



LATROBE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA FOR THE COUNCIL MEETING

**TO BE HELD IN KERNOT HALL, MORWELL AND VIA
AUDIO-VISUAL LINK
AT 6:00 PM ON
26 MAY 2025
CM619**

Please note:

Opinions expressed or statements made by participants are the opinions or statements of those individuals and do not imply any form of endorsement by Council.

By attending a Council Meeting via audio-visual link those present will be recorded or their image captured. When participating in the meeting, consent is automatically given for those participating to be recorded and have images captured.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THE LAND	4
2. APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE.....	4
3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES	4
4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	4
5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	4
6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TIME	4
7. NOTICES OF MOTION	6
8. STRATEGIC ITEMS FOR DECISION.....	8
8.1 Youth Infrastructure Plan	8
8.2 Community Connectors Program.....	47
8.3 Reduction of Litter in Public Spaces	69
8.4 Endorsement of Council Support Package – Round Two Funding Submission	80
9. STATUTORY PLANNING.....	94
9.1 Statutory Planning Decision Making Process	94
10. CORPORATE ITEMS FOR DECISION	105
10.1 Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure on Council Land Policy	105
10.2 CEO Delegation to Award Contracts for Ted Summerton Reserve Redevelopment - Regional Sports Infrastructure Program	117
10.3 Governance Rules	123
11. URGENT BUSINESS.....	149
12. REPORTS FOR NOTING	151
12.1 Public availability of Councillor Briefings.....	151
12.2 Contract Variations for the period 1 January 2025 - 31 March 2025.....	189
14. ITEMS FOR TABLING.....	210

14.1	Tabling of Petition - Upgrade of unsealed section of Rocla Road and T-Intersection at Dranes Road.....	210
15.	MEETING CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC TO CONSIDER CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.....	214
15.1	Strategic Land Consideration	214
15.2	Land Acquisition 88-90 Cross's Road, Traralgon.....	214
15.3	LCC-873 Glengarry Preschool Redevelopment.....	214

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THE LAND

I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting here today on the traditional land of the Brayakaulung people of the Gunaikurnai nation and I pay respect to their elders past and present.

If there are other Elders present I would also like to acknowledge them.

2. APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Proposed Resolution:

That Council confirm the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 12 May 2025.

4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Councillors may raise any formal acknowledgements that need to be made at this time, including congratulatory or condolences.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TIME

Public Questions on Notice

In Accordance with the Council Meeting Policy, members of the public can lodge a question on notice before 12noon on the Friday before the day of the Council meeting in order for the question to be answered at the meeting.

Public Speakers

An opportunity for members of the public to speak to an item on the agenda will be made available by necessary means. To participate, members of the public must have registered before 12noon on the day of the Council meeting.

NOTICES OF MOTION

7. NOTICES OF MOTION

Nil reports.

STRATEGIC ITEMS FOR DECISION

8. STRATEGIC ITEMS FOR DECISION

Item Number 8.1

26 May 2025

Regional City Planning and Assets

YOUTH INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

PURPOSE

To seek endorsement of the draft Youth Infrastructure Plan 2025-2035 at **Attachment 1**, following community consultation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The draft Youth Infrastructure Plan (draft Plan) aims to provide a wide range of outdoor recreational spaces that allow for informal physical activity and social connection. These spaces will be accessible, safe, and inclusive to support the wellbeing of everyone in Latrobe City.
- The draft Plan was presented to Council on 16 December 2024, seeking endorsement following community consultation.
- Upon release of the agenda, submissions were received from the Morwell Historical Society and the Latrobe Valley Hockey Association.
- Council deferred the decision on the Youth Infrastructure Plan to a future Council Meeting to allow time to address the two submissions.
- The Morwell Historical Society requested an opportunity to meet with Council Officers to discuss the proposal to install a Pump Track next to the Morwell Skate Park, and the historical significance of Alexandra Park.
- Officers have since met with the Morwell Historical Society who have now consented to the current proposal on the condition that Council re-engage with them before finalising the designs.
- The Latrobe Valley Hockey Association (LVHA) requested for Hockey to be noted as an individual sport within the document. Officers discussed the issue with LVHA and the Plan has now been updated to list Hockey as an individual sport, resolving their concerns.
- Following the recent Council decision to identify Agnes Brereton Reserve as the preferred site for the Traralgon Youth Activity Precinct (inclusive of the Traralgon Skate Park), an action to relocate Traralgon Skate Park to Agnes Brereton Reserve has been listed in year three, for an estimated cost of \$1,850,000.
- This estimate reflects the skate park elements outlined in the Traralgon Youth Activity Precinct Concept Plan from 2020, with an additional 30% adjustment applied to account for current market conditions and align the figures with today's values.

- This is an estimate for delivery of a district level skate park only, noting that the Moe Skate Park is Latrobe City's regional facility.
- Funding has not currently been allocated or secured for delivery of the majority of actions identified in the draft Plan, however projects will be referred to the annual budget process and external funding opportunities.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. endorses the Youth Infrastructure Plan 2025-2035 at Attachment 1; and**
- 2. notes that once endorsed, the Youth Infrastructure Plan 2025-2035 will be released to the public via Council's website.**

BACKGROUND

The draft Youth Infrastructure Plan aims to provide a wide range of outdoor recreational spaces that allow for informal physical activity and social connection. These spaces will be accessible, safe, and inclusive to support the wellbeing of everyone in Latrobe City.

The Plan addresses the strategic priority in the 2021-25 Council Plan to: Prioritise social planning and infrastructure for young people and their families, which provides additional programs and opportunities for young people to engage with health, wellbeing and connection to natural and built environments within the municipality.

Community consultation was undertaken for six weeks from 4 June to 16 July 2024 via the Have Your Say online engagement platform and Officers held a workshop with the Youth Council during their meeting on 11 July 2024.

A total of 29 submissions were received. Four comments that were received prior to the engagement period were also considered as part of the consultation phase, as well as feedback received from the Youth Council. As a result, 6 changes were made and presented at the 16 December 2024 Council Meeting.

The most significant change made to the draft Plan in response to community feedback was the site relocation for a new pump track in Morwell. This was moved to the land next to the existing state park (Alexandra Park) as 3 neighbours were unsupportive of one being located at Morwell Town Common.

ANALYSIS

Upon release of the agenda for the 16 December 2024 Council Meeting, a submission was received from the Morwell Historical Society requesting Council defer a decision on the draft Plan to enable the Society to consult with Council Officers regarding the historical significance of Alexandra Park.

Officers met with the Morwell Historical Society to address their concerns in January 2025, which was subsequently discussed at their February committee meeting. During that committee meeting, it was agreed that there would be no further objection to the current proposal, provided that Council Officers engage with them again prior to the finalisation of designs and project delivery (scheduled in the plan for 2033/34).

In addition, a letter was received from the Latrobe Valley Hockey Association (LVHA) requesting for Hockey to be noted as an individual sport within the document. The Vice President of LVHA spoke to the letter at the meeting held on 16 December 2024.

Officers spoke with the Vice President of the LVHA and the draft Plan has now been updated so that Hockey is highlighted as an individual sport, resolving their concerns.

Following the recent Council decision to identify Agnes Brereton Reserve as the preferred site for the Traralgon Youth Activity Precinct (inclusive of the Traralgon Skate Park), an action to relocate Traralgon Skate Park to Agnes Brereton Reserve has been listed in year three, for an estimated cost of \$1,850,000.

This is an estimate for delivery of a district level skate park only, noting that the Moe Skate Park is Latrobe City's regional facility.

RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK	RISK RATING	TREATMENT
FINANCIAL Failure to secure funding to deliver actions outlined in the draft Youth Infrastructure Plan Impact of ongoing maintenance costs on operational budget	Medium <i>Possible x Moderate</i> Medium <i>Possible x Moderate</i>	The Youth Infrastructure Plan will be used to support future budget submissions and funding applications. Highlight within the Plan that funding has not yet been allocated. Construct with ongoing maintenance requirements in mind.
STRATEGIC Plan does not meet community expectations, or the community may not agree with recommendations	Medium <i>Possible x Minor</i>	Thorough consultation on the Plan has been undertaken, with changes implemented based on feedback received.

CONSULTATION

Community consultation was undertaken on the draft Plan for six weeks from 4 June to 16 July 2024 via the Have Your Say online engagement platform. The campaign was promoted on social media, flyers and TV screens at leisure and service centres, and was also advertised in the Latrobe Valley Express Noticeboard. During this time, neighbouring properties of identified locations were contacted by mail, as well as relevant stakeholders such as schools, youth organisations, disability groups, local sporting clubs and the small township associations seeking feedback on the draft Plan. Officers held a workshop with the Youth Council during their meeting on 11 July 2024 and met with the Latrobe Health Assembly to seek their feedback on the draft Plan.

Direct engagement has been undertaken with Morwell Historical Society and Latrobe Valley Hockey Association following submissions to the Council Meeting held on 16 December 2024.

Officers will further consult with Morwell Historical Society prior to the finalisation of designs and project delivery of the Morwell Pump Track (scheduled in the plan for 2033/34).

COMMUNICATION

Once endorsed at a future Council Meeting, the Youth Infrastructure Plan will be uploaded onto the Council Website.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Officers preparing this report have declared they do not have a conflict of interest in this matter under the provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

APPENDIX 1 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Gender

A Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* has been conducted as the draft Plan has a significant and direct impact on the community. Imagery was updated within the document to include more diversity, and design considerations were included to ensure spaces are designed with a gender lens.

Social

The draft Plan aims to provide a wide range of outdoor recreational spaces that allow for informal physical activity and social connection to support health and wellbeing.

Cultural

A GIA undertaken on the draft Plan identified actions to ensure that these spaces are welcoming and inclusive for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Health

The draft Plan addresses the strategic priority in the 2021-25 Council Plan to: Prioritise social planning and infrastructure for young people and their families, which provides additional programs and opportunities for young people to engage with Health, wellbeing and connection to natural and built environments within the municipality.

Environmental

Environmentally Sustainable Design principles will be considered at detailed design and project delivery to ensure minimal environmental impacts of any new infrastructure.

Economic

There is potential that additional infrastructure will generate income for nearby business due to increased activity in the area, in particular in the small towns.

Financial

Funding has not currently been allocated or secured for delivery of the majority of actions identified within the Plan. However, projects will be referred to the budget process and relevant external funding opportunities. Commitment to deliver actions outlined in the Plan requires significant investment for construction as well as ongoing maintenance.

Attachments

1. Youth Infrastructure Plan 2025-2035

8.1

Youth Infrastructure Plan

1	Youth Infrastructure Plan 2025-2035.....	15
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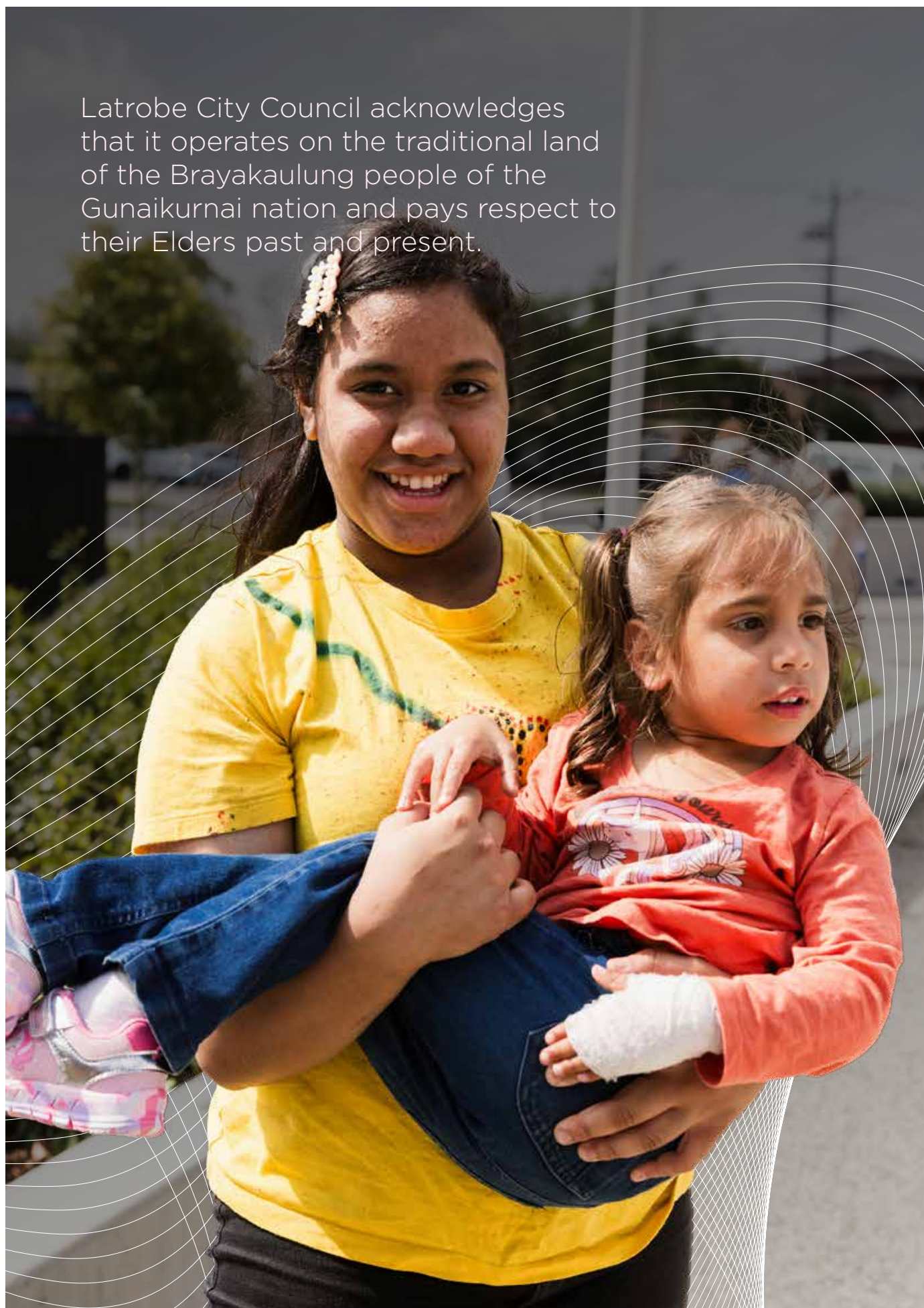


Youth Infrastructure Plan

2025-2035



Latrobe City Council acknowledges that it operates on the traditional land of the Brayakaulung people of the Gunaikurnai nation and pays respect to their Elders past and present.



Our Community Vision

In 2031 Latrobe City will be known for being smart, creative, healthy, sustainable and connected. It will be the most liveable regional city and at the forefront of innovation.

Working together we are a diverse, connected and resilient community, supporting the equitable diversification of our economic base and transition towards a low emissions future.

We are known as a community that is equitable, liveable and sustainable, with a continued focus on healthy lifestyles supported by high quality recreational and cultural facilities and a natural environment that is nurtured and respected.



Table of contents	
Introduction	01
Methodology	03
Current facilities	05
Short term actions	09
Long Term actions	09
Implementation plan	10
Design considerations	13
2024 Maps	14

Front cover: Moe Skate Park



Moe Skate Park

Introduction

The objective of the Latrobe City Council Youth Infrastructure Plan is to provide a wide range of outdoor recreational spaces that allow for informal physical activity and social connection. These spaces will be accessible, safe, and inclusive to support the wellbeing of everyone in Latrobe City.

Purpose

The Youth Infrastructure Plan will assist Council to:

1. Improve existing facilities;
2. Identify needs and gaps in recreational opportunities;
3. Make informed decisions around planning and delivery of outdoor active recreation infrastructure;
4. Seek appropriate funding opportunities for identified projects;
5. Promote facilities to the local and broader community to encourage participation and provide potential tourism benefits to small and large towns.

Strategic alignment

- Asset Plan 2022-2032
- Public Open Space Strategy
- Play Space Strategy
- Skate and BMX Plan



Haunted Hills Mountain Bike Park



Morwell Skate Park

Community feedback

"We need more investment in parks and natural play spaces, outdoor gyms, pump tracks, skate parks"

"Upgrade sporting facilities in smaller towns to encourage kids to stay involved in the town as well as upgrade park and recreational facilities"

"Encourage people to walk and ride around the towns where possible to help encourage a healthy lifestyle..."

"...Diverse sporting activity"

"...I want to see kids...engaged in something"

"...better quality open spaces, this relates to CBD's, parks, nature strip planting, median strips, fencing, pavements, public toilets, playgrounds, skateparks..."

"Building and maintaining community areas..."

As required under the Gender Equality Act 2020, a Gender Impact Assessment has been completed on the Youth Infrastructure Plan to ensure equal opportunities for people of all genders.

Methodology

To ensure this plan is financially viable and sustainable, small neighbouring towns have been grouped. The plan seeks to distribute infrastructure across these town groups.

The plan also acknowledges the significance of existing infrastructure such as Recreation Reserves, and seeks to build on these facilities to ensure they are broadly accessible and provide for the whole community.




Considerations in the development of the implementation plan has been given to:

- Current facilities
- Economic feasibility
- Financial sustainability
- Travel time and distance
- Potential tourism benefits
- Community involvement in facility development and managment

Active recreation activities to be available across town groups

- Tennis
 - Cycling
 - Cricket
 - Soccer
 - Hockey
- Skate / Scoot
 - Mt Biking
 - AFL
 - Baseball
 - BMX
- Basketball
 - Netball
 - Walk/ Run

Small town groups and travel distance

Small Town Groups	Kilometres			
Yinnar and Boolarra	9.2km	7min	-	16min
Glengarry and Toongabbie	9.6km	7min	27min	25min
Tyers and Glengarry	8.5km	6min	-	-
Tyers and Yallourn North	11km	11min	-	12min
Yallourn North and Newborough	7.7km	7min	-	13min
Traralgon South and Callignee	6.5km	7min	-	-



Population (2021 census)

Town	Total pop.	10-14yrs	15-19yrs	20-24yrs	Total 10-24yrs
Traralgon	26,907	1,680	1,545	1,489	4,714
Morwell	14,389	841	764	870	2,475
Moe	9,375	519	445	477	1,441
Newborough	6,886	369	380	405	1,154
Churchill	4,924	322	277	361	960
Yallourn North	1,511	86	75	96	257
Glengarry	1,113	98	76	52	226
Toongabbie	1,085	82	54	61	197
Boolarra	1,023	70	57	35	162
Yinnar	1,021	59	52	53	164
Tyers	893	66	56	43	165
Traralgon South	553	35	56	36	127
Callignee	391	32	23	16	71

Actions and priorities are based on an assessment and review completed by Gippsport in March and July 2023; the above data; and internal and external consultation.

Consideration has also been given to:

- CPTED Principles
- Accessibility
- Healthy By Design Principles



Current facilities

Small towns

	Boolarra	Yinnar	Glengarry	Toongabbie
<i>AFL</i>	Boolarra Recreation Reserve has a football oval with seasonal goals access	Yinnar Recreation Reserve has a football oval with seasonal goals access	Glengarry Recreation Reserve has a football oval with seasonal goals access	Toongabbie Recreation Reserve has a football oval with seasonal goals access
<i>Baseball</i>	Green open spaces available	Green open spaces available	Green open spaces available	Green open spaces available
<i>Basketball</i>	1/4 court at Boolarra Centennial Park	Half-court on Main Street	Half-court at Apex Park	-
<i>BMX</i>	Dirt BMX track at Boolarra Centennial Park	-	Dirt BMX track at Main Street Reserve	-
<i>Cricket (nets)</i>	Located at Boolarra Recreation Reserve	Located at Yinnar Recreation Reserve	Located at Glengarry Recreation Reserve	Located at Toongabbie Recreation Reserve
<i>Cycling</i>	Rail Trail	Decent path / open road network in and around town	Rail Trail	Rail Trail
<i>Mt Biking</i>	-	-	Rail Trail / BMX track	Rail Trail
<i>Netball</i>	Boolarra Recreation Reserve has netball courts with rings	Yinnar Recreation Reserve has netball courts with rings	Glengarry Recreation Reserve has netball courts with rings	-
<i>Skate / Scoot</i>	Concrete facility at Boolarra Centennial Park	Concrete facility at Main Street Skate Park	Metal ramps and rails on a concrete base at Main Street Reserve	Metal ramps and rails on asphalt base at Toongabbie Recreation Reserve
<i>Soccer</i>	Green open spaces available, but no access to goals	Green open spaces available, but no access to goals	Green open spaces available, but no access to goals	Green open spaces available, no goals access
<i>Table Tennis</i>	Railway Park	Yinnar Recreation Reserve	Town Centre	Toongabbie Recreation Reserve
<i>Tennis</i>	2 outdoor courts located at Boolarra Recreation Reserve	4 outdoor courts located at Yinnar Recreation Reserve	4 outdoor courts located at Glengarry Recreation Reserve	2 outdoor courts located at Toongabbie Recreation Reserve
<i>Walk / Run</i>	Rail Trail	Yinnar Recreation Reserve	Rail Trail / Glengarry Recreation Reserve	Toongabbie Recreation Reserve



Boolarra BMX Track



Boolarra Skate Park



Glengarry BMX Track



Glengarry Skate Park



Outdoor Table Tennis



Toongabbie Skate Park



Yallourn North BMX Track



Yallourn North Skate Park

	Tyers	Yallourn North	Newborough	Traralgon South	Callignee
<i>AFL</i>	Baillie Reserve has a football oval with seasonal goals access	George Bates Reserve and Yallourn North Recreation Reserve have football ovals with seasonal goal access	Northern Reserve has a football oval with seasonal goals access	Traralgon South Recreation Reserve has an oval (but no goals)	Callignee Recreation Reserve has an oval but no goals
<i>Baseball</i>	Green open spaces available	Green open spaces available	Permanent fencing and seasonal diamond located at WH Burrage Reserve	Green open spaces available	Green open spaces available
<i>Basketball</i>	Half-court at the CFA shed, next to the BMX track at Baillie Reserve	Rotating hoop/backboard located at one end of secondary netball court at George Bates Reserve	-	-	-
<i>BMX</i>	Dirt BMX track located at Baillie Reserve	Dirt BMX Track located at Reserve St / Third St Reserve	Dirt BMX Track located at Henry White Reserve	-	-
<i>Cricket (nets)</i>	-	Yallourn North Recreation Reserve	WH Burrage Reserve	Traralgon South Recreation Reserve	There is a cricket pitch on the oval at Callignee Recreation Reserve but no nets
<i>Cycling</i>	Decent path / open road network in and around town	Decent path / open road network in and around town	Bob Whitford Velodrome	Decent path / open road network in and around town	-
<i>Mt Biking</i>	-	Within close proximity to Haunted Hills Mountain Bike Park	Within close proximity to Haunted Hills Mountain Bike Park	-	-
<i>Netball</i>	Baillie Reserve has netball courts with rings	George Bates Reserve has netball courts with rings	Monash Reserve and Northern Reserve have netball courts with rings	Traralgon South Recreation Reserve has netball courts with rings	-
<i>Skate / Scoot</i>	-	Metal ramps with newer concrete corner located at Reserve St / Third St Reserve	-	Concrete bowl with metal coping located at Traralgon South Recreation Reserve	-
<i>Soccer</i>	Baillie Reserve has a soccer pitch with seasonal access to goals	Green open spaces available, but no access to goals	Soccer pitches located at WH Burrage Reserve and Monash Reserve with seasonal goals access	Green open spaces available, but no access to goals	Green open spaces available, no goals access
<i>Table Tennis</i>	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Tennis</i>	2 outdoor courts located at Baillie Reserve	2 outdoor courts located at Yallourn North Recreation Reserve	3 outdoor courts located at Monash Reserve	4 outdoor courts located at Traralgon South Recreation Reserve	
<i>Walk / Run</i>	Baillie Reserve	Yallourn North Recreation Reserve	Joe Carmody Athletics Track	Joe Carmody Athletics Track	Callignee Recreation Reserve



Newborough BMX Track



Tyers BMX Track



Yinnar Skate Park



Traralgon South Skate Bowl

Current Facilities

Large towns

	Traralgon	Morwell	Moe	Churchill
<i>AFL</i>	Traralgon West Sports Complex Apex Park Traralgon Recreation Reserve Duncan Cameron Reserve Liddiard Road Primary School Oval Bradman Boulevard Oval	Ronald Reserve Crinigan Road South Reserve Northern Reserve Morwell Recreation Reserve	Ted Summerton Reserve Joe Tabautu Reserve Northern Reserve (Newborough)	Gaskin Park Glendonald Park
<i>Baseball</i>	Kevin Lythgo Reserve Liddiard Road Primary School Oval	Toners Lane	WH Burrage Reserve (Newborough)	Andrews Park West
<i>Basketball</i>	Half-court at Catterick Crescent Reserve Half-court at St James Church (Grey St) Half-court Marshalls Road (Hammersmith Cct)	Half-court at Northern Reserve	Half-court at Apex Park	Glendonald Park
<i>BMX</i>	Pump Track at Traralgon Recreation Reserve	Ronald Reserve (dirt track)	Haunted Hills Pump Track	Glendonald Park (dirt track)
<i>Cricket (nets)</i>	Duncan Cameron Traralgon West Sporting Complex Apex Park Catterick Crescent Reserve (1 open to public) Traralgon Rec Reserve	Maryvale Recreation Reserve (1 open to public) Keegan Street Reserve (1 open to public)	Ted Summerton Reserve Gippsland Cricket Centre of Excellence (bookings required) WH Burrage Reserve (Newborough)	Andrews Park West Glendonald Park
<i>Cycling</i>	Gippsland Plains Rail Trail – Traralgon to Toongabbie Traralgon-Morwell Shared Path	Traralgon-Morwell Shared Path Waterhole Creek	Bob Whitford Velodrome Moe-Yallourn Rail Tail Old Sale Road (bike lane)	Eel Hole Creek
<i>Hockey</i>	-	-	-	Synthetic Hockey Pitch – Latrobe City Synthetic Sports Field



Moe Skate Park



Morwell Skate Park



Morwell BMX Track



Haunted Hills Mountain Bike Park

Large Towns (cont.)

	Traralgon	Morwell	Moe	Churchill
<i>Mt Biking</i>	Maryvale Pines *Located on private land	Maryvale Pines *Located on private land	Haunted Hills Mountain Bike Park (Newborough)	Dobbins Road (unsanctioned / difficult)
<i>Netball</i>	Breed Street Traralgon Recreation Reserve	Ronald Reserve Morwell Recreation Reserve Morwell Park Primary School	Ted Summerton (goals taken down) Monash Reserve (Newborough) Northern Reserve (Newborough) Saviges Road	Gaskin Park Glendonald Park
<i>Skate / Scoot</i>	Traralgon Skate Park (concrete)	Morwell Skate Park (concrete)	Moe Skate Park (concrete) Haunted Hills Pump Track	Churchill Skate Park (concrete)
<i>Soccer</i>	Harold Preston Bradman Boulevard Oval	Ronald Reserve Morwell Recreation Reserve Crinigan Road South Reserve Crinigan Road North Reserve (GSEP) Maryvale Recreation Reserve Morwell Park Primary School	Olympic Park WH Burrage Reserve (Newborough) Monash Reserve (Newborough)	Hazelwood South Reserve
<i>Tennis</i>	Traralgon Tennis Centre (bookings required) Maskrey Reserve, Pax Hill (bookings required) Eric Taylor Reserve (open to public)	Ronald Reserve (bookings required)	Moe Botanic Gardens	Gaskin Park (bookings required)
<i>Walk / Run</i>	Gippsland Plains Rail Trail Traralgon-Morwell Shared Path Traralgon Creek Path Harold Preston Reserve Railway Reserve	Traralgon-Morwell Shared Path Crinigan Road Bushland Reserve Immigration Park / Waterhole Creek	Joe Carmody Synthetic Athletics Track Edward Hunter Bushland Reserve Moe-Yallourn Rail Trail Lake Narracan	Mathison Park / Lake Hyland Eel Hole Creek
<i>Other</i>	Outdoor table tennis - Newman Park	Outdoor table tennis - Morwell Town Common	Track and field infrastructure at John Field Reserve Outdoor table tennis - Moe Botanic Gardens	Outdoor table tennis - Mathison Park



Churchill Skate Park



Churchill BMX Track



Traralgon Pump Track



Traralgon Skate Park

Short term actions

Action	Location
<i>Provide free Wi-Fi and mobile phone charging station</i>	Boolarra BMX Track Churchill Skate Park Glengarry Skate Park Moe Skate Park Morwell Skate Park Newborough BMX Track Traralgon Recreation Reserve (near Pump Track) Traralgon Skate Park (new) Traralgon South Skate Park Tyers BMX Track Yallourn North Skate Park Yinnar Skate Park
<i>Confirm availability / open to general public</i>	Boolarra tennis courts Gaskin Park netball courts Gaskin Park tennis courts Glengarry netball courts Monash Reserve tennis courts Pax Hill tennis courts Ted Summerton netball courts Toongabbie netball courts Toongabbie tennis courts Traralgon South tennis courts Tyers netball courts Yinnar netball courts Yinnar tennis courts
<i>Provide soccer nets (portable or permanent TBC per site)</i>	Boolarra Recreation Reserve Callignee Recreation Reserve Glengarry Recreation Reserve Harold Preston (make available all year round) Toongabbie Recreation Reserve Traralgon South Recreation Reserve Tyers Recreation Reserve Yallourn North Recreation Reserve Yinnar Recreation Reserve
<i>Provide AFL goal posts</i>	Callignee Recreation Reserve Toongabbie Recreation Reserve Traralgon South Recreation Reserve
<i>Review and update existing signage</i>	All sites

Long term actions

Action	Location
<i>Upgrade or install half-court basketball court and / or swivel ring</i>	Morwell (refurbish) Newborough Traralgon x 2 Traralgon South
<i>Install cricket nets</i>	Boolarra Recreation Reserve
<i>Upgrade BMX Track / install new Pump Track</i>	Boolarra Churchill Glengarry Morwell Newborough Traralgon South Tyers Yallourn North (upgrade to dirt track only)
<i>Upgrade or install new Skate Park</i>	Traralgon Tyers Yinnar
<i>Install shelter</i>	Churchill Skate Park Traralgon Pump Track

Implementation Plan

10 Year Implementation Plan – Yearly costings (estimated as at 2024)

Year one

2025 / 2026	Town	Priority reason	Estimated Cost (as at 2024)
Install Book-A-Court technology at tennis courts to allow free public access (online booking system)	Boolarra Churchill Newborough Toongabbie Traralgon South Yinnar	Identified gap (Gippsport) Risk management / asset protection	\$3,000 (Igloohome Padlock - funded within existing budget)
Upgrade dirt BMX track to a skate park / pump track and add basketball ring to one court at Baillie Reserve	Tyers	Lack of current facilities in northern small towns Community involvement	\$300,000 (funded through 2024/25 budget)
Install mobile phone charging stations at 12 locations and ensure free Wi-Fi available	Multiple	Council Plan - Connected Identified need (Gippsport)	\$130,000
Develop promotional campaign raising profile and visibility of Latrobe City's open access recreational spaces	All	Council Plan - Connected / Healthy	No additional cost to Council. This will be done in-house
Pilot 'Active After Hours' initiative	Multiple	Accessibility and activation	TBC (electricity rebate)
Install shelter for pump track at Traralgon Recreation Reserve	Traralgon	Identified need (GippSport)	\$75,000
Total Year 1 estimated costings (additional budget)			\$205,000

*Active After-Hours initiative will see lights turned on after dusk at selected Recreation Reserves to encourage community use at night.

