MINUTES

Unscheduled Council Meeting
Wednesday, 10 June 2026

Date:	**Wednesday, 10 June 2026**
Time:	**6.00pm**
Location:	**Council Chambers, 15 Stead Street, Ballan & Online**

Order Of Business

1 OPENING OF MEETING AND PRAYER

The Mayor opened the meeting at 6.00pm.

Cr Freeman read the Prayer.

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Mayor read the Acknowledgement of Country.

3 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
Mr Joseph Spiteri	Manager Governance & Civic Support
Mr James Hogan	Chief Financial Officer

4 APOLOGIES

Nil

5 DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil

6 PRESENTATIONS/DEPUTATIONS

Item	Item	Speaker/s	Position	Attendance
7.1	Draft 2026/27 Annual Budget – Consideration of Submissions	Scott Graham	Submitter	In person

7 CUSTOMER AND CORPORATE SERVICES REPORTS

7.1 DRAFT 2026/27 ANNUAL BUDGET - CONSIDERATION OF SUBMISSIONS

Author: **James Hogan, Chief Financial Officer**

Authoriser: **David Jackson, General Manager Customer and Corporate Services**

Attachments: **1. 2026/27 Budget Submissions (under separate cover)**

PURPOSE

This report relates to the process for Council to adopt the 2026/27 Annual Budget in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*. The process includes giving public notice to allow submissions to be made by members of the public and such submissions to be heard prior to Council adopting the 2026/27 Annual Budget.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Nine written submissions have been received.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Rod Ward
Seconded: Cr Jarrod Bingham

That Council:

1. Receives the following submissions:

No.	Submission From	Budget Submission
1.	**Andrea Stranaghan**	Kerbside hard waste collection MUST be provided as part of the service to bring the council in line with other areas. Capping it at 500 is ridiculous, who will get priority? There are certainly more than 500 elderly or people that have additional needs in the shire. Moorabool is no longer a regional council in regards to Bacchus Marsh and Ballan etc.
2.	**Robert Reid**	Not everyone has a trailer, or tow bar on their vehicle. Not everyone has a Ute and not everyone has a driving license including old people. It would be more cost effect for people to pay tip fees once or twice per year rather than have a rate increase. The council should consider the suggestions listed below. Regardless of what council approve, it will not stop illegal dumping but may at least reduce it. • one free Council hard waste collection (up to 3 cubic meters or • one free drop-off at the council transfer station up to 2 cubic meters but not both.
3.	**Chris Cathcart**	Great to see the long overdue White Avenue Park upgrade included in the proposed budget, an important local park used frequently and well overdue for an upgrade. Will email council separately on the matter, but would like to see a critical

		missing footpath link built on the nearby street of Margaret Drive, which perplexedly has no footpath on either side of the road, despite being a critical pedestrian link for the local community in an established urban environment. This creates an ongoing hazard for pedestrians, in particular pram uses who have no option other than walking with babies on the busy road. This key missing pedestrian link was identified in council's hike and bike strategy (2014).
4.	**Tom Bloomfield**	It's great to see that funding has been allocated to the White Avenue Playground Renewal. It's been a long wait and we are excited for the park to receive a much-needed makeover in 2026-27. Thank you Moorabool Shire Council. Is there any plan to complete the last section of the Aqualink project? I didn't see anything in the budget. Our family and friends use the Aqualink bike trail regularly and it would be fantastic to see the western section completed so it connects through to the Werribee River.
5.	**Daniel Emmerson**	I am writing as a resident and ratepayer living in Bacchus Marsh to formally submit my feedback regarding the Proposed 2025/26 Annual Budget. As a household without children, my perspective reflects a demographic that contributes significantly to municipal revenue via property rates, yet interacts with Council services differently than local families. While I recognize the fiscal complexities facing the Shire particularly given the reported 34% drop in external state grants and the sharp 77.94% contraction in developer contributions, I wish to highlight several areas of balance, opportunity, and concern regarding how this budget distributes benefits and financial burdens. 1. Commendations & Capital Allocations First, I strongly support Council’s decision to prioritize substantial capital investment directly into Bacchus Marsh without accumulating new debt for the 2025/26 direct capital program. Specifically: • Recreation Infrastructure: The $3.500 million allocation for the Bacchus Marsh Racecourse & Recreation Reserve Multi-Sports Hub is an exceptional use of funds that directly enhances local liveability, health, and community engagement for working adults and sports clubs alike. • Roads and Logistics: The combined investment of over $3.8 million in road widening and resealing alongside $2.000 million for traffic management is highly valued. Safe, well-maintained arterial corridors are critical for residents commuting.

