



CORANGAMITE
SHIRE

Minutes

Council Meeting

**Tuesday 25 March
2025**

Held in the Killara Centre
At the Camperdown Community
Centre
Commenced at 3:00 pm



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Order of Business

Minutes of the meeting of the Corangamite Shire Council
held in the Killara Centre at the Camperdown Community Centre,
210-212 Manifold Street, Camperdown Victoria 3260
At 3:00 pm on Tuesday 25 March 2025

Present

Councillors

K. Makin (Chairperson), J. Beard, N. Cole, G. Conheady, R. Gstrein, L. Hickey, J. Vogels

Officers

David Rae, Chief Executive Officer
Justine Linley, Director Sustainable Development
Shaun Broadbent, Director Works and Services
David Harrington, Director Corporate and Community Services
Kathryn Anderson, Manager Governance and Civic Support
Jacqui Thomas, Manager Finance
John Kelly, Manager Assets Planning
Katie Hearn, Manager Community Services
Katy McMahon, Manager Economy and Prosperity
Michele Stephenson, Manager Human Resources and Risk

1 Prayer

We ask for guidance and blessing on this Council. May the true needs and wellbeing of our communities be our concern. Help us, who serve as leaders, to remember that all our decisions are made in the best interests of the people, culture and the environment of the Corangamite Shire.

Amen.

2 Acknowledgment of Country

Corangamite Shire Council acknowledges and pays our respects to the Eastern Maar and Wadawurrung peoples, as the Traditional Owners of the Lands that we work, live and play. We also acknowledge their Elders, past and present and recognise their ongoing cultural, spiritual and educational practices.

3 Apologies

Nil

4 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

Nil

5 Confirmation of Minutes

RECOMMENDATION

That the minutes of the Corangamite Shire Council meeting held on 25 February 2025 be confirmed as correct.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Nick Cole
Seconded: Cr Laurie Hickey

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7 / 0

6 Deputations and Presentations

The Mayor, Cr Kate Makin, invited members of the public who had requested to address Council to make their presentations.

The following item/s was/were submitted:

- Nil

7 Committee Reports

7.1 Audit and Risk Committee Biannual Report to Council - March 2025

Directorate: Corporate and Community Services
Author: Phillippa Dee, Chairperson, Audit and Risk Committee
Previous Council Reference: Nil
Attachments: Nil

Declaration

Chief Executive Officer – David Rae

In providing this advice to Council as the Chief Executive Officer, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Author – Phillippa Dee

In providing this advice to Council as the Audit and Risk Committee Chairperson, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a summary of activities undertaken by the Audit and Risk Committee (the Committee) since September 2024. The report is also provided in accordance with the Committee's Charter and *Local Government Act 2020* which requires the Chairperson to report to Council every 6 months. The previous report to Council was in September 2024.

Introduction

Audit and Risk Committees play a critical role in the financial reporting framework of councils by overseeing and monitoring management and external auditors' participation in the financial reporting process. They also address issues such as the approach being adopted by a council and management to address business risks, corporate and financial governance responsibilities and legal compliance. A council may also refer issues of a strategic or risk nature to their Audit and Risk Committee for review. The principal functions and extent of authority for the Audit and Risk Committee are set out in the Committee's Charter and the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Issues

The Committee met twice during the review period (December 2024 and March 2025). The Committee membership did vary during the period with Cr Laurie Hickey replacing Cr Geraldine Conheady following the September 2024 meeting. A record of attendance is provided below.

Attendance Record

Attendee	Meeting	
	12/12/2024	13/03/2025
Ms. Phillippa Dee (C) ^	✓	✓
Ms. Lisa Young ^	✓	✓
Mr. Jim Gifford ^	✓	✓
Cr Geraldine Conheady *	✓	✓
Cr Kate Makin *	x	✓
Cr Laurie Hickey	x	x

Legend	
✓	In attendance
x	Apology
-	Attendance Not Required
*	Council Committee Member
^	Independent Committee Member

The Committee continues to meet its objectives and discharge its responsibilities under the Charter. The Committee's engagement with Council management remains positive, which ensures a continuing and strong commitment to corporate governance and improving internal controls.

The following individuals also attended Committee meetings during the review period:

- Council officers:
 - Mr. David Rae, Chief Executive Officer
 - Mr. David Harrington, Director Corporate and Community Services
 - Ms. Kathryn Anderson, Manager Governance and Civic Support
 - Ms. Jacqui Thomas, Coordinator Financial Services
 - Mr. Prabath Jayawardana, Manager Financial Services
 - Ms. Belinda Bennett, Manager Environment and Emergency
- RSD Audit, Audit Service Provider of the Victorian Auditor General's Office (External Auditor):
 - Mr. Nick Bell, Partner
- AFS & Associates (Internal Auditor):
 - Mr. Bradley Ead, Partner
 - Ms. Kater Scarce, Manager

Meetings

Matters considered by the Committee during the period included:

- Committee Meeting 1 December 2024:
 - Councillor reimbursements – 1 September 2024-30 November 2024
 - Mayor and CEO credit card use – 1 September 2024-30 November 2024
 - Landfill operations
 - Annual work plan
 - Internal audit – status update
 - Internal audit review - project management
 - Review of outstanding audit recommendations
 - Register of interactions with developers
 - Internal control environment monitoring plan
 - Review of rates and charges hardship policy
 - Review of fraud and corruption control policy
 - Appointment of audit and risk committee chairperson for 2025
 - Review of a warning for a breach of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006
 - Findings:
 - Nil
 - Recommendations made to Council:
 - The Committee endorses the rates and charges hardship policy for adoption by the Council.
 - The Committee endorses the fraud and corruption control policy for adoption by the Council.

Committee Meeting 13 March 2025

- Councillor Reimbursements - 1 December 2024-28 February 2025
- Mayor and CEO Credit Card Use - 1 December 2024-28 February 2025
- Review of the audit and risk committee charter
- Internal audit – status update
- Review of the external audit strategy (VAGO)
- Governance and management attestation
- Biannual strategic risk update
- Review of the borrowing policy
- Review of the rating of residential properties used for charitable purposes policy
- Finance report for December 2024
- Findings:
 - Nil
- Recommendations made to Council:
 - The Committee endorses the borrowing policy for adoption by the Council.

- The Committee endorses the rating of residential properties used for charitable purposes policy for adoption by the Council.

Discharging Responsibilities

As Chairperson, I am satisfied the Committee has discharged its responsibilities as set out in its Charter. These responsibilities, as described by section 54(2) of the Act, are to:

- Monitor the compliance of Council policies and procedures with:
 - the overarching governance principles, and
 - the Act and the regulations and any Ministerial directions,
- Monitor Council financial and performance reporting,
- Monitor and provide advice on risk management and fraud prevention systems and controls, and
- Oversee internal and external audit functions.

The matters considered at each meeting were in accordance with the Committee's Charter and annual work plan and demonstrates the Committee's commitment during the period to discharge its responsibilities.

Policy and Legislative Context

The Audit and Risk Committee Biannual Report to Council - March 2025 is meeting the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and also in keeping with the commitments in the Council Plan 2021-2025:

Theme Five - Community Leadership

Having strong governance practices

Ensuring that we maintain our strong financial position

Internal / External Consultation

The Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee has authored this report in consultation with Director Corporate and Community Services. The next biannual report will be provided in September 2025.

Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial and resource implications as a consequence of this report.

Conclusions

During the review period Council's Audit and Risk Committee considered a broad range of issues as detailed in this report. Members of the Committee worked productively and harmoniously and have discharged their responsibilities set out in the Charter. The Committee continues to recognise the ongoing need for continuous improvement in enhancing the effectiveness of the Committee and internal audit. The Committee also continues to work professionally and effectively with management.

