Minutes

Meeting of Council

Tuesday 23 September 2025

Surf Coast Shire Civic Office

Council Chambers

1 Merrijig Drive, Torquay, Victoria 3228

Commenced at 6:00pm

Council:

Cr Mike Bodsworth (Mayor)
Cr Paul Barker
Cr Rebecca Bourke
Cr Joel Grist
Cr Liz Pattison
Cr Tony Phelps
Cr Adrian Schonfelder
Cr Libby Stapleton
Cr Leon Walker

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1 Procedural Matters

1.1 Present

Cr Mike Bodsworth (Mayor)
Cr Paul Barker
Cr Rebecca Bourke (via videoconference)
Cr Joel Grist
Cr Liz Pattison (via videoconference)
Cr Tony Phelps
Cr Adrian Schonfelder
Cr Libby Stapleton
Cr Leon Walker

Chief Executive Officer - Robyn Seymour
General Manager Placemaking and Environment - Chris Pike
General Manager Community Life - Damian Waight
General Manager Strategy and Effectiveness - Joanne McNeill
Manager Government Relations and Strategic Projects - Darryn Chiller
Manager Integrity and Governance - Jake Brown
Manager Finance - Gabby Spiller
Coordinator Governance and Council Business - Liberty Nash
Senior Governance Officer - Sharon Busuttil

1.2 Opening

Mayor Mike Bodsworth opened the meeting.

I would like to acknowledge that we meet on Wadawurrung Country and that the Surf Coast municipality also includes the traditional Country of the Gadubunud and Gulidjan people of the Eastern Maar Nation. I pay my respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

Surf Coast Shire Council is committed to walking with Traditional Owners on a reconciliation journey that recognises and celebrates culture and the unique land, sea and waterway Country of the Surf Coast.

1.3 Pledge

As Councillors we carry out our responsibilities with diligence and integrity and make fair decisions of lasting value for the wellbeing of our community and environment.

1.4 Apologies

Nil.

1.5 Confirmation of Minutes

Council Resolution

Moved Cr Phelps, Seconded Cr Grist

That Council notes the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 26 August 2025 as a correct record of the meeting.

CARRIED 9|0

For	Against	Abstained
Cr Barker Cr Bodsworth Cr Bourke Cr Grist Cr Pattison Cr Phelps Cr Schonfelder Cr Stapleton Cr Walker	Nil	Nil

1.6 Leave of Absence Requests

Nil.

1.7 Conflicts of Interest

Nil.

1.8 Presentations

Nil.

1.9 Public Question/Submission Time

Submission 1
Jordie Campbell – Jan Juc (Submission 1 of 1)

Dear Councillors, it has been six months since we were here in this building on February 25, six months and there has barely been a week go by that I have not thought about the decision that will be made tonight. I stand here today as my ancestors have done for generations before me, a proud, resilient Aboriginal man fighting for the justices that have faced my people since 1788, January 26, the date that marks the invasion of our beautiful country, genocide of my peaceful people and the division of a nation.

My people are resilient, a resilience that has been built from generations of oppression and mistrust, a legacy I hope not to pass on to my children. I hope that my own children, nieces, nephews will not have to carry this burden, they won't need to fight for acceptance in this country and for acknowledgment of the wrongdoings.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Councillor Pattison for her motion to advocate for the Federal Government to formally change the date of Australia Day and to ensure that all Councillors have had the opportunity to receive cultural training - a cultural awareness training and have a proper understanding of the effects that reinstating Australia Day celebrations on January 26 will have for First Nations people.

I pose the question to all Councillors: what did you learn in this time? You've had the privilege to listen deeply to our Elders and learn from their deep understanding of our cultural knowledge, to walk on country with them and understand what this land means to us, the opportunity to really understand what impact your decision will leave on the people it will affect most, First Nations people of this country. What conversations have you had, what opportunities have you taken to learn and listen about this important decision you're about to make? Have you truly equipped yourself with the tools to understand the sorrows January 26 marks for the First Nations people of this land?

I think back to Surf Coast Shire's commitment to reconciliation. Our Council acknowledges that past laws, government policies, actions and attitudes have created great pain, grief and suffering for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We feel and express our deep sorrows that these actions and attitudes have occurred and we are determined to ensure they are not repeated.

I ask you once again what legacy do you want to leave behind - to continue the cycle of mistrust that comes from celebrating on January 26, our declared day of mourning and continued source of pain, grief and suffering from my people, or a Council that continues to be on the forefront of building trust with First Nations people through a commitment to reconciliation, striving forward with our Victorian State Government as we move towards treaty, truth telling, greater use of traditional names and a renewed school curriculum?

Acknowledging our day of mourning and advocating for a change of date, a date that can be celebrated by all, will truly be a step in the direction of reconciliation and uniting all Australians. Thank you.

Submission 2
Ilona Rose – Torquay (Submission 1 of 1)

Hi, Councillors. My name is Ilona Rose. I'm a proud Gunditjmara woman and carry the Rose name from the fighting Gunditjmara with absolute pride.

I work for the Department of Education and have for the last 25 years and so my submission today is really linking in with the young people that I service in the work that I do and other career educators that work alongside me.

I am from Gunditjmara, but I am born and raised here on Wadawurrung country and pay my respects to traditional custodians and Wari sea country runs really strong through my ancestry back to the Hopkins River and down Warrnambool way there.

So Australia Day celebrations held on January 26 can have profound emotional, cultural and psychological impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth. As I said before, I've worked in education locally across Wadawurrung country for the past 25 years and now across the whole South West Vic region in my role as career education manager. I also have two children in secondary school who are educated down here in the government system who deserve the right to live and learn in a town that sees, hears and includes them so they can continue to grow strong in their culture and identity.

Celebrating a day that symbolises loss and oppression can create confusion and emotional distress, especially for young people trying to feel proud of both their heritage and also their place in modern Australia, which can be a challenge. It reinforces feelings of exclusion and marginalisation and, through professional observation myself, I've seen young people withdraw from school and their community at this time to avoid such feelings. I've also seen that our young people become exposed to the negativity that occurs through social media, which only serves to perpetuate these feelings.

Youth voices are central in movements to change the date or reframe the day to reflect truth telling, healing and unity. I urge you to put the voices of our youth at the forefront as you make a decision that could build leadership and reconciliation of our young people.

As I said, I work in the government system here, but we have almost 200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people being educated in our schools here in Torquay and they are the ones that will benefit in the long term from the decisions that are made here today. Thank you.

Cr Schonfelder left the meeting at 6:18pm.

Submission 3
Ebony Hickey – Winchelsea (Submission 1 of 1) – Submission read by Mayor Mike Bodsworth

In relation to the Notice of Motion and resolution of 25 February 2025 regarding 26 January, the Chief Executive Officer was directed to ensure that cultural awareness training be provided to all Councillors. I acknowledge and thank the Surf Coast Shire CEO for organising this training. The non-attendance of some Councillors raises significant concerns regarding Council's ability to discharge its obligations under relevant legislative frameworks, including requirements to consider the views and interests of First Nations communities in decision making. A failure to engage with cultural awareness training compromises Council's capacity to demonstrate procedural fairness and inform decision making and adequately identify, assess and mitigate risks arising from decisions relating to 26 January. The absence of full participation in this training poses material risks to Council's integrity, compliance and accountability in relation to future determinations concerning Aboriginal affairs.

Question 1
Nicole Langtip – Moriac (Question 1 of 1)

First of all, I'd like to apologise to all First Nations people that we're here tonight even discussing this and this motion was brought forward. I'm really sorry.

I have been incredibly fortunate to live on Wadawurrung country for the past 25 years, spending 13 years on the coast and 12 years on the hinterland. I have attended both Pilk Purriyn events, which were incredible, powerful and the most generous offering from First Nations people for all community to come together as one. There were thousands of people at both events and it was more inclusive than any citizenship ceremony that I've walked through Taylor's Park before. That's the truth. I also participated in the Walk for Truth from Modewarre to Moriac this year which was an incredibly well attended hinterland event, another active indication of community support in walking forward together.

I have been really proud of the Surf Coast Shire Council and our commitment to reconciliation, I really have felt very proud, their decision making and actions to honour true reconciliation with First Nations people in a myriad of ways prior to this.

Principle 10 of Council's plan, "Respectful engagement and consultation with First Nations", was created and adopted after extensive community consultation, with theme 1 of the plan being First Nations reconciliation. What is the impetus to move away from the principle and the number one theme in our Council plan and does Council have the authority to do this without community consultation? Thank you.

Answer provided by Chief Executive Officer Robyn Seymour

Good evening, Nicole, and thanks for your question. Council remains committed to working with our First Nations community and stakeholders through our statement of commitment to reconciliation. An Innovate Reconciliation Plan has recently been developed and we're expecting that to be considered at the October Council meeting, so next month, and tonight Council will be considering a report that is in response to a resolution made in February to build greater understanding of the impacts of the 26 January celebrations. So thanks for your question.

Question 2
Julie Dingle – Anglesea (Question 1 of 2)

Thanks very much. Thank you. I just wanted to acknowledge that I'm happily living on Wadawurrung country and pay my respects to Elders past and present and for looking after this beautiful land.

I'm with Surf Coast for Reconciliation and I will just ask this one. After work done in the past years developing meaningful and strong collaborative relationships with traditional owner groups, we were glad that Surf Coast Shire was committed to making informed decisions about 26 January demonstrated at the February meeting. It's also been heartening to read the thorough research undertaken to explore impacts on First Nations people of "celebrations" on 26 January as documented in the current report contained in the agenda from Council. Thank you.

Following on from that, and noting that cultural awareness training has been offered, we're wondering if it has been well attended and if it was well received.

Answer provided by Chief Executive Officer Robyn Seymour

Thanks, Julie. Cultural awareness training was offered to all Councillors over two separate sessions and was really well received. While the training wasn't mandatory, the majority of Councillors attended the training.

Question 3
Julie Dingle – Anglesea (Question 2 of 2)

Is there still more training?

Answer provided by Mayor Mike Bodsworth

The answer to that question is no.

Cr Schonfelder returned to the meeting at 6:30pm.

Question 4
Tina Smith – Bells Beach (Question 1 of 2)

I have two questions and my first question is: are Council officers and Councillors aware of the level of community concern in regards to the proposed 36 metre high telecommunications tower at 185 Addiscott Road, Bells Beach, including, and importantly, the change.org petition with now over 790 signatures?

Question 5
Tina Smith – Bells Beach (Question 2 of 2)

In regard to the planning application for the proposed tower at 185 Addiscott Road, Bells Beach, we are aware that only a limited number of notifications were initially received and some very close to the cutoff date for objections to be submitted. Given the sensitive nature of the environmental significance, designated overlays in the area and likely community concern, can Council officers explain why notifications were provided so close to the cutoff date and why they were seemingly only provided after requests raised by concerned community members were lodged?

Answer provided by Chief Executive Officer Robyn Seymour

Tina, yes, Councillors and Council are aware of the level of community concern in relation to the proposed telecommunications tower. You might have seen on the papers tonight the petition will be considered by Councillors for its acceptance as part of tonight's meeting.

In relation to the planning application and the notification process, I want to clarify that notification was undertaken more broadly than the minimum requirements set out in the Planning and Environment Act. The date that's included in the notice, I think perhaps there's been a misunderstanding about that. It's not the cutoff date, that date - for objections, that is. Rather, it's the date before which Council cannot make a decision on the planning application. So, in practical terms, objections can continue to be lodged right up until the time that Council makes the decision and that's typically actually what happens. This allows plenty of opportunity for community members to provide their submissions as part of the process. So thanks for asking the question and clarifying that.

Question 6
Ian Poulton – Anglesea (Question 1 of 2)

Regarding the proposed telecommunications tower at 185 Addiscott Road, Bells Beach, is the Council aware that the proposed site has had trees removed and that site preparation works appear to have commenced prior to the planning approval?

Question 7
Ian Poulton – Anglesea (Question 2 of 2)
The majority of Bells Beach community members engaged in the direct area have said that they do not have cause for a new telecommunications tower, having already found alternate solutions over time for internet access such as Starlink and others. How and when was the community engaged in assessing this need and can you provide the evidence base for the expressed need for improved internet services for the subject community at Bells Beach and Bellbrae?

Answer provided by Chief Executive Officer Robyn Seymour

Thanks for your questions, Ian, and we are aware of the potential works and vegetation removal occurring at the site and are investigating and will take action if needed.

In relation to your second question, the question for the need for a facility like this is something that's really the responsibility of the telecommunications provider to investigate for themselves. It isn't something that forms part of our consideration of the planning application, so that isn't part of our consideration.

Under the Planning Scheme, as I said, Council does not assess community demand when considering the application or whether they include community consultation as part of that process to determine the need. The role of Council is to assess the application before it in accordance with the policy and requirements of our Planning Scheme. We'll continue to make sure the community is kept informed about the planning process and the outcome of the application. Thanks for your questions.

Question 8
David Salveson – Torquay (Question 1 of 2)

I also have two questions concerning the mentioned telecommunications tower. So given the Bells Beach and surrounds Significant Landscape Overlay, which aims to encourage discrete placement of simple, unobtrusive structures with reference to the approach to Bells Beach, of which Addiscott Road is listed in that overlay, I believe, together with the international attention that Bells Beach obviously has, including the WSL and the Cadel Evans bike ride, which brings a lot of people to the area, a lot of also significant aerial coverage of that event, isn't it the case that the proposed tower will have a potential negative impact on international coverage and the perception of the area in regards to its obviously pristine natural environment and is it contrary to the protection overlays?

Question 9
David Salveson – Torquay (Question 2 of 2)

Given the application argues that the tower provides for projected growth in the area and given the area is primarily made up of 5 to 10 acre blocks that can't be subdivided and have been identified as a non-growth area through numerous Council plannings, including the SLO I referred to in question 1, taking into account the rural conservation zone, the environmental significant overlay, the also significant landscape overlay, the bushfire management overlay, does Council agree that the tower contradicts the intent of these

overlays after a lot of community consultation and is the Council intending to amend the overlays to now allow residential growth in that area, which we would think is not the case.

Answer provided by Chief Executive Officer Robyn Seymour

Thanks, David. So the site itself is not actually specifically covered by the Significant Landscape Overlay. What we'll do is assess the appropriateness of the application against the requirements in the Planning Scheme. We'll make sure that all the relevant planning controls are carefully considered before a decision is made.

And in relation to your second question, the points raised in the application are the applicant's submission. They have the right to apply and Council must accept the application and then assess whether or not the proposal is appropriate under the Planning Scheme.

The need for the facility is not something, as I mentioned to the previous questions, Council considers as part of its assessment. We'll continue to ensure that community are kept up to date and informed throughout the process and the outcome of the application is - we'll let you know the outcome as well.

Question 10
Katrina Grant – Bellbrae (Question 1 of 2)

The community feels that it was poorly represented through the advertising notification process for the planning application for the tower at 185 Addiscott Road, Bells Beach. Given the sensitive environmental overlays and considerable objection to the tower, with over 700 people objecting in the petition, as concerned local community members, we feel that we need representation from the Councillors beyond the planning officers. So will Council call in the planning application for the tower at 185 Addiscott Road under section 4.6 of the Surf Coast Shire policy 057 and if not, why not as the grounds for this are that a significant number of objections have been received, that there is potential for this permit to have long-term environmental and social impacts, and that there is potential conflict of policies where the Telecommunications Act can be seen to conflict with the designated area of significant landscape?

Question 11
Katrina Grant – Bellbrae (Question 2 of 2)

Clause 02.01 of the Planning Scheme states, and I quote, "The Shire contains diverse environmental, cultural and scenic landscapes and its natural environment is its single most important attribute and asset." Can Council please explain in detail how a 36 metre high telecommunications tower is consistent with this clause? That's equivalent to an 11-storey building.

Answer provided by Chief Executive Officer Robyn Seymour

Katrina, for your questions and we are aware, as I mentioned earlier, of the significant number of signatures on the petition and Council will consider formally accepting that petition tonight.

And as I also mentioned earlier, the advertising process specifically designed to capture community views and so I'm sorry if community feel that we didn't do that effectively. In this case, it was carried out more broadly than is a requirement under the Planning and Environment Act, so we would have assumed that it was quite broad. In relation to whether the application will be called in under Council's policy, this is still under consideration. We'll keep the community updated as this progresses.

In relation to your second question, as with any application, the applicant has the right to apply and Council must then assess whether the proposal is appropriate and consistent with the Planning Scheme. At this stage, no decision has been made. The community will again - we'll let you know. We'll keep you informed as the assessment continues. But thanks for coming along tonight and for asking your questions.

Question 12
Tim Hulsman – Bellbrae (Question 1 of 1)

Has the Council been in contact with Telstra to confirm that the current tower that services the area must be decommissioned and cannot be upgraded? The decommissioning of the tower forms the basis for the argument that the new tower needs to be done anyway. A recent email received from Telstra base stations to one of our community members stated that the tower at 615 Great Ocean Road is still in use and will be for the foreseeable future.

Answer provided by Chief Executive Officer Robyn Seymour

Thanks, Tim. Council has not been in touch directly with Telstra about whether the existing tower can be upgraded or decommissioned and we rely on the information provided in the application in relation to this. More broadly, it's also not something that Council considers as part of assessing the planning application under the scheme. So we'll make sure the assessment is thorough and considers all of the relevant planning reviews as part of that assessment.

Question 13
Russell Allan – Bells Beach (Question 1 of 1)

My question is probably a bit of a follow-up to the last one. The application lodged by Amplitel and Downer states, and I quote, "The facility will appropriately replicate the services provided by the site at 615 Great Ocean Road, Bellbrae which are required to be decommissioned and removed." However, this statement is incorrect. Telstra has said it is still operational and the landowner has confirmed that it is not being decommissioned and is currently in discussion to extend the lease for this tower.

This tower sits on a larger parcel of land, is well hidden and is not subject to the extensive SLO applicable to the applicant's proposal. Are Council officers aware of the false claims in their application documents and the correct status of the existing tower and why is the tower indeed necessary at 185 Addiscott Road, Bells Beach given the close proximity to 615 Great Ocean Road?

Answer provided by General Manager Placemaking and Environment

Thanks, Russell, and forgive me if I'm repeating a little bit of what the CEO has already said. It's really useful for you to bring that to our attention and if there are any factual inaccuracies, we can note that and make sure that when we're making our decision, that remains firmly grounded in the Planning Scheme.

Really to that point, the question of whether a tower is operational or not or whether there are lease arrangements being pursued, as the CEO said before, this really sits outside of our considerations when we're looking at the Planning Scheme. We do just have to look at the application that comes to us, assess that against the planning controls and the policies, and then those other matters have to sit outside that process, but it is useful to have any factual inaccuracies pointed out so that we can take note of those, so thank you.

Question 14
Mat Hines – Torquay (Question 1 of 2)

So my question is on a different topic, but I would like to start by indicating my wholehearted support for the contributions that were made earlier this evening in regards to January 26, particularly thank the First Nations members of our community for their contribution to the discussion.

So my questions relate to the Briody West development in the west of Torquay.So Briody West is one of the last remaining subdivisions in Torquay and, as such, presents us with an opportunity to do subdivision well. The Shire has participated in the sustainable subdivisions trial and I believe that the highest level of these standards must be applied to this area.

The site contains areas of high conservation value vegetation that must be protected and most of the area is recognised for its high biodiversity and yet I understand there have been no flora or fauna studies, other than to identify endangered flora species. These studies must be undertaken to understand what may be at risk.

The current plan seeks to remove almost all vegetation and habitat from the site and recently approved subdivision applications have already resulted in large-scale clearing of the area. Of the subdivision applications to date, how many have requested the removal of vegetation, how many approvals have required the retention of vegetation, and what flora studies have been undertaken in the area to ascertain the role that vegetation in the area plays in supporting native species?

Question 15
Mat Hines – Torquay (Question 2 of 2)

So From the Planning Scheme, schedule 10, the Development Plan Overlay for the area, states that development in the area is to respond in a sensitive way to the protection of remnant vegetation and that development needs to consider retaining established windbreaks as an urban landscape form. Clause 12 of the Planning Scheme states that Surf Coast seeks to site and design development to minimise vegetation removal, particularly indigenous vegetation adds to landscape character, and encourages retention of existing vegetation on private land, roadsides and reserves.

Council has recently announced its Branching Out strategy, which aims to increase canopy cover, reduce urban heat and boost environmental resilience. In addition to retaining habitat, the trees in Briody West will also provide valuable shade and cooling, as well as retaining the character and adding to the character of the new subdivision. How does large-scale clearance of vegetation sit with this strategy and the intent of the Planning Scheme? Are we at risk of seeing a death by a thousand cuts to the flora and fauna communities of Briody West through poor planning for the sites? And finally, what is Council's plan to ensure that the Briody West area does not become completely devoid of existing vegetation as a result of subdivisions?

Answer provided by Chris Pike, General Manager Placemaking and Environment

Thanks, Mayor, and thanks, Mat, for the question. So I'll take your first question first. So there have been three subdivision applications for the Briody Drive West area. Each of those applications has included removal of some vegetation in line with the approved development plan. I'll touch on that in a moment. They were subject to assessment under native vegetation provisions, so these impacts involved input and support from DEECA and ecological specialists.

While removal has been permitted, retention measures have also been secured. So an example I'll give you there is the linear reserve along Grossmans Road. So that was widened from 7.5 to 10 metres specifically to protect the yellow Bellarine gums.

Permit conditions also require applicants to undertake fauna assessments before any removal occurs so we can understand the correlation between the presence of flora and its use by fauna and there must also be measures to manage the impacts to protect vegetation during construction and to secure offsets where removal cannot be avoided.

In response to the second question, so the broader planning framework for the site was reviewed through the recent amendment to the development plan, which was informed by an updated flora and fauna assessment of both the development area and also the Deep Creek Corridor and we had our Environment team look at that too and they do acknowledge the overall impact is significant, but the critical point here is that the land had already been rezoned for residential development previously and the revised development plan didn't increase the vegetation loss compared to that original plan.

That all said, the principles of avoid and minimise remain important to us and we've sought to focus protections on the most valuable vegetation, such as those roadside reserves that I've just mentioned, and to ensure that if there is any removal, it's offset and it's mitigated.

So our ongoing role here is to apply the Planning Scheme to require those offsets and secure conditions to protect and manage vegetation and habitat wherever possible and so whilst we will acknowledge the development in Briody West will change the landscape, we will remain committed to ensuring that the biodiversity values are considered and that the remaining vegetation is protected and managed as best we can into the future.

Question 16
Marg Montgomery – Freshwater Creek (Question 1 of 2)

Thank you. This is about the Freshwater Creek environment. The Freshwater Creek area is environmentally significant, supporting the conservation of high-value flora and fauna. Parts of the area are also recognised as places of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity, including the entirety of the land at 205 Loutitt Bay Road.

Residents acknowledge that industrial activities on land zoned for farming may, in some circumstances, be permitted. However, they may also be refused based on policy considerations, environmental impact, and amenity concerns. We therefore seek clarification on how Council assesses the cumulative impact of industrial and intensive farming uses when determining whether new application should be approved.

For example, two of the five properties between Brushfields Road and Blackgate Road that have boundaries with the south-east side of Loutitt Bay Road are now occupied by industrial-type uses. In addition, a recent permit application has been lodged for the development of six farm sheds for animal husbandry at 1258 Blackgate Road, Freshwater Creek. Unfortunately, the information currently available on Council's website about this proposal is limited, making it impossible for the community to properly understand the nature and scope of the intended use.

Question 17
Marg Montgomery – Freshwater Creek (Question 2 of 2)

When did Council most recently formally consider and define the policy protections that should apply to Freshwater Creek farming land; and was the community involved in those deliberations? And the second question: Given the pressure on land in the Freshwater Creek

area and the land's clear environmental and Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity, should those policy protections be reviewed?

Answer provided by Chris Pike, General Manager Placemaking and Environment

Thanks, Mayor, and thanks for the question, Marg. So the most recent piece of work that we've done in this space was the Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy and that was developed and implemented into the Planning Scheme across 22 and 23 and that was a piece that covered a broader area than just the Freshwater Creek area and so it did go through a full consultation process firstly on the strategy itself and then also on the Planning Scheme amendment, so people did have input into that and that helped shape the final work of both the strategy and then ultimately the Planning Scheme amendment.

The focus of that strategy is on promoting legitimate farming activities in the rural hinterland as well as tourism opportunities in appropriate locations, while also providing a clear policy test for other proposals that might be permissible under the farming zone. So that means that proposals are assessed not just against the zoning, but also against broader planning policy considerations and these include environmental impact, amenity and also the impact of non-farming activities on farming uses.

Just in terms of whether those policy protections should be reviewed, it's important to note that the controls now in place already do provide a framework to assess the appropriateness of use and development. They are designed to balance farming, environmental values and community expectations and at this stage we don't have any plans to review or redefine those protections further. However, they do give us the ability to carefully assess the impacts of each application to make sure that proposals are consistent with the Planning Scheme, which includes this strategy.

In closing, I do want to acknowledge that the community concern about cumulative impacts is a valid concern and whilst existing policies provide us with the tools to assess that, we will now continue to monitor how those policies are working on the ground and this is an example in point.

Question 18
Sally Galbraith – Freshwater Creek (Question 1 of 1)

Shire officers have advised that they do not actively monitor activities on properties in the circumstances of unpermitted uses,but instead rely on community members to gather information. If the intervention orders are successful, I will be prevented from observing and recording activities. This would significantly limit the community's ability to understand what's occurring on the land and to engage with the shire on this issue.

Our group maintains that planning issues relate to land, not to individuals. We are not seeking personal information about landowners. Rather, we seek clarity about land use and how the shire intends to regulate it. We do not believe this type of information falls within the scope of privacy laws and we are concerned by the barriers we have encountered in obtaining information about how the land is being used and how the shire is approaching its regulation. We believe that the Shire's lack of transparency regarding its processes for monitoring and investigating activities on this land is contributing to unnecessary tension between the property owners and their neighbours.

My question: Will the Shire advise of the factors it considers and the protocols it applies when people with a legitimate interest seek information about the scope of activities being undertaken on identified land and the Shire's approach to regulating use and development of that land? Does the Shire consider its current approach optimal or is there a better

approach that would not further inflame tensions within local communities?

Answer provided by Chris Pike, General Manager Placemaking and Environment

Thanks, Mayor, and thanks for the question, Sally, and do acknowledge that this is a source of frustration, which is evident in your question and our conversations, and also acknowledging that there will be points of disagreement about the extent of the information that Council officers can share in undertaking their work.

Importantly, Council officers must always gather their own evidence in relation to compliance matters, so whilst we're grateful and it's very useful to have information provided by the community, this brings breaches, or potential breaches, to our attention, the responsibility for evidence gathering must ultimately rest with the Council and that means that officers can only rely on information they have collected themselves when assessing or pursuing an investigation.

So in terms of sharing information back with the community, there's some we can share and then there are also limits to what can be disclosed. So typically we can talk about process, less so about content or analysis. So an example I might share is where we're seeking a hydrologist's report, we might share that we're seeking a hydrologist's report and it's something that we will consider in deliberations. We might also talk about how that might be referred for expert review, but where we won't be able to disclose information is who is putting that report together. We can't talk about the contents of that report. We can't talk about our analysis of that report.

When we do make decisions and actions become apparent, that can sometimes be revealing about officers' assessment of that information, but primarily our focus here is in not prejudicing the investigation and also ensuring that we provide procedural fairness.

So it's not lost on me that this will come across at times or feel like a lack of transparency, but it is the normal approach, it is the proper approach to enforce matters across local government.

I'd also acknowledge that it can take time, particularly where there are multiple agencies and multiple issues, and that also creates frustration. We do have a commitment to try to keep people as updated as we possibly can within those constraints I've described and, importantly, to ensure that the investigation is carried out thoroughly and professionally.

We are always open to considering improvements in how we communicate about these matters. I will keep returning to the matter of ensuring that we can conduct the regulatory process properly and we don't jeopardise any consequent action that might be taken and so, again, that can be a source of frustration.

I would just also briefly acknowledge we've received some recent correspondence from you last week raising matters that do require investigation and consideration alongside other agencies, so we're working through those as quickly as we can and we'll respond as soon as we're able to.

Question 19
Gary Montgomery – Freshwater Creek (Question 1 of 2)

I have two questions. The first one concerns the community's concern that despite the land which has just been referred to in Loutitt Bay Road - despite this land being subject to a Vegetation Protection Overlay, no effective action appears to have been taken either to release native vegetation currently suffocating beneath or encased by the enormous earth

wall or to prevent further extension of the wall.

Approximately one month ago Shire officers advised residents that the landowner had been granted two weeks to dig out encased trees by hand. While the owner appears to have made some superficial attempt to release a few trees, the surrounding space remains inadequate to allow proper aeration and hydration. In addition, the root zone of these trees and of many others, including trees on neighbouring properties close to the boundary, remain heavily compressed. In our assessment, it's only a matter of time before these trees decline and die. What is the value of a Vegetation Protection Overlay if there is no practical way to prevent native vegetation from the impacts of unauthorised works on the land?

Question 20
Gary Montgomery – Freshwater Creek (Question 2 of 2)

One of the recognised triggers for permits in the farming zone is a change to the rate of water flow across property boundaries. The Shire previously advised the community that the landowner had submitted a hydrology report in connection with the proposal to build stables and a menage. Since that time, however, an enormous earth wall has been constructed along much of the property boundary. This wall has multiple interfaces with neighbouring properties and public roads. In addition, works have been carried out on Merrijig Creek, including the construction of a crossing and expansion of the dam. Each of these activities has the potential to alter cross-boundary water flows.

More recently, residents were advised that Shire engineers would undertake a desktop assessment of available information to determine whether the earth wall, dam and/or creek crossing have changed the rate of flow across property boundaries. The community is still waiting advice on the outcome of that assessment.

Will the Shire please update the community on whether Shire engineers have undertaken any assessment of available information about changes in hydrology on the site because of extensive earthworks and, if so, what was found through that investigation? Did the investigation utilise or rely on hydrology information provided before substantive works were undertaken? If the investigation has not been completed, what is the proposed timeline and will the community be informed of the outcome?

Answer provided by Chief Executive Officer Robyn Seymour

Thanks for your questions, Gary, and I want to start at the outset with saying the Vegetation Protection Overlay is a really important planning tool and it does provide, we believe, provides real protections for the native vegetation across the municipality. In most cases, thankfully, landowners comply with those regulations and requirements and the overlay is effective in safeguarding our vegetation.

There are, however, occasions where unauthorised works are carried out on land. In those instances, Council can pursue enforcement and take action where the overlay is not adhered to. So while breaches do, unfortunately, occur, that does not mean the overlay itself is ineffective or of no value. It remains a critical mechanism for protecting native vegetation.

And in relation to your second question and the hydrology, so Council officers and engineers have considered the information made available, including interrogating the findings of the study that was submitted, but as the General Manager of Placemaking and Environment mentioned in response to our earlier question, this is tied to an ongoing investigation. So while I'm not in a position tonight to provide the full details, what I can say is that once the next course of action is determined, we'll convey our findings and next steps to the community. I do want to emphasise, though, that this remains an active matter and residents

will be informed of the outcomes as we progress through this investigation.

Question 21
Matt Freeman – Freshwater Creek (Question 1 of 2) - Question read by Alana Watt
I will be reading two questions on behalf of Matt Freeman, of Freshwater Creek. I am Alana Watt. I live in Jan Juc and I spend a lot of time with my grandparents in Freshwater Creek and furthermore, I'm very passionate about the environment.

So for the first question: On 25 June 2025, a large truck transporting a 30 tonne excavator and travelling south on Anglesea Road attempted to turn right into Blackgate Road. Residents believe the vehicle and excavator are linked to the earthmoving business currently operating on Loutitt Bay Road. While attempting the turn, the truck entered the roadside ditch and became stuck, leaving its tray and the 30 tonne excavator immobilised across Anglesea Road. This created a major safety hazard for passing traffic.

For many residents, the incident was not surprising, but rather a foreseeable consequence of the ongoing unregulated movement of heavy vehicles in the area, which continues to put community safety at risk. Would you please advise whether officers believe it is safe under current road conditions for heavy vehicles of this type to turn west from Anglesea Road into Blackgate Road across the path of northbound Anglesea Road traffic? We would appreciate a clear answer about officers' perceptions of current community safety, please. If not, what actions is the Shire taking to protect community safety?

Question 22
Matt Freeman – Freshwater Creek (Question 1 of 2) - Question read by Alana Watt

At the Council meeting on 26 August 2025, we asked Council to clarify how the National Heavy Vehicle Regulations apply to the use of local unsealed roads by vehicles operating from an earthmoving contractor's depot. Council responded that it did not yet have sufficient information from the permit applicant about its vehicles to provide an answer. Council therefore requested further details.

We wish to note that residents have already provided, and can continue to provide, Council with a record of vehicles personally observed at the site. In addition, the contractor's own website publicly lists the types of vehicles in its fleet, including details of some vehicle weights. Would you please advise whether, (a), you now have access to the required information about the vehicles to be used by the contractor's depot? If not, will Council commit to alerting residents when that information is available to Council and whether it raises issues about compliance with the NHVR scheme? Or (b), if the information has not yet been supplied, would Council nevertheless advise residents on how the NHVR scheme generally works and how Council takes the impact of heavy vehicles on local roads and road safety into account when assessing permit applications for industrial uses in farming areas?

Answer provided by Chris Pike, General Manager Placemaking and Environment

Yes, so thanks so much for coming in and posing those questions, good questions.

So the - yes, the intersection at Anglesea and Blackgate Roads, it's interesting, it's a road managed by the State Government is the first important point to make. That said, safety is one of the fundamental considerations as we undertake our investigations, so yes, we will look at the safety of movements.

It's also worth noting, and you might be able to share this with Matt, you do have the option to contact the Department of Transport and Planning directly, given it's a road that they manage. They're the responsible authority and they would be the authority that would

investigate and manage risks at that specific intersection, so it might be helpful for them to be made aware of concerns that people have if they're not already aware of them.

In relation to vehicle movements associated with the land as a contractor's depot, this is your second question, we have previously committed to follow up on the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator requirements and we're still waiting for the applicant to verify the details of all of their intended trucks and also the movements in and out of the site. So if it becomes clear that certain vehicle types need to be referred to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, we will definitely be doing that and, yes, we will keep residents updated when that information is available to us.

But also in terms of how the scheme works more generally, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, they set the rules about when a heavy vehicle requires a permit to use certain roads and if a vehicle doesn't require a permit, then really it's legally entitled to use any road that it sees fit.

So our role is a little bit different. When we assess a Planning Permit Application for an industrial-type use in a farming area, we look closely at the vehicles associated with the use and we look at the impacts of those vehicle movements on local roads in terms of the traffic that's generated, whether access arrangements are safe and suitable, things like are the site lines at the property entrance safe, is there a potential impact on the conditions of the road at the access point, like the road getting churned up. So while we're not the regulator of heavy vehicles, it is the case that we do take road safety and local amenity impacts into account when we do the planning assessment.

Question 23
Ebony Hickey – Winchelsea (Question 1 of 1) – Question read by Mayor Mike Bodsworth

The Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy, supported by the Local Government Act 2020, sets clear expectations for Councils to build equitable self-determined partnerships and to embed First Peoples' voices into decision making. As a municipality with two registered Aboriginal parties and one native title determination to date, Surf Coast Shire has heightened responsibilities in areas such as land use planning, cultural heritage protection, economic development, and civic participation of Aboriginal community members. Strengthening Councillors' understanding in these domains is not optional; it is integral to good governance and to meeting both statutory and strategic obligations. Treating our rights and aspirations as political talking points undermines both legislative compliance and the principles of partnership that underpin the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy.

What does a treaty-ready Surf Coast Shire look like? How can Council demonstrate genuine preparedness for the obligations and opportunities of treaty by embedding cultural awareness, respect and partnership into its core business if we can't get past one miserable day in January?

Answer provided by Damian Waight, General Manager Community Life

Thanks, Ebony, for the question. One of the answers earlier talked about Council's statement of commitment to reconciliation and aligning our work to that commitment to reconciliation helps prepare for the obligations and opportunities of treaty. This alignment helps embed cultural awareness, respect and genuine partnerships with First Nations people into all aspects of our work. This means we demonstrate commitment through everyday decisions, the policies we have and the practices we apply.

Our treaty readiness will be demonstrated through listening, engaging and working alongside

traditional owners and Aboriginal communities in shaping our shared future. In February, Council resolved to build greater understanding of the impacts of the 26 January celebrations on First Nations people. We've worked carefully to include these impacts in the report which Council will consider later on tonight. So thanks again, Ebony, for your question.

Question 24
Aleisja Henry – Torquay (Question 1 of 2) – Question read by Mayor Mike Bodsworth

Our next question is from Aleisia Henry. I'm going to just shorten Aleisia's preamble, which is around Council's resolution to providing cultural awareness training for Councillors from February's meeting. Question 1: "Has the cultural awareness training been completed and what did it involve?"

Question 25
Aleisja Henry – Torquay (Question 2 of 2) – Question read by Mayor Mike Bodsworth

Question 2: "Has advocacy to the Federal Government commenced and in what form? Given the importance of reconciliation and truth telling, I ask that Council ensures transparency and depth in its decision making and community engagement on this issue." So thanks, Aleisia, for your questions, if you're watching online, and I'll refer those to the CEO for a response.

Answer provided by Chief Executive Officer Robyn Seymour

Thanks, Aleisia, for your questions. So cultural awareness training was offered to Councillors over two separate sessions in July this year. One session was delivered, as we heard from a previous question, by Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation and one was delivered by Arranyinha cultural education providers and with support from Wadawurrung traditional owner. Both sessions included several elements of cultural awareness and learning, including perspectives of First Nations people, cultural respect, cultural heritage and cultural heritage management, reconciliation, the stolen generations and cultural safety. Your question came in before our agenda for tonight's meeting was published, so you'll note that the answer to question 1 is in item 4.4 of tonight's agenda and includes a summary of the consultation which took place.

So in relation to your second question, Council has advocated to the Federal Government to change the date of Australia Day, as outlined in the resolution contained in item 3.1 of the February 2025 Council meeting. This included writing a letter to the Prime Minister and Minister for Indigenous Australians. The matter was also raised with the federal member for Corangamite and, further, the topic has been included as part of tonight's Council's adopted advocacy priorities of 2025, which is also spoken about in the report that will be considered tonight. So Aleisia, thank you for your questions.

Question 26
Susan Gout – Bellbrae (Question 1 of 1) – Question read by Mayor Mike Bodsworth

Susan's question is about the telecommunications tower proposal in the Bells Beach locality and talks about the special landscape in that area and the preamble. Question 1: "Have Council or officers been through an appropriate level of due diligence to guarantee the proposed tower will not be able to be seen from the coast, which would be a significant issue for the significant landscape overlay for the Bells Beach coastline?" And that's it and I'm going to refer that question to the General Manager of Placemaking and Environment. Thanks.

Answer provided by Chris Pike, General Manager Placemaking and Environment

Thanks, Mayor, and thanks for the question, Susan. I can assure you that there will be a very thorough assessment of the application. It's really critically important to understand that we are in that process now, so no decision has been made and so all of the issues are being considered by the Council officers.

And so as I mentioned earlier, whilst the location isn't within the significant landscape overlay, we do consider all manner of things, including the appropriateness of the application against various elements of the Planning Scheme. So this will consider all the points raised by submissions by the community both tonight and formal objections made by members of the community.

Question 27
Damien Elsworth – Bells Beach (Question 1 of 1) – Question read by Mayor Mike Bodsworth

Our final question is from Damien Elsworth, from Bells Beach, on the same subject. "The applicant for the planning application has stated that 'Telstra is currently being forced to relocate from its existing telecommunications site'. In order to replicate the coverage performance of the area and ensure no disruptions to services, a new site to accommodate a new replacement telecommunications facility is required. Question 1: Given that we have confirmation that this is in fact a false statement and that the State Government has implemented a program to not only co-fund new towers, but also to upgrade existing towers, doesn't it make sense to upgrade the current tower rather than erecting another tower, effectively sandwiching residents in the Addiscott Road area between two towers at each end of the road?"

Answer provided by Chief Executive Officer Robyn Seymour

Thanks, Damien, for your question and I think we've mentioned this earlier to responses to previous questions. We are aware of the community's concerns about the statements made in the application regarding the status of the existing telecommunications site and Council's role, as we've covered earlier, is to assess the application that's been lodged against the requirements of the Surf Coast Shire Planning Scheme.

The overall need and demand for the facility is not a determining factor in the application. We will do all we can to ensure the proposal is carefully reviewed against the planning controls and that all community submissions are fully considered before making a final decision. So Damien, thank you for your question tonight.

1.10 Items to be Tabled

In accordance with section 174(4) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, a copy of the arbiter's decision and statement of reasons on the matter of an application by Cr Bodsworth concerning Cr Barker (**Attachment 1**) was tabled at the Council meeting and is recorded in these meeting minutes.

INTERNAL ARBITRATION PROCESS

In the matter of an Application by Councillor Mike Bodsworth concerning Councillor Paul Barker

HEARING PURSUANT TO PART 6 OF THE *LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2020*

Applicant:	Cr Mike Bodsworth
Respondent:	Cr Paul Barker
Date of hearing:	17 July 2025
Hearing location:	Surf Coast Shire Council offices
Arbiter:	Diana Price
Date of decision:	17 September 2025

FINDINGS & DETERMINATIONS

By way of findings and sanctions, the Arbiter orders as follows. The Respondent:

1. engaged in misconduct; and
2. is suspended from office for one (1) month commencing the day after the meeting of Council at which this decision is tabled.

STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR DECISION

The Application

1. By application dated 28 March 2025, Councillor and Mayor Mike Bodsworth sought a finding of misconduct against Councillor Paul Barker pursuant to s 143 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the **Act**) (the **Application**). Both the Applicant and Respondent are serving Councillors at Surf Coast Shire Council (the **Council**).

2. The Application contains two allegations:

    a. On or about 30 January 2025 Cr Barker engaged in misconduct in relation to a Facebook post in which he disputed Council estimates of the number of people attending the Pilk Purriyn event on 26 January 2025; and

    b. On or about 25 February 2025 Cr Barker engaged in misconduct in respect of comments made at a meeting of Council and in an email sent to the media.

Procedural history and evidence at hearing

3. The Application was accompanied by a number of attachments, including the relevant Facebook posts, concerns raised by members of the community, complaints made by other Councillors as well as other documents.

4. The matter was listed for a directions hearing on 13 May 2025. At this directions hearing a timetable was set for the filing of any further materials.

5. Cr Bodsworth did not file any further materials, relying instead on those which accompanied the Application. Cr Barker filed submissions, a statement of Cr Joel Grist as well as Cr Grist's emails with Council regarding the number of people who attended Pilk Purriyn.

6. Both parties attended in person at the final hearing on 17 July 2025. No witnesses were called at the hearing, however both parties engaged meaningfully in the hearing and made helpful oral submissions.

Allegation 1 – the Facebook post of 30 January 2025

7. Allegation 1 relates to a Facebook post made on or about 30 January 2025, and subsequent edits and comments made by Cr Barker to that original post (together, the **Facebook post**). The Facebook post related to Council's estimate of the number of people who attended Pilk Purriyn on 26 January 2025, which is a truth telling event presented by the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation

8. Pilk Purriyn was held at sunrise at 5.30am. It included a Welcome to Country ceremony, a Smoking Ceremony, various speakers and Cultural dance and song. Council provided in-kind support, such as logistical support and council staff to assist at the event, but did not provide monetary funding. On the same day, the Council issued a media release which included a photograph of the

event taken some time after the sun had risen. The media release stated, in part:

> **Truth-telling journey continues as thousands gather for Pilk Purriyn**
>
> Around 2,500 people gathered on Wadawurrung Country at Cosy Corner Torquay today, 26 January, as the sun rose at Warn Dja – Sea Country.
>
> Wadawurrung Traditional Owners shared testimonies and reflections seeking to deepen understanding of the stories of the past, and knowledge of Wadawurrung People and Country.
>
> Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation hosted the event for a third time with the support of Surf Coast Shire Council and Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority, providing opportunity for members of all communities to gather and deeply listen at this free event…

9. On 30 January 2025, Cr Barker made the Facebook post to a Surf Coast community page. This page had been set up some time prior by a member of the community. It was not an official Council Facebook page and was unmoderated. The Facebook account used by Cr Barker was created by him for Council related purposes. His name appears as 'Cr Paul Barker, Libertarian, Surf Coast Shire Council'. The post contained the above media release and stated:

> What do you think the numbers are? Count for yourself and let me know. My count in the comments.
> EDIT: It's clear some people don't understand the importance of the truth. The media release put out by Council sets official numbers. These numbers are then used to justify the spending of your rates on this event in the future. My concern is that if Council is not being honest with these numbers, can you trust them to be honest in other areas?

10. The post prompted many comments by other Facebook users. Some of these comments were favourable towards Cr Barker, but the majority were highly critical of him and the Facebook post. Cr Barker responded to some of these comments. For example:

    a. A community member posted 'You want us to count how many people attended? You right mate?', to which Cr Barker replied, 'only if you care about the honesty of the communications the council puts out'.

b. Another community member asked, 'What exactly is the point of this post?', to which Cr Barker replied 'truth. Do you not care about the truth?'.

c. A person posted 'When you are working with an organisation it is good practice to air your concerns privately with that organisation', to which Cr Barker replied 'that's been done. There has been no revision of official numbers'.

11. In addition to the above comments, Cr Barker also posted in the comment section a seven minute video of himself counting the number of people he could see in the photograph accompanying the media release. At some point he added in the 'EDIT' portion of the post.

12. There is no dispute between the parties that Cr Barker made the Facebook post referred to above. Nor is it in dispute that the attendance estimate contained in the media release was based upon information provided by a private event management company and from Council staff who assisted at the event. What is in dispute is whether the making of these posts constituted misconduct, being a breach of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct (the **Code**).

The Applicant's submissions

13. Cr Bodsworth's primary submission was that the Facebook post contravened Standard 4 of the Code, which provides a 'Councillor must act with integrity, exercise reasonable care and diligence and take reasonable steps to avoid any action which may diminish the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of local government'. The standard also includes some examples, such as that Councillors must ensure their behaviour does not bring discredit upon the Council.

14. Cr Bodsworth submitted that the Facebook post suggested that the Council was deliberately dishonest in estimating how many people attended Pilk Purriyn or was mistaken or incompetent in reaching that estimate. He said that the Facebook post was accusatory in tone, would inevitably undermine the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of local government, and brought discredit upon the Council. He submitted that while it is important for all Councillors to question the operation of Council, Cr Barker sought to spread unwarranted distrust.

15. Cr Bodsworth also submitted that the Facebook post contravened Standard 2, which requires Councillors to treat others, including Council staff members, with dignity, fairness, objectivity, courtesy and respect. He submitted that the attendance estimates were provided in good faith by people who actually

attended the event for its entire duration, and to challenge their estimation based on the number of people Cr Barker could see in a photograph taken later in the day was disrespectful and unfair to the Council staff who made the estimate. He said that the conduct also reflected on all Councillors and the Council as a whole and was disrespectful of those members of the public who attended or supported the event.

16. Cr Bodsworth also referred to one of the included examples in Standard 2, which requires Councillors to support the Council when applying the Council's community engagement policy to develop respectful relationships and partnerships with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal community controlled organisations, and the Aboriginal community. He submitted that Cr Barker's Facebook post was disrespectful to local traditional owners by implying that Pilk Purriyn was not worthy of support. Cr Bodsworth said that the event is highly regarded and has a significant positive impact.

The Respondent's submissions

17. In submissions Cr Barker sought to provide context to the Facebook post. Cr Barker provided a statement of Cr Girst. Cr Grist had queried the estimated number of people attending Pilk Purriyn with Council staff by email. For example, on 30 January 2025 Cr Grist received an email from a member of staff indicating that the media release had provided the best estimate of the number of people in attendance. On the same day Cr Grist discussed his dissatisfaction with Cr Barker. It was the conversation between Cr Grist and Cr Barker which prompted him to make the Facebook post and provided a reason as to why Cr Barker did not approach the Council himself to discuss the issue.

18. Cr Barker made extensive submissions maintaining his view that the Council's estimate of the number of people attending Pilk Purriyn was incorrect and stated that airing his opinion on Facebook is a protected political communication. As to whether the Facebook post contravened Standard 4, he submitted that the comments made by the public about his post do not evidence any loss in faith in the Council, and that his efforts to achieve transparency in fact increase public confidence in the Council as an institution.

19. In respect of Standard 2, Cr Barker stated that he treats all people equally, and does not treat anyone differently due to their gender, racial background or political leanings. Cr Barker submitted that he supports improved relationships between all peoples but does not see current approaches to reconciliation as effective. Further, he submitted that he did not seek to single out, harass or denigrate any particular individual Council employee who made the relevant attendance estimation. In any event, he said that any person employed by

Council needs to be robust enough to accept criticism. Cr Barker further submitted that if a representation is made on behalf of the Council that is not 100% true, that causes the loss of public trust and reduced confidence in the organisation.

Analysis

20. I have considered all arguments raised by the parties, both orally and in writing, including those not summarised in this decision.

21. Although Cr Barker did not himself attend Pilk Purriyn, he is entitled to disagree with the attendance estimate provide by Council. It was a free event, occurring in a public park with multiple access points. It started in the dark at 5.30am and continued until after sunrise. How many people attended could never be ascertained with certainty and estimates made in good faith may differ. Cr Barker was therefore entitled to share his views about whether the Council estimate was accurate or not. However, that is not a complete answer to the issues raised in the Application.

22. Standard 4 provides that Councillors have a duty to exercise reasonable care to avoid actions which may diminish the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of local government. This includes ensuring that their behaviour does not bring discredit upon the Council. Cr Barker took a discrete issue, being whether a crowd attendance estimate was accurate or not, and used it as a springboard to make very broad and serious allegations about the Council. He stated that the Council did not understand the importance of the truth and pointedly asked whether it could be trusted to be honest in other areas.

23. This was an attempt to sow distrust in the Council. It was unwarranted and inappropriate. His conduct falls wells short of what is reasonably expected of a Councillor. Cr Barker failed to exercise reasonable care not to diminish public trust and confidence in the Council and brought discredit upon the Council.

24. As indicated above, it was Cr Bodsworth's primary submission that the conduct breached Standard 4. Having made that finding it is unnecessary for me to decide whether the Facebook post contravened Standard 2, which requires Councillors to treat council staff with dignity, fairness, courtesy and respect. I do however note there is no evidence before me that the estimation provided by the Council staff who attended Pilk Purriyn was anything other than made in good faith. It is also unnecessary for me to decide whether Cr Barker failed to support the Council to develop respectful relationships and partnerships with Traditional Owners. While the Facebook post contains an implication that Pilk Purriyn should not be supported by the Council in the future, the express

purpose of the Facebook post was to criticise the Council rather than Pilk Purriyn or Traditional Owners.

Allegation Two – the Council meeting and email of 25 February 2025

25. The second allegation relates to statements made by Cr Barker at a Council meeting, and an email sent by him shortly thereafter to the media. On 25 February 2025 a Council meeting took place. The agenda included discussion of a petition for Council to resume funding of Australia Day activities and to conduct citizenship ceremonies on 26 January each year. A second petition was also tabled, albeit late, to maintain the status quo that Councill does not fund Australia Day activities nor conduct citizenship ceremonies on 26 January.

26. During the meeting Cr Barker objected to consideration of the second petition because it was submitted after the usual date prescribed by the governance rules. He said:

> If you want to know why the community trust in the organisation is deteriorating, it's because of this and many other actions that show me that the organisation treats the community with contempt. By having inconsistent application of rules, it sets this foundation. It seldom learns from its mistakes, rarely can be questioned, and I see more and more examples of conflicts of interest and political bias of people within the organisation.

27. Ultimately the Council resolved to consider both petitions as the governance rules permitted the receipt of petitions filed after the usual submission deadline. The meeting was attended by members of the public and was described as being highly charged.

28. Later that evening at 10.27pm Cr Barker wrote an email to his fellow Councillors, a journalist at news.com.au and a journalist from the Geelong Independent newspaper as follows:

> The behaviour of attendees and the lack of control of poor behaviour was unacceptable tonight.
>
> I'd like to know what sort of review will occur to ensure it doesn't happen again.

The respective submissions

29. Cr Bodsworth submitted that Cr Barker ought to have raised any concerns about the conduct of the meeting at the Council level, instead of immediately

contacting the media. He stated that the email was critical of him as Mayor and chair of the meeting, as the chair is responsible for the conduct of the meeting. He submitted that the email contravened Standard 1 of the Code, which states a 'Councillor must do everything reasonably necessary to ensure that they perform the role and responsibilities of a Councillor effectively and responsibly'. This duty includes acknowledging and supporting the Mayor in the performance of the role of Mayor. He also submitted the statement at the Council meeting and the email contravened Standard 4, in that he did not take reasonable care to avoid action which would diminish the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of local government.

30. Cr Barker submitted his comments at the Council meeting reflected his honestly held beliefs. Further, he said that Cr Bodsworth, as chair of the meeting, ought to have better controlled the members of the public in attendance who in Cr Barker's view were 'opponents of Australia Day'. He suggested that Cr Bodsworth ought to have considered expelling certain community members from the meeting. He did not see this as contradicting his otherwise support of absolute free speech. He said that he wrote immediately to the media as the matter was of 'public interest'. When asked why he did not take a staged approach, approaching his colleagues internally to seek a resolution before contacting the media, he said external scrutiny was required in order to achieve any progress.

Analysis

31. I find that the email sent to the media just hours after the Council meeting on 25 February 2025 contravened Standards 1 and 4 of the Code. All Councillors are required to be collaborative and work constructively together. If Cr Barker was concerned about the behaviour of some community members, then the recourse was to raise this issue internally with his fellow Councillors and other staff. Cr Barker ought not to have taken the precipitous step of emailing two journalists to complain when he had not first provided the Mayor or the Council with an opportunity to respond to his concerns. He therefore contravened Standard 1 of the Code by not acting responsibly, including by failing to support the Mayor in the performance of his duties, which includes chairing Council meetings.

32. The email further breached Standard 4, in that he did not take reasonable care to avoid action which would diminish the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of local government. Similarly, his statements during the meeting itself contravened Standard 4. The purported issue upon which Cr Barker was commenting was the receipt of a petition filed slightly out of time, that petition articulating a political position contrary to that held by Cr Barker. Cr Barker's

disproportionate response was to claim the Council was contemptuous, impervious to criticism and beset with conflicts of interest and political bias.

Findings & Determinations

33. Section 147 of the Act provides that if after completing the internal arbitration process the arbiter determines a Councillor has failed to comply with the Code, the arbiter may make a finding of misconduct. As detailed above, I find that:

    a. On or about 30 January 2025, Cr Barker's Facebook post contravened Standard 4 of the Code; and

    b. On 25 February 2025, Cr Barker's comments at the Council meeting and email to the media thereafter contravened Standards 1 and 4 of the Code.

34. Having made these findings of misconduct, s 147(2) provides that I may impose any one or more of a number of sanctions, which are:

    a. direct the Councillor to make an apology in a form or manner specified by the arbiter;

    b. suspend the Councillor from the office of Councillor for a period specified by the arbiter not exceeding 3 months;

    c. direct that the Councillor be removed from any position where the Councillor represents the Council for the period determined by the arbiter;

    d. direct that the Councillor is removed from being the chair of a delegated committee for the period determined by the arbiter;

    e. direct a Councillor to attend or undergo training or counselling specified by the arbiter;

    f. direct that the Councillor is not to attend or participate in a Council meeting specified by the arbiter that occurs after the meeting at which the decision and statement of reasons are tabled under subsection (4); and/or

    g. direct that the Councillor is ineligible to hold the office of Mayor or Deputy Mayor for a period specified by the arbiter not exceeding 12 months.

The Applicant's submissions

35. Cr Bodsworth submitted that the conduct was serious, in that it was intended to share and spread distrust about Council. He stated that the public's trust and confidence in Council was undermined by Cr Barker's conduct, and that individual persons within Council felt their integrity and competence had been called into question. He said further that upon being elected, all Councillors including Cr Barker, must put personal interests and differences aside and focus on constructively working together.

The Respondent's submissions

36. Cr Barker said that if I found that misconduct had been proven, it was not a particularly serious example of misconduct. In the event I came to consider sanctions, Cr Barker provided some information about the issues of importance to him on Council. They are the equitable application of spending of rate money, with an emphasis on core services, that Council decisions should be driven by the majority instead of what he describes as 'minority' views and the equal application of laws to all people.

Analysis

37. I find that given the nature and seriousness of the conduct and the harm that would be suffered if Cr Barker and other Councillors were not deterred from engaging in similar conduct, a period of suspension is required. I accept the submission made by Cr Bodsworth that the Facebook post contained serious accusations couched as questions. The issue of crowd estimates was unfairly used as a basis to allege that the Council was untruthful and dishonest. It is plain that Cr Barker's conduct brought discredit upon the Council and risked the loss of public trust in that institution. His conduct prompted complaints from members of the public and other Councillors alike, which demonstrates that his conduct reverberated within the community.

38. Similarly, Cr Barker's statements at the February 2025 Council meeting and email of the same day was a wholly disproportionate reaction to the tabling of a belatedly filed petition. He therefore failed to take reasonable care to avoid the diminishment of public trust and confidence. The precipitous email to the media was further irresponsible and failed to reasonably support the Mayor when chairing meetings in which there is charged political debate.

39. Further, general and specific deterrence are important considerations. It is necessary to convey to all local Councillors that conduct of this type is not acceptable and, if engaged in, will result in similar sanction. In addition, regard

must be made to maintaining public confidence in Councillors, the system of local government and the arbitration process. This public confidence is best achieved when Councillors who breach the standards reasonably expected of them are properly held to account.

40. Specific deterrence is a relevant consideration. Cr Barker reflected there were other ways in which he could have queried the estimated attendance numbers for Pilk Purriyn. He was particularly surprised by the largely adverse reaction on Facebook to his posts. However, his insight was limited. Cr Barker continued to refer to himself as a 'free speech absolutist'. He did not demonstrate any understanding that his conduct undermined public trust in the Council and the system of local government, perhaps because Cr Barker himself is highly cynical of government. Cr Barker repeatedly stated that the public's trust in local government is deteriorating but could not see any connection between his own behaviour and the loss of public confidence.

41. Regard has been had to the maximum possible period of suspension, being 3 months. Further, that pursuant to s 37 of the Act during such period of suspension Cr Barker would cease to be a Councillor, not be entitled to receive allowances, and that if the suspension were greater than two months he would be required to return all council equipment and materials.

42. I have not directed Cr Barker to apologise. Cr Barker was not willing to apologise and said any direction to do so would be 'forced'. I have also not directed Cr Barker to undergo any training in respect of the Code. Cr Barker does not lack an understanding of the Code but instead chose to disregard it when making the ill-considered public comments referred to above.

43. Finally, I was impressed by the professional courtesy demonstrated by both Cr Bodsworth and Cr Barker during the arbitration hearing. They were both articulate and respectful when discussing their opposing views on many issues. It is hoped that Cr Barker can display these same attributes when making any future public comments about matters pertaining to Council.

Diana Price
Arbiter

2 Petitions and Joint Letters

2.1 Receipt of Petition titled 'Request for Playground in Grossman's Ridge Estate'

Author's Title:	Executive Assistant
General Manager:	Chris Pike, General Manager Placemaking and Environment
Department:	Placemaking and Environment
Division:	Placemaking and Environment
Attachments:	1. 2025-08-26 - REDACTED PETITION - Item 2.1 - Request for Playground - Grossmans Ridge Estate 2025 [**2.1.1** - 5 pages]

Officer Conflict of Interest: No officer declared a conflict of interest under the *Local Government Act 2020* in the preparation of this report.

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is for Council to consider receiving and noting the petition requesting that Council construct a playground within Grossman's Ridge Estate. Full wording of this petition is provided in **Attachment 1**, noting that personal information of signees has been redacted for privacy purposes.

2. The petition consists of 30 signatures, as follows:

    2.1. Within Surf Coast Shire Council municipality: 29
    2.2. Elsewhere in Victoria: 1

Background

3. In accordance with Rule 23.2 of Council's Governance Rules, petitions which do not meet the definition of a petition under the Governance Rules may still be accepted if Council so resolves. The petition is assessed as not meeting the definition of a petition as it does not meet the requirement that '*each page of the petition bears the wording of the whole petition'.*

4. While the petition as attached to this report (**Attachment 1**) does not meet the format requirements as described above, officers have recommended that Council resolves to accept the petition in the interest of facilitating public participation in democratic process. Officers have assessed the petition and consider that any risks associated with non-conformity are low.

Recommendation

That Council, in accordance with its Governance Rules:

1. Receives and notes the petition requesting that Council construct a playground within Grossman's Ridge Estate; and
2. Receives the petition in a non-conforming format; and
3. Refers the petition to the General Manager, Placemaking and Environment for consideration; and
4. Requires a response to the petition be incorporated into a report on the Social Infrastructure Plan to be presented to a future Council meeting within three months of this Council meeting; and
5. Advises the lead petitioner of the outcome of this resolution.

Council Resolution

Moved Cr Stapleton, Seconded Cr Schonfelder

That Council, in accordance with its Governance Rules:

1. Receives and notes the petition requesting that Council construct a playground within Grossman's Ridge Estate; and
2. Receives the petition in a non-conforming format; and
3. Refers the petition to the General Manager, Placemaking and Environment for consideration; and
4. Requires a response to the petition be incorporated into a report on the Social Infrastructure Plan to be presented to a future Council meeting within three months of this Council meeting; and
5. Advises the lead petitioner of the outcome of this resolution.

CARRIED 8|1

For	Against	Abstained
Cr Bodsworth Cr Bourke Cr Grist Cr Pattison Cr Phelps Cr Schonfelder Cr Stapleton Cr Walker	Cr Barker	Nil

Petition to Surf Coast Shire Council: Request for Playground in Grossman's Ridge Estate

The petitioners whose names, addresses and signatures appear hereunder, petition the Surf Coast Shire as follows:

Dear Surf Coast Shire Council,

We, the residents of Grossman's Ridge Estate, respectfully submit this petition to request the construction of a playground within our estate. This initiative is essential for fostering community wellbeing, ensuring child safety, and fulfilling previously stated council commitments.

Why Our Estate Needs a Playground

- Community Building: A playground would serve as a vital social hub, encouraging interaction among families and strengthening community ties.
- Accessibility and Safety: The nearest playgrounds are distant and require children to cross busy roads or be driven, which discourages walking or cycling and poses safety risks.
- Demographic Need: Our estate is home to many young families with children who would benefit from a safe, local play space.
- Council Commitment: A playground was previously promised by the council, and we ask that this commitment be honoured (See appendix 1)
- Improper Use of Equipment: In the absence of a playground, children are using gym equipment not designed for play, which may lead to injury.

Alignment with Council Strategy

This request aligns with several priorities outlined in the *Council Plan 2025–2029*, particularly under the themes of:

- Community Wellbeing: The plan emphasises equitable access to social infrastructure and prioritises the needs of younger generations in decision-making.
- Assets and Infrastructure: Council aims to build safe, active transport networks and infrastructure that reflects township character while meeting future needs.
- Health and Wellbeing: The integrated Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan supports environments that promote physical activity and social connection—both of which are facilitated by playgrounds

Additionally, the *Our Places and Spaces: State of Play 2024* report identifies playgrounds as critical social infrastructure. It notes that while the Surf Coast Shire has a good overall provision of playgrounds, gaps remain in accessibility and walkability—particularly in growth areas like ours.

Surf Coast Shire Council is committed to protecting all personal and sensitive information consistent with the principles set out in the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014. The personal information in this petition will be used solely by Council for the primary purpose of petitioning Council or directly related purposes as permitted by law. The signatories understand that the personal information provided is for presentation to Council and that they may apply to Council for access to and/or amendment of the information. Please note that any personal information contained in this petition will be redacted from the public agenda.

OFFICE USE: Template Reference: D17/131742

Call to Action
We urge the Council to:

- Prioritise the planning and construction of a playground in our estate.
- Consider the safety and accessibility needs of children in this area.
- Honour previous commitments made to our community.
- Align this project with the strategic goals outlined in the *Council Plan 2025–2029* and *Our Places and Spaces: State of Play 2024*.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to working together to create a safer, more connected, and child-friendly community.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

On behalf of the residents of Grossman's Ridge Estate

Note to Signatories: Please include your name, address and signature when signing the petition, to ensure the petition conforms to requirements and is accepted by Council.

No.	NAME (First Name & Surname)	ADDRESS (Physical Address & Suburb)	SIGNATURE
1.	[redacted]	Bellbrae	[redacted]
2.	[redacted]	BELLBRAE	
3.		Bellbrae	
4.		Bellbrae	
5.		"	
6.	[redacted]		
7.			
8.	[redacted]	Bellbrae	
9.		BELLBRAE	
10.	[redacted]	Bellbrae	
11.		BELLBRAE	
12.		Bellbrae	
13.		Bellbrae	

Surf Coast Shire Council is committed to protecting all personal and sensitive information consistent with the principles set out in the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014. The personal information in this petition will be used solely by Council for the primary purpose of petitioning Council or directly related purposes as permitted by law. The signatories understand that the personal information provided is for presentation to Council and that they may apply to Council for access to and/or amendment of the information. Please note that any personal information contained in this petition will be redacted from the public agenda.

OFFICE USE: Template Reference: D17/131742

14.	[redacted]	Bellbrae [redacted]	[redacted]
15.	[redacted]		
16.			
17.			
18.			
19.			
20.			
21.			
22.			
23.			
24.			
25.			
26.			
27.			
28.			
29.			
30.			

Surf Coast Shire Council is committed to protecting all personal and sensitive information consistent with the principles set out in the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014. The personal information in this petition will be used solely by Council for the primary purpose of petitioning Council or directly related purposes as permitted by law. The signatories understand that the personal information provided is for presentation to Council and that they may apply to Council for access to and/or amendment of the information. Please note that any personal information contained in this petition will be redacted from the public agenda.

OFFICE USE: Template Reference: D17/131742

Appendix 1

Communication from 2022:

Grossmans Ridge Playground Update

Hi [redacted]

Sorry for the delay in getting back to you. I have done some following up with our new Social Infrastructure and Open Space Coordinator [redacted] who is in the process of developing our first ever Integrated Social Infrastructure and Open Space Plan which includes the review of our Playground Strategy as foreshadowed in my email to you in November 2020.

[redacted] has let me know that through these recent assessments Grossmans Estate is emerging as a gap and indications show that there is a need for a local level playground in the area. It will be picked up and represented in our new Integrated Social Infrastructure and Open Space Plan with the draft due for release mid-2022 for consultation.

Thank you for your patience as we work through the next steps for this area and all relative to the timing of the developer handing the assets over to Council as Council cannot approve or carry out any works in this space until April 2022.

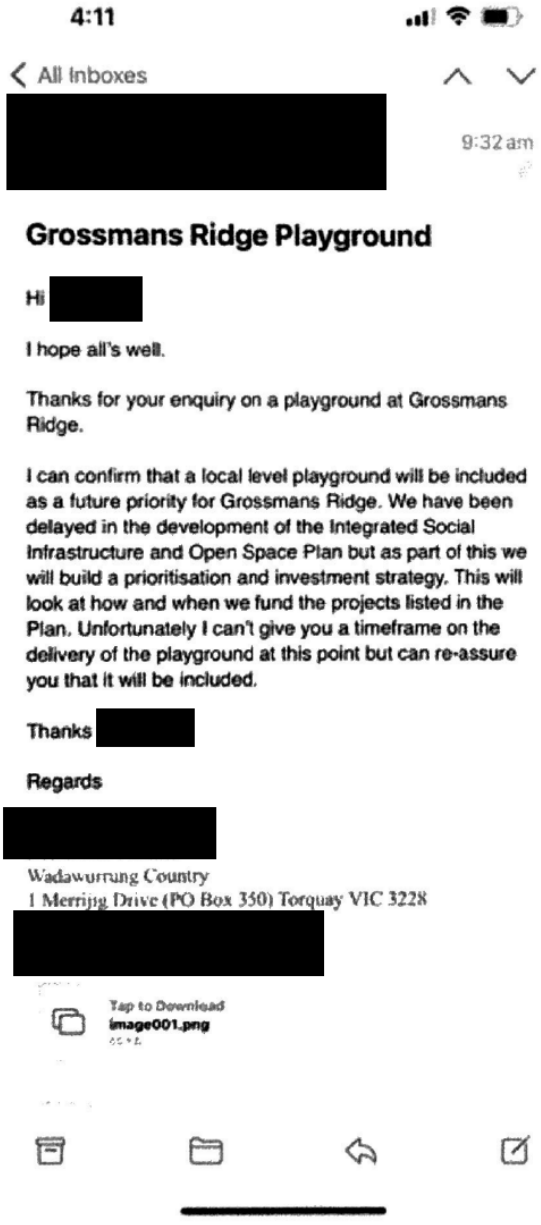
Hope you have a happy new year

[redacted] | Coordinator Recreation Planning
1 Merrijig Drive | Torquay VIC 3228
[redacted]

Surf Coast Shire Council is committed to protecting all personal and sensitive information consistent with the principles set out in the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014. The personal information in this petition will be used solely by Council for the primary purpose of petitioning Council or directly related purposes as permitted by law. The signatories understand that the personal information provided is for presentation to Council and that they may apply to Council for access to and/or amendment of the information. Please note that any personal information contained in this petition will be redacted from the public agenda.

OFFICE USE: Template Reference: D17/131742

Communication from 2024:



4:11

All Inboxes

[redacted]

9:32 am

Grossmans Ridge Playground

Hi [redacted]

I hope all's well.

Thanks for your enquiry on a playground at Grossmans Ridge.

I can confirm that a local level playground will be included as a future priority for Grossmans Ridge. We have been delayed in the development of the Integrated Social Infrastructure and Open Space Plan but as part of this we will build a prioritisation and investment strategy. This will look at how and when we fund the projects listed in the Plan. Unfortunately I can't give you a timeframe on the delivery of the playground at this point but can re-assure you that it will be included.

Thanks [redacted]

Regards

[redacted]

Wadawurrung Country
1 Merrijig Drive (PO Box 350) Torquay VIC 3228

[redacted]

Tap to Download
image001.png

Surf Coast Shire Council is committed to protecting all personal and sensitive information consistent with the principles set out in the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014. The personal information in this petition will be used solely by Council for the primary purpose of petitioning Council or directly related purposes as permitted by law. The signatories understand that the personal information provided is for presentation to Council and that they may apply to Council for access to and/or amendment of the information. Please note that any personal information contained in this petition will be redacted from the public agenda.

Page **5** of **5**

OFFICE USE: Template Reference: D17/131742

2.2 Receipt of Petition 'Planning Application Telecommunications Tower - 185 Addiscott Road Bells Beach'

Author's Title:	Executive Assistant
General Manager:	Chris Pike, General Manager Placemaking and Environment
Department:	Placemaking and Environment
Division:	Placemaking and Environment
Attachments:	1. Petition - 185 Addiscott 35 m Telecommunication Tower Rejection - REDACTED [**2.2.1** - 26 pages]

Officer Conflict of Interest: No officer declared a conflict of interest under the *Local Government Act 2020* in the preparation of this report.

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is for Council to consider receiving and noting the petition requesting that Council reject planning permit application no. 25/0099 for a telecommunications tower at 185 Addiscott Road, Bells Beach.

2. The petition consists of 705 signatures, as follows:

    2.1. Within Surf Coast Shire municipality: 201
    2.2. Elsewhere in Victoria: 388
    2.3. Elsewhere in Australia: 64
    2.4. International: 52

Background

3. In accordance with Rule 23.2 of Council's Governance Rules, petitions which do not meet the definition of a petition under the Governance Rules may still be accepted if Council so resolves. The petition is assessed as not meeting the definition of a petition as it does not meet the requirement that '*each page of the petition bears the wording of the whole petition',* as well as the requirement that each signee's physical address appears on the petition.

4. While the petition as attached to this report (**Attachment 1**) does not meet the format requirements as described above, officers have recommended that Council resolves to accept the petition in the interest of facilitating public participation in democratic process. It is noted that the format provided is consistent with the format commonly provided through online petition platforms. Officers have assessed the petition and consider that any risks associated with non-conformity are low.

Recommendation

That Council, in accordance with its Governance Rules:

1. Receives and notes the petition requesting that Council reject planning permit application no. 25/0099 for a telecommunications tower at 185 Addiscott Road, Bells Beach; and
2. Receives the petition in a non-conforming format; and
3. Refers the petition to the General Manager Placemaking and Environment, to be considered as a formal submission to planning application no. 25/0099; and
4. Notifies the lead petitioner of this resolution.

Council Resolution

Moved Cr Pattison, Seconded Cr Stapleton

That Council, in accordance with its Governance Rules:

1. Receives and notes the petition requesting that Council reject planning permit application no. 25/0099 for a telecommunications tower at 185 Addiscott Road, Bells Beach; and
2. Receives the petition in a non-conforming format; and
3. Refers the petition to the General Manager Placemaking and Environment, to be considered as a formal submission to planning application no. 25/0099; and
4. Notifies the lead petitioner of this resolution.

CARRIED 5|3

For	Against	Abstained
Cr Bodsworth Cr Grist Cr Schonfelder Cr Stapleton Cr Walker	Cr Barker Cr Bourke Cr Phelps	Nil

Bells Beach - 35 Meter Phone Tower Objection - Application 25/0099

705
Verified signatures

Let's get to 1000 signatures!

Petitions with 1,000+ supporters are 5x more likely to win!

Share on Facebook

Send via WhatsApp

Post on X

Copy link

Send via email

Decision Makers: Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority +1

The Issue

Please help **STOP** the **35 Meter High Telecommunications facility** that is being proposed to be put up at **Bells Beach** (Address has been wrongfully been removed from this petition 3 times by permit group). This is the equivalent to a 11-12 Story Building!!!

Decision makers- Statutory Planning Department Surf Coast Shire Council

'Responsible Authority' are still accepting objections particularly written objections.
Address all objections to Statutory Planning Department Surf Coast Shire Council

Planning Application Number 25/0099

Applicant for the permit: Downer Group EDI on behalf of Amplitel

Please consider the following key points:

1. Inappropriate Use of Land – Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ)

The subject site is zoned Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ), which prioritises environmental protection, landscape character, and biodiversity (Surf Coast Planning Scheme). The proposed development is inconsistent with the RCZ's objectives, which seek to maintain natural landscapes and ecological values.

Further, Amendment C133, the Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy, reinforces that land within Farming and RCZ zones should primarily deliver agricultural and environmental outcomes over inappropriate development. The proposed tower conflicts directly with these strategic directions.

2. Distinctive Landscape & Strategic Framework Protections

The Surf Coast region has been formally declared a Distinctive Area and Landscape under Victorian law, mandating heightened protection of its unique environmental and landscape values.

The Statement of Planning Policy (SPP) and associated overlays (such as the Significant Landscape Overlay) require decision-makers to preserve ecological integrity, landscape character, and scenic values. The introduction of a visually dominant tower within this sensitive area undermines these strategic protections.

3. Visual Impact & Loss of Locational Amenity

The prominence of the proposed tower will degrade the visual amenity, rural aesthetic, and natural character that this zone exists to protect. Many of us moved to this area of Victoria in order to move our families away from urban infrastructure so that we could live in a natural environment, and we take our responsibility to the preservation of this land and its natural state very seriously.

4. Lack of Local Benefit / Community Consultation

Local residents, already have access to reliable alternative communications services such as Starlink, limiting the actual direct community benefit of this facility. The environmental and amenity costs therefore strongly outweigh the utility of the proposal.

5. Health and Environmental Concerns

While EMF regulation sits with federal authorities, I wish to place on record the growing international concern regarding potential impacts of RF-EMF exposure. Over 250 peer-reviewed EMF scientists from 43 countries have cited evidence of biological and ecological harm at levels below current safety guidelines, including impacts on human health, plant life, and wildlife. Given the site's proximity to sensitive environmental areas including a National Park at the end of the road, these concerns should not be dismissed outright.

Note: Notice of application for a planning permit has been removed twice now due to permit applicants request for removal.

Handwritten letters are also encouraged -

Surf Coast Shire Council, 1 Merrijig Drive, Torquay VIC 3228

Surf Coast Shire commits to tourism body amid membership shifts

BY ELLIE CLARINGBOLD

THE Surf Coast Shire will remain a member of the Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism (GORRT) board, while one council departs and another reconsiders its future in the partnership.

Earlier this month, Glenelg Shire announced it was withdrawing from its decade-long partnership with GORRT, stating it would instead redirect its $100,000 annual membership fee toward "opportunities that better align with the unique needs" of the region.

The council cited a lack of support from both the state and federal government as the reason for the decision, suggesting it was "regularly omitted from marketing, tourism campaigns and strategies" managed by government bodies.

"Although GORRT have been strong in their advocacy and attempts to link the Glenelg Shire to the Great Ocean Road, the Glenelg Shire is simply not officially recognised by our state and federal partners as being part of the Great Ocean Road," the council said in a statement on its website.

Meanwhile in June, the Colac Otway Shire council initiated a formal review of its partnership with GORRT.

It follows an initial resolution by the council in March to reduce its membership fee from $100,000 to $80,000, a decision it later reversed after GORRT advised it may strip back its services in response.

The review is expected to be completed in March.

However, Surf Coast Shire general manager of placemaking and environment Chris Pike said the shire "greatly values" its longstanding partnership with GORRT and confirmed the shire would enter into a new three-year memorandum of understanding with GORRT.

Its 2025-26 budget includes a contribution of $150,000 to the tourism body.

"Tourism is a vital part of our economy, creating over 1,800 jobs in the Surf Coast, and our partnership with GORRT delivers a regional approach to the development, marketing, management and advocacy for the visitor economy."

GORRT, he said, had been a strong supporter of the Surf Coast's bid to become an accredited eco destination through Ecotourism Australia, and was supporting the shire through the program.

"This alignment in values and accreditation will drive a regenerative tourism approach to the way we promote and deliver tourism and help secure appropriate investment to support our world-class products and experiences," Mr Pike said.

GORRT general manager Liz Price said the organisation was focused on "continuous improvement" and "remaining strategic and responsive to market forces", suggesting Glenelg Shire's withdrawal would have little effect beyond its own shire.

"The visitor economy is critical to the Great Ocean Road region. It represents more than $2 billion in visitor spend, $591 million in direct gross regional product, approximately 12 per cent of filled jobs and supports more than 2,000 businesses," she said.

"The biggest impact of Glenelg withdrawing is on Glenelg Shire.

"We continue to look at new revenue streams to support growing our operations and reviewing and reshaping strategy to remain focused on what is a priority for council and industry partners."

In addition to the about $1.5 million GORRT receives annually from its membership councils, the tourism body also receives state government funding and investment from industry, which **supports its operations.**

GORRT general manager Liz Price said the visitor economy was critical to the Great Ocean Road region and represents more than $2 billion in visitor spend. Photo: VISIT VICTORIA

Residents fight Bells Beach telco tower

BY ABBY PARDEW

BELL Beach residents want the Surf Coast Shire to reject plans for a 35m telecommunications tower on Addiscott Road.

The tower is proposed for 185 Addiscott Road on land zoned for rural conservation.

The application was lodged with the shire on April 4 and advertised on August 8 after additional information was sought.

Resident Colin Brodie has lodged a formal objection, raising concerns about the zoning, visual impact, lack of community consultation and biodiversity.

"The fact that they want to build a 35m tower, which becomes 36.3m after the antennas go on it, in an area that's designated Rural Conservation Zone is ridiculous," he said.

"The development conflicts with all the core objectives of a Rural Conservation Zone, which seek to maintain the natural landscape and equal ecological values."

Mr Brodie said the impact on bees and other biodiversity was also a major concern in an area with many beekeepers.

"There are scientific studies, not anecdotal, proving that these towers disrupt the navigation of bees," he said.

"Bees potentially lose their way home to the hives, if council is so worried about the ecosystem, the beginning of the ecosystem is bees, without bees, we don't eat, things don't get pollinated."

Mr Brodie said many residents had accepted poor internet and switched to Starlink, meaning the tower would not benefit them.

He said residents had written to the council and would continue to do so in the hopes the application will be rejected.

Surf Coast Shire general manager placemaking and environment Chris Pike said a decision had not been made.

"We're following our usual processes, which includes the opportunity for people to make a submission.

"Submissions will be considered when making a final decision, as well as whether the application is considered appropriate under the Surf Coast Planning Scheme."

petition_signatures_jobs_490738855_20250904014108

Name	City	State	Postal Code	Country	Signed On
[redacted]				United States	2025-08-28
	Dana Point	CA	92629	United States	2025-08-28
	Santa Barbara	CA	93111	United States	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3161	Australia	2025-08-28
	Jan juc		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
	Bells beach		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
	San Juan Capistrano	CA	92675	United States	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3163	Australia	2025-08-28
	Lidcombe		2141	Fiji	2025-08-28
	Mobile	AL	36606	United States	2025-08-28
	Jan Juc		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
	Mornington		3931	Australia	2025-08-28
	Horsham		3400	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3029	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3128	Australia	2025-08-28
	Brisbane		4075	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-08-28
	New Smyrna Beach	FL	32168	United States	2025-08-28
	Santa Barbara	CA	93111	United States	2025-08-28
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
	Torquay		3000	Australia	2025-08-28
	Geelong		3220	Australia	2025-08-28
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
	Brisbane		4006	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-08-28
	Jan Juc		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
	George			Mauritius	2025-08-28

[redacted]	Seattle	WA	98102	United States	2025-08-28
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
	Bellbrae		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
	Jan Juc		3028	Australia	2025-08-28
	Jan Juc		3288	Australia	2025-08-28
	Jan Juc		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
	Geelong		3216	Australia	2025-08-28
	Jan Juc		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
	San Diego	CA	92113	United States	2025-08-28
	Noosa		4565	Australia	2025-08-28
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
	Geelong		3933	Australia	2025-08-28
	Moggs Creek		3231	Australia	2025-08-28
	Tweed heads		2485	Australia	2025-08-28
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
	Huntington Beach	CA	92646	United States	2025-08-28
	Santa Ana	CA	92701	United States	2025-08-28
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
	Oakland	CA	94612	United States	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3142	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3199	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
	Oceangrove		3226	Australia	2025-08-28
	Geelong		3216	Australia	2025-08-28
	Sydney		2199	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3207	Australia	2025-08-28
	Ladenburg		68526	Germany	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3018	Australia	2025-08-28
	Mount Duneed		3217	Australia	2025-08-28
	San Diego	CA	92116	United States	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3782	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3141	Australia	2025-08-28

[redacted]	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-08-28
			3134	Australia	2025-08-28
	Pambula		2549	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3165	Australia	2025-08-28
	Sydney	CA	2049	Australia	2025-08-28
	Jan Juc		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
	Sydney		2036	Australia	2025-08-28
	Dingolfing		84130	Germany	2025-08-28
	Jan Juc		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
	Honolulu	HI	96813	United States	2025-08-28
	BELLS BEACH		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-08-28
	Luton		LU1	United Kingdor	2025-08-28
	Geelong		3216	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-08-28
	Ocean Grove		3226	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3067	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3084	Australia	2025-08-28
	Jan Juc		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-08-28
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3207	Australia	2025-08-28
	Bells Beach		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
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	Jeffreys Bay			South Africa	2025-08-28
	Garmisch-Partenkirchen		82467	Germany	2025-08-28
	Bellbrae		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3186	Australia	2025-08-28
	Port Elizabeth			Netherlands	2025-08-28
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	Moriac		3240	Australia	2025-08-28
	Noosa		4567	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3145	Australia	2025-08-28
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	Melbourne		3161	Australia	2025-08-28
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	Melbourne		3011	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3240	Australia	2025-08-28
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
	Perth		6004	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3073	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3006	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3183	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3054	Australia	2025-08-28
	Leopold		3224	Australia	2025-08-28
	Barrabool		3221	Australia	2025-08-28
	Geelong		3216	Australia	2025-08-28
	Sydney		2125	Australia	2025-08-28
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
	Noble Park		3174	Australia	2025-08-28
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	FRESHWATER CREEK (VIC)		3217	Australia	2025-08-28
	Daisy Hill		4127	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3142	Australia	2025-08-28
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	Jan Juc		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
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	Melbourne		3249	Australia	2025-08-28
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	Melbourne		3149	Australia	2025-08-28
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	Wandana Heights		3216	Australia	2025-08-28
	Lennox Head		2478	Australia	2025-08-28
	Bellbrae		3228	Australia	2025-08-28
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	Newtown		30	Australia	2025-08-28
	Brisbane		4169	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3142	Australia	2025-08-28
	Newtown		3220	Australia	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3199	Australia	2025-08-28
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	Jan Juc		3941	Australia	2025-08-28
	San Diego	CA	92101	United States	2025-08-28
	Brooklyn	NY	11252	United States	2025-08-28
	Southold	NY	11971	United States	2025-08-28
	Lakewood	CO	80226	United States	2025-08-28
	Den Hoorn		2635	Netherlands	2025-08-28
	Ojai	CA	93023	United States	2025-08-28
	Melbourne		3006	Australia	2025-08-28
	Mill Valley	CA	94941	United States	2025-08-28
	Coral Gables	FL	33146	United States	2025-08-28
	Ojai	CA	93023	United States	2025-08-28
	Port Elizabeth			South Africa	2025-08-28
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	Geelong		3216	Australia	2025-08-28
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	Melbourne		3071	Australia	2025-08-28
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	North Arm		4561	Australia	2025-08-28
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	Belmont		3216	Australia	2025-08-29
	Melbourne		3228	Australia	2025-08-29
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	Ocean grove		3226	Australia	2025-08-29
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	Brisbane		4051	Australia	2025-08-29
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-08-29
	Melbourne		3977	Australia	2025-08-29
	Islington		EC1V	United Kingdor	2025-08-29
	Melbourne		3152	Australia	2025-08-29
	Sydney		2145	Australia	2025-08-29
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	Bellbrae		3228	Australia	2025-08-29
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	Jan Juc		3228	Australia	2025-08-29
	Melbourne		3165	Australia	2025-08-29
	Barmah		3639	Australia	2025-08-29
	Brisbane		4000	Australia	2025-08-29
	Melbourne		3101	Australia	2025-08-29
	Bells Beach		3228	Australia	2025-08-29
	Clifton Springs		3222	Australia	2025-08-29
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	Bellbrae		3228	Australia	2025-08-29
	Melbourne		3023	Australia	2025-08-29
	Barwon Heads		3227	Australia	2025-08-29
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-08-29
	Melbourne		3137	Australia	2025-08-29
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	Anglesea		3228	Australia	2025-08-30
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	Coolangatta		4225	Australia	2025-08-31
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	Melbourne		3163	Australia	2025-08-31
	Geelong		3216	Australia	2025-08-31
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	Ashburton		3147	Australia	2025-08-31
	Anglesea		3230	Australia	2025-08-31
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-08-31
	Bayswater North		3153	Australia	2025-08-31
	Melbourne		3207	Australia	2025-08-31
	Geelong		3216	Australia	2025-08-31
	Anglesea		3230	Australia	2025-08-31
	Melbourne		3150	Australia	2025-08-31
	Herefordshire	ENG	HR2 8DA	United Kingdo	2025-08-31

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	Smethwick	ENG	B66	United Kingdo	2025-08-31
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	Melbourne		3121	Australia	2025-08-31
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	Brisbane		4000	Fiji	2025-08-31
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	Sunbury		3429	Australia	2025-09-01
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	Waurn Ponds		3216	Australia	2025-09-01
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	Jan juc		3228	Australia	2025-09-01

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	Melbourne		3149	Australia	2025-09-01
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-01
	Anglesea		3230	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3029	Australia	2025-09-01
	Jan Juc		3228	Australia	2025-09-01
	Geelong		3220	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-09-01
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-09-01
	Geelong		3228	Australia	2025-09-01
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3923	Australia	2025-09-01
	Anglesea		3230	Australia	2025-09-01
	Brunswick East		3057	Australia	2025-09-01
	Jan Juc		3228	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3142	Australia	2025-09-01
	Bells Beach		3228	Australia	2025-09-01
	Oakleigh		3166	Australia	2025-09-01
	Port Fairy		3284	Australia	2025-09-01
	Wallan		3756	Australia	2025-09-01
	Sydney		2041	Australia	2025-09-01

[redacted]	Brisbane		4207	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3102	Australia	2025-09-01
				New Zealand	2025-09-01
	Highton		3216	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3121	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3031	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3032	Australia	2025-09-01
	Torquay Victoria		3228	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3006	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3184	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3124	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3003	Australia	2025-09-01
	Bemont		3216	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3056	Australia	2025-09-01
	Anglesea		3230	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3181	Australia	2025-09-01
	Ballarat		3350	Australia	2025-09-01
	Jan Juc		3228	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3071	Australia	2025-09-01
	Torquay		3229	Australia	2025-09-01
	Bendigo		3555	Australia	2025-09-01
	Ballarat		3352	Australia	2025-09-01
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-01
	Geelong		3220	Australia	2025-09-01
	Charlemont		3217	Australia	2025-09-01
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-01
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-01
	Bellbrae		3228	Australia	2025-09-01
	Wallington		3222	Australia	2025-09-01
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3228	Australia	2025-09-01
	BELLBRAE		3228	Australia	2025-09-01

[redacted]	Melbourne		3205	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3001	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3070	Australia	2025-09-01
	Geelong		3220	Australia	2025-09-01
	Bellbrae		3228	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3015	Australia	2025-09-01
	Bellbrae		3228	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3079	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3031	Australia	2025-09-01
	Armstrong Creek		3217	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3129	Australia	2025-09-01
	Victoria		3228	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-09-01
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-01
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-01
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-09-01
	Geelong		3220	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-09-02
	Geelong		3217	Australia	2025-09-02
	Winchelsea		3241	Australia	2025-09-02
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-09-02
	Geelong		3216	Australia	2025-09-02
			3190	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3079	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3006	Australia	2025-09-02
	Geelong		3217	Australia	2025-09-02
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-02
				Australia	2025-09-02
	Jan juc		3228	Australia	2025-09-02

[redacted]	Armstrong Creek		3217	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-09-02
	Jan Juc		3228	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3053	Australia	2025-09-02
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3141	Australia	2025-09-02
	Jan Juc		3228	Australia	2025-09-02
	Jan Juc		3228	Australia	2025-09-02
	Geelong		3214	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3076	Australia	2025-09-02
	Geelong		3220	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3228	Australia	2025-09-02
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3182	Australia	2025-09-02
	torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-02
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-02
	Yeppoon		4703	Australia	2025-09-02
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-02
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-02
	Rowville		3178	Australia	2025-09-02
	Southbank		3006	Australia	2025-09-02
			3230	Australia	2025-09-02
	jan juc	VIC	3228	Australia	2025-09-02
	Beaconsfield		3807	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3004	Australia	2025-09-02
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-02
	Winchelsea		3241	Australia	2025-09-02
	Anglesea		3230	Australia	2025-09-02
	Bellbrae		3228	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3016	Australia	2025-09-02
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3121	Australia	2025-09-02

[redacted]	Melbourne		3020	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3163	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-09-02
	Adelaide		5032	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3228	Australia	2025-09-02
	Adelaide		5000	Australia	2025-09-02
	Drysdale		3222	Australia	2025-09-02
	Geelong		3216	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3073	Australia	2025-09-02
	Geelong		3216	Australia	2025-09-02
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-02
	Brisbane		4306	Australia	2025-09-02
	Lucas		3350	Australia	2025-09-02
	Sydney		2747	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3046	Australia	2025-09-02
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-02
	Plumpton		2761	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3151	Australia	2025-09-02
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3151	Australia	2025-09-02
	Torquay		3218	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3012	Australia	2025-09-02
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3142	Australia	2025-09-02
	Sydney		2128	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3136	Australia	2025-09-02
	Geraldton		6530	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3006	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3006	Australia	2025-09-02
	Sydney		2208	Australia	2025-09-02
	Perth		6000	Australia	2025-09-02
	Tullamarine		3043	Australia	2025-09-02

[redacted]	Adelaide		5373	Australia	2025-09-02
	West Hindmarsh		5007	Australia	2025-09-02
	Jan Juc		3228	Australia	2025-09-02
	Perth		6163	Australia	2025-09-02
	Devonport		7050	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3145	Australia	2025-09-02
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-02
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-02
			3228	Australia	2025-09-02
	Melbourne		3215	Australia	2025-09-02
	Geelong		3220	Australia	2025-09-02
	Freshwater Creek		3217	Australia	2025-09-03
	Geelong		3200	Australia	2025-09-03
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-03
	Melbourne		3127	Australia	2025-09-03
	Melbourne		3133	Australia	2025-09-03
	Melbourne		3133	Australia	2025-09-03
	Melbourne		3133	Australia	2025-09-03
	Melbourne		3121	Australia	2025-09-03
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-09-03
	Melbourne		3183	Australia	2025-09-03
	Melbourne		3004	Australia	2025-09-03
	Melbourne		3128	Australia	2025-09-03
	Geelong		3217	Australia	2025-09-03
	Melbourne		3004	Australia	2025-09-03
	Bells Beach		3228	Australia	2025-09-03
	Melbourne		3121	Australia	2025-09-03
	Melbourne		3000	Australia	2025-09-03
	Richmond		3121	Australia	2025-09-03
	Melbourne		3206	Australia	2025-09-03
	Longueuil		J4K 3W2	Canada	2025-09-03
	Melbourne		3161	Australia	2025-09-03

[redacted]	Melbourne		3015	Australia	2025-09-03
	Torquay		3228	Australia	2025-09-03
	Melbourne		3145	Australia	2025-09-03
	Bellbrae		3228	Australia	2025-09-04

2.3 Receipt of Petition titled 'Extra Kangaroo and Wildlife Signage - Multiple Locations Within Surf Coast Shire'

Author's Title:	Manager Assets and Engineering
General Manager:	Chris Pike, General Manager Placemaking and Environment
Department:	Placemaking and Environment
Division:	Placemaking and Environment
Attachments:	1. Petition - Extra Kangaroo and Wildlife Signage - Multiple Locations Within Surf Coast Shire - Taz Co [**2.3.1** - 6 pages]

Officer Conflict of Interest: No officer declared a conflict of interest under the *Local Government Act 2020* in the preparation of this report.

