

MINUTES



OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL

on Tuesday 18 July 2023

**At 6.30 PM in the
Mount Alexander Shire Council Chamber,
Civic Centre
Corner Lyttleton Street and Lloyd Street, Castlemaine VIC
3450.**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

To start the official proceedings

**I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on Jaara country
of which the members and elders of the Jaara Jaara community and their
forebears have been custodians for many centuries
and have performed age old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal.
We acknowledge their living culture and their unique role in the life of this region.**

**Council Meetings are audio and video recorded and are made available to the public via
electronic media including YouTube.**

1. PRESENT

Councillors: Tony Cordy, Matthew Driscoll, Stephen Gardner, Christine Henderson, Bill Maltby and Gary McClure.

Officers: Chief Executive Officer (Darren Fuzzard), Director Corporate and Community Services (Lisa Knight via Zoom), Director Infrastructure and Development (Michael Annear) and Manager Governance and Risk (Leanne Brown).

2. APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Councillors: Rosie Annear

Councillor McClure has requested a leave of absence from 3 August to 26 September 2023 and Councillor Gardner has requested a leave of absence from 12 August to 26 August 2023.

RECOMMENDATION

That the requested Councillor leave of absences be approved.

MOVED COUNCILLOR MALTBY

That the recommendation be adopted.

SECONDED COUNCILLOR CORDY

CARRIED.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

4.1. Meeting Of Council - 20 June 2023

The unconfirmed minutes of the Meeting of the Mount Alexander Shire Council held at 6.30 pm on 20 June 2023 at the Mount Alexander Shire Civic Centre have been circulated to Councillors.

The unconfirmed minutes have also been posted on the Mount Alexander Shire Council website, pending confirmation at this meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Mount Alexander Shire Council held on 20 June 2023 be confirmed.

MOVED COUNCILLOR MCCLURE

That the recommendation be adopted.

SECONDED COUNCILLOR CORDY

CARRIED.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Nil.

6. PUBLIC TIME

MOVED COUNCILLOR MALTBY

That standing orders be suspended at 6.33 pm.

SECONDED COUNCILLOR MCCLURE

CARRIED.

- a) Read by Deputy Mayor Driscoll:

“We’ve received a pre-submitted question from a group called “Council Watch”.

As Chair, I deem this question unacceptable as per Mount Alexander Shire Council’s Governance Rules 2023:

Section 12.1.8, (where) “the Chairperson may cease or reject a question and/or statement that is deemed unacceptable under subclause 12.1.6 and will advise the author / speaker of the basis for this decision. Where deemed necessary, the Chairperson may require the speaker to leave the Chamber in accordance with the Governance Rules.”

Subclause 12.1.6 states “questions and statements to Council may be on any matter except if it:

*(a) relates to a matter outside the duties, functions and powers of the Council; and
(k) relates to any other matter which the Council considers would prejudice the Council or any person.”*

- b) Read by Deputy Mayor Driscoll:

“We’ve received another pre-submitted question from The Castlemaine Western Horse Club

As Chair, I also deem this question unacceptable as per Mount Alexander Shire Council Governance Rules 2023:

Under Subclause 12.1.6 states “questions and statements to Council may be on any matter except if it:

(b) is defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial or objectionable in language or substance.”

However; I do note that Council officers will meet with the Castlemaine Western Horse Club and the Wattle Flat Reserve Community Asset Committee separately to listen and discuss their respective concerns regarding the Castlemaine Western Horse Club being a regular user and hirer of the Reserve.

-
- c) Jacqueline Brodie Hanns, Chair of Mount Alexander Business Association.

“My name is Jacqueline Brodie Hanns and as you know I am the Chair of Mount Alexander Business Association, working to support and advocate on behalf of local businesses.

I am speaking to you today on behalf of one particular business, my own, Shedshaker Brewing; however, I am advocating more broadly on behalf of many businesses; those businesses who form part of and participate in the Castlemaine Farmers Market.

During COVID, the Castlemaine Farmers Market provided a lifeline to my own and many other local small businesses, allowing local and regional farmers, producers, growers and makers the opportunity to connect with customers and to continue to trade, even during the darkest days of lockdown and economic uncertainty. I cannot express how deeply indebted my business is to the incredible opportunity the Castlemaine Farmers Market provided and continues to provide.

My request to Council today is for you to review and reconsider the complete ban on dogs at Western Reserve, which is the home of the Castlemaine Farmers Market. Whilst I understand and appreciate the reasons why you would seek to prevent dogs on the playing surface of sporting grounds, the Western Reserve is not like Camp Reserve, or the Newstead Recreation Reserve, or any of the other sporting ovals in this Shire.

For one, it is not an oval.

I attended the Harcourt Recreation Reserve on the weekend to watch the Mount Alexander Falcons. There were dozens of families with dozens of dogs, all having a great time, all very well behaved on leads, with no fights, no issues. They stayed behind the oval boundary, where there was plenty of space for them.

The Western Reserve has no such distinction between the playing field and any other part of the reserve. A ban on dogs from the sporting grounds is a ban on dogs from the entire precinct, irrespective of what activity is taking place. For the majority of the time, that activity is not in fact sport.

Council’s own website promotes the Western Reserve as “the largest open green space in central Castlemaine”

and it states....” This location is home to the Farmers Market and is the perfect place for public outdoor events....” as long as those events do not involve your furry friends.

This is not what the community asked for, when 71% of surveyed respondents indicated that they supported dogs on leads being allowed on to the Western Reserve. Why would council ask the community what it thought, only to have this completely disregarded?

I ask for a review of this ban because the Farmers Market is being unfairly targeted and it is having a direct and punitive impact on traders. Customers are staying away and farmers with their working dogs, are forced to lock their dogs in their cars for hours at a time.

When you introduced this ban, you did so along with a curfew on cats. The rationale was always that this curfew was designed to change behaviour, it was recognised it

would be unenforceable but was to encourage cat owners to take greater responsibility for their pets.

We have one set of aspirations for behaviour change directed at cat owners.

But no attempts to improve or encourage greater responsibility amongst dog owners.

This is not fair and this ban is not consistent.

I ask that Council consider a review of this decision specifically as to how it impacts the Western Reserve and the operation of community events such as the Farmers Market.

In conclusion, I wish to share with you a photograph taken of the cricket pitch at the last Farmers Market. No dog was responsible for this mess. And it certainly changes our understanding of what it means to go out for a duck....”

Ms Brodie Hanns share an image of the cricket wicket on the western Reserve.

- Deputy Mayor Driscoll thanked Ms Brodie Hanns for her question.
- Councillor Maltby asked if the Farmer’s Market had considered using an alternative location such as Lyttleton Street

Ms Brody-Hanns noted the difficulties of this location, including street closures as well as pushback from local traders. She further noted that when the Market was held on Mostyn Street, it was great from shopper’s point of view; however, the impact on local traders was problematic.

- The Chief Executive Officer noted that Councillors have also raised this issue with him, and that Council officers are in the process of preparing information around this issue to present to Councillors and that the public can expect to hear more on this in the coming weeks.

d) Bryan Balmer, Farmer at Ravenswood South.

“Thank you for the opportunity, my name is Bryan Balmer and I’m a farmer at Ravenswood South. I’m here to speak on behalf of a large majority of farmers in the Shire and Victoria who are in support of the commercial harvesting of kangaroos. We note from the Council papers tonight that there is a Notice of Motion suggesting that the commercial harvesting of kangaroos should be banned. I’m quite concerned as a farmer because of unintended consequences.

The State Government of Victoria, through DEECA, conducts surveys of kangaroo populations across Victoria every two years, since 2018. They’ve identified a significant increase in the population of Eastern Grey Kangaroos in that time. In fact, the Central Zone has the largest population in Victoria, increasing quite dramatically.