RECOMMENDATION - 7.1

That Council receives the Biannual Audit and Risk Committee Report for March 2025.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

**Moved: Cr Laurie Hickey
Seconded: Cr Geraldine Conheady**

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7 / 0

8 Planning Reports

8.1 Amendment C67 Grow Corangamite

Directorate: Sustainable Development
Author: Kristen Wilkes, Strategic Planner
Attachments: 1. Amendment C 67 for authorisation March 2025 [8.1.1 - 48 pages]

Declaration

Chief Executive Officer – David Rae

In providing this advice to Council as the Chief Executive Officer, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Author – Kristen Wilkes

In providing this advice to Council as a Strategic Planning Contractor, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Summary

The *Grow Corangamite Agricultural Strategy* was adopted by Council in June 2024. A planning scheme amendment (PSA) has now been prepared. The amendment implements the *Grow Corangamite Strategy* and the findings of the *Corangamite Shire Planning Scheme Review* into the Corangamite Planning Scheme.

The amendment updates the Municipal Planning Strategy and the local policy within the Planning Policy Framework of the Corangamite Planning Scheme to implement the *Grow Corangamite Strategy* and provide policy direction for rural areas, including for dwellings, subdivision, renewable energy facilities and agricultural activities.

The amendment applies a new Farming Zone schedule to land identified within the *Grow Corangamite Strategy* as being of state significance. The new Farming Zone schedule requires a planning permit for Timber production.

Three new Rural Living Zone schedules are applied to land within the Rural Living Zone to identify the existing minimum subdivision area with more clarity.

This report presents a recommendation to seek authorisation from the Minister for Planning and to proceed with public exhibition of Planning Scheme Amendment C64 in accordance with the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

Introduction

Preparing an Agricultural Strategy for Corangamite was essential to recognise the changing landscape and the important role that the agriculture sector plays in the local economy, as well as the Victorian food system. Council engaged SGS Economics and Planning and RMCG to prepare the Strategy, in the context of Council's planning and economic development frameworks.

The Strategy responded to the issues and opportunities identified through the Scoping Study undertaken in mid-2023 and the analysis undertaken as part of the Strategy development, including preparation of, and consultation on, the Background Report (April 2024). It provides the planning and economic development recommendations and actions needed for Council and the wider industry to;

- identify farmland of strategic significance and productivity (ensuring that land important for agriculture is protected to encourage ongoing operation and investment in industry growth),
- support adoption of new technology,
- adapt to forecast climate change, and
- respond to trends in the scale and structure of modern farm business.

A primary driver in preparing the Strategy was to inform change to strategic and policy direction, and planning controls, within the Corangamite Planning Scheme. A PSA has now been prepared which will implement the land use and policy recommendations of Grow Corangamite into the Corangamite Planning Scheme. Additionally, the amendment seeks to implement one of the recommendations of the Planning Scheme Review, undertaken by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, in 2022, as it relates to agricultural land.

To proceed with the PSA, Council must seek authorisation from the Minister for Planning and undertake public exhibition in accordance with the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

Through public exhibition, the PSA process provides an opportunity for Council to review and consider submissions before it either adopts the amendment or refers any unresolved submissions to a Planning Panel.

Issues

A PSA is required to implement the key recommendations of the *Grow Corangamite Strategy*, and to give it statutory effect within the Corangamite Planning Scheme. Agriculture is a key economic strength in Corangamite Shire, which is critical for long term prosperity and growth locally and at a regional and State level. The industry is underpinned by the Shire's productive agricultural land, land capability, climate and proximity to key assets and infrastructure.

The Strategy is a long-term plan for the future use and development of agricultural land in Corangamite. It sets out the agricultural framework plan and planning policy recommendations to safeguard the Shire's agricultural industry and manage

competing land uses. It provides the direction for policy guidance to support and grow a strong agricultural economy.

The Strategy was developed with input from a broad range of stakeholders, including an industry-based Project Reference Group (PRG) and the broader community. It is informed by the Background Report which presents research into the key issues and opportunities facing agricultural land and the agricultural industry in the Shire, in relation to housing, the rural and agricultural economy and planning for agriculture and rural land uses.

The *Grow Corangamite* visions states that - *Corangamite Shire is home to a prosperous agricultural sector which underpins a thriving, connected and equitable community.*

The Strategy then details directions, strategies and actions, which together seek to implement the vision and provide the opportunity to ensure policy and planning scheme controls support, protect and enhance agriculture as a land use in the Corangamite Planning Scheme.

Additionally, non-planning related actions focus on other areas that Council has a role in or can work in partnership with stakeholders and the wider industry, to promote continued growth and positioning of agriculture and associated industries within the Shire.

To introduce the applicable planning scheme components of the Structure Plan into the Corangamite Planning Scheme, PSA C67 has been prepared. To progress the PSA, Council must resolve to seek Ministerial authorisation in accordance with Section 8A and undertake public exhibition in accordance with Section 19 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

The PSA documents have been prepared and are provided under separate cover in Attachment 1.

Specifically, the amendment makes the following changes to the Corangamite Planning Scheme:

- Amends Clause 02.03 Strategic Directions to include updated policy direction for agriculture and rural areas.
- Amends Clause 02.04 Strategic Framework Plan to introduce a new framework plan that shows agricultural land of state and regional significance.
- Amends Clause 14.01-1L 'Protection of agricultural land' to give effect to the recommendations of the Grow Corangamite Strategy.
- Amends Clause 14.01-1L 'Dwellings and rural workers accommodation in the Farming Zone' to give effect to the recommendations of the Grow Corangamite Strategy.
- Amends Clause 14.01-1L 'Subdivision in the Farming Zone' to give effect to the recommendations of the Grow Corangamite Strategy.

- Amends Clause 14.01-3L 'Forestry and timber production' to give effect to the recommendations of the Grow Corangamite Strategy.
- Amends Clause 19.01-2L 'Renewable energy' to give effect to the recommendations of the Grow Corangamite Strategy.
- Introduces new schedules to the Rural Living Zone to simplify the application of minimum subdivision controls.
- Amends Schedule 1 to the Farming Zone to apply to state significant agricultural land.
- Introduces a new Schedule 3 to the Farming Zone to apply to regional significant agricultural land

Policy and Legislative Context

This report is in keeping with the commitments in the Council Plan 2021-2025:

Theme One - A Connected Community

Infrastructure that enables industry and business growth

Theme Two - A Thriving Community

Facilitating and supporting economic development.

Recognising the vital role agriculture plays within the Shire.

Corangamite's townships are attractive, accessible and appealing to visitors and are presented in a way in which our residents can be proud.

Theme Four - Improving Our Environment

Protecting and improving our built and natural environment.

Capitalising on opportunities created by new energy, and minimising impacts on key industry sectors, landscape values and natural assets.

Helping our community plan and respond to climate change.

Theme Five - Community Leadership

We listen to and engage with our community.

Internal / External Consultation

The *Grow Corangamite Scoping Study* completed in 2023, was prepared in partnership with stakeholders of an industry-based PRG, chaired by two Councillors to discuss industry experiences, knowledge, issues and ideas for the future of agriculture in Corangamite.

The established PRG has since met four (4) times through the project, which began in late-2023. Consultation with the PRG has been used to further identify issues and opportunities for the strategy, test initial ideas and discuss the preliminary directions for the Report.

Consultation on the Background Report was undertaken in April/May 2024. It included a series of three (3) drop-in sessions in Skipton, Terang and Simpson, to further present the analysis to date and discuss community ideas, issues and desires for the future of agriculture. Surveys were also provided online to gain input from the community on the Background Report, and the Timber Plantation Discussion Paper. Feedback received was incorporated in the preparation of the Strategy, as appropriate.

A public exhibition phase of the draft Strategy was held in July/August 2024, to seek feedback on the Strategy and its actions. This included two (2) drop-in sessions in Simpson and Terang on 31st July. Consultation also included circulating draft reports and documents to the PRG for further review, website updates and social media and news articles. It was noted that the Timber Industry submitted a strong submission opposing the introduction of permits for timber plantations.

Further to this consultation program, the draft PSA C67 policy documents were circulated to the PRG, after discussions with Council at its briefing in January 2025. No further comments or changes were received to the draft policy from the PRG. As part of the PSA, draft Amendment C67 documents will also be placed on a full month public exhibition consistent with Section 20 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. This presents an opportunity for submissions to be received and considered by Council. All submissions must be considered and any unresolved submissions which object to, or request changes, to the PSA, must be referred to Planning Panels Victoria for consideration.

