

AGENDA

MEETING OF THE **HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL**

To be held on
26 October 2026
At 5.30pm

In the
Council Reception Room, Civic Centre
18 Roberts Avenue, HORSHAM



**COUNCILLORS are respectfully requested to attend the Council Meeting
of the Horsham Rural City Council to be held on 26 October 2026
in the Council Reception Room, Civic Centre, Horsham at 5.30pm**

Order of Business

PRESENT

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

1. PRAYER

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

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY STATEMENT

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

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

3. OPENING AND WELCOME

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

4. APOLOGIES

5. LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS

6. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Recommendation

That the minutes emanating from the Council Meeting of the Horsham Rural City Council held in the Council Reception Room, Civic Centre, Horsham at 5.30pm on 28 September 2026 be adopted.

7. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest

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

Members of Staff

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

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<i>Defined as confidential information in accordance with Local Government Act 2020 - Section 3(1)(f) - Personal information</i>	

CLOSE

GAIL GATT

Chief Executive Officer

REPORTS FOR COUNCIL DECISION

9. OFFICERS REPORTS

9.1 2025-2026 ANNUAL REPORT

Director:	Kim Hargreaves
Directorate:	Organisational Performance
File Number:	F06/A09/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

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

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

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

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

2025-2026 Horsham Rural City Council Annual Report (**Appendix 9.1A**)

Purpose

To present the 2025-2026 Annual Report for Horsham Rural City Council for adoption by Council.

Summary

- The 2025-2026 Annual Report reports on Council's operations, activities and performance for the financial year ended 30 June 2026.
- The Annual Report reports against the Council Plan 2025-2029, including Council Plan commitments and measures, major initiatives and services funded through the 2025-2026 Budget.
- The Annual Report incorporates the audited Financial Report and audited Performance Statement for the year ended 30 June 2026. Council received unmodified audit opinions on both reports, with the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) providing the signed audit reports, Financial Report and Performance Statement on 13 October 2026.
- The Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.

Recommendation

That Council adopt the attached 2025-2026 Horsham Rural City Council Annual Report (**Appendix 9.1A**).

REPORT

Background

A Council's annual report is a key document that demonstrates the ongoing financial and governance performance of the council and must be prepared each year as per section 98(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*. Section 98 of the *Local Government Act 2020* states that 'a Council must prepare an annual report in respect of each financial year'. The report must contain:

- a) a report of operations of the Council;
- b) an audited performance statement;
- c) audited financial statements;
- d) a copy of the auditor's report on the performance statement;
- e) a copy of the auditor's report on the financial statements under Part 3 of the *Audit Act 1994*;
- f) any other matters prescribed by the regulations.

Discussion

The Annual Report provides information about Council operations and performance, including results against Council Plan commitments and measures, progress on major initiatives and the services funded through the 2025-2026 Budget.

The Performance Statement presents Council's audited results against the prescribed service performance, financial performance and sustainable capacity indicators. The Financial Report presents Council's audited financial statements prepared in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards. The Financial Report and Performance Statement were considered by the Audit and Risk Committee on 17 September 2026 and approved in principle by Council on 28 September 2026. Council received unmodified audit opinions on both reports, with VAGO providing the signed audit reports, Financial Report and Performance Statement on 13 October 2026.

The 2025-2026 Annual Report presented for adoption has been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.

Options to Consider

Section 100 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires the Mayor to report on the implementation of the Council Plan by presenting the Annual Report at a Council meeting open to the public. In a year in which a general election is not held, the meeting must occur within four months after the end of the financial year.

Adoption and presentation of the Annual Report at this meeting will satisfy the statutory timeframe.

Sustainability Implications

The Annual Report includes reporting on Council's environmental, social and financial performance and the actions undertaken during 2025-2026 to support a sustainable municipality and organisation.

Community Engagement

Following adoption, the 2025-2026 Annual Report, including the Auditor's Reports, Financial Report and Performance Statement for the year ended 30 June 2026, will be made available on Council's website and for viewing at Council offices in accordance with legislative requirements.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The Annual Report consolidates Council's operational, performance and financial reporting into a single public accountability document and supports transparent reporting to the community.

Collaboration

Preparation of the Annual Report involved input from service areas across Council, with review of the Financial Report and Performance Statement through the external audit process and Audit and Risk Committee oversight.

Financial Implications

Costs associated with preparing and publishing the 2025-2026 Annual Report are provided for within the 2026-2027 Council Budget.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Local Government Act 2020;

Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020;

Australian Accounting Standards.