Year two

2026 / 2027	Town	Priority reason	Estimated Cost (as at 2024)
Install Cricket Nets	Boolarra	Lack of current facilities Safety Identified in Rec Needs Assessment	\$200,000
Resurface half basketball court at Northern Reserve	Morwell	Current condition	\$25,000 (to be funded through existing resurfacing budget)
Install basketball court at: Eric Taylor (add basketball / netball swivel rings at both ends of 1 tennis court and install removable tennis net) Ellavale Estate (half court) (park near Kangaroo Rise)	Traralgon	Identified gap / community requests	\$100,000 (\$50,000 each)
Total Year 2 estimated costings (additional budget)			\$300,000

10 Year Implementation Plan – Yearly costings (cont.)

Year three

2027 / 2028	Town	Priority reason	Estimated Cost (as at 2024)
Relocate Traralgon Skate Park to Agnes Brereton Reserve	Traralgon	Population Identified need (GippSport) Community requests	\$1,850,000
Total year three estimated costing			\$1,850,000

Year four

2028 / 2029	Town	Priority reason	Estimated Cost (as at 2024)
Extend skate park to include a pump track and add basketball / netball swivel ring to tennis court	Traralgon South	Community requests Co-location of complementary facilities to increase utilisation Identified gap (GippSport)	\$300,000
Total year three estimated costing			\$300,000

Year five

2029 / 2030	Town	Priority reason	Estimated Cost (as at 2024)
Install a pump track to area behind existing skate park	Churchill	Identified need (GippSport)	\$250,000
Provide sealed path from footpath to skate park and add seating and shelter	Churchill	Identified need (GippSport)	\$80,000
Remove BMX track at Glendonald Park	Churchill	Poor location To be replaced by pump track	\$5,000
Total year four estimated costing			\$335,000

Year six

2030 / 2031	Town	Priority reason	Estimated Cost (as at 2024)
Upgrade BMX track to a pump track (at detailed design consider keeping dirt track, and adding the pump track)	Glengarry	Condition of current facilities Tourism (economic benefit) Identified need (GippSport)	\$250,000
Upgrade dirt BMX track	Yinnar	Condition of current facilities	\$100,000
Improve access and signage to netball courts and soccer pitch next to Morwell Park Primary School	Morwell	Lack of current / appropriate facilities	\$10,000
Total year five estimated costing			\$360,000

10 Year Implementation Plan – Yearly costings (cont.)

Year seven

2031 / 2032	Town	Priority reason	Estimated Cost (as at 2024)
Upgrade BMX Track to Pump Track	Boolarra	Condition of current facilities Tourism (economic benefit) Co-location of complementary facilities to increase utilisation	\$250,000
Total year six estimated costing			\$250,000

Year eight

2032 / 2033	Town	Priority reason	Estimated Cost (as at 2024)
Upgrade skate park	Yinnar	Condition of current facilities	\$150,000
Total year seven estimated costing			\$150,000

Year nine

2033 / 2034	Town	Priority reason	Estimated Cost (as at 2024)
Install Pump Track next to skate park * need to obtain land lease from VicTrack and engage directly with Morwell Historical Society on final design.	Morwell	Lack of current / appropriate facilities	\$250,000
Remove BMX track at Ronald Reserve	Morwell	Poor location / passive surveillance To be replaced by pump track	\$5,000
Total year eight estimated costing			\$255,000

Year ten

2034 / 2035	Town	Priority reason	Estimated Cost (as at 2024)
Upgrade BMX track to a pump track and install half basketball court (include shelter, sealed footpaths, seating and table options)	Newborough	Condition of current facilities Tourism (economic benefit) Co-location of complementary facilities to increase utilisation	\$250,000
Install half basketball court at Morwell Recreation Reserve	Morwell	Co-location of complementary facilities to increase utilisation	\$100,000
Total year ten estimated costing			\$350,000

NOTE: Delivery of this Implementation Plan is contingent on securing external funding and/or an annual budget allocation.



Design Considerations

To ensure the Youth Infrastructure Plan is in line with the Latrobe City Council Fair Access and Use Policy – Community Sports and Recreation Facilities, supports Physical Literacy and delivers outdoor active recreational spaces that are welcoming and accessible to everyone, consideration should be made to:

Detailed design

Applying a safety lens: Adhering to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Principles, consideration for appropriate lighting (including car parks), ensuring clear visibility and sightlines to area, providing multiple entry / exit points, displaying welcoming signage using inclusive language that includes location of nearby amenities, public transport and emergency contact numbers.

Multifunctional design: Incorporate spatial variation and consideration for various skill levels and ability (such as a separate beginners / warm up area). Consider different levels and ways people engage in the space by including connecting footpaths, a variety of seating and shelter options and potentially include items of quick interest such as platforms, stages, hopscotch or 4 square.

Accessibility: Ensure spaces are accessible by providing smooth, wide pathways, ramps and consider including adaptive equipment for people with disability.

Create a welcoming environment: Provide a space that reflects the diversity of the community and encourages everyone to feel welcome (consideration to community art, use of colour, appropriate landscaping and signage that uses non gendered imagery and inclusive language).

Community engagement: Undertake targeted community engagement during detailed design to ensure the needs of current users and those who participate less are being considered.

Following delivery of infrastructure

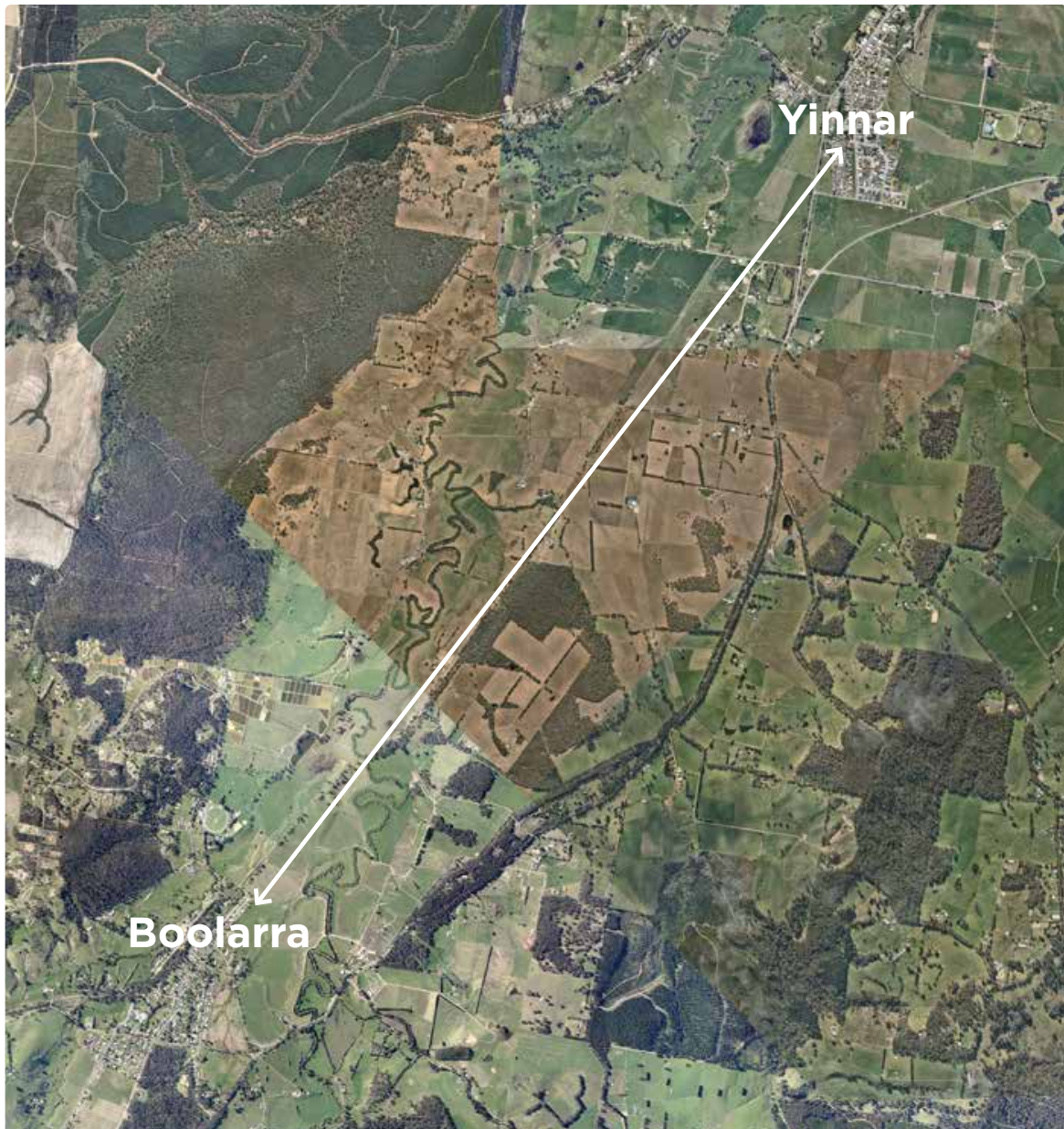
Programming and management: Activate spaces with inclusive programs and events promoted across Disability, LGBTIQ+, CALD, ATSI and Positive Ageing community networks.

Community engagement: Commit to using inclusive language and images.



2024 Maps

Yinnar and Boolarra



9.2km



7min



16min

Yinnar



Boolarra

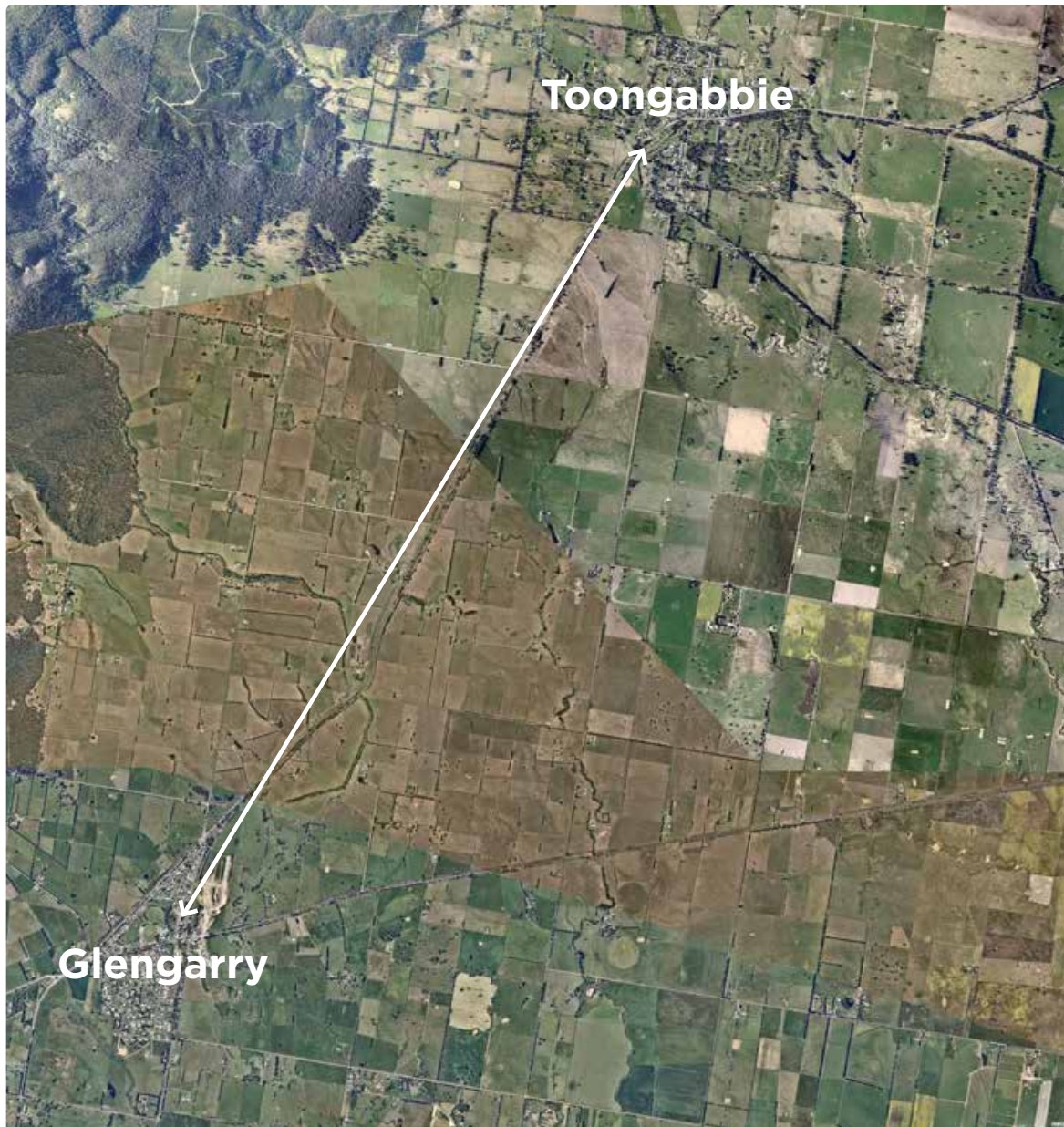


Legend




- Tennis
- Skate / Scoot
- BMX
- Basketball
- Cricket (nets)
- AFL
- Netball
- Soccer
- Baseball

2024 Maps (cont.)

Glengarry and Toongabbie



9.6km

 7min  27min  25min

Glengarry



Toongabbie



Legend

- Tennis
- Skate / Scoot
- BMX
- Basketball
- Cricket (nets)
- AFL
- Netball
- Soccer
- Baseball

2024 Maps (cont.)

Tyers and Glengarry



8.5km
 6min

Tyers



Glengarry



- Legend
- | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------------|-----|------------|----------------|-----|---------|--------|----------|
| Tennis | Skate / Scoot | BMX | Basketball | Cricket (nets) | AFL | Netball | Soccer | Baseball |
|--------|---------------|-----|------------|----------------|-----|---------|--------|----------|

Tyers and Yallourn North



11km
🚗 11min 🚆 12min

Tyers



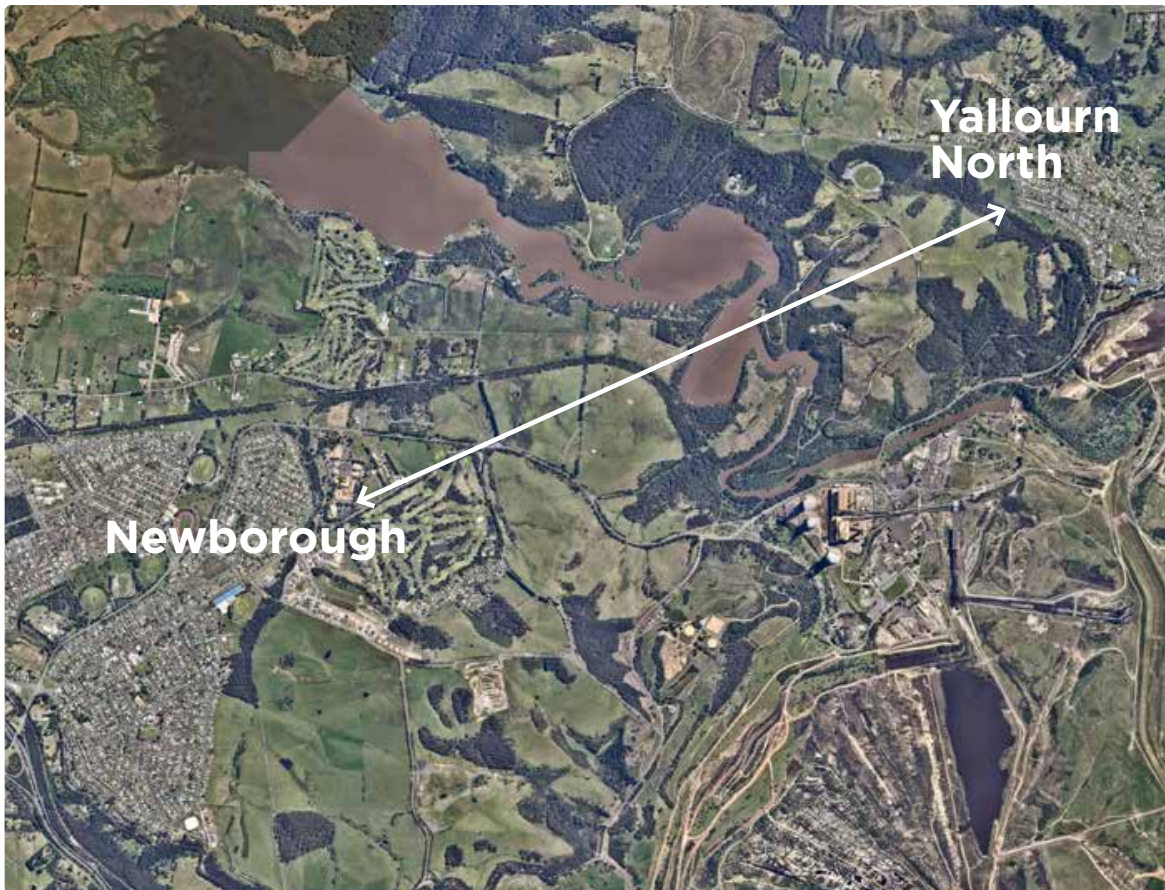
Yallourn North



- Legend
- Tennis
 - Skate / Scoot
 - BMX
 - Basketball
 - Cricket (nets)
 - AFL
 - Netball
 - Soccer
 - Baseball

2024 Maps (cont.)

Newborough and Yallourn North



7.7km

 7min  13min

Newborough



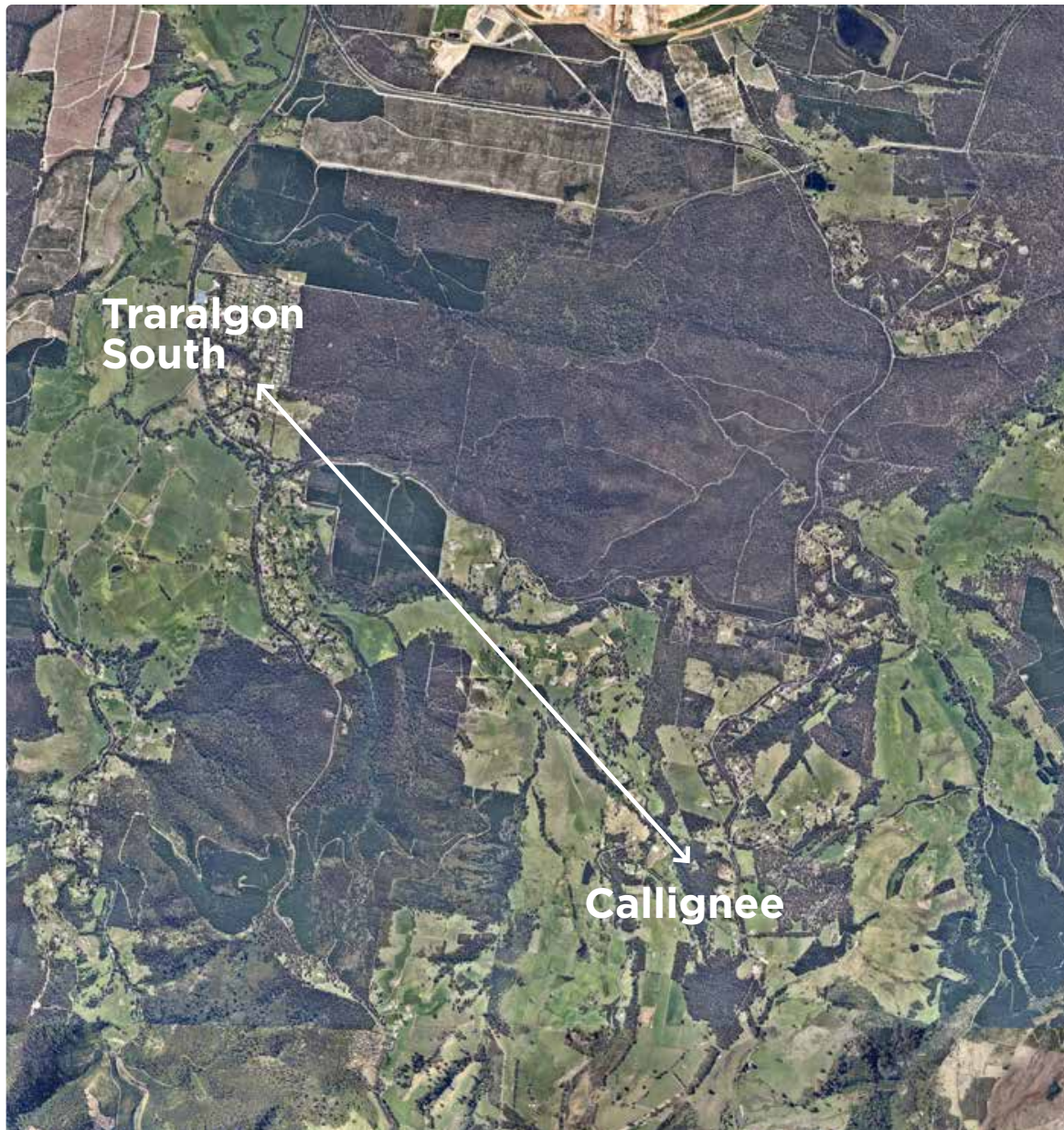
Yallourn North



- Legend
- Tennis
 - Skate / Scoot
 - BMX
 - Basketball
 - Cricket (nets)
 - AFL
 - Netball
 - Soccer
 - Baseball

2024 Maps (cont.)

Traralgon South and Callignee



6.5km

 7min

Traralgon South



Callignee



- Legend
- | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| ● Tennis | ● Skate / Scoot | ● BMX | ● Basketball | ● Cricket (nets) | ● AFL | ● Netball | ● Soccer | ● Baseball |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|--|

2024 Maps (cont.)

Traralgon



Legend

Tennis	Skate / Scoot	BMX	Basketball	Cricket (nets)	AFL	Netball	Soccer	Baseball
--------	---------------	-----	------------	----------------	-----	---------	--------	----------

Morwell



Legend

● Tennis ● Skate / Scoot ● BMX ● Basketball ● Cricket (nets) ● AFL ● Netball ● Soccer ● Baseball

2024 Maps (cont.)

Moe



Legend

- Tennis
- Skate / Scoot
- BMX
- Basketball
- Cricket (nets)
- AFL
- Netball
- Soccer
- Baseball

Churchill



Legend

- Tennis ● Skate / Scoot ● BMX ● Basketball ● Cricket (nets) ● AFL ● Netball ● Soccer ● Baseball
● Hockey



Catterick Crescent Reserve, Traralgon



Phone 1300 367 700
Post PO Box 264, Morwell 3840
Email latrobe@latrobe.vic.gov.au
www.latrobe.vic.gov.au

Service Centres & Libraries

Morwell

Corporate Headquarters

141 Commercial Road, Morwell

Morwell Library

63-65 Elgin Street, Morwell

Moe

Moe Service Centre and Library

1-29 George Street, Moe

Traralgon

Traralgon Service Centre and Library

34-38 Kay Street, Traralgon

Churchill

Churchill Community Hub

9-11 Philip Parade, Churchill

To obtain this information in languages other than English, or in other formats, please contact Latrobe City Council on 1300 367 700.

COMMUNITY CONNECTORS PROGRAM

PURPOSE

To provide further information to Councillors about the Community Connectors program following a resolution of Council at the March 2025 Council Meeting.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- At the Council Meeting on 24 March 2025, Council resolved to:
Receive a report at the April Council Meeting on the implementation of the Community Connectors Program in the Morwell CBD to respond to community safety concerns.
- This report addresses that resolution and complements information provided to Councillors about the Community Connectors program in the Morwell CBD Community Safety report at the February Council Meeting. Additionally, at the February 2025 Council Meeting, Council resolved in part to:
Endorse officers to seek funding for the Community Connectors program and advocate for the completion and opening of Morwell Railway Station Stage Two.
- As a result of this resolution, advocacy letters were sent to the Acting Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police, the Minister for Police and the Attorney General. It is unclear whether any existing funding streams, such as State or Federal Government grants are available to support the financial requirements of the program.
- The Morwell CBD experiences significant challenges in relation to economic growth, community safety and wellbeing. Current political, community and business stakeholders have expressed a strong interest in addressing these issues.
- Officers have undertaken several immediate steps to improve community safety, however, recognise that addressing this issue requires long-term prevention initiatives as well as direct responses.
- To date and historically, the response to antisocial behaviour has been reactive and used an enforcement lens. While this approach will continue, it has effectively proven to be unsuccessful in improving social outcomes and unless longer-term, preventative work is implemented, it is expected that the current situation in the Morwell CBD is unlikely to improve.

- The Community Connectors program is aimed at improving Morwell's CBD as a safe and welcoming area while attracting new businesses and visitors. The program works by directing people to appropriate support services by offering flexible outreach to community members at the Morwell Transit Hub. The program aims to address some of the drivers of antisocial behaviour and offending, including poor mental health, alcohol or drug use and poor social connections.
- Supports may include referring people to local services for mental health, family violence or drug and alcohol support or building relationships to improve perceptions of safety.
- The anticipated total cost of the Community Connectors program in the first year is \$420,000, and second year costs are \$370,000. A detailed breakdown of the project costs are included within the 'Analysis' section of the report.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. continue to seek funding for the Community Connectors program in the Morwell CBD via advocacy with the State and Federal Government and other potential partners such as V/Line; and**
- 2. as part of the 2024/25 End of Year Result Budget Review Process, give consideration to allocating up to \$50,000 to resource the initial research and planning phase of the program.**

BACKGROUND

Community safety is influenced by a range of factors. It can be real risks to safety through criminal offending or poor perceptions of safety due to things like antisocial behaviour or low levels of foot traffic.

The Community Connectors program aims to address some of the drivers of antisocial behaviour and offending, including poor mental health, alcohol or drug use and poor social connections.

The Morwell CBD experiences significant challenges in relation to economic growth and social disadvantage which impact community safety. Council officers and Councillors receive regular correspondence from community members, local businesses and agencies, and Members of Parliament seeking Council action in response to these issues.

In response, Council has undertaken several immediate steps to improve the situation, along with implementing other activities, which are largely in response to community concerns and are targeted at managing current behaviours rather than addressing drivers of behaviours, as follows:

Activity	Lead	Outcomes
Establishing an internal working group to coordinate efforts and share information in relation to the Morwell CBD	Community Health and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information shared about specific locations/behaviours causing community concern.• Discussion of potential actions Council could undertake.• Targeted relocation of portable street furniture.• Development of <i>Community Connectors</i> project.
Joint patrols with Victoria Police in particular areas of community concern	Local Laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In late 2024, Local Laws completed five planned joint patrols with Morwell police in the CBD, resulting in 13 infringements being issued.

Activity	Lead	Outcomes
Convening the Latrobe City Community Safety Advisory Committee in partnership with Victoria Police	Active Communities and Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sharing between agencies managing offending and antisocial behaviour in Morwell CBD. • Feedback on potential actions to be undertaken by Council and identification of partnership opportunities.
Liaison with Advance Morwell and business community	Business Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sharing about barriers to economic improvement and identification of locations of concern to business community and customers. • Feedback on potential actions that could be undertaken by Council and identification of partnership opportunities.
CBD Presentation Blitz	City Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commenced December 2024. • Weekly/fortnightly visitation frequency (pending time of year). • Focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improved visual amenity within Council's largest CBD's (Moe, Morwell and Traralgon). ○ Litter removal. ○ Footpath debris removal. ○ Weed removal within garden beds.

Activity	Lead	Outcomes
Strategic movement of street furniture	City Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic reconfiguration of street furniture in isolated areas which aims to improve pedestrian movement and safety. • Outcomes and/or benefits to be analysed over time. • This action is difficult for any furniture that is mechanically fixed in place to prevent tampering, and/or powered with phone chargers, requiring greater resourcing to safely remove. • Furniture provides access to general community where no alternative options are available.
Signage promoting use of public infrastructure	Active Communities and Partnerships / Business Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of low or no cost events, activities and public places to improve social connection and foot traffic.
Investigate creating CCTV 'safe zones' within transport hub	Active Communities and Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased perceptions of community safety. • Increased foot traffic and retail spend.
Installation of music to deter community gathering in areas impacting business	Active Communities and Partnerships / City Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced antisocial behaviour and increased social connection. • Increased foot traffic and retail spend. • Increased perceptions of community safety.

Activity	Lead	Outcomes
<i>Opportunity Awaits</i> – shop vacancy reduction initiatives	Business and Industry Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newly created business engagement in vacant shops in Morwell CBD. Increase the number of retail and food vendors in the Morwell CBD. Increased worker engagement with small business in the Morwell CBD.
Business Improvement District Development – collaboration project outlining a support initiative to establish business improvement districts	Business and Industry Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create events and marketing opportunities to support worker engagement with retail and food outlets. Increase visitation to the Morwell CBD.

The internal working group, described in the first row of the above table, has identified that longer-term, preventative work is needed which address the drivers of poor community safety, in addition to responding to immediate safety concerns. The *Community Connectors Program* (detailed below) is one method which aligns with Council's role which is recommended for consideration.

ANALYSIS

The *Community Connectors Program* is a community outreach program which would deploy two trained community practitioners to the Morwell Transit Hub in Commercial Road. A project plan is available in **Attachment 1**.

The program aims to address some of the drivers of antisocial behaviour and offending which would be achieved by building positive relationships with people using the Morwell Transit Hub and leveraging these to de-escalate conflicts, refer people to the numerous support services in Morwell, connect people to pro-social opportunities, and provide reassurance to concerned passengers and other community members.

Experiences in Dandenong and Frankston

This program has been implemented in two locations:

- Dandenong Train Station – collaboration between Metro Trains and South East Community Links from July 2023 to June 2024.

- Frankston Train Station – collaboration between Metro Trains, South East Community Links and Frankston City Council from February 2025 to late 2025.

Dandenong and Frankston experience similar challenges to Morwell with the three areas completing substantial works to improve physical uplifts in the CBD, while still experiencing a proliferation of antisocial behaviour. Both pilot programs employed 'Community Connectors' whose role was to provide direct support and advice to community members and coordinate referrals to local services for drug and alcohol, mental health, homelessness and family violence support. The programs have highlighted a range of impacts including:

- Improved safety and enhanced community wellbeing and a decrease of antisocial behaviour incidents.
- Improved allocation of resources, as the Community Connectors often provided immediate responses which required less intervention from Police and Authorised Officers. The Community Connectors used a different approach to managing issues including connecting with a person's family.

The experience in Dandenong demonstrated an increased sense of community safety, early intervention in situations involving self-harm and improved understanding of the service system for staff working in the vicinity of the train station. Significant impacts included:

- Direct support provided to community members with 3,347 direct engagements (e.g. relating to mental health, alcohol and other drugs, distress and emergency relief).
- De-escalation of 54 incidents.
- 188 referrals to 12 different community services.

In Frankston, the Frankston City Council has provided funding through a partnership with Metro Trains Melbourne and the program commenced with a 12-month pilot in November 2024. Frankston City Council has funded \$200,000 and Metro Trains has funded \$100,000 for the first year of the program. A decision has not yet been made about how the program will be funded in year two (2). However, they are also advocating to the Federal Government for funding of \$1.05 million to extend the pilot program.

Due to the program only being delivered for a short time, they have not developed an evaluation report as yet, however, they have advised that the feedback from business owners and community members in the Frankston CBD has been overwhelmingly positive.

Morwell Proposal

In Latrobe City, the Morwell CBD experiences the highest rates of poverty and crime and the poorest economic outcomes. For example, Morwell's shop vacancy rate is the highest in the municipality at 17.4%. In addition, 23.7% of occupied premises in Morwell offer community services such as opportunity shops, unemployment services, or welfare agencies.

