

Agenda

Council Meeting

Wednesday 26 November 2025 at 7:00 PM

Gisborne Administration Centre

40 Robertson Street, Gisborne

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1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and waterways. Council recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Council also acknowledges local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents of Macedon Ranges for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

2 RECORDING OF LIVE STREAMING OF THIS COUNCIL MEETING

This meeting is being recorded and streamed live on the internet, in accordance with Council's 'Live Streaming and Publishing Recordings of Meetings' policy, which can be viewed on Council's website.

3 PRESENT**4 APOLOGIES****5 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST****6 PETITIONS**

Nil

7 DEPUTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS TO COUNCIL**8 ADOPTION OF MINUTES****Recommendation**

That Council confirms the minutes of the Scheduled Council Meeting of Macedon Ranges Shire Council held on 22 October 2025, as circulated.

9 MAYOR'S REPORT**9.1 MAYOR'S REPORT - OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2025****Summary**

This report provides an update from the Mayor on recent Council activities and initiatives of a Shire wide nature.

Recommendation

That Council receives and notes the Mayor's report.

Mayor's report

As we move into the second year of our four-year Council term, I want to begin by acknowledging Mayor Cr Bonanno for his leadership throughout the 2024-2025 term. It's been an honour to work with you as Deputy Mayor, and on behalf of Councillors and the community, I thank you for your commitment and service.

Community engagement is now open for Council's 2026–2027 Budget, and your input is essential in shaping priorities for the year ahead. Whether you have a detailed proposal for a project idea or a simple suggestion around general budget principles, your contribution helps guide Council's decision-making. Submissions close at 5pm on Thursday 11 December 2025. Contributions can be made via Council's Your Say platform.

To support this online budget consultation, Councillors are hosting a series of in-person listening posts. We've held our first post in Lancefield for East Ward last weekend. You can now join many Councillors in South Ward this Saturday 29 November at Macedon Village Farmers Market or in West Ward at Woodend Community Farmers' Market on Saturday 6 December, both 9:30am to 11am. These events are an important way for Councillors to connect directly with residents, ensuring that the final budget reflects community needs, aspirations and responsible financial management.

Councillors were also invited to attend as observers to four planning application consultation meetings. These meetings have been a fantastic opportunity to hear from applicants, objectors and the community around the table in a direct and transparent way.

One of the standout highlights of November was the Kyneton Agricultural Show, which once again brought together the very best of our region. From livestock competitions and local produce to LEGO creations, hay bale parkour, fireworks and community submissions, the Show was a warm and vibrant reminder of why our towns are such wonderful places to live.

Councillors also attended a sod turning event for Stage 2 Macedon Ranges Sport Precinct. We acknowledge and thank the Federal Government for its investment in this project. On completion, expected by late 2026, the precinct will deliver significant long-term benefits in sporting participation, community access to facilities and regional liveability.

We would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the most recent happenings around the Shire.

Events/Meetings

Councillors were pleased to be invited to the following events/meetings since the last Scheduled Council Meeting:

- 23 October Maribyrnong River & Waterways Mayor's Round table meeting
- 23 October Municipal Association of Victoria AI Taskforce meeting
- 23 October Rural Councils Victoria Annual General Meeting
- 24 October Australia Post visit Gisborne Post Office
- 24 October Goldfields Library meeting
- 24 October Riddells Creek Pre-school AGM
- 27 October Municipal Association of Victoria Briefing on AI transformation
- 28 October Business Kyneton AGM
- 28 October ALP Labor Branch meeting
- 29 October Municipal Association of Victoria AI Taskforce meeting
- 29 October Meeting with Her Excellency Prof the Hon Margaret Gardner AC
- 29 October Gisborne Men's Shed visit Japanese delegation
- 29 October Refugee Welcome Zone Webinar
- 29 October Meeting with VLine
- 30 October CVGA Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance Meeting
- 30 October Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee meeting
- 30 October Business Kyneton Networking Event
- 31 October Small Business Friendly Charter re-signing
- 31 October 46th Annual Judges Art Exhibition Woodend Art Group
- 2 November Eden Park Romsey Open day
- 3 November Cup Eve reception at Government House
- 5 November Alliance for Gambling Reform meeting
- 6 November Minister Nick Staikos meeting
- 6 November Community discussion future operational model Malmsbury Juvenile Justice Centre
- 7 November Newham & District Landcare Group meeting
- 9 November Passivhaus Open Day Riddells Creek
- 10 November Kyneton Rotary Club meeting
- 10 November Malmsbury Mail AGM
- 10 November Planning Amendment Bill: Municipal Association of Victoria Information Session
- 11 November ALGA Australian Local Government Association Roads & Transport conference
- 11 November Remembrance Day Services across the Shire
- 11 November Eleanor Bryant Memorial tree planting
- 12 November Willowbank Primary School presentation

- 12 November 2025 Community Investment Evening
- 13 November VLGA Victorian Local Government Association AGM
- 14 November 175th Separation Anniversary
- 14 November Opening Night Kyneton Agricultural Show
- 15 November 150th anniversary Macedon Primary School
- 15 November National Move for Them Day
- 15 November Ziggy & Miles Australian Tour – Woodend Winter Arts Festival
- 18 November Macedon Ranges Heritage Council meeting
- 18 November EMRBATA Eastern Macedon Ranges Business & Tourism Association AGM
- 19 November Local Government Working Group on Gambling
- 19 November Sod turning Macedon Ranges Sports Precinct
- 19 November Macedon Ranges Community Enterprises Youth Program Launch
- 21 November Rural Councils Victoria RCV Planning reform
- 22 November Councillor Listening Post in the East Ward
- 22 November Macedon Tennis Club Centenary Cup Celebration
- 24 November Walk Against Family Violence 16 Days of Activism
- 26 November Municipal Association of Victoria AI Taskforce meeting

Have a great start to December and we'll see you on Wednesday 17 December for our final scheduled Council Meeting of 2025.

Deputy Mayor Kendall

Macedon Ranges Shire Council

10 RECORD OF MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS AND COUNCIL STAFF**10.1 RECORD OF MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS AND COUNCIL STAFF - OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2025****Summary**

Rule 66 of Council's Governance Rules requires a written record of matters discussed at specified meetings of Councillors and Council staff to be reported to the next practicable scheduled Council Meeting and recorded in the minutes of that meeting. This report provides a summary of meetings of Councillors and Council staff held since the last Council Meeting.

Recommendation

That Council receives and notes the record of meetings of Councillors and Council staff, as outlined in this report.

Record of meetings

Type of meeting	Councillor Briefing
Date and time	Tuesday 28 October, 9:30am
Venue	Gisborne Administration Centre 40 Robertson Street, Gisborne
Present - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Dominic Bonanno (Mayor) • Cr Kate Kendall (Deputy Mayor) • Cr Jennifer Anderson • Cr Cassy Borthwick • Cr Alison Joseph • Cr Janet Pearce • Cr Daniel Young • Cr Rob Guthrie • Cr Andrew Scanlon
Apologies - Councillors	Nil
Present - officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bernie O'Sullivan (Chief Executive Officer) • Rebecca Stockfeld (Director Planning and Environment) • Adele Drago-Stevens (Director Corporate) • Dominic Testoni (Director Assets and Operations) • Jarrod Westwood (Acting Director Community) • Jessica Clarke-Hong (Manager Governance and Performance)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adele Hayes (Manager Statutory Planner) • Simon Finlay (Manager Parks Recreation and Depot Operations) • Kristal Maynard (Manager Safer Communities) • Cherry Stojanovic (Coordinator Governance and Performance) • Lucy Olson (Senior Governance Officer Governance and Performance) • Dannielle Orr (Heritage Planner Strategic Planning and Environment) • Talysha Dawson (Governance Officer Governance and Performance)
Apologies officers	Nil
Presenters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simon Mathee – Local business owner and Loddon Murray Community Leadership Program (LMCLP) participant
Items discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation by Lead Loddon Murray Participant Simon Mathee • Lancefield Park – Future Management Options • Delegations and Authorisations Policy • Councillor Appointments to External Organisations, Committees and Community Groups for 2025 • Planning 101 Cultural Heritage • Planning Matters • Other Business
Conflicts of interest declared by Councillors and record of them leaving the meeting when the matter about which they declared the conflict of interest was discussed	<p>Nil</p> <p>Did they leave the meeting? N/A</p>
Conflicts of interest declared by officers	<p>Nil</p> <p>Did they leave the meeting? N/A</p>

Type of meeting	Councillor Briefing
Date and time	Tuesday 11 th November, 9:30am
Venue	Gisborne Administration Centre 40 Robertson Street, Gisborne
Present - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Dominic Bonanno (Mayor)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Kate Kendall (Deputy Mayor) • Cr Jennifer Anderson • Cr Cassy Borthwick • Cr Alison Joseph • Cr Janet Pearce • Cr Daniel Young • Cr Rob Guthrie • Cr Andrew Scanlon
Apologies - Councillors	Nil
Present - officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bernie O'Sullivan (Chief Executive Officer) • Rebecca Stockfeld (Director Planning and Environment) • Adele Drago-Stevens (Director Corporate) • Dominic Testoni (Director Assets and Operations) • Jarrod Westwood (Acting Director Community) • Jessica Clarke-Hong (Manager Governance and Performance) • Adele Hayes (Manager Statutory Planning) • Stuart Gunnell (Coordinator Facilities Management) • Leah Rushford (Coordinator Emergency Management and Recovery) • Jayde McBurnie (Manager Community Strengthening) • Alison Elliott (Coordinator Performance and Assurance) • Jack Wiltshire (Strategic Planner Strategic Planning and Environment) • Miguel Rocha (Senior Project Officer Facilities and Aquatics) • Lucy Olson (Senior Governance Officer Governance and Performance) • Talysha Dawson (Governance Officer Governance and Performance)
Apologies officers	Nil
Presenters	Nil
Items discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition of Land – 158 Hamilton Road Gisborne • 2025/2026 High Risk Weather Season Briefing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fraud and Corruption Control Framework Review • Planning Matters • Other Business
Conflicts of interest declared by Councillors and record of them leaving the meeting when the matter about which they declared the conflict of interest was discussed	Nil
Conflicts of interest declared by officers	<p>Adele Drago-Stevens declared a general conflict of interest with 'Acquisition of Land – 158 Hamilton Road Gisborne' due to a prior association with the school.</p> <p>Did they leave the meeting? Adele left the meeting at 11:30am and returned at 11:46am.</p>

Type of meeting	Planning Consultation Meeting
Date and time	Wednesday 12 November 2025, 12.00pm
Venue	Gisborne Administration Centre 40 Robertson Street, Gisborne
Present - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Kate Kendall (Deputy Mayor) • Cr Jennifer Anderson • Cr Cassy Borthwick • Cr Rob Guthrie • Cr Alison Joseph • Cr Janet Pearce
Apologies - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Dominic Bonanno (Mayor) • Cr Andrew Scanlon • Cr Daniel Young
Present - officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rees May (Coordinator Statutory Planning and Compliance) • Sue Sinnatt (Senior Statutory Planner)
Apologies - officers	Nil
Present - members of the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charlotte Blair & Andrew Blair • Margaret Curnow & Ian Curnow • George Mercieca • Jenny Gaudry & Anton Gaudry • Rob Bakes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emma Hanslow-Sells (Colliers Urban Planning Senior Planner) • Tim Peggie (Colliers Urban Planning Director)
Apologies – members of the public	Nil
Items discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLN/2023/395 - 33 Mt St Marys Lane Kyneton
Conflicts of interest declared by Councillors and record of them leaving the meeting when the matter about which they declared the conflict of interest was discussed	<p>Nil</p> <p>Did they leave the meeting? N/A</p>
Conflicts of interest declared by officers	<p>Nil</p> <p>Did they leave the meeting? N/A</p>

Type of meeting	Planning Consultation Meeting
Date and time	13 November 2025, 9am
Venue	Gisborne Administration Centre 40 Robertson Street, Gisborne
Present - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Kate Kendall (Deputy Mayor) • Cr Jennifer Anderson • Cr Cassy Borthwick • Cr Rob Guthrie • Cr Alison Joseph • Cr Janet Pearce • Cr Andrew Scanlon
Apologies - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Dominic Bonanno (Mayor) • Cr Daniel Young
Present - officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rees May (Coordinator Statutory Planning and Compliance) • Glen Meyer (Senior Statutory Planner)
Apologies officers	Nil
Presenters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steve Butler • Susan Sliwczynski • Cathy Freeman • Julie Lamont • Robert Lamont

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archie Conroy • Ashen Jayakody • James Bateman • Gill Metz • Sally Turvey
Items discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLN/2025/109 - 180 Main Road Riddells Creek
Conflicts of interest declared by Councillors and record of them leaving the meeting when the matter about which they declared the conflict of interest was discussed	<p>Nil</p> <p>Did they leave the meeting? N/A</p>
Conflicts of interest declared by officers	<p>Nil</p> <p>Did they leave the meeting? N/A</p>

Type of meeting	Councillor Briefing
Date and time	Tuesday 18 th November
Venue	Gisborne Administration Centre 40 Robertson Street, Gisborne
Present - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Kate Kendall (Deputy Mayor) • Cr Jennifer Anderson • Cr Cassy Borthwick • Cr Alison Joseph • Cr Janet Pearce • Cr Daniel Young • Cr Rob Guthrie • Cr Andrew Scanlon
Apologies - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Dominic Bonanno (Mayor)
Present - officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bernie O'Sullivan (Chief Executive Officer) • Rebecca Stockfeld (Director Planning and Environment) • Adele Drago-Stevens (Director Corporate) • Dominic Testoni (Director Assets and Operations) • Jarrod Westwood (Acting Director Community) • Jessica Clarke-Hong (Manager Governance and Performance)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Margaux McKenzie (Coordinator Performance and Assurance) • Jack Wiltshire (Coordinator Strategic Planning) • Rob Ball (Manager Strategic Planning and Environment) • Louise Dewberry (Senior Strategic Planner) • Lucy Olson (Senior Governance Officer Governance and Performance) • Talysha Dawson (Governance Officer Governance and Performance)
Apologies officers	Nil
Presenters	Nil
Items discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report of Operations – Workplan FY 2025-26 • Draft Open Space Strategy - Consultation • Instrument of Delegations • Meeting Procedure Workshop • Planning Matters • Other Business
Conflicts of interest declared by Councillors and record of them leaving the meeting when the matter about which they declared the conflict of interest was discussed	Nil
Conflicts of interest declared by officers	<p>Louise Dewberry declared a general conflict of interest with a submission to the draft Open Space Strategy.</p> <p>Did they leave the meeting? No, as the submission was not discussed.</p>

11 PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT REPORTS

PE.1	DRAFT DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN 2026 - 2029 FOR ADOPTION
Officer:	Althea Jalbert, Coordinator Local Laws
Council Plan relationship:	Our Environment
Attachments:	1. DRAFT - Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-29 - For Council Adoption (under separate cover) 2. Domestic Animal Management Plan Consultation Report Results - Stage 2 (under separate cover)

Summary

This report presents the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026 – 2029 to Council for adoption. An overview of community feedback on the Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026 - 2029 is also provided as an attachment to this report.

Recommendation**That Council:**

- 1. Adopts the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026 – 2029.**
- 2. Responds to all submitters to the consultation process in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy.**
- 3. Submits a copy of the adopted Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026 – 2029 to the State Government (Animal Welfare Victoria) by 4 December 2025.**

Background

It is a statutory requirement, in accordance with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, for all Victorian Councils to prepare and implement a domestic animal management plan every four years. Council is required to submit to the State Government (Animal Welfare Victoria) its new Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026 – 2029 by 4 December 2025.

Discussion

The draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026 – 2029 builds on the 2021-2025 plan in providing a framework for the delivery, planning, development, and evaluation of animal management strategies, programs, and services to increase responsible pet ownership for dogs and cats in the shire.

By law, the plan must outline programs, services and strategies to:

- Promote and encourage responsible pet ownership of dogs and cats
- Ensure that people comply with the Act, regulations and legislation
- Minimise risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals
- Address over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats

- Encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats
- Minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and
- Effectively identify all dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs and ensure these dogs are kept in compliance with the Act and regulations.

In preparing the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026 – 2029, two stages of community consultation were undertaken to help inform priorities for the new plan.

Consultation and engagement

The first stage of community consultation was undertaken from 1 April to 28 April 2025 according to an approved community consultation plan consistent with Council's Community Engagement Policy. Key areas Officers sought feedback about included:

- Council's current Domestic Animal management Plan 2021-2025 - what programs/initiatives our community feel are working and what programs/initiatives our community feel need to be improved.
- Programs/ initiatives our community would like to see more of in relation to dogs.
- Programs/ initiatives our community would like to see more of in relation to cats.
- Level of community support towards Council introducing a 24-hour cat curfew.
- Level of community support towards Council introducing a requirement for all cats that reside in the Macedon Ranges to be desexed.
- Council's "For the Love of Paws" responsible pet ownership campaign
- Service satisfaction levels (for those who have had interactions with a Council Officer/Ranger within the last 12 months).
- Any specific feedback the community wish to be considered as we developed our next Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026 - 2029.

The first stage of consultation received 460 survey responses in total including online and hard copy submissions.

Key themes from the feedback received included:

- A call for more education and promotion in general, particularly focussed on topics such as nuisance behaviours in dogs, effective control of dogs in public places, dog on-leash requirements, dog poo requirements, cat containment (requirements and the how-to), reducing nuisance behaviours in cats, and cat trapping.
- Support for improved provisions for dogs and their owners in public places (170+ prioritised this in their top 5 dog initiatives).
- Support for education and supports for cat owners regarding cat containment (210+ prioritised this in their top 5 cat initiatives).
- Consistent mentions regarding dog off leash areas needing attention:
 - Lack of fenced, secure off-leash dog parks (particularly in Romsey, Lancefield, Gisborne, Woodend, Kyneton) – 87 mentions.
 - Support for fenced dog off-leash areas (suggested locations including Lancefield, Romsey, New Gisborne, Gisborne, Kyneton) - 52 mentions.

- Concerns about current off-leash areas being unsafe, unfenced and/or poorly located - 40 mentions.
- 66% support for Council introducing a 24-hour cat curfew (survey responses). Two written submissions supported this, while three opposed.
- 79% support for Council introducing a mandatory cat desexing requirement (survey responses). One written submission supported this, while another two called for cat desexing initiatives.
- Enforcement – call for increased enforcement, specifically in relation to dog on leash requirements, wandering/aggressive dogs, collection of dog poo, and trespassing cats. Lack of resourcing (rangers/staff) was mentioned 30 times at the dog section of the survey, and 50 times in the cat section of the survey.
- Educational pop-up sessions to support pet owners.
- Wildlife concerns - flagged dogs chasing kangaroos or affecting local fauna and cats killing native birds, lizards, frogs and small mammals, especially in areas near bushland and waterways.
- Dog waste management: while appreciation towards dog poo bag dispensers and signage already provided was noted, more bins and/or better waste management continued to be requested/mentioned.
- Calls for Council to consider future low-cost desexing opportunities (mostly for cats, but dogs also mentioned).
- Calls for Council to consider pet registration incentives.

The second stage of community consultation was undertaken from 1 August to 31 August 2025, where the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029 was presented to the community, industry groups, special interest groups, and key stakeholders inviting feedback on the plan.

The second stage of consultation received 94 responses in total including online and hard copy submissions. Responses to the survey indicated a high level of support across all sections of the plan (73 – 82% support, apart from Section 7 ‘Responsible pet ownership and reducing nuisance for cats’ that had 69% support).

Key feedback themes were similar to themes in the first stage of consultation and included:

- Support for education and communication improvements in general with particular focus on topics such as dog on leash requirements, dog poo (pick up) requirements, and cat containment topics (in light of proposed 24hour cat containment requirement). For the Love of Paws was also mentioned as a good vehicle for delivering these types of communications and messaging.
- Support for improved provisions for dogs and their owners in public places with calls for more (not less) dog off leash areas and requests for fenced dog specific parks and/or spaces to be considered. These responses support the need for the activity included at section 7 of the plan “strategic planning for dogs and people in open space”.
- Support for Council introducing a 24-hour cat containment requirement (survey and submission response) – noting that 69% supported activities (including the 24-hour cat containment activity) in Section 7 of the plan (“Responsible pet ownership and reducing nuisance (for cats)”), while 22% did not support activities (including this one) in Section 7 of the plan. In addition, 17 comments in the survey further mentioned support for a 24-hour cat containment requirement, while nine further mentioned opposition towards

it. Of written submissions received, three submissions supported the 24-hour cat containment requirement, while one opposed it.

- Calls for Council to consider developing a detailed communications and rollout plan for the proposed 24-hour cat containment requirement (if introduced), being considerate of costs involved and a possible increase in the number of abandoned cats.
- Resourcing/staffing limitations – There were mentions of the limited number of Council officers, the difficult role they often play, and enforcement challenges when resources are so stretched. Also, comments about how the activities being proposed will be delivered effectively under current resourcing.
- Enforcement – calls for increased enforcement, specifically in relation to dog poo (requirement to pick up), dog barking, spot checks (registration and dog on leash), compliance checks (for excess animal numbers, dangerous dogs, animal businesses etc).
- Concerns around the value/cost of cat registration in relation to cats already contained 24/7 and the proposed 24-hour cat containment requirement.

There were also comments that were more related to the off leash and prohibited area review, which will be referred to that consultation process and included the following themes:

- Requests for area specific signage (specifically for dog on leash, off leash areas, prohibited areas, and dog poo).
- Calls for more provisions around dog poo (bag dispensers and/or bins).
- Opposition to changes proposed for Kyneton's Campaspe River Walk.
- Requests for fenced off leash dog parks.

Attached is a summary of community consultation on the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026 – 2029 as outlined in 'The Domestic Animal Management Plan Community Consultation (Stage 2) Report.'

The draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026 – 2029 was developed and further refined with the community's feedback factored into several proposed activities. Officers have also considered findings of the gender impact assessment, industry trends, Local Laws operational trends, internal cross-department feedback, and other Council priorities to inform the plan.

The activities set out in the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029 aims to deliver a continuing focus on community education for responsible pet ownership, promoting Council's animal services, supporting owners to comply with legal responsibilities, improving enforcement capabilities, providing opportunities for affordable cat desexing, and introducing new initiatives such as a 24-hour cat containment requirement and improved strategic planning for use of open space for dogs and people.

Collaboration

An action from the current Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021 - 2025 was to seek feedback from Councils with 24-hour cat containment requirements in place, which resulted in 15 Victorian Councils providing feedback about their experience. A summary of that feedback has been incorporated into the draft Domestic Animal Management 2026 – 2029 and has been considered in proposing a 24-hour cat containment requirement in the Macedon Ranges Shire.

Officers attended multiple online workshops:

- Australian Institute of Animal Management, Simplifying the complex: AIAM Animal Management Plan Guidance Document and Template
- RSPCA Victoria, Quick wins for your DAMP planning.

Information presented at these workshops has been considered in developing the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026 – 2029.

Innovation and continuous improvement

The draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026 – 2029 was prepared to reflect Council's ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and innovation in animal management initiatives for dogs and cats. The plan incorporates activities informed through benchmarking with other Victorian Councils and information from animal management and welfare organisations including Animal Welfare Victoria, RSPCA Victoria, and the Australian Institute of Animal Management.

Relevant law

Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* sets out the statutory requirements for preparing domestic animal management plans.

Relevant legislation that guides animal management that Council has responsibility for includes:

- *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, associated Regulations, and Codes of Practice
- *Macedon Ranges Shire Council Community Local Law 2023*
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*

In addition to above, the Council Dog and Cat Order 2019 was made by the Macedon Ranges Shire Council under sections 25 and 26(2) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* on 27 November 2019, which came into operation in 2020.

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment has been conducted in relation to the subject matter of this report. It is recommended that as far as is practical, that action is taken to ensure the plan is inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the diverse needs of all community members.

To deliver this, the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026 – 2029 includes activities that:

- Embeds officer training on identifying and responding to abuse and family violence as part of its development plans.
- Supports equitable access through continuation of low-cost cat desexing programs, fee waiver programs (e.g. first ride home free program) and a review of registration fees for desexed pets.

As per recommendations, all community consultations undertaken to inform the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026 – 2029 were designed and promoted in a way to ensure inclusive participation across genders.

These recommendations are helping to deliver more inclusive and accessible animal management services and programs for the local community.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

In developing the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026 - 2029, careful consideration was given to the Victorian State Government's strategic priorities and policy

objectives, including the Victorian Animal Welfare Action Plan, the Victorian Cat Management Strategy 2025-2035 and anticipated new animal protection legislation (currently the Animal Care and Protection Bill).

Relevant Council plans and policies

Shaping the Ranges 2025-2035 guides Council's aspirations and strategic direction, incorporating a new Community Vision, Council Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, and Disability Action Plan.

The draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029 aligns with Shaping the Ranges 2025-2035 by setting out objectives that support Council's strategic priorities, in particular those relevant to the Our Places and Our Environment strategic themes.

Climate Impact Assessment

How will the recommendation impact on Council's energy usage and greenhouse emissions profile? The activities outlined in the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026 - 2029 will have negligible impact on Council's energy usage and greenhouse emissions profile.

How will the recommendations mitigate risks posed by climate change to Council operations and services? The draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026 - 2029 includes an activity to review and update Council's Emergency Animal Plan helping to ensure Council's animal management services are better prepared for responding to emergency events that are at risk of increasing because of climate change.

How will the recommendation help to prepare the community for future climate scenarios? The draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026 - 2029 includes an activity to review and update Council's Emergency Animal Plan helping to ensure pet owners are better prepared for and supported during emergency events that are at risk of increasing because of climate change.

Financial viability

The activities set out in the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026 – 2029 will be primarily funded through operational budgets. There may be some resource implications if increased enforcement is required to support implementation of a 24-hour cat containment requirement, which will be considered as part of the annual Council budget process.

A proposed year-two activity in the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026 -2029 to strategically plan for dogs and people in open space is expected to require expert consultant support to deliver at an estimated cost of approximately \$50,000, which will need to be considered as a new initiative in Council's 2026 – 2027 budget process.

Sustainability implications

Nil.

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.

PE.2	ANNUAL ENVIRONMENT REPORT
Officer:	Tania MacLeod, Coordinator Environment
Council Plan relationship:	Our Environment
Attachments:	Annual Environment Report 2024/2025 ↓

Summary

Progress on the implementation of Council's Environment Strategy is required to be reported on annually through Council's Annual Environment Report.

The Annual Environment Report for 2024-2025 also includes progress on the 'Counting Down to Zero', the plan to reach zero net emissions Council operations by 2030.

