

## SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL

**Minutes** of a  
Special Meeting of Council held at  
Council Chamber, 15 Stead Street, Ballan on  
Wednesday 10 February 2016,  
at 6:00 p.m.

### **Members:**

Cr. Allan Comrie (Mayor)	East Moorabool Ward
Cr. Paul Tatchell	Central Ward
Cr. David Edwards	East Moorabool Ward
Cr. John Spain	East Moorabool Ward
Cr. Tonia Dudzik	East Moorabool Ward
Cr. Tom Sullivan	West Moorabool Ward
Cr. Pat Toohey	Woodlands Ward

### **Officers:**

Mr. Rob Croxford	Chief Executive Officer
Mr. Phil Jeffrey	General Manager Infrastructure
Mr. Satwinder Sandhu	General Manager Growth and Development
Mr. Danny Colgan	General Manager Community Services

**Rob Croxford**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

## AGENDA

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**1. OPENING OF MEETING**

*The Mayor, Cr. Allan Comrie, opened the meeting at 6.02pm.*

**2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO COUNTRY**

*We respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, their spirits and ancestors.*

**3. PRESENT**

<i>Cr. Allan Comrie</i>	<i>East Moorabool Ward</i>
<i>Cr. Paul Tatchell</i>	<i>Central Ward</i>
<i>Cr. John Spain</i>	<i>East Moorabool Ward</i>
<i>Cr. Tonia Dudzik</i>	<i>East Moorabool Ward</i>
<i>Cr. Tom Sullivan</i>	<i>West Moorabool Ward</i>

**Officers:**

<i>Mr. Rob Croxford</i>	<i>Chief Executive Officer</i>
<i>Mr. Satwinder Sandhu</i>	<i>General Manager Growth and Development</i>
<i>Mr. Danny Colgan</i>	<i>General Manager Community Services</i>
<i>Mr. Phil Jeffrey</i>	<i>General Manager Infrastructure</i>
<i>Mr. Steve Ivelja</i>	<i>Manager Finance</i>
<i>Mr. Melissa Hollitt</i>	<i>Minute Taker</i>

**4. APOLOGIES**

<i>Cr. David Edwards</i>	<i>East Moorabool Ward</i>
<i>Cr. Pat Toohey</i>	<i>Woodlands Ward</i>

## 5. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Under the Local Government Act (1989), the classification of the type of interest giving rise to a conflict is; a direct interest; or an indirect interest (section 77A and 77B). The type of indirect interest specified under Section 78, 78A, 78B, 78C or 78D of the Local Government Act 1989 set out the requirements of a Councillor or member of a Special Committee to disclose any conflicts of interest that the Councillor or member of a Special Committee may have in a matter being or likely to be considered at a meeting of the Council or Committee.

Definitions of the class of the interest are:

- a direct interest
  - (section 77A, 77B)
- an indirect interest (see below)
  - indirect interest by close association (section 78)
  - indirect financial interest (section 78A)
  - indirect interest because of conflicting duty (section 78B)
  - indirect interest because of receipt of gift(s) (section 78C)
  - indirect interest through civil proceedings (section 78D)

### Time for Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

In addition to the Council protocol relating to disclosure at the beginning of the meeting, section 79 of the Local Government Act 1989 (the Act) requires a Councillor to disclose the details, classification and the nature of the conflict of interest immediately at the beginning of the meeting and/or before consideration or discussion of the Item.

Section 79(6) of the Act states:

While the matter is being considered or any vote is taken in relation to the matter, the Councillor or member of a special committee must:

- (a) leave the room and notify the Mayor or the Chairperson of the special committee that he or she is doing so; and
- (b) remain outside the room and any gallery or other area in view of hearing of the room.

The Councillor is to be notified by the Mayor or Chairperson of the special committee that he or she may return to the room after consideration of the matter and all votes on the matter.

There are important reasons for requiring this disclosure immediately before the relevant matter is considered.

- Firstly, members of the public might only be in attendance for part of a meeting and should be able to see that all matters are considered in an appropriately transparent manner.
- Secondly, if conflicts of interest are not disclosed immediately before an item there is a risk that a Councillor who arrives late to a meeting may fail to disclose their conflict of interest and be in breach of the Act.

