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Surf Coast Shire Ordinary Council Meeting

Tuesday, 27 August 2024 at 6pm

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CR PATTISON: Good evening and welcome to our August Council meeting. I'm Mayor Liz Pattison and it's a pleasure to welcome members of the community joining us tonight.

This meeting is also being live streamed, so a big welcome to those tuning in online, and of course welcome to my fellow Councillors here tonight and to Councillor Hodge, who we have online. Live captioning will accompany the live stream of this meeting. We hope this assists those who have hearing difficulties.

I'd like to acknowledge that we're gathered on Wadawurrung country. I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging. The First Peoples have nurtured and protected these lands and waterways for thousands of generations and I am 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 who are viewing the meeting tonight.

It's also really pleasing to see the range of events which take place across the shire each month and I have the pleasure of talking about some of these at the beginning of each of our Council meetings. So this month one of our headline events was the Surf Coast Arts Trail, which took place over the first weekend of August, with more than 200 artists displaying work across 54 venues across the shire and we had around 16,000 individual check-ins at studios, arts hubs and community spaces, with most people visiting a number of venues across the shire.

So there's some interesting statistics. 51% of visitors were day trippers from outside of the shire, which is great, just showing the benefit that the Arts Trail has in bringing people from the broader region to experience the wonderful creative talent we have in our shire. Our artists generated total sales of \$179,450, which is great, and from all accounts, it was a really wonderful weekend.

Another really exciting event, very different from the Arts Trail, was the Surf Coast Wonderfalls Trail Run, which took place on Saturday, 17 August. Participants enjoyed ideal weather conditions tackling some epic challenges. One of my friends did the 20 something kilometre and it really did sound like it was an epic, gruelling but amazingly rewarding Trail Run. So it ranges from 5km to 52km navigating mountain trails, river crossings, very brutal climbs,

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spectacular views and beautiful waterfalls. So it's very challenging, but great for those that have that level of fitness and can enjoy that.

And now to our agenda for tonight. So for those that haven't watched before, I'll go through some of the process. Council meetings operate to our adopted Governance Rules and that includes the following procedures. During the meeting, the mover of a motion or an amendment may speak for a maximum of 5 minutes to open the debate and then a further 2 minutes to make a closing statement. Any other Councillors, including the seconder, may speak to a motion for no more than 3 minutes.

I ask that members of the gallery avoid using phones during the meeting, as this can be distracting for Councillors as well as other members of the gallery, and I also note that any unauthorised recording of the meeting is prohibited under our Governance Rules, but you can get a copy of it online anyway because it's recorded and will be put up 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.

So we have an apology for tonight's meeting. Councillor Wellington is an apology. Can I have a mover and a seconder for this apology, please? Moved Councillor Allen and seconded Councillor Stapleton. All those in favour? And the motion is passed unanimously.

Can I please have a mover and a seconder to confirm the minutes of the Council meeting held on 23 July 2024? Moved by Councillor Bodsworth, seconded by Councillor Schonfelder. All those in favour? And the motion is carried unanimously.

Do we have any leave of absence requests? No. And do we have any declarations of conflicts of interest from Councillors or officers? No.

Presentations - Councillor Allen.

CR ALLEN: Thanks, Mayor. I would like to congratulate Lesley and Clive Goldsworthy, who were elected as the recipients of the Doug and Mary Stirling Cup, a cup in Lorne for outstanding community service. Clive was a Councillor on the Surf Coast Shire from 2012 and he served two terms representing the Lorne ward and both he and Lesley really over 15 to 20 years have really been

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outstanding in their dedication and service to the community, and that will be presented at a luncheon at Stribling Reserve Pavilion on 20 September and tickets are available.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Allen.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Mayor Pattison, I just wanted to mention - Councillor Barker and Councillor Hodge, we're having trouble with our live streaming tonight and you can be heard, but at the moment you can't be seen online, so just to let you know we're working on it. I think the wind is interfering with some of our - and is being challenging in relation to live streaming tonight.