Financial and Resource Implications

The *Grow Corangamite: Sustaining Our Agriculture Future* project had an overall budget allocation of \$200,000 for 2023-2024. The project implementation component was then allocated a budget of \$56,000 for 2024-2025.

SGS Planning and Economics, with RCMG, was engaged by the Council to help prepare the Strategy, while Glossop Town Planning was engaged by the Council to help prepare policy amendment documentation. The project budgets covered consultant fees and project management.

The implementation of the planning scheme amendment (PSA) will require additional funding. This is through statutory costs and for a Planning Panel, noting the PSA is highly likely to attract submissions contesting aspects.

Options

It is recommended that Council resolve to seek authorisation from the Minister for Planning and undertake public exhibition of PSA C67 in accordance with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

Council may alternatively choose to defer or delay implementation of the Masterplan and not proceed with the PSA.

Conclusions

An Agricultural Strategy for the Shire provides an opportunity for Council to implement a refreshed set of planning objectives and direction for the agricultural sector, in a manner that seeks to achieve strategic objectives, and provide a long-term planning framework for change and protection. It serves to benefit the whole community and align with the Council's strategic priorities.

The Strategy addresses Council's overall objectives of engaging with the community, facilitating and supporting economic development, and improving our natural environment (including minimising impacts to the agriculture sector).

Advancement through the PSA under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* represents a significant milestone and shift towards statutory implementation in the Corangamite Planning Scheme. Further public exhibition will be undertaken enabling landowners, residents and the broader community to make submissions to Council for further consideration.

RECOMMENDATION - 8.1

That Council:

1. Seeks authorisation from the Minister for Planning for Planning Scheme Amendment C67 generally in accordance with Attachment 1 under Section 8A of the Planning and Environment Act 1987; and
2. After receiving authorisation, proceeds to exhibit Planning Scheme Amendment C67 in accordance with Section 19 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, subject to final ordinance and mapping changes.

{resolution}

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Geraldine Conheady
Seconded: Cr Laurie Hickey

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7 / 0

9 Officer's Reports

9.1 Borrowing Policy Review

Directorate:	Corporate and Community Services
Author:	Prabath Jayawardana, Manager Finance
Attachments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Borrowing Policy March 2025 [9.1.1 - 4 pages]2. Under Separate Cover - Borrowing Policy March 2025 - tracked changes [9.1.2 - 5 pages]

Declaration

Chief Executive Officer – David Rae

In providing this advice to Council as the Chief Executive Officer, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Author – Prabath Jayawardana

In providing this advice to Council as the Manager Finance, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Summary

This report recommends that Council adopt the Borrowing Policy (the Policy) dated March 2025 as attached.

Introduction

The Borrowing Policy is due for review. The Policy has been reviewed by management with only minor amendments proposed.

The Borrowing Policy establishes the objectives and principles that outline when it is appropriate for Council to undertake borrowings within a sound financial management framework which is compliant with the *Local Government Act 2020 (the Act)*.

Issues

The Policy provides for the effective and responsible utilisation of borrowings by Council within the legislative framework. Borrowing funds is a legitimate and responsible financial management tool. Policy emphasis is directed towards prudent borrowing decisions to limit unnecessary exposure to debt whilst ensuring sufficient liquidity to finance major projects over an appropriate term.

The Act provides councils with the power to borrow. A council cannot borrow money unless the proposed borrowings are included in the budget or a revised budget. Nor can a council delegate the power to borrow to a member of staff. The review of the Policy ensures it remains consistent with the Act.

The purpose of the Policy is to:

- Establish objectives and principles that outline when it is appropriate for Council to undertake borrowings within financial management framework consistent with the *Local Government Act 2020*; and
- To ensure borrowings:
 - Are sustainable and comply with legislative requirements.
 - Are considered on a case by case basis to optimise Council's loan portfolio.
 - Facilitate cash flow (liquidity) requirements, particularly where there are large scale projects.
 - Do not adversely impact Council's low-to-medium risk rating of indebtedness as defined by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office financial sustainability risk indicators and risk assessment criteria.

The only significant change is to explicitly allow Council to borrow through Treasury Corporation of Victoria (TCV). Access to TCV borrowings was introduced to councils after the adoption of the previous Policy.

Policy and Legislative Context

This report is in keeping with the commitments in the Council Plan 2021-2025:

Theme Five - Community Leadership

Having strong governance practices

Ensuring that we maintain our strong financial position

Council promotes best value and value for money for its ratepayers

The review of the Policy ensures that it remains consistent with the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Internal / External Consultation

The Borrowing Policy has been reviewed and developed internally. A Gender Impact Assessment has been completed to ensure the Policy does not adversely impact community members of different genders and has been developed in accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

Council's Audit and Risk Committee considered the proposed amendments at the March 2025 meeting and recommends Council adopt the Policy.

Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial impacts in the recommendation of this Policy. Council will go through a formal budget process to determine whether borrowing is appropriate in any given financial year.

Options

The Council has the following options:

1. To adopt the Policy as it is presented, or
2. To adopt the Policy with amendments, or
3. To not adopt the Policy

Conclusions

The Borrowing Policy provides guidance for Council's authorised officers when borrowing funds that have been approved in a Council budget. The Policy has been reviewed and attached to this report for adoption.

RECOMMENDATION - 9.1

That Council:

1. **Revokes the Borrowing Policy dated April 2022.**
2. **Adopts the Borrowing Policy dated March 2025.**

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Ruth Gstrein
Seconded: Cr Laurie Hickey

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7 / 0

9.2 Rating of Residential Properties used for Charitable Purposes Policy Review

- Directorate: Corporate and Community Services
- Author: Prabath Jayawardana, Manager Finance
- Attachments:
1. Rating of Residential Properties used for Charitable Purposes Policy March 2025 [9.2.1 - 4 pages]
 2. Under Separate Cover - Rating of Residential Properties used for Charitable Purposes Policy March 2025 - tracked changes [9.2.2 - 4 pages]

Declaration

Chief Executive Officer – David Rae

In providing this advice to Council as the Chief Executive Officer, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Author – Prabath Jayawardana

In providing this advice to Council as the Manager Finance, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Summary

This report recommends that Council adopt the Residential Properties used for Charitable Purposes Policy dated March 2025 as attached.

Introduction

The current Rating of Residential Properties Used for Charitable Purposes policy is due for review. Management has reviewed the attached policy and minor amendments are proposed.

Issues

Council is empowered under the Local Government Act 1989 (the Act) to raise revenue in the form of rates. Section 154 of the Local Government Act states that land would be not rateable land if “any part of land, if that part is used exclusively for charitable purposes” or “vested in or held in trust for any religious body”.

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines to assess the rateability of a house or flat on land that is used exclusively for charitable purposes or is vested in or held in trust for any religious body.

Following review of the policy, there was an additional provision made that Council be notified of any changes in the charitable status or purpose for which the property is used as well as an internal review of properties covered by this policy.

Policy and Legislative Context

This report is in keeping with the commitments in the Council Plan 2021-2025:

Theme Five - Community Leadership
Having strong governance practices

The review of the policy ensures that it remains consistent with the *Local Government Act 1989*.

Internal / External Consultation

The Rating of Residential Properties Used for Charitable Purposes policy has been reviewed internally. A Gender Impact Assessment has been completed to ensure the Policy does not adversely impact community members of different genders and has been developed in accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

Council's Audit and Risk Committee considered the proposed amendments at the March 2025 meeting and recommends Council adopt the Policy.

Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial impacts in the recommendation of this Policy.

Options

The Council has the following options:

1. To adopt the Policy as it is presented, or
2. To adopt the Policy with amendments, or
3. To not adopt the Policy

Conclusions

The Policy has been reviewed with only minor amendments, and it is still compliant with the *Local Government Act 1989*. It is attached to this report for adoption.