Recommendation

That Council:

- 1. Notes the attached Annual Environment Report for 2024-25.**
- 2. Supports the recommendation to incorporate future Annual Environment Reports into Council's Annual Report from 2025-26.**

Background

Council adopted its first Environment Strategy in June 2016, which provided an umbrella policy framework for its work in environmental management. An annual environment report has been produced since to track progress towards achieving the listed actions.

A refreshed version of the Environment Strategy was adopted in October 2021 that outlines future directions and actions across the themes: Climate Emergency, Biodiversity, Water and Waste.

The Annual Environment Report documents the activities and indicators against the Environment Strategy 2021 and progress towards achieving zero net emissions from Council operations by 2030. It also summarises the progress of the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy 2018, Roadside Conservation Management Plan 2021 and various management plans for Council managed reserves.

The Environment Strategy is next due for review in 2026/27.

Discussion

Counting Down to Zero Net Emissions for Council Operations

In 2022, Council adopted a target of *zero net emissions for Council operations by 30 June 2030, from the baseline of 3,260.6 tonnes CO₂-e at 30 June 2022 (or as retrospectively amended to account for additional indirect sources of greenhouse gas emissions)*'.

As per Action 33 of the Counting Down to Zero plan, a 'Year 2 Review' is currently underway.

The review is considering options to revise Council's emissions boundary by potentially omitting emissions associated with the collection and transportation of kerbside waste and introducing emissions associated with water usage and trade wastewater.

A revised emissions boundary and baseline is expected to be adopted with a revised Counting Down to Zero plan in early 2026.

When omitting kerbside waste transportation and comparing Council's emission inventory on a like-for-like basis, there has been a modest increase in Council-generated emissions since 2021-2022.

Council's greenhouse gas emissions by source (tonnes / CO ₂ -e)							
	2019 - 20	2020 - 21	2021 - 22	2022 - 23	2023 - 24	2024 - 25	%
Electricity	3,366.73	3,567.48	8.04	0.51	27.5	32	1.1%
Gas	750.62	933.06	858.5	902.36	834.2	824.59*	27.6%
Transport fuel	1,526.70	1,177.40	1,567.20	1,432.24	1,618.80	1,564.36	52.3%
Stationary fuel	Limited historic data (combined with transport fuel)			201.69	109.5	205.31	6.9%
Mixed fuels	1.2	0.5	5	5	5	5	0.2%
Mains water usage	159.26	199.99	197.76	182.11	247.7	256.72*	8.6%
Trade wastewater	55	50.4	25	44	44.4	48.53	1.6%
Corporate waste (incl. paper)	50	50	50	50	39.6	50*	1.7%
Total	5910.64	5978.83	2711.50	2817.91	2930.3	2992.17	100
Kerbside Waste collection & transport			65,007	61,444	63,639	62,776	

* Estimate due to billing availability

Summary 2024-2025 Annual Environment Report

Theme 1: Climate Emergency

Analysis of 'Indicator 1: Greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from Council operations' demonstrates the ongoing challenge Council faces in reducing the environmental impact of its operations. Emissions from fuel (fleet and plant) continue to slowly increase and make up a substantial portion of Council's emissions profile.

Another area of operations where an increase in emissions has been identified is from estimated potable water usage. With climate forecasts predicting longer, drier summers, Council will need to investigate ways in which it can reduce and prioritise the amount of potable water used within its operations.

There are some positive results with an early estimation of gas usage for the 2024/25 financial year indicating a small decrease compared to the previous year, however gas usage still makes up over a quarter of all Council-generated emissions.

Council continues to implement priorities and actions from the Climate Emergency Plan. Some notable highlights from 2024/25 include:

- The establishment of the Youth Climate Group in collaboration with Youth Services
- Successfully administering over \$33,000 to community groups through the Community Climate Action grant program in partnership with Community Bank Gisborne & District.
- Presenting at the Victorian Government's Inquiry into Climate Resilience, advocating for consistent funding to 'build back better'.
- Conducting a feasibility study into battery storage solutions for Council's Emergency Relief Centres that progressed to a State Government grant application.

- Reaching over 800 residents through Changemakers Macedon Ranges, a festival of climate and sustainability events, in partnership with the Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group.
- Participation in the Grow Towards Zero project, promoting local carbon offset projects.
- Launching the Climate Emergency Working Group.

Theme 2: Biodiversity

Council's Biodiversity Monitoring Program continued in 2024/25 with enthusiastic participation from the community who assisted in monitoring 112 nest boxes, conducting two spotlight surveys and one koala survey. Council also strongly promoted residents to participate in BirdLife Australia's Aussie Bird Count to help build a national picture of how bird populations are tracking. 791 surveys were submitted from Macedon Ranges, with 23,100 birds counted from 130 different species.

In all, 334 community members participated in 20 separate biodiversity-focussed events run by the Environment unit and collected meaningful data by doing so.

The Biodiversity Strategy is currently being refreshed with a revised draft under preparation.

Key achievements in the conservation and biodiversity space for 2024/25 include:

- Successful delivery of year one of a three-year commitment from project partners to deliver the Healthy Landscapes regenerative agriculture program.
- The launch of the pilot Backyard Biodiversity program in Kyneton.
- Assessing and mapping over 1,000 trees in Bald Hill and Black Hill reserves.
- Continuation of the annual conservation works program with high threat weeds treated at Stanley Park, UL Daly Reserve, Marsh Court, Gisborne Marshlands, Black Hill and Magnet Hill.
- Delivery of Council's roadside weed program, treating close to 30km of roadsides.

Theme 3: Water

In 2024/25, total consumption of potable water by Council is estimated to be 102,193 kiloliters (kL). This represents a 30% (or 23,816kL) increase when compared to 2023-24 and part of an upward trend in consumption from 2021-22.

The Kyneton Saleyards remain the highest consumption site, using approximately 35,506kL of potable water in the past financial year. This is consistent with the previous year's usage of 35,573kL.

In partnership with Melbourne Water, Council continued to implement the Liveable Communities, Liveable Waterways Program by conducting high priority maintenance activities along waterways in the south of the shire including Stanley Park, Mount Macedon, Jacksons Creek, Gisborne and Five Mile Creek, Romsey.

Additionally, Council secured more than \$830,000 over three years from the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust to improve riparian habitats in urban areas. This project will focus on the conservation and regeneration of Jacksons Creek, Howey Creek and Bunjil Creek in Gisborne, Djirri Djirri Waterway Reserve in Gisborne South, and Nursery Road Reserve in Macedon.

Theme 4: Waste and Resource Recovery

In 2024-25, there was an increase in the variety of items accepted at the Resource Recovery Facilities, which correlated with an increase in the percentage of items being diverted from landfill, a 31% diversion rate.

The refurbishment of Kyneton re-sale shop and establishment of the Romsey re-sale shop has proven to be another successful intervention for diverting items from landfill, with the total number of items being sold increasing from 592 in 2023/24, to 4545 in 2024/25, totalling 28 tonnes diverted and generating \$40,660 in sales.

There were 21,322 tonnes of waste collected across all four streams of waste. This is a decrease of 282 tonnes from the previous year. There was also a decrease of 0.02 tonnes (or 20kg) in waste generated 'per property' in the shire, which equated to 0.98 tonnes per serviced property. This is notable as the decrease occurred whilst there was an increase in serviced properties from 21,480 to 21,711 in the past two years.

Other highlights for 2024/25 include:

- The first 12 months of a Shire-wide soft plastic pilot has had over 15% uptake by households diverting 10,545 kgs of soft plastics via the orange bag in the recycle bin to be processed back into oil.
- 1,508 community members were engaged in face-to-face Council-led waste education activities in 2024/25, an increase of approximately 10% on the previous year.
- The Wash Against Waste trailer serviced 36 events across the Macedon Ranges.

Annual Environment Reporting

An Annual Environment Report has been produced every year since 2016 to track progress against Council's Environment Strategy. These reports have typically been extensive and require considerable resources to prepare annually. Some of the information contained in the Annual Environment Report is included in Council's Annual Report so there is a level of duplication across the two reports.

In 2024-25, the webpage hosting the Annual Environment Report received 215 views and since January 2025, the latest report recorded just 27 downloads. These analytics raise the question of the broader value these reports provide to the community. It is recommended that most of the key data presented in the Annual Environment Report is already included in Council's Annual Report or could be included where appropriate.

Consultation and engagement

No community engagement is required to inform the Annual Environment Report.

All members of the Environment unit contribute to the compilation of the Annual Environment Report as well as contributions from Resource Recovery and Facilities and Aquatics.

The Governance and Communications and Advocacy units were consulted on the recommendation to incorporate the Annual Environment Report into Council's Annual Report in subsequent years.

Collaboration

Collaboration with other councils, government or statutory bodies was not required in relation to this report.

Innovation and continuous improvement

Officers are currently undertaking a review of Council's Counting Down to Zero plan which will detail ways in which the organisation can meet its target for zero net emissions from its

operations by 2030. Reducing emissions from Council's two largest emission sources (i.e. plant & fleet and gas usage at Council facilities) are complex projects that will require detailed planning, design and expertise.

Relevant law

The Local Government Act 2020 strengthened the mandate for councils to act on climate change. The role of a Council is to provide good governance for the benefit and wellbeing of their community. Councils are required to promote the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks.

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment was not required in relation to the subject matter of this report.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

No regional, state or national plans or policies are directly relevant to this report.

Relevant Council plans and policies

The Annual Environment Report provides information on the implementation progress of the following Council plans and strategies:

- Environment Strategy - Refreshed 2021
- Counting Down to Zero – Zero Net Emissions Plan for Council operations 2022
- Roadside Conservation Management Plan 2021
- Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy 2021
- Biodiversity Strategy 2018

Climate Impact Assessment

How will the recommendation impact on Council's energy usage and greenhouse emissions profile?

This Report summarises the progress Council is making towards its target of zero net emissions by 2030.

How will the recommendations mitigate risks posed by climate change to Council operations and services?

This report highlights the organisation's largest emitters and risks in reaching the target of zero net emission from Council operations by 2030.

How will the recommendation help to prepare the community for future climate scenarios? The Annual Environment Report records data for the community's transition to a lower emissions-future by recording and publishing data regard waste generated per household, electric vehicle ownership and charging facilities usage, uptake of renewable energy such as solar and emissions from community facilities. It also reports on the support and education Council is providing to the community in addressing the Climate Emergency.

Financial viability

There are no financial implications associated with this report however Council will need to decide the best course of action to reach zero net emissions by 2030.

Investing in emissions reduction works typically involves short-term investment for savings in the longer term, both in ongoing (and inevitably increasing) operational costs for energy and fuels, and in avoided costs, like needing to purchase offsets for residual emissions.

Sustainability implications

The Annual Environment Report provides an overview of how Council is progressing towards achieving its environmental and sustainability agenda.

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.

Annual Environment Report 2024-25



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Acknowledgement of Country

Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and waterways. Council recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Council also acknowledges local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents of Macedon Ranges for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

Introduction

Council adopted its first Environment Strategy in June 2016, which provided an umbrella policy framework for its work in environmental management. An annual environment report has been produced since then, to track progress towards achieving the listed actions, and to account for changes in legislation and policy.

A refreshed version of the Environment Strategy was adopted in October 2021 which outlines future directions and actions across the themes:

- [Climate Emergency](#)
- [Biodiversity](#)
- [Water](#)
- [Waste](#)

Council will continue to publish an annual environment report based on the revised indicators included in the Environment Strategy.

This report monitors outcomes and outputs against the Environment Strategy 2021 and progress towards achieving zero net emissions from Council operations by 2030. It also summarises the progress of the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy 2018, Roadside Conservation Management Plan 2021 and various management plans for Council managed reserves.

The Environment Strategy is next due for review in 2026-27.



Theme 1: Climate Emergency

Highlights

- Reaching over 800 residents through Changemakers Macedon Ranges, a festival of climate and sustainability events, in partnership with the Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group.
- Development of the Regional EV public charging framework to guide public EV infrastructure.
- Launched the Climate Emergency Working Group.
- Establishment of the Youth Climate Group.
- Participation in the Grow Towards Zero project, promoting local carbon offset projects.
- Feasibility study into battery storage solutions for Council's Emergency Relief Centres.
- Continued investigation into electrifying Gisborne Aquatic Centre, Kyneton Town Hall and Kyneton Mechanics Institute.
- Successfully administering over \$33,000 to community groups through the Community Climate Action grant program in partnership with Community Bank Gisborne & District.
- Participation in the Zero Emissions Economic Opportunities and Action Plan project.
- Roll-out of the 'Empower Your Home' webinar series on household electrification.
- Presenting at the Victorian Government's Inquiry into Climate Resilience, advocating for consistent funding to 'build back better'
- Commenced Counting Down to Zero Net Emissions on Council Operation Year 2 review and refresh

2024-25 fast facts				
Indicator		Measure	Result	Unit
Climate Emergency Indicator 1	Greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from Council operations	Total GHG emissions	2992.17*	<i>Tonnes / CO2-e</i>
		GHG emissions from electricity	32	<i>Tonnes / CO2-e</i>
		GHG emissions from fuel	1780.33	<i>Tonnes / CO2-e</i>
		GHG emissions from natural gas and LPG	824.59*	<i>Tonnes / CO2-e</i>
Climate Emergency Indicator 2	Greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) across the shire	Total GHG emissions	516,000	<i>Tonnes CO2-e</i>
		GHG from residential uses	172,000	<i>Tonnes CO2-e</i>
		GHG emissions from commercial and industrial uses	168,000	<i>Tonnes CO2-e</i>
		GHG emissions from transport	131,000	<i>Tonnes CO2-e</i>
		GHG emissions from kerbside waste	19,000	<i>Tonnes CO2-e</i>
Climate Emergency Indicator 3	Extent of the shire's transition to sustainable transport	Extent of the shire's cycling network	1.68	<i>Km of on-road bike paths</i>
		Extent of the shire's walking network	4.61	<i>Km of footpaths</i>
		Number of public electric vehicle charging stations in the shire	6	<i>No. of charging stations</i>
		Use of public electric vehicle charging stations	168,683.4	<i>kWh of electricity used</i>
		Number of electric vehicles in Council fleet	3	<i>No. of electric vehicles</i>
Climate Emergency Indicator 4	Community climate change action	Number of buildings powered by renewable energy.	9,435 (42%)	<i>No. of and % roofs with solar panels</i>

* Estimate due to billing availability

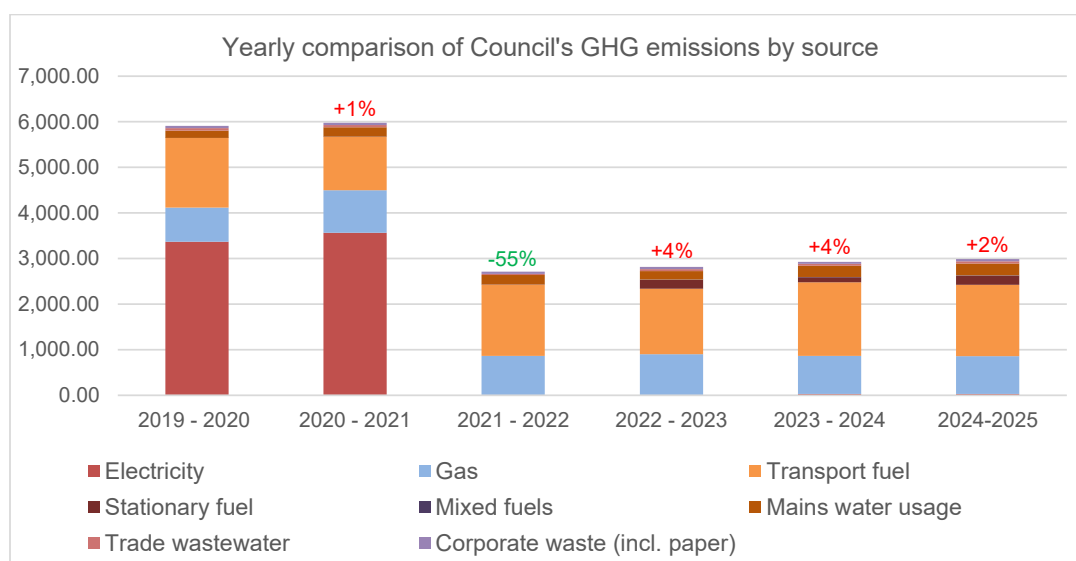
Indicator 1: Greenhouse gas emissions from Council operations

Figure 1: Yearly comparison of greenhouse gas emissions created from Council operations (excluding kerbside waste transport emissions)

In 2024-25, the total greenhouse gas emissions created from Council operations increased by 2%, to a total of 2992.17 tonnes / CO₂-e (Figure 1).

Table 1 provides a yearly comparison of each emissions source from 2019 to the current financial year.

Table 1: Council's greenhouse gas emissions by source from 2019 - 2025 (tonnes / CO₂-e)

Council's greenhouse gas emissions by source (tonnes / CO ₂ -e)							
	2019 - 20	2020 - 21	2021 - 22	2022 - 23	2023 - 24	2024 - 25	%
Electricity	3,366.73	3,567.48	8.04	0.51	27.5	32	1.1%
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Stationary fuel	Limited historic data (combined with transport fuel)			201.69	109.5	205.31	6.9%
Mixed fuels	1.2	0.5	5	5	5	5	0.2%
Mains water usage	159.26	199.99	197.76	182.11	247.7	256.72*	8.6%
Trade wastewater	55	50.4	25	44	44.4	48.53	1.6%
Corporate waste (incl. paper)	50	50	50	50	39.6	50	1.7%
Total	5910.64	5978.83	2711.50	2817.91	2930.3	2992.17	
Kerbside Waste collection & transport			65,007	61,444	63,639	62,776	

* Estimate due to billing availability

Since sourcing 100% renewable energy electricity for all facilities, Council's largest contributor of greenhouse gas emissions is transport fuel, making up 52.3% of Council's emissions profile. Further analysis shows that 44% of this quota is from the use of diesel. Whilst 'transport fuel (i.e. fuel used by fleet vehicles) has decreased by 54.4 tonnes Co2-e from the previous year, 'stationary fuel, which is fuel delivered to the Council's Operations Centre and used by Plant equipment has increased by 95.8 tonnes Co2-e.

Gas usage presents the second highest contributor to Council's greenhouse gas profile. At the time of writing, Council was unable to obtain 2024-25 Q4 billing information, however, using estimates from previous years, there appears to be a small decrease in greenhouse gas emissions associated with gas usage. This is likely due to the replacement of the Kyneton Sports & Aquatic Centre's gas boiler to a more efficient model.

Due to increased access to data, emissions associated with water usage and trade wastewater are now reported as part of Council operations (these sources have also been retrospectively included in past financial years). Officers will consider both emissions sources to be included in Council's emissions boundary when reviewing the Counting Down to Zero Net Emissions Plan.

In 2024-25, both the kerbside service collection and transportation of waste from the Shire's three Resource Recovery Facilities emitted 62,776 tonnes CO2-e, a decrease of 863 tonnes CO2-e from the previous year. These emissions are now reported separately from Figure 1 due to its large disparity to all other Council operational emissions. More detailed analysis of Council's Resource Recovery impacts is included in Theme 4: Waste and Resource Recovery chapter.

Council's vehicle fleet remains relatively similar to the previous year, a break down from vehicles by fuel type is outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Breakdown of Council's fleet by fuel type

Fuel type	2023-24	2024-25	%
Diesel	62	62	55%
Electric	3	3	3%
Plug-in Hybrid / Unleaded	0	1	1%
Hybrid / Unleaded	20	23	21%
Unleaded	24	22	20%
LPG	0	1	1%
Total	109	112	

Counting Down to Zero Net Emissions on Council Operations (progress report)

In 2022, Council adopted a target of 'zero net emissions for Council operations by 30 June 2030, from the baseline of 3,260.6 tonnes CO₂-e at 30 June 2022 (or as retrospectively amended to account for additional indirect sources of greenhouse gas emissions)'

As per Action 33 in the strategy, a 'Year 2 Review' of the plan commenced in 2024-25. At the time of writing this review included:

- an audit of the actions achieved since 2022
- recalibration of Council's initial emissions boundary and baseline with more accurate data (including retrospectively updating historic carbon emissions data)
- investigating the feasibility of additional scope 3 emissions for inclusion in a revised emissions boundary.

Currently, Council's emissions boundary includes the 'collection and transportation of kerbside waste' as a source of emissions. Due to this source having significant implications on Council's ability to offset, as well as Council's limited capacity to influence these emissions, how to address these emissions will be considered as part of the Counting Down to Zero 2025-27 Plan.

Indicator 2: Greenhouse gas emissions across the shire

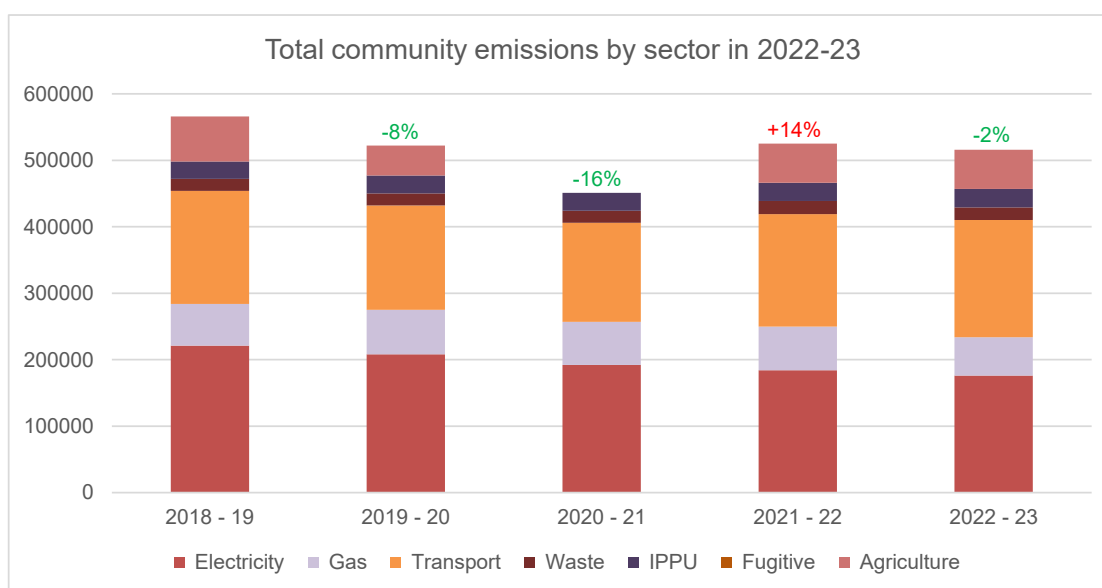


Figure 2: Yearly community emissions by source from 2018 - 2022. Source: Snapshot Climate: Macedon Ranges, www.snapshotclimate.com.au

Figure 2 outlines the latest publicly available community greenhouse gas emissions data from across the shire, which is estimated to be 516,000 tonnes CO₂-e in 2022-23.

Greenhouse gas emissions associated with residential activity, including kerbside waste, is estimated to equate to 172,000 tonnes CO₂-e. A decrease of 12,000 tonnes CO₂-e from the previous year.

Greenhouse gas emissions associated with commercial and industrial practices, including agriculture and refrigerant use, equate to 168,000 tonnes CO₂-e. A decrease of 2,000 tonnes CO₂-e from the previous year.

There is an approximate 2% difference when comparing greenhouse gas emissions of residents to industry (including agriculture), making residential activity a slightly higher contributor to the Shire's community emissions profile.

Emissions from 'in-boundary' transport, which excludes freight and rail, equated to 131,000 tonnes CO₂-e, approximate 25% of the Shire's total emissions and an increase of 7,000 tonnes CO₂-e from the previous year.

Transport emissions will become increasingly prominent in the shire's community emission's profile as the electricity grid continues to decarbonise. Council can have an impactful role in minimising these emissions by increasing investment in active transport and sound strategic planning.

Indicator 3: Extent of the shire's transition to sustainable transport

Active Transport

Council continues to maintain a total of 266.5km of active transport paths across the shire. In 2024-25, Council added 6.3km of shared and walking paths, a 61% decrease from the previous year.

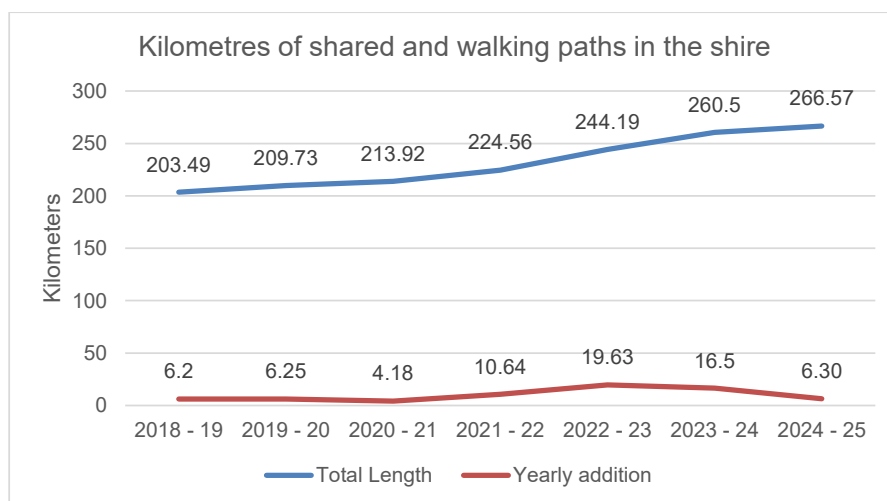


Figure 3: Cumulative total and year addition of shared and walking paths in the shire (km)

Figure 4 (overleaf) shows newly obtained data from Ironbark Sustainability, outlining the percentage of trips made by transport mode. In 2022 – 23, approximate 45% of 'in-boundary' trips were made by internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles. When combining cycling and walking, approximately 7.9% of trips were made by active transport modes.

Car ownership data from 2021, indicates 69% of households in Macedon Ranges Shire had access to two or more motor vehicles, compared to 57% in Regional Victoria¹.