CR HODGE: Thank you for letting us know.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: You are recorded, though, and you're visible on the recording. Sorry, Mayor Pattison.

CR PATTISON: No worries. Thanks for that update. So we have no submissions and that brings us to public question time. And I'll pass over to our CEO.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Great. Thank you, everyone. The bulk of our questions tonight relate to Haven Homes, so I thought it might be useful to just give a context of some of the work that we've been doing in this space before we answer the specific questions because there has been a bit happening in this space and there's a meeting that we've got next week.

So just to be clear for those people who aren't aware of what Haven Torquay is, it's a project that's intended to provide accommodation for people living with mental illness who need support and there's been a number of community members who've voiced their concerns about the location in Silvereye Street in Torquay.

So just to provide a bit of context around some of the work that we've been doing in that space prior to our General Manager of Community Life responding to the specific questions, given he's been leading a lot of this work, we have a meeting arranged with Mind Australia, who's the community housing provider who's delivering the project, for next week and as part of that, there's a small number of interested residents who will be meeting with Mind Australia as well as a small number of Councillors and that's really an opportunity to share information, Mind to share information, with our residents and our community

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and also have a conversation with some of those community members who are particularly concerned and leading the broader kind of community concern around this project.

We've been working, from a Council perspective, in addition to organising the meeting in improving the information sharing and information flow and engagement between Mind Australia and interested community members and we've raised a range of concerns on behalf of the community in our role to encourage Mind Australia to provide more information to our community to ensure that they kind of understand the intention and how the project will be managed and to address the concerns that are being raised.

Council doesn't have a planning role, as we've kind of talked about at this meeting previously, as this type of accommodation is exempt from the planning permit process, but we know that from Mind Australia's perspective, the goal of this project is to provide accommodation for people with mental illness who need support.

Mind have been really clear with us and told us that the project is going to go ahead at 26 Silvereye Street, Torquay. It's also told us that the engagement from now on is likely to focus on how the supported accommodation will operate, as opposed to whether or not it will be located at 26 Silvereye, so I think that's a really important piece of information for community to understand from Mind Australia's perspective and I thank those members of the community who are here tonight who will be asking questions, and also we know that we've had a couple of other questions submitted from another community member who's not able to be here tonight. So thanks very much, Mayor Pattison.

CR PATTISON: Thanks for that summary. So Jannine Rigby I don't think was able to make it - Jannine is from Silvereye Street in Torquay - and so I'll read out Jannine's question: This question relates to amenity of neighbours. Clause 53.20-6 includes development standards (based on ResCode and Better Apartments) to protect the amenity of adjoining neighbours. What role is Council able to play regarding overlooking and overshadowing open space from second storey balconies and are these amenity requirements exempt or not under the planning exemption provided by Clause 52.20?

I'll read the second question at the same time and then Mr Waight will respond: At the last Council meeting held at Anglesea I raised the issue of parking at the Haven facility in Silvereye Street Torquay, specifically relating to

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residents having the right to drive and where their cars would be parked. Has Council reviewed these concerns and is there any legislation that ensures adequate parking is provided?

MR DAMIAN WAIGHT: Thank you, Mayor Pattison. Hopefully Jannine is watching online. So thanks for your questions, Jannine. It's similar to questions we've received before and a question later on, so we acknowledge the ongoing community concerns around these topics.

Haven Torquay is classified as Community Care Accommodation, as mentioned earlier, which makes it exempt from our usual planning permit process. While we don't issue planning permits for this type of accommodation, our planning team did assess the certificate of compliance and the team is confident matters under the Planning Scheme have been adhered to.

Thanks also for sharing your question about parking. We have again considered the parking at Haven Torquay and can let you know that the parking spaces are still considered satisfactory to meet the demand for people accessing the property. Mind Australia is aware of the community concerns in your questions and we will continue our role to help and encourage Mind Australia to further consider these concerns.

CR PATTISON: Our next question is from Dallas Fett. Dallas, did you want to read your question?

DALLAS FETT: Yes.

CR PATTISON: Yes, sure, thanks.