RECOMMENDATION - 9.2

That Council:

- 1. Revokes the Rating of Residential Properties used for Charitable Purposes Policy dated April 2022.**
- 2. Adopts the Residential Properties used for Charitable Purposes Policy dated March 2025.**

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Jo Beard
Seconded: Cr Laurie Hickey

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7 / 0

9.3 Councillor Professional Development Policy Review

Directorate: Governance and Civic Support
Author: Kathryn Anderson, Manager Governance and Civic Support
Attachments: 1. Councillor Professional Development Policy [9.3.1 - 5 pages]
2. Under Separate Cover - Councillor Professional Development Adopted tracked changes [9.3.2 - 6 pages]

Declaration

Chief Executive Officer – David Rae

In providing this advice to Council as the Chief Executive Officer, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Author – Kathryn Anderson

In providing this advice to Council as the Manager Governance and Civic Support, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Summary

This report facilitates Council's review of the Support for Councillor Professional Development Policy which governs the criteria for professional development undertaken by Councillors.

Introduction

Councillors undertake professional development and training to provide them with the necessary knowledge and skills required for their role as elected representatives of their communities. Professional development also provides Councillors with the opportunity to expand their networks within the local government sector for information and support during their term on Council. The Support for Councillor Professional Development Policy promotes good governance and determines the criteria for how and when Councillors can access professional development.

Issues

The Support for Councillor Professional Development Policy is reviewed every four years following the Council election, or as required. The Policy aims to provide guidance on the types of activities and training available to Councillors in addition to the associated costs involved when accessing professional development. The Policy should be read in conjunction with the Council Expenses Policy.

As part of the current review, the Policy (attached) includes significant change of:

- Increase of CEO approval threshold for individual development requests from \$2500 to \$3000. This aligns to previous increases of \$500 at the four policy year review.

The minor updates to Policy are:

- Corrected legislative references, to include *Model Councillor Code of Conduct* and the *Government (Governance and Integrity) Amendment Regulations 2024*.
- Update to the definitions of Professional Development.

It is current practice for Councillors to pay any costs associated with their partner accompanying them to conferences or other professional development activities, and provisions relating to this have been retained in the policy. The policy also retains the requirement for Councillors to report back to fellow Councillors about their key learnings, which enhances the benefits Councillor professional development provides to the organisation.

Policy and Legislative Context

This report is in keeping with the commitments in the Council Plan 2021-2025:

Theme Five - Community Leadership
Having strong governance practices

Internal / External Consultation

Councillors and senior staff have been consulted during the review of this policy.

Financial and Resource Implications

Council's annual budget provides for Councillor professional development. There is no individual financial limit for professional development prescribed for each Councillor.

Options

Council may choose to adopt the Councillor Support for Professional Development Policy as presented or determine to make further amendments prior to adoption.

Conclusions

Councillors undertake professional development to provide them with the networks, skills and knowledge necessary for them to carry out their role as Councillors.

The support for Councillor Professional Development Policy provides guidance on the types of activities and training available to Councillors and has been recently reviewed to ensure it remains relevant.

RECOMMENDATION - 9.3

That Council:

- 1. Revoke Support for Councillor Professional Development Policy dated July 2021**
- 2. Adopts the Councillor Professional Development Policy dated March 2025.**

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Ruth Gstrein

Seconded: Cr Nick Cole

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7 / 0

9.4 Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy Review

Directorate:	Governance and Civic Support
Author:	Kathryn Anderson, Manager Governance and Civic Support
Attachments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy [9.4.1 - 6 pages]2. Under Separate Cover - Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy with track changes [9.4.2 - 7 pages]3. CEO Employment and Remuneration Advisory Committee Terms of Reference [9.4.3 - 3 pages]

Declaration

Chief Executive Officer – David Rae

In providing this advice to Council as the Chief Executive Officer, I have a material conflict of interest to disclose in this report.

Author – Kathryn Anderson

In providing this advice to Council as the Manager Governance and Civic Support, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Summary

In response to a resolution of Council, to appoint an Independent Advisor to assist the CEO Employment and Remuneration Advisory Committee (the Committee), a review of the Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy (the Policy) was conducted and proposed changes identified.

Beyond the review of the Policy, establishment of Terms of Reference for the the Committee is recommended.

Introduction

The Policy has been developed in accordance with the requirements of section 45 of the Local Government Act 2020 and provides clear processes for all aspects of the CEO employment, including:

- Recruitment;
- Contract of Employment;
- Remuneration;
- Setting annual performance objectives and measures;
- Managing performance and performance reviews;

Other terms and conditions of employment, including any requirements prescribed in Regulations.

Minor updates to the Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy were completed to allow for the inclusion of a suitably qualified and experienced Independent Advisor as a non-voting member of the Committee and to enable observers to be present at the Committee meetings.

Issues

The Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy has been reviewed in consultation with Councillors.

The amendments reflected in the attached Policy are as follows:

- Inclusion of a suitably qualified and experienced Independent Advisor as non-voting member of the Committee.
- Administration for the committee to be Manager Governance and Civic Support.
- The ability for Councillors who are not members of the Committee to attend the meeting, subject to the consent of the Chair.

The Committee Terms of Reference, as attached, have been developed in support of the Policy and are proposed for adoption. The Terms of Reference make provision for Committee members, meeting frequency and meeting quorum.

Policy and Legislative Context

This report is in keeping with the commitments in the Council Plan 2021-2025:
Theme Five - Community Leadership
Having strong governance practices

Local Government Act 2020

Internal / External Consultation

Consultation was undertaken via a briefing with Councillor's .

External consultation and benchmarking was undertaken with other Council's within the region.

Financial and Resource Implications

The cost of the Advisor will be approved via Council Resolution and accommodated in future budgets.

Conclusions

The proposed changes to the Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy align to the requirements of the Local Government Act and best practice. The Policy is recommended for adoption,

RECOMMENDATION - 9.4

That Council:

1. Revoke the Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy May 2023.
2. Adopt:
 - a. Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy March 2025; and
 - b. Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy Terms of Reference March 2025.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Laurie Hickey
Seconded: Cr Geraldine Conheady

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7 / 0

9.5 Councillor Candidates at Federal or State Elections Policy Review

Directorate:	Governance and Civic Support
Author:	Kathryn Anderson, Manager Governance and Civic Support
Attachments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Council Policy Councillor Candidates at Federal or State Elections Policy [9.5.1 - 4 pages]2. Under Separate Cover - Council Policy Councillor Candidates at Federal or State Elections Policy - tracked changes [9.5.2 - 5 pages]

Declaration

Chief Executive Officer – David Rae

In providing this advice to Council as the Chief Executive Officer, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Author – Kathryn Anderson

In providing this advice to Council as the Manager Governance and Civic Support, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Summary

Considering the approaching Federal Elections, it is timely to undertake a review of the Councillor Candidates at Federal or State Elections Policy ahead of its originally scheduled review date.

Introduction

The introduction of the *Local Government Act 2020* and its accompanying Regulations has resulted in a considerable change to the legislative context in which this policy operates. Additionally, there has been new guidance issued by the Municipal Association of Victoria regarding Councillors standing for State or Federal Elections. Appropriately, a new policy has been written with reference to these key documents.

The new proposed policy is attached for Councillors to review, along with the currently adopted policy for the purposes of comparison.

Issues

It is not an uncommon occurrence for a Councillor to seek election to either the Federal or State Parliament. There could possibly be a temptation for a Councillor

who is seeking election to misuse their position as a Councillor in a number of varied ways in order to further their politically focused campaign.

This occurrence poses a risk to the governance of the council in the periods prior to and leading up to an election. In order to guard against this risk, it is important that Council adopts a policy for election candidacy that can assist Council to:

- Ensure good governance at Council prior to and in an election campaign period.
- Ensure Councillors act in the best interest of the community, rather than their own personal interest.
- Prevent Council from making inappropriate decisions during an Election Period before a general election.
- Ensures that Council resources, including council staff, equipment and facilities, are not used inappropriately.
- Ensure that no decisions could be perceived as intended to affect the result of an election are made.

There is also the additional benefit of Councillors being able to protect themselves from breaching provisions of the Local Government Act 2020 that have severe penalties. For example, Section 123 of the Local Government Act 2020 provides it an offence for a Councillor to intentionally misuse their position to gain or attempt to gain an advantage for themselves or for any other person by making improper use of information acquired as a result of their position, or by using public funds or resources in a manner that is improper or unauthorised. Through the adoption of and compliance with such a policy, Councillors are able to provide themselves with some level of protection against such a breach.

