

**MINUTES of the Council Meeting of the Horsham Rural City Council held online and livestreamed at [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au) at 5.33 pm on 25 July 2022.**

**PRESENT**

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

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE**

Sunil Bhalla, Chief Executive Officer; Kerrie Bell, Acting Director Corporate Services; Kevin O'Brien, Director Communities and Place; Robyn Evans, Acting Director Infrastructure; Fiona Kelly, Executive Assistant to the CEO and Councillors; Jude Holt, Monitor; Cameron Gerlach, Co-ordinator Information Technology.

**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 Councillors, staff, members of the public and the media 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. She also stated that the meeting was being streamed live on the internet.

The Mayor advised that Councillors participating in the meeting by electronic means will be taken to be present and part of the quorum for the meeting, provided that they can hear proceedings, they can see and be seen by other members in attendance, and they are able to speak and be heard by those in attendance. The Mayor asked Councillors individually to confirm that they could see and hear other members in attendance and be able to speak. Confirmed by all Councillors.

**4. APOLOGIES**

Cr Claudia Haenel

**Council Resolution**

**MOVED Cr Ian Ross, Seconded Cr Di Bell**

That the apology from Cr Claudia Haenel be received.

CARRIED

**5. LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS**

Cr Di Bell will be on leave from 6 to 28 August 2022, but will join Council Briefings and Council Meetings virtually during this time.

**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 27 June 2022, 5.02pm on 4 July 2022 and 5.00pm on 11 July 2022 be adopted.

**Council Resolution****MOVED Cr David Bowe, Seconded Cr Les Power**

That the minutes emanating from the Council Meeting of the Horsham Rural City Council held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Horsham and virtually at 5.30pm on 27 June 2022, 5.02pm on 4 July 2022 and 5.00pm on 11 July 2022 be adopted.

CARRIED

**7. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST****Declarations of Interest**

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

**Members of Staff**

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

**8. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME****PUBLIC QUESTION FROM DAVID MCDONALD OF HORSHAM****Question 1:**

The Wimmera Intermodal Freight Hub has been operational for some years now. How many 20 foot container equivalents are shipped via train through the hub and how many equivalent 20 foot containers are shipped via road each month?

**Response from Kevin O'Brien, Director Communities & Place**

In the past 12 months there has been approx. 8000, 20 foot containers shipped through WIFT. It is our understanding that this would make up less than 50% of the 20 foot containers that are shipped by road. Actual data is being confirmed through Department of Transport.

**Question 2:**

Is there limitations on extra capacity through the Hub either by rail infrastructure or scheduling?

**Response from Kevin O'Brien, Director Communities & Place**

Although there is some additional capacity at the moment, there needs to be construction of 2 x 200 m pad extensions to increase the capacity of the WIFT hardstand area, extensions to rail and road capacity on-site, weighbridge, security upgrades, lighting, internal roads, and drainage.

**Question 3:**

Is road freight being delivered to Melbourne and Portland that could be shipped via train but limitations on the rail network or freight hub restrict the freight from being delivered by rail.

**Response from Kevin O'Brien, Director Communities & Place**

There are speed restrictions on sections of the rail line between Maroona and Portland, this impacts on timeliness of freight delivery to the Port of Portland. There are also limitations in regards to facilities available for unloading at the Port of Portland.

**Question 4:**

Has the new hub replaced/relocated the Mill Street location or is there more freight delivered by rail.

**Response from Kevin O'Brien, Director Communities & Place**

There is no freight delivered by rail in Horsham apart from what occurs at the WIFT

**PUBLIC QUESTION FROM KATH DUMESNY OF HORSHAM**

**Question 1:**

My question is regarding a procedural motion brought by Cr Power at 27 June council meeting. I note that section 43 procedural motions, only lists 3, none of which seem to apply in this instance.

Was it actually a valid procedural motion and if so, could you please explain how?

**Response from Sunil Bhalla, Chief Executive Officer**

It wasn't a procedural motion, but an item of urgent business in accordance with Section 21 of Council's Governance Rules, which council resolved to consider at the Council meeting.

**REPORTS FOR COUNCIL DECISION****9. OFFICERS REPORTS****9.1 ASSIGNMENT OF HERD'S Paddock TO HORSHAM REGIONAL LIVESTOCK EXCHANGE**

<b>Author's Name:</b>	Robyn Evans and Fiona Gormann	<b>Director:</b>	John Martin
<b>Author's Title:</b>	Managers – Operations & Investment Attraction & Growth	<b>Directorate:</b>	Infrastructure
<b>Department:</b>	Infrastructure /Communities and Place	<b>File Number:</b>	99/01/12496A

**Officer Conflict of Interest**

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

☐ Yes ☒ No

**Reason:** Nil

**Status**

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

☐ Yes ☒ No

**Reason:** Nil

**Appendix**

HRLE Economic Impact Report (**Appendix 9.1A**)

**Purpose**

To formalise the assignment of Lot 3 PS421087 commonly known as Herd's Paddock, to secure Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange (HRLE) operations.