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is for Council to consider receiving and noting the petition requesting that Council erect extra kangaroo and wildlife signage at multiple locations within Surf Coast Shire.

2. The petition consists of 44 signatures, all from within the Surf Coast Shire municipality.

Background

3. In accordance with Rule 23.2 of Council's Governance Rules, petitions which do not meet the definition of a petition under the Governance Rules may still be accepted if Council so resolves. The petition is assessed as not meeting the definition of a petition as it does not meet the requirement that '*each page of the petition bears the wording of the whole petition'.*

4. While the petition as attached to this report (**Attachment 1**) does not meet the format requirements as described above, officers have recommended that Council resolves to accept the petition in the interest of facilitating public participation in democratic process. Officers have assessed the petition and consider that any risks associated with non-conformity are low.

Recommendation

That Council, in accordance with its Governance Rules:

1. Receives and notes the petition requesting that Council erect extra kangaroo and wildlife signage at multiple locations within Surf Coast Shire; and
2. Refers the petition to the General Manager Placemaking and Environment for consideration; and
3. Requires a report on the petition be presented to a future Council meeting within three months of this Council meeting; and
4. Advises the lead petitioner of the outcome of this resolution.

Council Resolution

Moved Cr Pattison, Seconded Cr Phelps

That Council, in accordance with its Governance Rules:

1. Receives and notes the petition requesting that Council erect extra kangaroo and wildlife signage at multiple locations within Surf Coast Shire; and
2. Refers the petition to the General Manager Placemaking and Environment for consideration; and
3. Requires a report on the petition be presented to a future Council meeting within three months of this Council meeting; and
4. Advises the lead petitioner of the outcome of this resolution.

CARRIED 8|1

For	Against	Abstained
Cr Bodsworth Cr Bourke Cr Grist Cr Pattison Cr Phelps Cr Schonfelder Cr Stapleton Cr Walker	Cr Barker	Nil

Surf COAST SHIRE

Wadawurrung Country

With compliments

[redacted]

SURF COAST SHIRE COUNCIL
Record No: D25/159332
Date Received 4/09/2025

1 Merrijig Drive (PO Box 350) Torquay VIC 3228
p. 03 5261 0600 e.info@surfcoast.vic.gov.au
surfcoast.vic.gov.au

4 SEP 2025

Petition for extra Kangaroo/Wildlife signage within the Surf Coast Shire

[The petitioners whose names, addresses and signatures appear hereunder, petition the Surf Coast Shire as follows:]

Terms of Request:

We, the undersigned residents of Jan Juc, Bells Beach, and Bellbrae are writing to express our serious concern about the lack of a wildlife signage on Dufflieds Rd, The Great Ocean Rd, Bells Blvd, Bones Rd, Jarosite Rd, and Addiscott Rd and surrounding areas.

Currently, wildlife in these areas have started increasing due to their natural migratory patterns being disrupted by the expanse of urban development in the area and an increase in traffic, noise, and light pollution.
This poses a significant threat to local and native fauna species and is also a major safety concern for drivers (both local and visitor) who may be unaware of the fluctuation of wildlife (especially kangaroos).

If an animal is hit by a driver or the driver swerves to avoid it, the consequences could be fatal as these roads are narrow, with local flora close to the road and the roads are often undulating; thus, causing blind spots with the potential for head on collisions with trees or other vehicles.

Most wildlife that are hit (if not deceased upon impact) are seriously injured and will die over time from their injuries. They are often seen on the steep inclines beside the roads or on private property and out of sight and knowledge. This can also lead to the influx of introduced species in the area like foxes due to inclination of easy prey if left unchecked.

Therefore, we urge the Surf Coast Shire to install both wildlife and emergency contact information signage in our local area as soon as possible.

* Surf Coast Shire Council is committed to protecting all personal and sensitive information consistent with the principles set out in the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014. The personal information in this petition will be used solely by Council for the primary purpose of petitioning Council or directly related purposes as permitted by law. The signatories understand that the personal information provided is for presentation to Council and that they may apply to Council for access to and/or amendment of the information. Please note that any personal information contained in this petition will be redacted from the public agenda.

OFFICE USE: Template Reference: D17/131742

10.

NOTE TO SIGNATORIES: Please include your name, address and signature when signing the petition, to ensure the petition conforms to requirements and is accepted by Council.

No.	NAME (First Name & Surname)	ADDRESS (Physical Address & Suburb)	SIGNATURE
1.	[redacted]	Juc	[redacted]
2.		Torq	
3.		" "	
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.		JAN JUC	
9.	[redacted]	JAN JUC	
10.	[redacted]		
11.			
12.	[redacted]	Jan Juc	
13.	[redacted]	TORQUAY	

* Surf Coast Shire Council is committed to protecting all personal and sensitive information consistent with the principles set out in the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014. The personal information in this petition will be used solely by Council for the primary purpose of petitioning Council or directly related purposes as permitted by law. The signatories understand that the personal information provided is for presentation to Council and that they may apply to Council for access to and/or amendment of the information. Please note that any personal information contained in this petition will be redacted from the public agenda.

OFFICE USE: Template Reference: D17/131742

NOTE TO SIGNATORIES: Please include your name, address and signature when signing the petition, to ensure the petition conforms to requirements and is accepted by Council.

No.	NAME (First Name & Surname)	ADDRESS (Physical Address & Suburb)	SIGNATURE
14.	[redacted]		
15.			
16.			
17.			
18.			
19.	[redacted]	JAN JUC	[redacted]
20.		"	
21.		[redacted]	
22.		JAN JUC [redacted]	
23.		JAN JUC [redacted]	
24.		[redacted] Jan Juc	
25.		[redacted]	
26.			

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OFFICE USE: Template Reference: D17/131742

No.	NAME (First Name & Surname)	ADDRESS (Physical Address & Suburb)	SIGNATURE
27.	[redacted]		
28.			
29.			
30.			
31.			
32.			
33.			
34.			
35.			
36.			
37.			
38.			
39.			

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OFFICE USE: Template Reference: D17/131742

No.	NAME (First Name & Surname)	ADDRESS (Physical Address & Suburb)	SIGNATURE
40.	[redacted]		
41.	[redacted]	Bells Beach	[redacted]
42.	[redacted]	"	
43.	[redacted]	"	
44.	[redacted]		
45.	[redacted]	Bells Beach	
46.	[redacted]	[redacted] Bellbrae	[redacted]
47.		[redacted] Jan Juc	
48.			
49.			
50.			
51.			
52.			

* Surf Coast Shire Council is committed to protecting all personal and sensitive information consistent with the principles set out in the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014. The personal information in this petition will be used solely by Council for the primary purpose of petitioning Council or directly related purposes as permitted by law. The signatories understand that the personal information provided is for presentation to Council and that they may apply to Council for access to and/or amendment of the information. Please note that any personal information contained in this petition will be redacted from the public agenda.

OFFICE USE: Template Reference: D17/131742

3 Notices of Motion

Nil.

4 Reports

4.1 Council Plan (including Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) 2025 - 2029

Council Plan	**Theme Seven - Accountable and Viable Council** Strategy 19 - Improve Council's credibility as a trusted decision maker through meaningful engagement.
Author's Title:	Project Manager Corporate Strategy
General Manager:	Darryn Chiller, Manager Government Relations and Strategic Projects
Division:	Office of the CEO
Department:	Office of the CEO
Attachments:	1. Our Focus Our Future Phase 3 Engagement Report July 2025 [**4.1.1** - 10 pages] 2. Council Plan (including Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) 2025 - 2029 [**4.1.2** - 23 pages]

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Council Plan (incorporating the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) 2025-2029 to Council for adoption.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Receives a summary of the feedback received during the exhibition of the draft Council Plan (**Attachment 1**).
2. Notes that the Department of Health has granted Council an exemption from complying with section 26(2) of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, therefore enabling the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan to be incorporated into the Council Plan.
3. Adopts the Council Plan (incorporating the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) 2025-2029 (**Attachment 2**).

Council Resolution

Moved Cr Stapleton, Seconded Cr Walker

That Council:

1. Receives a summary of the feedback received during the exhibition of the draft Council Plan (**Attachment 1**).
2. Notes that the Department of Health has granted Council an exemption from complying with section 26(2) of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, therefore enabling the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan to be incorporated into the Council Plan.
3. Adopts the Council Plan (incorporating the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) 2025-2029 (**Attachment 2**).

CARRIED 7|2

For	Against	Abstained
Cr Bodsworth Cr Bourke Cr Pattison Cr Phelps Cr Schonfelder Cr Stapleton Cr Walker	Cr Barker Cr Grist	Nil

Outcome

2. If Council accepts this recommendation, it will have a Council Plan for the coming four years to guide decision making, and have met the requirements of the *Local Government Act* that requires a Council Plan to be adopted and sent to the Minister for Local Government by 31 October in the year following a general election.

Key Considerations

3. The *Local Government Act 2020* requires that a Council prepares and adopts a Council Plan for a period of at least four financial years, by 31 October in the year following a general election.

4. The Council Plan sets the strategic direction of Council and must address the Community Vision.

5. The Council Plan incorporates the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, which is an option under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*. This option requires an exemption to be granted by the Department of Health and Council has received approval for this approach.

6. The Our Focus Our Future community engagement project featured participatory and deliberative phases to ensure community input informed the drafting of the Council Plan.

7. The deliberative engagement was delivered via a community panel. The panel developed a set of principles that aim to support Council in balancing community needs with long-term financial sustainability.

8. Consultation was undertaken on a draft version of the Council Plan for six weeks, resulting in 31 submissions via an online survey and two email submissions.

9. The Our Focus Our Future Phase 3 Community Engagement Report included as **Attachment 1**, provides an overview of the submissions on the draft Council Plan.

10. The final Council Plan recommended for endorsement includes minor changes to the draft Council Plan. The changes include replacing Outcomes with Strategic Objectives under the themes, inclusion of Strategic Indicators for each theme, inclusion of an overview of the Phase Three engagement and minor text editing.

11. It is recommended that the Council adopt the Council Plan (incorporating the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) 2025-2029 included as **Attachment 2**.

Background

12. The Council Plan has been informed by the Community Vision and the Our Focus Our Future community engagement.

13. The ten-year Community Vision was developed in 2021 by a representative sample of community members, with input from the broader community, and was adopted by Council in September 2021.

14. The vision captures the community aspiration for the future of Surf Coast Shire and remains current, informing the development of the Council Plan.

15. The Council Plan sets a strategic direction across five themes:
    15.1. Assets and Infrastructure.

    15.2. Climate and Environmental Leadership.

    15.3. Community Wellbeing.

    15.4. High Performing Council.

    15.5. Sustainable Communities.

16. A requirement of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* is that Councils develop, implement and evaluate a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan as part of their role in improving public health outcomes within the community.

17. The *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* requires that Council must, amongst other requirements, include an examination of data about health requirements in the municipality; identify goals and strategies based on available evidence for creating a local community in which people can achieve maximum health and wellbeing; and specify measures to prevent family violence.

18. The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is incorporated into the Council Plan, which is an option provided for under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, subject to Councils receiving an exemption to do so from the Department of Health. This exemption has been granted and the department commended Council for pursuing the integration of public health and wellbeing goals within the Council Plan.

19. A draft version of the Council Plan was developed through workshops with Councillors and informed by extensive participatory and deliberative engagement undertaken as phase one and phase two of the Our Focus Our Future project.

20. The draft Council Plan was then placed on exhibition for a six-week period following endorsement at the June 2025 Council meeting. An overview of the results of this engagement phase is provided under the engagement section of this report, and a more detailed report is provided as **Attachment 1**.

21. Following the final phase of engagement, minor edits were made to the draft version of the Council Plan. The primary changes are listed in the table below. Additional minor typo and grammatical improvements were also made.

Page	Edits
Page 9	Revised text under About the Shire to more accurately describe the location of Surf Coast Shire. Inclusion of more townships referenced in the map.
Page 10, 26, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35 and 37	Replace the reference to Outcomes with Strategic Objectives.
Page 16	Add the following after the Infrastructure and transport heading: Focus on core services and infrastructure.
Page 18	Inclusion of phase three engagement overview.
Pages 29, 31, 33, 35, 37	Include Strategic Indicators for each theme.

22. An action plan will be developed to support implementation of the Council Plan. There will also be progress reporting over the four years on both the Council Plan and the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, in line with legislative requirements.

Options

23. **Alternative Option 1** – That Council does not adopt the Council Plan.

    This option is not recommended by officers as the Council Plan is informed by a significant amount of feedback received through community engagement and extensive group work with Councillors.

    Council is required under the *Local Government Act 2020* to have an adopted Council Plan by 31 October in the year following a general election.

24. **Alternative Option 2** – That Council adopts an amended version of the Council Plan.

    This option is not recommended by officers as the Council Plan was developed through an extensive collaborative workshop process with Councillors and the content is based on community perspectives gathered through intensive participatory and deliberative engagement processes.

Council Plan (including Health and Wellbeing Plan) Statement

Theme Seven - Accountable and Viable Council

Strategy 19 - Improve Council's credibility as a trusted decision maker through meaningful engagement.

25. The development of a new Council Plan is a statutory requirement of Council and whilst community engagement is mandated under the *Local Government Act 2020*, there are also well recognised benefits from engaging with community in the development of Council's strategic direction.

Financial Considerations

26. Financial sustainability was a primary factor in the project design for the Council Plan in recognition that Council would need to prioritise actions during its four-year term, given constrained revenue options. This was reflected in the remit for the community panel

which was: 'How can Council balance the priorities of our community and meet legislative obligations, whilst remaining in a financially sustainable position?'.

27. A project budget has supported delivery of the draft Council Plan, with the key costs including an engagement consultant to plan for and deliver the community panel sessions and deliver workshops with councillors ($123,100) and payments to community panel members ($21,500). The project is on track to be delivered within the allocated budget.

Community Engagement

28. A community engagement plan was prepared to inform development of the Council's strategic plans, including the Council Plan, the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Financial Plan and Asset Plan.
29. The engagement plan was delivered through the Our Focus Our Future project and included three phases: Phase 1 - participatory engagement including a survey and community pop-up sessions, Phase 2 – deliberative engagement through a community panel and Phase 3 – consultation on draft Council Plan.

30. Phase 1 included a survey and Phase 2 was undertaken through a community panel. These first two phases of engagement were key inputs to inform the draft Council Plan.

31. Phase 3 comprised a six-week engagement on the draft Council Plan.

32. Communications data indicated strong community interest with high visitation to the website and a high number of downloads of the draft Council Plan. 33 submissions were received, representing diverse perspectives.

33. Across the 33 submissions, community sentiment relating to the draft Council Plan was mixed but leaning positive. There was support for the focus on climate, health, and young people, with some highlighting gaps in areas such as inclusion, First Nations reconciliation, climate action and public transport advocacy. There were also submitters who expressed a preference for a focus on basic service delivery. The feedback received through the submissions aligned to community sentiment expressed during the previous two phases of engagement.

34. While there were a small number of contributions from the community during Phase 3, compared to earlier engagement phases, this contrasted with the number of visitors to the website. The fact there were 610 individual visitors to the website and 583 downloads of the draft Council Plan compared to 33 submissions suggests a majority of those who reviewed the document were comfortable with the draft plan.

Statutory / Legal / Policy Considerations

35. The Council Plan (incorporating the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) 2025-2029 has been developed in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, the *Climate Act 2017* and the *Gender Equality Act 2020*. The structure of the plan complies with the legislative requirements as does the use of a deliberative engagement process.

36. Endorsing the Council Plan (Incorporating the Health and Wellbeing Plan) 2025-2029, will support the Council to meet its legislative obligation to prepare and adopt a Council Plan and a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan by 31 October in the year following a general election.

37. In line with Council's requirements under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* a Gender and Equity Impact Assessment (GEIA) has been conducted.

38. This assessment was undertaken on the structure, design, and communication of the draft plan, with a prior GEIA conducted on the community engagement process for the development of the draft plan.
39. The GEIA considered the following core capabilities outlined by the Gender Equality Commission for Council Plan development:

    39.1. Core capability 3: Gender Equitable & Inclusive Communications, and

    39.2. Core capability 4: Equity-focused Budgeting and Resource Distribution.

40. GEIA research noted differences in the priorities and needs of people of different genders, backgrounds and lived experiences in Surf Coast Shire communities. Consideration of these differences is vital when developing strategic directions, aiming to ensure priorities and decisions reflect the diversity of community need, and do not unintentionally reinforce inequities.

41. Key recommendations included the use of inclusive language and representative imagery and use of disaggregated engagement data to better reflect community needs in Council Plan priorities. An inclusive and accessible approach was used for seeking feedback on the draft plan, and a summary version of the document will be prepared to support accessible communication of Council's priorities.

42. An intersectional gender lens will be applied to implementation of the Council Plan as required under the *Gender Equity Act 2020*.

Strategic Risk

43. Failure to meet Council's governance and compliance obligations
Inherent Risk Rating - *Serious*, Residual Risk Rating – *Medium*

44. The proposed recommendation supports mitigation of the identified risks.

Risk Rating

45. The risk rating is low and can be managed at department level.

Risk Appetite

46. We are keen to support community led projects and plans but not at the expense of financial responsibility and/or public safety.

Sustainability Considerations

47. Sustainability considerations are particularly prevalent in two of the Council Plan's strategic directions and associated objectives - Sustainable Communities and Climate and Environmental Leadership.

Conflict of Interest

48. No officer declared a conflict of interest under the *Local Government Act 2020* in the preparation of this report.

Confidentiality

49. This report and attachments contain no confidential information under section 66(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Transparency

Audit and Risk Committee involvement

50. This report is not within the scope of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Councillor Briefings

51. Councillors worked on the Council Plan through a series of facilitated workshops and strategic conversations along with regular Councillor briefings. Councillor attendance at each of these sessions was as follows:

Workshops and briefings prior to endorsement by Council of the draft Council Plan on 24 June 2025:

Councillor name	4 Dec 2024	15 Jan 2025	28 Jan 2025	25 Feb 2025	18 Mar 2025	2 April 2025	14 May 2025	21 May 2025	4 June 2025
Cr Paul Barker	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N
Cr Mike Bodswort	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cr Rebecca Bourke	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Cr Joel Grist	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cr Liz Pattison	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cr Tony Phelps	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cr Adrian Schonfelder	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Cr Libby Stapleton	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cr Leon Walker	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y

Briefings following the endorsement of the draft Council Plan on 24 June 2025:

Councillor name	5 Aug 2025	12 Aug 2025	19 Aug 2025	2 Sep 2025
Cr Paul Barker	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cr Mike Bodsworth	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cr Rebecca Bourke	N	Y	Y	N
Cr Joel Grist	N	Y	Y	Y
Cr Liz Pattison	N	N	N	N
Cr Tony Phelps	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cr Adrian Schonfelder	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cr Libby Stapleton	Y	N	N	N
Cr Leon Walker	Y	Y	Y	Y

Councillor attendance at briefings is not a statutory requirement. Councillors are able to access and request information through a number of mechanisms to understand matters being presented at a Council Meeting.

OUR FOCUS OUR FUTURE

Phase Three Engagement Report

Feedback on the draft Council Plan 2025-29
(incorporating the Health & Wellbeing Plan)

surfcoast.vic.gov.au

Surf COAST SHIRE

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Executive summary

The *Our Focus Our Future* engagement project was launched by Surf Coast Shire Council in November 2024 to guide the development of key strategic documents, including the Council Plan 2025-2029 (incorporating the Health and Wellbeing Plan), Long Term Financial Plan, and Asset Plan.

The engagement was delivered in three phases. Phases one and two were aimed at seeking broad and targeted community input into the development of the draft documents. Phase three sought to provide a final check in with community and provide an opportunity for feedback on the draft Council Plan.

This report summarises the findings this final phase of engagement.

Communications data indicated strong community interest in the topic with high visitation to the website and a high number of downloads of the draft report during the phase three engagement, which was open for a 6-week engagement period. 33 submissions were received, providing input on the draft plan.

Across the 33 submissions, community sentiment relating to the draft Council Plan was mixed but leaning positive. There was support for the focus on climate, health, and young people, with some highlighting gaps in inclusion, First Nations reconciliation, climate action ambition, and public transport advocacy. There was a preference expressed by some for a focus on basic service delivery.

Overall, community feedback was aligned to community sentiment expressed during the previous two phases of engagement.

Introduction

All Victorian local governments are required to prepare a set of strategic documents to guide their work. Surf Coast Shire Council is working with community and stakeholders through a project called 'Our Focus Our Future' to develop the Council Plan 2025-2029 (incorporating the Health and Wellbeing Plan), as well as a Long Term Financial Plan and Asset Plan.

The engagement took place over three phases:

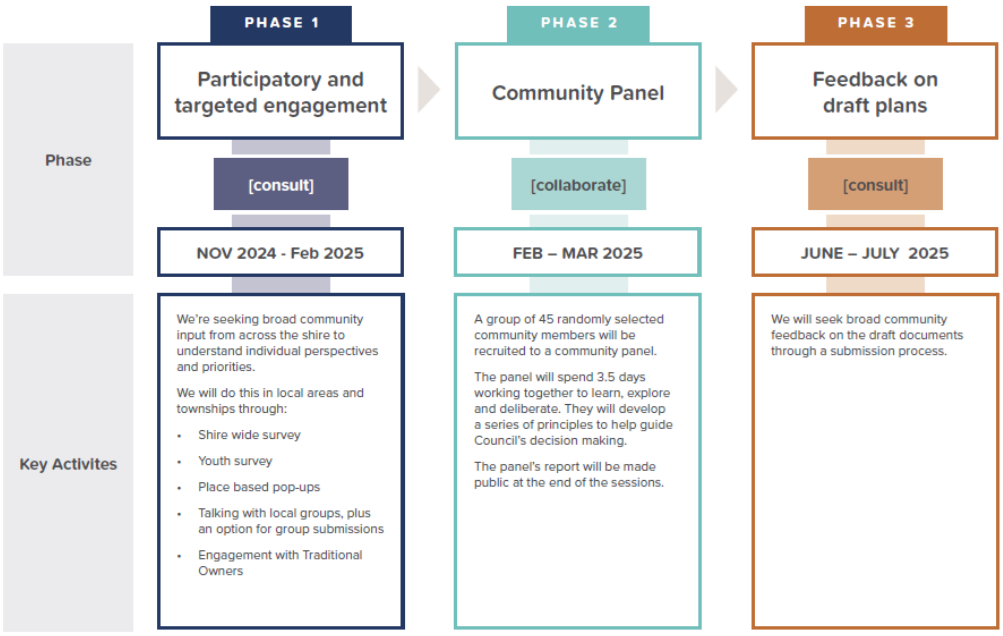
- Participatory engagement (November 2024-February 2025)
- Deliberative engagement (February 2025-March 2025)
- **Submissions process (June/July 2025)**

The roadmap below outlines the phases in more detail.

This report outlines the approach, community feedback, and findings from final submissions phase.

Notably, each phase had a specific level of empowerment based on the IAP2 public participation spectrum. The community panel convened for phase two were allocated the highest level of empowerment, being collaborate.

Community engagement roadmap – all phases



Communications

During the phase three engagement period, information about the draft Council Plan 2025-29 was distributed in the following ways:

- emails to community contacts and networks (including people who were involved in previous engagement phases)
- social media posts
- media release
- advertising in the Surf Coast Times, Winchelsea Star and Lorne Independent

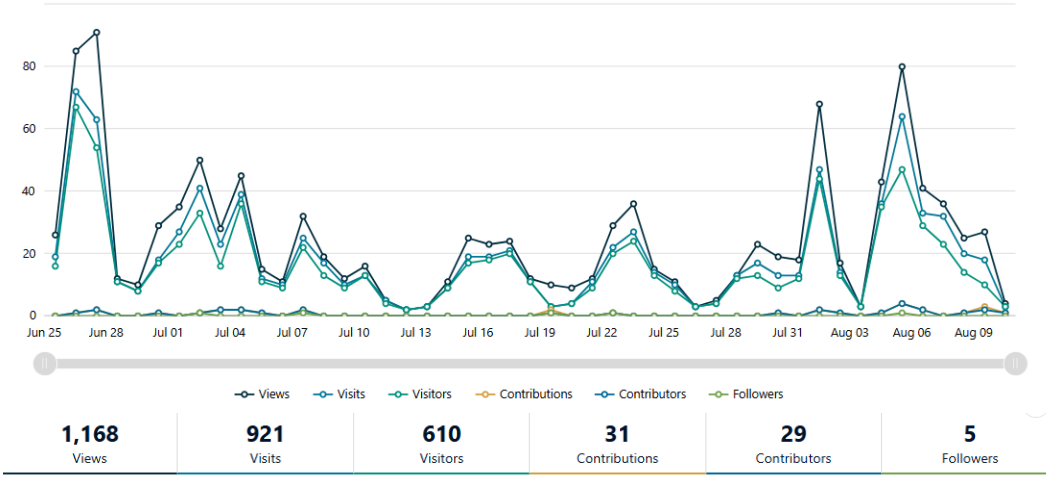
Communications impact
Communications ran over a six-week period to allow adequate time for contributions over the school holidays period. A targeted communications effort was undertaken to drive people to the website, resulting in the following online visitation during the engagement period:

- 610 individual visitors to the site
- 1168 total views of the site

In addition to 31 online contributions, people also accessed online resources, including:

- 583 people downloaded the draft Council Plan document
- 65 people downloaded the Our Focus Our Future Community Engagement Report
- 65 people downloaded the Community Panel Report

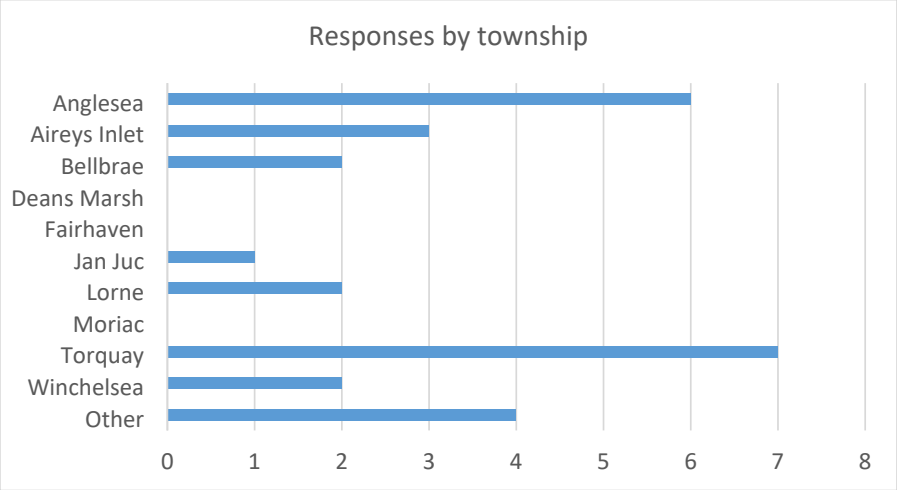
The below graph shows the website visitation and online contributions across the engagement period.



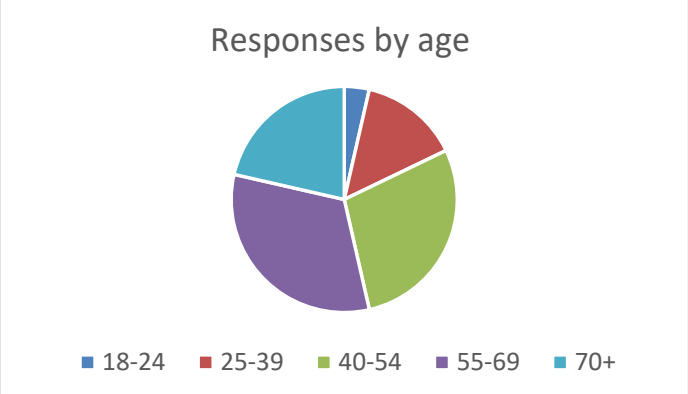
Survey responses

Throughout the 6-week engagement period, 31 submissions were received via the online form, with another two received via email.

The following graph shows the number of responses by township.

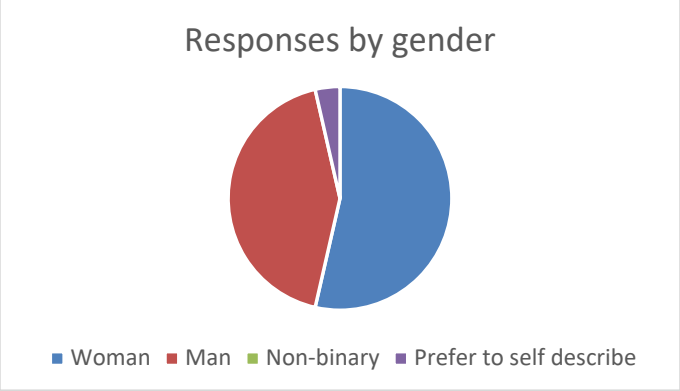


The following graph shows survey responses received by age group.



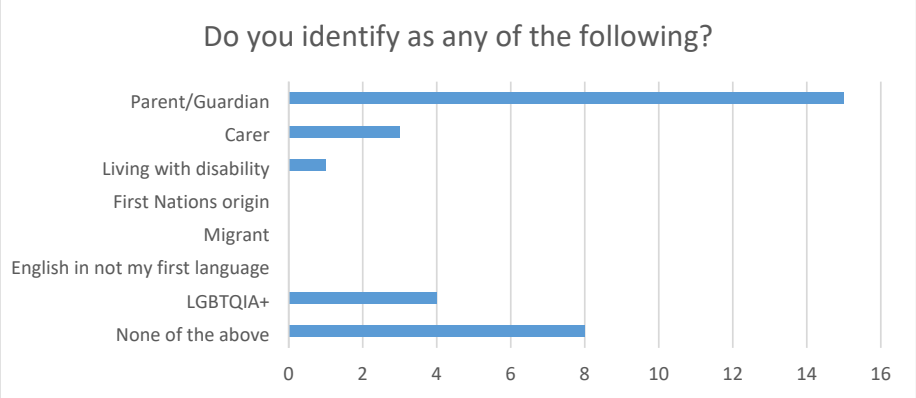
Responses by gender

As a part of Council's ongoing commitment to gender equality, and in line with the requirements of the Gender Equality Act 2020, Council collects and reviews community feedback by gender. This is to investigate whether a given program or project has different impacts on people of different genders.



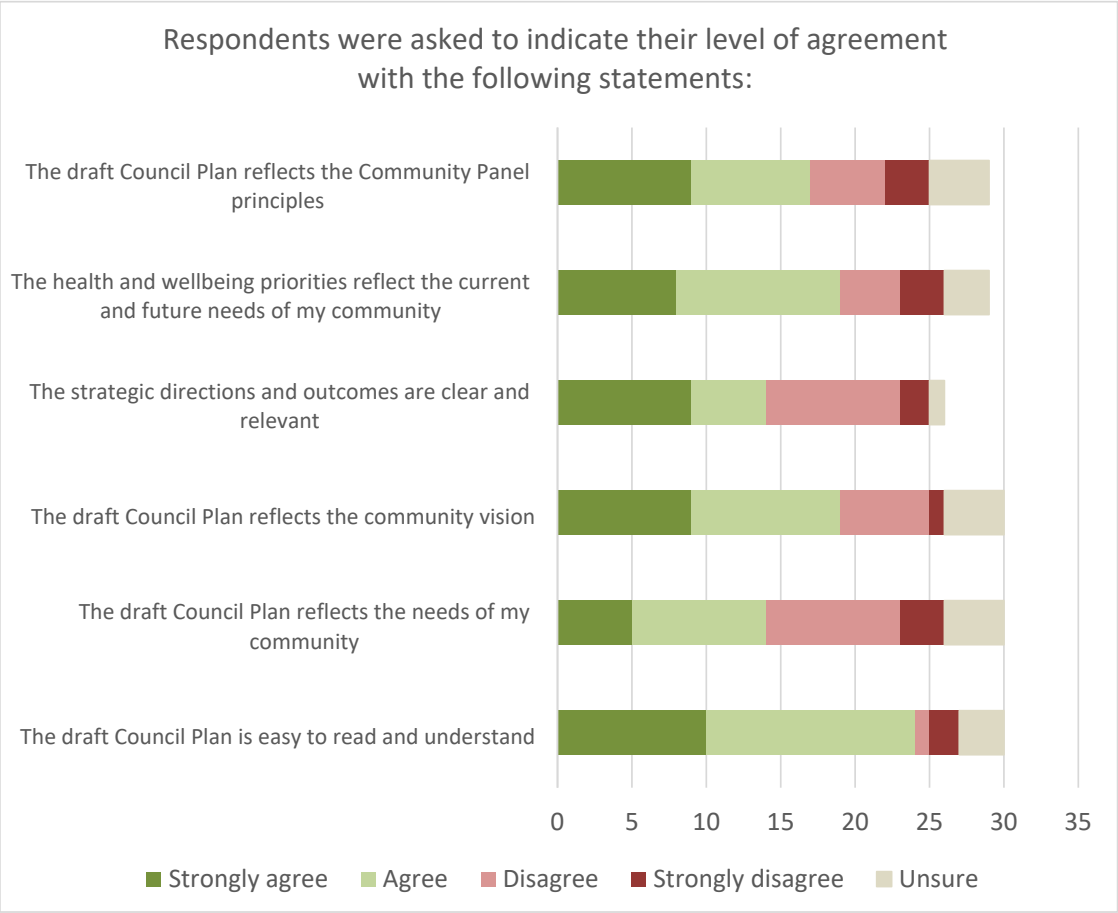
Community demographics

The below graph provides insight into the diversity of respondents, highlighting a mix of personal identities and caregiving responsibilities.



Survey results

The survey asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with a series of statements about the draft plan and related priorities.



The rating of 'level of agreement', along with community comments, indicated that overall community sentiment towards the draft Council Plan was mixed but leaning positive.

Survey results show that most respondents think the plan is clear, readable, and aligned with stated principles.

Overall comments indicated the plan is valued for its vision and clarity, with stronger action in inclusion, climate, transport, and essential services suggested by some to build community support and trust.

The following themes emerged from the feedback received:

- **Climate change and environmental action**

While there is support for addressing climate issues, there is criticism regarding the lack of ambition and specific actions on climate change, including more proactive climate recovery and resilience plans. The comments also expressed frustration over the use of softer language like "climate" instead of "climate change."

- **Health and wellbeing**

General support for the focus on mental health, family violence, and wellbeing, but feedback indicates the community feels more should be done. Specific suggestions include increasing services for ageing populations, addressing health impacts of climate change, and providing more local health and wellness programs.

- **Bureaucracy and governance**

Feedback indicated frustration with the growing bureaucracy of the council and increasing rates, along with calls for the council to focus on core services (including roads, waste and infrastructure) and reduce its involvement in broader issues.

- **Housing**

Feedback highlights the need for affordable housing, especially for essential workers and retirees. There are calls for innovative housing solutions, with concerns also raised over potential risks of social housing and development proposals.

- **Inclusion and diversity**

Feedback indicated a preference for a clearer commitment to inclusion, with more actionable steps toward supporting diverse communities and reducing discrimination. Some disappointment was expressed relating to how First Nations communities are referenced in the plan, with comments noting it was considered a shift backwards from the last Council Plan.

Key findings and next steps

Analysis of community feedback from the 33 submissions received during this phase three review process highlighted diverse perspectives. These are generally in line with community sentiment expressed across the detailed engagement conducted during phase one, and the representative engagement conducted in phase two (see report Our Focus Our Future – Community Engagement Report February 2025).

In line with the strategic engagement plan for this project, the phase three review process was an opportunity for a final check of strategic directions developed by council, based on community input from earlier phases.

A significant number of community members visited the webpage inviting community input, and more than 500 community members downloaded the draft Council Plan document, indicating community awareness of the plan and the opportunity to provide feedback.

The small number of submissions compared to the large number of document downloads is considered important contextual data.

All community feedback from the three phase Our Focus Our Future project – including these community submissions and the more detailed input from previous phases – should continue to inform the action plan and ongoing implementation of the finalised Council Plan.

Council Plan 2025–2029

Incorporating the Health and Wellbeing Plan

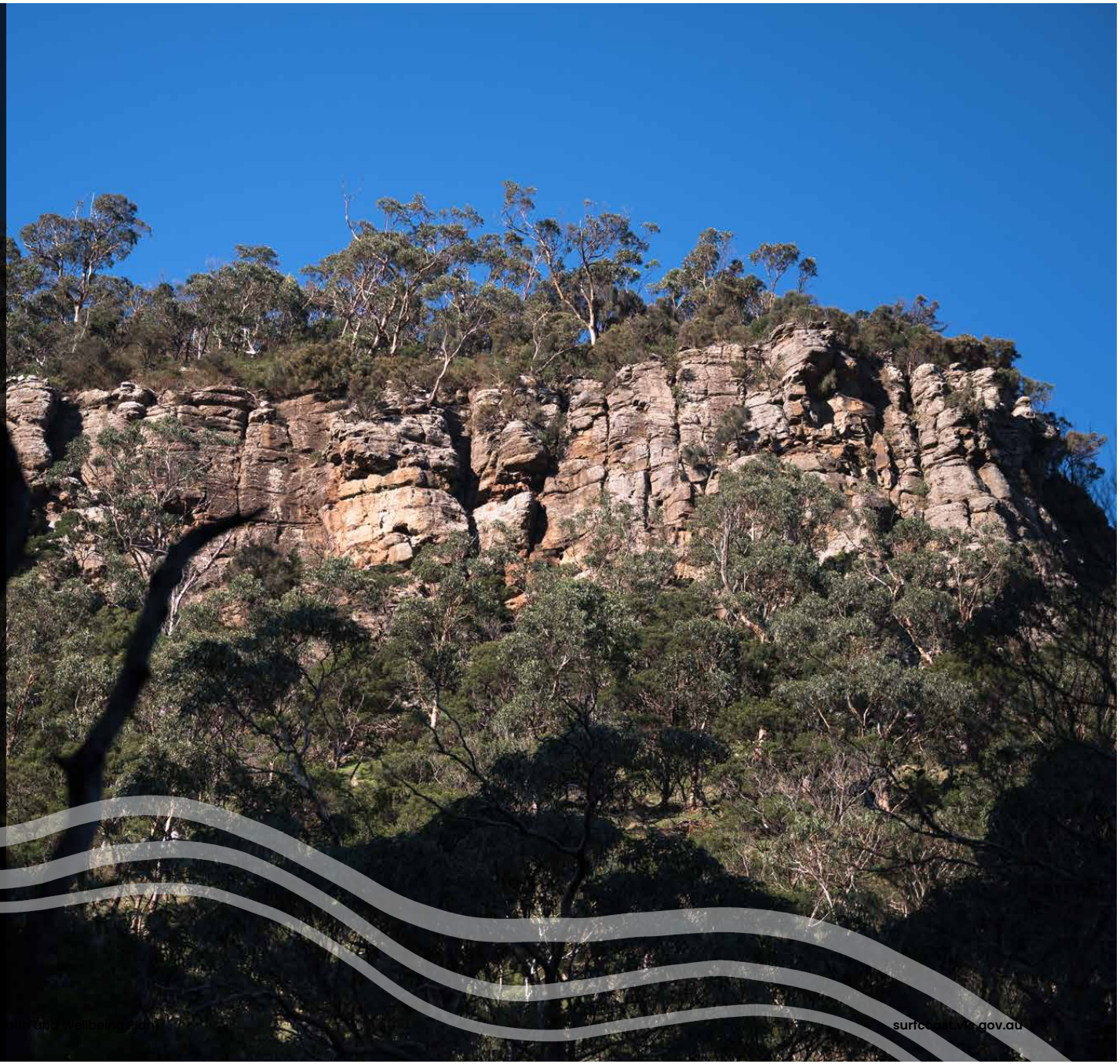
Surf COAST SHIRE

Acknowledgement of Country

Surf Coast Shire Council acknowledges the Wadawurrung People, and Gulidjan and Gadubanud Peoples of the Eastern Maar, their Elders and leaders past, present and emerging as the Traditional Owners of the skies, land, waters and sea country across our municipality.

We acknowledge their care and custodianship for more than 60,000 years, which continues today. We walk with them as we respectfully care for and tread lightly on these lands.

We also extend that respect to all First Nations people who are part of the community.



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Meet the Councillors

The Surf Coast Shire municipality comprises three wards: Otway Range, Torquay and Winchelsea. Each ward is represented by three Councillors.

The current nine-member Council was elected on 8 November 2024 for a four-year term. Cr Mike Bodsworth was elected Mayor for a one-year term on 14 November 2024. Cr Libby Stapleton was elected to the position of Deputy Mayor, also for one year.

Otway Range ward

Mayor Cr Mike Bodsworth
mbodsworth@surfcoast.vic.gov.au
0427 337 558

Deputy Mayor Cr Libby Stapleton
lstapleton@surfcoast.vic.gov.au
0400 271 574

Cr Leon Walker
lwalker@surfcoast.vic.gov.au
0417 650 391

Torquay ward

Cr Paul Barker
pbarker@surfcoast.vic.gov.au
0409 626 614

Cr Rebecca Bourke
rbourke@surfcoast.vic.gov.au
0417 252 503

Cr Liz Pattison
lpattison@surfcoast.vic.gov.au
0402 328 546

Winchelsea ward

Cr Joel Grist
jgrist@surfcoast.vic.gov.au
0417 155 465

Cr Tony Phelps
tphelps@surfcoast.vic.gov.au
0409 822 123

Cr Adrian Schonfelder
aschonfelder@surfcoast.vic.gov.au
0400 169 741

Mayor's Message

Development of a Council Plan is a critical part of every new Council's first year. Soon after being elected and forming a Council, we get this precious chance to connect with local communities and develop a plan for the Council term that's unique to this place and its people and reflects our heritage while also looking to the future.

To this end, we embarked on an extensive community engagement campaign under the banner of Our Focus Our Future. Step one involved a survey and pop-up engagement sessions at local markets and gathering spaces. Between November 2024 and February 2025 we received more than 1,000 responses, with people telling us what was important to them and where Council should place its priorities.

Next, a group of 43 randomly selected members of our community met between late February and late March to consider Council and community priorities in depth. It was exciting to watch people of all ages and all walks of life working together on what were some pretty challenging themes. At times there was doubt and even disagreement, but our panel members rose to the challenge, learnt from each other, and reached consensus on their final report.

It was a privilege to watch them working over three long Saturdays in March. I saw senior members advocating for the interests of young people, I heard the group urging for strong leadership and creativity in a time of rapid social and environmental change and I saw the passionate concern people held for our beautiful natural environment.

The panel built on the work of a similar group who met four years earlier to determine a 10-year Community Vision for our municipality. This vision remains the guiding light for the new Council Plan.

Having heard what was important to a cross-section of our community, Councillors then undertook a similar exercise – to identify and refine what outcomes would best place Council to deliver the Community Vision.

In keeping with all effective collaborations, the result is greater than the sum of its parts. Through this Council Plan we have the foundation of our work for the next four years. One that will keep us steady when there is doubt, one that will guide us when tough decisions must be made, and importantly, one that reflects the views of the community we are entrusted to serve.

Yes, there are some challenges, but I reflect on the words of one of the community panelists who in presenting their final report to us, encouraged Council to be bold. With this encouragement, and the clarity of direction this Council Plan provides, we have all we need to turn those challenges into great opportunities.

Cr Mike Bodsworth
Mayor, Surf Coast Shire Council

CEO Message

It's something of a cliché but true nevertheless. Only by looking back do we see how far we have come and how things have changed. In preparing this message I revisited the introduction to the Council Plan of 2021-2025. Back in 2021 our community was still in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

That's not to say other matters weren't on our radar. Housing affordability and the impact of climate and extreme weather were definitely of concern but fair to say the pandemic cast a long shadow at the time.

Four years on it might feel like the pandemic is in the rear vision mirror but for our business community, especially tourism operators, recovery is still less than complete. And since then, the shortage of affordable housing has been compounded by a widespread cost of living challenge. We know our community is resilient, resourceful and adept at helping themselves – however there are those within Surf Coast Shire who are in need and all of us, Council included, has a part to play.

That said, there is much to be positive about. My short journey into the past was a reminder that we are a community that does meet these challenges and does so compassionately and collaboratively.

The Mayor has written about the enthusiasm and generosity of the community panel who contributed to the development of this plan. I would add that this same level of enthusiasm is demonstrated in each of our township communities and at a municipal level.

One of the challenges we set the community panel, as well as our survey participants, was to ask them how Council could remain in a sustainable long term financial position given our revenue constraints and cost pressures. Creating space for community to lead its own projects and solutions was the most popular response.

This is entirely in keeping with how the Surf Coast Shire community functions - as a partner not a follower - and on behalf of Council I'm both grateful and excited for such a partnership. The Community Vision is a bold and ambitious statement of what we collectively aspire to for our towns, our environment, our economy and our lives and it is by moving forward together that we can fully realise what is so beautifully articulated in this vision.

With a clear direction and a commitment to collaboration we are set up well for the next four years. And whilst history tells us there will be some unexpected twists and turns, we can move forward with confidence knowing we have such a capable and passionate community walking alongside us.

Robyn Seymour
CEO, Surf Coast Shire Council

Community Vision

> From the hinterland to the coast, from the First Peoples to the children of the future, we are an active, diverse community that lives creatively to value, protect and enhance the natural environment and our unique neighbourhoods. We will leave the Surf Coast Shire better than we found it.

The 10-year Community Vision, adopted by Council in 2021, was developed by a representative sample of Surf Coast Shire community members, with input from the broader community.

About the Surf Coast Shire

The Surf Coast Shire is located in southwestern Victoria, 1 hour from Melbourne, 20 minutes from Geelong and includes the official start of the iconic Great Ocean Road.

The landscape is a mix of coast, natural forest, urban settled areas and rural environments including land dedicated to agriculture.

Surf Coast Shire comprises many individual townships, including Aireys Inlet, Anglesea, Bambra, Bellbrae, Deans Marsh, Fairhaven, Jan Juc, Lorne, Moriac, Freshwater Creek, Torquay and Winchelsea.

Each of these townships has a keen sense of community, a unique identity and a strong desire to protect and nurture the environment.

The Surf Coast is a major lifestyle and visitor destination that is among the fastest growing regional municipalities in Victoria and has undergone significant change over the past 15 years.

Population
39,928
(Estimated Resident Population 2024)

Size
1,553
square kilometres

Number of dwellings
20,634

Median age
42

About this Plan

The Council Plan 2025-2029 sets out Surf Coast Shire Council's strategic direction for the next four years. The guiding light for the plan is the 10-year Community Vision which was developed by a representative sample of community members four years ago, to articulate the aspirations, achievements and outcomes that matter most to our community.

A new community panel was convened in March 2025 to give advice to this term of Council on how to work towards achieving the Community Vision. In particular the 2025 panel gave guidance to Council on what to weigh up when making decisions, noting there are often competing demands to be considered.

The result is a Council Plan that sets a strategic direction across five themes:

- Assets and Infrastructure
- Climate and Environmental Leadership
- Community Wellbeing
- High Performing Council
- Sustainable Communities

For each theme, a series of strategic objectives are listed. The strategic objectives describe the desired future state, that combined across the five themes, move us toward the Surf Coast Shire vision. Priorities are identified to illustrate the work that Council will undertake to achieve the strategic objectives.

Council will report on progress through the life of the Council Plan and will continuously review the strategic objectives and priorities to ensure our efforts remain focused and effective.

The Council Plan incorporates our Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan which details the health and wellbeing goals Council will focus on. The Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 requires Council to consider the priority areas identified in the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

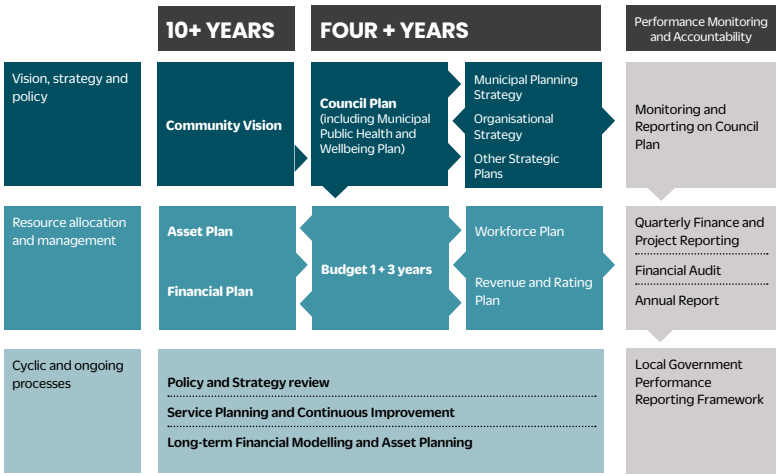
A separate 10-year Financial Plan and 10-year Asset Plan are companions to the Council Plan. These two plans give specific guidance on Council's long term strategic approach to managing financial sustainability and our approach to maintaining community assets.

Strategic Framework

This diagram shows how the Council Plan links to the Community Vision and its relationship to Council's other strategic documents.

Under the Local Government Act 2020, Councils are required to develop a number of strategic documents which together comprise an Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework (ISPRF).

In addition to the Local Government Act 2020, these strategic documents are guided by other pieces of state legislation including the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, the Climate Act 2017, the Gender Equality Act 2020 and the Planning and Environment Act 1987.



The context for this plan

This plan seeks to address several key challenges facing our shire. Information about these challenges was provided to the community panel to guide the panel members' thinking and recommendations. The questions in the Our Focus Our Future survey were also shaped by the challenges. More information about the panel and survey is provided in the section on community engagement.

Whilst the four-year time span of the Council Plan is too narrow to fully address these challenges, important progress can and should be made.

A collective response combining the efforts of Council, community, government and other partners will be necessary to ensure Surf Coast Shire remains a sustainable, healthy and prosperous place to live, work and visit.

Our Finances

Council works hard to maintain financial sustainability. This is challenging in what is an increasingly constrained economic environment. Persistent inflation and the cumulative effects of the rate cap have combined to create ongoing financial pressures. Our long term financial planning indicates we will need to make changes if we are to avoid a future deficit.

Councils are inherently complex organisations and legislative change over time has increased the range and depth of responsibilities that fall to local government to deliver.

The introduction of rate capping has significantly constrained revenue for local government authorities. Council must carefully consider the allocation of its financial resources in this environment and continue to pursue important efficiency reforms. To this end we set ourselves an annual savings target and have structured programs aimed at improving productivity.

We also regularly review fees and charges and look for alternative revenue where appropriate. Whilst we will need to do more of both to continue to deliver services in-line with community expectations, it's a complex equation given local households have themselves been experiencing widespread cost of living challenges.

Our Services

18	59	284
core service areas	service activities	service functions

Councils are unique organisations. We provide not just a large number of services, but services of considerable diversity, from childhood immunisation to road repairs. Additionally, much of the services we provide are required by legislation.

Some services are specifically mandated by legislation, such as waste management, road maintenance and animal management. Then there are services that are linked to a mandated outcome – meaning legislation requires a Council to achieve a certain outcome for its community and leaves some discretion to the Council on how best to achieve the outcome. In other words, Councils can choose which services best meet the outcome for a given community.

Finally, there are some services that don't need to be delivered by a Council because they are open to other providers - childcare and kindergartens fall into this category. Typically Councils do deliver these services in areas where there isn't a diverse enough commercial market to provide a viable alternative.

Over time the number and complexity of services delivered by Councils have grown. Surf Coast Shire Council delivers more than 280 individual service functions spread amongst 18 core service areas.

To remain financially sustainable, Council will increasingly need to focus on alternative revenue options to deliver its services, including fees and charges.

Assets and Roads

Council manages and maintains $1.6B of assets

1,100	253km	8,000
kilometres of roads	of footpaths and cycleways	open space and recreational assets

Our asset base is growing, driven by the demands of population growth, seasonal population and legislative changes. As a result, Council's funds are stretched more thinly across a greater number of assets.

Extreme weather events have had a significant impact on assets such as roads, bridges and drains. Council will need to find the means to not just repair the assets but retrofit them to enable them to withstand more frequent and more severe events in the future.

It can be a complicated equation as the creation of new facilities to support a growing community limits the amount of funding to maintain and renew existing assets. Yet newer facilities are likely to require less ongoing maintenance, at least for a period of time.

A related challenge is whether Council should seek to recover more of the cost of maintenance from the users of a facility. Currently the fees payable are set well below the cost of the upkeep and comparatively lower than those charged by other councils.

Climate and Environment

43,000 hectares of natural areas

30	6	5	30
rivers	major wetlands	estuaries	nature reserves

Surf Coast Shire can expect harsher fire weather, longer fire risk seasons, and increased extreme storm and wind events. This has a cascading effect on public and private infrastructure, emergency services, public health, and community resilience. Meanwhile, biodiversity loss and habitat degradation further undermines ecosystem resilience.

Nationally, the direct costs of extreme weather events will exceed $35 billion by 2050 according to the Insurance Council of Australia.

Given our mix of coastline, grassy plains and dense native forests, our municipality is disproportionately impacted, being rated one of the highest risk bushfire locations in Australia, and susceptible to inundation, erosion and flooding.

Surf Coast Shire has many areas of high environmental significance, including grasslands, forests, river, estuarine and coastal habitats.

It's these features that prove such a drawcard for residents and visitors, who desire to have close access to areas of environmental importance and yet also wish for these locations to be protected and preserved. Achieving the right balance between these aims is challenging given the complex nature of local ecosystems.

Economy and Tourism

ANNUAL VISITORS: 2.6 MILLION

42% of residents live and work locally

12,500+ local jobs

2,151 additional jobs required by 2031

Job creation is essential to maintaining Surf Coast Shire's prosperity and lifestyle. A diverse range of local jobs reduces the need to travel for work, sustains communities, attracts new families and provides more opportunities for young people to stay in their home towns.

The tourism sector is Surf Coast Shire's largest job provider. Visitors typically spend over $593 million each year. In the summer months more than 75% of expenditure in Surf Coast Shire is attributed to visitors.

A strong tourism season can be the difference between a local business surviving the off season or not. Small permanent populations mean many local businesses rely on visitors and tourists to sustain them through the peaks and troughs of the year.

Surf Coast Shire's proximity to Melbourne and Geelong, and its outdoor recreational opportunities, major events, and natural environment make it a major drawcard for visitors, however not all visitation is equal.

Multi-day stays are beneficial to the local economy, whereas day trips tend to generate little if any revenue for local business operators. The growth of Geelong and the west Melbourne corridor will increase the risk of Surf Coast Shire becoming primarily a day trip destination. In ten years it's estimated 1.66 million people will live within one hour of Surf Coast.

Population and Housing

ANNUAL GROWTH RATE 2013-2023: 3.4%

Growth prediction to 2026 of up to **1.8%** per annum

Government housing target of **8,000 new dwellings** by 2051

The state government has released housing targets for each of Victoria's 79 councils with the aim to deliver 2.24 million new homes by 2051. The target set for Surf Coast Shire Council is 8,000 new dwellings by 2051.

Winchelsea is identified as the focus for longer term growth in Surf Coast Shire, due to the declining capacity of Torquay, and the constraints of the other townships.

As well as a growing population, there is a need for a greater diversity of housing and more affordable housing options. Increased density in targeted locations can deliver diversity of housing, including more affordable options but this must be balanced with the need to protect the unique character of townships.

Currently 93% of housing stock in the shire is made up of larger detached houses. We have a mismatch in current trends for larger houses against a forecast growth in one to two person households.

A lack of affordable housing (including rental accommodation) and rising house prices are well documented challenges. Business operators in coastal towns struggle to attract and retain essential workers and those working in the tourism sector. Key workers are critical not just to local economies but to the vibrancy of local communities.

The challenge of retaining essential workers is compounded by the high vacancy dwelling rates in the coastal towns due to use as holiday homes and high demand for short-term tourist accommodation, which reduces housing supply to the market for local residents.

Community Engagement
Our Focus Our Future

The Our Focus Our Future engagement project was launched to seek diverse and meaningful community input into the development of a series of strategic documents, including a new Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan.

This plan is underpinned by contributions from more than 1,000 community members, community groups, students, businesses and local organisations.

The engagement process included a participatory engagement phase designed to seek broad community input, and a deliberative phase to encourage a deeper dive into a range of complex topics.

Phase 1: Participatory Engagement

To encourage a high level of participation during phase 1, consideration was given to the different ways people may wish to contribute their views. Online, hard copy and township based in-person options were made available, as well as school and kinder sessions, and direct liaison with local township community and trader groups.

858 Survey responses

83 Youth surveys

KINDER SESSIONS **80** children across **5** townships

16 Pop-up events (over 1,000 interactions)

16 Group submissions from community groups and organisations

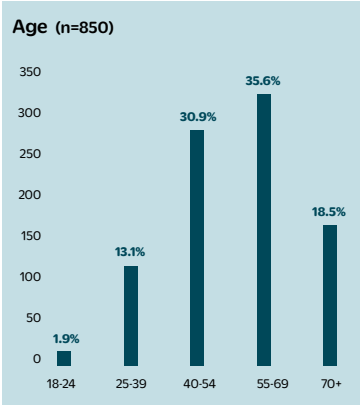
2,753 Website visits to the project page

6,069 Total web page views

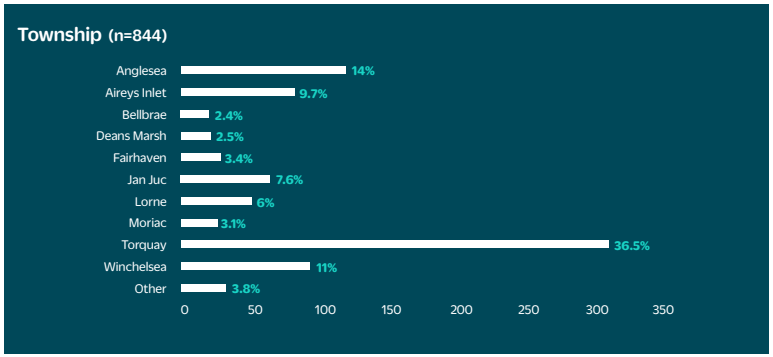
What we heard and who we heard from

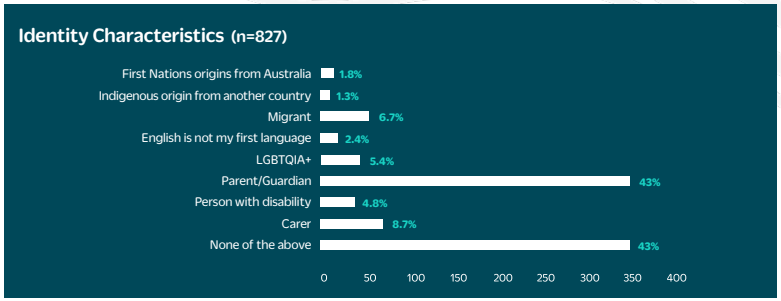
During this phase we received feedback on community needs and priorities, and people's experiences in their communities. The engagement revealed a highly invested community with clear priorities, including:

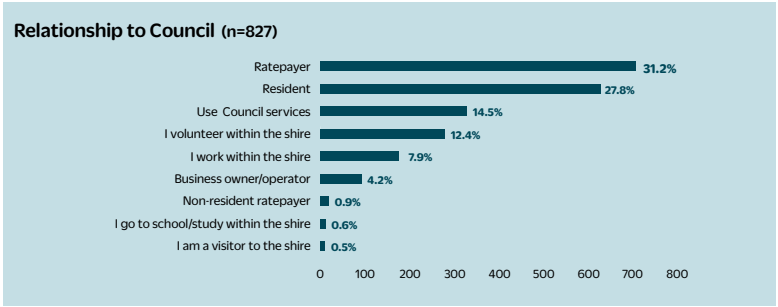
- **Environmental protection and sustainable growth** – Strong community desire to protect natural spaces and prevent overdevelopment.
- **Cost of living and housing affordability** – Housing shortages and rising living costs are major challenges.
- **Infrastructure and transport** – Focus on core infrastructure and services. Concerns about public transport limitations, road safety, and cycling/ pedestrian accessibility.
- **Tourism and local impact** – Seasonal overcrowding and its effect on infrastructure requires careful management.
- **Health and wellbeing** – Mental health concerns, family violence, and substance abuse were identified as issues.



Note: an additional 83 people under 24 years completed a youth-specific survey.







The Phase 1 Engagement Summary Report is available as Appendix 1.

Phase 2: Deliberative Community Panel

To achieve a representative sample of Surf Coast Shire communities during this phase, an independent process including an expression of interest and random selection was used to establish a Community Panel.

Potential barriers to participation were addressed, and a group of 43 people of different ages, genders, backgrounds and from different localities were invited to join the Community Panel.

Feedback from panel members indicated a strong growth throughout the panel process in, trust in Council, belief in authenticity of the process, and interest in participating in civic affairs from the first meeting to the final session.

The Community Panel Principles:

- Community engagement
- Financial sustainability
- Community equity
- Environmental impact
- Meeting our future needs
- Health and wellbeing
- Building trust through transparency
- Environmental leadership

The Community Panel Report is available as Appendix 2.

Community Panel Snapshot

TOTAL

43
Participants

GENDER

22 Women
20 Men
1 Prefer not to say

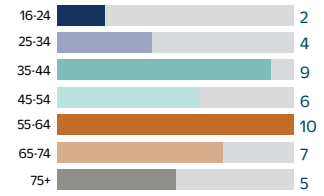
HOUSING TENURE

33 Homeowner
6 Renter
1 Non-residential ratepayer
3 Prefer not to say

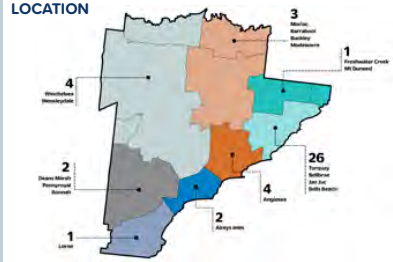
HOURS INVESTED

3.5 days (25.5 hrs) of workshop time
1080 collective participant hours

AGE



LOCATION



"As a panel, we've reflected on the dilemmas Council faces and what matters most to our community now and into the future. Together, we've developed a set of principles that aim to support Council in balancing community needs with long-term financial sustainability."

Phase 3: Feedback on draft plan

The Phase 3 review process was an opportunity for a final check of strategic directions in the draft plan, which was developed based on community input from earlier phases.

During a period of 6 weeks, 33 submissions were received, more than 600 people accessed the webpage, and 583 people downloaded the draft Council Plan document, indicating community awareness of the plan and the opportunity to provide feedback.

Analysis of community feedback from the 33 submissions highlighted diverse perspectives, that are generally in line with community sentiment expressed across the detailed engagement conducted during Phase 1.

The Phase 3 Our Focus Our Future Engagement Report is available as Appendix 3.

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

Overview

The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP) is a plan developed by Council to support the health, wellbeing, and quality of life of everyone in our community. It is a requirement under Victoria's Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, and helps us understand local health issues, set priorities, and take action. Its purpose is to guide coordinated actions that improve community health and wellbeing through prevention-focused programs and policies.

Council has chosen to integrate its Health and Wellbeing Plan into the Council Plan as many priorities address strategic objectives across both plans.

Our role

Council plays a vital role in creating environments where people can live healthy, fulfilling lives. Our focus is on improving health at the population level by addressing the social determinants of health - the non-medical factors that influence a person's health and wellbeing. These include the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age.

We work collaboratively with health services and community organisations to coordinate our efforts, share resources, and deliver more effective health outcomes for the community.

Our approach is based on primary prevention at a community wide level, taking action to prevent disease and health problems before they occur, by addressing the root causes of ill-health and promoting healthy behaviours, rather than treating illness. This incorporates a broad spectrum of activities undertaken by Council to build healthy communities, such as:

- Healthy public policy - considering the health impacts of Council decisions across a wide range of areas.
- Promoting healthy lifestyles - encouraging behaviours such as physical activity, healthy eating and smoking reduction through community programs and initiatives.
- Providing services - delivering essential public health services including the regulation of food and health premises, disease control (e.g. immunisations), child and family health services and kindergartens.
- Social and community support - strengthening community connection, education and access to resources to support overall wellbeing.
- Shaping the built environment – designing and maintaining infrastructure that supports healthy living, such as walkable neighbourhoods, access to green spaces, safe transport options and recreational facilities.
- Community safety - ensuring public spaces such as parks, playgrounds and community areas are safe, and supporting emergency services.
- Addressing health inequalities - targeting efforts through an equity approach to support vulnerable populations and reduce health disparities by addressing the social determinants of health.
- Advocacy – represent community health interests by advocating to other levels of government and stakeholders for policies, funding, and services that promote health and wellbeing.

Through these diverse roles, Council helps shape healthier, safer and more equitable communities.

Partnerships

Positive health and wellbeing outcomes cannot be achieved by Council alone. Partnerships are essential in public health primary prevention because they broaden reach, enhance impact and ensure a coordinated approach to addressing complex health issues.

Our key partners include:

- Government agencies including the Victorian Department of Health, the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and our G21 regional Council partners.
- Health and community services including Great Ocean Road Health, Hesse Rural Health, Barwon Health and Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West.
- Peak bodies including the Municipal Association of Victoria, VicHealth, Alcohol and Drug Foundation, Safe and Equal and Cancer Council Victoria.
- Department of Education and early years providers including primary schools, secondary schools and kindergartens.
- Community organisations and groups including Community Houses, men's and women's sheds, libraries and sporting clubs.

Council also recognises that communities are the experts in their own lives and have the knowledge, skills, and capacity to drive change. By supporting residents to lead collective action on the issues that matter to them, we foster local leadership, resourcefulness, and a shared responsibility for positive change.

Our Commitment to Equity

Council is committed to equity and inclusion for all. We value the diverse skills and perspectives that people bring to our community because of their personal attributes and life experiences. We are committed to walking alongside our community to learn and continue to create a more inclusive community. We stand against racism and discrimination of any kind. Through the delivery of our Gender Equality and Diversity Action Plan, Council works to create safer, more welcoming and inclusive places, spaces, programs and services for all. 'An equitable approach to health means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health and wellbeing, and that the causes of inequity are addressed' (www.health.vic.gov.au).

Health and Wellbeing Priority Areas

Our health and wellbeing priority areas are determined by:

- Analysing locally relevant health data (see Appendix 4).
- Engaging with our community (Phase 1 Engagement Summary Report Appendix 1 and Community Panel Report Appendix 2)
- Consulting with our key health and community service partners.
- Aligning with the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (see Appendix 4) and relevant legislation.

This has resulted in the development of five health and wellbeing priority areas, which set the direction over the next four years.

A Health and Wellbeing Action Plan detailing specific goals, strategies and actions will underpin these priority areas, and guide our approach to implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Health and wellbeing actions are also integrated across other Council strategies and plans including the Positive Ageing Strategy, Accessible and Inclusive Strategic Plan, Youth Strategy, Community Development Action Plan and Gender Equality and Diversity Action Plan.

Our Health and Wellbeing Plan features five priority areas:

Increase Healthy Eating and Active Living

Increased awareness and understanding of the health implications of healthy eating and physical activity

Improved access to safe, affordable and nutritious food (food security)

Accessible and inclusive spaces and programs that support everyone to be active

Advance Gender Equity and Address Family Violence

Increased awareness and understanding of gender equity, intersectionality and primary prevention initiatives

Inclusive spaces and programs where everyone feels safe and supported to participate

Improved access to family violence support services locally

Improve Mental Health and Social Connection

Increased opportunities for meaningful social connection

Improved access to mental health support services locally

Increased understanding of mental health protective factors (healthy eating, physical activity, strong social support networks)

Reduce Harm from Alcohol and Vaping

Increased community awareness on the safe consumption of alcohol

Increased education and initiatives targeted at reducing rates of vaping

Improved access to alcohol and smoking/ vaping cessation programs locally

Tackle the Impacts of Climate on Health

Improved understanding of how climate can affect health, particularly for higher risk groups

Increased access to sustainable food production systems

Resilient communities that can better prepare for and recover from extreme weather events

Measuring our progress

As per the requirements of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, Council will work with our key partners to evaluate the success of our collective actions annually, and amend the Plan as required. Monitoring and evaluating our progress will allow us to measure the success of activities, identify areas for improvement and make any necessary adjustments, ensuring a commitment to continuous improvement.

The following symbols are embedded within the Council Plan to identify how the Strategic Objectives support the health and wellbeing priority areas:

- Increase Healthy Eating and Active Living
- Advance Gender Equity and Address Family Violence
- Improve Mental Health and Social Connection
- Reduce Harm from Alcohol and Vaping
- Tackle the Impacts of Climate on Health

How we incorporated the work of the Community Panel

Overview

The 43 member Community Panel was recruited to give guidance to Council on the Council Plan, Health and Wellbeing Plan, Asset Plan and Financial Plan.

The panel, which comprised a representative cross-section of the Surf Coast Shire community, were given a specific challenge, or remit:

How can Council balance the priorities of our community and meet legislative obligations, whilst remaining in a financially sustainable position?

The remit recognised that Council is regularly faced with dilemmas that require trade-off decisions. This is especially so when it comes to financial capacity. The rate cap, and cost of living pressures being experienced in the community, place notable restrictions on Council's revenue.

The panel spent three Saturdays in March 2025 grappling with this challenge and ultimately produced a report with eight principles and two minority reports. Principles were determined subject to achieving an 80 percent level of support from the panel. Minority reports were topics still held to be important but that received a lower level of support.

On the following page, Figure 1 illustrates how the eight Community Panel Principles aligned to inform Council Strategic Directions. Figure 2 shows how they form a framework to support Council decision making.

Figure 1. Community Panel Principles
This chart shows which Community Panel Principles have informed the Council Strategic Directions.

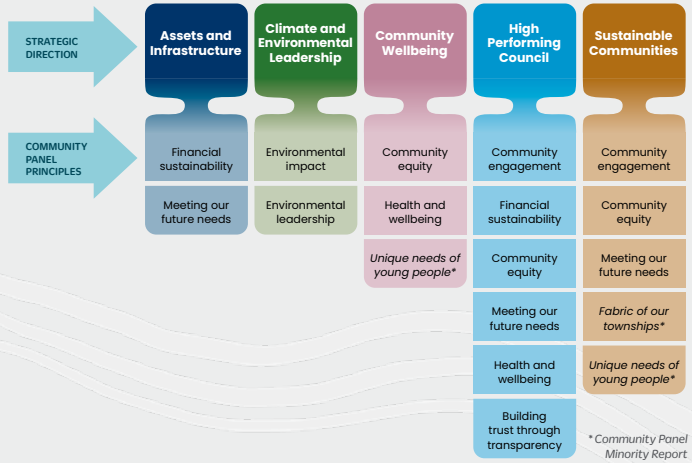
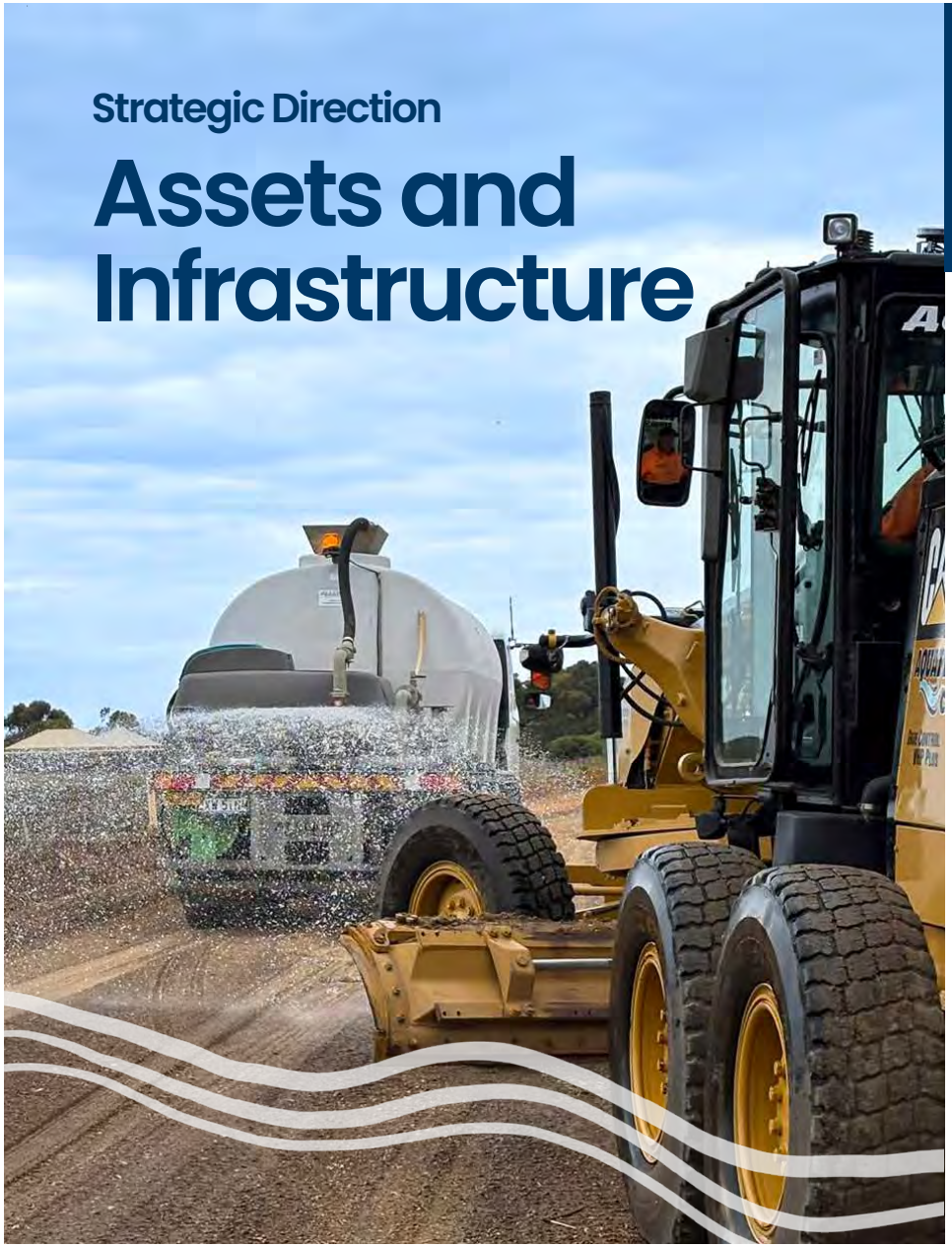


Figure 2. Decision Making Framework
This chart shows how the Community Panel Principles will guide Council decision making.

The Plan

Strategic Directions	Assets and Infrastructure	Climate and Environmental Leadership	Community Wellbeing	High Performing Council	Sustainable Communities
Strategic Objectives	Infrastructure is fit-for-purpose and service levels provide the best balance between ongoing maintenance costs and longer-term replacement cost	Local natural ecosystems are thriving and biodiversity is protected	Increased social connection to support physical and mental wellbeing	Council delivers long term community benefit	Planning for a diversity of housing to support different needs and life stages, including young people and those wishing to age in place
	We are building safe, active transport networks that connect communities	Communities are prepared ahead of emergencies, supported during them and resilient in their aftermath	Inclusive community that recognises and values diverse perspectives.	Trust in Council is built through decisions that are aligned to the Community Vision and adopted strategies; openly made, based on credible evidence; and thoroughly explained	The uniqueness and character of townships, places and significant landscapes are recognised and preserved, even where such places grow and evolve
	Infrastructure reflects township character whilst meeting future needs	Council operations and infrastructure are adapting to the impacts of extreme weather events	Equitable access to services, social infrastructure and opportunities to participate in community life	Council is financially viable over the long term	Individual township economies and communities are sustainable
	The social value of infrastructure and facilities is understood and informs decision making	Council is progressively eliminating emissions from its operations and supporting community to reduce emissions	Communities are empowered to meet their own needs and goals	Council revenue collection is equity based	The economy across the shire supports sustainable and diverse local employment
	Local roads are safer for all users	Council decisions are weighted towards long term positive environmental impacts	The needs of younger and future generations inform decision making	Community cost of living impacts are considered when Council makes financial decisions	Tourism supports local communities and delivers more consistent economic and social benefits year-round
		Circular economy principles are being applied to reduce waste			Community liveability is increased through reducing car dependency

The five Strategic Directions are listed alphabetically. The order therefore does not infer priority.



Strategic Direction

Assets and Infrastructure

The important role assets play in our community will be given specific recognition. Investment in assets will be equitable and evidence based. Road condition and function will be a focus whilst Council also broadens options for non car-based travel. Maintenance levels will be calculated to achieve the best balance of cost and amenity over time.

Strategic Objectives:

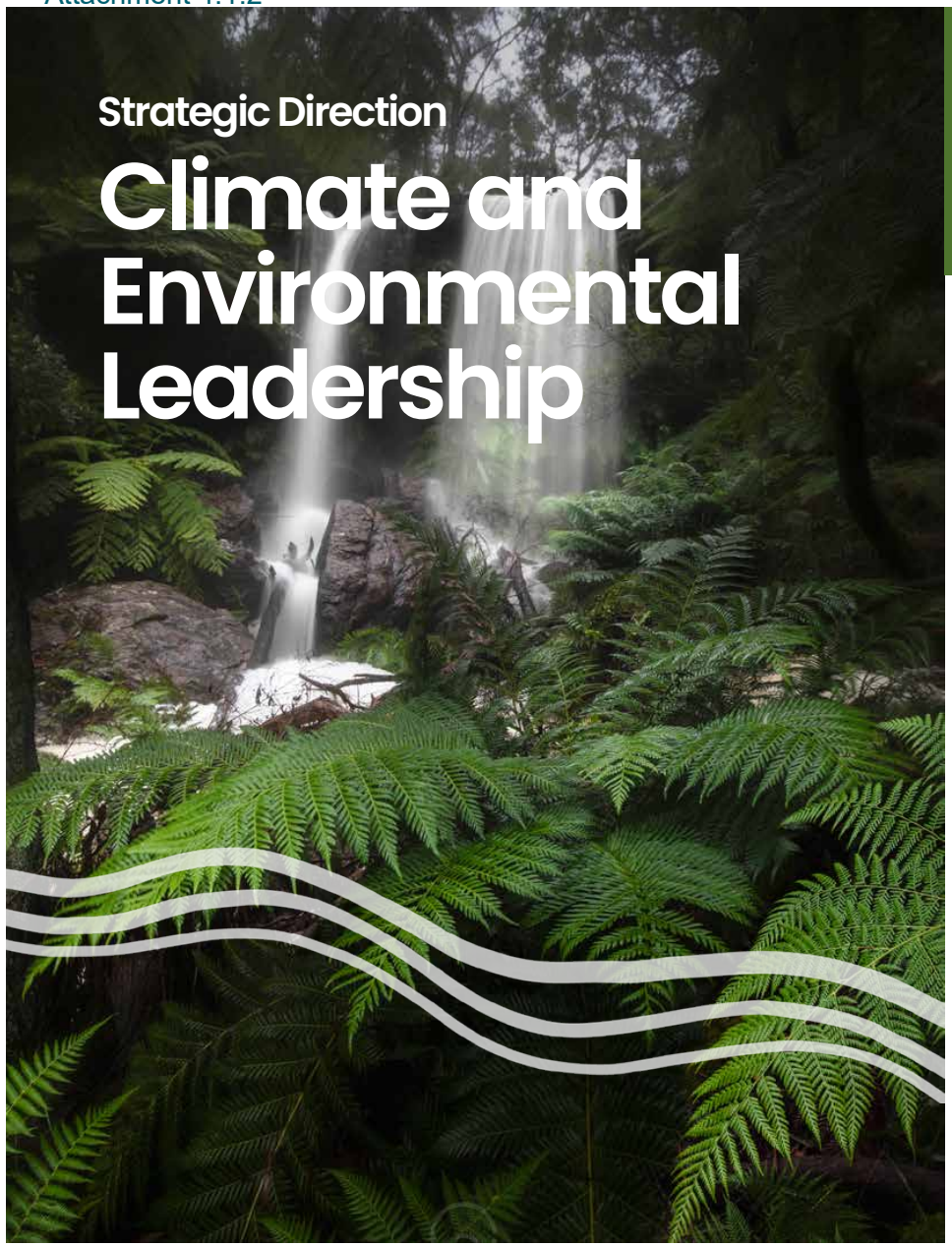
Infrastructure is fit-for-purpose and service levels provide the best balance between ongoing maintenance costs and longer-term replacement cost	♥♥♥
We are building safe, active transport networks that connect communities	♥♥♥♥
Infrastructure reflects township character whilst meeting future needs	♥♥
The social value of infrastructure and facilities is understood and informs decision making	♥
Local roads are safer for all users	♥♥♥

Priorities:

- Prioritise investment in maintenance and renewal of assets
- Review service strategies and intervention levels to best balance community expectations and expenditure
- Asset renewal anticipates and adapts to future impacts including changing usage patterns and the need for greater climate resilience
- Develop a strategy to determine the right combination of sealed and unsealed roads across the network

Strategic Indicators:

- Percentage of assets in very poor condition
- Number of serious crash incidents on local roads
- Delivery of identified active transport links



Strategic Direction

Climate and Environmental Leadership

Council will ensure its own operations are adapted to climate and weather events and build and renew assets with future needs in mind. It will play a leadership role within the community and continue to advocate for more upfront investment in resilient assets and mitigation actions. Areas of environmental significance will be valued and a high priority placed on preservation and conservation.

Strategic Objectives:

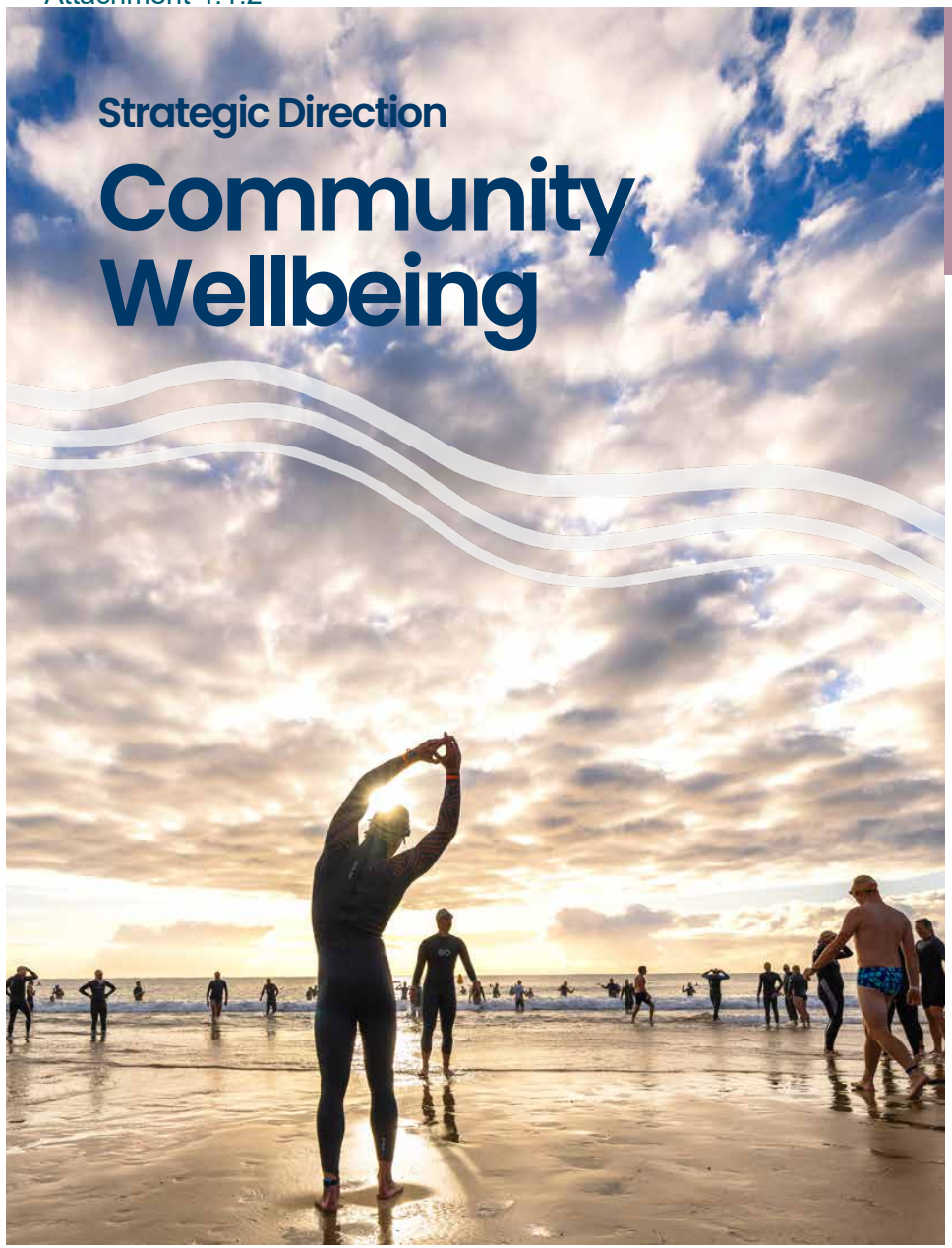
Local natural ecosystems are thriving and biodiversity is protected	♥
Communities are prepared ahead of emergencies, supported during them and resilient in their aftermath	♥♥♥
Council operations and infrastructure are adapting to the impacts of extreme weather events	♥
Council is progressively eliminating emissions from its operations and supporting community to reduce emissions	♥♥
Council decisions are weighted towards long term positive environmental impacts	♥
Circular economy principles are being applied to reduce waste	♥

Priorities:

- Advocate for investment in climate-resilient infrastructure from state and federal governments
- Prioritise local nature-based initiatives, such as wetlands, green corridors and urban forests
- Consider climate risk analysis and environmental sustainability in all relevant decision making
- Recognise the Traditional Owner approach to Caring for Country in Council's environmental management systems and practice
- Identify and work toward the best strategic outcome for the closure of the Anglesea landfill

Strategic Indicators:

- Waste diverted from landfill
- Corporate emissions



Strategic Direction

Community Wellbeing

Council seeks to increase community participation and empowerment and will favour projects being led by community where possible. Council will foster healthy active living and community connections for all age groups that improve wellbeing and are equitable and inclusive. The needs of younger and future generations will be prioritised given Council's role in planning for the future.

Strategic Objectives:

Increased social connection to support physical and mental wellbeing	
Inclusive community that recognises and values diverse perspectives	
Equitable access to services, social infrastructure and opportunities to participate in community life	
Communities are empowered to meet their own needs and goals	
The needs of younger and future generations inform decision making	

Priorities:

- Value and strengthen relationships with First Nations communities
- Encourage community led projects and initiatives
- Support community art and culture including opportunities for cultural celebration and community events
- Deliver social infrastructure, public spaces and community services that best supports health and inter-generational social connection
- Support the evolution of the library service
- Foster volunteerism
- Advocate for improved access to mental health support in local communities

Strategic Indicators:

- Participation of young people in community engagement activities
- Number of community led projects supported by Council
- Community contribution to Council grant funded projects
- Percentage of people who undertake physical activity
- Proportion of population who was able to get help from family or friends when required

Strategic Direction

High Performing Council

Council decisions are made based on evidence and with an emphasis on long term community benefit. Council is trusted and collaborative. It manages its finances prudently and works innovatively to deliver the best value. Revenue options carefully consider people's capacity to pay.

Strategic Objectives:

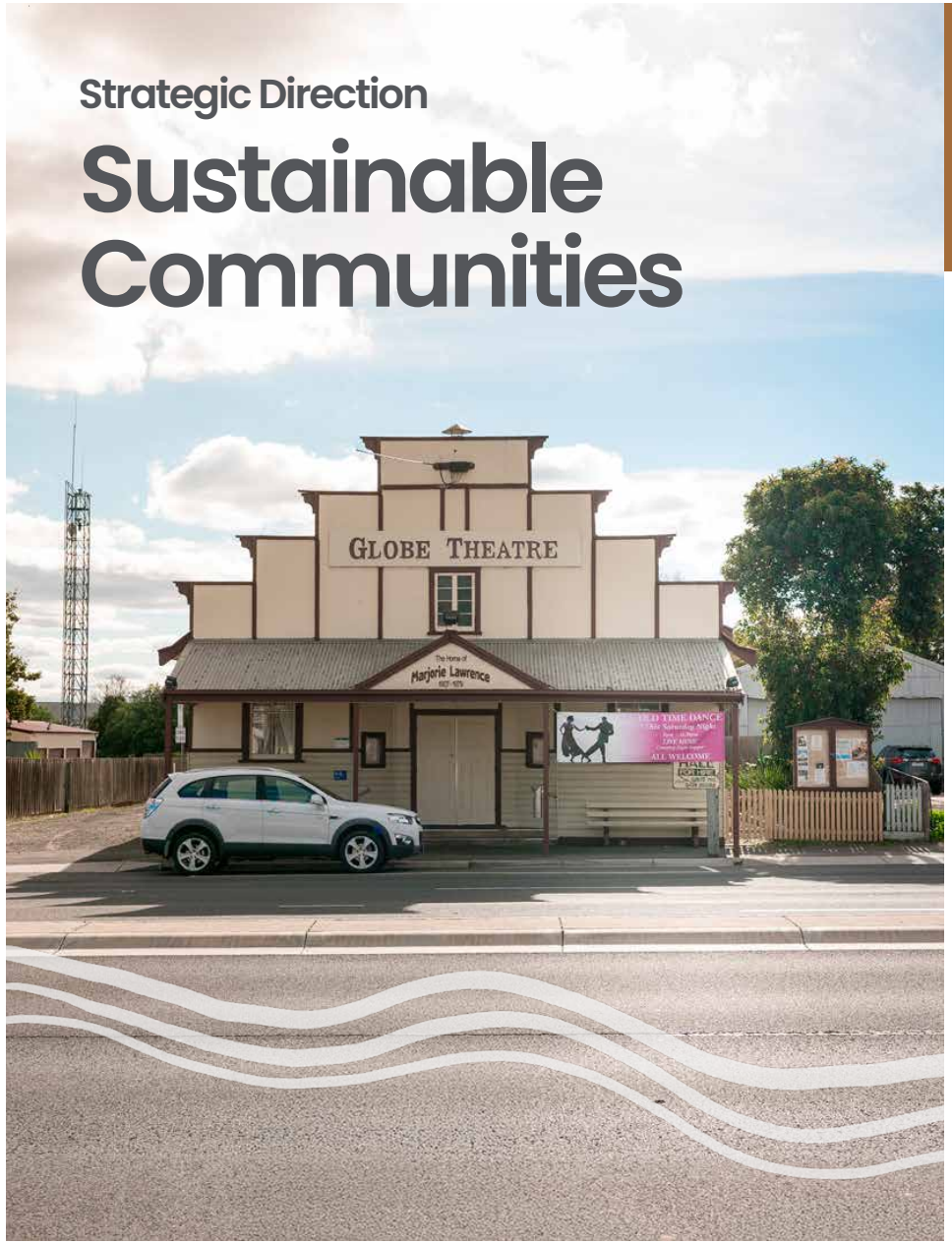
Council delivers long term community benefit	♥♥♥♥♥♥
Trust in Council is built through decisions that are aligned to the Community Vision and adopted strategies; openly made, based on credible evidence; and thoroughly explained	♥♥♥♥♥♥
Council is financially viable over the long term	♥
Council revenue collection is equity based	♥
Community cost of living impacts are considered when Council makes financial decisions	♥

Priorities:

- Develop additional revenue streams whilst maintaining discipline on spending
- Invest in two-way multi-channel communication that promotes understanding and builds civic trust
- Service reviews and a culture of continuous improvement utilised to achieve cost efficiencies and deliver services that meet community expectations
- Collaborate closely with community when progressing major future focused activities such as place planning
- Focus on user pays and cost recovery initiatives that are based on equity principles
- Advocate for greater funding support from state and federal governments

Strategic Indicators:

- Capacity to meet short term financial obligations
- Future Cash Fund Reserve
- Meeting annual savings target
- Delivery of capital program



Strategic Direction

Sustainable Communities

The qualities that make a place liveable, sustainable and functional will be understood and enhanced. Community members will be central to this work and in the specific growth areas of the shire, Place Plans will guide design and development to build communities that are vibrant, welcoming, sustainable and less car dependent. Tourism will be an important element but not at the expense of local amenity or environmental values.