Policy and Legislative Context

This report is also in keeping with the commitments in the Council Plan 2021-2025:

Theme Five - Community Leadership
Having strong governance practices

Internal / External Consultation

Nil

Financial and Resource Implications

Nil

Conclusions

Councillor Candidates at Federal or State Elections Policy has been reviewed and only minor editorial changes made:

- Updated reference to the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.
- Inclusion of the Gender Equality Act statement.

- Next review date to be August 2026 to align with the Victorian Election.

RECOMMENDATION - 9.5

That Council:

1. Council adopts the proposed Councillor Candidates at Federal or State Election Policy March 2025; and
2. Revoke the Councillor Candidates at Federal or State Election Policy March 2022

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Jo Beard
Seconded: Cr Ruth Gstrein

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7 / 0

(Mover) Resolution subject to the Policy being updated to include Local Government Act 2020 references relating to allowances ceasing.

9.6 Sexual Harassment - Prevention and Reporting Policy Review

- Directorate: Corporate and Community Services
- Author: Michele Stephenson, Manager Human Resources and Risk
- Attachments:
1. Sexual Harassment - Preventing and Reporting Policy March 2025 [9.6.1 - 12 pages]
 2. Under Separate Cover - Sexual harassment - Prevention and Reporting Policy March 2025 tracked changes [9.6.2 - 13 pages]

Declaration

Chief Executive Officer – David Rae

In providing this advice to Council as the Chief Executive Officer, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Author – Michele Stephenson

In providing this advice to Council as the Manager Human Resources and Risk, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Summary

This report recommends that Council rescind the Sexual Harassment – Prevention and Reporting Policy dated February 2022, and that it adopts the revised Sexual Harassment – Prevention and Reporting Policy dated March 2025.

The Sexual Harassment – Prevention and Reporting Policy (the Policy) aims to inform Councillors, and people who work for Council, about what constitutes workplace sexual harassment and victimisation. It also reaffirms Council's commitment to maintaining a safe, inclusive, and healthy work environment. The Policy applies to all people who work for Council, and given the legislative responsibilities and protections afforded to them, Councillors are included within the Policy's scope.

The Policy provides guidance on reporting instances of sexual harassment or victimisation, and offers information about support services available to those affected by or who are witnesses to such behaviours.

Introduction

Council maintains a zero-tolerance approach towards sexual harassment or victimisation in the workplace. Councils can be held vicariously liable for any acts of sexual harassment or victimisation that occur in connection with work. Under equal opportunity laws, Council has a positive duty to take all reasonable measures to

eliminate such behaviours. Additionally, perpetrators will be held personally liable for substantiated allegations, and certain types of sexual harassment may also constitute a criminal offence.

In 2020 the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) conducted a sector-wide survey to inform an audit into the prevalence of sexual harassment in local government. A total of 75 Victorian councils participated, with 9,939 employees and councillors responding. The survey results were analysed to identify the context and drivers for sexual harassment in local government. The audit found that sexual harassment was most likely to occur during day-to-day work and was experienced by all roles and levels in councils. People at greater risk were:

- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse people (48% had experienced harassment)
- Young women (42% aged between 18 and 34 experienced sexual harassment)
- People living with a disability (41% experienced sexual harassment)

Following this analysis, several recommendations were made to address the prevalence of sexual harassment in the workplace. One key outcome was the development of a stand-alone Sexual Harassment – Prevention and Reporting Policy. This Policy and other measures have been implemented in response to the audit's recommendations.

Issues

A review of the 2022 Policy was undertaken in accordance with the policy review cycle. The review also considered the following updates to the VPSC Model for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace:

- An acknowledgement that sexual harassment disproportionately affects certain groups of workers and is often experienced alongside other forms of discrimination based on disability, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status and age.
- Support for welfare, anonymous reporting and protection against victimisation
- Clarification of reporting options for individuals or groups who have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Use of consistent and more inclusive language such as referring to 'reports' rather than 'complaints' of sexual harassment.
- Provision of additional external support options.

The review also considered amendments to the Fair Work Act, enacted on 6 March 2023, which expanded the protections around sexual harassment in the workplace.

Minor administrative adjustments to improve clarity but not change the intent have also been made to the Policy.

Policy and Legislative Context

This report is in keeping with the commitments in the Council Plan 2021-2025:

Theme Three - A Healthy, Active and Resilient Community
Access and inclusion is improved

Theme Five - Community Leadership
Having strong governance practices
We provide a great work environment

The Gender Equality Act 2020 requires Council to undertake Gender Impact Assessments when developing or reviewing any policy, program or service which has a direct and significant impact on the public. A Gender Impact Assessment has been undertaken and it is considered that the policy meets the needs of people of different genders, addresses gender inequality, and promotes gender equality.

Internal / External Consultation

The Sexual Harassment Prevention and Reporting Policy was developed by the Human Resources Department and reviewed by the Executive Leadership Team.

The Policy is in alignment with the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's Guideline: Preventing and responding to workplace sexual harassment, as well as the Victorian Public Sector Commission's Model Sexual Harassment Policy and Practice Guide. Additionally, it addresses the recommendations from the VAGO audit on sexual harassment in local government.

Financial and Resource Implications

The implementation of this Policy will be within existing resources and budget.

Options

Council may rescind the Sexual Harassment Prevention and Reporting Policy dated February 2022 and adopt the Sexual Harassment Prevention and Reporting Policy dated March 2025 as presented, or with amendment.

Conclusions

This Policy underscores the responsibility of the Council, Councillors, and people who work for Council to ensure a safe, harassment-free working environment. It also provides a means for redress for those affected by workplace sexual harassment or victimisation.

Workplace sexual harassment is a serious issue, and the adoption of this Policy will reinforce Council's commitment to maintaining a safe, inclusive, and healthy environment, free from all forms of harassment and victimisation.

RECOMMENDATION - 9.6

That Council:

- 1. Revokes the Sexual Harassment Prevention and Reporting Policy dated February 2022**
- 2. Adopts the Sexual Harassment Prevention and Reporting Policy dated March 2025**

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Ruth Gstrein
Seconded: Cr Geraldine Conheady

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7 / 0

9.7 Early Years Plan 2025-2035

Directorate: Corporate and Community Services
Author: Katie Hearn, Manager Community Services
Attachments: 1. Corangamite Shire Early Years Plan 2025 - 2035 [9.7.1 - 42 pages]

Declaration

Chief Executive Officer – David Rae

In providing this advice to Council as the Chief Executive Officer, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Author – Manager Community Services – Katie Hearn

In providing this advice to Council as Manager Community Services, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Summary

This report presents the 2025 - 2035 Early Years Plan (**Attachment A**) to guide and inform Council in its planning and delivery of Early Years Education and Care services over the next decade. It addresses workforce, infrastructure and service modelling for Kindergarten, Long Day Care and Mobile Child Care.

Introduction

The Early Years Plan (EYP) 2025 – 2035 sets a strategy for Council's work in early years' education and care services for the next decade and has been prepared to guide Council in its response to the State Government's Best Start Best Life reforms as well as working towards meeting the needs of local families.

The EYP includes a point in time overview of infrastructure requirements, service modelling, workforce needs and recommendations for Council to enable the delivery of high quality education and care programs in contemporary learning environments. Council operates early childhood education and care (ECEC) services consisting of the following programs:

- six stand-alone kindergartens
- two after kinder care programs
- three long day care and three mobile child care programs.

Current supply of childcare places is not meeting community demand for long day care and childcare places. Limited childcare options and facilities capable of accommodating long day care programs have led to waitlists for services across the Shire and region, particularly for birth to three year olds in context of availability of places, as well as days and hours offered.

Council also oversees a small Family Day Care program (four educators, predominantly part time) supported by a Commonwealth Government Sustainability funding until June 2026.

Issues

Council engaged Community Child Care Association and Grounded Solutions to undertake the development of the 10-year strategic early years plan. Family & Children's services staff, stakeholders, early years consumers and the voice of children have contributed to this plan via surveys and in person facilitated participation sessions in line with Child Safe Standards.

