

## Draft Transcript

### Surf Coast Shire Council Meeting

Tuesday, 28 November 2023 at 6pm

#### About This Document

This document contains a draft transcript only.

This draft transcript has been taken directly from the text of live captioning provided by The Captioning Studio and, as such, it may contain errors.

The transcript may also contain 'inaudibles' if there were occasions when audio quality was compromised during the event.

The Captioning Studio accepts no liability for any event or action resulting from this draft transcript.

The draft transcript must not be published without The Captioning Studio's written permission.

## Draft Transcript

CR PATTISON: It's so lovely to see so many people here. Great that you could all come along.

Welcome and good evening, everybody, to our November Council meeting. I'm Mayor Liz Pattison and it's a pleasure to welcome members of our community joining us tonight. We've got a wonderful audience here in Aireys Inlet.

Tonight we are having our final off-site meeting for the year here in Aireys Inlet and this meeting is also being live-streamed, so a big welcome to those tuning in online, and of course welcome to my fellow Councillors, including Councillor Wellington, who will be joining us online tonight.

Live captioning will accompany the live stream of the meeting. We hope that this assists those who may have hearing difficulties.

I wanted to note it's wonderful that we've come to Aireys Inlet. We may have some technical difficulties around with the live-streaming. If that happens, I want to assure everybody that we're recording the meeting and so tomorrow morning the full meeting will be put up online if it does drop out for those that are watching online.

I would like to acknowledge that here at Aireys Inlet Community Centre we are gathered on Wadawurrung country and nearby on the other side of the Painkalac Creek is Gadubanud country. I pay my respects to Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Elders past, present and emerging. The First Peoples have nurtured and protected these lands and waterways for thousands of generations and I'd like to pay my respects. We are so grateful for the opportunity to live and work in such a beautiful part of the world. We also wish to acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which each person is attending and acknowledge First Nations people viewing the meeting tonight.

We have had some really great events across the Shire recently and the next few months will be really exciting. Firstly, the Surf Coast Century took place in Anglesea on 16 September and that brought around 4,500 participants and supporters to the Surf Coast, generating \$10.85 million in direct economic impact. Between now and Christmas the summer event calendar is packed with community carols and markets in our Surf Coast towns from hinterland to the coast, offering the chance to connect, share and share in the festive season and stock up on locally produced gifts. That's my favourite part of the year is community markets and Christmas carols and all of those fun things where we all come together and celebrate.

## Draft Transcript

We are also looking forward to the upcoming events that are organised by our lifesaving clubs and raise much-needed funds. We've got the Pier to Pub in Lorne, Danger Ocean Swim, the Rock 2 Ramp, Tim Gates Classic, and there's many more. I haven't even included the running events, that's just the swimming ones, so there's lots of great events coming up.

There are also some other really great things happening in the community and particularly in the Anglesea ward, including in Aireys Inlet, where we're meeting tonight. But Councillor Stapleton and Councillor Bodsworth have a got a little presentation that they'll be doing, so I won't steal their thunder, I'll leave that for them.

And now on to our agenda for tonight. So I'll just do a little bit of process so people that haven't watched before understand. Council meetings operate according to the Governance Rules, which include the following procedures. During the meeting, the mover of a motion or an amendment may speak for a maximum of five minutes to open the debate and then a further two minutes to make a closing statement. Any other Councillor, including the seconder, may speak to a motion for no more than 3 minutes.

I ask that members of the gallery avoid using mobile phones during the meeting as this can be distracting for Councillors as well as other members of the gallery. I also note that any unauthorised recording of the meeting is prohibited under our Governance Rules. However, you can access a copy of the official recording on our website after the meeting.

I'd now like to recite the pledge as a sign of our commitment: "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."

Apologies - we have an apology from Councillor Allen. Do I have a mover? Councillor Hodge. And seconded by Councillor Gazzard. And all those in favour. And the motion is carried unanimously.

We now move on to confirmation of minutes. Can I please have a mover and a seconder to confirm the minutes of the Council meeting held on 24 October and 14 November 2023? Councillor Schonfelder - is that as per the recommendation? Yes. And a seconder? Councillor Bodsworth. All those in favour. And the motion is - oh, you're abstaining, okay. So, yes, the motion is carried.

## Draft Transcript

Leave of absence requests - are there any Councillors requesting a leave of absence? No?

Declarations of conflicts of interest. If a Councillor and officer has a conflict of interest, they must declare it now and do so again just prior to the item being discussed. The Councillor and/or the officer will be requested to leave the - not the chambers because we're here in Aireys Inlet, but leave the meeting room and for those online, they'll be put in a virtual room and then they'll be brought back in once that's resolved. Are there any declarations of conflicts of interest in tonight's meeting? No.

Presentations - this is the fun bit. So Councillor Stapleton, would you like to start? Oh, okay. Certainly, Councillor Bodsworth, would you like to start?

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Mayor. So seeing as we're meeting in the Anglesea ward at the beautiful Aireys Inlet Hall, I'd like to run through a few things for my fellow Councillors' benefit to celebrate the Anglesea ward.

So mostly this is around Anglesea Community house. I attended the Anglesea Community House Annual General Meeting a short time ago and was really struck by the reach of the Anglesea Community House. So services that the Community House is involved in include child care, Food Link, community information, publication of News Angle, the Tip Shop, or the Anglesea Tip Resale Shed, twilight market. They have a big presence in community development.

They also auspice a number of important groups, so Anglesea Community Garden, Anglesea and District Men's Shed, Angelsea Community Rock Choir, Anglesea Community Network, Anglesea Movie Club, Surf Coast Repair Cafe, Surf Coast Rubbish Rangers.

In 2023, the Anglesea Community House returned a community value report. That community value report found that from an income of \$305,000, the Anglesea Community House returned community value of almost \$2.4 million, which equates to \$7.88 per \$1 of income, and it equates to about \$1,000 in community value for every hour that the Anglesea Community House is open.

Turning to a few things in particular, so the resale shed that I know a lot of people here in the gallery would volunteer at and sell items at which are obviously items that are being diverted from landfill and given a new life and offered for sale, proceeds from the sales go to community groups around Anglesea and Aireys Inlet. So there are 22 volunteer groups that work at the

## Draft Transcript

Tip Shop and benefit from the Tip Shop and it's raised almost \$40,000 in 2023 and it's saved hundreds of tonnes of material from landfill.

The next one is the Anglesea Community Garden, with 210 members. It's a thriving group, it has a big focus on sustainability, including social sustainability, being a fantastic sort of focal point for social activity.

Another one is the Rubbish Rangers. Rubbish Rangers originated here in Aireys Inlet, very proud - good on you, Rubbish Rangers - and spread to Anglesea, spread to Torquay and the Anglesea and Torquay groups were recently awarded A keep Australia Beautiful Award and National Volunteers Award.

And the final one on my list before I hand to Libby is the Repair Cafe, which now takes place in this hall, previously in the Anglesea Memorial Hall, reported 2,000 volunteer hours, 713 items coming through the Repair Cafe, of which 65% were fixed, and diverting around 1.5 tonnes of material from landfill. So fantastic achievements from those groups and Libby has got some more.

CR STAPLETON: Thanks, Mike. So I'd also like to give a shoutout to some of our local community who spend countless hours volunteering to improve the place that so many of us love to live and visit.

So along with the efforts of our Rubbish Rangers and Repair Cafe, there are groups in Aireys Inlet like the Community Garden, Friends of the Hooded Plover, Friends of the Painkalac Creek, Aireys Inlet Rural Australians for Refugees, the Uniting Church, AIDA, the Tourism and Traders Group, the Aireys Primary School Parents and Friends, the Aireys Hall Committee, the CWA, the CFA, the Surf Lifesaving Club, and more, and apologies to anyone here that I might have missed.

Like many other community groups right across the Surf Coast, these volunteers just do so much to help our community and environment to thrive, which also aligns to Council's vision.

In Aireys Inlet and Anglesea we have representatives from many of these groups who come together on a quarterly basis through community Zoom meetings, which I believe any local group is welcome to join, so I'd encourage you to get in touch with Council if you're interested in doing so. These online gatherings have proven a terrific way for community groups to hear from each other about achievements and challenges and have provided a valuable forum for sharing ideas and suggestions about our town.

## Draft Transcript

At our most recent gathering of community reps in Aireys, we heard about AIDA's Ash Wednesday Bushfire Oral History Project, which will be launched here in the hall this Saturday, 2 December at 4pm. Professional director and filmmaker Alex Watkins has interviewed people who experienced the bushfires in 1983 and has created a platform that captures and shares these real stories through an interactive website of audio interviews and visual records of the fire. It sounds like a fascinating project and if you're here on the weekend, I'd certainly encourage you to get along. It's a free event, but AIDA asks that you do register to help with their planning for Saturday.

We also heard from the Community Garden about their recent working bees and installation of solar panels to create a small off-grid system for food production as well as powering tools and appliances, such a fantastic project. They've hosted a walk on country for the community this year and have had a series of popular food preserving workshops. They will also be running more children's workshops over summer and, as always, they reminded us of the garden beds that sit outside the fence where locals can help themselves to free herbs.

And finally, I'd just like to acknowledge an event that took place here in the hall last weekend. It was the free screening of the film *Southern Blast*, produced by the Surfrider Foundation and put on by the Otway Coastal Environment Action Network, which is also known as OCEAN. Lisa Deppeler, who is the founder of OCEAN, spoke after the film about the risks of seismic blasting which is happening on our doorstep in the Otway Basin and why we need to stop it. Anyone interested in learning more can get in touch with OCEAN or the Surfrider Foundation. And that's it from me. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Stapleton and Councillor Bodsworth. Councillor Bodsworth has one more item on behalf of Councillor Allen, who's an apology tonight.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Mayor:

*Cameron and Skye Nugent. Cam's partner, Skye, more than eight years ago was diagnosed with breast cancer. Skye asked him to build their dream home in Lorne as a long-term passion project. Cam was not a builder and had no experience in the field. However, he was tasked with completing the project completely on his own.*

*The pair started the project together and completed the early planning stages before Skye's passing. Facing his grief*

DRAFT Transcript produced by The Captioning Studio  
W: **captioningstudio.com** T: (08) 8463 1639

## Draft Transcript

*head on, Cam took on the project and committed himself completely to the process. This included sleeping in tents and in his car for two years and taking up welding, sewing and bricklaying courses.*

*Eight years later Cam finished the project. He decided to honour Skye and raise money for cancer research by running from the place where he and Skye met in Prahran to Lorne, some 150km. He started the run on Wednesday, the 22nd and arrived the following day in Lorne at 5.15pm surrounded for the last leg by the boys of the Under 18 Lorne Football Team that he coaches on to the Stribling Reserve Oval to be greeted by the Lorne community. Cam set out on the day having raised \$50,000. He ended the day raising \$120,000. He is an amazing role model, not only to the boys that he coaches but to us all. Gary."*

CR PATTISON: Thanks, Councillor Bodsworth. We'll now move on to our public questions. Oh, sorry, actually, we have one more presentation from our CEO, Ms Seymour.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Apologies, Mayor. Hello, everyone, and welcome. I just thought that given we - many of you might have seen with your emergency apps there's been lots of warnings coming through this afternoon around lots of rain that we're expecting in the next couple of days and so there's a couple of things that we thought, given we're here, it's worth mentioning.

One is that our operational teams have organised themselves for tomorrow to be on standby should anything kind of - should they be needed. So from what I can tell, it looks like the bulk of the rain will be at the Lorne end of the shire, but it could come - it is looking like it could come as far as Aireys and Anglesea as part of that. So our teams are ready to respond should they need to should there be any issues.

The other thing that we've had to make a decision about tonight, which is very relevant to each and every one of you here in Aireys Inlet and that was the decision to open the Painkalac Estuary this evening ahead of that weather event and so I have just asked our General Manager of Community Life, Gail Gatt, to just give you a bit of an overview around the rationale and the decision because as we sit here now, our teams are down at the estuary working to open and release water tonight ahead of that rain event tomorrow.

## Draft Transcript

MS GAIL GATT: Thank you, Robyn. Hello, everyone. Great to see you and great to be here tonight. So as Robyn mentioned, we are currently undertaking an artificial opening of the Painkalac Estuary this evening. And I guess just to give you an overview as to how we came to that decision and the factors that we need to consider, we have - and you would most likely all be aware of this, we have around 50 private properties that are at risk along the Painkalac Creek and Council has the challenge of balancing the protection of property and infrastructure and then the impacts of the environment when they decide whether to open the estuary or not.

It's definitely a decision that we don't take lightly and we need to consider a whole range of factors to weigh up in the absence of really conclusive data that we're working to obtain. Those factors are predominantly based on the level of water in the creek and the predicted rainfall and as you might be aware, the water level has been sitting at about 1.9 metres, thereabouts, or actually a little bit over that, for sometime now and it's when it reaches that level that we start to enact our procedure, which is where we start to monitor things really closely to work out whether we should do an opening or not. As Robyn also mentioned, we have a flood watch issued for the Otway Coast and there's potentially 50mm to 100mm of rain forecast for tomorrow and then potentially 40mm to 80mm for Thursday.

So we're in a bit of a predicament in terms of how we manage the estuary and the potential impact of flooding.

So we undertake the opening in consultation with a range of other agencies, the Catchment Management Authority, Barwon Water, GORCAPA, and we have a permit from the Catchment Management Authority to do this and it is recognised at the moment as the best flood mitigation measure, and we also undertake an Emergency Estuary Management Support System Report, which in consultation with the Catchment Management Authority helps us assess the environmental impacts and, you know, factor that into our decision making.

Timing for the opening is particularly complex as that relies on the alignment of a whole range of factors to be successful, so the tides, the tide times, the tide levels, the energy levels of water, the spill from the dam, even the moon comes into the factoring of whether an estuary opening will be successful or not and we use a formula called a hydraulic gradient to calculate whether we will have a successful opening. So the officers definitely are taking a whole range of factors into consideration to work out if we need to do the opening and whether it will be successful and give the outcome that we want, but also will be minimal impact to the environment.

## Draft Transcript

So we needed to do the opening tonight starting at 5pm, so they'll probably almost be through with that. If we waited any longer, the tides and the swell won't be favourable tomorrow morning and access to the beach will be limited because we're also weighing up the needs of the nesting plovers and making sure that we don't have impact on them and so we need access to the beach and we need to work through all the nests.

So we've, yes, factored that in as well, so we need to be able to get down on the sand and if the swell is too high or the tide is too high, we can't do that. So we're always sort of trying to do those calculations to think can we hold off a bit longer or do we need to do it now, when is it going to be right because we don't want to go through the whole process and then not have a successful opening.

Unfortunately, I got a message before to say that one of the hooded - or the hooded nests had failed over the weekend, so that was pretty sad. I'm not sure - you probably all know more about that than I do, but definitely that comes into our consideration as well.

So hopefully that gives you a bit more of an overview of what we work through to work out whether we need to do this or not and make sure we fulfil our obligations, but balance everything in terms of our management.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Gail Gatt. That's much appreciated. We'll now move on to our public question time. Members of the public who wish to ask a question to Council are able to submit their written questions in accordance with Council's Governance Rules and we've had nine community members submit their questions and we have 15 in total to address today. So I will work through those questions.

Many of the questions relate to operational matters and therefore it's best placed for our CEO, Robyn Seymour, to respond to those questions and if people aren't here to read their own question, then I'll read it for them, but obviously if you're here, we'd love you to come up and sit at the table and read your question.

