Minutes
Ordinary Meeting of Council

Held at 10:30 am, Wednesday 23 September 2026
Council Chamber, Tallangatta Council Office
32 Towong Street, Tallangatta, Victoria

Unconfirmed

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

This information is available in alternative formats on request.

Minutes for the Ordinary Meeting of Council held at
32 Towong Street, Tallangatta, Victoria
at 10:30 am on Wednesday 23 September 2026

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

Unconfirmed

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Unconfirmed

The Mayor declared the meeting open, the time being 10:32am.

1 Opening Prayer

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

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

Amen."

2 Acknowledgement of Country

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.

3 Councillor and Officer Presence at the Meeting

Councillor Attendance
Crs Whitehead, Wortmann, Anderson, Pitman and Tolsher

Officer Attendance:	**Title:**
Ms Taylor	Acting Chief Executive Officer
Mr Heritage	Director Infrastructure and Environment
Mr Florence	Director Community and Planning
Mr Howard	Acting Director Corporate and Organisational Development

4 Apologies and Granting of Leave of Absence

Ms Juliana Phelps – 21 September 2026 to 12 October 2026 – Approved at 26 August 2026 Council meeting.

5 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.

Unconfirmed

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.

Nil.

Unconfirmed

6 Confirmation of Minutes

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

Minutes - Ordinary Council Meeting - Unconfirmed - 26AUG2026

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 26 August 2026 be confirmed.

Council Resolution:

CR WHITEHEAD
CR PITMAN

THAT THE MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 26 AUGUST 2026 BE CONFIRMED.

CARRIED

Unconfirmed

Unconfirmed

7 Petitions and Joint Letters

Nil

8 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.

8.1 Submitter - Peter Dikschei

Subject: Property Damage Claim Excess Increase

Questions:

1. My questions relate to the recently advised Property Damage Claim Excess Increase, under the JLT Municipal Asset Protection Plan, to local hall Committees of Management. How much saving in premium has TSC achieved from last financial to this financial year, by increasing the excess from $1,000 to $60,000?

2. What consultation was conducted with any affected Committees to determine the effect of the increased premium; taking into consideration the important role that community halls have in emergency relief and recovery, general wellbeing, and liveability of the remote communities across Towong Shire?

Council Response:

Ms Taylor responded to the questions as follows:

1. Council achieved a $45,000 per year saving as a result of increasing the excess from $1,000 to $60,000.

2. In short, there was no consultation. Whilst acknowledging the importance of these assets to our communities, the context of our decision is that we face significant challenges with the increasing costs of insurance. To illustrate this, our asset insurance premium rose from $105,608 in 2022-23 to $239,588 in 2026/27 - an increase of $133,980, or 127%. Across all insurance categories, Council's costs increased from $466,319 to $822,148 over the period of 5 years, a 76% increase. Council income through rates and charges increased by 12.21%. Unfortunately Council are simply not in a position to afford a $1,000 excess.

From the time we received the notice of the cost of our premium for the 2026/27 financial year to the time we had to accept the proposal was approximately 2 weeks, leaving insufficient time to consult.

An information sheet will be distributed to all Committees of Management providing FAQs and further information to outline the reasoning behind this decision. Any Committees that find they need to make a claim for property damage or loss during the year are encouraged to contact Council and speak to officers to discuss options available.

Unconfirmed

9 Informal Meetings of Councillors

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

The Meeting Records from the informal meeting of Councillors held recently are attached as follows:

1. Workshop Meeting Record - 09 Sep 2026 [**9.1.1** - 4 pages]
2. Workshop Meeting Record - 26 Aug 2026 [**9.1.2** - 3 pages]

Recommendation:

That the information be noted.

Council Resolution:

CR PITMAN
CR WHITEHEAD

THAT THE INFORMATION BE NOTED.

CARRIED

Unconfirmed

10 Organisational Improvement

10.1 Action Sheet Report (CEO)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Ms Aleth Barnes, Senior Governance Officer.

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

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the status of the resolutions from the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 26 August 2026.

Summary:

The attached report summarises the progress made in relation to the resolutions from the Ordinary Council meeting held on 26 August 2026.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

Attachment:

1. Action Sheet - Ordinary Council Meeting - 26AUG2026 [**10.1.1** - 2 pages]

Background/History:

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

Unconfirmed

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

Council Plans and Policies:

Not applicable.

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

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

Risk Assessment:

Not applicable.

Officer's View:

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

Council Resolution:

CR ANDERSON
CR WHITEHEAD

THAT THE REPORT BE NOTED.

CARRIED

Unconfirmed

10.2 Quarterly Budget Report (Dir. Corporate and Organisational Development)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Mr Dylan Howard, Manager Finance.

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 Quarterly Budget Report in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Summary:

The financial position for the year to date to 30 June 2026 is a surplus of $6.3M against a full year adopted budget surplus of $4.005M. The underlying result is a modest surplus of $20,000. There are no material changes expected as a result of the annual VAGO audit.

In June an advance payment of 80% of the 2026/2027 Financial Assistance Grants was received. The receipt of $5.5M of grants in the last month of the financial year has resulted in a surplus greater than anticipated at the time of the last quarterly report.

The attached report includes a detailed analysis of grant income, together with expenditure including employee costs, cash and debtors.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

Attachment:

1. Quarterly Budget Report - June 2026 [**10.2.1** - 8 pages]

Background/History:

This report provides a quarterly update on the financial performance of the organisation and is a requirement of the *Local Government Act 2020.*

Unconfirmed

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

Section 97 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires the following:

1) As soon as practicable after the end of each quarter of the financial year, the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a quarterly budget report is presented to the Council at a Council meeting which is open to the public.
2) A quarterly budget report must include –
   a. a comparison of the actual and budgeted results to date; and
   b. an explanation of any material variations; and
   c. any other matters prescribed by the regulations.
3) In addition, the second quarterly report of a financial year must include a statement by the Chief Executive Officer as to whether a revised budget is, or may be, required.

This report meets the requirements of the *Act*.

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

Not Applicable.

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

Financial sustainability is an ongoing challenge for Council, primarily due to the large municipal area serviced and the very small rate base to draw on to fund asset maintenance and service delivery. Accordingly, there is a heavy reliance on grant funding to meet the needs of the dispersed communities Council serves.

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.

Unconfirmed

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

The advanced payment of $5.5M of Financial Assistance Grants has contributed significantly to recording a $6.3M surplus for the year (underlying surplus of $20,000). The majority of this will be invested in term deposits, generating interest income. The forecast for the 2026/27 year will be reduced to reflect the advance payment of the grant. Council is in a stronger financial position as a result of receiving the funds in advance.

Capital grants of $6.2M were received, bringing the acquittal of LRCI and R2R funding programs up to date with expenditure incurred.

At the end of the financial year, the cash balance was $29 million.

There are still deficits forecast for future years, which highlights the need for our operating results to be balanced into the future.

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

Not Applicable.

Council Plans and Policies:

Council Plans:
6. Organisational Improvement - Maintain a high performing customer-centred organisation that works with the community to develop and deliver priorities.
6.1 Implement appropriate systems and processes for the regular review and reporting of budgets, long term financial plan and financial sustainability.

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.

Unconfirmed

Risk Assessment:

Whilst the quarterly budget report presents a positive operating result and the cash position remains strong, a large portion of this is committed to projects (operating and capital) for which funding was obtained. The underlying result is a modest surplus of $20,000.

Officer's View:

The organisation remains in a strong financial position with net current assets of $32M and $29M in cash at the end of the quarter.

A significant portion of Council resources are committed to budgeted capital works and services such as flood remediation works, Early Years and community projects.

Council Resolution:

CR ANDERSON
CR PITMAN

THAT THE REPORT BE NOTED.

CARRIED

Unconfirmed

10.3 Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statements (Dir. Corporate and Organisational Development)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Mr Dylan Howard, Manager Finance.

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 draft Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement for the year ended 30 June 2026 for review and in-principle approval.

Summary:

The *Local Government Act 2020* (LGA 2020) requires Council to prepare Financial Statements and a Performance Statement in respect of each financial year. The statements must be approved in principle by Council prior to submission to the auditor. Council officers have prepared the draft Financial Statements and a draft Performance Statement in line with legislative and regulatory requirements and they are now ready to be considered for in-principle approval.

Recommendation:

That:

1. The draft Annual Financial Statements and the draft Performance Statement for the year ended 30 June 2026 be approved in-principle; and
2. Two Councillors be authorised to certify the Financial Statements and the Performance Statement for the year ended 30 June 2026 on behalf of Council once any amendments or changes are made as requested by the Victorian Auditor General.

Attachment:

1. Towong Shire- Performance- Statement-2025-26 V 1 [**10.3.1** - 22 pages]
2. TSC Model Financial Report 2025-26 [**10.3.2** - 57 pages]

Unconfirmed

Background/History:

Legislative Context

Section 98 of the LGA 2020 requires Council to prepare an Annual Report in respect of each financial year, which must contain:

- *report of operations of the Council;*
- *an audited performance statement;*
- *audited financial statements;*
- *a copy of the auditor's report on the performance statement;*
- *a copy of the auditor's report on the financial statements under Part 3 of the Audit Act 1994;*
- *any other matters prescribed by the regulations.*

Items a), b) and c) are to take the form described by Section 98 of the LGA 2020 and any supporting regulations.

Section 99 of the LGA 2020 specifies that Council must prepare the financial statements and performance statement as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year. Council must pass a resolution approving the financial statements and the performance statement in principle prior to submitting them to the auditor. Council must ensure that the statements in their final form and after any changes recommended or agreed by the auditor have been made, are certified by two Councillors, prior to final certification by the auditor. The auditor must then submit reports on the statements to the Minister for Local Government, and the Mayor must present the Annual Report at a Council meeting open to the public.

Financial Statements

The financial statements show Council's financial performance, financial position and cash flows against the previous year.

Council achieved a surplus of $6.38 million for the year ended 30 June 2026 (an underlying surplus of $20,000), compared to a budgeted surplus of $4 million (budgeted underlying deficit of $2.483 M). The higher than anticipated result was primarily due to:

- $5.5 million (or 80%) of 2026/27 Financial Assistance Grants paid early
- $2.4 million of Roads to Recovery Grant income paid early
- $504,000 of DRFA Income accrued relating to the 2026 flood damage.

Unconfirmed

Performance Statement

The Performance Statement provides an overview of Council's progress against key performance indicators. The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) provides the basis of these indicators to enable a uniform Performance Statement across all Victorian councils.

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

The Financial Statements and the Performance Statement have been prepared in accordance with the requirements section 98 of the LGA 2020 and the associated *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.

Both statements are now ready for consideration for approval in principle in accordance with section 99 of the LGA 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)):

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

Unconfirmed

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

The financial result for the year ended 30 June 2026 reflects a net surplus of $6.03 million and an underlying surplus of $20,000.