Data sought from the Crime Statistics Agency demonstrates that Morwell's CBD has experienced a 15% increase in crimes against the person and property and deception crimes, and a 38% increase in drug offences between 2019-20 and 2023-24. The rates in Moe's CBD declined by between 1%-9% and Traralgon's CBD increased by between 2%-13% over the same period.

It is anticipated that implementation of the *Community Connectors Program* would take approximately 24 months from initial funding. Experiences in Dandenong have identified that building community relationships can take this amount of time, as can changing people's perceptions of safety.

The anticipated total project cost is as follows:

Expense	Amount
Project Scoping (research, data gathering and support service analysis)	\$50,000
Program Delivery	\$370,000
Program Delivery	\$370,000
Total	\$790,000

Two Community Practitioners would be required to be employed by a community service organisation. More scoping work and project planning is to be completed to identify the specific timelines that these roles will need to be employed, however it is anticipated that the roles will be employed part-time, 3-4 days per week - \$370,000 per year, totalling \$740,000 if the program was to be implemented for two (2) years.

Additionally, it is anticipated that \$50,000 will be required to undertake detailed project scoping and planning. This would encompass a contextual analysis for Morwell which would help to inform the specific skills and experience of the staff to be recruited.

Given recent State Government attention in relation to safety in the Morwell CBD, it is anticipated that having a project plan developed and ready to implement will provide a sound advocacy platform and be attractive to decision-makers.

Options to fund the program include:

- Continue to seek full funding of the program via advocacy with the State and Federal Government and other potential partners such as V/Line;
- Partly fund internally and seek additional funding from the State and/or Federal Governments. Note that the February Council report regarding Morwell CBD Community Safety included an option for \$150,000 to be reallocated from Commonwealth Games funding;
- Council may consider resourcing the initial research and planning phase at a cost of \$50,000;
- Fully fund the program internally.

Advocacy Approach

To date, it remains unclear whether any existing funding streams, such as State or Federal Government grants, are available to support the financial requirements of this initiative.

Without grant funding, Council would need to seek a financial commitment through the State or Federal Budgets, with officers recommending the State Government as the most appropriate and likely avenue. It is important to note that the 2025/26 Federal Budget has already been delivered, and the 2025/26 State Budget is scheduled to be handed down this May. The opportunity to influence this process is now closed.

If Council successfully secured a commitment through a future State Budget, funding would not be available until May 2026 at the earliest.

Should Council peruse an election commitment in the lead up to the 2026 Victorian State Election, funding would not be realised until the following budget which would likely be handed down in the May of 2027.

Given these constraints, officers emphasise that advocating for funding from the state and federal governments will be lengthy. While the initiative aligns well with the current government's political agenda, financial support outside the regular budget cycle is only possible if allocated through a dedicated grant program.

Following the endorsement of this program officers will seek guidance from both levels of government to confirm if any suitable funding streams are available.

RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK	RISK RATING	TREATMENT
SERVICE DELIVERY Decreased economic performance in Morwell CBD impacting business development and community safety strategic objectives	High Likely x Moderate	Council commits to programs and advocacy to improve drivers of safety concerns and works with local stakeholders to encourage business development.
FINANCIAL Council is expected to commit ongoing funding to additional community safety project officers or provide financial support to businesses.	Medium Unlikely x Moderate	Seek funding for longer-term projects to address drivers of antisocial and unsafe behaviours, such as <i>Community Connectors</i> .
FINANCIAL Council is not successful in attracting external funding for the Community Connectors program	Medium Possible x Moderate	Council commits to funding the Community Connectors program internally.
STRATEGIC Negative media attention if Council is not seen to be addressing Morwell CBD Safety concerns, or that Council has made commitments prior to receiving funding to deliver.	Medium Possible x Moderate	Council prepares a clear statement outlining project and advocacy priorities to communicate and respond to media and stakeholder enquiries.

CONSULTATION

Officers have sought direct feedback from business operators in the Morwell CBD and continually liaise with a range of partners, including Morwell Police.

Regular information is shared through the business community and state government agencies via the Latrobe City Community Safety Advisory Community and engagements with Advance Morwell.

Councillors and Council officers attended a Community Safety Forum with Minister Shing on 24 April 2025, where issues and concerns regarding the Morwell CBD were discussed.

COMMUNICATION

The public prominence of community safety concerns in the Morwell CBD is likely to require ongoing communication with the public and stakeholders to ensure those interested understand their concerns are being heard and Council is working to address them.

Advocacy and funding submissions in relation to the *Community Connectors* project are also most relevant to decision-makers, however key stakeholders and potential project partners such as members of the Latrobe Community Safety Advisory Committee or Advance Morwell will be informed. Should funding be received for *Community Connectors*, broader community messaging would be undertaken.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Officers preparing this report have declared they do not have a conflict of interest in this matter under the provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

APPENDIX 1 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Gender

A Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* will be completed on *Community Connectors* project should the project be progressed and funded. Gendered experiences of community safety have been considered to date, particularly data gathered from the 2021 YourGround survey. The survey identified particular locations of concern in Latrobe City, including a large number of submissions for the Morwell Transit Hub.

Social

Community safety concerns are in large partly driven by social disadvantage. The *Community Connectors* program aims to support community to access social services. Data gathered which identifies the need for the project demonstrates that Latrobe City residents rank 4th highest in the state for not feeling valued by society and that 16% of residents live in poverty.

Cultural

People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds may perceive greater risks to safety than the general community. *Community Connectors* will have skills to communicate with culturally diverse communities.

Health

Social and health issues are often linked, and Morwell's CBD serves as a hub across Gippsland for a large number of health and social support services. The *Community Connectors* program aims to support greater access to such services, overall improving the health outcomes of community members. Data gathered which identifies the need for the project demonstrates that 20% of Latrobe City residents have high or very high levels of mental distress and are 43% more likely than the Victorian average to have a mental health condition.

Environmental

There are no environmental sustainability impacts of either project. Both the advocacy and *Community Connectors* project aim to create a more socially inclusive and sustainable community environment, both built and civic.

Economic

Without detailed analysis, there is likely to be an opportunity cost of Council not progressing any community safety measures outside current means. For example, it is likely that retail economic performance in the Morwell CBD will continue to decline, along with foot-traffic and the passive surveillance that enables. Further information regarding the economic performance within the Morwell CBD is included in

Attachment 2.

Financial

The anticipated total project cost is \$420,000 in the first year of the program and \$370,000 in any further years, broken down as below:

- Subcontracted Program Delivery - \$370,000 per year.
- Subcontracted project scoping - \$50,000.

The February 2025 Council report regarding Morwell CBD Community Safety included an option for \$150,000 to be reallocated from Commonwealth Games funding, however, this funding is no longer available.

Other actions and activities outlined in the body of this report are being delivered through adopted operating budgets.

Attachments

1. Community Connectors Program Plan
2. Morwell Community Safety and Economic Development Data

8.2

Community Connectors Program

1	Community Connectors Program Plan.....	61
2	Morwell Community Safety and Economic Development Data.....	66



Community Connectors

Morwell Transit Hub Pilot Program



Executive summary

Community Connectors is a community outreach model piloted in 2023-24 at the Dandenong Railway Station to increase the safety and wellbeing of passengers and staff.

The program deploys trained community practitioners, known as Community Connectors, to mitigate antisocial behaviour and address critical community wellbeing needs. The Community Connectors will foster positive interactions and spaces, refer those experiencing social disadvantage to support services, de-escalate conflicts and build the capacity of staff serving the area.

The particular focus of the practitioners can be tailored to the local context. The below proposal outlines how the model could be implemented in the Morwell CBD, with the objectives of:

- Increasing community perceptions of safety.
- Decreasing incidence of offending and antisocial behaviours.
- Reduce risk-factors for offending or behaviours leading to poor perceptions of safety.

Background

The Morwell Transit Hub, comprising of the railway station and bus stop, is centrally located on Commercial Road and Princes Drive within Morwell's CBD. It provides critical access to transportation for Latrobe City residents and draws people from outside the municipality to access Gippsland's centrally located support services. The transit hub is widely utilised across community cohorts, including those experience disadvantage, providing both private and public routes.

Given its central location, the Morwell Transit Hub attracts significant usage for transportation, but also serves an important gathering function for community members, given its proximity to other amenities (public bathrooms, town squares, retail and service provision). Additionally, the site of the Morwell bus stop and associated Legacy Place is a gathering place of cultural significance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Real and perceived community safety is an ongoing issue of importance for Latrobe City residents and is reflected in Council's strategic documents such as the Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. In particular, the Morwell CBD experiences high rates of offending compared to Latrobe City's other CBDs in Traralgon and Moe, which is increasing over time. Community members and local businesses also regularly report concerns about the CBD including antisocial behaviour, alcohol and other drug use, loitering, noise and physical or verbal altercations. These experiences are mirrored in Latrobe City employee interactions, for example at the Morwell Library.

Overall, these experiences have a detrimental impact on perceptions of safety and utilisation of the CBD. In addition to negative impacts on social cohesion and connection, economic activity has declined due to a reduction of foot traffic and negative perceptions of the shopping district. A number of local businesses have also reported that community safety issues are affecting staff retention, location of shopfronts and further investment in the town.

Contributing to these behaviours and outcomes is the disproportionately high levels of disadvantage experienced by Latrobe residents, especially those living in Morwell. According to the Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage Index (SEIFA), Morwell is ranked in the top 1% of disadvantage within the state. In line with this statistic, municipal level data shows high or very high rates of mental distress (20%), low levels of community trust and low levels of feeling valued by society, as well as higher risk of alcohol, smoking, drug and gambling related harm.

Latrobe City recognises that a multifaceted approach is required to address systemic challenges to community safety and undertakes a body of work to address community safety issues through business-as-usual services. This includes joint patrols between Local Laws and Victoria Police, development and maintenance of city assets, or liaison between local organisations through the

Latrobe Community Safety Advisory Committee. It further commits to developing a suite of activations through to place-making in both economic and social terms. However, the Community Connectors model provides a unique opportunity to address the drivers of undesirable community outcomes.

Project Objectives, Methods, Evaluation Indicators

An initial review of the local area data has identified three focus areas for the Community Connectors Pilot in the Morwell CBD context.

Objective	Methods	Indicators
Increase community perceptions of safety	Presence of Community Connection Practitioners. Community education campaign.	Increase foot traffic. Increase perceived safety (survey).
Decrease incidence of offending and antisocial behaviours	De-escalating incidents. Increasing passive surveillance. Upskilling community members and transit staff. Supporting service networking and liaison.	Decrease incidence of offences in Morwell CBD. Decrease community and business reports of antisocial behaviour (survey, analysis of contact with Council). Reduction in public drinking incidents. Reduction Latrobe City employee OHS reports of criminal or antisocial behaviour.
Reduce risk-factors for offending or behaviours leading to poor perceptions of safety	Supporting service referrals. Supporting service networking and liaison.	# referrals to support services. Increase transport usage. Increase perceived safety (survey).

Project Scope, Timeline & Deliverables

Timeline	Deliverable	Detail
1 – 6 months	Recruit project officer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Latrobe City project officer recruited at Band 5, three (3) days per week. Convene service agency and partnership meetings. Identify longer-term funding sources. Deliver community activations.
	Contract community organisation to design Community Connectors for Morwell context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop social support needs analysis, evaluation plan. Identify Community Connector Practitioner resourcing (e.g. key times and days). Deliver project workshops/training with community and stakeholders.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build relationships with local support services and identify formal partners.
6 – 12 months	Secure funding to deliver Morwell Community Connector model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate to State government, local partners or philanthropic organisations. • Project scoping and agreement negotiations. • Execute funding agreement.
12 – 34 months	Appoint lead community organisation to deliver Morwell Community Connector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tender and contracting processes. • Recruitment of x2 Community Connector Practitioners. • Formalising partnership agreements. • Undertaking evaluation.
34 – 36 months	Program review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise and present evaluation. • Embedding project / seeking further funding opportunities.

Partnership

While the organisation responsible for delivering the Dandenong and Frankston Community Connectors projects are likely to bring specialist expertise to Morwell, local partners will be required to ensure its success. Further discussions are required to establish external organisational capacity to participate in the project, however critical partners include Victoria Police, V-Line, Latrobe Valley Buses, and VicTrack.

As referral plays an important role in the Community Connector Practitioners work, local agencies such as Quantum Support Services, Headspace, The Wes, The Orange Door, Community Housing Limited, and the Mental Health and Wellbeing Local are likely to be engaged in some capacity. Further, the business community, as represented by Advance Morwell and the Latrobe City Business Chamber will be consulted at all stages of the project to identify opportunities for collective impact.

Budget

Expense	Amount
Consultant – Project Scoping	\$50,000
Program Delivery	\$370,000
Program Delivery	\$370,000
Total	\$790,000

Council Contributions

As noted above, Latrobe City undertakes work to improve community safety. This work will occur alongside Community Connectors, representing a large, ongoing investment in and commitment to the objectives of this project.

Financial Sustainability

Community Connectors is proposed as a pilot. Delivery of the model beyond the pilot period, in the proposed form would continue to incur practitioner wages. It is anticipated that the project officer role would only be required to establish the work. Ongoing commitments to liaison, networking or project oversight could either be absorbed into the Community Safety Officer role, or developed into a permanent role alongside other community needs e.g. responses to homelessness. Delivery of the pilot will also enable review of potential efficiencies in the proposed model (e.g. fewer hours required each week) or shared resourcing opportunities with partners.

Morwell CBD Community Safety and Economic Development Data

Economic Development

In relation to economic performance within the Morwell CBD, officers from the Business Development Team have recently engaged with key businesses in the CBD to understand the challenges in establishing and growing their businesses.

Through this engagement officers derived detailed anecdotal evidence through direct business engagement with Calvary Care, Gippsland Cardiology Services, Energy Australia, Keith Williams/FN, Advanced Morwell, Morwell Dry Cleaners, Stockdale & Leggo, Ping Ping Variety & Harvey Norman.

Key concerns raised are as follows,

- Alcohol & Drug Use, Physical Alterations, Theft & Property Damage & Antisocial Behaviour.
- Staffing Challenges, Gippsland Cardiology Services has faced significant staffing issues, with three reception staff resigning since their opening in late November. Owner Derk has reported operating on a skeleton crew, warning that continued resignations may lead to closure, removing \$210,000 in wages from the CBD and incurring costs to recruit new employees.
- Private investment along the commercial road strip is perceived to be unattractive, while some interest exists, real estate's report difficulties progressing discussions due to ongoing social challenges in the area.
- Business relocations Keith Williams/FN and Calvary Care are relocating away from the CBD. Feedback suggests a key reason is customer concerns about safety, particularly among Calvary Care's vulnerable clientele, prompting the business to leave Morwell entirely.
- Business have provided feedback that their customers advised they feel unsafe when visiting the CBD, leading to reduced foot traffic and negatively impacting trade.
- Community Members will often seek refuge in shopfronts while waiting for buses to arrive due to safety concerns, an issue noted frequently by Morwell Dry Cleaners.
- Business owners on Commercial Road report that social issues tend to escalate after 12PM, particularly around the bus stop, Tarwin Street, and Legacy Place.
- Vacancy Rates Currently (20.7% Nov 2024) feedback from real estates it hard to attract new business due to the social issues impacting economic performance of the CBD.

Manny's Market Engagement Relating to Community Safety

Officers met with the businesses in Manny's market, to understand better their experiences with community safety, and how those issues have impacted their business over the last few years. Officers specifically sought to understand their experience and perception associated with the community dinning out the front of Manny's Market.

Out of Dough

- Seating located out the front of Manny market is being used to congregate & Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) use visible most days.

- Concerned as it is impacting foot traffic and the safety of his consumers. Perception effecting economic outcomes and is reliant on his wholesale trade.
- Out of Dough is concerned Morwell is a destination for welfare support services, for other areas of the state, and that issues are continuing to grow because of this.
- Out of Dough supports the theory behind the street revitalisation & the seating but currently the seating is being used for the incorrect purposes.
- Out of Dough noted that there has been no decreased in antisocial incidents, flagging multiple incidents last week.
- Out of Dough would like to see increased and consistent police patrols with Local Laws officers, noting the distinct change they see in community behaviour because of that action.
- Out of Dough has spoken with officers from Council many times over the last few years, with requesting Council remove the seating, subsequently being advised that the seating is a community asset.

Fish Shop, Butchers & Celebration (alcohol shop)

- Advised of multiple incidents of the last week
 - Monday – Fight out the front of the store located near the seats (this argument started at the bus stop and slowly moved down commercial road)
 - Wednesday – Fight in front of the store after purchasing alcohol at 5pm with two community members
- Advised that altercations are at inconsistent times, have had them happen as early as 9am from previous arguments the day
- Seating out the front is currently being used to congregate with up to 7-8 people on the one table with people sitting on top of the table.
- Mark advised that a female staff member resigned from the store due to safety concerns.
- Would like to see increased police patrols with Local Laws and further enforcement, advised when the police had the van in Tarwin Street the level of incidents dramatically decreased.

Max Employment

- Advised that community safety is an issue, with incidents and/or misuse of the tables happening daily
 - Person punched the Max Employment window breaking it in front of the manager, was a community member.
- Max Employment employees have found needles at the tables & chairs located out the front of the store.
- Max Employment employees flagged that the community does use these seats for the intended purpose quite a lot.

This collective feedback has advised they would support the following actions:

- Temporary removal or relocation of the seating located directly located at the front of Manny Market (4 sets of tables & Chairs). Measuring impacts of the removal done during this period.
- Increase Police Patrols with Local Laws presence, with enforcement of drinking in public and anti-social behaviour. They would like to see a consistent approach to this over a sustainable period of time.
- Would like to see further Business Engagement from council (consistency of engagement).

Community Safety

- Community safety is a priority in general for community members, with a particular focus on drug and alcohol use, physical altercations and antisocial behaviour including loitering and loud noises including arguments.
- Latrobe overall has the second highest general offence and drug offence rate in the state. It has the highest rate of domestic violence in the state.
- There has been an overall increase in offences in Morwell, which is significantly higher than Moe or Traralgon. Of this offending, incidents have increased on streets, lanes and footpaths.
- Latrobe City officers working in customer facing roles in the Morwell CBD experience workplace incidents. There reports are aligned to general antisocial behaviour and offending trends. Of the 47 incidents:
 - 18 were reported as 'Violent and Aggression' related.
 - 19 were reported as 'Customer Behaviour' related.
 - 12 incidents where drug and alcohol use were reported.
 - 14 involved verbal abuse or physical assaults.
- Particular areas of community concern in Morwell include Commercial Road (specifically the transit hub and public toilets), corner of Tarwin St and Commercial Road (both sides), Buckley Street (near Village Cinema), Mid Valley Shopping Centre transit hub.

Please note, specific crime statistics for relevant areas in the Morwell CBD have been requested from Victoria Police.

Community Health and Wellbeing

- 20% of people in Latrobe have high or very high level of mental distress. They are 43% more likely than the Victorian average to have a mental health condition.
- 16% of people in Latrobe live in poverty, of which Morwell skews higher.
- Latrobe ranks 4th highest Relative Disadvantage SEIFA score in state.
- 20% of people in Latrobe do not feel valued by society.
- 15% of people in Latrobe feel that most people not be trusted ever, or not often.
- Latrobe has significantly higher Centrelink payment rates than Victoria generally. Some payments, like single parent or disability pension, are over 100 to nearly 200% higher than the Victorian average.
- 13% of people in Latrobe have increased lifetime risk of alcohol related harm.
- Latrobe has the 3rd highest percent of estimated adults with severe EGM gambling related problems in state.

REDUCTION OF LITTER IN PUBLIC SPACES

PURPOSE

To inform Councillors of the actions being implemented to address littering across Latrobe City and the options to further reduce litter, including on State managed land.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Council is taking steps to combat littering and illegal dumping, with several initiatives implemented, including:
 - Roadside Litter program
 - Expanded hard waste collection
 - City Presentation Central Business District cleaning program
 - Hot Spot inspections and cleaning
 - Regular cleaning of creeks in urban areas
 - Supporting the container deposit scheme
 - Providing support to community members and groups undertaking litter control.
- The implementation of recent initiatives has resulted in a significant reduction in rubbish dumping and litter reports, decreasing from a peak of 1,110 in 2022 to 573 in 2024. This decline can be attributed to the proactive removal of rubbish and litter, reducing reliance on community requests for collection.
- Despite the decrease in reported incidents, the number of collections and the total volume of waste collected have increased, indicating a more effective and responsive waste management approach.
- While these measures have been successful, and will continue to be implemented, we are considering other improvements that could be made, including options for managing areas managed by State agencies if ongoing advocacy for improved maintenance of their assets does not occur.
- These options are discussed below, including costings for cleaning up highways noting such works would require Department of Transport permission and significant funding.
- The total estimated cost for a single cleanup across the full freeway length through the Latrobe City Council municipality is \$90,000.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. notes the report; and**
- 2. writes to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety requesting:**
 - an immediate uplift of litter collection along arterial roads within the Latrobe City Council area; and**
 - a review of current maintenance schedules for litter collection along these roads to ensure they align with community expectations and environmental standards.**

BACKGROUND

This report arises from a Notice of Motion passed on 2 September 2024 which resolved;

That Council receives a report at a future Council Meeting that:

- 1 Details the actions undertaken by Council since 2020 to reduce litter in public spaces; and*
- 2 Analyses the options to further reduce litter in Latrobe City, including on land that is managed by State agencies such as Regional Roads Victoria and Parks Victoria.*

Illegal rubbish dumping and litter complaints had gradually continued to rise in recent years, reaching a peak of 1,110 requests per year in 2022, resulting in increased resource demands and diminishing the municipality's overall attractiveness.

Litter has many negative impacts on the natural environment, particularly on roadside areas. It accumulates along roadsides, where it is unsightly and gives the impression of an uncared-for area. Litter can negatively impact roadside environments in the following ways:

- Contamination of local environments and waterways, which can harm local flora and fauna.
- Creating physical hazards for wildlife, which can become trapped or injured.
- Blocking stormwater systems.
- Economic burden, clean-up costs, decreased property values, reduced visitation to an area.
- Reducing the visual amenity.
- Social impacts. Litter encourages more litter and reflects poorly on an area.

Officers representing Local Laws, Communications, Waste Services, Urban Amenity operations, and Sustainability & Environment teams participated in a “War on Waste” workshop held in November 2021 to identify and discuss potential actions for addressing illegal dumping and littering. Several initiatives were implemented from this workshop including:

- Local Laws to investigate all instances of illegal dumping to potentially identify offenders.
- Roadside litter collection program.
- Illegal Dumping App for identifying waste types and locations.
- Litter patrols in areas identified as dumping hot spots.
- Increased budget for littering and illegal dumping.

ANALYSIS

Current Initiatives

Roadside Waste Management and response to dumped litter

In 2023, a Roadside Litter Collection Program was introduced as part of the Public Litter Bin Collection Contract. This program was designed to address the growing issue of roadside litter and enhance the cleanliness and appeal of the municipality's road network.

Under this program, Council's contractor is responsible for collecting litter from 36 designated roadsides, which include both local roads and roads managed by Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), excluding the Princes Freeway. This targeted approach ensures resources are concentrated on areas with the highest need.

On average, the contractor collects 1,140 litres of dispersed litter each month, highlighting the significant volume of waste being removed from roadside areas. The program's implementation has delivered measurable results, including a sharp decline in Pathway requests for litter-related issues. Requests dropped from 1,110 in 2022 to 665 in 2023 and further decreased to 573 in 2024, with 540 to date for the 24/25 FY.

Hard Waste Collection service

A review of the hard waste coupon system has led to the implementation of an 'all-in' hard waste collection service, which is now operational and offers greater accessibility and convenience for the community. The service is free of charge for all renters and property owners with a kerbside garbage collection, ensuring residents have disposal options for large, bulky items that are often difficult to dispose of.

Clean Up Australia Day

Council continues to play an active role in supporting and promoting Clean Up Australia Day each year. This annual initiative is an important opportunity to engage the community in environmental stewardship and showcase Council's commitment to sustainability. Council also runs its own staff Clean Up Australia Day event each year.

In recent years, Council has increased its involvement by encouraging community groups to register for Clean Up Australia Day events and providing practical support for these activities. Last year, Council supported events across several locations, including Moe/Newborough, Morwell, Traralgon, and Tyers.

To maximise community participation, Council actively promotes Clean Up Australia Day events through various media channels on behalf of registered groups. Council also provides practical assistance, including the supply of bins, equipment, and other resources to ensure the success of the events.

Trolleys

Abandoned shopping trolleys in creeks pose a significant litter problem. They are challenging to remove, requiring two people for safe retrieval, and often end up back in creeks after being recovered since they cannot be impounded. Responsibility for shopping trolleys lies with the retail businesses that provide them.

Officers have engaged with Trolley Tracker management to address this issue, particularly concerning trolleys abandoned or dumped in creeks. Trolley Tracker has committed to removing trolleys within 48 hours of receiving notification from the Council, a system that has been effective.

Local Laws officers have also been working proactively with retail stores to reduce the number of trolleys abandoned in public spaces. In 2023, Woolworths implemented coin-operated trolleys at their Mid Valley store to discourage trolleys from leaving the premises. Additionally, a review of Local Law 2, which partially addresses trolleys, is scheduled for 2026.

Central Business District Cleaning

Following the review of the 2024 Community Satisfaction Survey results, which highlighted the significance of the 'Appearance of Public Areas' to our community, Council Officers have collaborated to explore cost-neutral strategies to improve the scores in this category. As a result, City Presentation staff, in partnership with the Sustainability and Environment Team, have developed a program to enhance routine maintenance across the three major CBD locations—Moe, Morwell, and Traralgon—at varying frequencies throughout the year. The goal is to reduce litter in the CBDs and improve the overall presentation of these areas.

The CBD Blowout Initiative involves City Presentation staff using electric blowers (to minimize noise) to clear footpaths in the CBDs by blowing litter—such as cigarette butts, leaf litter, and other debris—onto the road. Council's Street Sweeping Contractor will then promptly remove this material from the road. In addition, City Presentation staff will focus on litter picking in garden beds within the CBDs during the same period to further enhance the cleanliness and visual appeal.

To provide context, this initiative represents an increase in maintenance services without additional costs. Previously, these CBD areas received:

- Monthly litter picking as part of routine garden bed maintenance.
- Thrice-weekly Street sweeping.

Under the initiative, the monthly garden bed litter picking service will remain unchanged, but the frequency will increase to three to five times per month, depending on the time of year. Thrice-weekly Street sweeping will also continue, with the initiative integrated into existing contractual arrangements.

Additional CBD Presentation Initiatives

Through cost savings achieved by bringing additional works in-house, Council has been able to redirect funds towards improving the overall presentation of our CBD areas. As part of this initiative, a contractor has been engaged to undertake regular cleaning and sanitising of public spaces in the Traralgon CBD, specifically targeting areas affected by roosting starlings along Seymour Street, Hotham Street, and Franklin Street.

These cleaning activities are being carried out every second day, with a focus on removing bird droppings from seats, bins, footpaths, and roads to ensure a cleaner, safer environment for pedestrians and visitors. The presence of bird mess in these areas is seasonal, typically occurring between March and May/June, coinciding with the period when the trees shed their leaves and the birds are most active.

In addition to the works in Traralgon, Council has also expanded pressure cleaning efforts in the Morwell and Moe CBDs, concentrating on Commercial Road in Morwell and Moore Street in Moe. This enhanced cleaning program not only addresses immediate maintenance needs but also contributes to the overall amenity and appearance of our town centres.

Looking ahead, Council is planning to further expand this cleaning program in the 2025/2026 financial year, with the aim of continuing to improve the presentation and livability of our CBD areas for residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

While not strictly litter related, these initiatives contribute to the overall aesthetic value of the CBD areas, leading to an increased sense of pride in place and higher public amenity values, which should in time, also lead to a decrease in public litter.

Hot Spots

Utilising data from the illegal dumping app and Pathways, Council officers have identified several areas that are frequent sites for illegal dumping and littering. Hot spot locations are checked once per week.

- Haunted Hills area.
- Traralgon East/Flynn area.
- Bonds Lane, Morwell.
- Derham's Lane, Morwell.

Officers regularly lodge complaints/ticket with DTP on behalf of the community regarding litter in these hot spots and requesting clean up.

Council's maintenance teams also collect litter from locations as a part of their regular operations. This includes the Horticulture Team removing litter from garden beds and the Mowing Teams collecting litter from grassed areas prior to mowing. The Urban Amenity Team also conduct regular clean-ups along creeks and waterways through Moe, Morwell, Traralgon and Churchill.

Community Clean-Ups

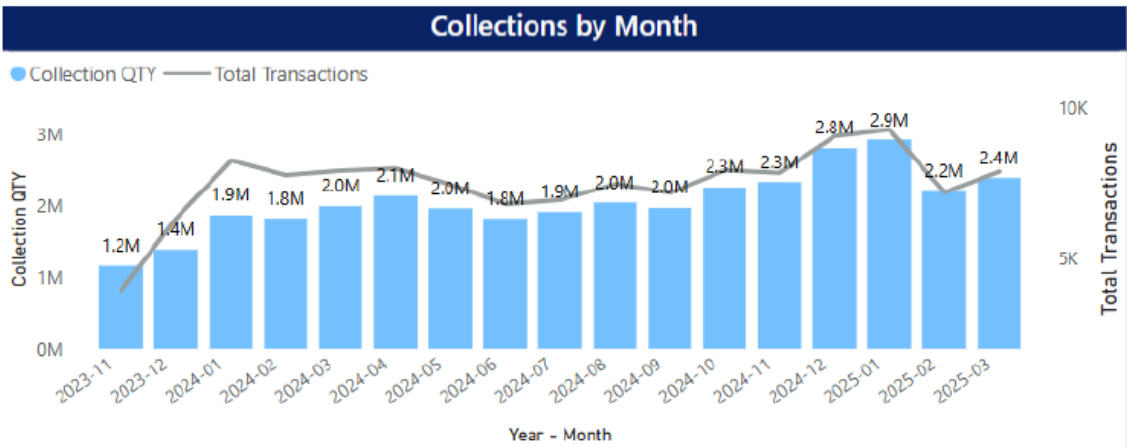
The Urban Amenity Team actively supports community-led clean-up initiatives by supplying essential resources such as litter pickers, garbage bags, gloves, and by arranging for the collection and proper disposal of waste following each event. Several local Geocaching groups undertake an important role in maintaining the cleanliness of public spaces, organising annual or bi-annual clean-up events along key waterways including Narracan Creek, Waterhole Creek, and Traralgon Creek. The most recent of these efforts took place along Narracan Creek shortly before the Easter period.

State Government Initiatives

Container Deposit Scheme (CDS)

The State Government has reintroduced a container deposit scheme to encourage recycling of bottles and cans. The scheme will provide people with a 10-cent refund for every can, bottle or carton they return.

The scheme has been implemented across Victoria and is already resulting in a doubling of recycling rates for eligible containers since November 2023, less waste and notably less litter from bottles, cans and containers. The program will also support jobs in the circular economy space. The below graph shows the recovery rate for eligible containers within the Vic East (Latrobe City Council) CDS zone since the introduction of the scheme in November 2023.



Single Use Plastic Ban

The State Government's ban on single-use plastic has now been in effect for two years, having come into force on 1 February 2023. The ban applies to various single-use plastic products, including drinking straws, cutlery, plates, drink stirrers, cotton buds, and specific polystyrene products.

While these measures have been successful, and will continue to be implemented, we are also considering further improvements that could be made, including options for managing areas managed by State agencies.

