

# Agenda

**Council Meeting**  
**Wednesday 18 June 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**

<b>6.1</b>	<b>PETITION IN RELATION TO SPEED REDUCTION ON CABBAGE TREE LANE, GISBORNE SOUTH</b>
<b>Officer:</b>	<b>Lucy Olson, Senior Governance Officer - Council Business</b>
<b>Council Plan relationship:</b>	<b>4. Delivering strong and reliable government</b>

**Summary**

A petition has been received from Jane Brook in Gisborne South on behalf of 20 residents stating:

“Mayor and Councillors of the Macedon Ranges Shire Council, we the undersigned, petition Macedon Ranges Shire Council as of Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March to reduce the speed limit on Cabage Tree Lane, Gisborne South.”

**Recommendation****That Council:**

- 1. Notes the petition from Jane Brook on the matter of a speed reduction for Cabbage Tree Lane, Gisborne South with 20 signatories;**
- 2. Notes that the petition has been circulated to all Councillors confidentially as it contains personal information; and**
- 3. Requests the CEO to prepare a report in response to this petition to be presented at the 23 July 2025 meeting of Council.**

**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 28 May 2025, as circulated.**

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**9 MAYOR'S REPORT****9.1 MAYOR'S REPORT - MAY-JUNE 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.**

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**Mayor's report**

The crisp winter days have arrived in the Macedon Ranges and with it, some welcome rain. Even though the rain may be late for the Autumn growing season, I do hope at the very least, water tanks and dams have water in them now and our farming community can rest a little easier.

I write a little easier above because Council understands it is still a very tough environment for our farming community, having to feed livestock or make the decision to sell, which many have already. The two locally based livestock agents, Nutrien and Elders, have both reported huge increases in farmers selling cattle and sheep that will take many years to recover when the drought breaks.

When farmers are doing it tough, it is important that we all, as a community, reach out to them and ensure they know they are valued and an integral part of our community. We don't need a special day to ask someone, are you ok? We should be asking that question regularly to our loved ones and even with people we might not know very well. That is exactly what Council staff and Councillors will do/did on 15 June in Newham at our ESVF Levy and Dry Conditions Community Session.

**Councillor Listening Posts**

The South Ward Councillors hosted a listening post at Mr Café in Macedon on 29 May. The West Ward Councillors then hosted a listening post at Nellie's Shed in Woodend on 30 May. It was a wonderful opportunity for residents to introduce themselves to their Ward Councillors and discuss a range of prominent issues.

**Woodend Winter Arts Festival**

The Woodend Winter Arts Festival now attracts more than 5000 visitors and has grown to a program of more than 30 events over the June (King's Birthday) long weekend bringing acclaimed Australian and international talent to our beautiful home, the Macedon Ranges. This year marked the 20th year of the festival so congratulations to the organisers and thank you for your dedication and commitment to this wonderful home-grown event.

**Telstra Macedon Ranges Community Choice Awards**

The Telstra Macedon Ranges Community Choice Award winners will be announced on 17 June and due to the deadline of this written report, I'm unable to share the winners with you but will do so verbally on the evening. Congratulations to all who were nominated and the winners.

**Events**

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

- 29 May South Ward Councillor listening post
- 29 May Braemar College AGM
- 30 May West Ward Councillor listening post
- 31 May Live4Life Annual Dinner
- 2 June Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Smoking Ceremony
- 3 June Dja Dja Wurrung Smoking Ceremony
- 7 June Celebration Ranges Cultural Centre
- 10 June Kyneton Racecourse Reserve AGM
- 11 June Audit & Risk Committee meeting
- 11 June Meeting with Lisa Chesters MP
- 12 June Councillor Field Trip
- 12 June Workspace Board Meeting
- 13 June Loddon Campaspe Group of Councils meeting
- 14 June Official Opening event Woodend Netball Court Development project
- 15 June Elder Abuse Awareness Day
- 15 June ESVF Levy and Dry Conditions Community Session
- 18 June CBA Regional Economic Development Circle

#### Current Community Consultation

Be sure to visit our <http://yoursay.mrsc.vic.gov.au> website and join/log in to provide feedback:

- Pedestrian and Road Safety Improvements – Council is dedicated to improving road safety for all users and on this page, you'll find a map with a list of categories and each project. You can browse through the list to view detailed information about each project and have your say!
- 89 Ross Watt Road Development Plan – Otherwise known as Rosalia in Gisborne was originally approved at the direction of VCAT on 19 July 2023. There are several changes being sought and Council is preparing for a hearing on the proposed amended development plans and there is an opportunity for community members to lodge a submission by Tuesday 24 June 2025.

Thank you and see you around the Shire!

**Mayor Bonanno**

**Macedon Ranges Shire Council**

**10 RECORD OF MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS AND COUNCIL STAFF****10.1 RECORD OF MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS AND COUNCIL STAFF - MAY-JUNE 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	Council Briefing
Date and time	27 May 2025 9:30am
Venue	Gisborne Administration Centre 40 Robertson Street, Gisborne
Present - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cr Dominic Bonanno (Mayor)</li> <li>• Cr Kate Kendall (Deputy Mayor)</li> <li>• Cr Jennifer Anderson</li> <li>• Cr Cassy Borthwick</li> <li>• Cr Alison Joseph</li> <li>• Cr Janet Pearce</li> <li>• Cr Andrew Scanlon</li> <li>• Cr Christine Walker</li> <li>• Cr Daniel Young</li> </ul>
Apologies - Councillors	Nil
Present - officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bernie O'Sullivan (Chief Executive Officer)</li> <li>• Rebecca Stockfeld (Director Planning and Environment)</li> <li>• Maria Weiss (Director Community)</li> <li>• Adele Drago-Stevens (Director Corporate)</li> <li>• Dominic Testoni (Director Assets and Operations)</li> <li>• Jessica Clarke-Hong (Manager Governance and Performance)</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Karen Curson (Manager Community Services)</li> <li>• Adele Hayes (Manager Statutory Planning)</li> <li>• Travis Harling (Manager Finance and Reporting)</li> <li>• Travis Fitzgibbon (Manager Communications and Advocacy)</li> <li>• Bodey Dittloff (Coordinator Communications)</li> <li>• Verity Games (Coordinator Statutory Planning and Subdivisions)</li> <li>• Rees May (Coordinator Statutory Planning and Compliance)</li> <li>• Samantha Waymouth (Coordinator early Years Services)</li> <li>• Lucy Olson (Senior Governance Officer)</li> <li>• Sarah Day (Early Years' Service Planner)</li> </ul>
Apologies officers	Nil
Externals	Nil
Items discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic direction setting for kindergarten - background and local context</li> <li>• Planning Permit Applications and VCAT 2025 Update</li> <li>• Budget 2025/26 Update</li> <li>• Councillor Community Engagement</li> <li>• Planning Matters</li> <li>• Council Meeting Agenda Review – 28 May 2025</li> <li>• Other Business</li> </ul>
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>Cr Anderson general conflict with PLN/2015/2014 – Davy Street, Woodend in Planning Matters due to connections with objectors.</p> <p>Did they leave the meeting? Yes, 11:58am - 12:03pm</p>
Conflicts of interest declared by officers	<p>Nil</p> <p>Did they leave the meeting? N/A</p>

Type of meeting	Council Briefing
Date and time	3 June 2025 9:30am
Venue	Gisborne Administration Centre 40 Robertson Street, Gisborne
Present - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cr Dominic Bonanno (Mayor)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cr Kate Kendall (Deputy Mayor)</li> <li>• Cr Jennifer Anderson</li> <li>• Cr Cassy Borthwick</li> <li>• Cr Alison Joseph</li> <li>• Cr Janet Pearce</li> <li>• Cr Andrew Scanlon</li> <li>• Cr Christine Walker</li> <li>• Cr Daniel Young</li> </ul>
Apologies - Councillors	Nil
Present - officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bernie O'Sullivan (Chief Executive Officer)</li> <li>• Rebecca Stockfeld (Director Planning and Environment)</li> <li>• Maria Weiss (Director Community)</li> <li>• Adele Drago-Stevens (Director Corporate)</li> <li>• Dominic Testoni (Director Assets and Operations)</li> <li>• Jessica Clarke-Hong (Manager Governance and Performance)</li> <li>• Travis Harling (Manager Finance and Reporting)</li> <li>• Daniel Grigson (Manager Engineering and Asset Services)</li> <li>• Travis Fitzgibbon (Manager Communications and Advocacy)</li> <li>• Adele Hayes (Manager Statutory Planning)</li> <li>• Rob Ball (Manager Strategic Planning and environment)</li> <li>• Amy Holmes (Manager Community Strengthening)</li> <li>• Jade McBurnie (Coordinator Community and Social Planning)</li> <li>• Alison Elliott (Acting Coordinator Performance and Assurance)</li> <li>• Cherry Stojanovic (Coordinator Governance)</li> <li>• Caitlyn Royce (Coordinator Creative and Connected Communities)</li> <li>• Ben Champion (Coordinator Strategic Planning)</li> <li>• Lucy Olson (Senior Governance Officer)</li> <li>• Zoe Hardiman (Business Support Officer)</li> </ul>
Apologies officers	Nil

Externals	Nil
Items discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated Strategic Plan Update - Final draft plans and overview of public consultation process</li> <li>• Meeting Procedure Workshop 1</li> <li>• Draft Reconciliation Plan</li> <li>• Planning Matters</li> <li>• Council Meeting June 2025 Preview Agenda Review</li> <li>• Other Business</li> </ul>
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 Did they leave the meeting? N/A
Conflicts of interest declared by officers	Nil Did they leave the meeting? N/A

Type of meeting	Council Briefing
Date and time	10 June 2025 9:30am
Venue	Gisborne Administration Centre 40 Robertson Street, Gisborne
Present - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cr Kate Kendall (Deputy Mayor)</li> <li>• Cr Jennifer Anderson</li> <li>• Cr Cassy Borthwick</li> <li>• Cr Alison Joseph</li> <li>• Cr Janet Pearce</li> <li>• Cr Andrew Scanlon</li> <li>• Cr Christine Walker</li> <li>• Cr Daniel Young</li> </ul>
Apologies - Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cr Dominic Bonanno (Mayor)</li> </ul>
Present - officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bernie O'Sullivan (Chief Executive Officer)</li> <li>• Rebecca Stockfeld (Director Planning and Environment)</li> <li>• Maria Weiss (Director Community)</li> <li>• Adele Drago-Stevens (Director Corporate)</li> <li>• Dominic Testoni (Director Assets and Operations)</li> <li>• Jessica Clarke-Hong (Manager Governance and Performance)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travis Harling (Manager Finance and Reporting)</li> <li>• Lucy Olson (Senior Governance Officer)</li> <li>• Zoe Hardiman (Business Support Officer)</li> </ul>
Apologies officers	Nil
Externals	Nil
Items discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget 2025/26 Update</li> <li>• Council's Policies, Plans and Strategies – Update</li> <li>• Integrated Strategic Planning Update - Next Steps for Finalising the 'Shaping the Ranges 2025-2035' Council Plan</li> <li>• Other Business</li> </ul>
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 Did they leave the meeting? N/A
Conflicts of interest declared by officers	Nil Did they leave the meeting? N/A

**11 DIRECTOR CORPORATE REPORTS**

<b>COR.1</b>	<b>REVENUE AND RATING PLAN</b>
<b>Officer:</b>	<b>Travis Harling, Manager Finance and Reporting</b>
<b>Council Plan relationship:</b>	<b>4. Delivering strong and reliable government</b>
<b>Attachments:</b>	<b>Draft Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029 <a href="#">↓</a></b>

**Summary**

The Revenue and Rating Plan is a requirement under section 93 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and must be reviewed and adopted following each general election. This updated four-year Plan outlines Council's approach to generating revenue through property rates, waste charges, fees, grants and other sources to support delivery of the Council Plan, services and capital works.

Targeted community consultation was undertaken in early 2025 as part of Council's Integrated Strategic Planning Framework process. This included a set of specific questions aimed at informing the development of the revised Plan and understanding community perspectives on rating equity and revenue priorities.

The updated Revenue and Rating Plan 2025–2029 has been developed with Councillors and feedback from the community and provides a clear and transparent framework for revenue decisions over the next four years.

This report recommends that Council formally adopts the Plan in accordance with legislative requirements.

**Recommendation****That Council:**

- 1. Adopts the Rating and Revenue Plan 2025-2029.**
- 2. Gives public notice of its decision to adopt the Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029.**
- 3. Makes the Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029 available to the public at Council Offices and Service Centres and on Council's website.**

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**Background**

Under section 93 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council is required to prepare a Revenue and Rating Plan by 30 June following a general election. The Plan must cover a period of four financial years and outlines how Council intends to raise revenue and apply the rating structure over that period to fund services, programs and infrastructure.

The Plan forms a key part of Council's Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework and must align with the Council Plan, Financial Plan and annual Budget. It includes policy decisions on rates, service charges, fees and other revenue streams, and provides the medium-term financial strategy that supports Council's financial sustainability.

## Discussion

Council delivers a broad range of services and infrastructure to the community and requires a clear and balanced approach to revenue generation to maintain service levels and invest in community assets. This need is heightened under the constraints of the *Fair Go Rates System* (FGRS), which limits Council's capacity to raise general rates beyond the annual rate cap without approval from the Essential Services Commission.

In developing the Revenue and Rating Plan 2025–2029, Council undertook targeted consultation as part of its broader integrated strategic planning process. This included engagement activities, and a set of targeted questions aimed at understanding community views on rating equity and revenue priorities. Feedback from this process has directly informed the updated Plan.

This Plan builds on the principles of fairness, transparency and sustainability, setting a clear direction for how Council will fund its priorities over the next four years. Adoption of the Plan ensures compliance with legislative requirements and supports the ongoing delivery of Council's strategic objectives.

The Plan outlines Council's medium-term approach to generating income to support the delivery of the Council Plan, services, programs, and capital works over the next four years. It identifies all revenue sources, the amount expected to be raised from each, and the policy rationale or assumptions behind them. Key components include:

- Property rates, including the application of any differential rates
- Fixed service charges (e.g. waste and recycling)
- Fees and charges for services, guided by cost recovery and equity principles
- Operational and capital grants (recurrent and non-recurrent) from other levels of government
- Developer contributions and other externally sourced income
- Revenue from the use or allocation of Council assets, including discount and waiver policies
- Income from entrepreneurial or collaborative activities aimed at generating revenue or reducing costs.

## Consultation and engagement

Community and internal engagement were undertaken as part of Council's integrated strategic planning process to inform the development of the Revenue and Rating Plan.

## Collaboration

The Revenue and Rating Plan was developed through a series of internal workshops with Councillors, supported by an external consultant. While direct collaboration with other councils, government agencies or statutory bodies was not required for this report, a benchmarking assessment of other councils was undertaken and informed the development of rating categories and their application.

## Innovation and continuous improvement

The development of the Revenue and Rating Plan reflects Council's commitment to continuous improvement through evidence-based decision-making and good governance. The process included a benchmarking assessment of other councils to ensure alignment with sector practice, along with expert advice from an external consultant to support best-practice design and implementation. The Plan was also informed by Councillor input across

a series of dedicated workshops and targeted community consultation to ensure relevance and transparency.