Strategic Objectives:

Planning for a diversity of housing available to support different needs and life stages, including young people and those wishing to age in place	♥ ♥
The uniqueness and character of townships, places and significant landscapes are recognised and preserved, even where such places grow and evolve	♥ ♥
Individual township economies and communities are sustainable	♥
The economy across the shire supports sustainable and diverse local employment	♥
Tourism supports local communities and delivers more consistent economic and social benefits year-round	♥
Community liveability is increased through a reduction in car dependency	♥ ♥

Priorities:

- Plan and facilitate growth according to placemaking principles, enabling diverse housing types and less reliance on car travel
- Foster local primary production and preserve land for farming and landscapes of significance
- Create opportunities and address barriers to support innovation, economic growth, and job creation, having regard to the distinct needs of coastal and hinterland communities
- Support local creative industries to thrive
- Foster an increase in long-term affordable housing for key workers in coastal townships, to support the viability of local economies and communities
- Foster slow and regenerative tourism that is respectful of the local environment, values local communities and maximises local yield and revenue
- Advocate for and invest in active and public transport

Strategic Indicators:

- Length of stay for domestic visitation
- Per capita gross regional product
- Increase in urban street tree planting

Appendices

Appendix 1

Our Focus Our Future Community Engagement Report February 2025

Appendix 2

Surf Coast Shire Community Panel Report March 2025

Appendix 3

Our Focus Our Future Phase 3 Engagement Report

These documents can be found on the Surf Coast Shire Council website at www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au

Appendix 4

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan context

Aligning our Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan with other regional health plans

Council aligns its Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan with the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and other regional Health Plans to ensure consistency across the region, and a collective impact approach to achieving positive health and wellbeing outcomes for our community.

Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-2027

The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is a state-level strategic framework guiding health initiatives across Victoria. It emphasises primary prevention, reducing health inequities and collaboration, ensuring 'all Victorians can enjoy the highest attainable standards of health, wellbeing and participation at every age'. The plan identifies ten priority areas that are key drivers for ill-health across the lifespan. These priorities represent areas where sustained action can have the biggest impact on health and wellbeing. Councils must have regard for, and show alignment to, the priorities of the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

For more information you can view the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-2027

Barwon South West Public Health Unit Catchment Plan 2023-2029

The Barwon South West Public Health Unit (BSWPHU) has developed the Barwon South West Population Health Catchment Plan (the Catchment Plan). The Catchment Plan was informed by population health needs, equity assessment and priorities for place-based health promotion, primary prevention and early intervention, including measures of impact aligned to outcomes frameworks, and will extend over a six-year period (2023–2029). The Catchment Plan supports the goals and objectives of the overarching Barwon South West Public Health Unit Strategy.

For more information you can view the Barwon South West Public Health Unit Catchment Plan Executive Summary

G21 Geelong Region Plan

The G21 Geelong Region Plan is a sustainability plan for the region that looks toward 2050. It identifies and addresses the challenges the region will face in the areas of environment, settlement, land use, community strength and economy as well as the need for change in the way we make things happen.

For more information you can view the G21 Geelong Region Plan

Health Snapshot

21.9% sought professional help for a mental health related problem (Vic 20.1%)

20.6% experienced loneliness (Vic 23.3%)

15.4% experienced high or very high psychological distress (Vic 19.1%)

24.5% consumed sugar sweetened beverages daily (Vic 34.4%)

17.8% have fair or poor dental health (Vic 22.5%)

42.8% met recommended daily fruit intake (Vic 35.2%)

9.9% met recommended daily vegetable intake (Vic 5.7%)

52.9% classified as overweight BMI over 25 (Vic 54.4%)

18.1% classified as obese BMI over 30 (Vic 23%)

9.9% did not do any moderate to vigorous physical activity (Vic 16.8%)

21% spent more than 8 hours sitting (Vic 27.9%)

12.6% smoke tobacco or vape (Vic 18.5%)

17.7% are at increased risk of alcohol related harm (Vic 13.1%)

15.2% self-rated their health status as fair/poor (Vic 20.9%)

*Data is sourced from Victorian Population Health Survey 2023, and is specific to adults living in the Surf Coast Shire.

For more detailed health statistics you can view the Victorian Population Health Survey

Health Priority Areas Overview

Increase Healthy Eating and Active Living

Healthy eating and regular physical activity are essential for overall health and wellbeing. They help prevent chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and certain cancers, while also enhancing mental health, boosting energy levels, reducing social isolation, strengthening social connections and supporting growth, development and a healthy immune system.

Less than half of Surf Coast Shire adults meet the recommended guidelines for daily fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity. Physical activity is declining in children, and recreational screen time is increasing. Increasing active living was the top priority identified by our community in the Our Focus Our Future community engagement survey. Healthy eating and active living are also priorities in the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Barwon South West Public Health Unit Plan and for the G21 region.

Advance Gender Equity and Address Family Violence

Preventing violence against women requires tackling all forms of harmful behaviour by addressing the underlying causes of disrespect and inequality. By promoting gender equity and working to prevent violence, we help create safer, healthier communities where everyone is respected, valued, and supported to thrive.

Violence, specifically men's violence against women, is a significant social issue that continues to do profound harm. Data produced by Safe and Equal in 2023 shows that almost 1 in 4 women and almost 1 in 14 men have experienced intimate partner violence since the age of 15. The Gender Equality Act 2020 requires all Victorian Councils to take action to reduce family violence and promote gender equality. Council will focus on tackling the drivers of violence against women and girls by promoting and progressing gender equity through the actions detailed in our Gender Equality and Diversity Action Plan. In the Our Focus Our Future survey, gender equity and preventing family violence was identified as one of the top three health issues. Preventing all forms of violence is also a priority in the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and Barwon South West Public Health Unit Plan.

Improve Mental Health and Social Connection

Good mental health supports decision-making, productivity and healthy relationships, and can prevent mental health conditions including anxiety and depression. Strong social connections protect and enhance mental health and reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation which are risk factors for poor mental health.

In 2023, 21.9% of adults living in the Surf Coast Shire sought professional help for a mental health related problem. Improving mental health and social connection is a priority in the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, the Barwon South West Public Health Unit Plan and in the G21 region, and was the second highest priority identified by our community.

Reduce Harm from Alcohol and Vaping

Excessive alcohol consumption and vaping are major contributors to preventable illness and death in Victoria and are linked to serious health issues including heart disease, stroke, certain cancers, and mental health challenges. They also contribute to broader social harms, including injury, road fatalities, crime and family violence. Preventing harm involves reducing risky use, preventing addiction and minimising exposure. Education and harm reduction strategies empower individuals to make safer and more informed choices, ease pressure on healthcare systems, and support healthier, safer communities.

In 2023, 17.7% of adults across the Surf Coast Shire were identified as being at an increased risk of alcohol related harm, which was significantly higher than the Victorian average. Whilst tobacco smoking rates are declining, rates of vaping have tripled, undermining years of progress from tobacco-related harm. Preventing and minimising harm from alcohol consumption and vaping, particularly among young people, will be a focus for this plan. Reducing harmful alcohol and e-cigarette use is also a priority of the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and Barwon South West Public Health Unit Plan.

Tackle the Impacts of Climate on Health

Climate change affects health both directly, including illness and death resulting from extreme weather events such as heatwaves, floods, droughts, and bushfires, as well as indirectly, through changes to land-use and the environment including declining air, food, and water quality. In addition, climate-related disasters can cause job loss, housing insecurity and financial hardship, which increases stress in households and is a known risk factor for family violence.

The *Climate Change Act 2017* requires Councils to have regard to climate change when preparing a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. In 2019 Surf Coast Shire Council declared a climate emergency in recognition that climate change is a real and significant threat and urgent action is needed globally and locally. Council will focus our actions on climate mitigation, adaptation and mobilisation, as well as supporting our community to be more resilient during and after extreme weather events. Tackling climate change and its impacts on health was a top five priority identified by our community, and is a priority within the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Barwon South West Public Health Unit Plan and for the G21 region.

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4.2 Financial Plan 2025 - 2035

Council Plan	**Theme Seven - Accountable and Viable Council** Strategy 18 - Establish a sustainable financial position.
Author's Title:	Manager Finance
General Manager:	Joanne McNeill, General Manager Strategy and Effectiveness
Division:	Strategy and Effectiveness
Department:	Finance
Attachments:	1. Financial Plan 2025-2035 Document - Agenda Council Report September 2025 [**4.2.1** - 54 pages]

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Financial Plan 2025 - 2035 (**Attachment 1**) to Council for adoption.

Recommendation

That Council adopts the Financial Plan 2025 – 2035 **(Attachment 1)**.

Council Resolution

Moved Cr Phelps, Seconded Cr Pattison

That Council adopts the Financial Plan 2025 – 2035 **(Attachment 1)**.

CARRIED 7|2

For	Against	Abstained
Cr Bodsworth Cr Bourke Cr Pattison Cr Phelps Cr Schonfelder Cr Stapleton Cr Walker	Cr Barker Cr Grist	Nil

Outcome

2. If Council accepts this recommendation, Council will have a Ten Year Financial Plan that details how Council will manage its finances to deliver services, maintain infrastructure, and ensure long-term financial sustainability in line with the strategic objectives of the Council Plan (incorporating Municipal and Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) 2025 - 2029.

Key Considerations

3. The *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) requires that a council prepares and adopts a Financial Plan for a period of at least the next ten financial years, by 31 October in the year following a general council election.

4. The Financial Plan, along with the Asset Plan and the Revenue and Rating Plan, supports the delivery of the Council Plan (incorporating Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) 2025-2029.

5. The Financial Plan is developed to deliver on the community's long-term aspirations. This plan is directly shaped by the Surf Coast Community Vision and the Council Plan (incorporating Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) 2025-2029 and is integrated with Council's broader planning framework.

6. The Financial Plan includes actions that align with the Council Plan (incorporating Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) 2025-2029 themes outlined under the following strategic levers for Council to progress during the life of the plan:

    6.1 Financial Sustainability

    6.2 Service Review

    6.3 Asset Management and Climate Impact

    6.4 Advocacy and Partnership

    6.5 Growth Planning

Background

7. In June 2021 Council adopted its first Financial Plan as required under the Act.

8. The Financial Plan is a ten-year plan that is developed and adopted every four years in the year following a general council election in line with the Act.

9. The financial plan modelling is reviewed every year and adopted as part of the Annual Budget Report.

Options

10. **Alternative Option 1** - That Council does not adopt the Financial Plan 2025 - 2035.

This option is not recommended by officers as Council is required under the Act to have adopted a Financial Plan by 31 October 2025. In addition, Council would not have a strategic financial plan that delivers on Council's strategic objectives in the Council Plan (incorporating Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) 2025-2029.

11. **Alternative Option 2** – That Council adopts an amended version of the Financial Plan.

This option is not recommended by officers as the Financial Plan was developed through an extensive collaborative workshop process with Councillors and the content is based on community perspectives gathered through intensive participatory and deliberative engagement processes.

Council Plan (including Health and Wellbeing Plan) Statement

Theme Seven - Accountable and Viable Council

Strategy 18 - Establish a sustainable financial position.

12. The Financial Plan 2025 - 2035 is an important component of Council's suite of integrated planning, monitoring and performance reporting documents and provides a 10 year financially sustainable projection regarding how the actions of the Council Plan (incorporating Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) 2025-2029 may be funded to achieve the Community Vision.

Financial Considerations

13. The Financial Plan includes financial statements for the 10 years from 2025-26 to 2034-35 including assumptions and a financial plan model.

14. Details on Council's projected loan balances, including new loans and loan repayments for the 10 years of the Financial Plan are included. In 2026-27 Council plans to take out $6.0 million of new borrowings as part of the funding strategy for the Wurdi Baierr Aquatic and Recreation Centre and $7.0 million in 2029-30 for the rehabilitation of the Anglesea Landfill.

15. Council's cash reserves including their purpose, typical sources of inflows and outflows and projections of reserve balances over the 10 years are included.

16. Strategic levers that Council can adjust to improve its financial performance and financial sustainability are identified in the Plan. They impact Council's revenue, costs and cash flows and can facilitate transformation in Council's business.

Community Engagement

17. A community engagement plan was prepared to inform development of the Council's strategic plans, including the Council Plan (incorporating Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) 2025-2029, Financial Plan and Asset Plan.

18. The engagement plan was delivered through the Our Focus Our Future project. Phase one (November 2024 - February 2025) included a participatory survey and was designed to capture diverse perspectives and priorities from residents of all ages. Phase two (February 2025 - March 2025) of the engagement was the undertaken through a community panel.

19. Phase one was designed to capture diverse perspectives and included over 1000 contributions from the community. The engagement revealed a highly invested community with clear priorities and concerns.

20. The Surf Coast Shire Community Panel was asked to deliberate on key dilemmas being faced by Council and then to develop principles to help shape the Council's strategic plans and inform ongoing decision making. The remit for the community panel was *How can Council balance the priorities of our community and meet legislative obligations, whilst remaining in a financially sustainable position?*

21. A representative sample of 43 people formed the panel and spent one evening session and three whole Saturdays working together to develop their principles.

22. The findings of the engagement are included in the Our Focus Our Future Community Engagement Report February 2025 and the Surf Coast Shire Community Panel Report March 2025, both of which were received by the Council in June 2025 as part of considering the draft Council Plan (incorporating Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) 2025-2029.

23. The community Panel Principles of Financial Sustainability, Community Equity and Meeting our Future Needs that helped inform this Financial Plan include:

    23.1. Apply a best value service/supply contract pricing approach to achieve quality and cost-effective inputs to the delivery of Council services to the community.

    23.2. Achieve the Financial Recurrent Savings Target embedded in the Financial Plan, through business improvement initiatives (such as service reviews), business case investment returns or other Council strategies.

    23.3. Establish a rolling four-year program of service reviews.

    23.4. Asset Renewal funding levels to consider impacts of climate change on Council's operations and assets.

    23.5. Balancing the affordability and accessibility of infrastructure and services with Council's financial capacity and in the interests of long-term financial sustainability.

Statutory / Legal / Policy Considerations

24. The Financial Plan has been developed in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.

25. Adopting the Financial Plan 2025 - 2035, will support the Council to meet its legislative obligation to prepare and adopt a Financial Plan by 31 October in the year following a general council election.

26. In line with Council's requirements under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender and Equity Impact Assessment (GEIA) has been conducted.

27. This assessment was undertaken on the content, design and communication of the Financial Plan.

28. GEIA research noted that Council decisions linked to the Financial Plan can have different impacts on people across gender, age, culture, ability, and socioeconomic status. Giving consideration to how budget decisions affect diverse groups can help to promote equity and reduce unintended barriers.

29. An earlier GEIA was undertaken on the engagement process and related community input, which was linked to the Our Focus Our Future project. This data provided a breakdown of community priorities, needs and inputs.

30. Council's strategic commitment to equity is noted in the Council Plan (incorporating Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) 2025-2029 and supported through other strategic work including the Financial Plan.

31. Key recommendations from this GEIA include the use of inclusive language and representative imagery and accessible key messages to support effective communication of the plan.

32. Implementation of GEIA recommendations related to Council's Asset Plan will address noted equity considerations relating to inclusive design, safety and accessibility.

Strategic Risk

33. **Breadth and level of Council operations exceed Council's long term financial sustainability**
Inherent Risk Rating - *Serious*, Residual Risk Rating - *Medium*

34. The Financial Plan 2025 - 2035 includes policy statements for targets for financial sustainability measures which demonstrates Council's financial capacity to fund the aspirations of the Community Vision and the Council Plan (incorporating Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) 2025-2029 while remaining financially sustainable.

Risk Rating

35. Risk rating is low and can be managed at department level.

Risk Appetite

36. There is no Risk Appetite Statement applicable for this report.

Sustainability Considerations

37. Council's delivery of services significantly depends on maintaining its assets in good condition for as long as the community needs them. Over the ten years of the Plan Council's annual allocation to asset renewal is increasing from $11.6 million to $21.2 million.

38. Council's capacity to fund new initiatives is declining over the life of this plan.

39. Climate change and the financial pressure to both recover and adapt is growing. This is an evolving environment and Council's Asset Plan will adapt asset renewal for future climate impacts in mind. Changes in the asset renewal modelling to reflect changes in the climate will flow through to the financial plan. This is an important factor in managing Council's long-term sustainability.

Conflict of Interest

40. No officer declared a conflict of interest under the *Local Government Act 2020* in the preparation of this report.

Confidentiality

41. This report and attachments contain no confidential information under section 66(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Transparency

Audit and Risk Committee involvement

42. This report is not within the scope of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Councillor Briefings

43. This item was discussed at the following Councillor briefings prior to being presented to Council for consideration. Councillor attendance at each briefing was as follows:

Councillor Briefing Date: 2 September 2025

Councillor name	*In attendance (Y/N)*	*Councillor name*	*In attendance (Y/N)*
Cr Paul Barker	*Y*	*Cr Tony Phelps*	*Y*
Cr Mike Bodsworth	*Y*	*Cr Adrian Schonfelder*	*Y*
Cr Rebecca Bourke	*Y*	*Cr Libby Stapleton*	*N*
Cr Joel Grist	*Y*	*Cr Leon Walker*	*Y*
Cr Liz Pattison	*N*		

Councillor Briefing Date:19 August 2025

Councillor name	*In attendance (Y/N)*	*Councillor name*	*In attendance (Y/N)*
Cr Paul Barker	*N*	*Cr Tony Phelps*	*Y*
Cr Mike Bodsworth	*Y*	*Cr Adrian Schonfelder*	*N*
Cr Rebecca Bourke	*N*	*Cr Libby Stapleton*	*N*
Cr Joel Grist	*Y*	*Cr Leon Walker*	*N*
Cr Liz Pattison	*N*		

Councillor Briefing Date:12 August 2025

Councillor name	*In attendance (Y/N)*	*Councillor name*	*In attendance (Y/N)*
Cr Paul Barker	*Y*	*Cr Tony Phelps*	*Y*
Cr Mike Bodsworth	*Y*	*Cr Adrian Schonfelder*	*Y*
Cr Rebecca Bourke	*Y*	*Cr Libby Stapleton*	*N*
Cr Joel Grist	*Y*	*Cr Leon Walker*	*Y*
Cr Liz Pattison	*N*		

Councillor Briefing Date:4 June 2025

Councillor name	*In attendance (Y/N)*	*Councillor name*	*In attendance (Y/N)*
Cr Paul Barker	*N*	*Cr Tony Phelps*	*Y*
Cr Mike Bodsworth	*Y*	*Cr Adrian Schonfelder*	*Y*
Cr Rebecca Bourke	*Y*	*Cr Libby Stapleton*	*Y*
Cr Joel Grist	*Y*	*Cr Leon Walker*	*Y*
Cr Liz Pattison	*Y*		

Councillor Briefing Date:6 May 2025

Councillor name	*In attendance (Y/N)*	*Councillor name*	*In attendance (Y/N)*
Cr Paul Barker	*Y*	*Cr Tony Phelps*	*N*
Cr Mike Bodsworth	*Y*	*Cr Adrian Schonfelder*	*Y*
Cr Rebecca Bourke	*N*	*Cr Libby Stapleton*	*Y*
Cr Joel Grist	*Y*	*Cr Leon Walker*	*N*
Cr Liz Pattison	*Y*		

Councillor attendance at briefings is not a statutory requirement. Councillors are able to access and request information through a number of mechanisms to understand matters being presented at a Council Meeting.

SURF COAST SHIRE COUNCIL
Financial Plan
2025-2035
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Surf COAST SHIRE

Acknowledgement of Country

Surf Coast Shire Council acknowledges the Wadawurrung People and the Gulidjan and Gadubanud Peoples of the Eastern Maar Nation as the Traditional Owners of the lands our shire spans. We pay our respects to their Ancestors and to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise and respect their beliefs, customs and values, which continue to sustain their intrinsic connection with Country that has endured for more than 60,000 years.

We value the contribution their Caring for Country makes to the lands, ocean, waterways, plants, wildlife and people of Surf Coast Shire, and acknowledge we have much to learn from the Traditional Owners, especially in changing how we think, work and act in relation to climate change.

We therefore commit to walking alongside the Traditional Owners, allowing them to guide us so that together we can have a more positive impact on our environment and communities in the Surf Coast Shire.

We embrace the spirit of Reconciliation, working towards self-determination, equity of outcomes and an equal voice for Australia's First Nations People.

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1. Executive Summary

Surf Coast Shire Council provides essential infrastructure for our growing community and around 2.6 million annual visitors, including responsibility for around $1.4 billion in assets.

We also deliver more than 100 services, many of which are heavily subsidised for community use.

This plan sets out how Council will manage its finances to deliver services, maintain infrastructure and remain financially sustainable over the next 10 years. It aligns with the Community Vision, Council Plan 2025–2029, Asset Plan, and Revenue and Rating Plan.

It does not determine the level or quality of service we will provide in the future but provides a framework for Council to consider during decision-making and in setting its annual budget.

The Council Plan 2025-29 aims for us to be a high performing council that is financially sustainable.

It features five Financial Management Principles, aiming to ensure:

- Our financial management is aligned to Council plans and strategies;
- Our actions are financially sustainable and predictable to the community;
- Our services are reviewed as part of an ongoing Business Improvement Program;
- We maintain accurate accounts and financial records; and
- We manage financial risks.

The plan has been developed at a time we are facing a number of challenges to our financial sustainability, including:

- Victorian Government rate capping constraining councils' ability to generate revenue that keeps pace with inflation;
- The cost of responding and adapting to climate change impacts and risks;
- An increasing asset base, resulting in increasing maintenance costs;
- Forecast continued population and visitation growth;
- Extra responsibilities being handed down from other levels of government without full financial compensation, and/or 'cost shifting' where councils must fund an increasing share of jointly funded services; and
- The increasing cost of waste management, including the upcoming closure and rehabilitation of the Anglesea Landfill.

As a result, it is projected that Council will deliver operating deficits in each of the next nine financial years. These deficits will be accommodated through funding from the Future Cash Fund, which has a balance of $13 million in 2025-26.

The plan commits to keeping a level of cash in the Future Cash Fund and sets out a series of strategic levers for Council to consider in its decision-making. These are grouped into the following themes:

Financial Sustainability
Including rating levels, service costs, fees and charges, and debt management.

Service Reviews
Including the scope, quality and frequency of our services, our operating models (direct delivery or outsourcing), and savings opportunities.

Asset Management and Climate Impact
Including decisions about when, where and how often we renew assets, how we manage the modernisation of infrastructure, and choices around disposing of underutilised assets.

Advocacy and Partnerships
How we leverage funding from external sources, and empower community-led initiatives.

Growth Planning
Including setting Development Contribution Plans to provide necessary infrastructure.

Emerging Service Impacts
Including how the Anglesea Landfill closure and transition to a new waste operating model is managed.

The financial plan statements and modelling are detailed in section 8 of this document. A key assumption underpinning our financial plan model is that the rate cap will align with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) each year. If it is below CPI (as it has been for the past four years), Council's financial sustainability will be at risk unless strategic levers are activated to mitigate the shortfall.

We will review our Financial Plan Model each year as part of our annual budget process, to determine any necessary adjustments based on changes in the broader operating environment as highlighted in Section 7 of this document.

To achieve long-term financial sustainability, decisions made today must be forward thinking and consider the evolving needs of our current and future community.

2. Our Shire at a Glance

The Surf Coast Shire is located in southwestern Victoria, 1 hour from Melbourne, 20 minutes from Geelong and includes the official start of the iconic Great Ocean Road.

It is home to eleven distinct townships; Aireys Inlet, Anglesea, Bellbrae, Deans Marsh, Fairhaven, Jan Juc, Lorne, Moriac, Freshwater Creek, Torquay and Winchelsea.

Each of these townships has a keen sense of community, a unique identity and a strong desire to protect and nurture the environment.

The Surf Coast is a major lifestyle and visitor destination that is among the fastest growing regional municipalities in Victoria and has undergone significant change over the past 15 years.

The secret to the Surf Coast's prosperity is lifestyle and connection to our beautiful, natural environment.

As of 2024, the Shire is home to around 39,928 residents and an annual visitation of 2.6 million. The region is renowned for its natural beauty and iconic attractions, including Bells Beach, the Split Point Lighthouse at Aireys Inlet, and the expansive Great Otway National Park.

The region's economy is primarily driven by tourism, construction, retail, and agriculture. Seasonal tourism plays a major role, with the population more than tripling during peak holiday periods. Ongoing population growth and urban development are increasing demand for infrastructure and services, reinforcing the need for sustainable, forward-looking asset management.

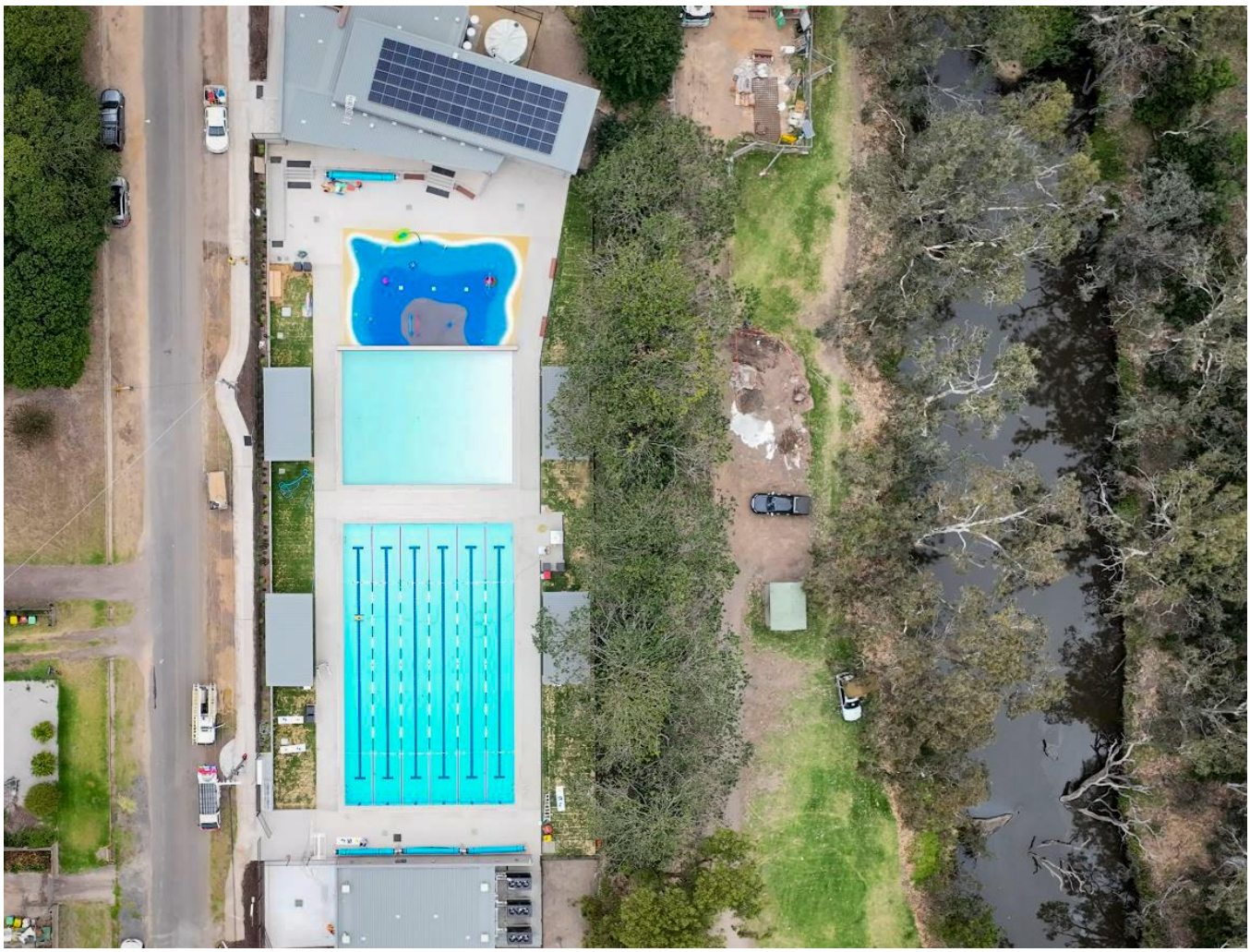
Council is responsible for managing a significant and growing portfolio of assets valued at approximately $1.4 billion. These assets are fundamental to Council's delivery of over 100 services to our community. The portfolio includes infrastructure assets such as transport infrastructure (roads and footpaths), buildings, recreational facilities, open spaces and drainage systems.

3. Introduction

3.1 Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of this ten-year plan is to detail how Council will manage its finances to deliver services, maintain infrastructure, and ensure long-term financial sustainability. This plan is developed as part of an integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance reporting under the *Local Government Act 2020*. It is a public facing plan developed in alignment with Council's Community Vision and Council Plan 2025-2029 and integrated with the Asset Plan 2025-2029 and the Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029. This plan provides a framework to ensure Council's long term financial sustainability when making decisions with a financial impact. It identifies challenges and opportunities and strategic levers that Council can adjust to improve its financial performance and financial sustainability.

The Financial Plan is developed and adopted every four years in the year following a general council election and the financial plan modelling is reviewed every year and adopted as part of the Annual Budget Report.



3.2 Strategic Alignment

Surf Coast Shire Council's Financial Plan is one of several key strategic documents developed to deliver on the community's long-term aspirations. This plan is directly shaped by the Surf Coast Community Vision and is integrated with Council's broader planning framework, including the Council Plan, Asset Plan, and key service strategies. Together, these documents reflect Council's commitment to achieving sustainable, place-based outcomes that support a thriving, connected, and environmentally responsible community.

Financial planning plays a critical role in delivering on the strategic objectives of the Council Plan and ensuring Council's ongoing financial sustainability. This is achieved by linking strategic actions to the five key themes of the Council Plan.

Council's 10-year Community Vision, adopted by Council in 2021, was developed by a representative sample of Surf Coast Shire community members, with input from the broader community. It remains the guiding light for the new Council Plan and supporting strategic documents including the Financial Plan.

Our Community Vision is:
From the hinterland to the coast, from the first peoples to the children of the future, we are an active, diverse community that lives creatively to value, protect and enhance the natural environment and our unique neighbourhoods. We will leave the Surf Coast Shire better than we found it.

The organisational purpose and direction, developed by the organisation, defines the fundamental reason for our existence and outlines the strategic path to fulfill the purpose.

Our organisational purpose is:
"We exist to help our community and environment to thrive."

Our organisational direction is:
An innovative and flexible leader, and a constructive partner, that values the strengths of others; a place where people can do their best and be proud of their achievements.

This diagram shows how the Financial Plan links to the Community Vision and its relationship to Council's other strategic documents.

Integrated Strategic Planning & Reporting Framework

In addition to the Local Government Act, these strategic documents are guided by other pieces of state legislation including the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, the Climate Act 2017, the Gender Equality Act 2020 and the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

3.3 Current Services

Council services are designed to meet our community's diverse and changing needs. They include all of the activities undertaken by our employees and our volunteers, whether it's the maintenance of roads, collection of waste, providing information to visitors, assessing planning applications, engaging with our stakeholders, or any of our support services. It is what we do and aligns with our purpose as a Council, to ensure the Surf Coast community and environment thrives.

There are a number of reasons why Council delivers the services it does. In some instances, Council is mandated to deliver specific services through legislation, such as the Local Government Act (Vic) 2020 and the Planning and Environment Act (Vic) 1987. Examples of mandated services include road maintenance, waste management and compliance services activities like occupational health and safety or financial management.

Legislation also imposes obligations on Council to deliver certain objectives or outcomes. In these instances, whilst Council is not mandated to deliver a particular service, it has an obligation to deliver a range of services to its community in order to deliver the legislated outcomes. For instance, the Local Government Act (Vic) 2020 requires councils to promote the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks. To do this, Council adopts a number of strategies, aligned with its Council Plan, which are delivered through services to the community.

In limited situations, Council also delivers services for a fee to its community where other providers can deliver the same service. Our kindergartens and childcare services are examples where there are private providers who are able to deliver the same type of service for a fee to the community. Council also has a role to play to provide services to meet the needs of the community when there are no other providers.

Council provides over 100 services to the local community and maintains over one billion worth of community assets to support both the local population and the 2.5 million people who visit the area on an annual basis. Of these various services, they can be grouped into 18 core services:

- Arts and Creative Economy
- Asset Management
- Children and Families
- Climate Change
- Community Engagement
- Community Health and Wellbeing
- Community Participation
- Community Safety
- Compliance and Corporate Support
- Early Years (Kindergartens and Occasional care)
- Economic Development
- Engineering Services
- Environment
- Integrated Planning
- Operations - Civil (Roads Drainage), Open Space (Parks and Trees), Facilities (Buildings) Maintenance
- Planning and Compliance
- Tourism
- Waste Management and Resource Recovery

In providing these services, Council must consider a range of 'Best Value' principles when setting fees and charges including service cost and quality standards, value-for-money, and community expectations and values. Council must also balance the affordability and accessibility of infrastructure and services with its financial capacity and in the interests of long-term financial sustainability. Council must determine the extent of cost recovery for particular services consistent with the level of both individual and collective benefit that the services provide and in line with the community's expectations. Services are provided on the basis of one of the following pricing methods:

a. Market Price
b. Full Cost Recovery Price
c. Subsidised Price

Many of Council's services are subsidised where the full cost of the service is not passed on to the customer.

3.4 Principles Underpinning the Financial Plan

Strategic Planning Principles

The Financial Plan provides a 10 year financially sustainable projection regarding how the actions of the Council Plan may be funded to achieve the Community Vision. The Financial Plan is developed in the context of the following strategic planning principles:

a) Council has an integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance reporting.
b) Council's Financial Plan addresses the Community Vision by funding the aspirations of the Council Plan. The Council Plan aspirations and actions are formulated in the context of the Community Vision.
c) The Financial Plan statements articulate the 10-year financial resources necessary to implement the goals and aspirations of the Council Plan to achieve the Community Vision.
d) Council's strategic planning principles identify and address the risks to effective implementation of the Financial Plan.
e) The Financial Plan provides for the strategic planning principles of monitoring of progress to identify and adapt to changing circumstances.

Financial Management Principles

The Financial Plan demonstrates the following financial management principles:

a) Revenue, expenses, assets, liabilities, investments and financial transactions are managed in accordance with Council's financial policies and strategic plans.
b) Financial policies and strategic plans are designed to provide financial stability and predictability to the community.
c) Aim to maintain existing service levels with optimal resource allocations, with an emphasis on innovation and efficiency.
d) Enables Council to undertake service reviews as part of Councils ongoing Business Improvement Program.
e) Council maintains accounts and records that explain its financial operations and financial position (i.e. the Financial Plan Financial Statements).
f) Examples of some of the financial risks to be managed are:
    - The financial viability of the Council (refer to section 8.13 Projections Strategic Lever Actions – Financial Sustainability).
    - The management of current and future liabilities of the Council (liabilities disclosed in Balance Sheet projections).
    - Asset Renewal allocations that also consider climate change adaptation and response.
    - Closure and rehabilitation of the Anglesea Landfill and the associated transition to a new transfer station and waste operating model.

Engagement Principles

Council's 10-year Community Vision, adopted by Council in 2021, was developed by a representative sample of Surf Coast Shire community members, with input from the broader community. It remains the guiding light for the new Council Plan and supporting strategic documents including the Financial Plan.

Building on the Community Vision, over the period November 2024 to March 2025 Council undertook an extensive community engagement campaign under the banner of Our Focus Our Future. This engagement has informed Council's key strategic documents, including the Council Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Financial Plan and Asset Plan.

Step one involved a participatory phase with a survey and pop-up engagement sessions at local markets and gathering spaces. We received more than 1,000 responses, with people telling us what was important to them and where Council should place its priorities.

Step two involved a deliberative phase with a community panel of 43 representative members of our community meeting over a course of 3.5 days to consider Council and community priorities in depth. The panel developed a set of principles that responded to: *'How can Council balance the priorities of our community and meet legislative obligations, whilst remaining in a financially sustainable position?'*

The Our Panel Report was considered in the identification and refinement of strategic objectives for the 2025-2029 Council Plan to best place Council to deliver the Community Vision. The Community Panel Principles are included as a separate principle's topic.

Service Performance Principles

Council services are designed to be purposeful, targeted to community needs and value for money. The service performance principles are listed below:

a) Services are provided in an equitable manner and are responsive to the diverse needs of the community. The Council Plan is designed to identify the key services and projects to be delivered to the community. The Financial Plan provides the mechanism to demonstrate how the service aspirations within the Council Plan may be funded.
b) Services are accessible to the relevant users within the community.
c) Council provides quality services that provide value for money to the community. The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) is designed to communicate Council's performance regarding the provision of quality and efficient services.
d) Council uses a performance monitoring framework to continuously improve its service delivery standards.
e) Council considers and responds to community feedback and complaints regards service provision.

Community Panel Principles

A Community Panel made up of a diverse group of local residents from across the Surf Coast Shire came together as part of the Council Plan community engagement process to help shape the future of our community. The panel developed a set of the principles that aim to support Council in balancing community needs with long-term financial sustainability. The set of principles was considered in the identification and refinement of strategic objectives for the 2025-2029 Council Plan. The principles and how they are applicable to guiding decision-making are below.

Principle 1: Community Engagement

Council will embed power-sharing and co-design into its engagement processes by actively involving community members—especially those most affected—in shaping decisions from the start. We will use tailored, culturally safe approaches to ensure priority communities have the agency, support, and tools needed to meaningfully influence outcomes. This principle builds upon Council's Community Engagement Policy 2023.

Principle 2: Financial Sustainability

Council decisions should be guided by long-term community benefit, fairness, and financial responsibility. Include:

- A focus on essential, evidence-based services that meet needs, and are not duplicated, avoiding funding services that run at a loss unless they are critical.
- Ensuring infrastructure that is fit-for-purpose.
- A user-pays approach where those who can afford more contribute more, while ensuring access for those who can't.

Principle 3: Community Equity

Decisions should be equitable, meaning support is provided to areas or people who need it most even if this is at the expense of other areas or people.

Principle 4: Environmental Impact

Environmental Impact needs to be at the forefront of Council considerations utilising robust protocols for monitoring and evaluating all Council activities. The Council should explore a user pay system for all tourists.

Principle 5: Meeting our Future Needs

In order to provide sustainable housing for all, Council should favour mixed housing solutions that include low-cost temporary and permanent accommodation whilst meeting housing types for various age groups. Prioritise industries where we have a competitive advantage and work with business to provide economic growth, placing more weight on the benefit to the wider area. Council needs to consider the lifecycle of its assets in relation to potential changing future needs.

Principle 6: Health and Wellbeing

Council should prioritise preventative programs that support healthy, active lifestyles. Where required, services should be transitioned to state, private, or community providers. However, Council should step in to deliver services where there are clear gaps and no suitable alternatives.

Principle 7: Building Trust through Transparency

Council should continue to prioritise multimodal and effective communication activities to give the community the opportunity to be educated on the rationale and processes of key decisions. Council should use methods by which they can measure and improve community interaction with communication channels.

Principle 8: Environmental Leadership

Council's decisions must be informed by the latest scientific consensus on climate change and follow these findings to make tough decisions that benefit the future of our ecosystem (including humans), even if it could be contested or unpopular in the short term.

Asset Plan Integration

The Financial Plan integrates with the Asset Plan to ensure that future asset funding (maintenance, renewal and upgrade) is allocated in a manner that supports service delivery in terms of the plans and the effective management of Council's assets into the future and considers climate change adaptation and response.

The Asset Plan identifies the operational and strategic practices which will ensure that Council optimises the management of assets across their life cycle in a financially sustainable manner. The Asset Plan, and associated asset management policies, provide Council with a sound base to understand the risk associated with managing its assets for the community's benefit.

The Asset Plan is designed to inform the 10-year Financial Plan by identifying the amount of capital investment required for the renewal and upgrade of existing assets and planned assets where known, in addition to the maintenance funding that is required over the life of each asset category. The level of funding will incorporate knowledge of asset condition, considering risk assessments, as well as the impact of reviewing and setting intervention and service levels for each asset class.

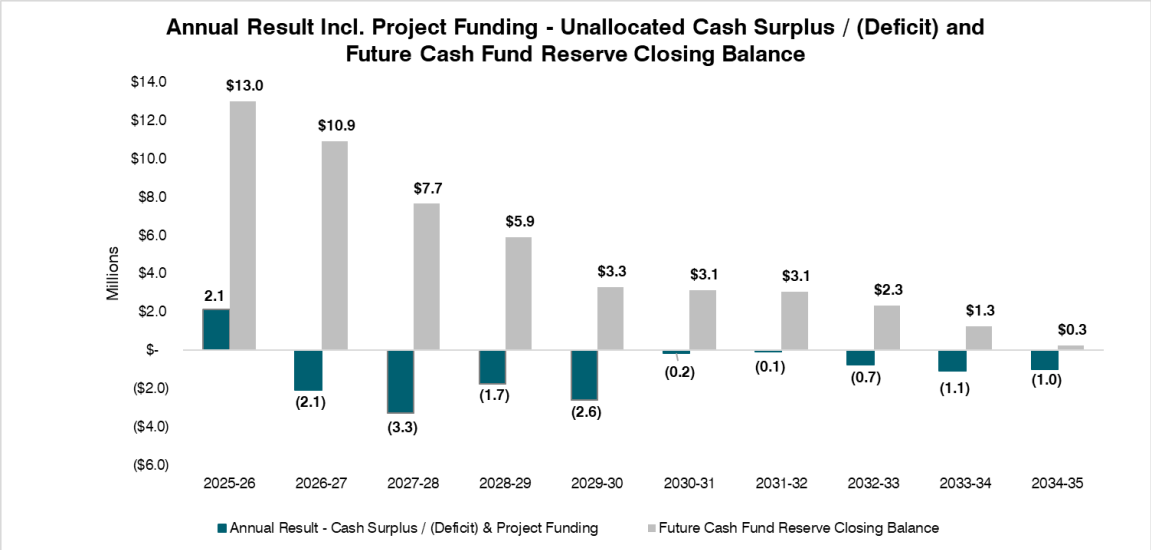
In addition to identifying the operational and strategic practices that ensure that Council manages assets across their life cycle in a financially sustainable manner, the Asset Plan quantifies the asset portfolio and the financial implications of those practices. Together the Financial Plan and Asset Plan seek to balance projected investment requirements against projected budgets.

4. Current Challenges & Opportunities

The purpose of this section is to identify the key financial challenges and opportunities Council is facing in the Financial Plan. The overall strategic risk that may have a significant impact on achieving Surf Coast Shire Council's strategic objectives is '*the breadth and level of Council operations exceed Council's long term financial sustainability*'.

4.1 Budget Surpluses for Future Deficits

The Financial Plan shows a surplus in the 2025-26 year which is needed to support the following four-year deficits, at which point Council's contribution to the Torquay/Jan Juc Development Plan are budgeted for completion. The deficits in the remaining years of the Financial Plan are largely attributed to the need to continue to grow the asset renewal allocation, as this allocation increases at a rate higher than the growth in the cash available for allocation. The annual cash deficits therefore will be funded through Council's Future Cash Fund Reserve as shown below, with a projected closing Future Cash Fund Reserve balance in 2034-35 of $250,000. As part of the Financial Plan, Council will continue with its business reform programs and service reviews to achieve a sustainable financial position to meet the Council Plan priorities. In line with Council's Financial Policy Statements, each Annual Budget cycle, the ten-year Future Cash Fund Reserve closing balance each year will be maintained with a balance of at least $250,000.



4.2 Balancing Needs of Current and Future Generations

Council has a responsibility to meet the demands of current and future community generations. This leads to significant demands on its finances, in particular:

- The reality of responding and adapting to the changing climate.
- Adding new assets to our asset base increases our future costs due to maintenance and asset renewal requirements.
- The expectations of a growing community, with diverse interests, compounded by a continuing growth in visitors.
- The growing costs of managing the Shire's waste and recycling including transitioning away from the Anglesea Landfill, including the associated landfill rehabilitation.

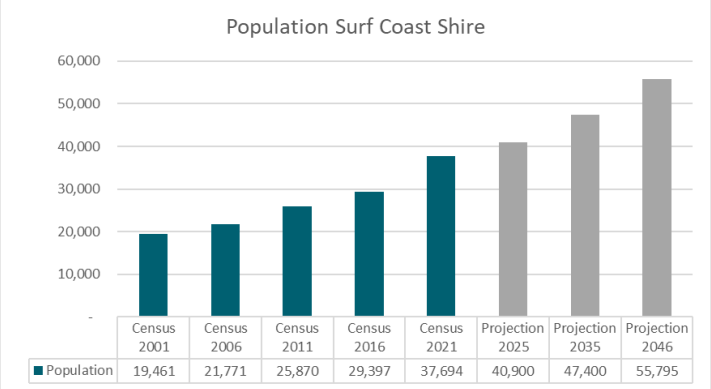
These demands are set in the context of revenue structures constraining Council's capacity to support the community:

- The State Government's "Fair Go Rates" legislation, introduced in 2016, has capped rate revenue increases below inflation;
- The State Government's debt levels are forecast to increase, restricting its ability to provide local government financial support;
- In 2024, the State Government introduced changes that prevent councils from fully recovering the costs of all waste and recycling costs through a waste service charge;
- The Federal Government's financial assistance grant which currently accounts for more than half of Council's operating grants, has declined from one per cent of Commonwealth taxation revenue in 1996 to just 0.5 per cent today; and
- The challenge of fully recovering our costs for our services.

Whilst acknowledging that household affordability is important, particularly with the current cost-of-living crisis, the introduction of rate capping has significantly constrained revenue for local government authorities. Council must carefully consider the allocation of its financial resources in this environment and continue to pursue important efficiency reforms. This can be difficult at times with the burden of extra responsibilities being placed on Council by State and Federal Governments without sufficient compensation.

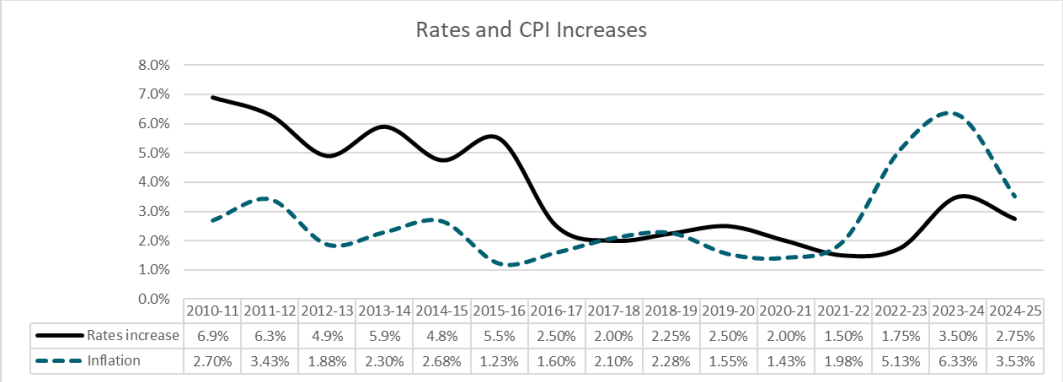
4.3 Population Growth, Rates Revenue and Inflation

Surf Coast Shire has experienced strong population growth over recent decades which has resulted in additional assets to maintain and renew, whilst also increasing demands on services. As show in the following graph, the Surf Coast Shire population has more than doubled since 2001, with an approximate population of 40,900 in 2025. This challenge will continue with the Surf Coast Shire projected to grow to 47,400 in 2035 (REMplan Community 2025).



To accommodate population growth, historical Council rate increases were above inflation in 2011 to 2017. However, since 2017, the aggregate rate increases under the Victorian Government Rate Capping Framework have not kept up with inflation (consumer price index – all groups – Melbourne). Recent years, since 2021-22, inflation has been significantly higher than the rate cap increase.

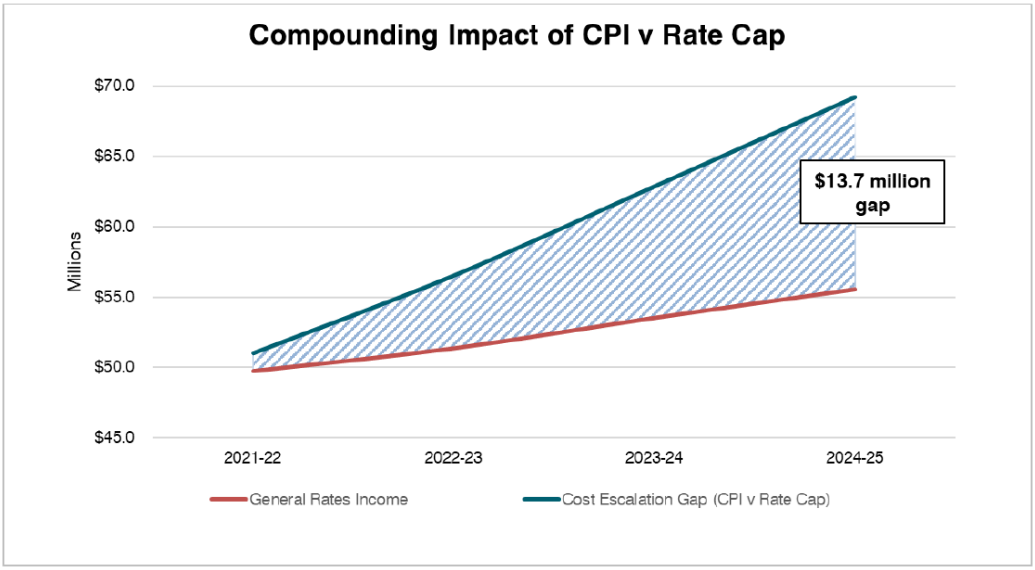
Our ability to manage that population and the changes in population requires a strategic partnership between all three levels of Government which involves closer collaboration and alignment not only between levels of Governments but also with industry and the community.



	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Rates increase	6.9%	6.3%	4.9%	5.9%	4.8%	5.5%	2.50%	2.00%	2.25%	2.50%	2.00%	1.50%	1.75%	3.50%	2.75%
Inflation	2.70%	3.43%	1.88%	2.30%	2.68%	1.23%	1.60%	2.10%	2.28%	1.55%	1.43%	1.98%	5.13%	6.33%	3.53%

The recent higher inflation environment has led to higher construction and other cost increases that have continued to move faster than rate revenue under the rate cap; Council's main revenue source. This constrains the revenue available to fund new projects and initiatives and puts pressure on delivery of our day-to-day services.

To visualise the impact on our revenue, the following graph summarises the difference between rate revenue that has increased at the rate cap as set under the Victorian Government's Fair Go Rate system and the consumer price index (CPI) over the past four financial years. This represents a compounding funding 'gap' of $13.7 million.



4.4 Climate and Environment

The Local Government Act 2020 requires councils to consider climate risks, including mitigation and planning for climate risks and ensure these considerations are embedded across council services, strategies, policies and processes.

Surf Coast Shire Council declared a climate emergency in 2019, following two community petitions. This declaration acknowledged the need for more urgent and extensive action to reduce emissions and build resilience to local climate change impacts. The Climate Emergency Corporate Response Plan 2021-2031 outlines how Council will respond to the climate emergency declaration. It centres on actions that Council and our community can take for climate change mitigation, adaptation and mobilisation.

Surf Coast Shire can expect harsher fire weather, longer fire risk seasons, longer periods of drought and increased extreme storm and wind events. This has a cascading effect on public and private infrastructure, emergency services, public health, and community resilience. Meanwhile, biodiversity loss and habitat degradation further undermine ecosystem resilience. Nationally, the direct costs of extreme weather events will exceed $15 billion by 2035 according to the Insurance Council of

Australia. Given our mix of coastline, grassy plains and dense native forests, our municipality is disproportionately impacted, being rated one of the highest risk bushfire locations in Australia, and susceptible to inundation, erosion and flooding.

Council is responsible for managing over $1 billion of community assets and infrastructure, including roads, community buildings and open space, all of which are impacted by climate events and have a high cost for repair and maintenance.

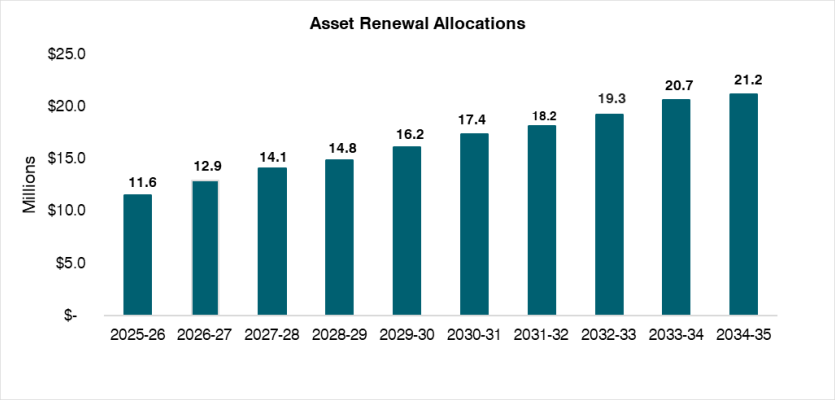
All levels of government, including Council, are now bearing the costs of climate change and the financial pressure to both recover and adapt will grow. This is an evolving environment and Council's Asset Plan will adapt asset renewal for future climate impacts in mind. Changes in the asset renewal modelling to reflect changes in the climate will flow through the financial plan. This is an important factor in managing Council's long-term sustainability.

4.5 Asset Renewal

Council's delivery of services significantly depends on maintaining its assets in good condition for as long as the community needs them. It also considers climate change adaption and response. The growing need for asset renewal expenditure, in the context of more extreme weather events, presents a significant challenge for Council.

Council's asset renewal modelling highlights the need for Council to continue to grow its budget allocation for asset renewal over the next ten years. The modelling optimises asset renewal expenditure and programming based upon the long-term renewal allocation, this results in a percentage of Council assets being in Poor and Very Poor (PVP) condition that are yet to receive funding.

The renewal of these assets is prioritised to ensure they are renewed prior to failure and there is no risk to the community. In a rate capped environment Council cannot address significant peaks in demand through corresponding increases in rate revenue. This means that funding the renewal of assets in the year that they are first due would impact Council's ability to fund other services, projects and initiatives in that year. Council's Asset Renewal Funding Strategy and Asset Plan aims to provides significant investment in asset renewal over the coming ten years, with the allocation almost doubling to meet demand as shown in the following graph.



The State of the Assets (SoA) report is a way of providing insight into how Council is managing its assets. This replaces the previously reported Asset Renewal Backlog as it provides a more holistic view of the entire asset base and its associated conditions. As environment and climate change information continues to be understood, future iterations of asset renewal modelling will be updated. %PVP (Poor and Very Poor) are the assets that are in condition 4 or 5 (typically intervention level) that are nearing the end of their useful life but have not yet been allocated funding. Not all asset classes are modelled due to set allocations or being obsolescence based.

The 2024 National SoA report shows that nationally 8% of assets are in a poor or very poor condition. These are assets requiring intervention as they are nearing the end of their useful life. Council is tracking considerably better than the national average with 4.2% requiring intervention (i.e. safe but with increasing maintenance costs).

Council considers if an asset should be decommissioned prior to renewal. Council continues to find it challenging to decommission assets, even if they are used infrequently as community reluctance to see a reduction in the number of facilities means Council's funds are stretched more thinly across a larger number of assets.

4.6 New Initiatives

Council's 10-YearFinancial Plan includes funding allocations towards items that are important to support a growing and changing community, including:

- Loan principal and interest costs, noting loans have been used to fund generational assets as Council is a growing municipality as it's rate-base cannot afford to fund the level of infrastructure required to provide those services to the community and will be used as part of the funding strategy for the rehabilitation of the Anglesea Landfill.
- Annual allocations towards new initiatives (Business Case Investment, Growth and Compliance Costs and Other Projects), which are important projects that respond to the Council Plan.

Council's allocations towards new initiatives are declining as more funds are required to renew existing assets and compensate for recent higher levels of inflation with lower levels of rate increases.

Council does have some funding sources that assist with new initiatives, including:

- Development and Infrastructure plans: these are strategically important because they ensure developer contributions are committed with certainty; however, these also may create long-term commitments from Council.
- Grants from other levels of government: Council has been successful at attracting grants to help fund new projects. This partnership funding remains essential however, it is important to note that the operating and future renewal costs will fall to Council and must be considered, as does any co-contributions that may be required under funding agreements. Grant funding is also impacted by financial pressures being experienced by other levels of government.
- New residential developments: provide increased rate revenue for Council which can help fund new items and services in response to the growth but does do not solve Council's financial challenges.
- Infrastructure Special Rate or Charge Schemes: can finance new or improved infrastructure with financial contributions from property owners that stand to benefit.

Council needs to consider the level of discretionary funding it wishes to have available as discretionary funding is used for a variety of things including new pathways, drainage, beautification works, recreation facilities and other community assets. Council's capacity to provide this funding is reducing over time and this may lead to community expectations not being met.

4.7 Waste and Recycling

Council is facing rising costs in waste management, particularly due to the upcoming closure and rehabilitation of the Anglesea landfill, expected in 2028. The estimated cost for rehabilitation has increased from $7.1 million in 2022–23 to $12 million, driven by inflation and stricter regulatory compliance. Although a Waste Reserve has been built up over time, it will not be sufficient to cover the full cost, and Council will need to borrow funds to complete the works.

Annual reviews of the waste operating model and landfill closure timing and costs are being conducted. The waste and recycling environment is evolving, and the reviews will inform updates to the long-term financial plan undertaken during the annual budget preparation process.

The State Government's municipal waste levy is one of the cost increases associated with waste management disposal. It is collected via the waste service charge and waste disposal charges and passed on to the Victorian Government. Increases are summarised below. This levy rate is not set by Council.

Year	EPA Landfill Levies per Tonne for Municipal Waste	Annual % Increase	Increase % From 2018-19
2018-19	$32.22	N/A	N/A
2019-20	$33.03	2.5%	2.5%
2020-21	$42.95	30.0%	33.3%
2021-22	$52.95	23.3%	64.3%
2022-23	$62.95	18.9%	95.4%
2023-24	$64.55	2.5%	100.3%
2024-25	$66.30	2.7%	105.8%
2025-26	$84.78	27.8%	163.1%

4.8 Other Matters Impacting the 10-Year Financial Plan

Other matters likely to impact the Financial Plan projections include:

- Natural Disasters: Increasing occurrences of unknown timing and impact. Whilst Council does significant work on prevention, recovery and asset upgrade/betterment, these events impact on Council's resources. Council continues to invest money in climate strategy projects and increased focus for generations to come.
- Cost Shifting: This refers to situations where Local Government delivers services to the community on behalf of the State or Federal Government. Over time, the funding provided has not kept pace with actual cost increases. Some examples of cost shifting include:
    - Maternal & Child Health (planned originally to be 50:50 between Council and Victorian Government, now closer to a 60% contribution by Council.
    - School crossing supervisors (planned originally to be 50:50 between Council and Victorian Government and has varied over the years from Council contributing 70% to 50%).
    - Library services (planned originally to be 50:50 between Council and Victorian Government, now closer to a 74% contribution by Council.
    - Building services now require greater inspection and oversight for Municipal Building Surveyors in relation to essential services inspections, swimming pool and barrier compliance.
    - Increased Environment Protection Authority landfill rehabilitation requirements, resulting in increased costs for Council.
    - Council still plays a role in maintaining Crown land reserves and has some exposure to infrastructure owned by other State authorities.
- Public infrastructure maintenance: councils across Australia raise approximately 3% of the total taxation collected by all levels of Government in Australia. In addition, Councils are entrusted with the maintenance of about one-third of all Australian public assets including roads, bridges, parks, footpaths and public buildings. This means that a large proportion of Council's income must be allocated to the maintenance and replacement of these valuable public assets in order to ensure the quality of public infrastructure is maintained at satisfactory levels.
- Population growth will continue to place stress on Council's resources as previously described.
- The value of developer contributed assets and completed capital works, together with an increase in the value of existing assets, are significantly increasing depreciation and maintenance expenditure.

5. Strategic Levers

Strategic levers are key areas that Council can adjust to improve its financial performance and financial sustainability. They impact Council's revenue, costs and cash flows and can facilitate transformation in Council's business. Section 6.2 identifies actions by strategic levers that aligned to the 2025-2029 Council Plan Strategic Themes.

Financial Sustainability

- Council rating levels
- Balancing service costs, fees and charges (level of cost recovery) and service level expectations
- Debt management whilst meeting the needs of current and future generations
- Sustainable cash reserves and investment of surplus cash until required

Service Reviews

- Review and adjust the scope, quality, or frequency of services. Seeking efficiency and revenue opportunities (new revenue sources, service levels, service costs and service charges)
- Operating models (service delivery, outsourcing)
- Achieving the Financial Plan recurrent savings target
- New services or infrastructure capable of being funded within the Financial Plan

Asset Management and Climate Impact

- Sustainable, contemporary and efficient renewal
- Meeting the needs of current and future generations
- Managing asset conditions and expectations – Poor/Very Poor levels
- Managing modernisation of infrastructure, climate resilience and betterment
- Considering disposal of underutilised or surplus assets prior to renewal
- Meeting basic renewal requirements in townships not growing as fast as others

Advocacy and Partnerships

- Advocating for the priorities in achieving the Council Plan
- Leveraging Council funding by seeking external contributions and grants aligned with the Council Plan
- Leveraging shared services and procurement frameworks (i.e. electricity and waste services)
- Empowering community led initiatives
- Leveraging digital transformation

Growth Planning

- Development Contribution Plans - Fees paid by developers and the community to support infrastructure related to new developments
- Supplementary rates
- Economic development
- Special Charge Schemes

Emerging Service Impacts

- Landfill Closure - transitioning to new waste operating model
- Managing landfill rehabilitation requirements, including borrowing considerations

6. Strategic Actions

6.1 Council Plan Strategic Objectives

Council has identified the following strategic objectives in its Council Plan to best place Council to deliver the Community Vision. The strategic actions in section 6.2 align with these objectives.

Assets and Infrastructure

- Infrastructure is fit-for-purpose and service levels provide the best balance between ongoing maintenance costs and longer-term replacement cost.
- We are building safe, active transport networks that connect communities.
- Infrastructure reflects township character whilst meeting future needs.
- The social value of infrastructure and facilities is understood and informs decision making.
- Local roads are safer for all users.

Climate and Environmental Leadership

- Local natural ecosystems are thriving, and biodiversity is protected.
- Communities are prepared ahead of emergencies, supported during them and resilient in their aftermath.
- Council operations and infrastructure are adapting to the impacts of extreme weather events.
- Council is progressively eliminating emissions from its operations and supporting community to reduce emissions.
- Council decisions are weighted towards long term positive environmental impacts.
- Circular economy principles are being applied to reduce waste

Community Wellbeing

- Increased social connection to support physical and mental wellbeing.
- Inclusive community that recognises and values diverse perspectives.
- Equitable access to services, social infrastructure and opportunities to participate in community life.
- Communities are empowered to meet their own needs and goals.
- The needs of younger and future generations inform decision making.

High Performing Council

- Council delivers long term community benefit.
- Trust in Council is built through decisions that are aligned to the Community Vision and adopted strategies; openly made, based on credible evidence; and thoroughly explained.
- Council is financially viable over the long term.
- Council revenue collection is equity based.
- Community cost of living impacts are considered when Council makes financial decisions.

Sustainable Communities

- Planning for a diversity of housing available to support different needs and life stages, including young people and those wishing to age in place.
- The uniqueness and character of townships, places and significant landscapes are recognised and preserved, even where such places grow and evolve.
- Individual township economies and communities are sustainable.
- The economy across the shire supports sustainable and diverse local employment.
- Tourism supports local communities and delivers more consistent economic and social benefits year-round.
- Community liveability is increased through a reduction in car dependency.

6.2 Strategic Lever Actions by Council Plan Theme

Strategic Lever Actions	Council Plan Theme
Financial Sustainability Actions • Set rate revenue at the maximum increase permitted under the Fair Go Rates framework and Revenue and Rating Plan. Where diverting from this approach in the Financial Plan, identified strategies need to be in place to ensure Council remains in a long-term financially sustainable position and the impacts of such a decision is clearly communicated with the community (i.e. short and long-term impacts on services and/or ability to fund projects). • Return unexpended project funds 'to source' or to the Future Cash Fund Reserve where no source. Examples of sources are Asset Renewal Reserve and Torquay Jan Juc Developer Contribution Reserve. • Land sales and interest revenue to be included in cash available for allocation, except for land sales relating to open space, which is to be transferred to the Open Space Reserve. • Discretionary allocations to projects above the capacity in the Financial Plan Model needs to be funded by proactively growing the increase to recurrent EBITDA, or through project savings from discretionary projects. • Apply a best value service/supply contract pricing approach to achieve quality and cost-effective inputs to the delivery of Council services to the community. • Achieve the Financial Recurrent Savings Target embedded in the Financial Plan, through business improvement initiatives (such as service reviews), business case investment returns or other Council strategies. • Apply new debt funding to landfill rehabilitation obligations or growth infrastructure where necessary and based on a sound business case and demonstrated community benefit. • Debt levels to fall within Council's performance indictor target. • Prior to introducing any new or expanded services, Council will affirm that there is an external funding source or identify the reduction or cessation of services/activities required to allow existing resources to be redirect to the new service. • Refer to Note 8.12 for financial sustainability measures.	High Performing Council
Service Review Actions • Service Review Framework and Policy development. • Establish a rolling four-year program of service reviews. • Conduct service reviews according to the priority criteria.	High Performing Council
Asset Management and Climate Impact Actions • Implement the asset renewal funding strategy to maintain fit-for-purpose assets for the community as well as reduce the increasing risk and maintenance associated with aging infrastructure. • Asset Renewal funding levels to consider impacts of climate change on Council's operations and assets.	Assets and Infrastructure Climate and Environmental Leadership High Performing Council
Advocacy and Partnership Actions • Provide avenues for philanthropic and community- based contributions to support services, programs and projects. • Advocating for the priorities in achieving the Council Plan and leveraging Council funding. • Within a risk management framework, empower communities to meet their own needs and goals.	Assets and Infrastructure Climate and Environmental Leadership Community Wellbeing High Performing Council Sustainable Communities

Strategic Lever Actions	Council Plan Theme
Growth Planning • Modelling of rate revenue for growth. • Pursue Development Contribution Plans in growth areas. • Pursue Economic and Business growth opportunities. • Pursue Special Charge Schemes to fund infrastructure that provides a special benefit to defined properties.	Assets and Infrastructure Community Wellbeing High Performing Council Sustainable Communities

7. Review and Update of the Financial Plan

The Financial Plan is developed and adopted every four years in the year following a general election in line with the *Local Government Act 2020*. The financial plan modelling (section 8.8) is reviewed every year and adopted as part of the Annual Budget Report.

Council is committed to reviewing its Financial Plan Model each year as part of the annual budget process. The annual review is a good risk management strategy for ensuring the ongoing financial viability of Council. During the review process, it may be determined that additional actions are required to be taken over the life of this plan. The following are examples of drivers of changes to Council's financial situation that may impact the Financial Plan Model:

- Council priorities: shifts in strategic direction
- Service level changes: adjustments in the scope, quality or frequency of services
- Economic conditions: changes in interest rates, inflation or other external financial factors
- Population growth: increased demand for services and infrastructure
- Climate and Environment impacts: emerging risks and adaptation needs
- Emergencies and Natural Disasters: Unforeseen events requiring financial reallocation.
- Legislative and Regulatory Changes: New compliance obligations or funding constraints
- Asset Renewal Needs: Updated data from asset modelling and maintenance requirements
- Emerging Service Impacts

A key area of Council's operations that will trigger an update to the Financial Plan Model is the landfill transition process. The timing of the Anglesea Landfill closure depends on several variables, including the annual volume of waste received—which influences how quickly the site reaches capacity—and the cost of transporting and disposing of waste at alternative locations.

8. Financial Plan Statements & Modelling

This section presents information related to the Financial Plan Statements for the 10 years from 2025-26 to 2034-2035.

- Comprehensive Income Statement
- Balance Sheet
- Statement of Changes in Equity
- Statement of Cash Flows
- Statement of Capital Works
- Statement of Human Resources
- Planned Human Resources Expenditure
- Council's Financial Plan Model (Recurrent EBITDA, Allocations and Closing Future Cash Fund Reserve)
- Reserves Strategy
- Future Borrowing Requirements
- Assumptions to the Financial Plan Statements
- Projections Financial Sustainability Measures

8.1 Comprehensive Income Statement

	NOTES	2025-26 Budget $'000	2026-27 $'000	2027-28 $'000	2028-29 $'000	2029-30 $'000	2030-31 $'000	2031-32 $'000	2032-33 $'000	2033-34 $'000	2034-35 $'000
						Projections					
Income / Revenue											
Rates and Charges	1	68,866	71,396	74,194	76,918	79,625	82,532	85,478	88,141	90,765	93,383
Statutory Fees and Fines	2	2,021	2,070	2,122	2,175	2,229	2,285	2,342	2,401	2,461	2,522
User Charges	3	6,918	10,154	11,723	10,186	10,690	11,089	11,479	11,882	12,266	12,597
Grants - Operating	4	11,379	11,658	11,943	12,236	12,536	12,843	13,158	13,481	13,812	14,152
Grants - Capital	4	48,166	1,997	2,102	2,102	5,300	2,102	2,102	2,102	2,102	2,102
Contributions - Monetary	5	2,651	2,686	3,885	3,481	3,798	4,930	5,666	2,509	2,561	3,002
Contributions - Non-Monetary	6	4,819	22,329	21,477	9,573	11,558	14,447	11,112	9,966	7,480	9,484
Net Gain/(Loss) on Disposal of Property Infrastructure, Plant and Equipment	7	1,148	536	307	549	436	531	380	223	437	451
Other Income	8	2,740	2,081	1,945	1,810	1,675	1,691	1,707	1,723	1,740	1,757
Total Income / Revenue		**148,709**	**124,908**	**129,699**	**119,030**	**127,848**	**132,451**	**133,425**	**132,428**	**133,624**	**139,450**
Expenses											
Employee Costs	9	42,766	44,219	45,682	47,035	48,389	49,782	51,213	52,686	54,200	55,756
Materials and Services	10	35,792	36,127	37,251	36,874	37,718	39,749	42,630	42,604	43,589	45,105
Depreciation	11	23,818	24,889	25,600	26,799	28,040	29,181	30,350	31,623	32,741	33,125
Amortisation - Intangible Assets	12	3,461	3,539	8,875	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation - Right of Use Assets	13	474	484	493	503	513	524	534	545	556	567
Allowance for Impairment Losses	14	108	108	111	113	116	119	122	125	128	132
Borrowing Costs	15	188	321	448	400	358	741	701	658	612	564
Finance Costs Leases	16	395	433	439	456	461	467	473	496	503	509
Other Expenses	17	4,294	2,169	2,146	2,369	3,523	2,721	3,220	2,512	3,545	3,137
Total Expenses		**111,296**	**112,288**	**121,045**	**114,550**	**119,120**	**123,283**	**129,243**	**131,248**	**135,873**	**138,895**
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year		**37,413**	**12,619**	**8,654**	**4,480**	**8,729**	**9,167**	**4,182**	**1,180**	**(2,249)**	**555**
Other Comprehensive Income											
Items that will not be reclassified to surplus or deficit in future periods											
Net Asset Revaluation Gain	18	60,177	37,510	23,313	66,835	17,378	25,648	71,843	19,800	27,393	77,412
Total Comprehensive Result		**97,591**	**50,130**	**31,966**	**71,315**	**26,107**	**34,815**	**76,025**	**20,979**	**25,144**	**77,967**

Notes to Comprehensive Income Statement:

For assumptions underpinning the Comprehensive Income Statement, refer to Note 8.11 for further information.

1. **Rates and Charges** – Rates and charges are an important source of revenue Council uses to fund essential services. Rates and the municipal charge (property taxes) form the largest component, with waste service charges for kerbside collections making up most of the balance. The growth in rates and charges across the ten years is due to indexation by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and supplementary rates. Supplementary rates are new rates that are created throughout the year from the building of new properties, subdivisions or existing property development.
2. **Statutory Fees and Fines** –Relates mainly to fees and fines levied in accordance with legislation and include fees for planning certificates, subdivision certificates, building certificates and local law infringements.
3. **User Charges** – Relates mainly to the recovery of service delivery costs through the charging of fees for Council services. The new Wurdi Baierr Aquatic and Recreation Centre is budgeted to commence operations during 2026-27 which will see an increase in user charges compared to the prior year. The decrease in user charges in 2028-29 reflects the budgeted closure assumption of the Anglesea Landfill on 30 June 2028.
4. **Grants – Operating & Capital** – Operating and capital government grants include all monies received from Victorian and Commonwealth Government sources for the purposes of funding the delivery of Council's services and projects. The increase of capital grants in the 2029-30 year relates to aspirations of receiving government grant funding for development in Winchelsea. Other than this grant, grants are not included in the Financial Plan unless they are confirmed.
5. **Contributions – Monetary** – Relate to recoupment of expenditures, community contributions to capital works, and monies paid by developers in relation to new subdivision works. Fluctuations are reflective of development modelling.
6. **Contributions – Non-Monetary** – Relates to new subdivision assets being handed over to Council from developers (granted assets). The varying amounts of this each year is reflective of development modelling estimating when subdivision handovers will occur.
7. **Net Gain/(Loss) on Disposal of Property Infrastructure, Plant and Equipment** –Relates to sale of assets, which generally reflects the timing of asset sales as part of renewal programs.
8. **Other Income** –Reflects interest on investments (i.e. Council cash term deposit returns) and volunteer services.
9. **Employee Costs** –Include all labour related expenditure such as wages and salaries, on-costs such as allowances, leave entitlements, employer superannuation and workers compensation insurance. Employee costs in the Comprehensive Income Statement do not include capitalised labour costs. Council enters into enterprise agreements over the shorter term which helps inform budgeting assumptions, with the longer term salary increase assumptions tied to the consumer price index and rate cap modelling.
10. **Materials and Services** –Enable the delivery of services and projects and includes the purchase of consumables, payments to contractors, utility costs and expensed capital works. The decrease in the 2028-29 year reflects the budgeted closure assumptions of the Anglesea Landfill on 30 June 2028.
11. **Depreciation** – Measures the allocation of the value of an asset over its useful life for Council's property, infrastructure (includes assets such as roads and drains), plant and equipment as a result of delivering services to the community.
12. **Amortisation - Intangible Assets** – Amortisation measures the allocation of an intangible asset over its useful life. Amortisation of the Anglesea Landfill air space has been budgeted over the remaining life of the asset, with a budgeted closure date of 30 June 2028. The increase in the 2027-28 year relates to the amortisation of the remaining airspace.
13. **Depreciation - Right of Use Assets** – Relates to the depreciation component of lease payments, which are budgeted to move in line with lease schedules. Examples of Council leases budgeted here include the Gherang Gravel Pits and fleet leases.
14. **Allowance for Impairment Losses** – Relates to bad and doubtful debts mainly attributable to infringements.
15. **Borrowing Costs** –Relates to interest charged by financial institutions on funds borrowed and fluctuate in line with Council's existing and planned borrowings schedules.
16. **Finance Costs Leases** –Relates to the interest component of lease payments. Finance costs leases are budgeted to move in line with lease schedules. Examples of Council leases budgeted here include the Gherang Gravel Pits and fleet leases.

17. **Other Expenses** – Includes assumed asset write offs undertaken as part of the renewal programs, along with Councillor allowances which are budgeted in line with the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal determination for councillor allowances, and audit expenditure. The fluctuations are mainly driven by the variability in the asset renewal program.
18. **Net Asset Revaluation Gain** – Reflect annual outcomes of asset classes scheduled to be revalued (typically a rolling three year program for asset classes).

8.2 Balance Sheet

	2025-26 Budget $'000	2026-27 $'000	2027-28 Projections $'000	2028-29 $'000	2029-30 Projection $'000	2030-31 Projection $'000	2031-32 Projection $'000	2032-33 Projection $'000	2033-34 Projection $'000	2034-35 Projection $'000
Assets										
Current Assets										
Cash and Cash Equivalents	3,383	3,507	3,598	3,753	2,849	4,122	3,635	3,366	3,098	4,037
Trade and Other Receivables	9,265	9,398	9,564	9,756	9,932	10,113	10,300	10,507	10,705	10,914
Other Financial Assets	69,000	45,000	42,000	44,000	35,000	35,000	31,000	34,000	34,000	36,000
Inventories	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29
Other Assets	2,244	2,244	2,244	2,244	2,244	2,244	2,244	2,244	2,244	2,244
Total Current Assets	**83,921**	**60,178**	**57,435**	**59,782**	**50,054**	**51,508**	**47,208**	**50,146**	**50,076**	**53,225**
Non-Current Assets										
Trade and Other Receivables	85	57	28	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Property, Infrastructure Plant & Equipment	1,367,141	1,445,791	1,487,255	1,554,468	1,590,129	1,617,059	1,696,923	1,714,489	1,739,192	1,813,463
Investments in Associates and Joint Ventures	345	345	345	345	345	345	345	345	345	345
Right of Use Assets	638	399	2,790	2,888	2,620	2,451	2,162	2,219	2,019	1,697
Intangible Assets	12,414	8,875	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Non-Current Assets	**1,380,623**	**1,455,467**	**1,490,418**	**1,557,709**	**1,593,101**	**1,619,863**	**1,699,438**	**1,717,060**	**1,741,563**	**1,815,512**
Total Assets	**1,464,544**	**1,515,645**	**1,547,854**	**1,617,490**	**1,643,155**	**1,671,371**	**1,746,646**	**1,767,206**	**1,791,639**	**1,868,737**
Liabilities										
Current Liabilities										
Trade and Other Payables	7,346	5,907	5,969	6,032	6,098	6,165	6,233	6,303	6,375	6,448
Trust Funds and Deposits	3,608	3,608	3,608	3,608	3,608	3,608	3,608	3,608	3,608	3,608
Provisions	9,194	8,126	8,289	13,855	14,624	8,796	8,972	9,152	9,335	9,521
Interest Bearing Liabilities	2,260	2,330	1,985	1,992	660	700	743	789	837	178
Lease Liabilities	507	301	525	530	534	539	527	532	536	541
Total Current Liabilities	**22,915**	**20,272**	**20,376**	**26,017**	**25,524**	**19,809**	**20,084**	**20,384**	**20,691**	**20,296**
Non-Current Liabilities										
Provisions	18,649	18,649	18,649	13,249	7,249	7,249	7,249	7,249	7,249	7,249
Lease Liabilities	108	52	2,176	2,248	1,958	1,774	1,492	1,562	1,381	1,085
Interest Bearing Liabilities	5,902	9,572	7,587	5,595	11,935	11,235	10,491	9,703	8,865	8,687
Total Non-Current Liabilities	**24,658**	**28,272**	**28,411**	**21,091**	**21,142**	**20,258**	**19,232**	**18,514**	**17,495**	**17,021**
Total Liabilities	**47,574**	**48,545**	**48,787**	**47,108**	**46,666**	**40,067**	**39,317**	**38,898**	**38,186**	**37,317**
Net Assets	**1,416,970**	**1,467,100**	**1,499,067**	**1,570,382**	**1,596,489**	**1,631,304**	**1,707,329**	**1,728,309**	**1,753,453**	**1,831,420**
Equity										
Accumulated Surplus	927,283	962,469	974,221	976,737	995,559	1,003,644	1,012,502	1,011,142	1,009,350	1,007,156
Asset Revaluation Reserve	413,496	451,006	474,319	541,154	558,533	584,181	656,024	675,823	703,216	780,628
Other Reserves	76,191	53,625	50,527	52,491	42,397	43,480	38,803	41,344	40,886	43,635
Total Equity	**1,416,970**	**1,467,100**	**1,499,067**	**1,570,382**	**1,596,489**	**1,631,304**	**1,707,329**	**1,728,309**	**1,753,453**	**1,831,420**

8.3 Statement of Changes in Equity

	Total	Accumulated Surplus	Revaluation Reserve	Other Reserves
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
2025-26 Budget				
Balance at Beginning of the Financial Year	1,319,380	881,337	353,319	84,724
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	37,413	37,413	-	-
Net Asset Revaluation Gain	60,177	-	60,177	-
Transfers to Other Reserves	-	(53,861)	-	53,861
Transfers from Other Reserves	-	62,394	-	(62,394)
Balance at End of the Financial Year	**1,416,970**	**927,283**	**413,496**	**76,191**
2026-27 Projection				
Balance at Beginning of the Financial Year	1,416,970	927,283	413,496	76,191
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	12,619	12,619	-	-
Net Asset Revaluation Gain	37,510	-	37,510	-
Transfers to Other Reserves	-	(16,883)	-	16,883
Transfers from Other Reserves	-	39,449	-	(39,449)
Balance at End of the Financial Year	**1,467,100**	**962,469**	**451,006**	**53,625**
2027-28 Projection				
Balance at Beginning of the Financial Year	1,467,100	962,469	451,006	53,625
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	8,654	8,654	-	-
Net Asset Revaluation Gain	23,313	-	23,313	-
Transfers to Other Reserves	-	(18,539)	-	18,539
Transfers from Other Reserves	-	21,638	-	(21,638)
Balance at End of the Financial Year	**1,499,067**	**974,221**	**474,319**	**50,527**
2028-29 Projection				
Balance at Beginning of the Financial Year	1,499,067	974,221	474,319	50,527
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	4,480	4,480	-	-
Net Asset Revaluation Gain	66,835	-	66,835	-
Transfers to Other Reserves	-	(18,645)	-	18,645
Transfers from Other Reserves	-	16,680	-	(16,680)
Balance at End of the Financial Year	**1,570,382**	**976,737**	**541,154**	**52,491**
2029-30 Projection				
Balance at Beginning of the Financial Year	1,570,382	976,737	541,154	52,491
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	8,729	8,729	-	-
Net Asset Revaluation Gain	17,378	-	17,378	-
Transfers to Other Reserves	-	(28,455)	-	28,455
Transfers from Other Reserves	-	38,550	-	(38,550)
Balance at End of the Financial Year	**1,596,489**	**995,559**	**558,533**	**42,397**

	Total	Accumulated Surplus	Revaluation Reserve	Other Reserves
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
2030-31 Projection				
Balance at Beginning of the Financial Year	1,596,489	995,559	558,533	42,397
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	9,167	9,167	-	-
Net Asset Revaluation Gain	25,648	-	25,648	-
Transfers to Other Reserves	-	(23,676)	-	23,676
Transfers from Other Reserves	-	22,593	-	(22,593)
Balance at End of the Financial Year	**1,631,304**	**1,003,644**	**584,181**	**43,480**
2031-32 Projection				
Balance at Beginning of the Financial Year	1,631,304	1,003,644	584,181	43,480
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	4,182	4,182	-	-
Net Asset Revaluation Gain	71,843	-	71,843	-
Transfers to Other Reserves	-	(25,427)	-	25,427
Transfers from Other Reserves	-	30,103	-	(30,103)
Balance at End of the Financial Year	**1,707,329**	**1,012,502**	**656,024**	**38,803**
2032-33 Projection				
Balance at Beginning of the Financial Year	1,707,329	1,012,502	656,024	38,803
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	1,180	1,180	-	-
Net Asset Revaluation Gain	19,800	-	19,800	-
Transfers to Other Reserves	-	(21,744)	-	21,744
Transfers from Other Reserves	-	19,203	-	(19,203)
Balance at End of the Financial Year	**1,728,309**	**1,011,142**	**675,823**	**41,344**
2033-34 Projection				
Balance at Beginning of the Financial Year	1,728,309	1,011,142	675,823	41,344
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	(2,249)	(2,249)	-	-
Net Asset Revaluation Gain	27,393	-	27,393	-
Transfers to Other Reserves	-	(22,614)	-	22,614
Transfers from Other Reserves	-	23,071	-	(23,071)
Balance at End of the Financial Year	**1,753,453**	**1,009,350**	**703,216**	**40,886**
2034-35 Projection				
Balance at Beginning of the Financial Year	1,753,453	1,009,350	703,216	40,886
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	555	555	-	-
Net Asset Revaluation Gain	77,412	-	77,412	-
Transfers to Other Reserves	-	(23,392)	-	23,392
Transfers from Other Reserves	-	20,643	-	(20,643)
Balance at End of the Financial Year	**1,831,420**	**1,007,156**	**780,628**	**43,635**

8.4 Statement of Cash Flows

	2025-26 Budget $'000	2026-27 $'000	2027-28 $'000	2028-29 $'000	2029-30 $'000	2030-31 Projections $'000	2031-32 $'000	2032-33 $'000	2033-34 $'000	2034-35 $'000
Cash Flow from Operating Activities										
Rates and Charges	68,746	71,287	74,051	76,743	79,445	82,347	85,288	87,946	90,564	93,177
Statutory Fees and Fines	2,021	2,070	2,122	2,175	2,229	2,285	2,342	2,401	2,461	2,522
User Charges	7,152	10,502	12,125	10,534	11,056	11,469	11,872	12,289	12,686	13,028
Grants - Operating	11,781	12,069	12,364	12,667	12,978	13,296	13,622	13,957	14,299	14,650
Grants - Capital	25,983	1,997	2,102	2,102	5,300	2,102	2,102	2,102	2,102	2,102
Contributions - Monetary	2,651	2,686	3,885	3,481	3,798	4,930	5,666	2,509	2,561	3,002
Interest Received	2,173	1,500	1,350	1,200	1,050	1,050	1,050	1,050	1,050	1,050
Net GST Refund/(Payment)	7,652	7,524	5,214	4,788	7,143	5,500	6,279	5,421	5,909	5,809
Employee Costs	(42,028)	(43,464)	(44,909)	(46,244)	(47,580)	(48,953)	(50,366)	(51,833)	(53,312)	(54,853)
Materials and Services	(44,752)	(46,578)	(43,975)	(43,155)	(46,397)	(46,822)	(50,522)	(49,693)	(51,206)	(52,662)
Net Cash Provided from Operating Activities	**41,379**	**19,592**	**24,331**	**24,291**	**29,023**	**27,203**	**27,334**	**26,148**	**27,115**	**27,826**
Cash Flows from Investing Activities										
Proceeds from Sale of Property, Plant & Equipment	1,977	781	597	840	606	1,021	495	370	675	872
Payments for Property, Plant, Equipment & Infrastructure Assets	(48,603)	(46,728)	(24,082)	(19,610)	(43,191)	(24,549)	(29,903)	(21,363)	(25,623)	(23,313)
Cash Flows from Investments	8,000	24,000	3,000	(2,000)	9,000	-	4,000	(3,000)	-	(2,000)
Net Cash Used in Investing Activities	**(38,626)**	**(21,947)**	**(20,485)**	**(20,769)**	**(33,585)**	**(23,527)**	**(25,408)**	**(23,994)**	**(24,947)**	**(24,441)**
Cash Flows from Financing Activities										
Finance Costs	(189)	(322)	(450)	(401)	(359)	(741)	(701)	(658)	(612)	(564)
Repayment of Lease Liabilities	(508)	(507)	(536)	(525)	(530)	(534)	(539)	(527)	(532)	(536)
Interest Paid - Lease Liabilities	(395)	(433)	(439)	(456)	(461)	(467)	(473)	(496)	(503)	(509)
Proceeds from Borrowings	-	6,000	-	-	7,000	-	-	-	-	-
Repayment of Borrowings	(2,195)	(2,260)	(2,330)	(1,985)	(1,992)	(660)	(700)	(743)	(789)	(837)
Net Cash Provided from Financing Activities	**(3,286)**	**2,478**	**(3,755)**	**(3,367)**	**3,658**	**(2,402)**	**(2,413)**	**(2,424)**	**(2,435)**	**(2,446)**
Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash & Cash Equivalents Held	**(533)**	**124**	**91**	**154**	**(904)**	**1,273**	**(487)**	**(270)**	**(268)**	**939**
Cash & Cash Equivalents at the Beginning of the Period	3,916	3,383	3,507	3,598	3,753	2,849	4,122	3,635	3,366	3,098
Cash & Cash Equivalents at the End of the Period	**3,383**	**3,507**	**3,598**	**3,753**	**2,849**	**4,122**	**3,635**	**3,366**	**3,098**	**4,037**
Investments (Current and Non-Current Financial Assets)	69,000	45,000	42,000	44,000	35,000	35,000	31,000	34,000	34,000	36,000
Total Cash & Investments at the End of the Period	**72,383**	**48,507**	**45,598**	**47,753**	**37,849**	**39,122**	**34,635**	**37,366**	**37,098**	**40,037**

8.5 Statement of Capital Works

	2025-26 Budget	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31 Projections	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Property										
Buildings	24,103	27,818	3,470	1,630	14,490	4,095	5,437	1,700	4,729	1,421
Total Property	**24,103**	**27,818**	**3,470**	**1,630**	**14,490**	**4,095**	**5,437**	**1,700**	**4,729**	**1,421**
Plant and Equipment										
Plant, Machinery & Equipment	2,240	2,622	2,374	2,641	2,005	1,607	3,161	3,365	3,535	3,998
Fixtures, Fitting & Furniture	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Computers & Telecomms	1,262	666	2,326	2,340	1,354	370	500	520	542	564
Total Plant and Equipment	**3,512**	**3,298**	**4,710**	**4,991**	**3,369**	**1,987**	**3,671**	**3,895**	**4,087**	**4,572**
Infrastructure										
Bridges	1,409	171	109	114	119	124	129	135	141	147
Drainage & Sewerage	1,167	2,105	326	340	354	404	914	728	758	790
Footpaths & Cycleways	1,164	584	468	986	757	528	2,090	572	595	619
Parks, Open Space & Streetscapes	1,274	935	522	603	568	789	3,207	599	670	698
Recreation, Leisure & Communities	4,200	3,035	4,868	4,368	10,260	3,634	3,840	2,845	2,945	3,057
Roads	9,598	6,202	6,841	6,578	7,873	6,987	10,616	10,889	11,698	12,009
Waste	653	1,353	2,767	-	-		-	-	-	-
Expensed Capital Works	4,049	1,684	631	733	667	853	2,593	858	815	945
Landfill Provision	1,524	1,227	-	-	5,400	6,000	-	-	-	-
Total Infrastructure	**25,036**	**17,296**	**16,533**	**13,721**	**25,999**	**19,319**	**23,387**	**16,626**	**17,621**	**18,265**
Total Capital Works Expenditure	**52,651**	**48,412**	**24,713**	**20,342**	**43,858**	**25,401**	**32,495**	**22,221**	**26,437**	**24,258**
Represented By:										
New Asset Expenditure	27,692	26,054	8,600	1,729	14,360	765	5,535	596	611	631
Asset Renewal Expenditure	12,845	17,200	13,675	15,617	22,542	16,763	21,716	19,751	23,979	21,630
Asset Expansion Expenditure	62	459	446	460	468	567	581	596	611	631
Asset Upgrade Expenditure	6,479	1,787	1,360	1,804	420	454	2,070	420	420	420
Expensed Capital Works	4,049	1,684	631	733	667	853	2,593	858	815	945
Landfill Provision Works	1,524	1,227	-	-	5,400	6,000	-	-	-	-
Total Capital Works Expenditure	**52,651**	**48,412**	**24,713**	**20,342**	**43,858**	**25,401**	**32,495**	**22,221**	**26,437**	**24,258**
Funding Sources Represented By:										
External										
Capital Grants	48,166	1,997	2,102	2,102	5,300	2,102	2,102	2,102	2,102	2,102
Borrowings	-	6,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Internal										
Asset Sales	657	781	597	840	606	1,021	495	370	675	872
Council Cash	3,828	39,634	22,014	17,400	37,952	22,278	29,898	19,749	23,660	21,283
Total Capital Works Funding Sources	**52,651**	**48,412**	**24,713**	**20,342**	**43,858**	**25,401**	**32,495**	**22,221**	**26,437**	**24,258**