State Agency Managed Areas

The Princes Freeway is managed by the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP). The DTP currently do not collect loose litter on the Princes Freeway but do collect illegally dumped rubbish on their roads.

The total estimated cost for a single cleanup across the full freeway length through the Latrobe City Council municipality is \$90,000. It is likely that this would need to be conducted several times a year to maintain the appearance.

Given the complexities and regulatory requirements associated with managing litter collection on the Princes Freeway the most efficient and sustainable approach is for the DTP to retain responsibility for this task. Council's role is currently focused on advocacy and collaboration to support this outcome. The lack of regular litter collection along arterial roads has been raised repeatedly in Executive meetings with DTP representatives. Further advocacy to the State Government Ministers is recommended to address this on-going problem.

Parks Victoria and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action play a crucial role in preserving and maintaining the natural environment across the state. As part of their responsibilities, these organisations undertake regular clean-up activities in the parks, reserves, and other areas under their management.

RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK	RISK RATING	TREATMENT
SERVICE DELIVERY That the Urban Amenity Team fall behind in the delivery of litter collection and clean up services	Medium Unlikely x Moderate	Ensure on-going budget and staff support to ensure the service is delivered into the future.
FINANCIAL That there is not adequate budget to continue to deliver litter services.	Medium Unlikely x Moderate	To ensure that litter and city presentation remain high on the Council agenda and is adequately resourced into the future.

RISK	RISK RATING	TREATMENT
STRATEGIC That a failure to deliver the service results in a reduction of overall city amenity and lowered reputation.	Low Unlikely x Minor	To ensure that litter and city presentation remain high on the Council agenda and is well resourced into the future and to continue advocate for greater action from State Government Agencies.

CONSULTATION

Community feedback received during the development of the Council Vision and Council Plan highlighted a strong desire for a cleaner and greener Latrobe Valley.

The appearance of public areas is among the top five categories with the most significant positive impact on the overall Community Satisfaction Survey Performance score, as identified by surveyed community members, and has been raised again as important by the public in the Council plan development workshops.

COMMUNICATION

Communication with the community on litter related issues will continue in the form of waste education programs. Further advocacy with State Government Departments is required.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Officers preparing this report have declared they do not have a conflict of interest in this matter under the provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

APPENDIX 1 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Gender

A Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* will be undertaken as part of the Waste Management Strategy review.

Social

Reductions to the amount of litter in Latrobe will have positive social impacts on the community. Litter looks unsightly and impacts negatively on urban amenity and people who live in poor quality environments suffer from mental health problems. Litter and rubbish can also affect the ways in which individuals interact with their environment. For example, an individual may be far less likely to take their dog walking along a creek if there is significant amount of litter in and along the creek. They will be worried for the health of their dog and their personal enjoyment of the environment will be reduced.

Cultural

Litter can have negative impacts on areas of cultural significance, resulting in a reduced connection with the local land and waters.

Health

Litter and pollution can have negative impacts on health. Plastics from litter accumulate along roadsides, in bushland areas and waterways, ultimately making their way into drinking water and food. Microplastics (from degrading plastic waste) have been found to accumulate in the human body, including the brain, likely contributing to global health trends such as decreasing fertility rates and increasing rates of cancer and dementia.

Environmental

Litter can have negative impacts on health by introducing toxins into an environment, creating pollution or having downstream impacts on environmental health (causing algal blooms, etc).

Economic

Presentation of public areas may have a flow on effect to local businesses and economy. Well presented public areas, free of litter, are more welcoming to tourists and locals alike. Roadsides, streets and creeks strewn with litter give an unkempt, uncared for image, which is not welcoming or encouraging for potential business owners, tourists or customers.

Financial

Proceeding with litter collection along the Princes Freeway would result in a significant cost increase. The estimated expense for each clean-up is approximately \$90,000, though this figure could rise due to the anticipated high volumes of waste. Importantly, this cost is not covered within the current budget allocations.

To address illegal dumping and litter, Council has already increased the annual illegal dumping budget to \$215,000. However, this amount has been fully committed as of January 2025, with \$60,000 specifically allocated to fund the City Presentation CBD Cleaning Program.

Key costs associated with current programs are as follows:

- Roadside Litter Program: \$144,000 per year under the Public Litter Collection Contract.
- Hard Waste Collection: \$1,770,000 per year.
- CBD Cleaning Program: \$30,000 annually for staff costs, with an additional one-off expense of \$30,000 for equipment, which could be reallocated for other future initiatives.

The total ongoing expenditure for existing rubbish and litter programs is significant, underscoring the need for careful budgetary consideration for any new initiatives.

Attachments

Nil

ENDORSEMENT OF COUNCIL SUPPORT PACKAGE – ROUND TWO FUNDING SUBMISSION

PURPOSE

To seek Council endorsement for the proposed list of Stage Two projects at **Attachment 1**, to be included under the Victorian Government Council Support Package (CSP) funding agreement.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Following the announcement of its decision not to continue with hosting the 2026 Commonwealth Games, the Victorian State Government announced a series of funding commitments, including a Council Support Package (CSP) available to regional hubs where Commonwealth Games events were set to be hosted.
- Council approved a funding submission to the CSP at the Council Meeting on 5 February 2024, with projects divided into two stages.
- Council received \$5 million of funding and the funding agreement administered by Regional Development Victoria (RDV) was executed on 12 June 2024.
- 17 projects valued at \$4.105 million formed Stage One of the funding. Implementation of these projects commenced upon execution of the funding agreement and is ongoing.
- Council agreed to review a further list of projects to utilise the remaining funding at a future Council Meeting. Proposed Stage Two projects are being presented for endorsement at this Council Meeting. All projects must be delivered by 30 June 2026.
- Following Council endorsement, the projects will be submitted to RDV for inclusion in the funding agreement.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the proposed list of Stage Two projects valued at \$895,000 as per Attachment 1 to be funded under the Victorian Government Council Support Package (CSP) funding agreement with the option to substitute projects from Attachment 2 should any projects from the proposed list become unfeasible.

BACKGROUND

On 18 July 2023, the Victorian State Government announced its decision to not proceed with hosting the 2026 Commonwealth Games. As part of the announcement, several related funding packages were announced including a \$25 million Council Support Package to assist in delivering projects or initiatives linked to Commonwealth Games planning and preparation.

Latrobe City Council received \$5 million of funding and an agreement administered by RDV was executed 12 June 2024. Funding was for work already undertaken during Commonwealth Games planning, and to support projects, infrastructure, or activations for the community that align with the following six legacy pillars:

1. *Celebrating the rich culture of Victoria's First Peoples. Boost opportunity and capacity for Traditional Owners (TO) corporations and businesses and supporting long term social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians.*
2. *Embedding accessibility and inclusion practices to achieve long-term benefits for regional communities. Includes accessible and inclusive infrastructure and workforce programs.*
3. *Boosting regional economic outcomes by backing local jobs, business and manufacturing, and enhance ongoing trade and investment in regional Victoria.*
4. *Building community cohesion and civic pride and support social development, particularly for those experiencing hardship or disadvantage.*
5. *Utilising sustainable practices to invest in climate adaptation and support climate resilient regional communities.*
6. *Increasing Victorian regional community sport and volunteering participation across all abilities and age groups, through education and promotion of healthy lifestyles.*

The 17 projects, valued at \$4.105M, endorsed by Council as Stage One on 5 February 2024 are in varying stages of planning, design, and construction.

Council agreed to review a further list of projects to form Stage Two utilising the remaining funding at a future Council Meeting.

Consultation has been undertaken with teams across Council to identify projects or initiatives that provided a strong link to the Commonwealth Games or align with the identified outcomes that would have been achieved from being a Commonwealth Games host.

As per the guidelines, proposed projects must align with the legacy pillars and will be assessed against the following evaluation criteria:

- Project Alignment – 25%
- Engagement – 15%
- Demand and need for the project – 20%
- Community benefits – 10%
- Project readiness – 20%
- Value for money – 10%

ANALYSIS

Stage Two projects listed below are valued at \$895,000. Inclusion of these projects will enable the funding agreement to be fully executed, within the required timeframes, for the full funding amount of \$5 million.

These projects:

- Meet the Council Support Package Program Guidelines.
- Link to previously planned Commonwealth Games activities or outcomes.
- Align with the Council Plan and other Council project priority lists such as the Recreation Needs Assessment.
- Propose a broad range of community benefit to Latrobe City.
- Can be delivered within the required timeframes.

The projects are not listed in priority order and are aligned to the funding pillars outlined in the program guidelines.

Further detail on the scope of each project is provided at **Attachment 1** to this report.

Project		Location	Cost \$	Funding Pillar(s)
1	Construction of a new Public Toilet facility in Churchill CBD.	Churchill	500,000	2
2	Replace existing halogen lights with LEDs at Ronald Reserve Soccer Pitch, Morwell	Morwell	110,000	6

	Project	Location	Cost \$	Funding Pillar(s)
3	Purchase of equipment to assist in maintenance of Regional Sports Infrastructure Program project reserves (Ted Summerton and Gippsland Sports and Entertainment Park)	Latrobe City	165,000	6
4	Internal Volunteer Management Assistance/Resource	Latrobe City	110,000	2,3
5	Cricket Net Uplift at Burrage Reserve, Newborough	Newborough	10,000	6
	Total		\$895,000	

Funding for projects within the Council Support Package do not require matched funding from Council. However, in order to maximise the projects being funded through Stage Two, it is proposed to jointly fund the Churchill Toilet Facility through both the Council Support Package and Council's 2025/26 Budget and once construction costs are known for the toilet, the remaining allocated Council funds would be returned to the Unallocated Accumulated Cash Reserve.

RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK	RISK RATING	TREATMENT
COMPLIANCE Inability to deliver on obligations outlined in the Funding Agreements	Low <i>Unlikely x Minor</i>	Regular monitoring of project progress through the Project Assurance Group combined with reporting through to the State Government will identify any issues and allow these to be managed in a proactive manner
SERVICE DELIVERY Additional projects impact on the delivery of Council's business as usual	Low <i>Unlikely x Minor</i>	Each initiative is anticipated to be able to be delivered with existing Council resources.

RISK	RISK RATING	TREATMENT
FINANCIAL Project costs exceed the funding available	Low <i>Unlikely x Minor</i>	The Project Assurance Group will assist with reducing financial risks by monitoring scope and any required value management.
STRATEGIC Community expectation around ongoing delivery	Low <i>Unlikely x Minor</i>	Each initiative will be designed to ensure they have a defined completion point or are sustainable within BAU.

CONSULTATION

Input was sought across internal Council business units to aid development of the list of proposed projects.

COMMUNICATION

A range of communication opportunities will be identified to actively promote the range of programs and initiatives delivered through the CSP funding package. These will be undertaken on a project-by-project basis and include updates on Council website, social media, and media releases.

Due to the broad and varied nature of the projects to be delivered, updates to Councillors will be provided through regular reporting channels such as the quarterly report.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Officers preparing this report have declared they do not have a conflict of interest in this matter under the provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

APPENDIX 1 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Gender

A Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* is required for most projects as they have a significant and direct impact on the community. Outcomes identified in each GIA are to be addressed by each project owner.

Social

The proposed projects aim to provide positive social outcomes for the community through improved sporting facilities, volunteering opportunities and accessibility improvements across Latrobe City.

Cultural

Engagement with Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLAWAC) is ongoing through the Project Control Group that oversees the CSP.

Engagement with other culturally diverse groups will be undertaken where relevant by project owners.

Health

The proposed projects aim to provide positive health and wellbeing outcomes for the community through improved sporting facilities, accessibility and amenity improvements and volunteering opportunities across Latrobe City.

Environmental

Environmental factors have been considered as part of the development of preliminary project scopes and will be considered further once the projects have been approved.

Economic

The proposed projects are anticipated to provide a direct economic boost through the engagement of local contractors to complete infrastructure works where possible. Projects included in Stage One are anticipated to have an impact through engagement of local contractors as well as stimulation of the Morwell and Moe CBDs through the specified project.

Financial

Funding is being provided by the Victorian State Government as part of the CSP. No Council contribution is required for these projects, however Council is responsible for any projects that exceed the allocated budget. Regular reporting through the internal Project Assurance Group will continue to monitor project budgets.

Officers are recommending the joint funding of the Churchill Public Toilet project to maximise the benefits received through the CSP funding.

Attachments

1. Council Support Package Recommended Stage Two Project Summaries
2. Council Support Package Previously Recommended Projects

8.4

Endorsement of Council Support Package – Round Two Funding Submission

- 1 Council Support Package Recommended Stage Two
Project Summaries 88**
- 2 Council Support Package Previously Recommended
Projects 90**

Recommended Stage Two Projects

	Project	Estimated Cost \$	Funding Pillar (s) 1 – 6	Council Plan Link	Strategic & Commonwealth Games Alignment
1.	Access and Inclusion Improvements in Churchill CBD Construction of a new Public Toilet facility in Churchill CBD. Resourcing: Delivered within existing Council resources Timeline: Mid 2025 – Mid 2026	500,000	2	Healthy	<i>Ensure a wholistic approach to community safety in the planning and development of infrastructure, and the delivery of service to our community.</i>
2.	LED Lighting conversion at Ronald Reserve Replace existing halogen lights with LEDs at Ronald Reserve Soccer Pitch Resourcing: Delivered within existing Council resources Timeline: Mid 2025 – Mid 2026	110,000	6	Sustainable	<i>Work towards net zero energy emissions across Latrobe City Council operations through the delivery of new energy initiatives, efficiencies and offsets is listed as a strategy in the Council Plan to achieve the Sustainable goal.</i> Supports the relocation of clubs affected by the GSEP upgrade works.
3.	Purchase of Recreation Reserve Maintenance Equipment Purchase of the following equipment to assist in maintenance of Regional Sports Infrastructure Program project reserves: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toro 5010 Hybrid cylinder mower • John Deere 4 Series Compact tractor 4044R with turf tyres and FEL Resourcing: Delivered within existing Council resources Timeline: Mid 2025 – Mid 2026	165,000	6	Healthy Connected	Strong link to the Commonwealth Games. Complements the works under the <i>Regional Sports Infrastructure Program Ted Summerton Reserve, Moe and Gippsland Sports & Entertainment Park, Morwell</i> upgrades.
4.	Internal Volunteer Management Assistance/Resource Resourcing: New Resource Timeline: Mid 2025 – Mid 2026	110,000	2,3	Smart Connected Healthy	Strong link to Commonwealth Games planning to attract, connect, and retain volunteers. <i>Support community groups and sporting clubs across the community, to increase engagement, participation and volunteerism, which will increase social connections within community is listed as</i>

	Project	Estimated Cost \$	Funding Pillar (s) 1 – 6	Council Plan Link	Strategic & Commonwealth Games Alignment
					a strategy in the Council Plan to achieve the Healthy goal.
5.	Cricket Net Uplift at Burrage Reserve, Newborough Resourcing: Delivered within existing Council resources Timeline: Mid 2025	10,000	6	Healthy Connected	Strong link to the Commonwealth Games. Supports the relocation of clubs affected by the <i>Ted Summerton Reserve, Moe</i> upgrades.
	Sub-Total	895,000			
	Stage One Projects	4,105,000			
	Total	5,000,000			

Previously Recommended Projects

Previously recommended projects not included in the funding application.

Project	Estimated Cost \$	Funding Pillar 1 – 6	Council Plan Link	Comments
Performing Arts Technical Training This project seeks to address an identified state-wide shortage of trained / qualified performing arts technical staff. Scope of training to be determined once approved.	150,000	1, 4	Smart Creative Sustainable Connected	Will enable Council to understand levels and patterns of use at facilities and inform future decision making.
External Projection Infrastructure Gippsland Performing Arts Centre, Traralgon Installation of projectors on the fly tower to create capacity to support events, host lighting displays etc.	450,000	4	Creative	Strong link to the Commonwealth Games. GPAC was the proposed location of the Commonwealth Games festival. Proposal is to light two sides of the tower.
People Counting Technology at Major Council Venues – Stage 1 Additional sites to complement planned implementation. Possible locations for consideration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor recreation facilities • Town Centres 	125,000	3	Smart	Will enable Council to understand levels and patterns of use at facilities and inform future decision making.
Business Case into the Establishment of a bike / e-bike hire scheme Completion of a business case to determine the viability and structure of a bike / e-bike scheme.	50,000	3, 4, 6	Healthy Connected	Link to Commonwealth Games planning – festival to be held at GPAC and shortage of trained staff identified. Proposed subsidised program.
Support of rugby development in the region – supply and installation of rugby posts Supply and installation of rugby posts and associated equipment to be installed at one suitable playing field in Latrobe City as agreed with Rugby Victoria.	20,000	4, 6	Healthy Connected	Strong link to Commonwealth Games outcomes Creation of one playing field would allow visiting teams to train and play in the region. Location to be multi-use with existing sports use and provide minimal disruption to existing users.
Total	795,000			

Previously recommended secondary projects not included in the funding application.

Project	Estimated Cost \$	Funding Pillar 1 – 6	Council Plan Link	Community Impact High, Medium, Low	Comments
People Counting Technology at Major Council Venues – Stage 2 Supplementary to recently procured counters at major facilities. Locations to be considered include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoor recreation facilities e.g. recreation reserves, skate parks Town centres (this can be linked to existing public Wi-Fi whereby movement is tracked through mobile devices). 	125,000	3	Smart	Low	Specifically listed as an example project in the funding guidelines. Will enable Council to understand levels and patterns of use at facilities and inform future decision making.
Festival of Small Halls Latrobe City has a large network of small halls throughout the municipality. This festival would offer a curated program across a number of these halls over a 10-day festival period.	200,000	4	Creative Connected	High	Link to Commonwealth Games outcomes – increased visitation, community connection Could be held as a one-off event, or ongoing if linked to upcoming Tourism and Events Strategy.
Youth Festival – Moe Service Centre & Skate Park, Moe Focus on activation of the new facilities delivered by the Moe Town Centre Revitalisation Stage 2, particularly the skate park. Scoped as a 2-day weekend festival based around live music, food trucks, skateboarding and other activations.	150,000	4	Creative Connected	High	Link to Commonwealth Games outcomes – increased visitation, community connection Could be held as a one-off event, or ongoing if linked to upcoming Tourism and Events Strategy.
Narracan Creek Waterway Health & Amenity Improvements This project would repair and upgrade key sections of the waterway to enhance existing linkages for activities such as walking, jogging and bike riding, as well as important passive recreation space and connection with nature.	100,000	5	Sustainable Healthy Connected	High	Link to Commonwealth Games outcomes – increased visitation. Strong alignment to Visit Latrobe branding <i>Restore waterways and bushland areas to improve health and wellbeing of community and presentation of Latrobe</i>

Project	Estimated Cost \$	Funding Pillar 1 – 6	Council Plan Link	Community Impact High, Medium, Low	Comments
					<i>City as well as our important biodiversity values</i> is listed as a strategy in the Council Plan to achieve the Sustainable goal.
Grand Strzelecki Track Repairs Repair to 20 kms of remote and difficult to access walking track to link both ends of the Grand Strzelecki Track Park to Park track.	140,000	5, 6	Healthy Connected Sustainable	Low	Link to Commonwealth Games outcomes – increased visitation. Project aligns with the Visit Latrobe branding to enable end to end multi-day walking track which could encourage tourists to stay multiple nights in the region. <i>Restore waterways and bushland areas to improve health and wellbeing of community and presentation of Latrobe City as well as our important biodiversity values</i> is listed as a strategy in the Council Plan to achieve the Sustainable goal.
Total	715,000				

STATUTORY PLANNING

STATUTORY PLANNING DECISION MAKING PROCESS

PURPOSE

To outline the current delegations to Regional City Planning officers in relation to the determination of planning permit applications and provide a proposed course of action for updating these delegations to streamline related processes.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Officer delegations have an impact on the timeliness of planning decisions.
- At the 16 December 2025 Council meeting a Notice of Motion was passed by Council, that requested officers to undertake a review and provide advice to Council, regarding possible options that could be applied to improve the regulatory application process, including fast tracking regulatory approvals.
- Current delegations were adopted on 3 March 2014. It is therefore considered timely to review these delegations.
- The planning delegations currently in place are as follows:
 - Any application with five or less objections can be approved by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in accordance with the Latrobe Planning Scheme.
 - The CEO may refer an application to Council for consideration should they deem it appropriate to do so.
 - Any application that has more than five objections to it must be referred to an Ordinary Council Meeting for a decision.
 - The CEO in consultation with the appropriate General Manager and Manager may refuse an application that is not in accordance with the Latrobe Planning Scheme.
 - In consultation with the CEO any Councillor can request an application to be presented to Council for consideration at an ordinary Council Meeting.
- Benchmarking has been undertaken against 10 other Councils, identifying their current delegations. The review compared levels of delegation provided to officers, application numbers, staffing levels and statutory decision making timeframes.
- The results of the benchmarking indicated that generally, councils where officers had higher levels of delegation had correlating higher percentages of decisions within the statutory timeframe.

- As a result, it is being proposed to increase delegations to officers, essentially increasing delegation for applications regardless of the number of submissions to officers without an automatic trigger for these applications to be presented to Council Meeting, unless called in. This would remove sending applications with more than five objections to a Council meeting as a mandatory step, instead giving the power to Councillors to decide which applications are necessary to be heard by Council.
- Ultimately, it is expected that this will allow for more timely decisions for all parties involved, with an estimated saving of 3-5 weeks for each application that currently would go to Council for a decision. While this is approximately 1-2% of planning permit applications each year (approximately 12-14 applications in total), the benefit for those applications will be significant.
- The Weekly planning reports email will still be provided to Councillors for their information.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **approves the *Instrument of Delegation to Members of Council staff* (Instrument) dated 7 May 2024 be varied to remove the following condition and limitation from the power delegated to officers to determine permit applications under section 61(1) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1989* (Vic):**
 - a. ***If the permit has one to five objectors or recommended for refusal it must be approved by CEO;***
 - b. ***If permit has more than five objectors it must be heard at ordinary Council Meeting;***
2. **approves the varied Instrument coming into force immediately after the common seal of Council is affixed to the Instrument;**
3. **notes that on the coming into force of the Instrument, all delegations to members of Council staff under the Instrument dated 7 May 2024 are revoked;**
4. **notes that the duties and functions set out in the Instrument must be performed, and the powers set out in the Instrument must be executed, in accordance with any guidelines or policies of Council that it may from time to time adopt;**
5. **notes that the Chief Executive Officer may refer a permit application to Council for consideration should they deem it appropriate to do so;**
6. **notes that in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, any Councillor can request a permit application be presented to Council for consideration at a Council Meeting; and**
7. **notes that a further report will be presented to Council reviewing the appropriateness and success of the updated planning delegations after an**

initial 12 month period.

BACKGROUND

The *Planning & Environment Act 1978* (the Act) determines the duties and function of councils as responsible authorities for planning, including that a council acting as responsible authority may delegate certain authority, responsibility and functions to committees of council or council officers.

Throughout Victoria, councils delegate decision making for planning permit applications to officers in several ways. Below provides the results of benchmarking with 10 councils and their performance in efficiently dealing with planning applications, application numbers and staff resourcing.

It should also be noted that generally speaking applications at smaller (rural) Councils are generally less complex than what is received for instance by a Regional City Council or metro Council.

Municipality	Total number of applications received in 2024	FTE staffing	% of applications decided in 60 statutory days (2024 calendar year)	Delegation practice
Latrobe	300	10 FTE	82.19%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Officer delegation up to 5 objections.• The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) may refer an application to Council.• The CEO may refuse an application that is not in accordance with the Latrobe Planning Scheme.• In consultation with the CEO any Councillor can request an application to be presented to Council.

Municipality	Total number of applications received in 2024	FTE staffing	% of applications decided in 60 statutory days (2024 calendar year)	Delegation practice
Hepburn	141	6 FTE (3 vacant)	25.52%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer delegation up to 10 objections. • Officer delegation up to 15 objections in the Farming Zone. • Officer delegation for developments with a cost of less than \$1 million. • Councilors can 'call in' an application if they have support from 2 other Councillors. • Executive can send any application to the council.
Mansfield	191	8 FTE	74.00%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer delegation up to 4 objections. • Officer delegation for applications of up to \$3 million. • Applications lodged by or on behalf of a Councillor or Council employee must go to Council. • Refusals go to Council unless the proposal is prohibited; is in breach of restrictions on title; extension of time assessment requirements are not met; or a determining referral authority has objected.
Mildura	365	12 FTE	43.43%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer delegation up to 6 objections. • Councilors can 'call in' an application if they have support from one other Councillor. Request assessed by the CEO.

Municipality	Total number of applications received in 2024	FTE staffing	% of applications decided in 60 statutory days (2024 calendar year)	Delegation practice
Mitchell	476	14 FTE	49.24%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officer delegation up to 3 objections. Councillors can 'call in' an application if they have support from one other Councillor.
Moira	300	13.5 FTE	64.46%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officer delegation up to 5 objections.
South Gippsland	325	10 FTE	52.39%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officer delegation up to 9 objections. Councillors can 'call in' an application if they have support from three other Councillors. Applications where a conflict of interest has been declared are presented to Council. Officer delegation for applications under \$5 million.
Strathbogie	124	2.8 FTE	86.49%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officer delegation up to 4 objections. Councillors can 'call-in' applications that are proposed to be refused.
Surf Coast	492	15.95 FTE	70.80%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full officer delegation, regardless of number of objections or if the application is proposed to be refused. Councillors can 'call in' an application if they have support from two other Councillors.

Municipality	Total number of applications received in 2024	FTE staffing	% of applications decided in 60 statutory days (2024 calendar year)	Delegation practice
Wellington	485	5.6 FTE	90.66%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full officer delegation, regardless of number of objections or if the application is proposed to be refused. • Councilors can 'call in' an application if they have support from two other Councillors.
Wodonga	145	No response received	69.29%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer delegation up to 5 objections. • The CEO may refer any application to Council. • In consultation with the CEO any Councillor can request an application to be presented to Council.

ANALYSIS

Given the findings of this benchmarking exercise, it is proposed that the Wellington Shire Council model of delegation be considered, with the current delegations to be updated as follows:

1. Officers have full delegation to decide on planning permit applications, regardless of the number of objections.
2. The CEO may refer an application to Council for consideration should they deem it appropriate to do so.
3. The CEO in consultation with the General Manager Regional City Planning and Assets and Manager Regional City Planning may refuse an application that is not in accordance with the Latrobe Planning Scheme.

The ability of a Councillor to call in a planning permit application for decision at a Council Meeting where they deem it necessary would remain unchanged.

This would essentially see officer delegation increased from 5 objections to an unlimited number, unless called in to Council for a decision. This would remove sending applications with more than five objections to a Council meeting as a mandatory step, instead giving the power to Councillors to decide which applications are necessary to be heard by Council, informed by the weekly planning reports sent to Councillors.

The benchmarking statistics generally demonstrate that councils with higher levels of officer delegation deliver a higher number of decisions within statutory timeframes. Although there were some exceptions to this correlation, there are a number of other contributing factors that need to be taken into account such as resourcing, internal processes and the level of usage of the “call-in process”. However, advice given by councils that provided information for this benchmarking exercise confirmed that increasing delegations contributed to improved timeframes for planning outcomes.

This is particularly the case for Wellington Shire Council, which has full officer delegation and issued 90.66% of decisions within statutory timeframes in 2024.

Increasing officer delegation is considered likely to contribute towards improved processing timeframes planning permit applications, delivering planning outcomes in a way that stimulates economic development and improves customer satisfaction with the planning service. Providing a streamlined decision-making process is a way of demonstrating to the development community that Latrobe is ‘open for business’ and values business and investment.

RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK	RISK RATING	TREATMENT
SERVICE DELIVERY Maintaining the existing delegations may not result in an improvement in decision-making timeframes.	High Likely/Moderate	Review and increase officer delegations to facilitate speedier planning outcomes.
FINANCIAL Maintaining the existing delegations may not facilitate increased business and investment being driven towards Latrobe City.	Medium Possible/Moderate	Review and increase officer delegations to facilitate speedier planning outcomes and attract business and investment.
STRATEGIC Maintaining the existing delegations and not reviewing them may be viewed as a blocker to attracting business and investment.	Medium Possible/Moderate	Review and increase officer delegations to facilitate more timely planning outcomes and attract business and investment noting a Councillor can still call in a planning application for consideration at a Council meeting.

CONSULTATION

All 79 local government authorities were emailed requesting their participation in a benchmarking exercise around statutory planning delegations. Of these 79 Councils, 10 responded and provided information around their current delegations.

COMMUNICATION

Officers have offered to share the benchmarking final outcomes with any participating councils so as to try and increase participation in the benchmarking exercise.

Any updated Instrument of Delegation would be a public document available to the community. It is intended to continue providing the weekly planning reports to Councillors so they are aware of current planning applications and their status.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Officers preparing this report have declared they do not have a conflict of interest in this matter under the provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

APPENDIX 1 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Gender

A Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* has not been conducted as this matter does not involve a program, service or policy with a significant and direct impact on the community.

Social

Consideration has been given to perceived community views of increasing officer delegations. It is the opinion of officers that the Councillor 'call-in' process will continue to effectively address any concerns in this regard. Weekly reports would continue to be circulated to Councillors, consistent with current practice.

Cultural

Not applicable.

Health

The same considerations outlined under Social above apply to planning permit applications that include health considerations.

Environmental

The same considerations outlined under Social above apply to planning permit applications that include environmental considerations.

Economic

The review of officer delegations is being put forward as an opportunity to support stimulation of economic investment in Latrobe City, by demonstrating that we are 'open for business' and reducing red tape in the planning permit process.

Officers are also investigating other opportunities to further streamline regulatory approval processes.

Financial

Not applicable.

Attachments

Nil

CORPORATE ITEMS FOR DECISION

10. CORPORATE ITEMS FOR DECISION

Item Number 10.1 26 May 2025

Regional City Planning and Assets

ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE ON COUNCIL LAND POLICY

PURPOSE

To present the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure on Council Land Policy (Policy) at **Attachment 1** for consideration and adoption. The Policy aims to provide direction and framework for third party requests to install electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure on Council owned land.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This Policy provides the framework and guidance for third parties to install EV chargers on Council land.
- The Policy supports the coordinated roll-out of EV charging infrastructure across Latrobe City.
- The Policy facilitates consistent and timely responses to community and stakeholder enquiries regarding installation of EV chargers on Council land.
- EV growth has been steadily increasing with 9.65% of new car sales in 2024 being EVs compared to 8.45% in 2023 and 3.81% in 2022.
- EV chargers will be treated like commercial leases and be managed by the Property and Operations Team.
- The Licensee must pay for all services in connection with the Licensed Area including utilities.
- The Sustainability Action Plan 2023-2033 has an action to develop an EV charger installation policy.
- Changes to the Policy through the review included making utility costs clearer, restricting EV chargers to over two-hour car spaces and including maintenance cost were made based on feedback provided.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **adopts the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure on Council Land Policy at Attachment 1; and**
2. **notes that after adoption, this Policy will be available on the Latrobe City Council's website.**

BACKGROUND

Requests for EV charging infrastructure on Council land has been increasing and there is currently no Council Policy to consider these requests. The development of the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure on Council Land Policy has been developed to provide guidance to process all new requests. This Policy will provide guidance for the coordinated roll out of EV charging infrastructure across Latrobe City, supporting the increase of EV uptake.

