

Minutes

Ordinary Meeting of Council

Held at 10:30am, Wednesday 25 June 2025
Council Chamber, Tallangatta Council Office
32 Towong Street, Tallangatta, Victoria

Our Community Vision

Towong Shire will be the ideal place to be: welcoming, vibrant and diverse communities with quality facilities and services.

This information is available in alternative formats on request.

**Minutes for the Ordinary Meeting of Council held at
32 Towong Street, Tallangatta, Victoria
at 10:30am on Wednesday 25 June 2025**

Commonly Used Acronyms

Abbreviation	Title
Council Officers	
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DIE	Director Infrastructure and Environment
DCP	Director Community and Planning
DCOD	Director Corporate and Organisational Development
MF	Manager Finance
SAE	Senior Asset Engineer
Government/Organisation	
CH	Corryong Health (formerly Upper Murray Health and Community Services)
DFFH	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
DJSIR	Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
DTP	Department of Transport and Planning
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
GMW	Goulburn Murray Water
HRGLN	Hume Region Local Government Network
MAV	Municipal Association of Victoria
NECMA	North East Catchment Management Authority
NERPEN	North East Regional Procurement Excellence Network
NEW	North East Water
NEWRRG	North East Waste and Resource Recovery Group
RCV	Rural Councils Victoria
RDA	Regional Development Australia
RDV	Regional Development Victoria
THS	Tallangatta Health Service
VGC	Victorian Grants Commission
WBNC	Walwa Bush Nursing Centre

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The Mayor declared the meeting open, the time being 10:31 am.

1 Opening Prayer

"Almighty God, we ask that you be present at this meeting to assist us in our service to the Community through Local Government.

We pray that our decisions will be wise and taken with goodwill and clear conscience.

Amen."

2 Councillor and Officer Presence at the Meeting

Councillor Attendance

Physical

Crs Whitehead, Wortmann and Tolsher

Virtual:

Cr Anderson

Officer Attendance:	Title:
Mr Heritage	Director Infrastructure and Environment
Mr Florence	Director Community and Planning
Ms Taylor	Director Corporate and Organisational Development

3 Apologies and Granting of Leave of Absence

The Mayor advised that Cr Pitman and Ms Juliana Phelps were apologies for the meeting.

Council Resolution:

CR WORTMANN

CR TOLSHER

THAT THE APOLOGIES BE NOTED.

CARRIED

4 Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

Section 130 of the Act requires that a 'Relevant person' (which means a person who is a Councillor, a member of a delegated committee who is not a Councillor or a member of Council staff) disclose any conflict of interest in the manner required by Council's Governance Rules and exclude themselves from the decision making process in relation to the matter including any discussion or vote on the matter at any Council meeting.

Council's Governance Rules state as follows:

A2 Obligations with regards to conflict of interest

Councillors, members of delegated committee, and Council staff are required to:

- a. Avoid all situations which may give rise to conflicts of interest;*
- b. Identify any conflicts of interest; and*
- c. Disclose or declare all conflicts of interest.*

A3 Disclosure of a conflict of interest at a Council meeting

A Councillor who has a conflict of interest in a matter being considered at a Council meeting at which he or she:

A3.1 is present must disclose that conflict of interest by explaining the nature of the conflict of interest to those present at the Council meeting immediately before the matter is considered; or

A3.2 intends to be present must disclose that conflict of interest by providing to the Chief Executive Officer before the Council meeting commences a written notice:

A3.2.1 advising of the conflict of interest;

A3.2.2 explaining the nature of the conflict of interest; and

A3.2.3 detailing, if the nature of the conflict of interest involves a Councillor's relationship with or a gift from another person, the:

- a. name of the other person;*
- b. nature of the relationship with that other person or the date of receipt, value and type of gift received from the other person; and*
- c. nature of that other person's interest in the matter, and then immediately before the matter is considered at the meeting announcing to those present that he or she has a conflict of interest and that a written notice has been given to the Chief Executive Officer under this sub-Rule.*

The Councillor must, in either event, leave the Council meeting immediately after giving the explanation or making the announcement (as the case may be) and not return to the meeting until after the matter has been disposed of.

There were no disclosures of any conflicts of interest.

Confirmed

5 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meetings listed below were circulated to Councillors following each respective meeting. Confirmation of the minutes is now sought.

- Special Council Meeting held on 14 May 2025
- Ordinary Council Meeting held on 28 May 2025

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 14 May 2025 and the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 28 May 2025 be confirmed.

Council Resolution:

**CR WORTMANN
CR ANDERSON**

THAT THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 14 MAY 2025 AND THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 28 MAY 2025 BE CONFIRMED.

CARRIED

6 Petitions and Joint Letters

Nil.

7 Public Question Time

In accordance with Council's Governance Rules, all questions must be submitted to Council in writing by 2.00pm on the day prior to the Council meeting.

An online form is available on Council's website, and a hard copy of the form is available at both the Tallangatta and Corryong Council offices.

Public Notice of Public Question Time was included in the advertisement for the Council meeting.

The CEO will advise of any Public Question Time submissions at the meeting.

7.1 Submitter: Ms Debbie Monteny

Ms Monteny provided a Public Question Time submission to Council to be addressed at the meeting. The submission was refused under section G4.8 of Council's Governance Rules, which states:

A question may be disallowed by the Chairperson if the Chairperson determines that it:

- is not related to an item on the agenda;
- relates to a matter outside the duties, functions and powers of Council;
- is defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial or objectionable in language or substance
- deals with a subject matter already answered;
- is aimed at embarrassing a Councillor or a member of Council staff;
- relates to confidential information as defined in s3 of the Act;
- relates to the personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer; or
- relates to any other matter which the Council considers would prejudice the Council or any person

As the submission is not related to an item on the agenda, and deals with a subject matter already answered, the submission is being disallowed by the Chairperson and the matter has been responded to prior to the meeting.

7.2 Submitter: Mr Stanley Mudford

Subject: Murray Valley Highway/Lake Road Intersection

Questions:

1. In January 2025 I attended Council Meeting In response to questions submitted by me regarding funding and the estimated completion of Federal Black Spot funded Murray Valley Highway/Lake Road intersection upgrade. It was stated that works would be completed by end of 2025 Financial Year. Is the project still to be completed by then? If not, when does Council expect works to commence?

Council Response:

Mr Heritage advised it would be done by the financial year and assured that the hold up is not sitting with Council. We are working with Vic Roads to try and get the assessment through and is still sitting with them to come back to us to approve works at the intersection and they are the ones looking after the funding side of the project. They are well aware the Council has been chasing them up regularly. As soon as we have approval, the submitter will be informed.

8 Informal Meetings of Councillors

In accordance with Council's *Governance Rules*, a written summary of the matters discussed at each informal meeting of Councillors is to be tabled at the next convenient Council meeting and recorded in the minutes of that meeting.

The Meeting Records from the Informal Meeting of Councillors held on 14 May 2025 and 28 May 2025 are attached as follows:

1. Workshop Meeting Records 14 May 2025 [8.1.1 - 4 pages]
2. Workshop Meeting Records 28 May 2025 [8.1.2 - 3 pages]

Recommendation:

That the information be noted.

Council Resolution:

**CR TOLSHER
CR ANDERSON**

THAT THE INFORMATION BE NOTED.

CARRIED

Cr Anderson moved a procedural motion to move to item 9.4 'Final Budget Report 2025/26'.

Council Resolution:

**CR ANDERSON
CR TOLSHER**

THAT WE BRING ITEM 9.4 FORWARD.

CARRIED

The meeting moved forward to item 9.4, the time being 10:37am.

9 Organisational Improvement

9.1 Action Sheet Report (CEO-06/06/0010)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Mr Justin Troy, Coordinator Governance and Compliance.

At the time of preparation of this report, the officer did not have a general or material conflict of interest in any matter to which the report or advice relates.

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to inform Councillors of the status of the resolutions from the Special Council Meeting held on 14 May 2025 and the Ordinary Council meeting held on 28 May 2025.

Summary:

The attached report summarises the progress made in relation to the resolutions from the Special Council Meeting held on 14 May 2025 and the Ordinary Council meeting held on 28 May 2025.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

Attachment:

1. Action Sheet from Special Council Meeting 14 May 2025 [9.1.1 - 2 pages]
2. Action Sheet from Ordinary Council Meeting 28 May 2025 [9.1.2 - 5 pages]

Background/History:

Not applicable.

Relevant Law (s.9(2)(a)):

Not applicable.

Options – Best Outcomes for the Community (s.9(2)(b)):

Not applicable.

Sustainability Implications (s.9(2)(c)):

Not applicable.

Community Engagement (s.9(2)(d)):

Not applicable.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement (s.9(2)(e)):

Not applicable.

Collaboration (s.9(2)(f)):

Not applicable.

Financial Viability/Budget Impact (s.9(2)(g)):

Not applicable.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies (s.9(2)(h)):

Not applicable.

Council Plans and Policies:

Not applicable.

Transparency of Decision (s.9(2)(i)) :

It is the officer's view that it is appropriate to consider this matter in a Council meeting that is open to the public.

Risk Assessment:

Not applicable.

Officer's View:

It is the officer's view that good progress has been made.

Council Resolution:

CR WORTMANN

CR TOLSHER

THAT THE REPORT BE NOTED.

CARRIED

Confirmed

9.2 Council Plan Priorities (DCOD)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Ms Narelle Taylor, Director Corporate and Organisational Development.

At the time of preparation of this report, the officer did not have a general or material conflict of interest in any matter to which the report or advice relates.

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to provide information.

Summary:

In accordance with section 90 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council must prepare and adopt a Council Plan for a period of at least the next four financial years after a general election in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices. This report provides a quarterly update on the progress of the priorities in our *2021-2025 Council Plan*.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

Attachment:

1. Council Plan Priorities - Q 3 - Jan to Mar 2025 [9.2.1 - 29 pages]

Background/History:

Each quarter Council officers provide an update to Council on the progress of the priorities listed in the Council Plan.

Relevant Law (s.9(2)(a)):

Not applicable.

Options – Best Outcomes for the Community (s.9(2)(b)):

Not applicable

Sustainability Implications (s.9(2)(c)):

The Council Plan priorities included in the appendix are addressed in individual reports to Council, where sustainability information relevant for Councillor consideration is provided.

Community Engagement (s.9(2)(d)):

Community Engagement activities are included in the Council Plan Priorities. Progress against each priority is noted in the appendix to this report.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement (s.9(2)(e)):

Innovation and continuous improvement are built into the Council Plan Priorities, and we continue to progress this as noted in the appendix to this report.

Collaboration (s.9(2)(f)):

Collaboration and pursuing shared service opportunities are included in the Council Plan Priorities. Progress against this priority is noted in the appendix to this report.

Financial Viability/Budget Impact (s.9(2)(g)):

Not applicable.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies (s.9(2)(h)):

Not applicable.

Council Plans and Policies:

This is a quarterly report to provide an update on the progress of the Council Plan 2021-2025 priorities.

Transparency of Decision (s.9(2)(i)) :

It is the officer's view that it is appropriate to consider this matter in a Council meeting that is open to the public.

Risk Assessment:

Not applicable.

Officer's View:

It is the Officer's view that despite the many challenges faced by the organisation since the adoption of the Council Plan, significant progress has been made since the adoption of the Council Plan in 2021, with many priorities having been delivered or substantially progressed.

Council Resolution:

**CR TOLSHER
CR WORTMANN**

THAT THE REPORT BE NOTED.

CARRIED

9.3 Domestic Animal Management Plan 2024/25 Review (DCOD)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Mr Justin Troy, Coordinator Governance and Compliance.

At the time of preparation of this report, the officer did not have a general or material conflict of interest in any matter to which the report or advice relates.

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the implementation of the *Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-25*.

Summary:

Council is required to establish and maintain a *Domestic Animal Management Plan* (DAMP) for its respective municipality and review its implementation annually. The DAMP is a statutory strategic document that summarises each Victorian Councils commitment towards domestic animal control services and the initiatives identified to promote responsible pet ownership and mitigate the risks associated with domestic animals. This report notes the progress and results of the DAMP for the 2024-25 financial year.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

Attachment:

1. DAMP Performance and Results [9.3.1 - 4 pages]
2. domestic-animal-management-plan-2021-2025 [9.3.2 - 13 pages]

Background/History:

The Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-25 was adopted by Council in November 2021 as required by the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*. The Act requires each Victorian Council to prepare a domestic animal management plan on 4 December 2021 and report to Council annually on the following topics it covers:

- Methods for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by the

Council in its municipal district are adequate to give effect to the requirements of this Act and the regulations,

- Outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district,
- Outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district:
 - to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats
 - to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation
 - to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals
 - to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats
 - to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats
 - to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance
 - to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations
- Provide for the review of existing orders made under this Act and local laws that relate to the Council's municipal district with a view to determining whether further orders or local laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in the municipal district are desirable,
- Provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary, and
- Provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan

Councils are required to prepare and adopt its DAMP every four (4) years from the day the Plan was adopted; the Plan is scheduled to be revised and adopted prior to or at the November 2025 Council Meeting. Councils must also publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.

Relevant Law (s.9(2)(a)):

Domestic Animals Act 1994

Section 68A "Councils to prepare domestic animal management plans"

Options – Best Outcomes for the Community (s.9(2)(b)):

Not applicable.

Sustainability Implications (s.9(2)(c)):

Not applicable.

Community Engagement (s.9(2)(d)):

The revised DAMP will be available for community consultation through the public exhibition process later in the calendar year. This will provide an opportunity for the community to submit any feedback or queries prior to the adoption of the revised Plan.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement (s.9(2)(e)):

Not Applicable.

Collaboration (s.9(2)(f)):

Council continues to maintain effective relationships with local vet clinics, animal shelters and State/Federal agencies to achieve the mutual goals of promoting responsible pet ownership and identifying contemporary practises to mitigate the risks associated with domestic animal ownership.

Financial Viability/Budget Impact (s.9(2)(g)):

Budget requirements and availability have been confirmed, grant funding has been sought where possible and all expenditure is being monitored and managed within agreed budget allocations. It is noted that Domestic Animal Management activities are not fully funded by animal registration fees, however providing these services is a statutory requirement.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies (s.9(2)(h)):

Not Applicable.

Council Plans and Policies:

Council Plans:
Not applicable.

Council Policies:
Not applicable.

Transparency of Decision (s.9(2)(i)):

It is the officer's view that it is appropriate to consider this matter in a Council meeting that is open to the public.

Risk Assessment:

Council Rangers continue to address community concerns relating to domestic animals in the Shire within the agreed service level timeframes. There are two (2) part-time Rangers available, who also have responsibilities as Local Laws Officers and Municipal Fire Protection Officers, and are managing their Ranger duties in an effective and responsive manner. Further initiatives could be applied to proactively address the DAMP Action Plan, however limited resourcing restricts the capability to achieve this as well as we can.

Officer's View:

It is the Officer's view that Council is implementing the DAMP effectively, noting the resourcing challenges presented. The revision of the DAMP towards the end of the calendar year will enable Council an opportunity to revisit its appetite for domestic animal management and the initiatives it will commit to, in ensuring the community can enjoy its amenities whilst considering responsible pet ownership obligations.

Council Resolution:

**CR TOLSHER
CR WORTMANN**

THAT THE REPORT BE NOTED.

CARRIED

9.4 Final Budget Report 2025/26 (DCOD)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Ms Narelle Taylor, Director Corporate and Organisational Development.

At the time of preparation of this report, the officer did not have a general or material conflict of interest in any matter to which the report or advice relates.

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of the report is to present the *Budget 2025/26* for adoption.

Summary:

At the Special Council Meeting on 14 May 2025 the Chief Executive Officer was authorised to make the *Draft Budget 2025/26* available for public exhibition and invite public submissions. At the time of completing this report, five submissions had been received. These have been considered and addressed in the Background/History of this report.

Work has been undertaken to secure substantial grant funding to support a wide range of capital works for the benefit of our communities. We have submitted grant applications for both new and renewal infrastructure projects across the shire, most notably the Bethanga Recreation Reserve Pavilion. We have not included this in the Budget 2025-2026 as the outcome of our grant applications will not be known until after the budget is adopted. A significant amount of road renewal works has been budgeted for, with disaster recovery funding being approved in the current financial year to renew our road network following the 2022 floods.

An increase to total rates raised of 3% is recommended in accordance with the rate cap set by the State Government under the Fair Go Rates system. The current pressures on our rate payers caused by the increased cost of living was a key consideration when preparing the budget and the associated 3% increase to rate revenue. The user charges for kerbside collection remain unchanged from the 2024/25 charges.

Recommendation:

That:

1. The Budget 2025/26 be adopted;
2. The Chief Executive Officer be authorised to give public notice of the adoption of the *Budget 2025/26*;
3. Pursuant to section 158 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, the amounts to be raised by general rates, municipal charges, service rates and service charges for the 2025/26 financial year are as follows:
 - a. General rates – \$7,362,000;
 - b. Municipal charge – \$1,390,000;
 - c. Kerbside collection charges – \$1,493,000;
 - d. Waste facilities management charge – \$416,000;
4. Pursuant to section 159 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, a municipal charge of \$347 per rateable property be declared for the 2025/26 financial year;
5. Pursuant to section 159 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, the following annual service charges be declared for the 2025/26 financial year:
 - a. Waste facilities management – \$104;
 - b. Garbage and recycling standard service – 140L/240L bins – \$340;
 - c. Garbage and recycling – 240L/240L bins – \$380;
 - d. Garbage and recycling – 80L/240L bins – \$310;
 - e. Garbage, Recycling and FOGO - 80L/240L/240L bins - \$470;
 - f. Garbage, Recycling and FOGO - 140L/240L/240L bins - \$495;
 - g. Garbage, Recycling and FOGO - 240L/240L/240L bins - \$530;
 - h. Additional garbage – 140L bin – \$380;
 - i. Additional garbage – 240L bin – \$495;
 - j. Additional garbage – 80L bin – \$325;
 - k. Additional FOGO 240L Bin - \$155;
 - l. Additional recycling – 240L bin – \$180; and
 - m. Garbage and recycling service extension (per km) - \$0.20;
6. Pursuant to section 161 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, general rates are raised by the application of differential rates to rateable properties and that the following rates in the dollar are applied for each type of rate to be levied for the 2025/26 financial year, with the definition of each type or class of land contained within the *Budget 2025/26*:
 - a. Residential properties – 0.2367 cents in the dollar of capital improved value;

- b. Rural residential properties – 0.2367 cents in the dollar of capital improved value;
 - c. Rural properties – 0.1894 cents in the dollar of capital improved value;
 - d. Business properties – 0.2130 cents in the dollar of capital improved value; and
 - e. Undeveloped residential properties – 0.7574 cents in the dollar of capital improved value;
- 7. In exercise of the power conferred by section 169 of the Local Government Act 1989, rebates are granted to each owner (or where applicable, occupier) of rateable land of the declared municipal charge and waste facilities management charge in respect of the financial year, if:
 - a. The rateable land is farm land within the meaning of section 2(1) of the *Valuation of Land Act 1960* or would be farm land if it were 2 hectares or more in area;
 - b. The rateable land forms part of a single farm enterprise;
 - c. A rebate is not granted in respect of at least one other rateable property which forms part of the single farm enterprise; and
 - d. In the case of a single farm enterprise, which is occupied by more than one person, a rebate is not granted in respect of more than one principle place of residence;
- 8. It is Council's position that rebates assist in the proper development of the municipal district by encouraging the retention of farms and reducing the rates and charges burden on owners (and, where applicable, occupiers) of single farm enterprises;
- 9. In exercise of the power conferred by section 169 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, the following concessions be granted:
 - a. 50% of the rates levied on the four elderly person units located at 24 Willong Street, Tallangatta, as per the existing agreement dated in 1994 between the Ministry of Housing and Council;
 - b. 50% of the rates, municipal charge and waste management charges levied on the property at 25 Wheeler Street, Corryong, as per the Council Minutes dated 1 May 2000; and
- 10. In accordance with section 167 of the Local Government Act 1989, rates and charges are to be paid in four instalments on or before 30 September 2025, 30 November 2025, 28 February 2026 and 31 May 2026.

Attachment:

1. Towong Shire Model Budget 2025-26 ADOPTED [9.4.1 - 63 pages]

Background/History:

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires that a Council must prepare and adopt a Budget for each financial year and the subsequent three financial years by 30 June each year. The budget must give effect to the Council Plan and contain the financial statements, services and initiatives to be funded, the prescribed indicators and measures of service performance, the total amount to be raised by rates and charges, descriptions of the rates to be applied, and any other information prescribed by the regulations. The Budget must be developed in accordance with the financial management principles outlined by the *Local Government Act 2020* as well as its *Community Engagement Policy*.

