

Minutes

Ordinary Meeting of Council

Held at 10:30 am, Wednesday 22 October 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.

Confirmed

**Minutes for the Ordinary Meeting of Council held at
32 Towong Street, Tallangatta, Victoria
at 10:30 am on Wednesday 22 October 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

Table of Contents

1	Opening Prayer.....	6
2	Councillor and Officer Presence at the Meeting.....	6
3	Apologies and Granting of Leave of Absence	6
4	Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest	6
5	Confirmation of Minutes	8
6	Petitions and Joint Letters.....	9
7	Public Question Time.....	9
8	Informal Meetings of Councillors.....	9
9	Organisational Improvement.....	10
9.1	Council Plan 2025-2029 - DCOD	10
9.2	Long Term Financial Plan - DCOD.....	18
9.3	Corporate and Organisational Development Report (DCOD-06/01/0011).....	21
9.4	Domestic Animal Management Plan (DCOD)	24
9.5	Risk and OHS Bi-Monthly report	28
9.6	Annual Report 2024/25 (DCOD)	32
9.7	Audit and Risk Committee Charter (DCOD).....	36
9.8	Appointment of Audit and Risk Committee Chairperson (DCOD)	40
10	Community Wellbeing	43
10.1	Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan.....	43
11	Asset Management.....	49
12	Land Use Planning	49
13	Environmental Sustainability.....	49
13.1	Environmental Sustainability Report June Quarter (DIE).....	49
14	Economic and Tourism Development	59
14.1	Bellbridge Container Cafe Lease	59
15	Councillor Reports	65
16	Urgent Business	65
17	Committee Minutes.....	65

17.1 Indi Local Government Area Roundtable	65
17.2 Hume Region Local Government Network (HRLGN)	67
17.3 Audit and Risk Committee Minutes - August 2025 (DCOD).....	69
18 Council Policies	71
19 Sealing of Documents	71
20 Confidential.....	71
21 Closure of Meeting.....	73

Confirmed

The Mayor declared the meeting open, the time being 10:39am.

1 Opening Prayer and Acknowledgement of Country

"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."

Towong Shire Council acknowledges all the Traditional Custodians throughout the Shire, we recognise their continued care of lands and waters, and their living knowledges and wisdom.

We pay our respect to elders past and present. We are committed to listening and working together to help build a stronger and more inclusive society.

2 Councillor and Officer Presence at the Meeting

Councillor Attendance

Crs Whitehead, Anderson, Wortmann, Tolsher and Pitman

Officer Attendance:	Title:
Ms Phelps	Chief Executive Officer
Mr Florence	Director Community and Planning
Ms Taylor	Director Corporate and Organisational Development

3 Apologies and Granting of Leave of Absence

Nil.

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.

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 3 September 2025

Ordinary Council Meeting 24 September 2025

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 3 September 2025 and 24 September 2025, be confirmed.

Council Resolution:

CR ANDERSON

CR TOLSHER

THAT THE MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2025 AND 24 SEPTEMBER 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.

There were no public question time submissions.

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.

There are no informal meetings of Councillors submitted for confirmation.

9 Organisational Improvement

9.1 Council Plan 2025-2029 - 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 present the *Council Plan 2025-2029* for adoption.

Summary:

It is a requirement of the *Local Government Act 2020* to develop a Council Plan and Community Vision to set the strategic direction, objectives, strategies and initiatives to guide the Council over the elected term. The council plan must be adopted by 31 October in the year following a general election. The *Draft Council Plan 2025-2029* was placed on public exhibition following a September Council Meeting, with submissions closing Friday 3 October 2025. We received a number of submissions, detailed below in Community Engagement section of this report.

The *Council Plan 2025-2029* aims to balance the need to maintain our existing infrastructure and service levels to the community with the demand for new infrastructure and expanded services. We acknowledge there is more demand for new infrastructure than we can deliver with current and predicted future resource levels.

Asset renewal is a key priority to ensure that our existing infrastructure is serviceable, safe and meets the needs of the community. There is also demand for additional infrastructure to provide:

- The Peninsula with a community space and commercial/retail opportunities;
- Increased capacity to meet demand at almost all of our Early Years centres, encompassing both long day care, outside school hours care and Kindergarten services;
- Improved road network with gravel roads progressively sealed;
- Upgraded parks and open spaces across the shire;
- Enabling infrastructure to support tourism and the expansion of the High Country Rail Trail.

There is growing demand for community services that supports community connection and well-being, through our Neighbourhood House programs, libraries, Emergency Management Services, Maternal Child Health services to name a few.

Recommendation:

That:

1. The submissions in relation to the *Council Plan 2025-2029* and *Community Vision* be considered;
2. Written notification of Council's decision in relation to each submission be provided to the respective submitters; and
3. The *Community Vision* and *Council Plan 2025-2029* as amended be adopted.

Attachment:

1. Council Plan 2025-2029 [9.1.1 - 34 pages]

Background/History:

Under Section 90 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (LGA 2020), a Council must prepare and adopt a Council Plan for at least the next four financial years after a general election in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices.

The Council Plan must include the strategic direction of Council; the strategic objectives for achieving the strategic direction; initiatives for achieving the objectives and strategic indicators for monitoring achievement of the objectives.

Section 88 of LGA 2020 requires Councils to maintain a Community Vision that is developed in consultation with the community and describes the community's aspirations for the future of the municipality. The *Draft Council Plan 2025-2029* has been developed inclusive of the Community Vision. We asked our community if the Vision is still relevant and 70% of respondents confirmed that the Community Vision is still relevant and therefore has not changed.

During the period of public exhibition, several changes were recommended internally, as follows:

- Completion of Dartmouth Streetscape removed (the completion of the pump track and splash pad being completed in the current Council term).
- Inclusion of an initiative to seek funding for pump tracks across the shire
- Clarification of a sample of priority issues that we will be advocating for our residents.
- Inclusion of an initiative to collaborate with GMW to identify and realise

opportunities for activation of GMW land.

- Clarifying a key objective that is sought from the planning scheme amendments – providing opportunities for second dwellings on farming properties to facilitate succession planning.
- Inclusion of an initiative to continuously seek opportunities for innovation, efficiency and process improvement through technology and artificial intelligence.

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

The *Local Government Act 2020*

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

The *Council Plan 2025-2029* has been prepared based on extensive community consultation and developed to deliver the best outcomes for the community over the current Council term.

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

The *Council Plan 2025-2029* includes a strong focus on sustainability; be it the economic sustainability of our municipality or the environmental sustainability and the impact that we have and contribution we can make to minimise this impact.

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

Following the Draft Council Plan being placed on public exhibition the following feedback was received from residents:

Submitter	Feedback (Summary)	Officers' recommendation and response
Megan Vearing	Re: Tallangatta Triangles playground This playground is a central gathering place for families and children in our community. While I welcome improvements to safety, such as fencing, the playground needs more than just a fence around the existing equipment. A full upgrade is required to provide a modern, nature-integrated play space that incorporates open-	No Change to Plan. It is acknowledged that there is strong demand for facilities of this kind. Council needs to balance the demand with what it can afford to provide for residents across the entire municipality. To that end, before we commit to what has been requested, we need to develop a

	ended equipment, natural safety features (such as rocks, gardens, and discreet fencing), shade, and inclusive areas for children of all abilities. In speaking with other parents in Tallangatta, there is strong support for these improvements. Families want a playground that is safe, engaging, and reflective of our natural surroundings. They want a space where children can learn, explore, and play, while parents feel confident that the environment is safe and welcoming.	comprehensive strategy – to identify what is affordable, fair and equitable to all towns and villages. The development of the Open Spaces Strategy will include community consultation and we encourage all interested parties to participate in this process.
Kaye Nankervis (UMI)	Corryong to Towong Cycling/Walking Trail Master Plan – As discussed with Council, the Corryong to Towong Cycling/Walking Track Master Plan to be included in the Council Plan.	Changes proposed. Furthering the High Country Rail Trail is Councils priority. It is recommended that Council consider including an initiative to assist in enabling this project to be shovel ready in year 4 of the Council Plan.
Kaye Nankervis (UMI)	A Housing Plan - There needs to be development/completion of a Housing Strategy Plan as an action. The Council Plan mentions under the Our Towns plan for Corryong that one of the main 5 topics as 'sustainable housing for a resilient community', but the plan only mentions housing as an advocacy item under the health and wellbeing topic, and as a state government infrastructure advocacy item under emergency management and coordination of community resilience.	Plan amended. The Plan has been amended to include the development of a Housing Strategy for the Upper Murray in years two and three of the Plan.

