



MINUTES

Ordinary Council Meeting Wednesday, 1 April 2026

Date: Wednesday, 1 April 2026

Time: 6.00pm

Location: Council Chambers, 15 Stead Street, Ballan &
Online

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1 OPENING OF MEETING AND PRAYER

The Mayor opened the meeting at 6.00pm.

Cr Keogh read the Prayer.

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Mayor read the Acknowledgement of Country.

3 RECORDING OF MEETING

In accordance with Moorabool Shire Council's Governance Rules, the meeting is livestreamed.

4 PRESENT

Cr Steven Venditti-Taylor, Mayor

Cr Jarrod Bingham, Deputy Mayor

Cr Moira Berry

Cr Sheila Freeman

Cr John Keogh

Cr Ally Munari

Cr Tom Sullivan

Cr Paul Tatchell

Cr Rod Ward

Officers:

Mr Derek Madden

Chief Executive Officer

Mr David Jackson

General Manager Customer & Corporate Services

Ms Leigh McCallum

General Manager Community Strengthening

Mr Phil Jeffrey

General Manager Community Assets & Infrastructure

Mr Joseph Spiteri

Manager Governance & Civic Support

Ms Leanne Manton

Manager Customer & Communications

Ms Kate Barclay

Manager Growth & Development

5 APOLOGIES

Nil

6 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr John Keogh

Seconded: Cr Ally Munari

That the minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on Wednesday 4 March 2026 be confirmed.

CARRIED

7 DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil

8 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Nil

9 PETITIONS

Nil

10 PRESENTATIONS/DEPUTATIONS

Item	Report name	Speaker/s	Position	Attendance
11.1	Amendment C109moor to the Moorabool Planning Scheme - Merrimu Precinct Structure Plan Council Submission	Bruno Tassone	Neutral	In person

11 COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

Bruno Tassone addressed Council in relation to item 11.1

11.1 AMENDMENT C109MOOR TO THE MOORABOOL PLANNING SCHEME - MERRIMU PRECINCT STRUCTURE PLAN COUNCIL SUBMISSION

Author: Matthew Milbourne, Co-ordinator Growth Area Planning

Authoriser: Henry Bezuidenhout, Executive Manager Community Planning & Development

Attachments:

- 1. Amendment C109moor Public Exhibition Documents (under separate cover)**
- 2. Merrimu Precinct Structure Plan Public Exhibition Submission (under separate cover)**

PURPOSE

To consider Council's submission to Planning Scheme Amendment C109moor to the Moorabool Planning Scheme – Merrimu Precinct Structure Plan, which has been prepared by the Department of Transport and Planning – New Communities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In October 2024, the Department of Transport and Planning – New Communities (DTP-NC) formerly known as the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) announced that the Merrimu Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) was back on the 2025 work program.
- DTP-NC has recently placed Amendment C109moor – Merrimu Precinct Structure Plan (PSP), Development Contributions Plan (DCP), and Native Vegetation Precinct Plan (NVPP) on public consultation.
- The PSP (Appendix 1) was prepared over a six-year period in consultation with Council, State agencies, and other key stakeholders.
- The PSP plans for approximately 1,800 direct jobs, 8,000 homes and a population of 24,000 people. The PSP provides four schools, two community centres, one indoor recreation centre, three sports reserves, two local town centres and one local convenience centre.
- Merrimu PSP was placed on public consultation by DTP-NC on 6 March 2026, with consultation ending on 7 April 2026. The proposed submission (Appendix 2) has been prepared by Strategic Planning officers in consultation with internal Council teams including Engineering, Environment, Open Space, Recreation, Community Activation and Heritage.
- The report provides an overview of the proposed draft Planning Scheme Amendment and the PSP and outlines the key issues that Council officers consider need to be addressed prior to the finalisation of the amendment documentation.
- It is anticipated that DTP-NC will continue to consult with submitters to resolve issues and DTP-NC will seek advice on key unresolved issues through a Standing Advisory Committee hearing.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Tom Sullivan

Seconded: Cr Paul Tatchell

That Council:

- 1. Adopts the submission at Appendix 2 as Council's submission to the Department of Transport and Planning – New Communities (DTP-NC), requesting changes to planning scheme amendment C109moor to the Moorabool Planning Scheme.**
- 2. Authorises the Executive Manager Community Planning and Development to advance negotiation with DTP-NC and other stakeholders in respect of the issues raised in the submission at Appendix 2, and submissions received by DTP-NC from other stakeholders.**
- 3. Notes that:**
 - (a) DTP-NC is likely to refer unresolved submissions to a Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) for advice.**
 - (b) A further submission will be prepared for presentation at any SAC hearing addressing issues in respect of the amendment that have not been resolved through negotiations.**
 - (c) Officers will provide further briefings to Council in respect to the SAC hearing and SAC submission.**

CARRIED

BACKGROUND**Bacchus Marsh Urban Growth Framework**

The Bacchus Marsh Urban Growth Framework (UGF) identifies four strategic growth areas, Merrimu, Parwan Station, Parwan Employment and Hopetoun Park North (Figure 1).

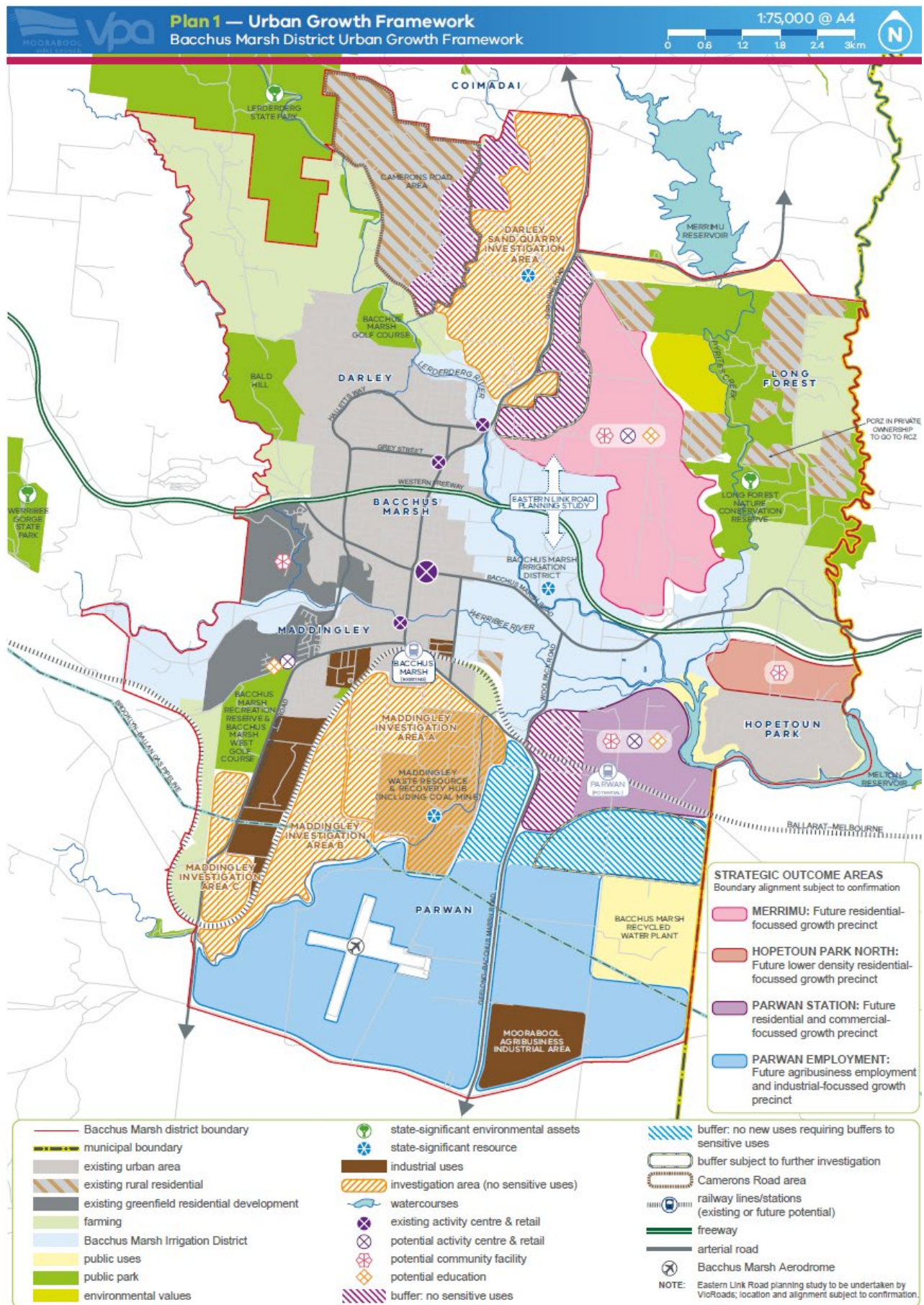


Figure 1: Bacchus Marsh Growth Areas

Merrimu Precinct Structure Plan Preparation

The Department of Transport and Planning – New Communities (DTP-NC) commenced work on the Merrimu, Parwan Employment and Parwan Station PSPs in 2020.