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

Council Plan 2025-2029:

Theme 4 – Leadership

Relevant Commitments

12. Make transparent and evidence-based decisions.

13. Demonstrate sound financial and asset management.

Risk Implications

Council is required to prepare and present an Annual Report in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and associated regulations. Failure to meet these requirements would create legislative compliance and reputational risk. Adoption of the Annual Report supports transparent reporting of Council's financial position, service performance and progress against the Council Plan.

Conclusion

The 2025-2026 Annual Report provides Council and the community with a consolidated account of Council's operations, performance and financial position for the year ended 30 June 2026 and is recommended for adoption.

REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

9.2 COMMUNITY DONATIONS 2026-2027

Director:	Justine Kingan
Directorate:	Community Liveability
File Number:	F20/A01/000016

Officer Conflict of Interest

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

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason:

Status

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

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Community Donations 2026-2027 (**Appendix 9.2A**)

Community Donations Policy (**Appendix 9.2B**)

Purpose

To provide Council with details of the Community Donations for 2026/2027 in accordance with the Community Donations Policy.

Summary

This report details community donations allocated as part of the 2026/2027 budget process.

- The donation allocations have been kept at the 2025-2026 level with no CPI increases applied for 2026-2027.
- Donations totalling \$173,825 have been allocated in accordance with the Community Donations Policy.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the Community Donations allocated for 2026–2027, as detailed in Appendix 9.3A; and
2. Notes that a comprehensive review of the Community Donations Policy will be undertaken as part of Council Plan Initiative 12.1, “Develop overarching Council Funded Grants Strategy”.

REPORT

Background

Council allocates funding to support community groups in the municipality as part of its annual budget process. Council recognises there are many community groups that work to make our municipality a better place to 'live, work and play'. The key principle is that the donation supports recurrent operational aspects of organisations within our community that provide community facilities, services or recreational activities that benefit the health and wellbeing of residents of our municipality. The donations program supports the Liveability Theme of the Council Plan "*A healthy, connected and vibrant community that supports people to live, work and thrive.*". These contributions support various recreation reserves, halls, kindergartens, and service groups to assist them with their operations (in accordance with the eligible categories in Council's Donations policy).

As part of the 26/27 annual budget process, Council approved the following budget for community donations, noting that, once approved the grant funds are paid to community groups in October:

Donation Category	WO Number	Amount \$
A. Recreation Reserves	W2649	84,810
B. Kindergartens	W2648	3,840
C. Public Halls/Community Facilities - Insurance	W469	33,400
D. Charitable Retail Premises – refund of rate payments	W167	8,510
E. Sponsorship of Prizes	W452	1,400
F. Other Community Donations	W2677	46,000
Total Donations Budget approved 2026/2027		177,960

Discussion

This Report details the community groups who have been allocated a donation in the 2026/2027 budget **Appendix 9.2A**.

Donations have been allocated under the following categories in the Community Donations Policy:

A. Recreation Reserve – maintenance of grass playing surfaces – Total Allocation \$84,810

This is an annual cash donation to assist recreation reserve Committees of Management maintain the standard of watered grass playing surfaces for the benefit of wider community use. Donations are based on whether a recreation reserve maintains a watered grass playing surface for competition sport during summer and/or winter, for example, a reserve that is watered for both summer and winter competition will receive two allocations. A reserve that is watered for either summer or winter will receive one allocation. A smaller allocation is provided for recreation reserves with no competition sport or that have a non-watered grass playing surface.

The donations listed in **(Appendix 9.2A)** are the same as 2025/2026, except for a change in arrangements for Coughlin Park. Historically, Coughlin Park had received a donation to maintain the oval surface for community use. In addition, Council's Parks and Gardens Team provided expertise and regular support. Recognising that this was an anomaly under the Community Grants Policy which states "Recreation reserves that receive direct support and maintenance via Council recreation staff are not eligible for recurrent cash donations", no donation was paid to Coughlin Park in 2025/2026. Following, discussions

between Council and Coughlin Park, it has been agreed to reinstate the community donation to Coughlin Park and phase out the additional provision of maintenance by Council staff over two years. The outcome of this agreement ensures that Coughlin Park receives an equitable donation each year that reflects Summer and Winter community sports usage.

B. Kindergartens (Council owned) – annual maintenance – Total Allocation \$3,840

Council provides a general maintenance allocation to all Council-owned kindergartens. The donations listed in **(Appendix 9.2A)** are the same as 2025/2026.