A proposed *Budget 2025/26* was prepared for consideration by Council at the 14 May 2025 Special Council Meeting and the Chief Executive Officer was authorised to release it for public exhibition and submissions. The document was subsequently released with submissions closing on 11 June 2025. Five submissions have been received as follows:

No.	Submission Summary	Officer Comments and Recommendation
1	Request for upgrades to Flagstaff road to improve safety for road users.	This will be included in the Future Capital Works register for evaluation and budgeting within the Roads budget in line with the priority of requested works.
2	Request for consideration to the timing and quantity of childcare fee increases, that this increase be implemented in a staged approach to allow families to budget for this; and raised concerns at the lack of engagement with families on what is affordable.	The recommendation is that the fees remain unchanged, however scenario analysis for different options have been provided to Councillors for consideration to inform their decision; Councillors sought broad input to the delivery of Early Years Services during recent Council Plan community consultation sessions by initiating conversations regarding Early years' service provision, and it was also considered that there was grounds for limited engagement due to the confidential & commercial information that has influenced this decision. We have initiated the standard engagement

		process for consideration of the Draft Budget in line with legislative requirements.
3	Request for a roof to be erected over the table and chairs that were recently installed at the Granya Hall.	This will be included in the Future Capital Works register for evaluation and budgeting within the Parks and Open Spaces budget in line with the priority of requested works.
4	Recommendation to Council provided: 11. Delay or phase in the fee increase to give families time to adjust; 12. Undertake meaningful community engagement before finalising the budget — including forums, surveys, or listening sessions with families; 13. Publicly outline the financial modelling and funding options considered prior to selecting a fee increase; 14. Reassess the rigid cost recovery model, and consider partial subsidisation, especially during periods of cost-of-living stress; 15. Benchmark fees against other comparable rural councils to ensure Towong's approach remains regionally competitive.	Response: 1. The recommendation is that the fees are increased to \$120/day, however scenario analysis for different options have been provided to Councillors for consideration to inform their decision; 2. Broad input regarding Early Years Service provision was sought during recent Council Plan community consultation sessions by initiating conversations regarding Early years service provision. It was considered that there are grounds for limited engagement due to the confidential & commercial information that has influenced this decision. We have initiated the standard engagement process for consideration of the Draft Budget in line with legislative requirements. 3. As above. Noting that alternate funding sources have also been investigated and had success in attaining this. 4. Council have taken the position of a cost recovery model for direct costs only. There are significant indirect costs that are not recovered under the current funding model. This is in

		recognition of the value of providing these services to our communities, particularly in the absence of a market. It is also noted that in times of economic difficulty, there are many residents that are facing challenges, for example, pensioners, whose rates are increasing and have limits on the increase in the pension payment that they rely on. It is not considered reasonable for ratepayers to be subsidising these costs any further. 5. Council have undertaken this exercise, noting that of the 6 regional Councils researched, none offer a Long Day Care Service. We have benchmarked against a neighbouring service at Alpine Children's Services and note that their long day care fee is \$146/day.
5	Request for upgrades to the Community rooms in Tallangatta.	This will be included in the Long term capital works plan for evaluation and budgeting within the Buildings - Minor works budget.

Relevant Law (s.9(2)(a)):

The *Budget 2025/26* has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1989*, the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.

Options – Best Outcomes for the Community (s.9(2)(b)):

Council could choose to vary revenue and expenditure levels from proposed levels. Revenue levels have been proposed to balance the community's capacity to pay for rates and services with Council's ability to cover its costs as inflation increases the cost of doing business. Expenditure is comprised of spending on projects which are grant funded, and spending on business-as-usual facilities and services, which are to be maintained at current levels.

Sustainability Implications (s.9(2)(c)):

The parameters of the proposed *Budget 2025/26* have been set to balance community needs with ongoing financial sustainability. Council's financial sustainability over the preceding years has been quite strong following receipt of significant funding for capital projects, Bushfire Recovery and Flood Recovery activities. Longer-term sustainability remains a challenge in the light of the costs of renewing the Shire's aging civil infrastructure.

Community Engagement (s.9(2)(d)):

The development of the proposed *Budget 2025/26* has considered feedback received through ongoing community engagement and particularly the consultation regarding the *Council Plan 2021-2025*. The proposed document has been released for exhibition and submissions and two submissions were received.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement (s.9(2)(e)):

The proposed *Budget 2025/26* includes a major capital works program which invests in our civil infrastructure to support the Shire in its future growth and vibrancy.

Collaboration (s.9(2)(f)):

Not applicable.

Financial Viability/Budget Impact (s.9(2)(g)):

The proposed *Budget 2025/26* signals our ongoing reliance on external funding sources to meet community expectations for the services we deliver.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies (s.9(2)(h)):

Many of our capital works renewal budget contained in the *Budget 2025/26* are funded by State and Federal grant programs, in alignment to associated State and Federal plans and strategies.

Council Plans and Policies:

The activities funded by the *Budget 2025/26* are in alignment with the strategies outlined in the *Council Plan 2021-2025*. The 2024/25 financial year is the last year of the *Council Plan 2021-2025*, we note that there are outstanding priorities that have heavily influenced inclusion in the *Budget 2025/26*, while the *Council Plan 2025/29* is

being developed and finalised.

Transparency of Decision (s.9(2)(i)):

It is the officer's view that it is appropriate to consider this matter in a Council meeting that is open to the public.

Risk Assessment:

The *Budget 2025/26* represents a consistent risk profile to previous budgets.

A surplus is forecast; this is predominantly a result of successful application for funding to complete disaster recovery works, that are Capital in nature. Our current financial position is quite strong. Long-term financial sustainability will be dependent on our ability to manage competing demands on our resources. Prioritisation of asset renewals is critical to ensuring we remain financially sustainable, and ensuring we are investment ready to pursue funding opportunities for new, upgraded or replacement of assets is needed, in order that ratepayer fund contributions are minimised to undertake these works. The *Budget 2025/26* and long term financial plan currently shows a good balance in this regard.

Officer's View:

The *Budget 2025/26* has been developed in accordance with legislative requirements and is based on ongoing community engagement. Council has worked hard to secure substantial grant funding, particularly disaster recovery funding to support major works in 2025/26 and the proposed financial position is sound.

It is the officer's view that the *Budget 2025/26* is financially responsible and consistent with community needs.

Council Resolution:

**CR ANDERSON
CR WORTMANN**

THAT:

- 1. THE INCREASE IN CHILDCARE FEES COMMENCE FROM 1 OCTOBER 2025 AND THE BUDGET 2025/26 BE AMENDED AND ADOPTED ACCORDINGLY;**
- 2. THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BE AUTHORISED TO GIVE PUBLIC NOTICE OF THE ADOPTION OF THE *BUDGET 2025/26*;**
- 3. PURSUANT TO SECTION 158 OF THE *LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1989*, THE AMOUNTS TO BE RAISED BY GENERAL RATES, MUNICIPAL CHARGES, SERVICE RATES AND SERVICE CHARGES FOR THE 2025/26 FINANCIAL YEAR ARE AS FOLLOWS:**
 - **GENERAL RATES – \$7,362,000;**
 - **MUNICIPAL CHARGE – \$1,390,000;**
 - **KERBSIDE COLLECTION CHARGES – \$1,493,000;**
 - **WASTE FACILITIES MANAGEMENT CHARGE – \$416,000;**
- 4. PURSUANT TO SECTION 159 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1989, A MUNICIPAL CHARGE OF \$347 PER RATEABLE PROPERTY BE DECLARED FOR THE 2025/26 FINANCIAL YEAR;**
- 5. PURSUANT TO SECTION 159 OF THE *LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1989*, THE FOLLOWING ANNUAL SERVICE CHARGES BE DECLARED FOR THE 2025/26 FINANCIAL YEAR:**
 - a. WASTE FACILITIES MANAGEMENT – \$104;**
 - b. GARBAGE AND RECYCLING STANDARD SERVICE – 140L/240L BINS – \$340;**
 - c. GARBAGE AND RECYCLING – 240L/240L BINS – \$380;**
 - d. GARBAGE AND RECYCLING – 80L/240L BINS – \$310;**
 - e. GARBAGE, RECYCLING AND FOGO - 80L/240L/240L BINS - \$470;**
 - f. GARBAGE, RECYCLING AND FOGO - 140L/240L/240L BINS - \$495;**
 - g. GARBAGE, RECYCLING AND FOGO - 240L/240L/240L BINS - \$530;**
 - h. ADDITIONAL GARBAGE – 140L BIN – \$380;**
 - i. ADDITIONAL GARBAGE – 240L BIN – \$495;**

- j. **ADDITIONAL GARBAGE – 80L BIN – \$325;**
- k. **ADDITIONAL FOGO 240L BIN - \$155;**
- l. **ADDITIONAL RECYCLING – 240L BIN – \$180; AND**
- m. **GARBAGE AND RECYCLING SERVICE EXTENSION (PER KM) - \$0.20;**

6. PURSUANT TO SECTION 161 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1989, GENERAL RATES ARE RAISED BY THE APPLICATION OF DIFFERENTIAL RATES TO RATEABLE PROPERTIES AND THAT THE FOLLOWING RATES IN THE DOLLAR ARE APPLIED FOR EACH TYPE OF RATE TO BE LEVIED FOR THE 2025/26 FINANCIAL YEAR, WITH THE DEFINITION OF EACH TYPE OR CLASS OF LAND CONTAINED WITHIN THE BUDGET 2025/26:

- a. **RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES – 0.2367 CENTS IN THE DOLLAR OF CAPITAL IMPROVED VALUE;**
- b. **RURAL RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES – 0.2367 CENTS IN THE DOLLAR OF CAPITAL IMPROVED VALUE;**
- c. **RURAL PROPERTIES – 0.1894 CENTS IN THE DOLLAR OF CAPITAL IMPROVED VALUE;**
- d. **BUSINESS PROPERTIES – 0.2130 CENTS IN THE DOLLAR OF CAPITAL IMPROVED VALUE; AND**
- e. **UNDEVELOPED RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES – 0.7574 CENTS IN THE DOLLAR OF CAPITAL IMPROVED VALUE;**

7. IN EXERCISE OF THE POWER CONFERRED BY SECTION 169 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1989, REBATES ARE GRANTED TO EACH OWNER (OR WHERE APPLICABLE, OCCUPIER) OF RATEABLE LAND OF THE DECLARED MUNICIPAL CHARGE AND WASTE FACILITIES MANAGEMENT CHARGE IN RESPECT OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR, IF:

- a. **THE RATEABLE LAND IS FARM LAND WITHIN THE MEANING OF SECTION 2(1) OF THE *VALUATION OF LAND ACT 1960* OR WOULD BE FARM LAND IF IT WERE 2 HECTARES OR MORE IN AREA;**
- b. **THE RATEABLE LAND FORMS PART OF A SINGLE FARM ENTERPRISE;**
- c. **A REBATE IS NOT GRANTED IN RESPECT OF AT LEAST ONE OTHER RATEABLE PROPERTY WHICH FORMS PART OF THE SINGLE FARM ENTERPRISE; AND**
- d. **IN THE CASE OF A SINGLE FARM ENTERPRISE, WHICH IS OCCUPIED BY MORE THAN ONE PERSON, A REBATE IS NOT GRANTED IN RESPECT OF MORE THAN ONE PRINCIPLE PLACE OF RESIDENCE;**

- 8. IT IS COUNCIL'S POSITION THAT REBATES ASSIST IN THE PROPER DEVELOPMENT OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT BY ENCOURAGING THE RETENTION OF FARMS AND REDUCING THE RATES AND CHARGES BURDEN ON OWNERS (AND, WHERE APPLICABLE, OCCUPIERS) OF SINGLE FARM ENTERPRISES;**
- 9. IN EXERCISE OF THE POWER CONFERRED BY SECTION 169 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1989, THE FOLLOWING CONCESSIONS BE GRANTED:**
 - a. 50% OF THE RATES LEVIED ON THE FOUR ELDERLY PERSON UNITS LOCATED AT 24 WILLONG STREET, TALLANGATTA, AS PER THE EXISTING AGREEMENT DATED IN 1994 BETWEEN THE MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND COUNCIL;**
 - b. 50% OF THE RATES, MUNICIPAL CHARGE AND WASTE MANAGEMENT CHARGES LEVIED ON THE PROPERTY AT 25 WHEELER STREET, CORRYONG, AS PER THE COUNCIL MINUTES DATED 1 MAY 2000; AND**
- 10. IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 167 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1989, RATES AND CHARGES ARE TO BE PAID IN FOUR INSTALMENTS ON OR BEFORE 30 SEPTEMBER 2025, 30 NOVEMBER 2025, 28 FEBRUARY 2026 AND 31 MAY 2026.**

CARRIED

Cr Anderson left the meeting, the time being 10:46am.

The meeting returned to item 9.1 'Action Sheet Report', the time being 10.46am.

9.5 Final Revenue and Rating Plan 2025/26 (DCOD)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Ms Narelle Taylor, Director Corporate and Organisational Development.

At the time of preparation of this report, the officer did not have a general or material conflict of interest in any matter to which the report or advice relates.

Purpose of Report:

This report provides an overview of the *Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029* for adoption.

Summary:

Development of a Revenue and Rating Plan is a requirement of the Local Government Act 2020 and establishes the revenue raising framework within which Council funds its operations. Revenue sources include rates and charges, statutory fees, user fees, grants and other income such as interest on funds held in bank accounts. The *Proposed Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029* was placed on public exhibition following the Special Council Meeting 14 May 2025, with submissions closing 11 June 2025.

Recommendation:

That the *Revenue and Rating Plan 2025/29* be adopted.

Attachment:

1. Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029 [9.5.1 - 19 pages]

Background/History:

The Local Government Act 2020 requires that a Council must prepare and adopt a Revenue and Rating Plan to cover a minimum period of four years following each Council election. The Revenue and Rating Plan establishes the revenue raising framework within which Council funds its operations, including the principles and considerations underlying the distribution of rates, charges and fees to property owners and users of Council services.

A *Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029* has been drafted in alignment with Council's

current revenue and rating strategies. The actual quantum of revenue to be raised is then determined in the Council Budget.

The two most significant sources of funding for Council are grants and rates, which comprise 48% and 33% of annual income within Council's *Budget 2025/2026* respectively. Rates provide a reliable foundation of funding from which Council can support the delivery of services and infrastructure, while grants can fluctuate considerably from year to year.

Relevant Law (s.9(2)(a)):

The *Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029* has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020 and also complies with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1989, which still retains provisions in relation to how Councils may raise and apply rates and charges.

Options – Best Outcomes for the Community (s.9(2)(b)):

Council could choose to vary its funding mechanisms. Funding mechanisms have been proposed to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of rates, charges and fees across ratepayer, residents and other users of Council services and facilities.

While the *Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029* covers the period 2025-2029, it is noted that the Council may choose to vary the Plan by resolution at any time if considered necessary.

Sustainability Implications (s.9(2)(c)):

The *Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029* strategies are designed to balance community needs with Council's ongoing financial sustainability.

Community Engagement (s.9(2)(d)):

The *Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029* was released for the community to provide feedback. No direct submissions have been received. We have considered feedback received during the Council Plan consultation process and through Budget submissions.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement (s.9(2)(e)):

The *Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029* expands on the information currently available to the community to explain how Council funds its operations, providing further transparency and understanding as well as opportunity for input.

Collaboration (s.9(2)(f)):

The *Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029* is based on the Model Revenue and Rating Plan provided by Local Government Victoria, which was developed through collaboration with Councils across the state.

Financial Viability/Budget Impact (s.9(2)(g)):

The *Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029* is a key instrument outlining how Council funds its operations, and provides the framework underpinning the income sources outlined in Council's Budget and Long Term Financial Plan. It is noted that grants are a major component of Council's funding and may fluctuate considerably from year to year.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies (s.9(2)(h)):

The *Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029* outlines the importance of grants, from the State and Federal governments, in funding the operations of Council, which in turn may be determined by relevant State and Federal plans and policies.

Council Plans and Policies:

The *Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029* is a key element of Council's integrated planning framework and provides the basis for funding Council's Budget and the Council Plan.

Transparency of Decision (s.9(2)(i)) :

It is the officer's view that it is appropriate to consider this matter in a Council meeting that is open to the public.

Risk Assessment:

The *Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029* highlights the importance of grant funding in supporting Council's operations, and notes that grants may fluctuate considerably from year to year.

Officer's View:

The *Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029* has been developed in accordance with legislative requirements and Council's current revenue and rating strategies. It is the Officer's view that the Plan be released for public exhibition.

Council Resolution:

**CR WORTMANN
CR TOLSHER**

THAT THE *REVENUE AND RATING PLAN 2025/29* BE ADOPTED.

CARRIED

Confirmed

9.6 Quarterly Performance Reporting Graphs (07/05/0022 - DCOD)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Ms Narelle Taylor, Director Corporate and Organisational Development.

At the time of preparation of this report, the officer did not have a general or material conflict of interest in any matter to which the report or advice relates.

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of the report is to provide information.

Summary:

The performance reporting graphs are provided to Council on a quarterly basis to provide a high-level picture of the key areas of Council operations.

A graph is provided for each of the following areas:

- Council Plan Priorities
- Top 5 Service Request Types
- Service Requests Closed and Open
- Corryong Visitor Information Centre Visitation
- Capital Expenditure
- Cash Position
- Rates Debtors
- Incident Reports
- Building Permits Issued
- Planning Applications Lodged
- Council Resolutions
- Technical Service Inspections

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

Attachment:

1. Monthly Council Reporting Graphs - 2024-25 [9.6.1 - 1 page]

Background/History:

Not applicable.

Relevant Law (s.9(2)(a)):

Not applicable.

Options – Best Outcomes for the Community (s.9(2)(b)):

Not applicable.

Sustainability Implications (s.9(2)(c)):

Not applicable.

Community Engagement (s.9(2)(d)):

In accordance with our *Community Engagement policy* this matter did not require community engagement.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement (s.9(2)(e)):

This report provides information relevant to our progress in performance and continuous improvement against key areas of Council's operations.

Collaboration (s.9(2)(f)):

Not applicable.

Financial Viability/Budget Impact (s.9(2)(g)):

Cash balances indicate that the Council is currently in a strong liquid position; the capital forecast also indicates that the cash reserves are committed, and that beyond the forecast budget for 12 months the financial position is less secure.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies (s.9(2)(h)):

This report does not relate to Regional, State and National Plans and Policies.

Council Plans and Policies:

Not applicable.

Transparency of Decision (s.9(2)(i)) :

It is the officer's view that it is appropriate to consider this matter in a Council meeting that is open to the public.

Risk Assessment:

The Performance Reporting Graphs provide a snapshot of how Council is tracking against its key operational objectives, helping to provide a high-level guide as to any emerging risks.

Officer's View:

The Performance Reporting Graphs are provided to illustrate key aspects of Council's performance and results. This data indicates Council officers' efforts to achieve strong outcomes for the community are coming to fruition.

Council Resolution:

**CR TOLSHER
CR WORTMANN**

THAT THE REPORT BE NOTED.

CARRIED

9.7 Chief Executive Officer - Employment and Remuneration Committee (10/01/0004-DCOD)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Ms Narelle Taylor, Director Corporate and Organisational Development.

At the time of preparation of this report, the officer did not have a general or material conflict of interest in any matter to which the report or advice relates.

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to recommend that tenure for the Chairperson of the Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Committee (the "Committee") be extended.

Summary:

The *Local Government Act 2020* (LGA 2020) requires that councils put in place a Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Committee which acts as an advisory committee to Council and comprises an Independent Chairperson and at least three councillors, one of whom must be the Mayor. The incumbent Independent Chairperson is Ms Leisa Clarke and Ms Clarke has applied to Council to continue in the role.

Recommendation:

That Leisa Clarke be re-appointed as the Independent Chairperson of the Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Committee for a further term of four years.

Attachment:

Nil

Background/History:

The Employment and Remuneration Committee provides for the appointment of an Independent Chairperson to the Committee. The Independent Chairperson is to have human resources (or related) qualifications, demonstrated management skills, senior business experience, demonstrated ability in relation to executive level performance appraisal, professional development and remuneration, and significant experience working with executives and board members in a similar advisory role. Experience

and knowledge of the Local Government sector is desirable.

Leisa Clarke was appointed in April 2022 for a three year term. Given Ms Clarke's contribution to this role and committee, her proven experience and performance, it is recommended that Ms Clarke is re-appointed to this role for a further four-year term. The maximum term is eight years, and this re-appointment will not exceed this.

Relevant Law (s.9(2)(a)):

Section 45 of the *Local Government Act 2020*

Options – Best Outcomes for the Community (s.9(2)(b)):

The Committee provides for the selection and employment of the Chief Executive Officer of the Council based on merit, transparency and equal opportunity, in the interest of providing for the best service delivery outcomes to the community.

Sustainability Implications (s.9(2)(c)):

The role of the Committee is to ensure that the selection and employment of the Chief Executive Officer provides for the effective, efficient and sustainable operation of the Council, for which the Chief Executive Officer is responsible.

Community Engagement (s.9(2)(d)):

Not applicable.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement (s.9(2)(e)):

The Committee based approach brings formality and independence to the selection and employment of the Chief Executive Officer, providing for consistency and transparency of these practices.

Collaboration (s.9(2)(f)):

Not applicable.

Financial Viability/Budget Impact (s.9(2)(g)):

The Independent Chairperson's remuneration is accounted for within Council's Budget.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies (s.9(2)(h)):

Not applicable

Council Plans and Policies:

Council Plans:

Not applicable.

Council Policies:

Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Committee

Transparency of Decision (s.9(2)(i)) :

It is the officer's view that it is appropriate to consider this matter in a Council meeting that is open to the public.

Risk Assessment:

The appointment of an Independent Chairperson of the Committee provides for appropriate oversight of the employment Chief Executive Officer, to ensure that the best candidate for the role is selected, that an appropriate level of remuneration is provided, that any performance issues are identified and addressed, and that ongoing performance feedback can be provided in a constructive manner to support the delivery of excellent service delivery.

Officer's View:

The recommended candidate has the appropriate experience and skill to fulfill the responsibilities of the Independent Chairperson.

Council Resolution:

**CR TOLSHER
CR WORTMANN**

**THAT LEISA CLARKE BE RE-APPOINTED AS THE INDEPENDENT CHAIRPERSON
OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER EMPLOYMENT AND REMUNERATION
COMMITTEE FOR A FURTHER TERM OF FOUR YEARS.**

CARRIED

10 Community Wellbeing

10.1 Early Years and Maternal Child Health Report - December 2024 - May 2025 (DCP- 04/03/0071)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Miss Maisie Pilli, Early Years Quality and Governance Administrator.

At the time of preparation of this report, the officer did not have a general or material conflict of interest in any matter to which the report or advice relates.

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to provide information.

Summary:

Council's Early Years and Family Services continue to provide a range of programs and core services to children and families.