So the first question is from Mat Hines and I don't think Mat is here tonight - no - so I'll read Mat's question. It's regarding public transport and strategy 5 of the Council plan. So, "My question relates to Council's role in advocating for improvements to public transport. Over the past 12 months the Department of Transport has been reviewing the Torquay bus network. The final plan is yet to be released and we don't know when in 2024 it will be introduced. What assurances has Council had that the new network will meet

## Draft Transcript

the needs of Surf Coast residents, workers and visitors, for example, that the reduction in routes to Jan Juc will not result in a reduction of frequency, the requirement for passengers to interchange in Torquay or Marshall will not result in increased travel times, services will operate late into the evening to support our hospitality industry and shift workers, buses will be capable of carrying bikes, as exists elsewhere in Victoria, the Sands route will be retained, a future direct link to Deakin/Epworth, an introduction of a summer timetable (with increased frequencies and additional routes to meet summer demand) and the introduction of a local route for Anglesea will not be ruled out, a review of V/Line services will be undertaken to increase frequency and hours of operation to meet the needs of our coastal townships?" There's quite a lot in that. I'll pass that on to our CEO, Robyn.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Thanks very much, Mat, and we understand that you've made inquiries directly to the Department of Transport and Planning and we hope that through those inquiries you've received some helpful responses.

Here at Council we're waiting for confirmation on the release of the final plan and the introduction of the service changes. We haven't had any specific assurances to those that you highlighted, but we've been told that the community and stakeholder feedback is still being considered along with the inputs of planning for future growth, road network constraints, network gaps, duplications, as well as the Victorian bus plan priorities.

We know that funding for the reform has been allocated through the State Budget for the growth areas of Armstrong Creek and also for Torquay.

When the changes are announced, we'll be able to share any state communications through our communications channels, such as Facebook and also through our pages on the Surf Coast Times, and we'd welcome any other ideas you might have or that you've put to State Government as part of that process. We'll also continue our work to attract funding for active transport infrastructure. We know, Mat, that this is a strong interest of yours and as such, providing a safe cycling connection between central to North Torquay as well as improvements to the Horseshoe Bend Road and Bell Street in Torquay to enable people to connect safely with our bus services.

CR PATTISON: And I probably should have read both of Mat's questions. So I'll read the second question, but we've --

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: I've got ahead of it.

CR PATTISON: Robyn has responded to both of them: "Has Council been advised as to exactly when the new network will be introduced and how does

## Draft Transcript

the council plan to promote the new bus network to residents, workers and visitors in order to work towards strategy 5 of the Council plan making it easier for people to move around in our towns and without relying on cars?" And we've discussed that already around Facebook and the newspaper, and the like. So thank you, Mat, for your question.

We now move on to the next question, by Anne Dansick. Is Anne here tonight? No? I'll read Anne's question. "A concern was sent to the Shire on behalf of the Tourism and Traders Association, a number of local residents and staff at Le Comptoir Restaurant in October regarding trucks turning into the 'Top Shops' carpark. I was witness to a truck hitting the 'No Standing' sign very close to the front wall of Le Comptoir and since this incident have been contacted by other local residents with safety concerns here. A reply from Holly Martin on 8 November stated that 'drivers manoeuvre many times in tight and restricted spaces with the drivers of these vehicles being adept to these conditions'. This is a serious safety issue as large vehicles use the footpath to make the turn and with the busy holiday period approaching, there will be many young children on this pathway, which has no kerbing to define it from the roadway. Customers stepping from the front door of Le Comptoir and the Gin Kitchen are also at risk if they are not vigilant. A wider entry to the carpark, removal of loading zone parks on the right-hand side of the entry, and some kerbing to define the footpath would resolve this problem. The loading zone could be around the corner at the side of Le Comptoir and the General Store." Once again, this is an operational one, so I'll pass it on to Robyn.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Thank you very much, Anne, for your question and there's a number of questions on this topic tonight that we've got coming up, and just to reassure you, safety is absolutely a key priority for all of us as well.

I understand, Anne, that we have previously shared advice with you in relation to Blackwood Lane and so the advice I'll provide tonight is consistent with that previous advice. A road safety engineer has reviewed this location, including completing a vehicle turning movement assessment. This confirmed the current parking arrangements are suitable for trucks to access the loading zone.

We do, however, acknowledge your concerns with regards to the small amount of space for pedestrians. It is tight. However, this is not uncommon for large vehicles to manoeuvre in tight and restricted spaces and drivers of these vehicles are generally pretty skilled and adept to those sorts of conditions. We actually asked for our assessment to be reviewed externally by a risk assessor and they confirmed the same - came back with the same assessment as our engineers in relation to this matter.

## Draft Transcript

Thank you for your suggested improvements and thought that's gone into them. They're really helpful. We looked into them and they too present some difficulties. Widening the entrance, removing the loading bays unfortunately won't assist with movements of vehicles, particularly trucks coming from the south and turning right, which require the full width of the road to turn into the carpark. Moving the loading bay to between Le Comptoir and the General Store would require any trucks parking here to reverse out across the footpath and into the service road to exit, which we think would be considered even more dangerous a manoeuvre.

CR PATTISON: I'll read the next question. The second question from Anne: "Water is still puddling 50ml deep on the driver's side of the vehicles parked at the parallel carpark outside the post office and pharmacy at the Top Shops car park in Aireys Inlet. This puddling after rain has been a concern for many years. Some work has been done. However, there is not an inclination on the right side of the carpark to drain stormwater, which has created this hazard for drivers exiting their vehicle. Concern has also been raised in front of the Eagles Nest Gallery pathway, which also has large puddles after a rainfall."

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Thanks, Anne, for your second question. With regards to the puddling of the water at the Top Shops, work was undertaken to reshape the asphalt in this location in recent years. We have a particular challenge here in that the lack of underground drainage infrastructure means that preventing any puddles would require the installation of significant new infrastructure that makes it very cost prohibitive.

We've got quite a large number of drainage challenges across the shire and as part of that, we're looking at how we address and how we prioritise the work that we do to address some of those priority issues and this one in the scheme of the broader drainage challenges we have is not a high priority in terms of our priority list and so we don't at this time have any plans to address this issue any further.

Thank you for raising the concerns, though, about the drainage issues at the front of Eagles Nest Gallery. We hadn't heard of these issues previously. So our stormwater infrastructure team will investigate this and contact you with a reply once they've been out to have a look at the site.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Our next question is from Caroline Lawrey. Caroline, are you here? No. I'll read Caroline's question: "My question relates to Council's lack of recognition to a potentially significant and dangerous situation on the service road access from the Great Ocean Road left into the

## Draft Transcript

Aireys Top Shop parking and pedestrian area. Why is Council not taking steps to remedy the danger when there has been a number of approaches by concerned residents and many close calls, especially in light of recent tragic events involving casual seating and pedestrian areas and vehicles." Caroline, thank you for your question. As you will have just heard, we've answered that extensively for Anne's and six questions, so I think that's been covered.

We'll now move on to Jacqui Lamont's question. Did you want to come and sit up at the table, Jacqui?

MS JACQUI LAMONT: Thank you. My question is Aireys Inlet is a unique part of the Surf Coast and people choose to live here for the beautiful bushland environment. How does the Council protect this through planning approvals and ensure compliance with planning permits, including land management, and once those permits have been issued, what are the penalties for non-compliance?

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Jacqui.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Thanks, Jackie. It's quite a technical response, but thank you for your question. The character of Aireys Inlet is well recognised within the Surf Coast Planning Scheme through various policies and planning controls. The Environmental Significance Overlay Schedules 1, 4 and 5 covers different parts of Aireys Inlet and requires a planning permit to remove vegetation that contributes to the Aireys Inlet environment. There are also some circumstances where vegetation may be removed without a permit, particularly under the requirements of the Bushfire Management Overlay. Some parts of Aireys Inlet are also managed by environmental land management plans that require the ongoing management of vegetation.

The built form is managed through the Neighbourhood Character Overlay Schedule number 1, which is a control covering Aireys Inlet, Fairhaven and Moggs Creek and specifically tailored to the character of the townships. These provisions include several objectives in regard to siting, height and site coverage to ensure new development is sympathetic to the bushland environment.

In deciding whether it's appropriate to grant a permit, Council considers the various objectives and policies in the scheme. Where our Planning Compliance team discovers non-compliance with a planning permit or agreement, we use the Planning & Environment Act 1987 to enforce compliance. Penalties can vary from infringements, Enforcement Orders, or even prosecutions in the

## Draft Transcript

Magistrate's Court. If you have any concerns about specific properties and their compliance, please report this to Council.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Jacqui. Our next question is from Vayia Kambouris? Vayia, are you here tonight? No? I'll read the question. It's in relation to Aireys Inlet and sealing of Blackwood Lane. "Why is Blackwood Lane the only commercial street in the entire Surf Coast Shire that is an unsealed road? It services 26 individual residents and businesses and Aireys Inlet rate holders pay as much rates as any other ratepayer in the entire Surf Coast Shire."

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Thanks very much for your question, Vayia. Which roads are sealed or unsealed is usually a quirk of history established over a really long period of time. It's worth noting that actually it's not the only street in a similar situation. There's actually one in Winchelsea, where there's a gravel laneway between and behind shops in Winchelsea.

Council does not currently have a program for upgrading existing gravel roads to sealed surface. Requests for such upgrades are usually delivered through special charge schemes where benefiting property owners contribute along with Council to the upgrade of the road. You can find information on these by searching the Special Charge Scheme on Council's website. If you're interested in Council investigating the feasibility of a scheme, we suggest gauging interest with businesses and homeowners in the area and contacting Council to further discuss the issue.

CR PATTISON: And the second question: "Why is Blackwood Lane not regularly maintained, often full of potholes and the dust that the dirt road generates blocks refrigeration motors and damages equipment within these businesses."

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: So Blackwood Lane is characterised as a "Secondary Access Road" in the Road Management Plan and is proactively inspected every six months. Over the past 12 months, our Civil Operations team have undertaken maintenance work on three occasions to fill potholes in the unsealed surface. Two of these occasions arose because of customer requests and the other was identified as part of the proactive inspections. This section of laneways also scheduled to be treated with dust suppression over the summer, which hopefully will help that other issue that you've raised.

CR PATTISON: Thanks for your questions. We'll now move on to Kim Neubecker. Kim, are you here? Great.

## Draft Transcript

MS KIM NEUBECKER: Right. Aireys Inlet residents welcome the active engagement of Surf Coast Shire that they have had with residents regarding the Painkalac River. This has involved investigating the impact of estuary openings and in the last year conducting water testing at four sites on the estuary to determine if enterococci is present. The results of this monitoring and analysis by the EPA are now in and the Shire's one recommendation, based on only part of the EPA summary, is to erect signage on two sites on River and Beach Roads advising people that it is a health risk to use the river for recreation after rain for recreation.

Is Council aware that the data in the results showed that at these two sites enterococci levels were six times identified as far above the allowable standards for recreational water use in both wet and dry conditions - ie, no recent rain? Given this, does Council agree that it would therefore be misleading to put up signs implying that it was only unsafe to swim in the estuary and river after rain events? Is Council also aware that the EPA made a further recommendation in their report that microbial source testing be done to establish the source of the contaminants and that this recommendation has been overlooked by the shire? Do you want me to go into question 2?

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: We'll deal with that question first. Thank you for your question. This is a really complex topic and whilst I'll respond tonight, I also want to ensure you're provided with a more detailed written response because there's a lot of elements to this.

So yes, Council is aware that some of the results obtained exceeded their enterococci levels in both wet and dry conditions. The recommendation to erect signage to discourage fishing and primary contact recreation for 48 hours after rainfall was provided by a water scientist expert within the EPA Victoria. Since the test findings we've reached out to all the stakeholders, including the CCMA, Barwon Water, DEECA and the EPA to determine the next steps.

The recommendation to do microbial source testing has not been overlooked by Council. Microbial source testing is an expensive exercise and a key consideration for Council prior to committing to costly investigative work is to better understand the cost versus the benefit. This needs to be carefully considered given that the estuary water testing undertaken this year provided results which are consistent with what would be expected to be found in a water system like this. Seeking information from key stakeholders will assist Council to determine the next steps. So when I say "key stakeholders", I'm talking about Barwon Water, CCMA, DEECA, so all of our partners in terms of the work that we do around the estuary and the river.

## Draft Transcript

MS KIM NEUBECKER: So the next part - we acknowledge that a number of agencies have responsibility for the Painkalac River. In its role as the agency responsible for the human health of residents and visitors, is Council aware that the Shire, with Barwon Water's support, initially agreed to microbial source testing, environmental DNA testing of the Painkalac to establish the origin of any potential contamination? Although promised this has not been implemented. If the environmental DNA test results show that the E. coli is avian, human health is not at risk. On the other hand, if the results show human E. coli, it may indicate something like a sewage leak, in which case action will be warranted. Can Council commit as a matter of urgency, and in coordination with Friends of the Painkalac, to recommence this summer and conduct ongoing regular testing both for enterococci and its microbial source until we can clearly establish the origins of the contamination? We are available to assist as volunteers in whatever way possible. This is important for residents, visitors and the economic brand of the town and shire. Council has a duty of care to determine the source of the contamination and not knowingly allow the public to potentially be at a health risk.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: So Council is aware that Barwon Water agreed to fund water sampling in the Painkalac last year. This was completed on 15 June 2022 and all results were satisfactory. Council made a commitment to undertake this preliminary sampling program with a potential outcome being to advocate to other State Government agencies for funding or support to do any further studies if they agree that it's needed. The responsibility of the health of the estuary is a shared one and not Council's alone. Council has demonstrated a commitment to the testing undertaken. Seeking further assistance from other stakeholder agencies will be explored given Council's limited budget. Council officers will continue to engage with the other agencies to confirm what options are available.

MS KIM NEUBECKER: Thanks.

CR PATTISON: Thank you for your question and coming along tonight. Our next question is from Anthony Turnbull. Anthony, are you here tonight? No? I'll read out Anthony's question. It's in relation to Aireys Inlet and sealing of roads in Aireys Inlet. "The current state of certain streets and roads in Aireys Inlet is fairly average. Would it be more financially logical to seal certain streets, as opposed to constantly grading and doing repair work on an ongoing basis, which has been the process for the last 30 years?"

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Thanks, Anthony, for your question. It's a really good question. Long-term maintenance costs of sealed roads is generally less than that of unsealed roads, but the upfront cost of sealing roads is a significant

## Draft Transcript

barrier given the long-term funding challenges that Council has. Council does not currently have a program for upgrading the existing gravel roads to a sealed surface, but as mentioned previously, we'd consider requests for upgrades through a Special Charge Scheme.

We also understand that there's strong views about sealed roads in Aireys and AIDA have shared the community survey results with us which suggest that most people support retention of the unsealed roads as a vital part of the character of the town. If the survey results doesn't reflect community views, it would be really useful to understand this.

CR PATTISON: And a second question: "Is there any other town in the Surf Coast Shire that has an unsealed section in its main shopping precinct, Blackwood Lane Aireys Inlet"?

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: So I sort of mentioned this earlier, but there is a similar situation in Winchelsea, where there's a laneway between and behind the shops that's gravel. Similarly to Blackwood Lane, this Lane is primarily for service vehicles and doesn't have shops fronting on to it.

CR PATTISON: Thanks for the question. And Jane Grant, are you here?

MS JANE GRANT: I'm here, but I'm happy for you to read it.

CR PATTISON: Sure, no worries. Thanks for putting in a question. So here's Jane's question: "The gravel roads in Aireys Inlet and Fairhaven are in a poor condition leading into the busy summer period. I have been advised that the maintenance schedule will allow for this maintenance to be done within 60 days, that is, by 25 January. This will mean some roads will be dangerous and very damaging to all vehicles. I'm particularly concerned about the condition of Boundary Road and Gilbert Street, but there are numerous other roads in similar condition. Can these roads be prioritised for much-needed maintenance"?