The three Bacchus Marsh PSPs (Merrimu, Parwan Station, and Parwan Employment Precinct) were paused in July 2023 following discovery of the Victorian Grassland Earless Dragon (VGED) in January 2023.

In October 2024, the Victorian Planning Authority announced that the Merrimu PSP was included in the 2025 work program.

Over the past six years, Council officers have been providing ongoing input into the preparation of the PSP.

Merrimu Precinct

The PSP area is located on the top of a plateau and is located north-east of the Bacchus Marsh township and covers approximately 907 hectares of land. It is generally defined by the Western Freeway and the Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District to the South, the Long Forest Conservation Reserve east, Diggers Rest – Coimadai Road to the north, and Gisborne Road to the west.

The Merrimu PSP is included in Plan Victoria as a key regional housing precinct in Victoria.

Planning Scheme Amendment

Planning Scheme Amendment C109moor proposes to incorporate the Merrimu PSP, Merrimu DCP, Merrimu NVPP, and the Small Lot Housing Code into the Moorabool Planning Scheme (Ordinance at Appendix 1). Specifically, it proposes the following changes:

- Inserts the Urban Growth Zone (UGZ) to the Moorabool Planning Scheme.
- Inserts Schedule 1 to Clause 37.07 Urban Growth Zone (UGZ1) and rezones the precinct to facilitate urban development.
- Amends the Schedule to Clause 45.01 Public Acquisition Overlay to insert PAO6 and PAO7.
- Applies PAO6 to reserve land for drainage outfalls and nominates Melbourne Water as the acquiring authority to the land addresses as follows:
 - Tipperary Flats Merrimu 3340
 - 206 Gisborne Road Darley 3340
 - 26 Lerderderg Park Road Merrimu 3340
 - Lerderderg Park Road Merrimu 3340
 - Lerderderg Gorge Road Merrimu 3340
 - Lerderderg Park Road Merrimu 3340
- Applies PAO7 to reserve land for road upgrades and intersections, and identifies Moorabool Shire Council as the acquiring authority to the land addresses as follows:
 - 705 Bacchus Marsh Road Merrimu 3340
 - 15 Flanagans Drive Merrimu 3340
 - 13 Lindsay Avenue Merrimu 3340
 - 17 Lindsay Avenue Merrimu 3340
 - 25 Lindsay Avenue Merrimu 3340
 - 27 Lindsay Avenue Merrimu 3340
 - Flanagans Drive Merrimu 3340

- 8 Flanagans Drive Merrimu 3340
- 81 Flanagans Drive Merrimu 3340
- 107 Flanagans Drive Merrimu 3340
- Streeton Drive Merrimu 3340
- 8 Streeton Drive Merrimu 3340
- 109 Flanagans Drive Merrimu 3340
- 731 Bacchus Marsh Road Merrimu 3340
- 735 Bacchus Marsh Road Merrimu 3340
- Gisborne Road Merrimu 3340
- Applies Clause 45.03 Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO) to land identified as having high for potential contamination.
- Inserts Clause 45.06 Development Contributions Plan Overlay into the Moorabool Planning Scheme.
- Inserts Schedule 1 to Clause 45.06 Development Contributions Plan Overlay (DCPO1) to all land within the precinct to fund new infrastructure in the precinct.
- Amends the Schedule to Clause 52.16 Native Vegetation Precinct Plan to manage removal and retention of native vegetation in the precinct.
- Amends the Schedule to Clause 66.04 Referral of Permit Applications under Local Provisions to insert a new determining referral for Head, Transport for Victoria for applications within one hundred metres of land shown for the Bacchus Marsh Eastern Link Road.
- Amends the Schedule to Clause 72.03 to include the revised list of maps in the Moorabool Planning Scheme.
- Amends the Schedule to Clause 72.04 Documents Incorporated in this Planning Scheme to incorporate four new documents:
 - Merrimu Precinct Structure Plan (February 2026)
 - Merrimu Development Contributions Plan (February 2026)
 - Merrimu Native Vegetation Precinct Plan (February 2026)
 - Small Lot Housing Code (November 2024)
- Deletes Design and Development Overlay Schedule 1 (DDO1) from the precinct as it is not consistent with the anticipated scale and nature of the new development in the precinct facilitated by the PSP.

Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) Overview

The Amendment is required to implement the Merrimu PSP, which facilitates the use and development of the PSP area as a predominately residential precinct comprising 8,063 dwellings for approximately 24,188 people, and the creation of 1,800 direct jobs.

To put this in context, the Victorian government's housing targets for Moorabool are the delivery of 20,000 new dwellings by 2051 and this PSP equates to 40% of that housing target.

To service this new population, the amendment provides for four schools, two community centres, one indoor recreation centre, three sports reserves, two local town centres and one local convenience centres, approximately 382.8 hectares of open space including a linear open space reserve along the escarpment edge, five conservation areas, and the provision of a Drainage Services Scheme.



Development Contributions Plan (DCP)

The DCP is the associated mechanism that is required to ensure collecting agencies can lawfully collect development contributions from landowners.

The exhibited Development Infrastructure Levy (DIL) has been set at \$549,779 per net developable hectare and will fund the acquisition of land and construction of specified roads, specified

intersections, community centres, and sports reserves in the PSP area. The DIL will also fund land acquisition for the indoor recreation centre.

The exhibited Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) has been set at \$1,365 per dwelling which is below the maximum levy rate permitted by the Victorian government at \$1,530 per dwelling. The CIL will be used for the construction of the three sports pavilions in the PSP area.

Native Vegetation Precinct Plan (NVPP)

The NVPP is the associated mechanism for managing native vegetation in the precinct.

The NVPP identifies what native vegetation should be retained and removed in the precinct. It also identifies what offsets are required for the removal of native vegetation.

Small Lot Housing Code

DTP-NC have created the Small Lot Housing Code (SLHC) which provides guidance for homes that will be constructed on lots smaller than three hundred square metres in area.

Houses that meet the SLHC design and siting standards are exempt from requiring a planning permit.

The SLHC provides standards to ensure new homes have high levels of amenity.

Public Consultation

DTP-NC placed the Merrimu PSP, DCP and NVPP on Public Consultation from 6 March to 7 April 2025.

Letters and a newsletter were sent to landowners within the PSP area at the commencement of the consultation period and all relevant information was also accessible on the Engage Victoria website, as well as Council's Have Your Say page.

The following community consultation sessions were also hosted by DTP-NC during the consultation period, with Council officer attendance at most events:

- 17 – 19 March – Public Acquisition Overlay meetings with affected landowners
- 19 March (5.30pm-7.30pm) – Community Drop-In Session at Lerderderg Library
- 25 March (6.00-7.00pm) – online information session
- 28 March (9.30am-12:30pm) – pop up stand at The Village Shopping Centre
- 2 April (6.00pm-7.00pm) – online information session

All parties have an opportunity to make a submission during the consultation period to the DTP-NC on the draft PSP, DCP, NVPP and Amendment documentation.

The council submission (Appendix 2) has been prepared by Strategic Planning officers in consultation with a range of other internal Council teams including Engineering, Environment, Open Space, Recreation, Community Activation, and Heritage.

Key Issues

There are several key issues, which are considered to have an impact on Council's ability to implement the PSP, DCP and NVPP that require resolution prior to Council providing full support for this Amendment. The issues are outlined below and detailed in Appendix 2 of this report:

Traffic and Transport

- The Bacchus Marsh Eastern Link Road (BMELR) project should be referred to the Minister for Planning to determine whether an Environment Effects Statement is required, and a Public Acquisition Overlay should be applied to the BMELR to reserve land for the road.
- It is recommended that a new requirement be introduced to set a residential lot limit if in the event BMELR is not constructed. The requirement sets out potential external road network upgrades to be undertaken if BMELR has not been built and Council wishes to allow further residential development to ensure efficient movement in and out of the precinct. The list of preliminary external transport project upgrades has been prepared by Council in response to modelled congestion. Council will be testing the scope of external works to refine, or if required to augment the list of external projects required if the bypass is not delivered in a timely fashion.
- The Merrimu PSP should identify an active transport link between the new development in the PSP area and the existing development in Bacchus Marsh and Darley, to reduce car dependence in the new suburb.
- There are significant challenges in upgrading Flanagans Drive and Lindsay Avenue to a connector road standard, the submission recommends changes to the DCP to facilitate their upgrade.
- Additional land take may be required for the intersection of Bacchus Marsh Road and Flanagans Drive to accommodate the required earthworks.
- The alignment of Buckleys Road needs refinement. The road should be realigned to provide a regular intersection with Gisborne Road.
- The Development Contributions Plan should fund the construction of all four lanes of road project seven (RD-07) on Flanagans Drive.
- The Development Contributions Plan should provide include forward funding arrangements for the transport projects in the southern section of the PSP (RD-06, RD-07, IN-08 and IN-09), which would allow Council to deliver these projects early in the development of this PSP.
- The intersection designs should be examined to ensure that they have a size that ensures that they can function appropriately. Some of the intersection designs appear to have excessively long legs.