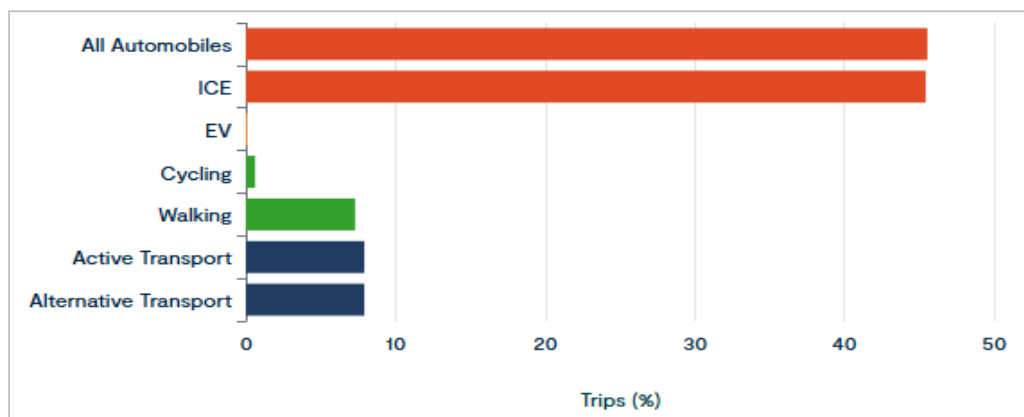


Figure 4: Breakdown of 'in-boundary' trips by transport mode in 2022 - 23. Source: Opticity, Ironbark Sustainability

Low emissions vehicles

In the 2023 – 24 calendar year, registration of electric (EVs) and hybrid vehicles in the shire increased by 0.71% collectively, with low emissions vehicles making up 1.32% of vehicles registered in the shire². Council continues to support low emissions transport through the management and facilitation of EV charging stations. Figure 5 outlines usage data for each station across the shire. The Kyneton (Baynton St.) is the highest used station.

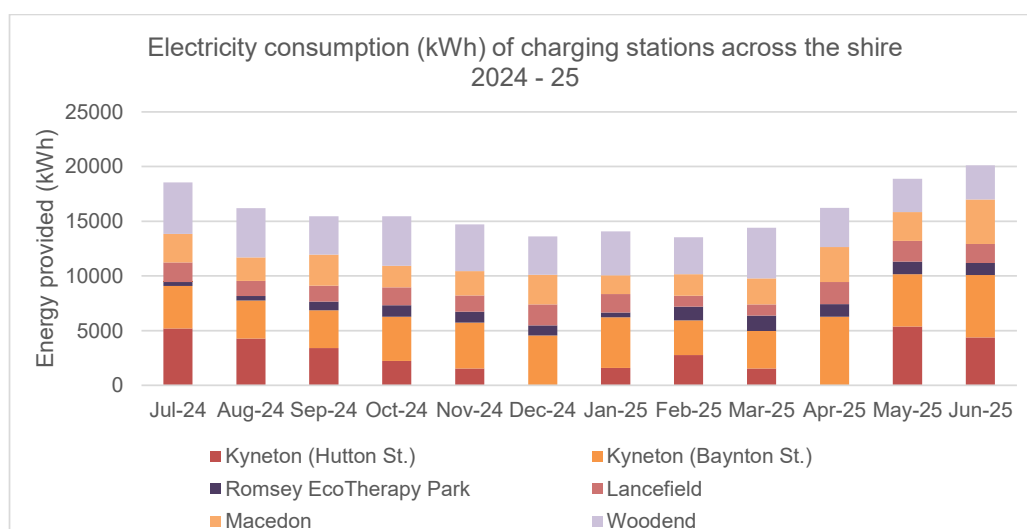


Figure 5: Monthly usage data of all six EV charging stations in the shire.

¹ Source: ProfileID: Macedon Ranges Shire, <https://profile.id.com.au/macedon-ranges/car-ownership>

² Source: Australian Automotive Association, <https://www.aaa.asn.au/research-data/electric-vehicle/>

Indicator 4: Community climate change action

In 2024–25, there were 705 recorded rooftop solar installations³, which increases the cumulative total of homes with solar to 9,435 (approximately 42% of all households).

Figure 6 shows the continual increase in solar installations over the past five years. This current level of household solar installation has the capacity to generate approximately 63 megawatts of electricity annually.

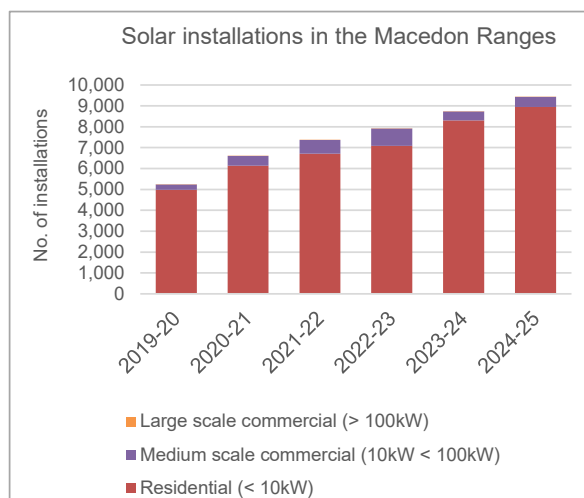


Figure 6: Yearly solar installation from 2019 - 2025

Community-led climate initiatives

Riddells Creek Enviro Energy Expo

'Cool Changes Riddells Creek' hosted the second Riddells Creek Enviro Energy Expo in March 2024. Powered by 60 volunteers and an estimated 3,700 volunteer hours, the event grew to approximately 400 attendees. The results of 62 survey respondents are outlined in the table below.

4.54	65%	68%	51%	30%
Ave. score when asked to rate the event from 1-5	Respondents were first time attendees	Respondents would like the Expo to run yearly	Attended 1-2 of the speaking events	Travelled more than 20kms to attend

Vince Mulkerin, the Action Group Leader of Riddells Creek Cool Changes, was also awarded Council's 'Contribution to the Environment' award at this year's Community Awards. Congratulations to Vince and the entire Riddells Creek Cool Changes group on an impactful and informative community grassroots event.

Electrify Your Home Planner

The Electrify Macedon Ranges community group developed an Electrify Your Home Action Planner, with funding from Council and Community Bank Gisborne & District.

The step-by-step guide is designed with specific tips for Macedon Ranges residents and will be available in to coming months from the Macedon Range Sustainability Group.

³ Australian PV Institute: Mapping Australian Photovoltaic installations, <https://pv-map.apvi.org.au/historical/#9/-37.2303/144.0747>

Grow Towards Zero

Grow Towards Zero is a project managed by the North Central Catchment Management Authority (North Central CMA), alongside the City of Greater Bendigo and the shire councils of Macedon Ranges, Hepburn, and Mount Alexander.

The project aims to use local council investments in carbon offsets to restore valuable habitats through revegetation and create carbon credits that will contribute to Councils' net zero emission goals.

The project 'pilot' planted out 1.8ha in the Woodend area in Autumn 2025, and from an initial Round 2 Expression of Interest release in early 2025, the project received a total of 36 eligible applications, totaling 842.2 hectares. Officers continue to refine this list to progress to stage two of the project.

Project spotlight: Changemakers Macedon Ranges

In partnership with Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group, the inaugural Changemakers Macedon Ranges Festival was hosted in March 2025.

The festival offered a diverse range of climate and sustainability events that aimed to provide practical opportunities for residents to "try the change". The program offered over 30 events throughout the week, many led by dedicated community volunteers. The results of 66 survey respondents are outlined in table below

86%	66%	35%	99%	75%
Rated the quality of facilitation as 4 or above (out of 5)	Respondents reported a high level of confidence to implement change	Respondents said there were no barriers to taking action	Attended 1-2 of the speaking events	Gained greater awareness of local community groups engaging in climate action projects

Changemakers Macedon Ranges delivered on multiple actions regarding community engagement in the Climate Emergency Plan, covering topics such as active transport, textile and food waste, home energy, sustainable food production, climate anxiety, collective climate action and nature connection. Importantly, the program of events supported a key principle of the Plan being 'Partnership and Collaboration'.



Theme 2: Biodiversity

Highlights

Biodiversity monitoring

- During nestbox inspections, 13 boxes had signs of the indicator species Brush-tailed Phascogale and two individuals were directly observed using the nestboxes.

Environmental Planning referrals

- Provided environment responses to 229 planning permit referrals ensuring the removal of native vegetation is kept to a minimum.

Healthy Landscapes – Practical Regenerative Agricultural Communities Program

- Delivered year 1 of a three-year commitment from project partners to deliver Healthy Landscapes until 2027.
- The continuous improvement and development ethos of the program to pilot an Equine Land Management Grazing course which was fully subscribed.

Environment Reserves

- Magnet Hill Reserve has had major works completed in 2025 with the old orchard removed (1.5ha) and mulched. These works have now returned the area to a more natural condition which is visible in the broader landscape.
- Delivered year 2 of the state-funded Black Hill project.
- Secured \$900K in federal funding for the restoration of the Upper Maribyrnong catchment as part of the Urban Rivers and Catchments Program.

Community engagement

- Backyard Biodiversity pilot program launched in Kyneton - the Shire's first urban biodiversity program.
- 28 environment events hosted by the Environment Unit, with over 1,200 participants.

Vegetation protection

- Participation in the Black Gum Waterways Program led by The Threatened Species Conservancy. The project aims to restore riparian zones over a 5-year period along Five Mile Creek in Woodend and extensive weed control has focussed on gorse, willows and blackberry.

2024-25 fast facts				
Indicator		Measure	Result	Indicator
Biodiversity Indicator 1	Biodiversity across the shire	Presence and abundance of biodiversity indicator species	0	No. of Brown Treecreeper observed
			6 ⁴	No. of Brush-tailed Phascogale observed
			1 ⁵	No. of Powerful Owl
			0	No. of Greater Glider
Biodiversity Indicator 2	Conservation value of Council managed land	Treated weeds on roadsides	4	Hectares of weeds treated
			231	No. of sites.
			8	No. of infestations of Serrated Tussock
			39	No. of infestations of Chilean Needle-grass treated.
		Ecological and cultural burns completed	0	No. of ecological or cultural burns conducted
Biodiversity Indicator 3	Community involvement in conservation	Participation in land management workshops	869	No. of participants
		Attendance at biodiversity events such as walks and talks	334	No. of attendees
		Health and activity of Landcare and Friends Groups	20	No. of responses to Landcare 'health check'

⁴ Source: iNaturalist, <https://www.inaturalist.org/>

⁵ Source: Birdlife Australia: Bird Data, <https://birddata.birdlife.org.au/>

Indicator 1: Biodiversity across the shire

As per the Biodiversity Strategy 2018, Council targets its monitoring program on four indicator species. These species are the Brush-tailed Phascogale, Powerful Owl, Greater Glider and the Brown Treecreeper.

Monitoring activity	No. of sites/surveys	Target species
Nestbox checks	112	Brush-tailed Phascogale
Spotlighting surveys	2	Greater Gliders, Brush-tailed Phascogale, Powerful Owl

Nestbox monitoring is completed annually to target the Brush-tailed Phascogale, but it also provides a good snapshot of the populations of hollow-dependent species across the shire. 112 nestboxes across the Shire's six biolink areas were surveyed in Autumn 2025. Positively, over 70% of nestboxes had signs of recent use (e.g. recent nests, scats) (Figure 7). Thirteen nestboxes had signs of our indicator species, the Brush-tailed Phascogale, and two of those were occupied by a Brush-tailed Phascogale at the time of checking. Another notable observation was a family of Antechinus - a mother with 9 young.

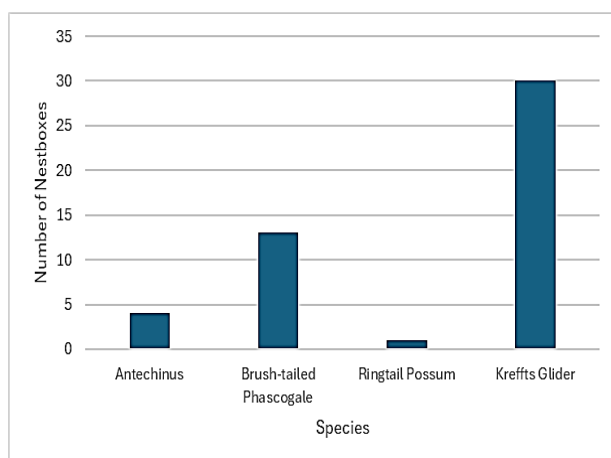


Figure 7: Count of nestboxes recently used and the species occupying them (determined based on nest and scat).



Brush-tailed Phascogale - 2025

Two spotlighting events were run with community members in 2025, at Barringo Reserve and Hobbs Road. Both saw significant nocturnal activity; ringtail possums were the most observed fauna species at each site (Figure 8). At Barringo Reserve, two Kreffts Gliders were sighted and participants observed them feeding and cleaning themselves.

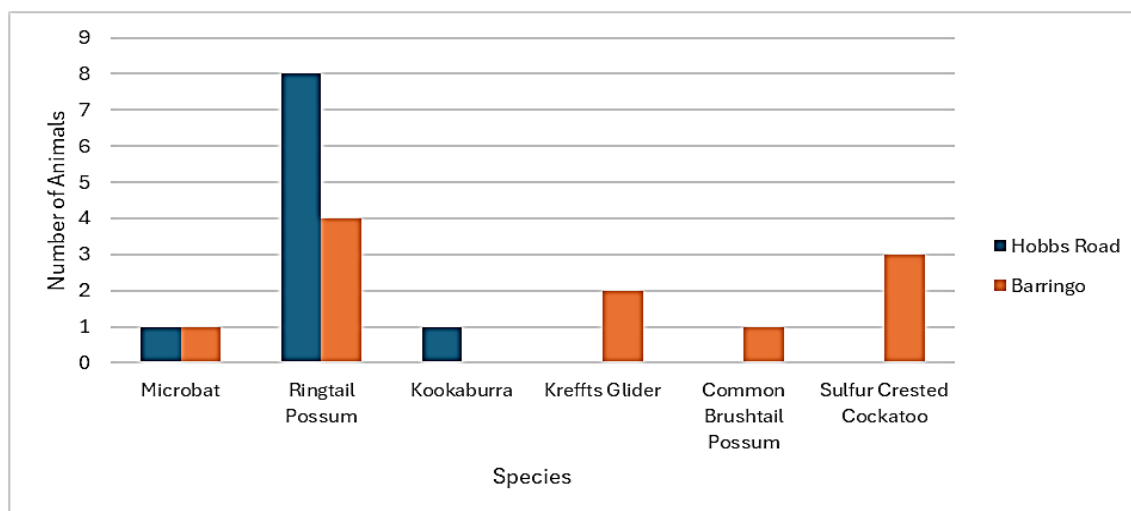


Figure 8: Number of animals observed during spotlighting surveys in 2024 - 25.



Spotlight event at Barringo Reserve April 2025



National Threatened Species Day September 2024 – Macedon Cemetery

Koala Count

Council has run an annual Koala count for five years at Hanging Rock. In November 2024, one koala was spotted a couple of meters off the ground in a Black Wattle - a daytime resting tree for koalas, as they don't eat the leaves of this species.

A nest of Peregrine Falcons was sighted perched high on top of a rock. The observation included two adult Peregrine Falcons and two chicks. The nest on the south side of Hanging Rock is a rare find.

	Participants	Koalas spotted	Other notable species
2023	14	1	Black Rock Skinks
2024	25	1	Peregrine Falcon

Birdlife Australia's Aussie Bird Count results

Council-run bird surveys were not completed in 2024-25, due to staff shortages. However, residents and community groups were encouraged to participate in the Aussie Bird Count which provides some insights into bird species populations across the Shire. Figure 9 outlines the recorded locations of the survey's conducted.

Surveys submitted	Birdwatchers	Birds counted	Species
791	251	23,100	130

The most commonly identified species were Magpies, Crimson Rosellas and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos.

The indicator species, Brown Treecreeper, was not identified during these surveys. It should be noted, however, that these birds are less likely to be counted as this is a citizen science survey and counts are biased towards familiar and urban-adapted species. As such, we need to wait until the 2025 Spring bird surveys to be able to compare to previous years.

Note that the Biodiversity Monitoring Program will be undergoing some changes with the refresh of the Biodiversity Strategy in 2025/26.



Figure 9: Recorded survey sites in the Aussie Bird Count project

Environmental Planning in the shire - Protecting Forest Trees in Developments

The balance of retaining environmental values in developments is an ongoing task that requires a level of precision and balance. The protection of large forest trees involves a suitable parcel of land to ensure the tree will have sufficient space to grow and will not be impacted by future development.

A current development in Kyneton includes the retention and protection of numerous large indigenous trees. They are situated in future public open space areas that will be actively managed by the MRSC Open Space Teams and the Arboriculture Unit. This will ensure tree health is monitored in perpetuity.

The retention of mature aged trees plays an important role in ecosystem function for a range of animals including native birds, bats and invertebrates. They contain hollow bearing limbs that function as nesting sites for numerous native animals. A photograph was captured of a baby Kestrel emerging from a hollow in one such old tree in a current development site.

The tree is of significant size and age, indicating the importance of protecting such large old trees and their role as habitat for local birds in the shire.



Indicator 2: Conservation value of Council managed land

Annual Roadside Weed Program

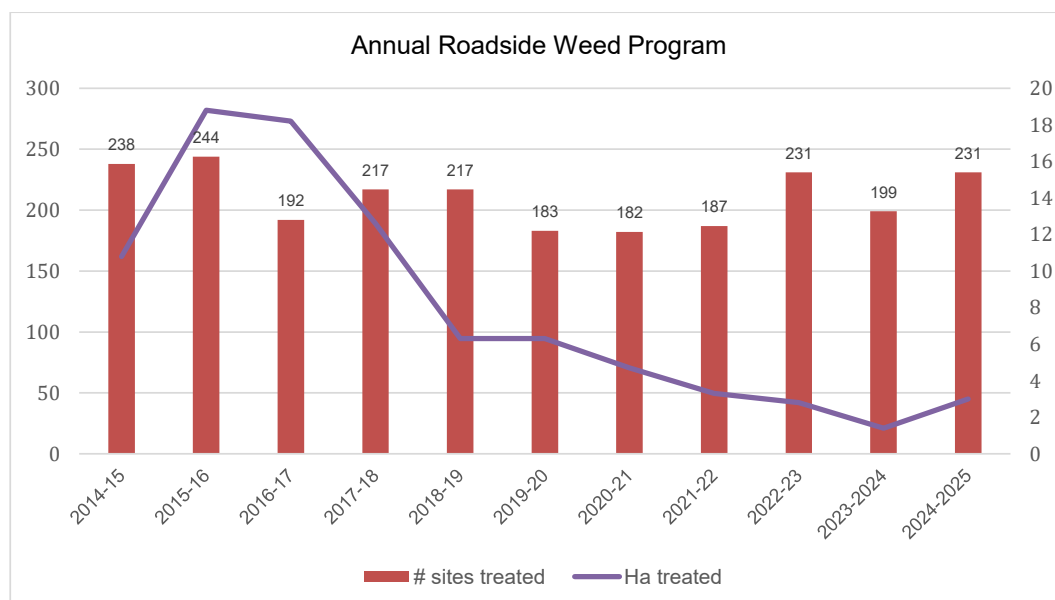


Figure 10: Council's Annual Roadside Weed Program from 2014-2025

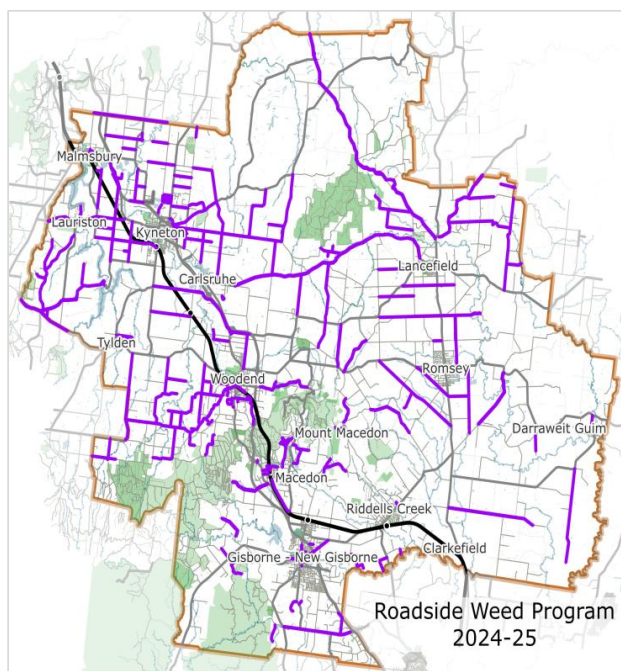


Figure 11: Aerial observation of total roadsides treated in Council's Annual Roadside Weed Program in 2024-25.

In 2024-25, there was an increase in the total number of sites (231) and total hectares (4ha) of weeds treated as part of Council's Roadside Weed Control Program, outlined in Figure 10. This is an increase of approximately 16% in sites treated and a notable 114% increase in hectares treated from the previous year and included works across 37 localities.

Figure 11 (left) outlines the 29.9 km² of roadside reserves and open space areas managed for noxious weed treatment in 2024-25.

In 2024-25, of the total 231 sites treated, 31 sites were treated through the state government funded, Roadside Weeds and Pests Program (RWPP).

The additional 200 sites were treated as part Council's recurrent funding through the Strategic Weed Fund and Fire Prevention Fund.

Analysis of the program indicates that the management of identified roadside weeds is progressing towards a maintenance phase. Most roadside reserves now require only occasional targeted spraying, with a reduced need for intensive control methods such as grooming.

Improved data management and reporting systems has enabled more effective use of Council and State Government funding.

As per previous years, targeted weeds included Gorse, Blackberry, Sweet Briar Rose and Broom species, as well as other environmental weeds such as English Ivy and Watsonia.

In 2024-25, targeted actions commenced in Trentham East to reduce fuel loads and protect biodiversity values along roadsides. The works focused on a combination of control methods, including grooming and targeted spot spraying, to manage vegetation in a strategic and environmentally sensitive manner. Over the next few years, these measures are expected to enhance conservation outcomes, reduce fire risk, and support increased agricultural productivity on adjoining farmland.

Council's Nassella Treatment Program continues to identify infestations of Chilean Needle Grass and Serrated Tussock across the Shire. The 2025-2026 weed program will target emerging Serrated Tussock infestations which have recently been identified, mainly in outlying areas in the south of the Shire.

Conservation value of bushland and conservation reserves

Council currently manages more than 70 sites for conservation values across the Shire, equating to 693 ha of land. This is a 34% increase in the area of land managed for conservation by Council since the adoption of the Biodiversity Strategy 2018.

Conservation Reserves: 2024-25 Activity Snapshot

Stanley Park - Control of high threat weeds including Blackberry & Ivy, in partnership with Melbourne Water's waterway maintenance program

Black Hill - Removal of Sallow wattle in high value conservation areas. Details of upgraded track works below in 'Reserve Spotlight' (page 23)

Bald Hill - Control of high threat weeds including Gorse & Horehound

Magnet Hill - Removal & chipping of Plum trees & control of Gorse & Blackberry

Old Ashbourne Road - Removal of storm damage tree debris & woody weeds in preparation for a CFA winter cool burn

Gisborne Marshlands - Control of Blackberry, Willow & Elm in partnership with Melbourne Water

UL Daly - Control of high threat weeds, mulching & track maintenance

Marsh Court - Control of Blackberry, Gorse & Paterson's Curse & construction of new boundary fence.

Trees – Over 2,000 reserve trees mapped and assessed in Forestree by qualified arborists

Reserve Spotlight: Hanging Rock

Council's Hanging Rock Reserve revegetation program continued with 3,578 trees, shrubs, grasses & sedges planted throughout Core Conservation Zones and Connectivity Zones.

Other conservation works included:

- The annual nestbox monitoring program of Kreffts Gliders throughout the reserve
- Completion of the annual rabbit fumigation program targeting warrens in the Core Conservation Zone, Connectivity Zone & Recreation Zone. Overall, Council recorded a reduction in active warrens where the works have been undertaken in the past 3 years.
- Completion of a rabbit proof skirt around the old well fence.
- Completion of the woody weed control programs across the reserve targeting Blackberry, English Broom & Thistle.
- Commenced Stage 3 of erosion control along Smokers Creek with coir logs.



Flora monitoring

Standardised flora monitoring was conducted at three reserves in the 2024-2025 financial year: Barringo Reserve, Old Ashbourne Road Reserve and Hobbs Road Reserve. There has been a general trend in increasing average flora species richness as captured by the vegetation monitoring.

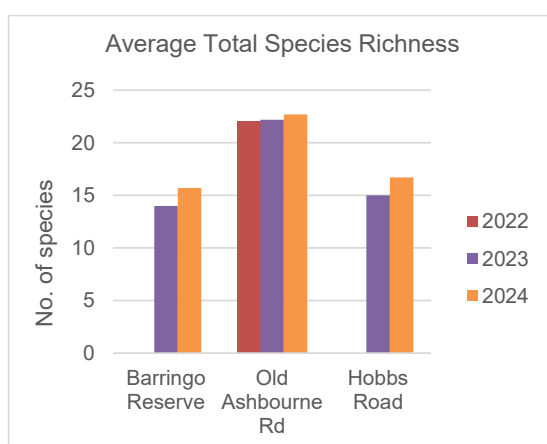


Figure 12: Ave. total species richness at three of Council's reserves

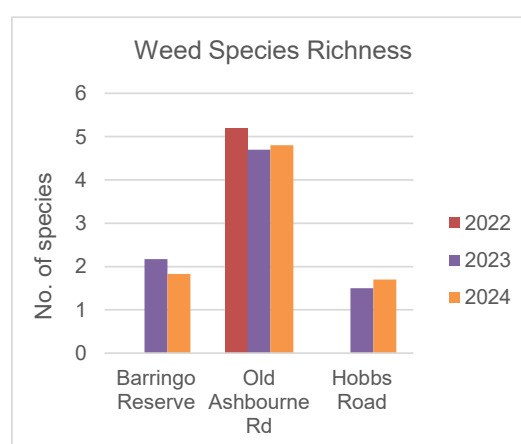


Figure 13: Weed species richness at three of Council's reserves

Key observations included:

- Greater number of indigenous species in 2024 than in 2023 at **Barringo Reserve**.
- a greater diversity of lily species in some quadrats, large patches of *Chiloglottis varia* (Common Bird-orchid), and a healthy patch of *Microseris walteri* (Murnong/Yam Daisy) at **Old Ashbourne Road Reserve**.
- Low presence of exotic species and good (but variable) indigenous species richness at **Hobbs Road Reserve**.
- The endangered *Bossiaea cordigera* (Wiry Bossiaea) remains present in significant numbers at **Hobbs Road Reserve**

Tree Management Program

The Environment unit is working closely with the Arboriculture unit to achieve greater consistency in tree management across the organisation and has recently adopted the Forestree program for mapping, assessing and managing tree assets in Council-managed Conservation Reserves. In 2024/25 all trees in Black Hill and Bald Hill reserves, in close proximity to paths, carparks and seats were captured on the system and assessed for risk by qualified arborists. The team will now action any works that pose a high risk to users of both reserves, as well as Hanging Rock, and progressively roll out the program across all other reserves. Over 2,000 trees have now been assessed.