8.6 Statement of Human Resources

Staff Expenditure	2025-26 Budget $'000	2026-27 $'000	2027-28 $'000	2028-29 $'000	2029-30 $'000	2030-31 $'000	2031-32 $'000	2032-33 $'000	2033-34 $'000	2034-35 $'000
					Projections					
Staff Expenditure										
Women	23,970	24,817	25,438	26,074	26,726	27,394	28,079	28,780	29,500	30,237
Men	16,946	17,545	17,984	18,433	18,894	19,366	19,851	20,347	20,855	21,377
Vacant Role	1,889	1,956	2,004	2,055	2,106	2,159	2,213	2,268	2,325	2,383
Total Staff Expenditure	**42,805**	**44,318**	**45,426**	**46,561**	**47,725**	**48,919**	**50,142**	**51,395**	**52,680**	**53,997**
Full Time										
Women	13,202	13,669	14,010	14,361	14,720	15,088	15,465	15,852	16,248	16,654
Men	15,304	15,845	16,241	16,647	17,063	17,490	17,927	18,375	18,835	19,306
Vacant Role	943	976	1,000	1,025	1,051	1,077	1,104	1,132	1,160	1,189
Total Full Time	**29,449**	**30,490**	**31,252**	**32,033**	**32,834**	**33,655**	**34,496**	**35,359**	**36,243**	**37,149**
Part Time										
Women	10,768	11,149	11,427	11,713	12,006	12,306	12,614	12,929	13,252	13,583
Men	1,642	1,700	1,742	1,786	1,831	1,876	1,923	1,971	2,021	2,071
Vacant Role	946	980	1,004	1,029	1,055	1,081	1,108	1,136	1,165	1,194
Total Part Time	**13,356**	**13,828**	**14,174**	**14,528**	**14,891**	**15,264**	**15,645**	**16,036**	**16,437**	**16,848**
Staff Expenditure Reconciled to Income Statement										
Total Staff Expenditure	42,805	44,318	45,426	46,561	47,725	48,919	50,142	51,395	52,680	53,997
Casuals	648	671	688	705	723	741	759	778	798	818
Volunteers	566	586	601	616	632	647	664	680	697	715
Capitalised Operational Employee Costs	(2,857)	(2,958)	(3,032)	(3,107)	(3,185)	(3,265)	(3,346)	(3,430)	(3,516)	(3,604)
Other Employee Costs and Project Staff	1,603	1,436	1,659	1,738	1,781	1,826	1,871	1,918	1,966	2,015
Unallocated New Compliance and Non Discretionary Employees	-	166	339	522	713	914	1,124	1,344	1,574	1,816
Employee Costs as per Income Statement	**42,766**	**44,219**	**45,682**	**47,035**	**48,389**	**49,782**	**51,213**	**52,686**	**54,200**	**55,756**

Staff Numbers	2025-26 Budget FTE	2026-27 FTE	2027-28 FTE	2028-29 FTE	2029-30 Projections FTE	2030-31 FTE	2031-32 FTE	2032-33 FTE	2033-34 FTE	2034-35 FTE
Staff Expenditure										
Women	196.1	196.1	196.1	196.1	196.1	196.1	196.1	196.1	196.1	196.1
Men	137.6	137.6	137.6	137.6	137.6	137.6	137.6	137.6	137.6	137.6
Vacant Role	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0
Total Staff Expenditure	**349.6**	**349.6**	**349.6**	**349.6**	**349.6**	**349.6**	**349.6**	**349.6**	**349.6**	**349.6**
Full Time										
Women	96.0	96.0	96.0	96.0	96.0	96.0	96.0	96.0	96.0	96.0
Men	123.0	123.0	123.0	123.0	123.0	123.0	123.0	123.0	123.0	123.0
Vacant Role	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7
Total Full Time	**226.7**	**226.7**	**226.7**	**226.7**	**226.7**	**226.7**	**226.7**	**226.7**	**226.7**	**226.7**
Part Time										
Women	100.1	100.1	100.1	100.1	100.1	100.1	100.1	100.1	100.1	100.1
Men	14.6	14.6	14.6	14.6	14.6	14.6	14.6	14.6	14.6	14.6
Vacant Role	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2
Total Part Time	**122.9**	**122.9**	**122.9**	**122.9**	**122.9**	**122.9**	**122.9**	**122.9**	**122.9**	**122.9**
Staff Numbers included in Income Statement										
Total Staff Expenditure	349.6	349.6	349.6	349.6	349.6	349.6	349.6	349.6	349.6	349.6
Casuals	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
Volunteers	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2
Capitalised Operational Employee Costs	(17.8)	(17.8)	(17.8)	(17.8)	(17.8)	(17.8)	(17.8)	(17.8)	(17.8)	(17.8)
Other Employee Costs and Project Staff	1.2	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
Unallocated New Compliance and Non Discretionary Employees	-	1.3	2.7	4.0	5.4	6.7	8.1	9.4	10.7	12.1
Total Staff Numbers included in Income Statement	**346.1**	**347.1**	**348.5**	**349.8**	**351.1**	**352.5**	**353.8**	**355.2**	**356.5**	**357.9**

8.7 Planned Human Resource Expenditure

	2025-26 Budget	2026-27	2027-28 Projections	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
Staff Expenditure by Division	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Chief Executive Office										
Full Time										
Women	659	682	699	717	735	753	772	791	811	831
Part Time										
Women	75	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	95
Vacant Role	125	130	133	136	139	143	147	150	154	158
Total Chief Executive Office	**859**	**889**	**912**	**934**	**958**	**982**	**1,006**	**1,031**	**1,057**	**1,084**
Community Life										
Full Time										
Women	4,075	4,219	4,324	4,433	4,543	4,657	4,773	4,893	5,015	5,140
Men	8,026	8,309	8,517	8,730	8,948	9,172	9,401	9,636	9,877	10,124
Vacant Role	446	461	473	485	497	509	522	535	548	562
Part Time										
Women	6,121	6,337	6,496	6,658	6,825	6,995	7,170	7,349	7,533	7,721
Men	588	609	624	640	656	672	689	706	724	742
Vacant Role	553	573	587	602	617	632	648	664	681	698
Total Community Life	**19,809**	**20,509**	**21,021**	**21,547**	**22,086**	**22,638**	**23,204**	**23,784**	**24,378**	**24,988**
Placemaking & Environment										
Full Time										
Women	4,337	4,490	4,602	4,718	4,835	4,956	5,080	5,207	5,337	5,471
Men	4,414	4,570	4,684	4,802	4,922	5,045	5,171	5,300	5,432	5,568
Vacant Role	255	264	271	277	284	291	299	306	314	322
Part Time										
Women	2,562	2,652	2,719	2,787	2,856	2,928	3,001	3,076	3,153	3,232
Men	749	776	795	815	836	857	878	900	922	945
Vacant Role	268	277	284	292	299	306	314	322	330	338
Total Placemaking & Environment	**12,586**	**13,030**	**13,356**	**13,690**	**14,032**	**14,383**	**14,743**	**15,111**	**15,489**	**15,876**
Strategy & Effectiveness										
Full Time										
Women	4,131	4,277	4,384	4,494	4,606	4,721	4,840	4,961	5,085	5,212
Men	2,864	2,966	3,040	3,116	3,194	3,273	3,355	3,439	3,525	3,613
Vacant Role	242	250	257	263	270	276	283	290	298	305
Part Time										
Women	2,010	2,081	2,133	2,187	2,241	2,297	2,355	2,414	2,474	2,536
Men	304	315	323	331	339	348	356	365	375	384
Total Strategy & Effectiveness	**9,552**	**9,890**	**10,137**	**10,390**	**10,650**	**10,916**	**11,189**	**11,469**	**11,756**	**12,050**
Total Staff Expenditure	**42,805**	**44,318**	**45,426**	**46,561**	**47,725**	**48,919**	**50,142**	**51,395**	**52,680**	**53,997**
Other Employee Expenditure										
Casuals	648	671	688	705	723	741	759	778	798	818
Volunteers	566	586	601	616	632	647	664	680	697	715
Capitalised Operational Labour (Included in Divisional FTE)	(2,857)	(2,958)	(3,032)	(3,107)	(3,185)	(3,265)	(3,346)	(3,430)	(3,516)	(3,604)
Other Employee Costs and Project Staff	1,603	1,436	1,659	1,738	1,781	1,826	1,871	1,918	1,966	2,015
Unallocated New Compliance and Non Discretionary Employees	-	166	339	522	713	914	1,124	1,344	1,574	1,816
Employee Costs as per Income Statement	**42,766**	**44,219**	**45,682**	**47,035**	**48,389**	**49,782**	**51,213**	**52,686**	**54,200**	**55,756**

Staff Number by Division	2025-26 Budget FTE	2026-27 FTE	2027-28 Projections FTE	2028-29 FTE	2029-30 FTE	2030-31 FTE	2031-32 FTE	2032-33 FTE	2033-34 FTE	2034-35 FTE
Chief Executive Office										
Full Time										
Women	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Part Time										
Women	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
Vacant Role	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Total Chief Executive Office	**4.4**	**4.4**	**4.4**	**4.4**	**4.4**	**4.4**	**4.4**	**4.4**	**4.4**	**4.4**
Community Life										
Full Time										
Women	31.0	31.0	31.0	31.0	31.0	31.0	31.0	31.0	31.0	31.0
Men	72.0	72.0	72.0	72.0	72.0	72.0	72.0	72.0	72.0	72.0
Vacant Role	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Part Time										
Women	59.8	59.8	59.8	59.8	59.8	59.8	59.8	59.8	59.8	59.8
Men	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9
Vacant Role	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.1
Total Community Life	**177.8**	**177.8**	**177.8**	**177.8**	**177.8**	**177.8**	**177.8**	**177.8**	**177.8**	**177.8**
Placemaking & Environment										
Full Time										
Women	32.0	32.0	32.0	32.0	32.0	32.0	32.0	32.0	32.0	32.0
Men	31.0	31.0	31.0	31.0	31.0	31.0	31.0	31.0	31.0	31.0
Vacant Role	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Part Time										
Women	22.6	22.6	22.6	22.6	22.6	22.6	22.6	22.6	22.6	22.6
Men	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8
Vacant Role	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6
Total Placemaking & Environment	**96.9**	**96.9**	**96.9**	**96.9**	**96.9**	**96.9**	**96.9**	**96.9**	**96.9**	**96.9**
Strategy & Effectiveness										
Full Time										
Women	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0
Men	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0
Vacant Role	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7
Part Time										
Women	16.8	16.8	16.8	16.8	16.8	16.8	16.8	16.8	16.8	16.8
Men	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8
Total Strategy & Effectiveness	**70.4**	**70.4**	**70.4**	**70.4**	**70.4**	**70.4**	**70.4**	**70.4**	**70.4**	**70.4**
Total Staff Numbers by Division	**349.6**	**349.6**	**349.6**	**349.6**	**349.6**	**349.6**	**349.6**	**349.6**	**349.6**	**349.6**
Other Employee Expenditure										
Casuals	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
Volunteers	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2
Capitalised Operational Labour (Included in Divisional FTE)	(17.8)	(17.8)	(17.8)	(17.8)	(17.8)	(17.8)	(17.8)	(17.8)	(17.8)	(17.8)
Other Employee Costs and Project Staff	1.2	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
Unallocated New Compliance and Non Discretionary Employees	-	1.3	2.7	4.0	5.4	6.7	8.1	9.4	10.7	12.1
Employee FTE	**346.1**	**347.1**	**348.5**	**349.8**	**351.1**	**352.5**	**353.8**	**355.2**	**356.5**	**357.9**

8.8 Council's Financial Plan Model (Recurrent EBITDA, Allocations and Closing Future Cash Fund Reserve)

	2025-26 Budget $'000	2026-27 $'000	2027-28 $'000	2028-29 $'000	2029-30 $'000	2030-31 $'000	2031-32 $'000	2032-33 $'000	2033-34 $'000	2034-35 $'000
						Projections				
Recurrent EBITDA less Waste and Other Special Purposes										
Property Rates and Charges	57,555	58,996	60,471	61,982	63,532	65,120	66,748	68,417	70,127	71,880
Supplementary Property Rates and Charges	240	729	1,435	2,128	2,766	3,522	4,324	5,074	5,739	6,352
Grants	11,139	11,418	11,703	11,996	12,296	12,603	12,918	13,241	13,572	13,912
Other Revenue	6,663	6,848	7,038	7,234	7,435	7,641	7,853	8,072	8,296	8,527
Total Recurrent Income	**75,598**	**77,991**	**80,647**	**83,341**	**86,028**	**88,886**	**91,844**	**94,804**	**97,735**	**100,671**
Employee Benefits	40,065	41,504	42,750	43,854	44,950	46,074	47,226	48,406	49,617	50,857
Materials and Services	17,795	18,181	18,630	19,102	19,574	20,057	20,553	21,078	21,599	22,133
Total Expenditure - Existing Operations	**57,861**	**59,685**	**61,380**	**62,956**	**64,524**	**66,131**	**67,779**	**69,484**	**71,216**	**72,990**
Financial Recurrent Savings Target	**-**	**331**	**679**	**1,044**	**1,426**	**1,828**	**2,248**	**2,688**	**3,149**	**3,631**
Compliance Costs (Recurrent)	116	331	679	1,044	1,426	1,828	2,248	2,688	3,149	3,631
Growth	515	1,065	1,559	1,409	1,692	2,781	3,156	3,548	3,983	4,463
Future Years of Budget Year	-	650	667	684	701	719	737	755	774	794
Total Expenditure - New Operations	**631**	**2,046**	**2,905**	**3,137**	**3,820**	**5,328**	**6,141**	**6,992**	**7,906**	**8,887**
Total Recurrent EBITDA less Waste and Other	**17,106**	**16,591**	**17,041**	**18,292**	**19,111**	**19,255**	**20,172**	**21,016**	**21,762**	**22,424**
Recurrent EBITDA Waste										
Garbage Charges	10,970	11,572	12,208	12,727	13,267	13,830	14,346	14,590	14,838	15,091
Other Revenue	3,002	4,777	4,896	1,345	1,453	1,490	1,527	1,565	1,604	1,644
Total Recurrent Income	**13,971**	**16,349**	**17,105**	**14,072**	**14,720**	**15,320**	**15,873**	**16,155**	**16,442**	**16,735**
Employee Benefits	1,469	1,521	1,566	1,607	1,647	1,688	1,730	1,774	1,818	1,863
Materials and Services	12,270	14,277	14,280	11,470	11,869	12,284	12,549	13,010	13,474	13,956
Total Expenditure - Existing Operations	**13,739**	**15,797**	**15,847**	**13,077**	**13,516**	**13,972**	**14,279**	**14,783**	**15,292**	**15,820**
Recurrent EBITDA Waste	**232**	**552**	**1,258**	**995**	**1,204**	**1,348**	**1,594**	**1,372**	**1,150**	**915**
Recurrent EBITDA Other Special Purposes										
Other Revenue	21	22	22	23	24	24	25	26	27	27
Total Recurrent Income	**21**	**22**	**22**	**23**	**24**	**24**	**25**	**26**	**27**	**27**
Materials and Services	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23
Total Expenditure - Existing Operations	**18**	**19**	**19**	**20**	**20**	**21**	**21**	**22**	**22**	**23**
Recurrent EBITDA Other Special Purposes	**3**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**5**	**5**
Total Recurrent EBITDA	**17,341**	**17,146**	**18,302**	**19,290**	**20,318**	**20,607**	**21,770**	**22,392**	**22,917**	**23,344**

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
	Budget	Projections								
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Total Recurrent EBITDA	**17,341**	**17,146**	**18,302**	**19,290**	**20,318**	**20,607**	**21,770**	**22,392**	**22,917**	**23,344**
Cash Adjustments:										
Balance Sheet Movements	68	93	44	36	42	48	53	60	81	80
Interest Revenue	2,275	1,600	1,430	1,280	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110
Interest Commited to Projects	(250)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Asset Sales	1,320	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Cash Adjustments	**3,413**	**1,693**	**1,474**	**1,316**	**1,152**	**1,158**	**1,163**	**1,170**	**1,191**	**1,190**
Total Cash Available for Allocation	**20,754**	**18,838**	**19,777**	**20,606**	**21,470**	**21,764**	**22,933**	**23,562**	**24,108**	**24,535**
Allocations:										
Debt Interest & Principal	2,024	2,222	2,420	2,385	2,350	465	465	465	465	465
Torquay/Jan Juc Developer Plan Allocation	1,394	2,770	2,770	1,211	1,730	-	-	-	-	-
Winchelsea Infrastructure Plan Allocation	246	253	261	269	277	285	294	303	312	322
Waste Allocation	232	552	1,258	995	1,204	1,348	1,594	1,372	1,150	915
Asset Renewal Allocation	11,558	12,906	14,086	14,837	16,152	17,388	18,163	19,256	20,660	21,177
Business Case Investments	100	405	415	426	436	447	458	470	482	494
Council Election Year	-	-	-	330	-	-	-	360	-	-
Aireys Inlet Social Housing Units	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	5	5
Growth and Compliance Costs (Non-Recurrent)	373	551	564	578	593	608	623	638	654	671
Other Projects	2,684	1,070	1,097	1,124	1,152	1,181	1,211	1,241	1,272	1,304
Total Allocations	**18,614**	**20,731**	**22,874**	**22,159**	**23,898**	**21,726**	**22,813**	**24,109**	**25,000**	**25,351**
Cash Surplus / (Deficit)	**2,140**	**(1,893)**	**(3,098)**	**(1,553)**	**(2,428)**	**38**	**120**	**(547)**	**(892)**	**(817)**
Future Cash Fund Reserve										
Opening Balance	10,889	13,029	10,946	7,658	5,916	3,298	3,146	3,077	2,340	1,258
Annual Surplus/(Deficit)	2,140	(1,893)	(3,098)	(1,553)	(2,428)	38	120	(547)	(892)	(817)
Net Allocations During the Year	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers for Project Funding	-	(190)	(190)	(190)	(190)	(190)	(190)	(190)	(190)	(190)
Closing Balance	**13,029**	**10,946**	**7,658**	**5,916**	**3,298**	**3,146**	**3,077**	**2,340**	**1,258**	**251**

Note: Refer to notes in Section 4.1 to understand how the surplus and deficits are be managed.

8.9 Financial Plan Model Explained

1. **Recurrent EBITDA:** EBITDA stands for 'Earnings before Interest, Tax, Depreciation and Amortisation' and is a measure of normal operations without the impact of one-off revenue and expenses. It allows a clear focus on Council's recurrent operational performance. This is important as Recurrent EBITDA provides the funding to allocate to commitments and discretionary allocations. It includes a recurrent financial savings target of $331k per year underpinned by business case investments and service reviews. It also includes an allowance for compliance costs and growth totalling $662k per year.
2. **Cash Adjustments:** Account for balance sheet adjustments not related to projects, interest revenue and asset sales. Balance sheet adjustments are part of working capital movements and are required as the model reconciles back to cash. Interest revenue is excluded from operational performance as returns on investments are outside management's control and variability on returns would skew performance results. The Grants Commission funds have been budgeted to be received in the year they are owed over the life of the plan. Where funds are received early, they will be ring fenced and transferred into the adopted strategy reserve. Therefore, any timing impact of the actual funds received in recurrent EBITDA will be offset by the transfer from the adopted strategy reserve. Funds from asset sales, with the exception of open space (which is to be transferred to the open space reserve), are made available for allocations. Recurrent EBITDA and Cash Adjustments provide cash available for allocation.
3. **Allocations to Commitments:** Includes Council's funding priorities which often Council has no or limited discretion on funding. Components of these allocations include:
    - Debt Interest and Principal allocations to meet our current and planned debt financing commitments.
    - Development allocations including the Torquay/Jan Juc Developer Plan which will receive its final allocation in 2029-30; and the Winchelsea Infrastructure Plan.
    - Waste Allocation which is the surplus from the recurrent Waste EBITDA and is used solely to meet Council's waste obligations, including the landfill rehabilitation.
    - Asset Renewal Allocations to fund the renewal of Council infrastructure.
    - Business Case Investments allocations to fund business case proposals which have a return on investment over five years as a minimum. The savings made on business cases are included in the recurrent financial savings targets in recurrent EBITDA.
    - Council Election Year allocations to funds the cost of elections every four years.
    - Aireys Inlet Social Housing allocations that represent the surplus from the service which is ring fenced for future maintenance and capital expenditure required on the units.
    - Growth and Compliance Cost allocations and Other Project allocation fund once off projects that align with Council Plan strategic objectives.

    Any surplus following the allocation of cash available for distribution is then assigned to the Future Cash Fund Reserve.
4. **Future Cash Fund Reserve:** Identifies Council's cash which can only be drawn upon by Council resolution. Surpluses for the year are transferred to the reserve as well as project savings not funded by any other reserve (as these savings are returned to the reserve that funded the project).

8.10 Reserve Strategy

This section describes the strategies and plans that support the 10-year financial projections included to the Financial Plan.

Current Reserves

Adopted Strategy Implementation Reserve

Purpose

The purpose of this reserve is to provide funding for projects in line with approved strategies adopted by Council and is funded from operations or grants received.

Typical Sources of Inflows and Outflows:

Inflows into this reserve will be funds allocated via Council resolution. Outflows will be funds allocated to specific projects by Council resolution.

Aireys Inlet Units Reserve (legislative)

Purpose

The purpose of this reserve is as the funding source for the maintenance of social housing for disadvantaged low-income earners. Four social housing units currently exist in Aireys Inlet.

Typical Sources of Inflows and Outflows:

Inflows are received by way of rent. Outflows cover future maintenance and capital expenditure related to the units.

Asset Renewal Reserve

Purpose

The purpose of this reserve is to provide funding based on the Asset Renewal Funding Strategy.

Typical Sources of Inflows and Outflows:

Inflows into this reserve will be funds allocated on a straight-line basis increasing year on year at a predetermined rate as set by Council. Funds from renewal projects completed under budget will also be returned to this reserve. Outflows from this reserve will be spent on renewal of Council assets including Council's heavy plant (graders, trucks, etc.) and fleet previously funded from the now closed Plant Reserve.

Unspent Capital Works Allocations Reserve (restricted)

Purpose

The purpose of this reserve is to function as a mechanism to carry over funding for capital works that are still in progress at year end.

Typical Sources of Inflows and Outflows:

Inflows into this reserve will be funds allocated at end of the financial year relating to incomplete projects. Outflows will be funds allocated in the new financial year to complete the projects in progress.

Unspent Operational Projects Allocations Reserve

Purpose

The purpose of this reserve is to act as a mechanism to carry over funding for operational projects that are still in progress at year end.

Typical Sources of Inflows and Outflows:

Inflows into this reserve will be funds allocated at end of financial year relating to incomplete projects. Outflows will be funds allocated in the new financial year to complete the projects in progress.

Defined Benefits Superannuation Reserve

Purpose

The purpose of this reserve is to provide funding for future defined benefits superannuation fund shortfalls.

Typical Sources of Inflows and Outflows:

Inflows to this reserve are at the discretion of Council, set via the Annual Budget process. Council will make an estimate on the future defined benefits superannuation funding shortfalls and build a reserve in order to meet the shortfall.

Outflows from this reserve will fund defined benefit funding calls from Council's superannuation provider.

Developer Contributions Reserve (restricted)

Purpose

The purpose of this reserve is to hold funds contributed by developers for specific works associated with subdivisions (except for funds in relation to Torquay Jan Juc DCP and Winchelsea Infrastructure Plan which have their own separate reserves). Funds are contributed for works such as footpaths, fencing, streetscape works, lighting and other such items where it is deemed that these works should occur at a later point than the initial development. Funds collected are very specific and tied to particular projects.

Typical Sources of Inflows and Outflows:

Inflows are from contributions collected from developers and outflows are on the works specified.

Future Cash Fund Reserve

Purpose

The purpose of this reserve is to separately identify Council's cash required for future purposes.

Typical Sources of Inflows and Outflows:

Inflows into this reserve will be funds allocated by Council based on operational savings or sources of funding.

Outflows from this reserve will be allocations based solely on Council resolutions.

Gherang Gravel Pits Reserve

Purpose

The purpose of this reserve is to provide funding for rehabilitation of the gravel pits reserve site. The balance of funds exceeds this requirement over the life of this plan.

Typical Sources of Inflows and Outflows:

Inflows to this reserve have accrued form surpluses from the Gravel Pits Reserve Operations. If further inflows are required to fund rehabilitation of the gravel pits reserve site, they will be transferred from the Future Cash Fund Reserve.

Outflows from this reserve are for rehabilitation of the gravel pits reserve site and, given the balance exceeds the expected rehabilitation requirements, a portion may be used for Council's discretionary requirements.

Main Drainage Reserve (restricted)

Purpose

The purpose of this reserve is to hold developer contributions for main drainage works at a later point than the initial development. As such they are also tied to works within the catchment area from which funds were derived.

Typical Sources of Inflows and Outflows:

Inflows are from contributions collected from developers and outflows are on the works specified.

Open Space Reserve (restricted)

Purpose

The purpose of this reserve is to provide improved recreational facilities for the Surf Coast Shire, both of an active and a passive nature.

Typical Sources of Inflows and Outflows:

Inflows to the open space reserve are solely composed of contributions from subdividers in lieu of the provision of land for public open space. It is noteworthy that substantial income flows into this reserve annually, and these funds will be critical in delivering key outcomes of the Open Space Strategy.
Outflows have been limited to capital works on parks, playgrounds, and both active and passive recreation reserves.

Torquay Jan Juc DCP Contributions

Purpose

The purpose of this reserve is to provide funding based on the Torquay/Jan Juc Developer Plan.

Typical Sources of Inflows and Outflows:

Inflows into this reserve will be funds allocated on a straight-line basis at a predetermined rate as set by Council and contributions from developers and community levies. Funds from Torquay/Jan Juc DCP projects completed under budget will also be returned to this reserve. Outflows from this reserve will be spent on the delivery of DCP projects.

Trust and Deposits Reserve (restricted)

Purpose

Whilst not technically a reserve, Trust and Deposits represent cash that Council holds under a contractual agreement and therefore should be considered part of restricted cash holdings. Some examples of use of this reserve include subdividers holding deposits, fire services levy and contractors' retention. Council has decided to utilise a reserve for this purpose to provide clarity.

Typical Sources of Inflows and Outflows:

Cash inflows and to the Trust and Deposits Reserve will arise from contractual agreements between Council and other parties. Outflows generally occur when the agreement expires.

Waste Reserve

Purpose

The purpose of this reserve is to ensure that the full cost of the waste function is met by the waste charges (garbage charge and fee income from landfill) and that surpluses and deficits on an annual basis can be covered without any adverse impact on the balance of Council's budget. This facet is particularly relevant in terms of Council meeting its long-term obligations for landfill rehabilitation where funds need to be set aside in the interim to plan for large-scale costs in the future.

Typical Sources of Inflows and Outflows:

Cash inflows to the reserve arise from any surplus funds remaining from the combined income from garbage charges and landfill fees, less the cost of operating the landfills, waste administration, kerbside collection, recycling and other associated waste costs. Outflows are due to waste capital expenditures.

Winchelsea Infrastructure Plan Allocation Reserve

Purpose

The purpose of this reserve is to provide funding for projects in line with strategies yet to be approved and adopted by Council and is funded from operations or grants received.

Typical Sources of Inflows and Outflows:

Inflows into this reserve will be funds allocated on a straight-line basis at a predetermined rate as set by Council. Funds from Winchelsea Infrastructure Plan projects completed under budget will also be returned to this reserve. Outflows from this reserve will be spent on the delivery of Winchelsea Infrastructure Plan Allocation projects that are yet to be defined.

5.2.2 Reserve Usage Projections

The table following discloses the balance and annual movement for each reserve over the 10-year life of the Financial Plan. Total amount of reserves, for each year, aligns with the Statement of Changes in Equity.

Reserves	2025-26 Budget $000's	2026-27 $000's	2027-28 $000's	2028-29 $000's	2029-30 $000's	2030-31 Projections $000's	2031-32 $000's	2032-33 $000's	2033-34 $000's	2034-35 $000's
Restricted Reserves										
Unspent Capital Works Allocations Reserve (restricted)										
Opening balance	48,151	37,507	12,010	7,102	7,547	9,337	10,117	10,827	10,827	10,827
Transfer to reserve	36,607	600	392	445	1,790	780	710	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve	(47,251)	(26,097)	(5,300)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance	**37,507**	**12,010**	**7,102**	**7,547**	**9,337**	**10,117**	**10,827**	**10,827**	**10,827**	**10,827**
Developer Contributions Reserve (restricted)										
Opening balance	1,098	1,928	2,289	2,736	3,226	3,738	4,509	5,170	5,708	6,152
Transfer to reserve	830	361	447	491	512	771	661	539	443	805
Transfer from reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance	**1,928**	**2,289**	**2,736**	**3,226**	**3,738**	**4,509**	**5,170**	**5,708**	**6,152**	**6,957**
Main Drainage Reserve (restricted)										
Opening balance	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	114
Transfer to reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance	**114**	**114**	**114**	**114**	**114**	**114**	**114**	**114**	**114**	**114**
Open Space Reserve (restricted)										
Opening balance	3,535	3,082	3,232	3,382	3,532	3,682	3,832	3,982	4,132	4,282
Transfer to reserve	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Transfer from reserve	(603)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance	**3,082**	**3,232**	**3,382**	**3,532**	**3,682**	**3,832**	**3,982**	**4,132**	**4,282**	**4,432**
Trust and Deposits Reserve (restricted)										
Opening balance	3,608	3,608	3,608	3,608	3,608	3,608	3,608	3,608	3,608	3,608
Transfer to reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance	**3,608**	**3,608**	**3,608**	**3,608**	**3,608**	**3,608**	**3,608**	**3,608**	**3,608**	**3,608**
Total Restricted Reserves										
Opening balance	56,507	46,240	21,254	16,943	18,028	20,480	22,181	23,702	24,391	24,984
Transfer to reserve	37,587	1,111	989	1,086	2,452	1,701	1,521	689	593	955
Transfer from reserve	(47,854)	(26,097)	(5,300)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance	**46,240**	**21,254**	**16,943**	**18,028**	**20,480**	**22,181**	**23,702**	**24,391**	**24,984**	**25,939**

Reserves	2025-26 Budget	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
					Projections					
	$000's	$000's	$000's	$000's	$000's	$000's	$000's	$000's	$000's	$000's
Unrestricted Reserves										
Future Cash Fund Reserve										
Opening balance	10,889	13,029	10,946	7,658	5,916	3,298	3,146	3,077	2,340	1,258
Transfer to reserve	2,140	(1,893)	(3,098)	(1,553)	(2,428)	38	120	(547)	(892)	(817)
Transfer from reserve	-	(190)	(190)	(190)	(190)	(190)	(190)	(190)	(190)	(190)
Closing balance	**13,029**	**10,946**	**7,658**	**5,916**	**3,298**	**3,146**	**3,077**	**2,340**	**1,258**	**251**
Adopted Strategy Implementation Reserve										
Opening balance	973	973	973	973	973	973	973	973	973	973
Transfer to reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance	**973**	**973**	**973**	**973**	**973**	**973**	**973**	**973**	**973**	**973**
Aireys Inlet Units Reserve										
Opening balance	339	342	345	348	352	355	359	363	368	372
Transfer to reserve	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	5	5
Transfer from reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance	**342**	**345**	**348**	**352**	**355**	**359**	**363**	**368**	**372**	**377**
Annual Leave Reserve										
Opening balance	156	156	156	156	156	156	156	156	156	156
Transfer to reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance	**156**	**156**	**156**	**156**	**156**	**156**	**156**	**156**	**156**	**156**
Asset Renewal Reserve										
Opening balance	(98)	528	1,585	3,866	5,243	804	3,810	2,127	3,396	2,204
Transfer to reserve	11,558	12,906	14,086	14,837	16,152	17,388	18,163	19,256	20,660	21,177
Transfer from reserve	(10,932)	(11,849)	(11,806)	(13,460)	(20,591)	(14,383)	(19,846)	(17,987)	(21,852)	(19,422)
Closing balance	**528**	**1,585**	**3,866**	**5,243**	**804**	**3,810**	**2,127**	**3,396**	**2,204**	**3,958**
Unspent Operational Projects Allocations Reserve										
Opening balance	2,049	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer to reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve	(2,049)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Defined Benefits Superannuation Reserve										
Opening balance	1,224	1,224	1,224	1,224	1,224	1,224	1,224	1,224	1,224	1,224
Transfer to reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance	**1,224**	**1,224**	**1,224**	**1,224**	**1,224**	**1,224**	**1,224**	**1,224**	**1,224**	**1,224**

Reserves	2025-26 Budget $000's	2026-27 $000's	2027-28 $000's	2028-29 $000's	2029-30 $000's	2030-31 $000's	2031-32 $000's	2032-33 $000's	2033-34 $000's	2034-35 $000's
					Projections					
Gherang Gravel Pits Reserve										
Opening balance	1,430	1,430	1,430	1,430	1,430	1,430	1,430	1,430	1,430	1,430
Transfer to reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance	**1,430**	**1,430**	**1,430**	**1,430**	**1,430**	**1,430**	**1,430**	**1,430**	**1,430**	**1,430**
Torquay Jan Juc DCP Contributions Reserve										
Opening balance	3,457	4,875	7,981	11,861	11,308	5,566	7,347	1,223	1,223	1,223
Transfer to reserve	2,048	3,639	4,546	2,478	3,544	2,266	3,007	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve	(630)	(534)	(667)	(3,030)	(9,286)	(484)	(9,131)	-	-	-
Closing balance	**4,875**	**7,981**	**11,861**	**11,308**	**5,566**	**7,347**	**1,223**	**1,223**	**1,223**	**1,223**
Waste Reserve										
Opening balance	5,424	5,483	5,295	3,533	4,528	6,732	544	1,203	1,639	1,853
Transfer to reserve	232	552	1,258	995	8,204	1,348	1,594	1,372	1,150	915
Transfer from reserve	(173)	(740)	(3,019)	-	(6,000)	(7,536)	(936)	(936)	(936)	(936)
Closing balance	**5,483**	**5,295**	**3,533**	**4,528**	**6,732**	**544**	**1,203**	**1,639**	**1,853**	**1,833**
Winchelsea Infrastructure Plan Allocation Reserve										
Opening balance	2,374	1,910	2,436	2,534	3,332	1,378	2,308	3,325	4,204	5,209
Transfer to reserve	293	565	754	798	528	931	1,017	970	1,098	1,157
Transfer from reserve	(757)	(39)	(656)	-	(2,482)	-	-	(91)	(93)	(95)
Closing balance	**1,910**	**2,436**	**2,534**	**3,332**	**1,378**	**2,308**	**3,325**	**4,204**	**5,209**	**6,271**
Total Unrestricted Reserves										
Opening balance	28,217	29,951	32,371	33,584	34,462	21,917	21,299	15,102	16,953	15,902
Transfer to reserve	16,274	15,772	17,550	17,559	26,004	21,975	23,906	21,055	22,020	22,437
Transfer from reserve	(14,540)	(13,352)	(16,338)	(16,680)	(38,550)	(22,593)	(30,103)	(19,203)	(23,071)	(20,643)
Closing balance	**29,951**	**32,371**	**33,584**	**34,462**	**21,917**	**21,299**	**15,102**	**16,953**	**15,902**	**17,696**
Reserves Summary										
Opening balance	84,724	76,191	53,625	50,527	52,491	42,397	43,480	38,803	41,344	40,886
Transfer to reserve	53,861	16,883	18,539	18,645	28,455	23,676	25,427	21,744	22,614	23,392
Transfer from reserve	(62,394)	(39,449)	(21,638)	(16,680)	(38,550)	(22,593)	(30,103)	(19,203)	(23,071)	(20,643)
Closing balance	**76,191**	**53,625**	**50,527**	**52,491**	**42,397**	**43,480**	**38,803**	**41,344**	**40,886**	**43,635**

8.11 Future Borrowing Requirements

The following table highlights Council's projected loan balance, including new loans and loan repayments for the 10 years of the Financial Plan. In 2026-27 Council plans to take out $6.0 million of new borrowings towards the Wurdi Baierr Aquatic and Recreation Centre and $7.0 million in 2029-30 for the rehabilitation of the Anglesea Landfill.

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
	Budget	Projection								
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Opening Balance	**10,356**	**8,162**	**11,902**	**9,572**	**7,587**	**12,595**	**11,935**	**11,235**	**10,491**	**9,703**
Plus New Loans	-	6,000	-	-	7,000	-	-	-	-	-
Less Principal Repayment	(2,195)	(2,260)	(2,330)	(1,985)	(1,992)	(660)	(700)	(743)	(789)	(837)
Closing Balance	**8,162**	**11,902**	**9,572**	**7,587**	**12,595**	**11,935**	**11,235**	**10,491**	**9,703**	**8,865**
Interest Payment	188	321	448	400	358	741	701	658	612	564

Associated Performance Indicators

Council maintains its loan borrowing within prudent and management limits as demonstrated by the following performance indicators.

	Target	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
		Budget	Projection								
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total borrowings / Rate revenue	Below 40%	11.9%	16.7%	12.9%	9.9%	15.8%	14.5%	13.1%	11.9%	10.7%	9.5%
Debt servicing / Rate revenue	Below 5%	3.5%	3.6%	3.7%	3.1%	3.0%	1.7%	1.6%	1.6%	1.5%	1.5%
Indebtedness / Own source revenue	Below 45%	30.2%	32.8%	31.5%	23.0%	22.3%	20.6%	19.0%	17.7%	16.2%	15.4%

Note on Indebtedness / Own source revenue when comparing to other Councils. Indebtedness (total non-current liabilities) as a percentage of own source revenue is well within the target level of below 45% to meet Council's targets over the ten-year period. A point of difference to many other councils if comparing this ratio, is that Council has a landfill provision which is included in non-current liabilities.

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8.12 Assumptions to the Financial Plan Statements

This section presents information regarding the assumptions to the Comprehensive Income Statement for the 10 years from 2025-26 to 2034-35. The assumptions comprise the annual escalations / movement for each line item of the Comprehensive Income Statement.

Escalation Factors (% Movement)	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
CPI Increase	3.00%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
Average Rate Increase (Rate Cap)	3.00%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
Supplementary Rates & Charges $'000	240	409	562	485	435	553	544	475	392	349
Garbage Collection Urban	4.00%	3.50%	3.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Garbage Collection Rural	6.07%	6.13%	6.17%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Statutory Fees & Fines	3.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
User Fees	3.50%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
Grants - Operating	3.00%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
Contributions - Monetary	3.00%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
Contributions - Non-Monetary Volunteers	14.27%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
Interest on Investments	4.10%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
Employee Costs	3.95%	3.50%	3.00%	2.58%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
Materials and Services	3.00%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
Other Expenses	3.00%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%

Notes:

- Current year based on actual statutory fees and fines which includes growth and CPI%.
- Contributions non-monetary volunteers are higher in 2025-26 due to kindergarten parent committees being recognised as volunteers for the first time (i.e. resulting in the larger % increase from the 2024-25 based year).
- Garbage collection charges are 0% in 2032-33 onwards as Council transitions to new waste operating model and may reset charges to reflect new service costs.
- Assumes new operations of the Surf Coast Aquatic and Recreation Facility commences from 2027 and Cultural Centre (subject to grant funding) from 2030-31 as part of the Torquay Jan Juc Developer Contribution Plan.

Revenue and Expenditure from the Comprehensive Income Statement

Rates and charges

The Victorian Government introduced rate capping from 2016 as a part of the *Fair Go Rates* system, requiring all Local Councils to limit their annual increase on rates. The rate cap applies to general rates and municipal charges. It does not apply to waste charges or the State's fire services property levy.

The rate cap for 2025-26 has been set at 3% as approved by the Minister for Local Government. Financial plan forecasts are based on Council complying with the expected rate cap. The annual rate increase for future years is based on state treasury's budgeted CPI forecasts.

The actual rate cap is announced by the Minister for Local Government in December of the preceding year of the budget.

In addition, additional properties and development in the Shire result in the projected additional supplementary rates. This is based on modelling undertaken by Council that is reviewed each budget cycle.

Waste charges are set to defray the total costs of waste management incurred across the municipal district. Future years' waste charges have been calculated to ensure Council continues to recover the full costs of providing waste services. With the changes to the waste services over the years, the cost for providing the rural and urban services now align. The fee for rural garbage collections is transitioning to the same levels as the urban garbage charge over the next three years from 2025-26.

Statutory fees and fines

The Financial Plan indexes statutory fees, set by legislation, according on the estimated annual rate of CPI. This is often a best-case scenario given some fees are outside of the control by Council and therefore may be subject to increases less than CPI.

User fees

Revenue from user fees is expected to increase by 3%. Details of user fees for the 2025-26 budget year can be found in Council's schedule of Fees and Charges that is adopted in conjunction with the budget.

Revenue increases for the ensuing years are based on a conservative annual rate of increase of CPI to reflect, as a minimum, annual increases in line with the state government rate cap. The 2026-27 year includes an increase associated with the commencement of the Wurdi Baierr Aquatic and Recreation Centre operations.

Grants

Council currently receives grants for tied (specific purpose grants) and un-tied Financial Assistance grant funding received via the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission (VLGGC). Operating grants are expected to increase in line with CPI to reflect, as a minimum, annual increases in line with the state government rate cap.

Council only allows for confirmed capital grant funding in budget allocations. Capital grants are essential for Council to deliver projects that will have intergenerational benefits and actively pursues grant funding opportunities where there is a sound business case and demonstrated community benefit.

Contributions

Council receives contributions from developers. These contributions represent funds to enable council to provide the necessary infrastructure and infrastructure improvements to accommodate development growth. The contributions are for specific purposes and often require Council to outlay funds for infrastructure works often before receipt of this income source. These contributions are statutory contributions and are transferred to a restricted reserve until utilised for a specific purpose through the capital works program or delivered as works in kind by developers. The Torquay Jan Juc Developer Contribution Plan contributions are budgeted for based on modelling of the scheme.

Other contribution increases are based on CPI.

Other income

Revenue from other income mainly comprises investment income.

Employee costs

Employee costs is one of the largest expenditure items and is required to deliver services supporting the community and meeting organisation commitments. Employee costs include a combination of direct wages and salaries, on-costs such as superannuation, WorkCover, leave entitlements, training and temporary staff arrangements. As well as recurrent employees, employee costs relating to operating projects and expensed capital projects are included.

The 2025-26 year enterprise agreement is under negotiation and also includes an increase to the superannuation guarantee of 0.5% and an allowance for level increments. Employee costs that were reduced in the 2024-25 year due to vacancies are budgeted back to normal levels.

Over the longer term, annual increases reflect an enterprise agreement based on the CPI which is tied to the rate cap projections. An allowance for new compliance and growth employees, net of recurrent savings of $166k per annum is included from 2026-27 onwards.

Materials and services

Material costs include items required for the maintenance and repairs of Council buildings, roads, drains and footpaths which are more governed by market forces based on availability than CPI. Other associated costs included under this category are utilities, materials for the supply of meals on wheels and consumable items for a range of services. Council also utilises external expertise on a range of matters, including legal services and audit. These costs are kept to within CPI levels year on year. The 2026-27 year includes an increase associated with the commencement of the Wurdi Baierr Aquatic and Recreation Centre operations.

An allowance for new compliance and growth materials and services, net of recurrent savings of $166k per annum is included from 2026-27 onwards.

Depreciation & amortisation

Depreciation estimates have been based on Council's asset base and the projected capital spending contained within this plan.

Borrowing costs

Borrowing costs comprise the interest expense to service Council's loan portfolio that is described in Section 7.6.

Other expenses

Other expenses include administration costs such as Councillor allowances, lease expenditure, lease interest and audit costs. These costs are kept to within CPI levels year on year.

8.13 Projections Financial Sustainability Measures

This section defines the policy statements, and associated measures, which demonstrates Council's financial capacity to fund the aspirations of the Community Vision and the Council Plan while remaining financially sustainable.

Notes	Policy Statement	Measure	Target	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
				Budget	Projection								
	A minimum balance of $250,000 must be retained in the Future Cash Fund Reserve in every year of the Financial Plan.	Future Cash Fund Reserve Balance	**> $250,000**	$13,028,922	$10,946,181	$7,658,370	$5,915,822	$3,298,007	$3,146,243	$3,076,604	$2,340,083	$1,257,627	$251,003
1	A cash deficit in any year must be funded by a reserve allocation; however this is only an interim solution with a strategy required to return to an ongoing surplus.	Cash Result must be greater than or equal to zero	**>= $0**	$2,140,327	($1,892,742)	($3,097,810)	($1,552,548)	($2,427,815)	$38,236	$120,361	($546,521)	($892,457)	($816,624)
	New borrowings will only be taken where there is capacity to fund debt servicing costs for every year of the loan and will not be taken out to fund deficits or asset renewal requirements.	Interest and principal repayments on interest bearing loans and borrowings / rate revenue	**< 10%**	3.5%	3.6%	3.7%	3.1%	3.0%	1.7%	1.6%	1.6%	1.5%	1.5%
	That Council applies loan funding to new capital or to fund a defined benefit call or rehabilitation of the landfill and maintains total borrowings in line with rate income and growth of the municipality.	Interest bearing loans and borowings/rate revenue	**< 40%**	11.9%	16.7%	12.9%	9.9%	15.8%	14.5%	13.1%	11.9%	10.7%	9.5%
	Ensure Council maintains sufficient working capital to meet its debt obligations as they fall due.	Current Assets / Current Liabilities	**> 125%**	366%	297%	282%	230%	196%	260%	235%	246%	242%	262%
2	Allocate adequate funds towards renewal capital in order to replace assets and infrastructure as they reach the end of their service life.	Asset Modelling	**VP% < 3.3%**	< 3.3%	< 3.3%	< 3.3%	< 3.3%	< 3.3%	< 3.3%	< 3.3%	< 3.3%	< 3.3%	< 3.3%
3	Recurrent EBITDA (excluding waste) is required to fund increases in obligations and discretionary allocations.	Recurrent EBITDA (excluding Waste and Other) growth year on year	**Positive %**	5.9%	-3.0%	2.7%	7.3%	4.5%	0.8%	4.8%	4.2%	3.5%	3.0%

Notes:

1. The Cash Results includes years of deficits. In terms of funding this within the Financial Plan:
   i. The Future Cash Fund Reserve holds sufficient funds to cover these deficits, noting the closing balance however is just above the minimum balance of $250,000.
   ii. This strategy requires discipline in coming years not to reallocate funds to cover the deficits unless an alternative solution is in place.
2. This item needs to be considered within the context of State of the Assets discussed in Section 4.5. The outcome each year of the %VP (Very Poor) for Council assets are assets that are typically at intervention level that are nearing the end of their useful life but have not yet been allocated funding.
3. The measure of recurrent EBITDA (excluding Waste and Other) growth target is not met in the 2026-27 year due to the newly introduced operating costs of running the Wurdi Baierr Aquatic and Recreation Centre in 2026-27.

9. Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Annual Budget Report	The yearly budget adopted by Council to allocate resources and deliver the Council Plan.
Asset Plan	A strategic plan that outlines how Council will manage, renew, maintain, and fund its infrastructure and community assets.
Asset Renewal	Investment to restore, refurbish, or replace existing assets so they continue providing their intended service.
Asset Renewal Reserve	A dedicated cash reserve fund for financing the renewal of Council infrastructure (for example: buildings, drainage, roads, parks, recreation, heavy plant and fleet).
Balance Sheet	A financial statement showing Council's assets, liabilities, and equity at a point in time.
Cash Reserves	Cash reserves are funds that Council sets aside for specific purposes or future needs, rather than spending them immediately.
Carried Forward Capital Works Reserve	Reserve for ongoing capital works projects at end of financial year, carried into the following year.
Carried Forward Operational Projects Reserve	Reserve for incomplete operational projects at end of financial year, carried into the following year.
Community Vision	The community's long-term aspirations for Surf Coast Shire, guiding the Council Plan and strategic documents.
Comprehensive Income Statement	A financial report showing Council's revenues, expenses, and net result (surplus or deficit) for a period.
Council Plan	A four-year plan detailing objectives and strategies to deliver the Community Vision, including service and infrastructure outcomes.
CPI (Consumer Price Index)	A measure of inflation that reflects changes in the cost of living; used in rate cap calculations by the Victorian Government.
DCP (Development Contribution Plan)	A mechanism requiring developers to contribute to infrastructure that supports growth areas meet infrastructure needs.
Deficit	When Council's expenses exceed revenue in a financial period.
Defined Benefits Superannuation Reserve	Reserve to fund potential future shortfalls in Council's superannuation obligations under the Defined Benefits superannuation scheme.
EBITDA (Earnings Before Interest, Tax, Depreciation and Amortisation)	A measure of Council's recurrent operating performance, excluding one-off items like projects and asset sales and other items such as interest, depreciation and amortisation. EBITDA surplus (and its growth) is a key measure of how much reoccurring cash from our ongoing operations is generated to meet Councils other obligations and commitments.
Financial Plan	A ten-year strategy detailing how Council manages finances to deliver services, maintain infrastructure, and ensure financial sustainability.

Gherang Gravel Pits Reserve	Reserve for rehabilitation of gravel pits; excess funds may be used for discretionary purposes.
Future Cash Fund Reserve	Council's reserve that identifies cash available for allocation as determined by Council for future purposes, and to manage Council's long term financial plan cash demands.
LGPRF (Local Government Performance Reporting Framework)	State framework for reporting Council service performance and financial sustainability.
Main Drainage Reserve	Reserve holding developer contributions for drainage works in designated catchment areas.
Open Space Reserve	Reserve funded by developer contributions in lieu of land, used for parks, playgrounds, and recreation facilities.
PVP (Poor and Very Poor) Asset Condition Measure	Asset condition rating used to identify infrastructure near the end of useful life requiring renewal.
Rate Cap	The maximum allowable increase in general rates set annually by the Minister for Local Government under the Fair Go Rates system.
Reserves	Dedicated funds set aside for specific purposes such as asset renewal, waste, or infrastructure projects.
Revenue and Rating Plan	Outlines Council's rating structure and revenue policies to fund the objectives of the Council Plan.
Strategic Levers and Actions	Key areas within Councils control that can influence its financial position, improve efficiency and maintain long term financial sustainability.
Statement of Capital Works	A financial report detailing capital projects such as new infrastructure, expansion, upgrades, or renewals.
Statement of Cash Flows	A financial statement showing Council's cash inflows and outflows from operating, investing, and financing activities.
Statement of Human Resources	A report detailing Council's workforce planning and staffing resources.
Surplus	When Council's revenues exceed expenses in a financial period.
Supplementary Rates	Council's rate revenue also increases from supplementary rates, which are new rates that are created throughout the year from the building of new properties, subdivisions or existing property development. Supplementary rates are identified separately in the Financial Plan as these funds are important to support the needs of a growing population.
VLGGC (Victorian Local Government Grants Commission)	State body that allocates Commonwealth financial assistance grants to local councils in Victoria.
Waste Reserve	The purpose of this reserve is to ensure that the full cost of the waste function is met by the waste charges (garbage charge and fee income from landfill) and that surpluses and deficits on an annual basis can be covered without any adverse impact on the balance of Council's budget.
Winchelsea Infrastructure Plan Allocation Reserve	Reserve for funding infrastructure projects under the Winchelsea Infrastructure Plan.

4.3 Asset Plan 2025 - 2035

Council Plan	**Theme Seven - Accountable and Viable Council** Strategy 18 - Establish a sustainable financial position.
Author's Title:	Manager Assets and Engineering
General Manager:	Chris Pike, General Manager Placemaking and Environment
Division:	Placemaking and Environment
Department:	Placemaking and Environment
Attachments:	1. Asset Plan 2025-2035 [**4.3.1** - 56 pages]

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Asset Plan 2025 - 2035 (**Attachment 1**) to Council for adoption.

Recommendation

That Council adopts the Asset Plan 2025-2035 **(Attachment 1)**.

Council Resolution

Moved Cr Pattison, Seconded Cr Schonfelder

That Council adopts the Asset Plan 2025-2035 **(Attachment 1)**.

CARRIED 8|1

For	Against	Abstained
Cr Bodsworth Cr Bourke Cr Grist Cr Pattison Cr Phelps Cr Schonfelder Cr Stapleton Cr Walker	Cr Barker	Nil

Outcome

2. Together with the Council Plan (incorporating the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) 2025-2029 and Financial Plan 2025-2035, this Asset Plan provides a strategic roadmap for managing and using resources efficiently and effectively. It aligns our assets with organisational goals, promotes sustainability, and helps minimise risks for our community. By considering intergenerational equity, the plan ensures that future generations share in the benefits. It also supports informed decision-making and smarter resource allocation, ultimately strengthening operational performance and long-term success.

Key Considerations

3. In accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council is required to adopt an Asset Plan (as well as a Council Plan and Financial Plan) by 31 October 2025.

4. The Asset Plan, along with the Financial Plan, outlines how Council will resource delivery of its Council Plan.

5. The Asset Plan includes an Improvement Plan that outlines several key initiatives for Council to progress during the life of the plan including:

    5.1. Climate Resilience Modelling.

    5.2. Gender and Equity Impact Assessments.

    5.3. Asset Modelling.

    5.4. Asset Rationalisation.

    5.5. Funding Performance.

    5.6. Asset Management Reporting.

    5.7. Linkages to Strategic Documents.

Background

6. In June 2021 council adopted its first Asset Plan as required under the *Local Government Act 2020.*

7. This new Asset Plan has been developed alongside the process of developing and adopting a new Council Plan.

8. The development of the new plan has considered the following key items:

    8.1. The need for Council's asset portfolio to support the newly developed Council Plan and align with the new Financial Plan.
    8.2. Providing the community with a snapshot of Council's asset portfolio, management and funding.
    8.3. Key improvements that Council can undertake to manage its assets better in the future.

Options

9. **Alternative Option 1** – That Council does not adopt the Asset Plan 2025-2035.

This option is not recommended by officers as Council would be in breach of its requirements under the *Local Government Act 2020*. In addition, it would not have an overarching plan documenting its commitment to managing its asset portfolio.

10. **Alternative Option 2** – That Council adopts an amended version of the Asset Plan.

This option is not recommended by officers as the Asset Plan was developed through an extensive collaborative workshop process with Councillors and the content is based on community perspectives gathered through intensive participatory and deliberative engagement processes.

Council Plan (including Health and Wellbeing Plan) Statement

Theme Seven - Accountable and Viable Council

Strategy 18 - Establish a sustainable financial position.

11. The Asset Plan along with the Financial Plan outlines Council's future financial allocations and commitment towards its asset portfolio.

Financial Considerations

12. The Asset Plan outlines Council's future asset renewal program funding approach which has been developed in conjunction with the development of Council's Financial Plan.

Community Engagement

13. A community engagement plan was prepared to inform development of the Council's strategic plans, including the Council Plan (incorporating the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan), Financial Plan and Asset Plan.

14. The engagement plan was delivered through the Our Focus Our Future project. Phase one (November 2024 - February 2025) included a participatory survey and was designed to capture diverse perspectives and priorities from residents of all ages. Phase two (February 2025 - March 2025) of the engagement was the undertaken through a community panel.

15. Phase one drew more than 1000 contributions from the community. The engagement revealed a highly invested community with clear priorities and concerns.

16. The Surf Coast Shire Community Panel was asked to deliberate on key dilemmas being faced by Council and then to develop principles to help shape the Council's strategic plans and inform ongoing decision making. The remit for the community panel was *How can Council balance the priorities of our community and meet legislative obligations, whilst remaining in a financially sustainable position?*

17. A representative sample of 43 people formed the panel and spent one evening session and three whole Saturdays working together to develop their principles.

18. The findings of the engagement are included in the Our Focus Our Future Community Engagement Report February 2025 and the Surf Coast Shire Community Panel Report March 2025, both of which were received by Council in June 2025 as part of considering the draft Council Plan.

19. The engagement has informed development of the Asset Plan.

Statutory / Legal / Policy Considerations

20. By adopting the new Asset Plan Council meets its obligations under the *Local Government Act 2020.*

21. In line with Council's requirements under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* a Gender and Equity Impact Assessment (GEIA) has been conducted.

22. GEIA research noted potential intersectional gendered differences/impacts for community members in asset management due to the different ways that people -

across gender, age, ability, culture, and caregiving roles - access and utilise assets. Women, gender-diverse people, First Nations communities, people with disabilities, and carers often experience different barriers and needs, meaning that decisions about investment, maintenance, and renewal can unintentionally reinforce inequities if these diverse perspectives are not considered.

23. Key recommendations included the use of gender disaggregated community engagement data to inform decision making, the inclusion of a GEIA process for asset management implementation, and inclusion of a commitment to apply GEIAs to all classes of facilities and works prioritisation.

Strategic Risk

24. **Breadth and level of Council operations exceed Council's long term financial sustainability**
Inherent Risk Rating - *Serious*, Residual Risk Rating - *Medium*

25. By adopting the new Asset Plan, Council meets its obligation under the *Local Government Act 2020,* as well as having a strategic framework with which to manage its asset portfolio.

Risk Rating

26. Risk rating is medium and can be managed at department level.

Risk Appetite

27. There is no Risk Appetite Statement applicable to this report.

Sustainability Considerations

28. The Asset Plan takes into consideration the need to sustainably manage Council's asset portfolio. In particular, the Improvement Plan identifies the need to integrate climate adaptation scenarios into asset lifecycle modelling and planning, including coastal erosion, bushfire risk, and increased storm intensity, to inform prioritisation and renewal decisions. This aligns with Council's Climate Emergency Response Plan.

Conflict of Interest

29. No officer declared a conflict of interest under the *Local Government Act 2020* in the preparation of this report.

Confidentiality

30. This report and attachments contain no confidential information under section 66(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Transparency

Audit and Risk Committee involvement
31. This is not within the scope of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Councillor Briefings

32. This item was discussed at the following Councillor briefings prior to being presented to Council for consideration. Councillor attendance at each briefing was as follows:

Councillor Briefing Date: 4/6/2025

Councillor name	*In attendance (Y/N)*	*Councillor name*	*In attendance (Y/N)*
Cr Paul Barker	*N*	*Cr Tony Phelps*	*Y*
Cr Mike Bodsworth	*Y*	*Cr Adrian Schonfelder*	*Y*
Cr Rebecca Bourke	*Y*	*Cr Libby Stapleton*	*Y*
Cr Joel Grist	*Y*	*Cr Leon Walker*	*Y*
Cr Liz Pattison	*Y*		

Councillor Briefing Date: 12/8/2025

Councillor name	*In attendance (Y/N)*	*Councillor name*	*In attendance (Y/N)*
Cr Paul Barker	*Y*	*Cr Tony Phelps*	*Y*
Cr Mike Bodsworth	*Y*	*Cr Adrian Schonfelder*	*Y*
Cr Rebecca Bourke	*Y*	*Cr Libby Stapleton*	*N*
Cr Joel Grist	*Y*	*Cr Leon Walker*	*Y*
Cr Liz Pattison	*N*		

Councillor attendance at briefings is not a statutory requirement. Councillors are able to access and request information through a number of mechanisms to understand matters being presented at a Council Meeting.

SURF COAST SHIRE COUNCIL

Asset Plan

2025-2035

surfcoast.vic.gov.au

Surf COAST SHIRE

Acknowledgement of Country

Surf Coast Shire Council acknowledges the Wadawurrung People and the Gulidjan and Gadubanud Peoples of the Eastern Maar Nation as the Traditional Owners of the lands our shire spans. We pay our respects to their Ancestors and to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise and respect their beliefs, customs and values, which continue to sustain their intrinsic connection with Country that has endured for more than 60,000 years.

We value the contribution their Caring for Country makes to the lands, ocean, waterways, plants, wildlife and people of Surf Coast Shire, and acknowledge we have much to learn from the Traditional Owners, especially in changing how we think, work and act in relation to climate change.

We therefore commit to walking alongside the Traditional Owners, allowing them to guide us so that together we can have a more positive impact on our environment and communities in the Surf Coast Shire.

We embrace the spirit of Reconciliation, working towards self-determination, equity of outcomes and an equal voice for Australia's First Nations People.

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Together with the Council Plan 2025-2029 and Financial Plan 2025-2035, this Asset Plan provides a strategic roadmap for managing and using resources efficiently and effectively. It aligns our assets with organisational goals, promotes sustainability, and helps minimise risks for our community. By considering intergenerational equity, the plan ensures that future generations share in the benefits. It also supports informed decision-making and smarter resource allocation, ultimately strengthening operational performance and long-term success.

1. Our Shire at a Glance

Surf Coast Shire is located in south-west Victoria, covering approximately 1,560 square kilometres. The shire is home to a range of diverse landscapes, including the rugged coastline of the Great Ocean Road to the lush hinterlands of the Otway Ranges. As of 2024, the shire is home to around 39,928 residents, with vibrant communities in townships such as Torquay, Anglesea, Lorne, and Winchelsea. The region is renowned for its natural beauty and iconic attractions, including Bells Beach, the Split Point Lighthouse at Aireys Inlet, and the expansive Great Otway National Park.

The region's economy is primarily driven by tourism, construction, retail, and agriculture. Seasonal tourism plays a major role, with the population more than tripling during peak holiday periods. Ongoing population growth and urban development are increasing demand for infrastructure and services, reinforcing the need for sustainable, forward-looking asset management.

Council is responsible for managing a significant and growing portfolio of assets valued at approximately $1.7 billion. This includes infrastructure, land, fleet and IT assets. The infrastructure assets such as transport infrastructure (roads and footpaths), buildings, recreational facilities, open spaces, and drainage systems are carefully planned and modelled over their life cycle to ensure they are maintained and renewed at the right time. These infrastructure assets are vital to connecting communities, supporting resilience, and maintaining the unique character of the Surf Coast region. The other assets, such as IT systems and fleet vehicles, are not included in this long-term modelling, as they are managed using different approaches suited to their shorter life spans. Appendix 2 shows the long-term financial plan for non-modelled assets.

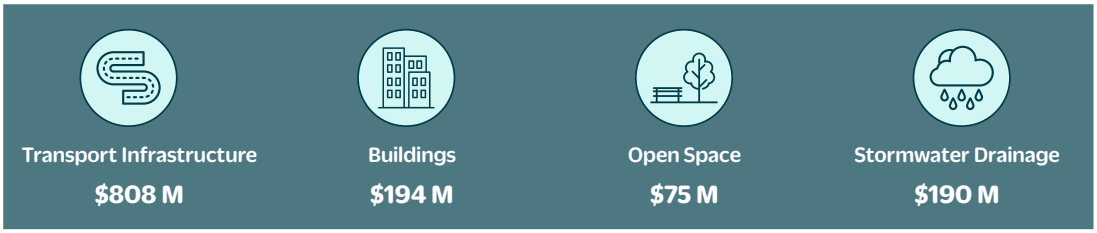
This Asset Plan outlines how Council intends to manage its infrastructure over the next 10 years, with a focus on sustainability, financial responsibility, and community wellbeing. This ensures our assets support the services and amenities our community needs and expects, both now and in the future, providing sustainable benefits for all residents.

The latest ERP for Surf Coast is 39,928 people (REMPLAN/ABS 2024)

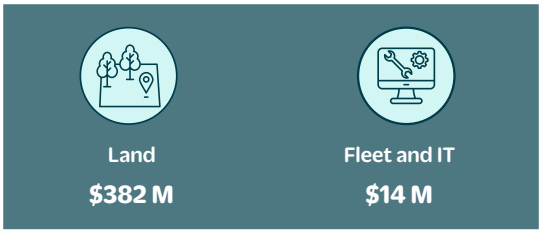
2. Our Assets Story on a Page

Total Value of Councils Asset Base $1.7 Billion[1]

Total Value of Infrastructure Assets $1.2 Billion[2]



Non-Modelled Asset Classes

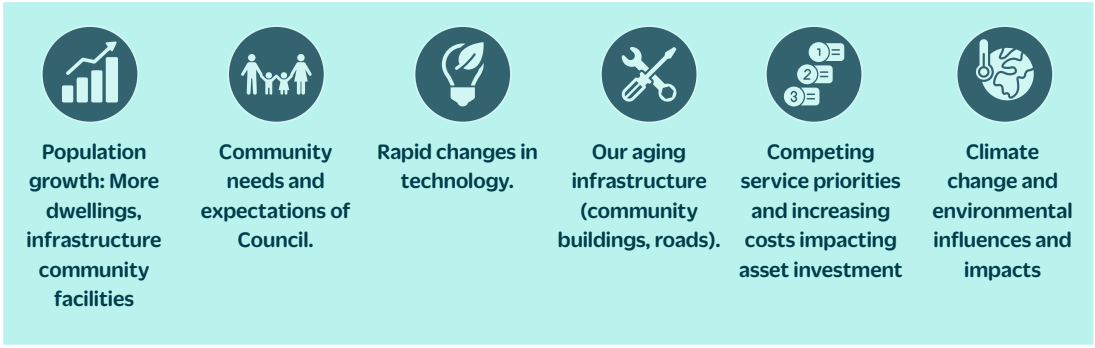


HEALTH CHECK

	Replacement Cost $925 M	Average Condition 1.97	PVP[3] 5.8%	VP[4] 0.48%
Transport Infrastructure	$808 M	1.92	6.84%	0.49%
Buildings	$194 M	2.33	4.04%	0.74%
Open Space	$75 M	2.22	5.02%	0.99%
Stormwater Drainage	$190 M	1.77	3.79%	0.03%
Fleet & IT Equipment	$14 M	N/A	N/A	N/A
Land	$382 M	N/A	N/A	N/A

1 Figure from Draft 2025-26 Budget
2 Includes roads, footpaths, buildings, open space, and drainage
3 PVP stands for Poor and Very Poor Condition
4 VP stands for Very Poor Condition

Key Challenges and Opportunities



2.1 Our Plan

Focus Area	Initiative
Service Delivery	Meet service levels aligned with community expectations
Growth Management	Manage growth through demand strategies and targeted infrastructure investment
Lifecycle Planning	Apply lifecycle costing to optimise long-term asset strategies
Organisational Support	Enable effective service delivery across the organisation
Asset Condition & Safety	Ensure assets are safe, fit for purpose, and prioritised for replacement
Sustainability	Minimise environmental impacts of asset decisions
Risk Management	Identify and manage risks across the asset portfolio

3. Introduction

3.1 Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of this Asset Plan is to guide Surf Coast Shire's approach to best practice asset management and to establish clear principles for responsible, evidence-based investment in public infrastructure. This document presents a long-term strategy for the sustainable stewardship of Council assets, ensuring they continue to meet the needs of our community now and into the future. It is a public-facing plan developed in alignment with Council's community vision (below), organisational goals, and strategic direction.

> From the hinterland to the coast, from the First Peoples to the children of the future, we are an active, diverse community that lives creatively to value, protect and enhance the natural environment and our unique neighbourhoods. We will leave the Surf Coast Shire better than we found it..

This plan outlines how we will optimise capital and operational investment, balancing the demands of asset renewal and maintenance with population growth and evolving community expectations. It supports consistent and transparent decision-making, strengthens links between service levels and funding, and enables meaningful engagement with the community and Council through performance reporting.

The Asset Plan also addresses the challenges of managing economic, environmental, cultural, and social outcomes within finite financial resources. It includes an assessment of current asset management maturity and outlines a targeted improvement plan to close identified gaps.

Finally, the Plan provides 10-year expenditure forecasts to inform long-term financial planning, annual budgets, and capital works programs ensuring assets continue to support high-quality service delivery across the municipality.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT

Council has prepared this Asset Plan in compliance with Victoria's Local Government Act 2020 which requires councils to develop integrated, long-term and transparent asset plans to achieve the best outcomes for the community with a timeline of at least 10 years.

COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLANNING

Our Asset Plan is integrated within the broader Council planning framework. It aligns closely with:

- **Community Vision (People Place Future):** Reflecting our long-term aspirations.
- **Council Plan (incl Health & Wellbeing Plan) 2025-2029:** Outlining short- to medium-term priorities.
- **Financial Plan 2025-2035:** Ensuring financial sustainability.

This alignment ensures that asset management decisions support our overall strategic objectives and are compliant with legislative requirements.

Other key planning documents that this plan should be read in conjunction with include:

- Strategic Asset Management Policy
- Asset Management Strategy
- Asset Accounting Policy
- Asset Renewal Funding Strategy

Council's Deliberative Engagement

In line with Council's Communication Engagement Policy, we will engage with our community in relation to decisions that affect asset and service delivery. We will use deliberative engagement practices in the development of key strategic asset management strategies.

What is asset management?

A systematic process to guide the planning and design, creation and acquisition, maintenance and operations, renewal, disposal and rationalisation of assets to balance available funds with community needs.

Why is asset management important?

Our community understandably expects assets to be provided to a standard that ensures public safety, amenity and accessibility and to support the delivery of quality services and programs.

We need to balance delivering what our community needs and expects with what our community can afford.

Over time, our community needs and expectations are bound to change, with demographics, climate and technology constantly evolving.

With a finite budget for investment in assets, a planned and measured approach to asset management is necessary to ensure a fair and fiscally prudent long-term financial plan.

"Our Council is committed to making informed decisions by drawing on the best available evidence and actively engaging with the community. We prioritise transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement to ensure our actions are well-considered and truly reflect the needs and values of our community."

Cr Mike Bodsworth, Mayor

"We are creating a long-term investment plan to ensure our assets are fit-for-purpose, deliver the services that our community needs and remain affordable for ratepayers."

Robyn Seymour, Chief Executive Officer

3.2 Our Community and Population

Surf Coast Shire is renowned for its lifestyle, vibrant communities and natural beauty.

The shire's population was estimated at 39,928 in 2024, reflecting significant growth in recent years. Projections indicate that by 2046, the population could reach approximately 55,795, driven by a consistent annual growth rate of 3.8%.

The shire comprises many individual townships, including Aireys Inlet, Anglesea, Bellbrae, Deans Marsh, Fairhaven, Jan Juc, Lorne, Moriac, Torquay and Winchelsea - each is a unique community with a strong sense of its own identity.

39,928
Population in 2024
Source: REMPLAN/ABS ERP

14.5%
Estimated Population growth 2024 to 2036
Source: id.com.au

45,717
Population Forecast 2036
Source: ABS Census 2021

17.1%
Population born overseas
Source: ABS Census 2021

Our Top Industries
Construction, Accommodation & Food Services, Retail, Trade, Health Care & Social Assistance, Education & Training, Professional, Scientific & Technical Services, Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing,
Source: REMPLAN

0.6%
Population identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
Source: ABS Census 2021

3,644
Businesses
Source: ABS Census 2021

12,576
Jobs
Source: REMPLAN

$2.1B
Gross Regional Product
Source: REMPLAN

3.3 Our Future Ahead

The following table summarises how Council's strategic priorities align with asset management initiatives across the five key themes identified in the Council Plan. These themes provide strategic direction for investment, planning and decision-making relating to Council's infrastructure portfolio.

Council Plan Theme	Theme Description	Asset Management Initiative
Community Wellbeing	Council seeks to increase community participation and empowerment and will favour projects being led by community where possible. Council will foster healthy active living and community connections for all age groups that improve wellbeing and are equitable and inclusive. The needs of younger and future generations will be prioritised given Council's role in planning for the future.	Deliver social infrastructure, public spaces, and community services that support health and inter-generational social connection.
Sustainable Communities	The qualities that make a place liveable, sustainable and functional will be understood and enhanced. Community members will be central to this work and in the specific growth areas of the shire, Place Plans will guide design and development to build communities that are vibrant, welcoming, sustainable and less car dependent. Tourism will be an important element but not at the expense of local amenity or environmental values.	Plan and facilitate growth with placemaking principles; invest in active/public transport; support long-term affordable housing in key townships.
Climate and Environmental Leadership	Council will ensure its own operations are adapted to climate and weather events and build and renew assets with future needs in mind. It will play a leadership role within the community and continue to advocate for more upfront investment in resilient assets and mitigation actions. Areas of environmental significance will be valued and a high priority will be placed on preservation and conservation.	Build and renew assets with future climate impacts in mind; advocate for investment in climate-resilient infrastructure; integrate environmental sustainability in decisions.
Infrastructure and Assets	The important role assets play in our community will be given specific recognition. Investment in assets will be equitable and evidence based. Road condition and function will be a focus whilst Council also broadens options for non car-based travel. Maintenance levels will be calculated to achieve the best balance of cost and amenity over time.	Prioritise asset maintenance and renewal; review service strategies and intervention levels; adapt asset renewal for climate and usage shifts; develop sealed/unsealed road strategy.
High Performing Council	Council decisions are made based on evidence and with an emphasis on long term community benefit. Council is trusted and collaborative. It manages its finances prudently and works innovatively to deliver the best value. Revenue options should carefully consider people's capacity to pay.	Use service reviews for continuous improvement; ensure revenue and cost-recovery initiatives are equitable; advocate for funding; manage spending with long-term view.

4. Strategic Context

4.1 Strategic Alignment

Surf Coast Shire Council's Asset Plan is one of several key strategic documents developed to deliver on the community's long-term aspirations. This plan is directly shaped by the Surf Coast Community Vision and is integrated with Council's broader planning framework, including the Council Plan, Financial Plan, and key service strategies. Together, these documents reflect Council's commitment to achieving sustainable, place-based outcomes that support a thriving, connected, and environmentally responsible community.

Asset planning plays a critical role in enabling Council to deliver services and infrastructure that align with strategic goals. By linking asset investment decisions to the five key themes of the Council Plan. This Plan ensures that infrastructure provision keeps pace with changing community needs, supports liveability, and promotes long-term financial and environmental sustainability.

Our purpose is:

"We exist to help our community and environment to thrive."

Our Community Vision is:

From the hinterland to the coast, from the first peoples to the children of the future, we are an active, diverse community that lives creatively to value, protect and enhance the natural environment and our unique neighbourhoods. We will leave the Surf Coast better than we found it.

Our organisational direction is:

An innovative and flexible leader, and a constructive partner, that values the strengths of others; a place where people can do their best and be proud of their achievements.

4.2 Integrated Planning

Under the Local Government Act (Victoria) 2020, Council is legislatively required to establish a suite of strategic management plans, which guide Council's future planning, asset management and financial sustainability.

An overview of these strategic management plans and how they support their delivery is shown below.

Strategic Planning Document	Role	Horizon & Review Cycle
Community Vision	Our community's aspirations and priorities for the future of Surf Coast Shire.	10 Years
Council Plan	Details the objectives and goals to aim for to achieve the Community Vision with a 4-year delivery focus	4 years
The Asset Management Policy	Sets the principles for consistent and appropriate asset management practices, processes and systems across the portfolio and sets the strategic intent for the sustainable management of Councils assets	4 yearly review
Asset Management Strategy	The Asset Management Strategy guides how Council plans, maintains, and invests in infrastructure to support service delivery, meet community needs, and ensure long-term sustainability.	4 years
Asset Plan	Details the strategic actions and asset management indicators that provide for deliberative community engagement in line with the Victorian 2020 regulation.	4 years (10 years of scenario planning)
Long Term Financial Plan	Council's Financial Plan detailing the Capital Works Plan, Income and Funding Sources and Local Government Financial metrics.	10 years outlook and Annual Review
Workforce Plan	Outlines how we will manage our resources and budgets to deliver projects	4 years
Annual Business Plan + Budget	Outlines how we will manage our resources and budgets to deliver projects	1-2 years
Individual Asset Class Plans	For each major class – transport, buildings, open space and stormwater drainage, it details the funding need for maintenance and capital for a range of service levels	10 years (comprehensive update every re-valuation cycle.)
Asset Renewal Funding Strategy	Formalise the financial principles and approach relating to asset renewal funding allocation, and the management of asset renewal funds.	4 years

4.3 Asset Management Planning

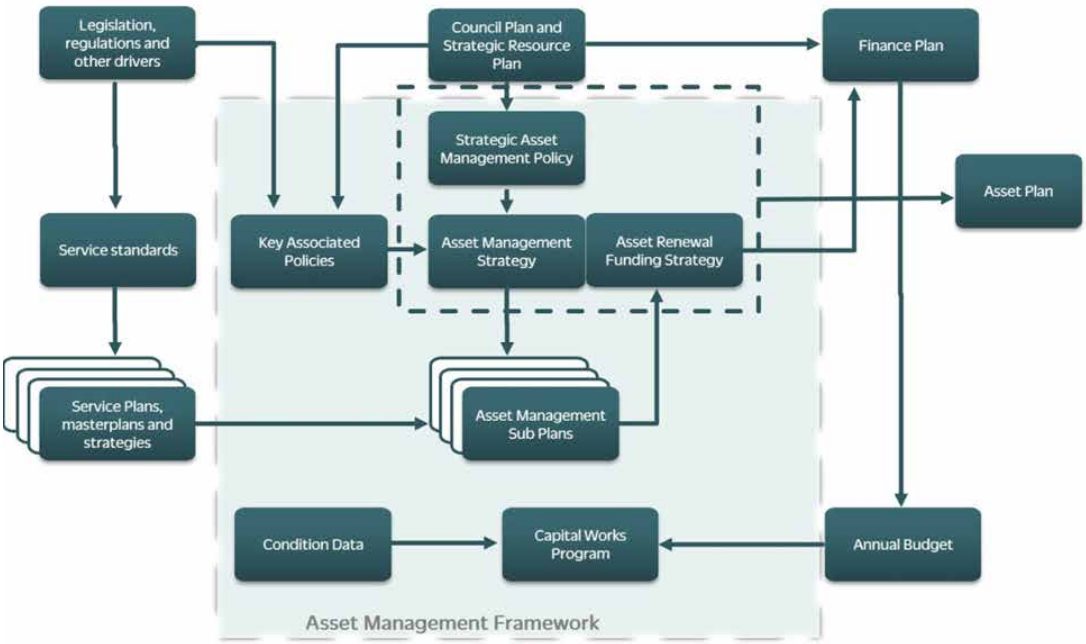
Council takes a lifecycle management approach to asset management planning, considering the resourcing requirements to operate, maintain, rehabilitate and renew assets to meet service level requirements and asset useful life expectancy.

To ensure we get the best possible return on our asset spending, we take a lifecycle approach to asset management that considers the costs of an asset over its useful life, that is from the time a new asset is built or acquired to the time it is replaced or disposed of. This approach allows us to get the most out of our assets by meeting required levels of service in the most cost-effective way.

Council's asset management practices are also governed internally by the Asset Management Policy, the Asset Plan and supporting documents, strategies. The whole process is supported by enablers such as technology, data, processes and people and is informed by key corporate and strategic documents. Council's Asset Management Framework is outlined below.

Asset Management Framework

Surf Coast Shire's Asset Management Framework provides a structured approach to managing our assets sustainably, ensuring alignment with strategic goals, community expectations, and long-term financial planning.



4.4 Lifecycle Approach to Asset Management

1. **Planning and design**
   When identifying asset requirements that meet service delivery needs over the long term, whole-of-life costs and other factors such as affordability, equity, accessibility, maintainability and the environment are considered.

1. **Creation and acquisition**
   Before constructing, expanding, upgrading or acquiring a new asset, alternative service delivery solutions are considered such as leasing or strategic partnerships. Any new build should align to an endorsed management plan or strategy and is supported by a life cycle cost that informs the Financial Plan for long term maintenance and renewal needs.

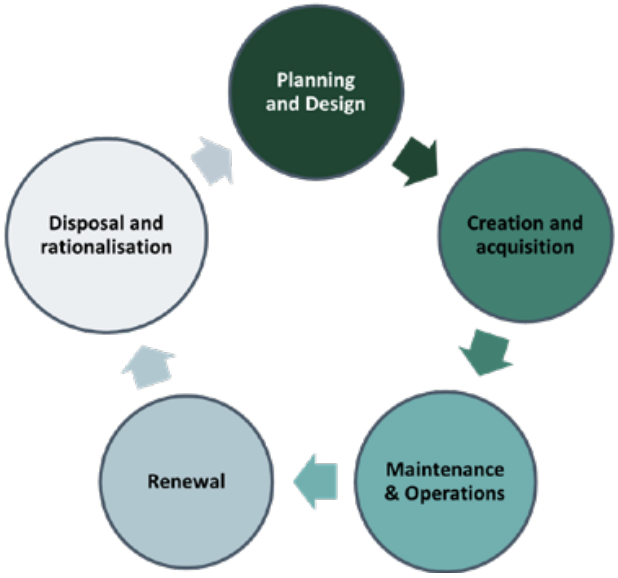
1. **Maintenance and operations**
   Each asset's operations are monitored consistently over its useful life. A program of planned condition assessments, maintenance and servicing is undertaken to minimise ongoing costs and the risk of asset failure and to ensure the asset remains operational, safe and compliant, and meets current maintenance levels of service.

1. **Renewal**
   Existing assets are replaced only when they have reached their intervention state. That is, they no longer support the required level of service delivery. Prioritisation of such works is based on criticality of the service and associated assets.

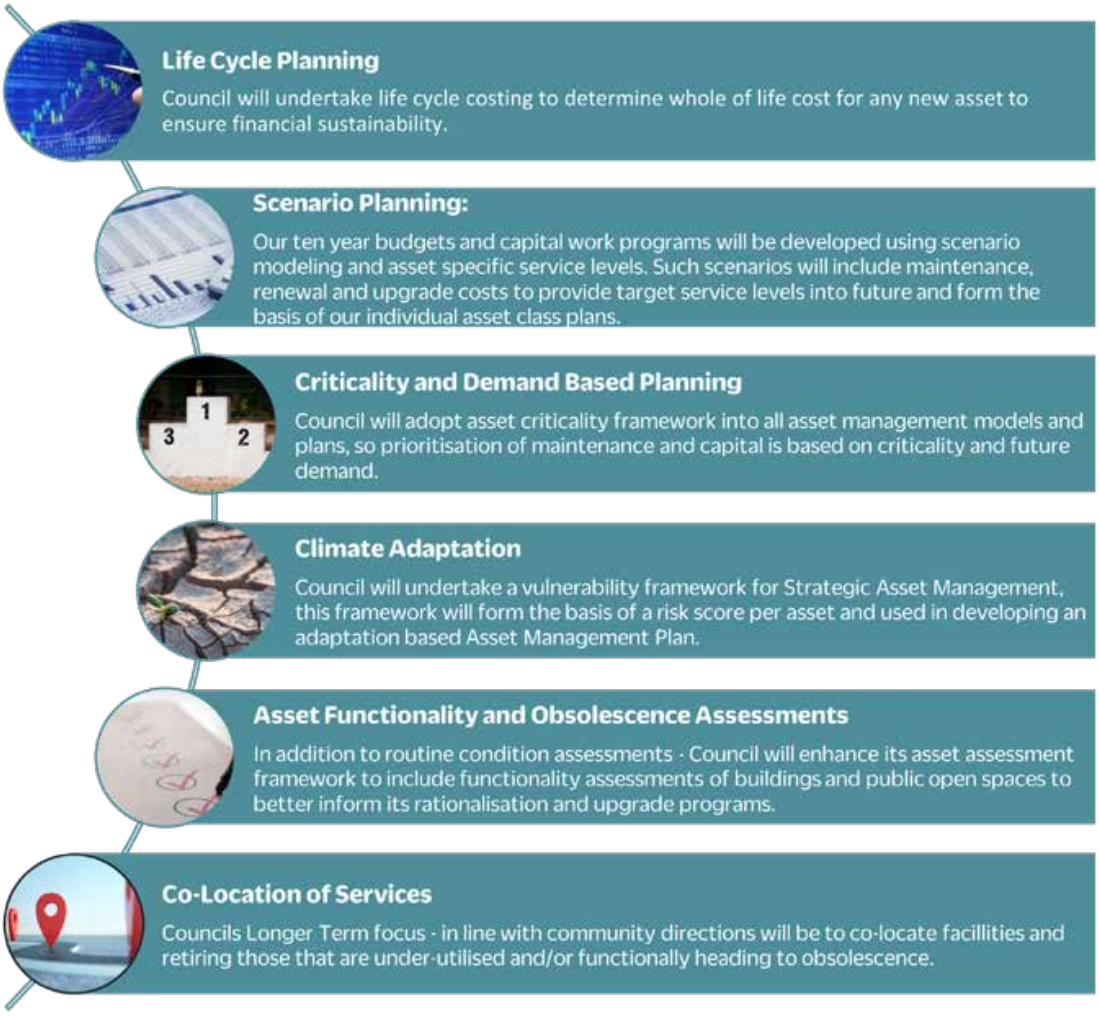
1. **Upgrade/expansion**
   Upgrades or expansions are considered when an asset no longer meets current or future service needs due to factors such as increased use, regulatory changes, or evolving community expectations. Projects must align with Council's strategic objectives, demonstrate a clear service benefit, and be assessed for long-term affordability and sustainability. Where possible, upgrades are coordinated with renewal works to maximise value.

1. **Disposal and rationalisation**
   Where an asset no longer directly supports the required level of service delivery, decommissioning or rationalisation of the asset to reduce lifecycle costs is considered as part of long-term financial planning.

Asset information – inventory, condition, functionality and capacity are recorded in our enterprise systems. Our funding is based on scenario planning using a service level-based approach.



4.5 Strategic Initiatives



5. Our Community's Role

We are committed to engaging with our community and ensuring transparency in our decision-making by providing opportunities for input into decisions that affect asset and service delivery.

In compliance with the Local Government Act 2020, we seek feedback from the community at key points in the decision-making process, where possible, to ensure we provide services and assets that are sustainable and available for future generations. Our stakeholders include the community, council, user groups and community groups.

We value the contribution that local voices bring to local decision making and we aim to provide easy access to information, to explain our actions with clarity and to make decisions that are informed by an understanding of the needs of our local communities.

5.1 Council's community engagement principles

The following guiding principles are applied at key points in our asset management planning process in line with our commitment to a best practice contemporary approach to community engagement as per Surf Coast Shire's Community Engagement Policy and Communications and Community Engagement Strategy.

Principles

- Transparent: We will be proactive with our communications and clear about the purpose and scope of our engagement.
- Genuine: We value your input and believe all citizens have a right to know about and contribute to decisions that affect them.
- Relevant: We will communicate to you promptly about issues of importance, and when we seek your feedback, we will ensure it is in time to inform our decision making.
- Accessible: We will use simple and inclusive language and reduce barriers to participation in our processes.

Our Commitment

- We will give people enough time to provide feedback
- We will communicate across multiple channels to ensure broad reach
- We will provide regular updates on our projects and services
- We will explain the reasons for our decisions
- We will ensure that everyone's view is considered fairly
- We will be innovative where doing so improves understanding, participation or deliberation

5.2 How do we engage with our community

Surf Coast Shire Council engages extensively with its community to inform strategic planning and ensure infrastructure decisions reflect local priorities. Through initiatives such as People Place Future (2021) and Our Focus Our Future (2024–2025), Council has implemented a combination of surveys, community pop-ups, youth engagement, targeted stakeholder outreach, and deliberative panels. These programs have captured diverse perspectives across all townships, age groups, and demographic backgrounds. This inclusive approach aligned with the Local Government Act 2020 and Council's Community Engagement Policy ensures that asset planning is grounded in community values, lived experiences, and shared aspirations for a sustainable future.

There are many ways members of the community can inform and influence decisions about our assets.

Community Engagement	
Annual Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey	Community members can provide input that may be used to help us identify ways we can improve our performance and provide more effective services for our community.
Annual Budget (incorporating capital works program)	Our draft Budget is developed using a consultation process that involves key stakeholders and councillors. It is then published for community comment and input.
Council meetings	We provide access to meeting agendas and minutes and community members can raise issues directly with us at public meetings.
Community forums	Community members can talk to Councillors and Council staff directly about programs, services or any other matters.
Digital Platforms	Community members can find out information about services and assets through our website or can interact directly with us via social media.
Consultation on the development of asset management strategies and policies	Community members can provide input into decisions that affect asset and service delivery.
Engagement for major infrastructure projects	We seek to engage with user groups and stakeholders who may be affected.
Customer service requests	Community members can contact us directly about any hazards, maintenance issues or other problems they see. This complements our regular inspection programs and helps us preserve the safety and function of our assets.
Asset Plan engagement	Our Community Vision, Council Plan and Financial Plan were prepared with direct input from our community via deliberative engagement. Outcomes of this engagement have also been used to inform this Asset Plan.

Future versions of the Asset Plan will be prepared following deliberative engagement. This will allow our community to consider detailed asset planning information, discuss the impacts, trade-offs and comparative options for asset management, and influence a range of important principles that will guide our future asset and service decisions.

5.3 Community Information "Popup" Session Details

Council hosted a series of Community Information "Popup" Sessions between November 2024 and February 2025 across key townships to gather input on local priorities, infrastructure requirements, and strategic planning objectives. Held at local markets, events, and public spaces, these sessions were designed to encourage broad participation and reflect the unique needs of each community. Discussions addressed a range of topics, including transport and housing, recreation and public amenity, town centre improvements, environmental concerns, and access to community and family services. Insights from this engagement process have directly informed asset planning and strengthened Council's commitment to place-based, community-informed decision-making.

5.4 What did the Community tell us

The "Our Focus Our Future" engagement process captured broad community input through 858 survey responses, 83 youth surveys, 16 group submissions, and participation from 80 kindergarten children. Respondents represented all townships, with strong contributions from Torquay–Jan Juc, Anglesea, and Winchelsea. Demographically, 62.1% of survey participants identified as women, 34.4% as men, and 3.6% as non-binary or preferred not to say. Age representation skewed toward older groups, with 40–54 (28.7%), 55–69 (33.1%), and 70+ (17.1%) accounting for most respondents.

Community feedback highlighted concerns around cost-of-living pressures, housing affordability, transport limitations, and tourism impacts, alongside strong support for environmental protection, better infrastructure, health services, and youth programs. These insights will guide Council's long-term strategic planning and asset investment decisions.

The following asset management themes were identified through community feedback during engagement and reflect priority areas where residents see a need for improved infrastructure and services across the Surf Coast Shire.

Theme	Community Insight
Transport & Roads	Concerns about traffic, road quality, and limited public transport options especially in rural areas.
Footpaths & Connectivity	Strong demand for more and safer footpaths, bike paths, and accessible pedestrian routes.
Open Space & Recreation	Calls for more parks, community spaces, and upgrades to sporting and recreational facilities.
Community Facilities	Interest in maintaining and upgrading libraries, community centres, and youth spaces.
Waste & Environmental Assets	Support for sustainable waste services, stormwater management, and protection of coastal/natural areas.
Health & Wellbeing Infrastructure	Desire for better access to local health services, mental health support, and spaces promoting social connection.
Growth-Ready Infrastructure	Community expectations for infrastructure keep pace with growth in areas like Torquay, Jan Juc, and Moriac.