Low Density Areas

- Guidance should be provided in the PSP to facilitate development of low-density properties in Davies Court, Drysdale Court, Flanagans Drive, Lindsay Avenue, Streeton Drive and Tucker Court.
- Special road cross-sections should be prepared for roads abutting the low-density properties in Flanagans Drive and Possumtail Run to provide an appropriate interface to these areas.

Long Forest Residential Land

- The Place Based Plan should be amended to identify this as a residential area. The plans should show local access roads on the interface to the Long Forest Conservation Area, and the low density lots on Flanagans Drive and Streeton Drive.

Conservation Areas

- Council does not support being the landowner or manager of the biodiversity conservation reserves.
- Council requests the preparation of conservation area concept plans for the conservation areas on the Rescom land to ensure that the biodiversity is adequately identified and the boundaries of the conservation areas are well resolved.

Escarpment

- A linear open space is proposed along the edge of the escarpment to setback development from bushfire hazard, protect development from erosion, to protect development from agricultural amenity impact, and to ensure development is visually recessive to Bacchus Marsh.
- The cross-section should be modified in the PSP to show how the linear open space will be developed.

Affordable Housing

- Council requests stronger guidance for the delivery of affordable housing.

Development Contributions Plan

- Multiple designs and cost sheets have been provided for some projects. A single design and cost sheet should be adopted for all DCP projects.
- Land acquisition plans are required which clearly identifies what land is required for each transport project.
- The intersection designs should be overlaid on recent aerial photographs.
- A reconciliation is required on unit costs for all projects as some line items are using incorrect unit costs.

Addition of Library Expansion Project

- The expansion of the Lerderderg Library (external project) should be included in the DCP as the Merrimu PSP generates demand for 936 sqm of additional library floor space.

Pavilion Construction Costs

- Council has adapted the cost sheet for pavilions using the unit rates in the Bannockburn Southeast DCP, which increases the construction cost of pavilions to \$4.3 million per project and results in an increase to the CIL to its maximum rate of \$1,530 per dwelling.

Indoor Recreation Centre

- The 0.6 Ha of land for the indoor recreation centre is not identified consistently through the DCP. Council requests this project be referenced in all the DCP tables.

Quarry Buffers

- The Schedule to the Urban Growth Zone requires the preparation of an Air Pollution and Nuisance Dust Assessment to be prepared for the development of sensitive uses in the quarry buffer area, which is to be the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority. We request that the review of these assessments be done in consultation with the Environment Protection Authority (EPA).

- The Schedule to the Urban Growth Zone should be amended to include an application requirement for use, subdivision, construct or carry out works in Landscape Values areas.
- Additional planning scheme ordinance is required to implement the PSP:
 - Schedule to Clause 52.33 Post boxes and dry-stone walls
 - Schedule to Clause 53.01 Public open space contribution and subdivision
 - Schedule to Clause 66.04 Referral of permit applications under local provisions
- Council has identified a discrepancy between the Land Capability Assessment and the proposed Environment Audit Overlay (EAO).

Implementation and Resourcing

- Council officers noted workforce and financial implications associated with the implementation of the PSP when approved.
- Council officers have identified the staff required to implement the PSP and have recommended that conversations will be required with the Victorian government to discuss how they can assist Council in the upskilling of staff and defray the cost of additional resources which are required to implement the PSP.

COUNCIL PLAN

The Council Plan 2025-2029 provides as follows:

Strategic Objective 3: Places and spaces that meet the needs of our many and varied communities

Priority 3.2: Align services to meet the needs of the community

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As a Victorian government-initiated planning scheme amendment, the Department of Transport and Planning – New Communities (DTP-NC) is required to pay statutory fees in accordance with the Planning and Environment (Fees) Regulations 2016. DTP-NC is also responsible for covering other costs associated with the Amendment as allowed under the Planning and Environment Act 1987, including advertising and panel costs.

Costs associated with the planning scheme amendment, including expert evidence and Councils legal representation during the standing advisory committee process are budgeted for in the recurrent budget of Council's Growth and Development department.

If the Amendment is ultimately approved, then the number of dwellings and residents in Bacchus Marsh Township will increase. Development contributions will provide significant contributions towards expanded transport and community infrastructure requirements generated by the proposed development. Ongoing maintenance costs for transport infrastructure, facilities and open space will need to be included in future Council budgets.

RISK & OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY ISSUES

Should Council not endorse the draft submission prepared by Council officers and send to DTP-NC for consideration there is a risk that Council will not have sufficient opportunity to influence any post-consultation changes to the plans prior to the Standing Advisory Committee or finalisation of the PSP.

VICTORIAN CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006

In developing this report to Council, the officer considered whether the subject matter raised any human rights issues. In particular, whether the scope of any human right established by the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities is in any way limited, restricted, or interfered with by the recommendations contained in the report. It is considered that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.

OFFICER'S DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

Under section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, officers providing advice to Council must disclose any interests, including the type of interest.

Executive Manager – Henry Bezuidenhout

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

Author – Matthew Milbourne

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

CONCLUSION

There is existing strategic planning justification for the proposed amendment and development of the Merrimu PSP area will make an important contribution towards the State Government's housing targets. Changes have been recommended to Amendment C109 prior to finalisation of the Amendment.

12 COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING REPORTS**12.1 BLACKWOOD HIKING HUB AND BALLAN CYCLING HUB FEASIBILITY STUDIES - ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

Author: Shannon Maloney, Manager Community Place and Prosperity

Authoriser: Leigh McCallum, General Manager Community Strengthening

Attachments: Nil

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the engagement activities planned for the development of the Blackwood Hiking Hub and Ballan Cycling Hub feasibility studies.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In May 2025 Council received \$75,000 to undertake two feasibility studies to understand the potential opportunity to position
- In November 2025 an internal Project Working Group (PWG) was established.
- In December 2025 Council requested quotes from experienced consultants to develop these feasibility studies concurrently. Urban Enterprise (UE) was appointed in late December 2025.
- In February 2026 Urban Enterprise, in consultation with the PWG, developed an engagement plan to gain insights from relevant stakeholders to inform the feasibility studies.
- Stakeholder engagement is proposed to take place in April – May 2026.
- Council and UE will then develop the draft Feasibility Study, seeking further feedback before finalising the studies for Council endorsement.
- The project is planned to be completed by December 2026.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Paul Tatchell

Seconded: Cr John Keogh

That Council:

- 1. Approves the Blackwood Hiking Hub and Ballan Cycling Hub Feasibility Studies Engagement Plan.**
- 2. Notes that once engagement has concluded a further report will be provided to Council for consideration.**

CARRIED

BACKGROUND

Moorabool Shire Council, with funding from the State Government's Tiny Towns Initiative, is undertaking two feasibility studies to strengthen regional tourism and active transport: the Blackwood Hiking Hub Feasibility Study and the Ballan Cycling Hub Feasibility Study.

The Ballan Cycling Hub and Blackwood Hiking Hub Feasibility Studies, both priority projects under the MSC Visitor Economy Strategy, will explore opportunities to strengthen Moorabool's nature-based tourism offering. Together, the studies will examine how Ballan can be positioned as a cycling tourism hub, leveraging its strategic proximity to destination-rich towns such as Daylesford and Ballarat, nearby townships including Gordon and Greendale, and natural assets like the Werribee Gorge and Brisbane Ranges, and how Blackwood can be developed as a hiking hub linking to Bacchus Marsh and the Wombat and Lerderderg State Forests. Both studies aim to drive local economic growth while supporting wellness, sustainability and enhanced visitor experiences.

In December 2025 Council requested proposals from suitably qualified consultants to undertake both studies concurrently. Urban Enterprise (UE) was successful and appointed in late December 2025.

Urban Enterprise will lead stakeholder consultations to identify local issues and opportunities that will inform both studies. Public engagement to develop the draft feasibility studies is proposed to take place in April 2026 including the following activity:

- Councillor one to ones with Council officers.
- Industry engagement – online consultations.
- Local businesses and community group sessions:
 - Ballan Cycling Hub Consultation – Ballan Library, Monday 20 April, 10.00am – 11.30am.
 - Blackwood Hiking Hub Consultation – Blackwood Hall, Monday 20 April, 2.00pm – 3.30pm.
- Council website and submissions through the Have Your Say platform.

Next Steps

Once consultation has been undertaken the following timeline is proposed for the draft and final feasibility studies:

- June – July: Draft Feasibility Studies presented to Executive and Councillors.
- August: Draft Feasibility Studies presented to an Ordinary Meeting of Council.
- September: Public Exhibition.
- October: Final Feasibility Studies presented to Executive and Councillors.
- November: Final Feasibility Studies presented to an Ordinary Meeting of Council.

PROPOSAL

It is proposed that Council support the engagement plan presented.

COUNCIL PLAN

The Council Plan 2025-2029 provides as follows:

Strategic Objective 2: A dynamic and resilient local economy

Priority 2.1: Grow local industry, employment and business opportunities

The proposed Blackwood Hiking Hub and Ballan Cycling Hub Feasibility Studies Engagement Plan is consistent with the Council Plan 2025-2029.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The budget for the completion of the two feasibility studies, including stakeholder engagement, is \$100,000. Council received \$75,000 from Regional Development Victoria. Council is contributing \$25,000 from the Arts and Economic Development recurrent budget.