***Nil.***

## 6. PRESENTATIONS / DEPUTATIONS

The Council has made provision in the business of the Special Meeting of the Council for the making of presentations or deputations to Council in relation to matters presented on the agenda for Council consideration.

Presentations or deputations are required to be conducted in accordance with the requirements contained within the **Presentation/Deputations Protocols and Procedural Guidelines**.

Persons wishing to make a presentation or deputation to the Council on a matter included in the agenda shall inform Council by 1pm on the Friday prior to the meeting by contacting the Chief Executive Officer's Office and registering their name and agenda item being spoken to.

At the meeting the Mayor will invite the persons wishing to make a presentation or delegation to address the Council on the agenda item.

The person making the presentation or deputation is to stand and address the Council on the item. No debate on the item is permitted between the person making the presentation or delegation and the Council.

A maximum of three minutes per presentation or delegation will be allocated. An extension of time may be granted at the discretion of the Mayor.

Councillors, through the Mayor, may ask the person making the presentation or delegation for clarification of matters presented.

The Mayor may direct that a member of the gallery ceases speaking if the above procedure is not followed.

**List of Persons making Presentations/Deputations other than in relation to a planning item listed on the agenda:**

*Nil.*

## 7. BUSINESS

### 7.1 Rate Cap Variation Options and Draft Community Engagement Plan

#### Introduction

File No.: 07/01/011  
Author: Rob Croxford  
Chief Executive Rob Croxford

The purpose of this report is to recommend that the Council endorse three options for a rate cap variation application and a community engagement plan that will involve extensive engagement with the community on the rate cap options.

#### Background

The Council at a Special meeting held on the 20 January 2016 resolved:

- (i) that the CEO be authorised to advise the Essential Services Commission that Moorabool Shire Council intends to apply for a rate cap variation for the 2016/17 financial year; and
- (ii) that Officers present the Draft 2016/17 Annual Budget Timetable of Key Dates (**Attachment 7.1(a)**) for the forthcoming 2016/17 budget to a Special Meeting of Council on 10th February, 2016.

Following the Special Meeting, the Chief Executive Officer notified the Essential Services Commission (ESC) in writing of Council's intention to apply for a rate cap variation for the 2016/2017 financial year.

The ESC has published a guidance document which is intended to assist Victorian local governments in meeting their obligations under the Fair Go Rates System (FGRS). The guidance provides direction for local governments on how to apply for a higher cap.

The guidance document outlines the **six matters (criteria)** upon which an application for a higher cap will be assessed:

- (a) a proposed higher cap for each specified financial year; and
- (b) the reasons for which the Council seeks the higher cap; and
- (c) how the views of ratepayers and the community have been taken into account in proposing the higher cap; and
- (d) how the higher cap is an efficient use of Council resources and represents value for money; and
- (e) whether consideration has been given to reprioritising proposed expenditure and alternative funding options and why those options are not adequate; and
- (f) that the assumptions and proposals in the application are consistent with the Council's long term strategy and financial management policies set out in the Council's planning documents and annual budget.

The details of what council needs to address in relation to the six criteria including the evidence that it will need to provide is contained in **Attachment 7.1(b)**.

## Rate Cap Options

The Victorian Minister for Local Government has announced a cap on general rates for Victorian local government of 2.5% (CPI) for the 2016/17 financial year.

Working within the confines of the cap will present significant challenges for the way Council continues its business of delivering high quality services to its residents.

The Council has made significant progress in preparing for a rate capped environment by:

- Reducing operating costs,
- Reducing management costs,
- Reducing overhead costs,
- A program of ongoing Service Reviews,
- Sharing services with other organisations,
- A policy on special charge schemes for some capital works,
- Future consideration of the commercialisation of some aspects of operations,
- Continued use of Business Excellence as a model to drive continuous improvement and review,
- The introduction of an integrated planning tool and model for officers.

Despite these efforts to contain costs, under a rate cap of 2.5% Council is forecast to produce underlying losses over its 10-year financial plan. These losses will impact the level of service Council can afford to deliver in future years resulting in either cuts to services or a deterioration of our asset base.