Long term financial sustainability continues to remain 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:

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:

At the time of submitting this report the Financial Statements and the Performance Statement have been substantially reviewed by the auditor, however officers are still awaiting feedback as well as information to be supplied by Vision Super for inclusion regarding Defined Benefit liabilities. The information in this section is still outstanding and is therefore highlighted to identify this.

It is noted that this report relates to Council's in-principle approval only and that the final statements may still vary as any final auditor recommendations are addressed.

Unconfirmed

Officer's View:

The Financial Statements and Performance Statement for the financial year ending 30 June 2026 have been prepared in accordance with all relevant legislation and regulations and have been subject to substantial auditor review. It is the officer's recommendation that the Financial Statements and Performance Statement as presented be approved in principle.

Council Resolution:

CR WHITEHEAD
CR WORTMANN

THAT:

1. **THE DRAFT ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND THE DRAFT PERFORMANCE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026 BE APPROVED IN-PRINCIPLE; AND**
2. **COUNCILLORS TOLSHER AND ANDERSON BE AUTHORISED TO CERTIFY THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND THE PERFORMANCE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026 ON BEHALF OF COUNCIL ONCE ANY AMENDMENTS OR CHANGES ARE MADE AS REQUESTED BY THE VICTORIAN AUDITOR GENERAL.**

CARRIED

Unconfirmed

10.4 Appointment of Audit and Risk Committee Chairperson (Dir. Corporate and Organisational Development)

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 Mr Marcus Goonan to the role of Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee for a period of one year.

Summary:

The term of the current Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee, Ms Carolyn Rosetta-Walsh, expires on 22 October 2026 and a new Chairperson is required. The external Committee members have recommended a new term of one year, and that Mr Marcus Goonan be appointed as the Chairperson. In line with the *Audit and Risk Committee Charter* this recommendation is presented for Council approval.

Recommendation:

That:

1. The term of the Audit and Risk Committee Chairperson be for a period of one year;
2. Mr Marcus Goonan be appointed to the role of Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee commencing 22 October 2026; and
3. Ms Carolyn Rosetta-Walsh be thanked for her valuable contribution as the Chairperson for the past 12 months.

Attachment:

Nil

Unconfirmed

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 the new Chairperson be appointed for a term of one year, and that Mr Marcus Goonan be appointed as Chairperson. Mr Goonan brings extensive senior management and public sector experience, and has served on Council's Audit and Risk Committee since 6 August 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 Mr Goonan 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.

Unconfirmed

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 Mr Goonan as Chairperson will provide valuable expertise and perspective to the Audit and Risk Committee. His experience and background make him well suited to the role.

Officer's View:

The Audit and Risk Committee has nominated a term of one year and Mr Goonan 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*. Mr Goonan's qualifications, experience and background as a committee member position him well to assume the role of Chairperson.

Unconfirmed

Council Resolution:

CR ANDERSON **CR WHITEHEAD** **THAT:** 1. **THE TERM OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON BE FOR A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR;** 2. **MR MARCUS GOONAN BE APPOINTED TO THE ROLE OF CHAIRPERSON OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE COMMENCING 22 OCTOBER 2026; AND** 3. **MS CAROLYN ROSETTA-WALSH BE THANKED FOR HER VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION AS THE CHAIRPERSON FOR THE PAST 12 MONTHS.** **CARRIED**

Unconfirmed

10.5 Audit and Risk Committee Charter (Dir. Corporate and Organisational Development)

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 October 2025. 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 - Draft revision - SEP2026 [**10.5.1** - 5 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 October 2025 Council Meeting.

At the 10 September 2026 Audit and Risk Committee meeting, the Committee resolved to propose changes to the Charter for Council's consideration. The recommended changes are as follows:

Unconfirmed

Meetings

At Item 4. Meetings, it is recommended a paragraph be added to clarify the Committee's decision-making process, including the use of consensus and voting where consensus cannot be reached.

Reporting to Council

At Item 8. Reporting, it is recommended two paragraphs be added to clarify the committee's reporting arrangements, strengthen direct engagement with council, and incorporate the statutory annual self-assessment requirement.

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.

Unconfirmed

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 are intended to strengthen the governance and operation of the Audit and Risk Committee. Clarifying the Committee's decision-making process will reduce the risk of uncertainty or inconsistency in how Committee resolutions are agreed upon.

Unconfirmed

The proposed reporting amendments support effective oversight of risk, audit and governance matters while maintaining the Committee's advisory role and independence.

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 WORTMANN
CR PITMAN

THAT THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE CHARTER BE ADOPTED.

CARRIED

Unconfirmed

10.6 Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillor Allowances (Dir. Corporate and Organisational Development)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Ms Aleth Barnes, Senior Governance Officer.

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

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of the report is to present the updated base and remote area travel allowances payable to the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and the Councillors from 1 July 2026, in accordance with the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal's 18 August 2026 Determination.

Summary:

Under the *Local Government Act 2020* (LGA 2020), the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors are entitled to receive allowances in accordance with a Determination of the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal. On 18 August 2026, the Tribunal made the *Allowance payable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors (Victoria) Determination No. 01/2026*, which takes effect from 1 July 2026 and sets the base allowances and remote area travel allowance payable to Council members. Towong Shire Council has been assigned to Category A under the Determination.

Recommendation:

That:

1. The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillor allowances be set at the Category A levels specified by the *Allowance payable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors (Victoria) Determination No. 01/2026* from 1 July 2026 as follows:

   a. Mayor: $103,400 per annum
   b. Deputy Mayor: $45,807 per annum
   c. Councillors: $35,000 per annum

2. The Remote Area Travel Allowance be set in accordance with the Determination from 1 July 2026, being $50.60 per day where eligible travel is more than 50 kilometres and not more than 100 kilometres, and $101.20 per

Unconfirmed

day where eligible travel is more than 100 kilometres, up to a maximum of $6,325 per financial year;

3. The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors individually advise the Chief Executive Officer if they elect to receive a partial allowance or no allowance;

4. Backdated allowance payments be made, if required, to reflect that the Determination takes effect from 1 July 2026; and

5. Future allowance payment adjustments be applied in accordance with any subsequent Determination or annual adjustment made by the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal.

Attachment:

Nil

Background/History:

The LGA 2020 provides for the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and the Councillors to be entitled to receive allowances. Under the LGA 2020, the responsibility for setting these allowances has moved from the Minister for Local Government to the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal.

The Tribunal made its first Determination on 7 March 2022. On 18 August 2026, the Tribunal made a new comprehensive Determination, the *Allowance payable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors (Victoria) Determination No. 01/2026*, which takes effect from 1 July 2026. The Determination sets fixed base allowances for each Council member depending on their role and the Council allowance category assigned to the Council. The allowance is inclusive of any superannuation guarantee contribution, or equivalent amount, that may be payable under Commonwealth law. The Determination also sets the remote area travel allowance and provides eligibility criteria for claiming it.

Council is assigned to Category A under the 2026 Determination. Accordingly, the allowance levels from 1 July 2026 are as follows:

	Time	Amount
Mayor	1 July 2026 onwards	$103,400
Deputy Mayor	1 July 2026 onwards	$45,807
Councillors	1 July 2026 onwards	$35,000

Unconfirmed

Councillors are also entitled to the reimbursement of necessary out-of-pocket expenses incurred while performing their duties as a Councillor, in accordance with Council's Councillor Support and Expenses Policy and any applicable legislative requirements.

In addition, the remote area travel allowance is payable for each day that a Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Councillor spends travelling to, or returning from, a location within the municipal district that is more than 50 kilometres from their place of residence, based on the shortest practicable road distance. From 1 July 2026, the allowance is $50.60 per day where the distance is more than 50 kilometres and not more than 100 kilometres, and $101.20 per day where the distance is more than 100 kilometres, up to a maximum of $6,325 per financial year.

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

Section 39 of the *Local Government Act 2020* stipulates that Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors are entitled to receive allowances in accordance with a Determination of the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal under the *Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019*.

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

The Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal's Determination supports fair and consistent remuneration for elected representatives in accordance with the statutory framework.

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

The allowance levels as set by the Determination help to provide for the sector's ability to attract and retain suitable elected representatives.

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

Not applicable.

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

The 2026 Determination updates the allowance framework established by the Tribunal by providing current, externally determined allowance levels and remote area travel allowance settings from 1 July 2026. This supports continuous improvement by maintaining a clear, transparent and consistent approach to elected representative remuneration.

Unconfirmed

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

Not applicable.

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

Councillor allowances have been factored into Council's annual budget.

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 risk associated with Council determining its own allowance levels has already been substantially mitigated through the Tribunal's 2022 Determination, which introduced fixed allowance levels for Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors. The 2026 Determination continues this approach by setting updated fixed allowance levels and remote area travel allowance arrangements from 1 July 2026. Applying the Determination as required mitigates compliance risk and supports transparency and consistency in elected representative remuneration.

Officer's View:

It is the officer's view that the updated Category A allowance levels and remote area travel allowance should be applied from 1 July 2026 in accordance with the Tribunal's 18 August 2026 Determination. Applying the Determination ensures Council meets its statutory obligations and provides clarity for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors.

Unconfirmed

Council Resolution:

CR WHITEHEAD
CR ANDERSON

THAT:

1. **THE MAYOR, DEPUTY MAYOR AND COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES BE SET AT THE CATEGORY A LEVELS SPECIFIED BY THE *ALLOWANCE PAYABLE TO MAYORS, DEPUTY MAYORS AND COUNCILLORS (VICTORIA) DETERMINATION NO. 01/2026* FROM 1 JULY 2026 AS FOLLOWS:**

   a) **MAYOR: $103,400 PER ANNUM**
   b) **DEPUTY MAYOR: $45,807 PER ANNUM**
   c) **COUNCILLORS: $35,000 PER ANNUM**

2. **THE REMOTE AREA TRAVEL ALLOWANCE BE SET IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DETERMINATION FROM 1 JULY 2026, BEING $50.60 PER DAY WHERE ELIGIBLE TRAVEL IS MORE THAN 50 KILOMETRES AND NOT MORE THAN 100 KILOMETRES, AND $101.20 PER DAY WHERE ELIGIBLE TRAVEL IS MORE THAN 100 KILOMETRES, UP TO A MAXIMUM OF $6,325 PER FINANCIAL YEAR;**

3. **THE MAYOR, DEPUTY MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS INDIVIDUALLY ADVISE THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER IF THEY ELECT TO RECEIVE A PARTIAL ALLOWANCE OR NO ALLOWANCE;**

4. **BACKDATED ALLOWANCE PAYMENTS BE MADE, IF REQUIRED, TO REFLECT THAT THE DETERMINATION TAKES EFFECT FROM 1 JULY 2026; AND**

5. **FUTURE ALLOWANCE PAYMENT ADJUSTMENTS BE APPLIED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ANY SUBSEQUENT DETERMINATION OR ANNUAL ADJUSTMENT MADE BY THE VICTORIAN INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION TRIBUNAL.**

CARRIED

Unconfirmed

10.7 S5 Instrument of Delegation - Council to Chief Executive Officer (Dir. Corporate and Organisational Development)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Ms Aleth Barnes, Senior Governance Officer.