### Relevant law

This report has been prepared in accordance with section 93 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, which requires Council to develop and adopt a Revenue and Rating Plan for a minimum of four years following a general election. The Plan must align with Council's Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework and is informed by the financial and rating provisions of both the *Local Government Act 1989* and the *Valuation of Land Act 1960*, which remain applicable to rating methodologies.

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment has been undertaken to ensure the Revenue and Rating Plan reflects the diverse financial realities and experiences within the community. The assessment identified opportunities to enhance equity through the following recommendations:

#### 1. Embed Equity into All Rating and Revenue Decisions

- Purpose: Reduce disadvantage by aligning revenue policies with the varied financial realities of our community.
- Application: This principle could guide updates to rating categories, hardship support criteria, and the development of flexible payment structures to better respond to the needs of financially vulnerable groups.

#### 2. Ensure Financial Information and Supports Are Inclusive and Accessible

- Purpose: Improve community understanding and engagement by making financial content clear, inclusive, and safe.
- Application: Implementation may involve using plain language in all communications, offering information in multilingual formats, and ensuring accessibility through trusted, non-digital channels.

#### 3. Strengthen Data and Support Systems to Address Financial Vulnerability

- Purpose: Enable early intervention and informed decision-making through better data, insights, and access to support.
- Application: This could lead to targeted investment in data-informed analysis and outreach initiatives, particularly to support carers, low-income households, and other at-risk groups.

These actions aim to ensure the Revenue and Rating Plan supports equitable access to Council services and contributes to a more inclusive and financially resilient community.

### Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies

The Revenue and Rating Plan has been developed in alignment with the following:

- *Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)* – which establishes requirements for financial management, transparency and strategic planning, including the preparation of a four-year Revenue and Rating Plan.
- Fair Go Rates System (FGRS) – Victorian Government policy limiting annual rate increases to ensure affordability for ratepayers.
- State Revenue Office Guidelines – relevant to the administration of pensioner concessions and hardship relief.

- Victorian Local Government Rating System Review (2020) – informs good practice rating structures and taxation principles.
- Local Government Better Practice Guide: Revenue and Rating Strategy (2014) – provides guidance on equity, transparency, and consistency in rating policy.

These frameworks ensure the Plan supports sound financial decision-making, equitable distribution of the rating burden, and alignment with broader state financial policies.

### **Relevant Council plans and policies**

The Revenue and Rating Plan supports the delivery of the Council Plan, particularly in the areas of sound financial management, community wellbeing and sustainable infrastructure. It aligns with Council's 10-Year Financial Plan, Annual Budget, and Community Engagement Policy, forming a key pillar of Council's Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework.

#### **Climate Impact Assessment**

How will the recommendation impact on Council's energy usage and greenhouse emissions profile? The Revenue and Rating Plan does not directly impact Council's operational energy usage or emissions. However, revenue raised through the Plan enables ongoing investment in emissions reduction initiatives, energy-efficient infrastructure, and climate-resilient assets.

How will the recommendations mitigate risks posed by climate change to Council operations and services? The Plan ensures Council can continue to resource services and projects that build community and infrastructure resilience to climate impacts, such as extreme weather events, through sustainable financial planning.

How will the recommendation help to prepare the community for future climate scenarios? By supporting funding certainty, the Plan helps Council deliver programs under the Zero Net Emissions Plan, Counting Down to Zero, and the Climate Emergency Plan, including community education, energy transition, and environmentally sustainable infrastructure upgrades.

### **Financial viability**

Adoption of the Revenue and Rating Plan will ensure a clear and sustainable framework for generating the income required to fund Council services, infrastructure and asset renewal over the next four years. It supports financial viability by providing predictability in revenue streams, aligning with the 10-Year Financial Plan and enabling informed resource allocation.

There are no direct IT or asset management implications arising from the adoption of the Plan. Any future changes to rating structures or revenue policy will be managed within existing operational budgets.

### **Sustainability implications**

The Revenue and Rating Plan supports social and environmental sustainability by enabling consistent funding for essential services, community programs and infrastructure maintenance. It ensures equitable revenue collection, with differential rates and rebates designed to support ratepayers experiencing hardship or disadvantage.

Environmentally, the Plan helps maintain Council's ability to invest in climate resilience initiatives, sustainable waste services and energy-efficient infrastructure. No negative sustainability impacts are anticipated as a result of adopting the Plan.



**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.

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# Revenue and Rating Plan

2025-2029

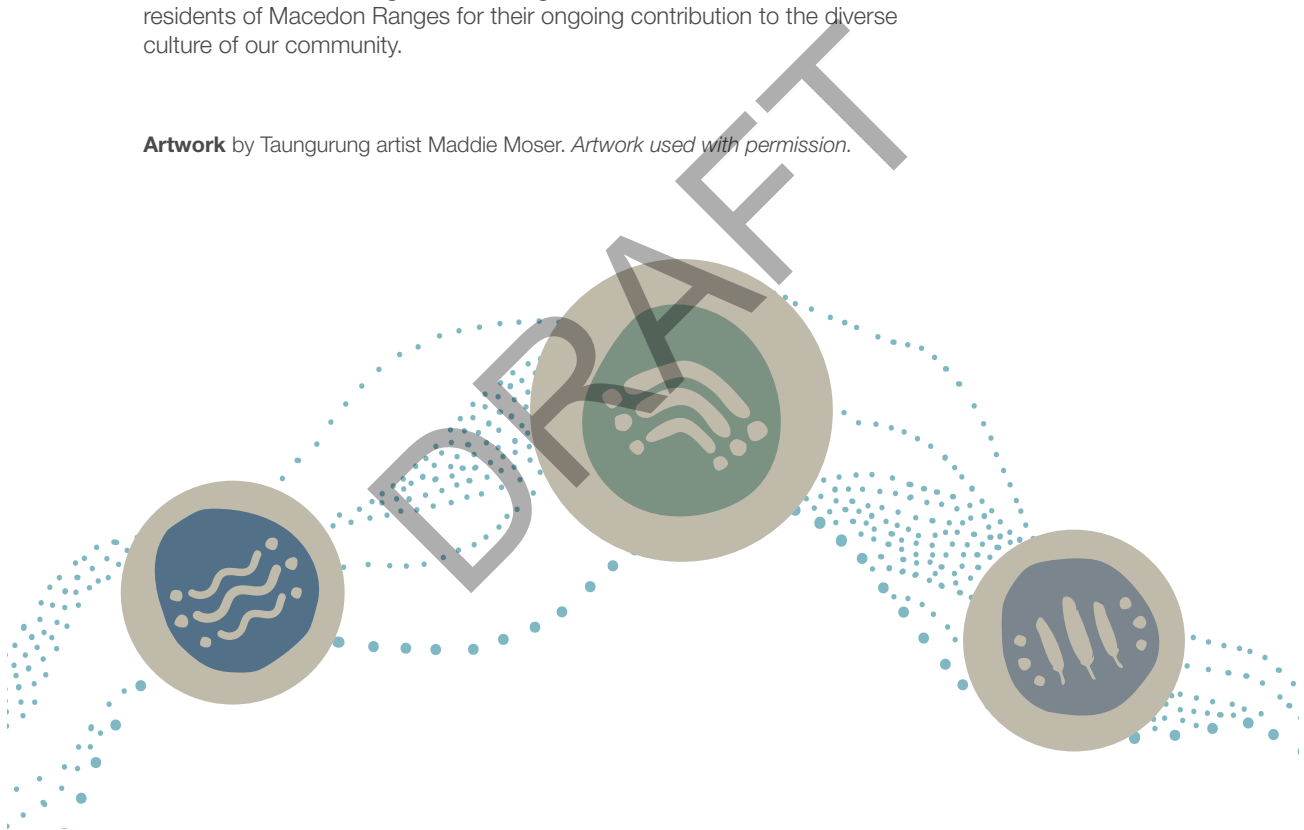


## Acknowledgement of Country

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.

**Artwork** by Taungurung artist Maddie Moser. *Artwork used with permission.*



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## 1 Executive Summary

The Revenue and Rating Plan (the Plan) is a four-year plan that outlines Macedon Ranges Shire Council's decision-making process on how revenues are calculated and collected, and is a requirement of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The Plan has been discussed with Councillors through a series of workshops held between March and May 2025.

No changes are proposed to the structure and level of rates and charges for the 2025-29 Plan, compared with the previous 2021-25 Plan, as Council believes the current structure continues to provide a fair and equitable distribution of the rating burden across the different types or classes of land.

Council proposes to review the agricultural land properties over the life of the Plan to ensure that the activities carried out on the land are consistent with those defined as a Primary Producer, and also proposes to continue working with landowners of some land within the shire that is not able to be developed under the Macedon Ranges Shire Planning Scheme to transfer ownership and preserve these allotments for conservation purposes where possible.

Finally, the Victorian Government is expected to release updated Ministerial Guidelines on the payment of rates and charges under the *Local Government Act 1989*, with a focus on financial hardship provisions. These guidelines, anticipated later in 2025, aim to standardise councils' approaches to supporting ratepayers experiencing financial hardship.

Council may need to review and potentially revise this Plan, and hardship policies, to align with the new guidelines. Further details, including the impact of the changes, is discussed within this Plan, in 'Appendix A' on page 25.

No changes are proposed to the policies for other revenue sources covered by this Plan.



## 2 Purpose

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires each council to prepare a Revenue and Rating Plan to cover a minimum period of four years following each Council election. The Plan establishes the revenue-raising framework within which Council proposes to work.

The purpose of the Plan is to determine the most appropriate and affordable revenue and rating approach for the Macedon Ranges Shire Council (Council), which in conjunction with other income sources, will adequately finance the objectives in the Council Plan (Shaping the Ranges).

The Plan is part of Council's Integrated Strategic Planning Framework as set out in the following diagram.

Figure 1. Integrated Strategic Planning Framework



The strategies outlined in this Plan align with the objectives contained in the Council Plan and feed into Council's Budget and Financial Plan, as well as other strategic planning documents.

This Plan explains how Council calculates the revenue needed to fund its activities, and how the funding burden will be apportioned between ratepayers and other users of Council facilities and services.

In particular, this Plan sets out decisions that Council has made in relation to rating options available to it under the *Local Government Act 2020* to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of rates across property owners. It also sets out principles that are used in decision-making for other revenue sources such as fees and charges. The Plan does not set revenue targets.

DRAFT



### 3 Introduction

Council provides a number of services and facilities to its local community, and in doing so, must collect revenue to cover the cost of providing these services and facilities.

#### 3.1 Revenue Sources

Figure 2 shows a breakup of the revenue Council uses to fund services and facilities for the Macedon Ranges community. The total revenue for the 2024-25 year is budgeted to be \$120 million with the major components being rates and charges at \$64 million (54%) and government grants at \$29 million (24%).

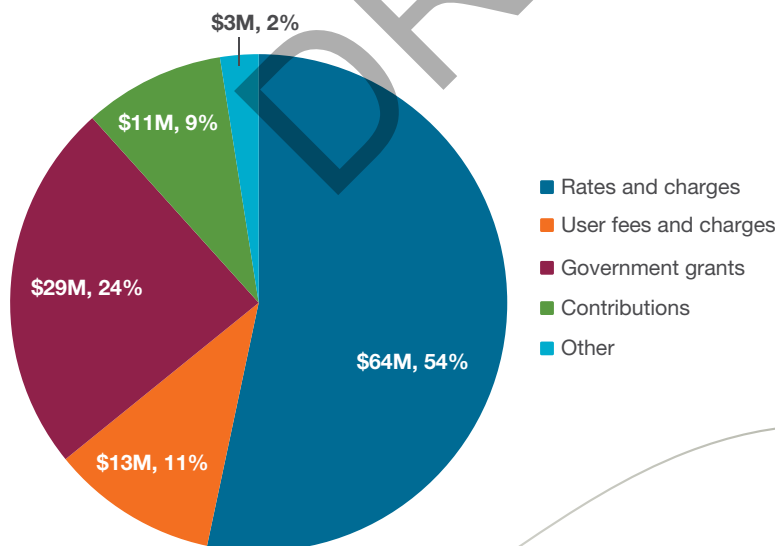
Grants includes \$10 million in regard to capital expenditure projects, and contributions includes non-monetary contributions of \$8 million relating to infrastructure assets to be gifted to Council during the year at no cost.

#### 3.2 Revenue Requirements

The Plan is a medium-term plan for how Council will generate income to deliver on the Council Plan, programs and services, and capital works commitments over the next four years. In determining its revenue requirements, Council has identified what each source of revenue is, how much will be raised in each class, and the policy rationale/assumptions for each. In doing this, Council has given consideration to:

- how revenue will be generated through rates on properties (including differential rates [if any] on different property classes)
- fixed service charges that might be applied on services such as waste or recycling
- fees and charges for services and programs including cost recovery policies, user charges and means testing

**Figure 2. Budget 2024-25**  
(Numbers are shown in millions)



- recurrent and non-recurrent operational and capital grants from other levels of government
- developer contributions and other revenue
- revenue generated from the use or allocation of Council assets (including the application of discounts and waivers)
- entrepreneurial, business, or collaborative activities established to deliver programs or services and generate income or reduce costs.

### 3.3 Revenue Balance

Council provides public goods and services, private goods and services, and a mix of both to the community. In determining if services should be funded through rates and charges or other revenue sources such as user charges, Council considers whether services are either entirely or partially public goods. That is, where a service provides a broad benefit to the whole community, then it will be mostly funded from rates. Where individual or groups of ratepayers receive a particular benefit, then the service will be mostly funded from user charges.

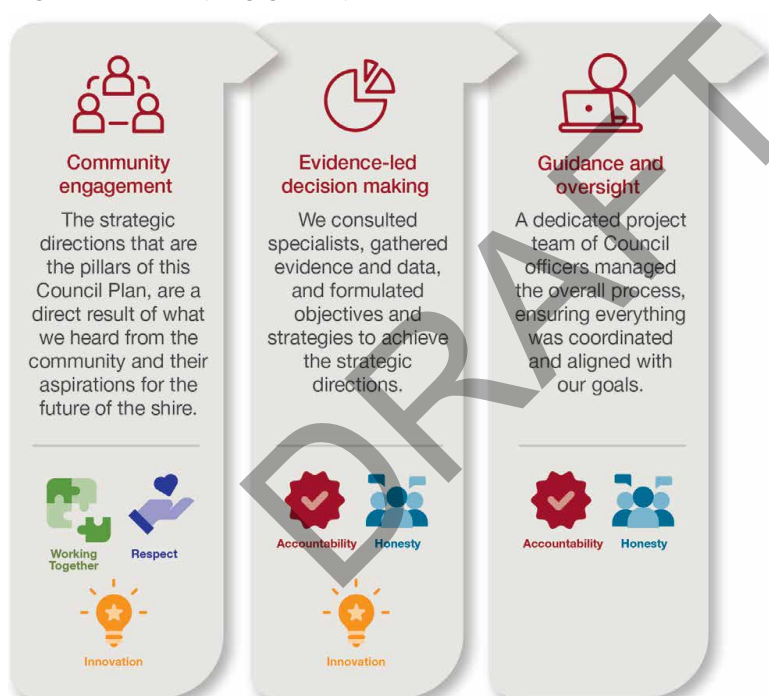


## 4 Community Engagement

The Plan outlines Council's decision-making process on how revenues are calculated and collected. The following public consultation process will be followed to ensure due consideration and feedback is received from relevant stakeholders.