Mary Fraser	The list of initiatives seems unachievably long. My concern also is whether Councillors are looking at the long-term costs of providing what some groups are asking for. I don't know how many formerly funded tennis courts are now defunct and many only had a few years of use so it is important to ensure Council has the courage to say no. As a ratepayer who pays significant rates annually it is painful to see what is sometimes wasteful expenditure of ratepayers money.	No change to Plan. This feedback is welcome. Financial sustainability is front of mind for Council and we note that the list of requests far exceeded those initiatives that have been included, reflecting our commitment to prudent financial management.
Sarah Lebner	The Our Towns plan for Corryong sites one of the main 5 topics as 'sustainable housing for a resilient community', but the Council plan only mentions housing as an advocacy item under the health and wellbeing topic, and as a state government infrastructure advocacy item under emergency management and coordination of community resilience. I'd also like to personally understand how the Council Plan overlaps with the 2030 plan that's on the UMI website; the latter had quite meaty actionables and responsible parties - is that separate ongoing work or should those items also be integrated into the Council Plan?	Plan amended. The added initiative to develop a Housing Strategy for Corryong and the Upper Murray will examine all the factors associated with housing including supply and demand pressures, and innovative opportunities.
Sarah Lebner	I'm also mindful of the commentary around emergency health services, and health services in general, in Corryong. I would have expected Council to have some kind of role in that territory, whether that's all State based and the role is more	Plan amended. In the Draft Plan there is an initiative to advocate for issues of importance. We have amended the plan to nominate some of the high profile issues,

	advocacy, or whether they have the jurisdiction to create change tangibly - I don't really see any of the above outlined.	including health and emergency services.
Sarah Lebner	I'd like to see a tangible point around the severely unpredictable futures we face in the coming decades due to overlapping volatile systems (3 degree climate change, AI, international relations instability) and for Council to be bravely facing this. Long term it needs to be about more than just street shade, composting and resilient agriculture but possibly even considering things like supply chains into our remote location, ensuring we do have good local medical facilities for this purpose, knowing that the emergency power grid can operate for longer periods if needed, etc.	No change to Plan. There are existing initiatives regarding building resilience in our communities to withstand future emergencies. Specific details are not included as it is a long list, however a key one is advocacy. The effectiveness of this is underscored by the recent works by Ausnet to install a Islandable Microgrid that can power Corryong in the event of power outage for up to 5 days.

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

Continuous improvement is reflected throughout the Council Plan with initiatives focussing on improving and enhancing services and infrastructure.

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

Collaboration is promoted through several Council Plan initiatives; advocacy to state and federal governments and the promotion of opportunities to identify opportunities to undertake shared service arrangements.

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

Council has incorporated the planned initiatives and priorities in the Long Term Financial Plan, this is also presented in this Agenda for adoption.

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

All relevant regional, state and national plans and policies have been taken into

account in the development of the *Draft Council Plan 2025-2029*.

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:

The *Council Plan 2025-2029* includes a number of initiatives to support the future financial sustainability of the organisation, promote good governance and risk management.

Officer's View:

The *Council Plan 2025-2029* and *Community Vision* have been provided to the community for feedback and further amendments made following receipt of feedback, and are now recommended for adoption.

Council Resolution:

**CR PITMAN
CR TOLSHER**

THAT:

- 1. THE SUBMISSIONS IN RELATION TO THE *COUNCIL PLAN 2025-2029* AND *COMMUNITY VISION* BE CONSIDERED;**
- 2. WRITTEN NOTIFICATION OF COUNCIL'S DECISION IN RELATION TO EACH SUBMISSION BE PROVIDED TO THE RESPECTIVE SUBMITTERS;**
- 3. THE COUNCIL PLAN BE AMENDED TO INCLUDE AN INITIATIVE TO SEEK FUNDING TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO UMI IN ENABLING THE TOWONG TO CORRYONG WALKING TRAIL PROJECT TO BE SHOVEL READY;**

4. **THE COUNCIL PLAN BE AMENDED TO INCLUDE AN INITIATIVE TO SEEK FUNDING TO DEVELOP A TALLANGATTA INDUSTRIAL ESTATE AND EXPLORE OTHER OPPORTUNITIES THE ESTATE COULD OFFER FOR THE FUTURE GROWTH OF THE TOWNSHIP OF TALLANGATTA; AND**
5. **THE *COMMUNITY VISION AND COUNCIL PLAN 2025-2029* AS AMENDED BE ADOPTED.**

CARRIED

Confirmed

9.2 Long Term Financial Plan - 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 present the Long Term Financial Plan for adoption.

Summary:

The Long Term Financial Plan is a critical component of the integrated strategic planning and reporting framework as set out in the Local Government Act 2020. It links the Community Vision, Council Plan and Asset Plan with the financial resources required to deliver on these objectives for our communities. The draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2035 was placed on public exhibition following endorsement from Council in September. No submissions were received.

Recommendation:

That the *Financial Plan 2025-2035* be adopted.

Attachment:

1. Final LTFP 2025-2035 [9.2.1 - 16 pages]

Background/History:

The Long Term Financial Plan is a 10 year forward plan outlining allocation of Council resources, key financial indicators, and our future financial sustainability.

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

The *Local Government Act 2020*

Under section 91 of the Local Government Act 2020, every council must prepare a Financial Plan covering at least 10 years and be adopted by 31 October in the year following a council election, and review it annually.

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

Not applicable.

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)):

The Draft Long Term Financial Plan was publicly exhibited for a four week period. No submissions were received.

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

Not applicable.

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

Council has utilised the Better Practice Guide for the preparation of the Long Term Financial Plan, issued by Local Government Victoria, in collaboration with FinPro.

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

The Long Term Financial Plan highlights the ongoing financial sustainability challenges facing Council. Some key points to consider:

- A conservative approach has been taken regarding forecasting one-off capital grants. There are key capital projects that have been included in the Long-term financial plan as they are critical infrastructure projects that the community have indicated are the highest priority. It is acknowledged that these projects will be unable to proceed without a contribution of one-off capital funding. One-off capital income has been included for these projects only and highlight that if the funding isn't received, then the capital expenditure forecast will also not be spent.
- Employee costs are significant, particularly in proportion to rates revenue. We note that approximately 25% of employee costs are related to Early Years service, which is funded through user charges and fees and childcare subsidies.
- Asset renewal requirements for roads, bridges, drainage, buildings and improvements, plant and equipment are funded 100%.

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:

The future cash position in 10 years highlights the reliance that Council has on one-off Capital grants to be able to fund the demand for new infrastructure. The Financial Plan has been prepared within the constraints of resources available, and allows for some new ratepayer-funded investment while also being financially sustainable over the period.

Officer's View:

It is the Officers view that the Long Term Financial Plan meets the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020 and reinforces the need for Council to be prepared and diligent in its efforts to attain State and Federal funding to deliver new infrastructure in our municipality.

Council Resolution:

**CR WORTMANN
CR TOLSHER**

THAT THE *FINANCIAL PLAN 2025-2035* BE ADOPTED.

CARRIED

9.3 Corporate and Organisational Development Report (DCOD-06/01/0011)

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 an update on Corporate and Organisational Development team activities over the quarter.

Summary:

The attached report provides an overview of activities within the Corporate and Organisational Development team between April and September 2025.

Significant activities undertaken in this quarter included:

- Adoption of the Budget 2025/26
- Engagement sessions with residents across the shire and a workshop day with Councillors were held to inform the Council Plan 2025/29. The Draft plan was endorsed by Council for exhibition with valuable feedback provided by the community and is now included in the agenda for adoption.
- Recruitment to fill vacant positions across the Directorate.
- An all staff day was held in Corryong at the Upper Murray Events Centre.
- The Enterprise Agreement negotiations concluded and the Agreement successfully endorsed with a yes vote.
- The Long-term Financial Plan prepared and publicly exhibited and is now included in the agenda for adoption
- A community rally was hosted in Corryong which attracted almost 200 residents and raised awareness regarding the concerns over the shortfalls in the proposed hospital redevelopment in Albury Wodonga.
- Implementation of a Human Resources Information system has commenced with the pilot testing expected to commence in November
- Building the framework of the SkyTrust safety system has commenced in conjunction with development of Safe operating procedures to be utilised in the

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

Attachment:

Nil

Background/History:

The Corporate and Organisational Development Report is provided on a quarterly basis. The summary of activities identified above highlights the volume of work carried out over the past six months

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

Corporate and Organisational Development activities and decisions have been made in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*.