Three options for the 2016/17 budget have been prepared, including 10 year forecasts under each option. It is recommended that the Council seek feedback from the community on the three options to inform Council's decision on the level of a rate cap variation sought for 2016/17 from the ESC.

## Community Engagement

The importance of engaging a representative sample of residents is identified in the Commission Reference Material on Community engagement that takes into account the characteristics of the community and aim to be as representative of the community's diversity as practicable.

While community engagement is fundamental to the legitimacy of the decisions of local government and crucial in informing decision making, the methods of community engagement that are deployed don't often lead to the results being regarded as **statistically** representative of the general community or target group/s.

To be able to confidently cite results as being representative requires a more robust and rigorous research based methodology along with broader community engagement activities.

For council to be confident that the results of its community engagement is representative of the communities of Moorabool it is proposed that the primary



means of engagement be undertaken through a statistically valid telephone survey complemented by other community engagement methods outlined in section 2 under proposal below.

## **Proposal**

### **1. Rate Cap Options**

The options prepared are:

- Option A – What Council can deliver under the Minister’s Rate Cap of 2.5% in Year 1**
- Option B – What Council can deliver if it had a rate increase of 4.15% for 2016/17 (inclusive of a 1.65% rate cap variation) in addition to a likely rate increase of 4.15% for a further 3 years.**
- Option C – What Council can deliver if it had a rate increase of 3.50% for 2016/17 (inclusive of a 1.00% rate cap variation) in addition to a likely rate increase of 3.50% for a further 3 years. This option is also based on other fees and charges increasing under a “user-pays” model to be cost reflective including indirect costs.**

Please note Options B and C are based on four years of rate cap variations. In 2016/17 Council can only apply for a one year variation so, Council will need to further consider an application for a further three year variation in 2017/18. The quantum of the variations sought for 2017/18 and beyond with further knowledge and a new Council will be re-evaluated prior to making a submission to the ESC.

Options B and C have been prepared to reverse and repair the impact underlying losses Council will have in the rate capped environment. These models propose the minimum level of rate and/or other charge increases necessary for Council to continue to provide current levels of services sustainably into the future. The key difference between these two models is that since other fees and charges are more cost reflective in Option C a lower rate increase is necessary.

Council may elect to vary the options to be put to the community for example, the user pays model could be applied to Option A.

### **Strategic Financial Plan - 10 year plan**

Strategic Financial Plans for each option have been prepared and are appended as **Attachment 7.1(c)**.

The Strategic financial plans prepared for each option have been prepared on the basis of known data or established benchmarks available from external sources. Some of the main parameters include;

1. Current and future CPI of 2.5% as per the DTF estimates
2. Population growth of 2.7% in 2016/17. Future years as per ID Forecast estimates
3. Wage increases as per EBA agreements.
4. Government grants revenue indexed at CPI (plus population growth where appropriate) or based on confirmed funding levels.
5. Non salary related expenditure indexed to CPI with allowances for known one off expenditures.

The modelling includes stringent budget control measures that will need to be implemented to ensure Council can operate in an economically sustainable fashion in a rate capped environment. To achieve these stringent targets Council will continue to focus on Continuous Improvement and Service Review processes outlined earlier in the report.

### Impact on Revenue

The below table highlights the changes to council rate revenue under each option:

	Option A	Option B	Option C
Average Rate Rise 2016/17	2.50%	4.15%	3.5%
Likely Average Rate Rise 2017/18-2019/20	2.50%	4.15%	3.5%
Anticipated Average Rate Rise 2020/21 and beyond	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
10 Year Projected rate Revenue	\$321.2M	\$339.7M	\$332.3M

Note: Options B and C are based on four years of rate cap variations. In 2016/17 Council can only apply for a one year variation so, Council will need to further consider an application for a further three year variation in 2017/18.

The below table shows how Council's other revenue sources will change under each option:

	Option A	Option B	Option C
<b>Fees &amp; Charges</b>	Increasing at 6%	Increasing at 6%	Accelerated increases to achieve full cost recovery*
<b>10 Year Projected Fees &amp; Charges Revenue</b>	\$30.6M	\$30.6M	\$32.9M
<b>Waste Management Charges</b>	Based on the direct cost of providing the service	Based on the direct cost of providing the service	Based on both the direct and indirect costs of providing the service
<b>10 Year Projected Waste Management Charges Revenue</b>	\$38.7M	\$38.7M	\$43.8M

\* Charges to potentially accelerate include: Transfer Station Fees, Animal Registrations, Food Registrations, and Septic Tank charges.