Throughout the reporting period, the following successful activities and events were delivered:

- Progressive implementation of changes to the management structure of the Early Years services.
- Maternal Child Health Nurse (MCHN) team continue to support and engage with community members requiring extra support including vulnerable families located across the shire.
- Maternal Child Health Christmas parties across all service areas were successful with each of the children receiving a book as a gift from the service.
- New centre for Walwa Early Years Learning Centre has opened under a temporary license at the Walwa Primary School, with a goal to move to a permanent license within the next 12 months.
- New three-year-old Kindergarten enrolments accepted during January and numbers are strong across all centres. The enrolments at Corryong are particularly high compared to previous years.

- Corryong is modelling a mixed kinder program to manage license capacity, demand, and staffing. This means the 3-year-old and 4-year-olds are mixed across two groups.
- Fortnightly Library visits for Storytime for Corryong and Tallangatta Kinders.
- Australia Day – Artwork with the children including Indigenous and Australian flag designs in Tallangatta and Bellbridge.
- St Patricks Day celebrated at Walwa through creative play.
- Pancake Day at Corryong, children cooked and ate their pancakes.
- The Bellbridge EYLC is holding excursions fortnightly to the park next door, to participate in the “Blue Earth” Program which promotes exercise and fitness.
- Mother's Day celebrations held across the four centres where children showcased their learning achievements.
- Children from Corryong and Walwa have had visits from Halve Waste.
- Continued facilitation of fun and engaging playgroup sessions, with strong attendance particularly at Corryong Playgroup – up to 15 families in some weeks.
- The Maternal Child Health Team put together a Corryong Giving Tree for Christmas in the MCHN building for vulnerable families within the shire.
- Worked with Food Bank in Wodonga to become a voucher distributor for vulnerable families within the shire.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

Attachment:

Nil

Background/History:

This report is presented at regular 6-month intervals across the year to provide an update on the activities of the Early Years (Kinder and Child Care) services, Maternal and Child Health Nurse services, and the delivery of Playgroup sessions.

Council provides MCH services, with 50% funding by the State Government; the childcare and Kinder are funded partially through State and Commonwealth funding, and fees from families. There is a growing demand for these services, with the availability of appropriate facilities being the biggest challenge Council faces in meeting this demand.

Relevant Law (s.9(2)(a)):

No relevant laws are applicable with any Council decisions or actions required from this report.

Options – Best Outcomes for the Community (s.9(2)(b)):

The Early Years and MCH units provide services to improve educational and wellbeing outcomes for young children and families and carers.

Sustainability Implications (s.9(2)(c)):

No economic, social, or environmental sustainability factors for the municipal district is required to be promoted through this report.

Community Engagement (s.9(2)(d)):

Key engagements/networking with the community over the past 6 months include:

- Upper Murray Family Care
- Child Protection Services (DFFH)
- Gateway Health
- Corryong Health
- Corryong P-12 College
- Corryong Kindergarten staff
- Victoria Police
- Foodshare
- Acres and Acres Food provision
- St Kilda Mums
- Orange Door
- Tallangatta Hospital
- Tallangatta CFA

Innovation and Continuous Improvement (s.9(2)(e)):

The Maternal Child Health, Early Years and Family Support Services continue to refine

processes, policies, and communication channels to:

- improve the identification of known or potentially at-risk children and families.
- achieve compliance with the Child Safe Standards.
- adequately identify and respond to risks within our services.

The early intervention practices can have important effects on family care, and child development.

Collaboration (s.9(2)(f)):

The teams continued to undertake important collaborations, including:

- Delivery of professional development for educators and teachers across the municipality with the Department of Education (through School Readiness Funding).
- December- Annual First Aid and CPR training.
- January- Focused on leadership, communication and creating a collaborative environment.
- May- How to create engaging spaces, dealing with difficult conversations, and Body Safety.
- Delivery of Early Years projects and parenting programs with the Australian Childhood Foundation, Tallangatta Health, Gateway Health and the Department of Education and Training; and
- Attendance and collaboration at key stakeholder meetings, such as Wodonga Alpine Indigo Towong (WAIT) meeting and Early Years Management Meetings.

Financial Viability/Budget Impact (s.9(2)(g)):

Budget requirements and availability have been confirmed, grant funding has been sought where possible, and all expenditure is being monitored and managed within agreed budget allocations.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies (s.9(2)(h)):

Early Years and MCH activities have been conducted in accordance with relevant state and national plans, including:

- The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority's National Quality Framework;
- The Victorian State Government's Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework;
- The Victorian State Government's Education State Early Childhood Reform Plan;

Council Plans and Policies:

Council Plans:

This report supports the following *Council Plan 2021-2025* priorities.

2. Community Wellbeing - Encourage and support all people in our Shire to be healthy, happy, connected, and resilient.
- 2.7 Expand and improve early years services across the Shire to support young families

Council Policies:

Not applicable.

Transparency of Decision (s.9(2)(i)):

It is the officer's view that it is appropriate to consider this matter in a Council meeting that is open to the public.

Risk Assessment:

Not Applicable.

Officer's View:

The Early Years services continue to deliver appropriate and well-managed services which meet the needs of children, families, and carers. With minimal private sector operators offering these services in the municipality, the community is in critical need of these services.

Council Resolution:

**CR WORTMANN
CR TOLSHER**

THAT THE REPORT BE NOTED.

CARRIED

10.2 Recreation Update (DCP-04/01/0006)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Ms Miranda Mouat, Senior Community Development Officer – Recreation.

At the time of preparation of this report, the officers did not have a general or material conflict of interest in any matter to which the report or advice relates.

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the activities in the Recreation portfolio throughout the period December 2024 to May 2025.

Summary:

The Recreation activities that were a focus during the reporting period included:

- Official opening of the Corryong Skatepark.
- Completion of the Transforming Tintaladra Equine Arena project.
- Submission of a funding application to the *Regional Community Sporting Infrastructure Fund* for the Sports Pavilion at Bethanga Recreation Reserve.
- Ongoing project management activities across sports infrastructure projects including the Rowen Park Sports Oval Lighting project, Cudgewa Football Oval Lighting Project, Bullioh Football Netball Club Female Friendly Facilities project, and Tallandoon Tennis Courts Redevelopment project.
- Management of Belgravia Leisure contract for operation of Council swimming pools to ensure successful delivery of 2024/25 swimming pool operating season (subject of an individual report to Council meeting also in June).
- Management of maintenance and facility improvement works at Council swimming pool sites, including compliance with Occupational Health and Safety and Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations.
- Training for relevant Council staff in Aquatic Technical Operator course, to ensure all staff with onsite pool operations responsibilities, such as water management, are suitably trained and qualified.
- Implementation of aspects of the Community Sport Fair Access Action Plan.
- Collaboration with external Recreation partners to support the development of sport and active recreation in Towong Shire.

Further details of the activities can be found in the attached Appendix.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

Attachment:

1. Appendix Recreation June 2025 [**10.2.1** - 3 pages]

Background/History:

This report is provided every six months to inform Council and the community of progress and activity in the Recreation portfolio.

Recreation activities are critical elements of supporting community health and wellbeing. The activities are typically diverse in nature, ranging from:

- infrastructure development at sporting clubs;
- operation of the swimming pools;
- development of programs and projects to support various community organisations;
- working with sporting organisations, health service providers and schools;
- linking and collaborating with government agencies in the delivery of targeted funded programs.

Relevant Law (s.9(2)(a)):

No relevant laws are applicable with any Council decisions or actions required from this report.

Options – Best Outcomes for the Community (s.9(2)(b)):

All of the activities undertaken were focussed on achieving the best outcomes for the community.

Sustainability Implications (s.9(2)(c)):

Not applicable.

Community Engagement (s.9(2)(d)):

Actions and activities undertaken in the Recreation space involve considerable engagement with the broader Towong Shire community.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement (s.9(2)(e)):

Not Applicable.

Collaboration (s.9(2)(f)):

There has been notable collaboration in the development of new sporting infrastructure projects, with community groups actively engaged in the execution of these projects.

Broad community collaboration has occurred in the development of designs and funding submission for the new Sports Pavilion at the Bethanga Recreation Reserve.

Ongoing liaison with Belgravia Leisure has produced improvements in processes and outcomes that will benefit the 2025-26 pool season.

Financial Viability/Budget Impact (s.9(2)(g)):

All activities were undertaken within budget allocations.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies (s.9(2)(h)):

Not Applicable.

Council Plans and Policies:

Council Plans:

This report supports the following Council Plan 2021-2025 priorities:

2. Community Wellbeing - Encourage and support all people in our Shire to be healthy, happy, connected and resilient.
- 2.4 Support the development of recreational activities and infrastructure to encourage active lifestyles for all ages and stages

This report aligns with the objectives of the

- *Towong Shire Recreation Strategy 2022-2033*
- *Community Sport Fair Access Policy and Action Plan 2024-2028*
- *Towong Shire Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025*

Transparency of Decision (s.9(2)(i)):

It is the officers view that it is appropriate to consider this matter in a Council meeting that is open to the public.

Risk Assessment:

Not applicable

Officer's View:

It is the officers' view that good progress is being made against the priorities detailed in both the Towong Shire's Council Plan 2021-2025 and Recreation Strategy 2022-2033.

Council Resolution:

**CR TOLSHER
CR WORTMANN**

THAT THE REPORT BE NOTED.

CARRIED

10.3 Emergency Management Update (DCP)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Mr Sven Erickson, Emergency Management Co-ordinator.

At the time of preparation of this report, the officer did not have a general or material conflict of interest in any matter to which the report or advice relates.

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the activities of the Emergency Management team.

Summary:

The attached report provides an overview of the current key activities within the Emergency Management functions of Council.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

Attachment:

1. Emergency Management Report June 2025 [**10.3.1** - 3 pages]

Background/History:

The emergency management report provides an update on the Emergency Management activities conducted by Council. Council's roles in municipal emergency management include:

- Working with emergency service agencies to provide support to the community to prepare for emergencies.
- Contributing to fire prevention planning and preparation activities through Councils' municipal fire prevention inspection program.
- Contributing to Municipal Emergency Management Planning as a member of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC).
- Providing support to relief and response arrangements during an emergency; and
- Providing leadership and support during recovery from an emergency.

Relevant Law (s.9(2)(a)):

Country Fire Authority Act 1958.

Emergency Management Act 2013

Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018.

Options – Best Outcomes for the Community (s.9(2)(b)):

Emergency management activities aid communities in preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies, supporting their economic and social well-being.

Sustainability Implications (s.9(2)(c)):

Emergency management planning provides for the ongoing resilience of the community in mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery from emergencies.

Emergency management planning further prepares Council and communities to prepare for the increase in both the likelihood and consequence of emergencies due to the impacts of climate change.

Community Engagement (s.9(2)(d)):

The current areas of focus of community engagement in Emergency Management over the last period has been through:

- Completion of flood recovery work.
- The emergence of drought support and drought advocacy.
- Supporting communities with the development and maintenance of community owned Community Emergency Management Plans (CEMP).
- Working with community facility committees on the implementation of the Resilient Community Facilities Project.
- Continuing the work of the Rebuild Support Service program for residents rebuilding after the 2019/2020 bushfires.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement (s.9(2)(e)):

As part of the North East Hume Emergency Management Collaboration (NEHEMC), Towong, Indigo and Alpine Shire Councils are in collaboration to improve their joint ability to respond to emergencies through sharing limited resources.

To improve the capacity to respond under Council relief obligations in emergencies, Council has in place two emergency relief trailers to supply resources to relief centres as a primary purpose and to be used for community engagement as a secondary

purpose. The trailers are positioned in specific areas around the shire based on the current risk profile of relevant hazards.

To support the resilience of more isolated communities within the Shire, Council is delivering its Resilient Buildings Project to enhance additional infrastructure in identified community buildings. The objective is to make these structures more resilient, allowing communities to utilise them after a significant emergency when it is safe to return to their community.

Collaboration (s.9(2)(f)):

Emergency management requires constant collaboration with other agencies and officers who work directly with the members of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC), the Hume Regional Emergency Management Committee (REMPC), the Hume Regional Emergency Management Team (REMT), the Hume Regional Recovery Committee and the North East Hume Emergency Management Collaboration on joint initiatives. Council leads the Towong Shire Local Recovery Agency Network. There is also an ongoing collaboration with Emergency Management Victoria, the Municipal Association of Victoria, Community Recovery Committees, and other community organisations.

Financial Viability/Budget Impact (s.9(2)(g)):

The Resilient Buildings Project, Flood Recovery Services and Rebuild Support Services are grant funded by Emergency Recovery Victoria. This funding has been invaluable in providing our Shire with improved resilience and recovery capacity. Day to day functions have been budgeted for and delivered within budget. Council's ability to deliver further capacity building programs will be contingent on future grant funding after the completion of the current grant funded programs.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies (s.9(2)(h)):

Emergency Management activities are undertaken in accordance with:

- Towong Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP).
- Hume Regional Emergency Management Plan (REMP).
- State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP); and
- Relevant sub plans and complementary plans associated with each of these three management plans.

Council Plans and Policies:

Council Plans:

This report supports the following *Council Plan 2021-2025* priorities.

2. Community Wellbeing - Encourage and support all people in our Shire to be healthy, happy, connected and resilient.

2.14 Support our communities to drive their recovery from bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic and improve their mitigation of and resilience to future adverse events

This report supports the following *Council Plan 2021-2025* priorities.

4. Land Use - Ensure that Council's planning, building and environmental health services support all aspects of liveability and sustainable population growth.

4.1 Support the rebuild process for fire impacted properties

Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025:

3.2 Our community is adaptable and resilient when people effectively prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies, including COVID-19 and the Black Summer Bushfires.

Council Policies:

Risk Management Policy.

Transparency of Decision (s.9(2)(i)) :

It is the officer's view that it is appropriate to consider this matter in a Council meeting that is open to the public.

Risk Assessment:

The weather situation of a dry summer and autumn has led to drought conditions in the municipality. This has led to an extended Fire Danger Period only just finishing May 30. This has presented resource challenges for fire control agencies to not have summer crews or summer aerial assets available. At this stage, the fire risk for the 2025/2026 season will be higher than the previous season if significant rain is not received.

Officer's View:

The emergency management team is continuing to make progress on implementing the priorities in the Council Plan 2021-2025.

Council Resolution:

**CR WORTMANN
CR TOLSHER**

THAT THE REPORT BE NOTED.

CARRIED

Confirmed

10.4 Bullioh Recreation Reserve - Female Friendly Facility (DCP)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Mr Michael Stanton, Manager Community Wellbeing.

At the time of preparation of this report, the officer did not have a general or material conflict of interest in any matter to which the report or advice relates.

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the tender and subsequent processes that have taken place into the development of the female friendly facilities at Bullioh / Wyeeboo Recreation Reserve.

This report also seeks Council approval to allocate additional funding towards this project and to appoint the recommended contractor.

Summary:

This report demonstrates the tender process followed for the procurement of a suitable contractor to undertake the construction of the female friendly facility at the Bullioh / Wyeeboo Recreation Reserve.

Recommendation:

That:

1. Contract 2024/25 - 023 for the Female Friendly Facilities at Bullioh / Wyeeboo Recreation Reserve not be awarded to any tenderer;
2. An additional \$300,000 be allocated towards the project from savings and reallocations in the ERV Recovery and Resilience fund;
3. A negotiated contract 2024/25-061 for \$614,796 be awarded to Barton Street Developments Pty Ltd for the revised scope project;
4. The use of the Common Seal in accordance with Local Law 1 – Common Seal and Miscellaneous Penalties be authorised for the purpose of signing the contract documents; and
5. The Chief Executive Officer be authorised to approve contract variations up to the total value of the allocated budget.

Attachment:

Nil

Background/History:

There are currently limited facilities for netballers at the Bullioh / Wyeeboo Recreation Reserve and these are located some distance away from the two netball courts, this leads to issues such as there being an inadequate amount of time during breaks in matches for players, umpires and officials to use the amenities, meaning delays in start times and overall scheduling disruption.

There is currently no storage at the netball courts for equipment, and there is little shelter for 100 plus supporters who attend matches at the recreation reserve.

The female friendly facility project at the Bullioh / Wyeeboo Recreation Reserve is aimed to deliver a new pavilion strategically positioned between the football oval and two netball courts benefitting all user groups.

The pavilion will include accessible player changerooms, umpires change rooms, accessible amenity, a small admin/multi-purpose space and storage all designed to align with Netball Victoria guidelines which incorporates female friendly design principles.

The new pavilion also includes a verandah along the eastern and western sides of the building creating undercover spectator areas for both the netball courts and football oval.

This project was developed through strong partnerships between Council, the Bullioh / Wyeeboo Recreation Reserve Committee of Management, the Bullioh Football Netball Club (BFNC), Sport and Recreation Victoria and Netball Victoria.

Grant funding of \$250,000 was secured for this project in 2023 through Sport and Recreation Victoria's 2022/23 Country Football and Netball Program. \$225,000 of this grant has already been paid to Council with the remaining \$25,000 to be paid upon the completion of the project.

A tender was issued in December 2024 for Contract No 2024/25 - 051, in line with Council's Procurement Policy with advertising through www.tenders.net, in local newspapers and Council's Facebook page. Four submissions were received which were all well above the budget figure for the project of \$395,000 (excluding GST).

Under the "Conditions of Tendering" Towong Shire Council reserves the right to accept a Tender in part or in whole or to negotiate. Based on this provision and the allocated budget, negotiations with the lowest priced tenderer (Barton Street Developments Pty Ltd) has taken place including reducing the scope and overall costs of the project.

The key objective and requirement for this project is to provide female friendly player and umpire change rooms and amenities close to the netball courts. The revised scope has not changed these changeroom and amenities components, but we have removed the canteen and social space based on:

- Further discussion and agreement with the Bullooh FNC
- Canteen and social facilities are included in the existing football pavilion and accessible for netball purposes.

A multi-purpose space and storage area are still included and designed to Netball Victoria Guidelines whilst the veranda remains, albeit slightly smaller due to the reduction in the width of the building. There are some other agreed modifications and reductions introduced in the revised scope to reduce the price further.

The revised scope has been communicated with, and approved by Sport and Recreation Victoria, with a variation to the funding agreement to be finalised and Netball Victoria is supportive of the reduced scope of the project as the revised design still meets its facility guidelines.

The total project cost based on the revised is over \$685,000 inclusive of \$614,796 for the proposed building contract, separate plumbing and electrical works and completed re-design costs. Approximately \$395,000 is currently budgeted with Council committing \$25,000. A further \$290,416 plus a small contingency is required for this project to proceed and there are no other feasible funding options aside from Council significantly increasing its contribution towards the project.

Relevant Law (s.9(2)(a)):

The Local Government Act 2020

"A Council must comply with it's Procurement Policy before entering into a contract for the purchase of goods or services or the carrying out of works"

Options – Best Outcomes for the Community (s.9(2)(b)):

In terms of achieving the best outcome for the municipal community, including future generations, three options are proposed for considerations:

Option 1 – Approve the negotiated contract price of \$614,796 Excluding GST to

Barton Street Developments Pty Ltd for the construction of the female friendly facility at Bullioh / Wyeeboo Recreation Reserve. This is the preferred option.

Option 2 – Retender the works. This will impact project timelines and jeopardise the State Government funding allocated to the project and accordingly is not recommended as not providing the best outcome for the Community.

Option 3 – Not proceed with this project and return the State Government funding. This option is not recommended as providing the best outcome for the Community.

Sustainability Implications (s.9(2)(c)):

Economic

The project will use local contractors providing a positive impact on the local economy.

Social

The successful completion of this project will significantly improve opportunities for sporting and recreation activities and provide much needed inclusive facilities for female participants at Bullioh / Whyeeboo Recreation Reserve.

Community Engagement (s.9(2)(d)):

This project was developed through strong partnerships between Council, the Bullioh / Wyeeboo Recreation reserve Committee of Management, the Bullioh FNC, Sport and Recreation Victoria and Netball Victoria.

The final project design and delivery will meet the needs of the community and value add to the Recreation Reserve and all participants who use the facility. Council will maintain contact and engagement with the Committee of Management throughout the construction phase of this project.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement (s.9(2)(e)):

This project will deliver facilities that are in-line with current guidelines for female participants and other facilities within the Upper Murray Football Netball League.

Collaboration (s.9(2)(f)):

This project has demonstrated excellent collaboration between Council, state Government via Sport and Recreation Victoria, the local community and contractors to achieve a positive outcome.

Financial Viability/Budget Impact (s.9(2)(g)):

The current budget for the project is \$395,000, with \$250,000 from Sport and Recreation Victoria, just under \$120,000 from the Bullioh FNC and \$25,000 from Towong Shire Council.

To ensure that the project proceeds and meets the community aspirations, and recognising the relatively small financial contribution from Council in the original budget, and that no further funds are available from Sport and Recreation Victoria or the BFNC, the option for Council to increase its allocation had to be considered.

The Recovery and Resilience fund established through Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) following the 2019/2020 Bushfire event has supported a range of community based projects and programs. There are some underspends in some of these projects, and when combined with some reallocations, Council's contribution to the Bullioh project can be increased from \$25,000 to \$325,000.

This increase is beneficial as no ratepayer funds are required. The additional \$300,000 is sourced from the ERV grant funding.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies (s.9(2)(h)):

The designs for this project meet Netball Victoria's strategic facility guidelines.

Council Plans and Policies:

Council Plans:

This report supports the following *Council Plan 2021-2025 priorities*.

1. Asset Management - Maintain and improve our Shire's infrastructure to meet the levels of service established in consultation with our communities.

1.1 Deliver 100% of the annual capital works program and bushfire recovery projects

1.2 Deliver infrastructure projects that arise from place-based master planning

This report supports the following *Council Plan 2021-2025 priorities*.