C. Public Halls – insurance – Total Allocation \$33,400

Council provides Industrial Special Risk (ISR) insurance for public halls. ISR insurance essentially provides property damage cover for buildings and (in cases where these have previously been nominated and accepted by Council) contents. In addition, Council also provides public liability cover for “casual” (and some designated “regular”) hirers of community halls, together with public liability insurance cover for the delegated activities of the HRCC Community Halls Community Asset Committee (noting that public liability is provided through the Crown, for any Crown Land Committees of Management).

The insurance amount allocated for public halls and other community facilities is the same as 2025/2026.

D. Charitable Retail Premises – refund of rate payments – Total Allocation \$8,510

In recognition of the outstanding community service work provided to our municipality, Council refunds payments for the general rate and municipal charge levied against eligible charitable retail premises. The total amount allocated is the same as 2025/2026.

E. Sponsorship of Prizes – Total Allocation \$1,400

Council sponsors a number of annual awards to support the activities educational institutions. The donations listed in **(Appendix 9.2A)** are the same as 2025/2026.

F. Specific Other Donations – Total Allocation \$41,865

Council recognises the important role that certain not-for-profit organisations play within our community to enhance the physical, recreational and/or social attributes of our municipality, through an annual cash donation.

These donations are grouped in the areas of:

- Welfare and Community Services
- Community Newsletters
- Support of Community events

The donations listed in **(Appendix 9.2A)** are the same as 2025/2026, except for:

- the removal of a donation to the Natimuk Brass Band, who advised Council that they disbanded and no longer required a donation from 1 July 2026; and
- the removal of a donation to the Natimuk & District Progress Association Inc, who advised Council that they were disbanding and no longer required a donation from 1 July 2026.

Future review of the Donations Policy

In February/March 2026, a working group of Council officers from the Finance, Governance and Grants areas reviewed the Donations Policy and agreed that a major review of this policy was required. Whilst the policy is reviewed every twelve months, there has been no comprehensive review or redesign of this historical policy to ensure that it meets contemporary best practice for Local Government community support. This review is planned to commence in the second half of 2026 and will form part of Council Plan Initiative 12.1 “Develop overarching Council Funded Grants Strategy”.

Options to Consider

Nil

Sustainability Implications

Nil

Community Engagement

Not applicable

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not applicable

Collaboration

Not applicable

Financial Implications

The total donation allocations of \$173,825 are included in Council's 2026-2027 Budget.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

- HRCC Community Donations Policy
- HRCC Council Plan (2021-2025)

Risk Implications

The Community Donations program is an established Council Program. This program will be reviewed over the coming 12 months

Conclusion

The 2026-2027 Community Donations will release over \$173,000 into the local community and economy. The local expenditure resulting from this Council funding will provide an important stimulus to our not-for-profit sector.

10. COUNCILLOR REPORTS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cr Brian Klowss (Mayor)

Committee Representation	
Date	Description
Other Council Activities	
22/09/26	Citizenship Ceremony
22/09/26	Horsham Bypass CRG Meeting
23/09/26	Across Victoria Alliance Groups
29/09/26	National Police Remembrance Day
30/09/26	Visit form Shadow Federal Minister David Littleproud
30/09/26	Across Victoria Alliance Groups
01/10/26	HRCC meeting with CFA
02/10/26	Liberal/National Party Member visit to Northwest Victoria
05/10/26	Meeting with Victorian Small Business Commissioner, Tim Symons
07/10/26	Victorian LG Grants Commission meeting
07/10/26	Across Victoria Alliance Groups
12/10/26	Marcus Oldham College Meeting
14/10/26	RCV General Meeting
15/10/26	RCV General Meeting
21/10/26	Federal Inquiry into Critical Minerals

Cr Cam McDonald

Committee Representation	
Date	Description
Other Council Activities	
02/09/26	Chaired meeting of Natimuk Economic and social plan Advisory Committee At Natimuk along with Tony Caccaviello
07/09/26	Council Briefing
14/09/26	Met with Brian Hedt re issue with City Gardens Pond Council Briefing
21/09/26	Council Briefing Met with Leigh Hinch re disability parking in Pynsent St.
28/09/26	Council Meeting
30/09/26	Meeting in Natimuk with Shadow federal Emergency services minister David Littleproud and Member for Lowan MP Emma Kealy

11. URGENT BUSINESS

12. PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

13. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

13.1 INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS – RECORD OF MEETINGS

- Council Briefing Meetings held on 5, 12 and 19 October 2026.
- Mining and Renewables Working Group held on 5 October 2026.

Refer to **Appendix 13.1A**

13.2 COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

- Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange meeting held on 20 August 2026.

Refer to **Appendix 13.2A**

Recommendation

That Council receive and note agenda items:

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

14. NOTICE OF MOTION