ANALYSIS

EV sales have been increasing with about 10% of new car sales being EVs in the past year. There have been reports of EV charging infrastructure struggling to keep up with demand with delays from waiting to charge reported especially during peak periods. Latrobe City Council is located on a major throughfare to eastern Victoria with Plugshare (<https://www.plugshare.com/>) showing 251 charges (last 2 years) at GRAC and 104 charges (past 7 months) at the EV charger opposite Victory Park in Traralgon. EV destination chargers, which are slower than fast chargers, can also provide incentive for visitors to smaller towns who can explore these towns while charging their vehicle.

This Policy provides the guidance and framework to support the coordination of EV chargers across all of Latrobe City. For example, there is little support for EV charging in Morwell compared to Moe and Traralgon which both have several public EV chargers. The Policy provides criteria for accepting or rejecting EV chargers depending on location and effect to the local area. The Policy also provides guidance around roles and responsibilities, including that third parties installing the EV chargers are responsible for all installation and maintenance costs and all ongoing costs including rates and utilities.

RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK	RISK RATING	TREATMENT
FINANCIAL Loss of local economic benefit from the lack of EV chargers	Medium Likely x Minor	This policy facilitates the installation of EV chargers in key locations near amenities and local business which could provide an increase to the local economy.
STRATEGIC Lack of EV chargers could cause reputational risk to council	Low Possible x Insignificant	Having an EV charging policy will facilitate EV charger installation and reduce the impact of complaints about not enough EV chargers.

CONSULTATION

Input was sought across internal Council business units to aid development in this Policy. No external consultation was required in the development of this Policy.

COMMUNICATION

To include the policy on Latrobe City Council's website once it is approved.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Officers preparing this report have declared they do not have a conflict of interest in this matter under the provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

APPENDIX 1 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Gender

A Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* has not been conducted as this matter does not involve a program, service or policy with a significant and direct impact on the community.

Social

There is no social impact

Cultural

There is no cultural impact

Health

As EVs have no exhaust emissions, EVs reduce the number of pollutants in the air that cause health impacts.

Environmental

This policy will help increase EV chargers in Latrobe City which in turn increases uptake of EVs, this will reduce community transport emissions as more internal combustion vehicles are replaced with EVs.

Economic

There is some economic impact from this policy including the creation of jobs and the potential for more people to stop in Latrobe City, however there are no studies that have quantified the benefit.

Financial

The leasing of carpark spaces could provide a financial benefit to Council, however this depends on the location, Licence length and amount of carpark spaces that are licenced for EV chargers.

Attachments

1. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure on Council Land Policy

10.1

Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure on Council Land Policy

1	Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure on Council Land Policy	110
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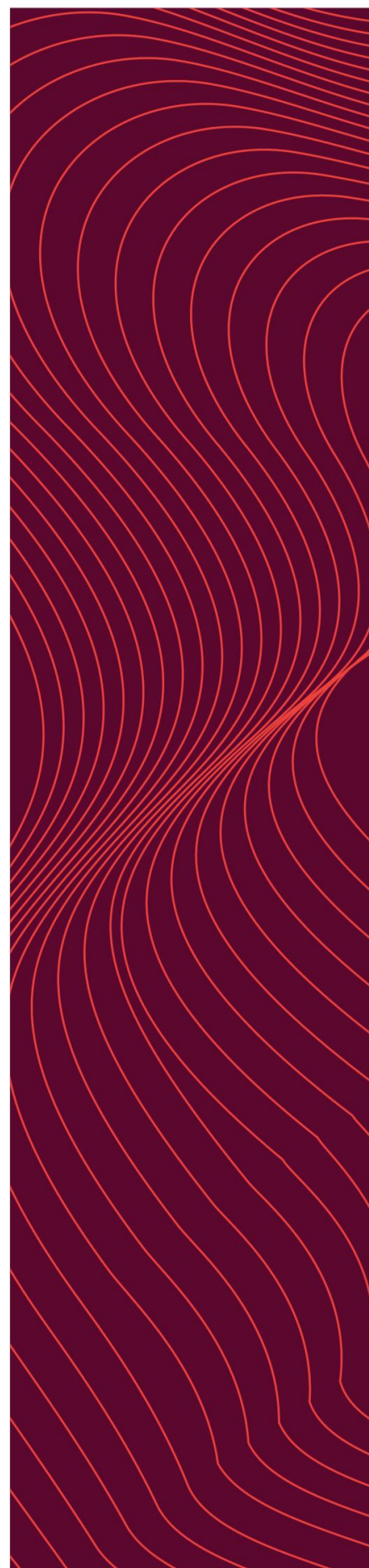


Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure on Council Land Policy

Version no. 4

Approval date: TBC

Review date: TBC



Document control

Responsible GM	GM Regional City Planning and Assets	
Division	Regional City Planning and Assets	
Last updated (who and when)	Resource Recovery Officer	2025

Document history		
Authority	Date	Description of change
Council	TBC	New policy developed
References	Refer to section 8 and 9 of this policy	
Next review date	TBC	
Published on website	Yes	
Document reference no.		

1. Background

Latrobe City Council recognises the growing importance of electric vehicles (EVs) in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting sustainable transportation.

To support the adoption of EVs and ensure the availability of adequate charging infrastructure, this policy outlines guidelines for entering into license agreements for EV Charging Infrastructure on Council owned or managed land and specifies instances where agreements may not be provided.

2. Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework and guidance for the provision of electric vehicle charging facilities on public land within Latrobe City for residents, businesses and visitors, and is aimed at developing consistent and beneficial agreements between Council and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure providers. The main objectives of the policy include:

- Support the coordinated roll-out of EV charging infrastructure across Latrobe City
- Provide a framework and approval process for EV charger requests.
- Inform local residents, businesses and investors about Council's role and how to seek further guidance
- Facilitate consistent and timely responses to community and stakeholder enquiries regarding installation of EV chargers on council land.

Division name

Approved: 00/00/0000 | Review: 00/00/0000

3. Scope

This policy applies to all council-owned or managed land and facilities where EV charging infrastructure is or is proposed to be installed.

4. Principles of management

Electric vehicle charging facilities will be installed based on agreements reached between suppliers and Council. These agreements will address all aspects from installation to operation of charging facilities.

4.1 Location Considerations

The following considerations must be considered before the installation of an electric vehicle charging facility:

- Charging facilities are to be located in areas maximising benefit to end users including but not limited to:
 - Main roads
 - Areas close to facilities including restrooms, shops and parks etc
 - Carparks
 - Well-lit areas
 - Parking spaces with over 2-hour time limits
- Placement of charging facilities must not adversely impact road safety. Consideration must be given to traffic conditions of the area.
- Placement of charging facilities must not adversely impact residential and commercial parking amenity.
- Placement of charging facilities must not adversely impact urban amenity.
- Council will consider other locations where there is a demonstrated demand for electric vehicle charging.
- Follow all national construction codes and minimum distances from buildings.

4.2 Council Requirements of EV Charging Suppliers

Electric vehicle charging facility suppliers must provide:

- Details of the proposed electric vehicle charging facility specifications, which must be in accordance with current Australian and industry standards.
- Details for the proposed location which must address the installation considerations as identified in Section 4.1 of this policy.
- Confirmation that electricity supply is available and the anticipated impacts on this supply.

Division name

Approved: 00/00/0000 | Review: 00/00/0000

- Provide the overarching business justification for the EV charging service.
- Confirmation of appropriate liability insurance.
- Full life-cycle responsibility including removal of asset and supporting infrastructure after the licence period, unless agreed by Council.
- Council will review applications for both alternating current (slower) and direct current (faster) charging.

4.3 Financial Considerations

- The installation including electrical upgrades, distribution fees and headworks, maintenance and operation of a charging facility will be the responsibility of the charging facility supplier.
- Building Alterations under the National Code or other standards will be the responsibility of the charging facility supplier.
- Where an electric charging facility supplier wishes to provide additional signage, advertisements or road markings this cost is to be borne by the charging facility supplier, including on-going costs such as maintenance and replacement.
 - Noting that this may require agreement with Council and/or a planning permit.
- Any electric vehicle charging facilities requested to be installed and owned by Council will not be considered.

4.4 Licence Agreements for Council Owned/Managed Land

- Operators of EV charging facilities will be treated as commercial tenants and the Licence will be managed by the Property and Operations Team.
- The proposed parking spaces will be independently valued before any Licence is agreed and the annual rental rate is set
- The Licensee must pay all rates, taxes (including land tax assessed on the basis that the Licensed Area is the only land owned by Council) and all other charges and levies separately assessed in connection with the Licensed Area.
- If the Rates and Taxes are not separately assessed for the Licensed Area, the Licensee must pay or refund to Council the proportion of the Rates and Taxes that the area of the Licensed Area bears to the total lettable area, within 14 days of receipt of a written notice from Council.
- The Licensee must pay for all services in connection with the Licensed Area including electricity, gas, water, garbage collection and telephone. Where the Licensed Area is not separately metered, the Licensee must at the discretion of Council either:
 - Pay to Council the proportion of the charges for the Services that the area of the Licensed Area bears to the total area, within 14 days of receipt of a written notice from Council; or pay for the cost of installing separate meters to assess the charges for the Services
- License agreements shall include provisions for regular maintenance, safety inspections, and compliance with relevant regulations and standards.
- Ensure the EV charging station is maintained to Council's satisfaction

Division name

Approved: 00/00/0000 | Review: 00/00/0000

- It is desirable that electric vehicle charging facilities are compatible with existing and future parking restrictions. This requires considering the charging speed of the charging facilities. Consideration of exclusive use rights for EV vehicles for the associated car parking bays will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

4.5 Instances Where Licenses May Not be Provided

- Council may decline entering into agreements for EV charging infrastructure in areas where there is already a well-established and sufficient charging network, ensuring efficient allocation of resources.
- Council may prioritise agreements for EV charging infrastructure in locations with areas lacking access to charging facilities, or strategic locations such as public transportation hubs, workplaces, and retail centres.
- Latrobe City Council reserves the right to make decisions outside of the Policy at the CEO's discretion.

4.6 Risk

Council acknowledges potential risks associated with EV charging infrastructure, such as technical failures and safety hazards.

To mitigate these risks, the Council shall:

- Ensure the owner organises independent inspections and audits of charging facilities to ensure compliance with safety standards.
- Collaborate with relevant stakeholders, including EV charging equipment manufacturers, and emergency response agencies, to address potential risks and develop contingency plans.

4.7 Council Management of Carparks

- Council will continue to manage all council carparks including:
- Maintaining the parking spaces as per the maintenance schedule in accordance with Council's current Road Management Plan.
- Council will enforce applicable parking restrictions as part of Council's normal parking management operations.

5. Accountability and responsibility

Accountability and responsibility for this policy is outlined below.

Division name

Approved: 00/00/0000 | Review: 00/00/0000

5.1 Council

- Responsibility to ensure this Policy is consistent with Latrobe City Council Strategic Direction and other Latrobe City Council Policy
- Responsibility for the decision to approve this Policy by Council Resolution

5.2 Chief Executive Officer

- Overall responsibility for compliance with this policy
- Overall responsibility for enforcing accountability
- Overall responsibility for providing resources
- Overall responsibility for performance monitoring

5.3 General Manager

- Responsibility for compliance with this policy
- Responsibility for enforcing accountability
- Responsibility for providing resources
- Responsibility for performance monitoring

5.4 Manager

- Develop frameworks and procedures in compliance with this policy
- Enforce responsibilities to achieve compliance with frameworks and procedures
- Provide appropriate resources for the execution of the frameworks and procedures

5.5 Employees, Contractors and Volunteers

- Participate where required in the development of frameworks and procedures in compliance with this policy.
- Comply with frameworks and procedures developed to achieve compliance with this policy.

6. Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed on request of Council, in the event of significant change in the Executive team, significant changes to legislation applicable to the subject matter of the policy or, in any other case, during each Council term (generally four years).

7. Definitions

Key term	Definition
Charging providers	Companies that commercially provide electric vehicle charging infrastructure for a fee or receive revenue by other means e.g. advertising
Councillors	the individuals holding the office of a member of Latrobe City Council
Council officer/officers	the Chief Executive Officer and staff of Council appointed by the Chief Executive Officer

Division name

Approved: 00/00/0000 | Review: 00/00/0000

DC fast charging	Direct current fast charging converts standard power to direct current and delivers it to the electric vehicle battery. Capable of recharging an electric vehicle battery to 80% in less than 30 minutes.
AC Charging	Alternating current is slow charging up to 22 KW comes from either a three-pin socket or wall box.
Electric Vehicle (EV)	vehicles powered by motors that use electricity, unlike traditional internal combustion engine vehicles that use liquid fuels. Can be plugged into an electrical power source to recharge. Electric vehicles include fully-electric and plug-in hybrid which combines fuel and electricity.
EV Charging Infrastructure	The network of charging stations, equipment, and related infrastructure required to charge electric vehicles
Road Management Plan	A road asset specific plan for managing infrastructure and other assets to deliver an agreed standard of service

8. Related Documents

- Council Plan
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Sustainability Action Plan 2023-2033
- Road Management Plans

9. Reference Documents

- Local Government Act 2020
- Road Management Act 2004
- Road Management (General) Regulations 2016

Division name

Approved: 00/00/0000 | Review: 00/00/0000

CEO DELEGATION TO AWARD CONTRACTS FOR TED SUMMERTON RESERVE REDEVELOPMENT - REGIONAL SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

PURPOSE

To seek Council endorsement of an increase to the Chief Executive Officer's (CEO's) delegation to award construction contract(s) associated with the Ted Summerton Reserve (TSR) Regional Sports Infrastructure Program (RSIP) Project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The TSR RSIP Project includes a refurbishment of the oval and lighting, new scoreboard, sight screens, accessibility improvements, new change rooms, refurbishment of the existing pavilion and new terracing.
- The RSIP grant agreement sets out the deliverables of the TSR project and has a number of milestones that are required to be met to ensure the project is tracking appropriately.
- Currently two milestones (Milestone 5 and 6 listed below) are likely to be achieved 6-8 weeks after the milestone due date, noting any delay of 8 weeks or more requires a formal application to the funding body to vary the date of the relevant milestone. Due to political sensitivity surrounding the RSIP program and the funding body's' priority to execute upgrades by such time as the 2026 Commonwealth Games would have commenced, the funding body's strong preference is for a formal extension request for the projects grant agreement milestones to be avoided.
 - Milestone 5 – The finalisation of Construction Documentation (Tender Issue Design Drawings – Due 31 March 2025
 - Milestone 6 – The award of a construction contract and commencement of works – Due 31 July 2025
- As the estimated value of works for both the Building and Civil, and Field of Play works packages exceed the existing CEO delegation, the contract(s) would be required to be presented to a future Council meeting to be awarded.
- The proposed date for tendering the TSR project is June 2025. As per the Procurement and Council report deadlines, this would result in the contract being presented to Council for award at the August 2025 Council meeting, approximately 30 days past the due date for Milestone 6.

- Granting of delegation to the CEO for this contract award will:
 - Minimise TSR user group displacement due to a condensed project timeframe.
 - Expedite the projects' overall program by as much as 5 weeks, and provide Council with better adherence to Grant Agreement timelines.
 - Provide the project with an improved likelihood of commencing works in a timeframe that does not jeopardise the projects' adherence to the grant agreement milestones and required completion date.
- As a result, officers seek Council endorsement to increase the CEO delegation to award the individual construction contract(s) specifically associated with the TSR RSIP project, provided they fit within the funding amount provided by the State Government and meet the requirements of the Procurement Policy.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That Council delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to award contracts associated with the Ted Summerton Reserve Redevelopment Project, subject to recommended tender(s) being within the funding allocation provided by the State Government, and complying with Council's Procurement Policy.

BACKGROUND

Following the cancellation of the 2026 Commonwealth Games in July 2023, the State Government funded sporting infrastructure upgrades for the sites previously nominated to host Commonwealth Games events through the RSIP, including upgrade works at TSR.

The TSR works include a refurbishment of the oval and lighting, new scoreboard, sight screens, accessibility improvements; new change rooms; refurbishment of the existing pavilion and new terracing.

To date officers have been working with the appointed design consultants to develop detailed designs for the two main construction packages which are planned to be tendered in concurrence as separable portions. These packages being:

1. Construction Works Package
2. Field of Play Works Package

Detailed design works for these aspects of the project are nearing completion following engagement with the Project Reference Group over the last 9 months and are expected to be ready to tender by June 2025.

ANALYSIS

The lead consultant for the Building and Civil construction package has been granted reasonable extensions to their program and have endeavoured to adhere to the timelines set out in the RSIP grant agreement, however, are ultimately 8 weeks behind the required milestone dates.

The above-mentioned lead consultant's delays in delivery of design documentation have been reasonably justified as follows:

- A delay in the execution of the contract VS scheduled commencement date set out in the Lead Design Consultancy tender document.
- Inadequate timeframe between the delivery of Concept and Preliminary Design with the Christmas break and numerous other holiday periods falling.
- Unforeseen leave being taken by the Projects' Lead Architect during the upscale from Schematic to Preliminary Issue designs.

Aside from the request for CEO delegation to expedite procurement and contract execution timeframes, the Project Team have been undertaking other measures to expedite the remainder of the design program, as follows:

- Regular interaction with key Council officers via Project Governance Groups
- Regular communication of timelines to the funding partner Sport Recreation Victoria.
- Early interaction by Council with utility authorities to inform costs & scope.

- Removal of Request for Tender (RFT) and Contract documentation from the Lead Design Consultants' scope of works by engaging a separate specialist consultant.

Despite these measures, the Consultant is unable to deliver the required design documentation within the timeline stipulated for the relevant Construction Documentation project milestone.

Grant Agreement Milestone	Due Date
Construction Documentation (or equivalent) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Final Construction Tender Documentation or equivalent) received, including Project Steering Committee endorsement. 	31/03/2025
Award of Contract & Construction Commencement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Award of Contract) Evidence of Award of Construction Contract (where multiple contracts are being awarded, this refers to main works contract) 	31/07/2025

Figure 1 – Milestones 5 & 6 – TSR RSIP Grant Agreement

Based on the timelines stipulated in the 2025 Procurement Calendar, the Procurement Plan deadline for tender documentation to be lodged by is 3 June 2025. Projected timelines for the award of a contract based on documentation being lodged at this time is as follows:

- Council Award – 25 August 2025
- CEO Award – 23 July 2025 (if delegation provided).

However, construction is currently required by the grant agreement to commence by the end of July 2025 (see figure 1 above).

Noting that the project is solely funded by the State, officers propose seeking CEO Delegation to award construction contract(s) specifically associated with the TSR RSIP project for the following packages, provided the contracts fit within the funding provided by the State Government and meet the requirements of Council's Procurement Policy:

1. Building and Civil Package
2. Field of Play Package

The two packages are planned to be tendered in concurrence under a separable portions contract structure in Q4 of 24-25 FY. This will provide Council or the CEO if the delegation is endorsed at a future Council meeting, with the ability to award to one bidder, or to separate the above packages between two bidders if this benefits the project.

RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK	RISK RATING	TREATMENT
SERVICE DELIVERY Delay in awarding contracts if Council endorsement is required.	High <i>Likely x Moderate</i>	Authorising the CEO to award contracts up to the budget amount will allow for projects to be delivered more promptly.
FINANCIAL External funding associated with the TSR project could be partially or fully forfeited if not delivered in a timely manner	Medium <i>Possible x Moderate</i>	Authorising the CEO to award contracts up to the budget amount will provide the best opportunity to complete the TSR project on time to meet funding requirements.
STRATEGIC There is a risk to Council's reputation within the community should the works not be delivered in a timely manner	Medium <i>Possible x Moderate</i>	Authorising the CEO to award contracts up to the budget amount will allow for projects to be delivered more promptly.

CONSULTATION

No external consultation has been undertaken in relation to this report.

COMMUNICATION

In preparing this report, internal communication has been held with the Procurement Team.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Officers preparing this report have declared they do not have a conflict of interest in this matter under the provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

APPENDIX 1 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Gender

A Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* has not been conducted as this matter does not involve a program, service or policy with a significant and direct impact on the community. A gender impact assessment was completed on the project, with its outcomes and subsequent benefits reflected in the detailed designs.

Social

To expand on the Risk section of this report, there is a potential of a prolonged works phase which impedes the 2025 Gippsland Football Netball League season if the project is not undertaken in a timely manner.

Cultural

Not applicable

Health

Not applicable

Environmental

Not applicable

Economic

Not applicable

Financial

As identified within the Risk section of this report, there is a possibility that funding for the TSR RSIP project could be partially or fully forfeited if the project is not completed in a timely manner in accordance with the Grant Agreements' milestone requirements.

Attachments

Nil

GOVERNANCE RULES

PURPOSE

To present the outcome of the community engagement process undertaken on the draft Governance Rules pursuant to Council resolution of 24 February 2025.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- At the 16 December 2024 Council Meeting, a resolution was passed for Council to receive a report on the process to alter the Governance Rules to remove:
 - Requirements concerning additional information being provided with notices of motion;
 - The ability of the Chief Executive Officer to refer certain notices of motion to other processes;
 - Limitations on notices of motion that commit Council to unbudgeted expenditure over \$5,000 or establish or amend a Council policy;
 - Restrictions on word limits and allowable e-petition platforms for petitions.
- A subsequent report was presented at the 24 February 2025 Council Meeting, regarding the alteration process and containing benchmarking of the proposed changes to the Governance Rules provisions as set out in the 16 December resolution. Following consideration of the report, Council then resolved to commence community engagement on the proposed changes.
- In accordance with the 24 February resolution, community engagement was undertaken for the proposed Governance Rules changes from 10 March to 7 April 2025.
- 48 valid submissions were received, with the majority of submissions being in favour of no changes being made to the Governance Rules:
 - 11 submissions supported the proposed changes to petitions, with 36 against and 1 not addressing the changes.
 - 5 submissions supported the proposed changes to notices of motion, with 36 against and 7 not addressing the changes.
 - There were no submissions received that suggested incorporating amendments to the proposed changes.
- Local Government Victoria (LGV) has advised that Model Governance Rules are intended to be provided to Victorian councils in December 2025, with some initial consultation having commenced in April 2025.

- Based on the feedback obtained through community engagement, results of the benchmarking and the incoming Model Governance Rules, it is the position of officers that the proposed changes should not be made to the adopted Governance Rules at this time.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That Council does not endorse the proposed amendments to rules 22 and 67 of the Governance Rules in relation to the consideration of Notices of Motion and Petitions as detailed in Attachment 1.

BACKGROUND

The current Governance Rules were adopted on 2 October 2023. Since endorsement, potential alterations to the parts of the Rules relating to petitions and notices of motion have been raised at several Council Meetings.

A report responding to a petition requesting changes to the Governance Rules around the format and use of petitions was considered at the Council Meeting of 8 April 2024. Council resolved not to make any changes to the Governance Rules at that time.

A Notice of Motion was also brought to the 5 August 2024 Council Meeting to conduct community consultation on the consideration of petitions in the Governance Rules, however it was not passed.

At the Council Meeting on 16 December 2024, the following resolution was passed:

That Council receive a report at a future Council Meeting in relation to a review of the Governance Rules detailing the process to be undertaken to amend the Governance Rules to incorporate changes to Section 22 (Notices of Motion) and Section 67 (Petitions) as detailed in Attachment One.

Attachment One referred to in the resolution is included as **Attachment 1** to this report, and the proposed changes to Rules 22 and 67 can be summarised as follows:

- Removal of word limit on petitions and allow any e-petition platform to be used rather than Council's e-petition platform being mandatory;
- Notices of motion to no longer be accompanied by a statement setting out the justification and background;
- Removal of the Chief Executive Officer's ability where appropriate to reject and refer a notice of motion to an operational service request process, Councillor briefing or out of session workshop;
- Notices of motion to no longer be accompanied by an officer report setting out any budget implications, internal resourcing impact, relevance to the Council Plan and any relevant policies, and how the notice of motion relates to any work already undertaken by officers or committees;
- Removal of the requirement for a Council report to be prepared for a notice of motion that would:
 - commit Council to unbudgeted expenditure of over \$5,000; or
 - establish or amend a Council policy.

In accordance with the 16 December resolution, a report was presented to the Council Meeting on 24 February 2025 setting out the review process. The report also provided benchmarking for the treatment of notices of motion and petitions in the Governance Rules of the other Gippsland councils, the other regional cities and the two documents considered best practice by the Local Government Inspectorate.

On consideration of that report, Council made the following resolution:

That Council:

1. *Resolve to undertake a four-week community consultation period on the proposed amendments to rules 22 and 67 of the Governance Rules in relation to the consideration of Notices of Motion and Petitions as detailed in Attachment 1, commencing on 10 March 2025, pursuant to section 60(4) of the Local Government Act 2020 and Council's Community Engagement Policy; and*
2. *Receive a further report at a future Council Meeting to consider community feedback and the proposed amendments to the Governance Rules.*

Attachment 1 referred to in the 24 February resolution containing the proposed changes was the same as **Attachment 1** from the 16 December resolution.

Community engagement was conducted from 10 March to 7 April 2025 via Council's Have Your Say platform, with hardcopy submissions also accepted. The community engagement was advertised via Council's website, social media and in the Latrobe Valley Express.

51 submissions were received in total, with 3 considered invalid. Of the 3 invalid submissions:

- 1 had insufficient personal details of the individual to be able to confirm the submission was legitimate;
- 1 appeared to have been submitted under a pseudonym; and
- 1 was unclear as to whether it was in support of or opposed to the proposed changes.

Excluding the 3 invalid responses, the submissions are provided in full at **Attachment 2**, with personal details redacted where this was requested.

The Model Governance Rules expected in December 2025 are still at an early stage of development. Feedback is being sought from all Victorian councils to support co-design of the Model Rules. So far this has been limited to a short survey seeking advice on potential areas for update since the creation of the Draft Model Governance Rules, as part of the transition to the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act). It is anticipated that there will be more involved opportunities for councils to contribute to the new draft Rules as they progress.

ANALYSIS

Community Engagement

Most submissions received through community engagement referred to the proposed changes broadly, or spoke to both notices of motion and petitions. However, as a small number referred only to one or the other, those two categories of proposed changes have been assessed separately.

From the 48 valid submissions, 47 included discussion of petitions. 11 were in favour (23%) and 36 were against (77%) the proposed changes to the Governance Rules relating to petitions.

41 submissions included reference to notices of motion. 5 submissions (12%) were in favour of the proposed changes to the Governance Rules regarding notices of motion, and 36 submissions (88%) were against.

None of the 48 submissions discussed the potential for amendments to the proposed changes, or provided an altered version that the submitter would support.

The majority of community feedback obtained from consultation does not support the adoption of the proposed changes.

Benchmarking

The comparative results of the benchmarking were provided in the Councillor Briefing and Council Meeting reports in February 2025.

The benchmarking showed that while methods varied, the majority of councils reviewed:

- Had at least the option for further information to accompany a Notice of Motion.
- Allowed the Chief Executive Officer to refer a proposed Notice of Motion to another process (half of councils, rather than majority).
- Restricted a Notice of Motion to calling for a report if it would result in a particular level of unbudgeted expenditure or change a policy.
- Required minimum of name and address for each signatory to a petition.

While Council's Governance Rules can be considered to have a more prescriptive approach than most of the councils included in benchmarking, in the opinion of officers the relevant provisions are still reasonably aligned to the majority.

It is also acknowledged that Council was the only council included in the benchmarking which had a word limit on petitions. However, the requirement for a word limit is a feature of 5 of the 9 federal, State and Territory government electronic petition platforms.

Review of Proposed Changes

The provisions on petitions that are proposed for removal from the Governance Rules under the 16 December resolution, together with most of the provisions proposed for removal regarding notices of motion, have been the subject of explanatory information previously presented to Council. This information was summarised in the February 2025 Councillor Briefing and Council Meeting reports but is repeated here in full for ease of reference.

Notices of Motion:

- Background and justification from a Councillor on their Notice of Motion supports informed and transparent decision making.

- Requiring an officer comment and statement better informs decision making and improves governance through greater accountability and transparency. The alignment for notices of motion with Council's legislated responsibilities assists in demonstrating accountability and promotes community confidence in Council's actions.
- The intent of the ability of the Chief Executive Officer to refer matters to operational service processes, Councillor Briefings or workshops is not to remove or limit the ability of Councillors to raise matters via a Notice of Motion. Rather, the aim is to improve the process in dealing with those that are submitted, including greater clarity as to their implications, while providing alternate avenues for dealing with the matters raised, if appropriate.
- While the Chief Executive Officer has power to reject or refer certain Notices of Motion, the Rules require collaboration with the relevant Councillor before arriving at a final decision.

The remaining provision being considered for removal that is not covered above, relates to a notice of motion needing to call for a report if it will commit Council to unbudgeted expenditure above \$5,000, or establish or amend a Council policy. This is to ensure Councillors, through having the opportunity to receive and consider all relevant information via an officer report, are best supported in evidence-based decision making for matters with significant impact on Council finances or position.

Petitions:

- The 250 word limit aims to support clear communication of the action required of Council, a petitioner being able to understand what they are signing and ensures the text can be included on each page of a hardcopy petition.
- The use of Latrobe City's e-petition facility protects petitioner engagement with Council via legislated privacy and personal information security in place. A platform able to be used as a comparison, Change.org, does not adhere to Australian privacy legislation and confirms on their website that personal information may be shared with third parties, or used and disclosed as deemed necessary or appropriate by the platform.

Another important caveat in relation to many e-petition platforms is they do not require sufficient identifying details for signatories, to be able to confirm each signature is legitimate. This means it would not be possible to identify, for example, if one person has signed a petition under various names multiple times, or if the majority of signatures on a petition for a matter specific to Latrobe City are from individuals outside the municipality.

Based on the rationales outlined above for each provision, officers are of the opinion that those provisions support transparent, evidence-based decision making and should be retained. While alternate versions of some of those provisions might be considered instead of removal, this would require further community engagement under the Act.

Model Governance Rules

The timing of the Model Governance Rules should be taken into account in determining appropriate next steps.

If an amended set of proposed changes were to be considered as a response to the results of the current community engagement, under the Act additional community engagement would need to be undertaken. Allowing for sufficient engagement time, the matter would be returnable to Council for final decision in August 2025 at the earliest.

LGV has advised that although the Model Governance Rules will not be mandatory, councils wishing to adopt the Rules without change will not be required to go through the community engagement process. Councils that intend to adopt a modified version will need to complete community engagement.

With the final Model Rules expected in December, if another set of proposed changes were considered this year, unless Council chose to adopt the Model Rules with no alterations, this would mean three rounds of community engagement on the Governance Rules in 12 months.

RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK	RISK RATING	TREATMENT
COMPLIANCE Petitions cannot be confirmed to be accurate and representative due to inability to verify signatories.	Medium <i>Possible x Minor</i>	Retain the Governance Rules in existing form.
STRATEGIC Decision-making from notices of motion is less transparent to the community without explanatory information in the agenda.	Medium <i>Possible x Minor</i>	Retain the Governance Rules in existing form.
STRATEGIC Removal of the proposed provisions of the Governance Rules does not reflect community views, as expressed in the community engagement undertaken.	Medium <i>Possible x Minor</i>	Retain the Governance Rules in existing form which is in line with community engagement results.

CONSULTATION

In accordance with the Act, community engagement was undertaken as outlined earlier in this report.

COMMUNICATION

The Governance Rules are available on Council's website and at service centres in hardcopy. Any updated version of the Rules will be substituted at those locations.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Officers preparing this report have declared they do not have a conflict of interest in this matter under the provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

APPENDIX 1 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Gender

A Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* has been conducted as the Governance Rules have a significant and direct impact on the community. No changes were recommended from the GIA.

Social

Ensuring that the Governance Rules reflect current legislative requirements and practice provides the community with an understanding of the processes of Council and also the opportunities to engage in decision making.