Kangaroos in large numbers cause a number of issues for Council, and for farmers, and for the community at large. They’re involved in a number of traffic accidents causing fatalities, injuries, and damage to property. I live on Fogarty’s Gap Road and there’s been one death and innumerable car accidents on that road related to kangaroo interactions.

The cause damage to pastures, to crops, and to fences, they compete for grazing and when the numbers are out of control have a negative impact on native vegetation and

on native habitat. Although they're native animals themselves, when the populations become what is considered to be too large they often have a very untoward effect on local native animals and their habitat.

The Kangaroo Harvesting Management Plan is a highly regulated plan. This has been, as you probably know, reviewed after consultations, after a three-year period and the State Government has sought feedback about how the activity could be improved, and should it be continued.

My own experience, not as a professional shooter, but I have been out with professional shooters, is that it is a highly regulated program. Professional shooters have to do training and be licensed and are involved, and the numbers are closely regulated because of the tag system. So, based on the population that the State Government identifies in any particular zone, they will then allow tags to be issued to manage a maximum of 10% of the population in any one management plan period.

The professional shooters need the approval of the landholder that they shoot on and, in most cases, notwithstanding there's been some issues raised in the press, in most cases, they choose not shoot around urban or peri-urban areas. They choose to shoot on larger properties where there are more kangaroos; therefore, theoretically but not always practically, they minimise the impact on peri-urban areas. As I said I've been out on a number of occasions with professional shooters and in my experience they're very sensitive to disruption with neighbours, with lights or guns, very sensitive to human safety and paranoid about animal welfare. Notwithstanding that we've read a number of cases in the press about inappropriate behaviour, I don't believe that they have been caused by professional shooters. Professional shooters, it is their occupation and they are very sensitive in my experience to make sure that they do things properly.

I note that in one of the Motions that commercial shooting provides very little by way of financial impact in the Shire. That may be true, it may be relatively small amount of pet food that is produced by that, but as a practicing farmer I can tell you that if kangaroo numbers grow any further it will severely impact the ability of farmers to manage their property and continue to run profitable businesses. You may be aware of the incident in Mount Macedon last week where a farmer is reporting having about 1200 kangaroos on his property and he is running half the livestock he would normally run."

- Councillor Henderson asked if Mr Balmer was aware of there being a lot of professional shooters active in the Shire in his experience.

Mr Balmer stated that from a market point of view he could understand the sentiment of the Motion; why would we allow professional shooters to come here and shoot? That's partly to do with the population that's been identified.

Mr Balmer also stated that his experience is limited to within the Shire only.

- Deputy Mayor Driscoll clarified that the Notice of Motion was for Council to advocate for the banning of commercial kangaroo harvesting in the Mount Alexander Shire to the Victorian Government and relevant Ministers and Departments.

MOVED COUNCILLOR MALTBY

That standing orders be resumed at 7.50pm.

SECONDED COUNCILLOR CORDY

CARRIED.

7. PETITIONS AND LETTERS

Nil.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Nil.

9. OFFICER REPORTS

9.1. Community

9.1.1. 2023 COMMUNITY ASSET COMMITTEE COMPLIANCE REPORT

This Report is For Information

Responsible Director: Chief Executive Officer, Darren Fuzzard

Responsible Officer: Principal Governance Officer, Augustine Sheppard

Attachments: 1. Community Asset Committee - Audit of Annual Return and required ~ Current [9.1.1.1 - 2 pages]

Executive Summary

The purpose of this paper is to submit to Council an annual report regarding the activities and performance of Council's Community Asset Committees. Under section 47 of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act), the Chief Executive Officer must submit a report in relation to the activities and performance of Community Asset Committees to Council. This occurs annually and is to be completed once Community Asset Committees have had sufficient time to submit their required documentation for the previous financial year.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the activity and performance of Council's Community Asset Committees for the 2022/2023 financial year.

MOVED COUNCILLOR GARDNER

That the recommendation be adopted.

SECONDED COUNCILLOR HENDERSON

CARRIED.

Context

Council has 20 Community Asset Committees that manage community assets on behalf of Council.

Every year, Community Asset Committees are required to complete an Annual Return. The Annual Return contains information on the following:

- Minutes of General Meetings and Annual General Meetings
- bank statements
- statement of income and expenditure
- monies held
- estimated value of Council / Committee owned equipment
- summary of non-Council works completed at facility in previous year
- proposed fees and charges for the next year
- Committee contact details

For Community Asset Committees to receive their annual contributions from Council, they are required to provide all the above data.

Issues

Under section 47(1)(b) of the Act, the Chief Executive Officer has a role in relation to Community Asset Committees.

The Chief Executive Officer may, by Instrument of Delegation, delegate to members of a Community Asset Committee any power, duty or function of the Council that has been delegated to the Chief Executive Officer by the Council.

Section 47(4) of the Act includes the delegations that can be exercised to Community Asset Committees by the Chief Executive Officer, and they include:

- a) the specified limit on any financial delegation and the specified purpose for which the financial delegation may be used;*
- b) compliance with specified governance requirements to ensure appropriate standards of probity are met;*
- c) specified monitoring and reporting of the activities and performance of the Community Asset Committee.*

Section 47 of the Act further states:

- (6) A Chief Executive Officer must submit an annual report to the Council in relation to the activities and performance of a Community Asset Committee in respect of which the members have been given a delegation under this section.*
- (7) A Chief Executive Officer must keep a register of delegations made under this section.*

In line with the above, Instruments of Delegations from the Chief Executive Officer to Community Asset Committees were signed on 2 September 2020. These Instruments specifically outline all financial delegation, governance requirements and reporting requirements.

Financial delegations include:

- The Community Asset Committee is not authorised to enter into a written contract, without prior approval of a delegated Council Officer, with an annual value of over \$2,000 per annum per supplier, with the exception of user hire agreements.
- The Community Asset Committee is not authorised to spend, without the written approval of a delegated officer of Council:
 - more than \$1,000 on minor works; (other than emergency repairs to ensure the continuity of the immediate operations of the facility), or
 - more than \$2,000 on any other single item (other than utilities' expenses for the operation of the facility).

The Instrument also states that Committees must adhere to the Governance Rules 2020 for their meeting procedures.

The following Committees have submitted all required documentation and received their annual Council contributions:

- Barfold Hall
- Baringhup Community Association
- Bill Woodfull Recreation Reserve
- Camp Reserve
- Campbells Creek Community Centre
- Campbells Creek Recreation Reserve
- Castlemaine War Memorial Stadium
- Guildford Hall
- Guildford Recreation Reserve
- John Powell Reserve
- Maldon Community Centre
- Metcalfe Hall
- Muckleford Community Centre
- Taradale Hall
- Taradale Recreation Reserve

-
- Wattle Flat Reserve
 - Wesley Hill Facility

Council is waiting to receive documents from the following committees:

- Elphinstone Facilities
- Sutton Grange Hall

Non-compliance by Community Asset Committees to provide the relevant documents means Council is not able to review their performance and activities throughout the financial year. The Governance team has contacted the Committees regarding the missing documentation to remind them of their requirements under the legislation listed above and is continuing to work with each Committee's key contacts, to provide any additional support for document completion.

This is the second year, the Elphinstone Facilities Community Asset Committee and the third year that the Sutton Grange Hall Community Asset Committee have not submitted their annual return documentation. As a result, they have not received their annual Council contribution again. Officers have attempted numerous ways of contacting the office bearers of Committees, including phone calls, email and hard copies of letters requesting that they contact Council.

It should be noted that in recent days, the Elphinstone Facilities Community Asset Committee have contacted Council officers and are making attempts to provide the documentation required. It is also understood that Councillor Cordy is making enquiries with the Sutton Grange Hall Committee.

Further details on how Community Asset Committees are adhering to their reporting requirements are shown in Attachment 9.1.1.1 to this report.

In general, the Committees have reported the slow return of regular hirers and an increase in facility bookings. It is noted that Committees, particularly the recreation reserves, are reporting an increase in utilities and services costs, such as water and grass maintenance.