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Jane, thank you for your question. You'll be pleased to hear that actually those roads are scheduled to be graded next week - yes. And that isn't just because we're coming here, just to be clear. They were already scheduled to be done next week. But you're right. Under the Road Management Plan, it defines hazards and defects for roads and specifies when intervention is required. For corrugations in unsealed roads, intervention is required when the depth is greater than 35mm along a road length of greater than 300 metres. The timeframe in our Road Management Plan for works to be completed is 60 days.

## Draft Transcript

When officers contact residents, they tend to advise that the Road Management Plan says it's 60 days that we've got that's the deadline for delivering the works. But generally they will endeavour to undertake the works as soon as possible prior to the deadline and currently we're doing pretty well with our grading and we've only got - we're only averaging about three to four weeks from when we find there's a problem to attend to grading jobs. But the average timeframe is subject to change due to weather conditions. So fingers crossed that with the weather events we've got coming in the next couple of days that our roads hold up well. But I guess because of that, it makes it really difficult to provide residents with an exact date for when the roads will be graded.

We've got an upcoming unsealed road management network review that's being undertaken with our civil operations service level review as part of that and we're hoping that through doing that review that will assist Council to balance our service levels and response times against the available funding. So we're hoping that will be really helpful in terms of informing any opportunities to adjust the way we currently manage our unsealed road network. But thanks for your question.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Stapleton directed a few of us to drive down Boundary Road on our way here, so a few of us experienced the corrugations as we came into the meeting today. So it's good to hear that it will be graded soon. Our next question is from Corinne Nigro. Corinne, are you here?

MS CORINNE NIGRO: Yes.

CR PATTISON: Great. Hello.

MS CORINNE NIGRO: First question, the proposed Anglesea mountain bike trail network is expected to contribute many millions of dollars per year to the local economy. Can the Council advise what's being done to make the proposal a reality and what Business Anglesea and the Anglesea community can do to help?

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Thanks for your question, Corinne. So the Anglesea mountain bike trail network features as one of Council's advocacy priorities in recognition of the economic and social benefits of the project. In partnership with stakeholders, we've produced an investment prospectus which perhaps you've seen for the trails network and shared this with potential funding partners and bodies. We've also applied for several government grants to

## Draft Transcript

undertake the necessary planning work, but to date these applications unfortunately haven't been successful.

We're really grateful for the offer of assistance to advocate for the project. Letters of support detailing the in-kind support, trail maintenance, et cetera, and benefit to Anglesea businesses when applications are being submitted are always really well received by the funding bodies and officers will be in touch with you when the applications are being submitted because it would be great if you were able to provide some support for that.

In advocating for the project, it's important we're mindful of working in close collaboration with the other agencies as Council doesn't own or manage the land in question, but obviously we've been doing quite a lot of advocacy over the last number of years really to try to progress the trails. Thanks for your question.

MS CORINNE NIGRO: Thank you. And another. Just about the budget. Anglesea contributes to 25% of the rates and receives only 3% of Council funding. Can you please explain how the funding is allocated in comparison to other Surf Coast towns?

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Thanks for your second question. An understanding of the rate contribution in a particular location is one of several important considerations when Council's budget is developed each year. It's also worth mentioning that the budget is allocated to new projects, asset renewal, programs and services such as arts, recreation and early years services. These service allocations are usually not described in our budget by ward, but they're an important investment we make in Anglesea Ward and you'll be aware of the kinder and other kind of services that we provide in Anglesea.

Another budget indicator is our asset distribution by ward, which indicates the proportion of Council assets relative to the rates and rates assessments in different wards at the end of a respective financial year. The indicator represents a good reflection of investments of funds over time and likely future demand for asset renewal. In Anglesea Ward it's 17% of Council assets.

An important piece of work that will inform future budgets in the development of our future budget is the community action plan for Anglesea, which will help us align investment with community aspirations. That work is on our current work plan for this year and subject to the engagement findings, that will really inform our future kind of prioritisation of the investment.

## Draft Transcript

In addition to that, we're currently doing engagement on the community and health hub in Anglesea, which may also create, depending on the outcome of that consultation and where that project lands, a pathway of project funding worth \$40 million. Some of the projects completed recently or well under way in Anglesea ward include the Anglesea Netball Pavilion redevelopment, Sparrow Avenue drainage and road upgrade, Coogoorah Park Nature Reserve boardwalk renewal, a major drainage investigation program for Aireys Inlet and Anglesea, and improvements to the award-winning Anglesea Retail Shed that Councillor Bodsworth was talking about earlier. The current budget provides more than \$320,000 for new projects and \$347,000 for renewal projects in the Anglesea ward. But thank you for your question.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. There were lots of great questions and lots of detailed answers, so thank you. Thank you, everyone, for your patience and listening. I hope you got something out of those questions. And that brings our public question time to an end.

We'll now move on to the items on our agenda. So first up we have the petitions. We have received one petition and one joint letter for this meeting. Firstly, we have a petition at agenda item 2.1. This petition is requesting that Council does not grant a Planning Permit to 23/0362 for 310 Grossmans Road Torquay regarding native vegetation removal and the subdivision of the land into five lots. We have a recommendation before us. Do I have a mover of a motion? Councillor Hodge - is that as per the recommendation?

CR HODGE: Yes, thank you.

CR PATTISON: And seconded by Councillor Gazzard. Would you like to speak?

CR HODGE: Just quickly to table the report, which is part of the process on petitions, and that that petition will be used as a submission towards the planning process in the future. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Gazzard? No. Would any other Councillors like to speak to this petition? Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. I'll try to be brief, but there's a bit to get through. 722 total signatories; 127 signatories from overseas, or 17%; less than 150 from the Surf Coast, or 20%; and just over 400 from Victoria more broadly, totalling about 55%. But unless I'd raised these numbers that were redacted, you'd think it would have more local support.

## Draft Transcript

The property owner should have the right to use their land as they see fit, including decisions related to development and vegetation removal. Any intervention by Council should be minimal and respect individual property rights. I think environmental stewardship is important, but I'd argue that the free market can often address these more efficiently than government intervention.

While I appreciate the democratic process, we should uphold the sanctity of private property rights. The property owner has the right to decide on the use of their private land. The petition, while well intentioned, introduces a level of government involvement that may infringe on these rights. Let us consider if the free market and property rights can better address these concerns without resorting to additional regulation or intervention by government.

Lastly, if the non-conforming format of petitions continues to be allowed to be accepted, I'll be moving that we move to amend the Governance Rules to allow petitions to be submitted in any format that the lead petitioner decides.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Hodge, do you have any closing remarks?

CR HODGE: No, thank you.

CR PATTISON: Councillor Wellington, would you like to speak to the petition?

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you. I'd just like to - the people who signed the petition who are watching, I don't know how the free market will protect those trees (inaudible) native vegetation. So I do think there's a role for a planning intervention for environmentally significant overlay.

But I do think if people signed this petition, they should perhaps be aware that (inaudible) planning process if they put in an individual submission, if this is a really important issue to people locally, that they should put in a submission as well as sign a petition. I think that they perhaps should realise that a petition is effectively - doesn't give them the same rights to speak during the planning process as does an individual submission.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. No closing remarks, Councillor Hodge?

CR HODGE: No.

CR PATTISON: We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And opposed? And the motion is carried.

## Draft Transcript

We now move on to item 2.2, which is a joint letter requesting the Surf Coast Shire Council work with relevant authorities and entities to provide for a safe passage for students from local schools, Christian College Geelong - Surf Coast Campus and Bellbrae Primary School, and community members to ride and walk safely to and from school, including crossing the Great Ocean Road. We have a recommendation before us. Do I have a mover? Councillor Gazzard - as per the recommendation? And seconded, Councillor Hodge. Councillor Gazzard, would you like to speak?

CR GAZZARD: Thank you, just that this is - a larger petition on this issue went to State Government and this is just a smaller addition, so I thank the community for advocating. This is a - that area of the Great Ocean Road is quite - although the speed limits have changed recently to 60 and 40 during school time, still a lot of cars go quite fast down that way and so to make this more safe for pedestrians and children crossing I do think is really worth advocating for, so thanks to the petition team.

CR PATTISON: Councillor Hodge.

CR HODGE: Oh, just quickly, the work that some of these women have put into this petition and also the work behind it on the ridgeline has been absolutely terrific and looking forward to working in the future with that group and to see what we can progress along that pathway. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Would any other Councillors like to speak? Councillor Bodsworth.

CR BODSWORTH: Very quickly, just to say how much I have appreciated this, the ridgeline trail proposal between Bellbrae and Jan Juc and also this letter and the intent of the recommendation here. Yes, I think it's particularly important for communities to get involved in this way and advocate strongly for things that they believe in, including active transport and cycling and walking connections.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Wellington, would you like to speak? You're on mute, Councillor Wellington.

CR WELLINGTON: Oh, am I there?

CR PATTISON: Yes, we can hear you, yes.

## Draft Transcript

CR WELLINGTON: I read this primarily as a joint letter or petition around safety of children trying to get to school and I was interested to see that Bellbrae Primary School is included in it because I've also been approached by residents of School Road in Bellbrae, who are really concerned about parking and driving and safety of children in the context and I've been down there to have a look at school time and it is completely chaotic. The school has grown from a tiny little rural school really into a big - a school which is attracting children from Torquay and Jan Juc I think because it's a great little school, but the traffic problems are unbelievable.

The parents there are keen to adopt the same approach and I really commend these parents for the view they've taken about how these problems can be solved and it's really an issue that affects the school council, the police, the local community and the parents and our council and I see our council as being a facilitator of those kinds of round table meetings that actually can come up with solutions.

And we can't sort of note this as - anything that deals with safety, public safety, to my mind has to take a very high priority for this Council. I mean, whenever I see something like this, I think how would I feel, you know, if in six months or a year or even next week a child was killed trying to get to school, and that would be an absolute disaster.

So I see this as a huge priority for Council. I congratulate the Council for putting together the idea, not just the petitioning Council to do something, but saying we actually need a collaborative approach (inaudible) and I would like to see the same approach at Bellbrae, for Bellbrae Primary School in School Road. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Any closing remarks?

CR BARKER: A question. Would this issue have been resolved by now if the Spring Creek development approved in 2017 wasn't interfered with?

CR PATTISON: I'll put that question to our CEO.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: It has an impact on the planning permit for and the requirements of the school, but now the solution, it wouldn't have been - it would depend - no, it's still part of a process that we need to - the solution might be slightly different now, but it wouldn't have been resolved by now.

CR PATTISON: Thank you.

## Draft Transcript

CR BARKER: I just want to get a solution to this problem sorted ASAP. Based on my understanding of the Spring Creek development, the problem would have been solved, but the save Spring Creek program has created a tradeoff causing the delay here, based on my understanding.

CR PATTISON: We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour - did you want to speak, Councillor Schonfelder?

CR SCHONFELDER: Is there right of reply?

CR PATTISON: Oh, Kate has already said she didn't want to, but thank you for following up. We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And all those opposed. Great. That motion is carried, and a shoutout to the people that have come down from Torquay Jan Juc for this petition that was tabled. It's great to see you here, so thank you for coming along.

We'll now move on to our notices of motion. We have received one notice of motion for this meeting. This notice of motion is proposing that Council joins the Mayoral Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum as a General Member council fulfilling the requirements of such membership as outlined in the terms of reference. Do we have a mover of the motion?

CR HODGE: I'm happy to move.

CR PATTISON: Councillor Hodge. And a seconder? Councillor Bodsworth. Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: Mayor, I also support the notice of motion, but I'd like to propose an amendment that has been put forward to me by the local Aireys Inlet Rural Australians for Refugees, otherwise known as AIRAR. Would you like me to read the amendment out?

CR PATTISON: That would be good, thanks. Actually, Governance, can we get that - so yes, Councillor Stapleton, if you read it and then we'll get it up.

CR STAPLETON: So the original motion is "that Council joins the Mayoral Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum as a General Member Council fulfilling the requirements of such membership as outlined in the terms of reference at attachment 1" and the amendment I'm proposing is to add point 2, which is "that Council supports Aireys Inlet Rural Australians for Refugees in its advocacy, calling on the Federal Government to stop the fast-track refugee determination process and establish a thorough and fair review process."

## Draft Transcript

CR PATTISON: Thank you for raising that amendment, Councillor Stapleton. I'll now ask our mover and seconder if they support that amendment. Councillor Hodge?

CR HODGE: Yes, I do.

CR PATTISON: And Councillor Bodsworth? Thank you. So the substantive nom is with that additional - the nom is with that additional second point. We'll move on to Councillor Hodge if you'd like to speak.

CR HODGE: Yes, thank you, Mayor. When the Mayor came to me wanting to join this taskforce, I was in great admiration for her because she's got a huge heavy workload and she wanted to join this and one of my roles is to support the Mayor in matters that she would like to do. The history of RAR in Torquay and the Surf Coast in 2003 it was Glenda Shomaly, the Councillor then, that joined us up with the Refugee Council of Australia to become a welcome zone for refugees and the signs went up in Torquay in about 2004 and I think Aireys Inlet demanded they had a sign too and I think it was Councillor E Fisher back about 10 years ago, I think, that the sign at Aireys Inlet went up. So I hope I'm right with those dates of Aireys Inlet.

Look, being on the RAR of Torquay, we were very active in the early days, especially when there were children on Manus and Nauru and we were very, very active in that. Unfortunately, just recently we lost one of the founding members, Jan Hale, and Laura Connor stepped down from her role in the Community House.

So the Torquay RAR sort of faded away a little bit, but what was so exciting and so pleasant to read is all the work that the Aireys Inlet group do and I really appreciate what you do and some of those causes and some of those projects that you do are just really, really humanitarian and fantastic to see. The shire has also supported the Aireys Inlet group with grants, I think \$2,500 for a refugee initiative and \$2,500 to the Uniting Church for the great work they do at Aireys Inlet.

As I said, the Mayor is extremely busy, but this is something she wanted to do. The actual cost is a \$500 membership and if we haven't budgeted for that, which I don't think we have, we can look at the transfer from accumulated unallocated funds, if I can get that out, to make sure that she can do this. She's got another nine months to go and we'd join as a general member. And if you look at the report, it goes through all the different priorities that this group wants to do and I think that the amendment that Councillor Stapleton

## Draft Transcript

added, which was the Aireys Inlet priority 2, is part of their priorities. So we're working in unison with you and with this group.

So I hope the Mayor does get the support to do this because I think not only will it put Surf Coast in a higher bracket and there's 38 other shires around Australia and it's growing, so I'd really like to see Surf Coast Shire part of that growing group of the problems that are still occurring with our refugees and the governments that we rely on. But I really do hope that this is supported tonight because I think the Mayor would be a very, very worthy chairperson - or not a chairperson, no doubt she'll work her way up, but a person on that committee to have our voices and especially the voices of Aireys Inlet and Torquay people and I think at one stage Winchelsea tried to get a refugee group up too. So there is a smattering of great support throughout the shire and I really hope that the Councillors around the table support our Mayor tonight. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Bodsworth.

CR BODSWORTH: I don't have much to add, Mayor. I just agree with Councillor Hodge and I support this based on the report in the agenda and I also hope that the Mayor gets to represent our Council on this taskforce. Thanks.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: Thanks, Mayor. I also support the motion for Council to join the Mayoral Taskforce and hope that fellow Councillors will support it with the amendment that I proposed to support AIRAR in its advocacy to achieve fairer outcomes for refugees and specifically to abolish the fast-track refugee process, which appears to be anything but fast or fair.

The amendment is consistent with the strategic priorities outlined in the terms of reference for the Mayoral Taskforce and will show support for an important advocacy and action group in our community. AIRAR has operated in the Surf Coast for almost 10 years, so you were right there, Councillor Hodge, initiated by a small group of local residents who came together in 2014 to advocate against the policy for offshore detention and determined to make a difference where they could and when they could.

They have an average of 18 people still attending every regular monthly meeting, with about 35 active members and a mailing list of over 300 addresses.