The “Our Focus Our Future” engagement has provided valuable insight into the priorities and expectations of our community. The feedback received highlights a shared desire for sustainable infrastructure, accessible services, and thoughtful planning that supports growth while protecting the natural environment. These insights will directly inform how Surf Coast Shire invests in, manages, and renews its assets ensuring they continue to meet the evolving needs of our community now and into the future.

6. How We Manage Our Assets

6.1 Our Assets Support Our Services

Surf Coast Shire Council delivers a wide range of valued services that contribute to a vibrant, inclusive, and liveable region. The infrastructure that supports these services spanning both heritage and contemporary, built and natural assets is essential to the wellbeing of our community. These assets enable people to live, work, play, and connect across our coastal and rural landscapes. As assets age through use, exposure to the elements, or evolving community needs, they require careful stewardship. Ensuring their ongoing performance while responsibly managing ratepayer investment is critical to our long-term financial sustainability and service delivery.

Why is asset management important?

Our community expects assets to be provided to a standard that ensures public safety, amenity and accessibility and to support the delivery of quality services and programs. We need to balance delivering what our community needs and expects with what our community can afford. Over time, our community needs and expectations are bound to change with demographics, climate and technology constantly evolving. With a finite budget for investment in assets, a planned and measured approach to asset management is necessary to ensure a fair and fiscally prudent long-term financial plan.

What assets are covered in this plan?

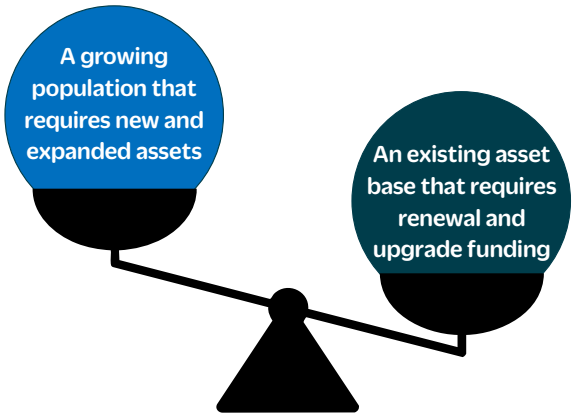
For the purposes of this Asset Plan 'assets' refers to the portfolio of public assets that Council is responsible for managing. To make it easier for our community to understand what these assets are, we have grouped them according to their services they provide and the functions they belong to in the following table.

Asset Classes	Service / Function	Includes
Transport Infrastructure	The infrastructure needed for movement, within or beyond our Shire and as part of our day-to-day activities, whether by vehicle or bike or as a pedestrian.	Roads and streets, bridges, footpaths, trails, roundabouts, speed humps and traffic management devices
Open Space	The locations and environments we frequent while enjoying the natural surroundings or engaging in recreational and leisure activities.	Parks and gardens (trees, flower beds, fences, gates), playgrounds, waterways, sports fields, stadiums, public furniture and amenity assets (seats, barbecues, pergolas, shade sails)
Buildings	The locations and areas we utilise when accessing community services or participating in recreational, cultural, or social activities.	Town halls, leisure and aquatic centres, sports pavilions, libraries, community centres, maternal health and other buildings that house community services, public toilets and shelters.
Stormwater Drainage	The infrastructure we need to direct stormwater run-off, mitigate flooding and improve water quality in line with EPA standards. Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) assets are specially designed features that help manage rainwater in ways that protect our environment and support healthy, sustainable communities.	Drains, pipes, and pits. WSUD include things like rain gardens, wetlands, swales, and permeable paving that slow down and filter stormwater before it reaches our rivers, creeks, and oceans.
Fleet	Essential for open space maintenance, waste management, infrastructure works, community support and regulatory services	Vehicles, heavy vehicles, plant and equipment
IT	Systems and infrastructure that support the delivery of digital services to the community and internal operations	Computers, mobile devices, IT infrastructure, audio visual, cloud services, software and cyber security
Land	These assets support a wide range of community, environmental, and operational functions, from recreation and open space to waste management and administrative services.	Freehold land, land parcels, and crown land managed by Council

6.2 How Our Assets Support Community Needs

Our assets exist to support the delivery of Council services and public amenities that, in turn, support our community's social and economic needs.

When making decisions about renewal or maintenance of our assets and/or prioritising our new asset investments, we always undertake life cycle analysis and what the appropriate levels of service are for an asset prior to setting budgets.



6.3 Levels of Service

Our Service Levels are defined by our expectations of the standard at which an asset needs to perform. We define our service levels with respect to availability of the service, quality of the service, risk posed by service deficiency, accessibility of the service and comfort level of the service. Service levels inform our capital works planning and delivery by guiding when assets need to be renewed, upgraded, or replaced to continue delivering value to our community, this is illustrated in the examples below. We acknowledge that where a higher service level provision is required due to higher utilisation and need, it will mean a higher criticality of the asset providing the service.

Asset Health	Functionality	Capacity	Utilisation	Decision
Very Poor	Good-Fair	Good-Fair	High	Renew Asset in next 3 years
Very Poor	Poor-Very Poor	Poor-Very Poor	High	Consider Rationalisation or Upgrade
Fair	Poor-Very Poor	Poor-Very Poor	High	Consider Asset for Upgrade next 3 years
Fair	Fair	Fair	High	Pay attention to future upgrades
Poor	Good-Fair	Good-Fair	High	Consider Asset Renewal 3-5 years

Service levels are set by the Council based on community expectation, legislated levels of service and subject matter standards and detailed within the respective Asset Management Plans balanced against affordability.

Our decisions on maintenance, renewal and upgrades are driven by these service level interventions and are based on the criticality of the asset (service), utilisation and available resources. When determining appropriate service levels, we focus on the following key considerations:

- Appropriate intervention level.
- What is the ongoing investment needed to fund minimum levels and then
- Finding the balance based on priority, risk and utilisation

Our service levels are defined in two categories:

Community (Customer) Levels of Service

These describe what the community experiences when using Shire-managed assets. For example, how accessible, safe, or well-maintained roads, public toilets, trails, parks, and buildings are.

Technical Levels of Service

These describe the measurable performance standards we apply in managing and maintaining our assets. This includes frequency of inspections, response times for repairs, and target condition levels for different asset classes.

6.4 Our Asset Response to Gender and Equality Impacts Assessment (GEIA)

Surf Coast Shire Council is committed to ensuring that public assets are planned, delivered, and maintained in ways that support equity and inclusion. In line with the Gender Equality Act 2020, the Council incorporates Gender and Equality Impact Assessments (GEIAs) into infrastructure planning and policy development to evaluate how people of different genders may experience and access public assets. This includes facilities such as sporting pavilions, public toilets, and community centres. Council's approach is supported by its Gender Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2021–2025, which outlines actions to address systemic barriers and promote equitable service delivery.

To further embed this commitment, Council has a Fair Access Policy[5] and will develop and implement a formal GEIA framework to be applied to all relevant new build, upgrade, and renewal programs, ensuring gender-responsive infrastructure outcomes. Implementation of the Fair Access Policy as all sporting clubs build capacity and capabilities to remove gender inequality in community sports infrastructure.

5 https://yoursay.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/fair-access-policy

7. The State of Our Assets

All Assets

Infrastructure **Land** **IT** **Fleet**	**$1.7 Billion** Total value for all Assets

Asset Value Per Capita $40,072

Asset value per head of population

Infrastructure Assets

39,750+ Assets Transport Infrastructure Buildings Open Space Stormwater	**$1.27 Billion** Assets supporting the delivery of Council's services	
	PVP Condition **5.8%** Value of assets that are currently considered poor or very poor	**Average Condition** **1.97** The average condition for all modelled assets

Asset Value Per Capita $23,167

Infrastructure value per head of population

Council is responsible for delivering services to the community. Many of these services rely on a large and diverse portfolio of physical assets for delivery. Understanding the current state of these assets, their service performance, costs, and risks, enables us to plan and prioritise maintenance and management to best meet the needs of the community. To better manage their unique characteristics and challenges, assets are categorised into asset classes.

This Asset Plan presents a high-level summary of the state of the assets and their sustainability. Detailed data on each asset class, as well as intervention levels and service monitoring, future financial sustainability options and consequences, can be found in the relevant asset management plan for each asset class.

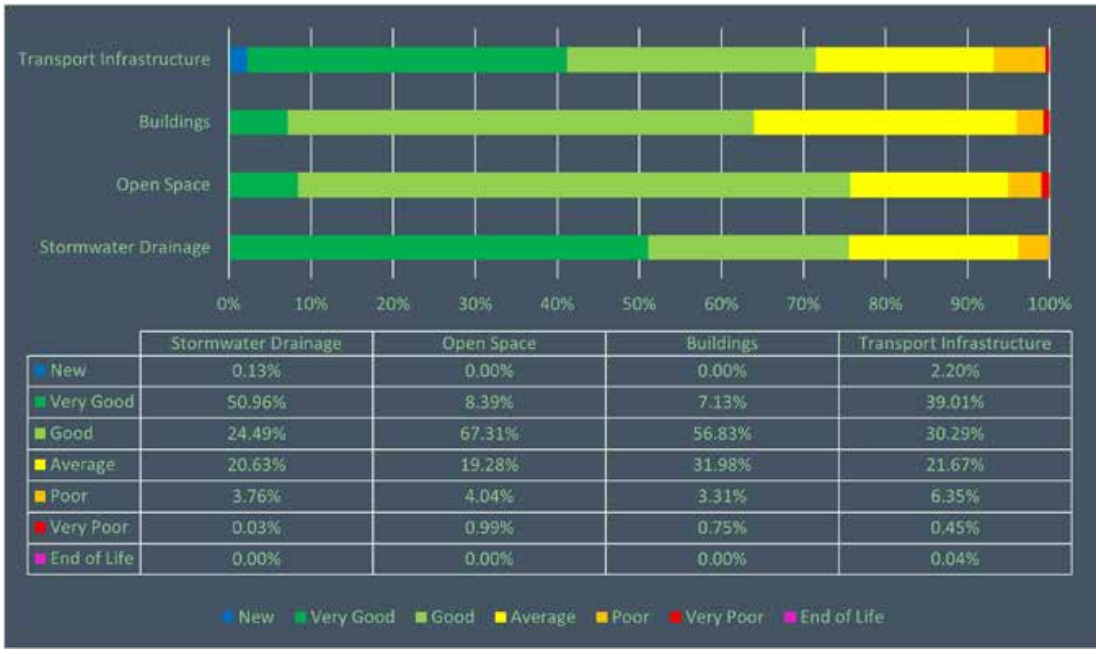
The condition for infrastructure asset classes is reported using a 0 to 6 rating system consistent with IPWEA guidelines (IPWEA, 2015, IIMM, Sec 2.5.4, p 2|80) as shown below:

Note: Road asset condition is originally recorded in our Asset Information System on a 1 to 10 scale. For reporting purposes, these ratings are converted to a 1 to 5 scale to ensure consistency and alignment with the IPWEA framework, allowing a holistic view of our asset base.

Condition Rating	Description
0 – New	Brand new asset or recently constructed. No deterioration. Full design capacity available.
1 – Excellent	Near new condition. No visible signs of wear. Performs at optimal level with no issues.
2 – Good	Minor signs of wear and tear but fully functional. Only routine maintenance required.
3 – Fair	Moderate wear evident. Asset remains serviceable but may require more frequent maintenance.
4 – Poor	Significant wear and reduced performance. Increased risk of failure. Planning for renewal needed.
5 – Very Poor	Asset is nearing the end of its useful life. Performance is compromised. Renewal or upgrade urgent.
6 – End of Life	Asset is no longer serviceable. Major failure has occurred or is imminent. Decommission required.

Asset Condition Assessment Rating

Within each asset class, there is a distribution of assets in very good through to very poor condition. The current distribution is illustrated in the figure below:



	Stormwater Drainage	Open Space	Buildings	Transport Infrastructure
New	0.13%	0.00%	0.00%	2.20%
Very Good	50.96%	8.39%	7.13%	39.01%
Good	24.49%	67.31%	56.83%	30.29%
Average	20.63%	19.28%	31.98%	21.67%
Poor	3.76%	4.04%	3.31%	6.35%
Very Poor	0.03%	0.99%	0.75%	0.45%
End of Life	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.04%

Condition distribution as percent of replacement cost as at 30th June 2024

8. Funding for the Future

To ensure responsible and sustainable stewardship of our assets, Council is committed to balancing community needs and aspirations with what is affordable for ratepayers. Decision-making in asset funding requires an ongoing balance between service levels, risk, and the financial capacity to maintain, renew, and improve infrastructure. Our long-term objective is to achieve sustainable service delivery through planned and prioritised investment in our assets.

8.1 Integration with the Financial Plan

The integration of this Asset Plan with Council's Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP) ensures that the financial resources needed to manage, maintain, and develop assets are identified and planned for. This Asset Plan considers a minimum of two funding scenarios per asset class, aligned with community levels of service, and selects an adopted expenditure pathway that reflects affordability and strategic need.

All asset portfolio funding requirements identified in this plan are included in the Financial Plan. Forecasts cover a 10-year period and will be reviewed regularly as new asset data, particularly condition and usage, becomes available. This may require future adjustments to both the Asset Plan and LTFP.

8.2 Our asset investment strategies

Looking ahead to the next 10 years, our approach is to be prudent in our investment decisions using a holistic lifecycle approach to asset management.

This means that we will aim to plan our assets so that they will continue to support quality living, economic development, and environmental sustainability in the long term.

Investment in asset maintenance and renewal will be balanced by significant investment in new and upgraded assets to meet current and future demand across the region as we grow and change.

Maintaining integration between our Asset Plan and Financial Plan is key to ensuring that future funding is allocated in a way that supports service delivery and effective asset management.

Our asset investment strategies align with our asset management and financial planning principles.

We will aspire to:

- Optimise asset life through timely and effective maintenance
- Continue to place a high priority on renewing our ageing assets
- Manage the impacts of growth by being strategic in how we plan for our future asset needs
- Comply with our obligations by actioning legislated standards in asset planning and development
- Provide affordable services by balancing community needs and aspirations with what ratepayers can afford
- Build resilient assets that not only deliver the best outcome for our community but also the best outcome for the environment

8.3 Prioritising Renewal Investment

Council places a high priority on renewing existing assets to maintain safety, functionality, and service delivery. Unlike funding for new and upgraded assets, which is typically subject to external grants or internal funding bids through the annual planning process, renewal funding is allocated annually as a dedicated budget line item. This ensures that essential renewal works are prioritised without needing to compete against discretionary new initiatives.

Strategic modelling is used to forecast the deterioration of asset classes and assess the impact of different renewal funding scenarios. This modelling directly informs annual renewal allocations and underpins our focus on long-term asset sustainability.

Council also maintains a Renewal Reserve, which is used to set aside funds specifically for future renewal projects. This ensures that resources are available when assets reach the end of their useful life and reinforces Council's commitment to long-term infrastructure sustainability.

8.4 Adaptive Approach to Asset Renewal

Council does not automatically replace assets on a like-for-like basis at end of life. When an asset is due for renewal, a review is undertaken to assess whether the asset remains fit-for-purpose or whether it should be redeveloped, repurposed, expanded, or potentially decommissioned. This process considers factors such as community demand, usage trends, alignment with strategic objectives, condition and risk, and cost-benefit analysis.

This adaptive approach ensures that infrastructure continues to meet the needs of a changing community and delivers value over time. It also aligns with broader planning frameworks such as the Council Plan 2025-2029, the Access and Inclusion Strategic Plan, and Council's evolving Social Infrastructure Planning Framework.

8.5 Asset investment categories

For the purposes of this Asset Plan, our asset spending is categorised in a way that helps us to plan our budgets and track how we spend our money on assets and services.

Expenditure Type	Asset Management Activity	Description
Recurrent	**Maintenance**	Scheduled work to keep assets operating at the required level of service, or reactive work to repair defects and ensure that assets meet their service life and don't require early renewal.
	Operations	Recurrent expenditure that is required to use an asset such as utility costs, audit and inspection programs, cleaning or fees paid to other organisations.
Capital	**Renewal**	Works on assets that are at the end of life that restore their ability to deliver or facilitate the delivery of the desired service
	Upgrade	Works that increase the quality of the existing service that can be delivered through an existing asset.
	Expansion	Extends existing assets to provide new services to new users at the same standard of service.
	New	Works that generate an asset that can provide a service that does not currently exist.

8.6 Lifecycle investment profile

This funding allocation is informed by strategic modelling analysis that predicts the deterioration of our assets and the impact of various renewal funding scenarios on future asset condition. The objective of forecasted funding requirements is to model the impact on Council's public domain portfolio by exploring various funding and service delivery scenarios. This process typically involves setting up lifecycle paths for each public domain asset, along with their inspected condition, identifying the appropriate treatments and unit rates to deliver these treatments and configuring the treatment rule base (matrices based on selected condition criteria that when matching will drive a treatment based on the condition).

By utilising the above process and setting up the criteria and logic utilising modelling and simulation techniques, it is possible to model the future costs of Council's asset portfolio renewal requirements and to predict the future condition of these assets under varying funding scenarios.

A detailed breakdown of what we expect to spend on each asset class over the next 10 years is outlined within individual asset class profiles under section 10 – Asset Class Detail. The table below summarises the adopted LTFP 10-year expenditure by asset class for 2025-2035. This is revised each year and subject to change due to updated modelling based on new condition data and prioritisation of works:

	Total Renewal	Average Renewal Pa	Total Maintenance	Average Maintenance Pa	Total Upgrade/New	Average Upgrade/New Pa
Transport	$58,085,400	$5,280,491	$58,259,685	$5,825,969	$25,177,761	$2,517,776
Buildings	$16,701,000	$1,670,100	$23,807,935	$2,380,794	$6,332,914	$633,291
Open Space	$25,995,000	$2,599,500	$51,541,794	$5,154,179	$ 6,234,331	$623,433
Stormwater	$4,014,000	$401,400	$9,930,000	$993,000	Included in Transport	Included in Transport
Fleet & IT	$30,598,000	$3,059,800	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Land	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	**$135,393,400**	**$13,011,291**	**$143,539,414**	**$14,353,942**	**$37,745,006**	**$3,774,500**

9. Asset Class Detail

9.1 Transport Infrastructure

What assets are included?

Sealed Roads, Kerbs, Footpaths, Unsealed Roads, Unsealed Road Shoulders, Car Parks, Bridges, Guardrails, LATM

What does our work involve?

Recurrent	Renewal	Upgrade and Growth
• Maintenance and repairs to roads such as patching potholes, crack sealing and path grinding • Operational servicing such as street sweeping, vegetation management and weed spraying	• Resurfacing of existing roads • Road reconstruction or major patching of road failures • Replacement of sections of existing pathways to an equivalent standard	• New constructed and gifted assets by developers • Road safety improvements such as installation of crash barriers, intersection upgrades, etc. • Widening of existing roads • Upgrading of gravel roads to sealed, • Traffic calming treatments such as construction of roundabouts, installation of speed humps, etc • Extension of existing pathway network to address gaps in connectivity

How is funding prioritised?

Funding for transport assets is primarily directed toward asset renewal, with allocations informed by strategic modelling that predicts asset deterioration over time and assesses the long-term impacts of various funding scenarios on overall network condition. This approach ensures that limited resources are used effectively to maintain service levels and minimise lifecycle costs.

New and upgrade works such as road expansions and network improvements are generally funded through external sources. This includes the Australian Government's Roads to Recovery (R2R) program, which provides targeted funding to local governments for road construction and maintenance. However, R2R funding is only guaranteed in four-year blocks and is subject to renewal at the discretion of the federal government. Minor road safety improvements are typically funded through internal budget bids during Council's annual planning process.

Council prioritises both renewal and upgrade investments based on asset condition data, usage levels, risk assessments, and alignment with strategic planning objectives, ensuring resources are directed where they provide the greatest community benefit.

How much do we plan to spend over the next 10 years?

Projected expenditure 2025-2035:

Projected expenditure ($'000)												
Transport Assets		**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**	**2031**	**2032**	**2033**	**2034**	**Total**
Maintenance	All Transport (incl. Stormwater)	6,816	6,807	6,819	6,821	6,821	6,821	6,821	6,821	6,821	6,821	**68,190**
Renewal	Sealed Roads	1,600	1,364	2,238	1,627	3,342	2,602	3,955	4,489	4,853	5,250	**31,319**
	Unsealed Roads	1,000	1,000	1,001	978	978	979	1,581	1,581	1,582	1,582	**12,262**
	Kerbs/LATM	150	100	101	102	102	102	102	103	104	104	**1,070**
	Footpaths	255	289	433	433	434	434	435	405	435	435	**3,988**
	Guardrails	100	100	101	102	102	102	159	159	158	159	**1,242**
	Bridges	100	100	101	102	102	102	102	103	104	104	**1,020**
Upgrade/New	Roads to Recovery (R2R)	1,682	1,997	2,102	2,102	2,102	2,102	2,102	2,102	2,102	2,102	**20,495**
	DCP - Roads		70		694		116	1,168				**2,048**
	DCP - Pathways	757		402	382			1,093				**2,634**
Total	**12,460**	**11,827**	**13,298**	**13,343**	**13,983**	**13,360**	**17,518**	**15,763**	**16,159**	**16,557**	**144,268**	

- Figures in 2025 dollars. No CPI.
- Figures to be reviewed annually as part of annual budget process
- Post 2025 maintenance figures subject to change due to asset growth and level of service factors

What are the future challenges and opportunities?

Theme	Challenges	Opportunities
Changing Population	Population growth and increased dwelling density are placing greater demand on the local road network, particularly on connections between local roads, collector roads, and State-managed routes. This increased usage requires coordinated planning across jurisdictions to manage safety, capacity, and access.	Council has the opportunity to improve connectivity through integrated transport planning, ensure alignment with State infrastructure investment, and apply network hierarchy principles to guide road upgrades and asset prioritisation.
Increased Freight Task	The rising number of heavy vehicles and increased freight loading is accelerating deterioration across parts of the local road network. This creates a need for more frequent maintenance and raises long-term funding pressures for renewal and rehabilitation.	Strategic use of pavement condition data and freight movement analysis can help prioritise asset upgrades in high-impact areas. Council can also collaborate with industry and other levels of government to manage freight impacts sustainably.
Climate Change	More frequent and extreme weather events increase the risk of damage to road and path infrastructure, including washouts, surface failures, and loss of access. Designing assets to withstand future climate conditions is a growing requirement.	Incorporating resilience into road design and construction standards—such as improving drainage, using climate-tolerant materials, and adapting road alignments can extend asset life and improve service continuity during adverse events.
Legislation and Compliance	Council must ensure its road infrastructure and operations comply with legal obligations under the Road Traffic Act 1961 and the Road Management Plan. There is also an ongoing need to clearly define road ownership and maintenance responsibilities, particularly where assets adjoin other agencies.	Improving internal asset data, mapping, and governance processes can strengthen compliance and reduce risk. Council can also clarify road responsibilities through policy updates and improved coordination with regional and State authorities.

9.2 Buildings & Facilities

What assets are included?

Buildings and structures.

What does our work involve?

Recurrent	Renewal	Upgrade and Growth
• Minor repairs to building components due to failure, vandalism, etc. • Unblocking drains, service checks, carpet repairs, etc. • Safety, compliance, and condition inspections	• Major structural repairs • Replacement of roof or wall cladding • Replacement of bathrooms and kitchens	• Building extensions • Sustainability improvements (e.g. PV systems, water harvesting and reuse systems, etc.) • Construction of a new building to cater for increased or changing demand • Replacement of amenities with DDA compliance

How is funding prioritised?

Funding for Buildings and Facilities is primarily directed toward asset renewal, with allocations informed by strategic modelling that predicts the deterioration of assets over time and assesses the long-term impacts of various renewal funding scenarios on asset condition and service delivery. This modelling supports evidence-based decision-making to ensure resources are allocated efficiently and sustainably.

When a building reaches the point of renewal, Council does not automatically replace it like for like. Instead, a service needs assessment is undertaken to determine whether the existing asset continues to meet community requirements. This may result in decisions to redevelop, repurpose, expand, or in some cases decommission the asset, depending on changes in demand, functionality, and alignment with strategic objectives.

New and upgrade projects, such as facility expansions, redevelopments or accessibility improvements, are typically subject to the availability of external grant funding or progressed through internal funding bids as part of Council's annual planning and budget process.

All building investment decisions, whether for renewal or upgrade, are prioritised based on a combination of asset condition data, risk assessments, service needs, usage levels, and alignment with Council's strategic and community objectives.

This funding allocation approach ensures long-term sustainability and supports a responsive, adaptable infrastructure network that continues to meet the evolving needs of the Surf Coast community.

How much do we plan to spend over the next 10 years?

Projected expenditure 2025-2035:

Projected expenditure ($'000)											
Building Assets	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**	**2031**	**2032**	**2033**	**2034**	**Total**
Maintenance	2,385	2,378	2,380	2,381	2,381	2,381	2,381	2,381	2,381	2,381	23,808
Renewal	800	3,391	2,058	801	802	4,321	1,400	1,061	1,066	1,001	16,701
Upgrade/New (DCP)		30	690	5,613							6,333
Total	**3,185**	**5,799**	**5,128**	**8,795**	**3,183**	**6,702**	**3,781**	**3,442**	**3,447**	**3,382**	**46,842**

- Figures in 2025 dollars. No CPI.
- Figures to be reviewed annually as part of annual budget process
- Post 2025 maintenance figures subject to change due to asset growth and level of service factors

What are the future challenges and opportunities?

Theme	Challenges	Opportunities*
Changing Population	The growing and diversifying population presents increasing pressure to improve access for all genders, abilities, and underrepresented communities. There is also a need to balance diverse and sometimes competing community expectations for facilities and services across different townships.	Council can respond by planning flexible, multi-use facilities that serve a broader demographic and enable more efficient use of public buildings. This supports inclusive community development and long-term service adaptability.
Financial	Managing community facilities involves challenges such as maximising the use of existing buildings, disposing of surplus assets, and addressing unplanned maintenance liabilities where community groups are no longer able to manage facilities themselves.	There is an opportunity to rationalise underused assets and reinvest in priority facilities. Council can also improve utilisation through co-location, shared use, and technology-driven space management strategies.
Climate Change	The increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events pose a higher risk of physical damage to buildings and community infrastructure. Additionally, achieving Council's target of net zero emissions presents both a technical and financial challenge for built assets.	Buildings can be upgraded or designed to meet higher environmental performance standards, incorporating energy-efficient systems, sustainable materials, and climate resilience measures that support Council's sustainability commitments.
Legislation and Compliance	Council is required to ensure all buildings comply with legislation covering accessibility, fire safety, occupational health and safety, and the National Construction Code. Meeting these requirements can be complex, especially across a diverse and ageing portfolio of assets.	Continued compliance provides an opportunity to improve safety, functionality, and user experience. Upgrades and renewals aligned with modern codes also support broader strategic goals, such as inclusion and long-term asset sustainability.

**Refer Recreation Infrastructure Plan*

9.3 Open Space

What assets are included?

Playgrounds, play equipment, sportsgrounds, park furniture, fences, lighting, irrigation and other assets typically found within open space areas.

What does our work involve?

Recurrent	Renewal	Upgrade and Growth
• Hazard/defect inspections • Mowing, vegetation/weed control • Garden bed maintenance • Litter collection and cleaning • Graffiti removal	• Replacement of playground equipment, • Replacement of park furniture • Rejuvenation or replacement of entire playing courts, skate parks, bike parks or sports fields, • to an equivalent standard	• Playing court extension • Replacement of playground equipment to a higher standard • Development of a new park or reserve

How is funding prioritised?

Funding for Open Space assets is primarily focused on renewal to ensure that parks, reserves, playgrounds, and other recreational spaces remain safe, functional, and aligned with community expectations. Allocation of renewal funding is informed by strategic modelling that forecasts asset deterioration over time and assesses the long-term impacts of different funding scenarios on asset condition and service outcomes. This supports proactive and evidence-based decision-making.

When an open space asset is due for renewal, Council assesses the current and future service need before proceeding. Rather than replacing assets like for like, consideration is given to whether the asset should be upgraded, modified, expanded, or possibly removed. This approach ensures that investments respond to changes in community use, environmental considerations, and strategic priorities.

Funding for new or upgraded open space assets, such as new play spaces, public amenities, or landscaping projects, is typically sourced through external grants or allocated via internal funding proposals submitted during Council's annual planning and budget process.

Investment decisions for open space assets are prioritised based on asset condition, usage data, risk assessments, service needs, and alignment with broader strategies, including open space planning frameworks and community engagement outcomes.

This approach enables Council to maintain a high-quality, accessible and adaptable open space network that supports health, wellbeing and liveability across the Surf Coast Shire.

This funding allocation is informed by strategic modelling analysis that predicts the deterioration of our Open Space assets and the impact of various renewal funding scenarios on future asset

How much do we plan to spend over the next 10 years?

Projected expenditure 2025-2035:

Projected expenditure ($'000)												
Open Space Assets		**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**	**2031**	**2032**	**2033**	**2034**	**Total**
Maintenance		5,147	5,144	5,155	5,157	5,157	5,157	5,157	5,157	5,157	5,157	5,147
Renewal		4,414	2,627	1,515	3,139	3,735	2,766	1,946	1,948	1,951	1,954	25,995
Upgrade/New	Torquay Jan Juc DCP	145		160	466		140	2,844				3,755
	Winchelsea Infrastructure Plan					1,748						1,748
Total		**9,706**	**7,771**	**6,830**	**8,762**	**10,640**	**8,063**	**9,947**	**7,105**	**7,108**	**7,111**	**83,043**

- Figures in 2025 dollars. No CPI.
- Figures to be reviewed annually as part of annual budget process
- Post 2025 maintenance figures subject to change due to asset growth and level of service factors

What are the future challenges and opportunities?

Theme	Challenges	Opportunities
Changing Population	Increasing population in coastal towns and growth areas places greater pressure on existing open spaces, especially where lot sizes are small and private open space is limited. Demand is rising for open spaces that support diverse recreation and wellbeing needs across age groups.	Use development contributions to fund new or upgraded open space in growth areas. Incorporate high-quality, multipurpose public open space into structure planning and infill development frameworks.
Open Space Provision	Acquiring new open space land is increasingly difficult in established areas due to cost and limited availability. Some communities have limited access to open space within a safe walking distance.	Identify and repurpose underutilised land such as road reserves, drainage corridors, or redundant facilities into local parks or green corridors. Enhance existing spaces to increase their functionality and appeal.
Participation Trends	Shift from organised sport to informal recreation activities like walking, dog exercise, group fitness, and nature play is changing the types of open space required. Increasing expectations for accessible and inclusive design.	Design flexible, adaptable spaces (e.g. open lawns, shaded areas, movable seating) that can serve multiple user groups. Embed universal design principles and gender-inclusive, culturally responsive planning approaches.
Environmental Sustainability	Rising community expectations for sustainability, biodiversity protection, and climate-resilient design. Environmental pressures including heat stress and biodiversity loss require new management approaches.	Integrate green infrastructure such as wetlands, raingardens, and native vegetation to improve amenity and support climate resilience. Apply low-impact maintenance practices and promote sustainability through public education.

9.4 Stormwater

What assets are included?

Stormwater Pipes, Pits and WSUD.

What does our work involve?

Recurrent	Renewal	Upgrade and Growth
• Pit cleaning • Pipe cleansing and removal of debris, sediment, etc. • Removal of litter from Gross Pollutant Traps • Programmed inspections	• Replacement of pits and pipes • Renewal of existing wetlands and other stormwater quality improvement devices	• Replacement of pipes to a higher hydraulic capacity • Extension of the stormwater drainage network • Installation of stormwater quality improvement devices, such as rain gardens, litter traps, etc. • Stormwater harvesting initiatives

How is funding prioritised?

Funding for stormwater and drainage assets is primarily directed towards renewal and maintenance to ensure the ongoing protection of people, property, and the environment from flooding and water-related hazards. Strategic modelling is used to forecast asset deterioration and to assess the long-term impacts of different funding scenarios on network condition, service performance, and environmental outcomes.

When a drainage asset reaches the end of its useful life or shows signs of failure, Council evaluates the service need, risk level, and broader network performance before committing to renewal. Rather than automatically replacing assets like for like, opportunities are considered to improve capacity, integrate water-sensitive urban design (WSUD), or reconfigure infrastructure to support sustainable stormwater management and climate resilience.

New or upgraded drainage infrastructure—such as increased pipe capacity, additional pits, or WSUD features—is typically funded through developer contributions, external grants, or Council's capital works budget as part of broader infrastructure or urban development projects.

Investment decisions for drainage assets are prioritised based on condition data, hydraulic performance, flood risk assessments, maintenance history, and alignment with strategic planning documents, including flood management studies and climate adaptation strategies.

This approach ensures that Surf Coast Shire's stormwater network remains effective, resilient, and adaptable to future challenges such as urban growth and changing rainfall patterns.

How much do we plan to spend over the next 10 years?

Projected expenditure 2025-2035:

Projected expenditure ($'000)												
Stormwater Assets		2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	Total
Maintenance		993	993	993	993	993	993	993	993	993	993	9,930
Renewal	Pipes/Pits	150	145	151	152	152	153	277	277	277	278	2,012
	WSUD	150	145	151	152	152	150	277	277	270	278	2,002
Total	**1,293**	**1,283**	**1,295**	**1,297**	**1,297**	**1,296**	**1,547**	**1,547**	**1,540**	**1,549**	**13,944**	

* Upgrade / New expenditure is included in Transport Infrastructure

- Figures in 2025 dollars. No CPI.
- Figures to be reviewed annually as part of annual budget process
- Post 2025 maintenance figures subject to change due to asset growth and level of service factors

What are the future challenges and opportunities?

Theme	Challenges	Opportunities
Development Density	Increased urban consolidation is leading to higher volumes of stormwater runoff, which places pressure on the existing drainage infrastructure. Greater areas of impervious surfaces reduce natural infiltration and elevate the risk of localised flooding.	There is an opportunity to upgrade the drainage network capacity in growth areas through integrated water management planning. Incorporating Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) into new developments can help manage stormwater quantity and quality at the source.
Ageing Infrastructure	Many older drainage assets are under capacity or in deteriorating condition, resulting in reduced performance and increased flood risk. Limited funding can constrain the timely renewal or upgrade of these assets.	Council can use asset condition assessments and hydraulic modelling to prioritise renewal and upgrade works. Coordinating drainage upgrades with road or open space projects also provides cost efficiencies and reduces community disruption.
Climate Change	More frequent and extreme weather events are increasing the severity and frequency of flooding, which is projected to reduce the current level of flood protection provided by the existing drainage network.	Applying climate resilience principles in drainage design and planning will help mitigate risks. High-risk catchments can be identified and prioritised for adaptation measures to reduce vulnerability and maintain service levels.
Environmental Sustainability	Stormwater runoff can transport pollutants into receiving waterways, impacting environmental health. There is currently a lack of infrastructure to support stormwater harvesting, treatment, and reuse.	Investment in stormwater treatment assets such as wetlands, raingardens, and gross pollutant traps will help improve water quality. There are also growing opportunities to capture and reuse stormwater for irrigation or non-potable use in public infrastructure.

9.5 Information Technology

What assets are included?

Surf Coast Shire's Information Technology (IT) assets include the systems and infrastructure that support the delivery of digital services to the community and internal operations. This includes:

- Desktop and laptop computers
- Mobile devices
- Servers and network equipment
- Audio-visual and conferencing equipment
- IT software and applications
- Cloud services and data storage systems
- Cybersecurity infrastructure

What does our work involve?

- Ensuring reliable and secure access to systems for staff and community services
- Keeping software and hardware up to date to support efficient operations
- Managing licences, subscriptions, and vendor relationships
- Monitoring system performance, cybersecurity risks, and data integrity
- Supporting staff through IT helpdesk and training services
- Aligning IT investment with the delivery of Council's strategic goals and digital transformation initiatives

Although IT assets are not modelled in the same way as long-life infrastructure, they are tracked through asset registers and managed under defined refresh and renewal cycles.

How is funding prioritised?

Funding for IT assets is prioritised based on:

- **Business continuity and risk:** Ensuring critical systems and equipment are supported and reliable to maintain core service delivery.
- **Cybersecurity and compliance:** Investing in systems and upgrades that meet legislative requirements, including data protection and privacy standards.
- **Strategic alignment with Council goals:** Supporting initiatives that enable digital service delivery, remote work, and improved community engagement.
- **Efficiency and user needs:** Addressing areas where system upgrades or enhancements will improve performance, reduce downtime, or enhance user experience.
- **Community access and equity:** Ensuring digital services are inclusive, accessible across devices, and available to all residents regardless of location or digital literacy.

Council also considers opportunities to improve digital equity, ensuring that all residents including those in rural areas or without reliable internet have fair access to Council services. This may involve investing in mobile-friendly services, accessible digital platforms, or partnerships with libraries and community centres that support digital inclusion.

Service-level expectations include reliable system availability, secure access to data, and timely response to IT support needs. Council reviews these expectations regularly to ensure technology continues to meet both operational and community needs.

How much do we plan to spend over the next 10 years?

Projected expenditure 2025-2035:

Projected expenditure ($'000)											
IT Assets	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	Total
IT Renewal	390	150	150	150	150	150	250	250	250	250	2,140
IT Software Renewal	500	403	2,150	2,150	1,150	150	250	250	250	250	7,503
Total	**890**	**553**	**2,300**	**2,300**	**1,300**	**300**	**500**	**500**	**500**	**500**	**9,643**

- Figures in 2025 dollars. No CPI.
- Figures to be reviewed annually as part of annual budget process

What are the future challenges and opportunities?

Theme	Challenges	Opportunities
Technology Lifecycle	Rapid obsolescence of hardware and software	Implement structured refresh cycles and explore as-a-service models to reduce upfront costs
Cybersecurity	Increasing cyber threats and need for stronger data protection	Invest in modern security infrastructure and staff training to build cyber resilience
Service Delivery	Rising community expectations for 24/7 digital access and real-time updates	Enhance online platforms and automate processes to improve user experience and responsiveness
Workforce Enablement	Ensuring staff have the tools and support to work efficiently, including remotely	Continue expanding flexible IT solutions and user-focused support services
Digital Equity	Ensuring fair access to digital services for all residents	Partner with community centres, libraries, and regional initiatives to improve digital inclusion
Integration & Complexity	Managing a growing number of systems and applications across departments	Leverage cloud-based platforms and integration tools for streamlined operations
Funding and Prioritisation	Balancing competing priorities within limited IT budgets	Align IT investment with Council Plan outcomes and demonstrate value through efficiency gains
Environmental Sustainability	E-waste and energy usage from IT infrastructure	Transition to energy-efficient devices and environmentally responsible procurement practices

9.6 Fleet

What assets are included?

Council's fleet assets support the delivery of a wide range of services to the Surf Coast Shire community. These include:

- Passenger vehicles (pool cars, utes, SUVs)
- Heavy vehicles (trucks, graders, loaders)
- Plant and equipment (ride-on mowers, tractors, trailers)
- Specialist vehicles (waste collection trucks, beach-cleaning equipment)

These assets are essential for service areas such as parks and open space maintenance, waste management, infrastructure works, community support, and regulatory services.

What does our work involve?

Fleet management ensures that Council staff have access to safe, reliable, and fit-for-purpose vehicles and equipment to perform their roles. This includes:

- Maintaining a central fleet register and tracking usage, condition, and maintenance history
- Scheduling regular servicing and safety inspections to meet roadworthiness and compliance standards
- Coordinating vehicle replacements to minimise downtime and maximise value for money
- Supporting environmentally responsible choices through procurement of low-emission and fuel-efficient vehicles
- Optimising utilisation through pool vehicle systems and equipment-sharing across departments
- Managing insurance, registration, and disposal of assets

Fleet assets are generally managed on shorter life cycles compared to infrastructure, with renewals guided by age, condition, usage, and operational requirements.

How is funding prioritised?

Funding for fleet assets is prioritised based on:

- **Safety and compliance:** Replacing vehicles that no longer meet safety standards or pose operational risks.
- **Operational impact:** Prioritising the renewal of vehicles that are essential to delivering core community services.
- **Asset lifecycle stage:** Renewing assets that have reached the end of their useful life or are incurring high maintenance costs.
- **Environmental sustainability:** Transitioning to electric or low-emission vehicles in line with Council's environmental goals.
- **Cost-effectiveness:** Using whole-of-life cost analysis to guide investment in vehicles that offer the best long-term value.

Council seeks to balance cost, efficiency, and sustainability, planning for regular fleet renewals in alignment with its operational needs and environmental commitments.

How much do we plan to spend over the next 10 years?

Projected expenditure 2025-2035:

Projected expenditure ($'000)											
Fleet & Plant	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	Total
Small Plant Renewal	90	104	55	41	112	130	64	134	79	47	856
Light Fleet Renewal	100	421	436	1371	488	193	308	850	243	428	4,838
Heavy Plant Renewal	1,400	1,494	1,725	997	1,140	1,012	2,144	1,615	2,276	1,458	15,261
Total	**1,590**	**2,019**	**2,216**	**2,409**	**1,740**	**1,335**	**2,516**	**2,599**	**2,598**	**1,933**	**20,955**

- Figures in 2025 dollars. No CPI.
- Figures to be reviewed annually as part of annual budget process

What are the future challenges and opportunities?

Theme	Challenges	Opportunities
Asset Lifecycle	Managing ageing vehicles with increasing maintenance costs	Optimise renewal cycles using condition and usage data to improve reliability and reduce downtime
Environmental Sustainability	Transitioning to low-emission or electric vehicles across a diverse fleet	Leverage government incentives and trial new technologies to reduce emissions and fuel use
Budget Constraints	Balancing fleet replacement costs with other service delivery needs	Adopt whole-of-life cost analysis to support strategic investment in high-use or shared assets
Technology & Safety	Keeping up with advancements in vehicle safety and fleet tracking	Introduce telematics to monitor performance, fuel use, and driver safety behaviours
Utilisation Efficiency	Underused or duplicated vehicles across service areas	Improve utilisation through pooled resources and cross-departmental coordination
Skills and Training	Ensuring staff are trained in the safe use of new or specialised equipment	Provide targeted training to reduce risk and support a more flexible, capable workforce
Infrastructure Readiness	Limited charging infrastructure for electric or hybrid vehicles	Plan for staged rollout of EV charging stations aligned with fleet transition plans

9.7 Land

What assets are included

Council's land assets form the foundation for many of its services and community spaces. These include:

- Freehold land owned by Council (e.g., reserves, civic precincts, depot sites)
- Crown land managed by Council under Committee of Management arrangements
- Land associated with public buildings, open space, and infrastructure assets
- Land parcels reserved for future development or strategic purposes

These assets support a wide range of community, environmental, and operational functions, from recreation and open space to waste management and administrative services.

What does our work involve

Council's role in managing land assets includes:

- Maintaining a comprehensive land register, including ownership, tenure, and use
- Ensuring land is appropriately zoned and utilised in line with Council and community needs
- Complying with relevant legislation, including Crown land management obligations
- Supporting land use planning, development approvals, and infrastructure delivery
- Managing risks such as contamination, encroachment, or unauthorised use
- Facilitating access, leasing, and use agreements with third parties where appropriate

Land is a non-depreciating asset and is not subject to renewal in the same way as physical infrastructure. However, it requires active management to ensure it continues to deliver value to the community and support long-term planning.

How is funding prioritised

Funding related to land assets is prioritised based on the following criteria:

- **Strategic alignment:** Acquiring or reserving land to support long-term growth, infrastructure needs, or environmental protection.
- **Legislative compliance:** Meeting obligations for land under Crown management, including environmental, cultural heritage, and access requirements.
- **Risk management:** Addressing known risks, such as poor access, flooding, contamination, or legal liability.
- **Service delivery needs:** Ensuring land remains suitable and available for essential Council services and community use.
- **Community benefit:** Supporting open space, recreation, or cultural uses that meet evolving community needs and priorities.

What are the future challenges and opportunities?

As Surf Coast Shire continues to grow and evolve, the way Council manages its land assets will play a vital role in shaping the future of the region. The table below outlines key challenges and opportunities that will influence how land is protected, utilised, and enhanced over time. Proactive and strategic land management will ensure these assets continue to support community wellbeing, environmental sustainability, and resilient service delivery into the future.

Theme	Challenges	Opportunities
Population Growth & Urban Expansion	Increasing demand for land to support housing, infrastructure, and community services	Strategically acquire or repurpose land to meet future growth and service delivery needs
Environmental Management	Balancing development with environmental protection, including biodiversity and waterways	Preserve and enhance green spaces, implement sustainable land use planning
Regulatory Compliance	Managing Crown land in accordance with complex legal and governance frameworks	Strengthen processes and partnerships to support compliance and responsible land stewardship
Cultural Heritage	Ensuring land management respects Aboriginal cultural heritage and values	Collaborate with Traditional Owners to embed cultural knowledge and practices in land use decisions
Climate Resilience	Exposure to risks such as bushfire, erosion, and flooding	Use land strategically to support climate adaptation, including buffer zones and natural infrastructure
Community Expectations	Growing community interest in access, equity, and amenity	Activate underused land for recreation, affordable housing, or social infrastructure
Land Use Efficiency	Underutilised or fragmented land holdings across the municipality	Consolidate or repurpose land to deliver greater public value and operational efficiency

10. Monitoring and Improvement Plan

Asset planning is not a set and forget process. It needs to be flexible to ensure our assets and levels of service are responsive to changes in population and demographics and the ongoing challenge of climate change, can capitalise on emerging trends and opportunities, and continue to meet agreed requirements as priorities change over time.

Asset Plan reviews and updates

This Asset Plan will be formally reviewed and updated every four years in line with the new Council term to provide opportunities for the new Council to make any required changes.

Intermediary reviews may be undertaken to provide the opportunity to reflect improvements achieved, major financial decisions made, the consideration of any relevant external factors, or changes to long-term capital works programs to ensure it is responsive to our available financial resources over time.

Reporting

Our Asset Management Plans have a life of four years in line with the council election cycle. They are fully reviewed and updated within two years of each council election. They are also reviewed during the annual budget planning process and updated to recognise any material changes in service levels or resources available to provide those services as a result of budget decisions.

Reporting on service levels and other performance measures is undertaken as part of our Annual Report.

Continuous Improvement

We acknowledge that significant annual expenditure is required to manage and maintain our existing infrastructure. This highlights the importance of maintaining high-level skills and practices to ensure services are delivered economically and sustainably and Council is committed to continuously working to improve our knowledge, skills and operational practices in line with sector-wide best practice.

The financial analysis and projections in this Asset Plan are based on existing data, processes, systems, processes and standards. Council is committed to identifying ways to achieve a more robust evidence base and analysis and to improving our practices to achieve this. One of the keys to this will be engaging with our community to establish optimised service levels that are affordable over the long term.

10.1 Improvement Plan

Initiative	Description
Climate Resilience Asset Modelling	Integrate climate adaptation scenarios into asset lifecycle planning, including coastal erosion, bushfire risk, and increased storm intensity, to inform prioritisation and renewal decisions.
Gender & Equity Impact Assessments	Apply gender & equity impact assessments to asset planning and public infrastructure investments to ensure equitable access, safety, and usability for all community members.
Asset Modelling	Fine tune and update modelling as new data becomes available
Asset Rationalisation	Identify underutilised or ageing assets for divestment, repurposing, or consolidation to optimise resource use and reduce maintenance burden.
Funding Performance	Review and monitor annual allocations vs optimised modelling on performance pvp/vp.
Asset Management Reporting	State of the Assets / performance reporting to Council and executive team.
Linkages to Strategic Documents	Develop mechanism to link current and future strategy actions to assets within Councils asset renewal candidates.
Maintenance Modelling	Work to improve understanding of maintenance costs and incorporate findings into asset modelling

Appendix 1: long term investment plan

Figures from Strategic Asset Modelling

Renewal Expenditure based on LTFP										
Projected Renewal Expenditure										
Asset class	**2025-2026**	**2026-2027**	**2027-2028**	**2028-2029**	**2029-2030**	**2030-2031**	**2031-2032**	**2032-2033**	**2033-2034**	**2034-2035**
Transport Infrastructure	$3,205,000	$2,953,000	$3,975,000	$3,344,000	$5,059,600	$4,321,000	$6,334,000	$6,839,800	$7,236,000	$7,634,000
Buildings	$800,000	$3,391,000	$2,058,000	$801,000	$802,000	$4,321,000	$1,400,000	$1,061,000	$1,066,000	$1,001,000
Stormwater & WSUD	$300,000	$290,000	$302,000	$304,000	$304,000	$303,000	$554,000	$554,000	$547,000	$556,000
Open Space	$4,414,000	$2,627,000	$1,515,000	$3,139,000	$3,735,000	$2,766,000	$1,946,000	$1,948,000	$1,951,000	$1,954,000
Total	**$8,719,000**	**$9,261,000**	**$7,850,000**	**$7,588,000**	**$9,900,600**	**$11,711,000**	**$10,234,000**	**$10,402,800**	**$10,800,000**	**$11,145,000**

Maintenance Expenditure										
Projected Recurrent Expenditure										
Asset class	**2025-2026**	**2026-2027**	**2027-2028**	**2028-2029**	**2029-2030**	**2030-2031**	**2031-2032**	**2032-2033**	**2033-2034**	**2034-2035**
Transport & Stormwater/WSUD	$6,815,706	$6,806,859	$6,819,097	$6,821,146	$6,821,146	$6,821,146	$6,821,146	$6,821,147	$6,821,146	$6,821,146
Buildings	$2,384,902	$2,377,999	$2,380,294	$2,380,678	$2,380,677	$2,380,677	$2,380,677	$2,380,677	$2,380,677	$2,380,677
Open Space	$5,147,273	$5,143,850	$5,154,737	$5,156,562	$5,156,562	$5,156,562	$5,156,562	$5,156,562	$5,156,562	$5,156,562
Total	**$14,347,881**	**$14,328,708**	**$14,354,128**	**$14,358,386**	**$14,358,385**	**$14,358,385**	**$14,358,385**	**$14,358,386**	**$14,358,385**	**$14,358,385**

Upgrade & New Expenditure based on LTFP										
Projected Growth Expenditure										
Asset class	**2025-2026**	**2026-2027**	**2027-2028**	**2028-2029**	**2029-2030**	**2030-2031**	**2031-2032**	**2032-2033**	**2033-2034**	**2034-2035**
Transport Infrastructure	$2,438,766	$2,067,021	$2,503,712	$3,177,960	$2,102,128	$2,218,032	$4,363,758	$2,102,128	$2,102,128	$2,102,128
Buildings		$30,000	$690,000	$5,612,914						
Stormwater & WSUD										
Open Space	$145,000		$160,000	$466,253	$2,479,011	$140,000	$2,844,067			
Total	**$2,583,766**	**$2,097,021**	**$3,353,712**	**$9,257,127**	**$4,581,139**	**$2,358,032**	**$7,207,825**	**$2,102,128**	**$2,102,128**	**$2,102,128**

Appendix 2: long term investment plan other non-modelled asset classes

Non-Modelled Asset Class Expenditure based on LTFP										
Projected Growth Expenditure										
Asset class	**2025-2026**	**2026-2027**	**2027-2028**	**2028-2029**	**2029-2030**	**2030-2031**	**2031-2032**	**2032-2033**	**2033-2034**	**2034-2035**
Condition Audits	$150,000	$175,000	$125,000	$200,000	$125,000	$150,000	$250,000	$225,000	$175,000	$250,000
Renewal Program Delivery	$109,000	$107,233	$105,686	$104,162	$102,659	$101,178	$99,719	$98,280	$96,862	$95,465
Unsealed Shoulders	$100,000	$0	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000
Small Plant Renewal	$90,000	$104,000	$55,000	$41,000	$112,000	$130,000	$64,000	$134,000	$79,000	$47,000
Light Fleet Renewal	$100,000	$421,000	$436,000	$1,371,000	$488,000	$193,000	$308,000	$850,000	$243,000	$428,000
Heavy Plant Renewal	$1,400,000	$1,494,000	$1,725,000	$997,000	$1,140,000	$1,012,000	$2,144,000	$1,615,000	$2,276,000	$1,458,000
Information Technology Renewal	$390,000	$150,000	$150,000	$150,000	$150,000	$150,000	$250,000	$250,000	$250,000	$250,000
Information Technology - Software Renewal	$500,000	$403,000	$2,150,000	$2,150,000	$1,150,000	$150,000	$250,000	$250,000	$250,000	$250,000
Total	**$2,839,000**	**$2,854,233**	**$4,846,686**	**$5,113,162**	**$3,367,659**	**$1,986,178**	**$3,465,719**	**$3,522,280**	**$3,469,862**	**$2,878,465**

Appendix 3: key terms & definitions

Terminology	Description
Infrastructure Assets	Stationary systems forming a network and serving whole communities where the system as a whole is intended to be maintained indefinitely by continuing replacement and refurbishment of its components, e.g. roads, facilities, footpaths, drains, parks.
Capital Expenditure	Expenditure for new infrastructure and for the renewal or upgrade of existing assets that enhances the service potential of the assets.
Maintenance	Expenditure that is incurred to ensure that the asset continues to provide its pre-determined service capacity and quality and achieves its expected useful life. Maintenance expenditure is of a regular and ongoing nature.
Long Term Financial Plan	A Financial Plan based on a Service Level Target that produces a year-by-year forecast of the investment needed in capital renewals, capital upgrades, new infrastructure and ongoing maintenance.
Lifecycle Indicator	Planned 10-year LTFP / Desired 10-year LTFP costs (maintenance, renewal, upgrade and new expenditure for desired service level). Recommended target = 85-115%.
Asset Health	Asset Health refers to the remaining life expectancy and serviceability of the asset portfolio
Intervention Level	A physical state of an asset defined by its condition, capacity or functionality at which Council will determine a treatment action.
Gender Equity Impact Assessment (GEIA)	A requirement under Victoria's Gender Equality Act 2020, a GEIA assesses how a policy, program or service may affect people of different genders to ensure equitable, inclusive outcomes in public decision-making.

4.4 Report on the impacts of celebrating Australia Day on 26 January

Council Plan	**Theme One - First Nations Reconciliation** Strategy 1 - Work with Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community to achieve reconciliation. Strategy 2 - Ensure Council decisions consider and respect Traditional Owner perspectives, culture and knowledge.
Author's Title:	Manager Community Support
General Manager:	Damian Waight, General Manager Community Life
Division:	Community Life
Department:	Community Support
Attachments:	Nil

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to update Council on the implementation of the Council resolution on Agenda Item 3.1 from the February 2025 Council meeting, and to present an information report on the impacts of celebrating Australia Day on 26 January, as required by that resolution.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes that all actions identified in Council's resolution on Agenda Item 3.1 from the 25 February 2025 Council meeting have been completed, as follows:
    - 1.1 Advocacy has been undertaken requesting that the Federal Government changes the date of Australia Day, and this topic has been included as part of Council's adopted Advocacy Priorities 2025 document.
    - 1.2 Cultural awareness training sessions have been made available to all Councillors.
    - 1.3 This report has been prepared, which investigates the impacts of reinstating Australia Day celebrations, including:
        - 1.3.1. Impacts on First Nations Community:
        - 1.3.2. Impacts on Council's ability to comply with the applicable legislation; and
        - 1.3.3. Identification and analysis of any impacts or outcomes, both positive and negative, which are identified as relevant to Council's decision making in considering future involvement in Australia Day celebrations on 26 January.
2. Continues the practice of not participating in Australia Day celebrations while the official date of Australia Day remains 26 January.
3. Notifies lead petitioners of the petitions received at the February 2025 Council meeting of this resolution.

Motion

Moved Cr Pattison, Seconded Cr Stapleton

That Council:

1. Notes that all actions identified in Council's resolution on Agenda Item 3.1 from the 25 February 2025 Council meeting have been completed, as follows:
    - 1.1 Advocacy has been undertaken requesting that the Federal Government changes the date of Australia Day, and this topic has been included as part of Council's adopted Advocacy Priorities 2025 document.
    - 1.2 Cultural awareness training sessions have been made available to all Councillors.
    - 1.3 This report has been prepared, which investigates the impacts of reinstating Australia Day celebrations, including:
        - 1.3.4. Impacts on First Nations Community:
        - 1.3.5. Impacts on Council's ability to comply with the applicable legislation; and
        - 1.3.6. Identification and analysis of any impacts or outcomes, both positive and negative, which are identified as relevant to Council's decision making in considering future involvement in Australia Day celebrations on 26 January.
2. Continues the practice of not participating in Australia Day celebrations while the official date of Australia Day remains 26 January.
3. Notifies lead petitioners of the petitions received at the February 2025 Council meeting of this resolution.

Amendment

Moved Cr Schonfelder, Seconded Cr Grist

That Council:

1. Notes that all actions identified in Council's resolution on Agenda Item 3.1 from the 25 February 2025 Council meeting have been completed, as follows:
    - 1.1 Advocacy has been undertaken requesting that the Federal Government changes the date of Australia Day, and this topic has been included as part of Council's adopted Advocacy Priorities 2025 document.
    - 1.2 Cultural awareness training sessions have been made available to all Councillors.
    - 1.3 This report has been prepared, which investigates the impacts of reinstating Australia Day celebrations, including:
        - 1.3.7. Impacts on First Nations Community:
        - 1.3.8. Impacts on Council's ability to comply with the applicable legislation; and
        - 1.3.9. Identification and analysis of any impacts or outcomes, both positive and negative, which are identified as relevant to Council's decision making in considering future involvement in Australia Day celebrations on 26 January.
2. Continues the practice of not participating in Australia Day celebrations while the official date of Australia Day remains 26 January.
3. Writes to the federal government requesting that it encourages the community to engage in a conversation about changing the date of Australia Day from January 26 to a long Australia Day weekend being the last weekend in January.
4. Notifies lead petitioners of the petitions received at the February 2025 Council meeting of this resolution.

CARRIED 5|4

For	Against	Abstained
Cr Bourke Cr Grist Cr Phelps Cr Schonfelder Cr Walker	Cr Barker Cr Bodsworth Cr Pattison Cr Stapleton	Nil

Council Resolution

Moved Cr Pattison, Seconded Cr Stapleton

That Council:

1. Notes that all actions identified in Council's resolution on Agenda Item 3.1 from the 25 February 2025 Council meeting have been completed, as follows:
   - 1.1 Advocacy has been undertaken requesting that the Federal Government changes the date of Australia Day, and this topic has been included as part of Council's adopted Advocacy Priorities 2025 document.
   - 1.2 Cultural awareness training sessions have been made available to all Councillors.
   - 1.3 This report has been prepared, which investigates the impacts of reinstating Australia Day celebrations, including:
     - 1.3.10. Impacts on First Nations Community:
     - 1.3.11. Impacts on Council's ability to comply with the applicable legislation; and
     - 1.3.12. Identification and analysis of any impacts or outcomes, both positive and negative, which are identified as relevant to Council's decision making in considering future involvement in Australia Day celebrations on 26 January.
2. Continues the practice of not participating in Australia Day celebrations while the official date of Australia Day remains 26 January.
3. Writes to the federal government requesting that it encourages the community to engage in a conversation about changing the date of Australia Day from January 26 to a long Australia Day weekend being the last weekend in January.
4. Notifies lead petitioners of the petitions received at the February 2025 Council meeting of this resolution.

CARRIED 6|3

For	Against	Abstained
Cr Bodsworth Cr Pattison Cr Phelps Cr Schonfelder Cr Stapleton Cr Walker	Cr Barker Cr Bourke Cr Grist	Nil

Outcome

2. If Council accepts this recommendation, it will be receiving and acknowledging the actions taken by officers to implement the Council resolution from Agenda Item 3.1 in the February 2025 Council meeting. Additionally, if Council accepts this recommendation, it will confirm its position on celebrating Australia Day on 26 January.

Key Considerations

3. In response to the Council resolution on agenda item 3.1 from the February 2025 Council meeting, officers have completed the following actions:

3.1. Undertaken advocacy urging the Federal Government to change the date of Australia Day, including writing a letter to the Prime Minister and Minister for Indigenous Australians. This was also raised with the Member for Corangamite, Libby Coker. The topic has been included as part of Council's adopted 'Advocacy Priorities 2025' document. Council has since heard from the Federal Government restating their position that Australia Day should remain on 26 January.

3.2. During July, Councillors were provided with opportunities to attend two separate training sessions focussing on cultural awareness and understanding. One session was held in Lorne on Eastern Maar Country, and the other was held in Torquay on Wadawurrung Country. Both sessions provided Councillors with Traditional Owner perspectives and cultural awareness. Both sessions included spending time on country to understand the significance of places for Traditional Owners.

3.3. Prepared this report for Council which investigates the impacts of Australia Day celebrations on 26 January, including: Impacts on the First Nations community, legal and legislative considerations and other identified impacts and outcomes, both positive and negative, as per the February resolution.

4. Two petitions presenting opposing viewpoints were received by Council relating to this matter in February 2025. Council resolved to consider these petitions as part of its consideration of agenda item 3.1. Following the February Council meeting, the lead petitioners were advised of the relevant Council resolutions. The lead petitioners will also be advised of Council's resolution on this item.

5. Australia Day is currently commemorated on 26 January. This marks the date the first fleet established a convict settlement at Sydney Cove on 26 January 1788 which is a significant moment in the commencement of European colonisation.

6. Many people hold celebrations on 26 January as Australia's national day. For many, it is a day of celebrating national identity and pride. Council has always maintained the position that any resolution it has undertaken does not seek to limit or impact the ability for others to hold celebrations on this day or any other day.

7. However, it is also viewed by many, both First Nations and Non-First nations people, as a day of mourning, symbolising colonisation, dispossession, and the onset of ongoing intergenerational trauma.

8. **Impacts on First Nations People** - *(Part 3.1 of the 25 February 2025 Resolution)*

8.1 26 January is often referred to by First Nations people as 'Invasion Day' or 'Survival Day'. Commemorating this date with celebrations is seen by many as celebrating the beginning of the dispossession and suffering caused to First Nations people through colonisation.

8.2 Celebrations on 26 January can deepen divisions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and alienate First Nations communities from national identity and civic life.

8.3 Public celebrations on this date have been linked to increased emotional distress, feelings of marginalisation and psychological harm among First Nations Australians.

8.4 Increased national attention to the debate, has led in some instances, to greater visibility of First Nations perspectives.

8.5 The debate around the date of Australia Day has created a platform for truth-telling and public education about Australia's colonial history and the continuing effects on First Nations communities.

8.6 In late 2024 and early 2025, several local governments in Victoria rolled back earlier decisions to change how or whether Australia Day is celebrated on 26 January.

8.7 First Nations organisations responded to these reversals with strong disappointment.

8.8 *The First Peoples United Together Djilang*, a collection of First Nations organisations including Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and the Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative, released a statement, sharing their disappointment and concern over decisions pertaining to recognising January 26 as Australia Day. They emphasized that 26 January is not a day of celebration for First Nations peoples, but rather a day of mourning, survival and remembrance. They called for a changing of the date of Australia Day to one that all Australians can be included in.

8.9 There have been several reports, inquiries, truth telling processes, health research and historical investigations which outline the harms that First Nations people have endured since colonisation. In understanding the evidence contained within these sources, it becomes clearer why the date which symbolizes the beginning of colonisation, is one which is painful and not a day of celebration for First Nations People.

8.10 *The Frontier Massacres Project* documents over 10,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people killed across 438 massacres during the frontier wars following the commencement of colonisation. Some regions experienced population declines of 95% *(Yoorook Justice Commission, 2025). The Yoorook Justice Report 2025* finds that these acts amount to genocide. There are several other key effects of colonisation on First Nations people, including the Stolen Generations and family separation, cultural dispossession, loss of language, health inequalities, intergenerational trauma and over representation in the criminal justice system. *The Bringing Them Home Report (1997)* revealed systematic policies of removing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families from the mid-1800s to the 1970s. These removals caused loss of cultural identity, family bonds, and connection to Country, with intergenerational trauma persisting today. *The Yoorook Justice Report (2025) and Bugmy Bar Book, Cultural Dispossession chapter (2025*) show that child removals continue to disproportionately affect Indigenous children, perpetuating cycles of trauma.

9. **Legal and legislative considerations** *(Part 3.2 of the 25 February 2025 Resolution)*

9.1 *The Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code* (updated 2023) sets out the requirements for councils to hold Citizenship Ceremonies at regular intervals. Councils are legally obligated to ensure their ceremonies align with the Code and the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007*.

9.2 While Councils were previously required to hold ceremonies on 26 January, as of 2023, they now have the flexibility to conduct them within a three-day period before or after. Holding citizenship ceremonies within a three-day period of 26 January ensures compliance with the legislation and Council meets this obligation.

9.3 Council, in the performance of its role, is required to give effect to the overarching governance principles as described in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020*. Section 9(2)(b) states that 'priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations'. Section 2 of the Act defines 'municipal community' as including:

9.3.1. people who live in the municipal district of the Council; and

9.3.2. people and bodies who are ratepayers of the Council; and

9.3.3. traditional owners of land in the municipal district of the Council; and

9.3.4. people and bodies who conduct activities in the municipal district of the Council;

9.4 Also of relevance is the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*. Section 19 of the Charter recognises the cultural rights of all persons, and Section 19(2) specifically recognises the cultural rights of Aboriginal people. Councils are obliged to act in a non-discriminatory manner and uphold cultural inclusion and respect. Holding or participating in celebrations on 26 January can be viewed as not consistent with this obligation.

9.5 Local governments play a crucial role in the identification, protection and management of cultural heritage and are bound by the requirements of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, the *Heritage Act 2017* and the *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018*. This requires that to complete any high impact activity in areas of cultural heritage sensitivity, cultural heritage must be managed, usually through a Cultural Heritage Management Plan. Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs), have statutory responsibilities under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act*, which includes evaluation of Cultural Heritage Management Plans and Permits for their area. Council currently has very proactive and positive relationship with the two RAPs which these responsibilities for Surf Coast Shire.

10. **Any other impacts or outcomes, both positive and negative** *(Part 3.3 of the 25 February 2025 Resolution)*

Positive Impacts

10.1 Since 1994, Australia Day has been recognised nationally, and 26 January (or the next working day) is a public holiday. Local residents and visitors attend

Australia Day celebration events in Surf Coast Shire. Like other community events a key aim of Australia Day celebrations is to bring people together as a form of community strengthening.

10.2 Some people would be pleased if Council again participated in celebrations on 26 January. Partner groups Council has worked with previously to produce celebratory events may again welcome Council's participation or support. Some people are likely to view this as the right approach.

10.3 Beyond Australia Day celebrations as an event, the long weekend / public holiday does generate significant local expenditure. *CommBank IQ* (an economic modelling tool that aggregates and estimates credit card expenditure) estimates over 68% of expenditure taking place over the Australia Day long weekend is generated from visitors in the Surf Coast Shire.

10.4 A similar effect can be seen for other long weekends such as the AFL Grand Final. In 2024 the AFL Grand Final was staged on Saturday 28 September. In this example 66.5% of expenditure was generated by visitors from outside of Surf Coast Shire.

10.5 Positive Impacts of Australia Day celebrations on 26 January are outlined in a study commissioned by the *National Australia Day Council (NADC) (2007).* It explored the meaning of Australia Day using focus groups and a national survey (840 responses). While this research is some years ago, it showed that Australia Day celebrations on 26 January have traditionally been seen to promote civic engagement and local pride in the community. Australia Day as a concept is supported by many Australians as a moment to express national pride, celebrate multiculturalism and reflect on the shared values. Further, a 2025 Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) poll, found that 69% of Australians believe that Australia Day should be celebrated on 26 January.

Negative impacts.

10.6 Council has an adopted *Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation* and participating in celebrations on this date limits the ability for Council to meet this commitment and work towards reconciliation. In any relationship, it is difficult - if not impossible - for two parties to achieve a shared goal if one party does not show understanding of the needs of the other party.

10.7 Participating in celebrations on Australia Day can be viewed as insensitive and may lead to reputational damage. Increasingly, Australia Day celebrations on 26 January in various locations are accompanied by protests, requiring increased security and posing logistical challenges.

10.8 As Australians continue to deepen their understanding of the nation's history, it is widely recognised that First Nations Peoples have endured significant hardship over many generations. In this context, there is a growing call to consider a date for Australia Day that all Australians can embrace together. For many, Australia Day represents a celebration of the nation's achievements, diversity and multiculturalism. First Nations Peoples share in valuing these qualities and achievements, while expressing a wish to celebrate them on a date that does not carry with it the same pain.

10.9 Ngarra Murray, Co-Chair of the *First People's Assembly of Victoria* said, "the Aboriginal community has a range of views on 26 January, but whichever way you look at it, it's a day of mourning for a lot of our people". Jordan Knight (Yorta Yorta), also the *First People's Assembly of Victoria* said, "There is definitely room for a day to celebrate the country and everyone who lives here but Jan 26 is not the day".

10.10 *Reconciliation Australia (2023)* states that Australia is the only former British colony whose national day falls on the anniversary of colonisation. *Karen Mundine, CEO of Reconciliation Australia* has consistently called for a re-evaluation of the date to one which all Australian's, including First Nations people, can celebrate.

11. The ongoing debate surrounding the date of Australia Day highlights the deep complexities of Australian history.

12. While Australia Day on 26 January remains a federally recognized public holiday, its celebration is becoming increasingly controversial. Council participating in Australia Day celebrations on 26 January limits the ability to progress reconciliation and perpetuates a national narrative that actively ignores the voice and lived experiences of First Nations People.

13. Conversely, it is also understood that many people in the Surf Coast Shire enjoy planning and attending celebratory events on 26 January. Council's current position to not participate in such events, is in no way a directive about what the rest of the community chooses to do. Many groups continue to celebrate Australia Day on 26 January, without any impact from Council's position, especially given that Council did not organise events in its own right. A decision to maintain the current position should have no impact on how community groups or individuals choose to spend the day. Nor does it mean Council does not believe in celebrating Australia on specific day, it upholds the position that 26 January is not the date for such a celebration.

Background

14. Up until 2022, Council partnered with the Anglesea and Torquay Lions Clubs to deliver celebratory events on 26 January. Citizenship ceremonies were also a part of the Torquay event.

15. In February 2021 Council registered with Reconciliation Australia to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan.

16. In March 2021, Council resolved to consult with Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living in the Shire on ways to acknowledge the significance of 26 January to First Nations Peoples, including the proposal to fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Flags at half-mast on 26 January.

17. In May 2021, Council made a Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation which pledges to walk together and work together with Traditional Custodians of the land while growing our understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Council also committed to using Reconciliation Australia's Reconciliation Action Plan framework to ensure tangible outcomes for reconciliation.

18. In September 2021, Council received a report on the future of acknowledging 26 January. In response to feedback provided from consultation undertaking with First Nations people within the community, and in recognition of the opportunity to be part of healing and reconciliation, Council resolved to:

    18.1 Agrees to fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island flags at half-mast on the Front Entrance and Ceremonial Flag Poles at the Council Civic Centre on 26 January each year.

    18.2 No longer participates in celebratory events on 26 January each year.

    18.3 Notes the Australian Government requires Council to conduct citizenship ceremony on 26 January each year (*note this was changed in 2023*) continues to conduct a citizenship ceremony on 26 January while it remains a requirement of the Australian Government.

    18.4 Advocates to the Australian Government to change the requirement for councils to hold citizenship ceremonies on 26 January each year.

    18.5 Engages with Wadawurrung Aboriginal Corporation and the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation regarding the potential of future mourning or survival events on 26 January and establishes how it can provide support if Traditional Owners determine it is appropriate for events to be delivered.

19 In December 2022 Council adopted an updated calendar of awareness raising events for the period 2023 to 2025. An event to acknowledge the impact of 26 January on First Nations people was included in this calendar.

20 In 2023, as a result of consultation arising from the above adopted position, and work to complete Council's Reconciliation Action Plan, Council supported Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation (WTOAC) to deliver 'Pilk Purriyn', a dawn truth telling event held at Cosy Corner in Torquay. The purpose of Pilk Purriyn is to invite all to listen, reflect and understand why January 26 is not a date to be celebrated. Council has supported WTOAC to deliver the event for three years with thousands of people estimated in attendance.

21 In February 2025 Council resolved to:

    21.1 Advocate to the Federal Government to formally change the date of Australia Day.

    21.2 Require the Chief Executive Officer to make cultural awareness available to all Councillors prior to 1 September 2025.

    21.3 Following provision of the training identified in point 2, requires the Chief Executive Officer to present a report to a future meeting of Council, no later than 23 September 2025, investigating the impacts of reinstating Australia Day celebrations, which includes the following points:

        21.3.1 The impacts on the First Nations Community.

        21.3.2 The impacts on Council's ability to comply with the applicable legislation.

21.3.3 Identification and analysis of any other impacts or outcomes, both positive and negative, which are identified as relevant to Council's decision making in considering future involvement in Australia Day celebrations on 26 January.

22 Two separate cultural awareness sessions were made available for Councillors in July 2025.

Options

23 **Alternative Option 1** – That Council change its current position by participating in Australia Day celebrations on 26 January and declines to note the report or actions taken in response to the resolution in item 3.1 February 2025.

This option is not recommended by officers as this would be inconsistent and negatively impact Council's Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation.

Council Plan (including Health and Wellbeing Plan) Statement

Theme One - First Nations Reconciliation

Strategy 1 - Work with Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community to achieve reconciliation.

Strategy 2 - Ensure Council decisions consider and respect Traditional Owner perspectives, culture and knowledge.

Financial Considerations

26. There is no financial impact in noting the actions and report provided. Council's current position on Australia Day is supported through the adopted 25/26 budget.

Community Engagement

27. Council's goal to progress First Nations Reconciliation is supported by community engagement undertaken to develop the Council Plan 2021-25. This was evident from the community panel and in wider engagement.

28. Engagement on the Council Plan 2025-29 did not ask questions about First Nations reconciliation as its focus was on financial sustainability. However, over 80 submissions addressed working with First Nations people and reconciliation as important.

29. Community Engagement was previously undertaken with First Nations people as per Council's resolution in 2021 on the future of how Council recognises 26 January. The preparation of this report has also been informed by consultation with Traditional Owners and other First Nations community members.

30. Communities - locally and globally – are regularly struggling to have constructive conversations over differences. Open discussion of polarising issues can often increase division, rather than reduce it. There is literature on affective polarisation – which means group hostility – that suggest public debates often exacerbate this. (*Oxford Academic Polarisation in multidisciplinary perspective PNAS Nexus, volume 3, Issue 10, October 2024*). Further, broad public debate of contested topics often allows for hurtful and discriminatory speech, especially online.

Statutory / Legal / Policy Considerations

31. The legal / legislative considerations are outlined in section nine of this report.

33. Council has an adopted Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation and a Reconciliation Action Plan. These provide the policy positions regarding First Nations reconciliation and how considering the needs of First Nations People are critical in Council pursuing its goal.

32. A Gender Equity and Diversity Impact Assessment was not undertaken because the report and actions undertaken were in response to specific items contained in resolution 3.1 from the February 2025 Council meeting.

Strategic Risk

34. Failure to deliver outcomes in line with community needs
Inherent Risk Rating - *Serious*, Residual Risk Rating - *Medium*

35. Failure to maintain effective partnerships with key stakeholders
Inherent Risk Rating - *High*, Residual Risk Rating - *Medium*

Risk Rating

36. The risk rating for noting the report and maintaining the current position is medium and can be managed at department level.

Risk Appetite

37. The risk appetite statement relevant for this topic is - We aim to achieve reconciliation with Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community through respectful engagement, acknowledgement and collaboration even if it means we do not align with State and Federal political agendas and some members of the municipal community.

Sustainability Considerations

38. Sustainability considerations are not applicable to this report.

Conflict of Interest

39. No officer declared a conflict of interest under the *Local Government Act 2020* in the preparation of this report.

Confidentiality

40. This report and attachments contain no confidential information under section 66(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Transparency

Audit and Risk Committee involvement

41. This topic is not in scope of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Councillor Briefings

42. Cultural Awareness Training was made available to all Councillors.

Eastern Maar Cultural Awareness Training Date: 9 July 2025

Wadawurrung Cultural Awareness Training Date: 23 July 2025

43. This item was discussed at the following Councillor briefing prior to being presented to Council for consideration. Information was provided to all Councillors. Councillor attendance at the briefing was as follows:

Councillor Briefing Date: 2 September 2025

Councillor name	*In attendance (Y/N)*	*Councillor name*	*In attendance (Y/N)*
Cr Paul Barker	*Y*	*Cr Tony Phelps*	*Y*
Cr Mike Bodsworth	*Y*	*Cr Adrian Schonfelder*	*N*
Cr Rebecca Bourke	*N*	*Cr Libby Stapleton*	*N*
Cr Joel Grist	*Y*	*Cr Leon Walker*	*Y*
Cr Liz Pattison	*Y*		

Councillor attendance at briefings is not a statutory requirement. Councillors are able to access and request information through a number of mechanisms to understand matters being presented at a Council Meeting.

Resolution

Moved Cr Schonfelder, Seconded Cr Stapleton

That standing orders be suspended for 10 minutes at 8:42pm.

CARRIED 9|0

For	Against	Abstained
Cr Barker Cr Bodsworth Cr Bourke Cr Grist Cr Pattison Cr Phelps Cr Schonfelder Cr Stapleton Cr Walker	Nil	Nil

Resolution

Moved Cr Barker, Seconded Cr Phelps

That standing orders be resumed at 8:56pm.

CARRIED 7|0

For	Against	Abstained
Cr Barker Cr Bodsworth Cr Grist Cr Phelps Cr Schonfelder Cr Stapleton Cr Walker	Nil	Nil

Cr Rebecca Bourke and Cr Liz Pattison were not online at the time of the vote.

4.5 Road Management Plan 2025 - 2029

Council Plan	**Theme Seven - Accountable and Viable Council** Strategy 18 - Establish a sustainable financial position.
Author's Title:	Manager Assets and Engineering
General Manager:	Chris Pike, General Manager Placemaking and Environment
Division:	Placemaking and Environment
Department:	Placemaking and Environment
Attachments:	1. Road Management Plan 2025 - 2029 [**4.5.1** - 33 pages]

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Road Management Plan 2025-2029 (**Attachment 1**) to Council for adoption.

Recommendation

That Council adopts the Road Management Plan 2025-2029 **(Attachment 1)** with effect from 1 November 2025.

Council Resolution

Moved Cr Phelps, Seconded Cr Schonfelder

That Council adopts the Road Management Plan 2025-2029 **(Attachment 1)** with effect from 1 November 2025.

CARRIED 8|1

For	Against	Abstained
Cr Bodsworth Cr Bourke Cr Grist Cr Pattison Cr Phelps Cr Schonfelder Cr Stapleton Cr Walker	Cr Barker	Nil

Outcome

2. If Council accepts this recommendation, Council will meet its obligation to have a new Road Management Plan adopted prior to 31 October 2025 deadline within the *Road Management Act 2004*.

Key Considerations

3. Council officers have reviewed the existing Road Management Plan and presented the revised plan to Council at the June 2025 Council Meeting for consideration. At the meeting Council endorsed the draft plan for exhibition.

4. Five people made submissions on the plan during the exhibition period, with feedback suggesting:

4.1. Council needs to maintain its roads as a priority.

4.2. The plan is easy to read.

5. Internal feedback during the public exhibition resulted in the following amendments to the plan:

5.1. No reduction in the inspection period for Primary Access Roads (previously recommended).

5.2. Modifications to descriptions of some defect criteria to ensure clarity and ability to measure performance.

Background

6. The *Road Management Act 2004* requires a road authority that has a road management plan, to review that plan, at intervals prescribed by the regulations. Regulation 8(3) of the Road Management (General) Regulations 2016 requires that a municipal council must conduct and complete a review of its road management plan within the period referred to in section 90(3) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, that being by 31 October in the year following a general election.

7. The Road Management Plan meets legal obligations but also provides value by:

7.1. Outlining the responsibilities of both Council and the community with regards to Council's roads and footpaths.

7.2. Setting service standards which are clear and well defined.

7.3. Clearly outlining how Council manages the maintenance of its network through inspections and responses to requests for service.

7.4. Minimising risk to the community to a level commensurate with Council's resource limitations.

7.5. Providing protection in the case of legal action related to incidents on roads and pathways.

8. An internal review of Council's existing Road Management Plan 2021-2025 (available on Council's website) has been conducted with consideration of a number of factors including:

8.1. Outcomes from an operational review of the management of Council's unsealed road network.

8.2. Outcomes from a review of Council's Civil Operations Service Level Agreement.

8.3. Benchmarking of like councils' service levels.

8.4. Customer requests from the community regarding the maintenance of Council's roads.

8.5. Council's current resourcing capabilities.

8.6. Newly released Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) template Road Management Plan.

9. The benchmarking found that in many instances Council's response times and/or intervention levels in this revised plan are better than other councils and the recommendations within the MAV template. This is particularly true for the unsealed road categories. Council's insurers indicated that Council had room to reduce service levels to align with others, however, it is not recommended to take up this option.

10. Following the review, a number of changes to the Road Management Plan 2021-2025 have been made including the following:

10.1. Adoption of the new MAV template for use as the base document for the Plan.

10.2. Adjustment of the inspection program with an increase in inspections for the higher use roads (Primary Collector Roads)

10.3. Inspections of kerbs adjacent to footpaths clarified within the Plan.

10.4. Inclusion of a number of service levels for road which previously sat outside the Plan.

10.5. Alterations to a number of defects and response times.

Options

11. **Alternative Option 1** – That Council does not adopt the Road Management Plan.

This option is not recommended by officers as this will result in Council failing to meet its obligations under the *Road Management Act 2004*.

Council Plan (including Health and Wellbeing Plan) Statement

Theme Seven - Accountable and Viable Council

Strategy 18 - Establish a sustainable financial position.

12. The Road Management Plan has been developed taking into consideration Council's financial position, constraints and ability to deliver service within existing Council budgets.

Financial Considerations

13. The changes proposed within the draft Road Management Plan can be delivered within Council's existing Civil Operations maintenance budgets. Any further improvements either through lower intervention levels or faster response times would require additional budget.

14. As part of the review of the RMP some adjustments to response times for some defect categories from those within the previous RMP where it has been shown over the past 4 years that Council can consistently achieve quicker response times with current resources.

Community Engagement

15. The draft Road Management Plan 2025-2029 was placed on public exhibition for an initial period of 28 days, which was then extended to 37 days. It was promoted on Council's website, social media posts and various print media. There were 376 visits to the webpage. Three people filled in the feedback survey and an additional two emailed Council. The feedback received commented on Council's need to maintain its roads as priority and that the plan is easy to read.

16. In addition, Council undertook a review of the maintenance practices for its unsealed road network in 2024 which included extensive community engagement and has been an input to the review of the Road Management Plan.

Statutory / Legal / Policy Considerations

17. Council, as a Road Authority, has a range of functions, powers and duties conferred or imposed on it through a range of legislation including:

    17.1. The *Road Management Act 2004.*

    17.2. The *Road Safety Act 1986.*

    17.3. The *Local Government Act 1989.*

    17.4. The *Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983.*

18. In line with Council's requirements under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* a Gender and Equity Impact Assessment (GEIA) has been undertaken. The primary outcome of which has been the inclusion of a GEIA statement within the plan. In addition, consideration to reviewing the hierarchy of roads and pathways surround high use precincts has been recommended.

19. GEIA research noted there are gendered differences in how people make choices about travel and transport, impacting Council's management of roads and pathways. Women, men and gender diverse people's experiences of travel can differ in a range of ways including the number of journeys taken, distances travelled, access to different transport modes, and the purpose for travelling.

20. Key recommendations include new interventions for road and pathway maintenance (supports cyclist and pedestrian safety); reduced timeframes for responding to corrugations of higher use unsealed roads (supports road users making repeated trips in local areas) and inclusion of pram crossing/kerb inspections (supports safety and access for all pedestrians, including pram and wheelchair users).

Strategic Risk

21. Failure to plan and deliver infrastructure and services which keep pace with growth Inherent Risk Rating - *Serious*, Residual Risk Rating - *Medium*

22. Council is required to have a Road Management Plan under the *Road Management Act 2004*. The plan outlines Council's commitment to inspections, maintenance and repair of roads to address nominated hazards or defects. This amendment of the RMP assists in ensuring Council meets these obligations.

Risk Rating

23. Risk rating is medium and can be managed at department level.

Risk Appetite

24. There is no Risk Appetite Statement applicable to this report.

Sustainability Considerations

25. There are no increased environmental/sustainability implications associated with the revision of this plan.

Conflict of Interest

26. No officer declared a conflict of interest under the *Local Government Act 2020* in the preparation of this report.

Confidentiality

27. This report and attachments contain no confidential information under section 66(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Transparency

Audit and Risk Committee involvement

28. This is not within the scope of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Councillor Briefings

29. This item was discussed at the following Councillor briefings prior to being presented to Council for consideration. Councillor attendance at each briefing was as follows:

Councillor Briefing Date: 15 April 2025

Councillor name	*In attendance (Y/N)*	*Councillor name*	*In attendance (Y/N)*
Cr Paul Barker	*N*	*Cr Tony Phelps*	*Y*
Cr Mike Bodsworth	*Y*	*Cr Adrian Schonfelder*	*Y*
Cr Rebecca Bourke	*Y*	*Cr Libby Stapleton*	*Y*
Cr Joel Grist	*Y*	*Cr Leon Walker*	*Y*
Cr Liz Pattison	*N*		

Councillor Briefing Date: 3 June 2025

Councillor name	*In attendance (Y/N)*	*Councillor name*	*In attendance (Y/N)*
Cr Paul Barker	*N*	*Cr Tony Phelps*	*Y*
Cr Mike Bodsworth	*Y*	*Cr Adrian Schonfelder*	*Y*
Cr Rebecca Bourke	*Y*	*Cr Libby Stapleton*	*Y*
Cr Joel Grist	*Y*	*Cr Leon Walker*	*Y*
Cr Liz Pattison	*N*		

Councillor Briefing Date: 2 September 2025

Councillor name	*In attendance (Y/N)*	*Councillor name*	*In attendance (Y/N)*
Cr Paul Barker	*Y*	*Cr Tony Phelps*	*Y*
Cr Mike Bodsworth	*Y*	*Cr Adrian Schonfelder*	*Y*
Cr Rebecca Bourke	*Y*	*Cr Libby Stapleton*	*N*
Cr Joel Grist	*Y*	*Cr Leon Walker*	*Y*
Cr Liz Pattison	*N*		

Councillor attendance at briefings is not a statutory requirement. Councillors are able to access and request information through a number of mechanisms to understand matters being presented at a Council Meeting.

Road Management Plan
2025-2029

surfcoast.vic.gov.au

Surf COAST SHIRE

Guideline Governance

Responsible Service / Department:	**Assets and Engineering**
Adoption authorised:	Council
Date of adoption:	23/09/2025
Date of effective from:	1/11/2025
TRIM Ref:	D25/159475
Version number:	6
Supersedes:	5

Review history 2004 to 2025

Version	Content Manager File Reference	Date	Description of Edits
5	D21/254787	24/6/2021	Adopted by Council
4.1	D18/150629	27/11/2018	Amendment Adopted
4	D18/150629	27/6/2017	Adopted by Council
3	D13/40777	25/6/2013	Adopted by Council
2	D13/160572	20/9/2009	Adopted by Council
1	-	17/8/2004	Adopted by Council

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Definitions

Arterial Road	Refers to freeways, highways and declared main roads, which are managed by the Victorian Government, through Head Transport for Victoria (as the co-ordinating road authority).
Co-ordinating road authority	The organisation which has the responsibility to co-ordinate works. Generally, if the road is a freeway or arterial road, this will be Head Transport for Victoria. Generally, if the road is a municipal road, this will be Council.
Council	Refers to the Surf Coast Shire
Demarcation agreement	A formal agreement between Council and another organisation that defines areas of responsibility.
Motor vehicle	Refers to a vehicle that is propelled by an in-built motor and is intended to be used on a roadway. This does not include a motorised wheelchair or mobility scooter which is incapable of travelling at a speed greater than 10 km/h and is solely used for the conveyance of an injured or disabled person.
Municipal road(s)	Road for which the municipal council is the co-ordinating road authority. The Road Management Act 2004 imposes specific duties on the municipal council with respect to the inspection, repair and maintenance of these roads and associated road-related infrastructure.
Non-road infrastructure	Refers to infrastructure in, on, under or over a road, which is not road infrastructure. This includes (but is not limited to) such items as gas pipes, water and sewerage pipes, cables, electricity poles and cables, tram wires, rail infrastructure, bus shelters, public telephones, mail boxes, roadside furniture and fences erected by utilities, or providers of public transport.
Other roads	Include roads in state forests and reserves, and roads on private property. Municipal councils are not responsible for the inspection, repair or maintenance of these roads.
Pathway	Refers to a footpath, bicycle path, shared path or other area that is constructed or developed by Council for members of the public (not motor vehicles) to use.
Plan	Refers to this Road Management Plan.
Public Road	As defined by the Road Management Act 2004 and includes a freeway, an arterial road, a municipal road declared under section 14(1) of the Act and a road in respect of which Council has made a decision that it is reasonably required for general public use and is included on the Register of Public Roads.
Road	Has the same meaning as in the Road Management Act 2004, being inclusive of any public highway, any ancillary area and any land declared to be a road under section 11 of that Act or forming part of a public highway or ancillary area.
Road infrastructure	Refers to infrastructure which forms part of a roadway, pathway or shoulder, which includes structures and materials.
Road-related infrastructure	Refers to infrastructure installed or constructed by the relevant road authority to either facilitate the operation or use of the roadway or pathway, or support

	or protect the roadway or pathway.
Road Reserve	Refers to the area of land that is within the boundaries of a road. Example: any nature strip, forest, bushland, grassland or landscaped area within the road reserve would be roadside.
Roadside	Refers to any land that is within the boundaries of the road (other than shoulders) which is not a roadway or pathway. This includes land on which any vehicle crossing or pathway, which connects from a roadway or pathway on a road to other land, has been constructed. Example: any nature strip, forest, bushland, grassland or landscaped area within the road reserve would be roadside
Roadway	Refers to the area of a public road that is open to, or used by, the public, and has been developed by a road authority for the driving or riding of motor vehicles. This does not include a driveway providing access to a public road, or other road, from adjoining land.
Shoulder	Refers to the cleared area, whether constructed or not, that adjoins a roadway to provide clearance between the roadway and roadside. This does not refer to any area that is not in the road reserve.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Surf Coast Shire municipality covers an area of 1,556 square kilometres an ABS estimated resident population of 39,928 in 2024.

As at the commencement of 2025, Council's road network comprises approximately 1,078 kilometres of constructed roads. The road network includes sealed roads (608kms), unsealed roads (470kms) and tracks.

Approximately 29% of Council's roads are in urban areas and usually include pathways, and road furniture, and kerb and channel that discharges into a drainage network. The remaining roads are classified as rural with stormwater usually controlled by open drains and culverts. Road infrastructure also includes major assets such as bridges and major culverts, roadside drainage, kerb and channel, shared paths and pathway networks.

The condition of these assets and the road environment has a significant impact on the safety of the people who use the network each day for recreation, sport, leisure, education and business.

Council's management of the road network needs to consider both the physical infrastructure and the operation of that infrastructure. To achieve this, Council has a range of policies, procedures and programs that involve day-to-day operations, regular maintenance as well as longer-term investment *(refer to Figure 1)*.

An important element of Council's management of the road network relates to how Council defines, identifies and addresses hazards or defects in roads, pathways and road related infrastructure. Defects in these assets are inevitable and so Council establishes its approach to road management by balancing the reasonable needs and views of the road users and the cost of the service delivery to the ratepayers and residents. Accordingly Council sets out in this plan what it believes are reasonable intervention levels, below which a defect does not warrant action but defects identified that exceed those levels will be actioned within a reasonable timeframe.

1.2 What is the purpose of this Plan

Section 50 of the Road Management Act 2004 sets the following objectives for a municipal road management plan:

1) To establish a system for our road management functions, which is based on policy, operational objectives and available resources.
2) To set a performance standard for our road management functions.

Although it is termed a 'plan' in the legislation, it is functionally an operational protocol document, describing the systems and rules we use to make decisions and meet obligations within our available resources. The plan forms part of a larger Asset Management Framework related to maintenance and operations.

For the avoidance of doubt, this Plan is a road management plan for the purposes of s.39 of the Road Management Act 2004.