Consultation on the Plan, and feedback on specific priorities for the plan, were sought as part of the 'Shaping the Ranges' Integrated Strategic Planning consultation, which ran from February to March 2025.

**Figure 3.** Community engagement process for the Plan





## 5 Legislative Framework

The legislative framework as it applies to the raising of revenue including the levying of rates and charges by Council includes the *Local Government Act 2020* (including subordinate legislation, guidelines etc.) and the *Valuation of Land Act 1960*. The rates and charges provisions are as per the previous *Local Government Act 1989* including recent amendments made by the *Local Government Legislation Amendment (Rating and Other Matters) Act 2022*.

### 5.1 Local Government Act 2020

#### Section 8 Role of a Council

The role of a Council is to provide good governance in its municipal district for the benefit and wellbeing of the municipal community.

#### Section 9 Overarching Governance Principles

A Council must in the performance of its role give effect to the overarching governance principles. Relevant overarching governance principles include:

- Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.
- The economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district is to be promoted.
- The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making.
- The ongoing financial viability of Council is to be ensured.

In giving effect to the overarching governance principles, a Council must take into account the financial management principles.

#### Section 101 Financial Management Principles

Relevant financial management principles include:

- Revenue, expenses, assets, liabilities, investments and financial transactions must be managed in accordance with a Council's financial policies and strategic plans.
- Financial policies and strategic plans, including the Revenue and Rating Plan, must seek to provide stability and predictability in the financial impact on the municipal community.

#### Section 94 The Budget

Council must adopt a budget by 30 June each year (or at another time fixed by the Minister) to include the following:

- The total amount that Council intends to raise by rates and charges.
- A statement as to whether the rates will be raised by the application of a uniform rate or a differential rate.
- A description of any fixed component of the rates, if applicable.
- If Council proposes to declare a uniform rate, the matters specified in section 160 of the *Local Government Act 1989*.
- If Council proposes to declare a differential rate for any land, the matters specified in section 161(2) of the *Local Government Act 1989*.



Council must ensure that, if applicable, the budget also contains a statement:

- that Council intends to apply for a special order to increase Council's average rate cap for the financial year or any other financial year; or
- that Council has made an application to the ESC for a special order and is waiting for the outcome of the application; or
- that a special Order has been made in respect of Council and specifying the average rate cap that applies for the financial year or any other financial year.

## 5.2 Local Government Act 1989

### Section 155 Charges that may be Declared

A council may declare the following rates and charges on rateable land:

- General rates
- Municipal charges
- Service rates and charges
- Special rates and charges

### Section 157 System of Valuing Land

A council may use the site value, net annual value or capital improved value system of valuation. For the purposes of calculating the site value, net annual value or capital improved value of rateable land, a council must use the current valuations made in respect of the land under the *Valuation of Land Act 1960*.

## 5.3 Quantum of Rates and Charges

This Plan outlines the principles and strategic framework that Council will use in calculating and distributing the rating burden to property owners, however, the quantum of rate and charges revenue will be determined in the annual Budget.

## 5.4 Taxation Principles

The Victorian Government's Local Government Better Practice Guide: Revenue and Rating Strategy 2014 states that when developing a rating strategy, in particular with reference

to differential rates, Council should give consideration to the following key good practice taxation principles:

### Wealth Tax

The "wealth tax" principle implies that the rates paid are dependent upon the value of a ratepayer's real property and have no correlation to the individual ratepayer's consumption of services, or the perceived benefits derived by individual ratepayers from the expenditures funded from rates.

### Equity

Horizontal equity – ratepayers in similar situations should pay similar amounts of rates (ensured mainly by accurate property valuations, undertaken in a consistent manner, their classification into homogenous property classes and the right of appeal against valuation). Vertical equity – those who are better off should pay more rates than those worse off (the rationale applies for the use of progressive and proportional income taxation. It implies a 'relativity' dimension to the fairness of the tax burden).

### Efficiency

Economic efficiency is measured by the extent to which production and consumption decisions by people are affected by rates.

### Simplicity

How easily a rates system can be understood by ratepayers and the practicality and ease of administration.

### Benefit

The extent to which there is a nexus between consumption/benefit and the rate burden.

### Capacity to pay

The capacity of ratepayers or groups of ratepayers to pay rates.

### Diversity

The capacity of ratepayers within a group to pay rates.

### 5.5 Rate Capping

The Fair Go Rates System (FGRS) sets out the maximum amount councils may increase rates in a year. For the 2024-25 year the FGRS cap was set at 2.75%. For the 2025-26 year it has been set at 3.00%. The cap applies to both general rates and municipal charges and is calculated on the basis of a council's average rates and charges.

From the 2019 year, general revaluations of all properties have been undertaken on an annual basis. As a result, the actual rate increase for an individual rateable property may differ from the rate cap percentage due to changes in its valuation. Where the change in an individual property valuation is higher than the average for all rateable properties, the rate increase for that property may be greater than the cap. Where the change in the property valuation is lower than the average for all properties, the rate increase may be lower than the cap.

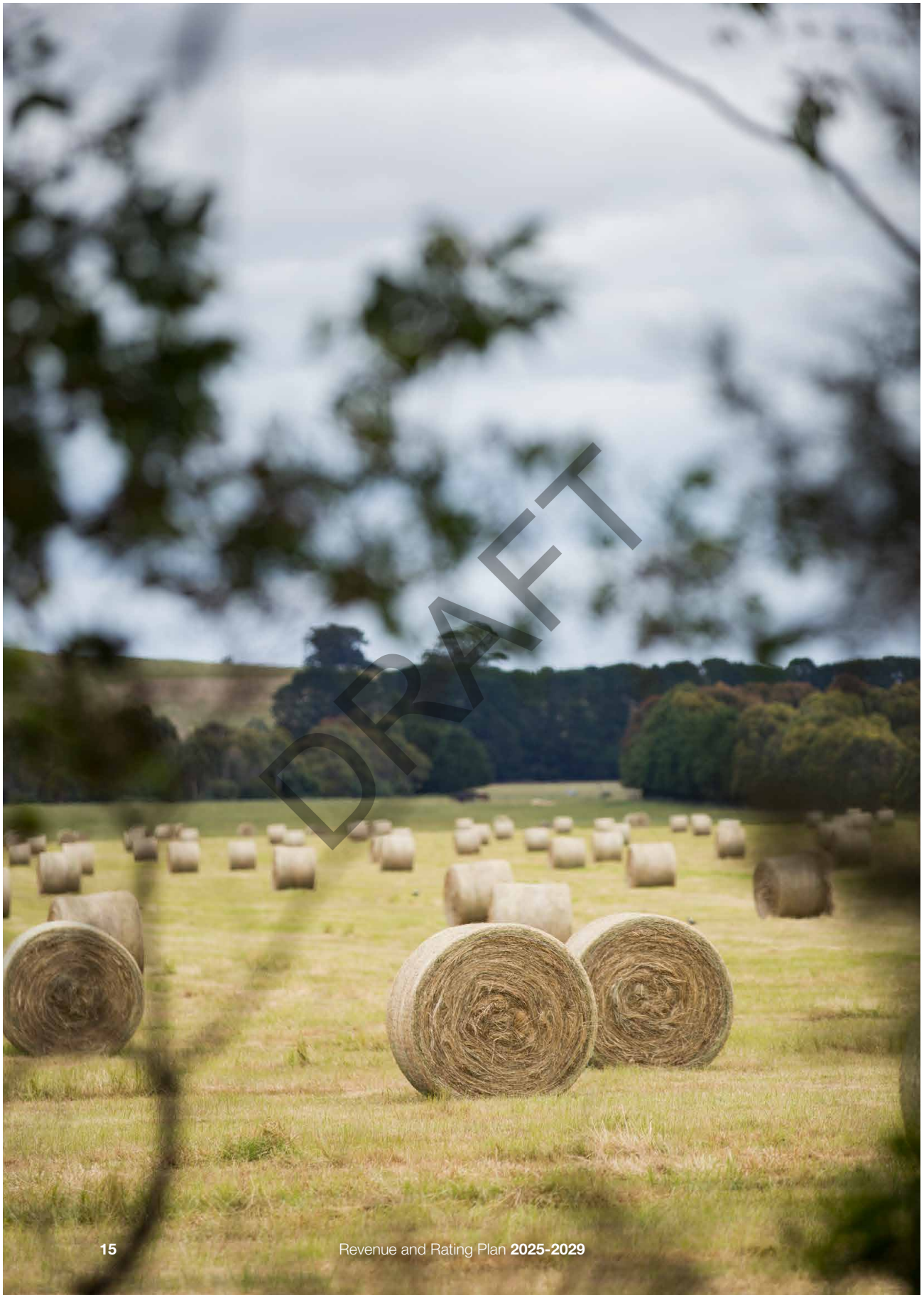
- expansion of funding to include other emergency services in addition to the existing Fire Rescue Victoria and Country Fire Authority (CFA)
- CFA and Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) volunteers will be exempt from ESVF on their principal place of residence (PPR)
- the vacant land category will be abolished, with vacant land being allocated to its corresponding land use sector.

From 1 July 2026, a new category will be created for residential PPR, and non-PPR residential properties will incur the non-residential fixed charge. Like the FSPL, the ESVF will be calculated based on a fixed charge that varies by property type, and a variable charge based on property value. The ESVF will be collected by councils and appear on rates notices, replacing the FSPL.

### 5.6 Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund

The Victorian Government has announced that the Fire Services Property Levy (FSPL) will be replaced with the new Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) from 1 July 2025.

Aimed to bolster protection for Victorians facing fires and other disasters, the key changes of the new ESVF include:





## 6 Rates and Charges

Rates and charges are property taxes that allow Council to raise revenue to fund essential public services to cater to their municipal population. Importantly, it is a taxation system that includes flexibility for councils to use different tools in its rating structure to accommodate issues of equity and to ensure fairness in rating for all ratepayers.

### 6.1 Valuation Method

#### Legislation

Under Section 157 of the *Local Government Act 1989* a council may use the site value, net annual value or capital improved value system of valuation. For the purposes of calculating the site value, net annual value or capital improved value of rateable land, a council must use the current valuations made in respect of the land under the *Valuation of Land Act 1960*.

#### Policy

Council uses the capital improved value system of valuation. This means the sum that the land (including improvements thereon), might be expected to realise at the time of valuation if offered for sale on any reasonable terms and conditions, which a genuine seller might in ordinary circumstances be expected to require.

### 6.2 Rates and Charges

#### Legislation

Under Section 155 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, a council may declare the following rates and charges on rateable land:

- General rates
- Municipal charges
- Service rates and charges
- Special rates and charges

#### Policy

Council's current policy for rates and charges are set out in the following sections.

### 6.3 Differential Rates

#### Legislation

Under Section 158 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, a Council when declaring rates and charges must declare whether the general rates will be raised by the application of a uniform rate or differential rates.

Under Section 161 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, if a Council declares a differential rate for any land, Council must:

- specify the objectives of the differential rate including a definition of the types or classes of land which are subject to the rate and a statement of the reasons for the use and level of that rate
- specify the characteristics of the land which are the criteria for declaring the differential rate.

A Council must have regard to any Ministerial guidelines before declaring a differential rate for any land. The Minister issued guidelines in April 2013. These guidelines attempt to spell out clearly what types and classes of land may be considered for differentials and also those that are not appropriate for differentials or need to be "carefully considered".

The highest differential rate must be no more than four times the lowest differential rate.

#### Policy and Charges

Council has five differential rates. Details of the types/classes of land and the level of rate applicable to each differential is as follows:

- General – 100% of the general rate
- Commercial/Industrial – 120% of the general rate
- Agricultural – 80% of the general rate
- Not for profit housing – 50% of the general rate
- Recreational – 50% of the general rate

To support the effective administration of differential rating categories, Council will implement ongoing monitoring and data collection that enables an understanding of who in our community is impacted by each differential rate and how access to services and financial burden may vary across different property classes and community groups.

Over time, this information will assist in assessing the equity and appropriateness of differential rates, ensuring they remain aligned with the principles outlined in this Plan and relevant policy and legislative requirements. It also ensures Council continues to support evidence-informed decisions and continual improvement in how rating categories are applied to ensure equity and access.

The definition of each differential rate is set out in 'Appendix B' on page 27.

#### 6.4 Municipal Charge

##### Legislation

Under Section 158 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, a council may declare a municipal charge to cover some of the administrative costs of the council. A council's total revenue from a municipal charge in a financial year must not exceed 20% of the sum total of the council's total revenue from a municipal charge and total revenue from general rates.

A person may apply to a council for an exemption from the payment of a municipal charge on rateable land if the rateable land is farmland, the rateable land forms part of a single farm enterprise and an exemption is

not claimed in respect of at least one other rateable property, which forms part of the single farm enterprise. In the case of a single farm enterprise which is occupied by more than one person, an exemption cannot be claimed in respect of more than one principal place of residence.

##### Policy and Charges

Council levies a municipal charge for the purpose of covering some of the administrative costs of Council. In applying the municipal charge, Council ensures that each rateable property in the shire makes a contribution.

#### 6.5 Service Rates and Charges

##### Legislation

Under Section 162 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, a Council may declare a service rate or charge for any of the following services:

- Waste, recycling or resource recovery
- Any other prescribed service

A council must have regard to any Ministerial guidelines before declaring a service rate or charge for any land. The Minister issued guidelines in 2024. These guidelines set out what constitutes good practice by councils in the determination and declaration thereof, and to ensure that service rates and charges:

- are only used to recover the reasonable costs of providing a direct service to an occupancy
- are calculated and declared in a fair and transparent manner
- subject to public engagement in accordance with a council's Community Engagement Policy.

**Policy and Charges**

Council has the following service rates and charges:

- Kerbside waste and recycling (Four bins: General waste, recycling, glass and Food organic and Garden Organics or FOGO)
- Environment Protection Authority (EPA) levy

Council's policy in regard to setting waste management charges is full cost recovery.

**6.6 Special Rates and Charges****Legislation**

Under Section 163 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, a council may declare a special rate or charge for the purposes of defraying any expenses or repaying (with interest) any advance made to or debt incurred or loan raised by the council, in relation to the performance of a function or the exercise of a power of the council, if it will be of special benefit to the persons required to pay the special rate or charge.

**Policy**

Special rates and charges schemes are raised in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

**6.7 Payment of Rates and Charges****Legislation**

Under Section 167 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, a council must allow rates and charges to be paid in four instalments. A council may also allow rates and charges to be paid in a lump sum. Under Section 168 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, a council may also provide incentives for prompt payment.

**Policy**

Rates are payable by quarterly instalments in September, November, February and May. Council also offers flexible payment options that provide smaller, regular payments to meet instalment timelines including direct debits, BPAY, Post BillPay and CentrePay. Part

payments can be made towards property rates at any time.

In addition to standard options, Council will continue exploring flexible, inclusive payment methods to ensure accessibility for people with limited digital access or irregular income.

**6.8 Rebates and Concessions****Legislation**

Under Section 169 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, a council may grant a rebate or concession in relation to any rate or charge to:

- assist the proper development of the municipal district; or
- preserve buildings or places in the municipal district which are of historical or environmental interest; or
- restore or maintain buildings or places of historical, environmental, architectural or scientific importance in the municipal district; or
- assist the proper development of part of the municipal district.