Officers acknowledge the increasing costs to maintain a facility and are developing a policy around the annual Council contribution that Committee's currently receive. It is proposed to have a base contribution amount for the Committees and then develop a weighted criterion, where additional funds would be added to the annual base contribution.

Criteria likely to be considered are the number of user groups that use the facility (noting that Committees are responsible for setting their own hire fees); what benefits the facility provides to the wider community; and whether the use of the facility meets a specific need unable to be provided elsewhere.

Contributions have been paid to committees as soon as possible, following the required documents being received.

Council can revoke a Community Asset Committee's delegation when a Committee is not able to continue performing its responsibilities, or at a time deemed appropriate by Council. This is not considered necessary currently.

Finance and Resource Implications

Community Asset Committees provide a valuable voluntary service to Council and the community which has not been quantified. There are no proposed actions in this report that alter the existing financial implications for Council.

Risk Analysis

Asset Risk:

Community Asset Committees manage assets on behalf of Council. Committees provide oversight and financial support to the maintenance and upgrade of the assets to a standard acceptable to the community and a standard that reduces the likelihood of liability for incidents.

Reputation Risk:

While the work of these Committees can be challenging and requires considerable effort by volunteers, they have long enabled members of the community who have a connection to such assets, or a passion for the services that the assets support, to make a meaningful contribution to the wider community. By continuing these Committees under the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council will retain this close link with the community and show that it wishes to continue to work closely with the community.

Climate Impact Statement

Council's community facilities that are managed through community-based committees include recreation reserves and community buildings. Sporting grounds within recreation reserves are particularly susceptible to climate change impacts and the continuation of volunteer-based management of such assets, is essential to ensuring that surfaces are maintained to a safe standard year-round at a more affordable cost.

Buildings also require ongoing treatments to respond to climate change impacts, and the Committees provide an effective mechanism for ensuring that the need for works is identified in a timely way. Summaries of non-Council works, which resolve some of the impacts of climate change are provided in the annual returns.

Alternate Options

There are no alternate options, this report is a requirement of section 47 (6) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Communication and Consultation

Community Asset Committees who are yet to submit the necessary documents have been contacted and reminded of the need to submit the above information.

Collaborate:

We will work together with our community to formulate solutions and incorporate our community's advice and recommendations into our decisions to the maximum extent possible.

Legislation

Local Government Act 2020

Section 47 Delegations by Chief Executive Officer

1. *The Chief Executive Officer may by instrument of delegation delegate any power, duty or function of the Council that has been delegated to the Chief Executive Officer by the Council to—*
 - a. *a member of Council staff; or*
 - b. *the members of a Community Asset Committee.*
2. *The Chief Executive Officer may by instrument of delegation delegate any power, duty or function conferred by this Act or any other Act on the Chief Executive Officer, other than this power of delegation and the power of delegation under subsection (1), to a member of Council staff.*
3. *A delegation under this section to a member of Council staff may be made to—*
 - a. *a person named in the delegation; or*
 - b. *the holder of an office or position specified in the delegation.*
4. *A delegation under this section to the members of a Community Asset Committee is to be exercised subject to the terms and conditions specified by the Chief Executive Officer, which must include the following—*
 - a. *the specified limit on any financial delegation and the specified purpose for which the financial delegation may be used;*
 - b. *compliance with specified governance requirements to ensure appropriate standards of probity are met;*
 - c. *specified monitoring and reporting of the activities and performance of the Community Asset Committee.*
5. *A member of a Community Asset Committee to whom a delegation is given under this section can only exercise the delegation while acting as a member of the Community Asset Committee at a meeting of the Community Asset Committee.*
6. *A Chief Executive Officer must submit an annual report to the Council in relation to the activities and performance of a Community Asset Committee in respect of which the members have been given a delegation under this section.*
7. *A Chief Executive Officer must keep a register of delegations made under this section.*
8. *Unless sooner revoked, a delegation made by a Chief Executive Officer under the Local Government Act 1989 continues in force until 1 September 2020.*

Section 65 Community Asset Committee

1. *A Council may establish a Community Asset Committee and appoint as many members to the Community Asset Committee as the Council considers necessary to enable the Community Asset Committee to achieve the purpose specified in subsection (2).*
2. *A Council may only establish a Community Asset Committee for the purpose of managing a community asset in the municipal district.*

Strategies and Policy Impacts

Council Plan 2021-2025

Our environment – We are maintaining, improving and celebrating our places and spaces.

Declarations of Conflict of Interest

Under section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any interests, including the type of interest.

No conflicts of interest

The Officers involved in reviewing this report, having made enquiries with the relevant members of staff, report that there are no conflicts of interest to be disclosed.

9.2. Environment

9.2.1. BUILDING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

This Report is For Decision

Responsible Director: Director Infrastructure and Development, Michael Annear

Responsible Officer: Building Projects Coordinator, Michelle Hayward

Attachments: 1. Building Asset Management Plan Draft [9.2.1.1 - 34 pages]

Executive Summary

Mount Alexander Shire Council manages 276 buildings and minor structures across the Shire that support the delivery of many services for the community. These buildings range in age, quality and function and vary from simple shelters and storage sheds through to amenity blocks, the library, office blocks and community centres. The management of the organisation's buildings requires prudent coordination of our technical, operational and financial resources.

The purpose of the Building Asset Management Plan 2023-2028 is to formally document a sustainable and strategic approach to plan, develop and maintain the organisation's building assets throughout their entire life cycle from acquisition to disposal. It provides direction and understanding to Council officers, the community and key stakeholders and demonstrates the organisation's commitment to maintaining community buildings in accordance with industry best practice.

The Building Asset Management Plan 2023-2028 is a five-year plan that spans a 20-year timeframe to 30 June 2043. Noting that many building assets have a life longer than this timeframe, the focus of this plan is determining strategies required for maintaining, rehabilitating and renewing components of the asset portfolio over the next 20 years

This is the first Building Asset Management Plan for Council and is presented for adoption.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the Building Asset Management Plan 2023-2028.

MOVED COUNCILLOR MCCLURE

That the recommendation be adopted.

SECONDED COUNCILLOR MALTBY

CARRIED.

Context

Council is responsible for the management, maintenance and conservation of 276 buildings. These buildings are located across the shire, each with its own character and range of facilities. The portfolio of buildings is critical to the delivery of a diverse range of services and are important to the local communities they serve, from depots to town halls, pre-schools, community centres and administration offices.

The estimated fair value replacement cost of the organisation's buildings is \$74.22 million (as at 30 June 2023)

The Building Asset Management Plan 2023-2028 formally documents the management of building assets over their life cycle from acquisition or construction, routine maintenance through to refurbishment or disposal. Importantly, it provides a strategic approach to ensure that our buildings remain in a serviceable and functional condition.

The Building Asset Management Plan 2023-2028 has been developed in accordance with Council's Asset Management Policy and Asset Plan, and forms part of a suite of asset management plans which sit under the umbrella of the Asset Plan.

The Building Asset Management Plan 2023-2028 responds directly to the Council Plan 2021-2025 strategic objective '*We are maintaining, improving and celebrating our places and spaces*' and Council's obligations under the Local Government Act 2020. It sets out the organisation's direction for the management of building assets for the community and key stakeholders and demonstrates the organisation's commitment to maintaining its buildings in accordance with industry best practice.

The Building Asset Management Plan 2023-2028 focuses on a 20-year timeframe from 2023-2043. This is considered necessary given the large capital and operating expenditure needed to maintain these assets and the often-long lead times for planning upgrades, replacements, purchases or building new assets.

CT Management Group was engaged to support the development of the Building Asset Management Plan. This included collection of accurate, up-to-date building asset data via an audit of all buildings and structures in December 2021. This data has been incorporated into the organisation's Geographical Information System (GIS – a mapping system) and asset management system. Collectively, this information provides a comprehensive physical assessment of our community buildings and asset provision across the shire.