Figure 14: Snapshot of trees mapped and assessed at Black Hill Reserve using the Forestree application.

Weeds and pest animal management

Table 3 outlines the observed increasing and declining weed species within some of the Shire's reserves.

Table 3: Summary of weed impacts in Bushland Reserves

Reserve	Reported increase	Reported decline
Bald Hill	Gorse	Broom & blackberry
Black Hill		Sallow Wattle
Gisborne Marshlands	Willow herb	Blackberry, Gorse, Willow & Elms
Magnet Hill		Plum Trees, Blackberry & Gorse
Marsh Court	Patterson's Curse	Blackberry & Gorse
Old Ashbourne Rd	Bluebell Creeper	Broom
Stanley Park	Blackberry & Ivy	Broom
UL Daly	Wild Galic	Broom

Council has also observed a significant increase in pest rabbit populations, accompanied by growing community concern about the issue. Rabbits have a detrimental impact on native plant biodiversity, promote the spread of invasive weeds, and cause considerable damage to gardens, properties, and infrastructure. Community engagement remains a key element of Council's strategy to address these environmental challenges with several education workshops held over the past year. However, further action is required to reduce rabbit numbers, with funding constraints and inaction on privately owned land continuing to present significant challenges and threats.

Environment Unit officers also actively participate in the State Government funded Victorian Rabbit Action Network, completing leadership and mentor training in 2024-25.

Annual progress on Environmental Management Plans

Environmental Management Plans (EMP) were reviewed early 2025 in consultation with active Friends Groups to determine future priority actions for Council managed Conservation Reserves including Black Hill Reserve, Bald Hill Reserve, Mt Gisborne Reserve, Stanley Park Reserve and Woodend Grassland Reserve. These reviews directly informed the 2025-26 Annual Works Programs with priority actions high threat weeds now planned.

Reserve Spotlight: Black Hill Reserve

Two and a half kilometres of tracks at Black Hill Reserve have been repaired, including the installation of new drainage along the Eastern and Link tracks. These tracks were weather damaged and required urgent repair.

Repairs were carried out in collaboration with contractors and engagement with Traditional owners, Taungurung Biik Cultural Land Management. The project was supported through a Council Support Package funded by the State Government's Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR).

In addition to track repairs, the project will fund the purchase and installation of new signage at Black Hill Reserve to enhance the visitor experience and provide cultural and environmental information for the community and visitors. Content is now being developed with Taungurung alongside the Community Working Group, which includes volunteers from the Friends of Black Hill Reserve and the Crag Stewards of Victoria. The project is due for completion in 2026.

**Indicator 3: Community involvement in conservation**Participation in land management workshops

In 2024-25, Council facilitated a three-year contract with Hepburn Shire, the City of Greater Bendigo, Melbourne Water, North Central Catchment Management Authority and adding Mount Alexander Shire to deliver the Healthy Landscapes Practical Regenerative Agricultural Communities program. The program also collaborated with Victorian Farmers Market Association, Stock Sense (Victorian Farmers Federation), Upper Deep Creek Landcare Network and Traditional Owners to run rural landholder-focused events.

The Healthy Landscapes program continued to deliver popular events and courses that focus on participants gaining practical skills that they can use to make a difference on private land. The program continues to develop its offering by:

- piloting an Equine Grazing Management Course
- introducing two practical fencing workshops to the program

The new Equine Grazing Management Course proved extremely successful in 2024-25, summaries by one participant as *“an excellent course, very comprehensive and great information and practical advice”*.

The Healthy Landscapes program is extremely proud of its role in community development when members of the 2022-23 Holistic Grazing Course (who first meet during the course) have continued to develop their skills and enhance others by running the GROW Festival, attracting 565 people to the Kyneton racecourse in February.

The very dry conditions that prevailed during the summer and autumn impacted events during this period and the program adapted to reflect these conditions.

Table 4: Engagement activities for Healthy Landscapes Program 2024-25

Event Type	2024 – 25 Target (properties/participants)	2024 - 2025 Actual	Note
Property visits	45 properties	54	Exceeded target
Revisited properties	15 properties	10	Target not achieved, but overall numbers of property visits were exceeded.
Discussion groups	78 participants	78	Target Met
Field Days	140 participants	257	Exceeded target
Cultural engagement	70 participants	101	Exceeded target
Webinars	100 participants	85	Under target
Courses	55 properties	56	Target Met
Total participation	869 people attended 41 Healthy Landscapes events held in 2024-25		



Healthy Landscapes' Land Cultural awareness session at Will-im-ee Moor-ing

Attendance at biodiversity events

In 2024–25, Council's Environment team delivered 24 biodiversity-focused events, workshops, citizen science activities and/or talks and provided in-kind support to another 8 community events. This is a decrease from the 38 Council-led events in the previous year and correlates with the decreased participants numbers (Table 6). This decrease in engagement is due to temporary low staffing resources throughout periods of recruitment from July 2024 onwards.

Notably, both the large tree hollow survey and Bird Blitz events were not hosted in 2024-25. Officers focused on providing a variety of events for differing knowledge, skill and accessibility and continues to adopt higher evaluation methods to assess event success.

Table 5: Comparative participation rates of biodiversity events from 2023/24 – 2024/25

Activity	No. of participants	
	2023 – 24	2024 - 25
Flora events - Clover Glycine monitoring, large tree and hollow surveys, roadside walks, wildflower identification.	101	54
Fauna education, citizen science events and walks - Bird Month and Aussie Bird Count, family-friendly spotlighting, Koala Count, citizen science activities, rabbit behaviour and control information session.	149	127
Landcare Week Celebration	32	15
In-kind supported events – revegetation and plant preparation workshops, fire ecology,	258	138

Excitingly, Council piloted the new community engagement program 'Backyard Biodiversity'. This program provided deep engagement and education to a small cohort of households in Kyneton and is highlighted in detail below (pg. 27)



National Tree Day planting at Hanging Rock July 2024



Koala Count, Hanging Rock November 2024



Spotlighting event, Krefft's Glider, April 2025. Credit: Helen Evans



National Threatened Species Day event: Local Grasslands at Macedon Cemetery, September 2025

Program spotlight: Backyard Biodiversity

To enact actions within both the Biodiversity Strategy 2018 and the Climate Emergency Plan to develop an urban biodiversity program, the 'Backyard Biodiversity' program was designed and piloted in Kyneton in 2025.

The program aims to encourage residents to create native, biodiverse gardens that support local wildlife in the shire's more urban settings and provides expert guidance from design and site preparation through to maintenance.

To pilot a new engagement model in the shire, ten households were chosen to participate in the program. All participating households received a one-hour consultation and tailored garden designs with a qualified landscape designer, free native plants from local nurseries, expert guidance and community connections. Together, they are learning how simple changes in a backyard can increase the resilience of the shire's biodiversity.

Officers will conduct progressive surveys with participants to evaluate the program's success and opportunities for improvement. This program will continue to be rolled out across townships in future years.



Before and after shot of a Backyard Biodiversity program participant

Health and activity of Landcare and Friends Groups

Landcare, Friends of and other community environment groups are asked to provide an optional self-assessed 'health check' when applying for Council's Environment Group Support Grants. In 2024-25, a total of 20 groups provided input. Whilst not conclusive, the data indicated a decline in 'strong' groups and an increase in groups stating they are either 'moving forward ok' or 'thriving'

groups. This shows the varying rate in groups' capacity to rebound after the widespread impact that the COVID pandemic had on volunteerism.

Council officers continue to provide in-kind support and capacity building events to community environment groups, as well as financial support in the form of grants to assist environmental community groups to be sustainable.

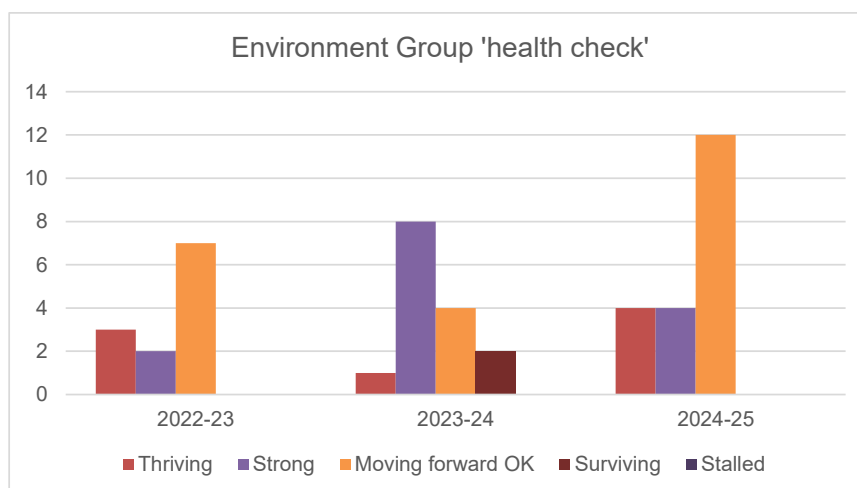


Figure 15: Responses received for the self-assessed environment group 'health' check.

Environment Group Support Grant Program

In 2024 – 25, the Environment Group Support Grants received strong interest, with 34 applications from 21 groups requesting \$70,521 in funding.

A review of the Environment Grants program will be undertaken in 2025/26.

Theme 3: Water

Highlights

- Urban Rivers and Catchments Grant: Council has secured more than \$830,000 over the next three years from the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust to improve riparian habitats. This project will focus on the conservation and regeneration of Jacksons Creek, Howey Creek and Bunjil Creek in Gisborne, Djirri Djirri Waterway Reserve in Gisborne South, and Nursery Road Reserve in Macedon.
- In partnership with Melbourne Water, Council continued to implement the Waterways program in the south of the Shire by conducting high priority maintenance activities along waterways including Stanley Park Mt Macedon, Jacksons Creek Gisborne & 5 Mile Creek Romsey, complimenting Council's Annual Conservation Reserve Works Plans.
- Also, in partnership with Melbourne Water, Council commenced a high priority weed control program at Gisborne Marshlands Reserve.

2024 – 25 fast facts

Indicator		Measure	Result	Unit
Water Indicator 1	Water consumption from Council operations.	Consumption of potable water	102,193*	<i>Kilolitres</i>
		Consumption of recycled water	54,639*	<i>Kilolitres</i>
Water Indicator 2	Extent of waterway restoration works conducted.	Weed control	Omitted <small>Details below</small>	<i>Ha high threat weeds treated</i>
		Revegetation	4,000	<i>No. of plants along waterways</i>
Water Indicator 3	Waterway quality in local creeks and rivers.	Water quality for the Upper Maribyrnong catchment	Omitted <small>Details below</small>	<i>Water Quality Index measured on Deep Creek at Kennedy's Lane, Romsey</i>

*Estimate due to billing

Indicator 1: Water consumption from Council operations

Consumption of potable and recycled water

In 2024-25, total consumption of potable water estimated to be 102,193 kiloliters (kL). This represents a 30% (or 23,816kL) increase and highlights an upward trend in consumption since 2022. The increase in water consumption may be partly due to a dry summer, and partly due to increased services, for example, the new Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct.

The Kyneton Saleyards remain the highest consumption site, using approximately 35,506kL of potable water in the past financial year. This is consistent with the previous year's usage of 35,573kL.

At the time of writing, Council is unable to conclusively note the total consumption of potable and recycled water (RCW) due to billing issues with Greater Western Water, however a projected estimate from previous year's data is provided in Figure 16 below.

Available data from Coliban Water sites equates RCW usage to total 18,683kL. This is a 32% increase in consumption on the previous year. Once again, this could be due to the prolonged dry period experienced throughout the year.

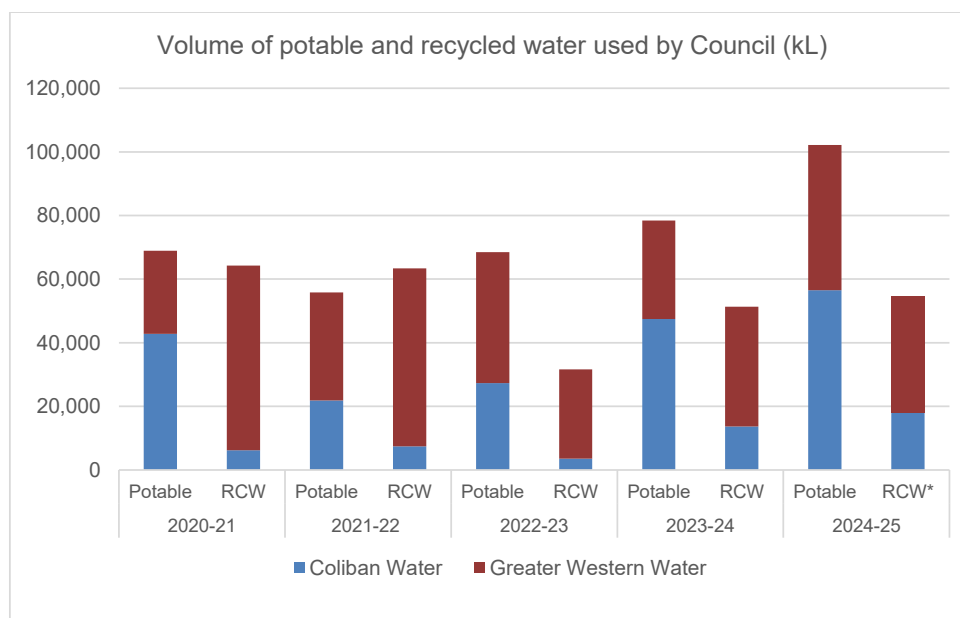


Figure 126: Volume and source of water used by Council from 2020 - 2025.

Indicator 2: Extent of waterway restoration works conducted

Weed control on waterways

Similar to last financial year, in 2024-25, high threat weeds such as Blackberry, Broom, Gorse, Willow, Pine and Elm were targeted along waterways. These species will be monitored as part of the ongoing waterways maintenance program. Table 7 below outlines weed control on Council managed waterway reserves during 2024-25.

Council does not record the collective number of hectares treated.

Table 6: Weed control conducted along Council managed waterway reserves in 2024-25

Waterway	Reserve	Locality	Note
Jacksons Creek	Rotary Park Waterway Reserve	Gisborne	Follow up weed control of Blackberry, Broom & continue to remove Elm trees. Maintenance of waterway program plantings.
Railway Creek	Waterfalls Rd Reserve	Macedon	Maintenance of program plantings.
Riddells Creek & Railway Creek	Tony Clarke Conservation Reserve 1 & 2	Macedon	Follow up weed control of Blackberry, Broom, Gorse, Large-leaf Cotoneaster, Bluebell Creeper, Japanese Honeysuckle & Pine trees. Maintenance of waterway program plantings.
Riddells Creek	Nursery Road Waterway Reserve	Macedon	Removal of Pine trees
Deep Creek	Three Chain Road Waterway Reserve	Newham	Follow up weed control of Broom, Gorse, Blackberry & Willow. Maintenance of waterway program plantings.
Dry Creek	Kathryn Court Waterway Reserve	Riddells Creek	Follow up weed control of Blackberry, Broom & Gorse, continue to remove Elm trees. Maintenance of waterway program plantings.
Murnong Creek	Whittakers Lane Waterway Reserve	Riddells Creek	Control of Blackberry, Hawthorn & Watsonia
Boyd Creek	Boyd Creek Waterway Reserve-Lobbs Bridge	Darraweit Guim	Follow up weed control of Blackberry, Broom & Gorse
Bunjil Creek	Bunjil 02,05, 08, 09 & 10	Gisborne	Follow up weed control of Blackberry, Broom, Gorse, Japanese Honeysuckle & Blue Periwinkle. Maintenance of program plantings.
Howey Creek	Howey 2, 3 & 4	Gisborne	Follow up weed control of Blackberry, Broom, Gorse & Chilean Needle Grass
Romsey Five Mile Creek	Lions Park	Romsey	Maintenance of program plantings.

Waterway	Reserve	Locality	Note
Woodend Five Mile Creek	Township area	Woodend	Control of Blackberrys, Gorse, Broom & English Ivy.
Campaspe River	Jennings Street to Mollison Street Bridge Edgecomb Street to Mollison Street Bridge	Kyneton	Follow up weed control program supporting Campaspe River & Land Catchment Group
Jacksons Creek	Jacksons Creek A, B, C & D	Gisborne	Melbourne Water Capital maintenance & weed control program
Turitable Creek & Gurrborra Creek	Stanley Park	Mt Macedon	Control of Blackberry & Ivy in partnership with Melbourne Water

Revegetation along waterways

Council's Waterway Program continues to administer revegetation projects along key waterways through the shire. In 2024-25, an approximate total of 4,000 grasses, shrubs and trees were planted along waterways, which is a 99% increase on the 2023-23 quota (when excluding plantings as part of the Hanging Rock Reserve planting program).

Table 7 provides an overview of the waterway and type of plantings conducted.

Table 7: Revegetation conducted along Council managed waterway reserves in 2024-25

Waterway	Locality	No. plants	Planting objective
Deep Creek	Newham	500	Indigenous grasses have been planted where exotic grasses have been controlled
Jacksons Creek	Gisborne	500	Riparian areas along the path have been planted with grasses & sedges
Riddells Creek	Macedon	500	Grasses, sedges & shrubs were planted along the banks & drainage line
Smokers Creek	Woodend	2500	Grasses, sedges, shrubs & trees were planted along the banks & flood plains

Theme 4: Waste and Resource Recovery

Highlights

- The first 12 months of a Shire-wide soft plastic pilot has had over 15% uptake by households diverting 10,545 kgs of soft plastics via the orange bag in the recycle bin to be processed back into oil.

2024-25 fast facts

Indicator		Measure	Result	Unit
Waste Indicator 1	Waste diverted from landfill in the community	Waste received at Resource Recovery Facilities.	7632	Tonnes
			31%	Diverted from landfill
		Sales at Kyneton & Romsey Re-sale Shop	4,545	No. of different items
			28	Tonnes diverted from landfill
			\$40,660.00	\$ collected
		Waste from kerb side collections (total and per serviced properties)	21,322	Tonnes
			0.98	Tonnes per serviced properties
		Waste from public places and events	244	Tonnes
Waste Indicator 2	Resource efficiency within Council operations	Waste collected from Council facilities	Omitted Details below	Tonnes of different waste streams
		Paper use	Omitted Details below	Reams of paper purchased
Waste Indicator 3	Community engagement with waste education	Number and type of waste education activities hosted by Council	58	No. of educational sessions
			1,508	No. of residents / participants
		Use of the Wash Against Waste Trailer	36	No. of Wash Against Waste Trailer bookings

Indicator 1: Waste diverted from landfill in the communityWaste received at Transfer Stations

In 2024-25, there was an increase in the variety of items accepted at the Resource Recovery Facilities, which correlated with an increase in the percentage of items being diverted from landfill, totaling to a 31% diversion rate.

Table 8 provides a detailed breakdown of items collected across Council's Resource Recovery Facilities, whilst Figure 17 shows yearly comparisons of total items received by waste stream.

Table 8: Detailed breakdown of items collected across Council's Resource Recovery Facilities from 2019 - 2025

Waste stream	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Unit
Paper and cardboard	220.8	256.84	278.99	268.2	284	290	tonnes
Aluminium and steel	1,683.9	1,729	1,959.4	1,786.3	1,630.5	1,707	tonnes
Comingled recycling	122.1	83.9	79.3	78	81.3	41	tonnes
E-waste	146.2	105.35	87.8	82.5	54.6	54	tonnes
Glass	197.56	166.96	142.3	123.5	115.3	67	tonnes
Garden Waste	34,186	38,512	39,411	49,793	54,802	6,084	cubic meters
Oil	13,800	20,550	24,052	19,040	14,600	20,800	litres
Tyres	1,821	3,046	2,005	2,642	2,243	19 tonnes	number
Mattresses	1,861	2,583	2,447	2,009	2,080	1817	number
Batteries	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	11	tonnes
Polystyrene	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	101.4	tonnes
Textile	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	67.2	tonnes
Soft Plastics	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	90	tonnes
Total diverted from landfill (excl. garden waste, oil, tyres and mattresses)	2,566.9	2,342.0	2,547.8	2,338.6	2,165.7	2357.57	tonnes
% diverted from landfill	44.80	28.80	28.80	26.02	23.48	30.9	%
Total disposed to landfill	3,162.8	5,789.6	6,286	6,650.2	7,054.2	5274	tonnes
Total (all items)	5,729.7	8,131.6	8,833.9	8,988.8	9,219.9	7631.57	tonnes

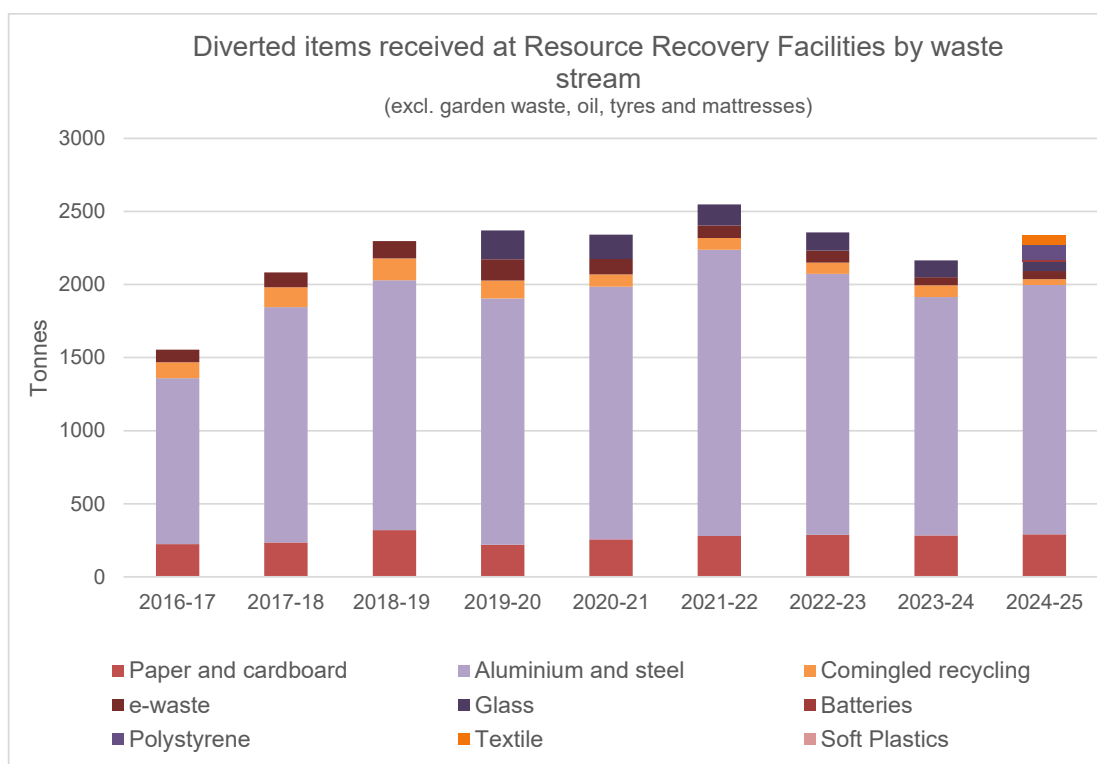


Figure 17: Yearly comparisons of total diverted items received by waste stream.

Sales at Kyneton & Romsey re-sale shops

The refurbishment of Kyneton re-sale shop and establishment of the Romsey re-sale shop has proven to be another successful intervention for diverting items from landfill, with the total number of items being sold increased from 592 in 2023-24, to 4545 in 2024-25, totalling 28 tonnes diverted and generating \$40,660 in sales.

All item categories saw an increase. Notably sales of bicycles, furniture, steel and lawn mowers all increased by over 300%.

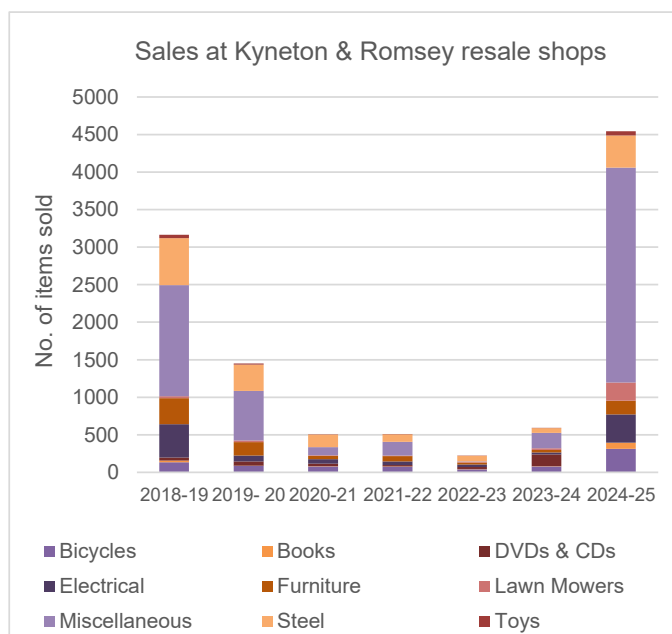


Figure 18: Sales and items sold at Council's re-sale shops

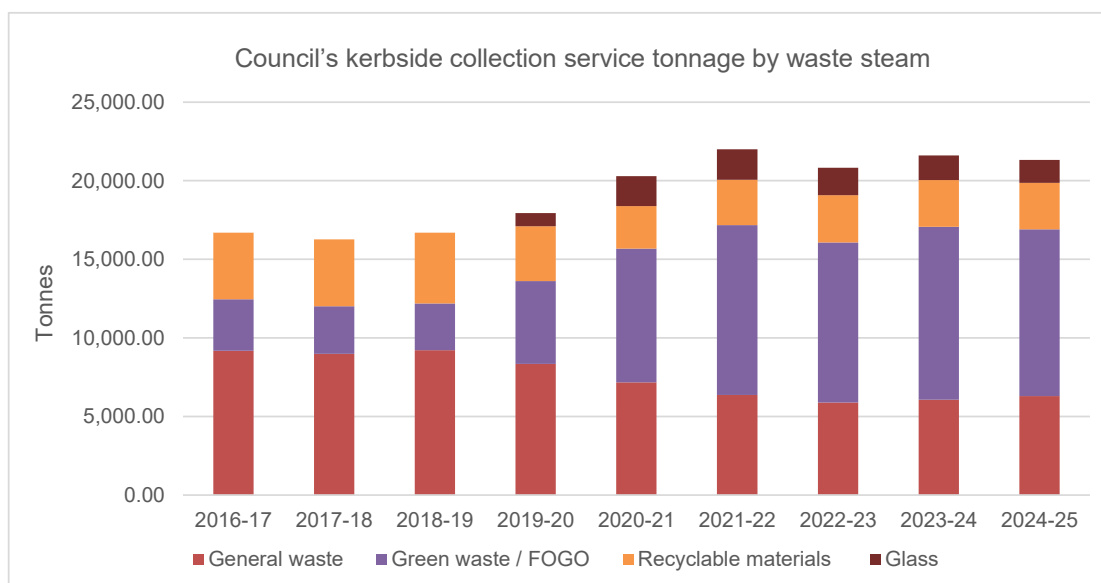
Council's kerbside collection service

Figure 19: Yearly comparison of Council's kerbside collection service tonnage by waste stream

Figure 19 shows that in 2024-25, there were 21,322 tonnes of waste collected across all four streams of waste. This is a decrease of 282 tonnes from the previous year.