A council resolution granting a rebate or concession must specify the benefit to the community as a whole resulting from the rebate or concession.

**Policy**

Ratepayers who hold an eligible pensioner concession card or, Veteran Affairs gold card in accordance with the concession rules determined by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing may be entitled to receive a Victorian Government-funded concession on their rates and charges for their principal place of residence.

The concession is set at half the rates and charges levied up to a maximum amount and is fully funded by the Victorian Government. Eligible pensioners are also entitled to receive a \$50 concession on the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund levy and a \$77.50 rebate off the glass and FOGO charge.

Council offers a rate rebate on land protected by a Trust for Nature covenant. Council grants a rebate to each owner (or, where applicable, occupier) of rateable land, upon successful application, that meets the criteria of the Macedon Ranges Shire Council Bushcare Incentive (Rate Rebate) Program.

The rebate is 100% of the rates calculated on the site value of the protected land as declared in the required Trust for Nature conservation covenant. The desired outcome is for the community to benefit from preserving privately owned natural bushland that contains remnant native vegetation.

In addition to ongoing rebate programs such as those provided through state concessions and conservation covenants, Council acknowledges the potential need for targeted, single-year rebate incentives to respond to emerging community needs or economic pressures.

Any future proposals of this nature, including their design and eligibility criteria, will be informed by relevant equity and accessibility requirements, supported by data. Council will also explore opportunities to embed equity principles into ongoing rebate frameworks to enhance their reach and effectiveness.

## 6.9 Deferments and Waivers

### Legislation

Under Section 170 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, a council may defer in whole or in part any rate or charge if the payment would cause hardship to the person. Under Section 171 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, a council may waive the whole or part of any rate or charge or interest in relation to:

- an eligible recipient
- any other class of persons determined by Council for the purpose of waiving rates or charges on the grounds of financial hardship.

Under Section 171A of the *Local Government Act 1989*, a person who:

- is suffering financial hardship; or
- would suffer financial hardship if that person paid the full amount of a rate or charge for which he or she is liable...

... may apply to a Council for the waiver of the whole or part of any rate or charge or of any interest imposed for late payment.

Under Section 171B of the *Local Government Act 1989*, on the application of a person, a council may enter into a plan with the person for the payment of a rate or charge (including interest charged under section 172):

- which the person is liable to pay
- which has not been paid by the date specified for payment.

A payment plan may be for an unpaid rate or charge.

### Policy

Council has a Financial Hardship Policy for the purposes of providing financial relief in regard to rates and other debts. The policy applies to ratepayers and other debtors who are suffering financial hardship or would suffer financial hardship if they paid the full amount of rates and charges or other debts for which they are liable.

The policy provides ratepayers and other debtors with the opportunity to apply for a deferment of payment or waiver of rates, charges, fees and/or interest, and aims to recognise the diverse financial realities of our community by providing flexible, equitable support options for ratepayers experiencing financial stress.

Council will continue to consider opportunities to improve proactive outreach and early identification of households at risk of financial hardship.

The local government sector is currently awaiting the release of updated Ministerial Guidelines from the Victorian Government relating to the management of outstanding rate income and financial hardship. These guidelines, to be developed under recent amendments to the *Local Government Act 1989*, are expected to provide set expectations and a consistent framework for councils in supporting ratepayers experiencing financial vulnerability. While initial advice has been prepared by the Essential Services Commission, formal guidelines have not yet been issued. Council will continue to monitor this process and review its practices as necessary to align with any new requirements once released.

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## 7 Fees and Charges

Fees and charges consist of statutory fees and fines and user fees. Statutory fees and fines relate mainly to those levied in accordance with legislation and include animal registrations, *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* registrations and parking fines. User fees relate to the recovery of service delivery costs through the charging of fees to users of Council's services. These include use of leisure, entertainment and other community facilities.

### 7.1 Fees and Charges Policy

Council has adopted a Fees and Charges Policy that provides guidance for its approach in setting appropriate levels of fees and charges. This policy applies to all fees and charges that are listed in the Fees and Charges Schedule which is published in the annual Budget. The policy seeks to ensure that the following key service performance principles under Section 106 of the *Local Government Act 2020* are met:

- Services should be provided in an equitable manner and be responsive to the diverse needs of the municipal community.
- Services should be accessible to the members of the municipal community for whom the services are intended.
- Quality and costs standards for services set by Council should provide good value to the municipal community.

Council must also comply with the government's Competitive Neutrality Policy for significant business activities it provides and adjust service prices to neutralise any competitive advantages when competing with the private sector.

### 7.2 Statutory fees and fines Policy

Statutory fees and fines are those which Council collects under the direction of

legislation or other government directives. The rates used for statutory fees and fines are advised by the state government department responsible for the corresponding services or legislation, and Council has limited discretion in applying these fees.

### Fees and fines

A summary of statutory fees and fines by major service area is as follows:

- Animal control
- Infringements and costs
- Permits
- Roads and infrastructure
- Town planning

### 7.3 User fees Policy

For user fees not regulated by statute, Council determines the extent of cost recovery for particular services consistent with the level of both individual and collective benefit that the services provide and in line with the community's expectations. The three types of non-statutory pricing are as follows:

- **Market price:** Price based on the benchmarked competitive prices of alternate suppliers. In general this represents full cost recovery plus an allowance for profit).
- **Full cost recovery price:** Price based on recovering all direct and indirect costs incurred by Council. This pricing is used in particular where a service provided by Council benefits individual customers specifically, rather than the community as a whole.
- **Subsidised price:** Price based on less than full cost of that service and range from full subsidies (i.e. Council provides the service free of charge) to partial subsidies,

where Council provides the service to the user with a discount.

The schedule of Fees and Charges in the Budget includes around 400 individual fees and charges, which are reviewed annually as part of the Budget process.

#### **User fees**

A summary of user fees by major service area is as follows:

- Childcare/Children's programs
- Cultural activities
- Hanging Rock Reserve
- Leisure centre and recreation
- Waste management



## 8 Other Revenue Sources

Other revenue sources that Council uses to fund services and facilities include government grants, contributions and other revenue.

### 8.1 Government Grants

#### Policy

Grant revenue represents income usually received from other levels of government. Some grants are singular and attached to the delivery of specific projects, whilst others can be of a recurrent nature and may or may not be linked to the delivery of projects. Council proactively advocates to other levels of government for grant funding support to deliver important infrastructure and service outcomes for the community. Council may use its own funds to leverage higher grant funding and maximise external funding opportunities.

When preparing its Financial Plan, Council considers its project proposal pipeline, advocacy priorities, upcoming grant program opportunities, and co-funding options to determine what grants to apply for. Council will only apply for and accept external funding if it is consistent with the Community Vision and does not lead to the distortion of Council Plan priorities. Grant assumptions are then clearly detailed in Council's budget document. No project that is reliant on grant funding will proceed until a signed funding agreement is in place.

#### Government Grants

A summary of recurrent government grants by type is as follows:

- Operating
  - Victorian Local Government Grants Commission
  - Family and children
  - Maternal and Child Health
  - School crossing supervisors
  - Youth and culture

- Capital
  - Roads to Recovery

### 8.2 Contributions

#### Policy

Contributions represent funds received by Council, usually from non-government sources, and are usually linked to projects. Contributions can be made to Council in the form of either cash payments or physical assets. Contributions are always linked to a planning or funding agreement and Council will not undertake any work on a contribution-funded project until a signed agreement outlining the contribution details is in place.

Contributions linked to developments, such as the Gisborne and Romsey development contribution plans, can be received well before any expenditure occurs. In this situation, the funds are identified and held separately in a reserve for the specific works identified in the agreements.

#### Contributions

A summary of contributions by type is as follows:

- Car parking
- Community facilities
- Drainage
- Footpaths
- Gisborne Development Contributions Plan
- Public open space
- Road contributions
- Romsey Development Contributions Plan

### 8.3 Other Revenue

#### Policy

Council earns other revenue from sources such as property rental and interest on investments. The amount of revenue earned from property



rental is based on rental agreements that set the rental amount at market rates. Council receives interest on funds managed as part of its investment portfolio, where funds are held in advance of expenditure, or for special purposes. The investment portfolio is managed in accordance with Council's investment policy, which seeks to earn the best return on funds, whilst minimising risk.

#### Other Revenue

A summary of other revenue by type is as follows:

- Interest on investments
- Property rental
- Sale of goods and materials



## 9 Appendix A

# Proposed Changes to Rates and Charges

### Objectives

In distributing the rating burden across the different categories of ratepayers in the Macedon Ranges, Council is looking to achieve the following objectives:

- Having a rating structure that provides fairness and equity for the whole Shire.
- Striking the right balance in terms of the number and level of differential rates.
- The rating structure is supported by the rating principles (see below).

### Rating Principles

The Victorian Government's Local Government Better Practice Guide: Revenue and Rating Strategy 2014 states that when developing a rating structure, a council should give consideration to the following key rating principles:

#### Wealth Tax

The 'wealth tax' principle implies that the rates paid are dependent upon the value of a ratepayer's real property and have no correlation to the individual ratepayer's consumption of services or the perceived benefits derived by individual ratepayers from the expenditures funded from rates.

#### Equity

Horizontal equity – ratepayers in similar situations should pay similar amounts of rates. Vertical equity those who are better off should pay more rates than those worse off.

#### Efficiency

Economic efficiency is measured by the extent to which production and consumption decisions by people are affected by rates.

### Simplicity

How easily a rates system can be understood by ratepayers and the practicality and ease of administration.

### Benefit

The extent to which there is a nexus between consumption/benefit and the rates paid.

### Capacity to pay

The capacity of ratepayers or groups of ratepayers to pay rates.

### Diversity

The capacity of ratepayers within a group to pay rates.

### Assessment of Rating Structure

Council received briefings from officers on an assessment of the current rating structure against the rating principles. The key findings and recommendations in relation to the type and level of differential rates were as follows:

- General
  - Equity: The share of the rate burden is considered to be fair and equitable.
- Commercial/Industrial
  - Equity: The share of the rate burden is considered to be fair and equitable.
- Agricultural
  - Equity: The share of the rate burden is considered to be fair and equitable.
- Recreational
  - Equity: The share of the rate burden is considered to be fair and equitable.
- Not-for-profit
  - Equity: The share of the rate burden is considered to be fair and equitable.

The key findings and recommendations in relation to the municipal charge were as follows:

**Equity:** The level of the charge is considered to be fair and equitable.

#### Other Matters

Council also requested the following additional information:

- Recreational: Information to be provided on the nine properties currently subject to the rate.
- Non-rateable: Information to be provided on the properties currently defined as non-rateable under the Act.
- Portable Homes: Information to be provided on whether these properties are separately rateable under the Act.
- Vacant Land: Investigate land banking of commercial and farming vacant land over the life of the Plan.

Council also requested benchmarking information be provided on the rating structures of neighbouring councils.

#### Proposed Changes

Based on the above assessment Council proposes no changes to the structure and level of rates and charges for the 2025-29 Plan compared with the 2021-25 Plan, as Council believes the current structure continues to provide a fair and equitable distribution of the rating burden across the different types or classes of land.

Council proposes to review the agricultural land properties over the life of the Plan to ensure that the activities carried out on the land are consistent with those defined by the *Valuation of Land Act 1960*, as a primary producer.

Council also proposes to continue reviewing land within the shire that is not able to be developed by landowners under the Macedon

Ranges Planning Scheme. These properties are classified as 'Inappropriate Subdivisions' and refer to existing subdivisions that were created before adequate planning controls were in place, leading to small lots that are not suitable for development due to environmental factors, servicing limitations or potential conflicts with existing land uses.

These properties are currently charged the General Rate, as the valuation of the land takes into account that it cannot be built on and therefore the value is heavily discounted. Council will look to transfer ownership and preserve these allotments for conservation purposes where possible.

The Victorian Government is also expected to release updated Ministerial Guidelines on the payment of rates and charges under the *Local Government Act 1989* in late 2025, focusing on financial hardship provisions. These guidelines aim to standardise councils' approaches to supporting ratepayers experiencing financial hardship. Foreshadowed changes include the following:

- Consistent definition of Financial Hardship to be adopted across councils.
- Requiring councils to proactively engage with ratepayers in arrears before initiating debt recovery actions.
- Limiting use of debt collectors, and legal action to be permitted only after all other avenues have been exhausted with no engagement.
- The potential for maximum interest rates on unpaid rates and charges to be set by the state, to prevent excessive penalties.
- Council hardship policies developed and implemented consistently in line with the Ministerial Guidelines across the state.

These changes, if implemented, may require Council to review or revise its Revenue and Rating Plan and hardship policies to align with the new guidelines.

## 10 Appendix B

### Differential Rate Definitions

#### General Land

Term	Definition
<b>Definition</b>	General Land is all rateable land other than agricultural land, recreational land, commercial/industrial land and land used by not-for-profit organisations to provide low-income residential housing.
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>The objective of this differential rate is to ensure that all rateable land makes an equitable financial contribution to the cost of carrying out the functions of the Macedon Ranges Shire Council, including (but not limited to) the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>amount of revenue required to be raised is in accordance with the Council Plan, Financial Plan and Budget</li> <li>range and quality of infrastructure, physical services, health services and community services available to the owners and occupiers of residential properties.</li> </ul>
<b>Characteristics</b>	<p>The characteristics of planning scheme zoning are applicable to the determination of vacant land which will be subject to the rate applicable to residential land.</p> <p>The vacant land affected by this rate is that which is zoned residential under the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme.</p> <p>The classification of land which is improved will be determined by the occupation of that land and have reference to the planning scheme zoning.</p>
<b>Types and classes</b>	The types and classes of rateable land within this rate are those having the relevant characteristics described above.
<b>Use of rate</b>	<p>The money raised by this rate will be applied to the items of expenditure described in the Budget by Council.</p> <p>The level of the rate for land in this category is considered to provide for an appropriate contribution to Council's budgeted expenditure, having regard to the characteristics of the land.</p>
<b>Level of rate</b>	100% of the general rate.
<b>Use of land</b>	Is any use permitted under the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme.
<b>Geographic location</b>	This rate is applicable to land within the municipal district.
<b>Planning scheme zoning</b>	The zoning applicable to each rateable land within this category, as determined by consulting maps referred to in the relevant Planning Scheme.
<b>Types of buildings</b>	The types of buildings on the land within this rate are all buildings already constructed on the land or which will be constructed prior to the expiry of the 2024-25 year.