## Draft Transcript

The fact that AIRAR still exists so strongly today highlights the need for ongoing advocacy of issues in relation to the treatment of asylum seekers and refugees in this country. With the displacement of so many people in the world now due to war and even more expected with the impending impacts of climate change and global warming, we know that millions more people are set to become refugees. Countries like Australia and communities like the Surf Coast have to address this reality with a spirit of generosity and compassion, and I took those words from the leader - one of the local leaders of AIRAR, Mary Bremner, who spoke recently at a film fundraiser.

AIRAR has undertaken significant efforts to improve the lives of refugees in our community. As Councillor Hodge mentioned, the RAR work in Torquay has done similar. In Aireys, they've connected with refugee groups who are living in our region, they've hosted picnic days and weekends, they provide moral support to people in detention, they contribute to Foodbank, run volunteer-led English language classes for refugees and fundraise through regular market stalls, book launches and film screenings.

During the COVID lockdowns, they raised enough money to support the release of two refugees from detention, affording them a new life in the US, and they've raised tens of thousands of dollars to support scholarships for refugee students and legal expenses for refugees seeking to extend their visas.

Most recently, they undertook their biggest and boldest project to date, supporting one of two refugee families to come from overseas and actually start a new life in Aireys Inlet through the Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot Program, known as CRISPP. The settled family is from Barundi and has spent the past eight years in a refugee camp in Kenya and the second family is sponsored by the Uniting Church, who are from Venezuela and have been living as refugees in Trinidad for four years. They have also been able to securely relocate to Aireys Inlet.

I'm so personally grateful and proud that people in our community are willing to volunteer so much of their time and money to support refugees and asylum seekers and supporting this motion tonight is one small step that Council can take to support their efforts and do what we can while we can to support this important work. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Would any other Councillors like to speak?  
Councillor Barker.

CR BARKER: Firstly, I have much empathy for those who seek a better life in Australia, regardless of how they want to get here, but it appears that an

## Draft Transcript

outdated template for this motion has been used as it references section 32 of the Governance Rules when it should reference section 35. Now, I know officers work hard, but I'm concerned if we can't get this correct, what else is wrong?

Then we go to the last line on page 32 of this meeting's agenda, "Surf Coast Shire has no strategic commitment or focus in this area, so participation in an officer working group at this point is unlikely to be possible without adjustments in priorities or allocation of additional resources". To me, this reads it is not in our remit and we can't do this unless we shift focus and ongoing funding away from basic services like road maintenance. You have to remember that there are no perfect solutions and with every choice there comes tradeoffs.

I'll be brief by not getting into the weeds of this item, but I'd like to look at this topic strategically. Is asylum seeker and refugee programs really in the remit of Council? I don't think so. We have working families in the Surf Coast who cannot put food on the table to feed their families who will be paying for this program. I don't think that's fair, just or reasonable.

If you want to fund this through voluntarily sourced funds, go for it, all the power to you, but I think we need to stop causing more pain for those who are already under significant pressure. I invite fellow Councillors to join me in opposing the motion if you respect the funds of all ratepayers.

CR PATTISON: Would any other Councillors like to speak to the motion?  
Councillor Wellington?

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you. Can I ask if you can hear me okay?

CR PATTISON: Yes, we can hear you fine.

CR WELLINGTON: I'm having problems with hearing others, so --

CR PATTISON: We can hear you loud and clear.

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you. Look, I won't vote for this. I'm with Councillor Barker on this point, unsurprisingly. Councillor Hodge says she hopes it passes. I'm sure she's very confident it will be and I'm very confident it will be too, but I have to stand up and say no.

Look, you know, this is not within the realm of Council's responsibilities. The people who work in these groups are admirable, commendable, wonderful and

## Draft Transcript

I have been involved in that sort of action in the past. In fact, earlier on as a Winchelsea ward candidate we organised and I've been involved in organising a forum on refugees in Winchelsea and Julian Burnside came down and spoke and it was amazing the community concern and compassion and willingness to help. So there's no question that that's a positive thing.

But we're here as a Council spending ratepayers funds, as Councillor Barker said. It's not - if we'd done the work locally, then we could look abroad a bit to see what else we can involve ourselves in as an organisation and a refugee advocacy taskforce would be no doubt interesting. But we at the moment are operating - we have 42% satisfaction in the Winchelsea ward with consultation and engagement by this Council. 60% - nearly 60% of people don't think we're doing it well. We have 45% satisfaction with decisions made in the interests of the community, 44% satisfaction with the condition of sealed roads, and unsealed roads 34% satisfaction with maintenance. There's a massive amount of work to do locally in our core business areas.

Refugee status determination processes and access to appropriate supports are obviously issues for the Federal Government and the community should and does get involved to advocate and to play their part and I really commend that and each of us as individual Councillors can do that as well. But this is another example of this Council deviating from what it was elected to do. Nobody in our community would have thought I think when they voted for this Council that they were electing us to go and advocate for refugees, to advocate to Canberra for refugees.

It's not about supporting a local interest group. It's not about supporting the Mayor to do something that she wants to do, it's about what are we here for? And if we can't get the basics right, and we're not, I believe, at the moment, we shouldn't be doing those other things, spending other people's money on those other things.

The community perception of the direction of Council's overall performance this year was raised at an all-time low, with a score of 46. It's been going down for a decade. It's been declining for a decade and it continued to decline in the last survey. 18% of people in this municipality believe Council's overall direction has deteriorated in the last 12 months. And what I hear from the community over and over is this Council is focusing on things which are not its business. Get the basics right. It's not just roads, rates and rubbish, as Councillor Hodge often says, it's planning, it's complaint management, it's flashing and keeping maintenance of laneways and nature strips, et cetera --

CR PATTISON: I'll get you to finish up there, Councillor Wellington.

DRAFT Transcript produced by The Captioning Studio  
W: **captioningstudio.com** T: (08) 8463 1639

## Draft Transcript

CR WELLINGTON: I will not support this. It's just another example of going beyond our scope. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you.

CR SCHONFELDER: Mayor, I'd like to speak, please.

CR PATTISON: Sure, Councillor Schonfelder.

CR SCHONFELDER: I'd like to say that I met an Iraqi migrant who told me that his family lived in Baghdad and an hour before the - well, an hour before the planes came and bombed Baghdad, all the dogs started barking because they could hear the planes come in. And I'd just like to draw Council's attention to the outlay for this, which is \$500, and I'm more than happy to donate \$100 myself towards it. Oh, thank you. And I'm quite confident my colleagues would be interested in helping too.

I'd just like to make one comment, a saying I like, and that is "the value of compassion, there's no price it can bring". Thank you, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Gazzard.

CR GAZZARD: Yes, thank you. I'll support this motion and I congratulate Mayor Liz Pattison for bringing it to us. I think it's really admirable.

I think that - not taking anything away from individual families' difficulties and cost of living crisis and all of that, but we live in one of the luckiest places in the world and to not fear for your life daily, to not have the uncertainty of where you and your family will live is something that we don't even need to consider because we're not in a war and we don't - we're not seeking refuge. So I think as citizens of the world, it is our duty to support people who are seeking asylum.

I've worked in the refugee clinic, the immigrant health clinic in Geelong for paediatrics, and seeing what these kids have been through, the trauma that they have not only from the war or whatever they're escaping in their home countries, but from living for years in detention is something that no child should go through and I think if we can do anything to help prevent that and speed up that process, then we should.

One of the things that this taskforce is advocating for are abolishing temporary visas and replacing them with permanent protection visas and pathways to

## Draft Transcript

citizenship, which I think is a key part of helping refugees on their journey. We see - they come here and they're granted these temporary visas and they're not allowed to work or really participate in the community, which what kind of life is that if you're not really part of the community? So I think this is part of Council's role in advocating for everyone in this community and that includes future members. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Councillor Hodge, do you have any closing?

CR HODGE: Yes. Our Council plan talks about inclusiveness and this is part of it. I think we should be looking at the global, but let's look at how we can do it locally and I think this is it. \$500 isn't a lot, or now 400 - thanks for that, Councillor Schonfelder. But it's all about just being respectful. The Mayor would like to do it. It's her time and I'm sure she will put the Surf Coast voice out there with all the other voices of different areas of Australia and shires and I think it will be a very strong voice and I wish her well if it does get up. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And all those opposed. And the motion is carried 6-2. Thank you.

We'll now move on to the reports for the Council meeting. So our first item is the Reconciliation Action Plan - Reflect. The purpose of this report is for Council to consider adopting the Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan December 2023 to December 2024 and to note the change in requirements for citizenship ceremonies. Do I have a mover of a motion? Councillor Stapleton. And a seconder? Councillor Bodsworth. Would you like to speak to the motion, Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: I will, thank you, Mayor. I'd firstly like to start by acknowledging the First Nations people in our commune and noting that the care that they and their ancestors have given to nurturing the land, sky and waters for thousands of years is the reason we all get to enjoy, to live and work and play on this country today, so thank you.

This motion is asking Council to adopt the Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan for December 2023 to 2024 and also notes that there is no longer a requirement to hold a citizenship ceremony on 26 January. Council will now hold its January citizenship ceremony on the 25th next year and will continue to schedule other ceremonies throughout the year as required.

The Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, or RAP, has been in progress for most of this Council term and I'm so proud to present it here tonight for our

## Draft Transcript

community to see. The development of Council's RAP over the past two and a half years hasn't just been about producing a document. It has been a period of learning and deep listening with traditional owners and First Nations people in our community so that we can present a plan that accurately reflects where Surf Coast Shire Council is as an organisation and where it wants to be.

Council formally committed to reconciliation in May 2021, making a statement to launch our reconciliation journey and a commitment to follow the four stages of reconciliation Australia's RAP framework, which includes Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate. The first stage, Reflect, is the plan we are presenting tonight.

When we made our commitment to reconciliation back in May 2021, it was accompanied by a statement which I'd like to share in part with you tonight. It says: "Our Council acknowledges that past and current laws, government policies, actions and attitudes have caused, and continue to cause, great pain, grief and suffering for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We feel and express deep sorrow that these actions and attitudes have occurred and continue to occur and we are determined to work with the registered traditional owner corporations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the community to acknowledge truths, address wrongs, and bring about positive change towards true reconciliation, ensuring they are not repeated. We are committed to reconciliation. That commitment is founded on respect and we recognise a need to grow our understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, one of the oldest living cultures in the world." That was the statement.

Council has stepped up over the past three years as leaders in reconciliation in our community. We've acknowledged that 26 January is not a date to celebrate and earlier this year Council declared its support for the Voice to Parliament. We know that the majority of our Surf Coast community was supportive of this too.

On 26 January this year, we supported the Pilk Purriyn truth-telling event in Cosy Corner in Torquay and Council has hosted a range of events to acknowledge and celebrate our First Nations community and culture. More recently, Council engaged with Wadawurrung on land management at Djarrk, known to many of us as Bells Beach, and worked with community to create a structure plan for Moriac that represents a new model in strategic planning at the Surf Coast, with acknowledgment of the First Peoples and the history of place beyond European settlement.

## Draft Transcript

There has also been a concerted campaign of cultural education and awareness raising for Councillors and staff, for which I'm personally extremely grateful. It's been such a privilege to be part of this journey toward better understanding and building of relationships with our First Nations people.

There is still much work to be done and this Reflect RAP provides us with a roadmap to progress this journey in partnership with Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar registered Aboriginal parties. There are 17 actions within the Reflect RAP clearly identifying the work that Council will commit to as part of our reconciliation journey. I encourage residents to read the plan and consider what we would like to achieve as a community.

Council will continue to be guided by the principles of the community vision and Council plan and we look forward to continuing to listen and deepen our understanding of First Nations perspectives, history and culture so that together as a community we can achieve a more respectful and equal future.

And before I finish, I'd just like to acknowledge local Surf Coast resident and artist Gerard Black, who is a proud Worimi man and created the artwork that appears on the front cover of our Reflect RAP. You can read more about his inspiration and meaning in the RAP, but I'd just like to share a short quote from Gerard with you, which I believe would resonate with many in our community. He said, "At the heart of reconciliation lies the discovery that we all truly share the same common goal of protecting, healing and connecting our Wadawurrung, Gulidjan and Gadubanud countries, returning to becoming one with our natural environment and ensuring a sustainable future for generations to come." I don't think anyone could argue that that as a common goal and aspiration for our community is worth striving for. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Stapleton. Councillor Bodsworth.

CR BODSWORTH: Mayor, I'll reserve my right to speak, thanks.

CR PATTISON: Would any other Councillors like to speak to the motion? Councillor Barker.

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. I respect people regardless of the colour of their skin and accept responsibility for my actions, but I acknowledge that previous generations have made some pretty poor choices of how they've interacted with one another. These actions I won't accept responsibility for.

The result of the recent referendum shows that there are a majority of local residents prepared to address Indigenous reconciliation at any cost, including

## Draft Transcript

creating a two-tiered society based on who one's parents are. I'm all for addressing disadvantage by creating resilience, as opposed to fostering and growing victim groups.

What's even more concerning for me is that there are Indigenous Australians who don't want to be treated like victims, but are uncomfortable speaking out of fear of being ostracised by their cultural community. I think this plan seeks to maintain this ostracism.

I'm all for an inclusive society of shared values, such as respect, stability, compassion and resilience. What your race, religion, socioeconomic, sex, gender, marital status or political preferences are should not change how you're treated by government. If there is strong support for this plan, I encourage the community to crowd source the funds and then we can have a discussion.

At the heart of this motion is for Council to cancel Australia Day citizenship ceremonies. For decades new citizens have had the opportunity to become Australian citizens on our national day of celebration. Whatever you think of that day is a federal matter and not for us to get involved with. If this motion passes, we'll be removing this opportunity for future ceremonies to occur on this day.

Now, I'm not a nationalist, I'm a humanist, but if you want to play around with federal matters, please go get elected to Federal Parliament or speak to your local federal MP or Senator. We here in Council should be focused on looking after the roads, both sealed and unsealed, as has been raised as a local issue, dealing with rubbish well, and reducing the rates at every available opportunity. This plan does none of that and if it passes, it will mean that these basics receive less resources allocated to them, making them worse and therefore does not receive my support.

CR HODGE: Mayor, can I ask just a point of clarification? I think Councillor Barker said we were cancelling the Australia Day, but isn't there a directive now from the Federal Government that you don't have to have Australia Day ceremonies, so it is a federal direction?

CR PATTISON: That's correct, Councillor Hodge, yes.

CR HODGE: Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Would you like to speak to the motion, Councillor Hodge?

## Draft Transcript

CR HODGE: Not yet.

CR PATTISON: Councillor Wellington? We can't hear you. You're on mute.

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you. I think this highlights again the difference in the belief of Councillors around the table about what we're here for. Somehow the process that Council undertook to develop its Council plan for this term led to First Nations reconciliation being the first priority seen in the plan. I don't think that reflects our community's views. I think most people, many people in Winchelsea community simply don't understand how that happened and I don't think it's their priorities. As a Councillor, I can honestly say no community member has ever approached me with a request for Council to develop a RAP.

So it's not that they don't support reconciliation, they do and they're very genuine in their commitment to First Nations people and other Australians walking together to a positive future, very much so, and people do recognise the injustices and problems of the past, but it's about what we're here for, and as I think Councillor Barker said very eloquently, please go and talk to your federal politician and get advocacy groups going, but don't put this in the name of Surf Coast ratepayers. We haven't even spoken to them.

We've got about 200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who live in the Surf Coast community. The Eastern Maar Corporation, which represents some of them at least, gives a very cool endorsement to this plan and it says that it does not favour RAPs over other policy and procedure works, such as Aboriginal employment strategies. So it's not strongly endorsed even by the Aboriginal Maar Corporation.