An online community survey in April 2022 captured needs and aspirations for our community buildings from 166 community members.

The Building Asset Management Plan outlines a management approach to ensure the financial sustainability of the current building portfolio. The plan identifies risks associated with the relevant asset (including criticality¹ and condition) and importantly explores the funds required (operating and capital) to manage the asset portfolio in alignment with the Asset Management Plan over a 20-year planning period.

As part of a commitment toward best practice, it is recognised that the asset management plan will need to be updated every five years to reflect changes in the management of our assets as driven by legislation, community need and usage.

¹ Criticality refers to a risk assessment process. For example, assets that have the greatest probability of failure and the greatest consequences due to failure are the assets that are the highest risk and therefore the most critical.

Issues

Development of Asset Management Plans is a legislative requirement of the Local Government Act 2020. The Building Asset Management Plan 2023-2028 forms part of a suite of asset management plans which sit under the umbrella of the Asset Plan and is guided by Council's Asset Management Policy.

Financial Plan Allocations

In line with the projected operations and maintenance expenditure as identified in the Asset Management Plan, the forecast operations and maintenance budget over the next 20 years is \$12.1 million. The estimated maintenance cost of items identified in the 2021 building audit is \$13.9 million. The analysis indicates the organisation is projected to have a deficit in the allocated maintenance and operations budget of \$1.8 million over the next 20 years (average \$90,000 / 17.5 per cent per annum shortfall).

It should also be noted that the building industry has been significantly impacted by the pandemic and inflation. This is seen in significant increases in cost of essential materials and skilled labour. In addition, supply chain pressures and material shortages are making it harder to secure construction materials. It is envisaged that the operations and maintenance budget deficit may be further exacerbated by the ever-increasing cost of contractors and materials for maintenance repairs.

The Building Asset Management Plan 2023-2028 includes a forecast for renewal demand and expenditure (see Figure 5 in the plan). This forecast indicates that the renewal budget will be greater than the expenditure required to meet renewal demand, however it is worth noting the following:

- The Financial Plan 2022/2023-2032/2033 is for a 10-year period and the projected budget has been assumed to increase by 2 percent per annum between years 11 and 20. This 2 percent increase does not take into account CPI nor impact of inflation on labour and materials.
- Currently a large percentage of the renewal budget is utilised for new assets, such as Harcourt All Gender Pavilion, Bill Woodfull All Gender Pavilion and sports lighting upgrades. This allocation of funding results in a reduction in renewal works required to maintain the projected condition rating of our building portfolio. This pattern of reallocation has been occurring over the past five years. In 2019/2020, 41 percent of the Capital Works Building Improvements budget was allocated to new builds whereas in 2023/2024, 86 percent of the Capital Works Building Improvement budget has been allocated to new builds.

It is important to consider the potential negative impacts of meeting operation and maintenance and renewal needs for the building portfolio when funding requirements for new assets exceeds the projected allocations in the Financial Plan.

The Building Asset Management Plan 2023-2028 outlines that the current allocation in the Financial Plan 2022/2023-2032/2033 does not allow for funding to implement the Camp Reserve and Campbells Creek Master Plans. This will be addressed as outlined in the plan's Improvement Plan – Table 23 in the plan.

The plan outlines that alternative revenue streams will need to be explored to fund the management of the organisation's buildings. This includes grant funding and also the utilisation of Council's Energy and Water Funding Reserve for investment in more energy efficient buildings. The Reserve is set aside broadly for implementation of Council's

Roadmap to Carbon Neutrality 2020-2025 of which, energy efficient buildings is a key element.

Capital Works Planning

The Building Asset Management Plan 2023-2028 will be utilised to develop a five-year rolling capital works plan for the building portfolio. This will strengthen the organisation's understanding of needs across building classes as well as the resources required for renewal, upgrade and where required new assets. This capital works plan will form the foundation for annual budget bids and external funding applications.

Improvement plan

The Building Asset Management Plan 2023-2028 has identified 12 improvement actions including the continued collection of data to inform analysis and decisions, a review of financial allocations across operations and maintenance and renewal categories, documentation of building maintenance processes and the exploration of an improved qualitative and quantitative assessment process for the functionality and capacity of the building portfolio.

The achievement of the improvement plan actions will support improved asset management and inform the update to the Building Asset Management plan in 2028.

Disposal

Council currently does not have a Disposal Policy to guide disposal of building assets. The Improvement Plan includes an action to develop a Disposal Policy in 2023/2024 for Council to consider adopting. The Disposal Policy will consider both building condition and building surplus.

Finance and Resource Implications

The Building Asset Management Plan was developed with a budget allocation of \$130,000 in the 2021/2022 Council budget.

The plan has been developed with consideration of the Financial Plan 2022/2023 - 2032/2033 and prepared as an Asset Management Plan over a 20-year planning period in accordance with the International Infrastructure Management Manual. The plan meets minimum legislative and organisational requirements for sustainable service delivery and long-term financial planning and reporting

The Building Asset Management Plan flags a review of the plan after five years. These works should be undertaken by an external consultancy, or through the engagement of skilled additional human resources. It is estimated the review (including complete building audit) will cost approximately \$125,000 and will form a future budget bid.

Risk Analysis

Asset risk

Asset management plans help reduce the organisation's risk by:

- Ensuring investment is appropriately allocated, both for operational and capital works needs.

-
- Providing transparency regarding technical, and community levels of service and intervention points.
 - Identifying over or under servicing of asset classes.

The Building Asset Management Plan's focus on the information and systems currently available will enable Council officers to commence the tracking of performance against the agreed levels of service, this performance has not historically been tracked.

Furthermore, a building inspection and maintenance regime has been established that provides a systematic process for scheduling and inspecting buildings and the prioritisation of works based on risk and agreed levels of service. The program prioritisation enables judicious use of community resources and is actioned within the available budget.

Safety and regulatory risk

The application of sound risk management allows for continual improvement in decision making and processes and is an essential consideration in determining appropriate levels of maintenance. While it is not possible to address all defects and eliminate all risks, they are minimised by undertaking inspections and maintenance regimes in line with accepted levels of service.

There are a number of legislative requirements relating to the management of building assets. The organisation must commit to meeting these standards which include the *Local Government Act 2020* and *Building Act 1993*.

The December 2021 building audit identified current legislative gaps and defects that present a safety risk. The audit included a prioritised list of actions to address safety and risk and satisfy legislative obligations. The five-year capital works program to be developed as part of the Building Asset Management Plan will systematically address these risks and assist with future capital works and operational budget bids by way of the annual budget process and external funding opportunities.

Financial risk

Adequate resourcing is required to manage the current and future maintenance of Council's building assets. The Improvement Plan includes an action to 'review current funding allocations made to building maintenance and operations to ensure that it is sufficient to deliver current levels of service and forecast maintenance needs'.

Inadequate resourcing impacts upon monitoring and maintenance of building assets. Interruptions to the scheduled programs due to an inadequate budget is likely to result in future increased costs for building maintenance to ensure buildings meet the agreed levels of service and legislative obligations.

The funding forecast for building asset operation, maintenance and renewal contained in the Financial Plan 2022/2023-2032/2033 adequately provide for the life cycle needs of the organisation's building assets.

Reputation risk

The organisation has an obligation to ensure that buildings are managed in line with its legislative and management obligations. As outlined in the Building Asset Management Plan 2023-2028, building management provides for the management of building assets throughout their entire life cycle. Deviation from these obligations places the organisation in a position of high reputational risk.

The risk of meeting community expectations is also a reputational risk to the organisation. Council officers' approach to building management, combined with community engagement practices, seek to engage the community for input when required and to promote our long-term building management approach.

Climate Impact Statement

A changing and more unstable climate is now widely considered to be a pressing environmental planning issue for the region.

How climate change will impact on assets can vary significantly depending on the location and the type of asset and services provided, as will how the organisation responds and manages these impacts.