## Commercial/Industrial Land

Term	Definition
<b>Definition</b>	Commercial/Industrial Land is all rateable land, which is not agricultural land and which is used predominantly for carrying on one or more of the following activities for the purpose of generating income: commercial, industrial, business, wholesale trade, retail trade, manufacturing, professional or administrative.
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>The objective of this differential rate is to ensure that all rateable land makes an equitable financial contribution to the cost of carrying out the functions of the Macedon Ranges Shire Council, including (but not limited to) the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• amount of revenue required to be raised in accordance with the Council Plan, Financial Plan and Budget</li> <li>• range and quality of infrastructure, physical services (including street lighting and street cleaning, car parking) and facilities available to the owners and occupiers of land described above.</li> </ul>
<b>Characteristics</b>	<p>The characteristics of planning scheme zoning are applicable to the determination of vacant land which will be subject to the rate applicable to commercial/industrial land.</p> <p>The vacant land affected by this rate is that which is zoned commercial/industrial under the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme.</p> <p>The classification of land which is improved will be determined by the occupation of that land and have reference to the planning scheme zoning.</p>
<b>Types and classes</b>	The types and classes of rateable land within this rate are those having the relevant characteristics described above.
<b>Use of rate</b>	<p>The money raised by this rate will be applied to the items of expenditure described in the Budget by Council.</p> <p>The level of the rate for land in this category is considered to provide for an appropriate contribution to Council's budgeted expenditure, having regard to the characteristics of the land.</p>
<b>Level of rate</b>	120% of the general rate.
<b>Use of land</b>	Is any use permitted under the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme.
<b>Geographic location</b>	This rate is applicable to land within the municipal district.
<b>Planning scheme zoning</b>	The zoning applicable to each rateable land within this category, as determined by consulting maps referred to in the relevant Planning Scheme.
<b>Types of buildings</b>	The types of buildings on the land within this rate are all buildings already constructed on the land or which will be constructed prior to the expiry of the 2024-25 year.



## Agricultural Land

Term	Definition
<b>Definition</b>	Agricultural Land is all rateable land, which is within Council's municipal district defined as farm land under Section 2 of the <i>Valuation of Land Act 1960</i> on the condition that the owner or occupier of the land is a person carrying on the activities defined by the <i>Valuation of Land Act 1960</i> , who is regarded as a primary producer by the Australian Taxation Office.
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>The objective of this differential rate is to ensure that all rateable land makes an equitable financial contribution to the cost of carrying out the functions of the Macedon Ranges Shire Council, including (but not limited to) the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• amount of revenue required to be raised is in accordance with the Council Plan, Financial Plan and Budget</li> <li>• range and quality of infrastructure, physical services, health services and community services available to the owners and occupiers of agricultural land</li> <li>• restrictions upon the use and development of agricultural land in the Planning scheme</li> <li>• need to encourage the retention of viable agricultural land for agricultural purposes.</li> </ul>
<b>Characteristics</b>	<p>The characteristics of planning scheme zoning are applicable to the determination of vacant land which will be subject to the rate applicable to agricultural land.</p> <p>The vacant land affected by this rate is that which is zoned agricultural under the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme.</p> <p>The classification of land which is improved will be determined by the occupation of that land and have reference to the planning scheme zoning.</p>
<b>Types and classes</b>	The types and classes of rateable land within this rate are those having the relevant characteristics described above.
<b>Use of rate</b>	<p>The money raised by this rate will be applied to the items of expenditure described in the Budget by Council.</p> <p>The level of the rate for land in this category is considered to provide for an appropriate contribution to Council's budgeted expenditure, having regard to the characteristics of the land.</p>
<b>Level of rate</b>	80% of the general rate.
<b>Use of land</b>	Is any use permitted under the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme.
<b>Geographic location</b>	This rate is applicable to land within the municipal district.
<b>Planning scheme zoning</b>	The zoning applicable to each rateable land within this category, as determined by consulting maps referred to in the relevant Planning Scheme.
<b>Types of buildings</b>	The types of buildings on the land within this rate are all buildings already constructed on the land or which will be constructed prior to the expiry of the 2024-25 year.

## Not-for-Profit Housing Land

Term	Definition
<b>Definition</b>	Not-for-Profit Housing Land is any rateable land, which contains low-income residential housing owned and/or managed by a volunteer, charitable or not-for-profit organisation for which the organisation is responsible for the payment of rates and for which a Victorian Government pension concession is not claimed.
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>The objective of this differential rate is to ensure that all rateable land makes an equitable financial contribution to the cost of carrying out the functions of Macedon Ranges Shire Council, including (but not limited to) the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• amount of revenue required to be raised is in accordance with the Council Plan, Financial Plan and Budget</li> <li>• public service that volunteers, charitable or not-for-profit organisations are delivering to the community by providing low-income residential housing.</li> </ul>
<b>Characteristics</b>	<p>The characteristics of planning scheme zoning are applicable to the determination of vacant land, which will be subject to the rate applicable to residential zoning.</p> <p>The vacant land affected by this rate is that which is zoned residential land under the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme.</p> <p>The classification of land which is improved will be determined by the occupation of that land and have reference to the planning scheme zoning.</p>
<b>Types and classes</b>	The types and classes of rateable land within this rate are those having the relevant characteristics described above.
<b>Use of rate</b>	<p>The money raised by this rate will be applied to the items of expenditure described in the Budget by Council.</p> <p>The level of the rate for land in this category is considered to provide for an appropriate contribution to Council's budgeted expenditure, having regard to the characteristics of the land.</p>
<b>Level of rate</b>	50% of the general rate.
<b>Use of land</b>	Is any use permitted under the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme.
<b>Geographic location</b>	This rate is applicable to land within the municipal district.
<b>Planning scheme zoning</b>	The zoning applicable to each rateable land within this category, as determined by consulting maps referred to in the relevant Planning Scheme.
<b>Types of buildings</b>	The types of buildings on the land within this rate are all buildings already constructed on the land or which will be constructed prior to the expiry of the 2024-25 year.

## Recreational Land

Term	Definition
<b>Definition</b>	Cultural and Recreational Land is any rateable land as defined under the <i>Cultural and Recreational Lands Act 1963</i> .
<b>Objectives</b>	The objective of the rate is to recognise the large contribution that these community organisations and the volunteers make to the municipality in the provision of sporting, cultural and recreational activities.
<b>Characteristics</b>	Is cultural and recreational land and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is occupied by a body which exists for cultural or recreational purposes and applies its profits in promoting the furthering of this purpose</li> <li>• is owned by the body, by the Crown or by Council</li> <li>• is not agricultural showgrounds.</li> </ul>
<b>Types and classes</b>	The types and classes of rateable land within this rate are those having the relevant characteristics described above.
<b>Use of rate</b>	The money raised by this rate will be applied to the items of expenditure described in the Budget by Council.  The level of the rate for land in this category is considered to provide for an appropriate contribution to Council's budgeted expenditure, having regard to the characteristics of the land.
<b>Level of rate</b>	50% of the general rate.
<b>Use of land</b>	Is any use permitted under the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme.
<b>Geographic location</b>	This rate is applicable to land within the municipal district.
<b>Planning scheme zoning</b>	The zoning applicable to each rateable land within this category, as determined by consulting maps referred to in the relevant Planning Scheme.
<b>Types of buildings</b>	The types of buildings on the land within this rate are all buildings already constructed on the land or which will be constructed prior to the expiry of the 2024-25 year.



**Kyneton Administration Centre**

129 Mollison Street, Kyneton  
Hours: Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm.

**Gisborne Administration Centre**

40 Robertson Street, Gisborne  
Hours: Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm

**Romsey Hub**

96–100 Main St, Romsey  
Hours: Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5pm

**Woodend Community Centre**

Corner Forest and High streets, Woodend  
Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 12pm to 5pm

**Woodend Operations Centre**

81 Old Lancefield Road, Woodend  
Hours: Public access by appointment only

## Contact Us

(03) 5422 0333 | [mrsc@mrsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:mrsc@mrsc.vic.gov.au) | [mrsc.vic.gov.au](http://mrsc.vic.gov.au)

Find us on:    

If you need help to speak or hear, you can contact us through the **National Relay Service**:

- **TTY** users call 133 677 then ask for (03) 5422 0333
- **Speak and Listen** (speech-to-speech relay) users call 1300 555 727 then ask for (03) 5422 0333
- **Internet relay users** connect to the National Relay Service and then ask for (03) 5422 0333

If you need help with English, please call **TIS National** on 131 450 and ask them to call Macedon Ranges Shire Council on 5422 0333.



<b>COR.2</b>	<b>BUDGET 2025-26</b>
<b>Officer:</b>	<b>Travis Harling, Manager Finance and Reporting</b>
<b>Council Plan relationship:</b>	<b>1. Connecting communities</b> <b>2. Healthy environment, healthy people</b> <b>3. Business and tourism</b> <b>4. Delivering strong and reliable government</b>
<b>Attachments:</b>	<b>1. Draft Budget 2025-26 (under separate cover)</b> <b>2. Budget 2025-26 Submission Responses <a href="#">↓</a></b>

### Summary

The draft Budget 2025-26 has been prepared consistent with the requirement of Section 94 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (LGA) and forms part of the Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework developed as Part 4 of the LGA.

Council undertook a community engagement and consultation process in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and Council's *Community Engagement Policy* during November 2024. A further opportunity was provided to the community to allow feedback on a concise version of the draft Budget 2025-26 during May 2025.

Therefore, the purpose of this report is to (1) decide on the responses to community submissions, and (2) adopt the Budget, with or without amendment.

### Recommendation

#### That Council:

1. **Adopts the draft Budget 2025-26, prepared in accordance with section 94 of the Local Government Act 2020 as attached with this agenda, effective from 1 July 2025.**
2. **Approves new loan borrowings of up to \$750,000 in line with the proposed Budget, and authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:**
  - i. **negotiate the loan;**
  - ii. **approve the successful tender;**
  - iii. **execute the loan documentation; and**
  - iv. **delegate to the Director Corporate and/or Manager Finance and Reporting to undertake the required process as outlined in points 2 (i), (ii) and (iii)**
3. **Adopts the following rates:**

	<b>Cents/\$CIV</b>
<b>General Rate for rateable residential properties – 100%</b>	<b>0.00196540</b>
<b>Agricultural land rate – 80%</b>	<b>0.00157232</b>
<b>Commercial/Industrial rate – 120%</b>	<b>0.00235848</b>
<b>Recreational land rate – 50%</b>	<b>0.00098270</b>
<b>Not-for-profit housing rate – 50%</b>	<b>0.00098270</b>

- 4. Gives public notice of its decision to adopt the Budget 2025-26 and the availability of the Budget 2025-26 to the public on Council's website and at Council offices and service centres.**
  - 5. Endorses officer responses to submissions in Attachment 2 to this report.**
  - 6. Responds to all submitters in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy.**
- 

## **Background**

Council's budget forms part of the Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework that includes Council's Community Vision, Council Plan, Financial Plan, Revenue and Rating Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Disability Action Plan, Workforce Plan, and Asset Plan.

This Budget supports the delivery of the four strategic objectives outlined in the existing Council Plan 2021-2031, considering the longer-term strategic objectives in the plans listed above.

During October-November 2024, the public were invited to help shape the budget by providing ideas and feedback, to suggest or support projects, infrastructure, and initiatives year-round for consideration through a Community Consultation process in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy. A further opportunity was provided to the community to provide feedback on a concise version of the draft Budget 2025-26 during May 2025.

## **Discussion**

The Budget 2025-26 represents a sustainable and strategic plan for expenditure for the coming financial year, building upon the delivery of strategic objectives in years one to four of the Council Plan 2021-2031. It also includes several long-term infrastructure projects aimed at enhancing liveability for our community.

Appropriately allocating resources to deliver essential community services remains a core responsibility for Council. These services are vital to meeting community needs and supporting the wellbeing of residents. Whether maintaining infrastructure, supporting public safety, or promoting cultural and recreational activities, Council services play an important role in creating a thriving, sustainable and inclusive community.

Council continues to be impacted by broader economic and inflationary pressures. This, along with constraints on generating new revenue and increasing costs, requires Council to prudently allocate resources, balance service delivery costs, and implement initiatives that support recovery and ongoing financial sustainability.

The key features of the Budget 2025-26 are:

### **Rates and Charges**

General rates and service charges will raise \$67,211,000 as follows:

General Rates	\$ 48,315,000
Municipal Charge	\$ 5,243,000
Service Charges	\$ 13,053,000
Supplementary Rates	*\$ 600,000

*\* Supplementary rates are the result of Supplementary Valuations. A Supplementary Valuation occurs when there is a significant change to a property that affects the valuation such as construction of a dwelling or shed, installation of a swimming pool, or a demolition.*

This is an increase in budgeted income from general rates revenue of \$2,112,000 compared with the 2024-25 adopted budget. This increase is within the maximum permitted increase of 3% under the Fair Go Rates System for 2025-26.

The Budget includes a General Rate and four (4) differential rates to be declared as detailed in the following table:

	<b>Cents/\$CIV</b>
General Rate for rateable residential properties -100%	<b>0.00196540</b>
Agricultural land rate -80%	<b>0.00157232</b>
Commercial/Industrial rate – 120%	<b>0.00235848</b>
Recreational land rate – 50%	<b>0.00098270</b>
Not-for-profit housing rate – 50%	<b>0.00098270</b>

### Operating initiatives

Included in the Draft Budget 2025-26 are several new operating initiatives that will enable Council to deliver annual actions aligned to year five of Council Plan 2021-2031. New initiatives proposed for 2025-26 are:

- Upgrade of Traffic data collection equipment
- Gisborne Fields Landscape Plan update
- Core internal Information Technology systems review
- Initial works for signalisation of Station and Ferrier Road intersection
- Free passes and two “free weeks” for green waste disposal
- Outdoor pool fee reduction

### Fees and Charges

Council has closely examined its financial sustainability while developing the 2025-26 Budget. Although our revenue primarily comes from rates and grants, User Fees and Charges remain an important element in maintaining adequate community services.

To ensure ongoing sustainability of Council's services and compliance with our legislative obligations, these fees and charges have been reviewed.

During this review, Council has reviewed fees to reflect service delivery costs and market benchmarks. While most fees have increased around CPI, some waste disposal charges have risen further to meet full cost recovery. Outdoor pool family pass fees have been reduced as a cost-of-living relief measure for residents. A proposed green waste disposal

fee of \$13.80 per standard trailer at Resource Recovery Centres has been maintained, with plans for free disposal access periods for fire prevention have been committed to.

Following the review, many User Fees and Charges have been proposed to increase by around 3%, aligned with the CPI, or slightly higher where service delivery costs have increased beyond this rate. Appendix 2 of the Budget document includes detailed information on User Fees and Charges.

### Capital Works of \$28,484,000

During 2025-26 Council, will continue to deliver on commitments to undertake significant capital projects which improve liveability across the Shire. Many of these projects have been the subject of extensive planning, advocacy, community engagement and investment over many years.

The program includes:

- Recreation facility renewal and upgrades
- Road renewals across multiple locations
- Upgrades to bridges, drainage and community facilities
- Plant and equipment purchases and IT upgrades

Projects include the delivery of Stage 2 of the Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct, major road renewals at Anslow Street (West) Woodend, Mullalys Road Bolinda, Malmsbury East Road Malmsbury and Noonan Grove Woodend. Building works include Tony Clarke Reserve, changerooms, Hutton Street toilets Kyneton, Gisborne Library, Montessori upgrade works Riddells Creek. Recreation projects new pitch lighting at Dixon Fields Gisborne, Kyneton Skatepark design, lighting upgrade at South Gisborne Tennis Club, Romsey Netball Court design, the conversion of the Gisborne Aquatic Centre boiler from gas to electric as well as improvements at Kyneton Airfield.

The program also includes ongoing asset renewal and upgrades, with \$8.74 million allocated to roads, \$611,000 to drainage, \$10.41 million to recreational leisure and community facilities, \$3.9 million to buildings, \$600,000 to footpaths and cycleways, and \$2 million to plant and equipment across the shire. The budget also includes \$933,000 of the new footpath projects across the Shire.