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

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to update the Instrument of Delegation from Council to the Chief Executive Officer, to give effect to the financial delegations recently adopted by Council through its Procurement Policy.

Summary:

The *Local Government Act 2020* provides councils with the ability to delegate certain powers, duties and functions to the Chief Executive Officer. These delegations are formally recorded in the "S5 Instrument of Delegation from Council to the Chief Executive Officer".

Earlier this year Council adopted a revised Procurement Policy which approved amendments to financial delegation limits. Adoption of the section 5 Instrument of Delegation from Council to the Chief Executive Officer is now required to give effect to those amendments.

Recommendation:

That in exercise of the powers conferred by section 11(1)(b) of the Local Government Act 2020:

1. There be delegated to the person holding the position, acting in or performing duties of Chief Executive Officer the powers, duties and functions set out in attachment "*S5 Instrument of Delegations from Council to the Chief Executive Officer*" (Instrument S5), subject to the conditions and limitations specified in that instrument;

2. The Instrument S5 comes into force immediately upon the Common Seal of Council being affixed to the instrument;

Unconfirmed

3. On the coming in force of Instrument S5, all previous delegations to the Chief Executive Officer are revoked;

4. The duties and functions set out in Instrument S5 must be performed, and the powers set out in the instrument must be executed, in accordance with any guidelines or policies of Council that it may from time to time adopt.

Attachment:

1. S5 - Instrument of Delegation - Council to CEO - REVIEW - AUG2026 [**10.7.1** - 4 pages]

Background/History:

Pursuant to section 11(1)(b) of the Local Government Act 2020, Council may, by Instrument of Delegation, delegate powers, duties and functions to the Chief Executive Officer, except for those matters specifically reserved to Council under the Act. The section 5 Instrument of Delegation from Council to the Chief Executive Officer is the mechanism by which Council formally confers these delegations and establishes any applicable conditions or limitations, including financial delegation limits.

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

Local Government Act 2020

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

Council could seek to retain various powers, duties and functions proposed for delegation within this report. Delegations have been proposed with a view to managing the administrative burden on Council to enable Council to focus on matters of the highest priority to the community.

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

Not Applicable.

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

Not Applicable.

Unconfirmed

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:

Council Plans:
Not applicable.

Council Policies:
Procurement Policy

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

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

Risk Assessment:

Council utilises the Maddocks Delegations and Authorisations service to ensure that delegations are comprehensive and in compliance with legislative requirements.

Officer's View:

The proposed Instrument of Delegation aligns Council's delegated authority framework with its approved procurement governance arrangements, ensuring that procurement-related decisions can be made efficiently and within the parameters established by Council.

Unconfirmed

Council Resolution:

CR PITMAN **CR WORTMANN** **THAT IN EXERCISE OF THE POWERS CONFERRED BY SECTION 11(1)(B) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2020:** **1. THERE BE DELEGATED TO THE PERSON HOLDING THE POSITION, ACTING IN OR PERFORMING DUTIES OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER THE POWERS, DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS SET OUT IN ATTACHMENT "*S5 INSTRUMENT OF DELEGATIONS FROM COUNCIL TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER*" (INSTRUMENT S5), SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS SPECIFIED IN THAT INSTRUMENT;** **2. THE INSTRUMENT S5 COMES INTO FORCE IMMEDIATELY UPON THE COMMON SEAL OF COUNCIL BEING AFFIXED TO THE INSTRUMENT;** **3. ON THE COMING IN FORCE OF INSTRUMENT S5, ALL PREVIOUS DELEGATIONS TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER ARE REVOKED;** **4. THE DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS SET OUT IN INSTRUMENT S5 MUST BE PERFORMED, AND THE POWERS SET OUT IN THE INSTRUMENT MUST BE EXECUTED, IN ACCORDANCE WITH ANY GUIDELINES OR POLICIES OF COUNCIL THAT IT MAY FROM TIME TO TIME ADOPT.** **CARRIED**

Unconfirmed

11 Community Wellbeing

11.1 Recreation Update (Dir. Community and Planning)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Mr Anthony Nicholson, Senior Community Development Officer - Recreation.

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

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the activities in the Recreation portfolio throughout the period February to August 2026.

Summary:

The Recreation activities during the reporting period included:

- Commencement of construction of the Bethanga Recreation Reserve Pavilion.
- Completion of Sport and Recreation funded projects including the Bullioh-Wyeeboo Recreation Female Friendly Facility, Cudgewa Recreation Reserve Lighting and Tallandoon Tennis Courts Redevelopment.
- An application to Sport and Recreation Victoria's Local Sports Infrastructure Fund (LSIF) to replace the outdated practice cricket pitch and nets at Bethanga Recreation Reserve.
- The successful application to the Victorian Government's 2026-27 Country Football and Netball Program to install new lighting at the Corryong Recreation Reserve oval.
- Process and appointment of Belgravia Leisure to manage the Tallangatta and Corryong pools for at least the next three years.
- In partnership with Sport North East, the delivery of a drop-in club development session in Tallangatta in April.
- Collaboration with external recreation partners to support the development of sport and active recreation in the shire.

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

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

Unconfirmed

Attachment:

1. Report - Recreation Update Report - AUG2026 [**11.1.1** - 3 pages]

Background/History:

This report provides an overview of significant activities, projects, partnerships, and outcomes delivered within the Recreation portfolio during the reporting period. Recreation services support community wellbeing, participation, and quality of life across the shire. The portfolio's work extends across infrastructure planning and delivery, facility management, community capacity building, stakeholder engagement, and the coordination of externally funded initiatives.

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

Not applicable.

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

This report demonstrates best outcomes for the community by:

• Delivering inclusive, high-quality infrastructure
• Supporting health, wellbeing and social connection
• Strengthening local clubs and volunteers
• Planning proactively for long-term sustainability

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

Economic, social and environmental sustainability considerations are embedded within recreation projects outlined in this report. This includes the provision of social spaces, energy-efficient infrastructure and inclusive design, and forms part of ongoing collaboration with sporting clubs, Committees of Management, Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV) and other agencies.

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

Multiple projects involve active collaboration with local Committees of Management and sporting clubs, ensuring community voices are part of the planning and delivery.

Unconfirmed

Unconfirmed

These include:

• Tallandoon Recreation Reserve Committee of Management
• Granya Recreation Reserve Committee
• Bethanga Recreation Reserve Committee of Management
• Bullioh Football/Netball Club representatives
• Cudgewa Football/Netball Club representatives
• Corryong Football/Netball Club, Corryong Recreation Reserve Committee, The Man from Snowy River Festival Committee (MFSRF) and the Corryong Show Society

In addition the Sport North East drop-in club development Session held in Tallangatta in April had 6 local community groups represented.

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

The development of facilities through the recreation projects identified in this report represent continuous improvement of operations, services and efficiencies.

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

Partnerships play a vital role in delivering positive recreation outcomes for the Towong community. As highlighted throughout this report and in the attachment, Council works closely with local sporting clubs, Committees of Management, regional organisations, State Sporting Associations, health services and neighbouring councils to plan, deliver and enhance recreation opportunities.

These partnerships help ensure projects reflect local needs and priorities, strengthen advocacy efforts, improve access to external funding, support the ongoing sustainability of clubs and facilities, and maximise the health, wellbeing and social benefits derived from recreation infrastructure and programs.

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)):

Several state and national sporting code facility and infrastructure guidelines have been used to guide the design and construction of sporting and recreation projects listed in this report.

Council Plans and Policies:

Council Plans:
This report supports the following Council Plan 2025-2029 priorities.
1. Community Wellbeing - Encourage and support all people in our Shire to be healthy, happy, connected and resilient.

1.16 Finalise funding and construction of a new cricket training facility at Bethanga Recreation Reserve.
1.17 Complete the Bethanga Recreation Reserve Pavillion Project.
1.18 Complete the Tallandoon Tennis Courts Redevelopment project.
1.19 Implement the actions from the 2022 - 2033 Towong Shire Recreation Strategy.
1.20 Assess and implement the preferred management model for the Corryong and Tallangatta Pools.
1.22 Complete the Bullioh Recreation Reserve Female Friendly Facility project.
1.23 Complete the Cudgewa Recreation Reserve Lighting project.
1.24 Actively engage with community sporting groups in planning and actioning initiatives to support sustainability and volunteer participation.

Council Policies:
Community Sport Fair Access Policy and Action Plan 2024-2028.

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

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

Risk Assessment:

The upgrades of sporting and recreation facilities listed in this report reduce the risk to users and participants as they provide improved compliant surfaces, lighting and change facilities.

Officer's View:

It is the officer's view that excellent progress has been made in delivering on the Council Plan initiatives over the past six months, with three major projects being completed.

Community groups continue to be consulted and included in the decision making and project delivery of the various projects.

Unconfirmed

The next six months should see the completion of the Bethanga Recreation Reserve Pavilion as well as the commencement of the Corryong Recreation Reserve Lighting project, as well as an announcement regarding the Bethanga Recreation Reserve Cricket nets funding application.

Council Resolution:

CR WORTMANN
CR PITMAN

THAT THE REPORT BE NOTED.

CARRIED

Unconfirmed

11.2 Community Development Report (Dir. Community and Planning)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

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

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

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of Community Development activities across Culture and Inclusion and the Tallangatta Neighbourhood House for the period 1 February 2026 to 31 August 2026.

Summary:

The key activities that were a focus during the reporting period are as follows:

Youth
- Implementation of actions from the Towong Shire Council Youth Strategy 2025-2029 including:
    - Youth Officer successful grant application and appointment
    - Youth events, programs and activities
    - Youth Fest Funding
    - Planning and progress for Youth Voice to Council

Inclusion
- Reconciliation Action Plan implementation of actions
- Inclusion events for Reconciliation, NAIDOC and IDAHOBIT
- Seniors' month funding and activity planning

Wellbeing
- Implementation of actions from the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029 and Towong Alliance
- Community connection
- Upper Murray Neighbourhood House Consultation
- Community Connect Expo
- Women's Health Week
- Wellbeing partnership engagement
- 16 Days of Activism

Unconfirmed

<u>Grants</u>

- Update on previous applications
- Grant acquittals
- Border Trust Grants
- Youth Fest Grant
- Seniors Month Country Concert Series and additional funding
- Respect Victoria Grant
- DFFH Corryong Neighbourhood House funding

<u>Libraries</u>

- Library visitation, membership and borrowing
- Regular library programming, Storytime, Book Chats, author talks
- Cultural and Special Programming
- Poetry Slam
- Australian Library Information Association Community Cohesion funding
- Memoir Writing Workshops
- Corryong Elyne Mitchell Library internal refurbishment completion and opening

<u>Creative Arts</u>

- Murray Arts and Regional Art Victoria partnership engagement
- Collaboration with community art groups
- Libraries as exhibition spaces for local art collaborations.

