council Briefing Meeting held on Monday 1 March 2021 at 7.45pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Horsham

Council Briefing Meeting held on Tuesday 9 March 2021 at 5.05pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Horsham

Council Budget Briefing Meeting held on Monday 15 March 2021 at 5.05pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Horsham

Refer to **Appendix “13.1A”**

13.2 SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

Nil

13.3 INWARD CORRESPONDENCE

Nil

13.4 COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

- Sunnyside Park Advisory Committee meeting held on Wednesday 6 May 2020 at 7.30pm via Zoom
- Horsham Racecourse Reserve Advisory Committee meeting held on Tuesday 12 May 2020 at 7.30pm via Zoom
- Dudley W Cornell Advisory Committee Meeting held on Thursday 14 May 2020 at 7.00pm via Zoom
- Haven Recreation Reserve Advisory Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 5 May 2020pm via Zoom
- Horsham Tidy Towns Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 16 February 2021 at 12.30pm via Zoom
- Bicycle Advisory Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 17 February 2021 at 5.00pm via Zoom
- Western Highway Action Committee Meeting held on Friday 12 March 2021 at 10.00am via Zoom

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.

Council Resolution

MOVED Cr Di Bell, Seconded Cr Penny Flynn

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.

CARRIED

14. NOTICE OF MOTION

Nil

CLOSE

The meeting closed at 6.53pm

Robyn Gulline

The Mayor, Cr Robyn Gulline
Chairperson