### Loan Borrowings:

New borrowings of \$750,000 are proposed for the Gisborne Aquatic Centre gas boiler replacement. Carry-forward loan funding of \$1,300,000 will also be drawn down for carry forward projects from the 2024-25 financial year.

This level of borrowing is consistent with the responsible borrowing limits and financial sustainability principles in Council's Borrowing policy, adopted earlier this year.

### Community Submissions

Council invited community submissions and proposals to contribute to the 2025-26 Budget over a four-week period from Monday, 4 November to Sunday, 1 December 2024. Submissions could be made via Council's 'Your Say' online engagement hub or submitted in writing through mail or in person at Council's customer service centres. A copy of these submissions were presented to Council at the April Council Meeting.

A total of 61 submissions were received.

Several submissions aligned with initiatives already included in the draft budget, such as:

- Riddells Creek Walkability initiatives

- General local law permit fee removals and reductions
- Romsey Oval #2 – design of surface and lighting
- Woodend Community Centre (carry forward)
- Bowen Street (Kyneton) flood study
- Dixon Field sports lighting
- Ongoing implementation of Botanic Gardens Master Plans

Several of the submissions related to projects that were already included in the Draft Budget 2025-26, projects include:

- Romsey Oval #2 – design of surface and lighting
- Woodend Community Centre (carry forward)
- Dixon Field sports lighting
- Ongoing implementation of Botanic Gardens Master Plans

Following a review of submissions, the following additional projects are recommended for inclusion in the draft budget:

- Lancefield Courthouse – ramp upgrade and air conditioning installation
- Bullengarook Community Hall – water tank
- Market Street Carpark, Kyneton – lighting upgrade
- Woodend Bowling Club – toilet upgrade
- Kyneton Football Netball Club – server window installation
- Macedon Jubilee Hall upgrades – switch board and ovens upgrade
- Free passes and two “free weeks” for green waste disposal

#### Targeted Engagement

A target consultation period was held over two weeks in May 2025 and focused on targeted feedback through Council's 'Your Say' online engagement platform. This approach supported community understanding and participation by focusing on the key elements of the Draft Budget 2025-26, without the complexity of a full model budget. A total of 20 responses were received.

Of these, 19 identified as residents of the shire. Respondents were distributed across wards, with 11 from the West Ward, five from the South Ward, and four from the East Ward. There was a relatively even gender split (eleven female, nine male), with most identifying in the 50-54 age group.

Services ranked as most important by respondents included waste management, roads and footpaths, and parks and open space. Services ranked as least important were people and OHS, digital platforms and services, and septic inspections.

When asked where Council should invest more, 16 responses were received, with roads and footpaths the most common theme (six mentions), followed by heritage buildings (two mentions). For areas of reduced investment, 12 responses were received, with varied suggestions; sports facilities and reserves were mentioned twice. Four people commented on proposed fees and charges, with feedback ranging from concerns about rate capping and transparency to opposition to some increases. Ten respondents provided feedback on proposed projects and initiatives. Specific mentions

included positive feedback for Bullengarook Hall and Jubilee Hall in Macedon, suggestions around Woodend Golf Club car parking and footpaths, and multiple references to the Racecourse Reserve soccer pitch at Woodend. Other comments included misunderstandings about grant-funded works such as wombat crossings and the Black Forest Drive project, and positive feedback for the Kyneton football canteen.

In addition, several written submissions have also been received and themes relating to the submissions are included in the table below. Each individual submission is included in the attached table with officer commentary provided:

- Ecological Study of the 5 Mile Creek either side of High St Underpass, Woodend
- Re-Zoning Newham to prevent overdevelopment and subdivision.
- Bendigo Foodbank - Assistance with funding for community needs in time of crisis.
- Disappointment that works to reduce flood risk from Bowen Street were not included.
- Storm water drain works at 2 Collis Court Gisborne not included.
- Lancefield Courthouse priority works – birds nesting in ceiling.

Please see Attachment 2 to this Report for the list of submissions, officer responses and recommendations.

As a result of the feedback received, officers are not proposing any amendments to the Draft Budget 2025–26 at this stage. As outlined in the officer responses, several of the matters raised in submissions are already being addressed through ongoing processes, with further work required before they can be considered for funding in a future budget.

Officers also received an email from Woodend Eagles Soccer club advising of an error in the information provided to the Council Report on 23 April in relation to this request. Officers have advised the club, and it is noted within the attachment of this error.

### **Consultation and engagement**

Under Section 96 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, community consultation on the draft Budget 2025-26 was undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy. This included a formal community submission process from November to December 2024, and a further targeted engagement period in May 2025.

### **Collaboration**

The draft Budget 2025-26 has been prepared by officers with input from Councillors through a series of Councillor Briefings and Workshops, including the input from the community during November – December 2024.

Benchmarking and other data have also been sought from neighbouring municipalities when considering service costs, fees and charges.

### **Innovation and continuous improvement**

The draft Budget 2025-26 is an important part of Council's integrated strategic planning framework; and the process to draft, develop, refine and endorse the budget is reviewed each year with Councillors and officers, to improve effectiveness and efficiency of the process. Officers also reference and share information with other municipalities in Victoria and across Australia to identify opportunities for improving the development and adoption of Council's annual budget. Local Government Victoria also provides a range of planning and reporting guides and templates to assist councils with planning, budgeting and reporting,



and we use these resources to help Council meet its legislative obligations to plan and report on their performance over the short, medium and long term.

**Relevant law**

Section 94 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires councils in Victoria to prepare a budget for each financial year. The *Local Government (Performance Reporting and Accountability) Act 2014* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* specify the requirement for a budget to include major initiatives, and the Regulations prescribe the relevant information disclosure requirements.

Individual programs, projects and initiatives will undertake Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs) in accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020* as part of their implementation during 2023-24, if not already completed.

Gender is a fundamental consideration for the Budget, as it:

- provides for Council operations that include services, assets, facilities, programs and activities.
- incorporates the major initiatives identified by the Council as priorities in the Council Plan, to be undertaken during the next financial year.

Completion of these GIAs highlights the importance of continued reflection on available data, and consultation processes.

For the implementation of the Draft Budget, Council undertook a GIA on the consultation and engagement processes proposed in line with our Community Engagement Policy. A range of consultation approaches and methods, including written, verbal and online were used to ensure that all community members had equal access to engage with and contribute to the development of the Draft Budget. A Submitters Delegated Committee was held online, and outside of work and school hours, to improve accessibility for people with work and caring responsibilities, particularly.

**Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies**

Nil

**Relevant Council plans and policies**

The preparation of the budget supports Council's priority of strong and reliable government. The Budget 2025-26 includes funding for the services outlined in the *Council Plan*.

Proposed Borrowings and Investments are in line with Council's Borrowing Policy and Investment Policy, respectively.

**Climate Impact Assessment**

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

The Draft Budget 2025-26 includes funding for projects that reduce energy use and emissions, such as the replacement of the gas boiler at the Gisborne Aquatic Centre with a more efficient system, upgrades to energy-efficient lighting at sporting facilities, and ongoing implementation of the Climate Emergency Action Plan. These projects will contribute to reducing Council's emissions footprint.

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

The budget provides for asset renewal and infrastructure upgrades designed to build resilience to climate-related impacts. This includes upgrades to drainage systems, investment in sustainable open space and park maintenance, and continued implementation of sustainable waste and recycling practices under the full cost recovery model at Resource Recovery Centres.

How will the recommendation help to prepare the community for future climate scenarios? Council is continuing delivery of initiatives under the Climate Emergency Action Plan, including community education and healthy landscapes programs. Targeted investment in active transport infrastructure such as shared trails and footpaths supports community resilience by reducing car dependence. Funding has also been allocated to increase urban tree planting and maintain green spaces that help manage heat and improve liveability.

**Financial viability**

The draft Budget 2025-26 includes all currently identified financial, resource, IT, and asset management requirements for Council in 2025-26. It is a balanced budget prepared in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, ensuring Council's ongoing financial sustainability and service delivery obligations are met.

**Sustainability implications**

The Draft Budget 2025-26 supports Council's environmental and social sustainability objectives. It provides for investment in energy-efficient infrastructure upgrades, expanded waste diversion and resource recovery programs, enhanced tree planting and open space maintenance, and continued delivery of the Climate Emergency Action Plan. It also supports social sustainability through investment in community facilities, sport and recreation, active transport infrastructure, and programs that promote inclusion, safety and wellbeing.

**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.

It should be noted that a range of Council officers are ratepayers of the Macedon Ranges Shire Council.

**Budget 2025/26 Submission Responses**

Submission No.	Submission - Summary	Officer Response
1,5	Funding for an Ecological Study of the 5 Mile Creek either side of High St Underpass in Woodend as per the recommendation of North Central Catchment Management Authority.	The Woodend Five Mile Creek Master Plan identifies the investigation of options to maintain path access under the High Street bridge as a high priority. Officers agree that addressing the underpass is a key priority; however, the specific ecological study proposed in the submission is not currently supported as the immediate next step. It is the officers' view that the ecological study represents one of several possible approaches, and that Council should first engage further with the North Central Catchment Management Authority (NCCMA) to explore the full range of options before committing to commissioning such a study.
2,3,6,9	Re-Zoning Newham to prevent overdevelopment and subdivision. Newham needs to compliment the landscape and not detract negatively from it by establishing smaller blocks and more houses. Concerned that There is no infrastructure in place in Newham, such as town water (we are all on tank water), sewerage, each dwelling has a septic tank, no major shopping centre, medical centre etc to support increased population.	Newham is identified as a "Village" within the hierarchy of settlements within the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme. The policy context for Newham is for limited change. The level of change in Newham has been minimal over the last 20 years and the recently approved two lot subdivision will create the opportunity for one additional dwelling within the township zoned land.  Council is scheduled to complete a review of its planning scheme by the end of 2026. This review will provide an appropriate mechanism to identify whether a review of the planning controls for Newham and other small towns, villages and hamlets is necessary.
4	Bendigo Foodshare is seeking an allocation in council's 2025 budget to strengthen our ability to continue operations and develop its business. Bendigo Foodshare is an independent, community led, non-profit organisation dedicated to combating food insecurity and hunger in the Central Victoria region	Under a tailored partnership model to ensure crisis food support reaches all communities in need across the shire, this proposal could provide positive outcomes for Macedon Ranges, and aligns with Council's Healthy Environment, Healthy People strategic objective. We will seek to investigate a partnership with Bendigo Foodshare to acquit against outcomes. Foodshare would also be eligible to apply for a grant through Council's Community Funding Scheme for up to \$10,000 if their project meets the funding criteria.

Submission No.	Submission - Summary	Officer Response
7	Romsey Town Centre Action Plan in which Village Well's Gilbert Rochecouste identified the need to clean and enhance the aesthetics of the Romsey roundabout (corner Main Street and Barry Street)	Officers have been involved in discussion with EMRBATA and agree the project would add aesthetic value to the Romsey township. Noting this project is for design only, there is a need to work with the Department of Transport and Planning as the roundabout is their asset. Subject to design outcomes, implementation costs are likely to be in the range of \$40,000 - \$80,000.
8	Regarding an ongoing (>15 years) issue with a Storm-water drain that was not terminated correctly.	Council's internal drainage construction crew will conduct the works during May 2025.
10	\$100 or \$75 for a family early bird season pass to Woodend outdoor pool is a fabulous outcome of lots of conversations. Thank you.	Noted.
11	Lancefield Courthouse – Acknowledgment of the inclusion of the ramp and air conditioner works in the draft budget. However, a more pressing issue that requires addressing is to address the filler that has fallen from the ceiling allowing birds nesting grass to drop into our kitchen. It will not be long before the birds will make their way into the kitchen, surely a major Health and Safety issue	Officers have been contacted about the bird issue. This issue will be addressed using operation funds from the 2024/25 budget. The issue has been inspected by Officers and will be actioned in the coming weeks.
12	To my mind Kyneton South remains a big hole in our strategic planning with developments already happening in what is effectively a strategic planning vacuum. There are already developers circling the remaining potential development sites in the area and I would have thought that it would be a priority for Council to have something in place to address and direct their expectations.	Progressing the Kyneton South Framework Plan process is identified as key strategic planning project in the short to medium term. Council has been liaising with key landowners within the Kyneton South area about a process to progress the framework plan process. These discussions are ongoing. It is estimated to complete this work would cost approximately \$350k over a four-year period.

Submission No.	Submission - Summary	Officer Response
13	I am obviously disappointed that the works necessary to reduce the flood risk from the distorted road drains at 21 Bowen Street, Kyneton, have not been included. Should there be major damage to our or our neighbours' properties as a result of this nonfeasance, it could cost your Council considerably more than the cost of correcting the problem.	Council is aware of flooding issues in the Victoria Street area of Kyneton, caused by legacy drainage assets such as bluestone channels, small-diameter culverts, and the absence of a retarding system along the urban drainage network. To address these concerns, Council is conducting a catchment-scale flood study to better understand the flooding behaviour and develop mitigation strategies. The project is set to begin in April 2025 and is expected to be completed by June 2026. The community will be engaged during the process.
14	Construction of footpath connecting Octagonal Court to Ferrier Road along the west side of Station Road. This has been addressed before - see prior emails including one from MRSC at 4.19pm on 24.5.2022 and my email of 21.9.2024.	A section of this path will be constructed as part of the future Cathlaw Estate Stage 3 and the childcare centre development. Once the developer sections are constructed Council will look to construct the missing link in front of 227 & 231 Station Road.
15	Noonan grove has been neglected for 40 years and is still unsealed. It is a very busy road with young children walking to school buses daily departing from Ashbourne road	Council is currently proceeding with detailed design to progress the Special Charge Scheme for Noonan Grove, Woodend. If the special charge scheme is progressed the works will take place in FY2025/26.
16	There needs to be more planning, there is a huge need for more social and affordable housing. We are lacking 1-bedroom properties for young people, single people and elderly. Close to all amenities.	<p>Social and Affordable Housing was raised as a high priority issue in recent community consultations informing the draft Council Plan. Further, 67.6% of people in the McEwan electorate and 74.3% in the Bendigo electorate said housing affordability and homelessness was an issue for their community. Only 1.7% of all dwellings in the shire are social housing, which is well below the state average of 3%.</p> <p>In response to community feedback on this issue, a budget request was submitted by officers for affordable housing initiatives (within local governments sphere of influence) and community infrastructure planning. This submission was for the "Community Planning Lead Position" however at this stage this has not been included in the draft budget.</p>

Submission No.	Submission - Summary	Officer Response
17	New laws prohibiting planting of cypress, making it mandatory that landowner's fence and plant with indigenous species a certain percentage of their land.	Council does not have powers regarding the planting of trees on private property. Council has powers under the Planning Scheme to manage the removal of trees on private land but not planting of trees. Similarly, Council generally does not have powers to require rural landowners to fence properties. There are requirements for fencing of livestock that Council can enforce but not general fencing.
18	New law stating all cat owners must keep their cats inside 24/7 or in a cat run to protect our native threatened species and birds.	Current law stipulates that cats must be contained to their property between sunset and sunrise. As part of the review of the Domestic Animal Management Plan, the community feedback is being sought on issues including containment of pets.
19	Mobile trading to be reviewed making trading on Council land more accessible and affordable. Allow for designated areas in each township for trading.	What officers have considered in establishing the fees for mobile trading is a tiered structure to support temporary trading as well as accounting for the impact on fixed businesses, with the goal of providing fair access to trade for both.
20	Youth activities and wellbeing, accessibility, toilets, new and improved buildings/assets.	Council has proposed increased funding for tactical renewals that relate to accessibility in the proposed budget, this includes capital assets. Youth activities and wellbeing remain funded in line with current service levels.
21	I am concerned about the areas that are missed entirely. Being a Social Worker, I am concerned at the state of the Macedon Ranges Shire Council's Disability Action Plan and feel that it requires attention.	Council is in the process of developing its next iteration of the Disability Action Plan, which will see it integrated with our Council Plan, emphasising Council's commitment to accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities.
22	There is not enough variation in permits e.g. it is the same price for a coffee van to be somewhere for an hour as a week!	What officers have considered in establishing the fees for mobile trading is a tiered structure that supports temporary trading as well as accounting for the impact on fixed businesses. This has the goal of providing fair access to trade for both.
23	Council needs to make a commitment to upgrade the car park at Woodend Golf Club. It services a council asset which is made available for a range of community groups to use, however currently it poses a risk through slip and trip hazards and requires a designated accessible parking space.	Officers support car park investigation and development of a design in the 2025/26 financial year with construction subject to future budget consideration and grant funding opportunities. The Golf Club has had recent projects funded. Council is the Committee of Management; The Club hold a Crown Land Lease.