DALLAS FETT: Obviously hearing that Mind are coming in to see us I think on 5 September, was it - yes - but under the banner that there would be no government officials, is there a possibility that the residents or the community could have a discussion with the Government alone without Mind Australia present?

CR PATTISON: And once again, Damian - Mr Waight will respond to the question.

MR DAMIAN WAIGHT: Yes, g'day, Dallas. Good to see you again. Our view is that the discussion will be better held with Mind Australia present because they'll be able to address some of the questions and concerns that community

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members have. And it was good to meet with you several weeks ago with our CEO, Robyn Seymour, and we discussed some of the challenges of not having Mind present in that conversation. So we think it's a good thing to have them there.

We'll certainly continue to have conversations with you and I might give you a call tomorrow to see what your thinking is and what might be possible, but we think having that meeting with Mind there and the conditions that they're after has set the invitee list up as it will. But I want to kind of assure you that we understand the concerns that are being raised and we hope to have a productive discussion next week and, as I said, I'll give you a call tomorrow and we can discuss what else might be possible.

DALLAS FETT: Okay.

CR PATTISON: Thanks, Dallas. Our next question is from Ian Stewart.

IAN STEWART: Good evening, Councillors and senior staff. Thank you for the opportunity to provide these questions. As per response from last month's Council meeting advice that Mind Australia contacted them in May 22 seeking relevant Planning Scheme controls, even though on numerous occasions Council had advised to the community inquiries that they were not aware of any proposal, it is also advised that Mind applied to Council for a compliance certificate under Clause 52.22. These plans did not include the overshadowing diagrams as these were not produced until 10 October 2023 (refer to plans by Mind designers). Does Council normally issue compliance certificates when the developer does not provide all the relevant information, plans to demonstrate compliance to assess these proposals, or was there some direction to fast track this approval? Also, was Mind required to provide owner's consent for the lodgment of this application?

CR PATTISON: I'll pass this one to Mr Waight.

MR DAMIAN WAIGHT: G'day, Ian. Thanks for coming in. Thanks for your question. I understand our planning team gave you a bit more detailed information on this question, but I can do a summary of that answer.

Council had sufficient information to assess the Certificate of Compliance and is confident that matters under the Planning Scheme have been adhered to. Any person may apply for a Certificate of Compliance and landowner's consent is

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not required. Please know that the certificate is not a requirement for the development to proceed.

IAN STEWART: No worries. Thank you. The second question is: in this month's agenda, Council officers' option 2 response to petition states that advocacy may pose a risk to the project proceeding and would not meet Council's strategic outcomes outlined in their Council plan. Is Council more concerned with a development in an inappropriate location rather than potentially no development?

MR DAMIAN WAIGHT: Yes, thanks, Ian. Noting that you read the report, it does reference Council's goal to improve access to residential accommodation, so that is that goal, and Council planned goals like this help officers create reports and recommendations around that and to present alternative options. The Haven Torquay project will deliver housing which will contribute to one of Council's goals, so if the project didn't proceed, it would not be able to contribute to that goal.

The option you refer to is one of the considerations for this evening along with many other things contained in the report, such as assessing risk, adherence to the Council plan, financial considerations, all those things that we have in our Council reports. So I hope that answers your question.

IAN STEWART: No worries, thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thanks, Ian. Our next question is from Naomi Stewart.

NAOMI STEWART: Good evening, Councillors.

CR PATTISON: Good evening.

NAOMI STEWART: Thanks for the opportunity. My first question: now that Council and officers have witnessed the congestion and safety issues in Silvereye Street behind the Torquay Coast Primary School, with the need to provide footpaths to ensure safer routes to school, especially during school drop-offs and pick-ups, Council CEO advised at the June Council meeting that a future path is to be designed and constructed on the open space area to the south of the school. You would also note that there is currently no developed public open space in the western end of the Stretton Estate. Will Council now fast track the development of the public open space (known as Reserve 1 - Stretton Estate) to provide safe footpath connections, landscaping and

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open space facilities to provide the North Torquay residents with these facilities that should have been provided at subdivision stage? Additionally to this, will Council allow the community to provide feedback on these plans?