There was also decrease of 0.02 tonnes in waste generated 'per property' in the shire, which equated to 0.98 tonnes per serviced property. This is notable as the decrease occurred whilst there was an increase in serviced properties from 21,480 to 21,711 in the past two years.

Council's kerbside collection waste tonnage in 2024-25		
	Tonnes	Tonnes / services property
General waste	6,301	0.29
FOGO	10,610	0.49
Co-mingled Recycling	2,963	0.14
Glass	1,448	0.07
Total	21,322	0.98

Table 9: Tonnage collected in Council's kerbside waste service and per property averages



Figure 20: Yearly per property averages (by kg) from 2016 - 2025 and linear trendline

Indicator 2: Resource efficiency within Council operationsWaste collected from Council facilities

Waste from Council facilities is collected as a part of Council's general kerbside collection service, meaning data regarding amounts of waste generated at individual council facilities is not available. Given that it is not feasible to separately measure the amounts of waste generated at council facilities through current contracted services, this indicator will not be reported on in future reports unless this changes.

Paper use

As per previously reported in the 2023-24 Annual Environment Report, Council will no longer report on paper use as a material measure and instead incorporate it into its zero net emissions reporting, including it in its 'corporate waste' stream of emissions accounting. Paper use is a Scope 3 emissions source for Council operations.

Indicator 3: Community engagement with waste education

In 2024-25, 1,508 community members were engaged in face-to-face Council-led waste education activities, an increase in engagement of approximately 10% on the previous year. Table below provides a detailed breakdown of all the engagements undertaken by Council's Resource Recovery unit in 2024-25.

Table 10: Overview of waste education events run in 2024-25

Type	No. of sessions	No. of participants/ engagements	Institution/event
Kindergartens	25	593	Manna Gum Family and Children's Centre, Gumboots Early Learning, Kyneton Kindergarten and Riddells Creek Kindergarten
Primary Schools	13	328	Gisborne Primary School, Woodend Primary School and Candlebark
Secondary Schools	5	150	Gisborne Secondary School
Community events/workshops	9	147	Various
Soft Plastics Pop-ups	2	60	Woodend Coles and Riddells Creek IGA
Events	4	230	Malmsbury Fayre, Riddells Creek Cool Changes Enviro-Energy Expo, Lancefield & Kyneton Agricultural Show
Total	58	1,508	

Use of the Wash Against Waste Trailer

In 2024-25, the Wash Against Waste trailer serviced 36 Macedon Ranges events. This trailer is managed by the Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group and powered by volunteers. Notable events included Malmsbury Fayre, Kyneton Agricultural Show, GROW festival and Riddells Creek Expo.

PE.3	PLANNING AMENDMENT (BETTER DECISIONS MADE FASTER) BILL 2025
Officer:	Rebecca Stockfeld, Director Planning and Environment
Council Plan relationship:	Our Places Our Performance
Attachments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Media release - Jacinta Allan MP - Premier - BIGGEST PLANNING SHAKE-UP IN DECADES WILL DELIVER MORE HOMES ↓ 2. Letter - Minister for Planning the Hon Sonya Kilkeny - Planning Amendment Better Decisions Made Faster Bill 2025 - 2025-11-17 ↓ 3. Letter - Mary-Anne Thomas MP State Member for Macedon - Planning Amendment Better Decisions Made Faster Bill 2025 - 2025-11-17 ↓ 4. Letter - Shadow Minister for Planning & Housing Richard Riordan - Planning Amendment Better Decisions Made Faster Bill 2025 - 2025-11-17 ↓

Summary

The purpose of this report is to outline the significant changes the Planning Amendment (Better Decisions Made Faster) Bill 2025 will make to the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and to note the correspondence sent to the Minister for Planning, the Member for Macedon, and the Shadow Minister for Planning and Housing expressing Council's concern with the outcomes the changes would bring.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Raises concerns that the Planning Amendment (Better Decisions Made Faster) Bill 2025 would create a significant regulatory burden on local government, and Council was not consulted on the Bill.
2. Expresses significant concerns that the Planning Amendment (Better Decisions Made Faster) Bill 2025 would result in the loss of the community's ability to have a say in planning through the removal of notification for some planning permit applications, thereby diminishing transparency and accountability in the planning process.
3. Notes the significant regulatory and financial impact the Planning Amendment (Better Decisions Made Faster) Bill 2025 would have on Council.
4. Requests the State Government pause progress of the Planning Amendment (Better Decisions Made Faster) Bill 2025 in its current form and work with local government to design a process that:
 - Continues to include the concept of fairness in the objectives of planning for Victoria;
 - Continues to involve local communities in decisions about their neighbourhoods;

- Maintains parliamentary oversight of planning scheme amendments;
 - Safeguards the provision of affordable and social housing through planning mechanisms; and,
 - Contributes to the costs of administering a new system.
5. Notes the speed that the Planning Amendment (Better Decisions Made Faster) Bill 2025 has been introduced to Parliament and the correspondence sent from the Deputy Mayor and CEO to the Minister for Planning, the Member for Macedon and the Shadow Minister for Planning and Housing.
-

Background

The *Planning Amendment (Better Decisions Made Faster) Bill 2025* has been introduced to Parliament at the Second reading of the Bill on late 29 October 2025. The Bill would make significant changes to and expands the Planning and Environment Act 1987. If passed the Bill would commence operation in October 2027.

Macedon Ranges Shire Council, nor the local government sector, has been consulted on the *Bill*, despite Council's being the principal administrator of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

The *Bill* would change the objectives of planning in Victoria, and would establish a new 'three streams' of planning permit application framework and reduce public notification and appeal rights on streams of applications. The Bill also changes the role of parliament in amendment processes, makes changes to distinctive areas and landscapes, result in changes to disclosure of gifts, as well as changes to the enforcement provisions, compensation and infrastructure contributions.

The *Bill* is aimed at speeding up the approval timeframes for dwellings, as outlined in the Premier of Victoria's media release (attachment 1).

Discussion

The *Planning Amendment (Better Decisions Made Faster) Bill 2025* is aimed at speeding up and making faster timelines for simpler projects, particularly for housing. However, the statutory planning process is not responsible for the lack of land supply and housing in the Macedon Ranges.

Macedon Ranges Shire Council has planned to accommodate housing growth through structure plans for Gisborne and Romsey. Both these structure plans provide a framework for growth and ensure the outstanding and valuable landscapes are conserved.

The State Government has had both plans for over 12 months without approving settlement boundaries. State Government decisions on the settlement boundaries would allow the re-zoning of land that would accommodate approximately 2,200 houses in Romsey and 4,500 houses in Gisborne.

The *Better Decisions Made Faster Bill* establishes a legislative framework intended to streamline planning processes and accelerate decision-making, particularly in relation to housing. Much of the detail will be provided through regulation and through the Victoria Planning Provisions. This limits opportunity for scrutiny and transparency that should be available through legislative reform.

The *Bill* makes changes to the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes provisions currently in the Planning and Environment Act 1987. Macedon Ranges Shire has been declared Distinctive

Area and Landscape and has a Statement of Planning Policy that provides a framework to ensure the outstanding landscapes, layers of settlement history, impressive landforms, and diverse natural environment of the Macedon Ranges are protected and conserved and continue to be of special significance to the people of Victoria. Several towns also have protected settlement boundaries to limit the encroachment of urban growth into the distinctive areas, and two more towns are to have boundaries put in place, as adopted by Council in 2024 (Romsey and Gisborne).

Under the *Bill* the framework in which to prepare a Statement Planning Policy would be changed to be a “high impact” amendment under the new low, medium and high impact categories for amendments. Given Macedon Ranges has a Statement of Planning Policy, this is not of high concern.

However, a planning scheme amendment could now amend a Statement of Planning Policy, and the Minister would determine whether the planning scheme amendment impact category is low, medium or high. And where the planning scheme amendment both amends a Statement of Planning Policy and another amendment (such as rezoning land for residential uses), then the planning scheme amendment impact category will be the same impact category as that other amendment and be dealt with through the same Planning Panel. This would appear to weaken the intent of the Statement of Planning Policy and its role as a guiding framework for land use and development.

The *Bill* also changes the current provision which prevents a responsible public entity from amending a planning scheme in a way that is inconsistent with a Statement of Planning Policy. This is proposed to be taken out of the Act, which could mean that another responsible public entity can amend the planning scheme in a way that is inconsistent with the Statement of Planning Policy. This is a major concern and is considered a weakening of the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes legislation, intended to protect our area.

The other matter that will change that is of interest is how protected settlement boundaries are ratified by Parliament. The current ratification process would remain unless the change was a “correction” to a protected settlement boundary. Under the *Bill* corrections to protected settlement boundaries would not need to be ratified by Parliament. The concern would be around what could be considered a “correction”. The *Bill* contains no indication/definition of what a “correction” is. This needs to be better defined to ensure “corrections” cannot be used for transformative change to the protected settlement boundaries.

The *Planning Amendment (Better Decisions Made Faster) Bill 2025* would rewrite the objectives of the Act and has deleted important concepts. The rewrite has removed “safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians” and “ecological processes” from the ‘objectives of planning in Victoria’, as well as the concepts of “fair” and “efficient”. The exercise of land use and environmental planning ought to be fair, and this should be a guiding principle of all decisions we make.

The *Bill* establishes three streams of planning applications and removes or significantly reduces notification requirements for Streams 1 and 2 (standalone homes, duplexes, townhouses, and low-rise apartments). The Bill also establishes 10-day and 30-day decisions for these streams of application. This will lead to poorer long-term outcomes for neighbourhood character, heritage protection, environmental protection and sustainable development.

Environmental protections may be overlooked because the role of referral authorities for Stream 1 and Stream 2 applications is limited, and therefore environmental risks being managed. Parts of our Shire are high-risk areas for bushfire and flooding. The speedy approval of housing will create housing that is not safe and ultimately unaffordable to insure.

The *Better Decisions Made Faster Bill* removes parliamentary oversight of planning scheme amendments. Doing this will eliminate public trust in planning. This should be deleted from the Bill as Parliamentary oversight is critical in the exercise of land use planning across the State.

The Bill also misses the opportunity to require more affordable housing, despite this being an objective of planning in Victoria. A new head of power in the *Bill* and Act is needed to enable affordable housing requirements and contributions.

The *Better Decisions Made Faster* will also create a significant administrative burden on Council. For example, the *Bill* proposes to make the applicant for a planning permit responsible for nominating a type 1, 2 or 3 assessment pathway when lodging their application (clause 78 of the Bill). The Bill also provides for the automatic approval of type 1 applications after 10 days. The Bill proposes only one opportunity for the council to move a type 2 or 3 application that has been nominated for a type 1 assessment pathway in error into the correct pathway: and that must occur within five days of the lodgement of the application (clause 83).

As a council, like many others, that has ongoing statutory planning staff turnover, this will place unprecedented demands on planners to conduct five-day application completeness checks to the accuracy needed to ensure that the type 1, 2 or 3 assessment pathway has been correctly identified. It is likely Council will need to access additional resources to manage this, in an environment where there are known shortages.

The Bill creates pathways and timeframes that local government cannot manage given the known and acknowledged lack of skilled workforce in planning at present which is expected to continue. It also creates a greater tension between quality versus quantity with regards to planning outcomes. These concerns relate to:

- The proposed changes having the effect of ‘pausing’, rather than resetting, the statutory clock in relation to further information requests made under s54 of the Act. This places additional pressure on Councils to avoid the risk of a failure review.
- The requirement for satisfaction matters (including the assessment of condition plans) to be assessed within 30 days, with failure to do so resulting in a ‘deemed to satisfy’ outcome.

A reliance on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to assist managing timeframes and managing simpler applications is untested and would come at an additional cost to Council’s in a rate capped environment.

The Better Decisions Made Faster Bill creates a financial burden on local councils, which in a rate capped environment, is unreasonable. Implementation of the *Bill* will require new IT and database systems to manage new streams of planning permit applications, their assessment timeframes and information submitted. This cost is certainly not anticipated in the Macedon Ranges Shire Council’s Long Term Financial Plan.

Given the speed at which the Bill has been introduced and is expected to pass through Parliament, the Deputy Mayor and CEO have written to the Minister for Planning, the Member for Macedon and the Shadow Minister for Planning and Housing, expressing our major concerns with the Bill. We expect many local councils to do the same, in addition to the actions the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) is taking.

As per the attached letters sent to the Minister and Members of Parliament, it is recommended that the State Government pause progress of the *Bill* in its current form and work with local government to design a process that:

- Continues to include the concept of fairness in the objectives of planning for Victoria;

- Continues to involve local communities in decisions about their neighbourhoods;
- Maintains parliamentary oversight of planning scheme amendments;
- Safeguards the provision of affordable and social housing through planning mechanisms; and,
- Contributes to the costs of administering a new system.

Consultation and engagement

No internal or community consultation has occurred in the preparation of this report.

Collaboration

Staff have engaged with the MAV in the preparation of this report. We expect to stay engaged with the MAV through the progress of the *Better Decisions Faster Bill*.

Innovation and continuous improvement

Staff are seeking additional advice on the proposed changes to the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes section of the Better Decisions Faster Bill to better understand any impacts.

Relevant law

No additional law is relevant to the preparation of this report.

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment was not required in relation to the subject matter of this report.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

The Victorian Government introduced the Planning Amendment (Better Decisions Made Faster) Bill 2025 in the Legislative Assembly in October 2025. At the time of preparing this report, the Bill is currently being debated in the Victorian Parliament.

Relevant Council plans and policies

The Council Plan has a strategic objective to: Deliver strong and reliable government: Council will provide good governance, with a clear vision and culture, transparency, respect, consistency, accountability and responsiveness.

Climate Impact Assessment

How will the recommendation impact on Council's energy usage and greenhouse emissions profile? Nil

How will the recommendations mitigate risks posed by climate change to Council operations and services? Nil

How will the recommendation help to prepare the community for future climate scenarios? Nil

Financial viability

As discussed in the body of the report, should the Planning Amendment (Better Decisions Made Faster) Bill 2025 come into effect in October 2027, there will be a financial requirement on Council relating to information technology (IT), databases and additional planning staff. These are expected to be considerable and at this time are not costed.

Sustainability implications

Nil

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.

Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



Tuesday, 28 October 2025

BIGGEST PLANNING SHAKE-UP IN DECADES WILL DELIVER MORE HOMES

The Allan Labor Government is delivering the biggest overhaul of Victoria's planning laws in decades — cutting red tape, speeding up decisions and getting things built faster so more young people can have a home of their own.

Minister for Planning Sonya Kilkenny today introduced the *Planning Amendment (Better Decisions Made Faster) Bill 2025* into the Victorian Parliament — updating the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and bringing Victoria's old-fashioned "NIMBY" planning laws into the modern era.

Faster timelines for simpler projects

Currently, a planning permit on average takes 140 days to get approved — and if there is an objection, it blows out to more than 300 days. That's time Victorian families, renters and builders shouldn't have to waste.

Under the existing Act, most projects — no matter how big or small — go through the same process. This can mean a single home is assessed the same way as a multi-storey apartment block.

This Bill fixes that. It creates three separate pathways for planning approvals, so the process matches the type of home being built. Simpler projects won't get stuck in the same queue as major developments.

These three streams will slash timeframes so homes can get off the ground sooner — with stand-alone homes and duplexes set to take 10 days, townhouses and low-rise developments to take 30 days, and larger apartment buildings to take 60 days to approve. It'll save weeks or even months of time on applications.

Common sense appeal rights

This Bill will establish common sense appeal rights. Victoria currently has the broadest third-party appeal rights in the country — allowing anyone to object to a planning permit — even if they live nowhere near the proposed development. This has led to homes being delayed for years by people who are not directly impacted.

The new streams for homes, duplexes, townhouses and low-rise apartments will require no notice and have no third-party appeals.

For the third stream for higher density apartments, only those who are directly impacted — like neighbours in the area — will get notice and be able to appeal.

Faster processes

The Bill also makes it easier for councils and the Government to update local planning rules or planning scheme amendments.

Every council has a planning scheme which outlines what can be built and where. But changing those rules is slow and complicated, even for small fixes. This reform introduces a smarter way to assess those changes.

Simple updates like fixing a zoning boundary or adjusting a local policy will be easier. More complex proposals — like rezoning land for a completely different use — will go through a more detailed process. It's about making the system more flexible, responsive and easier.

Media contact: Zoe McLaughlin 0474 593 035 | zoe.mclaughlin@minstaff.vic.gov.au

Together these changes are expected to unlock more than \$900 million of economic value each year – getting more homes off the ground faster.

This reform builds on major steps already taken by the Labor Government to boost housing supply including through setting housing targets for every local government area, unlocking space for homes near trains and trams, making it easier to build a townhouse.

Quotes attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

“Victoria’s planning laws were written decades ago – now we’re bringing them into the 21st century.”

“We want a planning system that makes better, faster decisions because we want more homes for young people.”

“Victoria leads the nation when it comes to building and approving homes – but we know the system needs to move faster. That’s exactly what this Bill will do.”

Quotes attributable to Minister for Planning Sonya Kilkenny

“Neighbours have a right to their say about a high-density development, but new homes shouldn’t be delayed by people who don’t live anywhere near a proposed project. It’s not common sense.”

“We’re fixing a planning system that’s been slowing things down - this new Bill is creating clearer rules, faster decisions, and fewer delays for people trying to build a home.”

Media contact: Zoe McLaughlin 0474 593 035 | zoe.mclaughlin@minstaff.vic.gov.au



Our Ref: F770

17 November 2025

The Hon. Sonya Kilkenney
Minister for Planning
Via email: sonya.kilkenny@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Minister Kilkenney

Re: Planning Amendment (Better Decisions Made Faster) Bill 2025

Macedon Ranges Shire Council wishes to urgently express our strong opposition to the *Planning Amendment (Better Decisions Made Faster) Bill 2025 in its current form*.

While we understand the need for more housing across the State of Victoria, we do not agree that the Planning and Environment Act needs the extent of reform sought by the *Better Decisions Made Faster Bill* to achieve more certainty and faster housing development.

As we write, the Government has been sitting on the implementation of two significant structure plans in Gisborne and Romsey in our Shire for over 12 months. These are two Structure Plans that would deliver much needed housing. State Government approval of the adopted settlement boundaries for these two towns would release 2,200 houses in Romsey and 4,500 houses in Gisborne. These two Structure Plans have been prepared transparently, in consultation with other stakeholders, responsible entities, and with multiple rounds of community consultation. Undertaking the necessary work at the State's end would help build community trust in the process that has occurred to date.

The *Better Decisions Made Faster Bill* has been introduced into Parliament with no consultation with local government. This is despite local councils being the principal administrator of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 through our role as responsible authorities and planning authorities.

Macedon Ranges Shire Council is concerned that the *Better Decisions Made Faster Bill* will diminish certainty and trust in the planning system in Victoria and impose a significant regulatory burden on local government.

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We are particularly concerned that the **rewrite of the objectives of the Act has deleted important concepts**. The rewrite has removed “safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians” and “ecological processes” from the ‘objectives of planning in Victoria’, as well as the concepts of “fair” and “efficient”. Macedon Ranges Shire Council strongly believes the exercise of land use and environmental planning ought to be fair, and this should be a guiding principle of all decisions we make. We request that all of these elements be reinstated.

Public notice will be switched off by default for all type 2 applications

Public notice is the mechanism that councils rely on to ensure local communities know about proposals, and to ensure that local knowledge can add value to the decision-making process. It is the mechanism that provides public trust in the planning system and decisions made under it.

The Bill provides that type 2 applications will not undergo any public notice unless new Ministerial guidelines allow it (clause 86). We understand that type 2 applications will include codified residential development for two or more dwellings on a lot, including in all residential zones across metropolitan areas, regional cities and rural townships.

This will lead to poorer long-term outcomes for neighbourhood character, heritage protection, environmental protection and sustainable development. When you remove notification and require 10 and 30-day approvals, mistakes get locked into our built environment. Mistakes that will be there for our lifetimes and those of our children.

Environmental protections may be compromised because referral authorities have limited roles in Type 1 and Type 2 applications, reducing oversight of environmental risks.

Macedon Ranges is a high-risk area for bushfire and flooding. The speedy approval of housing may create dwellings that are unsafe and ultimately unaffordable to insure.

We are also alarmed at the **administrative burden the Bill will place on our Council**. For example:

Higher risk applications may be locked into a ‘low risk’ pathway and risk automatic approval.

The Bill proposes to make the applicant for a planning permit responsible for nominating a type 1, 2 or 3 assessment pathway when lodging their application (clause 78 of the Bill). The Bill also provides for the automatic approval of type 1 applications after 10 days. The Bill proposes only one opportunity for the council to move a type 2 or 3 application that has been nominated for a type 1 assessment pathway in error into the correct pathway: and that must occur within five days of the lodgement of the application (clause 83).





As a council that has ongoing statutory planning staff turnover, we are very concerned about the demands on planners to conduct five-day application completeness checks to the accuracy needed to ensure that the type 1, 2 or 3 assessment pathway has been correctly identified. The onus should be on the responsible authority to assess an application under the correct assessment pathway type, and to determine whether a permit should be issued.

The Bill reverses the roles of the applicant and the responsible authority and is not something that should occur without careful consultation with responsible authorities. If this is not changed, our Council will face further financial pressures by needing to increase the number of staff to manage these timeframes.

The Bill creates pathways and timeframes that local government cannot manage given the known and acknowledged lack of skilled workforce in planning at present which is expected to continue. It also creates a greater tension between quality versus quantity with regards to planning outcomes. These concerns relate to:

- The proposed changes having the effect of 'pausing', rather than resetting, the statutory clock in relation to requests made under s54 of the Act. This places additional pressure on Council's to avoid the risk of a failure review.
- The requirement for satisfaction matters (including the assessment of condition plans) to be assessed within 30 days, with failure to do so resulting in a 'deemed to satisfy' outcome.

A reliance on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to assist in managing timeframes and simpler applications is untested and would come at an additional cost to councils.

The *Better Decisions Made Faster Bill* creates a financial burden on local councils, which in a rate capped environment, is unreasonable. Implementation of the *Bill* will require new IT and data base systems to manage new streams of planning permit applications, their assessment timeframes and information submitted. This cost is certainly not anticipated in the Macedon Ranges Shire Council's Long Term Financial Plan.

We are also concerned that the *Better Decisions Made Faster Bill* removes parliamentary oversight of planning scheme amendments. Doing this will eliminate public trust in planning, which is already a growing concern in the Macedon Ranges following the approval of the Amess Road, Riddells Creek Precinct Structure Plan - amendment C161macr. This should be deleted from the Bill as Parliamentary oversight is critical in the exercise of land use planning across the State.





Macedon Ranges Shire Council asks that affordable and social housing be addressed in the *Better Decisions Made Faster Bill*. The Bill fails to provide any mechanisms to require affordable homes or support social housing, despite this being a growing need in Victoria. We see this as a key failure of the Bill.

Macedon Ranges Shire Council implores the Government to focus on better decisions, and not prioritise speed over quality, fairness or accountability in decision making. We ask the State to pause and work with local government to design a process that:

- Continues to include the concept of fairness in the objectives of planning for Victoria;
- Continues to involve local communities in decisions about their neighbourhoods;
- Maintains parliamentary oversight of planning scheme amendments;
- Safeguards the provision of affordable and social housing through planning mechanisms; and
- Contributes to the costs of administering a new system.

If you have any questions in relation to the above matter, please do not hesitate to contact the Executive Office on 5422 0308 or bosullivan@mrsc.vic.gov.au. We would be happy to meet with you to discuss our concerns.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "B. Sullivan", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Bernie O'Sullivan
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Kate Kendall", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Councillor Kate Kendall
Deputy Mayor





Our Ref: F770

17 November 2025

The Hon. Mary-Anne Thomas MP
State Member for Macedon
Via email: mary-anne.thomas@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Minister Thomas

Re: Planning Amendment (Better Decisions Made Faster) Bill 2025

Macedon Ranges Shire Council wishes to urgently express our strong opposition to the *Planning Amendment (Better Decisions Made Faster) Bill 2025 in its current form*.

While we understand the need for more housing across the State of Victoria, we do not agree that the Planning and Environment Act needs the extent of reform sought by the *Better Decisions Made Faster Bill* to achieve more certainty and faster housing development.

As we write, the Government has been sitting on the implementation of two significant structure plans in Gisborne and Romsey in our Shire for over 12 months. These are two Structure Plans that would deliver much needed housing. State Government approval of the adopted settlement boundaries for these two towns would release 2,200 houses in Romsey and 4,500 houses in Gisborne. These two Structure Plans have been prepared transparently, in consultation with other stakeholders, responsible entities, and with multiple rounds of community consultation. Undertaking the necessary work at the State's end would help build community trust in the process that has occurred to date.

The *Better Decisions Made Faster Bill* has been introduced into Parliament with no consultation with local government. This is despite local councils being the principal administrator of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 through our role as responsible authorities and planning authorities.

Macedon Ranges Shire Council is concerned that the *Better Decisions Made Faster Bill* will diminish certainty and trust in the planning system in Victoria and impose a significant regulatory burden on local government.

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We are particularly concerned that the **rewrite of the objectives of the Act has deleted important concepts**. The rewrite has removed “safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians” and “ecological processes” from the ‘objectives of planning in Victoria’, as well as the concepts of “fair” and “efficient”. Macedon Ranges Shire Council strongly believes the exercise of land use and environmental planning ought to be fair, and this should be a guiding principle of all decisions we make. We request that all of these elements be reinstated.

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This will lead to poorer long-term outcomes for neighbourhood character, heritage protection, environmental protection and sustainable development. When you remove notification and require 10 and 30-day approvals, mistakes get locked into our built environment. Mistakes that will be there for our lifetimes and those of our children.

Environmental protections may be compromised because referral authorities have limited roles in Type 1 and Type 2 applications, reducing oversight of environmental risks. Macedon Ranges is a high-risk area for bushfire and flooding. The speedy approval of housing may create dwellings that are unsafe and ultimately unaffordable to insure. We are also alarmed at the **administrative burden the Bill will place on our Council**. For example:

Higher risk applications may be locked into a ‘low risk’ pathway and risk automatic approval.