RISK & OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY ISSUES

Risks associated with not proceeding with the Engagement Plan include:

Risk Identifier	Detail of Risk	Risk Rating	Control/s
Perception – lack of trust in Council	A lack of consultation can erode community trust, lead to projects that don't reflect local needs, and increase community opposition that may delay or obstruct implementation.	Medium	Implement a structured engagement plan; provide transparent updates; demonstrate how feedback influences decisions.
Financial	Public engagement takes longer and the studies are not delivered within grant funding deadlines.	High	The engagement plan is implemented to appropriate timeframes.

COMMUNICATIONS & CONSULTATION STRATEGY

Level of Engagement	Stakeholder	Activities	Location	Date	Outcome
Inform	Moorabool Shire Community Council officers Hiking and Cycling event organisers and groups Councillors Executive Community groups	Have Your Say platform (questionnaire to be circulated via Councillor delivery) Council website Corporate Facebook Targeted emails Councillor Information Bulletin (CIB) Councillor and Executive briefings Phone	Various	April 2026 – December 2026	Development of the Ballan Cycling and Blackwood Hiking Feasibility Studies to a high standard informed by industry and the local community.

Level of Engagement	Stakeholder	Activities	Location	Date	Outcome
		concierge service for those who are not computer literate			
Consult	Cycling and Hiking event organisers Councillors Executive Council officers People wishing to provide their feedback/input Local businesses Local community groups and residents Hiking and Cycling industry groups Tourism stakeholders including Tourism Midwest Victoria (TMV), Visit Victoria Cycling and Hiking peak bodies State and federal government	Targeted emails Corporate website and social media Councillor 1:1 meetings Councillor and Executive briefings 1:1 meetings with event organisers Have Your Say platform Face to face and online consultation meetings	Various	April 2026 – December 2026	Development of the Ballan Cycling and Blackwood Hiking Feasibility Studies to a high standard informed by industry and the local community.

Level of Engagement	Stakeholder	Activities	Location	Date	Outcome
Involve	Internal project working group Executive Councillors	1:1 meetings Direct email Project working group meetings Councillor and Executive briefings	Various	April 2026 – December 2026	Development of the Ballan Cycling and Blackwood Hiking Feasibility Studies to a high standard informed by industry and the local community.
Collaborate	Internal project working group Executive Councillors	1:1 meetings Direct email Project working group meetings Councillor and Executive briefings	Various	April 2026 – December 2026	Development of the Ballan Cycling and Blackwood Hiking Feasibility Studies to a high standard informed by industry and the local community.

VICTORIAN CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006

In developing this report to Council, the officer considered whether the subject matter raised any human rights issues. In particular, whether the scope of any human right established by the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities is in any way limited, restricted or interfered with by the recommendations contained in the report. It is considered that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.

OFFICER'S DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

Under section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, officers providing advice to Council must disclose any interests, including the type of interest.

General Manager – Leigh McCallum

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

Author – Shannon Maloney

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

CONCLUSION

The engagement plan will ensure that the Blackwood Hiking Hub and Ballan Cycling Hub Feasibility Studies are informed by meaningful input from key stakeholders. Urban Enterprise, working alongside Council's Project Working Group, will undertake engagement in April–May 2026 before preparing draft studies for further feedback.

12.2 RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION NO. 307 - GORDON-MT EGERTON ROAD BIKE/WALKING TRACK

Author: Travis Kirwood, Manager Community Development and Activation

Authoriser: Leigh McCallum, General Manager Community Strengthening

Attachments: 1. Report - Notice of Motion No. 307 - Gordon-Mt Egerton Road Bike/Walking Track (under separate cover)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide a response to the Notice of Motion No. 307, attached, requesting a report into a bike/walking track between Gordon and Mt Egerton on the Gordon-Mt Egerton Road.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- At the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 7 September 2022, Council passed a Notice of Motion requesting the CEO investigate the feasibility of shared trail between Gordon and Mt Egerton.
- As part of the Recreation and Leisure Strategy, Officers also reviewed the Hike and Bike Strategy. This Notice of Motion was placed on hold as it formed part of the process of both the creation and review of these two documents.
- The Recreation and Leisure Strategy has been adopted, and paths and trails form a major piece of the implementation plan. Officers have prepared a response to this Notice of Motion noting further work will be required in the future if this is deemed a viable and priority project.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Ally Munari

Seconded: Cr Moira Berry

That Council:

1. Notes the report in response to Notice of Motion No. 307 – Gordon-Mt Egerton Road Bike/Walking Track.
2. Refers \$40,000 to a future budget to undertake concept design of the proposed path.
3. Notes that once concept designs are completed a further report will be presented to Council for consideration of referring the project to the long-term capital program and Council's Advocacy document.

CARRIED

BACKGROUND

At the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 7 September 2022, Council voted in favour of a Notice of Motion:

That Council:

- 1. *Requests the Chief Executive Officer prepare a report into a bike/walking track between Gordon and Mt Egerton on the Gordon-Mt Egerton Road.***
- 2. *Requests consideration in the report of:***
 - (a) An active bike/walking path to accommodate for all types of exercise;***
 - (b) Connecting the footpath from the corner of Russell Street and Urquhart Street, Gordon to the start of the footpath at Malones Road, Mt Egerton;***
 - (c) Consideration and respect for the native character, with the track interweaving between established trees, shrubs and bushes, protecting the countryside and natural landscape;***
 - (d) Installation of a few seats scattered along the route for rest and rejuvenation;***
 - (e) Safety crossing at the train line;***
 - (f) Pedestrian safety; and***
 - (g) Affordable granite sand path.***

Officers' responses to the Notice of Motion are listed below, addressing each item as presented in the Resolution.

Requests consideration in the report of:

- (a) An active bike/walking path to accommodate for all types of exercise.**
 - Officers have reviewed options and details are provided below against each point raised as part of the Notice of Motion.
- (b) Connecting the footpath from the corner of Russell Street and Urquhart Street, Gordon to the start of the footpath at Malones Road, Mt Egerton.**
 - Officers have reviewed the proposed shared path connection as described above. This investigation has found that creating the proposed connecting path between the two towns poses a number of considerations, these include:
 - The location of power infrastructure including power lines.
 - The location of existing trees and local flora on both sides of the road that would need to be removed for the path to be an option.
 - There is an existing culvert crossing (raised section of the road to allow water to pass underneath) located approximately 150m north of the intersection of Gordon-Mt Egerton Road and McIntosh Lane. At this location the roadside verge narrows to approximately 2.5m, the narrowness is likely to present a challenge during detailed design.
 - In at least one location on each side of the road the verge appears to reduce to less than 2.5m, meaning the shared path would either need to go to below minimum standard size, or cross the main road at least once along the journey.

(c) Consideration and respect for the native character, with the track interweaving between established trees, shrubs and bushes, protecting the countryside and natural landscape.

- On both sides of the road there are sections that make the 2.5m path a challenge as the natural terrain of the countryside would see significant earth works required to ensure a smooth experience for users.
- A number of houses, in particular at the Gordon end of the proposed path, have beautified their nature strip – this would need to be considered in any future project from a community engagement perspective.
- After reviewing the possible track options it has been identified that a large number of trees and shrubs would need to be removed if this project was to proceed.
- A concept design of the path is recommended to identify and address the constraints along the route.

(d) Installation of a few seats scattered along the route for rest and rejuvenation.

- Rest and recovery seating, water fountains and other supporting amenities would be considered as part of the design. This would be a standard design inclusion given the length of the proposed shared path.

(e) Safety crossing at the train line.

- This requires further investigation and support from Vic Track. However, discussion could only occur once the project has progressed to detailed design. A preferred side for the crossing would need to be nominated and options worked through.
- The creation of a shared path could result in a change to the current crossing requirements. This would likely require the installation of different boom gates or introduction to pedestrian gates that are currently not in operation at this site. The crossing may need to be expanded as the road crossing allows for vehicle traffic movement only.

(f) Pedestrian safety; and

- Further pedestrian safety and appropriate path terrain would be considered as part of a detailed design process.
- The path itself would, at different points throughout the potential user's journey, come into very close proximity to cars travelling at 80kms. The design would need to take into consideration what measures could be put into place to protect users of the path.
- User safety is always a priority of a design, this is especially important given the proximity to an 80km zone.

(g) Affordable granite sand path.

- The type of material used would be considered as part of a design process, should the project progress. Given the terrain of the area a more permanent solution would be encouraged as rainwater would be crossing this path regularly and ongoing maintenance could be higher.

PROPOSAL

It is proposed that Council considers this report in response to the Notice of Motion.

COUNCIL PLAN

The Council Plan 2025-2029 provides as follows:

Strategic Objective 1: Healthy, inclusive and safe communities

Priority 1.3: Improve access and opportunities for all modes of transport

The proposal of a shared path is consistent with the Council Plan 2025-2029.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is currently no allocation in the Council budget or CIP to fund an active path between the two towns. Gordon-Mt Egerton Road is approximately 6km between the town centres.