2. Community Wellbeing - Encourage and support all people in our Shire to be healthy, happy, connected and resilient.

2.4 Support the development of recreational activities and infrastructure to encourage active lifestyles for all ages and stages

Council Policies:

Towong Shire Procurement Policy (August 2024)

The procurement process followed for this tender and the subsequent follow up processes have been undertaken in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy adopted in August 2024.

Community Sport Fair Access Policy (June 2024)

The outcomes of this proposed project align with several of the principles of Council's Community Sport Fair access Policy which was adopted by Council in June 2024.

Transparency of Decision (s.9(2)(i)) :

It is the officer's view that it is appropriate to consider this matter in a Council meeting that is open to the public.

Risk Assessment:

A risk for this project is the time frame available to spend the allocated grant funding. This risk will be mitigated through active management of project implementation and supervision of the contractor.

The appointment of a contractor with experience in similar type projects and strong referrals will facilitate the project being as low risk as possible.

Officer's View:

It is the officer's view that the awarding of this contract to Barton Street Developments Pty Ltd for the value of \$614,796 will result in successful project delivery and an excellent outcome for Council and the community. The references provided by Barton Street Developments demonstrate that they will deliver good value and are a low risk to Council for this project.

Council Resolution:

**CR WORTMANN
CR TOLSHER**

THAT:

- 1. CONTRACT 2024/25 - 023 FOR THE FEMALE FRIENDLY FACILITIES AT BULLIOH / WYEEBOO RECREATION RESERVE NOT BE AWARDED TO ANY TENDERER;**
- 2. AN ADDITIONAL \$300,000 BE ALLOCATED TOWARDS THE PROJECT FROM SAVINGS AND REALLOCATIONS IN THE ERV RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE FUND;**
- 3. A NEGOTIATED CONTRACT 2024/25-061FOR \$614,796 BE AWARDED TO BARTON STREET DEVELOPMENTS PTY LTD FOR THE REVISED SCOPE PROJECT;**
- 4. THE USE OF THE COMMON SEAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH LOCAL LAW 1 – COMMON SEAL AND MISCELLANEOUS PENALTIES BE AUTHORISED FOR THE PURPOSE OF SIGNING THE CONTRACT DOCUMENTS; AND**
- 5. THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BE AUTHORISED TO APPROVE CONTRACT VARIATIONS UP TO THE TOTAL VALUE OF THE ALLOCATED BUDGET.**

CARRIED

10.5 Tallandoon Tennis Courts Redevelopment - Tender Evaluation - Contract No 2024/25 - 001 (DCP)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Mr Michael Stanton, Manager Community Wellbeing.

At the time of preparation of this report, the officer did not have a general or material conflict of interest in any matter to which the report or advice relates.

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to provide information to support the assessment of tender submissions for the Tallandoon Tennis Courts Redevelopment and seek Council approval to appoint the recommended contractor.

Summary:

This report demonstrates the tender process followed for the procurement of a suitable contractor to undertake the Tallandoon Tennis Courts Redevelopment.

The key elements of the Tallandoon tennis project includes civil, electrical and construction works to design for the renewal of the two concrete tennis courts (surfacing works, drainage, surrounds and infrastructure), installation of club competition standard lighting, new fencing, water tap and concrete path in accordance with Technical Specifications and Construction Drawings as prepared by 2MH Consulting.

Tenders for this project (Contract No 2024/25 – 001A) were advertised from April 2 and closed on May 6. In all, six (6) compliant tenders were received. This report provides a recommendation for the most suitable contractor to undertake the above works. A comparative tender evaluation for Contract No 2024/25-001A has been circulated to Councillors prior to this meeting. This evaluation provides all financial information and non-price scoring criteria and weightings.

Recommendation:

That:

1. Contract 2024/2025 - 001A Tallandoon Tennis Courts Redevelopment be awarded to Global Turf Projects Pty Ltd for the lump sum of \$510,180.42 Excluding GST;
2. The Chief Executive Officer be authorised to sign and seal Contract No 2024/25 - 001A in accordance with Local Law 1 – Common Seal and Miscellaneous Penalties; and
3. The Chief Executive Officer be authorised to approve contract variations up to the value of the total allocated project budget.

Attachment:

A comparative tender evaluation for Contract 2024/25 - 001A has been provided to Councillors prior to the meeting.

Background/History:

The Tallandoon Tennis Courts (two courts) are located on the Tallandoon Recreation Reserve and is the only operating tennis club in the Mitta Valley. The reserve and tennis courts play a vital role in providing the Tallandoon and wider Mitta Valley community with opportunities for organised sporting activities, active recreation, and social interaction. The club has continuously played competitive tennis for 50 years with its catchment of players from Tallandoon, Eskdale, Mitta and Dartmouth.

The concrete tennis courts and associated infrastructure are in serious disrepair and urgent need of renewal with its most recent court having been built in 1963. The 2022 flooding event in the area led to further cracking of the courts making them dangerous and unplayable in many areas.

The current state of the tennis courts at Tallandoon is impacting on participation rates and limiting opportunities for both locals and visitors to engage in competition and informal tennis activity.

Council was awarded grant funding of \$456,771 in 2024 through Sport and Recreation Victoria's Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Funding program, whilst the remaining budget is made up of Council (\$34,000) and community (\$28,000) contributions.

The successful contractor will redevelop two high quality tennis courts with club competition standard lighting for the Tallandoon and wider Mitta Valley communities.

Relevant Law (s.9(2)(a)):

The Local Government Act 2020

Options – Best Outcomes for the Community (s.9(2)(b)):

In terms of achieving the best outcome for the municipal community, including future generations, two options are proposed for consideration:

Option 1 – Approve the tender as presented and award Contract No 2024/25 - 001A to Global Turf Projects Pty Ltd.

Option 2 – Retender the works. This will impact project timelines and potentially milestones associated with the funding agreement that has been established with Sport and Recreation Victoria. This option is not recommended.

Sustainability Implications (s.9(2)(c)):

Economic

This project will include the use of some local contractors and suppliers providing a positive impact to the local economy.

Social

The successful completion of this project will significantly improve opportunities for sporting and recreation activities, and community events for the local community.

Community Engagement (s.9(2)(d)):

The Tallandoon Tennis Courts redevelopment project has been developed through relationship and coordination with both the Tallandoon Recreation Reserve Committee of Management, and the Tallandoon Tennis Club.

The Tallandoon Tennis Club has been actively involved in the development of this project to date and is providing the in-kind labour for the demolition of the existing courts, associated items and fences. Council will maintain contact and engagement with the Committee of Management and Tennis Club throughout the construction phase of this project.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement (s.9(2)(e)):

This project will deliver vastly improved tennis court surface and lighting infrastructure at the Tallandoon Recreation Reserve for the benefit of the Tallandoon,

Mitta Valley and wider community. The new lighting infrastructure will incorporate the use of energy saving LED technology and achieve competition standard lighting.

Collaboration (s.9(2)(f)):

The Tallandoon Tennis Courts redevelopment project has been developed through strong partnerships between Council, the Tallandoon Recreation Reserve Committee, of Management, the Tallandoon Tennis Club, Sport and Recreation Victoria, and Tennis Victoria.

Financial Viability/Budget Impact (s.9(2)(g)):

Budget requirements and availability have been confirmed, grant funding has been secured for this project and all expenditure is being monitored and managed within agreed budget allocations.

In addition, the newly constructed asset will be the responsibility of the Committee of Management for the Tallandoon Recreation Reserve, meaning ongoing costs will not be borne by Council.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies (s.9(2)(h)):

All detailed design aspects of this project have been developed in accordance with Tennis Victoria guidelines.

Council Plans and Policies:

Council Plans:

This report supports the following *Council Plan 2021-2025 priorities*:

1. Asset Management - Maintain and improve our Shire's infrastructure to meet the levels of service established in consultation with our communities.
- 1.2 Deliver infrastructure projects that arise from place-based master planning

This report supports the following *Council Plan 2021-2025 priorities*:

2. Community Wellbeing - Encourage and support all people in our Shire to be healthy, happy, connected and resilient.
- 2.4 Support the development of recreational activities and infrastructure to encourage active lifestyles for all ages and stages

Council Policies:

Towong Shire Procurement Policy (August 2024)

The procurement process followed for this tender and the subsequent follow up processes have been undertaken in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy adopted in August 2024.

Transparency of Decision (s.9(2)(i)) :

It is the officer's view that it is appropriate to consider this matter in a Council meeting that is open to the public.

Risk Assessment:

The project design and development and the tender process has included strong risk management assessment. The due diligence exercised through the evaluation process has served to mitigate any significant risks associated with project construction.

A risk for this project is the time frame available to spend the allocated grant funding. This risk will be mitigated through active management of project implementation and supervision of the contractor.

The appointment of an experienced contractor in similar type projects with strong referrals will facilitate the project being as low risk as possible.

Officer's View:

The references provided by Global Turf Projects Pty Ltd in its tender submission combined with its experience in recreation related projects demonstrate that it will deliver good value and is a low risk to Council for this project. It is the officer's recommendation that Global Turf Projects Pty Ltd be awarded Contract No 2024/25 - 001A for the lump sum of \$510,180.42 excluding GST.

Council Resolution:

**CR TOLSHER
CR WORTMANN**

THAT:

- 1. CONTRACT 2024/2025 - 001A TALLANDOON TENNIS COURTS REDEVELOPMENT BE AWARDED TO GLOBAL TURF PROJECTS PTY LTD FOR THE LUMP SUM OF \$510,180.42 EXCLUDING GST;**
- 2. THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BE AUTHORISED TO SIGN AND SEAL CONTRACT NO 2024/25 - 001A IN ACCORDANCE WITH LOCAL LAW 1 – COMMON SEAL AND MISCELLANEOUS PENALTIES; AND**
- 3. THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BE AUTHORISED TO APPROVE CONTRACT VARIATIONS UP TO THE VALUE OF THE TOTAL ALLOCATED PROJECT BUDGET.**

CARRIED

10.6 Draft Youth Strategy Adoption (DCP)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Ms Danielle Brooke, Senior Community Development Officer, Culture and Inclusion.

At the time of preparation of this report, the officer did not have a general or material conflict of interest in any matter to which the report or advice relates.

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider and adopt the Draft Towong Shire Youth Strategy 2025-2029.

Summary:

The Draft Towong Shire Youth Strategy 2025-2029 was prepared by an experienced consultant during 2024 from existing published data and evidence in conjunction with community consultation engagement.

The Draft Strategy focuses on the young people aged 12-25 and sets the direction for Towong Shire Youth portfolio from 2025-2029, acknowledging Towong Shire is a better place to live with a healthy and connected youth population.

Following Council's resolution at its April 2025 meeting, the Draft Strategy was placed on public exhibition for a period of three weeks from 5 – 26 May 2025.

During this period two community submissions and one stakeholder submission were received in addition to internal feedback. These submissions and feedback have been considered and summarised in a table in Appendix 1 resulting in minor additions to the Draft Strategy which has been updated, and also attached to this report.

Recommendation:

That:

1. The Draft Towong Shire Youth Strategy 2025-2029 as presented, be adopted; and
2. The Towong Shire Youth Strategy 2025-2029 Action Plan be endorsed and noted as a tool by which the Strategy will be implemented.

Attachment:

1. Appendix 1 Summary of Submissions to Youth Strategy - June 25 [**10.6.1** - 1 page]
2. Towong Shire Youth Strategy 2025-2029 FINAL - June 25 [**10.6.2** - 34 pages]

Background/History:

Towong Shire's last youth strategic document was the Youth Plan 2019 – 2023 which included the priority areas of community connectedness, health and wellbeing, recreation, educational pathways and collaborative partnerships.

There have been a number of strategies and actions that have been implemented from the above plan, however over this period there has also been an increase in youth activities, events and wellbeing programs as part of the recovery focus and initiatives from the Black Summer bushfires.

The requirement for a new Youth Strategy and staffing changes and the implementations of a new structure of the Community and Planning Directorate led to CL Consulting being engaged in 2024 to complete the Draft Towong Shire Youth Strategy 2025–2029.

The Draft Strategy was developed through a methodology of literature review, evidence statistics, stakeholder engagement and evaluation of collected data to prepare the draft plan. The Draft Youth Strategy sets the direction for the Shire's Youth portfolio and focuses on the age range between 12 – 25 years old.

There are a number of actions listed in the Draft Strategy, under the following Strategic Priorities:

1. Youth Voice and Participation
2. Youth Friendly Spaces and Facilities
3. Stronger Partnerships and Local Solutions
4. Advocacy for Accessible Health and Wellbeing Supports
5. Leadership, Advocacy and Celebration
6. Future Prepared Youth

It's important to note that Towong Shire Council's role is not in direct service provision for young people, but in mobilising support from specialist services, networks and funding bodies to partner on programs and ensure young people feel a sense of belonging and security wherever they live in Towong. The actions listed in this draft document are reflective of this.

Relevant Law (s.9(2)(a)):

The *Local Government Act 2020*

Options – Best Outcomes for the Community (s.9(2)(b)):

The Draft Towong Shire Youth Strategy 2025-2029 works towards achieving the following vision for young people:

“Young people in Towong Shire are valued, connected and empowered. They thrive in communities where their voices are heard, their needs are understood, and they have equitable access to opportunities, supports, and spaces regardless of where they live”.

The action plan in the Draft Strategy contains detailed deliverables across 6 strategic priorities to address some of the issues raised by young people.

Sustainability Implications (s.9(2)(c)):

Economic

To ensure young people contribute meaningfully to local decision making and awareness raising on issues of importance to them including training and education pathways, recreation and transport initiatives.

Social

Partnering to achieve improved offerings for young people will be a central priority of this strategy, and ensures their needs are effectively addressed with a number of social outcomes as a result.

Environmental/Climate Change

To ensure young people are engaged with the impacts of climate change and the need to take action to reduce the rates of climate related disaster in their communities.

Community Engagement (s.9(2)(d)):

The Draft Strategy was developed with the direct input from young people, their parents, carers, guardians and from stakeholders who work with young people or deliver programs and services for young people.

The community engagement techniques used in the development of this Strategy included service mapping, three separate surveys, communication and meetings with forty (40) stakeholder groups and face to face meetings at schools.

The Draft Towong Shire Youth Strategy 2025-2029 was available for public exhibition from May 5 2025, to May 26 2025 which was communicated through the following channels:

- Council Website link
- Social media post on Facebook
- Council newsletter
- Emailed to local secondary schools
- Emailed to stakeholders
- Discussed in stakeholder network meetings

During this period two community submissions and one stakeholder submission were received in addition to internal feedback. These submissions and feedback have been considered and summarised in a table in Appendix 1 resulting in minor additions to the Draft Strategy.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement (s.9(2)(e)):

The development of the Draft Strategy sets the direction for Towong Shire Council's Youth portfolio from 2025-2029 and ensures appropriate support, programming, advocacy and services for young people remains a priority for the Council.

Collaboration (s.9(2)(f)):

The development of the Draft Strategy 2025-2029 involved collaboration and consultation with a number of stakeholders. Many of these stakeholders are listed as partners for the delivery of the Actions listed in the document to maximise the outcomes of the Actions under the various strategic objectives.

Financial Viability/Budget Impact (s.9(2)(g)):

Budget requirements and availability have been confirmed, grant funding has been sought where possible, and all expenditure is being monitored and managed within agreed budget allocations.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies (s.9(2)(h)):

Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023 – 2027

Council Plans and Policies:

Council Plans:

This report supports the following *Council Plan 2021-2025* priorities.

2. Community Wellbeing - Encourage and support all people in our Shire to be healthy, happy, connected and resilient.

2.4 Support the development of recreational activities and infrastructure to encourage active lifestyles for all ages and stages.

2.5 Review opportunities for communities to access library resources and connect through libraries

2.8 Renew the Youth Plan to embed the 'youth voice' in all aspects of service delivery

2.11 Support our communities to ensure that Shire places are welcoming to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and LGBTIQ+ communities and are inclusive and connected

2.13 Participate in key networks to support communities and key stakeholders on solutions to address family violence, suicide and mental health

Council Policies:

Community Engagement Policy.

Transparency of Decision (s.9(2)(i)):

It is the officer's view that it is appropriate to consider this matter in a Council meeting that is open to the public.

Risk Assessment:

The Draft Strategy 2025-2029 may inadvertently convey to the community that Council is positioned to financially support all actions within the document.

Towong Shire Council's role is not in direct service provision for young people, but in mobilising support from specialist services, networks and funding bodies to partner on programs. The emphasis on a partnership approach and seeking funding for specific actions within the Strategy will continue to be communicated through any Youth actions.

Officer's View:

The Draft Towong Shire Youth Strategy 2025-2029 has been informed by data, community consultation and developed by an experienced consultant in this area.

The development of the Draft Strategy was required given the timeframes of the most recent Youth Strategy was 2019 – 2023 and it's important that we can have a current overarching youth document providing direction and actions which council

can implement and deliver with the identified partners in the Strategy.

It is the officer's recommendation that the Draft Towong Shire Youth Strategy 2025-2029 be adopted.

Council Resolution:

**CR TOLSHER
CR WORTMANN**

THAT:

- 1. THE DRAFT TOWONG SHIRE YOUTH STRATEGY 2025-2029 AS PRESENTED, BE ADOPTED; AND**
- 2. THE TOWONG SHIRE YOUTH STRATEGY 2025-2029 ACTION PLAN BE ENDORSED AND NOTED AS A TOOL BY WHICH THE STRATEGY WILL BE IMPLEMENTED.**

CARRIED

10.7 Swimming Pools Report Season 2024/25 (DCP)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Ms Miranda Mouat, Senior Community Development Officer - Recreation.

At the time of preparation of this report, the officer did not have a general or material conflict of interest in any matter to which the report or advice relates.

Purpose of Report:

This report summarises the outcomes of the 2024/25 swimming pool season and makes recommendations for operational management, ongoing compliance obligations, and accessibility.

Summary:

The 2024/25 swimming pool season saw continued involvement of external contractor Belgravia Leisure in the partial management of Council swimming pools. The pool season was successfully delivered for the community, including:

- Consistent staffing and supervision at both pools;
- Extended opening hours at both pools during hot weather/heat health alert periods in January and February.
- No closures of pools due to operational issues, and limited closures of pools due to inclement weather. Both pools opened every day with seven incidents of closing early or temporarily during the regular opening hours for safety reasons due to storm activity.
- Achievement of increased visitation at both pools.
- Delivery of the season within budget.
- Management and implementation of maintenance, hazard reduction, and compliance activities at both swimming pool sites, in cooperation with Council OH&S staff and outdoor works teams.
- Provision of the VicSwim program at both Tallangatta and Corryong pools in January school holidays.
- Provision of Aquatic Technical Operator Training for Council staff involved in pool management.
- Engagement of Creo Structures to undertake an infrastructure assessment of Corryong and Tallangatta swimming pools, to enable Council to prepare long term works and asset replacement programs.

Further details on swimming pool activities can be found in the attached Pool Report

2024/25.

Recommendation:

That:

1. The 2024/2025 Swimming Pool Season Report be accepted as a summary of the positive outcomes achieved during the season, including increased participation, reduced operating costs, and improved cost per visit result;
2. The opening of Corryong and Tallangatta swimming pools on the last weekend of November 2025 be approved, with opening hours to remain the same as the 2024/25 season; and
3. Access for community user groups to both the Corryong and Tallangatta swimming pools outside public opening times from at least two weeks prior to public opening of the pools in season 2025/26 be approved.

Attachment:

1. Appendix - Pools report 2024/25 [**10.7.1** - 7 pages]
2. Belgravia FY25 TOWONG FINANCIALS [**10.7.2** - 1 page]
3. Towong End of Season Report 2024-25 [**10.7.3** - 10 pages]

Background/History:

Council currently operates seasonal pools in Tallangatta and Corryong that open annually between November and March. Public swimming is available seven days a week at both pools. The 2024/25 season saw the second year of partial management of the swimming pools by external contractor, Belgravia Leisure. Belgravia was primarily responsible for operating the pools during public opening hours, with a major function being the employment of the lifeguard staff.

Council retained responsibility for the operation of the pools outside public opening hours, including management of water and pool grounds, and liaison with all user groups such as schools, swimming clubs, morning swimming groups and health services.

During the 2024/25 pool season, both Tallangatta and Corryong pools opened as scheduled each day. There were partial closures required at each pool (4 days in Corryong and 3 days in Tallangatta) due to unsuitable weather, which in all cases involved storm activity. There were no opening days lost due to any operational issues

such as water quality, plant and equipment failure, or staffing shortages.

Council also provides some funding to the Eskdale Primary School to support operation of the swimming pool, which is situated on the Eskdale Primary School site, to enable continued operation of the pool for the local community.

Relevant Law (s.9(2)(a)):

This report addresses the Local Government Act 2020, Part 5 Service Performance Principles. The proposed recommendations consider the value for money of the pool operations to ensure pool service provision can continue equitably and affordably.

Options – Best Outcomes for the Community (s.9(2)(b)):

Continuing to invest Council resources into operating pools in Tallangatta and Corryong, and contributions for the Eskdale pool represents the best outcome for the community.

Sustainability Implications (s.9(2)(c)):

Economic

The operating costs of the swimming pools in 2024/25 represent a decrease compared to the previous season, and the engagement of Belgravia Leisure in pool operations has also resulted in savings not captured in financial terms. This relates primarily to the significant savings of Council resources in the areas of recruitment, employment and supervision of pool lifeguard staff.

Social

The swimming pools are vital facilities for social cohesion. Local schools, sports clubs, early morning swim groups, local health services, community events and sporting occasions use the pools. The facilities encourage healthy lifestyles through exercise, which is appealing and accessible to young and old alike, of varied abilities. The pools also provide a valuable space for children to learn to swim – a skill vital in a shire abundant with rivers and lakes.

Environmental

The swimming pools provide a safe, calm and cool environment for the community to use. The hot months can present a major health hazard, and the pools play a major role in allowing the public to stay cool and safe, in the company of people with medical and first aid training. With increasingly extreme weather patterns, the pools are increasingly becoming a resource in emergencies (as evidenced during the black summer bushfires), as well as a place for recreation, reflection and healthy exercise.