We don't know what the 200 individuals in our community who are Indigenous think about this, but we certainly don't know what the 38,400 other residents in our community think about it because this is the first plan that I can recall for a long time that hasn't been put out for community consultation and I think that's really sad that we feel we can commit people in our community to a process that theoretically involves them. There's not reconciliation between Council and the Indigenous community. We're committing our community to reconciliation between different groups within the community. I cannot believe that we haven't talked to people about it, other than perhaps the people that we want to hear.

I think many people in our community will contest Council's right to include the very graphic descriptions of the invasion of Victoria that are included in this RAP on their behalf. I don't contend it's historically inaccurate, but I question

## Draft Transcript

its appropriateness when Council hasn't even looked for the consent or input of the broader community. It doesn't only affect Indigenous people, but it's been prepared in the name of the 38,000 residents of the shire who are not Indigenous as well as the 200 Indigenous residents and I think everyone deserves a say.

So I'm not going to vote for it on the basis not that I don't support reconciliation, I do, I'm a humanist and I do support reconciliation, but I think the lack of consultation is outrageous, frankly, and makes me unable to support this report.

CR PATTISON: Would any other Councillors like to speak to the motion?

CR HODGE: Just very quickly. I just want to add something. The Reflect RAP has been carefully prepared in consultation with the traditional owners and has received conditional endorsement from Reconciliation Australia. I think that speaks for itself as well and I'm certainly going to support this. It's about walking together and there's always a couple of steps forward and a couple of steps back, but let's put Surf Coast stepping forward on this. I think you could go and ask 32,000 other people in the area, they mightn't be Indigenous, but they might agree with it, and I think after the voting in the referendum, there would be probably a silent majority that would support it and I'd be disappointed if Councillors don't support this. But that's democracy and that's the way - aren't we lucky that we can do that, but I'll certainly be supporting this document.

CR PATTISON: Councillor Schonfelder.

CR SCHONFELDER: Australia has one of the highest standards of living in the world and closing the gap, improving the conditions of and the reconciliation process of First Nations people is important. I have attended a number of Growing Winchelsea meetings and I have actually been approached personally by members of the Winchelsea community who have said that they support reconciliation and they support the importance of it.

Last month, sadly, a very dear friend of mine died of cancer who was 46 and it's the first friend of mine that has died and it brought home to me the fact that many First Nations people have a shorter life expectancy and I'm personally devastated about what I've been put through personally and I now feel more empathetic towards their own circumstances due to what I have experienced.

## Draft Transcript

I'd like to touch on the fact that today that Senator Pat Dodson announced his resignation. He is an eminent Australian who has championed reconciliation. In 1999, Senator Pat Dodson met with the late Queen Elizabeth II and said no-one cared more about Aboriginal people than Her Majesty and since her passing, Senator Dodson and many other First Nations Australians expressed their condolences and I publicly commend them for the way they have behaved.

I'd also like to say that Thomas Mayo with the way he behaved pertaining to the recent referendum was exemplary and I have the highest admiration for him and I also have the highest respect for Senator Dodson. I believe that reconciliation is very important and I believe it is incumbent on every tier of government, local government, state government and the Federal Government, to walk - as Councillor Hodge has said, walk with our First Nations people.

30 years ago I was a member of the Australia Day committee in Geelong representing the shire of Barrabool and I acknowledge that attitudes have changed. I support having an Australia Day, but I am happy for the date to be changed and tonight I'd like to even say that Senator Pat Dodson's birthday is on 29 January and I believe that is a possible date for a new Australia Day. I think it would be wonderful to have a Western Australian acknowledged for Australia Day to try to be inclusive of the whole of the Commonwealth. Thank you, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Any other Councillors? Councillor Gazzard? Councillor Bodsworth.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Mayor. Yes, I support remarks from other Councillors. I also support us adopting the Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan.

So I guess central to the Reconciliation Action Plan process is guidance from Reconciliation Australia to ensure that there's some consistency in Reconciliation Action Plans and I guess important in that is the fact that a lot of traditional owner groups, First Nations, are themselves struggling to rebuild and to sort of reconnect themselves with their own country and with their own culture and I think it's really important to have a consistent process so that there's not a continual reinvention of what a Reconciliation Action Plan means. So in terms of us sort of following a Reconciliation Action Plan kind of partly prescribed process, I think that's really important rather than us inventing our own version of a Reconciliation Action Plan.

## Draft Transcript

Another thing I note with this is that yes, the involvement of the general community has been less than usual and that's also an important part of Reconciliation Action Plans where First Nations groups, traditional owners, are empowered to take the lead on Reconciliation Action Plans. So central to our own process in developing this has been the process of listening, listening to traditional owners. We can see how that's been reflected in the timeframe of the project, which was longer than initially intended, and that was because we spent that time listening to traditional owners and building those relationships which have resulted in the Reconciliation Action Plan that we have.

So I'm really proud of the leading role that we've played in reconciliation in this area. I think it's particularly pertinent tonight because we're meeting very close to what is understood to be a traditional boundary between Gadubanud and Wadawurrung people here in Aireys Inlet and is now the official boundary between the registered Aboriginal parties the Wadawurrung Aboriginal Corporation and the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation.

So I think - and regarding the Australia Day, it was in 2019 that the Federal Government brought in a rule that Councils had to run citizenship ceremonies on Australia Day. That's only a few years ago. And in the space of a few years I'm glad to see that the current Federal Government has revised that and that Councils don't have to run ceremonies on Australia Day, which I think is a good move.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Gazzard.

CR GAZZARD: Yes, thank you. I support this Reconciliation Action Plan. I think this is about being strategic and sustainable in meaningful action towards reconciliation. Over 2,700 organisations have formalised their commitment to reconciliation through the Reconciliation Action Plan and so we're not alone in this area.

The treatment of First Nations people I believe is our nation's greatest shame and I don't think we should sugarcoat history. I think we need to learn history no matter how uncomfortable it is, sit with that discomfort so we don't keep repeating it and tell the truth, and so this is a step forward towards that for our First Nations people.

I particularly like the Tjaara Dja approach caring for country and involving First Nations people in caring for country. They've nurtured these lands for over 60,000 years and have been doing a lot better than what's happened in the last 250 years. So I think ownership and working together, caring for the land, is a really lovely part of this plan. Thank you.

## Draft Transcript

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Stapleton, any closing remarks?

CR STAPLETON: Just a few. So firstly, I just think it would be interesting maybe just to note there's been some discussion around the role of local government and what's appropriate for local councils to take on and interestingly, earlier this year there was a survey which when reported had the headline "Survey Results Support Councils Tackling Bigger Issues" and it was a survey that was a national survey undertaken by the Australian Catholic University, ACU, by researchers who surveyed more than 1,300 people across Australia last year and most respondents agreed that there was a place for local government to engage with contentious issues.

The professor of politics at ACU was the lead researcher on the project and said that "the results reflected important changes in how everyday Australians understand the changing role of local government. Gone are the days when the community simply wanted their local councils to stick to roads, rates and rubbish. Instead, more Australians now want local councils to tackle bigger issues, something which became particularly important during the heart of the pandemic, when communities across Australia came to depend on their local government."

Anyone who's interested in the story can read it, but it does conclude that the majority of those surveyed thought councils should go beyond the three Rs of roads, rates and rubbish and focus on future planning, health and community development. So I just thought that would be interesting to share.

And in terms of speaking with our community, it is important to note that the Surf Coast Shire Council plan, which sets the strategic direction for all of Council's work, was developed after a six-month community engagement program which began with survey that attracted some 1,200 submissions, including commentary on what people most valued in their townships and what their long-term vision was for the shire and First Nations reconciliation was adopted in the plan as theme 1 and not only is it reflected in the vision, but also contains the specific principle respectful engagement and consultations with First Nations. So I'm really confident that this plan speaks to our community and will be supported by community and hopefully by our Council tonight. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And all those opposed. And the motion is carried 6-2.

## Draft Transcript

We now move on to item 4.2, Safer Cycling Strategy and Action Plan for 2022-2027, the one-year progress report. The purpose of this report is to update Council on the first-year progress of the Safer Cycling Strategy Action Plan and implementation of the Safer Cycling Strategy recommendations. Do I have a mover? Councillor Bodsworth - as per the recommendation?

CR BODSWORTH: Yes, thanks, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: And a seconder? Councillor Schonfelder. Would you like to speak, Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: I would, thanks, Mayor. I have to be quick, there's a lot I'd like to say about this, but I've tried to keep it pretty brief.

So the first thing I'd like to say is I think this Safer Cycling Strategy turned out great, so that was a year ago, but I'd like to reiterate what I said then, which was to commend the team that worked on this and also a lot of people in communities who had input into this and also a lot of partner agencies who provided really valuable input into this. I think it's a great piece of work.

The year 1 progress report shows some excellent progress by a very small team, so this is a team who are working on a lot of things at any given time. Our Engineering Infrastructure team are also working on things like drainage and roads. In between all that, they've managed to make excellent progress on the Safer Cycling Strategy, across design, planning, external funding, both applications and successful applications, signs and line marking, speed limits changes and safer infrastructure, including bike lanes and road crossings.

So as the report notes, out of the actions, 22% are complete, 22% are on track, 12% are lagging, 15% not commenced, and a fairly substantial 29% with no resource available. I'll get on to that again in a sec. Most of the completed actions are in Torquay and Jan Juc, which is largely based on the accident data evidence base used for the Safer Cycling Strategy and the fact that most of that accident data relates to that area.

So the progress on this has underlined for me that community vision and activism around active transport is extremely important and I'd like to in that context send a shoutout to Anglesea Walking and Cycling Advocacy Project delivered by business Anglesea, formerly Business and Tourism Anglesea, which is a fantastic piece of work by a really highly reputed consulting firm on options for Anglesea that I'm still very passionately advocating for.

## Draft Transcript

Another thing I'd like to note is a speed limit change on Bells Beach Road from 80km an hour to 60, which was not by Council but by Department of Transport and Planning with Council's input and collaboration, and I'd like to send a shoutout to Aaron Tremill, who at the age of 14 a year and a month ago was hit by a car on that road while he was cycling and almost killed, he suffered horrific injuries, and I think that that speed limit change is a good action to improve cycle safety on that road.

So vegetation management along the Great Ocean Road I know has been an interest of some people in the gallery tonight and also of mine. I'd like to note that again Department of Transport and Planning has done some good work pruning back vegetation and doing other work to improve the safety of that corridor that cyclists have to use along the Great Ocean Road.

In terms of action 3.1 in the report, which is a video, the video is excellent. If anybody hasn't watched it, you can look it up. It talks about safe cycling issues in the shire across a couple of contexts.

And pointing out goal 4, which is around integrated planning for cycling, which is an absolutely critical piece of this and is noted as being under-resourced. Officers are working on a budget proposal for an active transport officer, which is something that I'm really interested to look at when that comes in front of us and I am quite likely to talk again in support of that when the time comes.

I'd like to move to some comments recently by Jonathan Spear, the CEO of Infrastructure Victoria, that Councillor Stapleton pointed me to, thanks for that, on 20 November ABC Conversation Hour. ABC said, "You can do one infrastructure thing, what is it?" Jonathan Spear, CEO of Infrastructure Victoria, said "For our communities to have safe, separated walking and cycling connections". So I think that underlines for me the importance of our own work in this space and also our own alignment with some of the heavy hitters like Infrastructure Victoria. And again, I'd like to commend our officers for the great work that they've done working with other agencies. And I'll say a little bit more in closing. Thanks.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. And Councillor Schonfelder, would you like to speak?

CR SCHONFELDER: Mayor, I would commend Councillor Bodsworth on his advocacy in this active transport space and as we know from the recent pandemic, a lot of money has been allocated towards medical areas and you have the debate about whether we should spend money on hospitals and addressing medical conditions or trying to have preventative measures and I

## Draft Transcript

believe one of these is active transport and people being more active, and an example of this is by cycling and having environments that are safer for cyclists encourages more cyclists to be active and it has that flow-on effect.

I'd just like to note that officers from the Council have secured over 2.4 million of external funding for active transport related infrastructure, planned for delivery in 2024 and 2025 to support cycling safety infrastructure related actions. This is something I'm very proud of. I know that the Transport Accident Commission has also allowed grants to become available to support projects focused on reducing cycling and/or pedestrian crash incidents on the road network within the shire and I was going to also say on the Great Ocean Road, but I don't know if they've specifically allocated funds for that or not. But I know it's been said before that many years ago you'd see people driving along with surf boards on their cars and now it's more often the case that people are driving with their bikes on their cars as well. I know in the hinterland there are people at Barrabool and Moriac and Winchelsea, Modewarre, they go to local stalls, they ride their bike to have a coffee and they're becoming more active, which is just so important. So I am a great advocate for active transport.

I also note that there are other agencies like Barwon Water that are fairly large landowners and I believe this is just a possible avenue in the future that there could be bike paths built that are separate to roads and they could also be built on other land that is not under the jurisdiction of the Council or even under the jurisdiction of the Department of Transport. But I look forward to further progress in this area. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Would any other Councillors like to speak to this motion? Councillor Stapleton.

CR STAPLETON: Just briefly, thanks, Mayor. I really appreciated this update and the amount of work that officers have undertaken to achieve some very impressive outcomes in the first 12 months. With the focus of the strategy on safety, officers have been working on the actions that make the biggest difference and I think that securing the \$2.4 million in grants, which Councillor Schonfelder just mentioned, to deliver safer cycling infrastructure is really impressive and a great credit to the team.

We know that town planning and infrastructure can impact health and wellbeing outcomes for communities, so it really is critical work that's being undertaken through this Safer Cycling Strategy. Responsibility for providing this type of infrastructure lies with a combination of state and local government and at a Council level we really are limited in what can be

## Draft Transcript

achieved financially. So we do mostly rely on grants to fund these initiatives, which means that there are several key goals within the strategy that are unlikely to successfully progress without an investment by Council to having a dedicated active transport officer for I think it was recommended two days a week, and this includes actions relating to change, education, collaborative relationships and advocacy that would be most at risk.

It's already been noted by Councillor Bodsworth that officers will develop a business case for next year's budget to consider in relation to this. But I would think that given how much Council relies on successful grant applications to progress this work, it would appear that having a dedicated active transport officer might provide the best return on investment in terms of securing additional funds to undertake the work that is needed. It could be a self-funded position eventually.

I do understand, however, that Council has many competing priorities and whether we can invest in an active transport officer will need to be considered as part of next year's budget process, but I am keen to see how this lines up in the budget against other priorities from our Council plan. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Do any other Councillors wish to speak?  
Councillor Barker.

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. Just to start off with a couple of baseline questions. How many deaths or near misses of cyclists reported each year on average and has the first year of this plan shown a reduction in those reports?

CR PATTISON: I pass that on to our CEO.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Thanks for the question, but Councillor Barker, I don't have that on hand. Our strategy actually has the data, the current data, for the last 10 years I think in relation to trauma, both injury, serious injury and fatalities in relation to cycling. It's not insignificant. There's a reasonable number. And with the growing cycling community, both training, recreational, families, we would anticipate that would continue to grow unless we actually addressed the underlying cause and created a safer network. But I don't have that data with me on hand, but it is in the strategy and we can get it for you.

CR BARKER: Thanks. And the next one alongside that, through the Mayor, what is the cost to Council for this plan so far, what is the expected costs per year ongoing, and how many cyclists will it impact?

CR PATTISON: Over to our CEO.

## Draft Transcript

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Again, good questions, Councillor Barker. In terms of the cost, a lot of - as Councillor Bodsworth talked about, a lot of our current investment is through the grants that we've received from the State Government. So this financial year our budget for delivery of cycling-related infrastructure is \$2.4 million and so - but in addition to that, there's obviously our recurrent EFT that is working on and other kind of pieces of work. But broadly that kind of gives you a bit of a feel for the cost.