Submission No.	Submission - Summary	Officer Response
24	Footpaths - I was consulted on about a new footpath outside my place, in my street in 2024. We had feedback and gave this to council and have heard nothing. We would like it built. Live in Woodend	The section of footpath along Anslow Street, Woodend between Forest Street and Schaw Street is identified as a priority in Councils Shire Wide Footpath Plan. Currently it is not included for construction in FY25/26.
25	I would like to advocate that Macedon Ranges Shire Council strongly consider funding a soccer pitch in Woodend for the 200 children that play soccer for the Woodend Eagles Soccer Club.	Council is currently developing a draft Woodend Racecourse Reserve Master Plan to inform future development of the site.  Officers support finalising development of the Master Plan prior to further consideration of this submission.



<b>COR.3</b>	<b>CONTRACTS TO BE AWARDED AS AT JUNE 2025</b>
<b>Officer:</b>	<b>Ilsa Melchiori, Coordinator Contracts</b>
<b>Council Plan relationship:</b>	<b>4. Delivering strong and reliable government</b>
<b>Attachments:</b>	<b>Nil</b>

### Summary

This report provides details of contracts proposed to be awarded under a delegation from Council, from the date of the last report. Although this report recommends noting the power delegated to Council officers, Council has the power to:

- a) direct that the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) award the contract under the direct delegation from Council; or
- b) specifically delegate the power to the CEO.

### Recommendation

**That Council grants delegated authority to the Chief Executive Officer to award contract C2025-94 Supply Panel Landscaping Services**

### 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 brief summary of proposed contracts, which are being advertised and also indicates whether or not delegated authority to award the contract exists.

<b>C2025-94 Supply Panel Landscaping Services</b>	
Macedon Ranges Shire Council is inviting tenders from suitably qualified and experienced contractors for the provision of Landscape Services to Council.	
Contractors with a breadth of services, and/or singular specialised services, are invited to complete this tender and the rates schedule section that is applicable to them. Additional or complimentary landscaping services other than those specified can be added in this tender by the contractor to highlight their capabilities.	
<b>Compliance Requirements</b>	<b>Budget Impacts</b>
The contract will exceed the \$1 million financial delegation of the Chief Executive Officer	Budgeted Value (excl. GST) \$3,5000,000 over a 5+1+1 year term. Equates to an average of \$500,000 works per annum that could be awarded via the panel 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 1989*. 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.

**Climate Impact Assessment**

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

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

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

**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.

<b>COR.4</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER EMPLOYMENT AND REMUNERATION POLICY</b>
<b>Officer:</b>	<b>Kylie Tatt, Manager People and Wellbeing</b>
<b>Council Plan relationship:</b>	<b>4. Delivering strong and reliable government</b>
<b>Attachments:</b>	<b>Amended CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy - June 2025 <a href="#">↓</a></b>

## Summary

Consistent with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council must develop, adopt and keep in force a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Employment and Remuneration Policy, and establish a CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee. Council requested an amendment to the Policy to enable a change in committee membership, and as a result, appoint an additional Councillor delegate. Officers recommend the amendments in this report to effect the proposed change.

## Recommendation

### That Council:

1. **Endorses the amendments to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Employment and Remuneration Policy, as attached to this agenda.**
2. **Appoints Councillor Jennifer Anderson as a delegate to the CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee from 19 June 2025 until the next review of appointments to the Committee, in November 2025.**

## Background

Section 45 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires councils to develop, adopt and keep in force a CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy. The Policy must include provisions for obtaining independent advice on CEO employment matters, outline the recruitment and appointment process, specify the terms to be included in the CEO's employment contract, and establish a framework for performance monitoring and review.

The Policy must also have regard to any Victorian Government statement of wages policy in force, as well as any determination currently in effect under section 21 of the *Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019* regarding remuneration bands for executives employed in public service bodies.

Council first adopted its CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy on 15 December 2021, and the policy is due for a full review and endorsement within the first year of this Council term.

## Discussion

### Amendment to the Policy

Council's adopted *CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy* (Section 3.3) currently specifies that the Committee comprises the Mayor, two Councillors, and an independent advisor. Officers recommend an amendment to Clause 3.3 of the Policy to update the Councillor membership from two to up to three Councillors, allowing greater flexibility in

representation and enabling for a returning Councillor to be included for continuity, as specified in the policy.

Corresponding updates have also been made to *Appendix A: CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference*, under the "Membership and Chairperson" section, to reflect this change. The revised Terms of Reference now state that membership includes the Mayor and up to three Councillors (other than the Mayor), along with an independent professional advisor.

#### Councillor Appointment to Committee

Council annually appoints Councillors to internal committees. The current appointments to the Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Committee were made at the Council Meeting held on 18 December 2024.

Committee	Current number of delegates	Meeting Frequency	Internal/ External	2024/25 Delegates
Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Committee	Mayor and two Councillors	Annually	Internal	Mayor Cr Kendall Cr Scanlon
The structure of the committee to appraise the performance of the Chief Executive Officer is determined in the CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy.				

Together with the amendments to the policy, officers recommend that Cr Jennifer Anderson, as a returning Councillor, be appointed to the committee until November 2025, when consideration of appointments to Council committees is due to occur, and nominations made.

If endorsed as recommended, the updated representation on the CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee would be:

Committee	Current number of delegates	Meeting Frequency	Internal/ External	2024/25 Delegates
Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Committee	Mayor and up to three Councillors	Annually	Internal	Mayor Cr Kendall Cr Scanlon Cr Anderson
The structure of the committee to appraise the performance of the Chief Executive Officer is determined in the CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy.				

The policy is scheduled for a full review prior to October 2025 to meet the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020. Further recommendations for refinements and improvements will be made during that process later this year.

#### **Consultation and engagement**

This policy amendment has been recommended in consultation with the current CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee members.

Feedback from existing committee members and Councillors has informed the proposed changes to the committee's structure and Terms of Reference.

**Collaboration**

Not applicable to this report.

**Innovation and continuous improvement**

The proposed amendment to the CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy reflects Council's commitment to continuous improvement and governance best practice. The changes support clearer role definition and improved flexibility in committee membership.

**Relevant law**

The proposed amendments to the Policy ensure Council remains compliant with section 45 of the *Local Government Act 2020*. In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment was not required for the subject matter of this report.

**Relevant regional, state and national plans and policies**

The proposed amendments to the Policy align with legislative requirements under section 45 of the Local Government Act 2020, which mandates that all councils must develop, adopt and keep in force a Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy.

**Relevant Council plans and policies**

The proposed amendments are consistent with the following plans and policies:

- *Public Administration Act 2004*
- *Victorian Public Sector Commission Policy on Executive Remuneration in Public Entities (2020)*
- *Victorian Government Appointment and Remuneration Guidelines (2020)*

These documents provide the framework for executive employment, remuneration, and governance standards that underpin Council's CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy.

**Climate Impact Assessment**

Not applicable to this report.

**Financial viability**

Not applicable to this report.

**Sustainability implications**

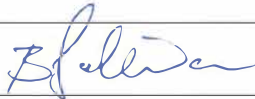
Not applicable to this report.

**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.



# POLICY POLICY POLICY POLICY

<b>Policy Title:</b>	<b>Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy</b>	
<b>Date of Adoption:</b>	15 December 2021	
<b>Adoption Method:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Council</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>CEO</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b> ( <i>please specify</i> )	
<b>CEO Signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b> 17/12/21
<b>Responsible Officer and Unit:</b>	Interim Executive Manager People, Culture & Performance	
<b>Nominated Review Period:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Annually</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Other: Every 4 years</b>	
<b>Last Review Date:</b>	April 2022 – Review of Terms of Reference June 2025 – Minor policy amendment	
<b>Next Endorsement Date:</b>	Within 12 months of the 2024 Council Election	
<b>Purpose/Objective:</b>	Establish a governance framework and provide guidance/direction on the employment cycle of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) including recruitment, performance, remuneration, and end of contract processes.	
<b>Background/Reasons for Policy:</b>	Compliance with Section 45 of the Local Government Act	
<b>Definitions:</b>	CEO	Chief Executive Officer
	Council	Macedon Ranges Shire Council
	Councillor	The individuals holding the office of a member of the Macedon Shire Ranges Council (including the Mayor)
	The Act	Local Government Act 2020
	The CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee	Responsibility for the recruitment of the CEO, determining the CEO's Performance Plan, assessing the CEO's performance against the plan and determining the remuneration of the CEO.
<b>References:</b>	Victorian Government Public Sector Commission Policy on Executive Remuneration in Public Entities 2020 Protecting integrity: Leading the way – Managing the Employment Cycle of a CEO, Local Government Inspectorate (Feb 2019) Victorian Government Appointment and Remuneration Guidelines July 2020	



<b>Related Policies:</b>	Procurement Policy Staff Code of Conduct Councillor Code of Conduct OHS Policy
<b>Related documents</b>	Appendix A: Terms of Reference CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee
<b>Related Legislation:</b>	Local Government Act 2020 Public Administration Act 2004 Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019

DOCUMENT HISTORY	Version	Date	Author
Initial Draft	1		Chrissy Gordon
Second Draft	2	2/11/21	Carmen Lawrence
Final Draft	3	8/12/21	Carmen Lawrence
Approval	3	15/12/2021	
Minor Amendment		April 2022	
Minor Amendment		June 2025	



## 1. Purpose and scope

This Policy complies with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* (Section 45). It outlines how Council will meet its responsibility to manage the employment cycle of a CEO including the recruitment and appointment of the CEO, determining the CEO's performance plan, reviewing the performance of the CEO against the plan, and determining the remuneration of the CEO.

## 2. Principles

Council will carry out its functions relating to the appointment, remuneration, contract, and performance appraisal of the CEO in accordance with the following principles:

- Decision making processes that are fair, transparent, and applied consistently in comparable circumstances
- Decision making criteria that are relevant, objective, and available to the person subject to the decision
- Decisions and actions that are conducive to ongoing good governance
- Documentation that is sufficiently clear and comprehensive to render decisions transparent and capable of effective review
- Employment decisions that are based on the proper assessment of an individual's work-related qualities, abilities, and potential against the genuine requirements of the role
- Decisions to appoint new employees are based on competitive, merit-based selection, open processes, and objective criteria

## 3. CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee

### 3.1 Establishment

Under section 45(2) of the Act Council is required to establish a CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee (the Committee).

### 3.2 Role

The Committee acts in an advisory capacity to Council; its role is to:

- Guide the recruitment of the CEO, and the process for appointing a person to act as CEO if required
- Provide recommendations to Council on contractual conditions and the remuneration of the CEO
- Develop the draft CEO Performance Plan
- Assess the CEO's performance against the performance plan

### Membership

- ### 3.3
- The Mayor (Chairperson)
  - Up to three Councillors
  - Independent advisor

The independent advisor will be a suitably qualified professional appointed via external advertisement and merit-based selection process for the term as specified in the Committee Terms of Reference. At the conclusion of the initial term on the Committee, the advisor may apply to be reappointed for a second term. The remuneration of the independent advisor will be based on a sitting fee per meeting, in line with the *Victorian Government Appointment and Remuneration Guidelines 2020* for like committees.

### 3.4 Meetings

The committee will meet at least twice per year, with authority to convene additional meetings as required. A quorum will consist of the Chairperson plus two other members.

### 3.5 Administrative support

The Manager People and Wellbeing will provide support to the Committee by:

- Coordinating meetings of the committee
- Preparing relevant documentation including contractual documents and reports to Council
- Consulting with the Committee on the development of a CEO onboarding program
- Maintaining appropriate records regarding employment and performance reviews
- Obtaining formal advice if requested.

## 4. Recruitment and appointment of the CEO

Council will engage a specialist recruitment provider to assist with the recruitment and appointment of a CEO. The Committee will provide recommendations to Council for the appointment of a recruitment provider, the selection criteria, and the development of the CEO contract. The Committee will also ensure gender equity in the composition of the interview panel.

### 4.1 Contract of Employment

At a minimum the Contract of Employment will detail:

- The term of employment (not greater than 5 years)
- An end of contract date at least 6 months prior to or post Council elections
- The responsibilities of the position
- Annual performance review
- The Management of Conflict-of-Interest requirements
- Remuneration
- Legislative obligations including those continuing after appointment
- Process for managing unsatisfactory performance or early termination

### 4.2 Remuneration and expenses

The remuneration package provided to the CEO will be subject to review by the CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee in accordance with the CEO performance review and contract requirements.

The CEO remuneration package should be developed in line with the *Victorian Public Sector Policy on Executive Remuneration in Public Entities* and the Section 21 of the *Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019* relating to remuneration bands for executives employed in public service bodies. The package should be sufficient to attract, retain and motivate the executives of the calibre required for the role but avoid excess.

### 4.3 Performance plan

The CEO's annual Performance Plan (the plan) will be developed in conjunction with the CEO and the CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee and is to be adopted by Council. The plan will document the agreed objectives and outcomes to be delivered over the 12-month period and the CEO will provide progress reports to the Committee at each review.

### 4.4 End of contract

Six months prior to the end of the CEO contract, the Committee will provide a recommendation to Council to:

- Reappoint the CEO, or
- Advertise for the recruitment to the role of CEO

The incumbent CEO is to be advised of Council's decision on the recommendation. The recommendation will be in accordance with current legislative requirements.

**5. Integrity of the processes**

All information relating to the recruitment, selection and review processes must be kept strictly confidential. Councillors and staff involved in the processes must take all reasonable steps to maintain confidentiality and respect the privacy of all persons involved.

Any breaches of confidentiality may constitute a breach of the Councillor or Staff Code of Conduct.