Community Engagement (s.9(2)(d)):

Extensive public engagement was conducted during 2021/22 as part of the Recreation Strategy for Towong Shire 2022-31, in addition to a Swimming Pool Review in 2018. Some pool user groups, including schools, early morning swim clubs and lifeguards, have also been engaged in the preparation of this report.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement (s.9(2)(e)):

The proposals outlined in this report identify several actions that will improve the facilities and advance the visitor experience for inclusion and equity in our community.

Collaboration (s.9(2)(f)):

Council collaborates with and supports the early morning swimming groups that utilise the Towong Shire swimming pools. It also works closely with the swim clubs, local schools and health services to ensure all have access to the facilities practically and affordably.

Financial Viability/Budget Impact (s.9(2)(g)):

Budget requirements and availability have been confirmed, grant funding has been sought where possible, and all expenditure is being monitored and managed within agreed budget allocations.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies (s.9(2)(h)):

The swimming pools are operated in accordance with the requirements of the Safer Public Pools Code of Practice (SPPCoP) which sets out the various legislation, standards and guidelines governing their safe management, including the:

- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004,*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017,*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009,*
- *Dangerous Goods Act 1985,*
- *Equipment (Public Safety) Act 1994,*
- *Consumer Affairs Legislation Amendment Act 2014,*
- *Emergency Management Act 2013,*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992,*
- *Victoria's Equal Opportunity Act 2010.*

Council Plans and Policies:

This report supports the following Council Plan 2021-2025 priorities.

2. Community Wellbeing - Encourage and support all people in our Shire to be healthy, happy, connected and resilient.
- 2.4 Support the development of recreational activities and infrastructure to encourage active lifestyles for all ages and stages

This report also aligns with the objectives of the:

- *Towong Shire Council Council Plan 2021-2025*
- *Municipal Health and Wellbeing Strategy*
- *Recreation Strategy for Towong Shire 2022-2031.*
- *Community Sport Fair Access Policy and Action Plan 2024-2028*

Transparency of Decision (s.9(2)(i)):

It is the officer's view that it is appropriate to consider this matter in a Council meeting that is open to the public.

Risk Assessment:

As with season 2024/25, delaying the opening of public swimming until the last weekend of November in 2025 will attract negative feedback from community members who will see this as a reduction in service provision. This risk can be managed through community engagement and provision of information to promote understanding of the relatively low use and associated high costs of opening the pools during November. It can also be managed by providing pre-arranged user group access to the pools two to three weeks prior to public opening.

Officer's View:

The Towong Shire swimming pools are vital recreational assets, providing a safe and inclusive space for community members while promoting physical well-being and social cohesion.

To best meet the needs of the community and to maximise visitation, the recommendations are that the commencement of public opening hours occurs on the last weekend in November 2025, with Council continuing to work collaboratively with all user groups to enable pool access outside public opening hours from mid-November.

Council Resolution:

CR WORTMANN

CR TOLSHER

THAT:

- 1. THE 2024/2025 SWIMMING POOL SEASON REPORT BE ACCEPTED AS A SUMMARY OF THE POSITIVE OUTCOMES ACHIEVED DURING THE SEASON, INCLUDING INCREASED PARTICIPATION, REDUCED OPERATING COSTS, AND IMPROVED COST PER VISIT RESULT;**
- 2. THE OPENING OF CORRYONG AND TALLANGATTA SWIMMING POOLS ON THE LAST WEEKEND OF NOVEMBER 2025 BE APPROVED, WITH OPENING HOURS TO REMAIN THE SAME AS THE 2024/25 SEASON; AND**
- 3. ACCESS FOR COMMUNITY USER GROUPS TO BOTH THE CORRYONG AND TALLANGATTA SWIMMING POOLS OUTSIDE PUBLIC OPENING TIMES FROM AT LEAST TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO PUBLIC OPENING OF THE POOLS IN SEASON 2025/26 BE APPROVED.**

CARRIED

Ms Taylor left the meeting, the time being 11.30am.

11 Asset Management

11.1 Plant Replacement Program – Tender Evaluation Backhoe Corryong Depot (DIE)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Mr Greg Karlson, Co-ordinator Circular Economy and Environment.

At the time of preparation of this report, the officer did not have a general or material conflict of interest in any matter to which the report or advice relates.

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to provide information to support the assessment of tender submissions for supply of replacement backhoe for Corryong depot and to seek Council approval to appoint the recommended supplier.

Summary:

This report outlines the tender process followed for the procurement of a new backhoe loader to assist with infrastructure works such as compacting bulk bins at Corryong landfill, drain repairs, culverts, road maintenance and general roadside cleanup activities predominantly within the Corryong district. This report also provides a recommendation of the most suitable supplier to supply the best value for money and preferred equipment type to undertake the above works.

Recommendation:

That:

1. Contract No. 2024/25 – 049 for the supply of a CAT 432 model backhoe be awarded to William Adams for the lump sum of \$212,500 excluding GST;
2. The Chief Executive Officer be authorised to sign Contract No. 2024/25 – 049 in accordance with Local Law 1 – Common Seal and Miscellaneous Penalties; and
3. The Chief Executive Officer be authorised to approve contract variations up to the total value of the allocated budget.

Attachment:

A comparative Tender Evaluation Report for Contract No. 2024/25 – 049 and supplier tender documentation has been provided to councillors prior to meeting.

Background/History:

This report provides information of the tender process undertaken for the purchase of a backhoe as part of plant replacement/upgrade program. As part of tender includes trade-in of ageing CAT 432D 2004 backhoe (Plant No. 419) located at Tallangatta depot. Corryong's other backhoe CAT 432E (Plant no. 4004) acquired in 2010 is to transfer to Tallangatta depot as part of its replacement program.

Both backhoes presently situated at Tallangatta are both ageing with costly maintenance costs incurred over recent times with their renewal being deferred since 2017. Both current backhoes have been earmarked for upgrades which will be met in part through inter depot transfer exchange and proposed future backhoe acquisition set down for the 25/26 fiscal year as part of Council's Capital program.

Tenders were released through the Municipal Association of Victoria's (MAV's) Procurement Vendor Panel on 1 April 2025 and closed on 16 May 2025. The contract reference number is: 2024/25-049 VP reference number VP458916. Five (5) different suppliers submitted tenders, the details of which are included for review.

The tenders were evaluated on the basis of price, suitability, service backup, machine quality and historical reliability. A copy of the Contractor evaluation Tool assessment is attached for reference. The recommended supplier is within the budget amount.

All prices within this report are exclusive of GST and stamp duty.

Evaluation

The Coordinator of Circular Economy and Environment and Manager Infrastructure Asset and Environment assessed each offer based on the criteria of price and suitability for scope of infrastructure work types performed by outdoor work crews. They also considered service backup, machine quality, and historical reliability. Council's mechanics and plant operators also had input into the discussions having field tested both CAT 432 and New Holland unit based out of Moira council depot in Yarrawonga.

A review has been undertaken of all the tenders which called for front end quick couplers for broom and other hydraulic attachments as well as backhoe rear end

hydraulic side shift. Although there are diverse price ranges across all suppliers the CAT 432 backhoe comes out as the more suitable machine for Towong Shire Council. Moreover, the CAT 432 is within budget and there will be no additional requirements for extra buckets and other attachments as these are held by depot currently

Relevant Law (s.9(2)(a)):

Section 109 of the *Local Government Act 2020* states:

"A Council must comply with its Procurement Policy before entering a contract for the purchase of goods or services or the carrying out of works."

The procurement process followed for this tender and the subsequent assessment and recommendation have been undertaken in accordance with Council's *Procurement Policy* adopted in June 2023.

Options – Best Outcomes for the Community (s.9(2)(b)):

Based on the specialised nature of these high value ticket items the proposals as presented be accepted for our consideration:

Sustainability Implications (s.9(2)(c)):

Economic

This tender used preferred suppliers as part of vendor panels accepted supplier network with the primary dealers working closely with local dealerships under their network. This has a positive impact on the local economy through the purchase of local materials and services over the life of the asset.

Climate change/Environmental

This capital spend will have a minimal contribution either positive or negative to carbon emission levels due to the slow advancement of alternate fuel types for heavy vehicle equipment.

Community Engagement (s.9(2)(d)):

Not Applicable.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement (s.9(2)(e)):

Not Applicable.

Collaboration (s.9(2)(f)):

Not Applicable.

Financial Viability/Budget Impact (s.9(2)(g)):

The recommended tender value is within the allocated budget spend for current financial year.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies (s.9(2)(h)):

Not Applicable.

Council Plans and Policies:

The tender has been conducted in accordance with the *Procurement Policy* and supports the following *Council Plan 2021-2025* priority:

4. *Deliver 100% of the annual plant replacement program.*

Council Policies:
Procurement Policy

Transparency of Decision (s.9(2)(i)):

It is the officer's view that it is appropriate to consider this matter in a Council meeting that is open to the public.

Risk Assessment:

Minimal risk is associated with this acquisition despite prolonged lead times on supply with current machinery equipment in use being adequately resourced to deliver capital works projects and/or Council asset maintenance programs. These risks will be mitigated by active management and continued servicing of machinery equipment in accordance with scheduled maintenance programs with little downtime expected.

Officer's View:

After a thorough assessment of all submissions and consultation with Council plant operators and mechanics, the assessment panel recommends engaging William Adams, the distributor of CAT heavy equipment, to supply the backhoe.

- CAT is a major industry player in the heavy vehicle earthmoving market whose brand is most reputable and is well regarded in the civil earthworks industry;
- Engine specs and safety feature are far superior and afford greater safety, flexibility and functionality for everyday tasks;
- The CAT 432 backhoe is largely compatible with the Council's existing backhoe fleet and is familiar to depot operators;
- Our depot mechanics are well-versed in servicing the CAT brand as most of the existing heavy equipment fleet is CAT orientated affording greater efficiency gains when performing mechanical maintenance & servicing related tasks;
- The international backing of a reputable industry player demonstrates the ability to provide a quality product along with a dedicated aftercare service offering delivering good value and low risk to Council. After-sales support from the supplier is readily available, and the unit comes with a 36-month warranty.

Council Resolution:

**CR TOLSHER
CR WORTMANN**

THAT:

- 1. CONTRACT NO. 2024/25 – 049 FOR THE SUPPLY OF A CAT 432 MODEL BACKHOE BE AWARDED TO WILLIAM ADAMS FOR THE LUMP SUM OF \$212,500 EXCLUDING GST;**
- 2. THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BE AUTHORISED TO SIGN CONTRACT NO. 2024/25 – 049 IN ACCORDANCE WITH LOCAL LAW 1 – COMMON SEAL AND MISCELLANEOUS PENALTIES; AND**
- 3. THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BE AUTHORISED TO APPROVE CONTRACT VARIATIONS UP TO THE TOTAL VALUE OF THE ALLOCATED BUDGET.**

CARRIED

11.2 Asset Management Report (DIE)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Mr Bivek Regmi, Manager Assets and Environment

At the time of preparation of this report, the officer did not have a general or material conflict of interest in any matter to which the report or advice relates.

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of Asset Management activities throughout Shire for the period up to 31 Mar 2025.

Summary:

This report presents the overall status of the Council's asset management program up to 31 March 2025, including:

- Asset Lifecycle activities
- Integrated Strategic Performance Reporting Framework
- Flood Works (AGRN - 1037)
- Scoping and researching Asset Management Systems

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

Attachment:

Nil

Background/History:

This report is produced quarterly by the Infrastructure and Environment department, to provide a progress overview of asset management activities and key deliverables of the Council Plan 2021-2025.

Asset inspections are well progressed, with the majority of activities completed. Remaining tasks, such as finalising road condition reports and inspecting park furniture in Tallangatta, are currently underway. Maintenance programs are progressing as planned, with approximately 70% of the budget already expended. Key service contracts are in place and operational, and flood recovery works are actively being

carried out across the region.

Parameter	Description	Status - % Completion to 31 mar 2025	Remarks
Asset Inspection	Road Condition Assessment	95%	Awaiting finalised reports.
	Road Management Plan – Compliance Inspection	On going	Works identified for maintenance are transferred for completion via datascape service request
	Bridge Condition Assessment	100%	Yellow boots were engaged to undertake level 2 inspections.
	Playground Inspection	100%	Defects were identified and handed over to the council with assigned priority.
	Parks furniture inspections	90%	Park furniture in Tallangatta is currently pending inspection
	Building compliance inspections	Ongoing	Asbestos, electrical tagging, HVAC inspections, etc.
Maintenance	Road, Bridge, Footpath & Drainage Maintenance	67 %	67% of the allocated asset maintenance budget is spent on the council's infrastructure assets.
	Building Maintenance, Cleaning	Ongoing	Facilities cleaning contracts are in place, and quality is being monitored.
	Beautification and Town Maintenance (Open Space)	Ongoing	Town maintenance contracts are in place, and quality is being monitored.

	Playground Maintenance	100%	Contractors were engaged to complete the soft fall installation and rectify high priority defect works in Council owned playgrounds.
	Flood works – ARGN 1037	Western – 85%	Western works are being undertaken by TCM and is in the verge of completion
		Eastern – Awaiting site mobilisation	Eastern works are now awarded to Country Wide Asphalt Pty Ltd and currently awaiting contract finalisation
Asset Renewals	Road Reseals	100%	Annual road reseals, pavement, bridge renewals, and drainage renewals have been completed for this financial year. Next year renewal works are currently being planned.
	Road – Heavy Patching		
	Road – Guardrail replacement		
	Road - Bridges		
	Road Stabilisations		
	Drainage Renewals		
	Building Renewals	In Progress	The council received a cost estimation for Mitta Toilet block rehabilitation. The next step is to finalise the project scope in consultation with the community prior to commencing the planned rehabilitation works
		In Progress	Corryong Cemetery gatehouse RFQ is currently advertised.
Asset Management System (AMS)		Initiated	Currently exploring options and obtaining quotes from suppliers.

			The Assets team organised demo sessions from the AMS solution providers.
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Current Asset Management Strategic document overview

A tabular summary has been developed to illustrate the status of key asset management documents across three categories: Integrated Strategic Performance Reporting Framework, Asset Management Framework, and Asset Services Management Plans. The diagram outlines each document's development or review status and associated timelines, supporting transparent progress tracking and alignment with strategic planning requirements. This overview assists in identifying priorities and ensuring timely delivery of foundational asset management documents.

Parameter	Description	Remarks	Timeline to Complete
Integrated Strategic Performance Reporting Frameworks (Asset Management)	Asset Plan	Currently in Draft and needs to be adopted	Jun 2026
Asset Management Framework	Asset Management Policy	Currently being reviewed and needs to be updated	Oct 2025
	Asset Management Strategy	Currently being reviewed and needs to be updated.	TBD
	Asset Management Plans (individual Asset Classes)	Needs to be developed	TBD
	Asset Systems Plan (Asset Register and GIS, any other corporate integration)	Needs to be developed	TBD
Asset Services Management Plan	Road Management Plan (Sept 2021)	In Place; Currently being reviewed;	Oct 2025 (next revision)
	Open Space and Playground Strategy	To be developed	TBD

Renewals, inspections and maintenance on critical infrastructures assets such as roads, bridges, open space and playgrounds, buildings have been conducted during this period and have issued several permits (including development application), including those related to legal points of discharge and activities within the road reserve.

Relevant Law (s.9(2)(a)):

The *Local Government Act 2020*

Options – Best Outcomes for the Community (s.9(2)(b)):

Not Applicable.

Sustainability Implications (s.9(2)(c)):

Economic

Works within the asset management program provide local economic stimulus through the employment of local contractors.

Social

Projects within the asset management program are prioritised in line with the *Council Plan 2021-2025* to improve social amenity and economic outcomes across the Shire including road patching and resheeting of gravel roads.

Environmental/Climate Change

Drier weather conditions have seen some improvement in the condition of sealed and unsealed roads.

Community Engagement (s.9(2)(d)):

Asset officers consistently provide assistance to residents and the community through the CRM system whenever requested.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement (s.9(2)(e)):

Council is currently exploring the procurement of an advanced asset management system to enhance operational efficiency and service delivery. This system is expected to streamline inspection processes, reducing the time required and enabling faster communication and work allocation to the maintenance team. It will support data-driven renewal planning, improving the prioritisation and timing of asset renewals.

Additionally, the system will provide more accurate and comprehensive infrastructure financial reporting, ensuring better transparency and accountability. Enhanced asset condition reporting capabilities will further assist in proactive maintenance and long-term asset management strategies, contributing to continuous improvement across council infrastructure operations.

Collaboration (s.9(2)(f)):

Not Applicable.

Financial Viability/Budget Impact (s.9(2)(g)):

The snapshot of the maintenance budget is presented below.

Asset Class	Actuals at 31 Mar 2025	FY2025 Budget	% Expended	Forecast (30 Jun 2025)
Road, Footpath, Bridge and Drainage	\$ 321,324.40	\$ 625,394.74	51%	(90-95) %
Facility and Building	\$ 278,837.84	\$ 345,226.15	81%	95%
Open Space	\$ 451,214.66	\$ 588,000.00	77%	100%
Playground	\$ 15,450.00	\$ 100,000.00	15%	100%
Utilities	\$ 157,595.85	\$ 167,252.88	94%	100%
Grand Total	\$ 1,224,422.75	\$ 1,825,873.77	67%	90%

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies (s.9(2)(h)):

Not Applicable.

Council Plans and Policies:

Council Plans:

This report supports the following *Council Plan 2021-2025 priorities*.

Asset Management Plan - Maintain and improve our Shire's infrastructure to meet the levels of service established in consultation with our communities.

Council Policies:

This report supports the following Council Policies.

Asset Management Policy

Stock Grid Policy

Asset Valuation Policy

Community Engagement Policy

Road Construction Policy

Transparency of Decision (s.9(2)(i)):

It is the officer's view that it is appropriate to consider this matter in a Council meeting that is open to the public.

Risk Assessment:

The ongoing demand for qualified road maintenance contractors continues to affect their immediate availability to Council, particularly in regional and rural areas where the pool of suitable providers is limited. These delays in securing contractors are resulting in extended timeframes for delivering programmed works, which leads to further deterioration of road surfaces and an increase in the scale of required repairs. Consequently, this is escalating overall project costs and placing additional strain on Council's budgets.

Furthermore, the timing of contractor availability often does not align with optimal seasonal windows for road works, further compounding delivery challenges. Alternative procurement approaches have been investigated and adjust work programs where possible to mitigate risks and ensure the community's road infrastructure remains safe and serviceable.

Officer's View:

The council's current asset management practices have laid a foundation for delivering essential maintenance and renewal programs. These practices provide a strong operational base from which the Council can now build greater strategic capability.

To meet growing community expectations, evolving legislative requirements, and ensure the long-term sustainability of assets, there is now an opportunity to shift from primarily operational asset management towards a more integrated, data-driven and future-focused approach. This includes enhancing asset data quality, aligning service levels with community needs, and embedding lifecycle planning into decision-making processes.

A key step forward in this journey is the implementation of a fit-for-purpose Asset Management System (AMS). This will streamline inspections, optimise maintenance workflows, improve asset condition tracking, and support timely and prioritised renewal planning. Complementing this, the development of core asset management documents such as the Asset Management Strategy, Plans, and the overarching Asset Plan will provide the strategic framework required to strengthen governance, improve performance, and increase overall asset management maturity.

It is the officer's view that Council is well positioned to evolve its asset management practices. By investing in the right systems and frameworks, Council can deliver smarter infrastructure outcomes, better manage long-term risk, and continue to meet the service expectations of its community in a sustainable manner.

Council Resolution:

**CR TOLSHER
CR WORTMANN**

THAT THE REPORT BE NOTED.

CARRIED

11.3 Capital Works Report (DIE)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Mr Matthew Fleet, Manager Capital and Development.

At the time of preparation of this report, the officer did not have a general or material conflict of interest in any matter to which the report or advice relates.

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to provide information. The report gives an overview of the 2024/25 Capital Works Program to 31 March 2025.

Summary:

This report presents the overall status of the capital works program to the end of March 2025 and includes updates on project status, progress, expenditure and completion risk.

Recommendation:

That the following be noted:

1. Reallocation of \$395,000 from the 2024/2025 Georges Creek Road/River Road Intersection capital budget to the Georges Creek Road Widening Works budget;
2. Reallocation of \$250,000 from the 2024/2025 Bellbridge Walking Track and Seal capital budget to the Lake Road Upgrade budget; and
3. Reallocation of \$75,000 from the 2024/2025 Building Demolitions capital budget to the Early Years Capital Projects budget.

Attachment:

The Capital Works Program Budget has been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

Background/History:

Council's 2024–2025 Capital Works Program includes a total budget of \$25.4 million, comprising 82 projects made up of both new initiatives and carry-over works from previous years. The 14 largest projects account for approximately 44% of the total capital works budget. Of these, six are currently in progress, two are under

construction, four have been completed, and two are in the tender phase. The remaining projects are on track to be completed by the end of the 2024–2025 financial year or as programmed.

The Hanson Street upgrade is currently in the concept design phase, with community consultation planned soon. This project is expected to be delivered over coming years via staged works.

Annual programs for resealing, guardrail replacement, gravel re-sheeting, and footpath renewal are also underway or completed, with all works scheduled to be finalised within the current financial year.

Relevant Law (s.9(2)(a)):

The *Local Government Act 2020*

Options – Best Outcomes for the Community (s.9(2)(b)):

Not Applicable.

Sustainability Implications (s.9(2)(c)):

Economic

Works within the Capital program provide local economic stimulus through the employment of local contractors.

Social

Projects within the Capital program are prioritised in line with the Council Plan 2021–2025 to improve social amenity and economic outcomes across the Shire.