In terms of the volume of cycling, it's a very popular activity in the Surf Coast. The actual numbers, I again don't have that with me, but we can look to see what utilisation rates we've got and send that through to you afterwards.

CR BARKER: Thanks. So some of the works are good ideas, but this motion is calling on taxpayers from outside our municipality to fund cycling infrastructure to the tune of half a million dollars on top of their already \$2.4 million contribution, as you've noted.

Now, in this high inflationary environment which is caused by excessive government spending of taxpayer funds like grants, like this, resulting in increasing interest rates, this isn't fair on those who are never going to use this infrastructure to be the funding source. I'm happy to note the report at point 1, but will be opposing point 2 of the motion and invite other Councillors to do so if they respect the money of hardworking Victorians who will never see what they've paid for.

CR PATTISON: Would any other Councillors like to speak to the motion? Do you have any closing remarks, Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: Yes, thanks, Mayor. Thanks for the segue to Councillor Barker, who I know likes riding his bike, so I don't have any doubt about Councillor Barker's affection for cycling or recognition of how important it is.

In terms of costs, so in terms of subsidies, Australia currently spends \$6 billion to \$8 billion per year on tax concessions for private car use, so the public money going towards subsidising private car use far outweighs any money going towards subsidising active transport.

A few more stats. The G21 Integrated Transport Strategy from this year, 2023, estimates that by 2041 time stuck in traffic in the Geelong area is to rise by over 420%. Currently the average Australian cost of car ownership is \$400 a week, which is close to 40% of the weekly income of low-income families, so it's easy to see the importance of this potentially for low-income families,

## Draft Transcript

where they may potentially be able to drop from two cars to one car, for example, to reduce their car usage and make the cost of living more affordable.

Cars account for around 11% of Australian greenhouse gas emissions. Physical inactivity costs Australia around \$14 billion per year. Air pollution from transport costs Victoria approximately \$2 billion per year. So you can see there the costs - I mean, the costs of not doing this stuff far outweigh the costs of doing it.

Communities want active transport. We've seen even tonight with regard to the ridgeline trail in Jan Juc. The Jan Juc and Bellbrae community are highly motivated on this, Anglesea, Growing Winchelsea, also the Moriac Structure Plan reflects it, our youth census from last year reflects it really strongly, as do the Council plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan. So, yes, very happy to note the progress and let's keep it going.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And all those opposed. And the motion is carried 7-1.

We've now been going for two hours, so we'll have a short break. It's now just on 8 o'clock, so we'll break for 15 minutes and we'll be back at a quarter past 8.

(Short break)

CR PATTISON: Thank you, everybody. We're now back online with our Council meeting. And can I have a motion to resume Standing Orders, please? Moved by Councillor Barker and seconded by Councillor Stapleton. And all those in favour. And we'll now resume Standing Orders.

So the next item on our agenda is the Response to a Petition for an LGBTQIA+ Advisory Committee. The purpose of this report is to respond to a petition received from the Rainbow Local Government team seeking an LGBTQIA+ Advisory Committee. Do I have a mover of a motion? Councillor Gazzard - as per the recommendation? And a seconder? Councillor Hodge. Would you like to speak to the motion, Councillor Gazzard?

CR GAZZARD: Yes, thank you. So by way of background, the Rainbow Local Government formed before the previous Council elections really trying to get more diverse LGBTQIA representation on Council and greater allyship on Council. So for open disclosure, I signed the pledge for Rainbow Government. I don't think that that causes any conflict of interest. So I think what we've

## Draft Transcript

come to learn is that a more individual tailored approach to our community is required.

So we did raise it as a Council in I think it was 2022 whether we should have an advisory committee and at that time there were some community consultations which actually showed that a committee that was required to meet regularly with no clear purpose was probably not what our community needed, but actually a reference group that can meet on a more ad hoc basis would be more appropriate. So I think having a more clear purpose and ensuring adequate resourcing and budget is important for this.

I think we've shown dedication to inclusion and diversity in our community and I'm really proud of what our Council has done to date with initiatives and achievements, particularly towards gender equality and gender equity, and that includes our LGBTQIA community for our - sorry, work towards reducing family violence, work towards men's wellbeing, to really encompass all groups in our community.

So I know this motion isn't quite what the Rainbow Local Government Group would like, but I think the establishment of a reference group, if this does go ahead, is probably more in keeping with the need for our community at the moment. So I encourage my fellow Councillors to support this motion.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Hodge, would you like to speak?

CR HODGE: Yes, thank you. Yes, we did try to get a committee up, but it wasn't quite successful. But I'm really looking forward to if this reference group gets up that they actually do the terms of reference, that there's different people consulted in the community and they get together and actually work through it and they can take leadership too from also the Rainbow areas, but also, you know, there's other shires that have done it too. We've got Yarra, Ballarat, Hepburn, Shepparton, Bendigo, Brimbank. So our reference group could actually contact these groups and say, "What works and what doesn't work" so we're not reinventing the wheel. It's something that they might find in a better way and I'm hoping they are.

Surf Coast has for a long time supported LGBTQI+ communities. It's in our council plan to be inclusive. I think it was seven or eight years ago we did IDAHOBIT Day. We've got a flag policy that raises the transgender flag. There's many things in this community that we've worked with. The grants that we've already given is to hold pride events and build on this inclusion and this is what - it would be terrific to get people like that on the reference group.

## Draft Transcript

But the inclusion of young people too in the Surf Coast, and we've seen that with the Surf Coast Secondary, they also received a grant to have a colour run and the purchase of rainbow flags. So there's another area that I'd like to see because usually when you hear of a committee, you think of older people. I'd really like to see our officers, if there's an expression of interest, put out there that people, the kids and young adults come in and also are part of this reference group.

It marries with our diversity and inclusion programs, it marries with our healthy connected communities and enabling community strength and I think that's really, really important. It strongly agrees with our gender equality and diversity action and if we re-engage with this group, it would be fabulous. And as I said, they can do their terms of reference and they've got lots of Councils now and I'd like to just personally thank Jan and Sean for the work that they've done behind the scenes on this, it has been fantastic.

With the Surf Coast, it was controversial at the time, but we did run the flag for marriage equality back all those years ago when that plebiscite occurred and Corangamite proved us right and was one of the highest supporting acceptance of this.

So Surf Coast has got a longish now great working relationship with LGBTQI+. I hope this continues and I hope that if this reference group gets up, they do their own terms of reference and who knows where it will lead. Hopefully if it does go into a committee, we'll have funds towards it and the officers that we have on our staff are absolutely fantastic with the work they've done not only with the LGBTQI but the Indigenous and I think that there's a real - we've seen some of the staff - the letters of support I've got from staff when we actually did the rainbow and all that, it was just fantastic, and to have your staff proud of what you do is pretty good, especially if it affects their personal lives and it shouldn't affect their workplace, which it doesn't because Surf Coast is a safe place to work. So I think this is great. Thank you very much.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Would any other Councillors like to speak?  
Councillor Barker.

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. I care about everyone, regardless of their background, genetics or choices, even my colleagues here who I sometimes disagree with. Earlier this evening I mentioned what your race, religion, socioeconomic status, sex, gender, marital status or political preferences are should not change how you're treated by any government. I'll stand by that statement for this motion.

## Draft Transcript

Do we really want to create more victim mentality? If so, push right ahead with this program. If the statement makes you feel uneasy, do yourself a favour and look into the history of Marxism intertwining with gay and lesbian advocacy and where that's led to today.

Those who fall in the LGBT banner are not all the same. They are all beautiful, independent human beings with so much potential and don't need different roads, bins or parks, so I don't think there's any reason to treat them any differently to anyone else, save for maybe an additional toilet cubicle. But after what this council has recently passed with 97% community opposition, that need is largely redundant.

All that decision and this motion does is drive a wedge between individuals in our community and I will not stand for it. It's time we started respecting individuals and all their unique differences, but treating them equally. I stand for equality of all people and invite my colleagues to do so too by opposing the motion.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Would any other Councillors like to speak to the motion? Councillor Wellington.

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you, Mayor. Look, I don't share Councillor Gazzard's uncertainty about the outcome of this motion. It will be 6-2, of course, because it's an ideologically based motion. I think we've got consultation processes that are supposed to ensure opportunities for engagement by every person in the shire regardless of their sexuality. We are already spending a lot of ratepayers' money on gender equity officers and advisors.

The biggest issue for me is there's no justification in this brief of the need. So it basically says let's go out and see if there's a need and if there's a need, we'll authorise the officers to go ahead and do it. And so we haven't been presented with what's the need.

I can't think of what it is about our services - I mean, as an organisation, we need to be inclusive and we need to be absolutely non-discriminatory and I hope we are and I've never heard any evidence that we're not as an organisation.

We have a limited role in shaping the social attitudes of the community. I think that's not our role.

I want to go back to Councillor Stapleton's quoting of the Australian Catholic University survey and I do think that survey about what people want their local government to do has been quite misrepresented, to be quite

## Draft Transcript

honest - probably not intentionally, but I think people need to look at the paper to actually understand what it says. It's got a list of 25 different things that local government could do and it asks people to prioritise them in a survey of 1,300 people. But the way it asked the question was is it extremely important, very important, moderately important, or slightly important. So if you say any of those things are important, if you get between 1 and 4, it's an important issue. It was only when you said not important you got one sort of vote.

At the bottom of the list of the 25 is LGBTQIA+ support and advocacy. That's at the bottom of the list. The next one up is provision of supervised injection rooms. The next one up is refugee support, another issue on the agenda tonight. The next one up is reconciliation and Indigenous issues, another issue. They're all at the bottom. At the top are street cleaning and waste management, roads, bridges, water, sewerage, stormwater drainage, et cetera, emergency disaster management, et cetera, all the things that we do. So this wasn't, you know, what do you think the priorities should be for local government in the sense that it was put forward earlier. This was a list of 25 priorities and these ones were at the bottom.

If there's a problem with the way we engage with LGBTQI+ community, I would like to know what it is and I would probably support a reference group if I could see the need. I don't support a reference group without the officers presenting to us the need. We're already investing significantly in this area. We've got equity officers and advisors and goodness knows what. I can't see the need. It will cost ratepayers money. And until we deal with the bridges and the roads and the road sides and all those things people want, I don't think we should expand into this.

And can I just say to the officer who's looking after the recording, I have got a sound like a toilet flushing in my microphone. There's something really wrong with the way this is coming through. So if somebody can please look at that, it would be really helpful. Thank you.

CR BARKER: Is that only recently or the whole meeting?

CR WELLINGTON: It's since we came back from the break. There's terrible interference. It's like a toilet flushing.

CR PATTISON: There's some storms going on out there, so I wonder if we've got some issues with reception, or something. But thank you for raising that, Councillor Wellington, and I can see the tech guys are looking into that, so hopefully we can resolve that for you.

## Draft Transcript

CR WELLINGTON: It's better already, actually.

CR PATTISON: Oh, good. He's fiddling with some knobs and things and I'm sure he'll make it work. It looks very technical over there. But thank you for that feedback, Councillor Wellington. We appreciate that. Would any other Councillors like to speak to the motion? Do you have any closing remarks, Councillor Gazzard?

CR GAZZARD: I just note that I think there is a need, as demonstrated by the disproportionate rates of suicide in our LGBTQIA, particularly in youth, so that's something that we can work on when we're making an inclusive community. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. We now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And all those opposed. And the motion is carried 6-2.

We now move on to item 4.4, MAV Free from Violence Grant Application. The purpose of this report is for Council to ratify an application to MAV, Municipal Association of Victoria, for the Free from Violence 2023-2026 grant. Do I have a mover of a motion? Councillor Schonfelder - as per the recommendation? And do I have a seconder? Councillor Gazzard. Would you like to speak, Councillor Schonfelder?

CR SCHONFELDER: Yes, please. I'd like to simply say that I believe that the rates of domestic violence are completely unacceptable and I believe it is a national emergency. It is incumbent on the three different levels of government to try to address this problem because I'm not an expert when it comes to criminology, because it is a criminal offence to commit domestic violence, but I do believe it is behavioural related and I know that when it comes to a safe space and a safe culture, it's incumbent upon all of us to try and improve behaviour that we conduct ourselves by and the behaviour we witness by other people as well. And I know that there's been like advertisements on television about people witnessing behaviour that has been unacceptable just by the way people speak about other people and the way they speak to people, let alone any physical activity as far as assault and the like, just to try and improve that.

This is a grant that's available for our Council from the MAV, Free from Violence 2023-2026 program. The submission is for a total of \$260,000 and I do agree that we do live in an environment where costs are increasing, but the fact that this grant is available is something that I think we should take advantage of and the breakdown of the funding is as follows. It's \$200,000 for

## Draft Transcript

a gender equity officer for three years to oversee this program and \$50,000 of this is for an external organisation to deliver gender equity or equality and intersectionality training for staff, executive management and Councillors.

There's \$10,000 for an external organisation to deliver community workshops on gender equality and intersectionality and to conduct consultation, and this is also specifically with the LGBTQIA+ community because I attended a kindergarten event recently in Winchelsea which I really enjoyed and I in particular enjoyed seeing the young animals there and the children playing with the different animals and I did speak to police there and they told me that recently there has been an increase in domestic violence and interestingly, amongst couples, some of them were same sex couples but also couples that had only been together for two or three weeks, which I thought was interesting because you have generalisations in your mind about crime and about it happening in certain communities and you have stereotypes about people being married for a long time and having domestic violence, but it does affect people who are in recent and also short-term relationships.

Most importantly, because I'm economically conservative - I'm socially progressive, but I am economically conservative - the contribution required from Council for this grant is \$10,000 and it's for campaigns and initiatives such as the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence and International Women's Day. There's \$52,861 from in-kind contributions and this is the existing gender equity advisor role which is within the framework of this.

I must also say that I have witnessed people with their dogs and speaking to their dogs and I've said to them I would like them to say please and thank you and I just find it's just behavioural related generally. Generally people's behaviour, I believe it extends across different realms and it's just trying to improve the standard.

I really hope that we can make achievement in this area because I must say it's just absolutely terrible when you do see the rates of domestic violence and the fact it was brought to my attention by a fellow Councillor this evening prior to the meeting that I think every day lately a woman has been killed by her partner, which I think is absolutely unacceptable. Thank you, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Gazzard?

CR GAZZARD: Thank you. I endorse the submission for a funding application that officers have already done. It's an excellent source of funding for hopefully an ongoing gender equity officer for the next three years, which I

DRAFT Transcript produced by The Captioning Studio  
W: **captioningstudio.com** T: (08) 8463 1639

## Draft Transcript

think the work done by our current gender equity officer has been really impressive, particularly our gender equity assessments. So, yeah, I wholeheartedly endorse this.

CR PATTISON: Would any other Councillor - Councillor Barker.

CR BARKER: Those of you who pay close attention to Council meetings would have heard this before, but for those of you here for the first time, this is why I'll be opposing the motion. There are four ways to spend money - your money, someone else's money, on yourself, or on others. It is just human nature. It happens to me, it happens to you, it happens to everyone.

Your money on you - you spend the least for the highest value. Your money on someone else - you spend the least and the value isn't a huge concern. Someone else's money on you, you spend as much as possible for the highest value. Someone else's money spent on someone else, you spend as much as possible and the value isn't a huge concern. The latter is how ratepayers and taxpayers' money is spent.

When it's government grants, it increases the distance from the funding source to the recipient even more. This reduces the accountability of the one spending money. It is for these reasons I oppose all grants regardless of the topic or its importance, whether they be handing them out or applying for them. If you feel good about spending other people's money on things they never knew about, then I encourage you to vote for this motion. If, though, you want to respect the hard-working Victorian taxpayers who are funding this, then I invite you to join me in opposing the motion.

CR PATTISON: Would any other Councillors like to speak to the motion? Councillor Wellington?