**Summary**

- Herd's Paddock has been a critical part of the HRLE operations for 22 years
- Herd's Paddock is essential for the current and continued operations, in particular the expansion of the loading docks to accommodate growth and larger transport (including B-triples and road trains)
- During 2021, the development of the industrial land at Burnt Creek Estate raised the issue of the potential sale of Herd's Paddock.
- Securing the use of Herd's Paddock for the HRLE operations will ensure HRLE operations are guaranteed into the future.

**Recommendation**

That Council formally assign Lot 3 PS421087 of the Burnt Creek Estate, known as Herd's Paddock, to the Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange footprint.

**Council Resolution**

**MOVED Cr Di Bell, Seconded Cr Ian Ross**

That Council formally assign Lot 3 PS421087 of the Burnt Creek Estate, known as Herd's Paddock, to the Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange footprint.

CARRIED

## REPORT

### Background

At its meeting of 26 April 2021, Council resolved as follows:

*That Council having formally considered the submissions and hearings at Council Briefing on Wednesday 7 April 2021, that Council further investigate in conjunction with the HRLE Advisory Committee the requirements of the Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange regarding the future use of Lot 3 PS421087 and Proposed Lot 15 at Burnt Creek Industrial Estate as shown hatched in green on the Proposed Subdivision Plan (Attachment 3) to determine sale options.*

The site is as shown in the diagram below.



Herd's Paddock has been an integral part of the HRLE operations since inception in 1999. The paddock, with an area of 10 ha has been constantly used for agistment and maintained by HRLE staff since the exchange has been at the Burnt Creek Estate.

### Discussion

As part of the agistment area at HRLE, Herd's Paddock has been a significant asset to enable the turning out of buyers' stock, after sales before they are ready to take receipt. Not only does this provide useful revenue for the HRLE operations, but, by providing flexibility for receipt, it helps to attract buyers to the Horsham markets, creating better competition and market prices.

The value of the agistment paddocks has been evaluated in a recent economic assessment of the HRLE operation, stating as follows:

*The agistment paddocks at HRLE are an important part of the competitive advantage. They offer the ability to agist stock on-site enables buyers to effectively use the HRLE as a stockholding facility (for example by holding stock for a week or two in order to fit buyers' processing schedules). If the agistment paddocks were not available, the estimated impact (in 2020-2021) would have been:*

- \$751,000 in direct loss of economic contribution
- \$1,112,000 in total lost economic contribution

Further, the industry is increasingly utilising larger trucks, including B-triples and road trains. To cater for these longer trucks, the HRLE will need room to expand its loading area. This will require encroaching into Herd's Paddock by an estimated 50-60 m. Preparations for this expansion will be required soon.

**Options to Consider**

The alternative use of this land is to sell it for industrial purposes. The potential impacts of this could include:

- Development of industry incompatible with the HRLE operation
- Reduced income and market positioning of HRLE
- Income for Council through the sale of land.

**Sustainability Implications**

The flexibility offered by the agistment paddocks helps to attract strong buyer competition, leading to the economic sustainability of the HRLE market.

The agistment paddocks shore the HRLE's capacity to respond to endemic diseases, (such as Foot and Mouth) and consequential stock standstill orders.

**Community Engagement**

This matter was considered at the HRLE Advisory Committee meeting held on 16 June 2022, which resolved:

*That the Board recommend to Council that Herd's Paddock be assigned to HRLE, based on the report presented.*

**Innovation and Continuous Improvement**

Nil

**Collaboration**

The industry representation on the HRLE Board helps to provide effective collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

**Financial Implications**

Council owns Herd's paddock hence it is proposed that the land be formally assigned to HRLE operations without any financial consideration, recognising that it has been part of the HRLE operations since establishment of the Exchange at Burnt Creek.

**Regional, State and National Plans and Policies**

Nil

**Council Plans, Strategies and Policies**

2021-2025 Council Plan

Theme 3 - Sustainability

**Risk Implications**

Alternative uses of Herd's Paddock could create risks to ongoing viable operation of HRLE.

**Conclusion**

There is a sound basis for assigning Herd's Paddock to the HRLE.



## 9.2 MURRAY BASIN FREIGHT RAIL ADVOCACY

<b>Author's Name:</b>	Robyn Evans	<b>Director:</b>	John Martin
<b>Author's Title:</b>	Acting Director Infrastructure	<b>Directorate:</b>	Infrastructure
<b>Department:</b>	Infrastructure	<b>File Number:</b>	F15/A02/000002

### 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

### Appendices

Rail Freight Alliance position paper on the Murray Basin Rail Project (**Appendix 9.2A**)  
20200318-VAGO Freight Outcomes Regional Rail Upgrades (**Appendix 9.2B**)

### Purpose

To advocate for the completion of the Murray Basin Freight Rail Project to its original scope.