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)):

A significant investment has been made in consultation sessions with the community to inform and guide the development of the Council Plan 2025-29.

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

Our IT and Records Management team continue to progress the transition from file servers to a cloud-based, in-place records management system.

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:

The May Audit and Risk Committee meeting was held during the quarter, and the unconfirmed minutes from this meeting were made available to Council in the May Council meeting.

Officer's View:

Despite some staff vacancies, significant progress has been made against a range of goals and objectives set for the Corporate and Organisational Development team.

Council Resolution:

**CR ANDERSON
CR PITMAN**

THAT THE REPORT BE NOTED.

CARRIED

9.4 Domestic Animal Management Plan (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 present the proposed *Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029* for Council's consideration prior to release for public exhibition.

Summary:

The Domestic Animals Act 1994 requires councils to prepare a domestic animal management plan every four years to provide for safe and responsible pet ownership across the municipality. A *Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029* has been prepared, based on the prior *Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025*, and is presented for Council's consideration.

Recommendation:

That:

1. The draft *Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029* be approved in-principle and placed on public exhibition with the closing date for submissions being 5pm 22 November 2025;
2. Any submissions received be considered at a future Council Meeting; and
3. If no submissions requesting changes are received, the *draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029* be adopted without further resolution.

Attachment:

1. Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 Draft v 3 cover [9.4.1 - 15 pages]

Background/History:

Section 68A of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 (the 'Act') requires councils to prepare

a domestic animal management plan by 30 November 2025. The plan must set out a method for evaluating whether its animal control services are adequate to give effect to the Act, outline training programs for authorised officers, and outline programs services and strategies to promote responsible pet ownership and compliance to the Act across the municipal community. It must provide for the review of any orders made under the Act and any local laws relevant to the management of dogs and cats.

A proposed Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 has been drafted based on Council's Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025, the overarching strategy of Council, contemporary animal management issues and controls, and community feedback regarding Council's animal management practices.

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

Domestic Animals Act 1994

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

The proposed Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 balances then needs of pet owners and the benefits of pet ownership with safety and amenity considerations for the municipal community.

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)):

The proposed *Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029* is recommended for approval in-principle and release for public exhibition and submissions.

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)):

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)):

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:

The proposed *Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029* addresses several risks associated with pet ownership, including the risk of dog attacks, over population, euthanasia, and nuisance behaviours. Adopting the Plan provides a clear plan for officers to act and mitigate those risks.

Officer's View:

The proposed *Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029* has been based on the prior *Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025* with minimal material change reflecting the effectiveness and continuity of existing controls in relation to responsible pet ownership. The proposed plan has been drafted in accordance with legislative requirements and is ready for consideration for approval in-principle.

Council Resolution:

CR ANDERSON

CR TOLSHER

THAT:

- 1. THE DRAFT *DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN 2025-2029* BE APPROVED IN-PRINCIPLE AND PLACED ON PUBLIC EXHIBITION WITH THE CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMISSIONS BEING 5PM 22 NOVEMBER 2025;**
- 2. ANY SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED BE CONSIDERED AT A FUTURE COUNCIL MEETING; AND**
- 3. IF NO SUBMISSIONS REQUESTING CHANGES ARE RECEIVED, THE *DRAFT DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN 2025-2029* BE ADOPTED WITHOUT FURTHER RESOLUTION.**

CARRIED

Confirmed

9.5 Risk and OHS Bi-Monthly report

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Ms Loren Murray, Manager People and Safety. 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 Council's Risk and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) strategy, performance, activities, and key initiatives for the reporting period.

Summary:

The Risk and OHS bi-monthly report provide a summary of the following:

- High level summary of incidents and injuries and WorkCover claims
- High potential incidents and near misses (HPIs), that have occurred during the reporting period and details of the identified causes, recommended controls, and the progress of developing and implementing these controls to date
- An insurance report on notable public liability claims that occurred during the reporting period
- Progress on close out of major hazards by site
- A high-level summary of the major projects underway and progress on systems development and implementation

Recommendation:

That the Risk and OHS Bi-Monthly report be noted.

Attachment:

Documents have been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

Background/History:

The Risk and OHS report explains how Council is performing against its OHS strategic plan and accepted industry standards. Council's Risk and OHS management performance measures and indicators quantify the inputs, outputs, and outcomes of a risk management system. They identify whether the risk management processes are implemented and working as intended; and if the risk management system is

effective.

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)):

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)):

Innovations and improvements during this reporting period:

- The Fit for Work Policy and Psychosocial Risk Management and Respect at Work Policy and Procedure Framework was developed during this reporting period. The documents are with Legal for review.
- The backend build of the Safety Incident Management Software (Skytrust) is underway. The OHS administrators are undertaking training in the software and building its functionality. Piloting is scheduled for November.

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

Not Applicable.

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)):

Not Applicable.

Council Plans and Policies:

Council Plans:

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

6. Organisational Improvement - Maintain a high performing customer-centred organisation that works with the community to develop and deliver priorities.

6.7 Provide a safe and healthy workplace for all Councillors and staff in a continually evolving environment

6.13 Continually improve the risk management and governance frameworks and practices

Council Policies:

Occupational Health and Safety Policy.

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:

Project activities are prioritised commensurate to the likelihood and impact of identified business and OHS risks.

Officer's View:

For this reporting period there has been a strong focus on completing the backend build of Skytrust. This software will alleviate several critical compliance issues. The Training and Development Officer is consulting with other Councils that have implemented this software, to take the best of their processes and to learn from their roadblocks.

Solid progress has been made in addressing outstanding hazards. Business as usual activities continue to be on a more reactive basis than is preferred however the introduction of a systemised framework will slowly reduce this.

Council Resolution:

CR TOLSHER

CR PITMAN

THAT THE RISK AND OHS BI-MONTHLY REPORT BE NOTED.

CARRIED

Confirmed

9.6 Annual Report 2024/25 (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 present the *Annual Report 2024/25*.

Summary:

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires that councils prepare an Annual Report in respect of each financial year. This report must be presented by the Mayor at a Council Meeting open to the public. The *Annual Report 2024/25* has been prepared in line with legislative and regulatory requirements and is ready for presentation.

Recommendation:

That:

1. The Mayor be thanked for his presentation of the Annual Report 2024/25; and
2. The Annual Report 2024/25 as presented be approved and made available to residents, ratepayers and the general public.

Attachment:

1. Annual Report - 30 JU N 2025 [9.6.1 - 147 pages]

Background/History:

Section 98 of *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) requires that a Council must prepare an Annual Report in respect of each financial year, containing a report of the operations of the Council, an audited performance statement, audited financial statements, and copies of the auditor's reports on the performance statement and financial statements.

Section 100 of the A4ct requires that the Mayor must report on the implementation of the Council Plan by presenting the Annual Report at a Council meeting open to

the public in the year of a general election, on a day not later than the day before election day.

The content of the *Annual Report 2024/25* has been prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and is now ready for presentation.

Operations of the Council

This year has been marked by the continued delivery of an expansive capital works program, with the delivery of these projects spanning multiple years across planning and execution phases. Projects of significance for this year have included:

- Corryong CBD Streetscape
- Bellbridge Walking Trail
- Corryong Skate Park
- Dartmouth Splash Park and Pump track

The three-year-old kindergarten program was successfully integrated with the four-year-old program and is now operational in Corryong, Tallangatta, Bellbridge, and Walwa. The Walwa Early Years service has also been relocated to the Primary school site, with these activities providing a consistent and enriching early education experience for children in these communities.