<u>Tallangatta Neighbourhood House (TNH)</u>

- Creation and implementation of a survey to gather feedback on house programs, activities and services with an excellent response.
- Establishment and implementation of a Foodshare program operating from TNH
- Reestablished connection with existing volunteers and recruited new volunteers to TNH
- A range of programs and services being delivered at TNH

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

Attachment:

1. Culture and Inclusion Report August 2026 [**11.2.1** - 9 pages]
2. TNH Council Report 1 May to 31 August 2026 [**11.2.2** - 5 pages]

Unconfirmed

Background/History:

This report is provided every six months to inform Council and the community of community development progress and activity across Culture and Inclusion and the Tallangatta Neighbourhood House.

Full details of all activities and highlights across Culture and Inclusion, libraries and the Tallangatta Neighbourhood House are provided in the attachments to this report.

This report has been prepared with contribution from the following positions within the Community Wellbeing team:

- Manager Community Wellbeing
- Senior Community Development Officer – Culture and Inclusion. This position includes arts, culture, youth, libraries, social inclusion and wellbeing.
- Senior Community Development Officer – Tallangatta Neighbourhood House

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

Not applicable

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

The Culture and Inclusion and Tallangatta Neighbourhood House activities support community wellbeing by promoting inclusion, connectedness and engagement, as well as offering community members opportunities to develop skills, and to exhibit talents and expertise.

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

Economic, Social and Environmental

The Municipal Health and Wellbeing plan promotes economic, social and environmental sustainability factors for the municipal district as outlined in the overarching Victorian Health and Wellbeing framework.

Collaboration with Corryong Health, Tallangatta Health Service, Walwa Bush Nursing Centre, Ovens Murray Public Health Unit, Gateway Health, Indio Shire Council and Alpine Shire Council contributes to economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Collaboration with community groups in arts provides sustainability towards social and creative community resilience. Collaboration with community groups working in food systems contributes towards social and environmental sustainability.

Unconfirmed

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

Community engagement was specifically conducted during the Upper Murray Neighbourhood House Consultation and during planning and activation of Youth events and activities.

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

The successful completion of the Corryong Elyne Mitchell Library project represents continuous improvement and innovation in our delivery of Community library services.

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

Implementation of actions in the Youth Strategy, Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan, LGBTQIA+ report, Reconciliation Action Plan, and networking with stakeholder agencies has featured strong opportunities to engage and support the Towong community to enhance social community capital.

Collaboration with important partners within the community and outreach services in the youth space, health services, schools, First Nations groups, LGBTQIA+ community, Neighbourhood House and Centres has been instrumental and will continue to be vital to improving health and wellbeing outcomes for the whole community of Towong Shire.

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)):

Activities have been conducted in accordance with relevant state and national plans including:

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- The Victorian State Government's Creative State 2016-2020
- Victoria's Gender Equality Act 2020
- Victorian Health and Wellbeing Act 2008

Unconfirmed

Council Plans and Policies:

Council Plans:
This report supports the following Council Plan 2025-2029 priorities.
1. Community Wellbeing - Encourage and support all people in our Shire to be healthy, happy, connected and resilient.

1.1 Implement the actions from the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025 - 2029.
1.2 Promote opportunities for communities to access libraries as a community connection hub and educational resource.
1.3 Facilitate the Murray Arts partnership to support arts and culture groups, individuals and activities throughout the Shire.
1.4 Implement the actions from the Youth Strategy 2025-2029.
1.7 Implement actions from the Reconciliation Action Plan.
1.8 Implement the recommendations from the LGBTIQA+ Inclusion and Wellbeing Consultation Report.
1.9 Encourage and facilitate the use of the former Corryong Junior Campus site by agencies that provide services and support for children and families.
1.10 Advocate for the establishment of innovative and sustainable transport solutions for remote communities.
1.11 Actively support programs, initiatives, policies and guidelines that promote a gender equal society.
1.12 Participate in key networks to enhance social, economic and environmental wellbeing across the community.
1.13 Actively participate and support networks, events, programs and secure funding for the wellbeing of seniors in the community.

Council Policies:
Climate Adaption Policy.
Community Engagement Policy.

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

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

Risk Assessment:

Not Applicable

Unconfirmed

Officer's View:

Building and strengthening relationships across the community remained a key focus throughout this reporting period. Ongoing engagement with schools, health services, community organisations, volunteers and stakeholders has strengthened local networks and supported collaborative delivery of initiatives aligned with Council priorities. The appointment of the Youth Officer for the Upper Murray has further enhanced engagement with young people, schools and youth service providers.

A significant achievement was the completion and opening of the Corryong Elyne Mitchell Library renovation. The project demonstrated the organisation's ability to deliver infrastructure while maintaining strong community engagement and adapting to the challenges presented by the 2026 bushfire impacts on Corryong.

The establishment of a Foodshare program at Tallangatta Neighbourhood House has also been a highlight over the period of this report.

Council Resolution:

CR WHITEHEAD
CR ANDERSON

THAT THE REPORT BE NOTED.

CARRIED

Unconfirmed

12 Asset Management

12.1 Operations Report (Dir. Infrastructure and Environment)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Mr Ben Toon, Manager Operations.

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 of the operational activities for the period May – September 2026.

Summary:

This report provides information on the operational activities performed by the Tallangatta and Corryong outdoor works crews during the reporting period, the positive outcomes achieved and efficiencies that have been incorporated into the works programs.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

Attachment:

Nil

Background/History:

This report is produced quarterly by the Infrastructure and Environment Department Operations Team, to provide an overview of operational activities and key deliverables of the Council Plan 2025-2029.

Unconfirmed

<u>Service Requests</u>

The Operations Team continues to review, inspect, manage, perform, and finalise the service requests that are received via Datascape. The focus has been on improving communication with an emphasis on how and when a response is provided back to the resident/ratepayer and in what form.

There has been a marked improvement from the previous reporting with a reduction in the overall outstanding service requests. This is due in part to implementing better systems in service request management and emphasising the importance of closing out service requests and creating efficiencies in response times.

Reducing outstanding service requests is an Organisational Key Result (OKR) and is part of goal setting and work plans for the depot teams for the period to October 2026.

The status of current Service requests is listed below for Corryong and Tallangatta depots:

Tallangatta
- Awaiting future works (12)
- Inspected, under investigation (4)
- Awaiting action (7)
- Inspected, awaiting works (12)
- Awaiting inspection (24)

Corryong
- Awaiting action (4)
- Awaiting inspection (7)
- In progress (4)
- With customer (1)

There has been continued and ongoing maintenance required on Council assets due to disaster events which are listed below:
- AGRN 1242 – Walwa Bushfires
- AGRN 1281 – Towong Flood Event
- AGRN 1294 – Victorian Storms and Floods

Consultation with stakeholders, community members, the asset management team and the depot staff will continue to capture and record all service requests, and allocate labour and mobile plant times to the nominated Work In Progress (WIP) accounts.

Unconfirmed

Capital Works

Hanson Street Corryong Stage 1

Hanson Street Corryong Stage 1 between McKay and Kiell Street is being finalised with the Department of Transport and Planning, to obtain a Memorandum of Authorisation permit and Working Within Road Reserve permit to site mobilise and commence civil construction work.

The Infrastructure and Environment department is collaborating with the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) team to improve existing OHS systems and structure, and utilise the recently implemented enterprise OHS management software: Skytrust.

Contract management and sub-contractor engagement is being undertaken to provide specialty trades project information through a competitive tender and Request for Quote (RFQ) process that is in line with Council's procurement policy.

Depot staff are being educated on the project's civil construction design to ensure the programmed construction work is efficient and delivered in a time frame that reflects community expectations.

A list of project management documentation is being prepared as listed below to ensure conforming site management processes:

- Construction methodologies,
- Work duration program in Gantt chart form
- Inspection Test Plans (ITP) with appropriate hold points, witness, and inspection points of each stage of work.
- Stakeholder engagement: Northeast Water, AusNet, Telstra, Department of Transport and Planning.
- Handover/Takeover (HOTO) documentation
- Construction budget that forecasts TSC labour and mobile plant usage, sub-contractor costs, procurement and references the initial budget estimate.

Tallangatta Office Landscaping and Flagpole Project

Hard landscaping is complete as of 28 August 2026, with the concrete planter walls, concrete pavement and ramp access into the building now providing egress and usable space for staff and the community to congregate. The soft landscaping and planting of the first stage will be undertaken through September.

Unconfirmed

Unconfirmed

Evans Street Corryong

Earthworks and drainage installation have commenced in August, with a program indicating the project duration being communicated to residents. The entirety of the civil construction scope of works will be performed by the Corryong depot road crew and managed by the team leader. This project is a good lead into the Hanson Street upgrade providing the depot crew with the opportunity to demonstrate their skillset to the community.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not Applicable.

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

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 Infrastructure and Environment team has filled the vacant Customer Liaison Position which has contributed to efficiencies in responding to service requests.

Timely communication with the community helps build trust and strengthen relationships between Council and the people it serves. Providing accurate and accessible information about Council projects and processes helps manage community expectations and reduces concerns arising from uncertainty or misunderstanding.

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

Pothole repairs are a key component of the Road Management Plan to ensure standards and community expectations are met when responding to related service requests. New systems, materials, and methods of installation have been identified to improve the process of repairing potholes within the municipality, including the use of $1m^2$ recycled glass 10mm crack seal mats. Prior to the commencement of the grading season a pothole blitz will be undertaken to rectify any road surface defects.

A key initiative is to implement an updated version of the grading and maintenance program that links with current versions of the road register and road management plan. Adopting this update will improve overall efficiency of maintenance works, keep a detailed record of works performed in what area and when (this will be critical moving forward for disaster recovery funding) and provide crew leaders with the tools to accurately coordinate the scheduled works.

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 2025-2029 priorities*.
2. Asset Management - Maintain and improve our Shire's infrastructure to meet the levels of service established in consultation with our communities.

2.3 Complete upgrades of Hanson Street, Corryong from Sugarloaf Road to Kiel Street in staged increments.

2.24 Deliver annual asset inspection and renewal programs per asset management and Road Management Plan requirements.

Council Policies:
Road Management Plan 2025

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.