### Summary

- The Murray Basin Freight Rail Project (MBFRP) was intended to upgrade much of the broad gauge rail network in northern Victoria to standard gauge, to enable a common rail gauge through to Victoria's Ports.
- One of the outcomes of the MBFRP will be reduced truck traffic along the Henty Highway to the Port of Portland, which currently contributes to amenity issues through Horsham, and degradation of the Henty Highway, hence its relevance to our municipality.
- Funding commitments were made to these works by both the Victorian and Australian Governments, however, the actual costs of completing the works were much greater than had originally been anticipated.
- As a result, the project has not been completed, with parts of the network remaining on broad gauge, and reduced efficiencies in other parts of the network.
- Detailed background information on the status of the MBFRP is provided in the position paper developed by the Rail Freight Alliance, of which Council is a member.
- The project would deliver significant economic and sustainability benefits to the region
- Delays to the project and changes to the scope, reduce the efficacy of the project and hence the benefits to the region.

### Recommendation

That Council write to The Hon Daniel Andrews, Premier of Victoria expressing concern over the Murray Basin Freight Rail Project and request that the Premier honour his government's commitment to complete the Murray Basin Freight Rail Project to its original scope.



**Council Resolution**

**MOVED Cr Les Power, Seconded Cr David Bowe**

That Council write to The Hon Daniel Andrews, Premier of Victoria expressing concern over the Murray Basin Freight Rail Project and request that the Premier honour his government's commitment to complete the Murray Basin Freight Rail Project to its original scope.

CARRIED

## REPORT

### Background

The Murray Basin Freight Rail Project is a \$440 Million, (MBFRP) funded equally by the Victorian and Federal Governments, is a 5 part project that was scheduled to be completed by 2018.

Currently an additional \$244 Million of funding has been allocated, \$195.2 of these funds are from the Federal Government. These funds are assigned to completing stage 2 and some maintenance works within the catchment.

In March 2020 the Victorian Auditor General tabled their report into the project which included the conclusion that:

*The regional rail upgrades we reviewed are not yet improving rural freight outcomes in a timely and cost-efficient way.*

The MBRP was intended to see the standardisation of four broad gauge rail lines in northern Victoria, and address the gauge connections through to the Ports, to streamline freight movement, in particular grain, but also with potential for other commodities, including mineral sands.

As the works progressed, it was found that there were issues with clarity of scope and the actual costs to deliver the works. So while it had been anticipated that the project would be completed, the funding was insufficient for the full initial scope.

Specific objectives of the original MBFRP included:

- Convert to standard gauge 1130 kilometres of the north western Victorian rail network
- increase speeds on these lines to 80 km/h
- increase the train axle loading to 21 tonnes
- increase efficiency by 15%
- increase the volume of grain transported by up to 500,000 tonnes per annum.
- removing around 20,000 truck trips from roads to the ports and improving safety for Victorian communities
- completion by the end of 2018.

### Discussion

Due to the delays and reduced scope of the project:

- The Freight capacity has decreased from the region.
- The regional is increasingly reliant on High Productivity Freight Vehicles.
- The regional has a mix of broad and stand rail guagess.
- Transit times by rail have increased.
- Rail Freight has been lost to road.
- The Road Network is degrading.

Progress of the MBFRP works has been limited. Only two of the four lines have been standardised, the connection between Maryborough and Ballarat has not been addressed, and speed limits on some sections are as low as 25 km/h and 40 km/h. The combined result of these is that the rail network is less efficient than before. This is reflected in the table below from the Rail Freight Alliance report:

**TRAVEL TIMES**

Location	Trucks	Pre MBRP-Trains	Current Trains
<b>Manangatang to Geelong and on to Melbourne</b>	6 Hours and 30 minutes	10 Hours	15 Hours
<b>Sea Lake to Geelong and on to Melbourne</b>	5 hours and 50 minutes	9 Hours and 30 minutes	12 Hours and 30 minutes
<b>Merbein (near Mildura) to Geelong</b>	7 Hours and 30 minutes	11 hours and 10 minutes	15 Hours
<b>Merbein to Appleton Dock (Port of Melbourne)</b>	8 Hours and 30 minutes	12 Hours and 30 minutes	16 Hours and 30 minutes

As a result of this, it is reported that there is an increase of grain movement on trucks. This impacts on the amenity of communities, and contributes to the accelerated deterioration of roads. This is particularly evident on the Henty Highway throughout our municipality, and through to the Port of Portland.