### Council's Financial Stability & Capital Program

The below table illustrates the impact of these options on Council's Financial Stability & Capital Program:

	Option A	Option B	Option C
<b>Council's Financial Stability</b>	\$12.1M losses predicted over 10 years	Breakeven position predicted over 10 years	Breakeven position predicted over 10 years
<b>Services</b>	Services will need to be reduced overtime to ensure financial stability	Council can maintain current services	Council can maintain current services
<b>Capital Program</b>			
<b>Council Contribution to Major Projects</b>	\$12.7M over 10 years	\$12.7M over 10 years	\$12.7M over 10 years
<b>New &amp; Upgrade Projects</b>	\$4.0M over 10 years	\$8.0M over 10 years	\$8.0M over 10 years
<b>Asset Renewal Program</b>	\$90.6M over 10 years	\$105.0M over 10 years	\$105.0M over 10 years

Note: the modelling above assumes Council's liquidity and loan borrowings program are the same under each option.

The graphs in **Attachment 7.1(d)** illustrates:

- Council's underlying results under the options proposed
- How Council will not be able to close the renewal gap under the rate cap

## 2016/17 Budget

The proposed rate and/or fee increases are largely geared to improving Council's long-term financial stability and maintaining services and infrastructure, they will of course have impacts on the 2016/17 budget. The below table indicates at a high level what the final 2016/17 budget may look like under these options. Subject to final Council approval post ESC and community consultation.

### Operating Budget

The below table shows the overall operating budget under each of the three options:

	Option A \$ '000s	Option B \$ '000s	Option C \$ '000s
Recurrent Revenues	43,091	43,518	43,587
Recurrent Expenses	43,991	43,991	43,991
Underlying Deficit	-900	-473	-134

### Capital Improvement Program

The below table shows the high-level 2016/17 Capital Improvement Program under each option

	Option A \$ '000s	Option B \$ '000s	Option C \$ '000s
Moorabool Major Projects	6,600	6,600	6,600
New Infrastructure Projects	400	800	800
Asset Renewal Program	7,704	7,704	7,704
Plant Replacement Program	1,772	1,772	1,772
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,476</b>	<b>16,876</b>	<b>16,876</b>

## Funding Sources

At a high level the 2016/17 Capital Improvement Program will be funded through the following sources.

	Option A \$ '000s	Option B \$ '000s	Option C \$ '000s
Cash from Operations	5,868	6,294	6,633
Reserves	2,353	2,353	2,353
Capital Grants & Developer Contributions	4,726	4,726	4,726
Proceeds from Sale of Assets	414	414	414
Loan Borrowings	3,115	3,090	2,750
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,476</b>	<b>16,876</b>	<b>16,876</b>

## What will this mean to the “average” ratepayer?

The below table indicates how the average residential ratepayer with a waste collection service may be impacted by the proposed options.

	Option A	Option B	Option C
Rates	\$1,514	\$1,539	\$1,529
Waste Service Delivery Charge	\$121	\$121	\$138
Waste Service Provision Charge	\$76	\$76	\$93
State Landfill Levy Charge	\$46	\$46	\$46
State Fire Services Levy	\$154	\$154	\$154
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,911</b>	<b>\$1,936</b>	<b>\$1,960</b>

The below table indicates how the average residential ratepayer without a waste collection service may be impacted by the proposed options.

	Option A	Option B	Option C
Rates	\$1,514	\$1,539	\$1,529
Waste Service Delivery Charge	\$0	\$0	\$0
Waste Service Provision Charge	\$76	\$76	\$93
State Landfill Levy Charge	\$46	\$46	\$46
State Fire Services Levy	\$154	\$154	\$154
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,790</b>	<b>\$1,815</b>	<b>\$1,822</b>

## 2. Community Engagement Plan

A community engagement plan has been prepared as contained in **Attachment 7.1(e)** which details the engagement methods to be used. The engagement plan includes a number of engagement methods of which a telephone survey will be the primary tool for engagement. In addition to the telephone survey a number of others methods for engagement set out below will be used including Council's current on-line engagement portal, Have Your Say.