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you very much. Can I just ask a question before I start? We already have a gender equity advisor, I think - no, a 0.4 EFT, is that right? How many EFT gender equity staff will we have if we receive this grant because I believe we already have a significant allocation to a gender equity advisor.

CR PATTISON: I'll just put your question to our CEO.

CR WELLINGTON: And we're looking for (inaudible) and for an officer.

## Draft Transcript

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: So I might refer this to the GM of Community Life, but my understanding, Councillor Wellington, is that this funding will replace the current Council funding that is funding those roles. So it would come from --

CR WELLINGTON: It will replace it?

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Yes, that's my understanding, yes.

CR WELLINGTON: Is that correct?

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Yes, that's correct, Councillor Wellington.

CR WELLINGTON: So if we won't have 1.2 EFT, we will have - of gender equity advisors, is that correct, we'll have 0.8 EFT?

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Yes, that's correct - well, in terms of 1.2 - yes, that's correct. But the 1.2 that Councillor Wellington is talking about - in addition to the 0.8, Councillor Wellington, we've got the - we also - General Manager of Community Life, can you assist me with this because we've got currently two staff with two different separate roles and is this just the funding for one of them?

MS GAIL GATT: Yes. So at the moment we have 0.4 of an EFT which is funded for one further year and this role will be a further 0.4 for three years.

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you. It was just quite confusing as to what - I thought if it was 1.4 it would be quite a significant (inaudible) to gender equity, which seems to be again an issue, but --

CR PATTISON: Just to clarify, Councillor Wellington, is this another question or are you now speaking to the motion?

CR WELLINGTON: No, no, sorry --

CR PATTISON: I just wanted to clarify if we have the timer going or if you're seeking another question.

CR WELLINGTON: Okay. No, no, I'm fine, thank you. Yes, look, one of my problems with this (inaudible) is \$260,000 for a gender equity officer for three years, \$50,000 for an external organisation to deliver training, \$10,000 for community workshops and consultation with LGBTQIA+ community, it will cost ratepayers \$62,000 for that.

## Draft Transcript

I haven't seen any evaluation. This program has been around for quite a while and Council has put in their applications and some Councils are successful and presumably over time (inaudible). But I have not seen any evaluation of whether it actually leads to reductions in domestic violence or gender-based violence in the municipalities that implement it. I've not seen an evaluation.

So it sounds like a reasonable deal. I'm very much on the margins as to whether I support it or not. We already pay - you know, we pay \$40,000 a year to the MAV, as I understand it, so it would be nice to get something back. It is going to cost this community another \$62,000. So I'm just going to reflect a bit before I vote. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Would any other Councillors like to speak? Councillor Bodsworth.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Mayor. I feel similarly to Councillor Wellington. I'm inclined to support it as per the recommendation, but I think the point about evaluation is a really important one and I support that. I'd be interested to see how the program has been performing so far. But yeah, I'm inclined to support it.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Do you have any closing remarks, Councillor Schonfelder?

CR SCHONFELDER: In closing, Mayor, I'd just like to add that I did actually speak to Winchelsea Police and they did mention to me that there has been a slight increase in domestic violence, so I think that is a concern that we should address, if possible. I think it's very correct in what Councillor Wellington has said about the membership we pay for the MAV. We are getting these funds back from the MAV, so we're getting value for our membership.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And all those opposed. And the motion is passed 7-1.

We now move on to item 4.5, the SCS-032 Complaint Handling Policy Review. The purpose of this report is to present the reviewed Complaint Handling Policy to Council for adoption. Do I have a mover of a motion? Councillor Barker - as per the recommendation? And do I have a seconder? Councillor Gazzard. And would you like to speak, Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Very briefly, thanks, Mayor. I like the transparency improvements and the responsibility on the CEO to learn from complaints made. I will be supporting the motion.

## Draft Transcript

CR PATTISON: Great, thank you. And Councillor Gazzard?

CR GAZZARD: I'll be supporting the motion as well. I think a lot of it is about making it more accessible to the community and with a continuous improvement mindset.

CR PATTISON: Would any other Councillors - Councillor Stapleton.

CR STAPLETON: Also briefly. Some people assume that Council doesn't like hearing complaints, but the truth is we find it really helpful and I do encourage people to complain when things do go wrong, which they do sometimes because that's the way that we will continue to improve. This policy has been reviewed and incorporates the most recent Ombudsman recommendations and is a similar process followed by most other Councils across the sector. And I really hope that the policy gives the community the confidence to complain and know that they'll be dealt with fairly and that it will help Council to improve its service delivery as part of that process. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Any closing remarks, Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: No, thanks, Mayor.

CR WELLINGTON: Can I make some comments, please, Mayor?

CR PATTISON: Yes, Councillor Wellington.

CR WELLINGTON: Thanks very much, I think the policy has actually evolved quite well over several years. I like to think I've had a role in trying to promote a better practice complaints handling approach in the shire and I think the policy is really in very good shape now and very clear about what we try to do with complaints that we receive.

The issue, if there is one, is in the implementation of the policy and the culture of receipt of complaints within the shire and I still think that there is work to be done. As I said, the policy is very clear, but there's work to be done on actually recognising when someone is complaining. I think all Councillors received an email this week from somebody who was very, very frustrated about requests for service I suppose they were put down as to get some walkways, you know, maintained in Moriac and that person was really, I think, quite dissatisfied with the service that had been provided and I suspect that will be put down as a request for service rather than a complaint.

## Draft Transcript

But I think that - I often as a Councillor get people coming to me saying, "I've put this to Council multiple times", they're very frustrated, they don't usually come to the Council first, they go through the process and then they say, "I didn't even get a response" or, you know, "I got a pushback and was told no, there's nothing we can do."

So I'd like to think that we're working very hard on the Council culture. We have to be wanting to receive these (inaudible).

The only comment I would make is the issue of people who persist unreasonably the complaints won't be accepted and that's reasonable, in principle, if people just persist when there's nothing that Council can do or, you know, that it's an unreasonable demand. But I've been in the personal situation where I persisted to get documents from this Council that were denied me and a submission was made to VCAT about me saying that I was unreasonably persistent and that my motives were not commendable and all sorts of nasty things, which were summarily and comprehensively rejected by the VCAT member who found in my favour and that sort of gave me a sense of what it's like to be called, you know, an unreasonable requester.

So I think those decisions need to be made very, very objectively. We shouldn't just label people because they persist when they don't get a service provided that they're entitled to. And I think someone senior and objective and independent needs to make those kinds of decisions. It doesn't say in the policy how those decisions will be made if somebody is unreasonably persistent and therefore will be black banned and I think we have to be very, very cautious about doing that to people because it may be personal prejudice rather than unreasonable persistence that's causing the problem. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Barker - oh, sorry, Councillor Bodsworth.

CR BODSWORTH: Sorry, Mayor, it's a late inclusion. No, just to back up some of Councillor Wellington's remarks, both in support of the policy, which I definitely strongly support, I think it's got great content in it, but also, yes, some caution around the unreasonableness which is obviously a subjective - sort of a judgment call and I think that judgment call does need to be made cautiously, and I also know from my experience over the past three years that - you know, we mentioned unreasonable lack of cooperation and unreasonable arguments and I know that it's not uncommon for people to find that we've engaged in that.

So I think it's great that we're on the lookout for that from complainants, I think it's completely appropriate, but I think we need to recognise that

## Draft Transcript

sometimes people find that we've been unreasonably uncooperative or that we've used unreasonable arguments that lack logic and an evidence base. So I just think we need to keep in mind that we can do that sometimes.

And I agree with persistence. I think some of the most important sort of evolutions and breakthroughs that have been seen by this Council and previous Councils have been because of persistence. In that case it wouldn't be called unreasonable. It's what I hope the difference would be. But persistence is really important and we often - yes, it's sort of a fine line sometimes between reasonable and unreasonable persistence.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Barker, any closing remarks?

CR BARKER: No, thanks, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And no-one opposes this. That motion is carried unanimously.

We now move to item 4.6, Council Representation on Various Regional/Peak Organisations for 2024. The purpose of this report is for Council to appoint Councillors to various regional/peak organisations for the remainder of the Council term.

So Councillors, as the Notice of Motion which was considered earlier tonight was successful, officers have adjusted the recommendation to reflect this and we can get officers to put that on the display. And do I have a mover of a motion? Councillor Bodsworth - is that as per the recommendation?

CR BODSWORTH: So it is not quite as per that one because I would like to include deletion from the list of the Barwon Southwest Waste and Resource Recovery Group and I think Governance has an alternative with that included, so that's the one that I would like to move as the motion.

CR PATTISON: Great. Thank you, Councillor Bodsworth. Do I have a seconder? Councillor Schonfelder. And would you like to speak to that motion, Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks. Well, I'll deal firstly with the Barwon Southwest Waste and Resource Recovery Group, which I've been on. So in January last year Recycling Victoria disbanded all of Victoria's regional waste and resource recovery groups. We did, by agreement with the people who - the Councillors and the officers who were on this group, we kept it rolling because we thought

## Draft Transcript

it was important to have a regional cooperative group discussing waste and resource recovery issues.

Over the past year or so the group hasn't really delivered the way I thought it would. So that, combined with the fact that it no longer exists in any formal sense and the fact that our officers are continually collaborating with others on waste and resource recovery issues, to me means that it doesn't - it shouldn't be on this list with the others. There are lots and lots of groups that people participate in that aren't listed on this list.

So with regard to the rest of the list, I think that Councillors can play really important roles on these groups and I think - with regard to the external groups, I think from what I've seen, our Council plays a really important and constructive role on those groups and I think it's super important for our reputation and for our ability to sort of influence the agendas of those groups. With the internal groups, like the Audit and Risk Committee, they're extremely important groups for the proper functioning of the Council and our performance. So for me I endorse the recommendations in this item.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Schonfelder.

CR SCHONFELDER: Yes, just quickly. Council has representation on various committees and regional peak organisations ensures the Council is well placed to have input on a broad range of key matters which are significant to the community. By reviewing appointments annually, Council is able to ensure that its involvement in the committees and organisations is relevant to Council's strategic goals and the Council plan objectives and community priorities.

Council representation on those committees and organisations is in a delegate capacity, although there are some representatives from our organisation that are directors and that is of the Geelong Regional Library Corporation, which I know, Mayor, you are very passionate about and I must say are doing a very good job executing that role, also the Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Inclusive and also the G21 Regional Alliance Limited, which I believe you are the Deputy Chair of, Mayor.

And I must say last week I, along with yourself, the CEO and Councillor Stapleton, attended the launch of the plan for 2050, which is in 27 years' time, and I know that our involvement in the region is so important because we have communities of interest where people work and recreate and also study in neighbouring areas, such as the City of Greater Geelong. I've said to Councillors who I've met from the City of Greater Geelong that - they've asked

## Draft Transcript

me how does the Surf Coast perceive them and I said as like an older brother and sister. So I really enjoy the involvement that I have in the MAV and I know that other members of our Council, they excel in the different organisations they're involved with. Thank you, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Would any other Councillors like to speak to the motion? Councillor Barker.

CR BARKER: I was so looking forward to supporting two consecutive motions, but with the inclusion of the Mayoral taskforce (inaudible) people seeking asylum, I now sadly cannot. It's quite cute that we're still participating in G21, (inaudible) in full effect now that cog is pulled out of G21, making it a redundant body more so than it was, but we're still holding on. I was going to finish off with saying that I'll support the motion, but as I noted before I can't because what I've raised just then was just a minor blemish on the motion that I could have supported.

CR PATTISON: Would any other Councillors like to speak? No? Councillor Wellington, sure.

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you. I'd just like to say that I very much appreciate the way this is presented this year. We've now sort of got it into directors' roles and various representative roles, et cetera, and I think it's much clearer to everybody what people are doing.

From my personal perspective, the Audit and Risk Committee is the committee that I find a really excellent committee, very important, very robust and you can really test some ideas at that committee and there is good people on it. So I'm really happy to be on that. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Any closing remarks, Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: No, thanks, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And all those opposed. And the motion is carried 7-1.

We'll now move on to item 4.7, SCS-031 Privacy and Data Protection Policy. The purpose of this report is to present the Privacy and Data Protection Policy to Council for adoption. Do I have a mover of a motion? Councillor Bodsworth - as per the recommendation?

CR BODSWORTH: Yes, thanks, Mayor.

## Draft Transcript

CR PATTISON: Do I have a seconder? Councillor Schonfelder. And would you like to speak to the motion, Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: I just think - I think the policy is good. I like that it's - the note in there that it's been sort of designed as a public-facing policy in recognition of the importance of privacy and data protection to people in communities rather than an internal policy that's not public facing and, yes, I just find it a clear and concise and thorough policy.

CR PATTISON: Councillor Schonfelder, would you like to speak?

CR SCHONFELDER: I reserve my right, thank you.

CR PATTISON: Would anybody else like to speak? Councillor Wellington.

CR WELLINGTON: Yes, thank you. I think that the policy preparation that's been achieved now is really significantly improved from what we had in the past. The policy itself is very clear. A lot of our policies, if people look at the red line versions, they're being substantially reorganised and I think that's a really good thing, they're much clearer. I come again to the fact that no matter what your policy is, if you don't have a culture which supports implementation of that policy, then you're not going to achieve the policy goals.

In relation to privacy, I was part of an issue probably that started a couple of years ago, but was only concluded in the last 12 months, I suspect, where there was, in my view, a serious breach of residents' privacy in the context of a very contentious planning matter and it was an obvious and proven breach. The organisation at that point put lawyers on to contest that and it cost a bit of money, quite a bit of money actually, and it ended up in a dispute that eventually was resolved in the favour of the resident.

I think the point is - the point of raising that is that the organisation needs to be open to complaints about privacy. It needs to assess them honestly and thoughtfully and address them where possible and use the lessons learned to improve our performance. So we are not immune to - you know, those policy breaches might only affect one person, (inaudible) but breaches that affect individuals are quite serious. They need to be - you know, we need to think about them (inaudible) and we need to learn from them. So I think the policy sets the framework (inaudible) we need to do that better, in my view. Thank you.

## Draft Transcript

CR PATTISON: Would any other Councillors like to speak to the motion?  
Councillor Barker.

CR BARKER: I support the updates made to this policy and happy to endorse its adoption. Going on from what Councillor Wellington was saying, no organisation is immune to data breaches or impacts on privacy of users in our system and as the culture improves, we need to make sure that every single person that's handling data is part of the culture of a healthy, secure environment and I hope this goes towards impacting that change.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Any closing remarks, Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: No, thanks, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: I now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And the motion is carried unanimously.

We now move on to item 4.8, SCS-045 Councillors as Candidates in State and Federal Elections Policy Review. The purpose of this report is to present Councillors as Candidates in State and Federal Elections Policy to Council for adoption. Do I have a mover of a motion? Councillor Barker - is it as per the recommendation?

CR BARKER: Yes, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: And a seconder? Councillor Bodsworth. Would you like to speak, Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Very briefly. I see the changes as sound updates to comply with legislative changes. I'll be supporting the motion.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: Briefly to - I welcome the definition of Councillors' obligations when standing as a candidate in state or federal elections and also to help with proper separation of roles and interests between Councillor and candidate.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Would any other Councillors like to speak to the motion? Councillor Wellington.

CR WELLINGTON: Yes, thanks very much. I agree, I think the policy is fine. I need to raise a question for me which is slightly parallel to the policy, but there

## Draft Transcript

was a circumstance I think - well, there was I know at the last Council election where the Mayor endorsed candidates in the Council election and this is not really about what Councillors do in relation to other candidates, but it does raise a question for me as is it appropriate for someone who is an existing Councillor and uses that to endorse candidates in an election, whether it be local, state or federal? I don't know if anyone would like to - or is that a proper use of the Mayor's powers, I suppose, or Council's powers. I don't know if anyone would like to answer that. But it's not - because the title of this policy, it doesn't fall exactly within this, but I think it's an issue --

CR PATTISON: Thanks for the question, Councillor Wellington. I think given this is specifically Candidates in State and Federal Election Policy, it's not relevant for the current matter at hand. It's something you're welcome to follow up with officers at a different date because it won't impact your decision on this particular policy. So if you want to continue with your speaking, that would be great.