MR DAMIAN WAIGHT: Hi, Naomi. Thanks for coming in and asking your question. So Council is undertaking the design for both sections of the reserve along Silvereye Street from Rosella Road through to Heath Street this financial year. We then intend to carry out the construction works, both landscaping and pathways, for this section during the following financial year, which is subject to the works being considered and included in Council's 2025-26 budget process.

And the second part of your question I might need to take on notice because it didn't have that in the preprepared one around whether residents can have input, so I might get back to you on that one.

NAOMI STEWART: Alright, that would be good, thank you. Second question: in this month's agenda, Council will consider the petition about the 12-unit significant mental health facility at 26 Silvereye, Torquay with the recommendation to acknowledge the concerns of the community. Why does Council not share the community concerns (rather than just acknowledging) and advocate to the relevant government departments to review the location of this proposed facility, or does Council believe this is an appropriate location for this facility?

MR DAMIAN WAIGHT: Thanks, Naomi. I hope the information I've provided in the previous answer has helped with some of the second question, but I'll summarise a bit further. It's worth noting Council balances various factors when determining what our advocacy priorities are and what we advocate for, including what our agreed goals are. So without repeating the previous answer, Council's goal around access to housing guides us on what we do with regard to advocacy on Haven Torquay and not to advocate for its relocation.

Council resolved last month to pursue a forum with Mind Australia, which has come up in some of the previous answers, community members and other elected officials and implementing this resolution has been our focus of the last few weeks and I'm pleased that we're finalising the details of this meeting.

NAOMI STEWART: You haven't really answered, though, whether Council is prepared to advocate for the community.

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MR DAMIAN WAIGHT: Well, that's not a priority at the moment.

NAOMI STEWART: But the elections are coming up.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. And our next question is from Gabrielle Peacock.

GABRIELLE PEACOCK: Hi.

CR PATTISON: Hi.

GABRIELLE PEACOCK: Thanks for having me tonight. I've been to a couple of Council meetings. This is my first time asking a question, so bear with me. In the Council report on item 4.1, "Response to Silvereye Haven development", two options were presented, neither of which are recommended. Option 2 suggested that the Council work with the Victorian Government to find a more suitable location for Haven Torquay. However, the Council notes that requesting a reconsideration of the housing location could result in the project being cancelled altogether by Haven withdrawing from the project.

Given that Haven's commitment to providing this type of Community Care Accommodation in Torquay seems to be uncertain and inflexible regarding discussions on the proposed location, despite it being less than ideal, what steps has the Council taken to ensure that the proposed housing is actually addressing a need in the Torquay community and aligns with the goal of affordable and sustainable housing, which was outlined within the Council's strategy?

MR DAMIAN WAIGHT: Hi, Gabrielle. Thanks for coming in and asking your question. Mind Australia has communicated, as I think Robyn mentioned this in the intro, that the project will proceed at the current location. So they have been clear about that when they've communicated where the accommodation will be.

This type of housing would address a need in the Torquay community. The research that we've done is that the proportion of social housing to total resident dwellings in Torquay is 0.027%, so a really small percentage. Meanwhile, according to the 21 census, mental health conditions was the third highest long-term health condition experienced by 7.6% of the Torquay population, so there's a mismatch there.

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The goal of Council's recently adopted Affordable Accommodation Action Plan is to enhance our capacity and the capacity of others to deliver safe, secure, appropriate and affordable housing and this project aligns with that goal, and as I mentioned previously, how it aligns with our other Council plan goal.

GABRIELLE PEACOCK: Can I just ask a little bit further on that? So you've given two different statistical numbers around housing, social affordable housing within Torquay, and then people who suffer from mental health illness in Torquay. This particular type of Community Care Accommodation, whilst it's under the banner of social housing, is actually an incredibly niche area of social housing that requires an incredibly high level of approval through NDIS to be able to access it. So my question is does it actually meet the accessibility requirements that we're looking for in Torquay in providing social housing or is this catering to a very niche community that may not in fact exist in our community already, that require this housing?