- **Community Research - Telephone Survey**

It is proposed that a telephone survey of Moorabool residents be conducted as part of Council's community engagement to inform the preparation of Council's 2016/2017 budget and the Council Plan 2017-2021.

The survey will seek the views of the respondents on the options for a higher rate cap being considered by the Council.

It is proposed that 400 people be surveyed with quotas on gender, age and locality. A sample size of 400 provides a maximum sampling error of plus or minus 5.0% at 95% confidence. Therefore, the research findings from the telephone survey can be interpreted as not just the opinions of 400 residents, but as an accurate and robust measure of the entire community's attitudes.

A market or social research company would need to be commissioned to design the questionnaire and undertake the telephone survey and provide council with a report containing the results of the survey with analysis and interpretation. The survey questionnaire will be designed to enable a comparison over time if and when the survey is repeated.

- **Focus Groups**

It is proposed that the above group commissioned to undertake the telephone survey also be commissioned to undertake a small number of focus groups (2-3) representative of the broader community. The focus groups would be held following the administration of the telephone survey and be used to explore in depth the results of the survey.

- **Listening Posts**

Listening Posts on the Council's budget and proposed application for a higher rate cap will be held across the municipality at the following locations:

- Lerderderg Library and Ballan Library (coinciding with Story time and Rhyme time)
- Ballan Mechanics Institute Library Depot,
- Village Shopping Centre, Bacchus Marsh
- Bacchus Marsh Train Station
- Ballan Train Station
- Rural Library Locations . Dunnstown Recreation Reserve, Bungaree General Store, Gordon Hall, Blackwood Hall

Portable signage and banners will display information. Reply Paid Postcards will be distributed.

(Listening Posts are small drop-in style events that provides an opportunity for community members to be informed about Council's activities and input into new plans.)

- **Have Your Say – Council's On Line Engagement Portal**

Community members will be provided with information and the opportunity to provide feedback on their preferred options relating to proposal to seek a higher rate cap.

Community members will also be provided with the opportunity to lodge written submissions in relation to the proposal to seek a higher rate cap.

- **Participatory Budgeting – Have Your Say – Budget Allocator**

It is proposed that the budget allocator be noted as a method of engagement. However, given the other engagement methods, it is proposed that the council consider the use of the budget allocator next year.

(Participatory budgeting is a process for involving community members in setting priorities in the context of resource constraints, often through a working group format)

- **Communication Strategy**

In order to encourage a high response rate to the telephone survey and simultaneously inform the communities of Moorabool of Council's Budget, information will be provided to community members through the following:

- A letter from the Chief Executive Officer will be sent to all households; non-resident ratepayers and businesses with a brochure (**Attachment 7.1(f)**) providing information on Council's budget, proposed application for a higher rate cap and telephone survey, outlining the purpose of the survey and encouraging community members to participate should they be contacted. A reply paid postcard (**Attachment 7.1(g)**) will also be distributed with the letter to provide people with another opportunity to provide feedback.
- Information on the Council's Budget and proposed application for higher rate cap will be promoted in the Moorabool News; Moorabool Matters; posted on Council's website (dedicated portal); Have Your Say, Facebook Page and Twitter.
- Notification about the telephone survey will also be promoted in the Moorabool News; Moorabool Matters; posted on Council's website (dedicated portal); Have Your Say, Facebook Page and Twitter.
- Media Releases will be issued providing information on the Council's budget; application for a higher rate cap; and community engagement activities including the telephone survey.

A communications plan is being prepared to support the administration of the telephone survey and the provision of information. The communications plan

will also include a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and community fact sheets.

### **Policy Implications**

The 2013 . 2017 Council Plan provides as follows:

#### **Key Result Area**

<b>Objective</b>	Sound, long term financial management
<b>Strategy</b>	Develop and maintain a long term financial planning, management and reporting system, which ensures resources to deliver services and manage Council's assets.

The proposal to seek a rate variation and undertaking community engagement is consistent with the 2013 . 2017 Council Plan.