A very high-level cost of the proposed path between Mt Egerton and Gordon would be in the order of \$1.0M and \$1.5M and this could vary based on ultimate design of the path, material selection and current unknowns associated with the project.

To inform a detailed cost estimate for the project, initial design work would be required with a cost estimate of \$40,000.

RISK & OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY ISSUES

The key risks related to this project are around pedestrian safety.

Risk Identifier	Detail of Risk	Risk Rating	Control/s
OHS – Pedestrian safety	Safety of users of the potential shared path.	High	Managed through design.
Financial – Inadequate funds to finish project	Project funding.	High	Currently not funded, cost estimations are difficult to gauge due to challenging elements like rail crossing.

COMMUNICATIONS & CONSULTATION STRATEGY

Level of Engagement	Stakeholder	Activities	Location	Date	Outcome
Consult	Community	Community engagement	Various	To be confirmed if project proceeds.	
Consult	Small Town Enhancement Plan (STEP) consultation	Community engagement	Mt Egerton	Part of consultation of STEP.	A community member provided feedback on the inclusion of this trial.

VICTORIAN CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006

In developing this report to Council, the officer considered whether the subject matter raised any human rights issues. In particular, whether the scope of any human right established by the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities is in any way limited, restricted or interfered with by the recommendations contained in the report. It is considered that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.

OFFICER'S DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

Under section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, officers providing advice to Council must disclose any interests, including the type of interest.

General Manager – Leigh McCallum

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

Author – Travis Kirwood

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

CONCLUSION

Council to consider the report in response to the Notice of Motion No. 307 which was passed at the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 7 September 2022.

13 CUSTOMER AND CORPORATE SERVICES REPORTS**13.1 AUDIT AND RISK ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL - REPORTS**

Author: Kaylene Bowker, Executive Assistant

Authoriser: David Jackson, General Manager Customer and Corporate Services

Attachments: 1. Audit and Risk Advisory Committee Summary of Minutes - 19 November 2025 (under separate cover)

BACKGROUND

Advisory Committees are established to assist Council with executing specific functions or duties.

Advisory Committees of Council currently have no delegated powers to act on behalf of Council or commit Council to any expenditure unless resolved explicitly by Council following recommendation from the Committee. Their function is purely advisory.

Advisory Committees are required to report to Council at intervals determined by the Council.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Councillors, as representatives of the following Advisory Committees of Council, present the reports of the Committee Meetings for Council consideration.

Committee	Meeting Date	Council Representatives
Audit and Risk Advisory Committee	Wednesday 19 November 2025	Cr Moira Berry Cr Paul Tatchell Cr Rod Ward (Sub)

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Moira Berry

Seconded: Cr John Keogh

That Council receives the Audit and Risk Advisory Committee Summary of Minutes for the meeting held on Wednesday 19 November 2025.

CARRIED

14 COMMUNITY ASSETS & INFRASTRUCTURE REPORTS**14.1 IRRIGATION WATER ALLOCATION POLICY ADOPTION**

Author: Mitchell Cunningham, Manager Environment & Waste

Authoriser: Phil Jeffrey, General Manager Community Assets & Infrastructure

Attachments: 1. Irrigation Water Allocation Policy (under separate cover)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council adoption of the Irrigation Water Policy, which sets out Moorabool Shire Council's approach to trading of its water irrigation allocation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Council holds irrigation water entitlements within the Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District, together with licensed groundwater (bore) entitlements that are used in maintaining open space assets.
- Seasonal water allocations fluctuate depending on climatic conditions and determinations by Southern Rural Water, creating variability in available supply.
- In some years Council may hold surplus allocation, while in others additional allocation may be required to maintain service levels across irrigated reserves.
- This policy provides a formalised framework guiding water trading decisions.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Tom Sullivan

Seconded: Cr John Keogh

That Council adopts the Irrigation Water Policy.

CARRIED

BACKGROUND

Council holds several reliability surface water shares (made up of high reliability (178.9MK) and low reliability (59.6ML)) within the Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District, together with licensed groundwater (bore) entitlements. These entitlements provide access to irrigation water subject to seasonal allocation determinations by Southern Rural Water.

Council's annual water requirements vary due to:

- Seasonal rainfall and climatic variability;
- Delivery of new capital works and landscape projects;
- Irrigation system upgrades and water efficiency improvements;
- Growth in demand for sporting and recreational facilities.

All water allocations are credited to Council's Allocation Bank Accounts (ABAs), which function similarly to financial accounts and record water use, carryover and trade volumes.

Unused water allocation may be:

- Carried over (subject to applicable rules including the 100% rule);
- Temporarily traded;
- Internally redistributed across Council-managed sites.

The water system in the Werribee and Bacchus Marsh Irrigation Districts is fully allocated. As such, allocation trading provides flexibility within a closed system without increasing overall extraction.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Council's approach to water trading is deliberately conservative and centred on protecting long-term community interests. Council will only engage in temporary (seasonal) allocation trading, meaning that any trade relates solely to unused water allocation within the current irrigation season. This ensures that Council retains ownership of its underlying water shares while allowing flexibility to respond to seasonal fluctuations. By limiting trading to allocation only, Council safeguards its strategic water assets for future generations while maintaining the ability to optimise short-term water management.

Council will not enter into permanent transfers or limited term transfers (leasing) of water shares without formal Council approval. Water shares are long-term public assets that underpin irrigation of sporting reserves, parks, civic open spaces and community facilities. Permanent or lease-based disposal of water shares could reduce Council's long-term resilience to drought, population growth and climate change. Requiring formal Council approval for such transactions ensures appropriate governance, transparency and community oversight before any structural change to water entitlements is considered.

Council will also maintain a contingency buffer within its Allocation Bank Accounts (ABAs) to ensure service continuity. Seasonal conditions can change rapidly, and irrigation demand may increase due to extreme heat events or prolonged dry periods. Retaining a buffer protects the condition and usability of community sporting facilities and open spaces, reduces reliance on more expensive potable water sources and ensures Council can continue delivering services without disruption.

All trading activity will be undertaken in compliance with the rules and determinations of Southern Rural Water and the requirements of the Water Act 1989. The regulatory framework governing water entitlements, carryover and trading is complex and designed to protect the integrity and sustainability of Victoria's regulated water systems. Compliance ensures Council meets its statutory obligations, avoids penalties and maintains its reputation as a responsible water entitlement holder.

While financial return may be achieved where surplus allocation exists, trading decisions will be driven by operational need, sustainability and community benefit rather than market speculation. This reinforces Council's stewardship role and protects against financial and reputational risk. Collectively, these guiding principles ensure that Council's water assets are managed prudently, transparently and in alignment with long-term community service delivery needs.

TRADING POLICY

The Policy establishes a four-step process for trading of water as follows:

1. Seasonal Assessment – Review allocations and forecast demand.

2. Identification of Surplus or Shortfall – Confirm water is genuinely surplus or determine additional needs.
3. Risk and Compliance Check – Confirm compliance, financial prudence and service security.
4. Trade Execution – Undertake trade through approved platforms or direct transfer, subject to formal registration in the Water Register.

ACCEPTABLE ACTIVITIES

Permitted activities include:

- Temporary allocation trading within the irrigation season;
- Trading surplus allocation after operational needs are met;
- Purchase of additional allocation where more economical than potable water use;
- Trading that supports community and local economic benefit.

Prohibited activities (without formal approval) include:

- Permanent sale of water shares;
- Leasing of water shares;
- Trading delivery shares;
- Trading that compromises Council service levels or creates reputational risk.

COUNCIL PLAN

The Council Plan 2025-2029 provides as follows:

Strategic Objective 4: A Council that engages and adapts

Priority 4.2: Align services and resources to sustainably meet the needs of our community

The proposal Irrigation Water Allocation Policy is consistent with the Council Plan 2025-2029.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from the adoption of this Policy itself, as it does not commit Council to any immediate expenditure. However, the Policy establishes a structured framework that creates opportunities for positive financial outcomes where water trading is planned and managed effectively. By identifying genuine surplus allocation and trading it within the irrigation season, Council may generate revenue to offset annual entitlement storage fees and irrigation operating costs. Similarly, the Policy enables the purchase of additional seasonal allocation where it is more cost-effective than the use of potable water, potentially reducing operational expenditure in dry years. Accordingly, while the Policy does not introduce new financial commitments, it provides governance mechanisms that support prudent financial management and the potential optimisation of Council's water-related costs.