The Bill proposes to make the applicant for a planning permit responsible for nominating a type 1, 2 or 3 assessment pathway when lodging their application (clause 78 of the Bill). The Bill also provides for the automatic approval of type 1 applications after 10 days. The Bill proposes only one opportunity for the council to move a type 2 or 3 application that has been nominated for a type 1 assessment pathway in error into the correct pathway: and that must occur within five days of the lodgement of the application (clause 83).





As a council that has ongoing statutory planning staff turnover, we are very concerned about the demands on planners to conduct five-day application completeness checks to the accuracy needed to ensure that the type 1, 2 or 3 assessment pathway has been correctly identified.

The onus should be on the responsible authority to assess an application under the correct assessment pathway type, and to determine whether a permit should be issued.

The Bill reverses the roles of the applicant and the responsible authority and is not something that should occur without careful consultation with responsible authorities. If this is not changed, our Council will face further financial pressures by needing to increase the number of staff to manage these timeframes.

The Bill creates pathways and timeframes that local government cannot manage given the known and acknowledged lack of skilled workforce in planning at present which is expected to continue. It also creates a greater tension between quality versus quantity with regards to planning outcomes. These concerns relate to:

- The proposed changes having the effect of 'pausing', rather than resetting, the statutory clock in relation to requests made under s54 of the Act. This places additional pressure on Council's to avoid the risk of a failure review.
- The requirement for satisfaction matters (including the assessment of condition plans) to be assessed within 30 days, with failure to do so resulting in a 'deemed to satisfy' outcome.

A reliance on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to assist in managing timeframes and simpler applications is untested and would come at an additional cost to Councils.

The Better Decisions Made Faster Bill creates a financial burden on local councils, which in a rate capped environment, is unreasonable.

Implementation of the *Bill* will require new IT and data base systems to manage new streams of planning permit applications, their assessment timeframes and information submitted. This cost is certainly not anticipated in the Macedon Ranges Shire Council's Long Term Financial Plan.

We are also concerned that the Better Decisions Made Faster Bill removes parliamentary oversight of planning scheme amendments. Doing this will eliminate public trust in planning, which is already a growing concern in the Macedon Ranges following the approval of the Amess Road, Riddells Creek Precinct Structure Plan - amendment





C161macr. This should be deleted from the Bill as Parliamentary oversight is critical in the exercise of land use planning across the State.

Macedon Ranges Shire Council asks that affordable and social housing be addressed in the *Better Decisions Made Faster Bill*. The Bill fails to provide any mechanisms to require affordable homes or support social housing, despite this being a growing need in Victoria. We see this as a key failure of the Bill.

Macedon Ranges Shire Council implores the Government to focus on better decisions, and not prioritise speed over quality, fairness or accountability in decision making. We ask the State to pause and work with local government to design a process that:

- Continues to include the concept of fairness in the objectives of planning for Victoria;
- Continues to involve local communities in decisions about their neighbourhoods;
- Maintains parliamentary oversight of planning scheme amendments;
- Safeguards the provision of affordable and social housing through planning mechanisms; and
- Contributes to the costs of administering a new system.

We are also carefully reviewing the proposed changes to the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes provisions in the *Bill*, to ensure the *Bill* does not undermine the DALs legislation as enduring tools to protect our magnificent landscapes for generations to come. Council will make a further submission on this aspect shortly.

If you have any questions in relation to the above matter, please do not hesitate to contact the Executive Office on 5422 0308 or bosullivan@mrsc.vic.gov.au. We would be happy to meet with you to discuss our concerns.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "B. Sullivan", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Bernie O'Sullivan
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "K. Kendall", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Councillor Kate Kendall
Deputy Mayor





Our Ref: F770

17 November 2025

Mr Richard Riordan
Shadow Minister for Planning and Housing
Via email: richard.riordan@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Mr Riordan

Re: Planning Amendment (Better Decisions Made Faster) Bill 2025

Macedon Ranges Shire Council wishes to urgently express our strong opposition to the *Planning Amendment (Better Decisions Made Faster) Bill 2025 in its current form*.

While we understand the need for more housing across the State of Victoria, we do not agree that the Planning and Environment Act needs the extent of reform sought by the *Better Decisions Made Faster Bill* to achieve more certainty and faster housing development.

As we write, the Government has been sitting on the implementation of two significant structure plans in Gisborne and Romsey in our Shire for over 12 months. These are two Structure Plans that would deliver much needed housing. State Government approval of the adopted settlement boundaries for these two towns would release 2,200 houses in Romsey and 4,500 houses in Gisborne. These two Structure Plans have been prepared transparently, in consultation with other stakeholders, responsible entities, and with multiple rounds of community consultation. Undertaking the necessary work at the State's end would help build community trust in the process that has occurred to date.

The *Better Decisions Made Faster Bill* has been introduced into Parliament with no consultation with local government. This is despite local councils being the principal administrator of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 through our role as responsible authorities and planning authorities.

Macedon Ranges Shire Council is concerned that the *Better Decisions Made Faster Bill* will diminish certainty and trust in the planning system in Victoria and impose a significant regulatory burden on local government.

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We are particularly concerned that the **rewrite of the objectives of the Act has deleted important concepts**. The rewrite has removed “safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians” and “ecological processes” from the ‘objectives of planning in Victoria’, as well as the concepts of “fair” and “efficient”. Macedon Ranges Shire Council strongly believes the exercise of land use and environmental planning ought to be fair, and this should be a guiding principle of all decisions we make. We request that all of these elements be reinstated.

Public notice will be switched off by default for all type 2 applications

Public notice is the mechanism that councils rely on to ensure local communities know about proposals, and to ensure that local knowledge can add value to the decision-making process. It is the mechanism that provides public trust in the planning system and decisions made under it.

The Bill provides that type 2 applications will not undergo any public notice unless new Ministerial guidelines allow it (clause 86). We understand that type 2 applications will include codified residential development for two or more dwellings on a lot, including in all residential zones across metropolitan areas, regional cities and rural townships.

This will lead to poorer long-term outcomes for neighbourhood character, heritage protection, environmental protection and sustainable development. When you remove notification and require 10 and 30-day approvals, mistakes get locked into our built environment. Mistakes that will be there for our lifetimes and those of our children.

Environmental protections may be compromised because referral authorities have limited roles in Type 1 and Type 2 applications, reducing oversight of environmental risks.

Macedon Ranges is a high-risk area for bushfire and flooding. The speedy approval of housing may create dwellings that are unsafe and ultimately unaffordable to insure.

We are also alarmed at the **administrative burden the Bill will place on our Council**. For example:

Higher risk applications may be locked into a ‘low risk’ pathway and risk automatic approval.

The Bill proposes to make the applicant for a planning permit responsible for nominating a type 1, 2 or 3 assessment pathway when lodging their application (clause 78 of the Bill).





The Bill also provides for the automatic approval of type 1 applications after 10 days. The Bill proposes only one opportunity for the council to move a type 2 or 3 application that has been nominated for a type 1 assessment pathway in error into the correct pathway: and that must occur within five days of the lodgement of the application (clause 83).

As a council that has ongoing statutory planning staff turnover, we are very concerned about the demands on planners to conduct five-day application completeness checks to the accuracy needed to ensure that the type 1, 2 or 3 assessment pathway has been correctly identified.

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We are also concerned that the *Better Decisions Made Faster Bill* removes parliamentary oversight of planning scheme amendments. Doing this will eliminate public trust in planning, which is already a growing concern in the Macedon Ranges following the approval of the Amess Road, Riddells Creek Precinct Structure Plan - amendment C161macr. This should be deleted from the Bill as Parliamentary oversight is critical in the exercise of land use planning across the State.

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If you have any questions in relation to the above matter, please do not hesitate to contact the Executive Office on 5422 0308 or bosullivan@mrsc.vic.gov.au. We would be happy to meet with you to discuss our concerns.

Yours sincerely

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Bernie O'Sullivan
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Kate Kendall".

Councillor Kate Kendall
Deputy Mayor



12 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORTS

Nil

13 CORPORATE REPORTS

COR.1	DELEGATIONS AND AUTHORISATIONS POLICY
Officer:	Bree Carlson, Senior Governance Officer Projects
Council Plan relationship:	Our Performance
Attachments:	Delegations and Authorisations Policy ↓

Summary

Delegations and Authorisations empower staff and committees with the authority to take action, determine matters or make decisions on behalf of Council to ensure effective day to day operations.

Delegations and Authorisations are a function of administration expressed, in ordinary terms, as ‘who can do what’ and enable staff across the organisation to better understand the legislation under which we operate, and the powers held.

In the context of local government, delegation is the giving of decision-making power by Council and/or the CEO to members of Council staff.

The reason for delegations being required are:

- Council and the CEO alone cannot practically exercise the many statutory powers given to Council efficiently and effectively.
- Delegation facilitates the achievement of good governance by empowering appropriate members of staff to make decisions on behalf of the Council and the CEO, consistent with the roles of each in the *Local Government Act 2020*.

This report presents an updated policy that sets out how delegations and authorisations are implemented and managed at Council.

Recommendation

That Council adopts the Delegations and Authorisations Policy and revokes all previous versions of the policy.

Background

Council’s current policy titled “*Delegation Framework, Policy and Procedures*” was adopted on 3 October 2023, with a scheduled review date of October 2025. No amendments have been made to the policy since its adoption.

The existing policy is underpinned by a framework developed prior to the commencement of the *Local Government Act 2020*. In preparing this updated version, officers have undertaken a comprehensive review and adopted a new approach to ensure alignment with current legislative requirements and best practices.

While the structure of the policy has been modernised, the core intent remains unchanged: to ensure delegations and authorisations are responsibly managed, monitored, and controlled.

Discussion

Council's current policy titled "*Delegation Framework, Policy and Procedures*" was adopted on 3 October 2023, with a scheduled review date of October 2025.

Consultation and engagement

This review was prepared in consultation with officers and Councillors.

Collaboration

As part of the review of this policy, officers looked at many similar policies, but particularly focused on those from the following councils:

- City of Whittlesea
- Warrnambool City Council
- Moorabool Shire Council
- City of Greater Bendigo

When benchmarking other council policies officers considered factors such as:

- relevance and simplicity
- best practice
- instrument management practices including use of software (such as RelianSys®)
- monitoring and control
- date of recent review or adoption

Innovation and continuous improvement

Not applicable

Relevant law

The *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act)

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment was not required in relation to the subject matter of this report.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

Not applicable.

Relevant Council plans and policies

This report directly supports the achievement of the Council Plan relationship: Delivering strong and reliable government. We maintain good governance and transparency, by clearly identifying and communicating the role of Councillors and Council.

Climate Impact Assessment

How will the recommendation impact on Council's energy usage and greenhouse emissions profile? Not applicable.

How will the recommendations mitigate risks posed by climate change to Council operations and services? Not applicable.

How will the recommendation help to prepare the community for future climate scenarios? Not applicable.

Financial viability

Not applicable.

Sustainability implications

Not applicable.

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.

Policy



Delegations and Authorisations Policy

Date of Adoption			
Adoption Method	<input type="checkbox"/> Council	<input type="checkbox"/> CEO	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please specify</i>)
CEO Signature			Date
Responsible Officer and Unit	Manager Governance and Performance		
Nominated Review Period	<input type="checkbox"/> Annually	<input type="checkbox"/> Every 4 years	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please specify</i>)
Last Endorsement Date			
Next Endorsement Date			

Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and waterways. Council recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. Council also acknowledges local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents of Macedon Ranges for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

DOCUMENT HISTORY	Version	Date	Author
Initial Draft	1	2 October 2025	Bree Carlson
Second Draft			
Final Draft			
Approval			

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Purpose

Many Acts confer a responsibility on councils to take action, determine matters or make decisions. For councils to function effectively, decision-making must be devolved effectively from the central source of authority downwards and powers allocated to certain groups or individuals. This policy sets out how delegations and authorisations are implemented and managed at the Shire.

Background

What is a delegation?

Councils have wide-ranging responsibilities, and are given many powers, duties and functions under different pieces of legislation. It would be impossible for a council to exercise all these powers, duties and functions itself because it would need to pass a council resolution each time it wished to act. For day-to-day operations, councils need others to make decisions and act on their behalf.

Delegating a council's powers, duties and functions is essential to fulfilling the responsibilities of local government. When a council delegates a power, duty or function to a member of staff or to a committee, the decision of the delegate is deemed to be a decision of the council.

How is authority delegated?

Legislation which confers an express power of delegation often requires that power of delegation to be exercised in writing, that is, by making a written instrument. An instrument of delegation generally specifies classes of position-holders to whom powers are delegated.

What is an authorised officer?

Appointment as an Authorised Officer involves a council appointing a person to a statutory position. Once a person is appointed as an Authorised Officer by council, that person has the statutory powers of that position (as distinct from being delegated the powers of council).

This is different from delegations, which involve council giving its powers to members of staff (or to delegated committees), who then act on behalf of council. Persons appointed or authorised by council are acting as holders of statutory powers – they are not acting on behalf of council. Their powers and responsibilities are different to the powers and responsibilities of council. However, Authorised Officers, such as Environmental Health Officers, can and are given delegated powers by Council in addition to the powers of their statutory position.

How is an individual appointed as an Authorised Officer?

Appointment as an Authorised Officer is made to an individual by name using a written instrument. The instrument demonstrates that a person is duly authorised to take action, make decisions or exercise powers of a statutory position.

Good Governance

Through instruments of delegation Council is being clear about boundaries for decision making. Effective delegation is a key aspect of good governance, ensuring that decisions are made by the appropriate individuals or bodies (legislated roles and powers) and that the integrity of delegation and accountability is maintained (robust decision-making processes).

Scope

This policy applies to the Macedon Ranges Shire Council – including staff, authorised officers, and members of delegated committees of Council – and any instruments of delegation or authorisation established by the Council, the Chief Executive Officer, Municipal Building Surveyor, and the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer under the *Local Government Act 2020* and any other Acts or Regulations.

Instruments in force

Instrument Title		Description	Adoption By
C4	Instrument of Delegation (Delegated Committees)	To exercise Council's functions and powers to perform Council's duties in relation to the management of the Submitters Delegated Committee in relation to submissions lodged in accordance with those matters specified in Council's Community Engagement Policy as matters that will be subject to a Submitters Delegated Committee hearing.	Council
S5	Instrument of Delegation from Council to CEO	This delegates all of Council's powers, duties and functions which are capable of delegation, subject to some exceptions and limitations, to the CEO.	Council

Instrument Title		Description	Adoption By
S6	Instrument of Delegation from Council to Members of Council Staff	This relates to Council powers, duties and functions within various Acts and Regulations, or specific parts of Acts and Regulations, which contain a specific power of delegation. This delegates certain powers directly from Council to Council staff due to the legislation referred to containing specific powers of delegation.	Council
S18	Instrument of Sub-Delegation to Council Staff under the Environment Protection Act 2017	This Instrument sub-delegates Council's powers, which are delegated to Council by the EPA, to members of Council staff.	Council
S7	Instrument of Sub-Delegation by CEO to Council Staff	This sub-delegates Council powers, duties or functions contained in Acts or Regulations which do not include a specific power of delegation. (See Note 1)	CEO
<p>Note 1 - The S7 Instrument of Delegation also contains a miscellaneous section which covers powers, duties and functions of Council that are not specifically provided for in legislation, but which are part of the general powers of Councils that are delegated to the Chief Executive Officer, and which, if it is appropriate the Chief Executive Officer will sub delegate. These include human resources issues, finance issues (noting the specific procurement/expenditure delegations are incorporated in the Procurement Policy) and miscellaneous matters.</p>			
S13	Instrument of Delegation by CEO of CEO powers, duties and functions	This instrument allows the CEO to delegate their powers, duties and functions existing under all Victorian legislation. This differs to the S7 Instrument in that it doesn't relate to Council powers, duties and functions, but those vested in the CEO personally.	CEO

Instrument Title		Description	Adoption By
S14	Instrument from CEO to Staff (VicSmart)	This provides for the CEO to delegate their powers as a responsible authority under the <i>Planning & Environment Act 1987</i> in relation to VicSmart planning applications.	CEO
S16	Instrument of Delegation by CEO for Bushfire Reconstruction Applications	This provides for the CEO to delegate their powers as a responsible authority under the <i>Planning & Environment Act 1987</i> in relation to Bushfire Reconstruction Applications.	CEO
S20A	Instrument of Delegation by CEO for Child link Users	This provides for the CEO to delegate their powers as a responsible authority under the <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</i> in relation to Child Link Users.	CEO
S19A	Instrument of Delegation of the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer	This Instrument sub-delegates powers from the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer to Assistant Municipal Fire Prevention Officer(s).	Municipal Fire Prevention Officer
S12	Instrument of Delegation and Authorisation by the Municipal Building Surveyor	This relates to the delegation of powers, duties and functions of the MBS to a member of Council staff or someone acting on behalf of Council.	Municipal Building Surveyor

Gender Impact Assessment

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment was not required in relation to the subject matter of this report.

Policy

Delegations

1. Instruments of Delegation

- a) All delegations of Council powers, duties, and responsibilities must be in writing and apply to the position, including anyone acting in or temporarily filling that role.
- b) Acting arrangements should be documented in writing (including by email correspondence) to ensure the transfer of delegated authority is verifiable.
- c) If a position is abolished or re-named, the delegation will be taken to be a reference to the principal successor to the functions of that position until the relevant Instrument of Delegation is amended.

2. Exercising delegated authority

In exercising a delegation, a delegate must comply with all conditions and limitations of a delegation, relevant legislation, resolutions of Council and the Shire's policies and procedures including any delegation or authorisation procedures.

3. Decision Making

A delegate must always act impartially and with integrity, actively guard against bias, both conscious and unconscious and adhere to the principles of natural justice when making decisions.

4. Delegate Scope

A delegate should be familiar with the delegated powers issued to them and ensure that decisions or actions taken are within their power to make. Delegates must not exercise delegated authority beyond the scope of their instrument of delegation. Any decisions made beyond the scope of a delegate's delegation will result in that decision being invalid and may potentially expose the Shire to litigation. If a delegate is unsure of the extent of their authority to make a particular decision, they must seek advice from their manager or the Governance Unit.

5. Delegate accountability

The delegate is responsible and accountable for any decisions made under a delegation and are required to be able justify such decisions or actions. Delegates must ensure decisions made under delegation are appropriate, fair and documented appropriately.

6. Conflicts of interest

A person must not exercise a delegation that would create for them any material or general conflict of interest. In these circumstances, the delegate must refer the matter to a person more senior in their line of accountability. A person is not obliged to exercise a delegation, where in their reasonable opinion, circumstances exist that would make it more transparent or ethical for the matter to be dealt with by another delegate. The matter must be transferred to a person more senior in their line of accountability.

7. No retrospectivity

A delegation cannot be exercised retrospectively.

8. Tiered delegation

Where an Instrument of Delegation gives the same delegation to different levels of authority (i.e. to a coordinator, manager and director in the same team/Directorate) any of those delegates have the authority to exercise that power. However, business units are free to make their own rules and procedures around the exercise of specific delegated powers (i.e. the coordinator has a specific delegation, but it is understood within the team that the coordinator would only ever exercise that power if the manager and director were unavailable).

9. Assistance from non-delegates

Delegated powers, duties and functions described in the Instruments of Delegation relate to the final exercise of those powers, duties and functions. Other staff not holding a delegation can and will assist a delegate to prepare for the exercise of that power in any way required (i.e. if a delegation conveys a power to purchase property, the final exercise of that delegation is the signing of a contract of sale and other documents to effect a transfer – many staff not holding that delegated power will be involved in the preliminary processes to negotiate a deal and produce that documentation).

10. Referral to Council

a) If a delegate considers that the exercise of a delegated power, duty or function would:

- i) raise an issue of significant public interest, concern, or controversy;
- ii) give rise to substantial public objection; or
- iii) be inconsistent with a previous decision of Council

The delegate should refer that matter to the Council for determination.

11. Recording

- a) The Shire will maintain a register that shows the names of all persons appointed to be Authorised Officers as required by the LGA 1989.
- b) The Shire will keep a public register of delegations as required by the LGA 2020.

12. Review of Instruments

- a) Legal and reputational risk is minimised by maintaining the currency of delegations to members of Shire staff through a regular review cycle.
- b) Directors and Managers are responsible for:
 - i) regularly reviewing delegations to positions within their directorates and business units to ensure the delegations remain current and accurately reflect the responsibilities of positions;
 - ii) regularly reviewing appointment of Authorised Officers within their directorates and business units to ensure officers are appropriately authorised to execute the duties of their position; and
 - iii) advising Governance regarding organisational changes and resultant implications for delegations and authorisations when those changes are made.
- c) The Governance and Performance Unit is responsible for coordinating regular reviews of delegations and authorisations as required by the LGA 2020 and to ensure that instruments are updated to reflect organisational changes and legislative amendments.

13. Instrument Monitoring and Reporting

- a) The administration and quality control of this Policy, including instruments of delegation will be subject to regular scrutiny and will be subject to risk assessment and internal audit review as appropriate.
- b) Reporting of delegations exercised is essential to ensure that adequate information regarding those actions is available to other staff, managers and Council. The powers, duties and functions to be reported will be determined with reference to risks associated with the exercise of delegations.
- c) Such reporting can be by:

- i) presentation of reports to Council;
- ii) preparation of a memorandum or report to the Executive Leadership Team;
- iii) preparation of a memorandum to relevant Managers, officers or Councillors; or
- iv) production of a register that will be available for inspection at any time or at the request of councillors.

14. Instrument Management

- a) An endorsed instrument remains in force until varied or revoked.
- b) Council uses RelianSys to manage and generate Instruments. This ensures consistency across instruments, a central location to house working documents and automatic feeding of legislative updates into working documents. RelianSys is also utilised by Council to manage compliance activities.

Authorisations

- An appointment as an Authorised Officer is made or evidenced by a written Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation to an individual by name.
- An individual appointed as an Authorised Officer will possess the requisite skills, qualification or experience consistent with the position to which they are appointed.
- Authorised Officers will be issued and carry an identity card as set out by section 224(2) of the LGA 1989.
- People managers are responsible for ensuring staff under their supervision, including new staff members and staff in acting position arrangements are appointed or authorised to execute the duties of the position.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To understand the scope of delegations made to them.

Role	Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To exercise their delegated authority in accordance with this policy and the relevant Instruments of Delegation.
Delegates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand the scope of delegations made to them. To exercise their delegated authority in accordance with this policy and the relevant Instruments of Delegation.
Authorised Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand the duties, functions and powers of their authorisation. To exercise their duties, functions or powers in accordance with this policy and the relevant Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation.
ELT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that new and existing staff with any delegated or authorised authority read and understand the relevant instruments (as they relate to that staff member's position) and this policy. In the case of new staff, this must be done as soon as possible after the staff member commences. To ensure that a suitable delegation or authorisation exists for officers under their supervision. To advise the Governance team to make or amend such delegations or authorisations as required. To ensure that delegates and Authorised Officers under their supervision exercise powers, duties and functions in accordance with this policy.
Governance and Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a register of Authorised Officers. Maintain a public register of delegations.

Role	Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate and prepare instruments of appointment and authorisation on request. • Regularly conduct reviews of instruments of delegation, appointment and authorisation in accordance with this policy. • Report on the currency and update pipeline for Instruments of Delegation. • Provide education and support across the organisation, as required, in relation to delegations and authorisations.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Authorised Officer	An individual appointed to a position under an Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation who holds and exercises the statutory powers, duties and functions of that position.
Authorisation	The authorisation of a person to exercise specified statutory powers.
Delegation	The conferral of an authority to a position to exercise a power, duty or function on behalf of Council.
Shire	Means the Macedon Ranges Shire Council organisation.
Council	Means the Macedon Ranges Shire Council comprised of elected Councillors.
ELT	Means the Macedon Ranges Shire Council Executive Leadership Team

Term	Definition
Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation	Means a document that appoints an officer to a statutory position. Once the person is authorised and appointed by Council, that person has the powers of that statutory position.
Instrument of Delegation	Means a document that delegates certain powers, duties and functions to a delegated officer (position or committee) who then acts as a delegate on the behalf of Council.
MBS	Means the Macedon Ranges Shire Council Municipal Building Surveyor
MFPO	Means the Macedon Ranges Shire Council Municipal Fire Prevention Officer
MRSC	Macedon Ranges Shire Council
RelianSys	Software utilised by Council for the generation, management and hosting of Instruments.
LGA 2020	Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)
LGA 1989	Local Government Act 1989 (Vic)

Related Documents

- > Employee Code of Conduct
- > Risk Management Framework
- > Public Transparency Policy
- > Fraud & Corruption Control Policy
- > Procurement Policy

- > Planning Consultation and Decision Pathway Procedure

Related Legislation

- > *Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)*
- > *Local Government Act 1989 (Vic)*
- > *Environment Protection Act 2017*
- > *Planning & Environment Act 1987*
- > *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*
- > *Legislation as specified in the instruments of delegation*

COR.2	INSTRUMENTS OF DELEGATION
Officer:	Cherry Stojanovic, Coordinator Governance
Council Plan relationship:	Our Performance
Attachments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. S5 Instrument of Delegation to Chief Executive Officer (under separate cover) 2. S6 Instrument of Delegation - Members of Staff (under separate cover) 3. S18 Instrument of Sub-Delegation under the Environment Protection Act 2017 (under separate cover) 4. C4 Instrument of Delegation (Delegated Committees) (under separate cover)

Summary

The *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) requires that Council must review all delegations made under section 11 of the Act within 12 months after a general election.

To satisfy the legislative requirements of the Act, this report seeks Council resolution to endorse the reviewed suite of Instruments of Delegation.