### **Financial Implications**

Under a rate capped environment, there is a greater likelihood that council will experience some form of financial distress in the medium to long term. With rates capped at 2.5% annually, Council is forecast to generate accumulated underlying deficits in excess of \$12m over the next 10 years. As a result Council will need to reduce services over time and/or reduce the level of investment in Infrastructure in line with its reduced revenue generating capacity.

It is proposed that provision be made in the 2015/16 budget for over expenditure to undertake the telephone survey and focus groups (\$20,000) and printing and distribution of information (\$5,000), a total of \$25,000. There will also be indirect costs through the allocation of existing staff hours and resources.

### **Risk & Occupational Health & Safety Issues**

Based on Council rates being capped at 2.5% in 2016/17 and projected CPI for future years, Council will likely experience some form of financial distress in the medium to long term. If a rate cap variation is not approved, Council will need to re-assess its options following community engagement in achieving a balanced budget in to the future.



<b>Risk Identifier</b>	<b>Detail of Risk</b>	<b>Risk Rating</b>	<b>Control/s</b>
Financial . Rates Capped at CPI.	Increase risk of Council experiencing some form of financial distress in the medium to long term.	High	Seek a rate cap variation.  Cost control. Service reviews.  Fees & Charges increases. Shared services.  Planning tools.

### **Community Engagement Strategy**

A community engagement plan has been developed that will involve a range of activities that will seek the views of residents on the options for a higher rate cap being considered by the Council.

### **Victorian Charter of Human Rights and 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 80C of the Local Government Act 1989 (as amended), officers providing advice to Council must disclose any interests, including the type of interest.

*Author –Rob Croxford*

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

### **Conclusion**

The Victorian Minister for Local Government has announced a cap on general rates for Victorian local government of 2.5% (CPI) for the 2016/17 financial year.

Working within the confines of the cap will present significant challenges for the way Council continues its business of delivering high quality services to its residents.

Council has notified the ESC of its intention to submit an application for a higher rate cap. This report present three options for endorsement and engagement with the communities of Moorabool.

**Resolution:**

**Crs. Sullivan/Spain**

***That the Council:***

1. ***Endorses the following rate cap options for the purposes of community engagement:***

***Option A – What Council can deliver under the Minister’s Rate Cap of 2.5% in Year 1***

***Option B – What Council can deliver if it had a rate increase of 4.15% for 2016/17 (inclusive of a 1.65% rate cap variation) in addition to a likely rate increase of 4.15% for a further 3 years.***

***Option C – What Council can deliver if it had a rate increase of 3.50% for 2016/17 (inclusive of a 1.00% rate cap variation) in addition to a likely rate increase of 3.50% for a further 3 years. This option is also based on other fees and charges increasing under a “user-pays” model to be cost reflective including indirect costs.***


2. ***Endorses the Rate Cap Variation Community Engagement Plan; and;***
3. ***Endorses an over budget expenditure of \$25,000 in 2015/2016 for the delivery of the community engagement activities.***

**CARRIED.**

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**Report Authorisation**

**Authorised by:**

**Name:** Rob Croxford   
**Title:** Chief Executive Officer  
**Date:** Friday, 5 February 2016.

## 7.2 Disability Respite Funding

### Introduction

File No.: 12/10/003  
Author: Danny Colgan  
General Manager: Danny Colgan

The purpose of this report is to recommend that the Council write to the Victorian Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing seeking clarification on the future funding arrangements for the Council's Disability Respite Service.

### Background

Council has for a number of years received block funding from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to provide recreation and respite programs to the families of people living with a disability. These programs were initially introduced due to a lack of respite options in Moorabool. The programs provide clients with a 6.8 hour block of respite on a fortnightly basis. The funding has enabled the provision of 4 weekend respite programs on a fortnightly basis and a weekly program on a Friday; involving a teenage Group; Young Men's Group and two adult groups. Currently there are 35 people utilising the respite service that have a range of disabilities. The service is valued by the participants and their families and carers.