Unconfirmed

Risk Assessment:

The focus of Risk Management and OHS activities during the period has been as follows:

- Ongoing compliance with SWMS (Safe Work Method Statements) when performing high risk construction works.
- Continuation of existing processes for maintenance of plant and equipment at both Corryong and Tallangatta depots. Explore options for improvements and integrate new systems into the depot workplace.
- Ensuring depot staff complete on the job training for usage of mobile plant and complete Safe Operating Procedures and Work Instructions.
- Review the existing OHS systems prior to commencing Hanson Street Stage 1 upgrade.

Officer's View:

Good progress has been made over the period, despite flood and storm events requiring the redirection of depot crews and resources at short notice.

Of note during the period was the collaboration between indoor and outdoor staff with the delivery and implementation of Skytrust training at the Corryong depot, coordinated through the Training and Development team. This collaboration supports greater operational efficiency by strengthening communication, sharing knowledge and improving coordination across teams.

Council Resolution:

CR PITMAN
CR WORTMANN

THAT THE REPORT BE NOTED.

CARRIED

Unconfirmed

12.2 Pre-qualified Supplier Panel Procurement Activity (Dir. Infrastructure and Environment)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

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

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

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Council on the use of prequalified suppliers for the period June to September 2026.

Summary:

During the last three-month reporting period, six (6) separate procurement activities were undertaken through the Prequalified Supplier Panel, with a total value of $318,983 excluding GST. Details of these procurements are provided in the table below.

Dir.	Supplier	Description of good/services/works	Amount (Ex GST)	Approval pathway
DIE	Tallangatta Construction and Maintenance (TCM)	Emergency Works – Springdale Road Culvert Replacement.	$37,760	DIE - CEO
DIE	TCM	Tallangatta Transfer Station Earthworks & Concreting	$13,635	DIE - CEO
DIE	TCM	Emergency Works – Springdale Road Culvert Replacement.	$93,020	DIE - CEO
DIE	TCM	Tallangatta Transfer Station Waste Drop-Off Platform Demolition and Rectification Works.	$134,060	DIE - CEO
DIE	TCM	Granya Carpark Construction Works	$17,239	DIE - CEO
DIE	TCM	Emergency Works – 6 Fire Damaged Culvert Replacements.	$23,269	DIE - CEO

Unconfirmed

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

Attachment:

Nil

Background/History:

Council's Procurement Policy establishes the principles and requirements for procurement activities to ensure Council's purchasing practices are fair, transparent, accountable and demonstrate best value for ratepayers.

The Policy provides for the establishment and use of a Prequalified Supplier Panel. Suppliers may only be included on the panel with Council approval following an assessment against selection criteria, including capability, previous performance, risk, safety, insurance, local benefit, sustainability and social responsibility. The assessment is undertaken by the Chief Executive Officer and a Director, with a report presented to Council for approval of suppliers to be included on the panel.

The Policy requires procurement activities undertaken with approved suppliers from the Prequalified Supplier Panel to be reported to Council each quarter. This provides Council with visibility of the use of the panel and supports ongoing governance, transparency and accountability in procurement decision-making.

Procurement from a prequalified supplier is permitted where the requirements of the Policy are met, including the preparation of a scope of works, obtaining a written quotation and obtaining the appropriate approval.

For procurements up to $150,000, approval may be provided by the relevant Director and Chief Executive Officer. Where the procurement value exceeds $150,000, Council approval is required before the procurement can proceed.

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

Local Government Act 2020

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

The use of the Prequalified Supplier Panel supports positive outcomes for the community by enabling Council to engage suppliers who have been assessed for capability, performance, risk, safety, insurance, local benefit, sustainability and social responsibility.

Unconfirmed

The panel also supports the timely delivery of essential and emergency works while maintaining appropriate approval, transparency, accountability and value-for-money controls.

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

The Prequalified Supplier Panel supports consideration of environmental sustainability and social responsibility before a supplier is approved for inclusion.

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)):

Expenditure is to be met from the relevant approved project or operational budgets.

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 2025-2029* priorities.

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

6.12 Improve service delivery and reduce costs through process improvement and shared services.

Council Policies:
Procurement Policy

Unconfirmed

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 risks associated with the use of the Prequalified Supplier Panel are mitigated through assessment of supplier capability, performance history, safety systems, risk management, insurance and business continuity arrangements before panel appointment, together with a defined scope of works, written quotation, appropriate approval, contract and operational controls, and quarterly reporting to Council. Continued monitoring of supplier performance and the currency of supporting documentation is required.

Officer's View:

It is the officer's view that the procurement activities reported were undertaken through the Prequalified Supplier Panel in accordance with the approval pathways established by Council's Procurement Policy.

The quarterly reporting requirement provides Council with appropriate oversight of panel use and supports transparency, accountability and value for money. Continued monitoring of supplier performance and compliance documentation will help ensure the panel remains effective and fit for purpose.

Council Resolution:

CR WHITEHEAD
CR PITMAN

THAT THE REPORT BE NOTED.

CARRIED

Unconfirmed

12.3 Road Resealing Contract 2026/27 (Dir. Infrastructure and Environment)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Mr John Sacco, Civil Asset Engineer.

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 seek approval to appoint the recommended contractor for Spray Sealing and Associated Services.

Summary:

This report describes the tender process followed for the procurement of a Spray Sealing contractor to undertake the resealing of Council roads and recommends the appointment of a contractor to undertake the work.

Recommendation:

That:

1. Contract No. 2025/26-047 for the resealing of Council roads be awarded to Szabolics Construction Pty Ltd for the lump sum of $635,494.73 excluding GST for the year 2026/2027 with the option of a further two (2) one-year extensions based on performance, up to the value of the annual resealing budget;

2. The Chief Executive Officer be authorised to sign and seal Contract No. 2025/26-047 in accordance with Local Law 1 – Common Seal and Miscellaneous Penalties;

3. The Chief Executive Officer be authorised to approve contract variations up to the total value of the allocated project budget; and

4. The Chief Executive Officer be authorised to approve the option for a further two (2) one-year extensions based on performance, up to the value of the annual resealing budget.

Unconfirmed

Attachment:

Nil

Background/History:

The resealing of Council roads is completed annually as part of the capital works program.

The Request for Tender process was undertaken and completed in September 2026. Tenders were sought from qualified parties for the supply and delivery of spray sealing and associated services on Council's rural and urban roads for 2026/27, with the option of two (2) one-year performance-based extensions (2027/28 and 2028/29).

Six tender submissions were received under Contract 2025/26-047 for the 2026/27 financial year. A detailed comparative analysis was completed based on the selection criteria and weighting to determine the preferred contractor.

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

The *Local Government Act 2020*

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

Option 1 – Approve the tender as presented and award the contract to Szabolics Construction Pty Ltd for the lump sum of $635,494.73 excluding GST. This is the preferred option as it provides the best overall value for money, having regard to the weighted tender evaluation, the contractor's demonstrated performance and quality of work, the low delivery risk and the availability of funding within the 2026/27 reseal capital budget.

Option 2 – Select a different tender submission to approve. This is not the preferred option, as it would not reflect the highest-ranked outcome from the weighted tender evaluation and may result in reduced value for money or increased cost, quality and delivery risks for Council.

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.

The contractor will use crumb rubber, a recycled tyre product that increases the life of seals on rural roads.

Unconfirmed

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

The costs to reseal specific roads within the schedule of works will be sourced from the 2026/27 reseal capital budget.

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 2025-2029 priorities*.
2. Asset Management - Maintain and improve our Shire's infrastructure to meet the levels of service established in consultation with our communities.

2.1 Deliver the annual Capital Works Program.

2.24 Deliver annual asset inspection and renewal programs per asset management and Road Management Plan requirements.

Council Policies:
Procurement Policy

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

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

Risk Assessment:

Due to the quality process followed through procurement, the risk for this contract is low.

Unconfirmed

The references provided by Szabolics Construction Pty Ltd in their tender submission as well as the quality of the work delivered for Council in 2025/26 for resealing and stabilisation of major patches, support the view that they will deliver work of a high quality and provide good value and low risk to Council.

Officer's View:

On the basis of the work performed and outcomes delivered during 2025/26, it is the officer's recommendation that Szabolics Construction Pty Ltd be awarded Contract No. 2025/26-047 for the financial year 2026/27, and the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to approve the option of two one-year performance-based extensions for the (2027/28 and 2028/29) financial years.

Council Resolution:

CR WHITEHEAD
CR WORTMANN

THAT:

1. **CONTRACT NO. 2025/26-047 FOR THE RESEALING OF COUNCIL ROADS BE AWARDED TO SZABOLICS CONSTRUCTION PTY LTD FOR THE LUMP SUM OF $635,494.73 EXCLUDING GST FOR THE YEAR 2026/2027 WITH THE OPTION OF A FURTHER TWO (2) ONE-YEAR EXTENSIONS BASED ON PERFORMANCE, UP TO THE VALUE OF THE ANNUAL RESEALING BUDGET;**

2. **THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BE AUTHORISED TO SIGN AND SEAL CONTRACT NO. 2025/26-047 IN ACCORDANCE WITH LOCAL LAW 1 – COMMON SEAL AND MISCELLANEOUS PENALTIES;**

3. **THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BE AUTHORISED TO APPROVE CONTRACT VARIATIONS UP TO THE TOTAL VALUE OF THE ALLOCATED PROJECT BUDGET; AND**

4. **THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BE AUTHORISED TO APPROVE THE OPTION FOR A FURTHER TWO (2) ONE-YEAR EXTENSIONS BASED ON PERFORMANCE, UP TO THE VALUE OF THE ANNUAL RESEALING BUDGET.**

CARRIED

Unconfirmed

12.4 Active Transport Fund - Mitta Mitta Community Link (Dir. Infrastructure and Environment)

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 seek endorsement to submit an application to the Australian Government *Active Transport Fund* for the design and construction of the *Mitta Mitta Community Link* project and to commit up to $550,000 towards the project, subject to a successful funding outcome.

Summary:

Council approval is sought to submit an application to the Australian Government *Active Transport Fund* for the design and construction of the *Mitta Mitta Community Link* project. The project will deliver a 1.5 kilometre shared-use path and pedestrian bridge across the Mitta Mitta River, creating a safe and direct connection between the Mitta Mitta township, Magorra Park Recreation Reserve, Magorra Park Caravan Park and the Mitta Mountain Bike Park trailhead.

The proposal responds to long-standing community aspirations identified through consultation undertaken for both the *Mitta Mitta Our Town Towards 2030* and the Mitta Mountain Bike Park Masterplan, while addressing an existing safety issue whereby pedestrians and cyclists are required to travel along the shoulder of the Omeo Highway to access the trailhead.