A related issue is the connection of the north-western Victorian rail network to the Port of Portland. This port is a major port for grain, mineral sands and other commodities. While the MBRP addresses standardisation of the network, and the connection to Ararat – which is the vital link to the Australian Rail Track Corporation network – the rail line between Maroona and Portland is a significant limitation in developing the full benefits of the MBRP. This line has a lower axle loading (19 t), and significant speed restrictions. There are also connection limits at the Port.

A study has recently been commissioned to examine the feasibility of upgrading the Maroona Portland line.

The Federal Government has made a significant commitment to further funding of the MBRP, with additional funds being required from the State Government to enable completion of MBRP to its initial scope.

**Options to Consider**

LGA 2020 S.9 (b) Overarching governance principle – priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations. Completion of the Murray Basin Rail project to its original scope meets this principle.

**Sustainability Implications**

Implementation of the project should increase rail freight movements for the benefit of the wider environment and for the improved sustainability of the road network. Further, increased utilisation of the rail network for freight movement has carbon emission benefits.

**Community Engagement**

Local governments across the Murray Basin catchment have engaged with business, industry and community for many years. Horsham is one of about 20 Council members of the Rail Freight Alliance.

**Innovation and Continuous Improvement**

Multiple federal, state and regional reports have identified the improvements this project is anticipated to deliver.

**Collaboration**

Horsham Council is an active member of the regional Rail Freight Alliance.

**Financial Implications**

In February 2021 the Federal Government committed a further \$195.2 million and offered \$5 million for planning for full standardisation (to be matched by Victoria). The Victorian contribution to the project is \$48.8 million. Further funding is required to complete the full scope of the works.

Continued delays will see continued consequential impact on Horsham's road network and negative weighing on the region's productivity.

**Regional, State and National Plans and Policies**

The MBFRP is a key project in the regional transport and growth strategies, and State strategies including the Victorian Freight Plan – Delivering the Goods, 2018.

**Council Plans, Strategies and Policies**

2021-2025 Council Plan

Advocacy on the Murray Basin Rail Project addresses four of the five themes of the Council Plan:

**Liveability** – *Reducing truck traffic on the highways through Horsham will help improve amenity in urban areas*

**Sustainability** – *Increased use of rail freight is more sustainable than using trucks on the road network*

**Accessibility** – *Upgrades to both the MBRP and the Maroona-Portland line will improve the connectedness of the rail network*

**Leadership** – *The proposed advocacy, in conjunction with other Councils, is an example of Council's leadership within the community*

**Risk Implications**

As above, the risks associated with the reduced scope and continued delays to the project risk the region's road network and productivity.

**Conclusion**

The value of the project for Horsham and the Murray Basin catchment region warrant a letter to the Andrews' government outlining Council's concerns and advocating for the completion of the Murray Basin Freight Rail Project, including upgrades to the Maroona-Portland rail line.

**REPORTS FOR INFORMATION****9.3 INVESTMENT ATTRACTION AND GROWTH REPORT**

<b>Author's Name:</b>	Fiona Gormann	<b>Director:</b>	Kevin O'Brien
<b>Author's Title:</b>	Manager Investment Attraction and Growth	<b>Directorate:</b>	Communities and Place
<b>Department:</b>	Communities and Place	<b>File Number:</b>	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**

Visitor Services May 2022 Report (**Appendix 9.3A**)

**Purpose**

To receive and note the Investment Attraction and Growth Report for May 2022.

**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 May 2022.

**Council Resolution**

**MOVED Cr David Bowe, Seconded Cr Penny Flynn**

That Council receive and note the Investment Attraction and Growth Report for May 2022.

CARRIED

## REPORT

### Background

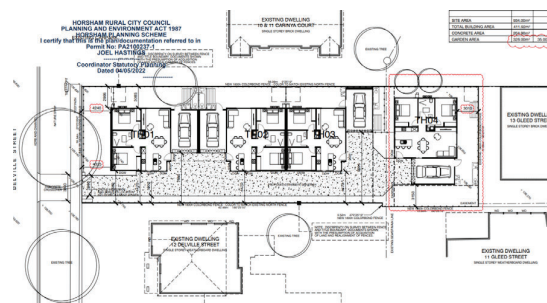
An Investment Attraction and Growth Report is tabled monthly at the Council Meeting.

### Discussion

The work undertaken across Investment Attraction and Growth includes Strategic Planning, Statutory Planning, Building Services, Business Development, Tourism and Events. This report also includes statistical information from the Visitor Services at the Horsham Town Hall.

## STATUTORY PLANNING

Council continues to receive a number of medium density housing applications across Horsham that add to the mix of housing availability. The provision of quality 1-2 bedroom developments in established residential areas and within walking distance to the city is an important part of the liveability and affordability of Horsham.



### Planning Applications Determined

Below are the number of Planning Permits issued for the month of May 2022 and a comparison with the same period last year.