		• Administrative Efficiency: I commend the targeted operational efficiency improvement to 83.78% for statutory planning timelines, which removes costly bottlenecks for households looking to invest in property upgrades. 2. Financial Concerns & Cost-of-Living Pressures Despite these positive investments, the compounding structural price hikes place a disproportionate strain on households managing fixed overheads on a dual or single income without child-related subsidies: • Compounding Rate Burden: Increasing average general rates by the maximum allowable 3.0% cap, combined with a sharp 7.52% jump in the baseline residential "rate in the dollar", represents a stark increase. When paired with recent volatile property revaluations, this structure risks penalizing long term residential ratepayers. • Waste Charge Escalation: A 21.54% spike in the State Landfill Levy Charge (shifting from $65 to $79), dragging total regular waste charges to an average of $544, represents a sharp and painful escalation. I urge Council to vigorously advocate to the State Government regarding the impact this levy pass-through has on local residents. • Equity in Service Value: A significant portion of municipal operational reserves protects family centric services, such as maternal child care, school crossings, and the $1.500 million Young Street Kindergarten upgrade. While these are vital for the broader community, households without children receive no direct yield from this expenditure, making the concurrent rate and waste fee spikes harder to justify from an individual equity standpoint. 3. Notable Omissions: Sustainability & Green Energy Finally, I note a distinct lack of dedicated funding, matching grants, or strategic initiatives targeting green or renewable energy systems within the budget overview. For residents looking to transition households toward energy independence or lower localized carbon footprints, leadership from local government is deeply missed. I urge Council to establish a clear framework for environmental sustainability in future financial plans. In conclusion, while the 2025/26 budget succeeds in bringing necessary infrastructure to Bacchus Marsh and safely avoiding new debt, it asks residential ratepayers to shoulder maximum financial increases during an acute cost-of-living crisis. I ask that Council remains fiercely focused on operational cost control and ensures that future budgets distribute local funding and sustainability initiatives equitably across all

		household types. Thank you for considering this submission. I look forward to reviewing Council's final deliberations and responses to community feedback.
6.	**Lauren Wall**	Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the draft budget 26/27. We love living in Bacchus Marsh and have been here for almost 13 years after moving from Carlton when we had our first baby. It has provided so many wonderful opportunities and MARC has been an incredible asset to the town. Just recently my son has turned 9 and I have spent more time than before at the skate park in Bacchus Marsh. As glad as I am to have a place for kids to go and scoot and skate or ride, I think the park is very tired and needs some investment. There is one bench seat near the skate park and the obstacles themselves could be freshed up. There is quite a lot of foot traffic and some investment in the greater space would be amazing for kids to go and enjoy as well as their parents. Thank you for considering this idea.
7.	**Scott Graham**	Each year a township improvement plan is completed an allocation of funds is made for initiating implementation is made in the following financial year budget. The Gordon TIP never received such an allocation. Please explain why?
8.	**Scott Graham**	I understand that with 1 year remaining for its 4 year validity priority initiatives expressed in Visitor Economy Strategy including placemaking in small towns are not going to be activated. Can you please indicate what will be activated in 2026/27 in support of Gordon and small towns and why we have strategies that do not obviously express real priorities?
9.	**Scott Graham**	2025/26 budget listed $1.1M expenditure for Gordon Active rec loop and draft 2025/26 budget carries forward $1.059 of that budget. Our community have only ever known about the project via non informative signs, conflicting info in articles and no plans and a surprise implementation of part of the project in Lyndhurst Street. Will this be explained properly in the annual report? Does the proposed expenditure include consultation to actually engage with the future users or will process so far set the expectation for surprise based on a lack of consultation?

2. **Takes into consideration the matters raised within the submissions in its consideration of the 2026/27 Annual Budget at the Special Meeting of Council on Wednesday 24 June 2026.**
3. **Provides a response to each Submitter following the adoption of the 2026/27 Annual Budget.**

CARRIED

BACKGROUND

Council commenced statutory procedures dealing with the 2026/27 Annual Budget at the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 14 May 2026. At this meeting, Council resolved to put on public display the Proposed 2026/27 Annual Budget.

Feedback was invited through Council's "Have Your Say" Page, where the following additional questions were asked in relation to subsidised waste services:

- Would you like to provide feedback on proposed subsidised waste services?
    - Do you support the proposed subsidised waste services being included in the 2026/27 Budget, knowing this would increase waste service charges for that year? Why or why not?
    - Which of the proposed subsidised waste services are most important to you or your household?

Responses to these questions have been provided in the attachment.

The proposed 2026/27 budget has been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020.*

As a result of this advertising process, a total of nine written submissions were received by the closing date of 4 June 2026.

Two of the submitters have indicated their intention to be heard in support of their written submissions.

The key themes of the submissions were:

- **Waste services and cost pressures:** Feedback on the lack of universal hard waste collection and concerns about equity for residents without transport or with additional needs. The increase in waste charges and broader cost-of-living impacts were also a key issue.
- **Local infrastructure priorities:** Requests to address specific gaps (e.g. missing footpaths, Aqualink completion, skate park upgrades) alongside support for some of the planned investments.
- **Equity in service mix:** Some concern (particularly non-family households) about perceived imbalance in who directly benefits from certain service areas, given rate and charge increases.
- **Delivery and alignment of strategies:** Frustration around township-level initiatives (e.g. Gordon), with expectations for clearer delivery, prioritisation and communication against existing strategies.
- **Sustainability:** Noted absence of visible renewable energy or environmental initiatives in the budget.

Overall, while there is support for key infrastructure investments, there is sensitivity around cost increases and a strong expectation of fairness, clearer delivery and better articulation of priorities.

PROPOSAL

That Council considers the nine submissions received before the budget is considered for adoption at the Special Meeting of Council on Wednesday 24 June 2026.

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

RISK & OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY ISSUES

There are no risk or occupational health and safety issues identified in relation to this report.

COMMUNICATIONS & CONSULTATION STRATEGY

The Proposed Budget was available for submissions and public comment from Thursday 15 May 2026 to 5.00pm on Thursday 4 June 2026.

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 – David Jackson

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

Author – James Hogan

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

CONCLUSION

Following the conclusion of the community consultation period in relation to the proposed 2026/27 Annual Budget and having completed all statutory requirements, it is recommended that Council consider the submissions received.

8 MEETING CLOSURE

The Meeting closed at 6.06pm.

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CHAIRPERSON