The project will improve safety, accessibility and connectivity for residents and visitors, support the long-term success of the Mitta Mountain Bike Park, and enhance the capacity of Magorra Park to function as a staging area for future mountain bike events.

The total project cost is estimated at between $2.0 million and $2.2 million. Council is seeking funding through the Australian Government *Active Transport Fund* and proposes to commit up to $550,000 from the Capital Works Program, as forecast in the Long Term Financial Plan, should the application be successful. The funding program includes provision for regional and remote councils to seek a contribution

Unconfirmed

greater than the standard 1:1 ratio. Council intends to apply for a contribution of up to 1:3 ratio with our maximum contribution being $550,000. This grant program and application presents a significant opportunity to deliver a transformational piece of infrastructure with limited impact on Council resources.

Recommendation:

That:

1. The proposed application to the Australian Government's *Active Transport Fund*, for the design and construction of the *Mitta Mitta Community Link* project be approved;

2. A maximum of $550,000 be committed to the project subject to a successful funding application; and

3. The Chief Executive Officer be authorised to progress all actions necessary to submit the application and, if successful, enter into any funding agreements associated with the grant.

Attachment:

Nil

Background/History:

Mitta Valley Inc. is currently delivering the Mitta Mountain Bike Park, a significant recreation and tourism project that is expected to be completed by the end of the 2026/27 financial year. The development of the mountain bike park will provide a major new recreational asset for the Mitta Valley and is anticipated to increase visitation to the Mitta Valley.

The need for improved pedestrian and cycling connectivity between the township and recreation precincts has been identified by the community for several years. During community consultation undertaken as part of the *Mitta Mitta Our Town Towards 2030* placemaking exercise, residents identified the provision of a pedestrian bridge crossing the Mitta Mitta River at The Mill Reserve as a key opportunity.

Building on this community feedback, and recognising the expected increase in visitation to Mitta Mitta following the completion of the Mitta Mountain Bike Park, Council has developed concept plans for the construction of a 1.5 kilometre shared-use path and pedestrian bridge crossing the Mitta Mitta River. The proposed link will provide a direct connection between the township, Magorra Park Recreation Reserve,

Unconfirmed

Magorra Park Caravan Park and the Mitta Mountain Bike Park trailhead. The project includes the upgrade of existing pathways and the construction of new infrastructure, creating a continuous, safe and accessible connection between these key community and visitor destinations.

The Australian Government's *Active Transport Fund* provides funding for the construction of new and upgraded walking and cycling infrastructure that improves safety and connectivity for active transport users. The proposed M*itta Mitta Community Link* project aligns strongly with objectives of the program by improving road safety outcomes for pedestrians and cyclists, enhancing connectivity and supporting active and liveable communities.

Currently, residents and visitors travelling between the northern side of the township and the trailhead are required to use the shoulder of the Omeo Highway for part of their journey. This arrangement is unsuitable for many users, particularly children, families and less confident riders, and creates unnecessary interaction between vulnerable road users and highway vehicle traffic. The proposed path and bridge will provide a safe off-road alternative that separates pedestrians and cyclists from vehicle movements and improves connectivity between key community and visitor destinations. The connection will be particularly important following the completion of the Mitta Mountain Bike Park, when increased visitation to both the mountain bike park trailhead and the Magorra Park Caravan Park is expected. By providing a dedicated active transport link, the project will ensure residents and visitors can safely access these attractions without relying on the roadside shoulder of the highway.

The project will play an important role in maximising the community and visitor benefits of the Mitta Mountain Bike Park by encouraging active transport, improving accessibility and enabling safer movement between accommodation, recreation facilities and the trail network. It will also facilitate direct access from the Magorra Park Caravan Park and Magorra Park Recreation Reserve to the mountain bike park, strengthening links between community infrastructure and one of Towong's emerging tourism assets.

Approval of this recommendation will enable Council to submit a funding application to the Australian Government's *Active Transport Fund* for design and construction of the *Mitta Mitta Community Link* project.

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

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

Unconfirmed

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

Option 1:
Council endorses the submission of an application to the Australian Government *Active Transport Fund* for the *Mitta Mitta Community Link* project.

If successful, the project would deliver a dedicated pedestrian and cycling connection between the township, Magorra Park, the Magorra Park Caravan Park and the Mitta Mountain Bike Park trailhead, improving safety, accessibility and connectivity for residents and visitors.

Option 2:
Council does not endorse the submission of a funding application.

Under this option, the opportunity to secure Australian Government funding for the project would not be pursued and residents and visitors would continue to rely on the existing route along the shoulder of the Omeo Highway to access the Mitta Mountain Bike Park trailhead.

Best Outcome for the Community

Option 1 is considered the best outcome for the community as it enables Council to seek external funding to deliver infrastructure that improves safety, connectivity and access to key community and tourism assets, while supporting the long-term success of the Mitta Mountain Bike Park.

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

Economic
The proposed project will support the long-term economic sustainability of Mitta Mitta by improving access between the township, accommodation providers, recreation facilities and the Mitta Mountain Bike Park. Improved connectivity is expected to enhance the visitor experience, encourage longer stays and increase visitation to local businesses and community assets, contributing to the local economy.

Social
The project will improve community connectivity by providing a safe and accessible pedestrian and cycling link between key community destinations. The dedicated off-road path and bridge will reduce interactions between vulnerable road users and vehicle traffic, creating safer access to the Mitta Mountain Bike Park, Magorra Park and the Magorra Park Caravan Park for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities. The project will encourage active recreation, healthy lifestyles and contribute to the

Unconfirmed

attractiveness and liveability of Mitta Mitta, supporting efforts to retain and attract young families to the community.

Environmental/Climate Change
The project will encourage active transport by providing a dedicated walking and cycling connection between the township and key recreation destinations. By supporting increased use of walking and cycling as an alternative to short vehicle trips, the project aligns with the objectives of the *Active Transport Fund* to promote sustainable transport options and reduce transport-related emissions.

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

The concept of providing a pedestrian bridge crossing and shared pathway connection between the Mitta Mitta township and recreation precinct is strongly supported by community-led planning undertaken through the *Mitta Mitta Our Town Towards 2030* placemaking report. Developed in partnership with the local community, the report identified S*trengthen the community heart along the Mitta Mitta River & Snowy Creek* as the township's highest priority strategy. As part of this strategy, Action 1.4.02 specifically identifies the investigation of a new bridge connection between the Historic Park Reserve and the Magorra Park Recreation Reserve. The proposed *Mitta Mitta Community Link* project directly responds to this community-endorsed priority by improving safety, accessibility and connectivity between key destinations within the township and recreation precincts.

The need for improved active transport connectivity was further reinforced through community consultation undertaken during the development of the Mitta Mountain Bike Park Masterplan. During this engagement, stakeholders identified the importance of providing a safe connection between the township, Magorra Park and the future mountain bike park trailhead. The proposed link was recognised as an opportunity to enable Magorra Park to function as a staging and event hub for mountain bike events, reducing the need for participants, spectators and their vehicles to congregate along or repeatedly access the Omeo Highway. The proposed path and bridge would facilitate safe movement between these precincts and improve the capacity of the township to host future mountain biking events.
Mitta Valley Inc. has demonstrated its support for the proposed project, recognising the benefits it will provide to both residents and visitors accessing the mountain bike park, recreation reserve and accommodation facilities.

Should Council endorse the project and funding application, further community and stakeholder engagement will be undertaken during the detailed design and delivery phases to ensure affected stakeholders are informed and provided with opportunities to contribute to the project's development.

Unconfirmed

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

The project demonstrates continuous improvement in the planning and delivery of community infrastructure by responding to feedback received through both the *Mitta Mitta Our Town Towards 2030* and the Mitta Mountain Bike Park Masterplan engagement processes. The proposal builds on these strategic projects to deliver improved connectivity, accessibility and safety outcomes for residents and visitors.

By linking the township, Magorra Park, the Magorra Park Caravan Park and the Mitta Mountain Bike Park, the project also creates opportunities for future events and recreational activities, supporting the efficient use of existing community assets and enhancing the overall visitor experience within Mitta Mitta.

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

Not Applicable.

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

The total estimated cost of the *Mitta Mitta Community Link* project, including the construction of a shared-use path and pedestrian bridge, is currently estimated to be between $2.0 million and $2.2 million, subject to final design refinement and receipt of all quotations.

Council is seeking funding through the Australian Government *Active Transport Fund*, to deliver the project. The program generally operates on a 1:1 ratio co-contribution, however, it provides flexibility for regional and remote local government authorities to seek a higher Australian Government contribution where justified. Council would seek a contribution of up to 1:3 with our maximum contribution being $550,000.

Council's future Capital Works Program contains sufficient funding allocated to Mitta Mitta Streetscape Works to support a Council contribution of up to $550,000 towards the project.

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

- *Australian Government Active Transport Fund*: Improves safety, connectivity and access through the provision of dedicated walking and cycling infrastructure.

- N*ational Road Safety Strategy 2021-30*: Supports improved safety outcomes for vulnerable road users by reducing interactions between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicle traffic.

Unconfirmed

- *Victoria's Active Transport Plan*: Encourages walking and cycling through the delivery of safe, accessible and connected active transport infrastructure.

Council Plans and Policies:

Council Plans:
This report supports the following *Council Plan 2025-2029 priorities*.
2. Asset Management - Maintain and improve our Shire's infrastructure to meet the levels of service established in consultation with our communities.
2.12 Complete streetscape upgrades in Mitta Mitta.

2.14 Continue to deliver the strategic footpath network improvement program in urban areas including access and egress for the elderly, school children and other critical paths.

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:

Key risk include:

Unsuccessful Funding Application
There is a risk that the funding application is unsuccessful, resulting in the project not proceeding as currently proposed, the anticipated safety and connectivity benefits not being realised, and Council resources invested in preparing the application not delivering a return. This risk will be mitigated through the preparation of a comprehensive, evidence-based application that clearly demonstrates the project's alignment with the objectives and assessment criteria of the Australian Government *Active Transport Fund*, supported by concept designs, cost estimates and demonstrated community and stakeholder support.

Project Cost Escalation
There is a risk that project costs may increase as detailed design, approvals and procurement processes are completed. This risk will be mitigated through the use of preliminary cost estimates that incorporate a generous contingency allowance, ongoing cost reviews throughout the design phase, and market testing during

Unconfirmed

procurement. Should projected costs exceed the available budget following detailed design, opportunities to refine the project scope details will be considered to maintain overall project viability.

Approval and Regulatory Delays
There is a risk that delays in obtaining environmental, land management, cultural heritage or other statutory approvals may impact project delivery timeframes. This risk will be mitigated through early engagement with relevant authorities and stakeholders, the timely commencement of any required approval processes, and the procurement of suitably qualified consultants with demonstrated experience and a proven track record of delivering similar infrastructure projects and approvals within required timeframes.