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**Appendix A: CEO Employment and Remuneration Advisory Committee  
Terms of Reference**

Delegation	The CEO Employment and Remuneration Advisory Committee 'the Committee' has no delegated authority. Its role is to make recommendations to Council on the appointment, performance review and remuneration of the Chief Executive Officer.
Role of the Committee	<p>The primary role of the Committee is to fulfil its responsibilities in relation to the employment cycle of the Chief Executive Officer. In that context the Committee has the following functions and responsibilities:</p> <p><b>Recruitment and Contract recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommend to Council the engagement of an executive recruitment agency and the steps in the recruitment process and recruitment timeline for endorsement. Taking into account the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The appointment of a recruitment agency must be in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy.</li> <li>The Committee may choose to utilise the Municipal Association of Victoria Permanent Recruitment Services Panel.</li> <li>The Manager People, Risk and Wellbeing will provide assistance to the Committee regarding processes as requested by the Chair.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Act as a point of liaison between the Council and any appointed executive recruitment agency.</li> <li>Coordinate the review of the CEO's Position Description and associated recruitment documentation</li> <li>Undertake any aspects of the recruitment and appointment process agreed to by Council</li> <li>Make recommendations to Council on remuneration and other conditions of employment.</li> </ul> <p><b>Onboarding of the CEO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with all Councillors and provide advice to administrative support on onboarding of the CEO</li> </ul> <p><b>Acting arrangements for the CEO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide advice to Council on any appointment to act as CEO for any term greater than 28 days (appointment for less than 28 days will be made directly by the CEO).</li> <li>Where the CEO is unable to appoint an acting CEO for less than 28 days the Committee will provide advice to Council on an acting arrangement"</li> </ul> <p><b>Performance Review</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate the CEO performance review process, having sought input and feedback from all Councillors</li> <li>Make recommendations to the Council on annual performance criteria</li> </ul>

*CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee  
Terms of Reference revised and Council endorsed April 2022*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make recommendations to Council on annual remuneration review, or the review of any other terms and conditions of the employment contract.</li> </ul> <p><b>End of Contract</b></p> <p>At a minimum of six months prior to the expiry of the current CEO's Contract of Employment make recommendations to Council, having sought input and feedback from all Councillors, on options which could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reappointment of the CEO; or</li> <li>• Early termination of the contract where warranted; or</li> <li>• To terminate in accordance with the contract.</li> </ul>
Membership and chairperson	<p>The membership of the Committee is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Mayor</li> <li>• Up to three Councillors (other than the Mayor)</li> <li>• An independent professional advisor (the Advisor) with appropriate professional experience in employment related matters</li> </ul> <p><b>The Independent Advisor</b></p> <p>The Independent Advisor (Advisor) will be appointed for a maximum four-year term with an option for a further maximum four-year term by mutual agreement between the Advisor and Committee. The Advisor cannot be a Councillor or member of Council staff.</p> <p>The Advisor's term must not be scheduled to finish 12 months either side of a Council election.</p> <p>The advisor will have the following key competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated executive human resource management experience and leadership (specifically in the areas of recruitment, salary benchmarking, performance management and appraisals, and professional development of executive level staff.</li> <li>• Experience in executive level roles in business and/or the public sector.</li> <li>• Experience working with boards or other governance bodies.</li> </ul> <p>The Advisor will be paid a fee based on a sitting fee per meeting, in line with the <i>Victorian Government Appointment and Remuneration Guidelines 2020</i> for like committees and will be appointed by the Council.</p> <p>The interview panel for the independent advisor, when required, will consist of Councillor members of the Committee and the Manager People, Risk and Wellbeing.</p> <p><b>Councillor Committee members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council will review Councillor appointments on an annual basis subject to the reappointment of a minimum of one existing Councillor Committee member</li> <li>• If a Mayoral election occurs during the CEO recruitment period and a new Mayor is elected, the current Mayor at the time recruitment commenced will continue to be included in the Committee until such time as the new CEO is appointed. The new Mayor will join the Committee at</li> </ul>

*CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee  
Terms of Reference revised and Council endorsed April 2022*

	<p>the time of being elected Mayor, temporarily increasing the Committee size.</p> <p><b>The Chairperson</b></p> <p>The Mayor will act as Chairperson for the Committee meetings. The Committee will appoint a deputy Chairperson annually after Councillor appointments to the committee. The Deputy Chairperson will chair meetings when the Mayor is absent for a schedule meeting that cannot be rescheduled.</p>
Administrative Support	<p>The Manager People, Risk and Wellbeing will provide support to the Committee by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing secretariat support for the Committee, including the production of agendas and draft minutes</li> </ul> <p>All other administrative support outlined in Section 3.5 of the Policy</p>
Meeting schedule	<p>The Committee will develop an agreed schedule of meetings in consultation with the CEO.</p> <p>The Committee will meet as outlined in the Policy.</p>
Voting rights	<p>A motion before the Committee is to be determined as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each member present is entitled to one vote</li> <li>• Voting must not be in secret</li> <li>• The motion is determined in the affirmative by a majority of members present</li> <li>• An abstention from voting is to be taken to be a vote in the negative</li> <li>• Voting shall be by a show of hands</li> <li>• The Chairperson must declare the result of the motion</li> <li>• Any member may request a division, in which the process described in Council Governance Rules shall apply, excepting where reference to "Councillor" is to be read as "member". In the event of a tied vote, the Chairperson must exercise the casting vote</li> </ul>
Quorum	<p>A quorum will consist of the Chairperson plus two other members.</p>
Reporting	<p>Advisory Committee minutes and recommendations will be submitted to the next appropriate Scheduled Council Meeting as a confidential item for consideration.</p>
Conduct of members	<p>Councillors' Code of Conduct applies. The conflict of interest and confidentiality provisions in the Local Government Act 2020 apply to all members.</p>
Conduct of meetings	<p>Meeting agendas will be prepared by secretariat in consultation with the Committee chair and provided at least five (5) working days in advance to members, along with appropriate briefing materials.</p> <p>Minutes will be prepared and distributed to the Committee within five (5) working days of the meeting for approval at the next meeting.</p>

*CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee  
Terms of Reference revised and Council endorsed April 2022*

	<p>The following provisions will apply to all meetings of the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Only Committee members are entitled to attend meetings</li><li>• The Committee may invite, or require, any person/s to attend meetings, as it deems necessary.</li></ul>
Contact details of committee	Manager People, Risk and Wellbeing
Review of Terms of Reference	The committee's terms of reference will be reviewed every four years or as required. The revised Terms of Reference must be approved by Council.
References	<i>Local Government Act 2020</i> <i>CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy</i> <i>Councillor Code of Conduct</i> <i>Victorian Government Appointment and Remuneration Guidelines 2020</i>

*CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee*  
*Terms of Reference revised and Council endorsed April 2022*



**12 DIRECTOR COMMUNITY REPORTS**

<b>COM.1</b>	<b>VICTORIAN CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES AND COMMUNITIES CHARTER</b>
<b>Officer:</b>	<b>Karen Curson, Manager Community Services</b>
<b>Council Plan relationship:</b>	<b>2. Healthy environment, healthy people</b>
<b>Attachments:</b>	<b>The Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter <a href="#">↓</a></b>

**Summary**

This report seeks endorsement for Council to become a signatory to the Victorian Local Government Association (VLGA) Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter (**attachment 1**)

**Recommendation**

**That Council become a signatory to the VLGA Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter.**

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**Background**

The Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter (CFCC Charter) is a statement of intent for local governments and organisations to recognise children as valued members of the community. The Charter articulates three principles that underpin actions to create child friendly communities. These principles are:

- Act in the best interests of the child
- Freedom for children to express their individual opinions and right to have these considered in decisions that affect them
- Create equity for all children based on their needs

The Charter draws on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (2006), and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and closely aligns with the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework.

The Victorian Local Government Association (VLGA) is the auspice agency for the Charter, related CFCC Network and CFCC Advisory Group. Support is available through the CFCC Network to embed the Charter in Council's policies and processes.

As of May 2025, 23 Victorian Council's and 17 organisations are signatories to the Charter.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), Macedon Ranges Shire Council has over 12,000 children aged 17 years and younger, which is almost 25% of the population. Population forecasts suggest the number of children and young people in the Macedon Ranges will increase to over 17,000 by 2046. As a significant proportion of the population and the future generations that we, as a Council, plan for, it is important to ensure that their voices are heard.

**Discussion**

Council have articulated a commitment to become a Child Friendly City both through the Council Plan 2021-2031 and CREATE – Municipal Early Years Plan 2021-2025.

Council currently demonstrates the principles of the Charter through strategic documents, projects, and initiatives. Becoming a signatory of the Charter will confirm Council's commitment to children and young people across the shire and will provide the strategic direction to champion its principles.

Council will continue to participate in the CFCC network to increase understanding of and capacity to engage with children and young people on decisions that will impact them. This will include:

- consider the best interest of children and young people in the development of policies and processes.
- develop tools and resources to help Council officers to engage children and young people.
- actively plan and advocate for children and young people.

The Charter supports a child safe and child friendly organisational culture and provides an invitation for Council officers to collaborate with children and young people on issues that affect them. Internally, the Charter provides departments opportunities to learn ways to broaden consultations to include children and young people.

**Consultation and engagement**

No community consultation has been undertaken directly related to this report.

**Collaboration**

Council officers attend the CFCC Network to collaborate with colleagues across the state and to stay informed on current best practice and initiatives across organisations. This supports the development and inclusion of children in civic life and decision-making forums at Macedon Ranges Shire Council.

**Innovation and continuous improvement**

The Charter draws on current best practice through the UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Initiative and provides a commitment to improve policies and processes to hear the voices of children and young people and increase their participation in civic life.

**Relevant law**

There are no regional, state or national plans or policies to be considered in relation 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**

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

**Relevant Council plans and policies**

Council Plan 2021-2031: Action - Continue to explore the feasibility of Macedon Ranges Shire becoming a 'Child Friendly Community'.

CREATE – Municipal Early Years Plan 2021-2025: Action - Identify processes and criteria involved in recognising the Macedon Ranges as a child-friendly community.

ELEVATE – Youth Strategy 2018-2028: Action - Actively consult, engage and consider young people in Council's decision-making.

**Climate impact assessment**

How will the recommendation impact on Council's energy usage and greenhouse emissions profile? Becoming a signatory to the Charter will not 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? Becoming a signatory to the Charter will not directly impact on mitigations of risk posed to climate change to Council's operations and services.

How will the recommendation help to prepare the community for future climate scenarios? Becoming a signatory to the Charter will not directly prepare the community for future climate scenarios.

**Financial viability**

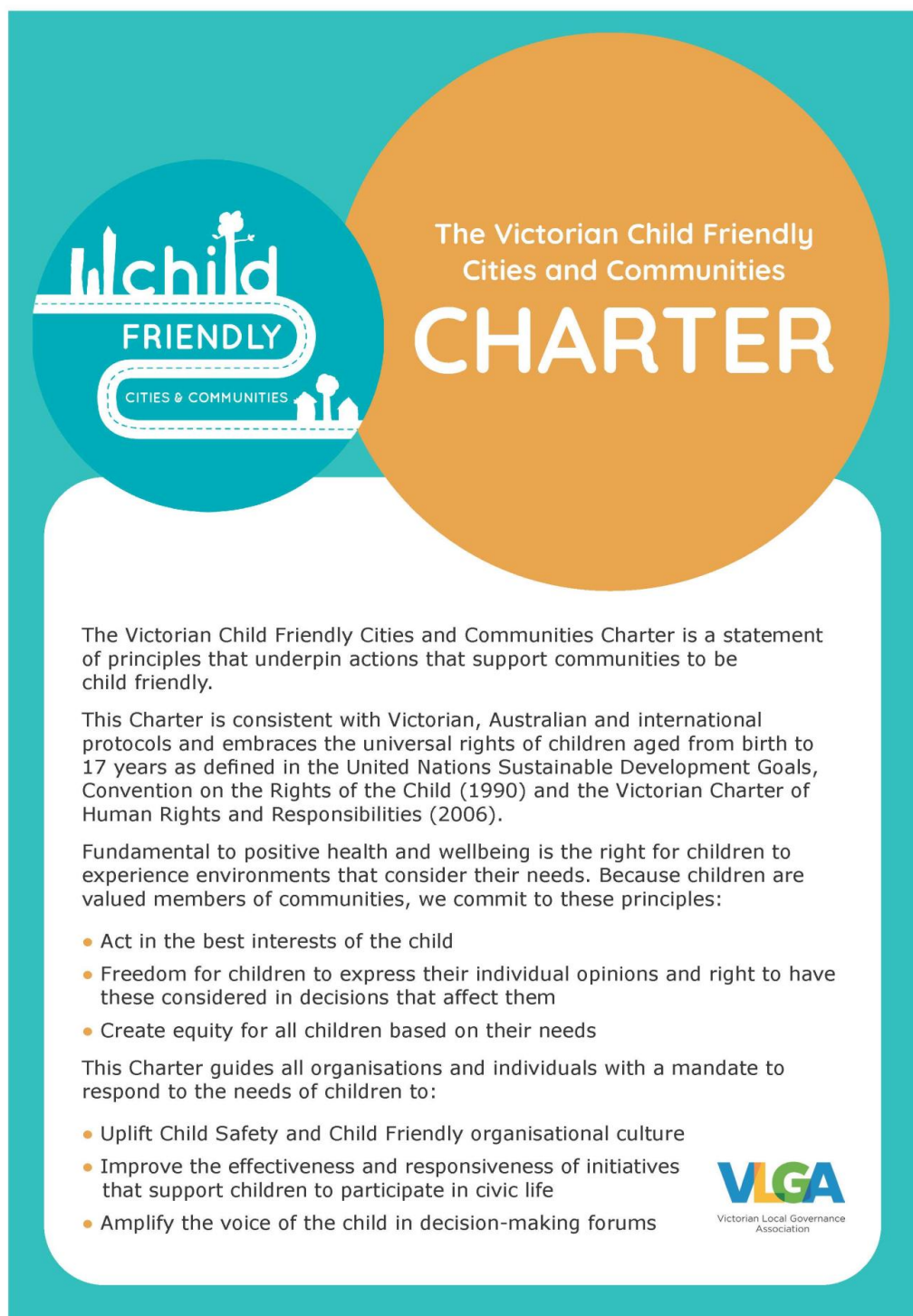
There are not budget or resourcing implications to be considered in relation to this report.

**Sustainability implications**

There are no social, economic or environmental sustainability implications to be considered in relation to 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.



The Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter is a statement of principles that underpin actions that support communities to be child friendly.


This Charter is consistent with Victorian, Australian and international protocols and embraces the universal rights of children aged from birth to 17 years as defined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) and the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (2006).

Fundamental to positive health and wellbeing is the right for children to experience environments that consider their needs. Because children are valued members of communities, we commit to these principles:

- Act in the best interests of the child
- Freedom for children to express their individual opinions and right to have these considered in decisions that affect them
- Create equity for all children based on their needs

This Charter guides all organisations and individuals with a mandate to respond to the needs of children to:

- Uplift Child Safety and Child Friendly organisational culture
- Improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of initiatives that support children to participate in civic life
- Amplify the voice of the child in decision-making forums



**13 NOTICES OF MOTION AND RESCISSION**

Nil

**14 URGENT BUSINESS**

**15 CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS**

Nil