Cultural

Not applicable.

Health

Not applicable.

Environmental

Not applicable.

Economic

Not applicable.

Financial

Not applicable.

Attachments

1. Appendix to 16 December 2024 Resolution
2. Community Engagement Responses

10.3

Governance Rules

1	Appendix to 16 December 2024 Resolution	133
2	Community Engagement Responses	138

Attachment One – Governance Rules Excerpt

Division 4 – Motions and Debate

21 Councillors may propose Notices of Motion

21.1 A Councillor may submit a Notice of Motion to the Chief Executive Officer for a matter to be listed on a meeting agenda.

21.2 A Notice of Motion cannot be accepted by the Chair unless it has been listed on the agenda for the meeting at which it was proposed to be moved or unless it is accepted by Council as urgent business.

22 Notice of Motion

22.1 A Notice of Motion must:

22.1.1 be in writing;

22.1.2 be signed and dated by the Councillor (including by electronic means);

~~22.1.3 include a statement setting out the justification and background of the notice of motion.~~

22.1.4 be raised for discussion at a Councillor Briefing Session by the Councillor who is proposing to move it, at least seven days prior to the Council meeting at which it is proposed to be moved; and

22.1.5 be lodged with the Chief Executive Officer by 10:00am six days before the next scheduled Council meeting to allow inclusion in the agenda in accordance with Sub-Rule 13.1;

22.1.6 relate to the objectives, role and functions of Council as outlined in the Act.

22.2 The Chief Executive Officer must reject a Notice of Motion which:

22.2.1 does not relate to the objectives, roles and function of Council as outlined in the Act;

22.2.2 is vague or unclear in intention;

22.2.3 is identical or substantially similar to a Notice of Motion or a rescission motion that has been considered by the Council and lost in the preceding six months;

22.2.4 is defamatory, discriminatory or offensive;

22.2.5 may be prejudicial to any person or Council;

22.2.6 is outside the powers of Council;

22.2.7 relates to an operational service request;

22.2.8 relates to a matter that can be handled under delegation;

22.2.9 is a Notice of Motion submitted during the Election period; or

22.2.10 is a matter subject to a Council decision making process which has commenced but is not yet complete.

22.3 If the Chief Executive Officer rejects a Notice of Motion under Sub-Rule 22.2, the Chief Executive Officer must, in writing, inform the Councillor who lodged the Notice of Motion of that rejection and the reasons for it within 24 hours of receiving the Notice of Motion. The Chief Executive Officer will collaborate with the Councillor to develop

revised wording to the draft Notice of Motion to facilitate compliance with the requirements for Notices of Motion under these rules. The Councillor may submit a revised Notice of Motion within 24 hours of being informed of the rejection.

22.4 The Chief Executive Officer may reject and refer any Notice of Motion to one or more of the following:

22.4.1 the Council's operational service request process;

22.4.2 Council officers to prepare a report for consideration at the next reasonably practicable Councillor Briefing Session;

22.4.3 a Councillor out of session Workshop;

if it relates to a matter that the Chief Executive Officer determines is more appropriately addressed in one of those ways.

22.5 Once a Notice of Motion is lodged, the Chief Executive Officer will arrange for an Officer comment to accompany the agenda item which will include setting the Councillors justification and background relevant to the Notice of Motion, including, but not limited to:

22.5.1 whether the Notice of Motion, if passed, will have budget implications and, if so, what;

22.5.2 whether the Notice of Motion, if passed, will impact on internal resources and, if so, how;

22.5.3 how the Notice of Motion relates to the Council Plan and any relevant Council policies; and

22.5.4 how the Notice of Motion relates to work that has already been undertaken by Officers or Committees.

22.6 Once lodged with the Chief Executive Officer a Notice of Motion may be withdrawn by, no later than two business days before the meeting at which it was to be considered, the Councillor who lodged the Notice of Motion submitting written advice to the Chief Executive Officer that it is to be withdrawn.

22.7 Subject to Sub-Rule 22.9 a Notice of Motion must call for a Council report if the Notice of Motion:

22.7.1 substantially affects the level of Council services;

22.7.2 commits the Council to expenditure in excess of \$5,000 and that has not been included in the adopted budget;

22.7.3 establishes or amends a Council policy; or

22.7.4 commits the Council to any contractual arrangement,
as determined by the Chief Executive Officer.

22.8 Where a Notice of Motion is likely to commit Council to significant expenditure not included in the adopted budget then the Notice of Motion must only call for referral to and for Council's consideration as part of its future year's annual budget and public submission process.

22.9 The Chief Executive Officer may designate a Notice of Motion to be confidential in accordance with the Act, in which case the Notice of Motion will be confidential unless the Council resolves otherwise.

22.10 The full text of any Notice of Motion accepted by the Chief Executive Officer must be included in the agenda.

22.11 The Chief Executive Officer must cause all Notices of Motion to be numbered, dated and entered in the Notice of Motion register in the order in which they are received.

22.12 Except by leave of Council, each Notice of Motion before any meeting must be considered in the order in which they were entered in the Notice of Motion register under Sub-Rule 22.12.

22.13 The motion moved must not be substantially different to the motion published in the agenda, however, it may be amended by resolution of the Council.

22.14 If a Councillor who has given a Notice of Motion is absent from the meeting or fails to move the motion when called upon to do so by the Chair, any other Councillor may move the motion.

22.15 If a Notice of Motion is not moved at the meeting at which it is listed, it lapses.

67. Petitions

67.1 The community has the right to lobby Council and can do so through petitioning. For a petition from the community to be considered valid, accepted and presented to a Council meeting on its own merits, the requirements in Sub-Rules 67.2 to 67.4 must be met:

67.2 A petition must be:

67.2.1 in the prescribed template format (attached to these Governance Rules at Appendix One);

67.2.2 addressed to Latrobe City Council;

67.2.3 refer to a matter on which Latrobe City Council has the power to act;

67.2.4 state the reasons for petitioning Latrobe City Council;

67.2.5 contain a request for action by Latrobe City Council;

67.2.6 be signed by at least ten people (must not be in pencil);

67.2.7 not relate to a matter under consideration through a current submission/objection process (e.g. through the Act or the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*).

67.3. The terms of the petition must:

67.3.1 be placed at the top of every page;

67.3.2 not contain any alterations;

~~67.3.3 not exceed 250 words;~~

67.3.4 not be illegal and must not promote illegal acts; and

67.3.5 language must not be objectionable or inflammatory in nature.

67.4 Only paper-based petitions (in the prescribed format) or e-petitions ~~that are submitted through an approved Council e-petition facility~~ that meet the above criteria will be accepted.

67.5 Submitting your petition

67.5.1 Paper-based petitions should be forwarded by mail with the details of the head petitioner or other nominated person for follow up, to:

Latrobe City Council

PO Box 264

Morwell VIC 3840

or delivered in person to any Latrobe City Council customer service centre during business hours.

67.5.2 E-petitions can be forwarded in accordance with the criteria specified by Council for that facility.

67.6 Once received, officers will provide written acknowledgement of receipt, and undertake an initial assessment against the criteria specified in these Rules to ensure that it complies prior to being presented to the next available Council meeting.

67.7 Where the petition does not meet the specified criteria, the following will apply:

67.7.1 If the subject matter relates to a current submission process (e.g. through the Act or the Planning and Environment Act 1987), the petition will be considered as a submission/objection to that process;

67.7.2 Any other matter it will be considered as general correspondence and not presented to Council;

and the head signatory or other nominated person notified accordingly.

67.8 A petition that meets the criteria will be listed for tabling at the next available Council meeting with the following information

67.8.1 The terms of the petition;

67.8.2 The number of signatures.

67.9 No discussion or debate will be entered into when a petition is being tabled, however, if the petition relates to an operational matter, Council must refer the petition to the Chief Executive Officer for consideration. If this occurs, a further report to Council is not required.

67.10 Follow up of Petition

67.10.1 Once tabled, the petition is forwarded to the appropriate Divisional General Manager for action. A report is then presented to a subsequent Council meeting, which will include officers' recommended response for Councils consideration.

67.10.2 Officers may contact the head petitioner or other nominated person as appropriate to clarify any of the issues raised in the petition.

67.10.3 The head petitioner will be advised in writing of the outcome of the request contained in the petition within a reasonable timeframe.

67.10.4 It is the responsibility of the head signatory to advise other signatories of the outcome.

Appendix One: Petition Template

Petition to the Latrobe City Council

Insert subject heading: e.g. Support for New Development

We, the undersigned (insert *residents, property owners, concerned citizens, club members etc.*) wish to inform the Latrobe City Council of (briefly *explain your concern.*)

We ask that the Latrobe City Council (explain the action you would like the Council to take).

Name (Print)	Address (minimum of residential locality must be specified)	Signature

Governance Rules – Community Engagement Responses

For/Against	Comment	Name
Against	Current governance rules ensures that council meetings are run smoothly by not having notice of motions introduced which could be incorrectly worded or misconstrued. It's also important for reports to be obtained so the full scope of the motion is understood before it is implemented. Removing this would impede council function and could see additional costs ratepayers are not expecting. Regarding the Petition rules being removed, I feel it's important that Council has ownership over the sensitive data that has to be entered for a petition to be valid. Maybe Council could explain why the e-petition platform was made in the first place so everyone understands why the rules are the way they are.	Redacted
For	I am in support of the amendments	Redacted
For	<p>Completely agree with the removals suggested and the amendments. Extreme over reach of CEO power and unnecessary complication around internal processes.</p> <p>Please remove those suggested for removal. Please ammend accordingly as suggested for notices of motions and petitions. Good to see democratic processes being reformed at long last.</p>	Redacted
For	Amend rule 67. Allowing petitions to be submitted in a manner that suits those with limited ability, knowledge or skills to do electronic online. Also allowing other E type lodgements such as change .org. it should be in a diverse way so the public can have choices to lodge in the best way that suits individuals skills, knowledge or ability to access electronic online submissions or paper lodgements. The end goal is to be able to communicate matters, in any way taking into consideration individuals means, skills ect	Redacted
For	I don't think the CEO, who is unelected by the people, should be able to reject a motion that a councillor, who is elected by the people, has bought forward. The councillors represent the people, therefore they should be able to decide what motions they move. In relation to the current petition rules, I believe the council makes it very hard to submit a petition. I think we should be able to submit petitions that are not through council. The 250 word limit should definitely be increased for council petitions.	Redacted

For/Against	Comment	Name
Against	I strongly disagree to and oppose the removal of the above rules. Regarding the removal of rule 22, this will lead to frivolous notice of motions being acted on in the chamber, including those matters that are outside of council's scope of influence. Removing this will add cost and detract council officers from their meaningful work with the community. Removing parts of and changing rule 67 will likely allow fraudulent partitions made to council. With the proposed changes it would be easy for someone to fabricate community sentiment to support a favoured project or notice of motion. Making such changes will severely damage public confidence in council decision making.	Redacted
Against	I strongly feel the Governance Rules Should Remain Unchanged Petition Requirements and Transparent Reporting Are Essential for Good Governance Local governance thrives on clear rules, accountability, and informed decision-making. Among the most critical regulations are the 250-word petition requirement and the mandate to use a council-approved platform both of which ensure that public concerns are raised in an organised and effective manner. However, an equally important aspect of governance is ensuring that all reports and notice of motion presented to the Council include essential information such as justification, costings, environmental impact, and workforce impact. Without these elements, Councillors risk making decisions without a full understanding of the consequences. Keeping Petitions Clear and Accountable- The 250-word limit ensures that petitions remain focused and to the point. Councillors and officials need to quickly assess public concerns, and an unrestricted petition length could lead to unnecessary complexity, making it harder to identify the key issue. A strict word limit also prevents petitions from becoming repetitive, ensuring that all requests are concise and actionable. Additionally, requiring petitions to be submitted through a council-approved platform safeguards against fraud, misinformation, and procedural loopholes. This requirement ensures: - Petitions meet verification standards. - Signatures are legitimate and not duplicated. - Every community member has equal access to the process. Allowing petitions on unverified platforms risks opening the door to manipulation, false claims, and unnecessary administrative burden. Councillors Must Have Full Knowledge Before Voting Beyond petitions, every report presented to Council should include costings, environmental impact, and workforce impact to ensure fully informed decision-making. Without this information, Councillors cannot accurately weigh the consequences of their votes, leading to potential budget shortfalls, unforeseen environmental damage, or negative effects on local workers. Requiring these key details in every report allows Councillors to: Understand financial implications. Every decision affect ratepayer dollars. Without costings, the Council risks approving initiatives that may be financially unsustainable. Assess environmental consequences. Any project or policy change must consider environmental impacts, whether	Redacted

For/Against	Comment	Name
	it's land use, infrastructure development, or resource consumption. Evaluate workforce effects. Policies and projects often impact council employees, local businesses, and job availability. Without workforce data, decisions could lead to unintended job losses or overburdened staff. Preventing Poor Governance and Inefficiency If reports lack this critical information, Councillors risk voting blindly, potentially making decisions that harm the organisation and community. Without transparency, governance becomes inefficient, leading to: - Delayed projects due to unforeseen costs. - Community backlash from unexpected environmental harm. - Workforce disruptions affecting service delivery. Conclusion: No Room for Guesswork in Governance Good governance requires clarity, accountability, and informed decision-making. Keeping the 250-word petition rule and platform requirement ensures that public concerns are raised in a structured manner, while mandating full financial, environmental, and workforce reporting guarantees that Councillors have all the facts before making decisions. Any changes that weaken these requirements would undermine efficiency, transparency, and public trust in the Council's decision-making process.	
Against	I don't want any changes to the governance rules especially the petitions Retaining the current epetition system is essential to preserving transparency and accountability in the petition process. By requiring petitions to be submitted through the Council's official platform, we can ensure that all signatories provide verifiable information, thereby preventing fraudulent identities or outside influences from unduly swaying Council decisions. This approach maintains the integrity of the process and guarantees that the voices of the community are represented in an honest and equitable manner.	Redacted
For	supporting the consideration of changes of the Governance Rules 2025 Rule 22 and Rule 67 I Pauline Hoeben am writing this on behalf of my husband (Peter Hoeben) and myself (Pauline) views to save you receiving 2 separate submissions from us both. We both would like to say that we fully support your decision for consideration for the removal of rule 22 and the 250-word limit rule 67. Also, we are supporting your consideration for amendment to the Rule 67 about Epetitions. With these changes this will open it up for all members of the pubic to have their say and get any submissions with signatures on these forms uploaded to council in a much timelier manner especially if it is needing urgent attention. To know that if in the future I or my husband may sign anything that needs attention from our local council and is signed by using a 3rd party form like Change. org for example then we will know at least this won't	Pauline & Peter Hoeben

For/Against	Comment	Name
	be in vain and will be a legit form that would be recognized by our local council should this amendment go ahead. Thank you.	
Against	I wish the governance rules to remain the same with no changes	Redacted
Against	I don't believe the Governance rules should be altered . As they are, they are best practice.	Georgie Parkmore
Against	I support maintaining the rules as they are. The need for change has not been compelling enough to warrant altering them.	Redacted
Against	The status quo should remain. I do not support any changes as they appear to be detrimental to the efficiency of governance and provide a means for serial petitioners to have free range.	Redacted
Against	No amendment to rule 22 and 67	Gavin Browne
For	I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed amendments to the Latrobe City Council Governance Rules, specifically the changes that would allow the use of Change.org and other third-party systems for submitting petitions. I believe this is a progressive step that will enhance community engagement, improve accessibility, and strengthen democratic participation in our local government processes. The inclusion of third-party platforms like Change.org offers several key benefits. Firstly, it modernizes the petition process by leveraging widely used, userfriendly tools that many residents are already familiar with. This reduces barriers for individuals who may find the council's existing e-petition system less intuitive or restrictive due to requirements like word counts or specific templates, as noted in previous community feedback. By expanding the options available, the council can ensure that more voices—especially those of younger residents, busy families, or people less comfortable with formal processes—are heard in decision-making. Secondly, allowing third-party systems aligns with the principles of transparency and flexibility outlined in the Local Government Act 2020. Platforms like Change.org enable petitioners to share their concerns publicly, fostering broader community	Redacted
Against	To Whom It May Concern, I am writing to express my concerns about the proposed changes to the Governance Rules, particularly regarding notices of motion and petitions. As a resident who values transparency and community involvement, I believe these changes could negatively impact how council decisions are made and how the public can have a say. With decades of experience in	Ricky Patton

For/Against	Comment	Name
	telecommunications and IT, I have worked with businesses such as Telstra and Aussie Broadband, as well as organizing gaming LAN events like TNW in Sale and GippsLAN in Morwell. My background has given me firsthand knowledge of network security, data management, and the risks associated with handling sensitive information online. Removing parts of Rule 22 that require justification and background for notices of motion, along with the CEO's ability to reject or refine them, could lead to motions being put forward without enough explanation or oversight. This may result in poor decision-making and less accountability to the community. Additionally, removing the requirement for a Council report when spending over \$5,000 outside the budget could create financial risks and reduce transparency about how public money is being used. Regarding Rule 67, while removing the word limit for petitions is not a major concern, I do believe that e-petitions should be kept on-premises or at least within the Council's network. Petitions can contain sensitive information that, if mishandled, could result in a cyber attack. Latrobe City Council is a smaller target compared to major petition platforms, making it a safer option for handling such data. Additionally, future ownership and liability issues could arise if the Council encourages or allows petitions through external platforms. There is also the issue of verifying signatures, which is critical for governance-related petitions. Without proper oversight, this method could weaken the integrity of the petition process. Overall, these changes seem to reduce community input and make it easier for decisions to be made without proper oversight. I urge the Council to reconsider these amendments and ensure that governance remains transparent, fair, and accessible to everyone. Sincerely, Ricky Patton	
For	Council should not under any circumstances restrict how many words an individual uses to submit their concerns relating to their community. By doing this restriction Councils are showing that they do not really care what Rate Payers have issues with. .councils SHOULD go back to what they were intended to do, manage Rates/Roads and Rubbish.	Joseph Hester
Against	Look, when it comes to governance rules, stability is key. Changing the framework every time there's a new challenge or new Mayor, just creates chaos. The rules are there for a reason—to provide consistency, accountability, and a clear path forward. If we start tweaking them to fit every situation, we undermine the very foundation that keeps things running smoothly. Stick to what works, and if change is truly necessary, it should be deliberate, well thought out, and not just a reaction to short-term pressures	David Whitnore
Against	Here's a version written in a younger, more relatable voice: — Hey everyone, I just wanna say that I think we should keep the governance rules as they are. They might not be perfect, but they work. Changing them could cause way more problems than it solves. Right now, we know what to expect, and	Redacted

For/Against	Comment	Name
	things are running smoothly. If we start making big changes, there's a risk of confusion, arguments, and maybe even decisions that make things worse. Plus, these rules were made for a reason. They've kept things fair and balanced so far. If we want to tweak something small later, cool—but throwing out the system we already have? That just seems like unnecessary drama. Let's not fix what isn't broken. Keeping things the way they are is the best move.	
Against	I'm writing to express my objection to the removal of e petitions as council process. I feel that using third party petitions such as change.org open the process up to corruption from outside sources. E petitions carry a level of integrity that can give rate payers the confidence to feel that only local residents are having a say. We should not be allowing outside sources to influence this process. I strongly urge council to vote against this proposed change to this rule.	Michelle Hassett
Against	I don't want changes made to the rules	Malcolm Thompson
Against	I oppose any changes to the rules	Adria Turner
Against	I object to any changes that decrease accountability or lack of justification for any large amount of expenditure	Redacted
Against	I don't want changes made to the governance rules	Edgar Owen
Against	These rules are best practice. Leave them as they are. You need to be accountable when spending ratepayer money.	Redacted
Against	Your proposal to governance rule changes is continuing evidence of your greed in a time of financial constraint and hardship	Redacted
Against	These changes are absolutely ridiculous and absurd. Don't change a system that works to pit to something worse. Don't change it.	Redacted
Against	I oppose this ridiculous proposed change to the current system. To allow council to use public monies in any way is highway robbery.	Redacted

For/Against	Comment	Name
Against	I feel there should be no changes to the government rules. In fact I feel there should be more checks and balances to spending the councils money.	Redacted
Against	I don't want the government rules to be altered and I'm opposed to any changes to the government rules.	Redacted
Against	These rules are best practice and I want them to remain as they are.	Redacted
Against	I oppose any changes to the rules and that the government rules should stay as they are.	Cindy Burns
Against	The governance rules as they currently stand are effective, efficient & do not require alterations. no changes are necessary, the current rules make sense	Redacted
Against	I support the current Governance Rules which align with the Local Government Act 2020. I am particularly opposed to any change to Rule 67 - there needs to be a sound mechanism for legitimate petitions to be submitted to Council, not subject to the vagaries & falsehoods of social media signatures collected on-line via change.org & similar set-ups. A petition to Council from citizens of Latrobe needs to be just that; not an undemocratic process where people can sign multiple times with multiple on-line identities & engage in other deceptive practices. Other levels of Government have restrictions on how petitions are designed, signatures collected & presented to our elected representatives - this protects the rights of citizens and our democracy - one person, one vote, one voice!	Margaret Guthrie
For	I support the proposed changes to the Latrobe City Council's Governance Rules regarding acceptance of e-petitions to include the recommended changes. I wish to see Council delete rule 67.3.3 and alter rule 67.4 to the words outlined below. 67.3. The terms of the petition must: 67.3.1 be placed at the top of every page; 67.3.2 not contain any alterations; 67.3.3 Delete this sub-rule as stated. 67.3.4 not be illegal and must not promote illegal acts; and 67.3.5 language must not be objectionable or inflammatory in nature. 67.4 Only paper-based petitions (in the prescribed format) or e-petitions that meet the above criteria will be accepted. It is my firm belief that all available forms of community feedback must be encouraged and accepted as being valid for council consideration, so long as all other basic requirements as outlined in the rules are met. I strongly support e-petitions that are created on reliable online, social media platforms and which comply with the template standards as outlined. Such a change would acknowledge that Latrobe City Council is genuinely seeking wide public response and that the council is fully complying with the terms of its undertakings to ensure close community engagement.	Elizabeth Mitchell

For/Against	Comment	Name
Against	I was not going to make a submission but after all this trouble with the Mayor using our rates for a trip I do want to have my say. Absolutely no way should the Governance rules be changed. We can't trust the Councillors with the rules they have in place there is no way we can trust them if we reduce the regulations.	Elizabeth (Ally) Montaburg
Against	I strongly oppose any changes to Latrobe City Governance rules. I believe the current situation is best practice for accountability, transparency and best outcomes of decision making processes that we entrust to council on our behalf	Redacted
Against	I oppose any changes to the current rules	Redacted
Against	These rules are best practice and I want them to remain as they are	Redacted
Against	The current governance rules are best practice, and I want them to remain as they are.	Redacted
Against	The disgraceful behaviour witnessed from the council this week only reinforces why governance rules must not be changed. These rules exist to prevent exactly this kind of misconduct and to ensure accountability. Altering them now would only enable more abuse of power and further erode trust. If the council spent half as much effort following the rules as they do trying to change them, we wouldn't be in this mess. The public deserves better. Keep the rules as they are.	Redacted
Against	I've seen plenty of councils come and go, but this week's behavior was some of the worst yet. It's exactly why the governance rules exist—to stop those in power from bending things to suit themselves. Changing the rules now would be like letting the fox guard the henhouse. Good governance isn't about making things easier for the council; it's about keeping things fair for everyone. Leave the rules alone and start acting with the integrity the public expects.	Redacted
Against	I don't want any changes made to the Governance rules. These rules are best practice, and I want them to remain as they are.	Redacted
For	The rules need to be changed	Neil Starkey
For	Change the rules about the ability to accept petitions. Council must fall inline with other councils and have the ability to accept public petition's.	Brad Davison

For/Against	Comment	Name
For	I oppose not being able to use their party platforms for petitions	Redacted
Against	<p>For the past few years, the cost-of-living crisis has been escalating in Australia. It is clearly evident in our community, that people are doing it tougher. Council's role is to provide good governance for our municipality and to clearly demonstrate their role as leaders in our community. This includes being open, honest and transparent about the way they seek to spend rate payers' money. To see a proposal to that weakens the existing governance arrangements at this time is quite astounding, especially when it seeks to remove reports and justification for expenditure in excess of \$5,000 that is also outside the Budget or establishes/alters a Council Policy. The Budget and Council Policies go through a rigorous reporting, discussion and endorsement process. Surely expenditure outside of that, should be considered with equal amounts of rigor. I expect our leaders to lead; to do their due diligence; to consider expenditure on its risks and merits. If an expenditure is warranted, then do the work required to get approval. I can't imagine how this would float in a family if one of the adults just went and blew off more than \$5,000 with no conversations or justification. The Council budget is no different to any other – it is finite. Please stick within it, and respect that it is rate payers' money, not the Councillors to spend as they please. The Council CEO has decades of local government experience. Some Councillors have been in their roles less than six months. The CEO is there to provide guidance based on these decades of experience, especially on matters of governance. To undermine this wealth of knowledge is heading into dangerous territory. We need stability in volatile, uncertain times.</p> <p>The Council e-petition facility offers a secure online platform for residents to have their say on matters of importance to them. The petition platform adheres to the Council Privacy Policy: Latrobe City Council (Council) believes that the responsible handling of personal information is a key aspect of democratic governance and is strongly committed to ensuring that personal information received by the Council is collected and handled in a responsible manner. The Council demonstrates its commitment through implementing the Information Privacy Principles ("IPPs") in the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic) and the Health Privacy Principles ("HPPs") in the Health Records Act 2001 (Vic) (jointly the "Privacy Principles"). However, allowing petitions to be submitted on unregulated petition facilities opens up residents to the sale of private data to third parties, increasing the risk to scams and financial fraudulent activity. How is the Council going to be assured that these petitions are not signed by bots and fake profiles? I've seen on the local paper petitions against the Council Future Morwell project have names of any one with an alternative or supportive view on the matter, have their names and views crossed off.</p>	Redacted

For/Against	Comment	Name
	There is a safe and easy way to manage genuine petitions to Council – and zero need to try to fix something that is not broken. If residents are genuinely wishing to sign a petition it is not too much to ask for them to do it on an approved Council e-petition facility.	
Against	Rule 22, especially in light of the Mayor's European Vacation fiasco, is important to keep in place. Having additional oversight for expenditure by a suitability qualified CEO, who is required to protect the interests of the Latrobe City Council, along with being able get additional information or reject motions is good governance and protects rate payers from counsellors making decisions without proper scrutiny or consideration. Rules 67 is important to keep in place as is. The 250 word limit and requirement to use an e-petition allows for the public to be heard by council in an efficient manner. Removing these means allowing for greater waste of council resources in dealing with potentially very lengthy submissions in various forms. I would like for my rates to spent dealing with matters in as an efficient way as possible. More information can be sought from submitters if the submission has merit and as necessary.	Christopher Milne

URGENT BUSINESS

11. URGENT BUSINESS

Business may be admitted to the meeting as urgent business in accordance with clause 20 of the Governance Rules, by resolution of the Council and only then if it:

- 20.1 Relates to or arises out of a matter which has arisen since distribution of the agenda; and
- 20.2 Cannot reasonably or conveniently be deferred until the next Council meeting.

REPORTS FOR NOTING

PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS

PURPOSE

To provide an update on the review of making Councillor Briefing Sessions and Councillor Briefing reports available to the public.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- At the Ordinary Council Meeting held 2 September 2024 Council determined that a Council Report outlining the advantages and disadvantages of making Councillor Briefings available to the public be presented to a future meeting.
- Councillor Briefings are generally held on the first and third Monday of each month. The meetings commence at 5.30 pm and generally run no longer than 3 hours and are closed to the public.
- Briefing sessions enable Councillors to discuss issues amongst themselves and with senior officers. Councillor Briefing sessions have traditionally been confidential on the basis that it provides an environment for officers to share work in progress reports and provide frank and fearless advice.
- It is worth noting that the only decision making forum for Council is Council Meetings, which are, along with the agendas and minutes, available to the public.
- East Gippsland Shire adopted a similar motion in 2024 and advised the other Gippsland CEOs that they had engaged a consultant, Local Government Experts (LGe) to complete a report on public transparency (including investigating the advantages/disadvantages of public Briefings). Gippsland councils were invited to participate with Baw Baw Shire, South Gippsland Shire and Latrobe City Council accepting the offer. The consultant's report is detailed at **Attachment 1**.
- The report includes 10 options to be considered and the benefits and risks associated with implementing them.
- After LGe was engaged to complete the report, Local Government Victoria (LGV) advised that a model Transparency Policy will be developed to promote council openness and transparency and is likely to be introduced mid 2025.

- It is officer's view that before considering any change, Council waits until the following has occurred:
 - receipt of the model Transparency Policy;
 - the introduction of the Transparency Hub, and
 - draws on any learnings from the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council (MPSC) which as recently opened Councillor Briefing meetings to the public online, is allowing for elaboration of briefing topics (discussed at the briefing meetings) at Council meetings before decisions are made, and has released for community feedback a proposed Protocol for Briefings and Workshops.
- Officers will continue assessing the operational possibilities of the options provided in the report at **Attachment 1**, subject to any requirements of the model Transparency Policy. This will be presented to a future Councillor Briefing.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. endorses that no changes to be made to the current Councillor Briefing meetings until all options have been investigated, learnings from other councils are available, and the model Transparency Policy has been received from Local Government Victoria; and**
- 2. notes that a future report will be presented to Council after the learnings from other councils, and the model Transparency Policy are available to Latrobe City Council.**

BACKGROUND

At the Ordinary Council Meeting held 2 September 2024, the following Notice of Motion was adopted:

That Council receive a report at a future Council Meeting that explores the advantages and disadvantages, including consideration of Local Government Act 2020 requirements, of making all Councillor Briefing Sessions and Councillor Briefing Reports available to the public.

East Gippsland with the support of Baw Baw Shire, South Gippsland Shire and Latrobe City Council engaged LGe to complete a Public Transparency report to explore the benefits and risks of having Councillor Briefing Meetings open to the public.

The focus on transparency in Local Government is at the forefront of the communities minds with all levels of government facing higher levels of public scrutiny than before.

There is an overall desire for improved transparency creating a more accountable, fair, and trustworthy government that can better serve its community. The increased focus has been driven by several key factors, including:

- Public trust;
- Corruption concerns;
- Global pressure;
- Technology advancements; and
- Public demand.

The brief provided to LGe was to develop an independent paper that explores a range of options to facilitate more transparency in briefings like:

- Live streaming;
- Having a gallery;
- Having sections of the briefings open to the public;
- Creating opportunities for community members to present to the Council during briefings on matters that will be coming to the next Council meeting
- Creating community listening posts as part of the briefings;
- Making notes from the briefing's public; and
- What other councils may be doing in this space.

Ten options are presented for consideration in this discussion paper, along with a consideration of benefits and risks for Councils.

It is also worth noting that following a Council resolution in May 2024, officers have been working on a Transparency Hub, where further information will be available to the public via Council's website. It is anticipated that this will be live by June 2025.

ANALYSIS

Ten options have been identified and are presented for consideration in the discussion paper **Attachment 1**, along with a consideration of benefits and risks for each option:

1. Separating Council Briefings into:
 - Council Workshops (closed meetings); and
 - Briefings (open to the public);
2. Introducing a public gallery;
3. Retaining Briefings as closed sessions but releasing minutes/notes as an inclusion in a Council Meeting Agenda or on the website;
4. Introducing listening posts;
5. Introducing more sessions to invite public feedback on matters scheduled to come before Council;
6. Strengthening community engagement practices and the capture and reporting of information gathered via these processes;
7. Introducing a Transparency Hub to allow community members to access 'real time' information from Councils via on-line, self-sourcing hubs;
8. Disbanding gatherings of Councillors such as Council only time or minuting these and releasing the minutes to the public;
9. Publishing the CEO KPIs; and
10. Publication of decisions made under officer delegation.