Community Expectation Risk
Submission of a funding application may create community expectations that the project will proceed. This risk will be mitigated through clear communication that funding approval is not guaranteed.

Risk of Not Proceeding
If external funding is not secured and the project does not proceed, pedestrians and cyclists will continue to utilise the shoulder of the Omeo Highway to access the Mitta Mountain Bike Park trailhead, maintaining existing safety and connectivity concerns. Council will mitigate this risk by continuing to seek alternative funding opportunities should the application be unsuccessful.

Officer's View:

The proposed *Mitta Mitta Community Link* project presents a significant opportunity to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety while enhancing connectivity between the Mitta Mitta township, Magorra Park, the Magorra Park Caravan Park and the Mitta Mountain Bike Park trailhead. The project responds directly to priorities identified through previous community consultation and complements Council's investment in the mountain bike park by providing safe and accessible supporting infrastructure.

Officers consider the project to be aligned with the objectives of the Australian Government *Active Transport Fund*, particularly those relating to improving safety outcomes for vulnerable road users and supporting active and liveable communities.

The project addresses an existing safety concern whereby pedestrians and cyclists are required to travel along the shoulder of the Omeo Highway and provides a safer, more direct connection to a major recreation and tourism asset.

Unconfirmed

Importantly, the funding program provides regional and remote local government authorities with the opportunity to seek an Australian Government contribution greater than the standard 50 per cent funding ratio where exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated. Officers consider this to be a significant opportunity for Council, as it may enable the delivery of a transformational piece of community infrastructure that would otherwise be difficult to fund.

The project would support the long-term success of the Mitta Mountain Bike Park by improving access for residents and visitors and creating opportunities for Magorra Park to function as a staging area for future events. This would assist in reducing congestion and interactions between event participants and traffic on the Omeo Highway.

Council Resolution:

CR PITMAN
CR WHITEHEAD

THAT:

1. **THE PROPOSED APPLICATION TO THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S *ACTIVE TRANSPORT FUND*, FOR THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE *MITTA MITTA COMMUNITY LINK* PROJECT BE APPROVED;**

2. **A MAXIMUM OF $550,000 BE COMMITTED TO THE PROJECT SUBJECT TO A SUCCESSFUL FUNDING APPLICATION; AND**

3. **THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BE AUTHORISED TO PROGRESS ALL ACTIONS NECESSARY TO SUBMIT THE APPLICATION AND, IF SUCCESSFUL, ENTER INTO ANY FUNDING AGREEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE GRANT.**

CARRIED

Unconfirmed

13 Land Use Planning

13.1 PA260020 Merkel Rise Talgarno - Variation of a Restriction (Dir. Community and Planning)

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

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

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

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to seek a decision on Planning Permit application PA260020 for the variation of a restriction to change the location of a building envelope, with a recommendation that the application be approved.

One objection to the proposal was received.

Summary:

Council received a Planning Permit application seeking approval to amend the building envelope established by the restriction contained in Plan of Restriction PS912778V. The current restriction requires that any building constructed on the land be wholly contained within the hatched building envelope shown on the registered plan, which reflects the siting originally approved under parent subdivision permit 2021/023.

The proposal involves re-orientating the existing building envelope east-west and repositioning it closer to the southern boundary. This amendment has been informed by a ground-truthing assessment, which identified practical constraints associated with the approved envelope, including steep topography, drainage considerations, and the extent of cut and fill required to construct a dwelling.

The approved building envelope currently measures approximately 50 metres in width by 100 metres in length and is set back 25 metres from the eastern and southern boundaries and 27.5 metres from the western boundary. The proposed envelope is marginally smaller, extending approximately 90 metres across the site's width with a variable depth of between 42 metres and 50 metres, and would be set back 5 metres from the relevant side and rear boundaries. The western boundary setback is proposed to be reduced from 27.5m to 8m.

Unconfirmed

The proposed relocation is intended to provide improved access and enable construction on a more suitable building pad with a reduced grade. The revised envelope remains generous in scale, comprising approximately 4,284 square metres, while reducing the overall envelope area by approximately 700 square metres.

There is no minimum setback specified under the applicable Rural Living Zone. On this basis, the proposed amendment is considered to provide a more practical and responsive siting outcome while maintaining an appropriate building envelope for future development of the land.

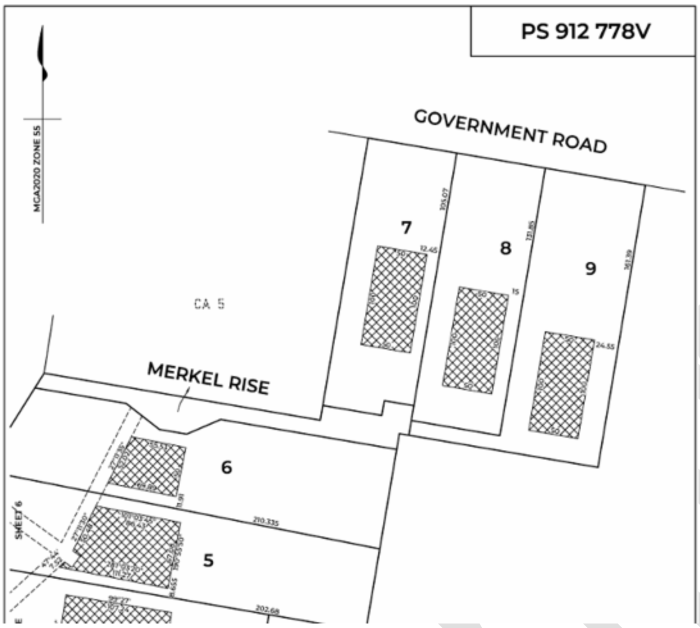

Figure 1- Existing Building Envelopes

Unconfirmed

Figure 2 – Proposed Building Envelope

Recommendation:

That Planning Permit application (PA260020) for the Variation of a Restriction of the land at Lot 9 Merkel Rise Talgarno, more particularly described as Lot 9 PS912778V, be approved subject to the conditions listed below and a Notice of Decision to Grant a Planning Permit be issued.

Commencement of Permit

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

Compliance with documents approved under this permit

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

Endorsed subdivision plans (amended plans required)

3. Before the plan of subdivision is certified under the Subdivision Act 1988, plans must be approved and endorsed by the responsible authority. The plans must:
   a. be prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority,

Unconfirmed

b. be drawn to scale with dimensions and submitted in electronic form,
c. be generally in accordance with the plans forming part of the application, but amended to show the following:
d. a building envelope with a minimum nine (9) metre setback distance from the southern and eastern boundaries.

Expiry (Removal or variation of an easement or restriction)

4. This permit will expire if:
   a. The plan has not been certified under the Subdivision Act 1988 within 3 years of the issued date of this permit.

   In accordance with Section 69 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, an application may be submitted to the responsible authority for an extension of the periods referred to in this condition.

Attachment:

1. PA260020 Merkel Rise Talgarno - Delegate Report [**13.1.1** - 18 pages]

Background/History:

The subject site is a rectangular shaped allotment of approximately 3.58 hectares located at the end of Merkel Rise Talgarno. The land rises steeply from the east down to the west and undulates from north to south. The land is mostly grass with some scattered trees. The parcel was created along with eight other lots forming the Trewella Road subdivision. All lots have the benefit of large building envelopes designed with consideration of topography, environmental impacts, defendable space and view sharing.

The land does not have the benefit of reticulated power, water or sewerage.
To the north of the site is a large parcel of land zoned Rural Living and the subject of a further subdivision application. To the east are larger parcels of land.

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

Planning and Environment Act 1987 provides the standard process for assessing a planning permit application. The Towong Planning Scheme sets out the planning permit triggers that require a planning permit application.

A planning permit is triggered pursuant to Clause 52.02 Easements Restrictions and Reserves.
Clause 52.02 states:

A permit is required before a person proceeds:

Unconfirmed

Under Section 23 of the Subdivision Act 1988 to create, vary or remove an easement or restriction, or vary or remove a condition in the nature of an easement in a Crown grant.

A full assessment against the Municipal Planning Strategy, Planning Policy Frameworks and the relevant decision guidelines of Clause 52.02 (Easements Restrictions and Reserves), Clause 53.02 (Bushfire Planning) and Clause 65.01 (Approval of an Application or Plan is in the attached Delegate Report. Consideration was also given to the objectives of the Rural Living Zone Schedule 3, the Design and Development Overlay Schedule 1 and the Significant Landscape Overlay Schedule 1.

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

The proposal is in response to the previously unidentified constraints associated with the site and the location of the building envelope. A change to the location will provide an improved environmental outcome. The objector's concern is that the building envelope is now much closer to the building envelope on the adjoining Lot 8. The proposed building envelope is setback from the dwelling constructed on Lot 8 by approximately the same distance the existing envelope is from the dwelling.

The perceived detriment must be balanced against the environmental outcomes and it is the officer’s view that the proposal is consistent with the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.

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

The proposal is consistent with the sustainability policies of the Planning Policy Framework, the change in the location of the building envelop responds to the topography of the land, and the potential for earthworks is reduced.

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

Notice was undertaken to all landowners with who have the benefit of the restriction pursuant to Section 52 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. One objection was received. A summary of the objection together with the planning response is contained within the attached Delegate Report.

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

Not Applicable.

Unconfirmed

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

Not Applicable.

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

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

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

The proposal is consistent with the Planning Policy Framework as discussed in the attached Delegate Report.

Council Plans and Policies:

Council Plans:
This report supports the following *Council Plan 2025-2029* priorities.
4. Land Use - Ensure that Council's planning, building and environmental health services support all aspects of liveability and sustainable population growth.
4.1 Facilitate the development and management of land and properties through the delivery of quality Land Use Planning, Building, Environmental Health, and Compliance Services.

Council Policies:
The proposal is consistent with the Municipal Planning Strategy as discussed in the attached Delegate Report.

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

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

Risk Assessment:

The relevant law section of this report outlines many of the sensitive considerations associated with steep slopes, erosion and landslip. The subdivision previously approved with the existing building envelopes pose challenges for any development of all sites. The applicant has demonstrated that the unique topography of Lot 9 severely limits the ability to develop the land.

Unconfirmed

The proposed building envelop will still require a significant site cut however; the extent of earthworks will be reduced.

Officer's View:

The site is located within the Peri-Urban area of Towong Shire (Clause 02.04 Strategy Framework Plan), the land is zoned as Rural Living Zone and is also subject to the Design & Development Overlay Schedule 1 and the Significant Landscape Overlay Schedule 1. It has been found that the existing building envelope is not consistent with Clause 13.04-2S in relation to landslip and soil degradation with slopes more than 20%. The proposed building envelop still contains slope however the grade is less than 20%.