Council achieved a surplus of \$5.65 million for the year ended 30 June 2025, compared to a budgeted deficit of \$1.98 million. The higher than anticipated result was primarily due to:

- Accruals of \$1.5 million DRFA insurance settlement relating to the 2022 Floods;
- \$3.3 Million (or 50%) of 2025/26 Financial Assistance Grants paid early.
- Non-recurrent grant income exceeding budget by \$3 million.

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

The *Annual Report 2024/25* has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of sections 98 and 99 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* and is ready for presentation by the Mayor in accordance with section 100 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

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

The Annual Report 2024/25 outlines the achievements of the Council during 2024/25 in support of the best outcomes for the community, including progress on Council Plan Priorities.

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

Not applicable.

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

The Annual Report 2024/25 is published on Council's website and the community will be notified through local newspapers, Council's eNewsletter and social media.

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 financial result for the year ended 30 June 2025 reflects a surplus. Long term financial sustainability continues to be dependent on the receipt of one-off grants to fund renewal of Council's aging infrastructure. The decrease in availability of state and federal funding is cause for concern in regard to our ability to attain such funding into the future.

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:

In line with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council's Performance Statement and Financial Statement, as included in the *Annual Report 2024/25*, have

been subject to independent audit and the oversight by the Audit and Risk Committee to mitigate the risk of reporting errors.

Officer's View:

Councils Annual Report 2024/25 has been prepared in accordance with all relevant legislation and regulation and it is the officer's view that it is ready to be presented by the Mayor at this Council Meeting.

Council Resolution:

CR ANDERSON

CR PITMAN

THAT:

- 1. THE MAYOR BE THANKED FOR HIS PRESENTATION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25; AND**
- 2. THE ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25 AS PRESENTED BE APPROVED AND MADE AVAILABLE TO RESIDENTS, RATEPAYERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC.**

CARRIED

9.7 Audit and Risk Committee Charter (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 present a revised Audit and Risk Committee Charter for Council's consideration and adoption.

Summary:

The Audit and Risk Committee Charter is due for review. The current Charter was adopted in June 2024. The Charter establishes the governance of the Committee, including authority, membership, meeting arrangements, as well as duties and responsibilities. Small changes have been recommended by the Committee for Council's consideration.

Recommendation:

That the Audit and Risk Committee Charter be adopted.

Attachment:

1. Audit and Risk Committee Charter - August 2025 [9.7.1 - 4 pages]

Background/History:

Section 54 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires that a Council must prepare and approve an Audit and Risk Committee Charter, which specifies the functions and responsibilities of the Committee. Council adopted the current Committee Charter at the June 2024 Council Meeting.

At the 14 August 2025 Audit and Risk Committee meeting, the Committee resolved to propose changes to the Charter for Council's consideration. The recommended changes are as follows:

Reporting to Council

It is recommended that an additional responsibility be included for the Chairperson to present a report to Council on an annual basis. This will provide a direct relationship between the Committee and the broader Councillor group, allowing for transparency and strong communication channels.

Quorum

It is recommended that the quorum be redefined to have a majority independent external members and 1 internal member.

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

The proposed Audit and Risk Committee Charter is prepared in accordance with section 54 of the *Local Government Act 2020* as specified below:

54 Audit and Risk Committee Charter

(1) A Council must prepare and approve an Audit and Risk Committee Charter.

(2) The Audit and Risk Committee Charter must specify the functions and responsibilities of the Audit and Risk Committee including the following—

- (a) monitor the compliance of Council policies and procedures with—*
 - (i) the overarching governance principles; and*
 - (ii) this Act and the regulations and any Ministerial directions;*
- (b) monitor Council financial and performance reporting;*
- (c) monitor and provide advice on risk management and fraud prevention systems and controls;*
- (d) oversee internal and external audit functions.*

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

The following options could be considered:

1. Adopt the proposed Audit and Risk Committee Charter to ensure Council can attract and utilise valuable expertise; or
2. Not adopt the proposed Audit and Risk Committee Charter and propose alternative changes for consideration.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Regular revision of the Audit and Risk Committee Charter ensures Council can maintain effective governance of the Committee through acknowledging best practice and current risks and challenges. This ensures valuable advice can continue to be provided for Council's consideration and action.

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:

The proposed changes to the Charter have been made to enhance the function of the Committee and ensure risk is well managed within the appetite and tolerance of Council. These changes will facilitate enhanced communication and ensure independence of the decisions of the Committee.

Officer's View:

The Audit and Risk Committee is a valuable resource enabling Council to utilise a range of expert knowledge, skills and experiences, with an effective Charter governing how the Committee can best be deployed within statutory limitations. It is the officer's view that the Charter meets the legislative requirements and is suitable for the needs of Council and the Committee.

Council Resolution:

CR PITMAN

CR ANDERSON

THAT THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE CHARTER BE ADOPTED.

CARRIED

Confirmed

9.8 Appointment of Audit and Risk Committee Chairperson (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 the appointment of Ms Carolyn Rosetta-Walsh to the role of Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Summary:

The term of the current Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee, Ms Lisa Forsyth, expires on 27 September 2025 and a new Chairperson is required. The external Committee members have recommended Ms Carolyn Rosetta-Walsh as the Chairperson, and in line with the *Audit and Risk Committee Charter* this recommendation is presented for Council approval.

Recommendation:

That:

1. Ms Carolyn Rosetta-Walsh be appointed to the role of Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee for a period of one year; and
2. Ms Lisa Forsyth be thanked for her valuable contribution as the Chairperson for the past two years.

Attachment:

Nil

Background/History:

Section 53 of the Local Government Act 2020 requires that a Council must establish an Audit and Risk Committee, which is an advisory committee and not a delegated

committee of Council. The chairperson of an Audit and Risk Committee must not be a Councillor of the Council, that is they must be an independent member of the Committee that has expertise in financial management, risk, or experience in public sector management.

The external members of the Committee recommend that Ms Carolyn Rosetta-Walsh is appointed as the new Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee for a term of one year. Ms Rosetta-Walsh brings extensive experience in accounting and audit and has served on Council's Audit and Risk Committee since October 2024.

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

The recommendation is made in accordance with Council's *Audit and Risk Committee Charter* which in turn has been adopted in accordance with the requirements of section 54 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

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

Council could choose not to approve Ms Rosetta-Walsh as the Chairperson in which case the external Audit and Risk Committee members will need to put forward an alternative candidate.

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:

The appointment of Ms Rosetta-Walsh to the role of Chairperson will provide good value for the Audit and Risk Committee. Her experience makes her a very suitable candidate.

Officer's View:

The Audit and Risk Committee has nominated Ms Rosetta-Walsh to the role of Committee Chairperson, and it is the officer's view that this process was conducted fairly and in line with the requirements of the *Audit and Risk Committee Charter*. Ms Rosetta-Walsh's qualifications, experience and background as a committee member position her well to assume the role of Chairperson.

Council Resolution:

**CR WORTMANN
CR ANDERSON**

THAT:

- 1. MS CAROLYN ROSETTA-WALSH BE APPOINTED TO THE ROLE OF CHAIRPERSON OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE FOR A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR; AND**
- 2. MS LISA FORSYTH BE THANKED FOR HER VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION AS THE CHAIRPERSON FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS.**

CARRIED

10 Community Wellbeing

10.1 Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan

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 for Council to consider and adopt the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029 (MHWP)

Summary:

The MHWP has been developed over the past six months which has included significant data review and various consultations, largely through the members of Towong Alliance. The Towong Alliance is a joint forum made up of Council, Tallangatta Health, Corryong Health, and the Walwa Health services, with support from a range of regional agencies such as the Ovens Murray Population Health Unit, and Women's Health Goulburn North East.

This MHWP contains actions that are designed to deliver improved population health and wellbeing outcomes, to be implemented in collaboration with the Towong Alliance and other key stakeholders across the municipality. The MHWP is part of the wider public health unit response to improve health and wellbeing across the regional Ovens Murray Catchment and Victorian state level.

Following Council's resolution at its 3 September 2025 meeting, the draft MHWP was placed on public exhibition for a period of over four weeks from 5 September – 5 October 2025.

During this period submissions from two organisations were received. These submissions have been considered and summarised in a table in Appendix 1 resulting in minor additions to the Plan which has been updated, and forms Appendix 2 of this report.

Recommendation:

That the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029 be adopted.