1.2.1 An Achievable Plan

It is important to both road users and ratepayers that the Road Management Plan is achievable. The development of the Road Management Plan has considered information available to Council regarding its financial and non-financial resources, historical performance and has been developed though discussion with the people that deliver the day-to-day services for Council to ensure that targets and timeframes are achievable.

1.2.2 A Readable Plan

The Road Management Plan helps the community to understand how Council will meet its obligations under the *Road Management Act 2004*. It is structured and written using simple language where possible. The Road Management Plan presents information in tables where practical and incorporates a number of photos and diagrams to explain some of the more technical terms.

1.3 Legislation guiding this Plan

In addition to the Road Management Act 2004, the plan also considers the following Acts, regulations and codes of practice:

- Local Government Act 2020
- Ministerial Codes of Practice
- Road Management (General) Regulations 2016
- Road Management (Works and Infrastructure) Regulations 2015
- Road Safety Act 1986
- Wrongs Act 1958.

1.3.1 Gender Equity and Impact Assessment

Council recognises that road use and safety experiences are not universal. Gender, age, disability, and cultural background shape how people interact with road and footpath infrastructure. This plan seeks to embed principles of inclusion, equity, and accessibility in road asset planning and maintenance.

1.4 What is covered in this Plan?

The Plan is divided into six sections:

1. Introduction.
2. Rights and Responsibilities – covers legislation and local laws relevant to road management.
3. Road Management Systems - how we classify roads, streets and footpaths – known as our asset hierarchy – and the plans and processes we use to maintain roads and road-related infrastructure.
4. Register of Public Roads – what's in it, how to access it and the process for making changes.
5. Technical References.
6. Attachments:
    a. Attachment 1, Road and Pathway Hierarchy
    b. Attachment 2, Inspection Requirements
    c. Attachment 3, Defect Intervention Levels and Repair Timeframes
    d. Attachment 4, Roads that are the Responsibility of Others

1.5 Updating the Plan

This Plan must be updated within a set period following a Council election. Outside of this cycle, changes may be required from time to time.

The following process will be used to manage these changes:

- If material changes are made to standards and specifications, a report will be presented to Council, along with a brief explanation as to why such changes are necessary. The review process must follow the steps as set out in the Road Management (General) Regulations 2016 Part 3 – Road Management Plans.
- When changes do not alter these technical aspects of road management, changes will be approved by the General Manager Placemaking and Environment.

These changes will be made in accordance with the processes prescribed by the Road Management Act 2004. To assist with version control, these changes will be numbered as follows:

- Versions presented to Council will be renumbered by whole numbers – for example, from Version 1.00 to 2.00.
- Those approved by the General Manager will be renumbered by decimals – for example, from Version 1.00 to 1.01.

1.6 Exceptional Circumstances

Council will make every effort to meet its commitments under its Plan.

However, there may be situations or circumstances that affect Council's business activities to the extent that it cannot deliver on the service levels of the Plan. These include but are not limited to: natural disasters, such as fires, floods, or storms, or a prolonged labour or resource shortage, due to a need to commit or redeploy Council staff and/or equipment elsewhere or due to the effects of pandemic and or government intervention.

1.6.1 Suspension of the Plan

In the event that the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Council has considered the impact of such an event on the limited financial resources of Council and its other conflicting priorities, and determined that the Plan cannot be met, then pursuant to Section 83 of the Wrongs Act 1958, the CEO will write to Council's Officer in charge of the Plan and inform them that some, or all, of the timeframes and responses in Council's Plan are to be suspended.

1.6.2 Reinstatement of the Plan

Once the scope of the event/s have been determined, and the resources committed to the event response have been identified, then there will be an ongoing consultation between Council's CEO and Council's Officer responsible for the Plan, to determine which parts of Council's Plan are to be reactivated and when.

1.6.3 Communication and documentation around Plan suspension

Council will provide information/statements to residents about the suspension or reduction of the services under its Plan, including:

- How the work that will be done has been prioritised; and
- The period for which it is likely to be affected.

This information will be provided by the Council on its website where its Plan is located and other channels as appropriate such as press releases or social media.

Where Council has suspended, in part or whole, it's Plan, associated documents (e.g. communications, meeting minutes, schedules, etc.) will be recorded and stored.

1.6.4 Inspections and repairs during suspension of Plan

The suspension of the Plan will not necessarily mean that all inspections and repairs halt. However, it may mean that only certain categories of inspections and repairs are undertaken. These will be based on a risk assessment and resources available to the Council, taking into account the resources needed to address the impact of the trigger event. For example, some reactive inspections may take place and repair (temporary or permanent) of roads/footpaths which pose a high risk may be undertaken, depending on the resources available to the council and the accessibility of each asset.

1.6.5 Catastrophic or Extreme Fire Danger Days

Council's priority on any day declared as Catastrophic or Extreme by the Country Fire Authority is for the safety of its employees, councilors', contractors and volunteers. On these days, Council's Fire Danger Preparedness Policy will apply and have precedence over any aspect of the Road Management Plan.

1.6.6 Responsibility for the Plan

Overall responsibility for administering and implementing the Plan rests with the Manager Assets and Engineering.

2 Rights and Responsibilities

2.1 Public Roads

Public roads are defined in the Road Management Act 2004 as including:

- a freeway
- an arterial road
- a road declared under section 204(1) of the Local Government Act 1989
- a municipal road declared under section 14(1) of the Road Management Act 2004
- a road in respect of which Council has made a decision that it is reasonably required for general public use and is included on the Register of Public Roads.

2.2 Key stakeholders

The key stakeholders impacted by this Plan include:

- the general community (for recreation, sport, leisure and business)
- residents and businesses adjoining the road network
- pedestrians
- vehicle users with motorised vehicles, such as trucks, buses, commercial vehicles, cars and motorcycles
- users of smaller, lightweight vehicles, such as pedal-powered bicycles, motorised buggies, wheelchairs, prams and so on
- tourists and visitors to the area
- emergency agencies (Victoria Police, Country Fire Authority, Ambulance Victoria, State Emergency Services)
- the military (in times of conflict and emergency)
- traffic and transportation managers
- managers of the road network asset
- construction and maintenance personnel, who build and maintain asset components
- utility agencies using the road reserve for infrastructure (water, sewerage, gas, electricity, telecommunications)
- state and federal governments, who periodically provide funding for roads.

2.3 Coordinating & Responsible Road Authority

Section 35 of the Road Management Act 2004 provides that a road authority has power to do all things necessary or convenient to be done for or in connection with the performance of its functions under the Act.

Section 36 of the Road Management Act 2004 outlines which road authority is the coordinating road authority. According to subsection (c), the coordinating road authority is:

> *If the road is a municipal road, the municipal council of the municipal district in which the road or part of the road is situated.*

However, there are instances where several authorities are responsible for components of the road within the road reserve. Section 37 of the Road Management Act 2004 identifies who is the responsible road authority in particular circumstances.

2.4 General Functions of a Road Authority

The general functions of a road authority are described within Section 34 of the Road Management Act 2004.

2.5 Rights of the Road User

The rights of public road users, which are legally enforceable, are set out in Sections 8 to 10 of the Road Management Act 2004.

2.6 Obligations of Road Users

2.6.1 General Usage

The common law requires that a road user must take reasonable care for their own safety (see *Ghantous v Hawkesbury City Council)*

The *Road Safety Act 1986* sets out obligations on road users, including section 17A which requires that a person who drives a motor vehicle on, or uses, a highway must drive in a safe manner have regard for all relevant factors, including without limiting their generality, the following:

(a) physical characteristics of the road
(b) prevailing weather conditions
(c) level of visibility
(d) the condition of any vehicle the person is driving or riding on the highway
(e) prevailing traffic conditions
(f) the relevant road laws and advisory signs
(g) the physical and mental condition of the driver or road user.

Section 17A of the *Road Safety Act 1986* also requires that a road user must take reasonable care:

(a) to avoid any conduct that may endanger the safety or welfare of other road users.
(b) to avoid any conduct that may damage road infrastructure and non-road infrastructure on the road reserve.
(c) to avoid conduct that may harm the environment of the road reserve.

2.6.2 Incident Claims

If a person proposes to make a claim in relation to a public road or infrastructure for which Council is the responsible road authority, that person should contact Council and Council will initiative respective investigation and insurance reporting processes.

In accordance with Section 110 of the Road Management Act 2004, Council is not legally liable for property damages where the value of the damage is equal to or less than the threshold amount.

In cases where the claim relates to assets Council does not own or is not responsible for on the road reserve, the person who proposes to make a claim must refer the claim to the other authority or person responsible for those assets.

2.6.3 Permits for work within a road reserve

In cases where an individual or organisation proposes to carry out works within the road reserve that may impede public access, or interfere with road infrastructure, they must apply for a 'works within road reserve' permit. There are some exemptions, as noted in the Road Management (Works and Infrastructure) Regulations 2015.

Local laws also require property owners to apply for a vehicle crossing permit if they plan to build a driveway.

In both cases, a fee applies to cover the costs of the administration and inspection of the work.

2.6.4 Obligation of others

There are several assets within the road reserve that we do not have an obligation to inspect and/or maintain. These include:

2.6.4.1 Non-road infrastructure / Utilities

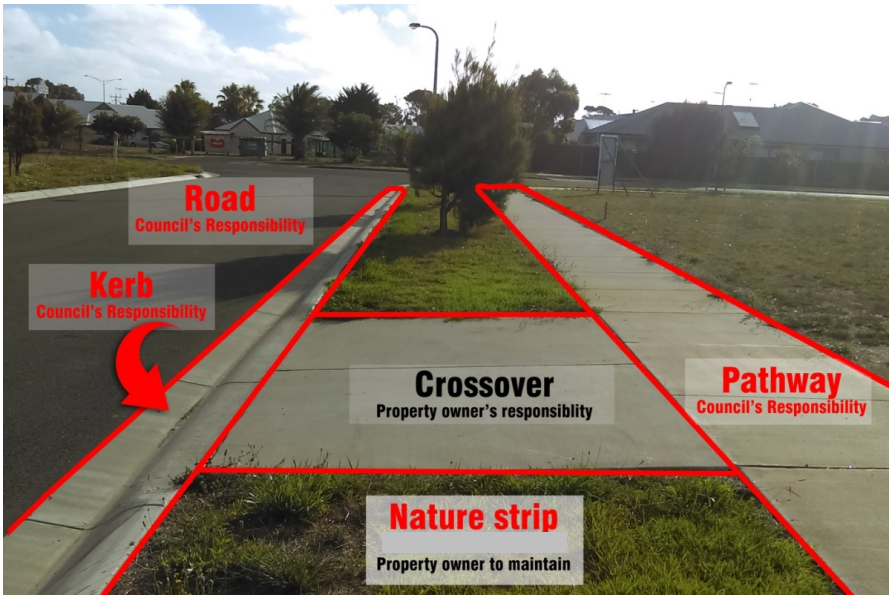
This includes (but is not limited to) such items as gas pipes, water and sewerage pipes, cables, electricity poles and cables, tram wires, rail infrastructure, bus shelters, public telephones, mail boxes, roadside furniture and fences erected by utilities, or providers of public transport, telecommunication, power, water, gas and rail authority assets.

2.6.4.2 Vehicle driveways

The vehicle crossing (including Cross-over), located between the carriageway and the property boundary, must be maintained by the adjoining property owner. However, Council is responsible for the portion of the driveway where the constructed pathway is reasonably required by the public in accordance with the following diagram.

The following diagram illustrates the layout of a typical vehicle crossover in urban areas, showing Council's responsibility and that of the property owner.

Figure 5 – Typical Urban Crossover



In the rural area, the typical crossover may consist of a crushed rock pavement, or sealed pavement, often including a reinforced concrete pipe or culvert and should include endwalls. All elements are the responsibility of the landowner, including general maintenance and cleaning of the pipe.

Roadside maintenance in rural areas where the speed zone is 100 kilometres per hour is the responsibility

of the road authority. If landowners wish to do works in the road reserve, they should contact Council to arrange appropriate approvals.

Figure 6 – Typical Rural Crossover (A)

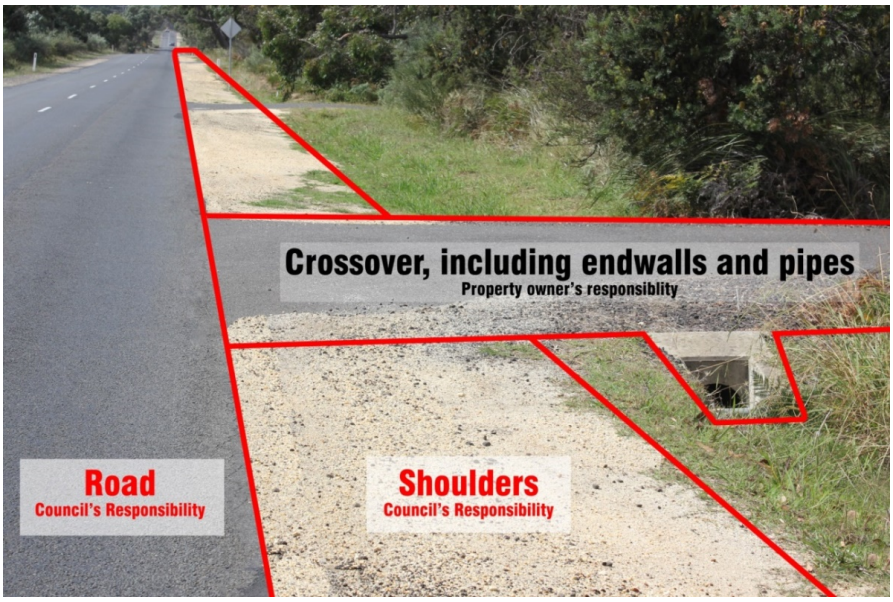
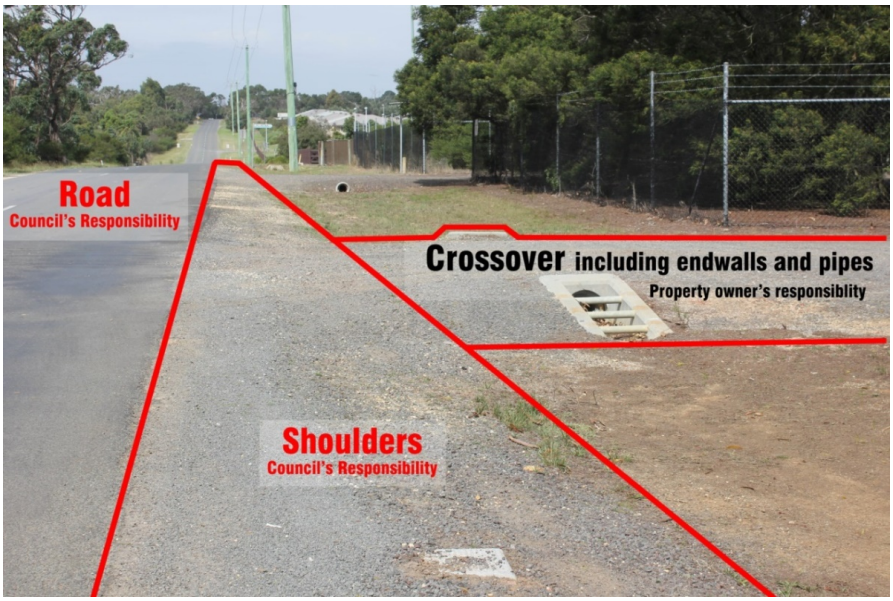


Figure 7 – Typical Rural Crossover (B)



Section 107 of the *Road Management Act 2004* provides that Council is under no statutory duty to inspect, maintain or repair roadside such as nature strips. This also extends to private vehicle crossings (driveways) and pathways on road reserves that provide access to land adjoining a road. This responsibility rests with the adjoining landowner.

Vehicle crossings must comply with Council's specifications and standards. Landowners must obtain a Works Within Road Reserves permit (WWRR) and comply with Council specifications and WWRR permit conditions when constructing vehicle crossovers.

2.6.4.3 Private roads

Council has a role in supervising the construction of private subdivisional works that occur within the municipality. This ensures that assets are constructed to an appropriate standard. Roads which are constructed as part of a subdivision are generally private roads until such time as the Statement of Compliance is finalised at which point they become public roads. There are some roads which remain privately owned and maintained. Council is not responsible for these roads.

2.6.4.4 State Roads

Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) is the Coordinating Road Authority for all State Roads.

Council is responsible for Council owned assets within road reserves where Department of Transport and Planning is the Coordinating Road Authority, for example Council pathways on a DTP arterial road. Likewise, DTP responsibility can extend into adjoining roads where Council is the Coordinating Road Authority. The demarcation between Council and DTP responsibilities is detailed in the *Road Management Act 2004 Code of Practice – Operational Responsibility for Public Roads* (Code of Practice).

Figures 2, 3a, 3b and 4 provide typical examples of demarcation between DTP and Council on roads within the Surf Coast Shire. Other demarcation arrangements can be found by referring to the Code of Practice.

Figure 2 – Demarcation Arrangements Urban Arterial Roads with service roads

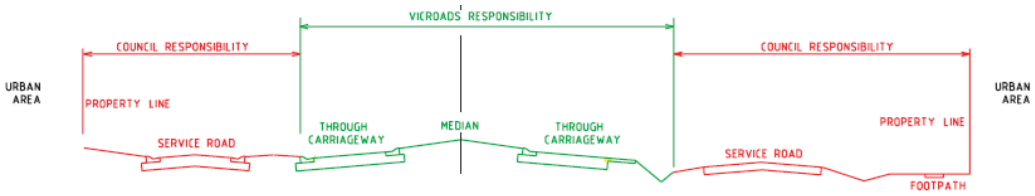


Figure 3a – Demarcation Arrangements Urban Arterial Roads

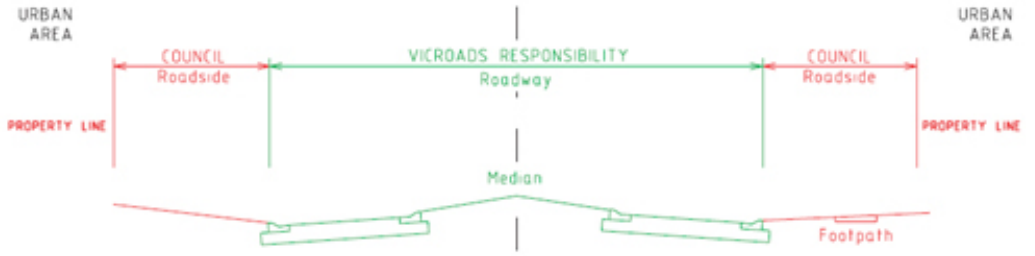


Figure 3b – Demarcation Arrangements Urban Arterial Roads

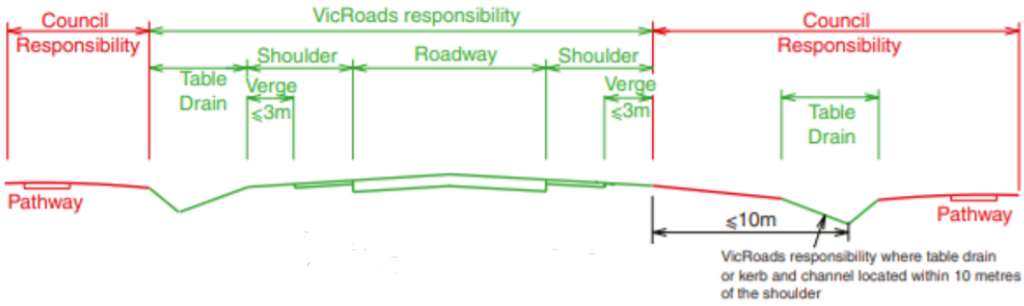


Figure 4 – Demarcation Arrangements for Typical Rural Arterial Roads

A number of roads and tracks exist on Crown Land (other than road reserves), or Great Ocean Road and Parks Authority (GORCAPA) eg. national and regional parks. In the absence of any other specific arrangements or agreements, DEECA, Parks Victoria or GORCAPA have management responsibility of these roads.

2.6.4.5 Street Lighting

Streetlights in road reserves provide a service to the community and by agreement are funded by the Council. However, they are owned and maintained by the respective network provider. They are therefore not covered by this Road Management Plan. The levels of service relating to these assets are considered through the Asset Management Plan and arrangements made directly with the appropriate utility.

2.6.4.6 Works within Road Reserves by Others

Periodically Council will issue permits and approvals for other parties to undertaken works in the road reserve (refer to Section 3.3). The Works Manager responsible for delivery of these works will be responsible for the condition of the road reserve from the commencement of construction until such time that a post-construction inspection has been conducted by Council confirming that reinstatement is satisfactory and that no hazards are present due to the works.

Until a post-construction certification or record is provided by Council, the Works Manager will be deemed to be responsible for the area of works. In situations where hazards or damaged assets are identified through inspection, and have been caused by others undertaking works in the road reserve, Council will make a record of the inspection finding and provide notice to the Works Manager to rectify the issues at their cost as per Schedule 7 of the Road Management Act 2004.

Management and intervention relating to hazards or damaged assets that are under the responsibility of a Works Manager or others, as outlined above, are considered to be outside of Council's responsibilities

under the Road Management Plan.

2.6.4.7 Other Assets

- **Single property stormwater drains** – for drains constructed within the reserve that carry water from a single property to an outlet in the kerb, or other drain.

- **Roadside** – as per Section 107 of the Road Management Act, Council has no "*statutory duty or a common law duty to perform road management functions in respect of a public highway which is not a public road or to maintain, inspect or repair the roadside*", described as *"any land that is within the boundaries of the road (other than shoulders) which is not a roadway or pathway"*. This includes landscaped tree plots within the footpath/pathway where the surface of the tree plot is not constructed with the intention of providing a trafficable pedestrian surface.

Where Council becomes aware of a hazard created by the defective condition of assets / infrastructure owned by another party, Council may at its absolute discretion:

- If located within assets / infrastructure for which Council is responsible (e.g. footpaths, road surfaces, etc.), or otherwise presents an immediate and significant risk to members of the public, undertake temporary measures to reduce the risk to members of the public until such time as the respective owner can implement permanent repairs (subject also to Council's available resources),
- Report in writing (e.g. email or letter) the presence of the hazard to the responsible party and request that repairs be implemented within a reasonable timeframe.
- Where repairs are not completed by the responsible party within the respective timeframe, Council may complete necessary repairs and invoice the responsible party for the costs.

However, where another party has a duty in relation to the asset / infrastructure, and Council has a discretionary power to take remedial action in relation to that matter, only that other party with the duty is liable in a subsequent proceeding, in accordance with s.104 of the Road Management Act 2004.

3 Road Management Systems

3.1 Background and Process

Road asset management involves managing both physical assets, and uses and operation that have the potential to impact their condition. It applies to all road assets, including:

- the road – pavement and surface, as well as footpaths, kerb and channel
- structures – bridges, culverts and traffic management devices
- road infrastructure – traffic signals and on-road electrical assets.

The aim of our road management system is to deliver a safe and efficient road network and meet community needs to the best of our ability, within available resources.

To create a road asset management system that would best meet our needs when inspecting, maintaining and repairing public roads, we used the following nationally-recognised asset management frameworks:

- International Infrastructure Management Manual (IIMM) 2015, IPWEA
- IPWEA National Asset Management Systems (NAMS+)
- Other references, as listed in Technical References.

3.2 Asset Hierarchies

All roads and footpaths within the municipal road network are classified according to a hierarchy that takes into account how they are used, who uses them and how often.

The hierarchy classification is used to determine the levels of service required, prioritise works programs and determine defect intervention responses.

Council's hierarchy is:

Road Network

- Primary Collector
- Secondary Collector
- Primary Access
- Secondary Access
- Fire Access Tracks

Pathway Network

- Primary Pathway
- Secondary Pathway

3.3 Our Road Network

More information about the Council's road network is shown in the tables below.

Table 3.1 – Road length by hierarchy – date last updated: 30/6/2025

Hierarchy	Length (km)	% of Network
Primary Collector	51.56	4.7%
Secondary Collector	118.04	10.9%
Primary Access	415.62	38.3%
Secondary Access	493.27	45.5%
Fire Access Tracks	6.3	0.6%
Tracks	N/A	N/A

3.4 Maintenance Management System

3.4.1 Maintenance Management

Council has responsibilities to road users and the community to maintain public roads to a reasonably safe and suitable standard, within our available funds and resources. By developing maintenance programs and renewal plans for our assets, we are better able to plan how we do this.

The following maintenance requirements shape our annual program and budget:

Routine maintenance standards

Standards vary across the network depending on the asset type and relevant risk factors, such as traffic volumes and composition, operating speeds, the susceptibility of assets to deterioration and the cost effectiveness of repairs. Competing priorities for funding are also relevant.

Defect intervention levels have been established using the VicRoads Standard Specification Section 750 and adapting it to local conditions.

The standards will be reviewed periodically to make sure they are adequate (see section 1.4).

Repair and maintenance works

Works must be completed within a specified time, depending on the severity and location of the defect. Response times are determined using local knowledge and experience and past performance as a guide.

Response times are monitored and will be periodically reviewed (see section 1.4).

Temporary mitigation measures

These are temporary works designed to reduce the risk of an incident, until such time as repair or maintenance works can be completed.

Response times and safety measures – for example warning signs, flashing lights, and safety barriers – are determined by reference to the risk to safety, road type and traffic volume.

Emergency works

Works that result from emergency incidents and must be undertaken immediately, for the safety of road

users and the public.

Emergency works might include traffic incident management, responses to fires, floods, storms and spillages, and any assistance required under the Victorian State Emergency Response Plan and Municipal Emergency Management Plan.

3.4.2 Asset Management Plans

Our asset management plans guide the development of long-term asset renewal programs, helping us to plan and finance asset renewal and replacement.

3.4.3 Maintenance Surveys and inspections

Council undertakes regular inspections of municipal roads as part of the Road Management Plan. The table below outlines the definition and purpose of each inspection type.

Table 3 Inspection Types

Inspection Type	Definition and Purpose
Reactive inspection	• Inspections undertaken in response to notification to council by members of the community. • These inspections allow Council to program required works where an intervention action is warranted.
Proactive Inspection	• Inspection undertaken in accordance with a programmed inspection schedule. • These inspections determine if the road asset complies with the levels of service as specified.
Condition Inspection	• Inspection undertaken specifically to identify deficiencies in the structural integrity of the various components of the road infrastructure assets which if untreated, are likely to adversely affect the lifespan of the asset. • Condition data will inform Council's long term asset management planning. • Such inspections are not intended to measure individual defects against the relevant intervention levels, this is done via the proactive and reactive inspections. • Condition Inspections are undertaken on a 3 yearly cycle.
Incident Inspection	• An inspection carried out to comply with the requirements the Road Management Act [Division 5 – Claims Procedure, Clause 116]; • This inspection enables an incident condition report to be prepared for use in legal proceedings and the gathering of information for the analysis of the causes of accidents and the planning and implementation of road management and safety measures.

3.4.4 Maintenance responsiveness and performance targets

The following information is recorded when we receive a Customer Request for Service (CRM) from the community:

- Date the request was received
- Details of the request, including the location and nature of the reported hazard/defect (including any specific measurements if provided), name of the person making the request, copies of any photographs provided, etc.
- The personnel / department to which the request has been assigned for action
- Date by which the request must be actioned (based on the target response times specified in Attachment 6)
- Date when the request was actioned and/or completed (this typically involves someone carrying out a reactive inspection request, as described in section 3.4.3, followed by any necessary repair works conducted).

By recording this information, we can monitor compliance against target response times – that is, the time it takes from receiving a request to carrying out an inspection and ultimately completing necessary works.

Customer requests will be inspected and assessed in accordance with timeframes specified in Attachment 6. Following are some possible outcomes from a reactive inspection:

- If a defect identified exceeds a Description / Intervention Levels specified in Attachment 3, a work order would be created with a date for completion of works in line with respective specified repair timeframes.
- If repairs are significant – for example, rehabilitation works are required – temporary mitigation measures may be undertaken to reduce the risk posed by the hazard/defect until the proper works can be undertaken (and subject to available resources).
- If the defect is assessed as below the Description / Intervention Level specified in Attachment 3 it would be noted (including why), but no remedial action will be conducted.

In all cases, the action taken would be noted against the original request.

Target response times and intervention times are based on 'normal' conditions. The same level of service would not apply in cases where the Plan has been suspended, under Section 1.6.1.

3.5 Asset Levels of Service

Five elements are taken into account when determining appropriate levels of service for the road network. These are:

- Community expectations;
- Technical standards;
- Organisational capacity;
- Performance measures and targets;
- Safety of road and footpath users.

3.5.1 Principles and Risk Management Philosophy

Section 20 of the *Road Management Act 2004* states that "the principal object of road management is to ensure that a network of roads is provided primarily for the movement of persons and goods as part of an integrated transport system and that road reserves are available for other appropriate uses."

A key principle of the *Road Management Act 2004* that applies to the management of works and

infrastructure is the minimisation of road safety hazards. In the application of this principle, Council has taken a risk management approach to the development of timeframes and intervention levels that apply to inspections, and any necessary repairs of defects that are found to exceed stated intervention levels. .

The hazards and defects, intervention levels and timeframes documented in this Road Management Plan have considered:

- The anticipated traffic volumes of different classification of roads;
- The likelihood that a particular type or extent of defect or hazard may contribute to an incident resulting in harm to persons or damage to property; and
- The potential harm that might be experienced in the event of an incident.

The above considerations are balanced with the cost to the community of infrastructure and services.

The above principles and considerations are reflected in the nominated timeframes and intervention levels outlined in Tables 4 to 9.

3.5.2 Community considerations

Council sets levels of service for its roads in accordance with the needs of the community. To do this Council uses various techniques to identify those needs, then considers those needs within the overall context of its road management resources.

Techniques to identify the community needs include:

- Community Satisfaction Measurement Survey;
- Council's Customer Service Request system data.

3.5.3 Financial and non-financial considerations

To evaluate its resources, Council's considerations include:

- Asset Management requirements as outlined in "Strategic Overview of Asset Management" and "Roads Asset Management Plan" documents.
- Level of service (Road Maintenance Service Level Agreement and Infrastructure Design Manual).
- Annual budget for both recurrent and capital works expenditure.

4 Register of Public Roads

Council maintains a register of public roads – called the Register of Public Roads – with the details of all public roads and ancillary areas for which we are responsible.

Section 19 of the *Road Management Act 2004* requires that a road authority must keep a Register of Public Roads specifying the public roads in respect of which it is the Coordinating Road Authority.

Council's Register of Public Roads is available for inspection on Council's website via www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au.

The Register of Public Roads includes the following details:

- Road name and locality
- Road section description
- Responsible Road Authority
- Road classification
- Asset hierarchy
- The date on which the road became a public road, if it became a road after 1 July 2004
- Other relevant details

The Road Register will be updated at intervals of no greater than 12 months and the current register will be accessible on Council's website.

4.1 Maintenance Demarcation (Boundary) Agreements

Where there are boundary agreements between us and other road authorities or private organisations, the schedule of roads affected, and agreements are listed in the Municipal Road Register.

We have agreements with the following road authorities:

- Colac Otway Shire Council
- Golden Plains Shire Council
- City of Greater Geelong

4.2 Roads not listed on the Register

The following roads are not listed on our Register of Public Roads:

- Roads which are the full responsibility of the state government, or a private enterprise;
- Unused roads for which we have not accepted responsibility;
- Roads drawn out on a plan of subdivision, until such time that we accept responsibility for these roads;
- Roads which we have not determined are reasonably required for general public use.

5 References

Legislation, Standards Codes of Practice, Guidelines, Council Strategies, Policies, Quality Plans and Procedures that are relevant to this Road Management Plan include:

Legislation:

- Local Government Act 1989
- Local Government Act 2020
- Road Management Act 2004
- Transport Act 1983
- Road Safety Act 1986 (Amended 2004)

Regulations:

- Road Management (General) Regulations 2005
- Road Management (Works and Infrastructure) Regulations 2005
- Codes of Practice:
- Road Management Plans
- Clearways on Declared Arterial Roads
- Operation Responsibility for Public Roads
- Worksite Safety – Traffic Management
- Management of Road and Utility Infrastructure in Road Reserves

Council documents:

- Council Plan 2021 - 2025
- Council Strategic Asset Management Policy 2022
- Council Road Asset Management Plan
- Council Road Safety Strategy 2021 – 2027
- Council Safer Cycling Strategy 2022 - 2027
- Council Tree Risk Management Plan 2023 - 2027
- Infrastructure Design Manual (IDM)

MAV Road Management Plan Template including its consideration of:

- AS ISO 31000:2018 – Risk Management – Guidelines
- Integrated Asset Management Guidelines for Road Networks (AP-R202) 2002, Austroads Inc.
- International Infrastructure Management Manual (IIMM) 2015, IPWEA
- VicRoads Risk Management Guidelines
- VicRoads Standard Specification Section 750 – Routine Maintenance

6 Attachment 1: Road and Pathway Hierarchy

The road hierarchy classifications for each Municipal road is detailed in the Road Register.

Table 2 Road and Pathway Hierarchy Classification

Asset type	Road Hierarchy Classification	Road Hierarchy Description
Roads	Primary Collector*	Provides a strategic link between arterial roads, suburbs, commercial areas, major housing areas or a defined destination. Access to tourist facilities or industrial centres and may include regional links. These roads carry the heaviest volumes of traffic.
	Secondary Collector*	Provides connection into residential areas. These roads carry heavy volumes of traffic.
	Primary Access*	Provides access to local residents or secondary access to commercial areas.
	Secondary Access*	Provides secondary access to residential properties, or provides access to property (non-residential) only.
	Fire Access Tracks	These tracks have been identified as of value in the event of fires. These tracks have little or no imported pavement material but are not closed to the public. They are infrequently used for fire access purposes. Council may undertake maintenance on nominated fire access tracks to allow access for fire fighting vehicles on request by the CFA
	Tracks	These tracks have little or no imported pavement material but are not closed to the public. They are infrequently used or dry weather or fire access only. These tracks are not maintained to a standard suitable for general public access and are excluded from the inspection and response requirements of the Road Management Plan.
Pathways	Primary Pathway	Pathways, including shared pathways, providing direct access or adjoining to significant facilities such as Shopping Precincts / Aged Care Units / Schools / Kindergartens / Hospitals. (Does not include paths in Parks and recreation reserves).
	Secondary Pathway	Remainder of constructed pathway network. (Does not include paths in Parks and recreation reserves).

**This category is classified listed in the Surf Coast Shire Roads - Public Road Register*

7 Attachment 2: Inspection Requirements

Table 4 Inspection Program and/or Response Times for Roads

Asset Group	Hierarchy Category	Reactive Inspection Timeframe	Proactive Inspection Frequency**	Night Inspections
Sealed Roads **Unsealed Roads**	Primary Collector*	5 WD	1 M	1 Y
	Secondary Collector*	5 WD	2 M	2 Y
	Primary Access*	5 WD	3 M	3 Y
	Secondary Access*	5 WD	6 M	3 Y
	Fire Access Tracks	10 WD	On CFA Request only	n/a
	Tracks	10 WD	Reactive Only	n/a
Footpaths, Shared & Bicycle Pathways	Primary Pathway	5 WD	6 M	n/a
	Secondary Pathway	5 WD	1 Y	n/a
Concrete and Stone Kerb and Channel	Primary Access*	5 WD	Reactive Only	n/a
	Secondary Access*	5 WD	Reactive Only	
	Connected to primary** pathway	5 WD	6 M	
	Connected to secondary pathway**	5 WD	1 Y	
Bridges.	Level 1 Bridge Inspections	5 WD	6 M	n/a
Condition Inspection - All Asset/ Categories (excluding Fire Tracks and Tracks)		n/a	3 Y	n/a
Emergency Response – All Asset / Categories * Reported Incidents / Hazards that present an immediate and significant risk to members of the public. (eg: water over road; Spillage / obstruction; Stop and Give Way signage) Temporary measures (e.g. installing barriers, signage, closing the road/footpath, etc.) will be implemented to reduce the risk to users of the road network until		1 WD		

** WD = Working Days, H = Hours, M = Calander Month, Y = Years*
**Proactive inspections are based on the maintenance program but completed at least once per inspection frequency. Eg 2M means asset will be inspected once in every second calendar month.*
** If a Proactive Inspection Frequency elapses on a Weekend or Public Holiday, the actual due date will be the next Working Day.*
*** Kerbs connected to footpaths are proactively inspected in conjunction with the adjoining footpath*

8 Attachment 3: Defect intervention levels and repair timeframes

NOTES:

* All timeframes are “Working Days” and do not include weekends or public holidays.

** In cases where a defect is not due to be repaired in less than 4 weeks, temporary measures, such as installing warning signage, erecting barriers, or painting the defect with a bright contrasting colour, may be implemented at the time of identification to reduce the risk as much as is reasonably practicable until permanent repairs can be completed in line with the specified Repair Timeframes.

*** Items listed below “Missing / Damaged Pit Lids” and “Missing / Damaged Guardrail or safety fencing” response action is to make site safe and protected as items often custom repairs and replacement timelines cannot be controlled by Council.

Table 7 Intervention Actions and Timeframes for all roads

Hazard or defect type	Criteria for Intervention Action	Collector Roads		Access Roads	
		Primary Collector	Secondary Collector	Primary Access	Secondary Access
Emergency Response	Obstruction to more than 50% of traffic lane (water over road / Debris, including fallen limbs)	1 WD	1 WD	1 WD	1 WD
Sight distances - grass/shrubs	Intersections where grass/shrub height is greater than 900 mm above the general road surface level and within the sight triangle. *(Refer to Appendix D).*	5 WDs	10 WDs	20 WDs	20 WDs
Sight distances - overhanging vegetation	Intersections where overhanging vegetation sit below 2 metres above the general road surface and within the sight triangle. *(Refer to Appendix C).*	5 WDs	10 WDs	20 WDs	20 WDs

Table 7 Intervention Actions and Timeframes for all roads

Hazard or defect type	Criteria for Intervention Action	Collector Roads		Access Roads	
		Primary Collector	Secondary Collector	Primary Access	Secondary Access
Signage – Stop and Give Way	Signs missing or more than 70% of sign illegible at 100m distance.	1 WD	1 WD	1 WD	1 WD
Signage – Other regulatory signage	Sign missing or more than 70% of sign illegible at 100m distance.	20 WDs	20 WDs	20 WDs	20 WDs
Vegetation Clearance (Appendix C)	Overhanging vegetation above traffic lanes less than 4.9m from the road surface.	60 WDs	60 WDs	100 WDs	100 WDs
Missing / Damaged Pit Lids	Missing or Damaged Council drainage pit lids (such that they are potentially structurally unsound) – To be made safe	1 WD	1 WD	1 WD	1 WD
Damaged Guardrail or safety fencing	Guard rail displaced and causing possible obstruction/risk to traffic– To be made safe	3 WDs	3 WDs	3 WDs	3 WDs
Missing / Damaged Pavement Markings	Pavement markings which are missing or faded making them substantially ineffective	Refer to program			

Table 7 Intervention Actions and Timeframes for Sealed Roads

Hazard or defect	Criteria for Intervention Action	Collector Roads		Access Roads	
		Primary Collector	Secondary Collector	Primary Access	Secondary Access
Rutting	Greater than 150mm depth and greater than 25m long, as measured by a three (3) metre straight edge from centreline towards edge of seal.	50 WDs	50 WDs	50 WDs	60 WDs
Potholes	Greater than 50mm depth and with a diameter greater than 300mm.	5 WDs	10 WDs	15 WDs	20 WDs
Edge Breaks	Reduction in sealed width of greater than 150mm, for greater than 20 metres in length.	15 WDs	25 WDs	60 WDs	60 WDs
Edge Breaks	Reduction in sealed width of greater than 250mm, for greater than 5 metres in length.	15 WDs	15 WDs	30 WDs	30 WDs
Shoulders	Edge of seal drop greater than 75mm, for greater than 20 metre length of seal.	45 WDs	45 WDs	60 WDs	60 WDs

Table 7 Intervention Actions and Timeframes for Unsealed Roads

Hazard or defect	Criteria for Intervention Action	Collector Roads		Access Roads	
		Primary Collector	Secondary Collector	Primary Access	Secondary Access
Rutting	Greater than 100mm depth and greater than 25m long as measured by a three (3) metre straight edge from centreline towards edge of road.	N/A	N/A	30 WDs	40 WDs
Potholes	Individual potholes greater than 100mm depth and with a diameter greater than 500mm	N/A	N/A	30 WDs	30 WDs
Potholes	more than 25 potholes greater than 50mm depth within a 10 metre length of road.	N/A	N/A	45 WDs	60 WDs
Corrugations	Corrugations greater than 35mm in depth for a length greater than 300 metres road length.	N/A	N/A	45 WDs	60 WDs
Corrugations	Corrugations greater than 75mm in depth for a length greater than 300 metres road length.	N/A	N/A	15 WDs	15 WDs

Table 8 Intervention Actions and Timeframes for Bridges.

Hazard or defect	Criteria for Intervention Action	Timeframe
Bridge damage	Implement temporary measures to make safe damage to superstructure of bridge from Level 1 inspection	1 WD
	Implement temporary measures to make safe missing planks or railings from Level 1 inspection.	1 WD
	Implement temporary measures to make safe damaged planks, railings or signs from Level 1 inspection.	10 WDs

Table 9 Intervention Actions and Timeframes for Pathways (concrete, gravel and other) and Kerbs

Hazard or defect	Criteria for Intervention Action	Primary Pathway	Secondary Pathway
Steps/ Breaks (concrete)	Greater than 20mm step or misalignment in path surface levels	30 WDs	60 WDs
Pothole	Greater than 300mm diameter and greater than 50mm depth.	30 WDs	60 WDs
Kerb Ramp*	Greater than 20mm step or misalignment in designed path surface levels	30 WDs	30 WDs
Signage	Guideposts or reflectors significantly damaged. Signs missing or less than 70% of regulatory sign illegible at 100m distance	30 WDs	30 WDs
Vegetation Clearance	Overhanging vegetation above pathway less than 2.5m above path surface	30 WDs	60 WDs
Hazard or defect	**Criteria for Intervention Action**	**Primary / Secondary Collectors Roads**	**Primary / Secondary Access Roads**
Kerb	Damaged kerb and channel. 50mm step or misalignment in kerb and channel. Deformation 50mm over 1200mm length.	20 WDs	60 WDs

** kerb ramps (pram crossing) providing transition between road and pathway levels are treated as part of the pathways for the purposes of the application of description / intervention levels.*

9 Attachment 4: Roads that are the responsibility of others

Department of Transport – Arterial Roads (Highways, Main Roads and Tourist Roads)

- M1 - Princes Highway
- B100 - Great Ocean Road
- B100 - Surf Coast Highway
- C111 -Barrabool Road (Merrawarp Road to Devon Road)
- C111 - Devon Road
- C122 - Lower Duneed Road
- C122 - Mt Duneed Road (Surf Coast Hwy to Anglesea Road)
- C132 - Bells Beach Road (Bones Road to Southside Carpark Entrance)
- C132 - Bells Boulevarde (Great Ocean Road to Bones Road)
- C132 - Bones Road (Bells Boulevarde to Bells Beach Road)
- C134 - Anglesea Road
- C135 – Cape Otway Road (Princes Highway to Hendy Main Road)
- C135 - Hendy Main Road (Cape Otway Road to Anglesea Road)
- C145 - Inverleigh Winchelsea Road
- C151 - Deans Marsh Lorne Road
- C151 - Winchelsea Deans Marsh Road
- C152 - Birregurra Deans Marsh Road

Shared Road Responsibilities

Roads where the centreline forms the shire boundary, have historically been maintained with a formal or informal agreement between the two Councils.

The *Road Management Act* requires clarification of the responsibilities for these roads and allows Surf Coast Shire Council to transfer responsibility for maintenance to another entity.

The following is a breakdown of the shared boundary roads, roads which the Surf Coast Shire will accept full responsibility (inspect, maintain and repair in accordance with our standards), and roads which we have transferred responsibility to another Road Authority.

Colac Otway Shire

Maintained By Surf Coast Shire Council

- Benwerrin Mt. Sabine Road (1km south of Erskine Falls Road to Shire Boundary)
- Ingleby Road
- Pennyroyal Wymbooliel Road
- Prices Lane (Cressy Road to Ondit Road West)

- Wingeel Road (Cressy Road to McIntyres Road)

Maintained by Colac Otway Shire

- Bushs Lane
- Lidgerwoods Lane
- Prices Lane (Ondit Road West to Princes Highway)
- Salt Creek Lane (Cape Otway Road to Birregurra Deans Marsh Road)

Golden Plains Shire

Maintained by Surf Coast Shire Council

- McIntyres Road
- Pollocksford Road Bridge

Maintained by Golden Plains Shire

- Gallaghers Road
- Barwon Park Road Bridge
- Flemmings Road Bridge

City of Greater Geelong

Maintained by Surf Coast Shire Council

- Honeys Road
- Mt Duneed Road (Anglesea Road to Pettavel Road)
- Pettavel Road (Princes Hwy to Mt Duneed Road)

Maintained by City of Greater Geelong

- Blackgate Road (Breamlea Road to Bridge)
- Breamlea Road (Barwon Heads Road to Blackgate Road)
- McCartney's Bridge (Blackgate Road)

Arrangements are in place to clarify maintenance responsibility for these roads. The Road Register identifies which Councils have maintenance responsibilities for various sections of the boundary roads.

Councils generally share road or bridge renewal and rehabilitation costs on an equal basis when these works are required.

4.6 Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029

Council Plan	**Theme Seven - Accountable and Viable Council** Strategy 19 - Improve Council's credibility as a trusted decision maker through meaningful engagement.
Author's Title:	Manager Community Safety
General Manager:	Damian Waight, General Manager Community Life
Division:	Community Life
Department:	Community Safety
Attachments:	1. Final Draft DAMP Plan 2026-2029 [**4.6.1** - 33 pages]

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to present the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) 2026-2029 to Council to seek endorsement for the purpose of public exhibition.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan (**Attachment 1**) that has been prepared in accordance with section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* for the purpose of public exhibition.
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to give public notice that the proposed draft Domestic Animal Management Plan is being placed on public exhibition from 25 September to 16 October 2025.
3. Considers adoption of a final Domestic Animal Management Plan at a future meeting of Council following consideration of public feedback.

Council Resolution

Moved Cr Schonfelder, Seconded Cr Walker

That Council:

1. Endorses the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan (**Attachment 1**) that has been prepared in accordance with section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* for the purpose of public exhibition.
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to give public notice that the proposed draft Domestic Animal Management Plan is being placed on public exhibition from 25 September to 16 October 2025.
3. Considers adoption of a final Domestic Animal Management Plan at a future meeting of Council following consideration of public feedback.

CARRIED 8|1

For	Against	Abstained
Cr Bodsworth Cr Bourke Cr Grist Cr Pattison Cr Phelps Cr Schonfelder Cr Stapleton Cr Walker	Cr Barker	Nil

Outcome

2. If Council accepts this recommendation, this will enable further consultation with our community. This consultation process is an important step to ensure key information provided is considered prior to considering adopting the final 2026-29 DAMP and helps meet the requirements of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

Key Considerations

3. Under section 68A of the *Domestic Animal Act 1994* Council must undertake a full comprehensive review every four years. This plan has been prepared to meet the requirement of the Act and provides a new four-year plan for Council's domestic animal services

4. The DAMP is required to be adopted by Council and received by the Secretary of Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) by 6 December, 2025.

5. A requirement of Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act, 1994*, is to ensure that the DAMP outlines programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district for the four-year period. Key to formulating the plans is to engage with our community and evaluate feedback.

6. Community and Stakeholder consultation has helped shape the draft DAMP to respond to legislative responsibilities and the needs of our community. Exhibiting the draft DAMP is an important step in the process to further evaluate the DAMP prior to it being endorsed for the next four-year period.

7. The plan has been developed with 485 participants in the community engagement process to date.

8. The engagement feedback was collated and reviewed and used to develop the new DAMP. Feedback was consistent with Council's two previous DAMP's and the key top five issues identified as:

    8.1. Uncontrolled and dogs off leash,

    8.2. Dog waste not being picked up,

    8.3. Lack of Council enforcement,

    8.4. Irresponsible pet ownership and

    8.5. Cats roaming and killing wildlife.

9. The draft DAMP responds to the engagement feedback and has several State Government reporting measures, along with key objectives relating to education, responsible pet ownership, controlling over population and enforcement activities.

10. The draft DAMP lists 32 key actions that Ranger Services will focus on during the next four years. The actions respond to continuing to communicate with our community to promote responsible pet ownership, adoption programs, enforcement activities by undertaking regular patrols across the Shire, signage and work in partnership with other land managers to be more effective with education.

11. A key action in this draft DAMP, will be increased monitoring of domestic animal management data to identify key trends and issues. This approach is aimed at prioritising and allocating Ranger resources to enhance the delivery of education and enforcement strategies throughout the shire.

12. The 2026-29 DAMP promotes pet owners to 'Take the lead' and be accountable for their pets by working in partnership with Council Ranger Services Team and by following the rules.

Background

13. The 2022-25 DAMP is due to expire in December 2025.

14. The 2026-29 DAMP has been drafted after undertaking community consultation, reviewing key operational statistics relating to service provision, customer requests, dog attacks and previous DAMP principles and actions. Information collated from this review has been used to create the new DAMP.

15. Council has performed well on the following indicators during the 2023/24 period. These being:

    15.1. Surf Coast is more responsive to animal management customer requests achieving a 1.2-day average when the statewide average is 2.2 days.

    15.2. Animal reclaims in Surf Coast Shire is at 72.2% when the statewide average is 41.4%.

    15.3. Surf Coast Shire cost of animal management service per population is less expensive at $12.59 compared with a statewide average of $14.79.

    15.4. Surf Coast Shire pet ownership has remained consistent over the past four years. Currently there are 6200 registered animals. Dogs make up approximately 87% of pet ownership. Surf Coast Shire remains a popular place to visit particularly during peak holiday periods that increases the dog population.

Comparative data source - https://www.vic.gov.au/know-your-council-comparison-dashboard

Options

16. **Alternative Option 1** – That Council does not endorse the draft DAMP and / or place it on public exhibition seeking final comments and submissions.

This option is not recommended by officers as the current DAMP is due for its four yearly comprehensive review in accordance with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* and this is a key next step in successfully completing this review. Exhibiting and finalising the plan now will

enable Council to meet the December deadline to submit an adopted Plan to DEECA as required.

Council Plan (including Health and Wellbeing Plan) Statement

Theme Seven - Accountable and Viable Council

Strategy 19 - Improve Council's credibility as a trusted decision maker through meaningful engagement.

Financial Considerations

17. The services and actions required to be delivered as part of the 2026-29 DAMP are funded in the allocated operational budget. Animal Registrations support the operational budget allocated to Ranger Services. Actions identified in the draft DAMP are deliverable with the current level of resources provided.

Community Engagement

18. A strong level of community engagement has been received during the development of this draft DAMP. Officers used a 'consult and collaborate' methodology to develop the community engagement.

19. The community engagement process, titled 'Take the lead', was promoted by print media and social media and directly to stakeholders to engage with our community. This resulted in 485 responses to the online survey.

Statutory / Legal / Policy Considerations

20. Under the *Domestic Animal Act 1994* Council must review the Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) each year and undertake a full comprehensive review every four years. Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* provides the framework for the content of the plan, what it must address and contain. This framework has been followed in the development of this draft DAMP.

21. In line with Council's requirements under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* a Gender and Equity Impact Assessment (GEIA) has been conducted. The key findings were:

    21.1. GEIA research noted that domestic animal management has distinct gendered impacts, shaped by differences in pet ownership, safety perceptions, and caregiving roles.

    21.2. Feedback from survey data noted that women are more likely to be primary caregivers for pets, managing registration, veterinary care, and compliance responsibilities, which can create financial and time pressures, which may disproportionality impact single parents and low-income households. Women also reported lower feelings of safety in shared open spaces and prioritised education and prevention of dog attacks, while men focused more on feral cat management, barking nuisances, and wildlife protection.

    21.3. National data also highlights strong links between domestic and family violence and animal safety, with pets often used in coercive control, disproportionately impacting women and children.

21.4. Key recommendations based on these findings include; ongoing collection and monitoring of gender disaggregated incident data to guide decision making and workload planning; gender inclusive communications, education and engagement processes relating to animal management; commitment to undertaking a gender impact assessment for any future open space areas and; promotion of concession rates and Council's Hardship Policy for people who may require support with animal registration fees.

21.5. Community feedback on the draft DAMP will be used to finalise recommendations from the GEIA, and implemented into the final document to be presented to Council.

Strategic Risk

22. Failure to meet Council's governance and compliance obligations
Inherent Risk Rating - *Serious*, Residual Risk Rating - *Medium*

23. Failure to maintain effective partnerships with key stakeholders
Inherent Risk Rating - *High*, Residual Risk Rating - *Medium*

24. By placing the draft DAMP on exhibition, Council is mitigating the risk of potential criticism of limited opportunity for public feedback on the draft.

Risk Rating

25. Council has a statutory obligation to prepare then deliver a four-year DAMP in response to its duties under the Act. The delivery of the service, amongst other matters, seeks to address the safety risks to the community together with environmental impacts and nuisances with the interaction of domestic animals in our community.

26. Failing to complete and endorse the 2026-29 DAMP is a High-Level risk and Council will not be in compliance with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

Risk Appetite

27. There is no Risk Appetite Statement is applicable to this report.

28. The DAMP is a requirement of the *Domestic Animal Management Act 1994*.

Sustainability Considerations

29. There are no identified sustainability considerations.

Conflict of Interest

30. No officer involved in the preparation of this report has any conflicts of interest.

Confidentiality

31. This report is not confidential

Transparency

Audit and Risk Committee involvement
32. This report is not within the scope of the Audit and Risk Committee.

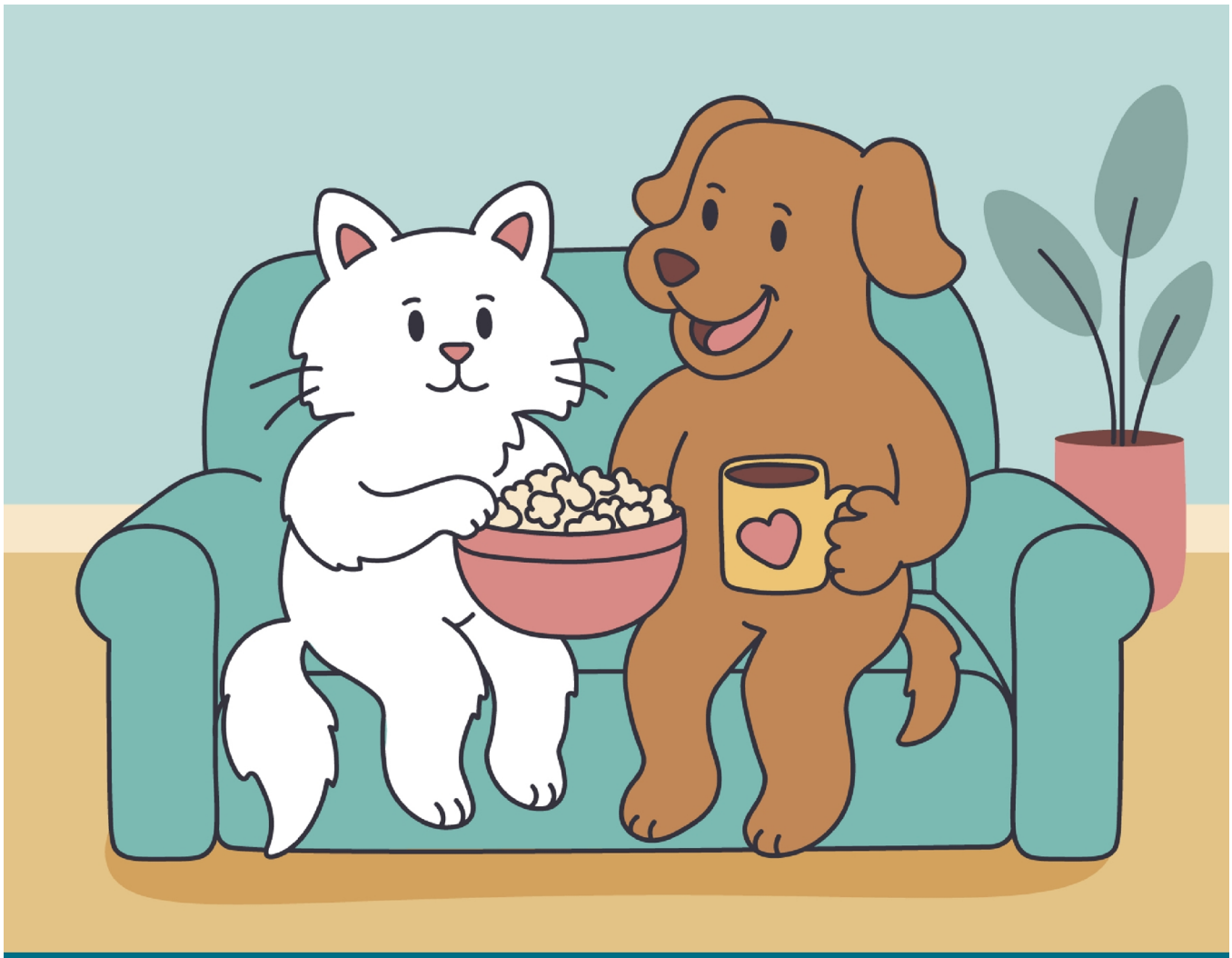
Councillor Briefings

33. This item was discussed at the following Councillor briefing prior to being presented to Council for consideration. Councillor attendance at the briefing was as follows:

Councillor Briefing Date: 9 September 2025.

Councillor name	*In attendance (Y/N)*	*Councillor name*	*In attendance (Y/N)*
Cr Paul Barker	*N*	*Cr Tony Phelps*	*Y*
Cr Mike Bodsworth	*Y*	*Cr Adrian Schonfelder*	*Y*
Cr Rebecca Bourke	*N*	*Cr Libby Stapleton*	*N*
Cr Joel Grist	*Y*	*Cr Leon Walker*	*N*
Cr Liz Pattison	*N*		

Councillor attendance at briefings is not a statutory requirement. Councillors are able to access and request information through a number of mechanisms to understand matters being presented at a Council Meeting.



Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029

surfcoast.vic.gov.au

Surf COAST SHIRE

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DRAFT

Our Plan

Take the Lead outlines how people, dogs and cats in the Surf Coast Shire can live together in safety and harmony, creating a community where responsible pet ownership supports everyone's wellbeing.

Purpose statement

The purpose of the Surf Coast Shire Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) is to guide and regulate the responsible care and management of cats and dogs within the community, recognising the contribution companion animals have on the health and wellbeing of many people.

The focus is on community education, providing support services and ensuring compliance with the Domestic Animals Act 1994 (*The Act*) and the Surf Coast Shire local laws.

The aim is to foster responsible pet ownership to protect the wellbeing of pets, enhance community safety and support a harmonious relationship between animals, their owners and the wider community.

Taking the Lead is a shared responsibility in partnership with the community, Parks Victoria and the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (GORCAPA).

Through this four-year action plan, the DAMP supports Council's broader goals of safety, wellbeing and environmental protection within the Healthy Connected Community theme of the Council Plan

The four "Take the Lead" principles of our Plan

We've worked with our community to build a shared understanding of responsible pet ownership. Guided by the four "Take the Lead" Principles, which apply to residents, visitors and Council, we aim for friendly relationships between pet-owners, pets and the wider community through a balanced approach to education and enforcement.

Principle 1 - Shared responsibility and awareness

- Dog attacks on people or other animals, including livestock and wildlife, are never acceptable. There are no exceptions.
- Surf Coast Shire includes hinterland, rural and coastal environments. Pet owners should be mindful of these environments, often home to endangered or fragile wildlife, as well as livestock used for commercial purposes, when controlling their animals to ensure the safety of the animals and their habitats.

Principle 2 - Education and training

- Don't assume people or other animals know your pet is friendly. Some dogs or people may be recovering from past experiences, so please ask before letting your dog approach them and if you see a leashed dog, leash your own as you head past.
- Barking can affect people's wellbeing so please contact Council for advice to reduce it, for you, your neighbours' and your dog's benefit.
- We have a 24-hour cat curfew in Surf Coast Shire, meaning all cats need to be confined to their owner's premises, unless your cat is appropriately restrained. Find out more about how to keep your cat happy and safe at surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Cats
- Don't feel ashamed to ask for help – there are people just like you being helped by the many experienced animal trainers and behaviourists in the region.

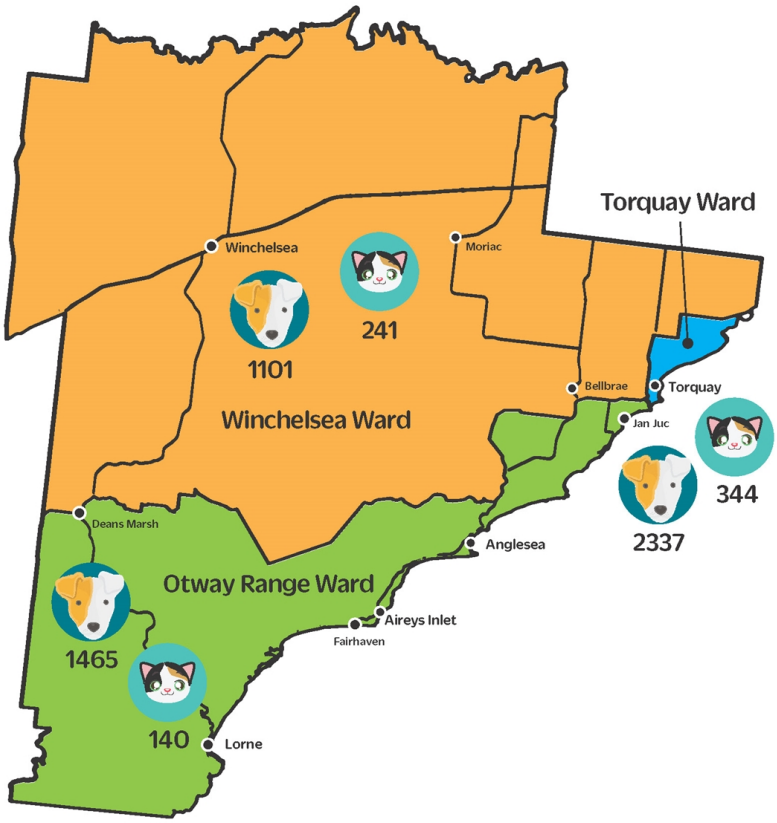
Principle 3 - Know the rules

- Take the lead by knowing and following the rules for the protection of ourselves, our pets, wildlife and livestock, our community and our natural environment.
- It may sound simple but always pick up the poo! It's a health hazard that can be easily avoided.
- Off the leash, only in off-leash areas. Be mindful that people or dogs who are nervous around animals may visit on-leash areas for good reasons.
- Keep your cat inside or in a cat run so they don't roam, and please adhere to cat curfews.
- De-sex your own pets and trap strays and feral cat populations, who threaten our endangered and fragile wildlife.

Principle 4 - Improving together

- Together, let's promote ways to be responsible pet owners.
- In partnership, we will educate our community with clear messaging and signage strategies, facilitate community programs, including for youth, and monitor domestic animal issues on social media when a ranger can't be there in person.
- To support safe spaces, we will continue to ensure animals are registered and micro-chipped, patrol shared areas and monitor compliance statistics for planning and response strategies.
- When rules are broken, we will help people understand the reasons behind them.
- Not all areas are Council-managed, so we work with GORCAPA to support their management arrangements for dogs on beaches and their other land.

Pet registration by ward



Surf Cost Shire is home to 11 distinct townships – Aireys Inlet, Anglesea, Bellbrae, Deans Marsh, Fairhaven, Jan Juc, Lorne, Moriac, Freshwater Creek, Torquay and Winchelsea.

These environments include a mix of 70-km of coastline, natural forest, settled urban areas and rural agricultural environments within a large geographical footprint of 1,560 square kilometres, forming a diverse background to where our domestic animals live.

We have a fast-growing human population of 39,292, with nearly half of the Shire's residents living in Torquay, a 20-30-minute commute from central Geelong. Popular as a sea-change, tree-change and summer holiday destination, and with a higher proportion of children and young people, older working families and people with high levels of education, employment and household income, it's possible that pet registrations will grow as new residents come with companion animals, alongside visitors from nearby growth areas and from further afield. There are over 5,500 dogs and 700 cats registered with our Council.

Fun Fact: Did you know that Daisy and Charlie are tied in the top animal names across the Surf Coast Shire, with Bella and Coco joint runners-up.

Fun Fact: Border Collies are the top choice for dog owners in our Shire, with kelpies, labradors and cavoodles next on the list.

Community engagement summary

Engagement objectives

A new plan for the management of our domestic pets is created every four years and we aim to make the engagement appealing to all ages. The engagement program opened in mid-July and closed mid-August, with a dedicated purpose to change behaviour and raise awareness of issues happening in public areas and on local beaches.

Our program, Take the Lead, is a message to all of us to take more responsibility with our pets and to be more aware of others, including non-pet owners and other pets.

Survey respondents have reported things there are contributing factors to the issues they are experiencing including pets have become used to their owners being at home, the cost of living has increased, and we have more visitors using our public spaces from nearby towns.

Engagement stats and facts

- **485** people participated in the survey.
- A range of ages contributed; however, the primary demographic was females between **40-70 years of age**.
- **60%** of responders were from the Torquay/Jan Juc area.
- A range of pet owners, sports clubs, vets, non-pet owners, trainers, bird /wildlife conservationists, and visitors had their say.
- We received over **2,500 comments.**

Overall, the sentiment is telling us we need to all do more, that things have worsened since we developed the last plan, mostly with dog related issues and shared spaces. The cat curfew is working well, however, more reminders are needed.

The engagement feedback is asking for:

- More enforcement,
- More community education,
- A dog space for off leash activities,
- Improved signage and waste facilities.

Key highlights

Many issues were highlighted in this community engagement phase. The top issues are listed below to help provide focus to the key actions Council might undertake in the DAMP. Other ideas were identified in the engagement phase and an engagement report will contain the engagement data and made available on Council's Your Say web page during the DRAFT DAMP exhibition period.

Top Five Issues in the Surf Coast Shire

The below list shows the most mentioned themes in order:

1	Dogs off leash / uncontrolled dogs
2	Dog waste not picked up (dog poop)
3	Lack of Council enforcement
4	Irresponsible pet ownership
5	Cats roaming and killing wildlife

Top Five Difficulties for pet owners

1. **Uncontrolled / off-leash dogs and poor owner behaviour**
   Concerns about dog attacks, lack of recall, aggression, and irresponsible owners in shared spaces.
2. **Lack of secure, fenced, or safe off-leash areas**
   Inadequate or removed fenced dog parks; limited options for dogs to run safely without disturbing others.
3. **Inadequate dog waste facilities (bins and bags)**
   Missing, empty, or poorly maintained dispensers; insufficient bins.
4. **Confusing, overly restrictive, or poorly communicated regulations**
   Rules around beach access, seasonal/time-share restrictions, signage clarity, and general pet-related laws.
5. **Cost and financial barriers to pet ownership**
   High costs for vet care, registration fees, pet supplies, desexing, and training.

Top Five Things you want to see in the next plan

1. **Strong need for enforcement/ranger presence**
   - Most consistent and widespread concern.
   - Requests for:
     - More rangers, especially outside standard hours and in key locations (Torquay, Point Roadknight, Jan Juc, Aireys Inlet).
     - Greater visibility and accessibility (rangers' contact info posted).
     - Better coverage during peak times and summer.
     - Volunteer or part-time officers suggested.
2. **Dog poo management/clean-up and enforcement**
   - Frustration with dog waste in public spaces.
   - Calls for:
     - More bins and bag dispensers (especially Deep Creek and walking tracks).
     - Stricter enforcement on owners who fail to clean up.
     - Education and fines both requested.

3. **Clearer and more visible signage/communication confusion**

- Signage is missing, unclear, or vandalized.
- Recommendations include:
  - Printed signs instead of removable stickers with agency logos.
  - More visible boundary demarcations in parks and beaches.
  - Maps or flyers for residents and renters, who are often unaware of rules.

4. **Off-leash and on-leash balance/control and safety**

- Strong disagreement on where dogs should be off leash.
- Some people want:
  - More off-leash areas.
  - Others feel unsafe and want stricter control in shared zones (e.g. beaches).
- Multiple reports of injuries and frightening encounters.

5. **Education and responsible pet ownership**

- Calls to educate pet owners on:
  - Cleaning up after pets.
  - Leashing rules.
  - Cat curfews.
- Many people also feel education is not enough without enforcement.

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Take the Lead Action Plan

Here's a high-level overview of the action plan, based on partnership between Council, our community and key stakeholders.

What Council could focus on:

- Educate and engage community and visitors about effective control, nuisance dogs and regulated areas, with a long-term focus.
- Undertake appropriate evidenced based enforcement actions and activities.
- Communicate throughout the year to pet owners and visitors.
- Stronger compliance support to ensure everyone knows the rules.
- Track and monitor statistics, such as compliance and complaints, to assist with planning patrols.
- Direct compliance resources and activities to priority areas, such as areas of high non-compliance, including additional signage during peak summer season.

Our Commitment:

- We'll review the data every month.
- We'll look for trends—both good and not-so-good—to understand what's happening.
- We'll use what we learn to help our Rangers and community focus on the most important "Take the Lead" priorities.
- The data will also help us guide our education and enforcement efforts as part of our ongoing DAMP goals.
- Most importantly, we'll encourage pet owners to be responsible, take the lead, and help make our Shire a safe and enjoyable place for everyone.

Areas where our community could improve:

- Carrying poo bags and picking up dog litter.
- Learning and applying effective control.
- Following the rules of responsible pet ownership, including for off-leash and on-leash areas. To read about the animal laws in Surf Coast Shire go to surfcoast.vic.gov.au/AnimalLaws.
- Being mindful of others and not assuming other people and animals are comfortable around all dogs.
- Knowing your dog breed, and your dog, as well as behaviour training.

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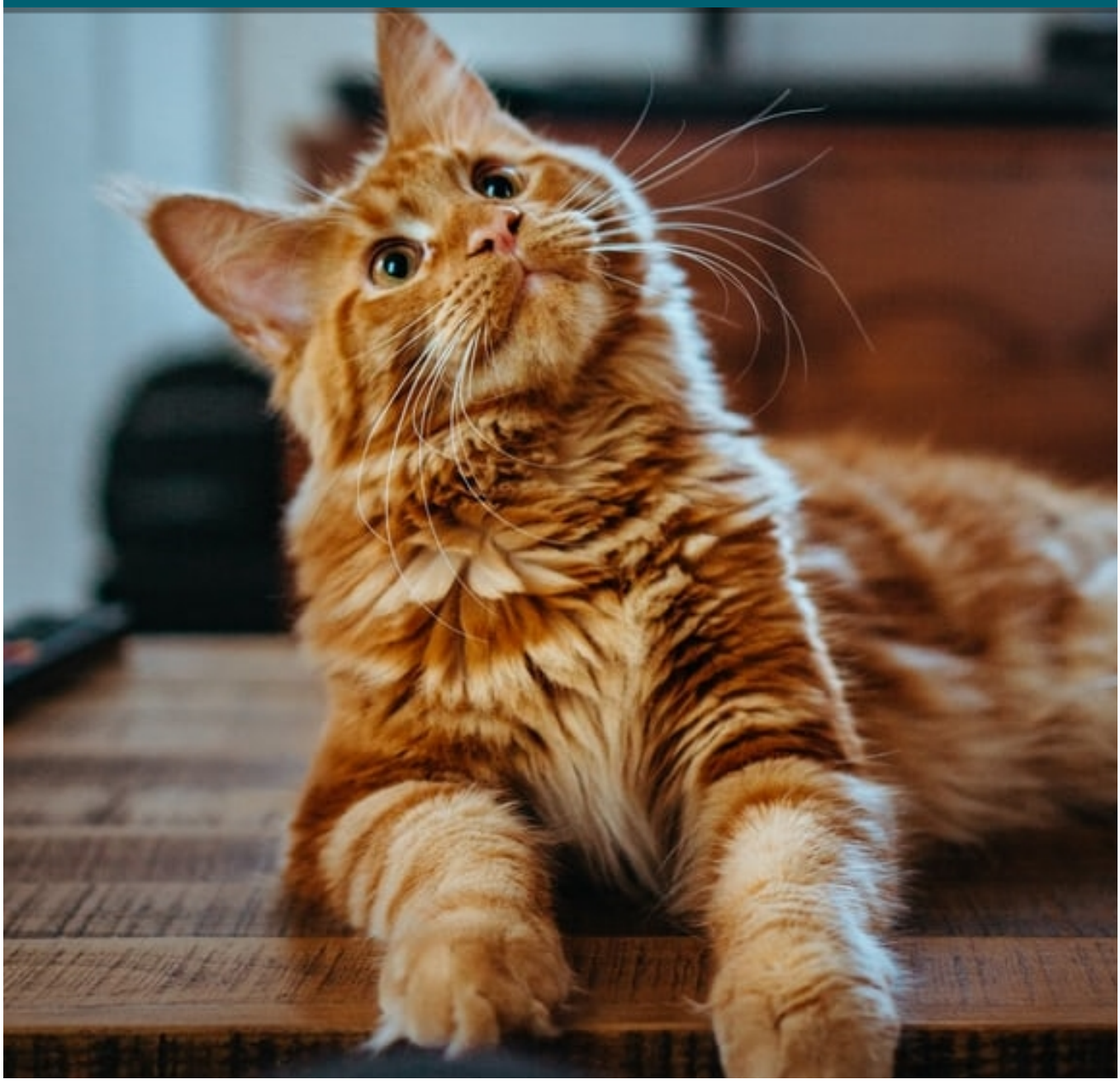
Our focus

Our plan is guided by community feedback and informed by our compliance services, all working together to support responsible and empowered pet ownership. The plan outlines clear objectives, assesses the current landscape, and defines performance measures across all key areas of responsibility. Action tables accompany each priority area, reflecting a continued commitment to core programs while identifying opportunities for growth and improvement throughout the life of the plan.



Our people

The Ranger Services team is responsible for domestic animal management alongside many other duties. Domestic animal demands on the team have risen alongside the increasing population of permanent domestic animals, holiday homeowners travelling with pets, and people from the Geelong and Armstrong Creek growth area frequenting the region with their pets. The current cost of delivering animal management services is approximately $654,000 per year.

Council works closely with GORCAPA to help manage dogs on land managed by GORCAPA, including beaches. While GORCAPA covers costs such as providing waste bags, signage and joining Council rangers on beach patrols, they don't receive income from pet registrations or fines issued by rangers on their land. Both Council and GORCAPA fund their own education and compliance efforts.

Staffing

All our rangers are trained to deliver multiple services, including local law enforcement, managing the school crossing supervisor program, parking restrictions, responding to stock on roads, administration tasks and domestic animal management.
It's not practical to assign rangers to just one task, such as domestic animal management, especially due to the seasonal changes in demand. We're always reviewing resources to keep up with our growing community needs.

Training

Surf Coast Shire Council is committed to making sure all staff are well-equipped to carry out their duties under *The Act*. Most team members are already fully trained, and a clear training plan is in place to support ongoing development. Newer staff are prioritised to ensure they receive the right training at the right time.

Our objectives

- Provide sufficient resources to effectively deliver the domestic animal management service over the four-year period of this plan and respond to the seasonal demands and unique challenges of our coastal areas.
- Ensure employees are fully trained to deliver the service, supported by best practice in procedures and occupational health and safety.
- Establish collaborative working relationships between the ranger team and the community, with roles and responsibilities between the community, Council and other open space managers made clear.
- Partner with and promote Animal Welfare Victoria to deliver best practice animal management outcomes for the community.

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Actions	2026	2027	2028	2029
Work actively with GORCAPA regarding roles and responsibilities on GORCAPA managed land.	🐾	🐾	🐾	🐾
Continue to develop and deliver individual training plans for rangers.	🐾	🐾	🐾	🐾
Rangers to complete Animal Welfare Victoria delivered training courses.	🐾	🐾	🐾	🐾
Participate in State Government programs and initiatives as they arise such as current review of animal welfare legislation.	🐾	🐾	🐾	🐾
Better utilise Animal Welfare Victoria for operational advice to ensure best practice service is provided to community.	🐾	🐾	🐾	🐾

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Our processes

Present situation

In 2025, there were 5,511 dogs and 717 cats registered in the Surf Coast Shire. Over the past four years dog and Cat registrations have decreased. This may mean there are fewer pets, or it could indicate more cats and dogs may be unregistered. The chart below shows how pet numbers have shifted over time, and with continued growth in the area, we expect these numbers to keep changing.

52% of dogs and 52% of cats are registered in Torquay and Jan Juc.

No. of animals registered to April 2025

	2023	2024	2025
Dogs	5800	5789	5511
Cats	887	810	717
Total	6687	6599	6228

*** Please note at time of producing this plan the registration and pet numbers varied due to loss of pets, new registrations etc.

Identification

All domestic animals are required to be microchipped and registered and its now accepted as a standard part of responsible pet ownership. Compulsory micro-chipping is required before registration, so only a small number of pets remain without a microchip.

Desexing

The percentage of dogs and cats desexed is also high. Desexed, micro-chipped or pensioner-owned animals are able to be registered for a third of the costs under the Act.

Our objectives

Ensure all cats and dogs over the age of three months residing in the municipality are registered annually with minimal delay and implanted with a microchip. Continue to monitor registration fees to ensure animal owners are making a fair contribution to the cost of running animal management services.

Performance measures

- Timely conduct of the registration process with a reduction in the percentage of late registrations.
- Percentage of registered animals microchipped.
- Net cost of the service to Council is not increased.

Actions	2026	2027	2028	2029
Strong communications and engagement to promote pet registration in the lead up to the registration period.	🐾	🐾	🐾	🐾
Continue to provide 12-month free registration to adopted animals.	🐾	🐾	🐾	🐾
Better publicise discounted desexing program available to concession card holders.	🐾	🐾	🐾	🐾

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Nuisance management

Nuisance behaviours include wandering dogs and cats, threats to wildlife and livestock, barking dogs and unsocial behaviour of dogs, including dog litter.

Present situation

Responsible pet ownership and fair compliance matter to both pet owners and the wider community. Most pet owners do the right thing, and we believe education works better than enforcement, but when a few ignore the rules, it affects everyone. That's why enforcement will focus on those who consistently disregard the rules. And we'll keep people in the loop to improve how we report back on actions taken.

In 2024/25 we received 823 customer requests including registration enquiries. The highest number of requests are for registration, then animal complaints (nuisance and animal control), and then lost animals.

Customer action requests by year

Animal Enforcement Action has increased over the last four years. It's now standard for first-time offenders to receive a warning.

We will monitor data for trends and patterns. This will include what is working well and where complaints and high levels of non-compliance is occurring. We will prioritise where resources will be deployed, improving education and circumstances where direct enforcement action is necessary.

Did you know? Uncontrolled barking, roaming pets, and uncollected waste are among the top complaints reported to Council, and they're all preventable with responsible pet ownership.

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Customer action requests by year

A review of recent penalty data indicates that a significant proportion of penalties issued relate to dogs found at large and cared for by officers at the pound until their owners are identified. Encouragingly, these incidents are decreasing as community members are increasingly using social media to reunite lost domestic animals with their owners, without the need for Council's involvement.

It is also important to note that infringement numbers have not increased in line with reports of animal attacks. This is largely due to many reported dog-related incidents, such as dogs rushing at people or animals or minor altercations, lacking sufficient information to pursue enforcement. In most cases, key details, such as the identity of the offending owner, are not provided, therefore limiting officers' ability to investigate or take further action.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Animal related customer requests total.	565 (818 including registration enquires)	675 (874 including registration enquires)	676 (823 including registration enquires)
Animal Attacks.	55	63	72 (all 24/25 stats as at 11.6.25)
Animal Complaints.	88	112	138
Animal Registration.	224	171	217
Barking Dogs.	62	97	73
Cat Cages.	73	102	100
Cat Curfew Enquiries	18	19	0
Cats.	45	103	85
Domestic Animals @ large.	154	97	63
Lost Domestic Animals.	99	110	75

Objectives

- Provide accessible information on animal nuisances and regulations, with clearly defined enforcement standards to promote responsible pet ownership.
- Monitor and enforce compliance with the regulations and laws that will provide for safe and clean community spaces.
- Our Rangers team will continue to investigate reported dog related attacks and rushes to promote responsible pet ownership, owner accountability and community safety.

Performance measures

- Number of community requests for service.
- Time taken to resolve service requests.
- Community satisfaction with responsible animal ownership.

Actions	2026	2027	2028	2029
Deliver consistent community education on key topics through a variety of channels (social media, print media, direct emails) – minimum of eight campaigns per year. May include a quarterly info newsletter to registered owners.	🐾	🐾	🐾	🐾
Partner with GORCAPA to deliver 'pop-up' education booths at known problem locations. Include local service providers including vets, pet trainers etc.	🐾	🐾	🐾	🐾
Deliver a minimum of 30 hours of proactive patrols per week in peak period, 20 hours in off-peak period. Increase use of beach all-terrain vehicle. Target patrol locations based on data. Primary aim to engage and educate dog owners regarding responsibilities.	🐾	🐾	🐾	🐾
Partner with GORCAPA and the community to develop alternative, playful signage styles to try and cut through on key messages, particularly around dog poo.	🐾	🐾	🐾	🐾

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Dog attacks and dangerous dogs

Details of dangerous, menacing, and restricted breed dogs in Surf Coast Shire are recorded on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry (VDDR). Restricted breeds in Victoria include the American Pitbull Terrier, Perro de Presa Canario, Japanese Tosa, Fila Brasileiro, and Dogo Argentino. Dogs declared dangerous must be clearly identified, securely contained housed on premises displaying compliant warning signs.

Dog attacks are not limited to aggressive breeds and include incidents where a dog rushes, lunges at, or harms people, other animals, or livestock.

Present situation

In Surf Coast Shire there is only one registered dangerous dog and four registered menacing dogs. We have a very low number of registered dangerous and menacing dogs, and this has been consistent over the last four years. Our team proactively responds to both dangerous and menacing dog reports.

Our objectives

- Gradually reduce the ratio of dog attacks relative to registered dog numbers in the Shire over the four-year plan period.
- Regularly review dog attack data to identify trends and inform targeted prevention strategies.
- Ensure prompt and thorough investigation of all reported dog attacks.
- Strengthen public education to promote effective control of dogs in public spaces.
- Increase community awareness of dog attack risks and ensure all dog owners understand the legal and social consequences of attacks.
- Achieve full compliance with regulations for declared dangerous dogs and restricted breeds.

Actions	2026	2027	2028	2029
Specific communications campaigns regarding animal-on-animal attacks – provide education and promotion for training options.	🐾	🐾	🐾	🐾
Review dog attack data to identify trends and promote safety strategies.	🐾	🐾	🐾	🐾
Complete random inspections of declared dangerous dog premises to make sure owners are meeting their obligations.	🐾	🐾	🐾	🐾

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Domestic animal businesses

Types of Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs) include:

- Breeding and rearing establishments
- Pet shops
- Shelters and pounds
- Boarding establishments
- Dog training operators

Obedience training organisations

All dog training businesses that operate for profit must register as a domestic animal business with Council and undergo an annual audit.

Dog training businesses can operate without being affiliated but they must comply with the Code of Practice for the Operation of Dog Training Establishments.

Present situation

There are eight registered DABs in the Shire:

- Doghouse Pet Resort
- Purr Central
- Pet Stock Torquay
- Pet Stock North Torquay
- All for Paws
- Torquay and Surf Coast Cattery
- Kiana Park Cattery
- Woodleigh Kennels

Council Officers conduct random and scheduled audits and follow up complaints. Pre-permit inspections are carried out prior to registration.

Our objectives

- Manage all Domestic Animal Businesses in accordance with legislated standards
- Protect the welfare of animals being traded through Domestic Animal Businesses
- Accurate register of Domestic Animal Businesses
- Number of registered Domestic Animal Businesses
- Compliance with regulations
- Protection of animal welfare

Actions	2026	2027	2028	2029
Develop and promote website guidance for dog owners regarding animal trainers and behaviourists operating in our region.	🐾	🐾	🐾	🐾

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Domestic animal overpopulation and euthanasia

Surf Coast Shire includes large areas of public land and National Parks, where managing feral cats is a priority. The 2024 Federal Government's Threat Abatement Plan highlights the role of local government in controlling feral cat populations.

This section highlights the importance of registering and identifying cats to prevent impoundment and euthanasia. Trapping and sterilising wandering and stray cats helps limit feral populations and supports local flora and fauna.

Cats are identified by how and where they live:

- Feral cats live and breed in the wild with no human support.
- Stray cats roam urban and rural areas, relying partly on human resources but are not owned.
- Domestic cats are owned and cared for by households or businesses.

As cat confinement becomes more common, domestic cats may be further classified as confined or unconfined due to their differing impacts on native wildlife.

You can learn more about Surf Coast Shire's cat curfew at surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Cats

Present situation

- The number of cats and dogs registered is trending down in the final year of the current Domestic Animal Management Plan.
- Cat and dog impoundments dropped significantly from 160 in 2024 to 79 in 2025 year to date.
- On average over the past four years 48 cats and 85 dogs are impounded.
- 24/7 cat curfews contributed to a sharp decrease in cat impoundments in 2024.
- Microchipping remains vital for reuniting pets with owners.
- Surf Coast Shire Council maintains low euthanasia rates and high rehoming/reuniting rates (72.2% vs. state average of 41.4%) and this data is provided to the Know Your Council website.

Our objectives

- Promote the cat curfew for confining domestic cats.
- Maintain high reclaiming rates for domestic animals.
- Minimise animal hoarding by acting on all reports and assisting owners to remove excess animals.
- Promote free use of cat cages to reduce the number of feral cats.

Actions	2026	2027	2028	2029
Promote adoption and shelter services.	🐾	🐾	🐾	🐾
Continue to utilise the services of Geelong Animal Welfare Society.	🐾	🐾	🐾	🐾
Continue to provide 12 months free pet registrations for adopted animals.	🐾	🐾	🐾	🐾
Continue to provide free hire cost cat cages.	🐾	🐾	🐾	🐾

Animals impounded

2022	2023	2024	2025 YTD.
116 total dogs and cats.	179 total dogs and cats.	160 total dogs and cats.	79 total dogs and cats.
Cats 43 (37%)	Cats 51 (28%)	Cats 63 (39%)	Cats 37 (46%)
Dogs 73 (63%)	Dogs 128 (72%)	Dogs 97 (61%)	Dogs 42 (54%)

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Annual review, reporting and performance management

Present situation

The collection, monitoring and use of data throughout the life of the DAMP is measured against the performance objectives listed in the plan. Identified trends and emerging issues will be communicated through Council's website and education programs.

This data is reported on annually in accordance with Section 68A(3) of *The ACT*.

Our objectives

- A current and well-maintained DAMP.
- Assessment of actions taken and annual performance.
- A data set that guides continual improvement of processes.
- Council's Rangers Team will create new projects and programs for the life of the DAMP.
- Published evaluation of the DAMP implementation in Council's annual report

Performance measures

- Completion of the DAMP internal annual review.
- Publication of the DAMP annual implementation report.
- Provision of a copy of the DAMP to the Secretary of Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) by 6 December.

Actions	2026	2027	2028	2029
Undertake internal annual review of the DAMP in November each year.	🐾	🐾	🐾	🐾
Provide a copy of the DAMP review to State Government annually.	🐾	🐾	🐾	🐾

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Appendix

1. Legislative requirement of the Domestic Animals Act

Domestic Animal Management Plans

Under Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, every Council must prepare a domestic animal management plan, as follows:

68A Councils to prepare domestic animal management plans

1. Every Council must, in consultation with the Secretary (of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources), prepare at 4-year intervals a domestic animal management plan.
2. A domestic animal management plan prepared by a Council must—
   - (a) Set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by the Council in its municipal district are adequate to give effect to the requirements of this Act and the regulations; and
   - (b) Outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district; and
   - (c) Outline programs, services and strategies that the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district—
     - (i) To promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats; and
     - (ii) To ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation; and
     - (iii) To minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals; and
     - (iv) To address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; and
     - (v) To encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats; and
     - (vi) To minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and
     - (vii) To effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations.
   - (d) Provide for the review of existing orders made under this Act and local laws that relate to the Council's municipal district with a view to determining whether further orders or local laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in the municipal district are desirable; and
   - (e) Provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary; and
   - (f) Provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.
3. Every Council must—
   - (a) Review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan; and
   - (b) Provide the Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan; and
   - (c) Publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.

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4. Surf Coast Shire Community Amenity Local Law No. 1

PART 5 - KEEPING OF ANIMALS

5.1 Keeping Animals

(1) A person must not, without a permit, keep domestic animals on a property, whether housed indoors or outdoors in a residential zone, a rural living zone or a built-up area that:

(a) is not listed in table one; or

(b) amounts to more than 5 different types of animals or more than the number prescribed for each type of animal in table one.

(2) A person must not, without a permit, keep animals in flats and units in a residential area, whether housed indoors or outdoors, that:

(a) is not listed in table two.

or (b) is more than the number prescribed for each type of animal in table two.

(3) A person must not, without a permit, keep more than 5 dogs or 5 cats on any other land in the municipal district.

(4) Bees must be kept in accordance with the terms of the Livestock Disease Control Act 1994 and the Apiary Code of Practice 1997 and be registered with Agriculture Victoria.

(5) A person keeping an animal in a residential area, rural living zone or a built-up area must ensure that the condition of the land resulting from the way in which an animal is kept does not affect or interfere with the amenity of other people living in reasonable proximity.

(6) This Part does not apply to any land:

(a) on which a pet shop is located

or (b) on which an animal hospital or veterinary practice is located

(7) The following animals and the maximum number permitted are allowed to be kept in residential zones, a rural living zone or a built-up area:

Table One:

TYPE OF ANIMAL	MAXIMUM PERMITTED
Dog	2
Cat	2
Poultry*	10
Domestic bird	100
Guinea pig	10
Domestic mice	10
Domestic rabbit	10
Domestic fish	No maximum limit
Turtles & tortoise	4
Frogs	No maximum limit
Pigeons	20
Geese	4
Ducks	4
Ferrets	4

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** The definition of "poultry" in the Community Amenity Local Law excludes ducks and geese. Roosters are prohibited in residential areas or built up areas.*

(8) The following animals and the maximum number permitted are allowed to be kept in flats and units in residential areas:

Table Two:

TYPE OF ANIMAL	MAXIMUM PERMITTED (without permit)
Dog	1
Cat	1
Domestic bird	4
Guinea pig	2
Domestic mice	4
Domestic rabbit	2
Domestic fish	No maximum limit
Turtle & tortoise	2
Frogs	No maximum limit
Ferrets	2

5.2 Trespassing Animals

The owner or occupier of any land where any animal is kept, other than a dog or a cat, must ensure the animal being kept on the land does not trespass on any Council land or a road.

5.3 Animal Excrement

The owner or person in charge of an animal must:

(a) Whilst on Council land or a road or in a public place, have in their possession a bag or container which can be used for the collection of that animal's excrement; and

(b) Immediately collect and remove all of the excrement left by the animal on Council land or a road or a public place.

5.4 Animal Control

The owner or person in charge of an animal must, whilst on Council land or a road or in a public place, have effective control of that animal.

5.5 Horses on Council Land or Public Places

(1) A person in charge of a horse must not without a permit:

(a) ride or lead a horse on any Council land, or footpath in a residential area;

(b) allow the horse to cause any damage to Council land or a road or a public place; or

(c) allow the horse to create a risk or danger to other users of the Council land or road or public place.

(2) A person in charge of a horse must immediately collect and remove all of the excrement left by the animal on Council land or a road or a public place.

5. Dog regulation Maps

The dog regulations areas are indicated on the maps on the following page. No change to the dog regulation areas is proposed here, though is likely to be considered as the transition of the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority progresses.

What do the symbols mean?

Within these areas, dogs are allowed off leash at all times, provided they are kept under effective control.