Environmental/Climate Change

The current dry weather conditions are favourable for project construction activities.

Community Engagement (s.9(2)(d)):

Community engagement activities have continued and is proposed across several capital projects, most notably there will be a significant amount of community engagement regarding the Hanson Street (Western End works).

Innovation and Continuous Improvement (s.9(2)(e)):

The Capital Works Program provides a structured framework for the ongoing strategic enhancement and renewal of assets across the Shire.

Collaboration (s.9(2)(f)):

Not Applicable.

Financial Viability/Budget Impact (s.9(2)(g)):

As at 31 March 2025	\$	%
Total Budget	\$ 25,425.568.39	100
Year to Date spend (31 March 2025)	\$ 11,960.712.14	47

Detailed budget and job closure analysis is included in the appendix to this report.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies (s.9(2)(h)):

Not Applicable.

Council Plans and Policies:

Council Plans:

This report supports the following *Council Plan 2021-2025 priorities*.

1. Asset Management - Maintain and improve our Shire's infrastructure to meet the levels of service established in consultation with our communities.

- 1.1 Deliver 100% of the annual capital works program and bushfire recovery projects
- 1.3 Complete Stage 2 Great River Road
- 1.4 Continue the upgrade of Georges Creek Road
- 1.5 Complete upgrades of Hanson Street from Sugarloaf Road to Kiel Street
- 1.6 Complete the upgrade of the Stock Route in Corryong
- 1.7 Progressively deliver the upgrade of the unsealed sections of Lake Road
- 1.8 Investigate upgrade options for Wisers Creek Road
- 1.10 Seek funding to deliver upgrades of key transport routes and hazardous road alignments to improve efficiency and safety
- 1.12 Continue to deliver the upgrade of unsealed streets in urban areas program
- 1.13 Complete the upgrade of the Corryong CBD
- 1.14.1 Complete streetscape upgrades in Dartmouth
- 1.14.2 Complete streetscape upgrades in Mitta Mitta
- 1.15.2 Investigate and plan for upgrades at Towong
- 1.15.3 Investigate and plan for upgrades at Cudgewa
- 1.17 Address long vehicle and overflow parking issues in CBD areas

- 1.19 Seek funding to deliver upgrades to town entrances and wayfinding signage across the shire
- 1.21 Increase the recreation opportunities for young families in Dartmouth
- 1.22 Review and deliver the strategic parks and playgrounds upgrade program to completion
- 1.25 Deliver the Corryong aerodrome 24-hour fuel project
- 1.27 Deliver annual asset inspection and renewal programs per asset management and road management plan requirements
- 1.28 Implement the maintenance program for Council's buildings

Council Policies:
Procurement Policy

Transparency of Decision (s.9(2)(i)):

It is the officer's view that it is appropriate to consider this matter in a Council meeting that is open to the public.

Risk Assessment:

Limited contractor availability has impacted timelines for some road construction projects, largely due to high demand for qualified contractors across the state. Council will continue actively engaging with local and regional contractors to encourage tender submissions and competitive quotations.

The recruitment of suitably qualified and experienced project managers remains a priority for the final quarter of 2024/25. While recent recruitment has proven challenging, efforts are ongoing. Any associated delays to the commencement of new capital works projects will be carefully managed to minimise impact.

Officer's View:

The team has made solid progress in delivering the capital works program through to the end of the third quarter. According to the financial report as of 31 March 2025, year-to-date (YTD) expenditure totals \$11.96 million, representing approximately 47% of the total capital budget.

Several major projects are currently under construction and are scheduled for completion by June 2025. It is anticipated that progress claims for these projects will result in a higher proportion of expenditure being recorded in the fourth quarter of the financial year.

Council Resolution:

**CR WORTMANN
CR TOLSHER**

THAT THE FOLLOWING BE NOTED:

- 1. REALLOCATION OF \$395,000 FROM THE 2024/2025 GEORGES CREEK ROAD/RIVER ROAD INTERSECTION CAPITAL BUDGET TO THE GEORGES CREEK ROAD WIDENING WORKS BUDGET;**
- 2. REALLOCATION OF \$250,000 FROM THE 2024/2025 BELLBRIDGE WALKING TRACK AND SEAL CAPITAL BUDGET TO THE LAKE ROAD UPGRADE BUDGET; AND**
- 3. REALLOCATION OF \$75,000 FROM THE 2024/2025 BUILDING DEMOLITIONS CAPITAL BUDGET TO THE EARLY YEARS CAPITAL PROJECTS BUDGET.**

CARRIED

Ms Taylor returned to the meeting, the time being 11.43am.

12 Land Use Planning

12.1 2024/032 290A Talgarno Gap Road Bethanga (DCP)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Mrs Margaret Fox Contract Planning Officer.

At the time of preparation of this report, the officer did not have a general or material conflict of interest in any matter to which the report or advice relates.

Purpose of Report:

A decision is required in relation to an application for the use and development of the land for a dwelling with a recommendation that the application be refused.

Council received four objections to the proposal, and it is considered appropriate that the application be presented to Council for consideration and decision.

Summary:

Council has received an application for the use and development of the land for a dwelling. The land is formally known as Lot 5 on Plan of Subdivision 641162W. The land is within the Rural Activity Zone and not subject to any overlays.

The application has been assessed and several key considerations associated with the proposal which includes:

- The topography of the land
- The visual impact of the proposal
- The extent of the proposed site cut and fill
- Erosion and landslip potential
- Stormwater Management and overland flows
- The use of the land for agriculture

Recommendation:

That:

1. The application for the use and development of the land at 290A Talgarno Gap Road be denied on the following grounds:
 - a. The proposal is not consistent with clause 02.03-2 - the siting of the dwelling will detract from the natural and aesthetic value of the landscape.
 - b. The proposal is not consistent with Clause 02.03-3 - the proposal does not avoid development of steep land.
 - c. The proposal is not consistent with Clause 12.03-1S - the proposal does not minimise the visual intrusion of the development on the natural landscape views. Further it does not ensure the development is visually subordinate to the local landscape setting.
 - d. The proposal is not consistent with Clause 12.05-2S - the proposal detracts from the natural qualities of the landscape.
 - e. The proposal is not consistent with Clause 13.04-2S and 13.04-2L - it proposes to site the dwelling on the top of steep slopes and does not minimise earthworks on steep slopes.
 - f. The proposal is not consistent with Clause 14.01-1L-01 - the proposal does not avoid land containing an environmental hazard ie erosion.
 - g. The proposal is not consistent with Clause 14.02-1S - the proposal does not demonstrate that measures can be undertaken to minimise the quantity and retard the flow of stormwater.
 - h. The proposal is not consistent with Clause 15.01-6S - it is proposed to locate the dwelling on a ridgeline and will be prominent on the landscape.

Attachment:

1. 2024-032 290 A Talgarno Gap Road Bethanga Plans [**12.1.1** - 5 pages]
2. 2024-032 290 A Talgarno Gap Road Bethanga Photo Montage [**12.1.2** - 6 pages]
3. 2024-032 290 A Talgarno Gap Road Bethanga Geotechnical Report [**12.1.3** - 16 pages]
4. Summary of Objections [**12.1.4** - 8 pages]

5. 2024-032 290 A Talgarno Gap Road Bethanga - Applicant Response to Submissions [12.1.5 - 5 pages]

Background/History:

The subject site is located on the southern side of Talgarno Gap Road, to the east of Bethanga township. The subject land does not have direct frontage to Talgarno Gap Road but is accessed via a shared accessway. The subject land is an irregular shaped allotment of approximately 23.05ha.

The land slopes up from the access entrance to the apex of a hill and falls gradually along a ridgeline that runs to the east and north of the land. The land on either side of the ridgeline falls steeply with up to 45-degree slopes.

The land is extensively cleared land with some scattered remnant native vegetation. The land also contains a long, gravel driveway and two sheds near the entry. The surrounding land is defined by other similar allotments of various sizes.



Relevant Law (s.9(2)(a)):

The *Planning & Environment Act 1987* provides the standard process for assessing a

planning permit application.

The Towong Planning Scheme sets out the planning permit triggers that require a planning permit application.

A planning permit is triggered under the Rural Activity Zone.

Clause 35.08-1 identifies the use of the land as a Section 2 Use and a planning permit is required for a dwelling and that the requirements of Clause 35.08-2 must be met.

Clause 35.08-2 States *"A lot used for a dwelling or small second dwelling must meet the following requirements:*

- *Access to the dwelling or small second dwelling must be provided via an all-weather road with dimensions adequate to accommodate emergency vehicles.*
- *Each dwelling or small second dwelling must be connected to reticulated sewerage, if available. If reticulated sewerage is not available, all wastewater from each dwelling must be treated and retained within the lot in accordance with the requirements of the Environment Protection Regulations under the Environment Protection Act 2017 for an on-site wastewater management system.*
- *The dwelling or small second dwelling must be connected to a reticulated potable water supply or have an alternative potable water supply with adequate storage for domestic use as well as for firefighting purposes.*
- *The dwelling or small second dwelling must be connected to a reticulated electricity supply or have an alternative energy source."*

Clause 35.08-4 states: *"A permit is required to construct or carry out any of the following:*

- *A building or works associated with a use in Section 2 of Clause 35.08-1"*

Clause 35.08-5 requires consideration of the following decision guidelines:

General

- *The Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
- *Any Regional Catchment Strategy and associated plan applying to the land.*
- *The capability of the land to accommodate the proposed use or development, including the disposal of effluent.*
- *How the use or development relates to sustainable land management.*
- *Whether the site is suitable for the use and development and whether the proposal is compatible with adjoining and nearby land uses.*

Response

The proposal on balance is not consistent with the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework as discussed further below.

The application was referred to Goulburn Murray Water as the relevant catchment management authority which consented to the issue of a planning permit. The North East Catchment Management Authority considered the treatment and disposal of wastewater and determined that all wastewaters could be disposed of on site.

The applicant provided a Land Management Plan that states that the applicant intends to graze cattle and plant olive and fruit trees on the land. It is intended to control weeds and feral rabbits on the land. Further it is proposed to plant trees in areas of erosion and landslip that has occurred on the site.

The geotechnical report submitted with the application directs that all stormwaters should be directed away from the area of cut and fill. The applicant has not addressed how this will be achieved.

The adjoining land consists of mostly vacant land used for grazing with some smaller rural lifestyle allotments to the north of the site.

Agricultural issues

- *Whether the use or development will support and enhance agricultural production.*
- *The potential for the use or development to limit the operation and expansion of adjoining and nearby agricultural uses.*
- *The capacity of the site to sustain the agricultural use.*
- *The agricultural qualities of the land, such as soil quality, access to water and access to rural infrastructure.*
- *Any integrated land management plan prepared for the site.*

Response

The land is currently vacant and not used for agricultural purposes. The applicant has provided a Land Management Plan that states that the land will be used for cattle grazing. It is also proposed to plant a small-scale orchard and olive grove. The plan proposes to undertake weed management and rabbit control.

It is not anticipated that the proposal will limit the operation and expansion of the adjoining and nearby agricultural uses. The proposed dwelling will be setback from boundaries on the ridgeline and will have no impact.

The site is a small allotment of approximately 23ha. The land is subject to steep slopes and is of moderate to low agricultural potential. The land management plan proposes a mixed farming enterprise.

The soil is described in the Geotechnical Report is 'SM sand, silty trace gravel and clay to 500mm, extremely weathered granite, excavating sand gravel to 1m. The land management plan identifies areas of erosion on the site.

Accommodation issues

- *Whether the dwelling will result in the loss or fragmentation of productive agricultural land.*
- *Whether the dwelling will be adversely affected by agricultural activities on adjacent and nearby land due to dust, noise, odour, use of chemicals and farm machinery, traffic and hours of operation.*
- *Whether the dwelling will adversely affect the operation and expansion of adjoining and nearby agricultural uses.*

Response

The land is of low to moderate agricultural potential. The proposed location of the dwelling will result in some fragmentation. The entrance to the property leads to two existing sheds. The proposal will result in a driveway being extended down the ridgeline to an area of cut and fill. The area adjacent to the driveway and the cut and fill area around the dwelling is estimated to remove approximately 1.5ha.

The proposed dwelling will not be adversely affect agricultural activities on adjoining properties; the proposed dwelling is setback from all boundaries.

The Geotechnical Report recommends that all stormwaters be directed away from the proposed dwelling, however the applicant has not provided any stormwater management system to show that the overland flows will not be impacted by the proposal and that the adjoining landowners will not be affected.

Environmental issues

- *The impact of the proposal on the natural physical features and resources of the area, in particular on soil and water quality.*
- *The impact of the use or development on the flora, fauna and landscape features of the locality.*
- *The need to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the area, including the retention of vegetation and faunal habitat and the need to revegetate land including riparian buffers along waterways, gullies, ridgelines, property boundaries and saline discharge and recharge area.*
- *The location of on-site effluent disposal areas to minimise the impact of nutrient loads on waterways and native vegetation.*

Response

The Geotechnical Report has identified that site drainage is crucial and that horizontal surfaces must be drained to reduce the risk of erosion. Stormwater management has not been addressed by the applicant. If a planning permit were to be issued for the proposal the permit will contain a condition requiring the submission of a detailed stormwater management plan.

No native vegetation is proposed to be removed as part of the development and no impact is anticipated on the biodiversity of the site.

A land capability assessment was provided as part of the application which was referred to Council's Environmental Health Team which did not object to the issue of a planning permit subject to conditions. All wastewaters can be disposed of on site.

Design and siting issues

- *The impact of the siting, design, height, bulk, colours and materials to be used, on the natural environment, major roads, vistas and water features and the measures to be undertaken to minimise any adverse impacts.*
- *The impact on the character and appearance of the area or features of architectural, historic or scientific significance or of natural scenic beauty or importance.*
- *The location and design of existing and proposed infrastructure including roads, gas, water, drainage, telecommunications and sewerage facilities.*
- *Whether the use or development will require traffic management measures.*

Response

It is proposed to construct the dwelling on a ridgeline that will be visible from Talgarno Gap Road to the north and to a lesser extent from Retallicks Road. It is also proposed to undertake a significant site cut more than 2m deep and to fill the land to make a level surface to construct the dwelling. It is anticipated that this site cut will have an impact on vistas from both roads. The applicant has proposed the planting of trees south of the house to screen the dwelling from Retallicks Road however no planned landscaping is proposed on the northern side.

The Geotechnical report recommends that any exposed face of weathered rock that has any fractures should be covered in steel wire mesh with an application of shotcrete over the wire mesh. This will limit the options for landscaping to soften the area of cut and fill and the dwelling.

As previously discussed, the management of stormwater and the changes in overland flows have not been addressed.

The proposed dwelling will be visible from Talgarno Gap Road and beyond and will detract from the natural scenic beauty.

The land is accessed via an existing driveway and no additional traffic management is required.

Municipal Planning Strategy and Planning Policy Framework

Clause 02.01 (Municipal Planning Strategy) the land is within a 40 minute commute to Albury-Wodonga and the scheme recognises Council's aspirations to encourage population growth in the 'peri urban area' within a 40-minute commute of Albury-Wodonga.

Clause 02.03-2 aims to protect and enhance areas of identified landscape and environmental value. Further it aims to ensure that the siting and design of development does not detract from the natural and aesthetic value of significant landscapes. The proposal will be in a prominent location on the land and is not consistent with the objectives of this policy.

Clause 02.03-3 identifies that climate change and greater climate variability present a real and present challenge to the community. This policy identifies that erosion and landslip potential is a moderate-high risk across those parts of the Shire that contain steep land. It directs that development on steep land that does not respond to site characteristics and environmental conditions are to be avoided. The proposal will be in a prominent position on the top of a ridgeline with steep slopes of up to 45 degrees on either side of the ridgeline. It also directs that development is to be avoided in areas prone to erosion or landslip. The applicant has identified, in the Land Management Plan that erosion is occurring on the site. The proposal is not consistent with this policy.

Clause 02.03-4 aims to protect high quality agricultural land from development and directs land use diversity and rural residential development to areas of low to moderate agricultural quality, including peri-urban land to the northwest of the Shire. The land is contained within this area. The proposal is supported by this policy.

This policy also directs that the use and development of land that is detrimental to water quality is to be avoided. The application has provided a Land Capability Assessment that demonstrates that all wastewaters can be disposed of on the land. The Geotechnical Report submitted with the application has identified that stormwater must be directed away from all horizontal surfaces and that pooling is to be avoided. The applicant has not demonstrated that the stormwater can be disposed on the land or how the stormwaters can be managed so that there is no change in overland flows.

Clause 02.03-6 identifies that rural living is the dominant land use in lakeside areas to the south of Bellbridge, near Tallangatta and in the Bethanga Creek catchment. The policy encourages additional residential and rural living on the periphery of existing townships and settlements. The proposal is consistent with this policy.

Clause 11 (Settlement) of the Towong Planning Scheme provides the context of how planning sits within the Shire and must anticipate and respond to the needs of both existing and future communities. Clause 11.01-1R (Settlement Hume) identifies the need to support growth and developments within regional cities, such as Shepparton, Wangaratta, Wodonga, and Benalla. Clause 11.01-1L-04 (Smaller settlements) identifies the need to support rural living development in the Bethanga Creek catchment based on the capability of the land and only if it is sited and designed to protect the water quality of the Bethanga Creek and Lake Hume.

The proposal has demonstrated that all effluent can be disposed of on-site however stormwater management has not been addressed.

Clause 12 of the Towong Planning Scheme provides the policy basis concerning 'Environmental and Landscape Values'. The policy contained in Clause 12.01 (Biodiversity) focuses on protecting Victoria's biodiversity, particularly from the unnecessary removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation. Clause 12.03-1S (River and riparian corridors, waterways, lakes, wetlands, and billabongs) seeks to ensure that water bodies are not detrimentally impacted by land development, which can alter water flow and quality. It aims to limit earthworks in proximity to waterway systems to minimise alterations to geomorphology, natural drainage, natural flows and water quality. The policy aims to enhance a sense of place and landscape identity by protecting existing topographic features and maintaining a sense of naturalness through sensitive design and siting. Clause 12.03-1S also aims to ensure that design and siting of development maintains and enhances the natural environment by minimising the visual intrusion of development on the natural landscape views from major roads, bridge crossings, public open space recreation trails and within waterway systems themselves and ensuring development is visually subordinate to the local landscape settings, including through the use of vegetation to filter views of development. Clause 12.05-2S (Landscapes) recognizes the importance of protecting and enhancing significant landscapes and open spaces.

The subject site is located on the outskirts of Bethanga and features only a few scattered trees. The land is elevated from Talgarno Gap Road and contains a ridgeline that runs from the southwest of the land sloping down to the northeast. The land falls steeply on each side of the ridgeline with up to 45-degree slope. The proposed development will be located on the crest of a ridgeline. Significant earthworks that include more than 2m of cut and fill with battered walls are also proposed. The proposal is not consistent with these strategies.

Clause 13 (Environmental Risk and Amenity) highlights the importance of planning for all potential environmental hazards. In areas more prone to environmental risks, planning should strengthen the resilience and safety of communities by adopting a best practice environmental and risk management approach.

Clause 13.02 (Bushfire) aims to prioritize protecting human life over all other policy considerations and aims at reducing the vulnerability of communities to bushfire through the consideration of bushfire risk in decision making at all stages of the planning process. Clause 13.02-1L aims to provide rural dwelling with adequate access and water for firefighting.

Any permit issued for the development will require the access to be upgraded to ensure there is an all-weather access suitable for access by emergency services vehicles. A further condition will require that a minimum water holding capacity of 45,000 litres with a minimum reserve of 20,000 litres is set aside for firefighting.

Clause 13.04-2S (Erosion and landslip) aims to protect areas prone to erosion, landslip or other land degradation processes by preventing inappropriate development in unstable areas or areas prone to erosion. Clause 13.04-2L (erosion and landslip) applies to land in the Rural Activity Zone where the slope of land is greater than 20 percent. It aims to discourage development on steep slopes; avoid the construction of buildings on land that is subject to subsidence or landslip; minimise earthworks on steep slopes and site and design buildings and works not to increase the possibility of landslip and erosion and minimise any adverse impacts on the environment.

The proposal is not consistent with these objectives in that the proposal will be located on top of the ridgeline with steep slopes on each side. Further the earthworks proposed are significant and will result in the excavation of the side of the slope. The applicant has identified in their Land Management Plan that erosion exists on the land.

Clause 14.01 (Agriculture) and Clause 14.01-1L-01 aims to protect high quality agricultural land and aims to ensure that dwelling on rural lots are compatible with the agricultural and environmental characteristic of the area. The policy states that the dwellings should be sited to avoid, wherever possible, land containing environmental hazards (such as flooding, inundation, erosion or fire).

The proposal is not consistent with this policy given that the land has been identified as being subject to erosion.

In a similar context to the policies contained in Clause 12.03, Clause 14.02-1S (Catchment planning and management) seeks to promote the protection of catchment, waterways, and water bodies. The strategies provided within the policy

focus on encouraging sensitive approaches to the management and treatment of runoff from construction sites and development areas.

No stormwater management has been provided with the application. The Geotechnical Report emphasizes the need to ensure that water does not pool on horizontal surfaces to avoid seepage and should be directed away from the area of cut and fill. Due to the rural nature of the land there is no legal point of discharge, and all stormwaters must be disposed of on-site so as not to increase the rate of overland flow. In the absence of any stormwater plan the proposal is not considered to be consistent with these policies.

Clause 15 outlines policies about "Built Environment and Heritage". Clause 15.01-6S (Design for rural areas) aims to ensure that the siting, scale and appearance of development protects and enhances rural character; protects the visual amenity of valued rural landscapes and character areas along township approaches and sensitive tourist routes by ensuring new development is sympathetically located. Further it aims to site and design development to minimise visual impacts on surrounding natural scenery and landscape features including ridgelines, hilltops, waterways, lakes and wetlands.