Recommendation

1. In the exercise of the power conferred by s11(1)(b) of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) Macedon Ranges Shire Council resolves that;
 - (a) there be delegated to the person holding the position, or acting in or performing the duties, of Chief Executive Officer the powers, duties and functions set out in the attached S5 Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer, subject to the conditions and limitations specified in that instrument;
 - (b) the instrument comes into force immediately upon this resolution being made and is to be signed by the Council's Chief Executive Officer and the Mayor;
 - (c) on the coming into force of the instrument all previous delegations to the Chief Executive Officer are revoked; and
 - (d) the duties and functions set out in the instrument must be performed, and the powers set out in the instruments must be executed, in accordance with any guidelines or policies of Council that it may from time to time adopt.
2. In the exercise of the powers conferred by the legislation referred to in the attached S6 Instrument of Delegation, Macedon Ranges Shire Council resolves that:
 - (a) there be delegated to the members of Council staff holding, acting in or performing the duties of the offices or positions referred to in the attached S6 Instrument of Delegation to members of Council staff, the powers, duties and functions set out in that instrument, subject to the conditions and limitations specified in that instrument;

- (b) the instrument comes into force immediately upon this resolution being made and is to be signed by the Council's Chief Executive Officer;
 - (c) on the coming into force of the instrument all previous delegations to members of Council staff (other than the Chief Executive Officer) are revoked; and
 - (d) the duties and functions set out in the instrument must be performed, and the powers set out in the instruments must be executed, in accordance with any guidelines or policies of Council that it may from time to time adopt.
- 3. In the exercise of power conferred by s 437(2) of the Environment Protection Act 2017 and the Instrument of Delegation of the Environment Protection Authority under the Act dated 4 June 2021, Macedon Ranges Shire Council resolves that:
 - (a) there be delegated to the members of Council staff holding, acting in or performing the duties of the offices or positions referred to in the attached S18 Instrument of Sub-Delegation to members of Council staff, the powers, duties and functions set out in that instrument, subject to the conditions and limitations specified in that instrument;
 - (b) the instrument comes into force immediately upon this resolution being made and is to be signed by the Council's Chief Executive Officer and the Mayor;
 - (c) on the coming into force of the instrument the S18 Instrument of Sub-Delegation resolved by Council 28 July 2021 is revoked; and
 - (d) the duties and functions set out in the instrument must be performed, and the powers set out in the instruments must be executed, in accordance with any guidelines or policies of Council that it may from time to time adopt.
- 4. In exercise of the powers conferred by s63 of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act), Council resolves that:
 - (a) there be established as a Delegated Committee the "Submitters Delegated Committee".
 - (b) pursuant to s11 of the Act, delegate to the Submitters Delegated Committee powers and functions as set out in the Instrument of Delegation attached to this report, with the purposes of the Submitters Delegated Committee being those set out in the schedule to that instrument;
 - (c) appoint the nine (9) councillors of Macedon Ranges Shire Council as the only members of the Submitters Delegated Committee;
 - (d) appoint the Mayor of Macedon Ranges Shire Council to be the Chairperson of the Submitters Delegated Committee;
 - (e) determine that a quorum for the Submitters Delegated Committee is a whole number that is the absolute majority, which is the number of members that is greater than half of the total number of members of the Submitters Delegated Committee;
 - (f) all members of the Submitters Delegated Committee have voting rights on the Submitters Delegated Committee;
 - (g) the instrument comes into force immediately upon this resolution being made and is to be signed by the Council's Chief Executive Officer and the Mayor and remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it;

- (h) on the coming into force of the instrument, the C4 Instrument of Delegation resolved by Council 22 February 2023 is revoked; and
 - (i) the powers, duties and functions conferred on the members of the Delegated Committee by the instrument must be exercised in accordance with any guidelines or policies Council may from time to time adopt.
5. Dissolve the Planning Delegated Committee established by Macedon Ranges Shire Council and revoke the C5 Instrument of Delegation (Planning Delegated Committee) made from Macedon Ranges Shire Council to the Planning Delegated Committee on 22 February 2023.
 6. Revoke the C7 Instrument of Delegation (Community Asset Committee) made from Macedon Ranges Shire Council by resolution 22 June 2022.
 7. Request the CEO to review the Council Instruments of Delegation and refine them, together with Council, to ensure they remain up to date and cover all relevant provisions by no later than 1 July 2026.
 8. Revoke any Instrument of Delegation made by Council predating this resolution.
-

Background

Council is authorised by various Acts to carry out specific duties and functions as set out in those laws. To effectively perform these responsibilities, it is important for Council to delegate certain powers to its administrative staff. This also supports the separation of duties between Council and staff, as required under the *Local Government Act 2020*.

As legislation changes, Instruments of Delegation are required to be updated from time to time to ensure they are up-to-date, effective, and in line with expectations.

Discussion

Legislation grants Council the authority, through an Instrument of Delegation, to delegate any power, duty, or function under the Act or other relevant Acts to Council staff members, except for certain specified powers.

These delegations are essential to allow the Chief Executive Officer and Council staff to manage the day-to-day operations of Council effectively.

Council subscribes to a delegation service by Maddocks Lawyers, which provides recommended updates to the Instruments of Delegation twice a year to ensure they remain aligned with legislative changes.

A review of the suite of instruments that govern delegation of authority of Council has been completed by officers. The review resulted in changes to strengthen the integrity of Council decision-making processes. The changes made were the result of position and realignment changes, legislative or individual administrative changes, together with improvements identified by Maddocks. Updates have also been made to the Abbreviations and Positions contained within the schedule of the instruments to align with the organisational structure; however this is an administrative update that does not affect the intent of the delegated powers.

Officers recommend that following the next release of updates from Maddocks Lawyers, the Instruments of Delegation are further reviewed and refined by Council, specifically to remove any delegated powers that are unlikely to be required in the future.

This is consistent with ongoing review and continuous improvement of Council's governance, delivering achievable improvements while appropriately managing risk, and the allocation of human resources.

Further to this, oversight and review of the use of delegated powers is delivered through a variety of reporting mechanisms. Additional oversight, including summative reporting on the use of delegated powers, or additional briefings on the execution of specific powers, may be included into the future should Council seek process or procedural changes to further enhance transparency on the use of these powers.

Following a resolution made by Council at the August Council Meeting, specific criterion relevant to objections to planning permit applications and submissions to approve or amend a Development Plan have been added to the conditions and limitations on delegation contained within the S6 Instrument of Delegation - Members of Staff.

The resolution from August also endorsed that Council's Planning Delegated Committee be wound up by October 2025, and as such, officers have recommended to Council in this report the revocation of Instrument of Delegation - *C5 Instrument of Delegation (Planning Delegated Committee)*.

Consultation and engagement

As an operational matter under the Act, community engagement is not required to be undertaken.

Collaboration

These Instruments of Delegation have been prepared in accordance with the delegation service provided by Maddocks Lawyers and satisfies current legislative requirements.

Innovation and continuous improvement

Not applicable

Relevant law

The *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) requires that Council must review all delegations made under section 11 of the Act within 12 months after a general election. To satisfy the legislative requirements of the Act, and appropriately exercise the powers conferred by various legislation contained within the Instruments of Delegation, this report seeks Council resolution to endorse the reviewed suite of Instruments of Delegation as attached to this report.

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment was not required in relation to the subject matter of this report.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

Not applicable.

Relevant Council plans and policies

This report directly supports the achievement of the Council Plan relationship: Delivering strong and reliable government. We maintain good governance and transparency, by clearly identifying and communicating the role of Councillors and Council.

Climate Impact Assessment

How will the recommendation impact on Council's energy usage and greenhouse emissions profile? Not applicable.

How will the recommendations mitigate risks posed by climate change to Council operations and services? Not applicable.

How will the recommendation help to prepare the community for future climate scenarios? Not applicable.

Financial viability

The Maddocks Delegation Service that Council subscribes to is within the existing operating budget. There are no further budget implications.

Sustainability implications

There are no sustainability implications to consider when endorsing the suite of Instruments of Delegation.

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.

COR.3	INSTRUMENT OF APPOINTMENT AND AUTHORISATION
Officer:	Andrew Dunshea, Administration Officer
Council Plan relationship:	Our Performance
Attachments:	S11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation - Clinton Smith ↓

Summary

This report seeks Council's approval to appoint one authorised officer under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (the Act) and the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) by an Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation. Under these Acts, only Council, by a resolution, can appoint authorised officers who must be employees of Council.

In addition, Council is required to revoke any Instruments for authorised officers who are no longer employed by Council.

An Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation is required for officers who have recently commenced with Council. In addition, an Instrument is required to be revoked as the authorised officer is no longer employed by Council.

Recommendation

Council resolves in the exercise of the powers conferred by section 147(4) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and section 313 of the Local Government Act 2020 that:

- 1. The Council officer named in the Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation provided in Attachment 1 be appointed and authorised;**
- 2. The Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation to come into force upon signing and remain in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it;**
- 3. The Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation in Attachment 1 is signed;**
- 4. The Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation for Ben Champion be revoked;**
- 5. The Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation for Maria Nunez be revoked; and**
- 6. The Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation for Chen Gao be revoked.**

Background

The appointment of Authorised Officers allows certain Council officers to act on behalf of Council in the administration and enforcement of various Acts, regulations, or local laws in accordance with the powers granted to them. Under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and the Local Government Act 2020 officers represent Council in enforcing the provisions of these Acts.

Discussion

The following officer is required to be an Authorised Officer under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and the Local Government Act 2020:

- Clinton Smith, Statutory Planning Officer

The Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation for the following officers is to be revoked as they are no longer employed by Council:

- Ben Champion, Coordinator Strategic Planning
- Maria Nunez, Team Leader Administration Statutory Planning
- Chen Gao, Statutory Planning Officer

Consultation and engagement

Not applicable

Collaboration

Not applicable

Innovation and continuous improvement

Not applicable

Relevant law

This report has been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

The implications of this report have been assessed and are not considered likely to breach or infringe upon the human rights detailed on the Victorian Government's *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment was not required in relation to the subject matter of this report.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

Not applicable

Relevant Council plans and policies

This recommendation allows Council to maintain the Shaping The Ranges 2025-2035 requirement to deliver consistent and reliable operations across Council.

Climate Impact Assessment

How will the recommendation impact on Council's energy usage and greenhouse emissions profile?

Not Applicable

How will the recommendations mitigate risks posed by climate change to Council operations and services?

Not applicable

How will the recommendation help to prepare the community for future climate scenarios?

Not applicable

Financial viability

Not applicable

Sustainability implications

Not applicable

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.



**Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation
(Planning and Environment Act 1987)**

In this instrument "**officer**" means -

Clinton Smith – Statutory Planning Officer

By this instrument of appointment and authorisation Macedon Ranges Shire Council -

1. under s 147(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* – authorises the officer to carry out the duties or functions and to exercise the powers of an authorised officer under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*; and
2. under s 313 of the *Local Government Act 2020* authorises the officer either generally or in a particular case to institute proceedings for offences against the Acts and regulations described in this instrument.

It is declared that this instrument -

- comes into force immediately upon its execution;
- remains in force until varied or revoked.

This instrument is authorised by a resolution of the Macedon Ranges Shire Council
on

Signed:

Mayor, Councillor

Date:

Signed:

Chief Executive Officer

Date:

COR.4	AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE - INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER 2025-28
Officer:	Melanie Walker, Corporate Reporting Officer
Council Plan relationship:	Our Performance
Attachments:	Internal Audit Charter 2025-28 (under separate cover)

Summary

The purpose of this report is to present the Internal Audit Charter (The Charter) for consideration and adoption by Council. The Charter outlines the scope, planning and reporting of Internal Audits, as well as the operational requirements and escalation of matters arising from those audits.

Recommendation

That Council adopts the Internal Audit Charter and revokes the previous version of the Charter.

Background

The Internal Audit Charter is not a mandatory requirement, however Council resolved in 2022, in consultation with the Audit and Risk Committee and Officers, that adopting such a document would strengthen its governance framework and align with best practice. The renewal period for the charter was set at three years, making this the first review of the initial charter. Officers have reviewed the current charter and made necessary updates.

Discussion

Council has a dedicated internal audit function as a key component of the Council's governance framework in accordance with best practice. This function is currently outsourced following a periodic tender process.

This Charter provides the framework for the conduct of the internal audit function at Council. Council's procurement requirements provide the framework for the appointment of the outsourced internal audit services provider.

The key updates to the Charter are:

- (1) **Updating the reporting manager** from Manager Finance and Reporting to Manager Governance and Performance.
- (2) **Addition of a new section - 2.5 Failure to maintain Professional Standards** (Page 2). This new section sets out the expectations of the Internal Auditor in upholding professional standards and provides a clear process for Council and Audit and Risk Committee members to follow should the Internal Auditor be deemed no longer fit, capable, or suitable to perform the role.

The updated Charter was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee meeting on 10 September 2025 and Council Briefing on 14 October 2025, with all feedback incorporated into the final document presented for adoption.

Consultation and engagement

The review of the Charter was prepared in consultation with officers, Councillors and Council's Audit and Risk Committee.

Collaboration

Not applicable to this report.

Innovation and continuous improvement

The review of these documents will form part of the Audit and Risk Committee's work plan to ensure it remains consistent with current strategy and objectives. This review will help strengthen the Committee's Charter and ensure alignment with best practice, supporting innovation and continuous improvement.

Relevant law

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment was not required in relation to the subject matter of this report.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

Not applicable.

Relevant Council plans and policies

In reviewing and updating the Charter, consideration was given to the related Audit and Risk Committee Charter to ensure consistency and alignment across areas.

Climate Impact Assessment

This recommendation has no direct impact on Council's energy use, emissions profile, or climate preparedness. However, maintaining strong governance and accountability frameworks supports responsible decision-making that aligns with Council's broader sustainability and climate commitments.

Financial viability

Not applicable.

Sustainability implications

Not applicable.

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.

COR.5	AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE - APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR 2026, EXTENSION OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER AND AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE CHARTER
Officer:	Melanie Walker, Corporate Reporting Officer
Council Plan relationship:	Our Performance
Attachments:	Audit and Risk Committee Charter - Updated Nov 2025 (under separate cover)

Summary

The Audit and Risk Committee comprises two Councillors and four independent members from the Macedon Ranges Shire community. This report seeks Council to consider an extension of an existing independent member and the appointment of a Chairperson for 2026.

Also included as part of this report is an amended version of the Audit and Risk Committee Charter for Council's consideration. The Charter is reviewed on an annual basis, with the previous review undertaken in December 2024.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. **Offers an extension to the appointment of independent member Vinitha Pinto for the period 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2029;**
2. **Endorses the appointment of independent member Vinitha Pinto as Audit and Risk Committee Chairperson from 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2026; and**
3. **Approves the attached updated Audit and Risk Committee Charter, to be effective from 27 November 2025, replacing the previous Charter.**

Background

The Audit and Risk Committee is an independent Advisory Committee of Council, formally appointed by Council pursuant to Section 53 (1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The purpose of the Audit and Risk Committee is to provide a structured, systematic oversight of Council's governance, audit, risk management and internal control practices.

The Committee's Charter defines the responsibilities and facilitates the operation of the Committee. It was first adopted by Council at its meeting on 26 August 2020.

Discussion

Extension of Independent Member – Vinitha Pinto

In accordance with the Committee's Charter, independent members may seek an extension of their term. Vinitha Pinto expressed her interest in continuing as member of the Committee, which was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on 10 September 2025. The Committee have recommended to Council that an extension be offered as follows:

Position	Member	Commencement term	Position due to expire (extension of four years)
Position 4	Vinitha Pinto	1/01/2026	31/12/2029

Appointment of Committee Chairperson for Period 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2026

Consistent with Section 4 (Composition) of the Charter, the Chairperson shall be appointed from the independent members of the Audit and Risk Committee on an annual basis. The appointment must then be endorsed by Council, at the next available Council meeting.

At the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting on 10 September 2025, the Committee recommended Vinitha Pinto be appointed as Chair for the period 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2026. The Committee now seeks Council's endorsement of this recommendation.

Ammendment to Audit and Risk Committee Charter

The Committee recommended the following changes to the Committee Charter:

- **Addition to point f) in Section 2 Authority (page 2):** this point has been added to outline the key Council documents that the Committee reviews and provides feedback on.
- **Addition to point n) in Section 4 Composition (page 3):** this point has been added to describe the process for removal of Committee Members. The addition of point n) to the Charter outlines Council's authority to remove a Committee member. The recommendation to include this point is based on review of ten other local council's Audit and Risk Committee Charters, with more than 50% including a similar provision. While it is anticipated that this clause may rarely, if ever, be needed, its inclusion provides both Council and Committee members with a clear understanding of the process should the need arise.
- **Revision of point j) in Section 5 Meetings (page 4):** The wording of point j) has been revised to reflect a change in the process for circulating the minutes after each meeting.

The Committee and Officers now submit the attached draft Audit and Risk Committee Charter for Council's endorsement.

Consultation and engagement

The Committee has reviewed, discussed and put forward recommendations to Council on these matters, arising from its September meeting.

Collaboration

Direct collaboration with other councils, governments and/or statutory bodies was not required in relation to this report, however, officers did utilise other local council's audit and risk committee charters to assist with making informed and appropriate changes to Macedon Ranges Shire Council's Audit and Risk Committee Charter document.

Innovation and continuous improvement

The operation of the Audit and Risk Committee reflects Council's commitment to innovation and continuous improvement through structured and systematic oversight of governance, risk management, and internal control practices. By providing independent advice and

guidance to Council, the Committee helps ensure these practices remain effective and identifies opportunities for enhancement.

The Committee also acts as a key communication forum between the External Auditor, Internal Auditor, management, and Councillors, promoting transparency and collaboration across the organisation.

To further strengthen its effectiveness, the Committee undertakes an annual review of its own performance, as well as that of the internal and external auditors. The outcomes of these reviews inform ongoing refinements to the Committee's operations, membership, and Charter, ensuring it continues to evolve in line with best practice.

Relevant law

The Audit and Risk Committee is established in line with Section 53(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, and its functions and responsibilities are outlined in and Section 54(2) of the Act.

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment was not required in relation to the subject matter of this report.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

Not applicable.

Relevant Council plans and policies

The operation of the Committee is a legislative requirement, which assists Council to deliver on its priority of strong and reliable government and achieve its vision by following good governance processes. To do this, Council has adopted a formal charter for the Committee.

Climate Impact Assessment

Establishment the Audit and Risk Committee enhances Council's oversight and strategic planning, enabling improved identification and management of risks, including those related to climate change impacts on operations and services.

Financial viability

There are no financial implications relating to the subject matter of this report that are over and above the current cost of resourcing the Committee.

Sustainability implications

There are no sustainability implications relating to the subject matter of this report.

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.

COR.6	QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT - SEPTEMBER 2025
Officer:	Travis Harling, Manager Finance and Reporting
Council Plan relationship:	4. Delivering strong and reliable government
Attachments:	Nil

Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide Council and the community with a report on the financial position of the Macedon Ranges Shire Council to 30 September 2025 for the 2025/26 financial year (Quarter 1), in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Recommendation

That Council receives the Quarterly Financial report as at 30 September 2025, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020.

Background

This report on Council's financial performance against budget has been prepared in accordance with Section 97 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, which states "as soon as practicable after the end of each quarter of the financial year, the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a quarterly budget report is presented to the Council at a Council meeting which is open to the public."

Discussion

The Finance and Capital Management Report to 30 September 2025 provides an update on financial performance against the 2025/26 budget.

The Income Statement reports an operating surplus of \$57.2M for the three months to 30 September 2025 compared to the budget of \$53.7M.

In accordance with accounting standards, all rates income is recognised at the start of the financial year when the rates are struck. This results in Council reporting a large surplus at the start of the year which reduces as the year progresses, as expenditure is incurred evenly throughout the year.

Council's Income Statement as at 30 September 2025 is provided below with analysis of the material variances. The adopted budget does not include amounts carried-forward from the prior year (e.g. as for multi-year or delayed capital projects).

Income Statement - Year-to-Date (YTD) Key Actual vs Budget Variances

INCOME STATEMENT

For the 3 month period ended 30th September 2025

	2025/26 Sep YTD Budget \$'000	2025/26 Sep YTD Actuals \$'000	2025/26 Sep YTD Variance \$'000
Income			
Rates and charges	66,568	66,509	(59)
Statutory fees and fines	713	792	79
User fees	2,234	1,929	(305)
Grants - operating	4,443	5,030	587
Grants - capital	8,583	9,844	1,261
Contributions - monetary	1,126	551	(575)
Other income	814	1,151	337
Total income	84,481	85,806	1,325
Expenses			
Employee costs	13,322	11,741	1,581
Materials and services	11,336	11,015	321
Depreciation and amortisation	4,621	4,423	198
Borrowing costs	232	216	16
Other expenses	1,303	1,378	(75)
Total expenses	30,814	28,773	2,041
Surplus/(deficit) excluding other adjustments	53,667	57,033	3,366
Other adjustments			
Net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	75	178	103
Total surplus/(deficit)	53,742	57,211	3,469

The Income Statement includes all sources of Council revenue and expenditure incurred in its day-to-day operations. It should be noted that expenditure listed in the Income Statement does not include the cost of asset purchases or sales, loan repayments, capital works expenditure or reserve funds. It does, however, include depreciation as an expense.

Overall the operating surplus of \$57.2M is \$3.4M favourable to budget. The financial summary provides an explanation of key variances to budget.

Operational Revenue

Key variances in operational revenue for the period are outlined below.

User Fees: The \$305K unfavourable income in user fees is mostly due to the decrease in fees received at Council's three Resource Recovery Centres. This decrease is partly offset by an increase in application fees in Strategic Planning and user fees in the truck wash and the aquatics and fitness area.

Grants Operating: Operating grants are \$587k favourable to budget, primarily due to an increase in Early Years funding due to higher level of enrolments than budget.

Grants Capital: Capital grants are \$1.2M favourable to budget, primarily due to delays in the delivery of several capital works projects.

Contributions Monetary: Actual income is \$551K, being \$575k unfavourable to budget. The timing of receiving this type of income can vary and the variance is related to this timing.

Other Income: Actual income is \$1.1M is \$337k favourable, due to higher levels of investment interest received and several insurance claims that have also been received , and were not included in the budget.

Operational Expenditure

Key variances in operational expenditure for the period are outlined below.

Employee Costs: There is a \$1.5M favourable result to budget, this is a timing difference relating to a year-end accounting entry which will be adjusted in the October accounts.

Materials and services: Year to date expenditure is reported at \$11.0M, this is \$321K favourable to budget. This variance is primarily due to lower costs resulting from reduced throughput at Council's Resource Recovery Centres and the timing of project expenditures across multiple departments.

Capital Works

Year-to-Date Capital Works Statement reports \$5.1M of works delivered at 30 September 2025 where the adopted budget including carry forwards for the 3-month period is \$9.6M.

Infrastructure expenditure of \$4.0M is lower than budget of \$7.89M due to delays in construction in Roads and Recreational, leisure and community facilities projects. The following projects contribute a significant amount to this variance:

Roads:

- Noonan Grove – pending Special Charges Scheme approval
- Chanters Lane – planning approvals are progressing
- Stawell Street – project has commenced
- Malmsbury East Road – project has commenced
- Simon Hills Road – project has commenced

Large Trail Projects:

- Macedon Shared Trail - project continues to progress with several constraints on approvals for remaining stages.

Recreational, Leisure and Community Facilities:

- Kyneton Showgrounds Netball Development – project has commenced
- Stage 2 - Macedon Ranges Sport Precinct – project has commenced

CAPITAL WORKS STATEMENT

As at 30th September 2025

	2025/26 Adopted Budget \$'000	2025/26 Adopted Budget & C/FWD \$'000	2025/26 YTD Budget \$'000	2025/26 YTD Actuals \$'000	2025/26 YTD Variance \$'000
Property					
Land and land improvements	-	-	-	-	-
Buildings and building improvements	3,903	7,331	1,014	492	523
Total property	3,903	7,331	1,014	492	523
Plant and equipment					
Plant, machinery and equipment	1,535	2,270	567	569	(2)
Computers and telecommunications	485	496	122	47	75
Total plant and equipment	2,020	2,765	689	617	72
Infrastructure					
Roads	8,741	17,110	4,731	2,409	2,323
Bridges	500	1,364	275	79	196
Footpaths and Cycleways	1,633	12,168	418	249	168
Drainage	611	1,364	257	98	160
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	10,533	18,898	2,009	1,102	907
Parks, open space and streetscapes	80	143	83	14	68
Other infrastructure	463	1,254	116	74	42
Total infrastructure	22,561	52,301	7,888	4,025	3,863
Total capital works expenditure	28,484	62,397	9,592	5,134	4,458

Investments

Investments held at 30 September total \$32.68M. Investments are earning adequate interest, with 54% of the portfolio being in line with the requirement of the Investment policy to maintain at least 20% with institutions that do not lend to organisations linked with fossil fuels. Interest rates are expected to remain steady for the remainder of the financial year.

Storm Reports

One claim remains in progress as at 30 September 2025 related to 7 October 2022 flooding. The total amount of pending claim is \$344,474. The claim is expected to be finalised in 2025/26 financial year.

Loans

Loan repayments have been made in line with the adopted budget. New loans included in the budget are planned to be drawn down later in the financial year.

Consultation and engagement

Officers across Council have contributed to the preparation of the report.

Collaboration

Collaboration with other councils, governments and/or statutory bodies was not required.

Innovation and continuous improvement

The Quarterly Financial Report forms part of a legislative requirement, which assists Council to deliver on its priority of strong and reliable government, whilst achieving its vision by following good governance processes and providing transparency to the community. The Quarterly Financial Report is reviewed by the Executive and incorporates feedback from various levels of management to enhance readability and allow for continuous improvement.

Relevant law

This report has been prepared in accordance with Section 97 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) and is compliant with the requirements. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards.

There are no human rights implications resulting from the completion of the Quarterly Report. In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment was not required in relation to the subject matter of this report.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

There are no regional, state or national plans or policies to be considered in relation to the subject matter of this report.

Relevant Council plans and policies

Macedon Ranges Shire Council Financial Plan 2021-2031, (*former plan, superseded by...*)

Macedon Ranges Shire Council Financial Plan 2025-2035

Macedon Ranges Council Budget 2025/26

Macedon Ranges Investment Policy

Financial viability

The Quarterly Financial Report provides information on Council's operating and financial performance for the quarter ending 30 September 2025. The financial statements within the report indicate that Council remains in a sound financial position.

Sustainability implications

In terms of financial sustainability, the financial statements within the report indicate that Council remains in a sound financial position.

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.

COR.7	CONTRACTS TO BE AWARDED AS AT NOVEMBER 2025
Officer:	Ilsa Melchiori, Coordinator Contracts
Council Plan relationship:	Our Places
Attachments:	Nil

Summary

This report provides details of contracts proposed to be awarded under a delegation from Council, from the date of the last report.

Recommendation

That Council notes that the following contracts will be awarded by Council officers under delegated authority:

- C2026-89 Darraweit Valley Road Bridge - Design and Construct Foundation Erosion Control Works**

Background information

Council's delegated authority to its officers to award a contract is controlled by the financial value of the contract. The various financial limits of the authority are specified in Appendix 1 of the Procurement Policy.

Opportunity to review delegated authority

This report provides Council with a summary of proposed contracts, which are being advertised and indicates whether delegated authority to award the contract exists.