Type	MAY 2022		MAY 2021	
	No.	*Value \$	No.	*Value \$
Miscellaneous Domestic	5	2,298,468	4	2,420,000
Industrial/Commercial	2	13,300,000	6	1,677,188
Subdivisions	3 (9 lots)	-	1(2 lots)	450,000-
Other	-	-	1	2,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15,598,468</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>\$6,547,188</b>

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

### Financial Year Comparison

Total number of planning permits issued in the Horsham Rural City Council area from 1 July 2021 to 31 May 2022 is 127 compared to 127 in the same period in 2020-2021.

Planning permits issued for subdivision have permitted 142 new lots from 1 July 2021 to 31 May 2022 compared to 63 in the same period in 2020-2021.

### BUILDING SERVICES

Below are the number of building permits issued for the month of **May 2022** and a comparison with the same period last year.

#### Permits issued by Horsham Rural City Council for this Municipality

Type	MAY 2022		MAY 2021	
	No.	Value \$	No.	Value \$
Dwellings	2	1,268,900	1	150,000
Alterations to Dwellings	-	-	-	-
Dwelling resittings	-	-	-	-
Misc Domestic (Carports, Garages etc)	6	126,499	-	-
Removal/Demolish	-	-	1	21,000
Industrial/Commercial	1	733,245	3	154,125
Signs	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2,128,644</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>325,125</b>

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

Type	MAY 2022		MAY 2021	
	No.	Value \$	No.	Value \$
Dwellings	8(*9)	6,221,984	8(*10)	3,737,387
Alterations to Dwellings	3	131,900	1	30,030
Dwelling resittings	-	-	1	220,000
Misc Domestic (Carports, Garages etc)	10	505,253	9	328,604
Removal/Demolish	1	20,000	3	46,600
Industrial/Commercial	6	2,313,492	6	742,520
Signs	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>9,192,629</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>5,105,141</b>

#### Financial Year Comparison

A total of 77 Building Permits have been issued by the Horsham Rural City Council at a total value of \$7,277,366 from 1 July 2021 to 31 May 2022 compared to 58 Building Permits at a total value of \$4,897,667 in 2020-2021.

Private Building Surveyors have issued 278 Building Permits at a total value of \$75,733,436 from 1 July 2021 to 31 May 2022 compared to 265 at a total value of \$61,437,212 in 2020-2021.



## STRATEGIC PLANNING

### Horsham Heritage Study Review

Landmark Heritage undertook site inspections accompanied by the Coordinator of Strategic Planning and Heritage on Monday 9 and Tuesday 10 May. The site inspections were to determine if any heritage places identified in the 2014 study had changed (i.e. modifications and/or condition whereby it may impact on their heritage values) and to decide upon suitable boundaries for future protection (proposed Heritage Overlay extent).

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM AND EVENTS

### I'm a Survivor Business Networking Event



On Tuesday evening 31 May saw an incredible coup for Horsham Rural City Council and West Vic Business as we welcomed *Khanh Ong* of MasterChef and Survivor fame. It was a cold but memorable night for everyone who was lucky enough to attend, and all present were treated to an up close and personal experience with Khanh, who was incredibly gracious and generous with his time and interest with everyone he met.

The event was designed to celebrate the tenacity and simple survival of our local businesses through the pandemic. We had a wide array of local businesses on hand to showcase our local produce, viticulture and brewery skills. Farm Girl Produce, Barangaroo Wines, Cupcakerella, Rightbank Brewing Society, Voddy & Vacay and Mount Stapylton Wines were welcomed to The Cattle Shed by the Horsham Ag Society who went out of their way to create an incredibly atmospheric event once again proving that our local businesses are worth the incredible effort that goes into an event such as this.

### Marketing Strategy Forum



A Marketing Strategy Forum was held Thursday 12 May, 2022 by facilitator *Karen Foster*, Director of 02 Media who delivered two sessions on 12 May, 2002 at the Wimmera Business Centre, relating to Digital Marketing and Strategic Planning. Karen reputation is practical and passionate in her delivery. The forum attracted interest from nineteen organisations. Participants engaged in a range of topics to suit their organisational needs relating to:

- Knowing your target audience
- Marketing principles
- Upgrade social profiles
- Get creative with analytics
- Stick to your planning process

### Grampians Tourism

Grampians Grape Escape, attracted thousands of visitors to our region and it's a real celebration of Western Victoria's producers and makers. Grampian's Tourism are also pleased to announce the month long inaugural Grampians Wine Festival this September.

The Grampians 2022 Visitor Guide Marketing Prospectus has an opportunity to promote local Horsham businesses to a large number of potential customers. Designed to entice visitors to discover and experience the diversity of the Grampians, the next edition will feature an improved layout, updated content and will be distributed extensively.