A study of the demographic trends for the area shows that Corangamite Shire 0 - 4 age range will remain relatively stable with a slight decrease of 5% between 2021 and 2036. These projections indicate that the demand for education and care across the municipality will not significantly change over the next ten or so years. However, due to current unmet demand, increased capacity of child care and long day care places must be considered. The EYP outlines four priority areas, identified as essential for enhancing the outcomes for children and families:

1. **Infrastructure and access to education and care:** All children across the municipality should have the opportunity to participate in education and care.
2. **Early Childhood Workforce:** The Shire requires expansion of its highly skilled workforce capable of delivering high-quality education and care programs.
3. **High-quality education and care and Maternal & Child Health (M&CH) Services:** Services need to encompass a comprehensive approach to education, care, and maternal and child health services, prioritising inclusion, safety, wellbeing, and educational outcomes.
4. **Health, wellbeing and connection:** Children and their families should have access to the health and family support services they need, as well as have opportunities to connect and be active participants in their community.

Within the four priority areas there are a total of 20 strategies with actions categorised as low, medium or high priority based on criteria such as safety, access, education and health outcomes. Plan implementation will be reviewed annually and subject to budget capacity and ability to attract external funding.

Audit and Facilities Management Plan

The Early Years Audit and Facilities Management Plan evaluated the current and future maintenance, expansion, and/or construction needs of the Corangamite Shire early years facilities. This included the Maternal and Child Health Camperdown complex, Kindergarten, Long Day Care, and Mobile Child Care services. The Facilities Plan provides an assessment of each facility individually including key building and design recommendations, safety concerns and low, medium and high priority requirements in order to enhance the services' compliance with National Quality Standards (NQS).

Current Context

- The State government has released housing targets for every Council across Victoria to support access to affordable housing. Corangamite currently has

8000 homes. Current targets for Corangamite to achieve by 2051 are an additional 1400 homes.

- Access to ECEC programs is a vital enabler to growing our population and will be necessary to ensure our Shire has the services and resources families most need.
- Advocacy for a State operated childcare centre has occurred on numerous occasions which to date has been unsuccessful.
- Recent Commonwealth announcements indicate funding to locate childcare centres on or near school sites in under-served markets which may be an option for Council.
- Council has committed to advocating for childcare both independently and through the South West Victoria Alliance along with growing our own workforce. These issues are clear economic drivers and a major contributor to achieving gender equity.

Early Years Plan

Priorities Year 1-2

- Work with State Government agencies to finalise the Kindergarten Infrastructure and Service Plan (KISP).
- Preliminary concept planning suitable to form a basic grant application has been prepared.
- Prepare designs and apply for funding for alterations to Camperdown MCH building.
- Apply for funding for improvements to Simpson, Timboon, Cobden, Terang Kindergartens and Ecklin, Port Campbell and Glenormiston childcare.
- Investigate funding opportunities to expand/improve infrastructure at Derrinallum and Skipton early years sites.
- Attraction and/or upskilling of a 9 additional degree trained Early Childhood teachers to meet Pre-Prep demand.
- Explore funding avenues to address high-priority recommendations in line with the Facilities Audit (Western Plains, Skipton, Ecklin).
- Advocate for increased access to childcare in high-demand areas such as Camperdown, Cobden and Terang with a focus on infants and toddlers.

Priorities Years 3-6

- Where funding is successful, plan for and upgrade Simpson, Timboon, Cobden, Terang Kindergartens and Ecklin, Port Campbell and Glenormiston childcare.
- Explore opportunities for sector partnerships to increase community access to childcare.
- Attraction and/or upskilling of 9 additional degree trained Early Childhood Teachers (ECTs) to meet Pre-Prep demand.
- Continued investment in the 'Grow Our Own' strategy to support attraction and upskilling of early years professionals.

- Plan for and advocate for funding to update and maintain outdoor play spaces.
- Expand Timboon to accommodate pre-prep and three-year funded kindergarten places by 2031.

Priorities Years 7-10

- Monitor supply and demand of childcare and kindergarten places and update plans as changes occur.
- Review of facilities and services to ensure compliance with National Quality Standards and inform Early Years Plan 2036-2046.
- Consider options for Lismore Early Years Facility.

Internal / External Consultation

The development of the EYP involved alignment with Commonwealth, State and Corangamite Shire Council policies and frameworks, site visits to Council-managed early years services with Grounded Studios, key stakeholder interviews and engagement, and analysis of demographic data.

This Plan has also been informed by stakeholders, service user families, children engaged in our services from 2023 and 2024, early years educators and facilities and coordination staff. Children were provided opportunities to contribute and shape the EYP. Analysis of their engagement emphasised the key areas children value in the early years services and spaces. This included outdoors environments for active, physical, and risky play; resources for imaginative, creative, and sensory play; natural environment; spaces to connect with peers, and family, as well as technology in their services for children to utilise. These key areas were fundamental in informing this EYP and have been incorporated into the plan's priorities and strategies.

A Workforce Plan (2024-2029) has also contributed to the service modelling and planning for the next decade. The current pre prep timeline for Corangamite is as follows:

Pre Prep roll out per year	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Corangamite Shire hours to be delivered	15	20	20	20	25	25	30

Policy and Legislative Context

The Victorian Government Best Start Best Life reforms include delivery of 15 hours of 3YO Kindergarten paired with a transition to offer 30 hours of play based learning for 4YO Kindergarten referred to as Pre-Prep by 2031. The Commonwealth is also investing heavily in childcare infrastructure and recognises equity of access as a key enabler.

Early Years is a highly regulated environment with increasing workforce obligations necessary for a safe environment that requires fit for purpose infrastructure and an

agile staff pool. It is critical that Council take a planned approach to early years' service provision and infrastructure planning to enable a coordinated approach.

This report is also in keeping with the commitments in the Council Plan 2021-2025:

Theme One - A Connected Community

Infrastructure and services that deliver population growth and new housing

Theme Two - A Thriving Community

Engaging with young people and encouraging opportunities that retain young people in our Shire

Theme Five - Community Leadership

Council advocates strongly and respectfully on issues that matter to our community

Financial and Resource Implications

The recommendations for refurbishment and enhancement of Council facilities are outlined in the Early Years Facilities Audit. Additional funding will be required for Project Management and other functions to support implementation of the EYP and Facilities Plan. Should this Plan be adopted, Council staff will work with Economic Development, Facilities, Victorian School Board and Department of Education to support plan implementation.

The Commonwealth also recently announced 3 days of subsidised childcare with more information to become available as the bill makes its way through parliament. At the time of preparing this report, the Commonwealth advised it was investing \$1 billion to establish the Building Early Education Fund to build early childhood centers inclusive of regional areas and under-served markets. There is a preference for co-location on or near school sites. More information will be available in the coming months. Council continues to apply for grant funding for capital works aimed at enhancing our ageing infrastructure. Council should note, plan implementation will be subject to ability to attract grant funding and Council's annual budget cycle.

Conclusion

The Early Years Plan 2025-2035 is a complex body of work that incorporates investment in upgrade and refurbishment of facilities, service modelling and workforce planning and expansion. Plan implementation will involve working closely with State and Commonwealth agencies and other government and non-government entities. Some facilities are co-located and some service delivery is co-dependent on cooperation with other stakeholders.

The implementation of suggested recommendations will require both capital and operational investment and partnerships. The required funding will be needed from the Commonwealth and State government(s) to support program changes they have

introduced including the promise of three days of subsidised childcare and Best Start Best Life reforms.

RECOMMENDATION - 9.7

- 1. Adopt the Corangamite Shire Early Years Plan 2025 - 2035.**
- 2. Note the implementation of Early Years Plan 2025 - 2035 is subject to annual budget allocation, including external funding.**

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Jo Beard
Seconded: Cr Laurie Hickey

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7 / 0

9.8 Morris Street, Port Campbell Footpath Special Charge Scheme

Directorate: Works and Services

Author: John Kelly, Manager Assets Planning

Attachments:

1. Under Separate Cover - Various Property Owner Responses - Proposed Morris Street Footpath [9.8.1 - 8 pages]
2. Under Separate Cover - Proposed Morris Street Footpath Plans [9.8.2 - 3 pages]
3. Under Separate Cover - Apportionment Table for Morris St Footpath Special Charge Scheme [9.8.3 - 1 page]
4. Under Separate Cover - Letter provided to owners re proposed Morris Street footpath [9.8.4 - 2 pages]

Declaration

Pursuant to sections 3(1) and 66(5) of the *Local Government Act 2020* the Chief Executive Officer has designated these attachments as confidential on the grounds that they contain personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs. In particular the attachments contain personal information regarding property ownership.