Further detail relating to the benefits and risks for each option can be found in **Attachment 1**.

Officers will continue to work through the options presented in the report, with a future report to be presented to Council. The model Transparency Policy will assist in guiding officer recommendations.

MPSC recently opened Councillor Briefing meetings to the public online and are allowing for elaboration of briefing topics (discussed at the briefing meetings) at Council meetings to assist the community to better understand and provide feedback before decisions are made.

Feedback from officers at MPSC will be sought as part of Council's review. This will include feedback from the community on their Protocol for Briefings and Workshops document, which outlines the principals for having Briefing meetings and workshops open to the public.

RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK	RISK RATING	TREATMENT
SERVICE DELIVERY Decreased overall service delivery/delay in decision making.	Medium <i>Possible x Likely</i>	Review of resourcing and current processes to ensure needs are met.
FINANCIAL Increased administration costs including, staff resourcing and community engagement/advertising.	Medium <i>Possible x Likely</i>	Review of resourcing and current processes to ensure programs can be delivered effectively.
STRATEGIC Implementing changes that aren't in line with community needs.	Low/Medium <i>Unlikely x Minor</i>	Community consultation to be undertaken to ensure any changes being considered are inline with community expectations.

CONSULTATION

No public consultation has been conducted for this report.

Consultation with neighbouring LGAs has been conducted, as outlined in the attached report.

Community consultation will be completed prior to any changes being made. This will ensure Council is working in the best interests of the community.

COMMUNICATION

Once all options have been investigated and a final report presented to Council, communication both internally and with the public will be done.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Officers preparing this report have declared they do not have a conflict of interest in this matter under the provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

APPENDIX 1 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Gender

A Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* is required as part of considering opening Councillor Briefings to the public was to occur as it could have a significant and direct impact on the community. A GIA will be undertaken to inform a future report.

Social

The review of options relating to opening Councillor Briefings to the public supports community access to information, through facilitating understanding of available information and methods of access.

Cultural

Not applicable.

Health

Not applicable.

Environmental

Not applicable.

Economic

Not applicable.

Financial

The options presented in the report may have financial impacts including, increased administration costs, advertising and staff resourcing.

This will be assessed in more detail as part of a future report.

Attachments

1. Transparency Discussion Paper

12.1

Public availability of Councillor Briefings

1	Transparency Discussion Paper	158
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TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

Executive Summary

The focus on transparency in government has never been more in the public domain than it is today. All levels of government are facing higher levels of public scrutiny than ever before.

The spotlight on local government transparency in decision making has been bought about by an overall desire for improved transparency creating a more accountable, fair, and trustworthy government that can better serve its community. The increased focus has been driven by several key factors:

1. **Public Trust:** There's a growing concern about the fairness and honesty of government decisions. Communities want to ensure that decisions are made without undue influence or corruption. Transparency helps build trust by making processes more open and understandable.
2. **Corruption Concerns:** Some research has shown that public perception of corruption in government has been rising, leading to calls for stronger anti-corruption measures and greater transparency.
3. **Global Pressure:** There's been a global trend towards more open governance. The 24-hour news cycle has led to increased accessibility to information, the circulation of information often without checking and generation of mistrust in governments more generally. It's a case of '*if it's happening there, it's probably happening here*'.
4. **Technological Advancements:** The rise of digital technologies has made it easier to share information and engage the public in decision-making processes, enabling access to better information and opportunities for broader participation.
5. **Public Demand:** Communities are increasingly demanding more accountability from their elected representatives. Particularly when there is evidence of poor performance and behaviours leading to the sacking of councils and the appointment of administrators and monitors. These circumstances have driven the need for a reform agenda to



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

address community concerns. Noting that under current legislation that individual Councillors can be held to account and addressed without the need to sack the entire Council.¹

These factors in the local government setting have been drivers of legislative reform imposed by state government and introspection by local councils / Councillors questioning their own policies and commitment to increasing transparency and accountability at the local level.

Ten options have been identified and are presented for consideration in this discussion paper, along with a consideration of benefits and risks for Councils.

Since being engaged to undertake this work, it is important to note that Local Government Victoria (LGV) has also advised that in response to Recommendation 22 of the IBAC Operation Sandon Report² (development of a Model Transparency Policy) LGV will be developing and introducing a Model Public Transparency Policy to promote council openness and transparency.

This work is likely to guide what should be included in a Transparency Policy and provide a Model Policy to be adopted by all local governments. This work is anticipated to be finalised by Quarter 3 of 2025.

Therefore, this paper focuses on opportunities to enhance transparency without commenting on what may be included in a revised Transparency Policy.

¹ Sources: Various integrity websites across Australia.

² <https://ibac.vic.gov.au/operation-sandon>



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

WHAT IS PUBLIC TRANSPARENCY?

Transparency is a fundamental tenet of democratic governance. Openness, accountability and honesty are essential to build high levels of accountability and trust amongst citizens and enable fully informed engagement in the democratic process. Without transparency effective community engagement, planning, financial management and any number of other council responsibilities cannot be properly performed.

One of the overarching principles of the new Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) is that “the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured” (s. 9(2)(i)). Councils should note that the public transparency principles, at section 58 of the Act, must be applied to all aspects of a council’s operations and decision making.

It must also be noted that simply having council information available to the public will not meet the requirements of the Act. Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of a council’s community and public awareness of the availability of this information must be facilitated.

Transparency and accountability will strengthen governance and accountability across the sector, so that the community can have confidence in the way their council works.

APPLICATION OF TRANSPARENCY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECISIONS:

Transparency in Local Government is not limited to how councils conduct meetings it also applied to how councils as both elected representatives and organisations:

- make decisions
- conduct public consultation processes
- provide notices of meetings



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

- run meetings
- make information available to the public.

Openness, accountability, and honesty are essential to build high levels of accountability and trust among citizens and to enable fully informed engagement in the democratic process.

Councils are required to adopt and maintain a **public transparency policy**, which must be in line with underpinning principles in the Act. [Public Transparency \(DOCX, 1491.43 KB\)](#)

Councils are also required through the Local Government Act to as a minimum, adopt and maintain a **community engagement policy** [Community Engagement \(DOCX, 1491.13 KB\)](#) which must be used in the development of:

- planning and financial management
- community vision
- council plan
- financial plan
- asset management plan.

Community engagement policies provide advice as to the breadth of legislative acts and regulations where consultation and engagement is well defined and specifically relevant to the area of council business being considered and addressed. Policies generally provided for the ability for different areas of council to define its own processes relevant to its area of business and dependent on the parameters in which it is working and relevant legislation.



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

When considering the options proposed in this report it will be useful to consider them both individually and collectively as the implementation of one or more may have unintended consequences for the matters addressed in the other options.

Council CEOs have an obligation to consider any organisational risks or legal matters, in particular any Occupational Health and Safety matters in making any changes to operations.

The table in this discussion paper sets out these options for consideration. This is supported by more detailed comments in **Attachment A**.

	Options to consider	Considerations (Benefits and Risks)
1	Separating Council Briefings into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Workshops (closed) • Briefings (open to the public and /or live streamed) 	<u>Council Workshops- (closed)</u> Benefits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protects sensitive and confidential information. • Enables <i>frank & fearless</i> advice from staff. • Enables early exploratory discussion without raising expectations. • Routine information can be discussed that do not warrant public broadcasting. • Minimises potential delays. Risks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some community expectations not met (some want to see everything).



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

	<p><u>Briefings (open)</u></p> <p>Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seen as more transparent by the community.• Streaming allows greater accessibility for all to information.• Could be run as a trial and then reviewed. <p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community seek to use this as a second opportunity to have their say potentially delaying or derailing the process.• Staff are reluctant to provide <i>frank and fearless</i> advice to Council in front of the community.• Tendency for Councillors to grandstand on issues in front of a public viewing.• Councillors need to come to the Council meeting with an <i>open mind</i> and would need to carefully manage any comments in the briefing meeting.• Increased costs of administration.• OHS issues for staff attending to present where the public are present and could come under scrutiny or be targeted.
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TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased Social Media campaigning/targeting of Councillors and staff.
2	Introducing or expanding a public gallery	<p>Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seen as more transparent by the community. <p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased costs of administration Could delay matters Could be used by few members of the community and hold up matters that may be considered in the interests of the broader community.
3	Retaining Briefings as closed sessions but releasing minutes or notes as part of the Council Meeting Agenda or Website.	<p>Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seen as more transparent by the community. Provides information to the community in advance of a Council meeting enabling them time to seek further information. Other Council examples to draw on for best practice. <p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased costs of administration/resourcing.
4	Introducing Listening Posts	<p>Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective for specific/major projects or strategies to understand some community views. Shares information with the community.



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More engaging style of interaction. <p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased costs of administration/resourcing to prepare, run and report back. • Could have limited reach in the community depending on who attends. • Could delay or derail decision-making by Council.
5	Introducing more sessions to invite public feedback on matters scheduled to come before Council.	<p>Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A perception by the community that it is more transparent. • May be effective for specific items on the agenda to understand some community views. • Shares information with the community. <p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased costs of administration/resourcing. • May double up on the effort especially where community engagement has already been undertaken as part of the project/ agenda item preparation. • Could have limited reach in the community depending on who attends. • May not represent the broader community views. • Could delay or derail decision-making by Council.



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

6	Strengthening Community Engagement Practices and the capture and reporting of information gathered via these processes.	Benefits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May broaden reach across the community collecting more representative community views. • Build reputation and trust in the Council. • Closes the loop for participants. • May assist Council in priority decision making reflecting the community views. Risks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased costs of administration/resourcing to prepare, run and report back.
7	Introducing Transparency Hubs to allow community members to access 'real time' information from Councils via on-line self-sourcing hubs.	Benefits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Council examples to draw on for best practice. • Easy access by the community 24/7 in an accessible and inclusive way. • Increases information to community in one central access point. Risks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased costs for set up, administration and updates. • Needs to be regularly reviewed and kept up to date to be credible and reliable.



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

8	Disbanding gatherings of Councillors such as Council Only Time or minuting these and releasing minutes to the public.	Benefits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seen as more transparent by the community. • Councillors demonstrating commitment in their actions to transparency and building trust with community. • Builds open relationships and trust between Councillors and Executive Team. Risks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minuting and administration of these would require additional resourcing. • Accidental release of confidential information to the public.
9	Publishing of CEO KPIs	Benefits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates transparency to the community and how Council is holding the CEO to account. Risks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny and interference by the community on what are normally confidential employment matters handled by the employer. • Unfounded criticism of the CEO by the community. • Political Interference. • From a leadership perspective, unlikely to motivate any employee.
10	Publication of decisions made under Officer Delegation	Benefits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seen as more transparent by the community.



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shares information with the community.• Demonstrates a commitment to accountability. <p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scrutiny by the community on decisions and extra time required by officers to respond to queries on decisions.
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TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

WHAT GIPPSLAND, OTHER COUNCILS AND JURISDICTIONS ARE DOING.

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council

In 2024 Mornington Peninsula Shire Council (MPSC) proposed a change to their briefing meetings, as part of their review of Council's Public Transparency Policy. This change was to include opening briefing meetings to the public online and allow for elaboration of briefing topics (briefing meetings) at Council meetings to help the community better understand and feedback before decisions are made.

The proposal for change and greater transparency was initiated by the former Council in 2024 and subsequently continued by the new Council, elected in October 2024. Whilst there has been some change to the makeup of the Council at MPSC however, the desire for improved transparency is still strong, albeit with potential for different outcomes.

Summary of the changes agreed by the new MPSC after the election in 2024 was that they:

- adopted its updated Mornington Peninsula Shire Public Transparency Policy
- required that Officers provide more detailed briefing meeting outcomes and information/discussion in the Council's ordinary meeting agendas.



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

- directed Officers to consult with the community on the draft Briefing Meeting Protocol including that the briefing meetings be conducted solely online and be livestreamed to the wider community. (As at 5 March 2025 this protocol is out for community feedback.)³
- identified the need to conduct Councillor Workshops where those matters that cannot be included in Briefing meetings due to the confidential nature of the information (as defined in the Local Government Act 2020) or does not meet the requirements of the Public Interest Test as defined in the Act and Council's Public Transparency Policy including meanings for both confidentiality and the Public Interest Test.

At the same time MPSC abandoned the conduct of their Citizens Advisory Panel who were involved in key deliberative engagement exercises.

MPSC is now awaiting the outcomes of the community consultation on the Protocol for Briefings and Workshops.

City of Greater Dandenong

City of Greater Dandenong (CGD) has also sought to obtain information (through the provision of an officer report) outlining the pros and cons on the conduct of Councillor Briefing Sessions being opened to the public. At GDCC the vote to consider opening Councillor Briefing Meetings to the public didn't have the full support of the Council, however the decision to provide regular qualitative and quantitative reports to Council on the performance and statistics of its complaints handling system was seen by some decision makers to address a critical aspect of being more transparent to the community.

³ <https://shape.mornpen.vic.gov.au/protocol-briefings-and-workshops>



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

East Gippsland Shire Council

Currently provides:

- Records the voting of all Councillors on each agenda item in Council Meetings.
- Commitment to introducing a transparency hub as part of system upgrades
- Livestreams meetings.
- Publishing, as part of quarterly report, a list of Contracts awarded under delegation.
- Publishing of Staff Public Interest Returns.

South Gippsland Shire Council

Currently provides:

- Publishing of notes from Strategic Briefing Sessions
- Publishing of Staff Public Interest Returns
- Livestreams meetings
- Publishing in the Council Agenda a list of contracts approved under delegation.

Latrobe City Council

Currently provides:

- Publishing of Staff Public Interest Returns
- Livestreams Meetings
- Council Meeting minutes including the voting of all Councillors on each agenda item
- Commitment to introducing a transparency hub



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

Baw Baw Shire Council:

Currently provides:

- Publishing of Staff Public Interest Returns
- Livestreams Meetings
- Consideration of tenders in open Council meetings
- A monthly governance report to transparently table assembly of Councillor records, Advisory Committee minutes, changes to Cr allowances, legislative changes, other governance related matters as they arise within a single reporting platform.
- Tabling of Assembly of Councillor records even though no longer mandatory.

Western Australia

When the reforms were first introduced in 2023 it was proclaimed that the reforms were the most significant reforms to the Local Government Act 1995 (the Act) in 25 years and aim to ensure local governments better serve residents and ratepayers.

Reforms have been crafted in consultation with the local government sector and are based on 6 themes Full Reform Proposals (dlqsc.wa.gov.au):

1. Earlier intervention, effective regulation and stronger penalties
2. Reducing red tape, increasing consistency and simplicity
3. Greater transparency and accountability
4. Stronger local democracy and community engagement



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

5. Clearer roles and responsibilities
6. Improved financial management and reporting.

It appears that most of the reforms proposed by the Western Australian Government are already in practice in Victoria and are unlikely to have any further effect apart from the requirement to publish the CEO Performance review outcomes.

New South Wales

In December 2024, the Minns Labor Government announced it was progressing reforms to strengthen local government, announcing changes to the way council meetings are conducted to ensure greater transparency and increase community confidence in council decision making. These changes were out for comment with the community invited to have their say. The consultation process concluded on 28 February 2025. It is not known when the proposed changes will come before the parliament and in what form. However, its intended that the proposed changes will be adopted and its these changes that may influence future reform in Victoria.

To date changes require all councils to adopt a code of meeting practice based on the Model Meeting Code issued by the Office of Local Government.

As can be seen from the level of local government reform described above notable is a general consistency in the elements of change across the sector Australia wide.

The proposed changes (apart from those focused on strategic planning, administrative and structural changes) have been largely directed at improving governance and transparency in decision making, increasing accountability, Councillor



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

conduct and behaviours, and requirements for enhanced community engagement including deliberative practice as a mandated approach.

South Australia

In South Australia reform has taken the form of revised legislation informed by the conduct of multiple reviews. Commencing in 2021 the government instigated changes to the local government legislation following several reviews in the preceding years.

Some key reforms include:

- a new conduct management framework for council members
- an expansion of expert, independent advice to councils on a range of critical financial and governance matters
- a modern approach to public consultation
- a range of improvements to regulation to reduce councils' costs.

These changes don't appear to have any significant learnings for Victorian Councils.



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

NEXT STEPS

In light of the findings of this discussion paper, Councils have the opportunity to consider future options that may enhance public transparency.

Any changes could be introduced as part of the review of Council Transparency policies or used to contribute to the State Government's development of a Model Transparency Policy.

Council CEOs should engage in a discussion with Councillors regarding the options in this report and understand the resource implications and risks associated with any proposed changes.

Council CEOs in the region are encouraged to share findings of any trials introduced to encourage continuous improvement across the region.



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

ATTACHMENT A

This table below provides comments on each of the Options summarised in this discussion paper for consideration by Councils.

Options to consider
1. Separating Council Briefings into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Workshops (closed) • Briefings (open to the public and /or live streamed)
Comments <p>To address the option of opening Councillor Briefing meetings to the public, consideration could be given to splitting the Councillor Briefing Meetings into two types, Briefings that are open to the public online and live streamed and Workshops that are meetings where Councillors can be briefed similarly to how Briefing Meetings occur currently (closed to the public).</p> <p><u>a) Council Workshops (closed)</u></p> <p>Closed Council Workshops provide an opportunity for Councillors and Council officers to share information and to explore proposals that are in their preliminary stages before embarking on a more detailed assessment of them. They also promote learning outcomes for Councillors and Council officers in relation to items that may later come before Council for decision.</p> <p>Like Briefings, Workshops are not used for conducting the general business of Council or making decisions.</p>



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

Unlike Briefings, Workshops are internal forums and will not be made open to the public. Workshops will be used to discuss and explore matters, including matters which might be of significant public interest, which:

- require the presentation and discussion of confidential information and/or sensitive information, where the release of such information may be contrary to legislation, mislead the public or otherwise be contrary to the public interest;
- involve the presentation of information to Councillors for the purposes of initial, preliminary or exploratory discussion; or
- are routine in nature and do not affect the community, or otherwise due to their nature and level of public interest do not warrant public broadcasting.⁴

b) Briefings (open to the public and / or live streamed)

Live Streaming

Councillors could consider live streaming of Briefing Meetings online to offer public observance and greater transparency across a broader range of Council matters.

Live streaming of scheduled Council meetings is already a common way of enabling the community to observe the ordinary meeting of the Council as a public gallery. Its practice is well entrenched following the COVID-19 lockdowns where physical attendance was not possible.

⁴ Mornington Peninsula Shire Council 2024 Draft Protocol for Briefings and Workshops



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

The development of the Briefing Protocol by Mornington Peninsula Shire Council (MPSC) provides insight into how briefing meetings might also be livestreamed and establishes a mechanism for differentiating between those matters that could be included in a briefing meeting open to the public and those matters better dealt with by a Councillor only Workshop.

Noting that the implications for this must give consideration to the Councils obligation around public interest and confidentiality.

Noting that decisions cannot be made by the Council at either a Briefing Meeting or a Workshop. The CEO could prepare an agenda in consultation with the Mayor:

- deciding whether an item or matter will be presented and discussed at a Briefing or at a Workshop;
and
- setting the agenda for Briefings and Workshops.

Public Gallery

The opportunity to have a Public Gallery is considered fundamental to public decision making. A Council meeting is a public, formal decision-making forum of the elected Council. There is an opportunity for the public to be present, in the Gallery to hear the discussion and debate and from that gain a deeper insight into the matters before the Council. This is of value to the members of the public in the Gallery with a community or specific interest in the matters being determined.

This is what is currently in place and required under legislation in a very regulated way. The only time that this doesn't occur is when the matters being determined by the Council can only be considered in a meeting closed to the public due to it meeting the provisions for confidentiality or not to be deemed to be in the public interest.



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

Councils, including the Councils participating in this research, all provide opportunities for limited participation in a formal Council meeting. There are generally notice periods, although some councils may not enforce that requirement if a person wants to speak to a matter before the Council and is usually limited to matters included in the Agenda Papers. Participation is time managed to enable all speakers to be heard, and participation is generally limited to presentation of information or questions being posed.

Councillors may ask questions for clarification only and generally not enter a discussion with those who have sought to present to the Council.

The Governance Rules lay out very clearly how the Council's decision-making process occurs and the participation, of any of anyone in the Public Gallery.

Councils generally have a series of rules and or protocols as part of its Governance Rules on how a Gallery is required to behave and the level of participation, if any.

There are pros and cons to having a public Gallery in that sometimes the presence of a Gallery may engender different behaviours of Councillors that don't benefit the debate or outcome of the matter/s being deliberated on. These behaviours can be a distraction and lead to unnecessary and unwarranted disruption and don't always lead to the best decisions or outcomes.

The notion of a Gallery in a Briefing Session is very different. Generally Briefing Meetings are designed to provide information to the Councillor group in a more informal setting, although certain protocols are expected with respect to the conduct and behaviours of all participants. It's an opportunity for the Council staff or a specialist consultant may be invited to present information and to discuss options for those matters that are not yet ready to go before the formality of a publicly convened Council meeting.



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

Where Public Galleries are contemplated as being a useful addition to a Councillor briefing then this may limit the form and content of information being presented, may limit the participation and role officers of the Council play in presenting information and the provision of frank and fearless advice. More junior officers may be prevented from appearing and or participating in a briefing session if the Briefing isn't closed to the public.

The decision of the MPSC to open their Briefing Meetings to a Public Gallery (online only) as observers not participants, has identified in their proposed Briefing Protocol to introduce another meeting format of Workshops where there is not the inclusion of the Public Gallery.

This format will deal with those matters that require the confidentiality of the meeting to discuss with Councillors those things that cannot be discussed with a Public Gallery present. This protocol is currently out for community consultation and will come before the Council in March 2025.

The risk in this approach is that the community may find that there are not too many Briefing meetings scheduled as most matters will fall into the category to be considered in a Workshop. In this instance the intentions of the Council in terms of providing enhanced transparency in decision making and building community trust may not meet the expectations of the community.

If the option to split the Briefing meeting as suggested above implementation could occur on a trial basis for a period of 6-12 months to ascertain its effectiveness in meeting Council's objectives for improved transparency.

In addition, if a decision is taken to change the way Briefing Meetings are conducted and open them to the public, then Council will also need to consider the complete range of other meeting types, For example Councillor Only time. The following questions and considerations should be applied to all formal and informal meetings that include Councillors and



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

whether they should continue or be discontinued, whether to take minutes/notes for those meetings and if they should be made available to the public for the purposes of public transparency. Refer to **Option 8**.

2. Introducing or expanding a public gallery Comments

Councillors should think carefully about their reasons for expanding opportunities for a stronger Public Gallery presence or introducing the opportunity for a Gallery where it isn't currently allowed. Council should investigate if the proposed changes are in the broader community interest⁵ by asking questions such as:

- will the expansion of opportunities for a Public Gallery be seen to be in the broader community interest?
- where opportunities are provided, for a Public Gallery, even in a limited context, i.e. online or limited opportunities what will the community benefit from in being a part of the Public Gallery?
- will the introduction of an alternative format for Workshops as with the MPSC protocol be seen as disingenuous by the community?
- identification of alternatives that could achieve a same or similar outcome or be more meaningful in terms of their engagement?
- understand if the opportunity is intended to be available for all Briefing Meetings or to specific occasions and matters of interest?
- clarify with the community what they are seeking and why?

⁵ For this report, Broader Community Interest refers to likely support or benefit expected from the majority to almost entire population of the municipality.



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

- consider and understand the level of community engagement that is carried out currently and look to identify where those opportunities can be promoted further or be tweaked to meet the needs of providing stronger engagement and transparency.

If Councillors determine the benefits are outweighed by the risks, as described above having considered these questions; then

- it needs to be made very clear to the community that there may be a limited number of opportunities to open a Briefing Meeting to a Public Gallery; and
- provide advice of the actual intent and outcomes expected of new or enhanced Gallery opportunities; and
- communicate this with the community to gauge interest; and
- test over a period of time before formalising.

Refer to comments in Option 1 on Public Galleries.

3. Retaining Briefings as closed sessions but releasing minutes or notes as part of the Council Meeting Agenda or Website.

Comments

As an alternative to opening briefing meetings the public the Council could opt instead to release minutes or notes of the briefing meeting to the public.

Some Councils across Australia currently release information regarding the briefing meetings held. e.g. The City of South Perth releases notes from their Agenda meeting meetings for their community.⁶

⁶ https://southperth.wa.gov.au/docs/default-source/minutes-and-agendas/2024/ocm-sep-2024/notes---council-agenda-briefing.pdf?sfvrsn=f611abbd_1



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

As briefing meetings are not decision-making forums the notes/minutes of the meeting could reflect:

- Attendance at the meeting
- Declarations of Interest
- The topics discussed/presented at the meeting and information provided to Councillors
- Summary of the topics
- Matters to be listed for a future Council meeting

These notes/minutes could then be published in the next available Council meeting agenda and/or on Council's website in advance of the Council meeting.

4. Introducing Listening Posts

Comments

Where Council wishes to seek community feedback and input on a particular strategy or project, the Council could set up a separate Community Listening Post.

A Community Listening Post can be highly effective in specific circumstances, generally a major Project, the Council Plan or other significant issue where their application requires equitable access for the wider community. That is, information is provided widely and everyone invited to participate. In this context they enable both the provision of information (from Council) as well as the opportunity to provide feedback to inform council decisions.

The implication, however, for the wider introduction of the Listening Post on a semi regular basis at Briefing Meetings needs also to be considered in terms of cost and resources to implement as they are costly to prepare and impart information, accommodation, and staffing time in preparation, delivery and analysis to inform the council decision.



TRANSPARENCY DISCUSSION PAPER – MARCH 2025

Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

The introduction of a Listening Post prior to a Council meeting to obtain feedback or ideas is not equitable as the exchange of information, ideas and feedback would be limited to a few were able to be present, require additional staff to manage and to collate and record detailed information and report back. Dependent on the issues raised this may delay further council decisions as any part that requires more research may not be available to Council immediately.

5. Introducing more sessions to invite public feedback on matters scheduled to come before Council.

Comments

Introducing more sessions to invite public feedback on matters scheduled to come before Council can be addressed through amending the definitions of Briefing Meetings as described in Option 1. Consideration in setting the agenda can be given to including those matters where the public may benefit from receiving more information and the minutes/notes from these meetings are included in the next formal Council meeting Agenda or on the website to enable full transparency of the matters discussed as well as any material made available during those meetings.

Noting however that in many cases Council may have already consulted widely in bringing information to the Council in a Briefing meeting it would be a mechanism to close the loop in the consultation process and provision of feedback and information.

6. Strengthening Community Engagement Practices and the capture and reporting of information gathered via these processes.

Comments

A commitment by Council to review and strengthen community engagement practices can be identified and captured in Councils Community Engagement Policies.

These engagement practices, particularly deliberative engagement, can often reach a broader representation of the community in seeking input and feedback.

These engagement techniques can build a positive reputation and trust in the Council.

These practices may also assist the Council in setting priorities in response to community need.



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Engagement practices are very resource intense and often requires specialist skills, techniques and a clear communications strategy to support the exercise. This can place large cost burdens on Councils. Council needs to decide whether the investment in further engagement will address any concerns of the community regarding transparency and decision making.

7. Introducing Transparency Hubs to allow community members to access 'real time' information from Councils via on-line self-sourcing hubs.

Comments

The introduction of a Transparency Hub on Councils website provides opportunities to record in a publicly accessible manner all types of information that cover the spectrum of council decisions and performance. A Transparency Hub can offer streamlined access to selected Council data, stories, reports, and curated information including:

- detailed financial records from the Council and its stakeholders
- asset management data (eg; Capital Works Program)
- procurement data (>\$200k)
- Councillor data and decisions taken
- Publication of decisions made under Officer delegation

An online portal lets you to explore and visualise data, providing an overview of Council's decision-making and activities. It is a central hub of information.

A Transparency Hub is an accessible way for the council to demonstrate its commitment to transparency, good governance and accountability.⁷ It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

⁷ <https://data.frankston.vic.gov.au/pages/home/>



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Implications for the introduction of a transparency hub can include costs in the set up and continued update of information, however the benefits from a transparency perspective includes access for everyone to important data, information and the decisions of council.

8. Disbanding gatherings of Councillors such as Council Only Time or minuting these and releasing minutes to the public.

Comments

Councillors, at some Councils, hold Councillor only Time meetings without the presence of the CEO or the public. Usually no notes or minutes are captured at these meetings and they are not decision making forums.

Councillors are as much responsible, as the Council administration, in promoting transparency to the community. On the basis of this it should be considered by a Councillor group whether to disband Councillor only time meetings or have notes prepared that are available publicly.

This would demonstrate a commitment to transparency to the public and help build trust between the Councillors, the public and the Executive Team of Councils.

There would be extra administration cost to the minuting and publishing of meeting notes.



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Prepared For: East Gippsland, Baw Baw, South Gippsland Shire Councils and Latrobe City Council.

9. Publishing of CEO KPIs

Comments

In Western Australia the Local Government Act is under review and there is a proposal to include new requirements for the publication of results of performance reviews of local government CEOs as well as a series of public registers.

The WA Government have stated:

“As the leader of a local government’s administration, CEOs are key to the successful delivery of community services and facilities as determined by the council. The proposed reforms will contribute to standardising key performance indicators for CEOs, so they can be published on the local government’s website in an easy-to-understand format.

These regulations also seek to improve the operation of the CEO employment standards by providing for the independent members on CEO selection panels to be drawn from a list maintained by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC), and for them to be paid in the same manner as independent committee members.

These regulations also strengthen the requirement for a recruitment process to be undertaken where a current CEO has 10 or more consecutive years of service on expiry of their contract.”⁸

Submissions are currently open for comments on this proposed change until 8 May 2025. Therefore outcomes are unknown at this stage.

⁸ <https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/departments/news/news-article/2024/12/18/consultation-on-regulations-for-ceo-kpis-and-public-registers>



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There are benefits and risks associated with this approach. Councils may benefit from monitoring this process and taking note of any outcomes before considering this option.

10. Publication of decisions made under Officer Delegation Comments

This option addresses both transparency and accountability.

With the implementation of a Transparency Hub under Option 7 this information could be provided on the Hub.

If Council does not have a Transparency Hub this information could be collected, reported on and easily made available on Council's website.

CONTRACT VARIATIONS FOR THE PERIOD 1 JANUARY 2025 - 31 MARCH 2025

PURPOSE

To provide a summary of contract variations approved during the period 1 January 2025 to 31 March 2025 in accordance with the requirements of the Procurement Policy 2025.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In accordance with Latrobe City Council's Procurement Policy 2025, Section 2.12 Contract Management, *contract variations are reported to Council on a quarterly basis.*
- Council has 198 active contracts and 13 (or 6.6%) of those active contracts have had variations during this quarter.
- Across these 13 contracts, 31 contract variations were approved during this quarter; 20 of these variations were within project budget and 10 didn't require budget allocation as they were a credit (a reduction in the contract sum).
- One variation is identified as being outside the project budget, this relates to the construction of the signalised intersection at Traralgon-Maffra Road and Marshalls Road, Traralgon and the variation is funded from the FY24/25 Road Rehabilitation Program. The variation to this contract is a cumulative result of:
 - Additional works required by the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP); and
 - Public street lighting and traffic signals changes between tender issue and Ausnet/DTP approved construction plans.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the report on contract variations for the period 1 January 2025 to 31 March 2025.