CR WELLINGTON: I'm trying to add to the richness of the debate, Mayor Pattison, in terms of the issues that are important in terms of Councillors involving themselves in elections and we do have a Council election coming up. So I will follow that up with officers and see whether we can get a policy or some policy statement about what appropriate conduct is in that regard. Again, I think this policy is clear, it should be easy to follow, hopefully it will be followed, and I support it.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Any closing remarks, Councillor Bodsworth - Councillor Barker, sorry?

CR BARKER: No, thanks, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: No. Great. We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And the motion is carried unanimously.

We now move on to 4.9, Award of Contract T24-009 - Lorne Transfer Station Design and Construction. The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to award contract T24-009, Design & Construct Lorne Transfer Station Upgrade. As part of the officer recommendation was redacted in the meeting agenda, I will now ask officers to share the unredacted recommendation on the screen before we proceed. And we have that up there, so we can see who the contract is being awarded to. And do I have a mover of a motion? Councillor Barker - as per the recommendation?

CR BARKER: Yes, Mayor.

## Draft Transcript

CR PATTISON: And do I have a seconder? Councillor Bodsworth. Would you like to speak, Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Again very briefly. It's disappointing that there weren't more tenders to choose from, but this should deliver a sound outcome based on the history of the contractor.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: I agree, but at least we got two, so it was competitive and, yes, I've read the report. I appreciate the way we're doing things now where less of these tender award - sorry, fewer of these - where these tender awards items on Council meeting agendas are included in the open agenda with only the commercial in-confidence information confidential for Councillors to peruse confidentially. I think that's a good way to do it. And I note that this is within - that the successful - what we're voting on as potentially the successful tender is acceptable and within budget.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Do any other Councillors wish to speak? Any closing remarks, Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: No, thanks, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And the motion is carried unanimously.

We now move on to 4.10, Quarterly Budget Report - September 2023. The purpose of this report is to receive and note the Quarterly Budget Report. Do I have a mover of a motion? Councillor Hodge. And a seconder? Councillor Gazzard.

CR HODGE: Oh, thank you, Mayor. Look, just very quickly, this is the September, as you said, 2023 Quarterly Budget and provides information of Council's financial positions. It includes explanations of any variance in the comprehensive income statement and statement of capital works and its transparency and it contributes to our compliance with the Local Government Act.

So inside you'll see a comprehensive income, balance sheet, cash flow and capital works and also there's an interesting part of the asset renewal backlog that we're trying to get through and that will be part of our budget discussions, no doubt, in the next coming months. Thank you.

## Draft Transcript

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Gazzard? No comments? Any other Councillors? Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Just a couple of questions quickly. Why are our bad and doubtful debts 6% higher without variation notes? Is this expected to get worse as the recession takes hold and will this impact our long-term financial planning?

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Thanks for the question, Councillor Barker. There we go. Actually our bad debts are - that percentage is pretty low comparatively and what we've seen so far in terms of our rate payments is that we haven't seen a kick-up in people not paying their rent so far. So hopefully that means our community are faring alright at the moment, but we're watching that very carefully and we have payment plans available for our community if they are struggling to pay their rates. So we encourage anyone who might be listening in who is struggling to pay their rates to get in touch with us to talk to us about that process.

CR BARKER: Thanks, CEO. And the other one, why is our non interest bearing current liabilities 2 million more than budgeted without any variance note?

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: I might refer that to our GM of Strategy and Effectiveness.

OFFICER: Yes, through you, Mayor Pattison - and thank you, Councillor Barker, for the question - could you just identify where that is? Is it in the comprehensive income statement?

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Page 178.

CR BARKER: Yes, I'm pretty sure it's 178. Just bear with me.

OFFICER: If I think it's the area you're referring to --

CR BARKER: Oh, just two lines below note 8, the bottom note 8, non-current liabilities, interest bearing liabilities.

OFFICER: Sorry, on which page?

CR BARKER: Page 178, subheading "Non-current" - oh, sorry, subheading "Current Liabilities", the bottom of that interest bearing liabilities - sorry --

OFFICER: Yes.

## Draft Transcript

CR BARKER: Non-current liabilities interest bearing liabilities.

OFFICER: Yes, I may take that question on notice as I'm not sure why there isn't a comment on that one, Councillor Barker.

CR BARKER: I'm happy to have that taken on notice and follow up.

CR PATTISON: Sure, great, will do. Would you like to speak to the motion?

CR BARKER: No, thanks.

CR PATTISON: Would any other Councillors - Councillor Wellington.

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you. I notice that we're holding a significant amount of cash at the moment, cash or cash equivalents, and I just wondered what the strategy was with that.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: So the vast majority of the cash that we're holding is committed to projects, Councillor Wellington. We've got some big projects that we've currently got on our books, so we've got \$39 million of projects this financial year to deliver and so - and then we've got future years' money that we're holding on projects as well.

CR WELLINGTON: So I presume it's expected that that figure will be reduced at some point, because if we have an excess of cash over a long period of time, I imagine (inaudible) investment strategy for it, would that be correct?

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: So if you think about - a good example, I guess, is the health and aquatic centre, which is a \$48 million project. So we anticipate the release of the tender early next year and we'll start the delivery of that project and we'll start drawing down on that funding for that project as delivery begins.

CR PATTISON: Did you want to speak to the motion, Councillor Wellington?

CR WELLINGTON: Sorry?

CR PATTISON: Did you want to speak to the motion?

CR WELLINGTON: Oh, not particularly, no. Oh, sorry - oh, no, it's the next item, yes. I was probably wanting to comment on how concerning that there's a number of roads and shoulders and what have you that are unable to be

## Draft Transcript

renewed, that is resealed or resheeted or whatever (inaudible) of them because we haven't got the money to do it. So that causes much of the dissatisfaction (inaudible) unsealed roads. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Hodge, any closing remarks?

CR HODGE: No, thank you.

CR PATTISON: I now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And the motion is carried unanimously.

We now move on to item 4.11, Council Meeting Dates for 2024. The purpose of this report is for Council to consider the adoption of the 2024 Council meeting schedule. Do I have a mover of a motion? Councillor Schonfelder - as per the recommendation? And a seconder? Councillor Stapleton. Would you like to speak, Councillor Schonfelder?

CR SCHONFELDER: Just briefly, Mayor. I'd just like to say that the proposal for the 2024 Council meeting schedule includes planning for the meetings to be held on the fourth Tuesday of each month, with the following exceptions. The September Council meeting is proposed to be held on the third Tuesday of the month, so it takes place prior to commencement of the 2024 local government election period. The December meeting is similar to this year, calendar year, insofar as it's proposed to be held on the second Tuesday of the month to avoid clashes with the Christmas period. There is no Council meeting in January, taking into account a high visitation period when many residents are taking holidays.

Council meetings are proposed to commence at 6pm at the Surf Coast Shire offices, 1 Merrijig Drive, Torquay, or at selected locations around the shire. It is proposed to hold three meetings in 2024 in Deans Marsh, Moriac and Anglesea. The exact month and venue for each of these meetings will be determined and communicated to the community.

I commend the Council for holding external meetings as a Council meeting at Winchelsea, Lorne and today a well attended meeting from members of the local community in Aireys Inlet. It has been fantastic to go out to the community and given the pandemic has hopefully ended, we have been able to come back out to community because I know in the past the Council has had meetings at different venues throughout the shire which have been attended by Councillor Hodge and Councillor Hodge can attest to this fact. Thank you, Mayor.

## Draft Transcript

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Stapleton? No comments? Would any other Councillors like to make a comment? Councillor Gazzard.

CR GAZZARD: It says Wednesday, 23 April, but I presume that's also a Tuesday.

CR BARKER: Good pick-up.

CR GAZZARD: That would be Anzac Day that week, but not on the Tuesday. So we should maybe just amend that.

CR HODGE: Is someone away? Is there a Mayors thing at G21 or something?

CR BARKER: No, it's typed as Wednesday, 23 April and there's Tuesday, the 23rd or Wednesday, the 24th. I think it will be Tuesday, the 23rd.

CR HODGE: It's Tuesday, the 23rd. Anyway.

CR PATTISON: It should be Tuesday, the 23rd.

CR GAZZARD: Move an amendment?

CR PATTISON: Sure. Councillor Gazzard, you'd like to move an amendment that the - well, I think it's an administrative typo because the date is 23 April. So I think the intention is there and I don't think we need an amendment. I think it's just Wednesday instead of Tuesday. But I think we've got the date right, so I think we just leave it as is, but thank you for raising that.

CR GAZZARD: No, I thought it was because of Anzac Day.

CR PATTISON: So I think, yes, that's an administrative change that our officers will resolve. Would any other Councillors like to speak? Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: Mayor, I'd just like to speak briefly to say that this schedule represents our last year together as a Council and I'd like to express my gratitude to my fellow Councillors for three years so far of acting in what we all believe to be the municipality's best interests and I wish everybody the best for that final year.

## Draft Transcript

CR PATTISON: Thank you for the kind words, Councillor Bodsworth. And do you have any closing remarks - oh, Councillor Wellington, you'd like to speak to the motion?

CR WELLINGTON: Yes, thank you very much. I generally support the Council meetings being held in external locations, but we have to be better with IT. I don't know if other people in the community - I know about 100 people actually watch this meeting and I don't know if they're having the same problems I'm having, but it's been extremely difficult to hear this evening, so I think we've got to get the technology working better if that is the case and it's not just at my end because we do want to encourage people to listen to Council meetings and to, you know, engage in the issues.

CR PATTISON: Thanks, Councillor Wellington. The sound guy is telling me that you have a different stream because the community's is delayed and so the community won't be having the issues that you're having and it is all - the recording will be uploaded tomorrow. So we can definitely work at resolving the issues that you're having, but I assure you the community is having a different experience. That's what the tech guy is nodding and telling me. But I'll let you continue on if you have more to say.

CR WELLINGTON: We do have to enable Councillors to attend by Zoom. It's obviously not possible, for various reasons, for all Councillors to attend (inaudible) and I think it's expected now that we can do that in a way that is accessible for everybody. So I look forward to that next year.

I also look forward to the break over January, actually. It's been an extremely difficult and challenging year for various reasons and I think a break will be excellent.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Any closing remarks? Yes, Councillor Schonfelder.

CR SCHONFELDER: Mayor Pattison, just very briefly, I'm aware that there have been changes from 4G to 5G in our shire in certain areas and I've noticed there have been difficulties with the internet.

One final point I'd like to make, Mayor, is that my grandfather was a Councillor for 45 years and he only missed three meetings in 45 years, which I thought was remarkable.

CR PATTISON: Remarkable. We can't all live up to those standards, that's amazing, but great comments. Thank you for the comments, Councillor Schonfelder. We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those - oh, sorry.

DRAFT Transcript produced by The Captioning Studio  
W: **captioningstudio.com** T: (08) 8463 1639

## Draft Transcript

CR BARKER: Attention to detail is important to me and I won't be supporting a motion that's incorrect.

CR PATTISON: Sure. We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And all those opposed? And the motion is carried 7-1.

We now move on to Project Budget Adjustments and Cash Reserve Transfers November 2023. This report contains proposed project budget adjustments and cash reserve transfers for Council approval. The report presents adjustments including existing projects requiring adjustments, project closures, new projects to be initiated, Chief Executive Officer-approved transfers under delegation or corrections to prior reports presented to Council. Do I have a mover of a motion? Councillor Bodsworth - as per the recommendation?

CR BODSWORTH: Yes, thanks, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: And seconded by Councillor Stapleton. Would you like to speak, Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: There's just a couple of things that I'd like to point out. One is I'm happy to see that we managed to fund the Aireys Inlet and Anglesea Christmas carols and also although the stupendous gallery that we had seems to have dwindled - the work that the Aireys Carols team put into helping us make some changes to the grant funding project we had, they helped make some really constructive changes. So I'm glad those carols have got funded and we've got a much wider group of carols applications than we've had in the past, which is also great.

And then there are a number of closed projects that I'd just like to mention because there's some really significant and great projects in there. So the Strategic Fuel Break Program has been really well supported by our own officers with good communication with residents, affected residents. I know certainly in Anglesea I'm well aware of where residents have had great communication with our team who are also working in collaboration with Forest Fire Management Victoria and others. The Prosperous Places Project was a really great project connected to our Economic Development Strategy and also the Outdoor Eating and Entertainment Program, so some - and there are others, but some good projects closed out. Thanks.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Stapleton?

## Draft Transcript

CR STAPLETON: I've got nothing to add, thanks, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: Would any other Councillors like to speak to the motion?  
Councillor Wellington.

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you. I just have a question about the Pollocksford Road Bridge and we're returning \$500,000 to our neighbouring shire because we haven't managed to progress it. I'm just wondering what the cause of that delay is. Obviously we'll get that money back when we do proceed, but what is the cause of the delay with the Pollocksford Road Bridge, please?

CR PATTISON: I'll pass that on to our CEO.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Councillor Wellington, the issue was that the tenders we got back for the replacement of that bridge were well above the budget that we received through the funding grant from the Federal Government and combined allocation and so we're sort of - we're now looking at what are our options in that space and so while we work through possible redesign, we are looking to pass the money back to Golden Plains until we actually are clearer around the scope and the pathway to renew that bridge.

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you very much. And my other question was I know there are carols planned for Winchelsea and I just wondered why there's not a small allocation for those as well.

CR PATTISON: Our CEO can respond to that one.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Councillor Wellington, we had so many of our towns put in for the carols and it was first in, first served and Winchelsea were successful in getting one of those grants. This transfer is really in recognition that there were two towns that missed out who really wanted to have carols. The others have all been funded.

CR WELLINGTON: Thank you very much.

CR PATTISON: Did you want to speak to the motion, Councillor Wellington?

CR WELLINGTON: No, thanks.

CR PATTISON: No. Would any other Councillors like to speak? No. Councillor Bodsworth, closing remarks?

CR BODSWORTH: No, thanks.

## Draft Transcript

CR PATTISON: We'll put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And the motion is carried unanimously.

We now move on to 4.13, Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation - Planning & Environment Act. The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement for authorised officers under the Planning & Environment Act 1987 through the updated Instrument of Authorisation and Appointment. This instrument requires updating due to recent staff changes. Do I have a mover of a motion? Councillor Gazzard - as per the recommendation? And seconded by Councillor Hodge. Would you like to speak, Councillor Gazzard?

CR GAZZARD: No, thank you.

CR PATTISON: Would you like to speak, Councillor Hodge?

CR HODGE: Oh, just it's good to see there's continuing, you know, new blood on it, but it's great to see Rhonda Gambetta back on the list. She was a great officer and it's good to see her back there.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Would any other Councillors like to speak? I assume no closing remarks, Councillor Gazzard? I'll put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And the motion is carried unanimously.

We now move on to 4.14, Conflict of Interest Records. The purpose of this report is to present conflict of interest records received since the previous Council meeting. Do I have a mover of a motion? Councillor Gazzard - as per the recommendation?

CR GAZZARD: Yes.

CR PATTISON: And seconded by Councillor Bodsworth? Would you like to speak, Councillor Gazzard?

CR GAZZARD: No, thank you.

CR PATTISON: Would you like to speak, Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: No, thanks.

## Draft Transcript

CR PATTISON: Would any other Councillors like to speak? We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And the motion is carried unanimously.

And we have no urgent business, so I now declare the meeting closed at 9.21. Thank you, everybody, for joining us here in person, we had a great audience here tonight, and thank you to those joining online. So good night, everybody.