Chief Executive Officer – David Rae

In providing this advice to Council as the Chief Executive Officer, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Author – John Kelly

In providing this advice to Council as the Manager Assets Planning, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Summary

This report proposes that the installation of a concrete footpath on the western side of Morris Street from Lord Street to the Great Ocean Road in Port Campbell does not proceed. The majority of adjacent property owners have indicated that they do not support contributing funds to a special charge scheme which is required for the proposal.

Introduction

Council's current budget provides for the construction of a concrete footpath, nature strip reinstatement and associated works in Morris Street, Port Campbell. The path would connect with the existing footpath on the western side of Morris Street which terminates just south of Lord Street and would extend to the Great Ocean Road.

Issues

The works in Morris Street would be required to be undertaken under a Special Charge Scheme where benefitting adjacent property owners contribute funds to the works.

Following consultation with affected property owners it is concluded that the majority of the owners do not support contributing funds to the project.

Policy and Legislative Context

This report is in keeping with the commitments in the Council Plan 2021-2025:

Theme One - A Connected Community

Footpaths that provide access to key destinations in our towns

Theme Three - A Healthy, Active and Resilient Community

Improving the health and wellbeing of our residents

Access and inclusion is improved

Theme Five - Community Leadership

Ensuring that we maintain our strong financial position

Council promotes best value and value for money for its ratepayers

The installation of this footpath supports Council's Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 by providing infrastructure that will support active transport, access and connectivity and improve the physical health of our community.

Council's Special Rates and Charges Policy applies to new infrastructure assets that benefit a specific group of property owners. The Policy outlines the circumstances and the process by which new or improved infrastructure works – such as the path on Morris Street – are carried out with financial contributions from property owners, based on principles of fairness and equity. These contributions are collected through a special charge scheme, which considers both the level of special benefit received by the properties and the broader benefit to the community.

In accordance with the Policy, if Council proposes to contribute 50% or more of the total cost of a proposed scheme, it may declare the scheme without considering objections. To date Council has not exercised this option. In this instance, Council proposed to contribute 75% of the scheme's total cost.

Internal / External Consultation

A preliminary letter and survey were sent on 22 November 2024 to affected property owners to gauge initial support for the proposal before the formal process for establishing a special charge scheme began. Of the seven owners, two indicated they did not support the proposal, while three were undecided. Two owners did not respond.

A follow up on-site meeting was held on 24 February 2025 between the property owners, Mayor Makin, Councillor Vogels and Council officers to provide owners further opportunity to ask questions of the proposed scheme. At the meeting six of the seven owners confirmed that they did not support the proposal. The remaining owner did not reply. The main objection from the owners was that they considered that they should not be required to contribute funds to the works.

Financial and Resource Implications

Council has provided an allocation of \$74,250 (including GST) for the contribution to the footpath installation in Morris Street in the 2024-2025 budget.

Although adjacent property owners have not supported the proposed footpath scheme extension to the Great Ocean Road, it is considered there would still be significant community benefit in extending the footpath in Morris Street by 37 meters. This extension would improve pedestrian safety and enhance accessibility benefiting both residents and visitors. It would run from Lord Street to the car park at the rear of the Port Campbell Hotel. The estimated cost for this extension is \$11,000 (including GST), which is below the \$15,000 threshold set in the Council's Special Rates and Charges Policy. As a result, it would be exempt from the special charge scheme requirement. Given the potential benefits and low cost, it is recommended that this section of footpath be constructed.

Options

Council may decide to proceed with the proposed special charge scheme for the full footpath installation, despite the lack of support from the majority of adjacent property owners.

Council may choose to proceed with the 37-meter footpath extension for \$11,000 and return the remainder of the project budget as savings.

Council may elect to abandon the footpath project in its entirety and return the full \$74,250 allocation as savings and consider the allocation of funding in the 2025-2026 budget.

Conclusions

Based on the preliminary property owner responses, which overwhelmingly did not support the proposal, it is recommended that Council does not proceed with the process for establishing a special charge scheme for construction of the concrete footpath on the western side of Morris Street from Lord Street to Great Ocean Road, Port Campbell. It is however considered there is significant community benefit in reallocating a portion of Council's allocated funds for the original scheme to extend the concrete path from Lord Street to the entrance to the car park at the rear of the Port Campbell Hotel.

RECOMMENDATION - 9.8

That Council:

- 1. Not proceed with the establishment of a special charge scheme for construction of a concrete footpath on the western side of Morris Street from Lord Street to Great Ocean Road, Port Campbell**
- 2. Reallocate \$11,000 including GST of the funds currently in the 2024-2025 Council budget for Morris Street footpath special charge scheme to construct a concrete footpath on the western side of Morris Street from Lord Street to the entrance to the car park at the rear of the Port Campbell Hotel. The remainder of the unallocated project funds are to be returned to Council as savings.**

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Jamie Vogels
Seconded: Cr Ruth Gstrein

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7 / 0

9.9 Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation of Officers Planning and Environment Act 1987

Directorate: Governance and Civic Support
Author: Kathryn Anderson, Manager Governance and Civic Support
Attachments: 1. S11A Instrument of Appointment Planning and Environment
Act [9.9.1 - 2 pages]

Declaration

Chief Executive Officer – David Rae

In providing this advice to Council as the Chief Executive Officer, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Author – Kathryn Anderson

In providing this advice to Council as the Manager Governance and Civic Support, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement for appointment of authorised officers under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 through the updated Instrument of Authorisation and Appointment ('the instrument').

This request results from recent staff changes. By authorising the relevant officers to perform their duties under the Planning and Environment Act 1987, Council will ensure these officers have the required authority to carry out their roles within legislated requirements.

Issues

Officers authorised to act under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 have authorisation to enter sites, gather evidence or serve legal notices, etc. if required, as appropriate to their level of experience and qualifications.

The specific authorisations provided through this instrument include:

1. under section 147(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic) – appointment as an authorised officer for the purposes of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and the regulations made under that Act; and
2. under section 313 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) authorisation generally to institute proceedings for offences against the Act and/or any

regulations. If officers are not appropriately authorised, they will not have the legal authority to perform key aspects of their role which would result in a lack of enforcement across the Shire. If officers act without the correct authority, actions can also be challenged and invalidated on that basis, and the officers may be personally liable. The attached instrument has been reviewed and updated to reflect recent staff changes and authorises the following officers:

James Andrew Nield
Belinda Anne Bennett
Darren Stanley Frost
David Martin Rae
Gisele De Souza Couto
Jarrod Leigh Bell
Jason Damien Hoffmann
Justine Ruth Linley
Katherine Valerie Shurvell
Melanie Louise Osborne
Pavit Ramesh
Shwethashree Amaranarayana
Stefan Martin Alber

Policy and Legislative Context

This report is in keeping with the commitments in the Council Plan 2021-2025:

Theme Five - Community Leadership
Having strong governance practices

Internal / External Consultation

This is a legislative requirement and no consultation is required.

Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial implications.

Options

Endorse the updated instrument This option is recommended by officers as it will ensure the selected officers are appropriately authorised under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

OR

Not endorse the updated instrument This option is not recommended by officers as it will limit the authorisations and authority of nominated officers.

Conclusions

By authorising the relevant officers to act under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* Council will ensure these officers have the required authority to carry out their roles within legislated requirements.