The proposal is not consistent with this policy, the proposed dwelling will be located on a ridgeline, the site cut and fill together with the dwelling will be visually intrusive and not in keeping with the character along the township approach to Bethanga.

Options – Best Outcomes for the Community (s.9(2)(b)):

The proposal is located within the area identified and Peri-Urban Towong and within a 40-minute commute to Albury-Wodonga. The applicant has demonstrated that all wastewaters can be disposed of on site. The land, however, is the subject of steep slopes, it is proposed to site the dwelling on a ridge line and undertake a site cut of greater than 2m and fill the land requiring retaining walls and batters. The Geotechnical Report has recommended that any exposed weathered rock with fractures will need to be stabilised through a mesh covering with a shotcrete seal. The report has also identified the risks of pooling and seepage on horizontal surfaces and recommended all surface water and stormwater to be directed away from the house and cut and fill area. The report also identified the presence of rock at 1300mm and that blasting may be required achieve the required site cut. The applicant has identified that the land has been subject to some erosion.

On balance, it is the officers view that the proposal is not consistent with the Municipal Planning Strategy or the Planning Policy Framework.

Sustainability Implications (s.9(2)(c)):

The proposal does not meet the sustainability policies of the Planning Policy Framework; there is no evidence that stormwater from the site can be effectively managed so as not to increase the overland flows to neighbouring properties. The proposal increases the risk of erosion and landslip and is contrary to the landscape policies in that it will be prominent on the landscape.

Community Engagement (s.9(2)(d)):

Notice was undertaken to all adjoining and nearby landowners and occupiers pursuant to Section 52 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. Four objections were received. A redacted copy of the objections together with the applicant's response is attached.

It is noted that objections based on a fall in property values is not a planning consideration.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement (s.9(2)(e)):

Not Applicable

Collaboration (s.9(2)(f)):

Not Applicable.

Financial Viability/Budget Impact (s.9(2)(g)):

As with all planning matters, there is a risk that this matter may be appealed pursuant to Section 78 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* to the Victorian Civil Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). It is the officer's view that proceeding to VCAT would have a budgetary impact. It is not possible to quantify this now.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies (s.9(2)(h)):

The proposal is not consistent with the Planning Policy Framework as discussed above.

Council Plans and Policies:

Council Plans:

This report supports the following *Council Plan 2021-2025* priorities.

4. Land Use - Ensure that Council's planning, building and environmental health

services support all aspects of liveability and sustainable population growth.

Council Policies:

The proposal is not consistent with the Municipal Strategic Statement as discussed above

Transparency of Decision (s.9(2)(i)):

It is the officer's view that it is appropriate to consider this matter in a Council meeting that is open to the public.

Risk Assessment:

The relevant law section outlines many of the sensitive considerations associated with the proposed use and development of the land for a dwelling. Upon assessment, it is considered that the proposal is not consistent with the policy relating to steep slopes and construction adjacent to steep slopes. The proposal will be a feature on the landscape and will be prominent when viewed from Talgarno Gap Road.

The proposal includes significant excavation and there are inconsistencies between the plans submitted, the geotechnical report and the land management plan submitted in relation to the present of landslip and erosion.

Officer's View:

The site is located within the Peri-Urban area of Towong Shire (Clause 02.04 Strategic framework plan) and the development of the land for a dwelling is supported by this and the policies at Clause 02.03-4 (Natural resource management – Agriculture, Clause 02.03-6 (Housing – Rural residential development). However, the following policies do not support the approval of a planning permit as follows:

- Clause 02.03-2 Environmental and landscape values – Landscapes
- Clause 02.03-3 Environmental risks and amenity – Erosion and Landslip
- Clause 12.03-1S Water Bodies and Wetlands – River and riparian corridors, waterways, lakes, wetland and billabongs
- Clause 12.05-2S Significant Environments and Landscapes – Landscapes
- Clause 13.04-2S Erosion and landslip
- Clause 13.04-2L Erosion and landslip
- Clause 14.01-1L-01 Dwellings in rural areas
- Clause 14.02-1S Catchment planning and management
- Clause 15.01-6S Design for rural areas

It is considered that, while the issues around stormwater, water supply for bushfire preparedness and landscaping could be mitigated via planning permit conditions the risk associated with the significant earthworks, potential erosion and landslip and the visual impact cannot be mitigated.

On this basis the application for the use and development of the land for a dwelling is not an appropriate outcome for the site. It is recommended that Council resolves to refuse the application on the following grounds:

The proposal is not consistent with clause 02.03-2 - the siting will detract from the natural and aesthetic value of the landscape.

The proposal is not consistent with Clause 02.03-3 - the proposal does not avoid development of steep land.

The proposal is not consistent with Clause 12.03-1S - the proposal does not minimise the visual intrusion of the development on the natural landscape views. Further it does not ensure the development is visually subordinate to the local landscape setting.

The proposal is not consistent with Clause 12.05-2S - the proposal detracts from the natural qualities of the landscape.

The proposal is not consistent with Clause 13.04-2S and 13.04-2L - it proposes to site the dwelling on the top of steep slopes and does not minimise earthworks on steep slopes.

The proposal is not consistent with Clause 14.01-1L-01 - the proposal does not avoid land containing an environmental hazard being erosion.

The proposal is not consistent with Clause 14.02-1S - the proposal does not demonstrate that measures can be undertaken to minimise the quantity and retard the flow of stormwater.

The proposal is not consistent with Clause 15.01-6S - it is proposed to locate the dwelling on a ridgeline and will be prominent on the landscape.

Council Resolution:

CR WORTMANN

CR TOLSHER

THAT THE ITEM BE DEFERRED UNTIL THE AUGUST 2025 COUNCIL MEETING.

CARRIED

Confirmed

12.2 PA240059 Omeo Highway Mitta Mitta - Mitta Mountain Bike Trail (DCP)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Mrs Margaret Fox, Contract Planning Officer.

At the time of preparation of this report, the officer did not have a general or material conflict of interest in any matter to which the report or advice relates.

Purpose of Report:

A decision is required in relation to an application for the construction of a mountain bike trail and the removal of native vegetation with a recommendation that the application be approved.

Council received seven objections to the proposal, and it is considered appropriate that the application be presented to Council for consideration and decision.

Summary:

Council has received an application for the construction of a mountain bike trail and the removal of native vegetation on Crown Land on the outskirts of the township of Mitta Mitta. The proposed track will be contained within the Mitta Mitta State Forest and utilize the northern slopes of Mt Welcome. There are two privately owned parcels within the the State Forest. While the applicant initially understood they had the landowner's permission to use the land for the trail, no written permission has been provided and accordingly these areas will be excluded from the proposal.

The land is within the Public Conservation and Resource Zone and is subject to the Bushire Management Overlay. Pursuant to Clause 36.03-3 of the Towong Planning Scheme the consent of the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action for the construction of the trail is required and has been obtained. A planning permit is also required for the removal of native vegetation pursuant to Clause 52.17 of the Towong Planning Scheme.

The consent requires Towong Shire Council to be appointed as the Committee of Management. The applicant can then enter into a Memorandum of Understanding that transfers the construction and maintenance of the trail to Mitta Valley Inc.

The application was advertised widely to all owners and occupiers of adjoining land and the wider township of Mitta Mitta. Seven objections and 45 letters of support were received. Of the seven objections six were from residents of Mitta Mitta while

the 45 letters of support were predominantly from people within 100km of Mitta Mitta.

The application has been assessed against the relevant provisions of the Towong Planning Scheme. It is considered that the concerns raised by the objectors can be mitigated through conditions on a planning permit.

Recommendation:

That the application be approved subject to the following conditions:

Instrument of Agreement

1. Works must not commence until a suitable tenure and management type, and formal Instrument of Agreement has been agreed by both DEECA and the Towong Shire Council.
2. This Agreement will articulate all governance and regulatory matters to effect appropriate management of the defined land area to be the responsibility of Towong Shire, and the activities of the proposal.
3. If appointment of the Towong Shire Council as Committee of Management is the agreed tenure type, all costs associated with the appointment of the Towong Shire Council as CoM (survey and plan preparation) must be borne by Towong Shire Council.
4. In the event that an Agreement cannot be reached between DEECA and Towong Shire Council, this permit cannot be executed.

Compliance with documents approved under this permit

5. At all times what the permit allows must be carried out in accordance with the requirements of any document approved under this permit to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

Commencement of permit

6. This permit will operate from the issued date of this permit.

Approved and Endorsed Plans

7. Before the use commences, a Multi-Agency Emergency Response Plan must be approved and endorsed by the responsible authority. The plans must:
 - a. Be prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority
 - b. Be drawn to scale with dimensions
 - c. Be submitted in electronic form
 - d. Show the following details:
 - i. Details of the agencies engaged in the preparation of the plan
 - ii. Preparedness arrangements including but not limited to
 - iii. Communication planning
 - iv. Access arrangements – Omeo Highway and Ottos Road
 - v. Response arrangements

- vi. Control, Command & Coordination
- vii. Incident Command Post
- viii. Safety & Risk Assessment
- ix. Activation of Response
- x. Injured persons
- xi. Media Communications
- xii. Staging Areas
- xiii. Aircraft management
- xiv. Responder Information
- xv. Briefings, debriefings and review
- xvi. Contact lists
- xvii. Maps of Emergency access

Buffer around private land

- 8. No tracks or trails are to be constructed with 20m of the land described as CA A8 Parish of Dorchap and CA A7 Parish of Dorchap (also known as Ottos Road Mitta Mitta). A 20m buffer must be maintained at all times.

Runoff Control

- 9. Polluted and/or sediment laden run-off must not be discharged directly or indirectly into any waterways or drainage lines.

Ongoing soil erosion control

- 10. All works must be undertaken in a manner that minimises soil erosion to greatest extent practicable, and any exposed areas of soil must be stabilised to prevent soil erosion, to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

Environmental weeds

- 11. No environmental weeds referred to in the Advisory List of Environmental Weeds in Victoria M. White, D. Cheal G.W. Carr et al. April 2018 may be planted on or allowed to invade the site.

Review of Traffic & Carparking Demand

- 12. Within 6 months of the commencement of the use of the land a traffic and carparking assessment must be undertaken. The assessment must include the following:
 - a. Carparking demand assessment
 - b. Traffic movement assessment
 - c. Incident report including all traffic related incidents within 100m of the entrance to The Mill campground and Ottos Road.

Bushfire protection measures

- 13. The bushfire protection measures forming part of this permit or shown on the endorsed plans, including those relating to construction standards, defensible space, water supply and access, must be maintained to the satisfaction of the

responsible authority on a continuing basis. This condition continues to have force and effect after the development authorised by this permit has been completed.

Goulburn Murray Water – Construction activities

14. All construction activities must be in accordance with the EPA Publication 1834.1 Civil Construction, Building and Demolition Guide (September 2023) and there must be no transport of sediment or other materials to waterways either during or following construction.

Goulburn Murray Water Works within waterways

15. Proposed works must be undertaken in accordance with the relevant Works on a Waterway Permit as issued by the North East Catchment Management Authority.

Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) - Native Vegetation

Native vegetation permitted to be removed, destroyed or lopped

16. The native vegetation identified in Native Vegetation Removal Report ID: RGE_2024_003 and permitted to be removed, destroyed or lopped under this permit is 3.055 hectares of native vegetation, which is comprised of:
 - a. 3.055 hectares of native vegetation, including zero (0) large trees.

Native vegetation offsets

17. To offset the removal of 3.055 hectares of native vegetation, the permit holder must secure a native vegetation offset in accordance with Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation (DELWP 2017). The permit holder must secure the following offsets:
18. A general offset of 1.431 general habitat units located within the North East Catchment Management boundary or Towong Shire municipal area, with a minimum strategic biodiversity value of at least 0.582.
19. Within six (6) months of the completion of the works, a follow up assessment of the actual impacts from the construction works on native vegetation, including retained trees and associated Tree Protection Zones (TPZ), must be conducted by an appropriately qualified and experienced arborist, to identify any discrepancies from the current Native Vegetation Removal Report associated with this permit (NVR Report ID No. RGE_2024_003). The arborist's assessment report must be provided to the responsible authority and DEECA.
20. Within six (6) months of the completion of the project, the offset requirements can be reconciled with the written agreement of the responsible authority and DEECA.

Offset evidence

21. Before any native vegetation is removed, evidence that the offset required by this permit has been secured, must be provided to the satisfaction of the responsible authority. The offset must be in the form of a credit extract(s) allocated to the permit from the Native Vegetation Credit Register.
22. A copy of the offset evidence will be endorsed by the responsible authority and form part of this permit.

Construction Environmental Management Plan

23. Before any works start, including removal of native vegetation, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) must be prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority and submitted to and approved by the responsible authority in consultation with DEECA. When approved, the CEMP will form part of this permit. The CEMP must include (but not necessarily be limited to) details regarding the following:
24. Measures to be implemented to protect the native vegetation and other biodiversity values to be retained on the work/impact site and on land directly adjoining the work/impact site, during and post construction works. These measures must include the erection of native vegetation protection fencing around all native vegetation to be retained on site, including the tree protection zones of all native trees to be retained in accordance with AS 4970-2009 Protection of Trees on Development Sites.
25. Details for the implementation of recommendations and mitigation measures from the Native Vegetation Report: Detailed Assessment (Red-Gum Environmental Consulting 23 February 2024) to mitigate impacts on biodiversity.
26. Details for the implementation of the recommendations, methods and techniques in accordance with the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Plan (High Country Arborist Reports, 29 January 2025) to avoid and minimise impacts of construction works on retained trees, including works within Structural Root Zones (SRZs) and Tree Protection Zones (TPZs).
27. Identification of all stockpiles, storage, parking and vehicle/machinery storage locations and appropriate management requirements for these – all to be located within the identified facility development and impact areas.
28. Details of management measures to be implemented before, during and after the construction phase, including weed control, sediment control, erosion and drainage management, rehabilitation and stabilisation of the site and impacted areas, vehicle/plant hygiene requirements.
29. Measures to protect aquatic habitats and vegetation outside of the construction footprint from the impacts of sediment run-off, erosion, work-related debris, and construction activities, with appropriate control measures in accordance with all relevant EPA Victoria guidelines (EPA Publications 175, 275, 480, 960, and 1834). All erosion and sediment control measures should be

- established prior to the commencement of works and be monitored regularly throughout the entire duration of construction, particularly after heavy rain events.
30. Details regarding the retention of habitat features such as coarse woody debris and rocks etc, and relocation (if necessary) into adjoining areas of native vegetation.
 31. The CEMP should also include details and requirements regarding fauna management.
 32. Pre-clearance surveys must be undertaken by a qualified ecologist and within an appropriate timeframe, before impacts occur, e.g. 2 weeks or less, in accordance with the recommendations of the Detailed Assessment (Red-Gum Environmental Consulting 23 February 2024).
 33. Native fauna salvage, handling or relocation to be conducted by an appropriated qualified, experienced and licenced handler.
 34. Details pertaining to timing of works to avoid impacts during key times such as breeding and nesting periods.
 35. Monitoring and reporting requirements for all aspects and actions identified in the endorsed CEMP.
 36. Identification of persons responsible for all aspects and actions identified in the endorsed CEMP.
 37. All persons undertaking works on site must be fully briefed on all aspects and requirements of the endorsed CEMP. All works constructed or carried out must be in accordance with the endorsed CEMP, to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

Protection of native vegetation to be retained

38. Before works start, native vegetation protection fencing must be erected around or along native vegetation to be retained on and in the direct vicinity of the work site/footprint. This fencing must be erected in accordance with the AS 4970-2009 Protection of Trees on Development Sites. The fence must be constructed of highly visible, durable materials to the satisfaction of the responsible authority. The protective fence must remain in place until all works are completed to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.
39. Except with the written consent of the responsible authority within the area of native vegetation to be retained and any tree or vegetation protection zone associated with the permitted use and/or development, the following is prohibited:
 - a. vehicular or machinery access
 - b. trenching or soil excavation
 - c. storage or dumping of any soils, materials, equipment, vehicles, machinery or waste products

- d. entry and exit pits for the provision of underground services
- e. any other actions or activities that may result in adverse impacts to retained native vegetation.

Other conditions

40. Before any works start, including native vegetation removal, an Operational and Trail Management Plan must be prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority and submitted to and approved by the responsible authority in consultation with the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Hume Region. When approved, the Trail Management Plan will form part of this permit. The Trail Management Plan may be generally in accordance with the Trail Management Plan (Mitta Valley Inc) and must include (but is not necessarily limited to) details regarding the following:
 - a. Trail and surrounding area management and responsibilities
 - b. Maintenance requirements, including schedule of works
 - c. Site environmental values
 - d. Ongoing biodiversity matters; vegetation management, sediment control, management of pest plants and animals,
 - e. Regular monitoring and reporting, identifying any potential hazards and compliance requirements
 - f. Event management
 - g. Transport arrangements to and from the site for patrons, to ensure that impacts on road traffic are minimised on event days.
 - h. Car parking locations
 - i. Contingency provisions in the event of traffic accidents, breakdowns and illegal parking on road reserves on event days.
 - j. Appropriate signage and traffic measures between the site and car parking areas
 - k. How patron numbers will be controlled and monitored
 - l. Staffing and other measures which are designed to ensure the orderly arrival and departure of patrons.
 - m. The location for emergency vehicle access and width of emergency vehicle access and location of an emergency assembly area.
 - n. Road signage on event days
 - o. Management structure, roles, responsibilities, powers and procedures
 - p. A compliant hotline for the duration of the event in relation to patron and security issues.
 - q. Post closure rehabilitation standards
41. If the trail and associated infrastructure is no longer required or closed, the subject site must be rehabilitated to the satisfaction of the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Hume Region.

Bushfire and emergency management

42. Prior to commencement of use of the Mountain Bike Park, an Operational Emergency Management Plan (OEMP) must be prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action. The EMP must include (but not limited to):
- Access controls
 - Bushfire and user safety
 - Evacuation procedures
 - Any other matters raised in consultation with DEECA relating to the protection of human life on the site.

Expiry – Development and use

43. This permit will expire if one of the following circumstances applies:
- The development is not started within 2 years of the issued date of this permit
 - The development is not completed within 4 years of the issued date of this permit.
 - The use does not start within 2 years of completion of the development
44. In accordance with Section 69 of the Planning & Environment Act 1987, an application may be submitted to the Responsible Authority for an extension of the periods referred to in this condition.

Permit Notes

Goulburn Murray Water

45. The subject property is located within an area of Cultural Heritage Sensitivity. Should the activity associate with proposed development require a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP), planning permits, licences and work authorities cannot be issued unless a CHMP has been approved for the activity.

North East Catchment Management Authority

46. In the vicinity of the proposed bike trails, Deep Gully (along the western side of the site) and a tributary, along with an unnamed waterway draining north toward the Mitta River, are gazetted by the Authority to be designated waterways under the *Water Act 1989*.
47. A Works on Waterways permit must be obtained from the Authority in accordance with By-Law No 2024/01 Waterways Protection prior to commencing any works in, on or over designated waterways (such as landscaping, access crossings, stormwater outlets, etc.).

Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action

PUBLIC LAND

48. Before any works on public land start, if any flora species listed as protected under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee (FFG) Act 1988* are to be removed, a

permit to take protected flora will be required. To obtain a permit to take protected flora or for further information, please contact, Hume Natural Environment Program - Hume_NEP@deeca.vic.gov.au.

49. The granting of this permit does not exempt the holder of a permit from the requirements of other Commonwealth and State legislation or policy.

Attachment:

1. P A 240059 Omeo Highway Mitta Mitta - Cultural Heritage Management Plan [12.2.1 - 71 pages]
2. P A 240059 Omeo Highway Mitta Mitta - Environmental Management Plan [12.2.2 - 30 pages]
3. P A 250059 Omeo Highway Mitta Mitta - Trail Management Plan [12.2.3 - 48 pages]
4. P A 240059 Omeo Highway Mitta Mitta - Trail Map [12.2.4 - 18 pages]
5. PA240059 Omeo Highway Mitta Mitta Summary of Objections [12.2.5 - 13 pages]
6. P A 240059 Omeo Highway Mitta Mitta - Objections Response [12.2.6 - 24 pages]

Background/History:

The subject site is located to the south and west of the township of Mitta Mitta. The land is Crown Land. A trail head has already been established on the opposite side of the Omeo Highway at The Mill Campground that contains public carparking and toilet facilities. The site contains walking trails that lead to Mt Welcome.

The land contains two privately owned parcels that are not able to be developed. The land consists of forest with steep slopes. The land is currently managed by DEECA. The plan for the Mountain Bike Park has been funded through a State Government grant. Funding has also been secured through the Victorian State Government's Local Economic Recovery program for the completion of the first stage of the development.

The proposal will provide additional cycling options within the North East Region that has become Victoria's premier cycling destination. It is anticipated that the trail will provide an additional tourism offering for Mitta Mitta.

It is intended that Towong Shire Council will be appointed as the Committee of Management with a Memorandum of Understanding with Mitta Valley Inc to construct and maintain the trails in accordance with the requirements of any planning permit issued and the Memorandum of Understanding.

**Relevant Law (s.9(2)(a)):**

The *Planning & Environment Act 1987* provides the overarching standard process for assessing a planning permit application.

The Towong Planning Scheme sets out the planning permit triggers that require a planning permit application.

A planning permit is triggered under the Public Conservation and Resource Zone and the Bushfire Management Overlay.

Clause 36.03-1 identifies the use of the land for Informal Outdoor Recreation as a section 1 use where the use is being conducted by or on behalf of a public land manager. The applicant is not the public land manager and therefore a planning permit is required.

Clause 36.03-2 identifies that a planning permit is required to carry out works associated with the use of the land for Informal Outdoor Recreation that are not carried out by or on behalf of the public land manager.