RISK & OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY ISSUES

Risk Identifier	Detail of Risk	Risk Rating	Control/s
Insufficient Water for Service Delivery	Trading too much allocation or mis-forecasting seasonal demand could result in insufficient water to	Medium	Conservative trading approach; mandatory seasonal demand forecasting; maintenance

	maintain sporting fields, parks and community facilities, potentially leading to asset deterioration, increased potable water costs or service disruption.		of contingency buffer; prohibition on trading water required for current or foreseeable needs; staged review before trade execution.
Regulatory Non-Compliance	Failure to comply with trading rules, carryover limits, ABA conditions or requirements under the Water Act 1989 and Southern Rural Water determinations could result in penalties, rejected trades or reputational damage.	Low	Formal risk and compliance check prior to trade; use of approved trading platforms; lodgement and confirmation through the Water Register; internal financial and governance oversight.
Financial Exposure	Poorly timed trades, price volatility in the water market or purchasing allocation at inflated prices may reduce financial benefit or increase operational costs.	Medium	Evidence-based seasonal assessment; confirmation that trades deliver financial or operational benefit; avoidance of speculative trading; monitoring of market conditions prior to execution.
Reputational Risk	Community concern may arise if water trading is perceived as prioritising revenue over public amenity, particularly during dry conditions.	Medium	Clear policy position prohibiting speculative trading; transparent documentation and reporting; Council approval required for permanent transfers; prioritisation of community service delivery before trade consideration.

COMMUNICATIONS & CONSULTATION STRATEGY

Community consultation was not undertaken in the development of this Policy, as it relates solely to the operational management and governance framework surrounding the trading of seasonal water allocations. The Policy does not alter Council's water entitlements, reduce service levels, change irrigation practices, or impact the community's access to parks, reserves or sporting facilities. Instead, it formalises internal processes to ensure responsible and compliant management of water resources already held by Council. As such, the Policy is administrative in nature and does not directly affect the use of water by the community. However, during the development of the policy the following consultation took place.

Level of Engagement	Stakeholder	Activities	Location	Date	Outcome
Internal – Consult	Internal Council Staff	Multiple workshops and operational meetings to review current water usage, irrigation demand forecasting, allocation management processes and governance controls. Discussions focused on risk tolerance, contingency buffers and operational impacts of trading.	Online & in-person	2025	Requirements built into Policy.
External – Inform / Consult	Southern Rural Water	Ongoing online engagement and review of published allocation data, trading rules, carryover requirements and Water Register processes to ensure compliance and accuracy of policy settings.	Online	2025	Ensured Policy alignment with current trading rules.

VICTORIAN CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006

In developing this report to Council, the officer considered whether the subject matter raised any human rights issues. In particular, whether the scope of any human right established by the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities is in any way limited, restricted or interfered with by the recommendations contained in the report. It is considered that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.

OFFICER'S DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

Under section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, officers providing advice to Council must disclose any interests, including the type of interest.

General Manager – Phil Jeffrey

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

Author – Mitchell Cunningham

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

CONCLUSION

The Irrigation Water Allocation Policy establishes a framework for the management and trading of Council's irrigation water and bore water allocations. It ensures that seasonal allocation trading is conducted responsibly, in compliance with Southern Rural Water requirements and the Water Act 1989, while protecting Council's long-term ownership of critical water entitlements. By prioritising community service delivery, asset condition and drought resilience, the Policy provides operational flexibility without compromising public amenity, strengthens governance, supports financial prudence and reinforces Council's commitment to sustainable and transparent water management.

14.2 SMALL TOWNSHIP ENHANCEMENT PLAN ADOPTION AND UPDATE ON WAR MEMORIAL PROJECT - MOUNT EGERTON

Author: Mitchell Cunningham, Manager Environment & Waste
Authoriser: Phil Jeffrey, General Manager Community Assets & Infrastructure
Attachments: 1. Mount Egerton STEP Master Plan (under separate cover)
2. Mount Egerton War Memorial (under separate cover)

PURPOSE

This report provides a summary of the outcomes of the Small Township Enhancement Project (STEP) at Mount Egerton and includes an update on the design outcomes for the war memorial located within Open Space 216, at the corner of Main Road and Steetley Lane.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- At the August Ordinary Meeting of Council, the Mount Egerton STEP process was presented, including approval for the use of Open Space 216 for a War Memorial.
- Community consultation for the Mount Egerton STEP was undertaken during key project milestones: before and after the development of the master plan. These engagement activities provided opportunities for community members to provide feedback and help inform the project direction.
- The final layout has been prepared with consideration of both community input and the heritage character of Mount Egerton, ensuring that the design outcomes are sensitive and appropriate to the local context.
- Council is requested to note the proposed outcomes to allow progression of landscape and civil design plans. Funding for project implementation has been nominally allocated in the draft 2026/2027 Capital Works Budget, with project delivery anticipated within that financial year.
- The Mount Egerton War Memorial Committee, in consultation with Council, has developed a concept for Open Space 216. A number of elements within Open Space 216 have been funded by the Committee through grants and are ready for construction. The construction will be project managed by Council as these assets will be handed over to Council following the construction.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Ally Munari
Seconded: Cr Tom Sullivan

That Council:

1. Approves the Mount Egerton Small Township Enhancement Plan to facilitate the progression and completion of landscape and civil design plans.
2. Notes that the Elaine Small Township Enhancement Plan is scheduled for development during the 2026/2027 financial year, with a further report to be presented to Council upon completion of the master planning process, including community consultation.

3. **Notes the war memorial concept plan to facilitate progression of detail design.**
4. **Refers items identified in each plan to future capital budgets for consideration as part of the annual budget process.**

CARRIED

INTRODUCTION

This report provides an update on the completion of the STEP for Mount Egerton, which has been developed through a process of community engagement and strategic planning. It outlines the key outcomes of the Mount Egerton STEP, including the integration of identified works into future Capital Improvement Programs and the commencement of detailed design for these elements.

The report also provides an update on the war memorial design which Council, in conjunction with the Mount Egerton War Memorial Committee, has developed over the past six months. This war memorial not only serves as a tribute to the soldiers it is intended to honour, but also recognises the dedication of the local community who have secured grants to enable the delivery of elements of the project.

BACKGROUND

Mount Egerton was identified in 2024 as the next township for inclusion in Moorabool Shire Council's Small Township Enhancement Project (STEP) program. During the August 2025 OMC it was noted that the Mount Egerton STEP would be scheduled for design in the 2025/2026 financial year and approved the use of Open Space 216 for establishing a war memorial. The STEP initiative provides a strategic framework for identifying and delivering targeted public realm improvements in smaller townships across the Shire, aiming to enhance liveability, preserve local character and support community wellbeing. The program has been successfully delivered in recent years in Greendale, Blackwood and Lal Lal and is guided by a combination of community feedback, Council priorities and available budget allocations.

The Mount Egerton STEP was developed throughout the 2025/2026 financial year, with key elements of the plan proposed for delivery as part of Council's 2026/2027 Capital Improvement Program, subject to inclusion in the budget. Community engagement was a critical component of the project, with two formal stages of consultation undertaken. The first phase sought broad community feedback to identify local priorities, while the second phase focused on reviewing the draft township enhancement plan. This two-stage engagement approach ensured that the final plan was informed by community needs, values and aspirations.

The resulting concept and landscape plans are context-sensitive, reflective of Mount Egerton's rural identity and responsive to feedback received during consultation. The plans aim to achieve a balance between heritage considerations, functional improvements and community expectations, supporting achievable outcomes for the township.

Following the completion of the Mount Egerton STEP design process, Elaine has been identified as the next township for inclusion in the STEP program. It is proposed that the design and community engagement process for Elaine be undertaken during the 2026/2027 financial year, with implementation subject to budget allocation in 2027/2028. This sequential approach allows Council to apply a consistent methodology across projects and maintain momentum in delivering strategic improvements to the Shire's small townships.

MOUNT EGERTON SMALL TOWNSHIP ENHANCEMENT PLAN PROJECT

Based on the outcomes of the Have Your Say community engagement process, the provision of additional footpaths within the Mount Egerton township was identified as the highest priority for consideration. This was followed by reserve upgrades and activation of public land, including both Council-managed and Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) land, and thirdly, landscaping and tree planting initiatives. These priorities reflect strong community support for improved pedestrian connectivity, enhanced use of public open space and environmental improvements within the township.

In response to the engagement outcomes, a set of community-preferred STEP upgrade priorities have been identified to guide future planning, design and implementation. These priorities focus on improving safety, accessibility, township presentation and functionality while maintaining Mount Egerton's rural and heritage character.

Key projects include township gateway upgrades, incorporating a condition assessment of the existing picture-frame signage, the installation of secondary entry signage and enhancements to the overall gateway framework to strengthen arrival points and township identity. Improved pedestrian connectivity has also been strongly supported, with a proposed footpath along Main Road to provide a continuous link to the proposed War Memorial Park within Open Space 216.

Further investigations are recommended to assess the feasibility of extending pedestrian connections from Main Road to key community destinations, including Mount Egerton Primary School and the Mount Egerton Recreation Reserve. These connections would improve safety for pedestrians, particularly school children and recreational users, and support active transport within the township.

Additional improvements identified through the consultation process include the investigation of increased car parking provision in front of the Mechanics Hall, with consideration given to the inclusion of accessible (disabled) parking spaces. Upgrades to the township noticeboard are also proposed to improve community information sharing and enhance the presentation of this key piece of township infrastructure.