C2026-89 Darraweit Valley Road Bridge - Design and Construct Foundation Erosion Control Works	
Council is seeking the services of a qualified contractor to complete design and construct erosion control works around the base of the two piers in Darraweit Valley Road Bridge.	
Compliance Requirements	Budget Impacts
Council's Director has delegated authority to award this contract.	Budgeted Value (excl. GST) \$200,000

As part of Council's procurement processes, several controls are implemented to ensure the risks are identified and managed. For the contracts to be awarded in this report, that includes the following measures:

- Conflict of Interest Declarations – Officers must disclose conflicts before participating in procurement decisions or panels.
- Competitive Bidding – Transparent public tendering with multiple suppliers was undertaken for all contracts and are required for contracts above the \$1m financial delegation limit of the CEO to ensure competition and transparency.
- Legal and Probity Review – Contract Coordinator reviews of each contract before execution.

- Performance Monitoring – KPIs and regular reviews, milestone tracking and monitoring for compliance with grant requirements where applicable for each approved contract.
- Public Disclosure Requirements – Contract awards are published in Council's Annual Report.
- Delegation Limits – All approvals are per the Procurement Policy and clearly defined specific financial thresholds the CEO can approve.
- Regular Reporting – the CEO submits periodic reporting on contracts for monitoring.
- Procurement Compliance – Training, audits, and adherence to policies is undertaken for all officers and steps in the process.

Consultation and engagement

The nature of this report does not require any consultation or community engagement.

Collaboration

The nature of this report does not require collaboration with other councils, governments or statutory bodies.

Innovation and continuous improvement

Council reviews its Procurement Policy regularly, in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*. These reviews consider options for innovation and are part of continuous improvement processes.

Relevant Law

The *Local Government Act 2020* provides for Council to delegate powers to staff, including the power to award contracts.

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment was not required in relation to the subject matter of this report.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

There are no regional, state or national plans and policies that are relevant to the subject matter of this report.

Relevant Council plans and policies

The awarding of contracts is undertaken in accordance with the provisions of Council's Procurement Policy.

Financial viability

Funds for all contracts to be awarded, as listed above, have been provided in the capital and operational budget and future annual budgets.

Sustainability implications

Council's Procurement Policy requires staff to procure goods, services and works from suppliers who actively employ sustainable practices in their operations.

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.

COR.8	COUNCILLOR APPOINTMENTS 2025-2026
Officer:	Lucy Olson, Senior Governance Officer
Council Plan relationship:	Our Performance
Attachments:	Councillor Appointments 2025-26 ↓

Summary

This report is presented to Council for determining Councillor representation on internal advisory committees and external organisations from November 2025 till November 2026, refer to **Attachment 1**.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. **Appoints the Councillor delegates from November 2025 to November 2026 to the internal and external committees/organisations as specified in the table in Attachment 1.**
2. **Appoints the Mayor, Councillor X, Councillor Y and Councillor Z as the Councillor delegates to the Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Committee.**
3. **Endorses the ongoing membership to the Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance and Rural Councils Victoria Incorporated.**
4. **Endorses the ongoing membership to the Municipal Association of Victoria.**
5. **Endorses the ongoing membership to Victorian Local Governance Association and Australian Local Government Women's Association - Victorian Branch.**

Background

Effective representation on relevant internal and external organisations and committees is a critical element of Council's advocacy program. Through its membership of and representation on a diverse range of relevant local, regional and state committees and organisations, Council is well placed to represent and advocate for the interests of the Macedon Ranges Shire Council.

Council has been invited to appoint a delegate or delegates to various external committees and organisations of which it is a member, or to which it subscribes.

These committees and organisations collectively assist Council to plan and develop services and programs and set strategic and policy directions. Membership and participation of committees may include residents, industry or sector specialists, Councillors and/or Council officers.

Discussion

Council is represented on a range of internal and external committees and organisations. Ensuring that Council has proper appointment of Councillors to these organisations is important for Council's ability to advocate on behalf of the Shire in the different forums. Delegates to advisory committees or external committees and organisations are encouraged

to report issues of significance to Council or the Councillor group following attendance at meetings.

There are some internal advisory committees and external organisations that require the Mayor to attend as Mayor ex-officio. There is also an opportunity for Councillors to participate on a range of committees that are important to the future economic, environmental and social sustainability of the municipality. The current list of Council advisory committees and external organisations for Councillor representation, at **Attachment 1**, outlines the Mayor ex-officio and number of Councillors to be endorsed on the committee or organisation for November 2025 to November 2026. Councillors have considered their interest in being a Council delegate on the various committees prior to this meeting and will determine their nominated delegates during this meeting.

In addition, **Attachment 1** describes the purpose, structure, membership and meeting frequency for internal and external committees.

Membership and subscriptions

There are several peak bodies and associations that support Victorian Councils and Councillors through representation and advocacy, policy development and advice, and other activities, such as training and professional development. Access to these services is through a membership and/or subscription process. Council subscribes to Municipal Association of Victoria, Victorian Local Governance Association, Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance, Rural Councils Victoria Incorporated, and Australian Local Government Women's Association - Victorian Branch.

The membership fees for the 2025/26 financial year were as below, and we anticipate 2026/27 fees to be in line with these.

- Municipal Association of Victoria - \$57,014.10
- Victorian Local Governance Association - \$16,926.00
- Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance - \$17,108.00
- Rural Councils Victoria Incorporated - \$5,500.00
- Australian Local Government Women's Association - Victorian Branch - \$750.00

Consultation and engagement

Officers from across the organisation have contributed to the preparation of this information.

Collaboration

There has been no collaboration with other councils or agencies in the preparation of this report.

Innovation and continuous improvement

Councils utilises the information and advice gathered through its participation in the various committees, organisations, bodies and associations listed in this report to continuously improve its services and make informed, strategic decisions.

Relevant law

The *Local Government Act 2020* provides that Council can establish delegated committees and community assets committees and must establish an Audit and Risk Committee.

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment was not required in relation to the subject matter of this report.

Appointing Councillor representatives to internal advisory committees and external organisations in 2025-26 to advocate on behalf of the municipal community is consistent with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

There are no regional, state, or national plans or policies, which are applicable to the preparation of this report.

Relevant Council plans and policies

The subject matter of this report is in alignment with the Council Plan strategic objective *Our Performance*.

Climate Impact Assessment

Not applicable.

Financial viability

The current resourcing and support for the operations of these committees, along with funding of membership are included in Council's 2025/26 Budget.

Sustainability implications

There are no sustainability implications as a result of the preparation of this report.

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.

Councillor Appointments to Internal and External Committees and Organisations November 2025 to November 2026

Committee and Purpose	Number of Delegates	Meeting Frequency	Internal/ External	2025/26 delegate/s
Audit and Risk Committee The Audit and Risk Committee is established under Section 53 of the Local Government Act 2020 as an Advisory Committee to Council. Its role is to assist Council in the effective conduct of its responsibilities, and to review and provide advice in good corporate governance, managing risk and improving operational controls. The Committee consists of four independent members and two Councillor delegates. The Committee meets a minimum of four times a year. Meeting minutes are circulated to the Councillors, Executive, Managers and Auditors.	Two (2) Councillor delegates and first and second substitute delegates	At least four (4) times per annum. Internal	Internal	Cr Joseph Cr Borthwick Cr Anderson (1st Substitute) Cr Young (2nd Substitute)
Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Committee – The structure of the committee to appraise the performance of the Chief Executive Officer is determined in the CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy.	Mayor and up to three (3) Councillors	Annually	Internal	TBC
Annual Meeting of Braemar College Ltd - Braemar College was established in the 1970s by the Newham and Woodend Shire (pre-amalgamation) in conjunction with local churches. Every year, a representative from each organization is invited in their capacity as shareholders to attend the Annual General Meeting of Braemar College.	One (1) Councillor and one (1) substitute delegate	Meets annually in May	External	Cr Scanlon Cr Kendall (Substitute)
Calder Highway Improvement Committee The Calder Highway Improvement Committee is an Advisory committee to VicRoads and the State Government. The committee advocates for long term investment strategies to deliver improvements to the safety and operation of the Calder Highway from Mildura to Melbourne.	One (1) Councillor delegate and one (1) substitute delegate	Three (3) times annually	External	Cr Scanlon Cr Pearce (Substitute)
Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance (CVGA) - The CVGA works across Central and Northern Victoria to support local government with climate change mitigation and adaptation activities. They represent 13 councils and help them to develop and implement innovative regional initiatives to benefit their local communities and the economy.	One (1) Councillor delegate and one (1) Officer proxy	Quarterly	External	Cr Anderson Director Planning and Environment (Proxy)

Committee and Purpose	Number of Delegates	Meeting Frequency	Internal/ External	2025/26 delegate/s
Goldfields Library Corporation Board - The North Central Goldfields Regional Library Corporation (trading as Goldfields Library Corporation) is a regional library service serving the City of Greater Bendigo, Loddon Shire, Macedon Ranges Shire, and Mount Alexander Shire. Responsibility for the provision and management of the library service rests with the Library Board, which comprises two representatives from each of the four member Councils and is established by the Regional Library Agreement adopted by the member Councils. The responsibilities and authority of the Board include policy determination, strategic planning and service and education.	One (1) Councillor Delegate and one (1) Council officer	Monthly	External	Cr Bonanno Cr Guthrie (Substitute)
Macedon Ranges Heritage Council - This group is a representative group of all Historical Societies in the Shire. The MRHC shares ideas and expertise and provides a focal point for the Macedon Ranges Shire Council	Two (2) Councillor delegates	Bi-monthly	External	Cr Guthrie Cr Joseph
Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) - The MAV is the peak advisory body for councils in Victoria. The objectives of the MAV are to improve community awareness of local government, advocate for and provide leadership and support for the sector. Cr Anderson is the President of the MAV but the current constitution states she can remain as part of her two-year term even if she is not the nominated representative of Council.	One (1) Councillor delegate and First and second substitute delegates	As needs basis	External	Cr Anderson (Delegate) Cr Young (Additional delegate) Cr Pearce (1st substitute) Cr Borthwick (2nd substitute)
Rural Councils Victoria Inc (RCV) - RCV represents the interests of rural councils within Victoria it has 38 members. The defined purposes of RCV organisation are to: (1) heighten awareness and understanding of issues that impact on rural communities; (2) assist with building the capacity of rural councils to face challenges; (3) provide leadership on local governance; (4) develop and support rural councils; and (5) develop policy and advocate for rural councils.	One (1) Councillor delegate only for the purpose of voting at the AGM	Annually	External	Cr Kendall Cr Pearce (Substitute)

Committee and Purpose	Number of Delegates	Meeting Frequency	Internal/ External	2025/26 delegate/s
Workspace Australia – Workspace Australia Ltd (Workspace) is a community 'not for profit' social enterprise which was established to improve employment opportunities for socially disadvantaged individuals thereby reducing the personal and social costs of unemployment. Workspace provides training and enterprise activities for the benefit of individuals seeking employment in Regional Victoria. Workspace operates a number of Social Enterprises that create employment throughout Central Victoria. Workspace has been operating at the business incubator in New Gisborne since 1998.	One (1) Councillor Delegate	Bi-monthly	External	Cr Guthrie
Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee – The Macedon Ranges Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (MFMP) is responsible for providing a strategic and integrated approach to fire management within the shire.	Any number of Councillors	Quarterly	Internal/ External	Cr Joseph Cr Scanlon Cr Pearce
Local Government Working Group on Gambling The group provides an opportunity for councillors and council officers from VLGA member councils to come together to hear from informed speakers about current gambling harm prevention research and policy and consider Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan implications and the regulatory environment.	Two (2) Councillors	Bi-monthly	External	Cr Anderson Cr Borthwick
Mayoral and Councillor Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum Since 2018, the Taskforce has been advocating to the Federal and Victorian Government for kindness and justice for people seeking asylum in the community.	One (1) Councillor Delegate	Multiple per year	External	Cr Pearce

14 COMMUNITY REPORTS

COM.1	OPPORTUNITIES FOR A FORMAL STRUCTURE OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT WITH COUNCIL
Officer:	Jacob Munnery, Youth Engagement and Development Lead
Council Plan	Our People
relationship:	Our Performance
Attachments:	Nil

Summary

This report presents options for the creation of a formal structure for young people to engage with Council and recommends the establishment of a Youth Council.

The recommended Youth Council would be recruited by an Expression of Interest (EOI) process (rather than a peer led election), and Councillors would be invited to contribute to the process of supporting young people on the Youth Council to learn and experience local democracy and contribute meaningfully to Council decision-making.

Recommendation

That Council endorses the creation of the Macedon Ranges Shire Youth Council, as described under Option 1 in this report, noting this will:

- 1. Comprise nine positions (three per Council ward).**
- 2. Serve a term of two years, commencing from June 2026.**
- 3. Be appointed through an Expression of Interest process, designed and delivered by a working group of young people.**
- 4. Meet formally to discuss and provide input on decisions that affect young people across the shire for Council consideration.**
- 5. Be supported by the Mayor and Councillors to learn and experience local democracy and contribute meaningfully to Council decision making, including through mentoring and partnership opportunities.**

Background

Council's previous youth leadership program, "Leaders in the Loop" (Youth Ambassadors), was established in 2011. The program was disbanded in 2023 after a review, which identified that there were opportunities for the group to evolve into a more formal structure.

The proposal to move to a new and more formalised structure, such as a Youth Council, was for a variety of reasons:

- Increased impact:* By evolving the group into a more formal structure, the aim is to enhance the impact of youth leadership initiatives and facilitate more meaningful involvement in local decision-making processes.
- Empowerment and representation:* Provide a structured platform for young people to have a more significant role in shaping the future of the Macedon Ranges, ensuring that their voices are heard and acted upon.

- *Sustainable engagement*: Formalising an alternative for Council to engage with young people in a sustainable and meaningful way, while also offering a democratic learning opportunity.
- *Greater accountability*: Facilitating transparency and accountability in decision-making and encouraging more young people to participate in Council decision-making processes.

Purpose of youth representation

Establishing a more formal structure of youth engagement with Council provides the following opportunities:

- *Youth engagement in decision making*: When young people are engaged in decision-making, the breadth of the community is better represented.
- *Educating young people on government processes*: Opportunity to train young people in governance processes and council procedures, resulting in increased awareness of how the local council works. This is particularly relevant to those who are approaching or have recently reached voting age. An increased awareness of political processes with a local government perspective is likely to result in better engagement from young people in state and federal politics, which may in turn create better representation and consideration for the Macedon Ranges in these broader political landscapes.
- *Leadership skills*: Young people can gain valuable upskilling opportunities. These would tend to centre around leadership, public speaking, conducting formal meetings, etc. These skillsets will serve the participants beyond their time in the program and outside of a government setting, placing them in a better position to achieve various career and personal goals.
- *A facilitated mechanism for Council teams seeking to gauge youth input on relevant topics*: This strengthens consultations and program planning, where youth perspectives have often been underrepresented as a subset of the community.

Formats for formal youth representation

Group type	Description
Youth Council	This format essentially mimics the council structure as a learning opportunity for young people. Young people are elected to the group, and the group meets in a formal capacity to discuss and provide input on decisions that affect young people across the shire.
Youth Advisory Committee	This format follows a defined structure where meetings are scheduled, minutes taken, and the discussions and decision making is informed by a governance process. Officers facilitate the committee and guide young people to participate. A committee may work on nominated projects determined by its members. The committee would have Councillor representation.

Benchmarking

Several adjacent Local Government Areas (LGAs) operate youth representation groups in a variety of formats, noting the below for comparison.

LGA	Title	Structure
City of Greater Bendigo	Youth Council	Youth Council (mimics the elected councillor group).
Mount Alexander Shire Council	Youth Advisory Group	Not an advisory committee of council, rather a community reference group.
Hepburn Shire Council	Youth Council (not yet established)	Working towards a Youth Council which mimics the elected councillor group with external support.
Mitchell Shire Council	Youth Council	Utilises council positions (Youth Mayor, etc.). Acts in an advisory committee capacity.
Hume City Council	Youth Advisory Committee	Currently operates as an advisory committee of council, with councillor representation. Working towards a Youth Council which mimics the elected councillor group with external support.

Regarding the Youth Council structure, officers from benchmarked councils have spoken of challenges relating to:

- Youth councillor retention and supplementary recruitment/ election/ countback processes, when necessary, to fill positions vacated by youth councillors who depart outside of planned youth council terms.
- Structuring the engagement of young people in this group to maximise a sense of meaningful contribution, identifying aspects of council decision-making that can meaningfully be deferred to the group.
- Creating relevant training and development opportunities for youth councillors to increase a sense of reward for their participation.

Discussion

This paper presents three options for Council's consideration:

- (1) Establish a Youth Council.
- (2) Establish a Youth Advisory Committee.
- (3) Continue to embed aims in our youth service programs and activities.

Option 1: Establish a Macedon Ranges Youth Council

This option proposes the creation of a formal Youth Council. The Youth Council would include nine positions (three for each ward).

The best practice approach to filling positions is through the delivery of a peer-led election. The delivery of the election would require additional budget, and organisations that are well known for supporting councils to deliver these types of elections have expressed limited capacity to take on additional programs at this time.

Due to this, it is recommended that for the initial stage of the Youth Council, an EOI process is undertaken to recruit to the Youth Council.

The EOI and recruitment process will be planned with emphasis on the following:

- Broad promotion of the EOI to encourage all young people from the shire to consider the opportunity, including social media, newspaper advertising, community noticeboards, and collaboration with schools, spaces and services that youth engage with for a targeted approach.
- Fairness and equity in planning, particularly relating to the EOI, shortlisting, and selection processes.
- Forming a working group made up of young people to aid in its design and delivery, supporting a peer led contribution.
 - Participation in the working group will necessitate an agreement from group members that they will not be eligible to apply for a position in the Youth Council, must not provide information that could unfairly advantage other prospective nominees, and must declare conflicts of interest that arise throughout the process.

Once established, officers would facilitate the Youth Council to:

- Build their capacity and understanding of local democratic processes.
- Deliver routine formal meetings of the Youth Council, which would consider and weigh in on appropriate issues and discussions from across the organisation, and from within the community.
- Provide input to decisions on matters that affect young people across the shire.

There would be opportunities for the Mayor and Councillors to become involved with the group, through participating in their recruitment, offering mentoring and partnering on joint initiatives, if they so choose.

On matters that are determined suitable for youth input, the Youth Council could be presented with the topic, vote to come to a democratic consensus, then provide this outcome as recommendations to Council, similar to officer recommendations.

Work to establish the Youth Council would begin in January 2026, and by June 2026 the group would begin meeting formally and informing decisions of Council. The group would then continue for a term of two years, with robust progress and outcome evaluations in place.

Council could look to build on learnings to strengthen the next iteration of the Youth Council (pending its outcomes), and by that time may have acquired additional funding and support to deliver a peer election.

Option 2: Establish a Macedon Ranges Youth Advisory Committee

As an alternative model to a Youth Council, a Youth Advisory Committee could be established. This could be the re-establishment of Leaders in the Loop as it existed previously, or a similar group with a revised structure, purpose, and identity.

The establishment of an Advisory Committee would have to be a decision of Council.

Officers would conduct recruitment to the group through EOI, shortlisting and interview processes. Then the newly formed group would establish its structure, name and purpose together. As per usual governance processes, there would also be Councillors represented on the advisory committee.

Option 3: Continue current operational youth service functions with a focus on youth engagement.

Council's Youth Engagement and Development team already focuses on delivering programs and activities that support young people. These include a focus on youth leadership and youth engagement. Officers can build more focus on the aims articulated in this report in the delivery of these programs and activities in lieu of a more formal structure.

Consultation and engagement

This proposal is informed by:

- Outcomes of an internal evaluation into Leaders In The Loop which identified potential areas for growth.
- Benchmarking of other LGAs offering similar programs, as well as a similar program delivered by the office of Mary-Anne Thomas MP.
- Feedback from stakeholders, such as the Foundation for Young Australians and Youth Affairs Council Victoria.

Collaboration

Collaboration is not required in relation to this report, however, would be essential to delivering its recommendations.

Innovation and continuous improvement

The creation of a Youth Council or Youth Advisory Committee represents an opportunity for young people in the Macedon Ranges to participate in decision-making. The broadening of Council's decision-making to this new and formalised cohort represents an opportunity for innovation in Council engagement processes.

The recommended initiative would be routinely evaluated, and learnings utilised to strengthen its outcomes over time.

Relevant law

The *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* sets child safe standards, which are the minimum standards for Council to adhere to when providing services to children and young people.

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires councils to adopt a community engagement policy and use deliberative practices for the Community Vision, Council Plan, Financial and Asset Plans—this sets the standard for authentic youth participation in Council decision making.

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment has been conducted in relation to the subject matter of this report.

The Gender Impact Assessment identified that if a Youth Council or Youth Advisory Committee were established, the following actions would support it to have a positive gender impact:

- Provide tailored support through recruitment stages to young people of all genders and demographics.
- Ensure balanced staff representation in engagements with the program.
- Communicate meeting dates, times, and locations in advance.
- Create and enforce group rules, including hearing all opinions, managing differences in opinions, discouraging disruption, etc.

- Introduce accessibility measures to assist participants with language/communication barriers.
- Ensure spaces are welcoming and inclusive.
- Wherever possible, all-gender bathrooms are available at locations utilised.
- Staff to supervise young people departing meetings and events to carpark(s) and ensure all participants have a plan for getting home.

Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies**Engage! – the Australian Government’s Youth Engagement Strategy (2024)**

Sets out how the Commonwealth will recognise, empower and work with young people across policy and programs.

Victoria’s Youth Strategy 2022–2027 – Our promise, Your future

Whole-of-government youth agenda with priorities across health, safety, education, work, civic participation.

Relevant Council plans and policies

Establishing a youth representation group is aligned to:

- **Shaping the Ranges 2025-2035**
The delivery of a youth representation group would align with the following priorities under the theme ‘Our People’ and ‘Our Performance’:
 - Enable people of all ages and backgrounds, especially those with lived experience, to lead, participate and shape local decisions.
 - Deliver inclusive, accessible and culturally safe services and spaces that support participation, reduce discrimination and reflect our diverse community.
 - Our community experiences customer interactions that are positive, meaningful and accessible and help to shape our organisation’s priorities.
- **Elevate - Youth Strategy 2018-2028**
The proposal aligns with Council’s *Youth Strategy 2012-2028: ELEVATE*, actioning its strategic goals; specifically, the area of young people being ‘Embraced and Heard’.
- **Community Engagement Policy 2022**
Children and young people are one of the key stakeholders mentioned in Council’s Community Engagement Policy. A youth representation group would meet multiple principles and fit the intention within this, including:
 - Principle 3. Participants in community engagement must be representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter that is the subject of the community engagement.
- **Funded programs and impactful engagement:**
The proposed youth representation group is aligned with deliverables within the Victorian Local Government Partnership Program funded by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, specifically its objective to ‘Include children and young people in policy creation’. Council is funded under this program until December 2025.

Climate Impact Assessment

How will the recommendation impact on Council's energy usage and greenhouse emissions profile? Not applicable

How will the recommendations mitigate risks posed by climate change to Council operations and services? Providing a formal platform for young people to voice their opinions may prove to be of benefit to Macedon Ranges climate initiatives and knowledge.

How will the recommendation help to prepare the community for future climate scenarios? By giving a formal voice to young people to share their opinions on a variety of topics, Council can be better informed by climate concerns and potential solutions proposed by young people from the shire.

Financial viability

The proposed recommendation can be accommodated within Council's adopted annual budget.

External funding opportunities to expand and strengthen the program will be proactively sought by officers.

Sustainability implications

The proposed Youth Council aims to support the sustainable integration of young people's perspectives into Council decision-making, to better inform Council services and spaces.

Becoming a Youth Councillor or Youth Advisory Committee member provides young people with significant leadership and decision-making professional and personal development opportunities, helping those involved form skillsets that will aid them in their future or current career paths.

Officer declaration of conflicts of interest

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the subject matter.

15 NOTICES OF MOTION AND RESCISSION

No. 8/2025-26:	NOTICE OF MOTION - LEAVE OF ABSENCE - SIX MONTHS (UNPAID)
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I, Councillor Dominic Bonanno, give notice that at the next Meeting of Council to be held on 26 November 2025, I intend to move the following motion:

That Council:

- 1. Approves a leave of absence of six months for myself, Cr Dom Bonanno, for the period commencing Wednesday 26 November 2025 until Monday 25 May 2026 in accordance with Section 35(4) of the Local Government Act 2020, and**
- 2. Notes that I, Cr Dom Bonanno, will not receive a Councillor allowance during this time.**

Background

Cr Bonanno has advised the Chief Executive Officer and Councillors that he is seeking an extended period of unpaid leave for personal reasons.

The requested leave ensures clarity under section 35 of the Local Government Act 2020 regarding attendance requirements, and provides certainty for Council, the community, and the organisation regarding the timing of the leave and expected return of Cr Bonanno to duties.

No. 9/2025-26: NOTICE OF MOTION - DISTINCTIVE AREA AND LANDSCAPE

I, Councillor Jennifer Anderson, give notice that at the next Meeting of Council to be held on 26 November 2025, I intend to move the following motion:

That Council:

- 1. Writes to the Hon. Sonya Kilkeny, Minister for Planning, requesting she undertake a planning scheme amendment to include the Macedon Ranges Statement of Planning Policy 2019 into the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme as an incorporated document and embed in the State Planning Policy Framework with existing state and local planning policies, zones overlays and particular provisions that apply to land within the declared area. The amendment should include reference to the binding objectives, particularly those listed as the highest priority represented in the landscape domain, the biodiversity and environment domain, and the water catchments and supply domain. Inclusion in the planning scheme is essential to give effect to the declared status of Macedon Ranges as a Distinctive Area and Landscape and ensure the Statement of Planning Policy delivers its intended protections for the shire's unique character and landscapes.**
- 2. Requests the CEO to continue to advocate to the Department of Transport and Planning to support the amendment process.**
- 3. Provide a copy of the letter to Mary Anne Thomas MP and to Bass Coast Shire Council, Surf Coast Shire Council, Borough of Queenscliffe and Greater Geelong City Council.**

16 URGENT BUSINESS

17 CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS**Recommendation**

That pursuant to section 66(1) and (2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council closes the meeting to the public to consider the confidential report(s) listed below, which are confidential on grounds provided in Section 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*:

17.1 Acquisition of Land - 158 Hamilton Road New Gisborne

17.2 CEO Employment and Remuneration

Confidential reasons**17.1 Acquisition of Land - 158 Hamilton Road New Gisborne**

This matter is considered to be confidential under Section 3(1) - g(ii) of the Local Government Act, and the Council is satisfied that discussion of this matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest as it deals with private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

Contains information on land aquisition.

17.2 CEO Employment and Remuneration

This matter is considered to be confidential under Section 3(1) - f of the Local Government Act, and the Council is satisfied that discussion of this matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest as it deals with personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs.

Contains confidential information regarding the Cheif Executive Officer's employment.