Clause 36.03-6 Requires consideration of the following decision guidelines:

- *The Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
- *The comments of any public land manager or other relevant land manager having responsibility for the care or management of the land or adjacent land.*
- *Whether the development is appropriately located and designed, including in accordance with any relevant use, design or siting guidelines.*

Response

The proposal is consistent with the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework as discussed below.

The public land manager is the Department of Energy Environment & Climate Action (DEECA) which has consented to the issue of a planning permit subject to conditions. The approval is conditional upon Towong Shire Council being appointed as the Committee of Management for the trail.

The trail will meander through the forest and only trees and understorey that is necessary to be removed for the safe operation of the trail will be removed. The tracks are proposed to be narrow. The track will intersect the existing walking track but will not utilise any of the existing tracks to avoid any conflict in land use. The trail head will be located at the The Mill campground. This is located on the opposite side of the Omeo Highway. Any permit issued for the proposal will require the applicant to prepare traffic and car parking assessments after the first 12 months of operation. Further an incident report will be required in relation to any traffic incidents that have occurred within 100m of the The Mill Campground and the entrance to Ottos Road.

A planning permit is triggered under the Bushfire Management Overlay. Clause 44.06-2 identifies a planning permit is required for works associated with the use of the land for Leisure and recreation.

Response

The application was referred to DEECA as the relevant authority. DEECA proposes to include a condition requiring the preparation of an Operational Emergency Management Plan before the use can commence.

Clause 52.17 identifies that a planning permit is required to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation. Clause 52.17-1 states "*A permit is required to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation, including dead native vegetation*"

Clause 52.17-4 requires consideration of the decision guidelines associated with a basic, intermediate or detailed pathway. The proposed vegetation removal falls

within the Detailed Pathway. An application for the removal of native vegetation in a Detailed Pathway must be referred to DEECA.

Response

DEECA have reviewed the application material and ecological assessment and has consented to the issue of a planning permit subject to extensive conditions as outlined above.

Municipal Planning Strategy and Planning Policy Framework

Clause 02.03 sets out the strategic direction for Towong Shire to achieve its aspirations. Clause 02.03-1 identifies Mitta Mitta as a compact settlement with a quaint character and scenic setting that attracts many visitors. It is described as a popular stop along the Omeo Highway. The strategic direction aims to facilitate development that contributes to a network of settlements that support each other in their service base and offer a variety and choice of lifestyle opportunities. It is anticipated that the mountain bike trail will strengthen the existing tourism for the town. It will also provide an additional recreational activity for the wider Mitta Mitta Valley Community.

Clause 02.03-2 (Environmental and landscape values - Biodiversity) aims to protect and enhance areas of identified landscape and environmental value and assist the protection and conservation of biodiversity, particularly remnant vegetation. While native vegetation will be removed for the construction of the trail, the trail has been designed to avoid and minimise the loss of native vegetation.

Clause 02.03-3 (Environmental risks and amenity) requires consideration of the impact of climate change. Further consideration of the impact of bushfire and erosion and landslip. Any permit issued for the proposal will require the preparation of an Operational Emergency Management Plan to ensure the trail is managed to protect visitors in the event of bushfire. The trail has also been designed to minimise the risk of erosion and landslip.

Clause 02.03-7 (Economic development – Tourism) aims to encourage land use and development that results in tourism investment and support opportunities for eco-tourism and cultural tourism. The trail will provide an additional offering for the Mitta Mitta Valley and wider Towong Shire. With the opening of the Omeo Mountain Bike Trail the Mitta trail will provide an additional offering on the way to Omeo.

Clause 12 of the Towong Planning Scheme provides the policy basis concerning 'Environmental and Landscape Values'. The policy contained in Clause 12.01 (Biodiversity) focuses on protecting Victoria's biodiversity, particularly from unnecessary removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation and the

fragmentation of habitat and the spread of pest plants, animals and pathogens into natural ecosystems. The applicant has provided a detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan outlining how the environment will be protected during the construction phase. As discussed above the native vegetation proposed to be removed is to the minimum extent possible to ensure the safe operation of the trail. Clause 12.01-2S aims to ensure there is no net loss of biodiversity. The proposed vegetation removal will be offset, and the applicant has already provided a quotation to secure these offsets.

Clause 12.03-1S (Water bodies and wetlands) aims to protect and enhance waterway systems and limit earthworks in the proximity of waterways. Any permit issued for the proposal will require that all waterways be protected from any construction activities. A further condition will require the control of any environmental weed species that may invade the site.

Clause 12.05-2S aims to ensure significant landscape areas such as forests are protected and to ensure development does not detract from the natural qualities of significant landscape areas. While some native vegetation will be removed to make way for the trail the ongoing maintenance requirements will ensure weeds are controlled and the remaining vegetation is protected.

Clause 13 operates in much the same way as Clause 02.03-3 and requires consideration of the impact of climate change, bushfire risk and soil degradation. As previously discussed, the trail will be constructed to ensure there is no soil degradation or impact on any waterways. Permit conditions have been included to protect riders from the risk of bushfire.

Clause 17.04-1S (Tourism – facilitating tourism) aims to encourage tourism development to maximise the economic, social and cultural benefits of developing the State. Clause 17.04-1L aims to encourage the development of tourist trails based on the cultural heritage and significant landscape features of the Shire. The proposal is supported by this policy.

Options – Best Outcomes for the Community (s.9(2)(b)):

The proposal will provide additional recreational facilities for the Mitta Mitta Valley and wider Towong Shire. It will contribute to the wider tourism objectives of the Hume region and link the network of mountain bike trails and parks throughout the northeast with the newly opened mountain bike park at Omeo.

The creation of trails within the State Forest will result in some loss of biodiversity and could lead to the introduction of weed species to the site. The proposal has considered these factors and aims to minimise the impact of the trail on the

environment.

It is considered that the objectors concerns can be mitigated through conditions on any permit issued for the proposal and, on balance, it is the officers view that the proposal is consistent with the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.

Sustainability Implications (s.9(2)(c)):

Economic

It is anticipated that the proposed trail will attract tourism to the Mitta Mitta Valley and contribute to the economic sustainability of the small township of Mitta Mitta.

Social

The construction of a mountain bike trail will provide an additional recreational facility for the community of the Mitta Mitta Valley and the wider Towong Shire community.

Community Engagement (s.9(2)(d)):

The application was advertised, and seven objections were received. There were 45 letters of support received. It is the officers view that the concerns of the objectors relating to traffic management, rider safety and threats to biodiversity can be address through conditions.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement (s.9(2)(e)):

Not Applicable.

Collaboration (s.9(2)(f)):

Not Applicable.

Financial Viability/Budget Impact (s.9(2)(g)):

As with all planning matters, there is a risk that this matter may be appealed pursuant to Section 82 of the Planning and Environment Act 19987 to the Victorian Civil Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). It is the officer's view that proceeding to VCAT would have a budgetary impact. It is not possible to quantify this now.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies (s.9(2)(h)):

The proposal is consistent with the Planning Policy Framework as discussed above.

Council Plans and Policies:

Council Plans:

This report supports the following *Council Plan 2021-2025* priorities.

4. Land Use - Ensure that Council's planning, building and environmental health services support all aspects of liveability and sustainable population growth.

Council Policies:

The proposal is consistent with the Municipal Strategic Statement as discussed above.

Transparency of Decision (s.9(2)(i)):

It is the officer's view that it is appropriate to consider this matter in a Council meeting that is open to the public.

Risk Assessment:

The relevant law section outlines many of the sensitive considerations associated with the proposed construction of a Mountain Bike Trail. Upon assessment it is considered the proposal is generally consistent with the policies and can be supported.

The risk factors considered relate to the risk to:

- The environment through the removal of native vegetation and the potential impact on biodiversity.
- The increase in traffic, car parking and speed limits
- The increased bushfire threat
- The response to rider incidents and injuries

Any permit issued for the development contains conditions that aim to mitigate these risks.

Officer's View:

It is the officers view that the proposal is consistent with the requirements of the Towong Planning Scheme and that it is appropriate for a Notice of Decision to Grant be issued subject to conditions.

Council Resolution:

**CR TOLSHER
CR WORTMANN**

**THAT THE ITEM BE DEFERRED UNTIL THE END OF THE CALENDAR YEAR OR
UNTIL WE HAVE AN AGREEMENT IN PLACE.**

CARRIED

Confirmed

13 Environmental Sustainability

There are no Environmental Sustainability reports to present this meeting.

Confirmed

14 Economic and Tourism Development

14.1 Economic Development and Tourism Update - October 2024 - May 2025 (DCP)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Ms Kerissa Heritage, Economic Development Tourism Officer.

At the time of preparation of this report, the officer did not have a general or material conflict of interest in any matter to which the report or advice relates.

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to provide information.

Summary:

This report outlines the key activities undertaken by the Economic Development team between 1 October 2024 and 31 May 2025. During this period, the team focused on a range of strategic initiatives across the tourism and agriculture sectors, aimed at enhancing regional development, community engagement, and economic resilience.

Tourism

- Progressed the High Country Rail Trail project towards investment-ready status;
- Finalised the installation of interpretive signage and public artworks along the Great River Road;
- Initiated the Bellbridge Container Café project;
- Commenced the Hanson Street Mural Project;
- Completed the new destination website and launched the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) campaign;
- Delivered the 'December on Hanson' promotional campaign;
- Revitalised the Tallangatta and Corryong Visitor Information Centres, and secured funding for upgrades to the Eskdale Visitor Information Centre;
- Delivered the inaugural Run Upper Murray Trail event and commenced planning for the 2025 Pub to Pelican marathon;
- Hosted the Upper Murray Business and Tourism Expo;
- Upgraded Council's digital media management system to improve the storage, accessibility, and use of photography and videography assets.
-

Agriculture

- Participated in the Tallangatta Farming Expo;
- Delivered two Upper Murray Landcare drop-in information sessions;
- Hosted a Succession Planning Workshop in Talgarno;
- Engaged with stakeholders on strategies for managing dry seasonal conditions;
- Represented Council at key industry meetings, including the Alpine Valleys Dairy and the Upper Murray Inc. (UMI) Agricultural Innovation Working Group.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

Attachment:

1. Towong Shire Riverine Plains Agriculture Officer November May 2025 Report [14.1.1 - 2 pages]
2. Economic Development and Tourism Report - October 2024 - May 2025 Attachment [14.1.2 - 10 pages]

Background/History:

This report is typically provided bi-annually, however this report covers an eight-month period.

Relevant Law (s.9(2)(a)):

No relevant laws are applicable with any Council decisions or actions required from this report.

Options – Best Outcomes for the Community (s.9(2)(b)):

Economic and tourism development activities are aimed at supporting the economic prosperity of the community.

Sustainability Implications (s.9(2)(c)):

Economic and tourism development activities help to provide for the ongoing economic sustainability of the Shire.

Community Engagement (s.9(2)(d)):

During the reporting period, the Economic Development team undertook a range of engagement activities to support the planning and delivery of key tourism and agriculture initiatives:

- Managed the community-led creation of interpretive signage along the Great River Road and other key sites across the Shire;
- Presented the Great River Road marketing investment proposal to Upper Murray Inc for feedback;
- Engaged with key stakeholders regarding the Bellbridge Container Café project;
- Conducted landowner engagement on the proposed route for the Run Upper Murray event;
- Consulted with the project steering group during the development of the destination website;
- Undertook landowner consultation in relation to environmental reporting for the High Country Rail Trail;
- Established a Community Project Steering Group to oversee the Hanson Street Murals project;
- Engaged with street traders, Men's Sheds, and the broader community in the delivery of the 'December on Hanson' campaign;
- Maintained visitor engagement through the Corryong Visitor Information Centre;
- Collaborated with the Tallangatta Heritage Group on matters relating to the Tallangatta Visitor Information Centre;
- Engaged all residents and landowners impacted by the Run Upper Murray event, and coordinated with emergency services to support event planning and safety;
- Informed Tallangatta residents affected by the Pub to Pelican event and engaged with all relevant emergency service providers;
- Maintained ongoing engagement with Towong farming residents through various channels.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement (s.9(2)(e)):

The Economic Development team's activities from October 2024 to May 2025 reflect Towong Shire Council's strong commitment to innovation and continuous improvement across both tourism and agriculture sectors.

Tourism

Council has embraced innovation through the delivery of creative, community-driven projects and the adoption of digital tools to enhance regional promotion and visitor engagement. The progression of the High Country Rail Trail to investment-ready

status and the completion of interpretive signage and public artworks along the Great River Road demonstrate a strategic approach to place-making and cultural storytelling. Initiatives such as the Bellbridge Container Café and Hanson Street Mural Project showcase Council's support for activation of public spaces.

The launch of the new destination website and Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) campaign represent a significant digital transformation, improving the region's online presence and accessibility to potential visitors. Campaigns like 'December on Hanson' and events such as Run Upper Murray, reflect Council's commitment to innovative event development that drives tourism and community pride.

The revitalisation of Visitor Information Centres and the upgrade of Council's digital media management system further demonstrate a focus on modernising service delivery, improving operational efficiency, and enhancing the visitor experience.

Agriculture

In the agricultural sector, Council has continued to support innovation through knowledge-sharing and industry collaboration. Participation in the Tallangatta Farming Expo, delivery of Landcare information sessions, and hosting of a Succession Planning Workshop have provided valuable opportunities for local producers to access information and build resilience.

Engagement on dry season management strategies and representation at key industry forums, including the Alpine Valleys Dairy and the UMI Agricultural Innovation Working Group, highlight Council's proactive role in supporting sustainable agricultural practices and fostering innovation through regional partnerships.

Together, the economic development activities delivered over the last reporting period reflect a forward-thinking approach that aligns with Council's strategic goals, ensuring that Towong Shire remains adaptive, resilient, and positioned for future growth.

Collaboration (s.9(2)(f)):

During the reporting period, the Economic Development team actively collaborated with a range of community groups, businesses, and regional organisations to support the delivery of key projects and initiatives. Key collaborations included:

- Sandy the War Horse Committee – Supported the development of interpretive signage and videography at the Tallangatta Visitor Information Centre;

- Eskdale Progress Association – Partnered in identifying upgrade requirements for the Eskdale Visitor Information Centre and co-developed a funding application to support the works;
- Mat Dore Coaching – Collaborated with Council to deliver the inaugural Run Upper Murray Trail event and to commence planning for the 2025 Pub to Pelican marathon;
- The Man from Snowy River Tourism Association and Upper Murray Inc. – Provided input into the planning and agenda for the Upper Murray Business and Tourism Expo.

In the agricultural sector, Riverina Plains worked in partnership with several organisations to deliver workshops and provide valuable information to the Towong farming community. These partners included:

- Alpine Valleys Dairy;
- Upper Murray Landcare;
- Mitta to Murray Landcare Network;
- Mitta Valley Landcare Group;
- Agmate Rural Services;
- Yenda Producers Co-operative;
- Costello Rural Corryong;
- Ag Warehouse Corryong.

Financial Viability/Budget Impact (s.9(2)(g)):

Budget requirements and availability have been confirmed, grant funding has been sought where possible and all expenditure is being monitored and managed within agreed budget allocations.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies (s.9(2)(h)):

- Victoria's High Country Destination Management Plan 2023-2033
- North East Victoria Cycling Optimisation Plan
- The Hume Strategy for Sustainable Communities 2010-20
- Hume Regional Growth Plan • Visit Victoria Visitor Economy Strategy Action Plan 2016-20
- Lake Hume Land and On-Water Management Plan
- Goulburn Murray Water Corporate Plan 2019-20 to 2023-24
- Regional Development Victoria: Ovens Murray Regional Partnership roadmap Ordinary Council Meeting Agenda - 27 November 2024 61 of 69
- Hume Regional Growth Plan 2014 • Goulburn Murray Water, Corporate Plan 2021-22 to 2025-26
- Regional Development Victoria Ovens, Murray Regional Partnership 2019-20
- Victoria State Government, Victoria's Climate Change Strategy 2021

Council Plans and Policies:

Council Plans:

This report supports the following *Council Plan 2021-2025* priorities.

2. Community Wellbeing - Encourage and support all people in our Shire to be healthy, happy, connected and resilient.

2.4 Support the development of recreational activities and infrastructure to encourage active lifestyles for all ages and stages

3. Economic and Tourism Development - Expand economic and employment opportunities across our Shire in a sustainable way.

3.1 Connect businesses to learning, development and networking opportunities to increase capacity

3.2 Run a series of business expos to support local businesses

3.4 Support businesses to adapt to and recover from the impact of bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic

3.5 Support businesses to expand adventure tourism offerings across the shire

3.9 Support Mitta Valley Inc to develop the Mitta Valley mountain bike park

3.10 Seek funding to complete the High Country Rail Trail

3.15 Capitalise on Tallangatta's status as a Notable Town

3.17 Deliver improved visitor information and experience across the Shire

3.18 Expand the reach of tourism marketing and promotional materials

3.19 Seek to support the growth of value-add product and/or diversification opportunities for the agriculture industry

6. Organisational Improvement - Maintain a high performing customer-centred organisation that works with the community to develop and deliver priorities.

6.3 Continually improve processes to support improved service delivery

Council Policies:

Not applicable.

Transparency of Decision (s.9(2)(i)):

It is the officer's view that it is appropriate to consider this matter in a Council meeting that is open to the public.

Risk Assessment:

Not applicable.

Officer's View:

The Economic Development team continues to deliver strongly on the Council Plan 2021-2025 objectives.

Council Resolution:

**CR TOLSHER
CR WORTMANN**

THAT THE REPORT BE NOTED.

CARRIED

15 Councillor Reports

An opportunity is provided for Councillors to table or present a Delegate's report.

Nil.

16 Urgent Business

In accordance with Council's Governance Rules, matters of urgent business can only be considered if:

- a) It relates to or arises out of a matter which has arisen since distribution of the agenda; and
- b) It cannot safely or conveniently be deferred until the next Council meeting; and
- c) The Council resolves to admit an item considered to be urgent business.

Nil.

17 Committee Minutes

There are no Committee Meeting minutes for review or confirmation this meeting.

18 Council Policies

18.1 Policies for Adoption (DCOD)

The following policies were tabled for review at the 30 April 2025 Council Meeting:

- Councillor Correspondence
- Councillor Gift Policy

Attachment:

1. Councillor Correspondence - May 2025 Review [**18.1.1** - 5 pages]
2. Councillor Gift Policy - May 2025 Review [**18.1.2** - 6 pages]

Please note the recommended changes are shown in colored text.

Recommendation:

That the following policies as amended and presented be adopted, with the Chief Executive Officer authorised to make minor administrative changes where necessary:

- Councillor Correspondence
- Councillor Gift Policy

Council Resolution:

**CR TOLSHER
CR WORTMANN**

**THAT THE FOLLOWING POLICIES AS AMENDED AND PRESENTED BE
ADOPTED, WITH THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AUTHORISED TO MAKE
MINOR ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES WHERE NECESSARY:**

- **COUNCILLOR CORRESPONDENCE**
- **COUNCILLOR GIFT POLICY**

CARRIED

18.2 Policies for Review (DCOD)

The following policies are tabled for review in accordance with Council's agreed review cycle. Feedback should be provided to the nominated officer by 24 July 2025 to ensure any input can be considered prior to tabling the policies for adoption:

- External Grants Application Policy
- Procurement Policy

Attachment:

1. External Grant Application Policy - Adopted December 2020 [**18.2.1** - 2 pages]
2. Procurement Policy - Adopted August 2024 [**18.2.2** - 13 pages]

Recommendation:

That the policies tabled for review be noted.

Council Resolution:

CR WORTMANN
CR TOLSHER

THAT THE POLICIES TABLED FOR REVIEW BE NOTED.

CARRIED

19 Sealing of Documents

Nil.

20 Confidential

Section 66 of the *Local Government Act 2020* declares that meetings are to be open to the public unless the following specified circumstances apply:

1. *A Council or delegated committee must keep a meeting open to the public unless the Council or delegated committee considers it necessary to close the meeting to the public because a circumstance specified in subsection (2) applies.*
2. *The circumstances are –*
 - a) *the meeting is to consider confidential information; or*
 - b) *security reasons; or*
 - c) *it is necessary to do so to enable the meeting to proceed in an orderly manner.*
3. *If the circumstance specified in subsection (2)(b) or (2)(c) applies, the meeting can only be closed to the public if the Council or delegated committee has made arrangements to enable the proceedings of the meeting to be viewed by members of the public as the meeting is being held.*
4. *For the purposes of subsection (3), the arrangements may include provision to view the proceedings on the Internet or on closed circuit television.*
5. *If a Council or delegated committee determines that a meeting is to be closed to the public to consider confidential information, the Council or delegated committee must record in the minutes of the meeting that are available for public inspection –*
 - a) *the ground or grounds for determining to close the meeting to the public by reference to the grounds specified in the definition of confidential information in section 3(1); and*
 - b) *an explanation of why the specified ground or grounds applied.*

As defined in section 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* "confidential information" means the following information

- a. *Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released;*

- b. *Security information, being information that if released is likely to endanger the security of Council property or the safety of any person;*
- c. *Land use planning information, being information that if prematurely released is likely to encourage speculation in land values;*
- d. *Law enforcement information, being information which if released would be reasonably likely to prejudice the investigation in an alleged breach of the law or the fair trial or hearing of any person;*
- e. *Legal privileged information, being information to which legal professional privilege or client legal privilege applies;*
- f. *Personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs;*
- g. *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;*
- h. *Confidential meeting information, being the records of meetings closed to the public under section 66(2)(a);*
- i. *Internal arbitration information, being information specified in section 145;*
- j. *Councillor Conduct Panel confidential information, being information specified in section 169;*
- k. *Information prescribed by the regulations to be confidential information for the purposes of this definition; and*

Information that was confidential information for the purposes of section 77 of the Local Government Act 1989.

Nil.

21 Closure of Meeting

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting closed, the time being 12:07 pm.