The application for the variation of the restriction on the land represents an appropriate outcome for the site. It is recommended that Council resolve to approve the application subject to the conditions contained within the attached Delegate Report and issue a Notice of Decision to Grant a Planning Permit.

Council Resolution:

CR WORTMANN
CR PITMAN

THAT PLANNING PERMIT APPLICATION (PA260020) FOR THE VARIATION OF A RESTRICTION OF THE LAND AT LOT 9 MERKEL RISE TALGARNO, MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS LOT 9 PS912778V, BE APPROVED SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS LISTED BELOW AND A NOTICE OF DECISION TO GRANT A PLANNING PERMIT BE ISSUED.

COMMENCEMENT OF PERMIT

1. **THIS PERMIT WILL OPERATE FROM THE ISSUED DATE OF THIS PERMIT.**

COMPLIANCE WITH DOCUMENTS APPROVED UNDER THIS PERMIT

2. **AT ALL TIMES WHAT THE PERMIT ALLOWS MUST BE CARRIED OUT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF ANY DOCUMENT APPROVED UNDER THIS PERMIT TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY.**

Unconfirmed

Unconfirmed

ENDORSED SUBDIVISION PLANS (AMENDED PLANS REQUIRED)

3. **BEFORE THE PLAN OF SUBDIVISION IS CERTIFIED UNDER THE SUBDIVISION ACT 1988, PLANS MUST BE APPROVED AND ENDORSED BY THE RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY. THE PLANS MUST:**
    a) **BE PREPARED TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY,**
    b) **BE DRAWN TO SCALE WITH DIMENSIONS AND SUBMITTED IN ELECTRONIC FORM,**
    c) **BE GENERALLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PLANS FORMING PART OF THE APPLICATION, BUT AMENDED TO SHOW THE FOLLOWING:**
    d) **A BUILDING ENVELOPE WITH A MINIMUM NINE (9) METRE SETBACK DISTANCE FROM THE SOUTHERN AND EASTERN BOUNDARIES.**

EXPIRY (REMOVAL OR VARIATION OF AN EASEMENT OR RESTRICTION)

4. **THIS PERMIT WILL EXPIRE IF:**
    a) **THE PLAN HAS NOT BEEN CERTIFIED UNDER THE SUBDIVISION ACT 1988 WITHIN 3 YEARS OF THE ISSUED DATE OF THIS PERMIT.**

    IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 69 OF THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT ACT 1987, AN APPLICATION MAY BE SUBMITTED TO THE RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY FOR AN EXTENSION OF THE PERIODS REFERRED TO IN THIS CONDITION.

CARRIED

14 Environmental Sustainability

There are no Environmental Sustainability reports to present this meeting.

15 Economic and Tourism Development

There are no Economic and Tourism Development reports to present this meeting.

16 Councillor Reports

An opportunity is provided for Councillors to table or present a Delegate's report.

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Mrs Rhonda Ramsdale, on behalf of Cr Peter Tolsher, Mayor.

At the time of preparation of this report, neither the officer nor the Mayor had 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 a summary of the activities undertaken by the Mayor during the reporting period.

Summary:

I was pleased to represent Council as follows:

Police Memorial Service (Tuesday 25 August)

I attended the Police Memorial Service in Wangaratta to mark the first anniversary of the Porepunkah tragedy, honouring and commemorating the lives of Leading Senior Constable Neal Thompson and Senior Constable Vadim de Waart-Hottart. As part of the service, I laid a wreath on behalf of Council in their memory.

Tallangatta Show Society (Wednesday 26 August)

This meeting was held at the Tallangatta Memorial Hall and both Cr Anderson and I attended.

Unconfirmed

Discussions were in relation to camping arrangements at the showgrounds and approvals for the proposed camping infrastructure.

The committee also raised the considerable costs involved in hosting BlazeAid after the summer's bushfires.

The committee requested that a meeting with Councillors. This was arranged for Wednesday 9 September 2026.

Dr. Helen Haines MP – LGA Roundtable (Friday 28 August)

Chief Executive Officer Ms Juliana Phelps and I attended this meeting at Wangaratta along with Mayors and Chief Executive Officers from Alpine, Benalla, Indigo, Mansfield, Murrindindi, Strathbogie, Wangaratta and Wodonga Councils.

Dr Haines presented updates on the January 2026 bushfire response and recovery, key priorities and Parliamentary work, LGA Financial Sustainability inquiry and Commonwealth funding opportunities.

The National Emergency Management Agency Disaster Resilience and Recovery gave a presentation which included the process for seeking betterment funding for more resilient infrastructure.

RCV Forum (Thursday 3 and 4 September)

Cr Whitehead, Chief Executive Officer Ms Juliana Phelps and I attended the Rural Councils Victoria (RCV) Forum held in Swan Hill. The forum was well attended by both industry experts and other Councils. Financial Sustainability, housing availability and affordability, infrastructure investment and emergency preparedness were all discussed in detail.

The forum was an excellent opportunity to make connections with other Councillors and exchange experiences, ideas and build on relationships.

Correspondence sent:

Date	Recipient	Subject
2 Sep	Minister for Local Government	Limited funding Weed and Pest Control
	Minister for Government Services	cc. above
15 Sep	Minister for Local Government	Request for funding increase
16 Sep	Lyn Coulston	Congratulations Landcare Honour Roll
16 Sep	Jim de Hennin	Congratulations Landcare Honour Roll

Unconfirmed

Attachments:

Nil

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

Council Resolution:

CR PITMAN
CR ANDERSON

THAT THE REPORT BE NOTED.

CARRIED

17 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.

Unconfirmed

18 Committee Minutes

18.1 Audit and Risk Committee Minutes - September 2026 (Dir. Corporate and Organisational Development)

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 unconfirmed minutes from the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 10 September 2026.

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 10 September 2026. The unconfirmed minutes were circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

Attachment:

Minutes – Audit and Risk Committee – Unconfirmed – 10SEP2026 (confidential attachment)

The minutes of the meeting are considered confidential under Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2020 due to: (f) Personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs.

Unconfirmed

Report from Chairperson and resolutions of the Committee

I am pleased to present this report summarising the key matters considered by the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) at its meeting held on 10 September 2026. The Committee welcomed Ms Paula Sutherland to her first meeting following her recent appointment as an independent member and looks forward to her contribution to the Committee's oversight of governance, risk management and assurance activities.

The Committee considered a range of governance, risk management, financial reporting and organisational improvement matters. Key items included the review of the Committee Charter and Annual Work Plan, updates on risk management activities, internal audit progress, compliance matters, and Council's draft 2025-26 statutory financial statements.

A significant focus of the meeting was the progress of organisational initiatives designed to strengthen governance, compliance and risk management capability across Council. The Committee received updates on the implementation of workplace health and safety systems, digital risk management tools, policy and procedure development, staff training frameworks and broader risk management initiatives.

The Committee emphasised the importance of maintaining momentum in these initiatives to support ongoing legislative compliance, strengthen organisational capability and continue Council's progression towards a more mature and integrated risk management framework. Members acknowledged the positive progress achieved to date while recognising that sustained investment and organisational focus will be important to deliver the intended long-term benefits.

The Committee thanks Council officers, Internal Audit and the external auditors for the quality of their reports and their ongoing support of the Committee's work.

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

Audit and Risk Committee membership

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the appointment of Ms Paula Sutherland as an independent member and welcome her to the committee.

Unconfirmed

Audit and Risk Committee Chairperson

That:

1. The term of the Audit and Risk Committee Chairperson be for a period of one year;
2. Mr Marcus Goonan be appointed to the role of Chairperson commencing from 22 October 2026; and
3. Council approval of the nomination be sought at the next ordinary Council meeting.

Charter Review

That:

1. The Charter be amended as follows:
    a. At item 4. Meetings, a paragraph be added to clarify the Committee's decision-making process, including the use of consensus and voting where consensus cannot be reached.
    b. At item 8. Reporting, two paragraphs be added to clarify the Committee's reporting arrangements, strengthen direct engagement with Council, and incorporate the statutory annual self-assessment requirement.
2. The updated Charter be presented to Council for adoption.

Workplan review

That:

1. The Annual Workplan be updated to provide for the annual reporting of all Councillor expenditure, timed to coincide with the release of Council's Annual Report.
2. The Annual Workplan be endorsed by the Committee.

Financial and Performance Reporting

That the Statutory Financial Statements and external auditors update be noted and endorsed by the Audit and Risk Committee.

Policy review

That feedback provided by the Committee be received for consideration in regard to the proposed Artificial Intelligence policy.

Unconfirmed

Future meeting dates

That the meeting dates for 2027 be endorsed as follows:

- Thursday 11 February 2027
- Thursday 13 May 2027
- Thursday 9 September 2027
- Thursday 11 November 2027

Recommendation:

That the unconfirmed Audit and Risk Committee Minutes and Resolutions from the 10 September 2026 meeting be noted.

Council Resolution:

CR WHITEHEAD
CR ANDERSON

THAT THE UNCONFIRMED AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MINUTES AND RESOLUTIONS FROM THE 10 SEPTEMBER 2026 MEETING BE NOTED.

CARRIED

Unconfirmed

19 Council Policies

19.1 Policies for Review (Dir. Corporate and Organisational Development)

The following policies are tabled for review in accordance with Council's agreed review cycle. Feedback should be provided to the nominated officer by 14 October 2026 to ensure any input can be considered prior to tabling the policies for adoption:

- Employee Code of Conduct

Attachment:

1. Policy - Employee Code of Conduct - 1DEC2021 [**19.1.1** - 16 pages]

Recommendation:

That the policy tabled for review be noted.

Council Resolution:

CR PITMAN
CR ANDERSON

THAT THE POLICY TABLED FOR REVIEW BE NOTED.

CARRIED

Unconfirmed

19.2 Policies for Adoption (Dir. Corporate and Organisational Development)

The following policies were tabled for review at the 25 March 2026 Council Meeting:

- Complaints Policy

Attachment:

1. Policy - Complaints - FOR ADOPTION - AUG2026 [**19.2.1** - 6 pages]

Please note the recommended changes are shown in colored text.

Recommendation:

That the Complaint Policy as amended and presented be adopted, with the Chief Executive Officer authorised to make minor administrative changes where necessary.

Council Resolution:

CR ANDERSON
CR PITMAN

THAT THE COMPLAINT POLICY AS AMENDED AND PRESENTED BE ADOPTED, WITH THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AUTHORISED TO MAKE MINOR ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES WHERE NECESSARY.

CARRIED

Unconfirmed

20 Sealing of Documents

Nil

21 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;*

Unconfirmed

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.

22 Closure of Meeting

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting closed, the time being 11:42am.

____

Mayor

Unconfirmed