Walk Friendly Training Program kicking off with a focus on the Grampians Peaks Trail and joined by Grampians Peaks Walking Co and Parks Victoria on how to support this specialised visitors market.

Grampians Tourism will head to Sydney mid-May for the Australian Tourism Exchange as part of the Great Southern Touring Route

### Spendmapp



April spending softened over declining consumer sentiment and rising inflation, with Total Local Spend up 1% from March. Reflective of this is a 5% increase in Visitor Spend and a 3% decrease in Resident Spend. Interestingly, Discretionary Spend is up and Consumer Staples is down in April for what could be a number of reasons. While Online Spending is down 8% in April, online grocery spending continues to surpass pre-pandemic levels which is signifying a shift in buyer behaviour.

### Monthly Spending Summary - Horsham Rural City Council

**Peak Spending Day:** Thursday 14 April 2022

**Total Local Spend:** \$1.71M

**Expenditure by Type**

Expenditure Type	Total Local Spend	Resident Local Spend	Visitor Local Spend	Resident Escape Spend	Resident Online Spend
April '22 Spending	\$34.8M	\$22.2M	\$12.7M	\$9.14M	\$10.7M
Change from Mar '22	0.6% decrease	3.9% decrease	5.9% increase	7.1% decrease	11.5% decrease

**Business Development Team – Business Visitations for the Month of Year 2022**

Month Visitation	Retail Services	Hospitality & Accommodation	Event interaction contacts	Event Notifications	Over all contacts for the month
January	4	3	10	5	22
February	4	6	19	10	39
March	5	41	11	4	61
April	12	8	8	6	34
May	19	4	9	11	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>199</b>

**2022 Visitations to the [www.visithorsham.com.au](http://www.visithorsham.com.au) website**

The visithorsham website continues steady visitation hits per month.

Website Visitation Statistics 2022				
January	February	March	April	May
4,531 Overall users resulting in 13.8% returning visitors and 4,397 new visitors to the site relates to 86.2%	3,582 Overall users resulting in 12% returning visitors and 3,478 new visitors to the site relates to 88%	5,085 Overall users resulting in 12.1% returning visitors and 4,952 new visitors to the site relates to 87.9%	5,306 Overall users resulting in 14.1% returning visitors and 5,153 new visitors to the site relates to 85.9%	4,399 Overall users resulting in 14.4 % returning visitors and 4,176 new visitors to the site relates to 85.6 %

**Visitor Services**

Statistic have been collected by the Visitor Services' team for the month of May (refer to attached May 2022 Report)

**Wimmera Business Centre****Occupied Businesses**

*(Businesses are determined by whether they are 1. A premises, 2. Have customers 3. Exchange money; i.e. Centre Link and the Cinema are included, and the Public Library is excluded).*

Street and Number of Businesses	APR FY 21/22 Businesses Occupied	MAY FY 21/22 Businesses Occupied	MAY FY 21/22 Businesses Vacant	MAY FY 21/22 Percentage Businesses Occupied
<b>Darlot St – 43</b> car wash and businesses operating from a house included	40	40	3	93%
<b>Firebrace St - 99</b>	92	91	8	92%
<b>Hamilton St - 17</b>	16	16	1	94%
<b>Wilson St – 34</b>	28	28	6	82%
<b>Pynsent St – 28</b> Cinema included	24	24	4	86%
<b>Roberts Ave – 27</b> Coles included	25	24	3	88%
<b>McLachlan St – 24</b> CFA & GMW included	24	24	0	100%
<b>Total 272</b> Post February 2022 there were 262 shops identified in the study area	<b>249/272</b>	<b>247/272</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>91%</b>

**Options to Consider**

Not applicable – no decision required

**Sustainability Implications**

Report provides overview development and business activity across the region with no direct sustainability implications.

**Community Engagement**

Report has been prepared in consultation with range of agencies and will be made publicly available to Wimmera Development Association, West Vic Business and on Council's website.

**Innovation and Continuous Improvement**

Report provides overview of activity and assists with continuous improvement.

**Collaboration**

Report has been prepared in collaboration with Council officers across Planning, Building and Business and Tourism Support.

**Financial Implications**

Nil

**Regional, State and National Plans and Policies**

Not applicable – no direct relationship or requirements

**Council Plans, Strategies and Policies**

2021-2025 Council Plan

Theme Three - Sustainability - Horsham Rural City Council will actively lead in sustainable growth and development of the community and the economy.

Strategy 2: A sustainable economy where local business, agriculture, tourism and other diverse industries thrive.

**Risk Implications**

Not applicable – no decision required

**Conclusion**

Council provided financial support to bring two successful events to Horsham this month. These events directly supported businesses; a night with *Khanh Ong* of MasterChef and Survivor fame and digital and strategic planning workshops with facilitator *Karen Foster*, Director of 02 Media.