1. Dog to be immediately controllable by voice commands
2. Dog to always be within close proximity to owner
3. Prevent dogs from approaching people or other dogs unless invited. If in doubt place your dog back on lead out of respect and harmony for all.

Within these areas dogs are allowed off leash except when organised events are occurring or being prepared for. In this instance dogs must be on leash, provided they are under effective control.

Dogs are only allowed with the following times and conditions:

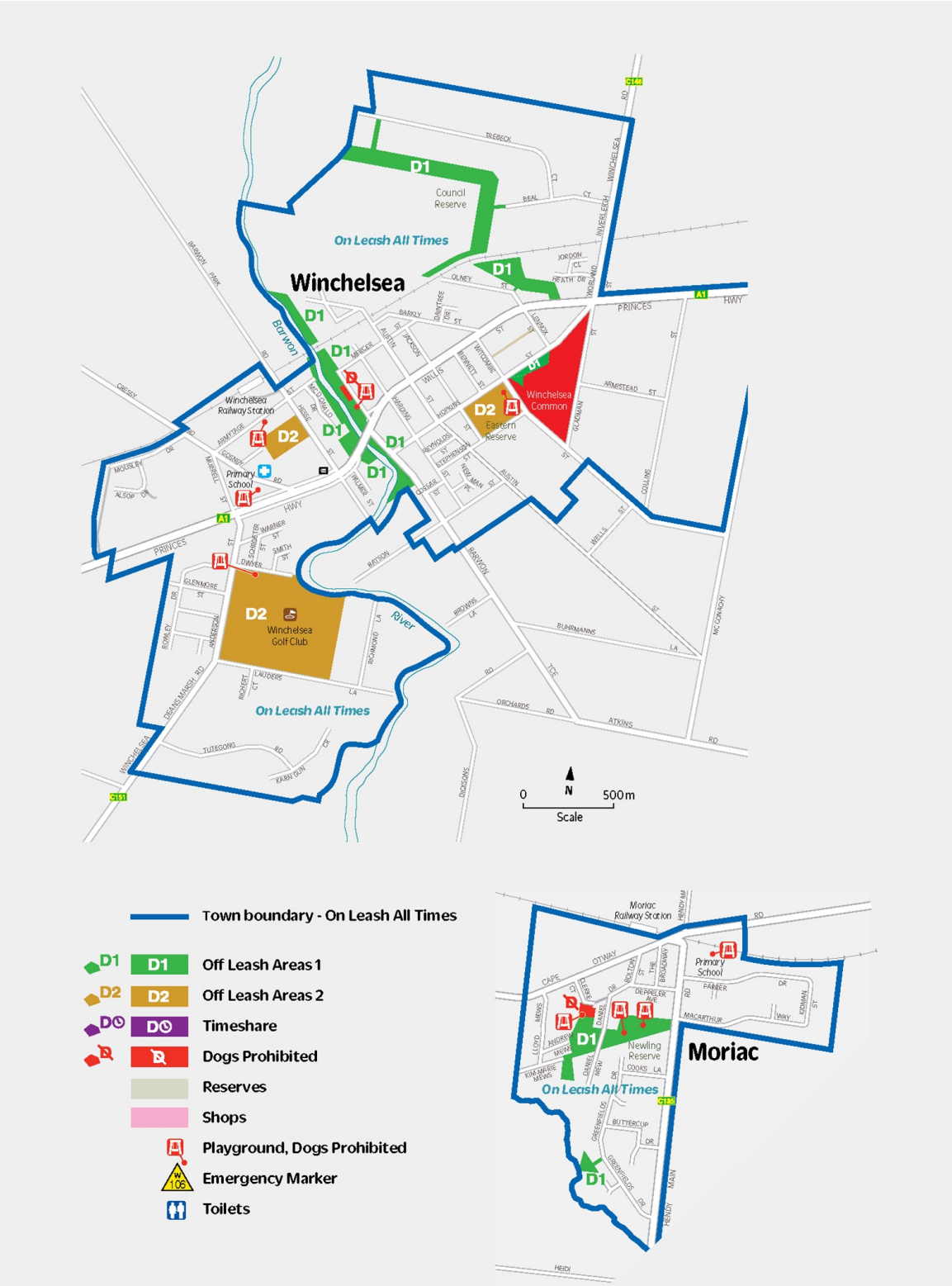
9am–7pm: No Dogs allowed *(except on defined paths and on a leash).*

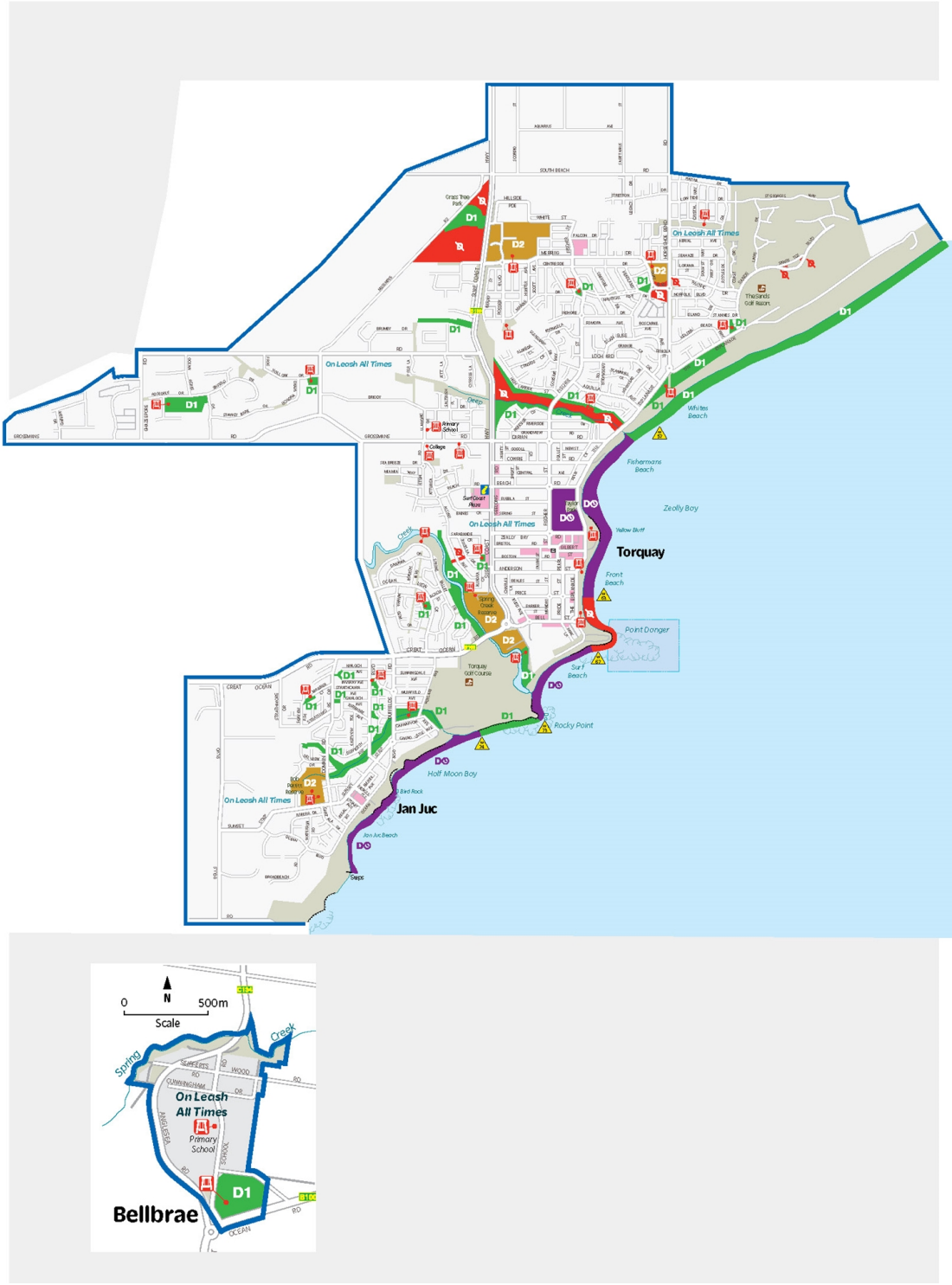
7pm–9am: Dogs allowed in these areas off leash but under effective control.

Outside the active timeshare zone dates: Dogs are allowed off leash but under effective control.

In these areas dogs are not allowed, with the exception of defined pathways, where they must be on a leash.

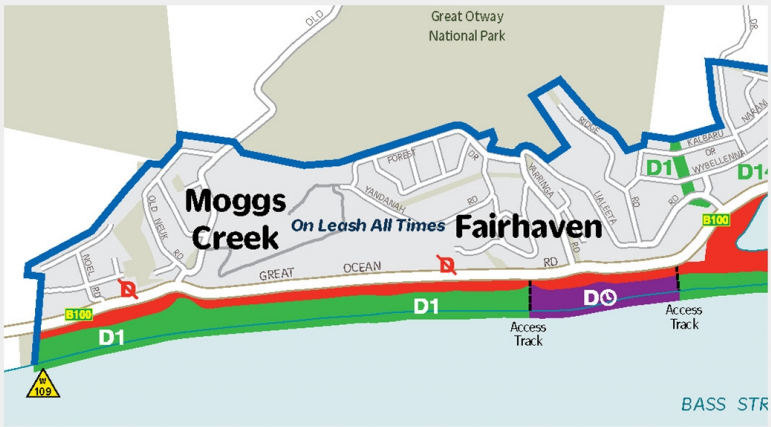
Note: Includes all fenced dune or vegetation areas and playgrounds.


Winchelsea
Council Reserve
On Leash All Times
Winchelsea Railway Station
Primary School
Winchelsea Golf Club
Winchelsea Common
Eastern Reserve
Barwon River
PRINCES HWY
0
N
500m
Scale
Town boundary - On Leash All Times
D1 Off Leash Areas 1
D2 Off Leash Areas 2
DO Timeshare
Dogs Prohibited
Reserves
Shops
Playground, Dogs Prohibited
Emergency Marker
Toilets
Moriac
Moriac Railway Station
Primary School
Newling Reserve
On Leash All Times


On Leash All Times
D1
D2
D3
Torquay
Jan Juc
Bellbrae
Primary School
Scale
0
500m
N
Spring Creek
On Leash All Times
Fishermans Beach
Front Beach
Point Donger
Surf Beach
Rocky Point
Half Moon Bay
Bird Rock
Jan Juc Beach
Zeally Bay
Yellow Bluff
Whites Beach
The Sands Golf Resort
Torquay Golf Course

NB – Dog regulations on these maps have previously been adopted by Council. There are visual gaps on this map that are being reviewed for potential updating in the Final DAMP

Aireys Inlet
On Leash All Times
Primary School
Sanctuary
Steps
Split Point Lighthouse
Eagle Rock Marine Sanctuary
Eagle Rock
Table Rock
Split Point
Access Track
Access Track
D1
D0
B100
W 104
W 106
Painkalac Creek
BASS STRAIT
0
N
500m
Scale


Great Otway National Park
Moggs Creek
On Leash All Times
Fairhaven
Access Track
Access Track
D1
D0
B100
W 109
BASS STR

Great Otway National Park
Stony Creek
Little Stony Creek
Lorne Country Club
Great Otway National Park
On Leash All Times
Erskine River
D1
D1
DO
DO
Loutit Bay
Lorne
D2
DO
Lorne Pier
Point Grey
DO
Shelly Beach
On Leash All Times
Queens Park
Saint George River
0
N
500m
Scale

Deans Marsh
On Leash All Times
D2
Primary School
0
N
500m
Scale

DRAFT

4.7 Annual Financial Report and Performance Statements 2024-2025

Council Plan	**Theme Seven - Accountable and Viable Council** Strategy 18 - Establish a sustainable financial position.
Author's Title:	Manager Finance
General Manager:	Joanne McNeill, General Manager Strategy and Effectiveness
Division:	Strategy and Effectiveness
Department:	Finance
Attachments:	1. 2024-2025 Financial Statements [**4.7.1** - 55 pages] 2. 2024-2025 Performance Statement [**4.7.2** - 23 pages]

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Council's in principle approval of the 2024-25 Financial and Performance Statements as recommended by the Audit and Risk Committee and in accordance with Section 99 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act).

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Approves in principle the 2024-25 Annual Financial Report (**Attachment 1**) and the 2024-25 Performance Statement (**Attachment 2**);
2. Authorises the Chief Financial Officer to implement any non-material changes to the statements as recommended by the Auditor-General and provide a summary of any such changes to the Audit and Risk Committee at its next meeting;
3. Authorises the Chief Financial Officer to discuss any material changes to the Audit and Risk Committee Chair prior to reporting to Council;
4. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer, Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Principal Accounting Officer to certify the final version of the statements by signing;
5. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to submit the signed statements to the Victorian Auditor-General; and
6. Notifies the Audit and Risk Committee when these actions have been taken.

Council Resolution

Moved Cr Pattison, Seconded Cr Phelps

That Council:

1. Approves in principle the 2024-25 Annual Financial Report (**Attachment 1**) and the 2024-25 Performance Statement (**Attachment 2**);
2. Authorises the Chief Financial Officer to implement any non-material changes to the statements as recommended by the Auditor-General and provide a summary of any such changes to the Audit and Risk Committee at its next meeting;
3. Authorises the Chief Financial Officer to discuss any material changes to the Audit and Risk Committee Chair prior to reporting to Council;
4. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer, Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Principal Accounting Officer to certify the final version of the statements by signing;
5. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to submit the signed statements to the Victorian Auditor-General; and
6. Notifies the Audit and Risk Committee when these actions have been taken.

CARRIED 9|0

For	Against	Abstained
Cr Barker Cr Bodsworth Cr Bourke Cr Grist Cr Pattison Cr Phelps Cr Schonfelder Cr Stapleton Cr Walker	Nil	Nil

Outcome

2. If Council accepts this recommendation, Council would be giving its approval in principle to the Annual Financial Report and Performance Statement prior to submitting the statements to the Auditor-General for issue of an audit opinion in line with the Act. The auditor will provide the Minister with a copy of the audit report and audited statements. These statements will then form part of Council's 2024-25 Annual Report.

Key Considerations

3. Council's Annual Financial Report and Performance Statement are subject to a rigorous audit process to ensure their accuracy and to advise Council through these reports of any areas of concern.

4. The Audit and Risk Committee considered the reports at its meeting held on Wednesday 10 September 2025. The Committee recommended to Council the in principle 2024-25 Annual Financial Report and Performance Statement for adoption and certification, subject to any further adjustments recommended by Council's auditor.

Background

5. Section 99 of the Act states:

    5.1. As soon as practicable after the end of the financial year, a Council must cause to be prepared in accordance with section 98, the performance statement and financial statements of the Council for the financial year.

    5.2. The Council, after passing a resolution giving its approval in principle to the performance statement and financial statements, must submit the statements to the auditor for reporting on the audit.

    5.3. The Council must ensure that the performance statement and financial statements, in their final form after any changes recommended or agreed by the auditor have been made, are certified in accordance with the regulations by:

        5.3.1. Two Councillors authorised by the Council for the purposes of this subsection; and

        5.3.2. any other persons prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this subsection.

5. The auditor must prepare a report on the performance statements (the auditor is required under Part 3 of the *Audit Act 1994* to prepare a report on the financial statements.)

6. The auditor must not sign a report under subsection (4) or under Part 3 of the *Audit Act 1994* unless the performance statement or the financial statements (as applicable) have been certified under subsection (3).

7. The auditor must provide the Minister and the Council with a copy of the report on the performance statements as soon as is reasonably practicable (the auditor is required under Part 3 of the *Audit Act 1994* to report on the financial statements to the Council within 4 weeks and to give a copy of the report to the Minister).

8. In accordance with its Charter, the Audit and Risk Committee is required to review the Annual Financial Report and Performance Statement and make any recommendations to Council concerning their adoption.

9. At its meeting on 10 September 2025, the Audit and Risk Committee resolved the following:

    9.1. Receive and note the Annual Financial Report and Performance Statement 2024-25.

    9.2. Recommend that Council approve in principle the annual financial report and performance statement (the statements) for the year ended 30 June 2025 and further recommends that Council authorises the:

        9.2.1. Chief Financial Officer to implement any non-material changes to the statements as recommended by the Auditor-General and provide a summary of any such changes to the Audit and Risk Committee at its next meeting;

9.2.2. Chief Financial Officer to discuss any material changes to the Audit and Risk Committee Chair prior to reporting to Council;

9.2.3. Chief Executive Officer, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to certify the final version of the statements by signing;

9.2.4. Chief Executive Officer to send the signed statements to the Auditor-General; and

9.2.5. Chief Executive Officer to notify all members of the Audit and Risk Committee when these actions have been taken.

9.3. Record its appreciation to all the employees involved in the end of year closing of Council's accounts and the preparation of the Financial Statements and Performance Statement.

10. Council staff and a representative of the Auditor-General's Office attended the committee meeting to present and answer any questions about the Financial Statements and Performance Statements. It was the consensus of the Committee that the statements present fairly the financial position of Surf Coast Shire Council at the conclusion of the 2024-25 financial year, and that the financial statements are in accordance with applicable Australian Accounting Standards and requirements of the Act.

Options

11. **Alternative Option 1** – That Council does not give in principle approval of the 2024-25 Financial Report and Performance Statement.

12. As the 2024-25 Financial and Performance Statements have been cleared for signing by a Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) representative and recommended for signing by the Audit and Risk Committee, this option is not recommended by officers as it may lead to Council being non-compliant with the Act.

Council Plan (including Health and Wellbeing Plan) Statement

Theme Seven - Accountable and Viable Council

Strategy 18 - Establish a sustainable financial position.

13. The presentation of the Annual Financial Report and the Performance Statement provides an accurate and transparent representation of Council's performance for the 2024-25 year.

Financial Considerations

14. The Annual Financial Statements are a key pillar in Council's financial reporting, and include Income Statements, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow Statements, financial commentary, variance reporting against budgets and notes to the statements.

Community Engagement

15. Once the final statements have been certified by the nominated councillors and the independent auditor's report received from VAGO, they will form part of Council's

Annual Report. Council's Annual Report will be presented to Council at the October 2025 Council meeting and will be placed on Council's website.

Statutory / Legal / Policy Considerations

16. Council's Financial and Performance Statements are subject to a rigorous audit process to ensure their accuracy and to advise Council through these reports of any areas of concern. The Audit and Risk Committee also has a responsibility to review the statements prior to adoption of the statements in principle, and to raise any matters of concern.

17. The 2024-25 Financial Report has been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020, also the Australian Accounting Standards, and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.

18. The 2024-25 Performance Statement has been prepared to meet the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.

Strategic Risk

19. **Breadth and level of Council operations exceed Council's long term financial sustainability**
Inherent Risk Rating - *Serious*, Residual Risk Rating - *Medium*

20. Implementing the report recommendation will ensure that Council is compliant with its obligations under the Act in relation to the Annual Financial Report and Performance Statement.

21. Implementing this recommendation does not create any new significant risks to Council as it is reporting on Council's financial position and performance for the 2024-25 year.

Risk Rating

22. Risk rating is low and can be managed at department level.

Risk Appetite

23. There is no Risk Appetite Statement applicable for this report.

Sustainability Considerations

24. Council's Annual Financial Report and Performance Statements report on Council's financial position and performance for the 2024-25 year.

25. As 2024-25 progressed, economic pressure in the form of inflation eased, however the prior year high inflation environment, has embedded higher service and project delivery costs for Council.

26. Council's ability to maintain a healthy financial position during the past financial year was supported by the delivery on the financial savings target set in the Long-Term Financial Plan. During 2024-25, $544,000 in permanent savings were realised through business case investment and business improvements. Additionally, Council realised

favourable returns on investments compared to budget due to higher levels of cash on hand due to capital grant funding timing and a cash rate higher than budgeted.

27. Being a growth Council brings challenges with maintaining and renewing an ever-increasing asset base. During 2024-25, $10.0 million of contributed assets were handed to Council from developers in addition to the new assets from the capital works program of $20.5 million.

28. Capitalised expenditure on significant projects in 2024-25 include:

    28.1. Wurdi Baierr Aquatic and Recreation Centre - $17.1 million.

    28.2. Barwon River Reserve - Winchelsea Swimming Pool - $6.5 million.

    28.3. Widen Coombes Road (RD11) - $1.9 million.

    28.4. LRCIP Phase 4A - Multi Arts Centre Redevelopment - $1.3 million.

    28.5. Hockey Pitch Banyul Warri Fields - $1.3 million.

    28.6. Stribling Reserve Stadium Mould Removal - $0.9 million.

    28.7. Eastern Reserve and Stribling Reserve Netball Courts - $0.9 million.

    28.8. Barwon River Adventure Play Space - $0.8 million.

    28.9. Ellimatta Reserve Netball Courts - $0.8 million.

    28.10. Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety Improvements Torquay Education Precinct - $0.4 million.

    28.11. Wurdi Baierr Stadium Upgrades – Seating - $0.3 million.

29. Financial Sustainability highlights:

    29.1. Cash and Investments

        29.1.1. $108.3 million, up from $95.2 million last year.

        29.1.2. Working capital ratio of 194%.

        29.1.3. Indicates strong liquidity and prudent financial management.

        29.1.4. Cash funds are clearly allocated for specific purposes.

    29.2. Borrowings

        29.2.1. $10.4 million, down from $12.5 million last year.

        29.2.2. Reduction in debt enhances financial flexibility allowing for future borrowings and lowers future interest obligations.

29.3. Revenue

29.3.1. $138.5 million, a significant increase from $114.5 million last year.

29.3.2. Growth likely driven by increased grants and contributions, reflecting successful funding strategies.

29.4. Income Statement Surplus

29.4.1. $33.2 million surplus, compared to an $18.5 million deficit last year.

29.4.2. The Surplus is attributed to:

29.4.2.1. High levels of capital grants.

29.4.2.2. Non-monetary contributions from infrastructure development.

29.4.2.3. Early receipt of half of the 2025-26 financial assistance grant.

29.4.2.4. Interest revenue due to higher cash balances and interest rates.

Conflict of Interest

30. No officer declared a conflict of interest under the *Local Government Act 2020* in the preparation of this report.

Confidentiality

31. This report and attachments contain no confidential information under section 66(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Transparency

Audit and Risk Committee involvement

32. Feedback from the Audit and Risk Committee is recorded below.

Audit and Risk Committee Meeting Date: 10 September 2025

Feedback Received	*Action Taken*
Update to commentary.	*Under Note 4B added 'based on an interim actuarial investigation' after the Vested Benefit Index rate.*

Councillor Briefings

33. This item was discussed at the following Councillor briefings prior to being presented to Council for consideration. Councillor attendance at each briefing was as follows:

Councillor Briefing Date: 12 August 2025

Councillor name	*In attendance (Y/N)*	*Councillor name*	*In attendance (Y/N)*
Cr Paul Barker	*Y*	*Cr Tony Phelps*	*Y*
Cr Mike Bodsworth	*Y*	*Cr Adrian Schonfelder*	*Y*
Cr Rebecca Bourke	*Y*	*Cr Libby Stapleton*	*N*
Cr Joel Grist	*Y*	*Cr Leon Walker*	*Y*
Cr Liz Pattison	*N*		

Councillor attendance at briefings is not a statutory requirement. Councillors are able to access and request information through a number of mechanisms to understand matters being presented at a Council Meeting.

Surf Coast Shire Council
ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Surf Coast Shire Council
Financial Report
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Certification of the Financial Statements

In my opinion, the accompanying financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* , the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* , the Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.

Gabrielle Spiller CPA
Principal Accounting Officer
Dated : *23 September 2025*
Torquay

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly the financial transactions of the Surf Coast Shire for the year ended 30 June 2025 and the financial position of the Council as at that date.

At the date of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances that would render any particulars in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

We have been authorised by the Council and by the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* to certify the financial statements in their final form.

Cr Mike Bodsworth
Mayor
Dated : *23 September 2025*
Torquay

Cr Libby Stapleton
Deputy Mayor
Dated : *23 September 2025*
Torquay

Robyn Seymour
Chief Executive Officer
Dated : *23 September 2025*
Torquay

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Comprehensive Income Statement
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	Note	2025 $'000	2024 $'000
Income / Revenue			
Rates and charges	3.1	66,374	64,426
Statutory fees and fines	3.2	2,047	2,382
User fees	3.3	6,470	6,492
Grants - operating	3.4	14,099	5,941
Grants - capital	3.4	29,165	6,255
Contributions - monetary	3.5	2,245	2,508
Contributions - non monetary	3.5	10,032	18,162
Net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	3.6	230	(25,441)
Share of net profits of associates	6.2	27	69
Other income	3.7	7,818	8,223
Total income / revenue		**138,507**	**89,017**
Expenses			
Employee costs	4.1	(42,413)	(39,960)
Materials and services	4.2	(34,107)	(33,720)
Depreciation	4.3	(22,588)	(21,932)
Amortisation - airspace asset		(2,639)	(6,494)
Depreciation - right of use assets		(439)	(352)
Allowance for impairment losses		(111)	(129)
Borrowing costs		(233)	(283)
Finance costs - leases		(83)	(23)
Other expenses	4.4	(2,618)	(4,577)
Total expenses		**(105,231)**	**(107,470)**
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		**33,276**	**(18,453)**
Other comprehensive income			
Items that will not be reclassified to surplus or deficit in future periods			
Net asset revaluation gain	9.1	27,035	30,698
Total other comprehensive income		**27,035**	**30,698**
Total comprehensive result		**60,311**	**12,245**

The above comprehensive income statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Balance Sheet
As at 30 June 2025

	Note	2025 $'000	2024 $'000
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	5.1	3,341	2,721
Trade and other receivables	5.1	8,276	8,949
Other financial assets	5.1	105,000	92,500
Prepayments		580	442
Other assets		1,095	1,831
Total current assets		**118,292**	**106,443**
Non-current assets			
Trade and other receivables	5.1	47	121
Investments in associates	6.2	372	345
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	6.1	1,279,514	1,224,393
Right-of-use assets		1,670	668
Intangible assets	5.2	18,334	19,260
Total non-current assets		**1,299,937**	**1,244,787**
Total assets		**1,418,229**	**1,351,230**
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	5.3	13,819	5,726
Trust funds and deposits		3,166	3,609
Provisions	5.5	11,411	11,063
Interest-bearing liabilities	5.4	2,195	2,183
Lease liabilities		443	227
Contract and other liabilities	5.3	29,787	28,582
Total current liabilities		**60,821**	**51,390**
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	5.5	16,837	18,180
Interest-bearing liabilities	5.4	8,162	10,356
Lease liabilities		1,226	432
Total non-current liabilities		**26,225**	**28,968**
Total liabilities		**87,046**	**80,358**
Net assets		**1,331,183**	**1,270,872**
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		457,675	429,788
Asset revaluation reserves	9.1	771,220	744,185
Other reserves	9.1	102,288	96,899
Total Equity		**1,331,183**	**1,270,872**

The above balance sheet should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of Changes in Equity
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

2025	Note	Total $'000	Accumulated Surplus $'000	Asset Revaluation Reserves $'000	Other Reserves $'000
Balance at beginning of the financial year		1,270,872	429,788	744,185	96,899
Surplus for the year		33,276	33,276	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain	9.1	27,035	-	27,035	-
Transfers to other reserves	9.1	-	(61,463)	-	61,463
Transfers from other reserves	9.1	-	56,074	-	(56,074)
Balance at end of the financial year		**1,331,183**	**457,675**	**771,220**	**102,288**

2024		Total $'000	Accumulated Surplus $'000	Asset Revaluation Reserves $'000	Other Reserves $'000
Balance at beginning of the financial year		1,258,627	450,107	713,487	95,033
Deficit for the year		(18,453)	(18,453)	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain	9.1	30,698	-	30,698	-
Transfers to other reserves	9.1	-	(68,089)	-	68,089
Transfers from other reserves	9.1	-	66,223	-	(66,223)
Balance at end of the financial year		**1,270,872**	**429,788**	**744,185**	**96,899**

The above statement of changes in equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of Cash Flows
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	Note	2025 Inflows/ (Outflows) $'000	2024 Inflows/ (Outflows) $'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Rates and charges		66,990	62,593
Statutory fees and fines		1,970	2,320
User fees		6,761	6,695
Grants - operating		15,521	5,070
Grants - capital		30,868	10,537
Contributions - monetary		2,243	2,053
Interest received		5,744	5,196
Trust funds and deposits taken		7,339	4,371
Net GST refund		5,654	4,087
Employee costs		(41,873)	(40,381)
Materials and services		(34,258)	(39,043)
Short-term, low value and variable lease payments		(289)	(200)
Trust funds and deposits repaid		(7,782)	(6,162)
Net cash provided by operating activities	9.2	**58,888**	**17,136**
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		(43,102)	(20,600)
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		264	174
Payments for investments		(231,500)	(116,000)
Proceeds from sale of investments		219,000	121,001
Net cash used in investing activities		**(55,338)**	**(15,425)**
Cash flows from financing activities			
Finance costs		(235)	(284)
Interest paid - lease liability		(83)	(23)
Repayment of borrowings		(2,182)	(2,171)
Repayment of lease liabilities		(430)	(354)
Net cash used in financing activities		**(2,930)**	**(2,832)**
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		620	(1,121)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		2,721	3,842
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	5.1(a)	**3,341**	**2,721**
Financing arrangements	5.6		

The above statement of cash flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of Capital Works
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2025 $'000	2024 $'000
Property		
Land under roads	41	-
Buildings	22,062	6,116
Total property	**22,103**	**6,116**
Plant and equipment		
Plant, machinery and equipment	3,304	1,636
Computers and telecommunications	81	118
Total plant and equipment	**3,385**	**1,754**
Infrastructure		
Roads	6,412	7,705
Bridges	182	-
Footpaths and cycleways	1,059	841
Drainage and sewerage	2,423	683
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	4,418	551
Waste management	2	1,642
Parks, open space and streetscapes	1,489	882
Off street car parks	1,629	426
Total infrastructure	**17,614**	**12,730**
Total capital works expenditure	**43,102**	**20,600**
Represented by:		
New asset expenditure	20,507	4,229
Asset renewal expenditure	15,754	11,092
Asset expansion expenditure	1,441	34
Asset upgrade expenditure	5,400	5,245
Total capital works expenditure	**43,102**	**20,600**

The above statement of capital works should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Note 1 OVERVIEW

Introduction

The Surf Coast Shire was established by an Order of the Governor in Council on 9 March 1994 and is a body corporate. The Council's main office is located at 1 Merrijig Drive, Torquay.

Statement of compliance

These financial statements are a general purpose financial report that consists of a Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows, Statement of Capital Works and Notes accompanying these financial statements. The general purpose financial report complies with the Australian Accounting Standards (AAS), other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board, the *Local Government Act 2020* , and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* .

The Council is a not-for-profit entity and therefore applies the additional AUS paragraphs applicable to a not-for-profit entity under the Australian Accounting Standards.

Accounting policy information

1.1 Basis of accounting

Accounting policies are selected and applied in a manner which ensures that the resulting financial information satisfies the concepts of relevance and reliability, thereby ensuring that the substance of the underlying transactions or other events is reported. Specific accounting policies applied are disclosed in sections where the related balance or financial statement matter is disclosed.

The accrual basis of accounting has been used in the preparation of these financial statements, except for the cash flow information, whereby assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses are recognised in the reporting period to which they relate, regardless of when cash is received or paid.

The financial statements are based on the historical cost convention unless a different measurement basis is specifically disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The financial statements are in Australian dollars. The amounts presented in the financial statements have been rounded to the nearest thousand dollars unless otherwise specified. Minor discrepancies in tables between totals and the sum of components are due to rounding.

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated judgements are based on professional judgement derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and also in future periods that are affected by the revision. Judgements and assumptions made by management in the application of AAS that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates relate to:
- the fair value of land, buildings, infrastructure, plant and equipment (refer to Note 6.1 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment)
- the determination of depreciation for buildings, infrastructure, plant and equipment (refer to Note 6.1 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment)
- the determination of employee provisions (refer to Note 5.5 Provisions)
- the determination of landfill provisions (refer to Note 5.5 Provisions)
- the determination of whether performance obligations are sufficiently specific so as to determine whether an arrangement is within the scope of AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers* or AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit Entities* (refer to Note 3)
- the determination, in accordance with AASB 16 *Leases* , of the lease term, the estimation of the discount rate when not implicit in the lease and whether an arrangement is in substance short-term or low value.
- other areas requiring judgements.

Unless otherwise stated, all accounting policies are consistent with those applied in the prior year. Where appropriate, comparative figures have been amended to accord with current presentation, and disclosure has been made of any material changes to comparatives.

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Income and expenses are recognised net of the amount of associated GST. Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is included with other receivables or payables in the balance sheet.

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Note 2 Analysis of our results

2.1 Performance against budget

The performance against budget notes compare Council's financial plan, expressed through its annual budget, with actual performance. The *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* requires explanation of any material variances. Council has adopted a materiality threshold of 10 percent and at least $100,000 or where further explanation is warranted. Explanations have not been provided for variations below the materiality threshold unless the variance is considered to be material because of its nature.

These notes are prepared to meet the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* .

2.1.1 Income / Revenue and expenditure

	Budget 2025 $'000	Actual 2025 $'000	Variance $'000	Variance %	Ref
Income / Revenue					
Rates and charges	66,240	66,374	**134**	0%	
Statutory fees and fines	2,141	2,047	**(94)**	(4%)	**1**
User fees	6,973	6,470	**(503)**	(7%)	**2**
Grants - operating	10,631	14,099	**3,468**	33%	**3**
Grants - capital	17,039	29,165	**12,126**	71%	**4**
Contributions - monetary	1,788	2,245	**457**	26%	**5**
Contributions - non monetary	5,081	10,032	**4,951**	97%	**6**
Net gain on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	274	230	**(44)**	(16%)	
Share of net profits/(losses) of associates	-	27	**27**	-	
Other income	2,943	7,818	**4,875**	166%	**7**
Total income / revenue	**113,110**	**138,507**	**25,397**	**22%**	
Expenses					
Employee costs	41,290	42,413	**(1,123)**	(3%)	**8**
Materials and services	33,080	34,107	**(1,027)**	(3%)	**9**
Allowance for impairment losses	108	111	**(3)**	(3%)	
Depreciation	21,755	22,588	**(833)**	(4%)	**10**
Amortisation - airspace assets	4,264	2,639	**1,625**	38%	**11**
Depreciation - right of use assets	448	439	**9**	2%	
Borrowing costs	234	233	**1**	0%	
Finance costs - leases	137	83	**54**	39%	
Other expenses	2,964	2,618	**346**	12%	**12**
Total expenses	**104,280**	**105,231**	**(951)**	**(1%)**	
Surplus for the year	**8,830**	**33,276**	**24,446**	**277%**	

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

(i) Explanation of material variations

Variance Ref, item and explanation

1 Statutory Fees and Fines
Unfavourable variance driven by subdivision fees ($67k) and planning assessment fees ($22k) reflective of recent development slow down.

2 User Fees
Unfavourable variance due to waste disposal fees ($492k) and planning secondary consent applications ($50k), offset by favourable utilisation of the Winchelsea Health Club admission fees ($40k).

3 Grants - operating
Favourable variance driven by early receipt of half of the estimated annual allocation of the 2025-26 Financial Assistance Grant in late 2024-25 ($2,972k); Early Years funding increase due to increased use of occasional care ($37k); and once off funding for early years school readiness and other kindergarten funding ($157k), environment and sustainability ($152k) and youth services ($40k).

4 Grants - capital
Favourable variance driven by the progress being made on the Wurdi Baierr Aquatic and Recreation Centre ($3,910k), timing of Local Roads Community Infrastructure Program grant ($2,665k), Black Spot Funding projects ($1,812k) Hockey Pitch Banyul Warri Fields ($1,315k), Integrated Water Management Project in Winchelsea and Jan Juc ($662k), and other unbudgeted grants ($1,762k), many of which relate to various road safety improvement works.

5 Contributions - monetary
Favourable variance driven by contributions for works associated with 325 Mousley Drive Winchelsea ($270k) and various unbudgeted project contributions ($206k), developer bonds retained ($69k), distinctive area landscape legal charges recouped ($175k), infringement recoupments ($50k); rates pensioner concessions ($48k), offset by reduced developer contributions ($361k) with development slow down.

6 Contributions - non monetary
Favourable variance driven by development infrastructure handed over to Council for water sensitive urban design infrastructure (Quay 2 and Glenmore Estate), along with auxiliary items such as retaining walls, fencing and park assets that were not budgeted for ($5,357k). Unfavourable variances relate to the timing of subdivision infrastructure assets being handed over to Council ($406k), which included favourable variances for Westcoast Business Park ($1,394k), Glenmore Estate ($898k), 51 Main Street Winchelsea ($289k) and unfavourable variances for Austin Street Winchelsea ($2,388k) and Stretton Estate ($599k) due to prior year hand overs.

7 Other income
Favourable variance driven by interest on investments with higher cash balances and interest rates ($2,595k), landfill rehabilitation adjustment with indexation rates decreasing by more than the increase in discount rates ($1,267k), and assets found through the drainage condition assessment process ($1,007k).

8 Employee costs
Unfavourable variance driven by works relating to capital works that do not meet the capitalisation threshold budgeted in materials ($811k), employee provision valuations net increase ($261k) and WorkCover premium increase ($135k), partially offset by favourable overtime ($36k) and employee training ($36k).

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

(i) Explanation of material variations

Variance Ref, item and explanation

9 Materials and services

Unfavourable variances driven by capital works that do not meet the capitalisation requirements($2,026k); mainly related to intersection works completed on VicRoads assets ($1,379k), digital transformation software subscriptions expensed ($454k) and reactive weather event emergency works funded by a grant ($234k). Other unfavourable variances include higher levels of civil maintenance expenditure ($392k) mainly due to unsealed road grading with extended dry weather periods, insurance industry premium increases ($141k) and higher plant repair and maintenance costs ($52k). Partially offset by favourable variances includes timing of operating projects ($823k) and waste collection and disposal due to revised contract rates and lower waste disposal volumes ($790k).

10 Depreciation

The unfavourable variance is mainly due to the 2024-25 budget depreciation for recreation, leisure and community assets being estimated prior to revaluation completion in 2023-24 which included some large movements for modern equivalent rates ($611k), with the remaining variance relating materially to the outcomes of the scheduled revaluation conducted in 2024-25 for building assets ($250k).

11 Amortisation - airspace assets

The favourable variance is due to lower consumption of the landfill airspace at the Anglesea landfill than budgeted ($1,625k).

12 Other expenses

The favourable variance is mainly due to the timing of asset write offs that occur as part of the renewal program, materially in drainage ($185k), roads ($152k), computers and telecommunications ($114k) and buildings ($19k), offset by work in progress from prior year now determined not to meet capitalisation requirements ($132k).

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

2.1.2 Capital works

	Budget 2025 $'000	Actual 2025 $'000	Variance $'000	Variance %	Ref
Property					
Land	72	-	72	100%	**1**
Land under roads	-	41	(41)	-	**2**
Buildings	23,189	22,062	1,127	5%	
Total property	**23,261**	**22,103**	**1,158**	**5%**	
Plant and equipment					
Plant, machinery and equipment	1,661	3,304	(1,643)	(99%)	**3**
Computers and telecommunications	1,455	81	1,374	94%	**4**
Total plant and equipment	**3,116**	**3,385**	**(269)**	**(9%)**	
Infrastructure					
Roads	11,393	6,412	4,981	44%	**5**
Bridges	288	182	106	37%	**6**
Footpaths and cycleways	1,643	1,059	584	36%	**7**
Drainage and sewerage	1,803	2,423	(620)	(34%)	**8**
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	3,649	4,418	(769)	(21%)	**9**
Waste management	1,732	2	1,730	100%	**10**
Parks, open space and streetscapes	865	1,489	(624)	(72%)	**11**
Off street car parks	26	1,629	(1,603)	(6,165%)	**12**
Total infrastructure	**21,399**	**17,614**	**3,785**	**18%**	
Total capital works expenditure	**47,776**	**43,102**	**4,674**	**10%**	
Represented by:					
New asset expenditure	21,153	20,507	646	3%	
Asset renewal expenditure	19,592	15,754	3,838	20%	**13**
Asset expansion expenditure	140	1,441	(1,301)	(929%)	**14**
Asset upgrade expenditure	6,891	5,400	1,491	22%	**15**
Total capital works expenditure	**47,776**	**43,102**	**4,674**	**10%**	

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

(i) Explanation of material variations

Variance Ref, item and explanation

1 Land
Lower than budgeted expenditure due to Land Purchase for Public Access Winchelsea being capitalised under Land Under Roads ($72k).

2 Land under roads
Higher than budgeted expenditure due to Land Purchase for Public Access Winchelsea being budgeted under Land ($41k).

3 Plant, machinery and equipment
Higher than budgeted expenditure on Winchelsea Pool Equipment budgeted in Buildings ($1,520k) and the late delivery of 2023-24 Heavy Plant ($129k).

4 Computers and telecommunications
Lower than budgeted capitalisation expenditure due to capital works that did not meet capitalisation criteria ($1,218k) and ongoing capital renewal program ($154k).

5 Roads
Lower than budgeted expenditure on Blackgate & Horseshoe Bend Road Intersection ($1,181k), Coombes Road Widening ($795k), Coombes and Messmate Rd Intersection ($763k) due to timing of the projects; Cape Otway Rd East ($578k) completed in 2023-24; Surf Coast Hwy/Bristol Rd Intersection ($2,294k) due to expenditure not meeting capitalisation criteria (Vic Roads asset); offset by higher than budgeted expenditure on renewal ($730k) due to timing of projects.

6 Bridges
Lower than budgeted spending on Pollocksford Road Bridge project ($191k) with design works still progressing and Bridge Safety audit not capitalised ($21k); partially offset by the completion of the Centre Road Culvert Works ($106k) budgeted for in prior year.

7 Footpaths and cycleways
Lower than budgeted expenditure on Regional Bike Route - Duffields Rd to Strathmore Drive ($489k), Regional Bike Route - Strathmore Dr to Bellbrae ($175k) and Barwon River Loop Walk - Stage 2 ($380k) due to timing of the projects; offset by expenditure on Winchelsea Pool ($227k), road projects ($111k) and Wurdi Baierr Aquatic Centre ($75k) budgeted in other asset categories.

8 Drainage & sewerage
Higher than budgeted expenditure on Wurdi Baierr Aquatic Centre ($1,159k) budgeted in other asset categories; offset by Karaaf Stormwater Management ($332k) and renewal projects ($40k) due to timing of delivery and responsibility for Bells Beach Recreation Reserve drainage transferring to Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority ($80k).

9 Recreational, leisure and community facilities
Higher than budgeted expenditure on Banyul Warri Fields Hockey Pitch ($1,289k), a grant funded project announced after the Budget was adopted, offset by projects effected by timing - Bob Pettitt Reserve Tennis Court Renewal ($200k), Playground Renewal ($163k) and Torquay Central and North Playgrounds ($124k).

10 Waste management
Lower than budgeted expenditure on Lorne Transfer Station Upgrade due to timing of the project ($1,244k); Anglesea Landfill Stage 3E Liner as the project was completed in 2023-24 ($446k) and Torquay Transfer Station Feasibility Plan ($40k) due to the project not meeting the capitalisation criteria.

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

(i) Explanation of material variations

Variance Ref, item and explanation

11 Parks, open space & streetscapes
Higher than budgeted expenditure on Barwon River Adventure Playground ($244k), Winchelsea Swimming Pool ($211k) and Stribling Reserve Stadium Retaining Wall ($188k) budgeted in other asset categories.

12 Off street car parking
Higher than budgeted expenditure on Wurdi Baierr Aquatic Centre with more works completed than planned ($1,505k), Lorne Transfer Station Upgrade ($66k) and Mt Duneed Rd (Geelong Rail Bridge) ($43k) budgeted in other asset categories.

13 Asset renewal expenditure
Lower than budgeted expenditure on Karaaf Stormwater Management ($332k), Footpath Renewal Projects ($129k), Parks & Open Space Small Renewal Projects ($332k), Widen Coombes Rd Stage 2 ($595k) and Horseshoe Bend Rd/Blackgate Rd Intersection ($1,181k) due to timing of the projects; Winchelsea Swimming Pool ($704k) due to additional capital works completed in 2023-24 and Digital Transformation and IT projects not meeting capitalisation standards ($616k).

14 Asset expansion expenditure
Higher than budgeted expenditure on the Multi Arts Centre Redevelopment ($1,322k) due to timing and partly budgeted under Asset upgrade expenditure.

15 Asset upgrade expenditure
Lower than budgeted expenditure on Surf Coast Hwy/Bristol Rd Intersection Upgrade ($1,296k) due to expenditure not meeting capitalisation criteria (Vic Roads asset) and on the Multi Arts Centre Redevelopment ($180k) as classified as expansion.

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Note 2.2 Analysis of Council results by program

Council delivers its functions and activities through the following programs:

2.2.1 Council programs

Chief Executive Office
The CEO takes responsibility for leading and managing the organisation to ensure implementation of the goals and strategies endorsed by Council. In doing so, the CEO creates a climate for good democratic governance and promotion of the principles of fairness, equality, openness, accountability and transparency within the organisation to assist Councillors to govern effectively, as required under the *Local Government Act (2020)* .

Community Life
This portfolio supports people to have a great life - whether it's in our parks and facilities or through the services we provide from early childhood to environmental health. It includes how we support people to make the most of their lives in Surf Coast Shire. A big part of this work is communication and community engagement, helping customers with their enquiries and supporting communities to achieve more themselves. And there is a focus on safety through emergency management, building and ranger services as well as maintaining our roads, trees, reserves and gardens. The four departments in this division are: Operations, Community Safety, Community Support and Community Strengthening.

Placemaking and Environment
The purpose of this Centre of Excellence is to guide and support the ongoing development of the Surf Coast Shire as a vibrant, connected, and sustainable community. It plays a critical role in shaping how our region evolves - ensuring that planning is truly integrated and aligned with our assets, engineering, environmental, sustainability, and economic development priorities. This centre leads and collaborates across disciplines to help realise the aspirations of our community. It encompasses everything from how people move through and experience our spaces, to ensuring that infrastructure and services function effectively and efficiently. In essence, it brings together the key elements that shape and grow our community - ensuring the Surf Coast Shire remains a thriving, liveable, and future-ready place for all.

Strategy and Effectiveness
This division helps set the direction for Council and supports the whole organisation to work effectively and deliver on our goals. It brings together key areas such as Business Improvement, Finance, Integrity and Governance, People and Culture, Technology and Information, and Project Management. Together, these functions help us work smarter, stay on track, and make the best use of our resources. This team focuses on planning for the future, enabling great performance, and making sure we're accountable for delivering real outcomes for our community - now and into the future.

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

2.2.2 Summary of income / revenue, expenses, assets and capital expenses by program

2025	Income / Revenue	Expenses	Surplus/ (Deficit)	Grants included in income / revenue	Total assets
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Chief Executive Office	1	3,290	(3,289)	-	-
Community Life	9,315	36,567	(27,252)	5,333	864,372
Placemaking & Environment	46,952	32,200	14,752	29,280	29,802
Strategy & Effectiveness	82,239	33,174	49,065	8,651	524,055
	138,507	105,231	33,276	43,264	1,418,229

2024	Income / Revenue	Expenses	Surplus/ (Deficit)	Grants included in income / revenue	Total assets
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Chief Executive Office	-	3,103	(3,103)	-	-
Community Life	9,018	34,573	(25,555)	5,267	830,562
Placemaking & Environment	25,963	32,722	(6,759)	6,686	30,248
Strategy & Effectiveness	54,036	37,072	16,964	243	490,420
	89,017	107,470	(18,453)	12,196	1,351,230

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Note 3 Funding for the delivery of our services	**2025**	**2024**
3.1 Rates and charges	**$'000**	**$'000**

Council uses Capital Improved Value (CIV) as the basis of valuation of all properties within the municipal district. The CIV of a property is the total market value of the land and buildings and other improvements.

The valuation base used to calculate general rates for 2024/2025 was $35,628 million (2023/2024 $35,181 million).

General rates	50,027	48,134
Municipal charge	5,510	5,325
Special rates and charges	-	158
Service rates and charges	10,351	10,121
Supplementary rates and rate adjustments (General rates & municipal charge)	221	437
Interest on rates and charges	265	251
Total rates and charges	**66,374**	**64,426**

The date of the general revaluation of land for rating purposes within the municipal district was 1 January 2024 and the valuation was first applied in the rating year commencing 1 July 2024.
Annual rates and charges are recognised as income when Council issues annual rates notices. Supplementary rates are recognised when a valuation and reassessment is completed and a supplementary rates notice issued.

3.2 Statutory fees and fines

Infringements and costs	918	933
Building services	240	228
Town planning fees	689	694
Land information certificates	57	68
Subdivision fees	61	390
Other statutory fees and fines	82	69
Total statutory fees and fines	**2,047**	**2,382**

Statutory fees and fines (including parking fees and fines) are recognised as income when the service has been provided, the payment is received, or when the penalty has been applied, whichever first occurs.

3.3 User fees

Leisure centre and recreation	1,115	1,088
Child care/children's programs	268	240
Building services	46	27
Registration and other permits	907	844
Waste management services	2,942	3,078
Royalties	574	599
Gravel pits	113	129
Lease rentals	86	67
Other fees and charges	419	420
Total user fees	**6,470**	**6,492**

User fees by timing of revenue recognition		
User fees recognised over time	925	873
User fees recognised at a point in time	5,545	5,619
Total user fees	**6,470**	**6,492**

User fees are recognised as revenue at a point in time, or over time, when (or as) the performance obligation is satisfied. Recognition is based on the underlying contractual terms.

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

3.4 Funding from other levels of government	**2025**	**2024**
Grants were received in respect of the following:	**$'000**	**$'000**
Summary of grants		
Commonwealth funded grants	18,810	5,453
State funded grants	24,454	6,743
Total grants received	**43,264**	**12,196**
(a) Operating grants		
Recurrent - Commonwealth Government		
Financial Assistance Grants	8,651	243
Other	264	245
Recurrent - State Government		
Home and community care	-	156
School crossing supervisors	94	91
Maternal and child health	511	476
Community safety	240	240
Kindergartens	3,800	3,929
Family and children	154	174
Environmental planning	15	15
Other	83	36
Total recurrent operating grants	**13,812**	**5,605**
Non-recurrent - Commonwealth Government		
Family and children	-	9
Recreation	3	34
Non-recurrent - State Government		
Waste Management	33	33
Environmental planning	129	96
Community safety	28	15
Kindergartens	88	30
Maternal and child health	-	99
Other	6	20
Total non-recurrent operating grants	**287**	**336**
Total operating grants	**14,099**	**5,941**
(b) Capital grants		
Recurrent - Commonwealth Government		
Roads to recovery	1,458	503
Total recurrent capital grants	**1,458**	**503**
Non-recurrent - Commonwealth Government		
Recreation	-	460
Buildings	4,238	2,500
Roads	4,146	1,459
Environmental planning	50	
Non-recurrent - State Government		
Buildings	15,920	-
Community safety	499	55
Roads	357	734
Recreation	1,585	211
Waste Management	-	84
Environmental planning	887	249
Other	25	-
Total non-recurrent capital grants	**27,707**	**5,752**
Total capital grants	**29,165**	**6,255**

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

(c) Recognition of grant income

Before recognising funding from government grants as revenue Council assesses whether there is a contract that is enforceable and has sufficiently specific performance obligations in accordance with AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers* . When both these conditions are satisfied, Council:

- identifies each performance obligation relating to revenue under the contract/agreement
- determines the transaction price
- recognises a contract liability for its obligations under the agreement
- recognises revenue as it satisfies its performance obligations, at the point in time or over time when services are rendered.

Where the contract is not enforceable and/or does not have sufficiently specific performance obligations, Council applies AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit Entities* .

Grant revenue with sufficiently specific performance obligations is recognised over time as the performance obligations specified in the underlying agreement are met. Where performance obligations are not sufficiently specific, grants are recognised on the earlier of receipt or when an unconditional right to receipt has been established. Grants relating to capital projects are generally recognised progressively as the capital project is completed. The following table provides a summary of the accounting framework under which grants are recognised.

	2025 $'000	2024 $'000
Income recognised under AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit Entities*		
General purpose	8,651	243
Specific purpose grants to acquire non-financial assets	29,165	6,255
Other specific purpose grants	5,408	5,655
Revenue recognised under AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers*		
Specific purpose grants	40	43
	43,264	**12,196**
(d) Unspent grants received on condition that they be spent in a specific manner		
Operating		
Balance at start of year	12	3
Received during the financial year and remained unspent at balance date	13	12
Received in prior years and spent during the financial year	(12)	(3)
Balance at year end	**13**	**12**
Capital		
Balance at start of year	28,558	24,473
Received during the financial year and remained unspent at balance date	23,263	7,236
Received in prior years and spent during the financial year	(22,057)	(3,151)
Balance at year end	**29,764**	**28,558**

Unspent grants are determined and disclosed on a cash basis.

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

3.5 Contributions	**2025 $'000**	**2024 $'000**
Monetary	2,245	2,508
Non-monetary	10,032	18,162
Total contributions	**12,277**	**20,670**
Contributions of non-monetary assets were received in relation to the following asset classes.		
Land	3,848	4,309
Roads	2,601	5,569
Other infrastructure	893	2,697
Drainage	2,690	5,587
Total non-monetary contributions	**10,032**	**18,162**

Monetary and non-monetary contributions are recognised as income at their fair value when Council obtains control over the contributed asset.

3.6 Net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment

Proceeds of sale	264	174
Written down value of assets disposed	(34)	(25,615)
Total Net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	**230**	**(25,441)**

The profit or loss on sale of an asset is determined when control of the asset has passed to the buyer.

During the 2023-2024 financial year Surf Coast Shire transferred assets totalling $24.539 million to Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority under the *Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act 2020.*

3.7 Other income

Interest	5,051	5,076
Volunteer services	492	552
Found assets	1,008	1,078
Future landfill rehabilitation adjustment (Refer to note 5.5 Provisions)	1,267	1,517
Total other income	**7,818**	**8,223**

Interest is recognised as it is earned.

Other income is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable and is recognised when Council gains control over the right to receive the income.

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Note 4 The cost of delivering services	2025 $'000	2024 $'000
4.1 (a) Employee costs		
Wages and salaries	36,482	34,522
WorkCover	630	495
Superannuation	4,232	3,860
Fringe benefits tax	46	55
Volunteer services	492	552
Other	531	476
Total employee costs	**42,413**	**39,960**

(b) Superannuation

The majority of employees of Council are members of various accumulation funds including Vision Super, and other industry and retail funds. As at 30 June 2025, there are 2 employees in Vision Supers defined benefit scheme.

Council made contributions to the following funds (11.50% 2024/2025,11.00% 2023/2024)

Accumulation funds		
Employer contributions to Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Vision Super)	1,720	1,720
Employer contributions - other (74 funds for 2024/2025, 75 funds for 2023/2024)	2,445	2,151
Accumulation funds total	**4,165**	**3,871**
Employer contributions payable at reporting date.	201	169

Contributions made exclude amounts accrued at balance date.

Defined benefit fund		
Employer contributions to Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Vision Super)	25	30
Defined benefit fund total	**25**	**30**
Employer contributions payable at reporting date.	-	-

The expected contributions to be paid to the Defined Benefit category of Vision Super for the year ending 30 June 2026 is $13,906.
A triennial actuarial investigation for the Defined Benefit category was conducted as at 30 June 2023. The vested benefit index (VBI) was 104.1% as at this date. The VBI is used as the primary funding indicator. Because the VBI was above 100%, the actuarial investigation determined the Defined Benefit category was in a satisfactory financial position and that no change was necessary to the Defined Benefit category's funding arrangements from prior years. In the event that the Fund Actuary determines that there is a shortfall based on the above requirement, the Fund's participating employers (including Council) are required to make an employer contribution to cover the shortfall.
For 30 June 2025 the vested benefit index (VBI) was 110.5% based on an interim actuarial investigation.

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2025 $'000	2024 $'000
4.2 Materials and services		
Contract payments - Roads	1,857	1,922
Contract payments - Waste	8,452	8,123
Contract payments - Operations	1,149	1,287
Contract payments - Facilities Management	2,130	2,091
Contract payments - Assets & Engineering	2,252	2,593
Contract payments - Other	1,738	1,549
General maintenance	704	709
Utilities	1,142	1,170
Office administration	875	814
Information technology	2,205	1,459
Insurance	1,188	1,017
Consultants	2,624	2,541
Fuel	675	773
Grants, contributions and sponsorship	1,581	1,325
Materials	1,004	1,304
Royalties	1,902	2,119
Contributions to developer works	250	1,003
Other	2,379	1,921
Total materials and services	**34,107**	**33,720**

Expenses are recognised as they are incurred and reported in the financial year to which they relate.

4.3 Depreciation		
Property	4,063	3,463
Plant and equipment	1,532	1,450
Infrastructure	16,993	17,019
Total depreciation	**22,588**	**21,932**

Refer to note 6.1 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment for a more detailed breakdown of depreciation and accounting policy.

4.4 Other expenses		
Auditors' remuneration - VAGO - audit of the financial statements, performance statement and grant acquittals	61	61
Auditors' remuneration - Internal Audit	121	133
Councillors' allowances	386	377
Operating lease and rentals	329	376
Assets written-off	1,721	3,630
Total other expenses	**2,618**	**4,577**

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Note 5 Investing in and financing our operations	2025 $'000	2024 $'000
5.1 Financial assets		
(a) Cash and cash equivalents - Current		
Cash on hand	3	3
Cash at bank	3,338	2,718
Total cash and cash equivalents	**3,341**	**2,721**
(b) Other financial assets		
Current		
Term deposits	105,000	92,500
Total other financial assets	**105,000**	**92,500**
Total financial assets	**108,341**	**95,221**

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand and deposits at call.

Other financial assets are valued at fair value, at balance date. Term deposits are measured at original cost. Any unrealised gains and losses on holdings at balance date are recognised as either a revenue or expense.

Other financial assets include term deposits and those with original maturity dates of three to 12 months are classified as current, whilst term deposits with maturity dates greater than 12 months are classified as non-current.

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

(c) Trade and other receivables	**2025 $'000**	**2024 $'000**
Current		
Statutory receivables		
Rates debtors	4,808	5,289
Special rate schemes	29	63
Infringement debtors	1,105	1,015
Allowance for expected credit loss - infringements	(198)	(185)
Net GST receivable	1,881	901
Non statutory receivables		
Other debtors	678	1,893
Allowance for expected credit loss - other debtors	(27)	(27)
Total current trade and other receivables	8,276	8,949
Non-current		
Statutory receivables		
Special rate schemes	47	121
Total non-current trade and other receivables	47	121
Total trade and other receivables	**8,323**	**9,070**

Short term receivables are carried at invoice amount. An allowance for expected credit losses is recognised based on past experience and other objective evidence of expected losses.

(d) Ageing of receivables

The ageing of the Council's trade and other receivables (excluding statutory receivables) that are not impaired was:

Current (not yet due)	483	1,707
Past due by up to 30 days	51	100
Past due between 31 and 60 days	3	7
Past due between 61 and 90 days	7	5
Past due by more than 120 days	134	74
Total trade and other receivables	**678**	**1,893**

(e) Ageing of individually impaired Receivables

At balance date, other debtors representing financial assets with a nominal value of $27,390 (2024: $27,390) were impaired. The amount of the allowance raised against these debtors was $27,390 (2024: $27,390). They individually have been impaired as a result of their doubtful collection. Many of the long outstanding past due amounts have been lodged with Council's debt collectors or are on payment arrangements.

The ageing of receivables that have been individually determined as impaired at reporting date was:

Past due by more than 1 year	27	27
Total trade & other receivables	**27**	**27**

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

5.2 Non-financial assets	**2025 $'000**	**2024 $'000**
(a) Intangible assets		
Landfill air space	18,334	19,260
Total intangible assets	**18,334**	**19,260**

Landfill air space	**Total $'000**
Gross carrying amount	
Balance at 1 July 2024	112,827
Revaluation	7,711
Balance at 30 June 2025	**120,538**
Accumulated amortisation and impairment	
Balance at 1 July 2024	93,567
Amortisation expense	2,639
Revaluation	5,998
Balance at 30 June 2025	102,204
Net book value at 30 June 2024	19,260
Net book value at 30 June 2025	**18,334**

An intangible asset is defined as “an identifiable non-monetary asset without physical substance”. The Landfill Airspace fits this definition. The Landfill Airspace was initially measured at fair value of the asset – that is, the value of the future cash flows expected to be generated by the asset. After initial recognition, the Landfill Airspace is carried at its fair value, less any accumulated amortisation and impairment losses. Amortisation expenses the assets value on a systematic basis over the asset's useful life. Amortisation is calculated on a units of use basis, at a rate that allocates the asset value, less any estimated residual value over its estimated useful life. Estimates of the remaining useful lives and amortisation method are reviewed at least annually, and adjustments made where appropriate. The landfill airspace was revalued as at 30 June 2025. The remaining useful life of the Landfill airspace is 5 years at 30 June 2025. The Landfill airspace asset has been accounted for using FG02/2017 Local Government Accounting for Landfills by adopting the revaluation model.

Key assumptions:		
- discount rate (weighted average)	4.20%	4.35%
- inflation rate	4.32%	5.61%

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

5.3 Payables and contract and other liabilities	**2025**	**2024**
(a) Trade and other payables	**$'000**	**$'000**
Current		
Non-statutory payables		
Trade payables	9,797	1,698
Rates and charges received in advance	1,055	919
Accrued expenses	2,967	3,109
Total trade and other payables	**13,819**	**5,726**
(b) Contract and other liabilities		
Contract liabilities		
Current		
Grants received in advance - operating	13	12
Contributions received in advance	10	12
Total contract liabilities	**23**	**24**
Other liabilities		
Current		
Deferred capital grants	29,764	28,558
Total other liabilities	**29,764**	**28,558**
Total contract and other liabilities	**29,787**	**28,582**

Contract liabilities
Contract liabilities reflect consideration received in advance from customers in respect of rates and grant income. Contract liabilities are derecognised and recorded as revenue when promised goods and services are transferred to the customer, refer to Note 3.

Other liabilities
Grant consideration was received from state and federal governments to support the construction of Council assets. Grant consideration is recognised as income following specific guidance under AASB 1058 as the asset is constructed. Income is recognised to the extent of costs incurred-to-date because the costs of construction most closely reflect the stage of completion of the assets. As such, Council has deferred recognition of a portion of the grant consideration received as a liability for outstanding obligations.

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

5.4 Interest-bearing liabilities	**2025 $'000**	**2024 $'000**
Current		
Borrowings from Banks - secured *	2,195	2,183
Total current interest-bearing liabilities	**2,195**	**2,183**
Non-current		
Borrowings from Banks - secured *	8,162	10,356
Total non-current interest-bearing liabilities	**8,162**	**10,356**
Total interest-bearing liabilities	**10,357**	**12,539**

* Borrowings are secured by Council's general rates.

(a) The maturity profile for Council's borrowings is:

Not later than one year	2,195	2,183
Later than one year and not later than five years	8,162	8,489
Later than five years	-	1,867
	10,357	**12,539**

Borrowings are initially measured at fair value, being the cost of the interest bearing liabilities, net of transaction costs. The measurement basis subsequent to initial recognition depends on whether the Council has categorised its interest-bearing liabilities as either financial liabilities designated at fair value through the profit and loss, or financial liabilities at amortised cost. Any difference between the initial recognised amount and the redemption value is recognised in net result over the period of the borrowing using the effective interest method. The classification depends on the nature and purpose of the interest bearing liabilities. The Council determines the classification of its interest bearing liabilities based on contractual repayment terms at every balance date.

In classifying borrowings as current or non-current Council considers whether at balance date it has the right to defer settlement of the liability for at least twelve months after the reporting period. Council's loan arrangements include covenants based on Council's financial performance and position at the end of the reporting period. These covenants are assessed for compliance after the reporting period based on specified financial ratios.

5.5 Provisions

Current		
Employee provisions	8,043	7,658
Landfill Restoration provision	3,368	3,405
Total current provisions	**11,411**	**11,063**
Non-current		
Employee provisions	764	780
Landfill Restoration provision	16,073	17,400
Total non-current provisions	**16,837**	**18,180**
Total	**28,248**	**29,243**

2025	**Employee $ '000**	**Landfill restoration $ '000**	**Total $ '000**
Balance at beginning of the financial year	8,438	20,805	29,243
Additional provisions/(reduction in provisions)	3,700	(1,506)	2,194
Amounts used	(3,408)	(97)	(3,505)
Change in the discounted amount arising because of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate	77	239	316
Balance at the end of the financial year	**8,807**	**19,441**	**28,248**

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

2024	Employee $ '000	Landfill restoration $ '000	Total $ '000
Balance at beginning of the financial year	8,518	22,437	30,955
Additional provisions/(reduction in provisions)	3,722	(646)	3,076
Amounts used	(3,604)	(116)	(3,720)
Change in the discounted amount arising because of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate	(198)	(870)	(1,068)
Balance at the end of the financial year	**8,438**	**20,805**	**29,243**

(a) Employee provisions	**2025 $'000**	**2024 $'000**
Current provisions expected to be wholly settled within 12 months		
Annual leave	2,312	2,339
Long service leave	887	747
	3,199	**3,086**
Current provisions expected to be wholly settled after 12 months		
Annual leave	525	531
Long service leave	4,319	4,041
	4,844	**4,572**
Total current employee provisions	**8,043**	**7,658**
Non-current		
Long service leave	764	780
Total non-current employee provisions	**764**	**780**
Aggregate carrying amount of employee provisions:		
Current	8,043	7,658
Non-current	764	780
Total aggregate carrying amount of employee provisions	**8,807**	**8,438**

The calculation of employee costs and benefits includes all relevant on-costs and are calculated as follows at reporting date.

Annual leave
A liability for annual leave is recognised in the provision for employee benefits as a current liability because the Council does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability. Liabilities for annual leave are measured at:
- nominal value if the Council expects to wholly settle the liability within 12 months
- present value if the Council does not expect to wholly settle within 12 months.

Liabilities that are not expected to be wholly settled within 12 months of the reporting date are recognised in the provision for employee benefits as current liabilities, measured at the present value of the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled using the remuneration rate expected to apply at the time of settlement.

Long service leave
Liability for long service leave (LSL) is recognised in the provision for employee benefits. Unconditional LSL is disclosed as a current liability as the Council does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement.
Unconditional LSL is measured at nominal value if expected to be settled within 12 months or at present value if not expected to be settled within 12 months. Conditional LSL that has been accrued, where an employee is yet to reach a qualifying term of employment, is disclosed as a non-current liability and measured at present value.

Key assumptions:		
- discount rate (weighted average)	4.20%	4.35%
- inflation rate	3.00%	3.00%

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

(b) Landfill rehabilitation provision	**2025 $'000**	**2024 $'000**
Current	3,368	3,405
Non-current	16,073	17,400
Total Landfill rehabilitation provision	**19,441**	**20,805**

Council is obligated to restore the Anglesea Landfill site to a particular standard. The forecast life of the site is based on current estimates of remaining capacity and the forecast rate of infill. The provision for landfill restoration has been calculated based on the present value of the expected cost of works to be undertaken. The expected cost of works has been estimated based on current understanding of work required to reinstate the site to a suitable standard. Accordingly, the estimation of the provision required is dependent on the accuracy of the forecast timing of the work, work required and related costs.
Council reviews the landfill restoration provision on an annual basis, including the key assumptions listed below.

Key assumptions:		
- discount rate (weighted average)	4.20%	4.35%
- inflation rate (Rawlinson)	4.32%	5.61%

5.6 Financing arrangements

The Council has the following funding arrangements in place as at the end of the financial year:		
Bank overdraft	2,300	2,300
Credit card facilities	100	100
Other facilities - Bank Loans	10,357	12,539
Total facilities	**12,757**	**14,939**
Used facilities	(10,378)	(12,560)
Unused facilities	**2,379**	**2,379**

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

5.7 Commitments

The Council has entered into the following commitments. Commitments are not recognised in the Balance Sheet. Commitments are disclosed at their nominal value and presented inclusive of the GST payable.

(a) Commitments for expenditure

2025	Not later than 1 year $'000	Later than 1 year and not later than 2 years $'000	Later than 2 years and not later than 5 years $'000	Later than 5 years $'000	Total $'000
Operating					
Waste management	8,380	5,098	9,478	-	22,956
Consultancies	333	-	-	-	333
Open space management	301	-	-	-	301
Cleaning of Council buildings	1,095	1,085	-	-	2,180
Other	1,573	406	172	-	2,151
Total	**11,682**	**6,589**	**9,650**	**-**	**27,921**
Capital					
Construction	41,735	6,444	-	-	48,179
Consultancies	1,391	204	-	-	1,595
Waste management	1,157	-	-	-	1,157
Total	**44,283**	**6,648**	**-**	**-**	**50,931**

2024	Not later than 1 year $'000	Later than 1 year and not later than 2 years $'000	Later than 2 years and not later than 5 years $'000	Later than 5 years $'000	Total $'000
Operating					
Waste management	8,000	8,000	13,413	896	30,309
Consultancies	158	-	-	-	158
Open space management	291	94	-	-	385
Cleaning of Council buildings	1,064	-	-	-	1,064
Other	1,309	274	326	-	1,909
Total	**10,822**	**8,368**	**13,739**	**896**	**33,825**
Capital					
Construction	13,797	-	-	-	13,797
Consultancies	1,055	349	82	-	1,486
Waste management	51	-	-	-	51
Other	1,205	-	-	-	1,205
Total	**16,108**	**349**	**82**	**-**	**16,539**

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Note 6 Assets we manage
6.1 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment
Summary of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment

	Carrying amount 30 June 2024 $'000	Additions $'000	Contributions $'000	Revaluation $'000	Found $'000	Depreciation $'000	Disposal $'000	Write-off $'000	Transfers $'000	Carrying amount 30 June 2025 $'000
Property	487,922	7,170	3,873	4,666	-	(4,063)	-	(366)	2,230	501,432
Plant and equipment	5,790	3,195	-	-	-	(1,532)	(34)	(1)	454	7,872
Infrastructure	722,804	12,767	6,159	20,656	1,008	(16,993)	-	(1,222)	1,252	746,431
Work in progress	7,877	19,970	-	-	-	-	-	(132)	(3,936)	23,779
Total	**1,224,393**	**43,102**	**10,032**	**25,322**	**1,008**	**(22,588)**	**(34)**	**(1,721)**	**-**	**1,279,514**

Summary of Work in Progress	Opening WIP $'000	Additions $'000	Write-off $'000	Transfers $'000	Closing WIP $'000
Property	4,881	14,933	(80)	(2,222)	17,512
Plant and equipment	35	190	(4)	(454)	(233)
Infrastructure	2,961	4,847	(48)	(1,260)	6,500
Total	**7,877**	**19,970**	**(132)**	**(3,936)**	**23,779**

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

(a) Property

	Land - specialised	Land - non specialised	Land Under Roads	Total Land	Buildings - specialised	Buildings - non specialised	Total Buildings	Total Property excl WIP	Work in progress	Total Property
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
At fair value 1 July 2024	260,608	7,590	109,676	**377,874**	163,013	17,873	**180,886**	**558,760**	4,881	**563,641**
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2024	-	-	-	**-**	(62,410)	(8,428)	**(70,838)**	**(70,838)**	-	**(70,838)**
	260,608	7,590	109,676	**377,874**	100,603	9,445	**110,048**	**487,922**	4,881	**492,803**
Movements in fair value										
Additions	-	-	41	**41**	7,113	16	**7,129**	**7,170**	14,933	**22,103**
Contributions	3,765	-	83	**3,848**	25	-	**25**	**3,873**	-	**3,873**
Revaluation	-	-	-	**-**	6,530	432	**6,962**	**6,962**	-	**6,962**
Write-off	-	-	(5)	**(5)**	(3,099)	(104)	**(3,203)**	**(3,208)**	(80)	**(3,288)**
Transfers	-	-	-	**-**	2,229	(8)	**2,221**	**2,221**	(2,222)	**(1)**
	3,765	-	119	**3,884**	12,798	336	**13,134**	**17,018**	12,631	**29,649**
Movements in accumulated depreciation										
Depreciation	-	-	-	**-**	(3,652)	(411)	**(4,063)**	**(4,063)**	-	**(4,063)**
Accumulated depreciation of write offs	-	-	-	**-**	2,753	89	**2,842**	**2,842**	-	**2,842**
Revaluation	-	-	-	**-**	(2,609)	313	**(2,296)**	**(2,296)**	-	**(2,296)**
Transfers	-	-	-	**-**	6	3	**9**	**9**	-	**9**
	-	-	-	-	(3,502)	(6)	**(3,508)**	**(3,508)**	-	**(3,508)**
At fair value 30 June 2025	264,373	7,590	109,795	**381,758**	175,811	18,209	**194,020**	**575,778**	17,512	**593,290**
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2025	-	-	-	**-**	(65,912)	(8,434)	**(74,346)**	**(74,346)**	-	**(74,346)**
	264,373	**7,590**	**109,795**	**381,758**	**109,899**	**9,775**	**119,674**	**501,432**	**17,512**	**518,944**

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

(b) Plant and Equipment

	Plant machinery and equipment	Fixtures fittings and furniture	Computers and telecoms	Total plant and equipment excl WIP	Work in progress	Total plant and equipment
	$'000	$'000	$'000		$'000	$'000
At fair value 1 July 2024	11,004	1,475	4,287	**16,766**	35	**16,801**
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2024	(6,026)	(1,393)	(3,557)	**(10,976)**	-	**(10,976)**
	4,978	82	730	**5,790**	35	**5,825**
Movements in fair value						
Additions	3,125	-	70	**3,195**	190	**3,385**
Disposal	(755)	-	-	**(755)**	-	**(755)**
Write-off	(231)	-	(771)	**(1,002)**	(4)	**(1,006)**
Transfers	454	-	-	**454**	(454)	**-**
	2,593	-	(701)	**1,892**	(268)	**1,624**
Movements in accumulated depreciation						
Depreciation	(1,192)	(22)	(318)	**(1,532)**	-	**(1,532)**
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	721	-	-	**721**	-	**721**
Accumulated depreciation of write offs	230	-	771	**1,001**	-	**1,001**
	(241)	(22)	453	**190**	-	**190**
At fair value 30 June 2025	13,597	1,475	3,586	**18,658**	(233)	**18,425**
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2025	(6,267)	(1,415)	(3,104)	**(10,786)**	-	**(10,786)**
	7,330	**60**	**482**	**7,872**	**(233)**	**7,639**

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

(c) Infrastructure

	Roads	Bridges	Footpaths and cycleways	Drainage and sewerage	Recreational, leisure and community	Parks, open spaces and streetscapes	Off street car parks	Waste Management	Total Infrastructure excl WIP	Work in progress	Total Infrastructure
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
At fair value 1 July 2024	731,677	12,319	56,946	169,929	43,359	32,065	15,895	11,651	**1,073,841**	2,961	**1,076,802**
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2024	(231,195)	(6,388)	(17,287)	(58,308)	(15,193)	(10,999)	(3,637)	(8,030)	**(351,037)**	-	**(351,037)**
	500,482	5,931	39,659	111,621	28,166	21,066	12,258	3,621	**722,804**	2,961	**725,765**
Movements in fair value											
Additions	5,102	165	734	1,470	3,091	1,211	992	2	**12,767**	4,847	**17,614**
Contributions	2,601	-	638	2,690	12	168	50	-	**6,159**	-	**6,159**
Found Assets	-	-	-	1,008	-	-	-	-	**1,008**	-	**1,008**
Revaluation	-	-	-	14,488	-	-	-	-	**14,488**	-	**14,488**
Write-off	(2,307)	(143)	(82)	(155)	(714)	(297)	(13)	-	**(3,711)**	(48)	**(3,759)**
Transfers	739	-	67	194	193	68	-	-	**1,261**	(1,260)	**1**
	6,135	22	1,357	19,695	2,582	1,150	1,029	2	31,972	3,539	**35,511**
Movements in accumulated depreciation											
Depreciation	(9,839)	(126)	(949)	(1,860)	(1,892)	(1,566)	(211)	(550)	**(16,993)**	-	**(16,993)**
Revaluation	-	-	-	6,168		-	-	-	**6,168**	-	**6,168**
Accumulated depreciation of write offs	1,608	125	59	101	408	182	6	-	**2,489**	-	**2,489**
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	(9)	-	-	**(9)**	-	**(9)**
	(8,231)	(1)	(890)	4,409	(1,484)	(1,393)	(205)	(550)	(8,345)	-	**(8,345)**
At fair value 30 June 2025	737,812	12,341	58,303	189,624	45,941	33,215	16,924	11,653	**1,105,813**	6,500	**1,112,313**
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2025	(239,426)	(6,389)	(18,177)	(53,899)	(16,677)	(12,392)	(3,842)	(8,580)	**(359,382)**	-	**(359,382)**
	498,386	**5,952**	**40,126**	**135,725**	**29,264**	**20,823**	**13,082**	**3,073**	**746,431**	**6,500**	**752,931**

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Acquisition

The purchase method of accounting is used for all acquisitions of assets, being the fair value of assets provided as consideration at the date of acquisition plus any incidental costs attributable to the acquisition. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset (or paid to transfer a liability) in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. Refer also to Note 8.4 Fair value measurement for further disclosure regarding fair value measurement.

Where assets are constructed by Council, cost includes all materials used in construction, direct labour, borrowing costs incurred during construction, and an appropriate share of directly attributable variable and fixed overheads.

In accordance with Council's policy, the threshold limits have applied when recognising assets within an applicable asset class, and unless otherwise stated are consistent with the prior year.

Asset recognition thresholds and depreciation periods

		Depreciation Period	Threshold Limit
(a) Property			**$'000**
Heritage Buildings		100 - 150 years	5
Buildings - Complex	Structure	100 years	5
	Roof	60 years	5
	Fit Out	25 years	5
	Services	35 years	5
	Pools	20 - 50 years	5
Buildings - Simple		20-50 years	5
(b) Plant and Equipment			
Plant, machinery and equipment		3 - 15 years	1
Fixtures, fittings and furniture		10 years	1
Computers and telecommunications		3 - 10 years	1
(c) Infrastructure			
Formation		NA	5
Sealed Road Pavements	High Traffic	90 years	5
	Low Traffic	100 years	5
	Concrete	40 years	5
Unsealed Road Pavements	High Traffic	16 years	5
	Low Traffic	20 - 25 years	5
Seals	Spray Seal	10 - 18 years	5
	Asphalt	25 - 30 years	5
Road Shoulders	Unsealed Pavement	50 years	5
Road Kerb and Channel		70 years	5
Traffic Control Devices		20 - 70 years	5
Bridges and Major Culverts	Bridges	100-140 years	5
	Major Culverts	80 years	5
	Timber Bridges	40 years	5
Footpaths and Cycleways	Concrete	65 years	5
	Asphalt	30 years	5
	Brick	50 years	5
	Gravel	20 years	5
Drainage and Sewerage	Drainage	80 - 100 years	5
	Sewerage	80 years	5
	Septic Tanks	30 years	5
	Wetlands and WSUD	100 years	5
Recreation, leisure and community facilities		10 - 100 years	5
Parks, Open Spaces and streetscapes		10 - 50 years	5
Off Street car parks	Sealed Pavement	100 years	5
	Unsealed Pavement	16 - 20 years	5
	Seals	15 - 30 years	5
Waste Management		Units of Use	5
Leased Assets		2 - 45 years	NA

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Land under roads
Council recognises land under roads it controls at fair value.

Depreciation
Buildings, land improvements, plant and equipment, infrastructure, and other assets having limited useful lives are systematically depreciated over their useful lives to the Council in a manner which reflects consumption of the service potential embodied in those assets. Estimates of remaining useful lives and residual values are made on a regular basis with major asset classes reassessed annually. Depreciation rates and methods are reviewed annually.

Where assets have separate identifiable components that are subject to regular replacement, these components are assigned distinct useful lives and residual values and a separate depreciation rate is determined for each component.

Road earthworks are not depreciated on the basis that they are assessed as not having a limited useful life.
Straight line depreciation is charged based on the residual useful life as determined each year.
Depreciation periods used are listed above and are consistent with the prior year unless otherwise stated.

Repairs and maintenance
Where the repair relates to the replacement of a component of an asset and the cost exceeds the capitalisation threshold the cost is capitalised and depreciated. The carrying value of the replaced asset is expensed.

Valuation of land and buildings

Valuation of land was undertaken by a qualified independent valuer Opteon. The valuation of land is at fair value, being market value based on highest and best use permitted by relevant land planning provisions. Where land use is restricted through existing planning provisions the valuation is reduced to reflect this limitation. This adjustment is an unobservable input in the valuation. The adjustment has no impact on the comprehensive income statement.

Specialised land is valued at fair value using site values adjusted for englobo (undeveloped and/or unserviced) characteristics, access rights and private interests of other parties and entitlements of infrastructure assets and services. This adjustment is an unobservable input in the valuation. The adjustment has no impact on the comprehensive income statement.

Any significant movements in the unobservable inputs for land and land under roads will have a significant impact on the fair value of these assets.

Valuation of Building assets has been determined in accordance with Rawlinson's componentised costs and Council's Manager Assets and Engineering, Mr John Bertoldi B E (Civil) as at 31 March 2025.

Details of the Council's land and buildings and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 30 June 2025 are as follows:

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Date of Valuation	Type of Valuation
	$'000	$'000	$'000		
Land	-	7,590	-	31/03/2023	Independent
Specialised land	-	-	264,373	31/03/2023	Independent
Land Under Roads			109,795	30/06/2023	Independent
Buildings	-	9,775	109,899	31/03/2025	Independent
Total	-	17,365	484,067		

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Valuation of infrastructure

Valuation of Road and Offstreet Car Park assets has been determined in accordance with a valuation undertaken by independent valuer, Infrastructure Management Group Pty Ltd and Council's Manager Assets and Engineering, Mr John Bertoldi B E (Civil) as at 31 December 2022. Valuations of Bridge assets has been determined in accordance with a valuation undertaken by independent valuer Pitt and Sherry and Council's Manager Assets and Engineering, Mr John Bertoldi BE (Civil) as at 31 December 2022. Valuation of footpath assets has been determined in accordance with a valuation undertaken by Infrastructure Management Group as at 31 December 2023. Valuation of Recreation and Parks and Open Space has been determined in accordance with a valuation undertaken by Council's Manager Assets and Engineering, Mr John Bertoldi B E (Civil) as at 1 July 2023. Valuation of Drainage has been determined in accordance with a valuation undertaken by Design Flow Consulting Pty Ltd as at 31 December 2024.

The date and type of the current valuation is detailed in the following table.

The valuation is at fair value based on current replacement cost less accumulated depreciation as at the date of valuation.

Details of the Council's infrastructure and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 30 June 2025 are as follows:

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Date of Valuation	Type of Valuation
	$'000	$'000	$'000		
Roads	-	-	498,386	31/12/2022	Independent
Bridges	-	-	5,952	31/12/2022	Independent
Footpaths and cycleways	-	-	40,126	31/12/2023	Independent
Drainage and sewerage	-	-	135,725	31/12/2024	Independent
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	-	-	29,264	1/07/2023	Independent
Parks, open space and streetscapes	-	-	20,823	1/07/2023	Independent
Off street car parks	-	-	13,082	31/12/2022	Independent
Waste management	-	-	3,073	30/06/2023	Independent
Total	-	-	746,431		

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Description of significant unobservable inputs into level 3 valuations

Specialised land and land under roads is valued using a market based direct comparison technique. Significant unobservable inputs include the extent and impact of restriction of use and the market cost of land per square metre. The extent and impact of restrictions on use varies and results in a reduction to surrounding land values between 0% and 95%. The market value of land varies significantly depending on the location of the land and the current market conditions. Currently land values range between $0.62 and $2,915.25 per square metre.

Specialised buildings are valued using a current replacement cost technique. Significant unobservable inputs include the current replacement cost and remaining useful lives of buildings. Current replacement costs are calculated on a square metre basis and ranges from $381.54 to $7,777.00 per square metre. The remaining useful lives of buildings are determined on the basis of the current condition of buildings and vary from 0 years to 100 years. Replacement cost is sensitive to changes in market conditions, with any increase or decrease in cost flowing through to the valuation. Useful lives of buildings are sensitive to changes in expectations or requirements that could either shorten or extend the useful lives of buildings.

Infrastructure assets are valued based on the current replacement cost. Significant unobservable inputs include the current replacement cost and remaining useful lives of infrastructure. The remaining useful lives of infrastructure assets are determined on the basis of the current condition of the asset and vary from 0 years to 150 years. Replacement cost is sensitive to changes in market conditions, with any increase or decrease in cost flowing through to the valuation. Useful lives of infrastructure are sensitive to changes in use, expectations or requirements that could either shorten or extend the useful lives of infrastructure assets.

	2025	2024
Reconciliation of specialised land	**$'000**	**$'000**
Parks and reserves	223,599	219,834
Public use	36,963	36,963
Waste	1,009	1,009
Car Parks	2,802	2,802
Total specialised land	**264,373**	**260,608**

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

6.2 Investments in associates	**2025 $'000**	**2024 $'000**
(a) Investments in associates		
Investments in associates accounted for by the equity method are:		
- Geelong Regional Library Corporation	372	345

Geelong Regional Library Corporation
Background
The Geelong Regional Library Corporation (GRLC) was formed under the provisions of sections 196 and 197 of the *Local Government Act 1989* on 4 March 1997 to provide library services within the local government areas of: Borough of Queenscliffe, City of Greater Geelong, Golden Plains Shire, Colac Otway Shire and Surf Coast Shire. Council holds 2.68% (2024 2.87%) of equity in the corporation. Council has one director on the Board of seven. Council has the ability to influence rather than control its operations.

Fair value of Council's investment in Geelong Regional Library Corporation	**372**	**345**
Council's share of accumulated surplus		
Council's share of accumulated surplus at the start of the year	345	276
Council's share of accumulated surplus for the year	27	69
Council's share of accumulated surplus at the end of year	**372**	**345**
Movement in carrying value of specific investment		
Carrying value of investment at start of year	345	276
Share of accumulated surplus for the year	27	69
Carrying value of investment at end of year	**372**	**345**

Associates are all entities over which Council has significant influence but not control or joint control. Investments in associates are accounted for using the equity method of accounting, after initially being recognised at cost.

(b) Community Asset Committees
All entities controlled by Council that have material revenues, expenses, assets or liabilities, such as community asset committees, have been included in this financial report. Any transactions between these entities and Council have been eliminated in full. The following Community Asset Committees are not included in this financial report as their aggregate income is immaterial and they prepare their own financial reports separately:

Deans Marsh Community Hall and Memorial Park
Stribling Reserve
Anderson Roadknight Reserve
Eastern Reserve
Modewarre Reserve
Connewarre Reserve
Anglesea Bike Park

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Note 7 People and relationships
7.1 Council and key management remuneration

(a) Related parties

Parent entity
Surf Coast Shire Council is the parent entity.

Associates
Investments in associates are detailed in Note 6.2.

(b) Key management personnel
Key management personnel (KMP) are those people with the authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of Surf Coast Shire. The Councillors, Chief Executive Officer, General Managers and Executive Manager are deemed KMP.

Councillors	Councillor Mike Bodsworth - Deputy Mayor 1 Jul 24 to 26 Oct 24 and Mayor 11 Nov 24 to 30 Jun 25 Councillor Libby Stapleton - Councillor 1 Jul 24 to 26 Oct 24 and Deputy Mayor 11 Nov 24 to 30 Jun Councillor Liz Pattison - Mayor 1 Jul 24 to 26 Oct 24 and Councillor 11 Nov 24 to 30 Jun 25 Councillor Gary Allen (1 Jul 24 to 26 Oct 24) Councillor Paul Barker (1 Jul 24 to 26 Oct 24 and 11 Nov 24 to 30 Jun 25) Councillor Rebecca Bourke (11 Nov 24 to 30 Jun 25) Councillor Kate Gazzard (1 Jul 24 to 26 Oct 24) Councillor Joel Grist (11 Nov 24 to 30 Jun 25) Councillor Rose Hodge (1 Jul 24 to 26 Oct 24) Councillor Tony Phelps (11 Nov 24 to 30 Jun 25) Councillor Adrian Schonfelder (1 Jul 24 to 26 Oct 24 and 11 Nov 24 to 30 Jun 25) Councillor Leon Walker (11 Nov 24 to 30 Jun 25) Councillor Heather Wellington (1 Jul 24 to 26 Oct 24)
Key management personnel	Chief Executive Officer - Robyn Seymour General Manager Community Life - Damian Waight General Manager Placemaking & Environment - Chris Pike (1 Jul 24 to 15 Jun 25) and Gabby Spiller (16 Jun 25 to 30 Jun 25) General Manager Strategy & Effectiveness - Gail Gatt (1 Jul 24 to 15 Jun 25) and Chris Pike (16 Jun 25 to 30 Jun 25) Executive Manager Strategic Projects and Partnerships - Darryn Chiller

	2025 No.	2024 No.
Total number of Councillors	13	9
Total of Chief Executive Officer and other key management personnel	5	5
Total number of key management personnel	18	14

(c) Remuneration of key management personnel
Remuneration comprises employee benefits including all forms of consideration paid, payable or provided by Council, or on behalf of the Council, in exchange for services rendered. Remuneration of key management personnel and other senior staff is disclosed in the following categories.

Short-term employee benefits include amounts such as wages, salaries, annual leave or sick leave that are usually paid or payable on a regular basis, as well as non-monetary benefits such as allowances and free or subsidised goods or services.

Other long-term employee benefits include long service leave, other long service benefits or deferred compensation.

Post-employment benefits include pensions, and other retirement benefits paid or payable on a discrete basis when employment has ceased.

	2025 $'000	2024 $'000
Total remuneration of key management personnel was as follows:		
Short-term benefits	1,600	1,545
Long-term benefits	30	29
Post-employment benefits	139	127
Total	**1,769**	**1,701**

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

The numbers of key management personnel whose total remuneration from Council and any related entities, fall within the following bands:

	2025 No.	2024 No.
$10,000 - $19,999	4	-
$20,000 - $29,999	5	1
$30,000 - $39,999	1	6
$40,000 - $49,999	1	-
$50,000 - $59,999	-	1
$60,000 - $69,999	1	-
$90,000 - $99,999	1	-
$110,000 - $119,999	-	1
$160,000 - $169,999	-	1
$180,000 - $189,999	1	-
$240,000 - $249,999	-	1
$250,000 - $259,999	1	1
$260,000 - $269,999	-	1
$270,000 - $279,999	2	-
$370,000 - $379,999	-	1
$380,000 - $389,999	1	-
	18	**14**

(d) Remuneration of other senior staff

Other senior staff are officers of Council, other than Key Management Personnel, whose total remuneration exceeds $170,000 ($170,000 2024) and who report directly to a member of the KMP.

	2025 $'000	2024 $'000
Total remuneration of other senior staff was as follows:		
Short-term benefits	2,245	2,050
Post-employment benefits	258	226
Long-term benefits	56	51
Total	**2,559**	**2,327**

The number of other senior staff are shown below in their relevant income bands:

Income Range:	2025 No.	2024 No.
$170,000 - $179,999	7	8
$180,000 - $189,999	4	4
$190,000 - $199,999	3	1
	14	**13**

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

7.2 Related party disclosure	**2025 $'000**	**2024 $'000**
(a) Transactions with related parties		
During the period Council entered into the following arms length transactions with related parties:		
Contributions are paid by the Surf Coast Shire Council to the Geelong Regional Library Corporation. Please refer to details in Note 6.2	910	840
Contributions paid to G21 - Geelong Region Alliance Ltd	76	76
Contributions paid to Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd	176	163
Contributions paid to Lorne Historical Society	-	56
Contributions paid to LGPro	5	22
Contributions paid to Torquay RSL	10	10
Contributions paid to Winchelsea Community House Inc	60	-
Advertising paid to The Winchelsea Star Organisation Inc	7	-
Fees for the use of Council facilities	3	4
Family member employed under normal employment conditions and terms	30	20

All of the above transactions were at arms length and in the normal course of Council business.