Landscaping improvements along Main Road were identified as a supporting priority, including targeted tree planting to strengthen the streetscape, alongside weed control measures and improvements to maintenance access. These works would contribute to the overall amenity of the township, support environmental outcomes and reinforce Mount Egerton's rural character.

Collectively these priorities provide a clear and community-endorsed framework for the staged delivery of STEP projects in Mount Egerton and will inform future detailed design, funding considerations and implementation planning.

MOUNT EGERTON WAR MEMORIAL

The Mount Egerton War Memorial has been developed collaboratively between Council and the Mount Egerton War Memorial Committee through a considered design process that reflects community values and the significance of the site. The memorial is intended to provide a respectful and enduring place of remembrance, acknowledging the service and sacrifice of local residents while integrating with the surrounding open space and broader Small Township Enhancement Project (STEP) works.

A key element of the design is the inclusion of memorial boards that formally recognise and pay respect to individuals from the Mount Egerton area who served in wartime. These boards provide

a focal point for reflection and commemoration, ensuring that local history and contribution are preserved and respectfully presented for current and future generations.

The design incorporates a network of accessible footpaths and complementary landscaping throughout the site. These elements improve accessibility, support inclusive use of the memorial space and enhance the overall amenity of the area. The landscaping has been designed to create a calm and reflective setting while remaining consistent with Mount Egerton's rural and heritage character.

Tree planting forms an important component of the memorial design, including the incorporation of trees originating from Mount Egerton Primary School. This element establishes a strong symbolic and intergenerational connection between the school, the memorial and the wider community, reinforcing themes of remembrance, continuity and community ownership. Provision has also been made within the design to allow for a shelter structure, subject to funding availability and further detailed design.

The war memorial has been deliberately integrated with broader STEP infrastructure improvements, including the connection of new and existing footpaths and consideration of additional car parking to support access during commemorative events. These elements will be delivered as part of the wider STEP project, ensuring a co-ordinated and cohesive approach to improving access, functionality and the overall presentation of the township.

COUNCIL PLAN

The Council Plan 2025-2029 provides as follows:

Strategic Objective 4: A Council that engages and adapts

Priority 4.2: Align services and resources to sustainably meet the needs of our community

The proposed Mount Egerton STEP and War Memorial Projects are consistent with the Council Plan 2025-2029.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding for the implementation of the Mount Egerton STEP will be put forward as part of the 2026/2027 Capital Works Budget, with proposed delivery planned for the 2026/2027 financial year, subject to funding approval.

As part of the Mount Egerton STEP, the proposed War Memorial, located at the corner of Steetley Lane and Main Road, will be funded through external community grants. Ancillary components to upgrade of the parcel of land including a shelter, carparking and path connections will also be put forward as part of the 2026/2027 Capital Works Budget.

RISK & OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY ISSUES

Risk Identifier	Detail of Risk	Risk Rating	Control/s
Consultation	Community opposition or lack of support.	High	Detailed community engagement has been undertaken throughout the design process.
Budget	Budget overruns due to unforeseen costs.	Medium	Include contingency funds; apply rigorous project cost estimation and regular financial reviews.

Approvals	Delays due to planning permit or regulatory approval processes.	High	Council's planning department and relevant state bodies have been consulted with during the design process.
Maintenance	Lack of long-term maintenance planning.	Medium	Develop ongoing maintenance schedules; allocate budget and assign responsible bodies.
Schedule	Plan is not implemented within set timelines.	Medium	Monitoring of design with any value management.

COMMUNICATIONS & CONSULTATION STRATEGY

Level of Engagement	Stakeholder	Activities	Location	Date	Outcome
Consult	Community Groups / Stakeholders	"Have your Say" digital platform	Online	August 2025	Feedback provided by community and stakeholders.
Consult	Community Groups / Stakeholders	Drop-in sessions	Mount Egerton	August & September 2025	Feedback provided by community and stakeholders.
Engage	Various Internal Stakeholders	Internal Workshops	Various	Various times throughout 2025	Feedback provided by stakeholders.

VICTORIAN CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006

In developing this report to Council, the officer considered whether the subject matter raised any human rights issues. In particular, whether the scope of any human right established by the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities is in any way limited, restricted or interfered with by the recommendations contained in the report. It is considered that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.

OFFICER'S DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

Under section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, officers providing advice to Council must disclose any interests, including the type of interest.

General Manager – Phil Jeffrey

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

Author – Mitchell Cunningham

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

CONCLUSION

The Mount Egerton STEP has been developed through a robust process of strategic planning and community engagement and provides a clear, community-endorsed framework for the delivery of

targeted public realm improvements within the township. The outcomes of the STEP reflect local priorities, respond to Mount Egerton's rural and heritage character and align with Council's broader strategic objectives. Noting the proposed STEP outcomes will enable the progression and completion of detailed civil and landscape design, supporting timely delivery of identified projects in accordance with the 2026/2027 Capital Improvement Program.

The Mount Egerton War Memorial represents a significant community-led initiative that has been developed in collaboration between Council and the Mount Egerton War Memorial Committee. The design provides a respectful and enduring place of remembrance, acknowledges local service and sacrifice and demonstrates strong community commitment through the securing of external grant funding. Noting the war memorial plan will allow construction to commence, and integration with STEP infrastructure to ensure co-ordinated delivery and long-term asset management outcomes for the township.

14.3 RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION NO. 345 - GRIFFITH STREET UPGRADE

Author: Ewen Nevett, Manager Engineering Services

Authoriser: Phil Jeffrey, General Manager Community Assets & Infrastructure

Attachments: 1. Minutes at Item - NOM. 345 – Griffith Street Upgrade (under separate cover)

PURPOSE

To provide a response to Notice of Motion 345 regarding the upgrading of Griffith Street, Bacchus Marsh and the safety of pedestrians crossing the road.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Significant investment has been, and is being made into the Griffith Street corridor.
- New bus stop built in 2023; shared user paths included in the 2025-2026 CIP; and interim safety improvements planned for 2026 to improve the safety of pedestrians crossing Griffith Street near the Providence Aged Care facility.
- Continue to advocate for grant funding to complete the duplication of Griffith Street.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Moira Berry

Seconded: Cr Jarrod Bingham

That Council notes the actions taken, and future actions proposed to be taken, to improve Griffith Street, Bacchus Marsh for all road users.

CARRIED

BACKGROUND

The Council resolution passed at the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 17 December 2025 requested officers to provide an update on:

- The current status of the Griffith Street Upgrade project;
- Funding arrangements and any external agency involvement;
- Expected timelines for design, community engagement, tendering and construction; and
- Any factors causing ongoing delays.

to Investigate pedestrian safety improvements on Griffith Street including, but not limited to:

- A pedestrian crossing;
- A pedestrian refuge island;
- Traffic calming measures; and
- Any other feasible treatments to improve safety for elderly residents and other vulnerable pedestrians.

And to provide a report back to Council detailing interim repair actions taken and recommended long-term pedestrian and road safety solutions for Griffith Street, Bacchus Marsh.

Council developed a concept in 2021 for the upgrade of Griffith Street including duplication of Griffith Street to a four lane divided road; extending the footpath on the north side from Moonglow Crescent to Franklin Street; creating a Shared User Path on the south side; upgrading and sealing of service roads; intersection treatments; a signalised pedestrian crossing; and improved landscaping outcomes (including replacing existing trees with trees more sympathetic to the local environment).

Community engagement was undertaken in mid-2021 and the concept was then finalised.

Since then:

- Council has advocated to State and Federal governments for funding for the project, including in the lead up to the last State and Federal elections.
- Council successfully applied for funding and installed a new bus stop and footpath connection in February 2023 on the north side of Griffith Street in the vicinity of the Providence Aged Care facility.
- The Department of Transport and Planning have amended their proposal for the intersection upgrade of Grant Street/Station Street/Griffith Street requiring some re-design for the Griffith Street duplication connection at the eastern end.
- The TAC announced funding for Safer Local Roads & Streets in early 2025, which included funding for improving pedestrian safety. The footpath on the north side was enhanced to a Shared User Path (SUP) with raised crossings at the intersecting streets with SUP user priority – this project was approved for award by Council at the OMC meeting on 4 February 2026.
- The Federal Government announced funding in mid-2025 for Active Transport projects. Council was successful in attracting further funding to construct the SUP on the south side of Griffith Street. Pre-planning is underway for this project to commence in late 2026.
- With the changes to the DTP intersection design and the segmented funding for the SUP's, the design for the four lane duplication is being re-visited, although still being consistent with the original concept developed in 2021. This design review and updating is expected to be finalised by 30 June 2026.

Given the previous consultation took place in 2021, it is planned to re-engage with the community in mid-2026 to reconfirm and inform of the intersection changes; service road improvements; pedestrian crossing points and landscaping proposal.

PROPOSAL

Council has taken the opportunity to fund various elements of the overall Griffith Street Improvement project as various government grant programs have become available.

In recognition of the safety of pedestrians crossing Griffith Street, and the uncertainty with funding and timing for the duplication components, Council has prepared an interim line marking proposal in the vicinity of the Providence Aged Care facility that includes the installation of a protected pedestrian refuge island to assist elderly pedestrians cross the road. This work is planned to be completed in 2025-2026.