Attachment:

1. Appendix 1 - Summary of Draft MHWP submissions received [**10.1.1** - 2 pages]
2. Appendix 2 - Draft Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029 [**10.1.2** - 31 pages]

Background/History:

The Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 mandates that local governments have a responsibility to protect, improve and promote public health and wellbeing within their municipalities. The Act requires councils to develop a MHWP every four years (within 12 months of each general election of the council), which is consistent with the Council plan prepared under Section 90 of the Local Government Act 2020.

Given that Council's existing Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan was for the period 2021-2025, a new draft plan covering the period 2025-2029, was developed in partnership with the Towong Alliance and presented to the 3 September 2025 Council Meeting where the following resolution was made:

That:

- 1. The Draft Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025 – 2029 be approved in-principle;*
- 2. The Chief Executive Officer be authorised to place the Draft Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025 – 2029 on public exhibition and invite public submissions, with submissions closing at 5pm on Sunday 5 October 2025; and*
- 3. In the event that no submissions are received, the Draft Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029 be adopted.*

This MHWP contains actions that are designed to deliver improved population health and wellbeing outcomes, to be implemented in collaboration with the Towong Alliance and other key stakeholders across the municipality. The MHWP is part of the wider public health unit response to improve health and wellbeing across the regional Ovens and Murray Catchment and Victorian state level. The MHWP sits alongside the Towong Alliance Partner's and other stakeholders plans and policies to deliver a health and wellbeing response across the municipality.

The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-2027 provides an overarching

policy framework for improving public health and wellbeing in Victoria including identifying the following ten priority areas which the MHWP contains actions across. These have been prioritised in the following order:

1. Preventing all forms of violence;
2. Improving wellbeing;
3. Increasing healthy eating;
4. Improving sexual and reproductive health;
5. Increasing active living;
6. Reducing harm from alcohol and drug use;
7. Tackling climate change and its impacts on health;
8. Reducing harm from tobacco and e-cigarette use;
9. Decreasing antimicrobial resistance across human and animal health;
10. Reducing injury.

Some of the key actions for these priority areas include awareness campaigns, strengthening community knowledge, placing mental health at the forefront, embracing diversity, inclusion and fostering social connection.

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

The Local Government Act 2020

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

The Towong Shire Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025–2029 presents a municipality wide response to the requirements of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008.

The MHWP aligns to the Community Vision 2031. "Towong Shire will be the ideal place to be: welcoming, vibrant and diverse communities with quality facilities and services"

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

Social

Partnering with key stakeholders to achieve improved health and wellbeing will be a central priority of the MHWP to ensure the community can achieve optimal health outcomes across all population cohorts.

Environmental/Climate Change

Tackling climate change and its impacts on health is one of the 10 priority areas of the MHWP with several actions under this priority listed in the document.

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

The draft MHWP was developed with the direct input from Towong Alliance members, other relevant organisations and stakeholders who work within the health and/or wellbeing areas.

Many of the actions in this draft document relate to other Council strategic documents such as the draft Council Plan 2025-2029, Recreation Strategy, Youth Strategy and place plans. These documents have all been recently developed and involved significant community engagement.

The Draft Towong Shire MHWP 2025-2029 was available for public exhibition from 5 September 2025 to 5 October 2025, and this was communicated through the following channels:

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

During this period two submissions from separate organisations were received. These submissions have been considered and summarised in a table in Appendix 1 resulting in minor additions to the Plan.

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

The development of this MHWP provides some direction for Council and our health partners in relation to many health and wellbeing areas which is aimed at continually improving health and wellbeing services, programs and initiatives for our residents.

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

The development of the MHWP involved collaboration and consultation with a number of stakeholders, including further collaboration during the public exhibition period. 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 priority areas

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 Act 2008.

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.
- 2.3 Maintain a contemporary Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan which reflects our community priorities
- 2.4 Support the development of recreational activities and infrastructure to encourage active lifestyles for all ages and stages
- 2.7 Expand and improve early years services across the Shire to support young families
- 2.8 Renew the Youth Plan to embed the 'youth voice' in all aspects of service delivery
- 2.9 Advocate for the development of a variety of housing options to match community needs, particularly for older people
- 2.10 Encourage the establishment of innovative, sustainable transport solutions for remote communities
- 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
- 2.12 Build relationships and develop understanding of aboriginal people and consider the commitment to an ongoing reconciliation action plan process
- 2.13 Participate in key networks to support communities and key stakeholders on solutions to address family violence, suicide and mental health

Council Policies:

Climate Adaptation 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:

Communication on the plan will be clear that Council's role is not in direct service provision for all actions listed in the plan. The emphasis will be on outlining the role of Council to lead, advocate, fund or partner for specific actionable objectives within the plan.

Officer's View:

The Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029 has been informed by data, research and consultation, namely member organisations of the Towong Alliance, community consultation and developed by experienced staff in this area.

The development of an updated MHWP was required given Victorian legislation and the timeframes of the most recent Plan was 2021 – 2025. It is the officer's recommendation that the MHWP as presented be adopted.

Council Resolution:

**CR TOLSHER
CR ANDERSON**

**THAT THE MUNICIPAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN 2025-2029 BE
ADOPTED.**

CARRIED

11 Asset Management

There are no Asset Management reports to present this meeting.

12 Land Use Planning

There are no Land Use Planning reports to present this meeting.

13 Environmental Sustainability

13.1 Environmental Sustainability Report June Quarter (DIE)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Mr Greg Karlson, Coordinator 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 an update on environmental sustainability activities.

Summary:

This report provides an update on environmental sustainability activities throughout the Shire for the period March 2025 to September 2025.

Council's environmental sustainability activities continue to be focused on the management of recycling operations at resource recovery centres along with actions related to the circular economy waste and recycling transition processes.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

Attachment:

Nil

Background/History:

Waste and recycling services

Ongoing education and reminders regarding campaign around the three bin system continue to be promoted through Council's digital platforms as well as exposure through the Halve Waste platform which enjoys TV promotional content. Grant monies provided in part funds which defrayed some of this cost during rollout over the first year under the new system.

Recent activities around kerbside waste since the transition shows 64.30% of households with an existing kerbside bin service had taken up the additional FOGO bin. Although this figure seems low, it was heavily influenced by the level of opt-outs from eligible rural residents, who represented 38.3% of total households. Overall the participation rate of rural households was a modest 26.8% of total households.

YTD performance to June 25 highlights:-

- Organics tonnage levels - 719 tonnes from now 2175 monthly serviced households
- General Waste tonnage levels – 921 tonnes from now 3061 monthly serviced households
- Recycling tonnage levels – 526.43 tonnes from 3059 monthly serviced households

For the month of June 2025 the Recycling Contamination Rate was - 0.14 tonnes with total contamination volume for the year at 2.08 tonnes. The average monthly contamination rate was 0.39%. For FOGO 719 tonnes has been collected with average monthly contamination levels of 0.14%.

With the three bin system State Government initiative Towong Shire has achieved a current diversion rate# of 57.49% from landfill.

Diversion rate – The amount of waste diverted from landfill. Calculated by dividing the tonnes of recyclables and organics collected (less contaminants) by the total tonnes of waste and recyclables and organics collected.

Summary of key results from recent bin audit undertaken by third party EC Sustainability:

- Bin audit shows resource recovery rate with the recycling stream recording

- a reduction from 81% in 2021 to 79.04% in 2025 representing a reduction of 1.96%. The Organics stream recorded an outstanding result of 91.22%.
- The new system saw an increase capture rate of food waste in the food and garden organics where in 2021 46% of FOGO accepted materials could have been recovered in a green lidded bin. By proportion of weight, the mixed recyclables in the waste stream increased from 10.59% in 2021 to 15.04% in 2025, an increase of 4.45%. Garden organics reduced from 12.67% to 0.20% in 2025 a reduction of 12.47% Loose food also decreased 23.4% in 2021 to 16.92%.
- The introduction of the FOGO service for areas as surveyed from recent bin audit resulted in the effective diversion of garden organics and loose food from general waste stream. However, the increase in the proportion of mixed recyclables within the residual waste stream was likely due to the removal of FOGO accepted material with the weight of mixed recyclables decreasing significantly which was also likely impacted by the introduction of Container Deposit Scheme Vic.