(b) Outstanding balances with related parties

There are no balances outstanding at the end of the reporting period in relation to transactions with related parties.

(c) Loans to/from related parties

There are no loans in existence at balance date that have been made, guaranteed or secured by the Council to a related party.

(d) Commitments to/from related parties

There are no commitments in existence at balance date that have been made, guaranteed or secured by the council to a related party.

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Note 8 Managing uncertainties

8.1 Contingent assets and liabilities

Contingent assets and liabilities are not recognised in the balance sheet, but are disclosed and if quantifiable, are measured at nominal value. Contingent assets and liabilities are presented inclusive of GST receivable or payable, respectively.

(a) Contingent assets

Contingent assets are possible assets that arise from past events, whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council. At balance date the Council was impacted by two significant storms in August 2024 and February 2025. These storms led to clean-up and recovery activities costing council $151,000. Council has lodged claims with the Victorian State Government for assessment in line with the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements 2018. At 30 June 2025 two claims across the two events totalling $139,394 are undergoing formal assessment. The amount repayable will not be known until later in the 2025-26 financial year.

(b) Contingent liabilities

Contingent liabilities are:
- possible obligations that arise from past events, whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council; or
- present obligations that arise from past events but are not recognised because:
- it is not probable that an outflow of resources embodying economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation; or
- the amount of the obligation cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

Superannuation

Council has obligations under a defined benefit superannuation scheme that may result in the need to make additional contributions to the scheme. As a result of the volatility in financial markets the likelihood of making such contributions in future periods exists.

Landfill

Council operates a landfill at Anglesea. Council will have to carry out site rehabilitation works in the future. At balance date Council provided a Bank Guarantee to State of Victoria - Environment Protection Authority. The guarantee provides financial assurance up to $545,000 for remedial action as defined in section 3.1 EPA Publication 777 Determination of financial assurance for Landfills, September 2001.

MAV Liability Mutual Insurance Scheme

Council is a participant of the MAV Liability Mutual Insurance (LMI) Scheme. The LMI scheme provides public liability and professional indemnity insurance cover. The LMI scheme states that each participant will remain liable to make further contributions to the scheme in respect of any insurance year in which it was a participant to the extent of its participant's share of any shortfall in the provision set aside in respect of that insurance year, and such liability will continue whether or not the participant remains a participant in future insurance years.

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

(c) Guarantees to other entities

Council has provided contract performance guarantees. The details and extent of Council exposure at the reporting date are as follows:

	2025 $'000	2024 $'000
Contract Performance:		
Department of Minerals and Energy	20	20
Department of Energy and Resources	50	50
	70	**70**

The amount disclosed for financial guarantees in this note is the nominal amount of the underlying loan that is guaranteed by the Council, not the fair value of the financial guarantee.

Financial guarantee contracts are not recognised as a liability in the balance sheet unless the lender has exercised their right to call on the guarantee or Council has other reasons to believe that it is probable that the right will be exercised.

8.2 Change in accounting standards

Certain new Australian Accounting Standards and interpretations have been published that are not mandatory for the reporting year ending 30 June 2025. Council assesses the impact of these new standards. As at 30 June 2025 there were no new accounting standards or interpretations issued by the AASB which are applicable for the reporting year ending 30 June 2025 that are expected to impact Council.
In September 2024 the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) issued two Australian Sustainability Reporting Standards (ASRS). This followed Commonwealth legislation establishing Australia's sustainability reporting framework. Relevant entities will be required to undertake mandatory reporting of climate-related disclosures in future financial years. Public sector application issues remain under consideration and Council will continue to monitor developments and potential implications for future financial years.

8.3 Financial instruments

(a) Objectives and policies

The Council's principal financial instruments comprise cash assets, term deposits, receivables (excluding statutory receivables), payables (excluding statutory payables) and bank borrowings. Details of the material accounting policy information and methods adopted, including the criteria for recognition, the basis of measurement and the basis on which income and expenses are recognised, in respect of each class of financial asset, financial liability and equity instrument is disclosed in the notes of the financial statements. Risk management is carried out by senior management under policies approved by the Council. These policies include identification and analysis of the risk exposure to Council and appropriate procedures, controls and risk minimisation.

(b) Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of Council's financial instruments will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. The Council's exposure to market risk is primarily through interest rate risk with only insignificant exposure to other price risks and no exposure to foreign currency risk.

Interest rate risk

Interest rate risk refers to the risk that the value of a financial instrument or cash flows associated with the instrument will fluctuate due to changes in market interest rates. Council does not hold any interest bearing financial instruments that are measured at fair value, and therefore has no exposure to fair value interest rate risk.

Investment of surplus funds is made with approved financial institutions under the *Local Government Act 2020* . Council manages interest rate risk by adopting an investment policy that ensures:

- diversification of investment product;
- monitoring of return on investment; and
- benchmarking of returns and comparison with budget.

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

There has been no significant change in the Council's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing interest rate risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period. Interest rate movements have not been sufficiently significant during the year to have an impact on Council's year end result.

(c) Credit risk

Credit risk is the risk that a contracting entity will not complete its obligations under a financial instrument and cause Council to make a financial loss. Council has exposure to credit risk on some financial assets included in the balance sheet. To help manage this risk:

- Council may require collateral where appropriate; and
- Council only invests surplus funds with financial institutions which have a recognised credit rating specified in Council's investment policy.

Receivables consist of a large number of customers, spread across the ratepayer, business and government sectors. Credit risk associated with Council's financial assets is minimal because the main class of debtors is secured by a charge over the rateable properties.

There are no material financial assets which are individually determined to be impaired. Council may also be subject to credit risk for transactions which are not included in the balance sheet, such as when Council provides a guarantee for another party. Details of our contingent liabilities are disclosed in Note 8.1(b).

The maximum exposure to credit risk at the reporting date to recognised financial assets is the carrying amount, net of any allowance for impairment of those assets, as disclosed in the balance sheet and notes to the financial statements. Council does not hold any collateral.

(d) Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk includes the risk that, as a result of Council's operational liquidity requirements it will not have sufficient funds to settle a transaction when required or will be forced to sell a financial asset at below value or may be unable to settle or recover a financial asset.
To help reduce these risks Council:

- has readily accessible standby facilities and other funding arrangements in place;
- has a liquidity portfolio structure that requires surplus funds to be invested within various bands of liquid instruments;
- monitors budget to actual performance on a regular basis; and
- sets limits on borrowings relating to the percentage of loans to rate revenue.

The Council's maximum exposure to liquidity risk is the carrying amounts of financial liabilities as disclosed on the face of the balance sheet and the amounts related to financial guarantees disclosed in Note 8.1(c), and is deemed insignificant based on prior periods' data and current assessment of risk.

There has been no significant change in Council's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing liquidity risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period.

With the exception of borrowings, all financial liabilities are expected to be settled within normal terms of trade. Details of the maturity profile for borrowings are disclosed at Note 5.4 Interest-bearing liabilities.

Unless otherwise stated, the carrying amounts of financial instruments reflect their fair value.

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

(e) Sensitivity disclosure analysis

Taking into account past performance, future expectations, economic forecasts, and management's knowledge and experience of the financial markets, Council believes the following movements are 'reasonably possible' over the next 12 months:

- A parallel shift of + 1.00% and - 1.00% in market interest rates (AUD) from year-end rates of 3.85%.

These movements will not have a material impact on the valuation of Council's financial assets and liabilities, nor will they have a material impact on the results of Council's operations.

8.4 Fair value measurement

Fair value hierarchy

Council's financial assets and liabilities are not valued in accordance with the fair value hierarchy, Council's financial assets and liabilities are measured at amortised cost.

Council measures certain assets and liabilities at fair value where required or permitted by Australian Accounting Standards. AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement* , aims to improve consistency and reduce complexity by providing a definition of fair value and a single source of fair value measurement and disclosure requirements for use across Australian Accounting Standards.

Council has considered the amendments to AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement* that apply for the 2024-25 financial year as a result of AASB 2022-10 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - *Fair Value Measurement of Non-Financial Assets of Not-for-Profit Public Sector Entities* . For assets, where Council adopts a current replacement cost approach to determine fair value, Council now considers the inclusion of site preparation costs, disruption costs and costs to restore another entity's assets in the underlying valuation. This has been progressively implemented over the previous revaluation cycle.

The AASB 13 amendments have not resulted in any material impacts to Council's financial statements.

All assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the financial statements are categorised within a fair value hierarchy, described as follows, based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole:

Level 1 — Quoted (unadjusted) market prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities

Level 2 — Valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is directly or indirectly observable; and

Level 3 — Valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is unobservable.

For the purpose of fair value disclosures, Council has determined classes of assets and liabilities on the basis of the nature, characteristics and risks of the asset or liability and the level of the fair value hierarchy as explained above. In addition, Council determines whether transfers have occurred between levels in the hierarchy by re-assessing categorisation (based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole) at the end of each reporting period.

Revaluation

Subsequent to the initial recognition of assets, non-current physical assets, other than plant and equipment, are measured at their fair value, being the price that would be received to sell an asset (or paid to transfer a liability) in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. (For plant and equipment carrying amount is considered to approximate fair value given short useful lives). At balance date, the Council reviewed the carrying value of the individual classes of assets measured at fair value to ensure that each asset materially approximated its fair value. Where the carrying value materially differed from the fair value at balance date, the class of asset was revalued.

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Fair value valuations are determined in accordance with a valuation hierarchy. Changes to the valuation hierarchy will only occur if an external change in the restrictions or limitations of use of an asset result in changes to the permissible or practical highest and best use of the asset. In addition, Council undertakes a formal revaluation of land, buildings, and infrastructure assets on a regular basis ranging from 1 to 3 years. The valuation is performed either by experienced council officers or independent experts. The following table sets out the frequency of revaluations by asset class.

Asset class	Revaluation frequency
Land	3 years
Buildings	3 years
Roads	3 years
Bridges	3 years
Footpaths and cycleways	3 years
Drainage and sewerage	3 years
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	3 years
Parks, open space and streetscapes	3 years
Off Street car parks	3 years
Waste management	3 years
Landfill airspace	1 year

Where the assets are revalued, the revaluation increases are credited directly to the asset revaluation reserve except to the extent that an increase reverses a prior year decrease for that class of asset that had been recognised as an expense in which case the increase is recognised as revenue up to the amount of the expense. Revaluation decreases are recognised as an expense except where prior increases are included in the asset revaluation reserve for that class of asset in which case the decrease is taken to the reserve to the extent of the remaining increases. Within the same class of assets, revaluation increases and decreases within the year are offset.

Impairment of assets
At each reporting date, Council reviews the carrying value of its assets to determine whether there is any indication that these assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs of disposal and value in use, is compared to the assets carrying value. Any excess of the assets carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the comprehensive income statement, unless the asset is carried at the revalued amount in which case, the impairment loss is recognised directly against the revaluation surplus in respect of the same class of asset to the extent that the impairment loss does not exceed the amount in the revaluation surplus for that same class of asset.

8.5 Events occurring after balance date
No matters have occurred after balance date that require disclosure in the financial report.

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Note 9 Other matters

9.1 Reserves **(a) Asset revaluation reserves**	**Balance at beginning of reporting period** **$'000**	**Increase (decrease)** **$'000**	**Balance at end of reporting period** **$'000**
2025			
Property			
Land	228,845	-	228,845
Land under roads	54,572	-	54,572
Buildings	57,911	4,666	62,577
	341,328	4,666	345,994
Furniture and equipment			
Furniture and equipment	32	-	32
	32	-	32
Infrastructure			
Roads	266,329	-	266,329
Bridges	5,057	-	5,057
Footpaths and cycleways	20,982	-	20,982
Drainage and sewerage	52,831	20,656	73,487
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	26,481	-	26,481
Parks, open space and streetscapes	12,029	-	12,029
Offstreet car parks	4,999	-	4,999
Waste	594	-	594
	389,302	20,656	409,958
Intangibles			
Waste Air Space	13,523	1,713	15,236
	13,523	1,713	15,236
Total asset revaluation reserves	**744,185**	**27,035**	**771,220**
2024			
Property			
Land	228,845	-	228,845
Land under roads	54,572	-	54,572
Buildings	40,740	17,171	57,911
	324,157	17,171	341,328
Furniture and equipment			
Furniture and equipment	32	-	32
	32	-	32
Infrastructure			
Roads	266,299	30	266,329
Bridges	5,057	-	5,057
Footpaths and cycleways	25,774	(4,792)	20,982
Drainage and sewerage	52,831	-	52,831
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	18,152	8,329	26,481
Parks, open space and streetscapes	2,238	9,791	12,029
Offstreet car parks	4,999	-	4,999
Waste	594	-	594
	375,944	13,358	389,302
Intangibles			
Waste Air Space	13,354	169	13,523
	13,354	169	13,523
Total asset revaluation reserves	**713,487**	**30,698**	**744,185**

The asset revaluation reserve is used to record the increased (net) value of Council's assets over time.

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	Balance at beginning of reporting period $'000	Transfer from accumulated surplus $'000	Transfer to accumulated surplus $'000	Balance at end of reporting period $'000
(b) Other reserves				
2025				
Open space	3,810	63	(500)	3,373
Main drainage	114	-	-	114
Developer contributions	1,118	-	(25)	1,093
Airey's Inlet aged care units	340	1	-	341
Waste	5,029	822	(27)	5,824
Gravel pits	1,431	-	-	1,431
Defined benefits superannuation	1,224	-	-	1,224
Carried forward capital works	66,252	34,863	(37,692)	63,423
Carried forward operational projects	2,371	2,511	(2,371)	2,511
Adopted strategy implementation	1,034	2,972	(63)	3,943
Asset renewal	(742)	11,789	(10,586)	461
Torquay Jan Juc Developer Contributions	3,866	3,970	(3,809)	4,027
Winchelsea infrastructure plan	1,810	293	(36)	2,067
Annual Leave Cash Reserve	156	-	-	156
Accumulated unallocated cash	9,086	4,179	(965)	12,300
Total other reserves	**96,899**	**61,463**	**(56,074)**	**102,288**
2024				
Open space	3,545	495	(230)	3,810
Main drainage	114	-	-	114
Developer contributions	785	959	(626)	1,118
Airey's Inlet aged care units	332	8	-	340
Waste	4,464	1,603	(1,038)	5,029
Gravel pits	1,431	-	-	1,431
Defined benefits superannuation	1,224	-	-	1,224
Carried forward capital works	55,150	41,311	(30,209)	66,252
Carried forward operational projects	3,165	2,368	(3,162)	2,371
Adopted strategy implementation	6,562	14	(5,542)	1,034
Asset renewal	1,440	13,141	(15,323)	(742)
Torquay Jan Juc Developer Contributions	8,034	4,365	(8,533)	3,866
Winchelsea infrastructure plan	1,304	561	(55)	1,810
Annual Leave Cash Reserve	326	-	(170)	156
Accumulated unallocated cash	7,157	3,264	(1,335)	9,086
Total other reserves	**95,033**	**68,089**	**(66,223)**	**96,899**

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Councils allocated reserves contain funds that have been resolved by Council to be used in a particular manner or an obligation by either an Act or contractual agreement that limits the use of the funds.

Reserve	Purpose
Open Space	To provide improved recreational facilities for the Surf Coast Shire, both of an active and passive nature. Council has an obligation to hold these funds under the *Subdivision Act 1988* .
Main drainage	To hold developer contributions for main drainage works at a later point than the initial development. They are tied to works within the catchment area from which funds were derived. Council has an obligation to hold these funds under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987.*
Developer contributions	To hold funds contributed by developers for specific works associated with subdivisions. Funds are contributed for infrastructure (footpaths, fencing, streetscapes etc.) where it is deemed that these works should occur at a later point than the initial development. Funds collected are specifically identified for projects via s173 agreement.
Airey's Inlet aged care units	The funding source for the maintenance of social housing for disadvantaged low income earners. Four social housing units currently exist in Aireys Inlet. Council has an obligation to hold these funds under the *Housing Act 1983* .
Waste	To ensure that the full cost of the waste function is met by the waste charges (garbage charge and fee income from landfill) and that surpluses and deficits on an annual basis can be covered without any adverse impact on the balance of Council's budget.
Gravel pits	The purpose of this reserve is to provide funding for rehabilitation of Council's gravel pits.
Defined benefits superannuation	To reserve funds for future Defined Benefits Superannuation funding calls arising from shortfalls in the Local Government Defined Superannuation Benefits Fund.
Carried forward capital works	To act as a mechanism to carry over funding for capital works that are still in progress at year end.
Carried forward operational projects	To act as a mechanism to carry over funding for new initiatives that are still in progress at year end.
Adopted strategy implementation	To provide funding for projects in line with approved strategies adopted by Council and is funded from operations or grants received.
Asset renewal	To provide funding based on the Asset Renewal Funding Strategy.
Torquay Jan Juc Developer Contributions	All funds in relation to the Torquay/Jan Juc Developer Plan, including Council contributions.
Winchelsea infrastructure plan	All funds in relation to the Winchelsea infrastructure plan, including Council contributions.
Annual Leave Cash	To provide a cash reserve for material amounts of employee annual leave accrued during the financial year to be taken in a future period.
Accumulated unallocated cash	To separately identify Council's cash that has not been allocated and is available to allocate.

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

9.2 Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities to surplus/(deficit)	**2025 $'000**	**2024 $'000**
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	33,276	(18,453)
Non-cash adjustments:		
Depreciation	22,588	21,932
Amortisation - intangibles	2,639	6,494
Amortisation - right of use	439	352
Net (gain)/loss on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(230)	25,441
Assets written-off / impaired	1,721	3,630
Found Assets	(1,008)	(1,078)
Borrowing costs	233	283
Finance costs - leases	83	23
Contributions - Non-monetary assets	(10,032)	(18,162)
Share of net losses of Geelong Regional Library Corporation	(27)	(69)
Change in assets and liabilities:		
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	747	(3,296)
Increase in prepayments	(138)	(40)
Decrease in accrued income	741	158
(Increase)/decrease in inventories	(5)	1
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other payables	8,093	(219)
Increase in contract and other liabilities	1,205	3,639
Decrease in provisions	(995)	(1,712)
Decrease in trust funds and deposits	(442)	(1,788)
Net cash provided by operating activities	**58,888**	**17,136**

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

10 Change in accounting policy

There have been no changes to accounting policies in the 2024-25 year.

Surf Coast Shire Council

Performance Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2025

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Certification of the Performance Statement

In my opinion, the accompanying performance statement has been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.*

_____
Gabrielle Spiller CPA
Principal Accounting Officer
Dated: 23 September 2025

In our opinion, the accompanying performance statement of the Surf Coast Shire Council for the year ended 30 June 2025 presents fairly the results of council's performance in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.
The performance statement contains the relevant performance indicators, measures and results in relation to service performance, financial performance and sustainable capacity.
At the date of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances that would render any particulars in the performance statement to be misleading or inaccurate.
We have been authorised by the council and by the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* to certify this performance statement in its final form.

_____
Cr Mike Bodsworth
Mayor
Dated: *23 September 2025*

_____
Cr Libby Stapleton
Deputy Mayor
Dated: 23 *September 2025*

_____
Robyn Seymour
Chief Executive Officer
Dated: *23 September 2025*

Victorian Auditor – General's Office Audit Report

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Description of municipality

Surf Coast Shire is located in south-western Victoria, 120km from Melbourne, 21km south of Geelong, covers 1,560 square kilometres and includes the official start of the iconic Great Ocean Road.

It is home to eleven distinct townships; Aireys Inlet, Anglesea, Bellbrae, Deans Marsh, Fairhaven, Jan Juc, Lorne, Moriac, Freshwater Creek, Torquay and Winchelsea.

Each of these townships has a keen sense of community, a unique identity and a strong desire to protect and nurture the environment.

The Surf Coast is a major lifestyle and visitor destination that is among the fastest growing regional municipalities in Victoria and has undergone significant change over the past 15 years.

The secret to the Surf Coast's prosperity is lifestyle and connection to our beautiful, natural environment.

Section 2. Service performance indicators

For the year ended 30 June 2025

	Results					Comments
	2022	2023	2024	2025		
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target as per budget	Actual	
Aquatic Facilities ***Utilisation*** *Utilisation of aquatic facilities* [Number of visits to aquatic facilities / Municipal population]	0.21	0.17	0.00	N/A	0.08	The pool was open for a limited 6-week season following construction being completed. Despite the short season, the community response was encouraging. Free entry during the first week created a welcoming atmosphere and gave many residents the chance to visit and explore the new space.
Animal Management ***Health and safety*** *Animal management prosecutions* [Number of successful animal management prosecutions / Number of animal management prosecutions] x 100	0%	0%	0%	N/A	100%	Surf Coast Shire Council has achieved a 100% success rate in animal related prosecutions within the Magistrates' Court of Victoria. Council prosecuted two separate individuals resulting in findings of guilt for a total of 6 offences under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Vic).*

	Results					Comments
	2022	2023	2024	2025		
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target as per budget	Actual	
Food Safety ***Health and safety*** *Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications* *[Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises followed up / Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises] x100*	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	N/A	100.00%	Surf Coast Shire Council Environmental Health Officers completed 41 food safety assessments that resulted in either a critical or major non-compliance result. 100% of these non-compliances were followed up, Council continues to have a strong track record in this area. Following up non-compliances is a high priority for officers, to ensure that the risk to public health is adequately controlled.
Governance ***Consultation and engagement*** *Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement* *[community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on community consultation and engagement.]*	54	52	52	55	54	Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement has increased from 52 to 54 in the latest Community Satisfaction Survey. This result places Surf Coast Shire above both the state average of 50 and the large rural councils average of 48. The results are from a perception-based survey so not all respondents will have experienced engagement or consultation in the period.

	Results					
	2022	2023	2024	2025		Comments
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target as per budget	Actual	
Libraries ***Participation*** *Library membership* *[Number of registered library members / Population] x100*	N/A	N/A	29.05%	N/A	30.24%	Surf Coast Shire Council services are reporting a 7% increase in the number of members who have registered activity when compared to the same period last year.
Maternal and Child Health (MCH) ***Participation*** *Participation in the MCH service* *[Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of children enrolled in the MCH service] x100*	76.13%	75.31%	72.78%	N/A	73.16%	Strategies to increase engagement rates for key age groups (1.5 years to 3.5 years) have been successful in 2024-25. Overall engagement is steady. Engagement figures can be impacted by movement of families in and out of the Shire, where families elect not to engage with MCH services as their children grow older.
Participation *Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children* *[Number of Aboriginal children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of Aboriginal children enrolled in the MCH service] x100*	82.93%	77.08%	84.09%	N/A	91.94%	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family participation increased. Families are offered to engage with Surf Coast Shire MCH service, the local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation, or both.

	Results					Comments
	2022	2023	2024	2025		
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target as per budget	Actual	
Roads						
Condition						
Sealed local roads below the intervention level *(percentage of sealed local roads that are below the renewal intervention level set by Council and not requiring renewal)*	96.39%	97.59%	97.79%	97.50%	97.78%	Surf Coast Shire Council engages an external specialised road auditor every three years to undertake a whole network assessment, utilising a condition assessment procedure that is based on industry guidelines to ensure a repeatable process so that previous data is able to be compared. The last audit was undertaken in 2022-23 with the next assessment due to occur in 2025-26. The condition data from the asset database, along with updates based on completed capital works, are inputs into the strategic asset modelling undertaken annually on the Council's asset base. The outputs from the annual modelling are the framework of the renewal program that is developed and delivered each year as part of the wider capital works program.

	Results					
	2022	2023	2024	2025		Comments
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target as per budget	Actual	
Statutory Planning ***Service standard*** *Planning applications decided within required time frames* *[(Number of regular planning application decisions made within 60 days) + (Number of VicSmart planning application decisions made within 10 days) / Number of planning application decisions made] x100*	78.21%	69.09%	68.73%	75.00%	74.84%	The percentage of planning applications determined within required timeframes increased from 68.7% to 74.8%, bringing us closer to our 75% target. This improvement reflects the combined effects of backlog reduction, streamlined processing procedures, and a shift toward simpler application types—factors that have supported more efficient assessment and decision-making and faster turnaround times overall.
Waste Management ***Waste diversion*** *Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill* *[Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins] x100*	71.12%	73.57%	71.22%	75.00%	69.67%	Recyclables collected via the kerbside waste system have reduced due to the introduction of the Victorian Container Deposit Scheme. Reduced Food Organics and Garden Organics are due to drier climate for 2024-25.

Section 3. Financial performance indicators

For the year ended 30 June 2025

Dimension/indicator/ measure	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Target as per budget	2025 Actual	2026 Forecast	2027 Forecast	2028 Forecast	2029 Forecast	Material Variations and Comments
Efficiency										
Expenditure level										
Expenses per property assessment *[Total expenses / Number of property assessments]*	$4,123.90	$4,230.23	$5,556.71	$4,296.00	$4,368.10	$4,590.29	$4,554.01	$4,845.30	$4,547.97	During the 2024 financial year Surf Coast Shire transferred assets totalling $24.25 million to Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority under the *Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act 2020*. As this transfer is recognised as an expense it increased the expenses per property assessment compared to the target budget. In 2027 the Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre will be operational increasing depreciation and operating expenses. The spike in the 2028 year is in relation to higher amortisation expense in relation to the Anglesea Landfill airspace.

Dimension/indicator/ measure	2022	2023	2024	2025		2026	2027	2028	2029	Material Variations and Comments
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target as per budget	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	
Revenue level *Average rate per property assessment* *[Sum of all general rates and municipal charges / Number of property assessments]*	$2,115.83	$2,169.27	$2,253.27	N/A	$2,314.47	$2,383.76	$2,422.21	$2,478.00	$2,545.39	The forecast increases in the average rate per property assessment are in relation to the budgeted rate cap and supplementary rates in relation to new buildings.
Liquidity ***Working capital*** *Current assets compared to current liabilities* *[Current assets / Current liabilities] x100*	227.40%	219.18%	207.07%	219.80%	194.45%	366.22%	296.85%	281.88%	229.78%	The 2025 actual result is lower than the target budget because of higher unearned revenue and payables, and lower capital works expenditure than budgeted. The 2026 ratio does not have the effects of unearned revenue as the prior years do. The decrease in the 2027 ratio is due to capital works expenditure being funded from reserves. The decrease in the 2029 ratio is in relation to the transfer of provisions for the landfill rehabilitation in preparation for rehabilitation works in 2030.

Dimension/indicator/ measure	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Target as per budget	2025 Actual	2026 Forecast	2027 Forecast	2028 Forecast	2029 Forecast	Material Variations and Comments
Unrestricted cash										
Unrestricted cash compared to current liabilities *[Unrestricted cash / Current liabilities] x100*	-68.86%	-170.69%	-196.05%	N/A	-160.48%	-187.02%	-87.54%	-65.49%	-54.87%	At 30 June 2025 Councils creditors are $8 million higher than 2024 due to amounts owed but not yet paid for the construction of the Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre. This ratio excludes other financial assets - term deposits with maturities from 3 months to 12 months, if these were included the ratio would be mostly positive. Council manages its cash flow to ensure sufficient cash to pay liabilities when due.
Obligations										
Loans and borrowings										
Loans and borrowings compared to rates *[Interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x100*	28.50%	24.09%	19.51%	N/A	15.60%	11.85%	16.67%	12.90%	9.86%	The decrease in the ratios from 2022 to 2026 is in line with Council's loan repayment schedules. The increase in the 2027 ratio is in relation to the forecast borrowings of $6 million to partially fund the construction of the Wurdi Baierr Aquatic and Recreation Centre.

Dimension/indicator/ measure	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Target as per budget	2025 Actual	2026 Forecast	2027 Forecast	2028 Forecast	2029 Forecast	Material Variations and Comments
Loans and borrowings repayments compared to rates *[Interest and principal repayments on interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x100*	4.26%	4.07%	3.82%	N/A	3.64%	3.46%	3.62%	3.75%	3.10%	The increase in the 2028 ratio is in relation to the forecast repayments in relation to borrowings of $6 million to partially fund the construction of the Wurdi Baierr Aquatic and Recreation Centre.
Indebtedness *Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue* *[Non-current liabilities / Own source revenue] x100*	44.86%	44.15%	35.50%	N/A	31.62%	30.18%	32.78%	31.47%	23.02%	The reduction in the 2025 ratio is in relation to Council's reducing loans portfolio and the adjustment decreasing the landfill provision. Councils anticipated borrowings will increase this ratio in the 2027 year.
Asset renewal and upgrade *Asset renewal and upgrade compared to depreciation* *[Asset renewal and asset upgrade expense / Asset depreciation] x100*	67.31%	66.68%	74.49%	121.70%	93.65%	81.13%	76.29%	58.73%	65.01%	The 2025 actual ratio is lower than the target ratio due to capital works being carried forward and higher depreciation due to revaluations, which is also impacting the future year ratios in a downward trend.

Dimension/indicator/ measure	2022	2023	2024	2025		2026	2027	2028	2029	Material Variations and Comments
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target as per budget	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	
Operating position ***Adjusted underlying result*** *Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit)* *[Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit)/ Adjusted underlying revenue] x100*	-14.84%	-12.35%	-48.90%	N/A	-5.00%	-16.27%	-11.30%	-14.89%	-7.04%	The spike in the 2024 financial year is due to the transfer of assets totalling $24.25 million to Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority under the *Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act 2020*. The underlying deficit demonstrates that Council cannot renew its assets to the level of depreciation expense.
Stability ***Rates concentration*** *Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue* *[Rate revenue / Adjusted underlying revenue] x100*	69.31%	68.19%	72.00%	72.60%	66.23%	71.94%	70.77%	70.42%	71.87%	The 2025 actual ratio is lower than the target because of the increase in recurrent grants of $9.5 million mainly due to receiving the 2025 and 2026 financial assistance grant in 2025 and its 2024 financial assistance grant in 2023.

Dimension/indicator/ measure	2022	2023	2024	2025		2026	2027	2028	2029	Material Variations and Comments
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target as per budget	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	
Rates effort *Rates compared to property values* *[Rate revenue / Capital improved value of rateable properties in the municipality] x100*	0.19%	0.20%	0.18%	N/A	0.19%	0.20%	0.20%	0.20%	0.20%	This ratio is expected to remain steady over time.

Section 4. Sustainable capacity indicators

For the year ended 30 June 2025

	Results				
Indicator / measure [formula]	2022	2023	2024	2025	Comments
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	
Population *Expenses per head of municipal population* *[Total expenses / Municipal population]*	$2,703.76	$2,605.96	$3,438.66	$2,635.54	During the 2024 financial year Surf Coast Shire transferred assets totalling $24.25 million to Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority under the *Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act 2020.* As this transfer is recognised as an expense it increased the average expense per head of population substantially.
Infrastructure per head of municipal population *[Value of infrastructure / Municipal population]*	$17,690.86	$21,109.76	$21,901.04	$22,484.37	The increase in the 2023 ratio relates to the revaluation increases of Council's infrastructure assets of $172 million.

Results

Indicator / measure [formula]	2022	2023	2024	2025	Comments
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	
Population density per length of road *[Municipal population / Kilometres of local roads]*	33.49	35.76	35.66	36.83	Surf Coast Shire's population is growing at a higher rate than Council's road length as new developments have higher than Council's average housing density.
Own-source revenue *Own-source revenue per head of municipal population* *[Own-source revenue / Municipal population]*	$1,944.35	$1,915.80	$2,110.89	$2,077.21	Council's increase in population of 3.3% exceeds the increase in Council's own-source revenue of 1.9%. In 2024 Council increased its other income by $4.5 million from prior year, this is a result of higher interest on investments, landfill rehabilitation adjustment and found assets.
Recurrent grants *Recurrent grants per head of municipal population* *[Recurrent grants / Municipal population]*	$282.71	$292.00	$124.00	$382.44	In 2025 Council's operating recurrent grants increased by $9.5 million. This is mainly due to early receipt of 50% of the 2025-26 Financial Assistance Grant in 2024-25 and 100% of the 2023-24 grant in 2023. The 2024 ratio does not include $1.3 million of new kindergarten funding as it was classified as non-recurrent at the time.

	Results				
Indicator / measure [formula]	2022	2023	2024	2025	Comments
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	
Disadvantage *Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage* *[Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage by decile]*	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	
Workforce turnover *Percentage of staff turnover* [Number of permanent staff resignations and terminations / Average number of permanent staff for the financial year] x100	17.7%	13.3%	16.7%	11.4%	The average tenure of departures in 2025 is 6.5 years and 7.5 years for 2024.

Section 5. Notes to the accounts

5.1. Basis of preparation

Council is required to prepare and include a performance statement within its annual report. The performance statement includes the results of the prescribed, service performance, financial performance and sustainable capacity indicators and measures together with a description of the municipal district, an explanation of material variations in the results and notes to the accounts. This statement has been prepared to meet the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.

Where applicable the results in the performance statement have been prepared on accounting bases consistent with those reported in the Financial Statements. The other results are based on information drawn from council information systems or from third parties (e.g., Australian Bureau of Statistics or the Council's satisfaction survey provider).

The performance statement presents the actual results for the current year and the previous three years, along with the current year's target, if mandated by *the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*. Additionally, for the prescribed financial performance indicators and measures, the performance statement includes the target budget for the current year and the results forecast for the period 2025-26 to 2028-29 by the council's financial plan.

The *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* requires explanation of any material variations in the results contained in the performance statement. Council has adopted materiality thresholds relevant to each indicator and measure and explanations have not been provided for variations below the materiality thresholds unless the variance is considered to be material because of its nature.

5.2. Definitions

Key term	Definition
Aboriginal children	means a child who is an Aboriginal person
Aboriginal person	has the same meaning as in the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006
adjusted underlying revenue	means total income other than: • non-recurrent grants used to fund capital expenditure; and • non-monetary asset contributions; and • contributions to fund capital expenditure from sources other than those referred to above
adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit)	means adjusted underlying revenue less total expenditure
annual report	means an annual report prepared by a council under section 98 of the Act
asset renewal expenditure	means expenditure on an existing asset or on replacing an existing asset that returns the service capability of the asset to its original capability
asset upgrade expenditure	means expenditure that— (a) enhances an existing asset to provide a higher level of service; or (b) extends the life of the asset beyond its original life
critical non-compliance outcome notification	means a notification received by council under section 19N(3) or (4) of the *Food Act 1984* , or advice given to council by an authorized officer under that Act, of a deficiency that poses an immediate serious threat to public health
current assets	has the same meaning as in the Australian Accounting Standards
current liabilities	has the same meaning as in the Australian Accounting Standards
food premises	has the same meaning as in the *Food Act 1984*
intervention level	means the level set for the condition of a road beyond which a council will not allow the road to deteriorate and will need to intervene
local road	means a sealed or unsealed road for which the council is the responsible road authority under the *Road Management Act 2004*
major non-compliance outcome notification	means a notification received by a council under section 19N(3) or (4) of the *Food Act 1984*, or advice given to council by an authorized officer under that Act, of a deficiency that does not pose an immediate serious threat to public health but may do so if no remedial action is taken
MCH	means the Maternal and Child Health Service provided by a council to support the health and development of children within the municipality from birth until school age
non-current liabilities	means all liabilities other than current liabilities
own-source revenue	means adjusted underlying revenue other than revenue that is not under the control of council (including government grants)
population	means the resident population estimated by council

rate revenue	means revenue from general rates, municipal charges, service rates and service charges
relative socio-economic disadvantage	in relation to a municipal district, means the relative socio-economic disadvantage, expressed as a decile for the relevant financial year, of the area in which the municipal district is located according to the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage of SEIFA
restricted cash	means cash, cash equivalents and financial assets, within the meaning of the Australian Accounting Standards, not available for use other than for a purpose for which it is restricted, and includes cash to be used to fund capital works expenditure from the previous financial year
SEIFA	means the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas published from time to time by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on its Internet site
unrestricted cash	means all cash and cash equivalents other than restricted cash

4.8 T25-002 - Road Safety Improvements - Torquay North & Fischer Street

Council Plan	**Theme Two - Healthy Connected Community** Strategy 5 - Make it easier for people to move around our towns and in nature without relying on cars
Author's Title:	Senior Contract Manager
General Manager:	Chris Pike, General Manager Placemaking and Environment
Division:	Strategy and Effectiveness
Department:	Strategy and Program Delivery
Attachments:	Nil

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Council's award of contract T25-002 Road Safety Improvements, Torquay North and Fischer Street.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Awards contract T25-002 Road Safety Improvements, Torquay North and Fischer Street to [redacted] for the lump sum amount of [redacted] (ex-GST).
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to execute contract documents on behalf of Council.

Council Resolution

Moved Cr Schonfelder, Seconded Cr Pattison
Recommendation

That Council:

1. Awards contract T25-002 Road Safety Improvements, Torquay North and Fischer Street to Pearson Plant Pty Ltd (ABN 19 645 885 427) for the lump sum amount of $1,281,694.46 (ex-GST).
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to execute contract documents on behalf of Council.

CARRIED 8|1

For	Against	Abstained
Cr Bodsworth Cr Bourke Cr Grist Cr Pattison Cr Phelps Cr Schonfelder Cr Stapleton Cr Walker	Cr Barker	Nil

Outcome

2. The award of this contract will improve pedestrian and cyclist safety in Torquay's local roads meeting objectives within Council's Road Safety and Safer Cycling Strategies. Safety measures include the installation of wombat crossings in multiple locations on Fischer Street and its side streets.

3. Based on capability, experience and the project risks, the award of the contract to the recommended contractor is expected to deliver the best value for money outcome to Council.

Key Considerations

4. A public tender process was conducted in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy.

5. Tenders were released to market on 17 May 2025.

6. On tender receipt, a total of seven suppliers submitted tenders for this contract.

7. Each submission was assessed against pre-determined evaluation criteria, including price and non-price criteria.

8. As the majority of tenderers were over budget and there were a number of questions around tenderer capability and experience in working on a busy local road network tenderers were asked to resubmit tenders based on a reduced scope of works.

9. All seven tenderers resubmitted and the tenders were again evaluated to identify a preferred tenderer to undertake the project.

10. The contract will operate on a fixed lump sum basis with anticipated completion in May 2026.

11. The value of the contract exceeds officers' delegated authorities and therefore requires a decision by Council.

Background

12. Fischer Street was identified as a high-risk corridor for cyclists and pedestrians during the development of Surf Coast Shire's Safer Cycling Strategy in 2022. In a 5-year period there were 12 injury crashes on the road, including 7 cyclist crashes. In 2023 an analysis project was undertaken, funded by the Transport Accident Commission, assessing how the corridor could safely accommodate growing numbers of active transport users.

13. The works within the contract have been funded through the following:

    13.1. Grant funding through the *Safer Local Roads and Streets Program* (*SLRSP)* in 2024.
    13.2. Grant funding through the *Victorian Government Safe System Pedestrian Infrastructure Program – Investment Plan 43* (*IP43)* in late 2023.
    13.3. Council 2023/24 budget allocation for *Torquay North Traffic Improvements* to support implementing recommended safety measures in the north Torquay area.

14. As part of improvements to the Fischer Street corridor to date Council has delivered the following works:

    14.1. Wombat crossings at Puebla Street, Parkside Crescent and Nautical Rise (Pirate Park).
    14.2. Intersection improvements at Beach Road, Darian Road, Merrijig and Centreside Drive (bicycle line marking and coloured pavement).
    14.3. Intersection treatment including Wombat Crossing on all approaches at Inshore Drive.

15. Future planned works along the Fisher Street corridor will include additional treatments to key intersections similar to those at Inshore Drive as well as dedicated cycle lanes where possible. Council has recently submitted a Black Spot application for raised intersections at Spring St and Cowrie Road. All works will be subject to either receiving external grant funding or future Council budget allocations.

16. This corridor is a key link between central and north Torquay with high pedestrian and cyclist activities, including high number of school children, as well as vehicle traffic.

Options

17. **Alternative Option 1** – Do not award the contract as per the recommendations in this report.

This option is not recommended by officers as Council has attracted an acceptable tender which allows the completion of the project to scope and budget. The officers' recommendation follows considerable due diligence and is in accordance with published evaluation criteria and conditions of tender. Any decision that is not in accordance with the formal conditions of tender may compromise good governance and probity standards.

Council Plan (including Health and Wellbeing Plan) Statement

Theme Two - Healthy Connected Community

Strategy 5 - Make it easier for people to move around our towns and in nature without relying on cars

18. This project will support active transport modes and reduce the reliance of the community on cars to travel short distances to and from schools and shops.

Financial Considerations

19. The successful tender falls within the budget for the works. Council has sufficient funds and resources to deliver the project.

20. A full description of the 'Financial and Resource Impact Analysis' is provided as part of Confidential Tender Evaluation Summary has been issued to Councillors.

Community Engagement

21. In 2023 as a part of the analysis project to safely connect active transport users from Torquay town centre to Torquay north, broad engagement was undertaken with the community including community survey and stakeholder sessions, which gave rise to the current project scope.

22. In March 2025, community engagement was undertaken on the detailed design with directly impacted community members. The broader community was also informed via a range of communication channels.

Statutory / Legal / Policy considerations

23. This tender was conducted accordance with the requirements of section 108 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Council's Procurement Policy.

24. In accordance with section 109 of the *Local Government Act 2020* the following information is provided in relation to any opportunities for collaborative procurement.

25. This tender is for site-specific road network safety works within Surf Coast Shire, therefore does not include opportunity for collaborative tendering.

Strategic Risk

26. Failure to plan and deliver infrastructure and services which keep pace with growth Inherent Risk Rating - *Serious*, Residual Risk Rating - *Medium*.

27. There is a strategic network safety risk in failing to implement these works.

Risk Rating

28. Risk rating is medium and can be managed at department level.

Risk Appetite

29. We must value and enable community to foster a thriving, connected, healthy municipality even if this means Council has less influence and control.

30. We will manage and support population growth in the Municipality, but not at the expense of the most important elements of our environment or the unique heritage and character of the different areas of our Shire.

Sustainability Considerations

31. The project is intrinsically sustainable as it supports a move away from motor vehicles to active transport modes.

Conflict of Interest

32. No officer declared a conflict of interest under the *Local Government Act 2020* in the preparation of this report.

Confidentiality

33. Pursuant to sections 3(1) and 66(5) of the *Local Government Act* 2020, the information contained in this report is confidential because it contains private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that relates to trade secrets.

Audit and Risk Committee involvement

34. This is not in scope of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Council Briefings:

35. Not applicable

Tender Details

Invitation to Tender

36. Council issued an open tender {Contract no} to appoint {a panel of } suitably qualified and experienced contractor{s} to {undertake works at / deliver # services}

Table 1 Invitations to Tender

Medium	Date Advertised
Council eTendering Portal (Tenderlink)	

Evaluation Panel

37. The Tender Evaluation Panel comprised the following officers:

Table 2 Tender Evaluation Panel

Position / Title	Panel Role
Senior Contracts Manager	Chair Non-voting
Senior Project Engineer	Voting Member
Senior Project Manager	Voting Member
Project Design Engineer	Voting Member

Evaluation Criteria

38. Submissions were evaluated by the panel against pre-established selection criteria.

Table 3 Mandatory Evaluation Criteria

Mandatory Criteria	Assessment
Occupational health & Safety System	Pass/Fail
Financial Capability	Pass/Fail
Insurance	Pass/Fail

39. Tenderers who satisfied the above mandatory criteria were then assessed against the following comparative criteria.

Table 4 Comparative Criteria

Comparative Criteria	Weighting
Financial Assessment	50%
Methodology & Program	20%
Capability & Capacity	27%
Systems	3%

40. Details of submissions received, pricing and final rankings the evaluation is provided in **Confidential Tender Evaluation Summary** has been provided to Councillors**.**

4.9 Project Budget Adjustments and Cash Reserve Transfers - September 2025

Council Plan	**Theme Seven - Accountable and Viable Council** Strategy 18 - Establish a sustainable financial position.
Author's Title:	Management Accountant
General Manager:	Joanne McNeill, General Manager Strategy and Effectiveness
Division:	Strategy and Effectiveness
Department:	Finance
Attachments:	Nil

Purpose

1. This report contains proposed project budget adjustments and cash reserve transfers for Council approval. The report presents adjustments including existing projects requiring adjustment, project closures, new projects to be initiated, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) approved transfers under delegation or corrections to prior reports presented to Council.

Recommendation

That Council approves the project budget adjustments outlined in Tables 1 to 6 of this report, with the net changes to projects summarised below:

Project Funding Sources	2025-26 Transfers From/(To) Funding Source $
Reserve Funding Sources	
Developer Contributions Reserve	30,000
Winchelsea Infrastructure Plan Reserve	613,639
Sub-total Reserve Funding Sources	**643,639**
Other Funding Sources	
Grant Funded	694,351
Partner Contribution Funded	(6,646)
Project Savings Account	4,926
Project Account	0
Sub-total Other Funding Sources	**692,631**
Grand Total from Project Funding Sources	**1,336,270**

Council Resolution

Moved Cr Stapleton, Seconded Cr Schonfelder

That Council approves the project budget adjustments outlined in Tables 1 to 6 of this report, with the net changes to projects summarised below:

Project Funding Sources	2025-26 Transfers From/(To) Funding Source $
Reserve Funding Sources	
Developer Contributions Reserve	30,000
Winchelsea Infrastructure Plan Reserve	613,639
Sub-total Reserve Funding Sources	**643,639**
Other Funding Sources	
Grant Funded	694,351
Partner Contribution Funded	(6,646)
Project Savings Account	4,926
Project Account	0
Sub-total Other Funding Sources	**692,631**
Grand Total from Project Funding Sources	**1,336,270**

CARRIED 6|3

For	Against	Abstained
Cr Bodsworth Cr Pattison Cr Phelps Cr Schonfelder Cr Stapleton Cr Walker	Cr Barker Cr Bourke Cr Grist	Nil

Outcome

2. This report regularly brings decisions to Council about material changes to project budgets and provides visibility about CEO approved project changes. Material project budget transfers or new projects endorsed by the Executive Management Team which not yet approved by Council are presented for approval. This process ensures that Councillors decide on changes and are kept informed; whilst allowing for smooth project delivery. The report also provides transparency for the community.

Key Considerations

3. This report contributes to Council's financial management principles by recording the allocation and movement of project funds that may impact on current and future budgets.

4. This report contributes to public transparency by ensuring that the allocation and movement of project funds is made available to the community.

Background

5. The project budget adjustments presented in this report relate to the 2025-26 financial year. All figures in this report are exclusive of GST.

6. The following project adjustments, detailed in Table 1, are projects that require adjustments to their approved budgets to allow achievement of project scope and objectives, or there is a request to adjust project scope. The project adjustments in Table 1 have been endorsed by the Executive Management Team.

Table 1 - Projects Requiring Adjustment

Project Name	Funding Source	Basis for Variation	Project Allocation Increase/ (Decrease) $	Amended Project Budget $
Streetlight Replacement - Non Standard Streetlights	Developer Contributions Reserve	Developer Contribution Reserve funding for the replacement of non-standard streetlighting and poles. Street lights identified for replacement upon failure, post development of 2025-26 budget.	30,000	30,000
Road Side Pest and Weeds program	Grant Funded	State Government grant funding from Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions for controlling and preventing the spread of regionally controlled weeds and the control of rabbits on municipal rural roadsides.	29,065	29,065

Project Name	Funding Source	Basis for Variation	Project Allocation Increase/ (Decrease) $	Amended Project Budget $
Gladman Street Construction	Winchelsea Infrastructure Plan Reserve	Detailed cost plan now available following detailed design process. This has confirmed the budget required to complete the works. Initial concept estimate was $757,064. Detailed design has revealed significant additional scope will be required including increased pavement works in response to discovery of poor sub-base materials, adjustments to avoid impacting roadside native vegetation and increased drainage. This additional scope requires funding to enable the project to proceed.	613,639	1,370,703

Project Name	Funding Source	Basis for Variation	Project Allocation Increase/ (Decrease) $	Amended Project Budget $
Civic Centre Heating Pump Coil and Chiller	Grant Funded	Grant received under the Federal Government's Community Energy Upgrades Program, for the upgrade and conversion of the heating/cooling system at Council's Civic Offices from gas to electric powered. The existing gas boiler has reached the end of its useful life and is due for replacement with an electrified system in alignment with Council's Environmentally Sustainable Design Policy. The new system being installed will lower Councils running costs and assist in working towards achieving Council target of a net zero emissions from operations by 2030.	700,000	1,448,940
Winchelsea Bowls Club Sports Lighting Project	Grant Funded	State government funding for installation of four lighting poles lighting controls and switchboard modifications at Winchelsea Bowling Club delivered under budget. Return of unspent funds to grant provider as per funding ratio in grant agreement.	(34,714)	115,443

Project Name	Funding Source	Basis for Variation	Project Allocation Increase/ (Decrease) $	Amended Project Budget $
Winchelsea Bowls Club Sports Lighting Project	Project Savings Account	Council allocation is required for additional project management costs due to complexities with the lighting design, requiring further consultation with the Winchelsea Bowls Club and coordination to minimise disruption to club activities. As the grant cap for project management of 7.5% does not cover these costs, the club has agreed to fund 50% of the additional expense.	4,926	120,369
Winchelsea Bowls Club Sports Lighting Project	Partner Contribution Funded	Winchelsea Bowls Club contribution for installation of four lighting poles lighting controls, switchboard modifications and project management delivered under budget. Return of unspent funds to club.	(6,646)	113,723

Project Name	Funding Source	Basis for Variation	Project Allocation Increase/ (Decrease) $	Amended Project Budget $
Widen Coombes Road Stage 3 - Ghazepoore Road	Project Account	Additional funds required due to the soft subgrade under the entire intersection requiring additional material, protection of services and additional drainage. These works were identified after excavation to subgrade level and actual site conditions were exposed. Furthermore, to improve safety for cyclists and vehicles, additional speed humps and associated drainage works were added to the design of the roundabout. Savings in the Widen Coombes Road Stage 3 - Ghazepoore Road project have been identified following practical completion. $400,000 of these savings to be reallocated to Coombes / Messmate Road Intersection Upgrade project, with the value of estimates savings $800k to be realised on finalisation of the project.	(400,000)	2,051,403
Coombes / Messmate Road Intersection Upgrade			400,000	1,555,102

The budget transfers, detailed in Table 2, are newly initiated projects and have been endorsed by the Executive Management Team.

Table 2 – New Projects

Project Name	Funding Source	Basis for Variation	Project Allocation Increase/ (Decrease) $
Nil			

Project closures detailed in Table 3 have been endorsed at an Executive Management Team meeting.

Table 3 – Closed Projects

Project Name	Funding Source	Basis for Variation	Project Allocation Increase/ (Decrease) $
New Stretcher Access Stribling Reserve Pavilions, Lorne	Project Savings Account	Scope complete. Life of project cost $122,263. Project delivered the construction of stretcher access and balustrade improvements at Stribling Reserve.	Nil
Winchelsea Bowls Club Sports Lighting Project	Project Savings Account	Scope complete. Life of project cost $113,723. Project delivered the supply, installation, and commissioning of new LED lighting on four new poles to state competition standard at the Winchelsea Bowls Club.	Nil

Project Name	Funding Source	Basis for Variation	Project Allocation Increase/ (Decrease) $
Building Blocks Inclusion Equipment Grant - Torquay Kindergarten	Grant Funded	Scope complete. Life of project cost $9,438. Project delivered the purchase of inclusive educational resources for kindergarten programs. The resources included science technology kits, low floor seats, pop up play tents, pod tents and sensory balls.	Nil
Building Blocks Inclusion Equipment Grant - Jan Juc Kindergarten	Grant Funded	Scope complete. Life of project cost $8,998. Project delivered the purchase of inclusive educational resources for kindergarten programs. The resources included science technology kits, low floor seats, pop up play tents, pod tents and sensory balls.	Nil
Agile Working Project	Project Savings Account	Scope complete. Life of project cost $40,000. Project delivered significant improvements to meeting and collaboration spaces across a number of Council sites including the Civic Centre and Torquay and Winchelsea depots. These improvements included providing fixed and mobile screens to meeting rooms for video conferencing functions.	Nil

Table 4 contains projects that have been endorsed under Council delegation by the Chief Executive Officer.

Table 4 – CEO Approved Transfers

Project Name	Funding Source	Basis for Variation	Project Allocation Increase/ (Decrease) $
Nil			

Table 5 contains corrections or adjustments to prior reports presented to Council.

Table 5 – Corrections to Prior Reports

Project Name	Funding Source	Basis for Variation	Project Allocation Increase/ (Decrease) $
Nil			

Table 6 – Future Cash Fund Reserve Movements

Future Cash Fund Reserve	2025-26 $'000	2026-27 $'000	2027-28 $'000	2028-29 $'000
Opening Balance	12,301	14,414	12,331	9,044
Budgeted Annual Surplus/(Deficit)	2,140	(1,893)	(3,098)	(1,553)
Transfer for Project Funding	-	(190)	(190)	(190)
Net Allocations During Year (From)/To	(27)	-	-	-
New Allocations Proposed (From)/To	-	-	-	-
Closing Balance *	**14,414**	**12,331**	**9,044**	**7,301**

Future Cash Fund Reserve	2025-26 $'000
Net Allocations During Year (From)/To Major Event Support - Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race (March 2025 Council Resolution)	(27)
Net Allocations (From)/To	**(27)**
New Allocations Proposed (From)/To Nil	-
Total New Net Allocations (From)/To	**-**

*Note: Includes budgeted annual surplus/(deficit) as per Adopted Budget 2025-26.

Options

7. **Alternative Option 1** – Not approve transfers as recommended.

This option is not recommended by officers because transfers are necessary to allow ongoing delivery and closure of projects that have been through a series of governance checks.

Council Plan (including Health and Wellbeing Plan) Statement

Theme Seven - Accountable and Viable Council
Strategy 18 - Establish a sustainable financial position.

Financial Considerations

8. This report contributes to Council's financial management principles by recording the allocations and movements of project funds that may impact on the budget, current and future, and the achievement the Council Plan strategies and objectives.

Community Engagement

9. Community engagement was not undertaken on the content of this report. Many projects are subject to community engagement on scope and project completion is regularly communicated to community members involved in projects and the wider community. This report contributes to public transparency by ensuring that the allocation and movement of project funds is made available to the community.

Statutory / Legal / Policy Considerations

10. Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, this report contributes to:

    10.1. Financial viability by ensuring Council approves and is well informed about the allocation and movement of project funds to achieve the best outcomes for the municipal community;
    10.2. Transparency by ensuring that the allocation and movement of project funds is made available to the community;
    10.3. Financial management principles by recording the allocation and movement of project funds that may impact on the budget, current and future; and
    10.4. Performance for project delivery by considering the allocation and movement of project funds for successful project outcomes.

Strategic Risk

11. **Failure to deliver outcomes in line with community needs**
    Inherent Risk Rating - *Serious*, Residual Risk Rating – *High*

Risk Rating

12. Risk rating is low and can be managed at department level.

Risk Appetite

13. This report relates to the ordinary business of Council and no Risk Appetite Statement is relevant.

Risk Assessment

14. If Council did not receive this report, this would risk public transparency and potentially reduce the financial rigour applied to managing projects.

15. Decisions in this report support project delivery and the implementation of the Council Plan (including Health and Wellbeing Plan).

Conflict of Interest

16. No officer declared a conflict of interest under the *Local Government Act 2020* in the preparation of this report.

Confidentiality

17. This report and attachments contain no confidential information under section 66(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic).

Transparency

Audit and Risk Committee involvement

18. This monthly Council Report item is not within the scope of matters considered by the Audit and Risk Committee.

Councillor Briefings

19. This item was not discussed at a Councillor briefing.

4.10 Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation - Planning and Environment Act 1987

Council Plan	**Theme Seven - Accountable and Viable Council** Strategy 19 - Improve Council's credibility as a trusted decision maker through meaningful engagement.
Author's Title:	Governance Officer
General Manager:	Joanne McNeill, General Manager Strategy and Effectiveness
Division:	Strategy and Effectiveness
Department:	Integrity and Governance
Attachments:	1. 2025-09-23 - S 11 A Authorisation - (Planning and Environment Act 1987) - Clean Copy [**4.10.1** - 1 page] 2. 2025-09-23 - S 11 A Authorisation - (Planning and Environment Act 1987) - Tracked Changes [**4.10.2** - 1 page]

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Council's appointment of authorised officers under the *Planning & Environment Act 1987* through the updated Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (the instrument). This instrument requires updating due to recent staff changes. The content of the instrument has also been slightly reworded to reflect changes to the template provided by external lawyers.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Approves the Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation appointing the Council officers listed as authorised officers under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (**Attachment 1**);
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to execute the instrument by affixing the common seal in accordance with Local Law No. 2 of 2020 Common Seal and Miscellaneous Penalties;
3. Notes that the instrument comes into force immediately upon execution and remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it; and
4. Notes that the previous Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation is revoked upon execution of the updated instrument.

Council Resolution

Moved Cr Schonfelder, Seconded Cr Phelps

That Council:

1. Approves the Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation appointing the Council officers listed as authorised officers under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (**Attachment 1**);
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to execute the instrument by affixing the common seal in accordance with Local Law No. 2 of 2020 Common Seal and Miscellaneous Penalties;
3. Notes that the instrument comes into force immediately upon execution and remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it; and
4. Notes that the previous Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation is revoked upon execution of the updated instrument.

CARRIED 9|0

For	Against	Abstained
Cr Barker Cr Bodsworth Cr Bourke Cr Grist Cr Pattison Cr Phelps Cr Schonfelder Cr Stapleton Cr Walker	Nil	Nil

Outcome

2. If Council accepts this recommendation, the updates identified in the instrument will be implemented. This will ensure that officers have the authority to carry out their roles within the legislated framework.

Key Considerations

3. Officers acting under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* have authorisation for regulatory and enforcement work if required, as appropriate to their level of experience and qualifications.

4. The specific authorisations provided through this instrument include:

    4.1. Under under section 147(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* – appointment as an authorised officer for the purposes of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the regulations made under that Act; and

    4.2. under section 313 of the *Local Government Act 2020,* authorisation generally to institute proceedings for offences against the Act and/or any regulations.

5. The attached instrument has been reviewed and updated to reflect recent staff changes which includes employees who have begun in a role which requires to be under this

instrument, employees who have ceased employment with the organisation or are now in a position that have transitioned or returned to roles that no longer require appointment under this instrument.

Background

6. Officers are appointed as authorised officers to exercise statutory powers under various Acts and regulations. Appointments of authorised officers are to individual staff members.

7. The power to appoint authorised officers under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* cannot be delegated and must be done through a resolution of Council.

Options

8 **Alternative Option 1** – That Council does not approve the updated instrument of authorisation.

This option is not recommended by officers as it will prevent new officers from being able to properly carry out their roles and provide services and support to the community.

Council Plan (including Health and Wellbeing Plan) Statement

Theme Seven - Accountable and Viable Council

Strategy 19 - Improve Council's credibility as a trusted decision maker through meaningful engagement.

Financial Considerations

9. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Community Engagement

10 Community engagement is not required when updating the Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation - *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

Statutory / Legal / Policy Considerations

11 The appointmentt of authorised officers under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* ensures Council is compliant with the legislation and that officers are able to carry out their enforcement roles.

Strategic Risk

12 Failure to meet Council's governance and compliance obligations
Inherent Risk Rating - *Serious*, Residual Risk Rating - *Medium*

13 By approving the Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (**Attachment 1**), Council is mitigating the risks associated with officers not being properly authorised to carry out their roles as responsibilities. The risks mitigated include both legal and reputational risks.

Risk Rating

14 The risk rating associated with accepting the recommendation in this report is low and can be managed at department level.

Risk Appetite

15 No Risk Appetite Statement selected as this is a procedural report.

Sustainability Considerations

16 There are no sustainability considerations associated with this report.

Conflict of Interest

17 No officer declared a conflict of interest under the *Local Government Act 2020* in the preparation of this report.

Confidentiality

18 This report and attachments contain no confidential information under section 66(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Transparency

Audit and Risk Committee involvement

19 This report was no considered by the Audit and Risk Committee.

Councillor Briefings

20 This item was not discussed at Councillor Briefings.

Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation
(*Planning and Environment Act 1987*)

In this instrument "**officer**" means –

Adrienne Golaboski
Andrew Hewitt
Anthony (Tony) Rolfs
Barbara Peppard
Ben Hynes
Ben Schmied
Benjamin Lowe Jabornik
Bianca Wilkin
Chris Pike
David O'Connor
David Priddle
Dee Gomes
Ella Sjogren
Emily Jolley
Emma Monteath
Finn Tewson
Foti Dimopoulos
Gabrielle O'Shea
Genevieve Cooper
Guy Price
Jason Scammell
Jayde Whitten
Jennifer Davidson
Jordan Tartaglia
Karen Campbell
Kate Sullivan
Kristy Prothman
Kyi Laing Aye
Leah Protyniak
Leanne Rolfe
Mathew Mertuszka
Melessia McMillan
Melinda (Mindy) Vardy
Michelle Warren
Nicole Van Velzan
Paul Elshaug
Paul Russell
Paul Sarapuu
Rhiannan Glenister
Rhonda Gambetta
Robert Pitcher
Robyn Neville
Samantha Natt
Sandra Tomic
Sarah Farrer
Shaun Barling
Susan Wlodarcyzk
Terrie Thomas
Tim Waller
Travis Ferrari
Veronica Abbot
William (Bill) Cathcart

By this instrument of appointment and authorisation Surf Coast Shire Council -

1. under section 147(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* - authorises the officers to carry out the duties or functions and to exercise the powers of an authorised officer under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*; and

2. under section 313 of the *Local Government Act 2020* authorises the officers either generally or in a particular case to institute proceedings for offences against the Acts and regulations described in this instrument.

It is declared that this instrument -

(a) comes into force immediately upon its execution;
(b) remains in force until varied or revoked.

This instrument is authorised by a resolution of the Surf Coast Shire Council pursuant to the Council resolution dated 23 September 2025.

The COMMON SEAL of SURF COAST SHIRE COUNCIL was affixed in the presence of:)

…….
Chief Executive Officer

……..
Date

……..
Mayor/Deputy Mayor

……..
Date

Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation
(*Planning and Environment Act 1987*)

In this instrument "**officer**" means –

Adrienne Golaboski
Andrew Hewitt
Anthony (Tony) Rolfs
Barbara Peppard
Ben Hynes
Ben Schmied
Benjamin Lowe Jabornik
Bianca Wilkin
Chris Pike
David O'Connor
David Priddle
Dee Gomes
Ella Sjogren
Emily Jolley
Emma Monteath
Finn Tewson
Foti Dimopoulos
Gabrielle O'Shea
Genevieve Cooper
Guy Price
Jason Scammell
Jayde Whitten
Jennifer Davidson
Jordan Tartaglia
Karen Campbell
Kate Sullivan
Kristy Prothman
Kyi Laing Aye
Leah Protyniak
Leanne Rolfe
Mathew Mertuszka
Melessia McMillan
Melinda (Mindy) Vardy
Michelle Warren
Nicole Van Velzan
Paul Elshaug
Paul Russell
Paul Sarapuu
Rhiannan Glenister
Rhonda Gambetta
Robert Pitcher
Robyn Neville
Samantha Natt
Sandra Tomic
Sarah Farrer
Shaun Barling
Susan Wlodarcyzk
Terrie Thomas
Tim Waller
Travis Ferrari
Veronica Abbot
William (Bill) Cathcart

By this instrument of appointment and authorisation Surf Coast Shire Council -

1. under section 147(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* - authorises the officers to carry out the duties or functions and to exercise the powers of an authorised officer under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*; and

2. under section 313 of the *Local Government Act 2020* authorises the officers either generally or in a particular case to institute proceedings for offences against the Acts and regulations described in this instrument.

It is declared that this instrument -

(a) comes into force immediately upon its execution;
(b) remains in force until varied or revoked.

This instrument is authorised by a resolution of the Surf Coast Shire Council pursuant to the Council resolution dated ~~26 August~~23 September 2025.

The COMMON SEAL of SURF COAST SHIRE COUNCIL was affixed in the presence of:)
)
)

……
Chief Executive Officer

……..
Mayor/Deputy Mayor

……..
Date

……..
Date

4.11 Conflict of Interest Records

Council Plan	**Theme Seven - Accountable and Viable Council** Strategy 19 - Improve Council's credibility as a trusted decision maker through meaningful engagement.
Author's Title:	Senir Governance Officer
General Manager:	Joanne McNeill, General Manager Strategy and Effectiveness
Division:	Strategy and Effectiveness
Department:	Integrity and Governance
Attachments:	1. Conflict of Interest Record - Assets and Engineering Operations Information Session - Otway Ward - 29 July 2025 [**4.11.1** - 1 page] 2. Conflict of Interest Record - Assets and Engineering Operations Information Session - Winchelsea Ward - 30 July 2025 [**4.11.2** - 1 page] 3. Conflict of Interest Record - Assets and Engineering Operations Information Session - Torquay Ward - 13 August 2025 [**4.11.3** - 1 page] 4. Conflict of Interest Record - Councillor Briefing - 19 August 2025 [**4.11.4** - 1 page] 5. Conflict of Interest Record - Optional Councillor Briefing - 19 August 2025 [**4.11.5** - 1 page] 6. Conflict of Interest Record - Councillor Briefing - 26 August 2025 [**4.11.6** - 1 page] 7. Conflict of Interest Record - Councillor Briefing - Winchelsea Ward - 26 August 2025 [**4.11.7** - 1 page] 8. Conflict of Interest Record - Site Tour - Winchelsea Community Bank Village - 26 August 2025 [**4.11.8** - 1 page] 9. Conflict of Interest Record - Councillor Briefing - 2 September 2025 [**4.11.9** - 2 pages]

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to present conflict of interest records received since the previous Council meeting.

2. Conflict of interest records are required in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* (Act) and these records inform Council and the community if any conflicts of interest have been declared by Councillors at meetings held under the auspices of Council which are not Council meetings.

Recommendation

That Council notes the conflict of interest records as presented in **Attachments 1** to **9** for the following meetings:

1. Conflict of Interest Record - Assets and Engineering Operations Information Session - Otway Ward - 29 July 2025
2. Conflict of Interest Record - Assets and Engineering Operations Information Session - Winchelsea Ward - 30 July 2025
3. Conflict of Interest Record - Assets and Engineering Operations Information Session - Torquay Ward - 13 August 2025
4. Conflict of Interest Record - Councillor Briefing - 19 August 2025
5. Conflict of Interest Record - Optional Councillor Briefing - 19 August 2025
6. Conflict of Interest Record - Councillor Briefing - 26 August 2025
7. Conflict of Interest Record - Councillor Briefing - Winchelsea Ward - 26 August 2025
8. Conflict of Interest Record - Site Tour - Winchelsea Community Bank Village - 26 August 2025
9. Conflict of Interest Record - Councillor Briefing - 2 September 2025

Council Resolution

Moved Cr Barker, Seconded Cr Phelps

That Council notes the conflict of interest records as presented in **Attachments 1** to **9** for the following meetings:

1. Conflict of Interest Record - Assets and Engineering Operations Information Session - Otway Ward - 29 July 2025
2. Conflict of Interest Record - Assets and Engineering Operations Information Session - Winchelsea Ward - 30 July 2025
3. Conflict of Interest Record - Assets and Engineering Operations Information Session - Torquay Ward - 13 August 2025
4. Conflict of Interest Record - Councillor Briefing - 19 August 2025
5. Conflict of Interest Record - Optional Councillor Briefing - 19 August 2025
6. Conflict of Interest Record - Councillor Briefing - 26 August 2025
7. Conflict of Interest Record - Councillor Briefing - Winchelsea Ward - 26 August 2025
8. Conflict of Interest Record - Site Tour - Winchelsea Community Bank Village - 26 August 2025
9. Conflict of Interest Record - Councillor Briefing - 2 September 2025

CARRIED 9|0

For	Against	Abstained
Cr Barker Cr Bodsworth Cr Bourke Cr Grist Cr Pattison Cr Phelps Cr Schonfelder Cr Stapleton Cr Walker	Nil	Nil

Outcome

3. This report promotes public transparency by disclosing any conflicts of interest declared by Councillors during meetings conducted under the auspices of Council.

Key Considerations

4. The Act outlines requirements for Councillors to declare and manage conflicts of interests. Councillors disclosing conflicts of interests and following the prescribed requirements promote transparency in decision-making.
5. The attached conflict of interest records are prepared in accordance with the Act and Council's Governance Rules. The Act outlines that the procedure for disclosing conflicts must be included within the Governance Rules and Chapter 3 of these Rules prescribes that a record of any meeting held under the auspices of Council must be kept and presented to the next possible Council meeting.

6. Publication of these records is an important part of the overall management of conflicts of interest. By making these records publicly available, the community is made aware that interests are recorded and managed effectively. This helps Councillors perform their roles in a way that meets the requirements of legislation and is consistent with community expectation.

Background

7. Conflict of interest records are required to be presented to Council in accordance with the Act and Council's Governance Rules.

8. Council notes these conflict of interest records monthly. Declaring conflicts of interest helps Councillors comply with legal requirements and meet community expectation.

9. These records replace the previous requirement under the *Local Government Act 1989* to present an Assembly of Councillors to Council.

Options

10. **Alternative Option 1** – That Council does not note the conflict of interest records.

This option is not recommended by officers as it would mean Council is not compliant with legislation.

Council Plan (including Health and Wellbeing Plan) Statement

Theme Seven - Accountable and Viable Council

Strategy 19 - Improve Council's credibility as a trusted decision maker through meaningful engagement.

Financial Considerations

11. There are no financial considerations associated with presenting the conflict of interest records.

Community Engagement

12. Community engagement has not been undertaken as this report is a presentation of conflict of interest records.

13. Providing these records to the community provides information if any Councillor conflicts of interests are recorded.

Statutory / Legal / Policy Considerations

14. These records are published in accordance with section 131 of the Act.

Strategic Risk

15. Failure to meet Council's governance and compliance obligations
Inherent Risk Rating - *Serious*, Residual Risk Rating - *Medium*

Risk Rating

16. Risk rating is low and can be managed at department level. Individual departments are responsible for completing these records, mitigating risks of non-compliance.

Risk Appetite

17. The Risk Appetite Statement is not applicable to this report.

Sustainability Considerations

18. There are no sustainability considerations associated with this report.

Conflict of Interest

19. No officer declared a conflict of interest under the *Local Government Act 2020* in the preparation of this report.

Confidentiality

20. This report and attachments contain no confidential information under section 66(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Transparency

Audit and Risk Committee involvement

21. This report has not been presented to the Audit and Risk Committee.

Councillor Briefings

22. This item was not presented to a Councillor briefing.

File No F18/225-7
Trim Reference Record Number

Conflict of Interest Record
Meetings conducted under the auspices of Council

Section 131 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Chapter 3 of Council's Governance Rules

Description of Meeting: Assets & Engineering / Operations Councillor Information Session (Otway Ward)
Responsible Officer: John Bertoldi
Date: Tuesday 29 July 2025
In Attendance: Yes (✓) No (X)

Councillors		Officers	
Cr. Mike Bodsworth (Mayor)	✓	John Bertoldi (Manager assets & Engineering)	✓
Cr. Paul Barker	X	Travis Nelson (Manager Operations)	✓
Cr. Rebecca Bourke	X	Mark Gibbons (Coordinator Road Strategy)	✓
Cr. Joel Grist	X	Tym Guthridge (Coordinator Asset Management)	✓
Cr. Liz Pattison	X	Blake Wall (Coordinator Engineering Services & Design)	✓
Cr. Tony Phelps	X	Ronan Corcoran (Coordinator Stormwater Infrastructure)	✓
Cr. Adrian Schonfelder	X	Rishi Viner (Coordinator Civil Operations)	✓
Cr. Libby Stapleton	✓	Ella Jackson (Coordinator Open Space Operations)	✓
Cr. Leon Walker	✓	Brett Ellis (Coordinator Facilities Operations)	✓
		Apanie Wood (Manager Environment & Sustainability)	✓
		John Furleo (Design Engineer)	✓

MEETING COMMENCED	2.00pm	MEETING CONCLUDED	4.00pm

Matters considered at the meeting		
Staff outlined department roles / structure / stats and some key projects / actions in the Ward.		
Councillor Conflict of Interest Disclosures		
Councillor	**Left Meeting (Y/N)**	**Classification and nature of interest(s) disclosed**
Nil.		

Responsible Officer Signature: **Print Name: John Bertoldi**

To be completed on conclusion of session and provided to Governance Officer.

Governance Rules, Chapter 3, Clause 3

3.1. At a meeting under the auspices of Council that is not a meeting of the Council or delegated committee, the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a written record is kept of—

a) the names of all Councillors and members of Council staff attending;
b) the matters considered;
c) any conflict of interest disclosures made by a Councillor attending under subclause 3.3;
d) whether a Councillor who has disclosed a conflict of interest as required by subclause 3.3 leaves the meeting.

3.2. The Chief Executive Officer must ensure that the written record of a meeting held under this clause is, as soon as practicable—

a) reported at a meeting of the Council; and
b) incorporated in the minutes of that Council meeting.

Auspices of the Council

Any meeting that is organised, sponsored or otherwise facilitated by the council should be treated as an 'auspiced' meeting. Council auspiced meetings may include, but are not limited to:

- regular councillor briefings or forums,
- other briefing meetings,
- committees other than a delegated or community asset committee (such as advisory committees),
- public consultations, and
- site meetings (incl.include meetings the council arranges jointly with other organisations).

File No F18/225-7
Trim Reference Record Number

Conflict of Interest Record
Meetings conducted under the auspices of Council

Section 131 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Chapter 3 of Council's Governance Rules

Description of Meeting: Assets & Engineering / Operations Councillor Information Session (Winchelsea Ward)
Responsible Officer: John Bertoldi
Date: Wednesday 30 July 2025
In Attendance: Yes (✓) No (X)

Councillors		Officers	
Cr. Mike Bodsworth (Mayor)	X	John Bertoldi (Manager assets & Engineering)	✓
Cr. Paul Barker	X	Travis Nelson (Manager Operations)	✓
Cr. Rebecca Bourke	X	Mark Gibbons (Coordinator Road Strategy)	✓
Cr. Joel Grist	✓	Tym Guthridge (Coordinator Asset Management)	✓
Cr. Liz Pattison	X	Blake Wall (Coordinator Engineering Services & Design)	✓
Cr. Tony Phelps	✓	Ronan Corcoran (Coordinator Stormwater Infrastructure)	✓
Cr. Adrian Schonfelder	✓	Rishi Viner (Coordinator Civil Operations)	✓
Cr. Libby Stapleton	X	Ella Jackson (Coordinator Open Space Operations)	✓
Cr. Leon Walker	X	Brett Ellis (Coordinator Facilities Operations)	✓
		Emma Clark (Communications Officer)	✓

MEETING COMMENCED	2.00pm	**MEETING CONCLUDED**	4.00pm

Matters considered at the meeting		
Staff outlined department roles / structure / stats and some key projects / actions in the Ward.		
Councillor Conflict of Interest Disclosures		
Councillor	**Left Meeting (Y/N)**	**Classification and nature of interest(s) disclosed**
Nil.		
Responsible Officer Signature: **Print Name: John Bertoldi**		
To be completed on conclusion of session and provided to Governance Officer.		

Governance Rules, Chapter 3, Clause 3
3.1. At a meeting under the auspices of Council that is not a meeting of the Council or delegated committee, the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a written record is kept of—
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c) any conflict of interest disclosures made by a Councillor attending under subclause 3.3;
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- public consultations, and
- site meetings (incl.include meetings the council arranges jointly with other organisations).

File No F18/225-7
Trim Reference Record Number

Conflict of Interest Record
Meetings conducted under the auspices of Council

Section 131 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Chapter 3 of Council's Governance Rules

Description of Meeting: Assets & Engineering / Operations Councillor Information Session (Torquay Ward)
Responsible Officer: John Bertoldi
Date: Wednesday 13August 2025
In Attendance: Yes (✓) No (X)

Councillors		Officers	
Cr. Mike Bodsworth (Mayor)	X	John Bertoldi (Manager assets & Engineering)	✓
Cr. Paul Barker	✓	Travis Nelson (Manager Operations)	✓
Cr. Rebecca Bourke	✓	Mark Gibbons (Coordinator Road Strategy)	✓
Cr. Joel Grist	X	Tym Guthridge (Coordinator Asset Management)	✓
Cr. Liz Pattison	X	Blake Wall (Coordinator Engineering Services & Design)	✓
Cr. Tony Phelps	X	Ronan Corcoran (Coordinator Stormwater Infrastructure)	✓
Cr. Adrian Schonfelder	X	Rishi Viner (Coordinator Civil Operations)	✓
Cr. Libby Stapleton	X	Ella Jackson (Coordinator Open Space Operations)	✓
Cr. Leon Walker	X	Brett Ellis (Coordinator Facilities Operations)	✓
		Emma Clark (Communications Officer)	✓

MEETING COMMENCED	1.00pm	**MEETING CONCLUDED**	3.00pm

Matters considered at the meeting		
Staff outlined department roles / structure / stats and some key projects / actions in the Ward.		
Councillor Conflict of Interest Disclosures		
Councillor	**Left Meeting (Y/N)**	**Classification and nature of interest(s) disclosed**
Nil.		
Responsible Officer Signature: **Print Name: John Bertoldi**		
To be completed on conclusion of session and provided to Governance Officer.		

Governance Rules, Chapter 3, Clause 3

3.1. At a meeting under the auspices of Council that is not a meeting of the Council or delegated committee, the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a written record is kept of—

a) the names of all Councillors and members of Council staff attending;
b) the matters considered;
c) any conflict of interest disclosures made by a Councillor attending under subclause 3.3;
d) whether a Councillor who has disclosed a conflict of interest as required by subclause 3.3 leaves the meeting.

3.2. The Chief Executive Officer must ensure that the written record of a meeting held under this clause is, as soon as practicable—

a) reported at a meeting of the Council; and
b) incorporated in the minutes of that Council meeting.

Auspices of the Council

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- regular councillor briefings or forums,
- other briefing meetings,
- committees other than a delegated or community asset committee (such as advisory committees),
- public consultations, and
- site meetings (incl.include meetings the council arranges jointly with other organisations).

File No F18/225-7
Trim Reference Record Number

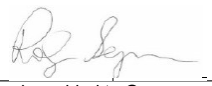
Conflict of Interest Record
Meetings conducted under the auspices of Council

Section 131 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Chapter 3 of Council's Governance Rules

Description of Meeting: Councillor Briefings #3 – Strategic Conversations
Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer Robyn Seymour
Date: Tuesday 19 August 2025
In Attendance: Yes (✓) No (X)

Councillors		**Officers**	
Cr. Mike Bodsworth (Mayor)	✓	Chief Executive Officer – Robyn Seymour	✓
Cr. Paul Barker	✓	General Manager Placemaking & Environment – Chris Pike	✓
Cr. Rebecca Bourke	✓	General Manager Strategy & Effectiveness – Joanne McNeill	✓
Cr. Joel Grist	✓	General Manager Community Life – Damian Waight	✓
Cr. Liz Pattison	X	Manager Government Relations and Strategic Projects – Darryn Chiller	✓
Cr. Tony Phelps	✓	Project Manager Corporate Strategy – Sarah Storen	✓
Cr. Adrian Schonfelder	✓	Community Engagement Facilitator – Rochelle Harding	✓
Cr. Libby Stapleton	X	Coordinator Community Health and Development – Monika Geall	✓
Cr. Leon Walker	✓	Senior Project Design Engineer – Aoife Corcoran	✓
		Coordinator Road Strategy – Mark Gibbons	✓
External Presenter			
Kenn Beer – Safe System Solutions Pty Ltd.	✓		

MEETING COMMENCED	11am	**MEETING CONCLUDED**	3:10pm

Matters considered at the meeting		
Council Plan – review of submissions		
External Presentation – Road Safety		
Styles of Traffic Calming Devices		
Councillor Conflict of Interest Disclosures		
Councillor	**Left Meeting (Y/N)**	**Classification and nature of interest(s) disclosed**
Nil.		
Responsible Officer Signature:  **Print Name: Robyn Seymour**		
To be completed on conclusion of session and provided to Governance Officer.		

Governance Rules, Chapter 3, Clause 3
3.1. At a meeting under the auspices of Council that is not a meeting of the Council or delegated committee, the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a written record is kept of—
a) the names of all Councillors and members of Council staff attending;
b) the matters considered;
c) any conflict of interest disclosures made by a Councillor attending under subclause 3.3;
d) whether a Councillor who has disclosed a conflict of interest as required by subclause 3.3 leaves the meeting.

3.2. The Chief Executive Officer must ensure that the written record of a meeting held under this clause is, as soon as practicable—
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b) incorporated in the minutes of that Council meeting.

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- public consultations, and
- site meetings (incl.include meetings the council arranges jointly with other organisations).

File No F18/225-4
Trim Reference Record Number

Conflict of Interest Record
Meetings conducted under the auspices of Council

Section 131 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Chapter 3 of Council's Governance Rules

Description of Meeting: Optional Briefing on Financial Plan 2025-2035
Responsible Officer: Gabby Spiller
Date: Tuesday 19 August 2025
In Attendance: Yes (✓) No (X)

Councillors		Officers	
Cr. Mike Bodsworth (Mayor)	✓	Chief Executive Officer – Robyn Seymour	✓
Cr. Paul Barker	X	General Manager Placemaking & Environment – Chris Pike	X
Cr. Rebecca Bourke	X	General Manager Community Life – Damian Waight	X
Cr. Joel Grist	✓	General Manager Strategy & Effectiveness – Joanne McNeill	✓
Cr. Liz Pattison	X	Manager Government Relations and Strategic Projects – Darryn Chiller	X
Cr. Tony Phelps	✓	Manager Finance – Gabby Spiller	✓
Cr. Adrian Schonfelder	X	Coordinator Management Accounting – Tim Dickson	✓
Cr. Libby Stapleton	X		
Cr. Leon Walker	X		

MEETING COMMENCED	5.00 pm	**MEETING CONCLUDED**	6.15 pm

Matters considered at the meeting		
Components of the Draft Financial Plan 2025-35		
Councillor Conflict of Interest Disclosures		
Councillor	**Left Meeting (Y/N)**	**Classification and nature of interest(s) disclosed**
Nil.		

Responsible Officer Signature: **Print Name: Gabby Spiller**

To be completed on conclusion of session and provided to Governance Officer.

Governance Rules, Chapter 3, Clause 3

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b) the matters considered;
c) any conflict of interest disclosures made by a Councillor attending under subclause 3.3;
d) whether a Councillor who has disclosed a conflict of interest as required by subclause 3.3 leaves the meeting.

3.2. The Chief Executive Officer must ensure that the written record of a meeting held under this clause is, as soon as practicable—

a) reported at a meeting of the Council; and
b) incorporated in the minutes of that Council meeting.

Auspices of the Council

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- site meetings (incl.include meetings the council arranges jointly with other organisations).

File No F18/225-7
Trim Reference Record Number

Conflict of Interest Record
Meetings conducted under the auspices of Council

Section 131 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Chapter 3 of Council's Governance Rules

Description of Meeting: Councillor Briefings #4 Agenda Clarification Time
Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer Robyn Seymour
Date: Tuesday 26 August 2025
In Attendance: Yes (✓) No (X)

Councillors		Officers	
Cr. Mike Bodsworth (Mayor)	✓	Chief Executive Officer – Robyn Seymour	✓
Cr. Paul Barker	X	General Manager Placemaking & Environment – Chris Pike	✓
Cr. Rebecca Bourke	X	General Manager Strategy & Effectiveness – Joanne McNeill	✓
Cr. Joel Grist	✓	General Manager Community Life – Damian Waight	✓
Cr. Liz Pattison	✓	Manager Government Relations and Strategic Projects – Darryn Chiller	✓
Cr. Tony Phelps	✓	Manager Integrity and Governance – Jake Brown	✓
Cr. Adrian Schonfelder	✓	Coordinator Governance and Council Business – Liberty Nash	✓
Cr. Libby Stapleton	X		
Cr. Leon Walker	✓		

MEETING COMMENCED	9:30am	MEETING CONCLUDED	10:40am

Matters considered at the meeting		
26 August 2025 Council Meeting Agenda		
Councillor Conflict of Interest Disclosures		
Councillor	**Left Meeting (Y/N)**	**Classification and nature of interest(s) disclosed**
Nil.		
Responsible Officer Signature:		**Print Name:** Robyn Seymour
To be completed on conclusion of session and provided to Governance Officer.		

Governance Rules, Chapter 3, Clause 3

3.1. At a meeting under the auspices of Council that is not a meeting of the Council or delegated committee, the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a written record is kept of—

a) the names of all Councillors and members of Council staff attending;
b) the matters considered;
c) any conflict of interest disclosures made by a Councillor attending under subclause 3.3;
d) whether a Councillor who has disclosed a conflict of interest as required by subclause 3.3 leaves the meeting.

3.2. The Chief Executive Officer must ensure that the written record of a meeting held under this clause is, as soon as practicable—

a) reported at a meeting of the Council; and
b) incorporated in the minutes of that Council meeting.

Auspices of the Council

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- other briefing meetings,
- committees other than a delegated or community asset committee (such as advisory committees),
- public consultations, and
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File No F18/225-7
Trim Reference Record Number

Conflict of Interest Record
Meetings conducted under the auspices of Council

Section 131 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Chapter 3 of Council's Governance Rules

Description of Meeting: Winchelsea Ward Councillor Briefing on Loutitt Bay Road Planning Matter
Responsible Officer: General Manager Placemaking & Environment
Date: Tuesday 26 August 2025
In Attendance: Yes (✓) No (X)

Councillors		Officers	
Cr. Mike Bodsworth (Mayor)	✓	Chief Executive Officer – Robyn Seymour	✓
Cr. Paul Barker	✓	General Manager Placemaking & Environment – Chris Pike	✓
Cr. Rebecca Bourke	x	Manager Planning & Compliance – Dee Gomes	✓
Cr. Joel Grist	✓	Coordinator Statutory Planning - Ben Hynes	✓
Cr. Liz Pattison	x	Coordinator Planning Compliance – Veronica Abbot	✓
Cr. Tony Phelps	✓		
Cr. Adrian Schonfelder	✓		
Cr. Libby Stapleton	x		
Cr. Leon Walker	x		

MEETING COMMENCED	3.15pm	**MEETING CONCLUDED**	4.00pm

Matters considered at the meeting		
Planning compliance and permits matters affecting a property in Freshwater Creek		
Councillor Conflict of Interest Disclosures		
Councillor	**Left Meeting (Y/N)**	**Classification and nature of interest(s) disclosed**
Nil		

Responsible Officer Signature: **Print Name:** Chris Pike

To be completed on conclusion of session and provided to Governance Officer.

Governance Rules, Chapter 3, Clause 3
3.1. At a meeting under the auspices of Council that is not a meeting of the Council or delegated committee, the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a written record is kept of—
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d) whether a Councillor who has disclosed a conflict of interest as required by subclause 3.3 leaves the meeting.

3.2. The Chief Executive Officer must ensure that the written record of a meeting held under this clause is, as soon as practicable—
a) reported at a meeting of the Council; and
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Auspices of the Council
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- public consultations, and
- site meetings (incl.include meetings the council arranges jointly with other organisations).

File No F18/225-7
Trim Reference Record Number

Conflict of Interest Record
Meetings conducted under the auspices of Council

Section 131 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Chapter 3 of Council's Governance Rules

Description of Meeting: Site Tour – Winchelsea Community Bank Village
Responsible Officer: General Manager Placemaking & Environment
Date: Tuesday 26 August 2025
In Attendance: Yes (✓) No (X)

Councillors		Officers	
Cr. Mike Bodsworth (Mayor)	✓	Chief Executive Officer – Robyn Seymour	✓
Cr. Paul Barker	✓	General Manager Placemaking & Environment – Chris Pike	✓
Cr. Rebecca Bourke	x	General Manager Strategy & Effectiveness – Joanne McNeill	✓
Cr. Joel Grist	✓	General Manager Community Life – Damian Waight	✓
Cr. Liz Pattison	x		
Cr. Tony Phelps	✓		
Cr. Adrian Schonfelder	✓		
Cr. Libby Stapleton	x		
Cr. Leon Walker	✓		

MEETING COMMENCED	4.00pm	MEETING CONCLUDED	5.00pm

Matters considered at the meeting		
Site tour only		
Councillor Conflict of Interest Disclosures		
Councillor	**Left Meeting (Y/N)**	**Classification and nature of interest(s) disclosed**
Nil		

Responsible Officer Signature: **Print Name:** Chris Pike

To be completed on conclusion of session and provided to Governance Officer.

Governance Rules, Chapter 3, Clause 3
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- public consultations, and
- site meetings (incl.include meetings the council arranges jointly with other organisations).

File No F18/225-7
Trim Reference Record Number

Conflict of Interest Record
Meetings conducted under the auspices of Council

Section 131 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Chapter 3 of Council's Governance Rules

Description of Meeting: Councillor Briefings #1
Responsible Officer: Acting Chief Executive Officer Damian Waight
Date: Tuesday 2 September 2025
In Attendance: Yes (✓) No (X)

Councillors		Officers	
Cr. Mike Bodsworth (Mayor)	✓	Chief Executive Officer – Robyn Seymour	X
Cr. Paul Barker	✓	Acting Chief Executive Officer – Damian Waight	✓
Cr. Rebecca Bourke	X	General Manager Placemaking & Environment – Chris Pike	✓
Cr. Joel Grist	✓	General Manager Strategy & Effectiveness – Joanne McNeill	✓
Cr. Liz Pattison	✓	Acting General Manager Community Life – Shannon Fielder	✓
Cr. Tony Phelps	✓	Manager Government Relations and Strategic Projects – Darryn Chiller	✓
Cr. Adrian Schonfelder	✓	Manager Integrity and Governance – Jake Brown	✓
Cr. Libby Stapleton	X	Coordinator Governance and Council Business – Liberty Nash	✓
Cr. Leon Walker	✓	Governance Officer – Candace Martin-Burgers	✓
		Project Manager Corporate Strategy – Sarah Storen	✓
		Community Engagement Facilitator – Rochelle Harding	✓
		Coordinator Health and Development – Monika Geall	✓
		Manager Finance – Gabby Spiller	✓
		Coordinator Management Accounting – Tim Dickson	✓
		Manager Assets and Engineering – John Bertoldi	✓
		Manager Operations – Travis Nelson	✓
		Coordinator Civil Operations – Rishi Viner	✓
		Senior Project Manager Capital and Operational Projects – Chris Leonard	✓
		Manager Integrated Planning – Kate Sullivan	✓

MEETING COMMENCED	10:32am	MEETING CONCLUDED	2:42pm

Matters considered at the meeting
Preview of Final Council Plan
Financial Plan 2025-2035
Road Management Plan
Winchelsea Infrastructure Plan
Coombes Road/Messmate Road Project Update
Report on the Impacts of Celebrating Australia Day on 26 January
Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan
Councillor Topics

Councillor Conflict of Interest Disclosures		
Councillor	**Left Meeting (Y/N)**	**Classification and nature of interest(s) disclosed**
Nil.		

Responsible Officer Signature: **Print Name:** Damian Waight

To be completed on conclusion of session and provided to Governance Officer.

Governance Rules, Chapter 3, Clause 3
3.1. At a meeting under the auspices of Council that is not a meeting of the Council or delegated committee, the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a written record is kept of—
a) the names of all Councillors and members of Council staff attending;
b) the matters considered;

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c) any conflict of interest disclosures made by a Councillor attending under subclause 3.3;
d) whether a Councillor who has disclosed a conflict of interest as required by subclause 3.3 leaves the meeting.

3.2. The Chief Executive Officer must ensure that the written record of a meeting held under this clause is, as soon as practicable—
a) reported at a meeting of the Council; and
b) incorporated in the minutes of that Council meeting.

Auspices of the Council
Any meeting that is organised, sponsored or otherwise facilitated by the council should be treated as an 'auspiced' meeting. Council auspiced meetings may include, but are not limited to:

- regular councillor briefings or forums,
- other briefing meetings,
- committees other than a delegated or community asset committee (such as advisory committees),
- public consultations, and
- site meetings (incl.include meetings the council arranges jointly with other organisations).

5 Closed Section

Nil.

6 Urgent Business

Nil.

7 Close of Meeting

The Council meeting - 23 September 2025 closed at 9:32pm.