The impact of climate change is complex and opportunities to address these challenges will continue to be developed. Several climate challenges have already been recognised with several processes and changes put in place to enhance resilience. Current initiatives to improve the environmental sustainability of Council's buildings include:

- Replacing all lights in Council facilities with LEDs.
- Maximising the use of natural light where possible.
- Installing water efficient plumbing fixtures (e.g., taps, shower heads, etc).
- Installing insulation so that Council facilities are thermally efficient.
- Installing PV systems and water harvesting systems at Council facilities.
- Replacing refrigerators and other electric appliances with more energy efficient equivalents.
- Transitioning from gas as an energy source by replacing gas appliances with electric.
- Installing energy efficient hot water systems.

Council's goals for the design and construction of new facilities will be to:

- Optimise site potential: site design integrates with sustainable design
- Optimise energy use: improving the energy performance to reduce dependence on fossil fuel-derived energy.
- Protect and conserve water: building design and construction uses water efficiently to minimise reliance on potable water supply.
- Optimise building space and material use: buildings are designed and operated to use and reuse materials in the most productive and sustainable way across its entire life cycle.
- Enhance Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ): building design maximises daylighting, has appropriate ventilation and moisture control, optimises acoustic performance, and avoids the use of materials with high-VOC emissions.
- Optimise operational and maintenance practices - specify materials and systems that simplify operational practices and reduce maintenance requirements.

The implementation of the above actions will also contribute to meet the organisation's target of zero-net emissions by 2025 as outlined in the Roadmap to Carbon Neutrality 2020-2025.

Alternate Options

Council could choose not to endorse the Building Asset Management Plan 2023-2028. This is not recommended as having an endorsed Building Asset Management Plan provides direction and understanding to staff, the community and stakeholders.

The Building Asset Management Plan 2023-2028 also demonstrates a strategic approach to delivering positive outcomes for our buildings. Furthermore, it is supported by the strategic direction in the Council Plan 2021-2025.

Communication and Consultation

Collaborate:

We will work together with our community to formulate solutions and incorporate our community's advice and recommendations into our decisions.

In April 2022, the Buildings and Projects team sought feedback from the community to understand how people use the organisation's buildings, how they feel about the condition of them, and their priorities on how these assets need to be developed to meet user needs.

The community survey received 166 responses covering users of a broad age range and interests. The survey's results have informed development of the Building Asset Management Plan 2023-2028 and will be a valuable source of information to inform and shape future service planning and development of future building improvement programs.

Key data captured by this survey includes priorities for future improvement of the organisation's buildings including:

- Presentation of spaces, including the condition of interior finishes and lighting.
- Upgrading kitchen facilities, including cookery, appliances, serving ware, etc.
- Reducing environmental impact, through green power, solar panels, water harvesting, and efficient heating, etc.
- Incorporating modern facilities, such as Wi-Fi, projector screen, and audio-visual equipment.
- Improved toilet and changeroom facilities.

This feedback indicates that the community's expectation is access to quality and contemporary facilities. This information should be used to inform longer-term strategy for the building portfolio and indicates that investment in upgrades and improvements will be needed in the short to medium term.

Wherever practicable, community input is sought on aspects of the planning of new and renewal of buildings by way of consultation with committees and user groups involved with each facility.

The Building Asset Management Plan 2023-2028 will be available on the organisation's website.

Legislation

This Building Asset Management Plan is consistent with Council's obligations within the following legislation:

Legislation	Requirement
<i>Local Government Act 2020</i>	Sets out role, purpose, responsibilities, and powers of Council including the preparation of a long-term financial plan supported by asset management plans for sustainable service delivery.
<i>Building Act 1993</i>	Victorian building policy
<i>Building Interim Regulations 2017</i>	Victorian building regulations and standards
National Construction Code	Code of Practice relevant for all building design and construction but subservient to the Victorian Act and Regulations.
All relevant Australian Standards and Codes of Practice	Referenced in the BCA as amended. Covers design, demolition, painting, pest management, electrical installations, plumbing, design and access for mobility and virtually every aspect of building construction and management.
<i>Crown Land Reserves Act 1978</i>	Requires that tenancy agreements must be in place for groups occupying facilities on Crown land.
<i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i>	To ensure that persons with disabilities have the same rights as the rest of the community (including access to premises).
<i>Environment Protection Act 1970</i>	Provides a legislative framework for aspects such as noise, sustainability, landfills, septic tank systems, etc.
<i>Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004</i>	To provide a working environment that is safe, and, as far as practicable, without risk to health.
<i>Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007</i>	Provides for health and safety in relation to workplaces and hazards, activities, and things at workplaces.
Occupational Health and Safety Codes of Practice	Codes of practice provide practical guidance for any person placed under obligation by the OH&S Act or its Regulations.
<i>Heritage Act 1995</i>	Protection of historic buildings, structures, and precincts.
<i>Children's Services Act 1996 and Children's Services Regulations 2020</i>	Licensing and regulation of Children's services. Security, safety, hygiene, facilities, rooms and area, toilet and washing facilities, other requirements for buildings.

Strategies and Policy Impacts

Council Plan 2021-2025

Objective: We are maintaining, improving, and celebrating our places and spaces.

The implementation of the 20-year Asset Plan is a key strategic direction of the Council Plan 2021-2025.

Asset Management Policy

This policy outlines Council's commitment to manage its assets in a sustainable way, to assist in the achievement of Council's vision and meet the service and infrastructure needs of the community.

Asset Plan

Sets out how the organisation manages infrastructure and other assets to achieve the Council Plan objectives and Community Vision.

Community Engagement Policy 2021

This policy outlines Council's commitment to engaging with the community and its intent to ensure clear and thorough communication in all stages of each community engagement process.

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025

Tackling climate change and its impact on health.

- 1.2 Demonstrate leadership and commitment to addressing climate change and its impacts on health within the community, through a strategic approach at multiple levels of decision making across all Council business areas.

Roadmap to Carbon Neutrality 2020-2025

Goal: Zero-net emissions buildings by 2025.

The emissions reduction plan sets out Council's roadmap to carbon neutrality that will lead to zero net emissions for Council operations by 2025. The roadmap sets out Council's plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across its vehicle fleet, buildings, street lighting, procurement, and waste management.

Declarations of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any interests, including the type of interest.

No conflicts of interest

The Officers involved in reviewing this report, having made enquiries with the relevant members of staff, report that there are no conflicts of interest to be disclosed.

9.3. Economy

9.3.1. APPROVAL OF LEAVE FOR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER - 25 AUGUST 2023 TO 10 OCTOBER 2023

This Report is For Decision

Responsible Director: Chief Executive Officer, Darren Fuzzard

Responsible Officer: Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer, Peta Fenton

Attachments: Nil

Executive Summary

This report seeks Council's approval of annual leave for the Chief Executive Officer, Darren Fuzzard, from 5:00 pm on Friday 25 August 2023 to 8:30 am on Tuesday 10 October 2023 inclusive.

It also seeks approval of the appointment of Michael Annear as Acting Chief Executive Officer, from 5:00 pm on Friday 25 August 2023 to 8:30 am on Tuesday 10 October 2023 inclusive, to cover the full period of leave prior to the Chief Executive Officer's return.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Approves annual leave for the Chief Executive Officer for the period 5:00 pm on Friday 25 August 2023 to 8:30 am on Tuesday 10 October 2023, inclusive.**
- 2. Appoints Michael Annear, Director Infrastructure and Development, as Acting Chief Executive Officer for the period 5:00 pm on Friday 25 August 2023 to 8:30 am on Tuesday 10 October 2023, inclusive.**
- 3. Includes the following limitations on the delegations of Michael Annear as Acting Chief Executive Officer:**
 - a) No approval of changes to the organisational structure.**
 - b) No approval of new permanent positions.**
 - c) No rebanding of current positions.**
 - d) No changes to senior Managers' contracts, other than increments in-line with the current Enterprise Agreement increments if they fall due during the period.**

MOVED COUNCILLOR CORDY

That the recommendation be adopted.