To aid with waste collection during the high visitation period of Easter, Council provided additional public bins at key locations, increased the frequency of collections and promoted respectful disposal behaviours for visitors with flyers provided to caravan operators.

Council encouraged the reporting of overflowing bins and Cleanaway promptly responded to callouts over this period whilst Council provided added services and assistance to key hospitality businesses during this time.

Many businesses were supported over the peak period with “in kind support” given to event organisers such as the Man from Snowy River Bush Festival. Additionally commercial operators were also supported under a user pay system which was successfully managed in collaboration with town maintenance contractors, assistance from Cleanaway and via use of Council-owned vehicle fleet.

For peak holiday periods additional work will be undertaken as Council strives to improve education around best waste practices. A future initiative will include new bin coral stands with sign messaging at Walwa Recreation Reserve. Also Council proposes to explore new street signage in our major outer townships which will include a theme such as ‘Carry In Carry Out’ policy that will be promoted in key camper locations and high patronage areas. Council will look to partner with other stakeholders such as DEECA and Parks Victoria with the intention to reduce dumped waste or unnecessary waste build up at Council supplied bin locations.

Both signs and flyer materials will be used as tools to mitigate incorrect and poor disposal habits during these periods.

Container Deposit Scheme (CDS)

Local business and community groups in Tallangatta and Corryong were successfully established as CDS point operators for the State Government's 10c deposit scheme for eligible glass, plastic, aluminium and cardboard drink containers.

For Corryong YTD results Nov through to June 2025 saw 2,171,364 containers returned, \$218,316.40 paid out in refunds which saw the Shire ranked 18 of 25 for North Zone ahead of Alpine and Indigo Shire. For reference Wodonga City Council area ranked 5th overall with 20,800,313 containers.

Resource Recovery Centres

The operational plan for both centres has been reviewed with the existing retaining wall at Tallangatta RRC to be upgraded with a new concrete block structure to reinforce wall integrity. Slide chute railing at the bay entry is also to be installed with similar railing works at Corryong proposed to ensure both are "fit for purpose" and meet safety requirements for public and worker use.

Balance of government grant monies has been exhausted which has seen introduction of enhanced signage to promote designated drop off areas for waste items.

Corryong Landfill - Council has operated the premise as a landfill from 1992 to 2023. The original landfill area was an unlined trench and fill operation in the northeast portion of the site operated under EPA licence ES504 and capped in 2014 (Mackenzie Environmental, 2021). The western portion of the site continues to be operated by Council and has ongoing use as a waste transfer station operated by Council, and for which we hold an EPA A13c registration R000301955. The more recent landfill area (mapped in appendix 1, [Mackenzie Environmental, 2021]) consists of two lined landfill cells (Cell 1 and Cell 2) & a leachate pond. At that time, these cells were considered Landfills Exempt from Licencing (LEFLs) under the Environment Protection Act 1970 and did not require an EPA permission to operate.

The facility has reached full capacity and has been closed for public access since October 2023. Bulk bins supplied by contractor has proven the best method for disposal and transportation of general waste.

The externally prepared Aftercare and Environmental Management Plan has been ratified by EPA. The tender was granted to third party contractor NECC for proposed capital project works with works commencing in June with estimated completion expected in late August 2025.

Climate Action

Climate Action Plan has been produced by Ironbark Sustainability Group who recommends investment in climate future with changes to Council vehicle fleet and landfill management practices. The removal of putrescible waste which was identified as a major factor which has now been addressed following the introduction of Food and Garden Organics Bins Kerbside collection service which has now reached its first anniversary.

Changes to council passenger fleet vehicles to electric vehicles or hybrids to reduce carbon emissions is still to be explored further with cost impost proving a barrier for change. Further review will be undertaken as grant monies become available and as vehicle lease renewals near end dates and future upgrades occur.

Resource Recovery Centre continues to provide a supply of repurposed crushed concrete material as base for all infrastructure road work as part of Council's maintenance program schedules.

To measure emission levels in 2019 Council adopted a software tool – Trellis which primarily enabled a method to measure emission levels from Council-owned assets. Broadly it allowed organisations to manage data relating to its consumption of utilities, including electricity, gas, water, waste disposal, business travel and other resources such as fuel and refrigerant gas.

For the 24/25 FY carbon emission levels measured 2,945 2Co2-e generated across Council-owned assets which was up 12.8% on prior year. The main resource contributor to emission levels was derived from waste 73% or 2152TCO2-e

Tree and Weed Programs

Further tree planting has been undertaken on Playles Hill with a further 15 trees planted. There are 12 different species contributing to the biodiversity required to mitigate risk from emerging pathogens and pests. These plantings have a focus on a diversity of flowering trees including dogwoods, forest pansy and magnolias.

Other tree plantings include:-

- 15 red oaks planted in Cudgewa, completing the Avenue of Honour replacement plan.
- Approx 15 trees planted on Playles Hill, these plantings have a focus on a diversity of flowering trees including dogwoods, forest pansy and magnolias.
- Removal 2 ash trees and a pinoak from Tallangatta Triangles, these trees were diseased and had reached the end of useful lifespan.

- Planting of 3 established red oaks to replace trees removed from Triangles.
- 6 trees planted at Tallangatta skate park.
- 5 trees planted at various streets within Tallangatta.
- 10 crepe myrtles planted in Granya.
- Rare Davidia (Dove tree) planted at Walwa, in front of nursing home.
- 3 Japanese elm planted in the Arcade, Corryong.
- 5 trees planted in Attree Park, Corryong as part of succession plan to replace mature trees that are approaching the end of useful lifespan.
- 11 established maples with root directors and wicking systems planted in the centre of Hansen St CBD.
- 5 dogwood trees planted in new parking bays Donaldson St Corryong.
- 3 large liquidambar trees causing damage to storm water system identified for removal from Kiel St Corryong

A high incidence of rabbit infestation is prevalent throughout the Shire and in an attempt to manage numbers, the following has been undertaken:

Calicivirus has been released in Playles Hill -Corryong, Granya, Mitta, Bethanga and Talgarno as part of rabbit control program. Fumigation using phostoxin of multiple warrens in and around Granya, Talgarno and Bethanga has also been carried out, whilst rabbit proof netting has been installed around water storage tank at old Granya Primary School site.

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

All environmental sustainability actions have been undertaken in accordance with the service performance principles outlined in the *Local Government Act 2020*, *Environmental Protection Act 2017* and the *Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling Act) 2021*.

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

Not Applicable.

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

Economic

Enhanced recycling methods will diminish the volume of waste sent to landfills, while adopting a four-stream waste system enhances the circular economy framework for waste management in Victoria.

Social

The projects mentioned in this report promote sustainability education for the community.

Environmental/Climate Change

Actions undertaken on recycling of materials and ongoing review of tree management practice and climate adaption will contribute positively towards the mitigation of Council's impact on the environment and adherence to risk management best practice.

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

Community Education on Recycling - Council received grant funding from Sustainability Victoria under the Circular Economy Household Education Fund (CEHEF). The community education package included digital and print material post rollout to reinforce messaging.

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

Not applicable

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

Council officers liaise regularly with representatives of the Goulburn Murray Climate Alliance, waste management officers from councils in the Hume region and government representatives from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and Sustainability Victoria (SV) relating to environmental and sustainability activities.

Council is also currently a partner with the Innovation Upper Murray Group who is looking at grant opportunities to support a proposed Biomass facility within the region. The Group are currently exploring use of consultants to commission a scoping study to assess the availability of woody biomass in the region, with the intent of identifying opportunities for utilisation in a proposed pyrolysis plant in the Upper Murray.

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.