On the 16 September 2015, the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments signed a bilateral agreement to rollout the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) across Victoria over a three year period. The NDIS is administered by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and is a national approach based on insurance principles that will provide individualised support and services for people with a disability, their families and carers. People currently receiving support through the Commonwealth and Victorian Government, will, if eligible, move to the NDIS at different times depending on the type of support they receive and where they live. It is expected that the NDIS will address and benefit around 105,000 Victorians with a disability. The State Government will provide \$10 million to support Victorians with disabilities, their families, service providers and staff in the transition to the NDIS.

With the introduction of the Federal Government's National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and rollout in the Central Highlands Region commencing 1 January 2017, there is uncertainty over the continued funding of the Council's Disability Respite Program with some reports that the funding will cease as of the 30 June 2016.

In order to receive the Disability Respite funding from the DHHS, the Council as with other disability services providers is required to be registered with the DHHS and undergo accreditation against the Department Standards and in Council's case broader International Standards which stands for a period of three years. Council's accreditation is due for renewal by the 27 March 2016 with work having commenced to seek re-accreditation.

## Proposal

Formal advice on the funding arrangements for the Disability Respite Program post 30 June 2016 has been sought through meetings and in writing with Departmental Representatives and as well as questioning the need to undertake accreditation against International standards (not just DHHS) standards. At this stage, no formal advice has been received on either matter.

There are also concerns about what services will be available to people with disabilities that are assessed as ineligible for NDIS packages. It is proposed that a further report be presented to the Council at a future meeting regarding the roll-out of the NDIS in the Central Highlands Region. The report will also address the role of Council as a provider in the NDIS.

It is proposed that the Council write to the Victorian Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing seeking clarification on the future funding arrangements for the Council's Disability Respite Service and the services and support that will be available to Moorabool residents with a disability that are assessed as ineligible for NDIS packages.

## Policy Implications

The 2013 - 2017 Council Plan provides as follows:

<b>Key Result Area</b>	Community Wellbeing
<b>Objective</b>	Inclusive, responsive and accessible community services
<b>Strategy</b>	Advocate, support and provide aged and disability services

## Financial Implications

The DHHS currently provides a total annual block grant of \$174,000. Certification against the standards require appointment of an external auditor from a list provided by the DHHS and costs the Council approximately \$15,000.

## Risk & Occupational Health & Safety Issues

Risk Identifier	Detail of Risk	Risk Rating	Control/s
Community	Reduction in services	Moderate	Continue to provide services and advocate for funding
Political and Reputation	Concerns about Council reducing services	Moderate	Continue to provide services and advocate for funding

## **Community Engagement Strategy**

Information has been provided to carers, families, clients; disability support services about the uncertainty over the funding of the Disability Respite Program. Information is and will continue to be provided on the roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme including a community information forum to be held on 1 March in Bacchus Marsh. The forum will be advertised extensively through all forms of media.

## **Victorian Charter of Human Rights and 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. If the funding for the program cease and alternative services aren't provided to the clients, it could be said that the Human Rights of the program clients have been limited, restricted or interfered with.

## **Officer's Declaration of Conflict of Interests**

Under section 80C of the Local Government Act 1989 (as amended), officers providing advice to Council must disclose any interests, including the type of interest.

*General Manager – Danny Colgan*

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

## **Conclusion**

Council has for a number of years received block funding from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to provide recreation and respite programs to the families of people living with a disability.

With the introduction of the Federal Government's National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and rollout in the Central Highlands Region commencing 1 January 2017, there is uncertainty over the continued funding of the Council's Disability Respite Program with some reports that the funding will cease as of the 30 June 2016.

### **Resolution:**

**Crs. Tatchell/Sullivan**

*It is recommended that the Council:*

- 1. Write to the Victorian Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing seeking clarification on the future funding arrangements for the Council's Disability Respite Service**
- 2. Receive a further report on the roll-out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in the Central Highlands Region.**

**CARRIED.**

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**Report Authorisation**

**Authorised by:**



**Name:**

Danny Colgan

**Title:**

General Manager Community Services

**Date:**

Thursday 4 February, 2016

**8. FURTHER BUSINESS AS ADMITTED BY UNANIMOUS RESOLUTION OF COUNCIL**

*Nil.*

**9. CLOSED SESSION OF THE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC**

*Nil.*

**10. MEETING CLOSURE**

*The meeting closed at 6.38 PM.*

*Confirmed.....Mayor.*