SECONDED COUNCILLOR MALTBY

CARRIED.

Context

The Chief Executive Officer wishes to apply for leave to be taken from 5:00 pm on Friday 25 August 2023 to 8:30 am on Tuesday 10 October 2023 inclusive. It is proposed that Michael Annear, Director Infrastructure and Development, be appointed as Acting Chief Executive Officer during the period of leave.

In accordance with the Chief Executive Officer's Delegation, Council approval is required to appoint an Acting Chief Executive Officer for periods longer than 28 days.

Issues

The Acting Chief Executive Officer will be provided with a copy of the Position Description and the Mount Alexander Shire's Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer, which outlines the scope of authority for the role under various legislations.

This report recommends certain limitations on the Acting Chief Executive Officer's delegations during the period of appointment.

Finance and Resource Implications

There are no financial implications with this report as both the Chief Executive Officer and Director Infrastructure and Development's wages and leave are included in the budget.

Risk Analysis

Enabling the Chief Executive Officer to have leave is not only a requirement of employment, it is good governance to ensure that the health and wellbeing of the Council's only employee is supported and to enable a periodic 'fresh set of eyes' in the role of the Chief Executive Officer.

The primary risk associated with this occurring is a loss of continuity of the Chief Executive Officer's direction to the organisation and support to Council. This risk is substantially mitigated by the whole executive team meeting on a weekly basis, to give collective and shared direction to the organisation and meeting with Councillors at the same frequency, to offer collective advice and support.

In addition, the Chief Executive Officer will provide a handover of key priorities and tasks to the Acting Chief Executive Officer and discuss the position description and instrument of delegation.

Director Annear has demonstrated himself to be a highly capable and diligent leader of the organisation and is considered to possess the skills and knowledge to enable him to act in the role of Chief Executive Officer as proposed.

Climate Impact Statement

There are no climate impacts relating or associated with this report.

Alternate Options

Council could reject the Chief Executive Officer's request for leave or appoint another person to the role from that proposed. The former is not recommended for the reasons previously stated.

If Council were to appoint another staff member, then this would most likely be Lisa Knight, the Director Corporate and Community Services. The Director of Corporate and Community

Services has ably acted in the role of Chief Executive Officer on many occasions over the past six years and could do so again should Council prefer.

Communication and Consultation

Consultation has been limited to the Chief Executive Officer, Director Corporate and Community Services and Director Infrastructure and Development.

Legislation

Local Government Act 2020

Strategies and Policy Impacts

Council Plan 2021-2025

Declarations of Conflict of Interest

Under section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any interests, including the type of interest.

No conflicts of interest

The Officers involved in reviewing this report, having made enquiries with the relevant members of staff, report that there are no conflicts of interest to be disclosed.

9.3.2.ANNUAL PLAN ACTIONS 2023/2024

This Report is For Decision

Responsible Director: Director Corporate and Community Services, Lisa Knight

Responsible Officer: Executive Manager Corporate Services, Carolyn Ross

Attachments: 1. Annual Plan 2023 2024 [9.3.2.1 - 11 pages]

Executive Summary

Each year an Annual Plan is collated to monitor progress towards achieving the priorities in the Council Plan. On a quarterly basis, Council is provided with a report on the achievement of actions in the Annual Plan.

The Annual Plan 2023/2024 contains priority projects outlined in the Budget 2023/2024, and actions and projects identified in the various strategies adopted by Council, that will deliver the strategic objectives contained in the Council Plan 2021-2025.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Endorses the proposed actions for the Annual Plan 2023/2024.**
- 2. Notes a quarterly update on progress will be provided at Meetings of Council.**

MOVED COUNCILLOR HENDERSON

That the recommendation be adopted.

SECONDED COUNCILLOR GARDNER

CARRIED.

Context

The Council Plan 2021-2025 was adopted by Council at its Meeting of Council on 19 October 2021. Each year an Annual Plan is developed to better facilitate delivery of projects and initiatives over the four-year period of the Council Plan.

Issues

There are 28 actions proposed across 12 strategic objectives or principles. This is inclusive of 20 current year actions and 8 actions carried forward from the prior year.

Finance and Resource Implications

Projects and initiatives contained in the Annual Plan are fully funded in the Budget 2023/2024, either through a specific budget allocation, grant funding, or from existing operational budgets.

Risk Analysis

Financial risk:

Managing financial risk for project delivery and the Annual Plan commences by allocating funds within the Annual Budget to resource the delivery of the Plan's actions.

Regulatory risk:

Adopting a Council Plan is a requirement of the Local Government Act 2020, and Section 90 (2) of the Act details what the Plan must include. Section 98 (3) (a) of the Act details the annual reporting requirements in relation to the Council Plan i.e., a statement of progress on implementation of the Council Plan. Reporting quarterly to Council and our community makes annual reporting easier.

Reputation risk:

By publicly reporting on items in the Annual Plan, Council is managing reputational risk by being clear and transparent with our community on the progress of project delivery.

Climate Impact Statement

In preparing the Annual Plan 2023/2024, Council can choose to allocate funds to address the impacts of climate change directly or indirectly. Council is directly addressing the impacts of climate change in the following ways:

- Partnering with the CFA and members of the Chewton community to build emergency resilience toward bushfire risk associated with Chewton and the Chewton Bushlands area.
- Adopting an Active Transport Strategy, encouraging people to walk or ride rather than drive.
- In collaboration with other councils, supporting the North Central Catchment Management Authority to commence a pilot project to test the feasibility of a larger local carbon offsetting project.
- Design and improvement work to levees in National School Lane, Elizabeth Street, Castlemaine Cabin and Van Park, and Campbells Creek Township.

Alternate Options

Whilst an Annual Plan is not required by legislation, reporting on the progress and achievement of initiatives on a quarterly cycle, better facilitates delivery of the four-year Council Plan.

Communication and Consultation

Managers and the Executive Team were consulted in the preparation of the proposed actions before presenting them to Council for their review and direction.

Inform:

We will keep our community informed.

Quarterly progress reports are presented at Meetings of Council.

Legislation

Local Government Act 2020

Section 18 (1) (d) of the Act requires the Mayor to report to the municipal community, at least once each year, on the implementation of the Council Plan.

Section 98 (3) (a) states that the Annual Report's report of operations of the Council must contain a statement of progress on the implementation of the Council Plan, which includes the results of the strategic indicators.

Strategies and Policy Impacts

Council Plan 2021-2025

Principle - We are always improving.

- Council is responsive to the needs of the communities it serves.

Principle - We are delivering together.

- We are working across Council, government, local partners and across community to meet the varied needs of our region.

Principle - We are engaging genuinely with the community.

- Our community feels heard and is able to influence and participate in the decisions that impact them.

The Annual Plan is developed and monitored to support achievement of the strategic objectives set out in the Council Plan.

Declarations of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the Local Government Act 2020, Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any interests, including the type of interest.

No conflicts of interest

The Officers involved in reviewing this report, having made enquiries with the relevant members of staff, report that there are no conflicts of interest to be disclosed.

9.3.3. FINANCIAL PLAN 2023 TO 2033

This Report is For Decision

Responsible Director: Director Corporate and Community Services, Lisa Knight

Responsible Officer: Executive Manager Corporate Services, Carolyn Ross

Attachments: 1. Financial Plan 2023 to 2033 [9.3.3.1 - 33 pages]

Executive Summary

The ten-year Financial Plan (the Plan), updated and adopted in June 2022 (after its initial adoption in October 2021), details the financial resources required to deliver the activities that Council proposes to undertake over the short, medium and long term. The Plan will guide future strategies and actions of Council to ensure that the organisation focuses on operating in a financially sustainable manner. Development of the Plan has been undertaken using prudent financial sustainability assumptions and guidelines.