	Note	June 2025 YTD (Actual) \$	2024/25 Full Year (Forecast)	2024/25 Full Year (Budget) \$	Forecast to Budget (Variance) \$	Forecast to Budget (Variance) %	
Income							
Kerbside collection	1	1,528,599.84	1,543,449.44	1,360,560.00	182,889.44	12%	
Waste facilities management	2	458,297.12	458,297.12	506,000.00	(47,702.88)	-10%	
Total Income		1,986,896.96	2,001,746.56	1,866,560.00	135,186.56		
Expenditure							
Kerbside collection	3	1,350,191.55	1,454,434.31	1,290,236.00	164,198.31	12%	
Waste facilities management	4	446,013.79	444,204.07	227,057.00	217,147.07	49%	
Total Expenditure		1,796,205.34	1,898,638.38	1,517,293.00	381,345.38	21%	
Net Income / (Expenditure)		190,692	103,108	349,267			

- Revenue for kerbside collection surpassed budget with collection charges up 6% with additional revenue of circa \$52K derived from waste contractor for payment in lieu of Council servicing own streetscape bins (recycling and general waste public bins.) There has been nominal growth from rates with some additional households added to the collection service. Other income recorded included non recurring grant monies -\$16,150 from Sustainability Victoria
- Waste facility management fees met budget whilst Resource Recovery Centres gated revenues fell below budget projections with lower-than-expected tip fees from lower patronage.
- Full year Budget for kerbside collection charges were below budget projections given cost base is fully quantifiable under waste contractor terms. Bin purchases for FOGO and Glass associated with the transition under Kerbside Reform rollout totalled \$167K which will be non-recurring going forward. Other one-off costs were incurred that were attributable to external contractors/consultants appointed as part of final landfill capping.
- Garbage and recycling charges increased more than budgeted as projections were underestimated with too little provision made for tonnage levels of

general waste, green waste generated at RRC for disposal into Albury landfill. Additionally, no allowance was made for contractors- waste management which largely centred on additional concrete crushing works because of Corryong streetscape project works.

Other one-off costs included the provision of mobile toilet upgrades identified following an OHS audit - \$13K as well as a \$25k consultancy fee for a report commissioned around options analysis for roadside vegetation.

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.

5. Environmental Sustainability - Integrate sustainable environmental management practices into all of our activities.

- 5.5 Improve the use of recycled materials in infrastructure projects eg crushed concrete, glass and rubber
- 5.6 Investigate and implement options for the management of roadside vegetation for fire mitigation
- 5.8 Continue to implement noxious weed control and monitoring along roadsides within available funding
- 5.9 Continue to implement the tree planting strategy to achieve 40% canopy coverage in urban streets by 2025
- 5.10 Explore the diversification of options for the establishment of native vegetation offset sites
- 5.11 Seek funding to establish a network of electric car charging stations
- 5.12 Develop a climate change action plan (including actions to reduce carbon emissions, electric vehicle charging, etc)
- 5.13 Transition waste and recycling services operations as per Victorian Government Circular Economy Strategy to deliver a four bin system for waste and recycling collection including separation of glass, green waste and organics
- 5.14 Invest in community education programs and a waste services survey to improve waste and recycling separation
- 5.15 Investigate options for hard waste, green waste and agricultural waste management e.g silage wrap
- 5.16 Replace the retaining wall at the Tallangatta Transfer Station
- 5.17 Investigate options for the future of the Corryong Landfill

- 5.18 Implement required measures to ensure management of closed landfills is compliant with EPA requirements

Council Policies:

Climate Adaptation Policy.

Kerbside Refuse and Recycling Collection Policy

Tree 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:

Not Applicable.

Officer's View:

Environmental Sustainability strategic priorities under the *Council Plan 2021-2025* have been mostly achieved with ongoing progress being made to meet all nominated objectives.

It is the officer's recommendation that the report be noted.

Council Resolution:

**CR WORTMANN
CR TOLSHER**

THAT THE REPORT BE DEFERRED TO THE NOVEMBER MEETING.

CARRIED

14 Economic and Tourism Development

14.1 Bellbridge Container Cafe Lease

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Ms Kerissa Heritage, Coordinator Economic Development and Tourism.

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 formalise the lease agreement for the operation of the Bellbridge Container Café.

Summary:

Following an Expression of Interest process, D.C. Innovations Pty Ltd was selected as the preferred operator for the Bellbridge Container Café. Lease terms and conditions were subsequently negotiated, and a Statement of Disclosure was prepared and signed by both parties at the end of September. The formal lease, drafted by Country Life Law, has now been signed by the lessee.

Council's execution of the lease requires formal endorsement in accordance with Local Law 1 - Common Seal and Miscellaneous Penalties. This final step will complete the agreement and enable D.C. Innovations Pty Ltd to commence operations under the agreed terms.

Recommendation:

That the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to sign and seal the lease agreement for the operation of the Bellbridge Container Cafe with D.C. Innovations Pty Ltd, in accordance with Local Law 1 - Common Seal and Miscellaneous Penalties.

Attachment:

Nil

Background/History:

In early 2025, Council allocated funding for the development of a container café on the foreshore of Lake Hume in Bellbridge. A planning permit was obtained, and the container was designed and fabricated. Following consultation with key stakeholders, a site was selected, and the container was delivered in August. Final works, including signage, decking, and landscaping, are currently underway. Once AusNet completes the power connection, the café will be ready to commence operations.

While the container was being fabricated, an Expression of Interest process was undertaken to identify a suitable operator. D.C. Innovations Pty Ltd was selected as the preferred lessee, having successfully established and operated a similar container café in Wodonga for five years. Lease terms and conditions were negotiated, and a Statement of Disclosure was signed by both parties at the end of September. The formal lease, prepared by Country Life Law, has now been signed by the lessee.

To execute the lease, it now requires formal endorsement under Council's common seal. This final step will complete the agreement and enable D.C. Innovations Pty Ltd to begin operations under the agreed terms. The café is expected to deliver meaningful economic and social benefits to Bellbridge, including increased visitation, activation of the foreshore precinct, and support for local employment. It will provide a welcoming space for residents and visitors alike, enhancing community connection and contributing to the vibrancy of the township.

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 café is eagerly anticipated by the Bellbridge community and is set to deliver meaningful social and lifestyle benefits. It will create a welcoming space for locals to connect, relax, and engage - strengthening community ties and enhancing everyday life. As a convenient stop for residents and a vibrant addition to the foreshore precinct, the café will also elevate the visitor experience. Its presence will add value to the Hume Boat Club, and enhance the experience of visitors to the wider region.

Importantly, the café will also generate local employment opportunities, supporting jobs in hospitality and retail while fostering skills development within the community.

By activating the lakeside area and supporting local tourism, the café is poised to contribute to both the social fabric and economic vitality of Bellbridge.

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

The container café will directly generate local employment opportunities, supporting jobs in hospitality and contributing to regional workforce development. Its presence on the Bellbridge foreshore will enhance the visitor experience and serve as a key attraction for tourists.

By encouraging reason for visitation throughout the year, the café will help flatten the seasonality curve. This steady influx of visitors will create fertile ground for new tourism ventures to emerge, igniting the visitor economy.

In addition to its economic impact, the café promotes sustainable tourism by activating existing public space with minimal environmental footprint. Its modular design and strategic location support low-impact development while enriching the social and cultural fabric of Bellbridge.

Should demand for the container café decline in the future, its modular design allows it to be easily dismantled and relocated to another part of the Shire. This flexibility ensures the asset can continue to support tourism activation wherever it is most needed, adapting to changing visitor patterns and community priorities.

Importantly, relocating the container would cause minimal environmental impact. Its transportable structure avoids the need for extensive construction or land disturbance, making it a low-footprint solution for place-making. This sustainable approach aligns with Council's commitment to responsible development and long-term community benefit, ensuring the café remains a valuable and adaptable asset across the region.

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

Community engagement was a key component in the development of the Bellbridge Container Café. As part of the planning permit process, community feedback was received and considered, helping to shape the project's direction. The Hume Boat Club was actively consulted regarding its precise location near the entrance to the Club grounds.

To ensure transparency and inclusivity, the broader community was kept informed through updates on social media.

The Expression of Interest for the café lease was widely promoted via Council's website, social media channels, and local newspapers - encouraging participation and ensuring the opportunity was accessible to all interested parties.

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

Container cafés are an emerging trend in hospitality, offering quick, accessible stops for commuters and unique, inviting spaces for people to gather. Their compact, modular design allows for creative placement and efficient service, making them ideal for activating public spaces.

By leveraging this growing popularity, and the seasonal influx of visitors during the warmer months, the Bellbridge Container Café represents an innovative and accessible approach to kick-starting the Bellbridge visitor economy. It introduces a fresh, contemporary experience to the foreshore precinct, encouraging foot traffic, enhancing amenity, and showcasing Council's commitment to continuous improvement in place-making and tourism development.