RECOMMENDATION - 9.9

Council resolves that:

1. The members of Council staff referred to in the instrument attached be appointed and authorised as set out in the instrument;
2. The instrument comes into force at once the common seal of Council is affixed to the instrument, and remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it;
3. The Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (*Planning and Environment Act 1987* only) dated 17 December 2024 be revoked; and
4. The common seal of Council be affixed to the Instrument.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Laurie Hickey
Seconded: Cr Nick Cole

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7 / 0

9.10 Business Assistance Scheme - March 2025

Directorate: Sustainable Development
Author: Samantha Fox, Coordinator Wellbeing Economy
Attachments: 1. Under Separate Cover - BAS March 2025 Summary [9.10.1 - 2 pages]

Declaration

Chief Executive Officer – David Rae

In providing this advice to Council as the Chief Executive Officer, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Author – Samantha Fox

In providing this advice to Council as the Coordinator Economy Wellbeing, I have no interests to disclose in this report.

Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the assessment and recommended funding allocation for the March 2025 round of the Business Assistance Scheme (BAS) and recommend a time-limited revision to Stream 1 for Port Campbell businesses.

Introduction

As part of Grow and Prosper Corangamite, Council has consolidated its approach to economic and community development, inclusive of arts, culture, tourism and the circular economy. The Grow and Prosper Framework outlines new programs including the BAS.

The BAS enables Council to support local businesses, big or small, community enterprises, creative industries and new businesses looking to establish in the municipality.

Issues

The BAS provides business, building owners and community the opportunity to apply for support, including financial assistance. Applications are assessed on merit, considering the eligibility criteria and available funds.

The BAS policy was adopted by Council September 2023. The Scheme is ongoing across the year enabling businesses to submit when suitable for their proposed

project and provides four streams 1) Business Facade Improvement; 2) Creative Industries and Placemaking; 3) Community Enterprise; and 4) Fees and Enabling Infrastructure.

Current applications include one application under Stream 1 Business Façade Improvement and one application under Stream 3 Community Enterprise that have been assessed, and are recommended for assistance to be considered by Council for determination:

- **Milk and Honey Timboon:** this project is to improve safety and beautify the second entrance to the business premises. The funding requested is \$2,207.28 excluding GST. Elements of the project require a planning permit and the project is recommended subject to a planning permit being approved.
- **Lakes and Craters Band Camperdown Inc:** this project includes the development of a new website, training and upskilling that will enable the group (incorporated not-for-profit) to self-manage the content and coordinate the ongoing updates for the Lakes and Craters Band site. The funding assistance requested is \$1,050 excluding GST.

The BAS scheme is an ongoing grant and business support scheme that is open for applications year-round. Council officers work with applicants to enable applications to be 'grant ready'. Applications are assessed against the relevant stream criteria and evaluated by an assessment panel. Applications are assessed to ensure they meet all assessment criteria and align with the objectives of the program and if so, are recommended for approval.

In addition to the two current applications Council Officers are in discussions with Port Campbell businesses who are seeking assistance with front of premise outdoor dining and landscaping works arising from streetscape changes as part of the Port Campbell Town Centre Revitalisation Project. Current discussions have highlighted the opportunity to support businesses through a time and location limited variation to BAS Stream 1.

Currently Stream 1 requires a \$1 for \$1 contribution with Council contributing 50% of costs towards a maximum Council contribution of \$3,500 being a combination of physical infrastructure works (50% of costs at maximum support of \$3,000) and landscaping (50% of costs at maximum support of \$500). To support Port Campbell businesses as the Port Campbell Town Centre project nears conclusion, a variation to BAS Stream 1 is proposed being:

- Removal of \$1 for \$1 contribution requirement, with applicants not being required to fund the works upfront and enabling any combination of landscaping and physical infrastructure works.
- Contribution options for Council consideration include:

- *Option A:* Maximum Council contribution of \$3,500 in line with existing Council BAS Stream 1 maximum contribution.
- *Option B:* Contributions up to maximum of \$7,000 in recognition that some of works under discussion are in both the public realm and comparatively small component in the private domain.
- Time-limited: from March to June 2025.
- Location: Port Campbell businesses with a visible street frontage in line with existing BAS requirements.
- To ensure timely response to businesses and to link in with finishing works in the Port Campbell streetscape project it is proposed to delegate the decision making on applications under this variation to the CEO and report applications back to Council for noting in July 2025.

Current discussions with businesses include:

- Surface treatment to enable extended footpath trading outside Waves Café in Lord Street.
- Garden bed planting and treatment on Lord Street frontage of Port Campbell Hotel.
- Art works within garden bed on Lord Street frontage of 12 Rocks Café.

Policy and Legislative Context

This report is in keeping with the commitments in the Council Plan 2021-2025:

Theme One - A Connected Community

Digital connectivity that meets the needs of our community

Theme Two - A Thriving Community

Facilitating and supporting economic development

Arts and culture that is supported and accessible

Our young people are encouraged and supported to engage in learning

We retain and we grow our population

Theme Three - A Healthy, Active and Resilient Community

Access and inclusion is improved

Our community groups and clubs are engaged and supported and facilities are fit for purpose

Internal / External Consultation

Extensive external promotion and consultation about the BAS has occurred across the Shire including media releases, Council's social media channels, Corangamite News, Corangamite E-News and Corangamite Business E-News.

On receipt of applications internal consultation is undertaken with relevant teams (e.g. planning, building and environmental health) to ensure all aspects of proposals are considered and applicants are supported through the permit processes.

Financial and Resource Implications

The current two applications are seeking a total commitment of funds of \$5,464.55 (excluding GST). Council's 2024-25 adopted budget includes an allocation of \$90,000 for the BAS with a remaining budget of \$79,055.

The planning fee for one planning permit is proposed to be waived by Council at a cost of approximately \$1,465.60

Applications under the proposed Port Campbell BAS Stream 1 variation will be considered on a case-by-case basis and require quotes and applications to be approved by the CEO.

Options

Officers have assessed the applications and recommend them for assistance under the BAS the options are:

1. Allocate funds of \$5,464.55 to the two Business Assistance Scheme applicants.
2. Not allocate funding through the program.

Options regarding the proposed Port Campbell variation to Stream 1 are:

1. Approve the variation at a maximum Council contribution of \$3,500
2. Approve the variation at a maximum Council contribution of \$7,000
3. Approve a higher or lower maximum Council contribution variation.
4. To not approve the variation.

Conclusions

The BAS provides businesses, building owners and community enterprises with the opportunity to apply for support, including financial assistance. The March applications meet the objectives of the BAS program and contribute to the growth and prosperity of Corangamite and are recommended for support. Providing a time-limited variation to Port Campbell businesses will enable these businesses to respond to the streetscape upgrades and capitalise on the town centre revitalisation project.

RECOMMENDATION - 9.10

That Council:

- 1. Approve the Business Assistance Scheme applications for funding being:**
 - Milk and Honey Timboon for \$2,207.28 excl GST and waive the associated planning permit fee.
 - Lakes and Craters Band Camperdown Inc. for \$1,050 excl GST.
- 2. Approve a variation, to end June 2025, to the Business Assistance Scheme Stream 1 for Port Campbell businesses by:**
 - A) removing the \$1 for \$1 contribution requirement with applications under this variation;**
 - B) capping contribution to a single business/project to an amount to be determined by Council.**
 - C) authorise the CEO to approve the applications lodged through this variation under delegation and report to the July 2025 Council meeting for noting.**

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Jamie Vogels
Seconded: Cr Ruth Gstrein

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7 / 0

Resolution included Council agreeing 2. B) Capping contribution set to \$5,000.00

10 Other Business

- Councillor Jamie Vogels congratulated Port Campbell on a successful Crayfest and noted the decks were well used. Updated provided on the works left to be completed on the Port Campbell streetscape.
- Councillor Nick Cole also congratulated Port Campbell on the Crayfest and Timboon on the 150 year celebration. Noted the upcoming Skipton fishing event.

11 Open Forum

The Mayor, Cr Kate Makin, invited members of the public to ask a question or make a statement.

The following item was submitted:

- Peter Younis tabled a petition, containing 1412 signatures, relating to the dissatisfaction with the wooden balustrade on the decks in Port Campbell.
- Marion Manifold supported the petition tabled by Peter Younis.

12 Close Meeting

Mayor, Kate Makin declared the Council Meeting closed at 3:58pm.

I hereby certify that these minutes have been confirmed and are a true and correct record.

CONFIRMED: _____
Chairperson

DATE: 25 March 2025