This version of the Plan extends the Plan out an additional year, to 2033, using updated financial information and forecasts. It contains more up-to-date financial information, noting that the format and context of the document has not changed from the initial 2021 Plan.

Planning for long-term financial sustainability will help ensure that:

- Council is focused on remaining financially viable in the medium to long term.
- Council can reliably deliver the works and services required by our community.
- Assets are maintained at appropriate levels, and they are renewed, upgraded, or replaced as planned.
- Current ratepayers are funding the works and services they consume now and are not burdening future ratepayers (the concept of inter-generational equity).

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the updated Financial Plan 2023-2033.

MOVED COUNCILLOR CORDY

That the recommendation be adopted.

SECONDED COUNCILLOR MCCLURE

CARRIED.

Context

The Plan sets out Council's objectives and recommendations for ensuring that Council remains focused on its financial sustainability over the medium to long term.

The Plan has been developed using several key principles. These principles include:

- Priority of service provision is the provision of mandated and legislated services, or activities to manage risk.
- Flexibility in the choice of service delivery model e.g., in-house or contracted, to best meet community needs.
- Development of Asset Management Plans to determine the priority of capital investment.
- A prudent use of debt.
- Ensuring that certain future liabilities and provisions are backed by cash holdings.
- On adoption by Council, all new strategies requiring investment of funds must include consideration of their impact on the long-term finances of Council.
- A regular review of the Plan to ensure the most recent economic data is being used and the assumptions are still appropriate.
- Seeking contributions from developers to fund new assets.

The Plan has been developed using the Better Practice Guide and Template provided by Local Government Victoria (LGV). LGV developed the Guide and Template after sector consultation and input.

An annual review of the Financial Plan is recommended as it is a positive practice that promotes good governance. It is important that the stewards who are currently responsible for administering and making decisions about public resources, continue to plan for future financial sustainability and continuation of operations.

Issues

Council operates in an environment where approximately 60% of its income is subject to capping, set according to the Fair Go Rates System (FGRS). In contrast, Council's expenditure can increase at a rate greater than that set by the FGRS. While Council has adapted, and continues to adapt to this operating environment, finding operational savings is becoming more challenging. At some stage Council will need to review the services, service levels and service delivery models offered to ensure future financial sustainability. An additional item has been added to the list of strategic actions in section 2.2 to highlight this challenge. Council could seek a rate rise above the cap set by the Essential Services Commission in accordance with the FGRS; however, this is not an effortless process and does require significant community engagement and support.

The Plan acts as a guide for the organisation to manage future financial sustainability. It is a statement of intent, at a point in time, as to how Council plans to proceed in the future. However, issues and events occur that will impact Council operations. Being adaptable to current events, while still considering long-term financial sustainability is challenging, but important.

Information in the Plan for consideration includes:

- Estimates of financial policy statements that meet or exceed targets in most years. The exception is the underlying operating result, which shows a deficit in all years. Future decisions will need to be made that find operational expenditure efficiencies, or increase available income, to meet the target of an operating result greater than, or equal to, zero.
- The assumption of nine strategic actions in the preparation of the Plan.
- Details of the financial assumptions used to compile the Plan. It is difficult to predict future escalation factors, so it is important that these factors seem reasonable and not overly optimistic.
- A summary of planned human resources required to deliver the Council Plan.

Factored into this updated Plan is the assumption that in future years, operating costs will continue to be challenged, as demand for Council-provided services increases. Additionally, the increased income from government grants may not continue, instead returning to pre-pandemic levels.

Finance and Resource Implications

The Plan has been prepared within current budgetary resources.

The Plan itself details the financial resources required to deliver important works and services for our community. The Financial Statements included in the Plan are:

- Comprehensive Income Statement.
- Balance Sheet.
- Statement of Changes in Equity.
- Statement of Cash Flows.
- Statement of Capital Works.
- Statement of Human Resources.

The above financial information is also presented in the Annual Budget and the Annual Financial Statements, so the content is consistent between the documents and should be familiar to regular readers of those documents.

There is capacity to borrow throughout the life of the Plan and remain within acceptable risk levels.

Risk Analysis

Financial risk:

Financial uncertainty always exists, and the level of future financial uncertainty is difficult to predict. Regularly reviewing the Plan will help alleviate this financial risk, as assumptions and information is based on more recent and up to date information. By reporting and analysing expected future financial information, potential problems can be identified earlier, and appropriate action taken.

Information risk:

In formulating the Plan, Council understands it does not have all the information required to accurately compile the future financial statements. Whilst all care has been taken in choosing and setting the assumptions within the Plan, readers should review the assumptions to ensure they appear reasonable.

Climate Impact Statement

Council responds both directly and indirectly to the impacts of climate change in numerous ways. While these are not specifically mentioned in the Plan, annual budget allocations facilitate Council's response.

What is apparent, however, is the impact that climate change can have on Council operations. For example, we know we will experience natural disasters, such as fire, drought, or flood in the future. We may also experience extreme or volatile temperatures in our climate. The financial cost, such as increased insurance premiums or the costs of responses to emergencies, associated with the frequency, duration and severity of such future events is not able to be predicted and is therefore not included in the financial statements within the Plan.

Alternate Options

The Local Government Act 2020 requires Council to keep a Financial Plan in force.

Communication and Consultation

Inform:

We will keep our community informed.

In making this Plan public, Council is seeking to keep its community informed on the long-term financial viability of the organisation.

Legislation

Local Government Act 2020

Section 91 of the Act concerns the Financial Plan. This section states:

1. *A Council must develop, adopt and keep in force a Financial Plan in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices.*
2. *The scope of a Financial Plan is a period of at least the next 10 financial years.*
3. *A Financial Plan must include the following in the manner and form prescribed by the regulations—*
 - a. *Statements describing the financial resources required to give effect to the Council Plan and other strategic plans of the Council;*
 - b. *Information about the decisions and assumptions that underpin the forecasts in the statements specified in paragraph (a);*
 - c. *Statements describing any other resource requirements that the Council considers appropriate to include in the Financial Plan;*
 - d. *Any other matters prescribed by the regulations.*
4. *A Council must develop or review the Financial Plan in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices and adopt the Financial Plan by 31 October in the year following a general election.*

-
5. *The Financial Plan adopted under subsection (4) has effect from 1 July in the year following a general election.*

Council adopted the Financial Plan 2022-2032 in June 2022; this updated plan shifts the focus to 2023-2033.

Strategies and Policy Impacts

Council Plan 2021-2025

Principle - We are always improving.

- Council is responsive to the needs of the communities it serves.

Principle - We are delivering together.

- We are working across Council, government, local partners and across community to meet the varied needs of our region.

Declarations of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the Local Government Act 2020, Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any interests, including the type of interest.

No conflicts of interest

The Officers involved in reviewing this report, having made enquiries with the relevant members of staff, report that there are no conflicts of interest to be disclosed.