The café will significantly enhance the lifestyle of Bellbridge residents by providing a vibrant, accessible space to enjoy daily rituals like grabbing a morning coffee, meeting friends, or relaxing by the lake. It will introduce a new social hub within walking distance for many locals, encouraging spontaneous interactions and fostering a stronger sense of community.

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

Not Applicable.

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

The lease for the Bellbridge Container Café has an initial term of six months, with the option to renew for an additional two-year period. To ensure the lease reflects fair market value and supports long-term viability, Council engaged tourism economics specialists, Urban Enterprise, to assist in determining an appropriate rental fee.

The café will establish a new income stream for Council, with revenue projections indicating it will more than cover associated operational costs- including repairs, maintenance, and future renewal of the container infrastructure. While the café is not intended to be a significant profit-generating asset, its primary purpose is to stimulate economic activity and enhance social wellbeing within the Bellbridge community. This approach balances financial sustainability with broader community benefit.

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.

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

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

6. Organisational Improvement - Maintain a high performing customer-centred organisation that works with the community to develop and deliver priorities.

6.10 Investigate alternative revenue streams

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:

Proceeding with the execution of the café lease carries several risks. One key risk is the potential for limited commercial viability. While D.C. Innovations Pty Ltd has demonstrated prior success operating a similar café, market conditions in Bellbridge may differ significantly. Factors such as seasonal fluctuations in visitor numbers and local spending habits, could impact the café's profitability and long-term sustainability. If the operator struggles to maintain viable operations, Council may face reputational risks and the need to reinitiate the leasing process.

If the café fails to attract consistent patronage, Council may need to reassess its investment and consider alternative uses/sites for the container, which would incur further costs.

Officer's View:

Execution of the lease for the Bellbridge Container Café represents a strategic and timely opportunity to activate the foreshore precinct and deliver tangible benefits to the community. The project has progressed through a transparent and consultative process, including stakeholder engagement, planning approvals, and a competitive Expression of Interest. D.C. Innovations Pty Ltd has demonstrated capability and

experience in operating similar ventures, positioning them as a reliable partner to deliver a high-quality café experience.

Signing and sealing the lease will formalise the agreement and enable operations to commence, unlocking the café's potential to enhance local amenity, foster community connection, and stimulate economic activity. The café will provide a new income stream for Council, with forecasted revenue covering associated costs, and its flexible design ensures long-term adaptability. Importantly, the café aligns with Council's broader goals of tourism activation, and continuous improvement in service delivery.

Given the strong community interest, sound financial modelling, and alignment with strategic objectives, the officer recommends that Council proceed with applying the seal in accordance with Local Law 1. This action will complete the final step in a well-considered initiative and allow the café to begin delivering value to Bellbridge residents and visitors alike.

Council Resolution:

**CR ANDERSON
CR PITMAN**

THAT THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BE AUTHORISED TO SIGN AND SEAL THE LEASE AGREEMENT FOR THE OPERATION OF THE BELLBRIDGE CONTAINER CAFE WITH D.C. INNOVATIONS PTY LTD, IN ACCORDANCE WITH LOCAL LAW 1 - COMMON SEAL AND MISCELLANEOUS PENALTIES.

CARRIED

15 Councillor Reports

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

17.1 Indi Local Government Area Roundtable

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Mrs Rhonda Ramsdale, Executive Assistant to the CEO.

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 in relation to agenda items discussed at this meeting..

Summary:

The minutes for the Indi LGA Roundtable hosted by Dr Helen Haines MP and held 19 September 2025 were circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Key topics of discussion included:

1. Roads and Infrastructure
2. Housing Affordability and Supply
3. Climate Resilience and Disaster Preparedness

4. Local Government Sustainability
5. Regional Collaboration
6. Towong Shire Council Participation

Recommendation:

That the unconfirmed minutes from the LGA Roundtable meeting held on 19 September 2025 be noted.

Council Resolution:

CR TOLSHER

CR PITMAN

**THAT THE UNCONFIRMED MINUTES FROM THE LGA ROUNDTABLE MEETING
HELD ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2025 BE NOTED.**

CARRIED

Confirmed

17.2 Hume Region Local Government Network (HRLGN)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Mrs Rhonda Ramsdale, Executive Assistant to the CEO.

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 in relation to the Hume Region Local Government Network (HRLGN).

Summary:

The Hume Region Local Government Network (HRLGN) is comprised of the twelve Councils from across the Hume region, with each council represented by both the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer. HRLGN meets four times a year.

On Thursday 2 October 2025, Mayor Cr Whitehead and Chief Executive Officer Ms Phelps, accompanied by the Executive Assistant, attended a meeting of the Hume Region Local Government Network in Benalla.

At this meeting, Towong Shire Council formally accepted the Secretariat role for the next 12 months. As part of the HRLGN Secretariat role, the Mayor will serve as Chair of the Network. The role will involve strategic support, facilitating collaboration among member councils, and helping to drive forward regional advocacy priorities and providing administrative support.

Strathbogie Shire Council as the outgoing Secretariat presented the Network's draft "Advocacy Ask" document outlining key advocacy objectives for the next 12 months. These advocacy "asks" are directed at both the Federal and State Government and focus on:

- Growth enabling infrastructure
- Health facilities and programs
- Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund Levy
- Road safety
- Planning reform
- Aged and childcare
- Large scale renewable energy projects
- Public transport

Further updates will be provided as the final strategy is endorsed, and implementation progresses.

Recommendation:

That the report and the unconfirmed minutes from the Hume Region Local Government Network meeting held on 2 October 2025 be noted.

Council Resolution:

**CR ANDERSON
CR WORTMANN**

**THAT THE REPORT AND THE UNCONFIRMED MINUTES FROM THE HUME
REGION LOCAL GOVERNMENT NETWORK MEETING HELD ON 2 OCTOBER
2025 BE NOTED.**

CARRIED

17.3 Audit and Risk Committee Minutes - August 2025 (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:

As per section 8 of the Council Audit and Risk Committee Charter, the minutes of an Audit and Risk Committee meeting must be forwarded to the next ordinary meeting of Council, including a report explaining specific recommendations and key outcomes.

An Audit and Risk Committee meeting was held on 14 August 2025. The unconfirmed minutes were circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

Resolutions made by the Committee, other than those 'for noting' were as follows:

Charter Review

THAT:

1) THE CHARTER BE AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

- a) AT ITEM 4. MEETINGS, THE SECOND SENTENCE OF THE THIRD PARAGRAPH BE REWORDED TO REQUIRE A MAJORITY OF EXTERNAL INDEPENDENT MEMBERS AND AT LEAST ONE INTERNAL MEMBER TO BE PRESENT;
- b) AT ITEM 8. REPORTING, A REQUIREMENT FOR A REPORT FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OR DELEGATE TO BE PRESENTED TO COUNCIL ON AN ANNUAL BASIS; AND
- o THE UPDATED CHARTER BE PRESENTED TO COUNCIL FOR ADOPTION.

Workplan review

THAT:

1. THE ANNUAL WORKPLAN BE UPDATED WITH APPROPRIATE THRESHOLD AMOUNTS IDENTIFIED FOR REPORTING CEO AND COUNCILLOR EXPENDITURE;
2. THESE REPORTS ARE PROVIDED TO THE COMMITTEE BY EXCEPTION IF EXPENDITURE EXCEEDS THESE AMOUNTS; AND
3. THE UPDATED ANNUAL WORK PLAN BE ENDORSED BY THE COMMITTEE.

Chairperson Appointment

THAT:

1. THE COMMITTEE NOMINATES CAROLYN ROSETTA-WALSH TO BE APPOINTED AS THE CHAIRPERSON FOR A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR COMMENCING FROM NOVEMBER 2025; AND
2. COUNCIL APPROVAL OF THE NOMINATION BE SOUGHT AT THE NEXT ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING.

Recommendation:

That the unconfirmed Audit and Risk Committee Minutes and Resolutions from the 14 August 2025 meeting be noted.

Council Resolution:

**CR PITMAN
CR ANDERSON**

THAT THE UNCONFIRMED AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MINUTES AND RESOLUTIONS FROM THE 14 AUGUST 2025 MEETING BE NOTED.

CARRIED

18 Council Policies

Nil.

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 11:54am.

Mayor

Confirmed