Council is now preparing detailed construction drawings and landscape plans based on the 2021 concept which are expected to be finalised by the middle of 2026. This process will include re-engagement with the community.

Applications for funding the remaining elements of the Griffith Street Improvement project will be advanced as and when Government funding programs become available. Any State and/or Federal funding will require a Council contribution, which is allowed for in the forward Capital Improvement Program.

Completion of the Griffith Street Improvement project will be dependent on securing external funds.

Council will continue to monitor and maintain the current road through its road maintenance operations to ensure safety for all road users.

COUNCIL PLAN

The Council Plan 2025-2029 provides as follows:

Strategic Objective 1: Healthy, inclusive and safe communities

Priority 1.3: Improve access and opportunities for all modes of transport

The proposal to construct the Shared Users Paths, install an interim pedestrian crossing point and advocate for funding to duplicate Griffith Street are consistent with the Council Plan 2025-2029.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications for Council. All works are either funded and on the current CIP or, for future works, provided for in the Councils' Strategic Financial Plan, noting that external funding will be required to construct the ultimate upgrade.

RISK & OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY ISSUES

Risk Identifier	Detail of Risk	Risk Rating	Control/s
Financial – Inadequate funds to finish project	Grant funding is not forthcoming for the duplication component.	Medium	Continuous design reviews to ensure the duplication is a viable project.
Adverse Publicity - Public disquiet over the time to finalise the road improvement	Delay to upgrading Griffith St causes the public to demand action.	Medium	Segment project into components to attract varying funding sources. Implement interim measures to improve safety for road users. Maintain the road to a serviceable standard.

COMMUNICATIONS & CONSULTATION STRATEGY

Level of Engagement	Stakeholder	Activities	Location	Date	Outcome
Consult	Residents and community	Have Your Say Letter drops	Various	2021	Support for project.
Inform	Residents and community	Update flyers	On site and via Council webpage	Mid 2026	More informed community.

VICTORIAN CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006

In developing this report to Council, the officer considered whether the subject matter raised any human rights issues. In particular, whether the scope of any human right established by the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities is in any way limited, restricted or interfered with by the recommendations contained in the report. It is considered that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.

OFFICER'S DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

Under section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, officers providing advice to Council must disclose any interests, including the type of interest.

General Manager – Phil Jeffrey

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

Author – Ewen Nevett

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

CONCLUSION

Council continues to leverage available grants to progressively redevelop the Griffith Street corridor with bus stop improvements completed, new shared user paths about to commence on both the north and south sides and an interim pedestrian crossing and refuge to be installed by mid-2026, while advocacy continues for further grant funding to compete the duplication of the road.

15 OTHER REPORTS

Nil

16 NOTICES OF MOTION

Nil

17 NOTICES OF RESCISSION

Nil

18 MAYOR'S & COUNCILLORS REPORTS**18.1 MAYOR'S REPORT****Author:** Dianne Elshaug, Co-ordinator CEOs Office**Authoriser:** Derek Madden, Chief Executive Officer**Attachments:** Nil**PURPOSE**

To provide details to the community on the meetings and events attended by the Mayor since the last Ordinary Meeting of Council.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

That the Mayor's Report be tabled for consideration at the Ordinary Meeting of Council.

RESOLUTION**Moved:** Cr Tom Sullivan**Seconded:** Cr John Keogh**That Council receives the Mayor's Report.****CARRIED****Cr Steve Venditti-Taylor – Mayor's Report*****Date:*** 1 April 2026

6 March	Moorabool Social Innovators Pitch Event, West Maddingley Early Years Hub
11 March	Councillor Briefings - Western Health Update by Prof Russell Harrison; Budget Briefing; Irrigation Water Allocation Policy; Small Township Enhancement Plan Adoption and Update on War Memorial Project - Mt Egerton; Strawberry and Cherry Festival; Review of the draft DAC Agenda
13 March	- Greater Ballarat Alliance of Councils Meeting, Ballan - Ballan & District Chamber of Commerce 35 Years Celebration - The Collins Club Speech, Melbourne
14 March	- Platypus Society of Bacchus Marsh Sculpture Opening, Lerderderg Library - Moorabool Light Orchestra Epic the Musical, Bacchus Marsh Public Hall

15 March	• Ballan Autumn Festival
16 March	• Tourism Midwest Industry Briefing, North Ballarat Sports Club, Ballarat
18 March	• Meeting with Jennie Courtney, CEO, Women's Health Group, Ballan • Councillor Briefings – Consideration of the 2025-2029 Council Plan (Year 1 Update); Results of Community Consultation on Municipal Charge; 2026/27 Valuation Analysis and Rate Impacts; Review of the draft OMC Agenda • Development Assessment Committee • 2026 Men's Health Night at The Pub Clinic, The Plough, Myrniong
19 March	• Coffee with a Councillor, Bacchus Marsh • MAV Mayors Institute Forum – Leading Healthy Communities, Melbourne
20 March	• Peri- Urban Group of Rural Councils Victoria – Board Meeting
21 March	• Friends of Werribee Gorge and Long Forrest Mallee Clean Up Day, Long Forest Road
25 March	• Councillor Briefings - Budget Planning – 2026/27; Blackwood Hiking Hub and Ballan Cycling Hub Feasibility Studies - Engagement Plan; Response to NoM No. 345 - Griffith Street Upgrade; Amendment C109 Moor Merrimu Precinct Structure Plan
27 March	• Western Highway Action Committee meeting • Meeting with Catherine King MP, Federal Member for Ballarat
28 March	• Darley Neighbourhood House Marsh Mender
29 March	• Clean Up Australia Day – Platypus Society of Bacchus Marsh Underbank Clean Up Day • Mt Egerton Market and Car Boot Sale
30 March	• Meeting with Steve Morrison, Baccus Marsh Grammar (with Leigh McCallum)
1 April	• Ordinary Meeting of Council

18.2 COUNCILLORS REPORTS**Author:** Dianne Elshaug, Co-ordinator CEOs Office**Authoriser:** Derek Madden, Chief Executive Officer**Attachments:** Nil**PURPOSE**

To provide details to the community on meetings and events attended by Councillors since the last Ordinary Meeting of Council.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

That the Councillors Reports be accepted for consideration at the Ordinary Meeting of Council.

RESOLUTION**Moved:** Cr John Keogh**Seconded:** Cr Sheila Freeman**That Council receives the Councillors Reports.****CARRIED****Cr Jarrod Bingham*****Date:*** 1 April 2026

I would like to acknowledge and pay my respects to the recent passing of Lynn Edwards, the wife of long time Councillor David Edwards. Lynn touched so many lives and she will sincerely be missed. Rest in Peace.

Cr Moira Berry***Date:*** 1 April 2026

5 March	Peri Urban Councils Victoria Federal Delegation, Canberra
13 March	Ballan and District Chamber of Commerce 35 Years Celebration at Ballan Bakehouse and Bar, Ballan
14 March	Coffee with a Councillor at Degani's Village Shopping Centre, Bacchus Marsh
15 March	Ballan Autumn Festival
17 March	March Disability Access and Inclusion pre meeting, Darley Hub

19 March	• Moorabool Environment and Sustainability Advisory Committee, Ballan Chamber
20 March	• Peri Urban Councils Victoria Board Meeting Video Conference
24 March	• Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Meeting, Lerderderg Library • Blacksmiths Cottage and Forge Community Asset Committee Meeting
30 March	• Gordon Football Netball Club AGM
31 March	• Peri Urban Councils Victoria State Delegations

Cr Sheila Freeman

Date: 1 April 2026

4 March	• Moorabool Growth Management Committee Meeting • Ordinary Meeting of Council
11 March	• Councillor Briefings
14 March	• Coffee with a Councillor, Bacchus March
18 March	• Councillor Briefings • Development Assessment Committee Meeting
23 March	• Bacchus Marsh Aerodrome Management Meeting
25 March	• Councillor Briefings

Cr John Keogh

Date: 1 April 2026

4 March	• Ordinary Meeting of Council
5 March	• Grow West Implementation Committee
11 March	• Councillor Briefings
13 March	• Ballan and District Chamber of Commerce 35 Years Celebration at Ballan Bakehouse and Bar, Ballan
14 March	• Maddingley Park Market

15 March	• Ballan Autumn Festival
18 March	• Councillor Briefings
19 March	• Moorabool Environment and Sustainability Advisory Committee, Ballan Chamber
20 March	• Men's Health Clinic Myrniong
22 March	• Blackwood Community Black Creek Track walk
24 March	• Blacksmiths Cottage and Forge Asset Committee
25 March	• Councillor Briefings

Cr Ally Munari

Date: 1 April 2026

15 March	• Ballan Autumn Festival
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Cr Paul Tatchell

Date: 1 April 2026

15 March	• Ballan Autumn Festival – Congratulations to the volunteers on the fantastic job they did.
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19 URGENT BUSINESS

20 CLOSED SESSION OF THE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC

Nil

21 MEETING CLOSURE

The Meeting closed at 6.41pm.

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CHAIRPERSON