10. DELEGATES REPORTS

Meetings attended by CEO and Mayor from 21 June 2023 to 18 July 2023

MEETING	CEO	MAYOR
Attended workshop with representatives from Castlemaine Art Museum (Merryn Tinkler, Manager Economy and Culture also in attendance)	✓	✓
Attended meeting with Executive Team from Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (Djaara); (Lisa Knight, Director Corporate and Community Services and Michael Annear, Director Infrastructure and Development also in attendance)	✓	
Attended Loddon Campaspe Councils CEOs meeting	✓	
Attended project advisory group meeting for Castlemaine Heritage Study		✓
Attended Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership meeting	✓	
Attended Rural Councils Victoria meeting as Loddon Campaspe's CEO representative	✓	
Gold Central Vic radio interview	✓	
Meeting with lessee of Mount Alexander Shire Council asset (Michael Annear, Director Infrastructure and Planning also in attendance)	✓	
Meeting with Mary-Anne Thomas MP, Minister for Health, Health Infrastructure and Medical Research to discuss matters of common interest for Mount Alexander Shire	✓	
Attended relaunch of 1,000 Books Before School program		✓
Attended exhibition opening at Castlemaine Art Museum		✓
Attended Castlemaine Rotary's changeover afternoon tea		✓
Gold Central Vic radio interview	✓	
Meeting with CEO, Dhelkaya Health to discuss matters of common interest for Mount Alexander Shire	✓	
Attended joint State Government and Local Government CEOs monthly forum	✓	
Attended Loddon Campaspe Councils CEOs meeting	✓	
Panel member for International Local Government Information Unit session about finding long-term sustainability options for local government	✓	
Meeting with Regional Director, Rural Development Victoria, CEO Central Goldfields Shire Council and representative from George Weston Foods to discuss matters of common interest	✓	
Gold Central Vic radio interview	✓	

MEETING	CEO	MAYOR
Attended Community Reference Group meeting for Housing and Neighbourhood Character Strategy		✓
Meeting with local resident to discuss drainage concerns		✓
Gold Central Vic radio interview	✓	
Meeting with representatives from Autoplex to discuss matters of common interest for Mount Alexander Shire (Merryn Tinkler, Manager Economy and Culture also in attendance)	✓	

The CEO spoke on the previous Notice of Motion regarding the Metcalfe Fire Station, confirming that he had written to Mary-Anne Thomas MP, who has confirmed she would take up the request to see that the Metcalfe Fire Station improvements does proceed as proposed.

He spoke of a meeting with Harriet Shing, MP, regarding the cancellation of the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Victoria. Minister Shing is the current Minister for Regional Development and she briefed CEO's about the \$1 billion proposal for housing as a result of the Commonwealth Games no longer being held. It was asked if the funding would go to rural cities or regional Victoria. Minister Shing confirmed that it was proposed that the funding would be equitable across the regions so councils are not disadvantaged. This is potentially a new opportunity that was not there previously.

Councillor Henderson asked the CEO about being a panel member for International Local Government Information Unit session about finding long-term sustainability options for Local Government. He confirmed he attended the online meeting with other panel members from England, Ireland and a larger NSW Council. He noted Council's willingness to explore opportunities to generate more income to increase sustainability.

11. NOTICES OF MOTION

11.1. NOTICE OF MOTION 003/2023 - BANNING OF COMMERCIAL KANGAROO HARVESTING IN MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE

MOVED COUNCILLOR GARDNER

That Council advocates for the banning of commercial kangaroo harvesting in Mount Alexander Shire Council to the Victorian Government, relevant Ministers and Departments.

SECONDED COUNCILLOR HENDERSON

CARRIED.

The Deputy Mayor used his casting vote.

COUNCILLOR MALTBY CALLED FOR A DIVISION.

For: Councillors Gardner, Henderson, Driscoll, Driscoll (Casting Vote).

Against: Councillors Maltby, Cordy, McClure.

Rationale

I am asking Council to support advocating to ban commercial killing of kangaroos in our Shire for the following reasons:

- Kangaroos are a native species and form part of the Shire's attraction and beauty.
- There is no economic benefit for our Shire on this. Most of the hunters are not from within the Shire and no or minimal jobs will be created. In fact, it can have the reverse affect, as people visit the Shire to see the natural environment including at hotels, bush camps and farm stays – they want to see kangaroos and native animals.
- Shooting will take place at night using spotlights and high-powered rifles with the potential to cause injury to people and shooting does cause distress to some people and definitely children.
- Despite there being rules around harvesting there has been many stories, documented evidence that a large number of killings are done inhumanely with animals suffering and leaving offspring to die.
- The community in this Shire has a close connection to kangaroos, we have the wildlife shelters and Maldon recently had displays of kangaroos in shop front windows for the Maldon in Winter festival.
- Allowing kangaroos to be harvested is not in line with Council's own strategic documents including:

-
- The Shire's 10-year vision and aspirations of "preserving our natural environment means living sustainably and caring for country"
 - Under the Council's recently approved Climate Strategy – We have a pillar: *An environment for people and nature*
 - Council's Environment Strategy 2015-2025 Priority Area 7: *A long-term goal of the natural environment is health and thriving.*

Officer Comment

In Victoria, all wildlife is protected under the Wildlife Act (1975). It is illegal to disturb or destroy wildlife without an appropriate authorisation, licence or exemption.

The Kangaroo Harvesting Management program began in Victoria on 1 October 2019, to enable the harvesting of Eastern and Western Grey Kangaroos in Victoria on private land in seven designated harvest zones. The program is designed to enable authorised harvesters to take kangaroos in a sustainable manner by limiting the harvest, using annual quotas at no cost to landholders.

The Kangaroo Harvesting Management program is implemented alongside the Authority to Control Wildlife system for landholders. The Authority to Control Wildlife program allows landholders to undertake kangaroo control for damage mitigation purposes. The program allows an individual to shoot, wilfully disturb or trap wildlife where it is damaging property, crops or other wildlife habitat or for the purposes of management, conservation or protection of wildlife. Land managers must exhaust all practical non-lethal control options before applying for an Authority to Control Wildlife for lethal control, which is a last resort.

The management and administration of the Kangaroo Harvest Management program is split across two state government departments and involves four entities.

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, is responsible for maintaining the program, including managing kangaroo population surveys and quota-setting. They are also responsible for decisions to reduce or suspend quotas as indicated by population threshold models.

The Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions and its agents are responsible for administering the Kangaroo Harvesting Program in line with the requirements of the Victorian Kangaroo Harvest Management Plan, and with monitoring and enforcing compliance of program participants.

The Game Management Authority[1] is an independent authority responsible for the regulation of game hunting in Victoria. The Authority is delegated the authorisation of licences to harvesters and leads compliance and enforcement of the Kangaroo Harvesting Program.

PrimeSafe (the Statutory Authority responsible for regulating meat, poultry, seafood and pet food in Victoria) issues licenses and monitors compliance for Game Meat Processing Facilities, Pet Meat Processing Facilities, Field Depots and Harvest Vehicles, when facilities are required to be licensed under the Meat Industry Act (1993).

The administration of the program, including issuing authorisations, monitoring harvest quotas and linking landholders with harvesters is managed via an online system by Service Victoria.

The Victorian Government designates zones across Victoria which are assigned quotas that specify the number of Eastern and Western Grey kangaroos that can be controlled in any one area to ensure the sustainability of kangaroo populations. Annual quotas are set by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action for the Kangaroo Harvest program and allocations are released in stages throughout the year.

Annual quotas for the Kangaroo Harvest Management program are calculated by deducting the estimated Authority to Control Wildlife system numbers from the maximum recommended level of population reduction. To ensure sustainable kangaroo populations, no more than 10 percent of the total Victorian kangaroo population should be controlled each year across both the Kangaroo Harvesting Program and the Authority to Control Wildlife system.

Mount Alexander Shire is located within the Central Zone under the Kangaroo Harvest Management Program. In 2023 the Central zone has a quota of 65,100. It is estimated that the total economic benefit from this activity (total for Victoria) is about \$2.8 million.

The Kangaroo Harvesting Management Plan 2021-2023 is set to expire at the end of 2023. The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action are seeking public feedback on the existing program and will use this to inform the development of the future plan. The public consultation period ends on 11 July 2023.

If Council resolves to write to the State Government seeking a ban on commercial kangaroo harvesting within Mount Alexander Shire, it is recommended to:

1. Request the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action to accept a submission from Mount Alexander Shire Council to the consultation on the Kangaroo Harvesting Management Plan 2021-2023 after 11 July 2023,
2. Write to the Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. Ingrid Stitt, and the Minister for Outdoor Recreation the Hon. Sonya Kilkenny, outlining Mount Alexander Shire Council's position on the Kangaroo Harvest Management Program.

[1] The Game Management Authority reports to the Minister for Outdoor Recreation

12. URGENT SPECIAL BUSINESS

Nil.

13. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Nil.

14. MEETING CLOSE

Meeting closed at 7.43 pm