BACKGROUND

In accordance with Council's Procurement Policy 2025, Section 2.12 Contract Management, *contract variations are reported to Council on a quarterly basis.*

ANALYSIS

During the period 1 January 2025 to 31 March 2025, 31 contract variations were processed across 13 contracts. Variations were submitted for the following variation types and are detailed in the attachments.

Variation Type	Number of Variations
Credit	10
Design Omission/Error	3
Principal /Client Directed	15
Latent Condition	6
Total	34

NB: there are 34 variation types across 31 contract variations, due to four variation types accepted in one contract variation approval (LCC-816).

The table indicates that the majority of variations (approximately 45%) were Principal/Client Directed. A further 32% were credits (a positive effect resulting in a reduction in the contract sum). The details of each of these variations have been provided in Attachment 2.

A latent condition is typically defined as an unforeseen problem that arises during a project, which could not have been identified before work began, despite thorough site inspections and investigations. These conditions can include subsurface issues like poor soil conditions, hidden utility lines, or contamination, which can cause delays and increased costs.

RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK	RISK RATING	TREATMENT
COMPLIANCE Failure to comply with Council's Procurement Policy	Low <i>Possible x Insignificant</i>	Process created and documented to ensure report is prepared and submitted to Council for noting in a timely manner
STRATEGIC Perception that Council is not acting in a transparent manner	Low <i>Possible x Insignificant</i>	Present report summarising variations to contracts on a regular basis

CONSULTATION

Not applicable

COMMUNICATION

In accordance with Council's Procurement Policy 22-POL-14 section 5.2

Communication, summary information relating to contracts awarded is published on Council's eTendering Portal.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Officers preparing this report have declared they do not have a conflict of interest in this matter under the provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

APPENDIX 1 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Gender

A Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* has not been conducted as this matter does not involve a program, service or policy with a significant and direct impact on the community.

Social

Not applicable

Cultural

Not applicable

Health

Not applicable

Environmental

Not applicable

Economic

Not applicable

Financial

Variations to contracts are funded from within the project budget or if necessary from within the overall adopted budget.

Variations are approved under delegation by the relevant Officer, as these variations relate to previous periods, there are no financial implications from this report.

Attachments

1. Variation Summary
2. Variations Detail

12.2

Contract Variations for the period 1 January 2025 - 31 March 2025

1	Variation Summary	194
2	Variations Detail.....	195

Summary of Contracts with Variations between 01 Jan 2025 - 31 Mar 2025										
Contract Number	Award Date	Awarded By	Contract Title	Funding Source (Federal/State/ Council)	Current Contract Value (at 1 Jan 2025)	No. Variations this Quarter	Total Variations this Quarter	Revised Contract Value	Variations as a % of Current Contract Value	
LCC-732	13-Apr-23	CEO (under delegation, via council resolution)	Traralgon Multi-Level Car Park Project	State Government Grant	\$ 5,293,497	1	-\$ 3,186	\$ 5,290,311	-0.06%	
LCC-781	17-Oct-23	CEO	Solar Projects, First Stage	Council Funded	\$ 1,759,692	1	\$ 4,192	\$ 1,763,884	0.24%	
LCC-784	1-May-23	Council	Construction of Leachate Pond - Hyland Highway Landfill	Council Funded	\$ 1,036,841	1	\$ 27,038	\$ 1,063,879	2.61%	
LCC-797-1	11-Jul-23	CEO	Provision of Architectural Design for Traralgon Flood Recovery Project Stage 1 (Project 1 - Traralgon Recreation Reserve Multi-Use Pavilion)	State Government Grant / Council Funded	\$ 323,500	1	\$ 1,532	\$ 325,032	0.47%	
LCC-807	9-Nov-23	CEO	Lead Design Consultant - Multi-Level Car Park Development Traralgon	State Government Grant	\$ 754,424	3	\$ 50,200	\$ 804,624	6.65%	
LCC-816	20-Dec-23	CEO (under delegation, via council resolution)	Construction of signalised intersection at Traralgon Maffra Road and Marshalls Road, Traralgon	Council / Developer Contribution Plan Funds	\$ 7,496,197	1	\$ 330,860	\$ 7,827,056	4.41%	
LCC-818	2-Feb-24	CEO (under delegation, via council resolution)	Reconstruction of Old Melbourne Road, Morwell	Federal Government Grant	\$ 1,607,587	1	-\$ 97,114	\$ 1,510,472	-6.04%	
LCC-831	3-Sep-24	Council	Construction of Traralgon Recreation Reserve Multipurpose Pavilion	State Government Grant / Council Funded	\$ 6,182,599	12	\$ 8,511	\$ 6,191,110	0.14%	
LCC-840	8-Aug-24	Council	Construction of Park Lane Preschool	State Government Grant	\$ 1,273,874	2	\$ 21,239	\$ 1,295,113	1.67%	
LCC-844	8-Nov-24	CEO (under delegation, via council resolution)	Kay Street Multi-level Carpark	State Government Grant	\$ 24,382,903	4	-\$ 118,991	\$ 24,263,912	-0.49%	
LCC-849	21-Aug-24	CEO	Traralgon Tennis Court Resurfacing	Council Funded	\$ 226,887	1	-\$ 5,000	\$ 221,887	-2.20%	
LCC-855	7-Nov-24	CEO	Design & Construct Sports Lighting at Gaskin Park 2 Oval, Churchill	State Government Grant	\$ 221,629	1	\$ 11,541	\$ 233,170	5.21%	
LCC-856	27-Nov-24	CEO	Renewal of Changerooms and Amenities at Baillie Reserve, Tyers	Council Funded	\$ 390,997	2	\$ 28,305	\$ 419,302	7.24%	

Details of Contract Variations 01 Jan 2025 - 31 Mar 2025

Contract Number: LCC-732

Contract Title	Supplier Name	Date Approved	Variation Value	Within budget	Funding Source (Federal/State/Council)	Variation Type
Traralgon Multi-Level Car Park Project	Becon Constructions (Aust.) Pty Ltd	02-Jan-2025	-\$3,185.52	NA	State Government Grant	Credit
Variation Title	Credit - Lift Works					
Variation Reason	Credit variation for lift call out works paid for by Latrobe City whilst site under contractors possession					

Contract Number: LCC-781

Contract Title	Supplier Name	Date Approved	Variation Value	Within budget	Funding Source (Federal/State/Council)	Variation Type
Solar Projects, First Stage	RACV SOLAR PTY LTD	03-Mar-2025	\$4,191.62	Yes	Council Funded	Principal/Client directed variation
Variation Title	Kernot Hall Reduction in small scale certificates					
Variation Reason	Because Kernot Hall had roof works required, the solar project now falls in 2025. This means that there is less small scale certificate rebate from the price and the cost has increased.					

Contract Number: LCC-784

Contract Title	Supplier Name	Date Approved	Variation Value	Within budget	Funding Source (Federal/State/Council)	Variation Type
Construction of Leachate Pond - Hyland Highway Landfill	RTL Mining and Earthworks Pty Ltd	24-Feb-2025	\$27,038.25	Yes	Council Funded	Design Omission/Error
Variation Title	Clay quantity variation during construction					
Variation Reason	The quantity used for construction is higher than the quantity stated in the BOQ					

Contract Number: LCC-797-1						
Contract Title	Supplier Name	Date Approved	Variation Value	Within budget	Funding Source (Federal/State/Council)	Variation Type
Provision of Architectural Design for Traralgon Flood Recovery Project Stage 1 (Project 1 - Traralgon Recreation Reserve Multi-Use Pavilion)	John Brand and Company Pty Ltd	23-Jan-2025	\$1,531.84	Yes	State Government Grant / Council Funded	Principal/Client directed variation
Variation Title	VQ 03 - Building Permit Fee					
Variation Reason	This variation is to cover the Victorian Building Authority fee required to secure a building permit and was not included in Brands original design scope.					

Contract Number: LCC-807

Contract Title	Supplier Name	Date Approved	Variation Value	Within budget	Funding Source (Federal/State/Council)	Variation Type
Lead Design Consultant - Multi-Level Car Park Development Traralgon	Katz Architecture Pty Ltd	26-Feb-2025	\$7,800.00	Yes	State Government Grant	Principal/Client directed variation
Variation Title	Pile cap re-design					
Variation Reason	The Piles (part of foundations) on the Kay Street carpark are a design and construct element of the contract. This means that the Contractor has the design responsibility and can find efficiencies at their benefit so long as it meets the criteria set by the Principal (Council). The Contractor has requested to reduce the number of piles which meets the criteria but has a flow on effect on requiring the pile caps that are not the contractor's responsibility for design, to be redesigned by the Principals Consultants. The Contractor has been advised of the cost for the redesign works by the Consultant team and have agreed to the amount. This additional variation is for the contract between Council and the consultants. A matching separate credit variation will be submitted for the contract between Council and the Contractor effectively making this works nil cost to Council					
Lead Design Consultant - Multi-Level Car Park Development Traralgon	Katz Architecture Pty Ltd	26-Feb-2025	\$27,900.00	Yes	State Government Grant	Principal/Client directed variation
Variation Title	Revised In Ground Structure Design					
Variation Reason	Post schematic design cost plans being produced on the structural foundations, officers requested combination of bored piers and pad footings could be utilised to save money on foundations. To accurately make determination on pile design, additional geotechnical of deep bore drilling was required (VQ2). Following findings of unexpected soft spots at 7m deep found consistently across the site. The consequence of this was entire foundation design needed to be reworked to be piles only to go through the soft layer. This fee provided includes redesign and certification for a piled solution.					
Lead Design Consultant - Multi-Level Car Park Development Traralgon	Katz Architecture Pty Ltd	30-Jan-2025	\$14,500.00	Yes	State Government Grant	Principal/Client directed variation
Variation Title	Dual Certification Structural					
Variation Reason	Dual certification required for the structure as per building surveyor requirements/request. A fee was provided at time of tender should the building surveyor request dual certification.					

Contract Number: LCC-816

Contract Title	Supplier Name	Date Approved	Variation Value	Within budget	Funding Source (Federal/State/Council)	Variation Type
Construction of signalised intersection at Traralgon Maffra Road and Marshalls Road, Traralgon	Fowlers Asphaltting Pty Ltd	02-Jan-2025	\$330,859.50	No	Council Funded / Developer Contribution Plan Funds	Various variations, details within Variations Reasons

Variation Title Variations for street lighting, traffic signals, replacement of unsuitable subgrade, minor drainage and footpath works

Variation Reason

1. Variation required to cover cost for public street lighting and traffic signals for changes between Tender Issue vs. Ausnet and DTP approved construction plans. \$130,606.40 ex GST (Latent Condition).
2. Variation for DTP directed replacement of approx. 1100m3 of unsuitable pavement subgrade material along Traralgon-Maffra Rd within stages 3 and 4 during the months of October and November. Works could not proceed unless Council Officers agreed to carry out DTP's directions. This was inspected on a day by day basis over a two month period and as such, could not await variation approval as it would lead to extensive delays on site. \$144,430.32 ex GST (Latent Condition).
3. Variation for minor drainage and footpath works to be completed based on further feedback and direction from DTP and design omissions. \$25,822.78 ex GST (Design Omission/Error).
4. Variation for a Provisional Item for Day Works to cover any further latent conditions between now and project completion - \$30,000.00 ex GST (Principal/Client Directed).

These four variations were funded from the FY24/25 Road Rehabilitaiton Program.

Contract Number: LCC-818						
Contract Title	Supplier Name	Date Approved	Variation Value	Within budget	Funding Source (Federal/State/Council)	Variation Type
Reconstruction of Old Melbourne Road, Morwell	ACE Earthmoving (Victoria) Pty Ltd	20-Mar-2025	-\$97,114.18	NA	Federal Government Grant	Credit
Variation Title	Credit (reduction on contract sum) to remove unclaimed items for pricing schedule following project completion					
Variation Reason	<p>This credit (reduction in contract sum) is to remove unclaimed items from the schedule that will not be claimed between now and Final Completion as follows:</p> <p>Item 1.8 Contingency Sum for testing of materials - \$5,000.00 Item 2.2.4 Provisional Sum for supply and placement of Tensar TX-G or equivalent - \$1,718.88 Item 3.1 Provisional Sum for removal of deep lift asphalt - \$1,683.00 Item 5.2(a) Line marking - \$20,816.50 Item 5.2(d) Supply and install RRPMS - \$3,844.80 Item 5.5 Provisional Sum for reprofiling table drains - \$44,851.00 Item P Provisional Sum for Day works - \$19,200.00 ----- Total = \$97,114.18 ex GST</p>					

Contract Number: LCC-831

Contract Title	Supplier Name	Date Approved	Variation Value	Within budget	Funding Source (Federal/State/Council)	Variation Type
Construction of Traralgon Recreation Reserve Multipurpose Pavilion	Langden Constructions Pty Ltd	24-Feb-2025	-\$25,707.00	NA	State Government Grant / Council Funded	Credit
Variation Title	Rubber Flooring CREDIT					
Variation Reason	This Variation cost saving is for the change of flooring in the change rooms and boxing room. Spectrum Impact S136 was specified during tender and we have used Regupol 4mm in the Morwell Rec. change rooms and is holding very well. There will be 4mm Regupol rubber in the change rooms and 8mm Regupol in the boxing gym.					
Construction of Traralgon Recreation Reserve Multipurpose Pavilion	Langden Constructions Pty Ltd	18-Mar-2025	\$23,265.00	Yes	State Government Grant / Council Funded	Principal/Client directed variation
Variation Title	Structural Revisions					
Variation Reason	<p>During Tender, no details were shown for the raised Electrical Main Switch Board (MSB) this work was excluded from tender pending conformation from Ausnet. This new MSB platform will lift the electrical switchboard to 1 in 100 year flood at 40mtr above sea level. This part of the structural revision variation is for the supply and installation of concrete footings, concrete wall, for the elevated MSB plinth and CREDIT for the shorter western ramp to avoid hitting the 300mm Gippsland Water main.</p> <p>The second part of this variation is for the steel access platform to access the MSB. This was excluded form the tender due to pending confirmation from Ausnet. The CREDIT is for the removal of the timekeeper/media operable Wall Support Beam due to design changers in the media timekeepers room.</p>					
Construction of Traralgon Recreation Reserve Multipurpose Pavilion	Langden Constructions Pty Ltd	07-Mar-2025	\$2,359.50	Yes	State Government Grant / Council Funded	Latent Condition
Variation Title	Sewer Pit - Piers					
Variation Reason	This variation is for bridging over an old redundant sewer access hole that was located in the middle of a Pier. This pit will be filled with concrete and utilised as an additional Pier for more strength.					

Construction of Traralgon Recreation Reserve Multipurpose Pavilion	Langden Constructions Pty Ltd	28-Mar-2025	\$59,217.40	Yes	State Government Grant / Council Funded	Principal/Client directed variation
Variation Title	Electrical Revisions					
Variation Reason	Due to the amount of underground services, both current and decommissioned, at the Traralgon Recreation Reserve, the architects and electrical engineer had difficulty identifying where the reserves power supply was coming from. This was unable to be resolved prior to the project going to tender, meaning tenderers were unable to provide an accurate price for the works. Once the electrical requirements for the new pavilion were determined, further changes were required to the pillar and main switchboard design in order to meet Ausnet's requirements, therefore the scope of works has increased. Electrical works were budgeted for outside of the contract, with an allowance of \$60,000. This variation fits within that allocation.					
Construction of Traralgon Recreation Reserve Multipurpose Pavilion	Langden Constructions Pty Ltd	17-Feb-2025	-\$35,340.00	NA	State Government Grant / Council Funded	Credit
Variation Title	Replace Louvres with Fixed Glazing					
Variation Reason	Langden and their glazing sub-contractor have identified a substantial cost saving by changing selected louvre windows to fixed glazed windows. This saving will help with the project budget and will not make any difference with ventilation and temperature to the inside the building as some rooms have mechanical climate control and good ventilation already.					
Construction of Traralgon Recreation Reserve Multipurpose Pavilion	Langden Constructions Pty Ltd	23-Jan-2025	\$3,850.00	Yes	State Government Grant / Council Funded	Latent Condition
Variation Title	VQ 09 Relocate Water Main					
Variation Reason	This variation is for the relocation of the oval sprinkler water main (80mm). it runs under the proposed building and in between the 200 odd concrete piers. As best as the engineers could try to design around them, once setting the piers out 3 are marked over or just on the edge of the water main. The water main also has had repairs over the years and will be good to replace before the new building is built over it.					
Construction of Traralgon Recreation Reserve Multipurpose Pavilion	Langden Constructions Pty Ltd	23-Jan-2025	\$5,687.00	Yes	State Government Grant / Council Funded	Latent Condition
Variation Title	VQ 08 Backfill Existing Water Tank					
Variation Reason	During the site excavation cut/ levelling, an old underground tank was located. To make the site safe the hole was cleaned out and covered with mesh before back-filling with stabilised sand. This variation is for the excavation and back filling up to ground level. The tank is outside the building footprint, between the new Pavilion and existing social room					

Construction of Traralgon Recreation Reserve Multipurpose Pavilion	Langden Constructions Pty Ltd	23-Jan-2025	\$5,064.90	Yes	State Government Grant / Council Funded	Latent Condition
Variation Title	VQ 07 Soft Spot Removal					
Variation Reason	<p>Once demolition was completed it was identified that from years of flooding, the soil under the building in lots of areas has become waterlogged. This was undetectable by an early soil test where the building was located due to access. This Variation is for the removal of a portion of the worst areas of unstable soil and backfield with rock.</p> <p>Further work is required here with the possibility of laying down geofabric or geomesh over the whole new building footprint</p>					
Construction of Traralgon Recreation Reserve Multipurpose Pavilion	Langden Constructions Pty Ltd	23-Jan-2025	-\$5,329.50	NA	State Government Grant / Council Funded	Credit
Variation Title	VQ 06 Prefab Wall Frame Credit					
Variation Reason	This credit variation is for changing the internal metal wall framing stud spacing's from 300mm to standard 450mm and prefabricated in a factory saving material and Labour. This is inline with the building code regulations.					
Construction of Traralgon Recreation Reserve Multipurpose Pavilion	Langden Constructions Pty Ltd	14-Feb-2025	-\$19,000.00	NA	State Government Grant / Council Funded	Credit
Variation Title	VQ 5 Alternative Lighting Credit					
Variation Reason	This Variation if for alternate lighting throughout the proposed pavilion. The electrical engineer has reviewed the proposal and has approved this option.					
Construction of Traralgon Recreation Reserve Multipurpose Pavilion	Langden Constructions Pty Ltd	22-Jan-2025	\$2,475.82	Yes	State Government Grant / Council Funded	Principal/Client directed variation
Variation Title	VQ 04 Site Office					
Variation Reason	Due to the size and complexity of this project, a site office for Council officers is required for better construction project management. This variation is for placing the office and power connection to the office.					
Construction of Traralgon Recreation Reserve Multipurpose Pavilion	Langden Constructions Pty Ltd	22-Jan-2025	-\$8,032.25	NA	State Government Grant / Council Funded	Credit
Variation Title	VQ 3 Temp Power Credit					
Variation Reason	This Credit Variation is for temp power supply to the existing social rooms at Traralgon Recreation Reserve. As the building power supply was originally thought to be coming from the old change-rooms that are to be demolished, the social rooms needed temp power. It was identified once the building was demolished that the power came in from Whittakers road and not from the old change-rooms. This is a credit for \$8032.25					

Contract Number: LCC-840

Contract Title	Supplier Name	Date Approved	Variation Value	Within budget	Funding Source (Federal/State/Council)	Variation Type
Construction of Park Lane Preschool	Langden Constructions Pty Ltd	24-Jan-2025	\$19,313.80	Yes	State Government Grant	Principal/Client directed variation
Variation Title	Prefabricated Colorbond Shed					
Variation Reason	This variation is for the supply and installation of a new prefabricated colorbond shed, Building Permit, and all required documentation The original tender drawings showed this shed to be retained, but after further investigation it was determined determined it should be upgraded due to its age, condition, and budget considerations. A new shed can also be correctly sited to suit the new building.					
Construction of Park Lane Preschool	Langden Constructions Pty Ltd	15-Jan-2025	\$1,925.00	Yes	State Government Grant	Principal/Client directed variation
Variation Title	Stormwater Revisions					
Variation Reason	This variation is for changes to the stormwater drainage layout due to works associated with the revised Legal Point of Discharge (LPOD) location. Changes include, relocated water tank, additional stormwater point for the proposed shed and additional underground pipe and fittings to take to the stormwater to the existing pit at the north east of the site. When cross referencing the LPOD plan and the proposed site drainage plan from JJC (drawing A-05 Rev 02), an error was found on the JJC drawing. The stormwater from the building was incorrectly directed to the back of kerb outlet on the street. The Architect has since revised the site drainage plan accordingly, see drawing A-05 Rev 04.					

Contract Number: LCC-844

Contract Title	Supplier Name	Date Approved	Variation Value	Within budget	Funding Source (Federal/State/Council)	Variation Type
Kay Street Multi-level Carpark	Melbourne Industries Pty Ltd	25-Mar-2025	-\$168,000.00	NA	State Government Grant	Credit
Variation Title	Negative Variation - Cladding					
Variation Reason	<p>An alternate manufacturing method for the perforations to the facade screening was identified post tender. Lockers current Champagne pattern is a series of x5 different random hole sizes, on a 25mm pitch (5mm, 8mm, 12mm, 15mm, 19mm) where each hole is individually punched into the panel until design is achieved. The only difference between this and Champagne360, is the omission of the 5.0mm hole. Therefore Champagne 360, has x4 different and random hole sizes (8mm, 12mm, 15mm, 19mm) on a 25mm pitch. This is more efficient in production and also provides a significant cost saving with still meeting it's design intent and also specifications. An image of the samples is attached for reference.</p> <p>The option for Champagne 360 had not been tried and tested during the design of Kay Street, subsequently the original Champagne was specified and costed. Since the project commenced, Champagne 360 has been used and verified at similar projects. Given the minimal change in perforation to the naked eye it would be remiss not to proceed with the alternate series at a saving of \$41sq/m over 3846 m2.</p>					
Kay Street Multi-level Carpark	Melbourne Industries Pty Ltd	25-Mar-2025	\$24,624.60	Yes	State Government Grant	Principal/Client directed variation
Variation Title	Substation Power Supply					
Variation Reason	<p>Power supply for the car park is to be provided via the electrical substation on Lot 58 which runs through common property to new pillar location which will be within LCC property. Drawing E050 notes connection between substation and pillar to be completed by authority (typical), as such the Contractor did not provide a fee for works at time of tender as it was identified as headworks.</p> <p>The Authority's (SP Ausnet) position is that as it passes through common property in this instance, they would not strictly complete works due to being through common property. Alternatively they could complete works however would be a significant cost impost in comparison to works being undertaken by an electrical contractor.</p> <p>Under the contract Power supply headworks were to be paid by the principal. The Superintendent evaluates under the contract that the mains power upgrade works between substation and new pillar detailed in drawing E050 are considered Headworks whether completed by Authority (or Contractor in this case) and therefore costs to be borne by the Principal pursuant to Clause 11.5 of the Contract. The variation is therefore more cost effective and no risk to timing in comparison to the authority undertaking works. A Quantity Surveyor has also reviewed the proposed variation and has deemed the quotation fair and reasonable to current market rate. A letter of recommendation is attached.</p>					

Kay Street Multi-level Carpark	Melbourne Industries Pty Ltd	21-Feb-2025	-\$7,800.00	NA	State Government Grant	Credit
Variation Title	Credit - Pile Cap Re-Design					
Variation Reason	The Piles (part of foundations) on the Kay Street carpark are a design and construct element of the contract. This means that the Contractor has the design responsibility and can find efficiencies at their benefit so long as it meets the criteria set by the Principal (Council). The Contractor has requested to reduce the number of piles which meets the criteria but has a flow on effect on requiring the pile caps that are not the contractor's responsibility for design, to be redesigned by the Principals Consultants. This variation is for the contract between Council and the Contractor. A separate variation has been submitted for the contract between Council and the Consultant (LCC-807) effectively making this works nil cost to Council.					
Kay Street Multi-level Carpark	Melbourne Industries Pty Ltd	21-Feb-2025	\$32,184.00	Yes	State Government Grant	Principal/Client directed variation
Variation Title	Fibre to Data Centre					
Variation Reason	Pre-Agreed Variation taken up as per Annexure Part G. This fibre connection will establish network connectivity between the car park and the Council's data centre, enabling several services, including CCTV, security systems, public Wi-Fi, digital signage, building management, and traffic management systems.					

Contract Number: LCC-849						
Contract Title	Supplier Name	Date Approved	Variation Value	Within budget	Funding Source (Federal/State/Council)	Variation Type
Traralgon Tennis Court Resurfacing	The Trustee for Pro Court Surfacing & Construction Unit Trust	16-Jan-2025	-\$5,000.00	NA	Council Funded	Credit
Variation Title	Reduction in Provisional Sum					
Variation Reason	The project has been completed and the value of the provisional sums for Principal Directed Works was not fully exhausted. This is a negative variation to reduce the value of the contract by the unused amount to allow for the contract to be closed out.					

Contract Number: LCC-855						
Contract Title	Supplier Name	Date Approved	Variation Value	Within budget	Funding Source (Federal/State/Council)	Variation Type
Design & Construct Sports Lighting at Gaskin Park 2 Oval, Churchill	The trustee for Contracting Kings Trust	08-Jan-2025	\$11,541.00	Yes	State Government Grant	Design Omission/Error
Variation Title	Supply and Install Larger Pole Footings					
Variation Reason	Additional footings (deeper concrete and steel cages) are required for the poles as determined by the geotechnical report and structural engineer's advice. A standard allowance of 3.6m deep footings was included with the tender submission, however through the design process it has been found that deeper footings are required. This is due to the poor quality of the soil at this location. It was known that additional footings would be required for the project, with the extent only confirmed after the contractor had completed the required design work.					

Contract Number: LCC-856

Contract Title	Supplier Name	Date Approved	Variation Value	Within budget	Funding Source (Federal/State/Council)	Variation Type
Renewal of Changerooms and Amenities at Baillie Reserve, Tyers	VIRTUE HOMES PTY LTD	07-Mar-2025	\$23,991.00	Yes	Council Funded	Principal/Client directed variation
Variation Title	Tiles in Lieu of Vinyl in Amenities					
Variation Reason	It was identified during the works that the vinyl floor which was originally specified for the amenities areas would not be able to guarantee a waterproof seal due to the condition of the existing brick wall. Should water seep under/behind the vinyl through imperfections and gaps in the existing brick wall, there is no way to stop this spreading from the walls to the floor. The contractor has advised that they will be unable to warrant the project if directed to go ahead with the current design. Instead, it is proposed to replace the vinyl floor with tiles and extend the tiles up the wall to create a full waterproof barrier.					
Renewal of Changerooms and Amenities at Baillie Reserve, Tyers	VIRTUE HOMES PTY LTD	11-Feb-2025	\$4,313.53	Yes	Council Funded	Principal/Client directed variation
Variation Title	Upgrade to Wall Linings					
Variation Reason	An opportunity to upgrade the wall linings within the changeroom to an impact check product has been completed due to these areas being common places for footballs to be kicked/thrown, players to run into walls or other such impacts. By upgrading to a more durable product it will reduce maintenance costs for callouts to patch/replace holes as and when they occur.					

13. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Nil reports

ITEMS FOR TABLING

14. ITEMS FOR TABLING

Item Number 14.1 26 May 2025

Regional City Strategy & Transition

TABLING OF PETITION - UPGRADE OF UNSEALED SECTION OF ROCCLA ROAD AND T-INTERSECTION AT DRANES ROAD

PURPOSE

To present the petition received by Council relating to the upgrade of the unsealed section of Rocla Road and T-intersection at Dranes Road, Traralgon.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Council has been presented with a petition relating to the upgrade of the unsealed section of Rocla Road and T-intersection at Dranes Road, **Attachment 1**.
- The petition contains 238 signatures.
- This report is being presented to Council in accordance with Rule 67 of the Governance Rules, requesting that the petition lay on the table.
- The purpose of laying the petition on the table is to bring the petition to Council's attention, detail the terms of the petition and to allow time for a detailed report to be prepared for the consideration of Council.
- No debate or discussion will be entered into when the petition is tabled. However, this can occur when a future report about the petition is presented to Council.
- The petition will be referred to the General Manager Regional City Planning and Assets for assessment and analysis and a further report regarding this petition will be presented to a future Council Meeting.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. in accordance with the Governance Rules, agrees to lay on the table the petition requesting:
'That Latrobe City Council seal the 350 metre section of gravel on Rocla Road and improve visibility and safety at the T-intersection at Dranes Road.' and
2. advises the head petitioner of this decision in relation to the petition.

BACKGROUND

Council has been presented with a petition, **Attachment 1** containing 238 signatures. The details of the petition are:

- *'We, the undersigned concerned Citizens wish to inform the Latrobe City Council of our ongoing concerns for Public Safety regarding the 350 metre unsealed gravel section of Rocla Road and poor visibility at the T-intersection with Dranes Road.'*
- *We ask that the Latrobe City Council seal this 350 metre section of gravel on Rocla Road and improve visibility and safety at the T-intersection at Dranes Road.'*

The 238 entries into the petition are compliant with the requirements of Council's *Governance Rules*.

In accordance with Council's *Governance Rules*, a petition is required to lie on the table unless it is an item of urgent business.

A report for decision on this petition will be presented at a future Council Meeting.

ANALYSIS

Refer to the background section of this report.

RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK	RISK RATING	TREATMENT
COMPLIANCE Petitions received by Council are to be tabled at the next available Council Meeting.	Low <i>Rare x minor</i>	Present the petition at the May 2025 Council Meeting.

CONSULTATION

Not applicable.

COMMUNICATION

Not applicable.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Officers preparing this report have declared they do not have a conflict of interest in this matter under the provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

APPENDIX 1 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Gender

A Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* has not been conducted as this matter does not involve a program, service or policy with a significant and direct impact on the community.

Social

Not applicable.

Cultural

Not applicable.

Health

Not applicable.

Environmental

Not applicable.

Economic

Not applicable.

Financial

Not applicable.

Attachments

1. Petition (Published Separately)

This attachment is designated as confidential under subsection (f) of the definition of confidential information contained in section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2020, as it relates to personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs. The attached petition includes names and addresses of those that have signed it.

**MEETING CLOSED TO
THE PUBLIC TO
CONSIDER
CONFIDENTIAL
INFORMATION**

15. MEETING CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC TO CONSIDER CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Section 66 of the *Local Government Act 2020* enables Council to close the meeting to the public to consider *confidential information* as defined in that Act.

Proposed Resolution:

That Council pursuant to section 66(1) and 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) close the Council Meeting to the public to consider the following items containing confidential information as defined in section 3(1) of the Act:

15.1 Strategic Land Consideration

This item is confidential as it contains Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released (section 3(1)(a)). This ground applies because previous reports relating to this subject were marked confidential.

15.2 Land Acquisition 88-90 Cross's Road, Traralgon

This item is confidential as it contains land use planning information, being information that if prematurely released is likely to encourage speculation in land values (section 3(1)(c)). This ground applies because this report contains information regarding the value of a persons property.

15.3 LCC-873 Glengarry Preschool Redevelopment

This item is confidential as it contains Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released (section 3(1)(a)) and private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that—
(i) relates to trade secrets; or
(ii) if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage (section 3(1)(g)). These grounds apply because releasing this information publicly and/or prematurely may prejudice the undertaking of this process and would release private commercial information of the tenderers that may cause disadvantage.