## 9.4 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S OPERATIONAL REPORT

<b>Author's Name:</b>	Sunil Bhalla	<b>Director:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Author's Title:</b>	Chief Executive Officer	<b>Directorate:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Department:</b>	Chief Executive Officer	<b>File Number:</b>	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 July 2022.

### 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 July 2022.

### Council Resolution

#### **MOVED Cr Les Power, Seconded Cr Penny Flynn**

That Council receive and note the Chief Executive Officer's Operational Report for July 2022.

CARRIED

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## REPORT

### Background

At the 24 June 2019 Council meeting, 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***

**Return of Passenger Rail to Horsham:** Officers have commissioned a study into the cost of bringing passenger rail services to Horsham. This study, along with the feasibility study completely previously will form the basis of refreshing and rebranding Council's advocacy campaign.

**DJPR, CEO and MAV Forum:** The CEO attended a joint State Local Government CEO meeting on Wednesday 6 July 2022 to discuss strategic matters around dispute resolution, Regional Planning Hub, supporting ratepayers experiencing hardship and a Local Government Victoria update.

**Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Partnership Meeting (WSMRP):** The CEO attended a WSMRP meeting on Thursday 14 July 2022. The main items on the agenda were the WSM Regional Economic Development Strategy and Horizon Highway – developing a vision for WSM region.

**Wimmera Regional CEO Meeting:** The CEO's from Horsham, Hindmarsh, Yarriambiack and Northern Grampians met on Thursday 21 July 2022. The group met with representatives from Homes Victoria to discuss Social and Affordable Housing. The group also received an update from WDA Executive Director.

**Funding Opportunities:** There were no new grant applications for July.

#### ***B. Community Engagement***

**Horsham Skate Park:** A draft plan to increase usage of the Skate Park was presented to a Council Briefing on Monday 11 July 2022. The draft plan, developed in collaboration with members of a Community Reference Group (CRG) will be shared with our community for a 6 week period of consultation and feedback. Information regarding the draft plan and links to a survey is available via the HRCC webpage and pop-ups will occur at the Skate Park, Horsham Plaza and Haven Market.

**WIM Resource MOU Signing:** The CEO attended the WIM Resource MOU signing ceremony on Monday 11 July 2022.

**Filming of sporting matches at Council owned/managed facilities:** There have been recent community enquiries/media in regards to Council not allowing filming of sporting matches at Council owned/managed facilities.

Council officers are aware of the additional Child Safe requirements that have been introduced to take effect as of 1 July. This includes a greater focus on ensuring protections/appropriate consents are in place including filming of games. There will be a requirement for groups to meet the child safe standards, and if required that evidence is provided to Council as the facility owner/manager that these requirements are met.

Approval has been given to the Wimmera Football Netball League to film at this year's finals as they have demonstrated that appropriate policies including consent arrangements are in place. It is anticipated that approval will also be given to the Horsham District Football Netball League.



Council has or will be contacting other groups that use its facilities to determine if they will be live streaming or filming games, and if so what consents will be put in place to ensure the safety of children.

### **C. Projects and Events**

**Citizenship Ceremony:** The Mayor conducted a Citizenship Ceremony on Wednesday 29 June 2022 for 6 people from 3 different countries who formally became Australians. Countries of origin included India, Philippines and Thailand.

**NAIDOC Art Exhibition Opening:** The CEO attended the NAIDOC Art Exhibition evening opening held at the Horsham Art Gallery on Wednesday 6 July 2022.

**Landscaping Along Riverfront:** Landscaping work has commenced along the Wimmera Riverfront as part of the City to River project. As indicated in the masterplan for this precinct, the landscaping will be natural and in keeping with the area, while increasing the functionality and usability of the space. The area in front of the recently completed public toilets has been landscaped, and these facilities are already receiving a great amount of use. The area under the Angling Club Pergola has been paved, providing 135m<sup>2</sup> of outdoor undercover space for public use.

**Public Artwork Installed:** The entrance to the Riverfront precinct is now enhanced by the installation of a 5.4m stainless steel sculpture called "Liquid Arborescence". Created by Taradale artist Alex Sanson, he described the work as *"Inspired by a life-long love and fascination for both rivers and trees, Liquid Arborescence is a reminder of the great value that these essential elements of inland eco-systems can offer, as focal points for life, meeting and community as well as being a home for all the myriad life that is nurtured by them. While very much in the form of a tree, all elements and details have been imagined with shapes inspired by a river like the Wimmera, with meandering forms, tributaries feeding in, with shapes that could be ripples on the water, or twisting branches or bark."*

### **D. Staff Matters**

**Snake and Spider Safety Training:** Earlier this month thirteen staff from different operations teams completed Snake and Spider Safety Training. The focus of this training was on being careful to avoid being bitten where possible, but also staff were trained in what to do if another staff member was bitten. The staff practiced first aid related to snake and spider bites and the application of special bandages to assist when bitten. Staff also had the opportunity to see two tiger snakes, a brown snake and a black snake. These are three most common snakes in our area. They were also able to see three types of venomous spiders including our favourite Red Back Spider.

#### **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**

2021-2025 Council Plan - Theme 5 - Leadership

**Risk Implications**

Not applicable

**Conclusion**

That Council receive and note the Chief Executive Officer's Operational Report for July 2022.

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## 10. COUNCILLOR REPORTS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### Cr Robyn Gulline (Mayor)

- I had the honour of bestowing Australian citizenship on six new Australians on Wed 29 June. Welcome and thank you for choosing our municipality as your home. We look forward to watching your contribution to our community.
- Participating in a number of NAIDOC week celebrations were a highlight of the past month. It was pleasing to see so many community members out supporting the numerous events.
- I had the pleasure of presenting the award winners at the Victorian Masters Squash Championships in Horsham on Sunday 17 July. A weekend filled with high quality squash and fellowship was enjoyed by the 100+ participants. The positive feedback on the facilities in our beautiful city from first time and return visitors was lovely to hear.
- Our country halls are a very special place for our rural communities. Dooen Hall celebrated 70 years on July 17. Many returned to reminisce the Deb Balls, lawn bowls and the diverse range of other activities that were held at the hall over the decades.

### Cr David Bowe

- 29 June 2022 - Citizenship Ceremony (Council Chambers)
- 4 July 2022 – NAIDOC week Flag raising Ceremony (Goolum Goolum)
- 4 July 2022 – NAIDOC week Art exhibition Opening (Horsham Regional Art Gallery)  
The exhibition is a showcase of the talent, artwork, and cultural heritage of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk community. Art exhibition will be on display until 28 August.
- 8 July 2022 – NAIDOC Week Walk / Run Family Fun Day event (Weir Park)
- 10 July 2022 – Horsham Magistrates' Court NAIDOC week event (Horsham Showgrounds)  
Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony, Yarning Circle: Marngrook story reading by author Aunty Titta Seacombe, traditional games. Also in attendance Emergency services and other Community organisations with displays, opportunity ask to questions & gather further information.
- 11 July 2022 – Council briefing meeting (Council Chambers)
- 20 July 2022 - Values Based Messaging - Introduction to Framing Gender Equality Workshop - Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) (online via zoom)

### Cr Penny Flynn

- At our Councillor Briefing held on 11 July 2022 members of the Skate Park Plan CRG attended and presented the proposed plans. It was great to hear from this group of people who had many and varied interested in making the park a regional play space for all ages. I look forward to seeing this area progress.

**SUSPEND STANDING ORDERS****MOVED Cr Penny Flynn, Seconded Cr Les Power**

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

CARRIED

*The time being 5.58pm, the Council meeting was suspended.*

**RESUME STANDING ORDERS****MOVED Cr Penny Flynn, Seconded Cr Di Bell**

That Standing Orders resume.

CARRIED

*The time being 6.04pm, the Council meeting resumed.*

**MOVED Cr David Bowe, Seconded Cr Penny Flynn**

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 at 5.30pm on Monday 11 July 2022
- CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee Meeting 3 held at 12.00pm on Tuesday 28 June 2022

Refer to **Appendix “13.1A”**

**13.2 SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

Nil

**13.3 INWARD CORRESPONDENCE**

Nil

**13.4 COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Nil

**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 David Bowe, 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

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## 15. CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

### Council Resolution

#### **MOVED Cr Penny Flynn, Seconded Cr Di Bell**

That the meeting close to the public to consider Confidential Matters.

CARRIED

*The time being 6.07pm, the meeting closed to the public.*

### Council Resolution

#### **MOVED Cr Penny Flynn, Seconded Cr Les Power**

That the meeting move into open Council.

CARRIED

*The time being 6.18pm, the meeting opened to the public.*

### Council Resolution

#### **MOVED Cr David Bowe, Seconded Cr Penny Flynn**

That Council:

1. Receive and note the report provided by Fisher Leadership, on the CEO Mr Sunil Bhalla's performance for the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.
2. As per the contract conditions approve an increase of 2.1% to the CEO's remuneration package.
3. Endorse the performance measures proposed by Council for the 2022-2023 period and discussed with the CEO, contained in Appendix 15.1B as an authorised variation of the contract of employment with the CEO and which will become the agreed performance criteria for the purposes of the performance review to be conducted in 2023.

CARRIED

## CLOSE

After dealing with Confidential Matters, the meeting closed at 6.18pm.

DocuSigned by:

*Robyn Gulline*

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The Mayor, Cr Robyn Gulline  
Chairperson