MR DAMIAN WAIGHT: Our understanding is that it caters for people with mental illness and quite high need support people with mental illness, so that's that 7.6% of the Torquay population that it may cater for.

GABRIELLE PEACOCK: Okay. And then I guess my next question sort of feeds on from that. So what reassurance can Council provide to concerned residents that the Haven development will not create a scenario where individuals with severe mental health disabilities are moved from outside the Torquay region into the Torquay region to be housed next to a primary school which will have a flow-on effect by being exposed to hundreds of residents, children.

MR DAMIAN WAIGHT: Yes, thanks again. So the research we've done has revealed the following evidence. People living with a mental illness who are receiving effective treatment are no more violent or dangerous than the rest of the population. Crimes against children that are perpetrated by strangers are quite shocking and naturally attract media headlines, but statistically, crimes of this nature are quite rare and crimes against children are often perpetrated by people that are known to the child. Finally, the Discrimination Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person with a disability in moving freely around the community accessing public places and renting or buying a home.

GABRIELLE PEACOCK: You might have misinterpreted my question. I don't think that the residents that will be living here will commit crimes against the children in the area, but I think that there is a risk of exposure of behaviours that are quite adult in nature being positioned next to a school by, you know,

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adults that didn't previously frequent that area. So we're introducing adult behaviour next to a school because unfortunately the nature of severe and enduring mental illness is that sometimes people who suffer from these conditions can behave in manners that might be confronting for young children.

CR PATTISON: Thanks for raising your question, Gabrielle. We appreciate you coming in and asking them.

So our next question is from Megan Morris - well, firstly, thank you everyone for coming in and submitting your questions and raising your concerns around the Haven Torquay. So our next question we move on to a different topic. It's from Megan Morris, from Winchelsea, and it's around the new school on a new site for Winchelsea. So Megan's question - she's not able to be here tonight - is the following: Winchelsea has been identified by the shire to experience substantial growth. Projections forecast show that by 2051 a population of almost 18,000. We have one school only for primary aged students. The enrolment capacity is 175. The facilities are old, with increasing maintenance needs. The site's unsuitable bordered by industrial businesses and a highway. The maintenance required is not sustainable with the current funding. By 2026, enrolments are expected to exceed 175.

The Department of Education acknowledges we're experiencing enrolment pressures, but indicate a new school is not in the future plans for us. For our students' education, development, mental and physical health, it is imperative we campaign for a new school. The department need to acknowledge Winchelsea students and their families deserve the same opportunities as other students and families on the Surf Coast. In Council's 2015 Structure Plan, land was earmarked in Barwon Terrace as an education precinct to replace the current unsuitable site. Will Council support the community to lobby the Education Department to acquire land and assist us to advocate for a new school on a new site for the children of our community?

So thank you, Megan, for your question and I hope you're listening online. Council officers have recently engaged with the Department of Education about a future school in Winchelsea. This included inviting the department to make a submission on our Draft Urban Futures Strategy, which will guide sustainable urban growth. The department's submission acknowledged Winchelsea as a designated growth area. It also acknowledged schools in the Winchelsea and Surf Coast area can meet anticipated enrolments.

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Given this, there are no plans to fund the construction of a new school in Winchelsea. However, the department will continue to complete an annual review as part of its statewide planning for schools. The department clarified that any designation of a school precinct in the short-term residential growth area may accommodate either future non-government or government schools. In its submission, the Department of Education shared that it looks forward to working with Council on the future Long-Term Strategic Place Plan for Winchelsea. Council will ensure that the Department of Education is fully engaged in the preparation of a future growth plan to ensure adequate school provision in Winchelsea to meet planned population growth. So thank you, Megan, for that important question.

And that brings us to the end of public question time. So thank you, everybody, for your questions.

We have no petitions and no Notice of Motions. So now we can get into the reports for the meeting tonight.

So our first report is 4.1, petition Response Silver Eye Haven Development. The purpose of this report is to respond to the petition presented at the July 2024 Council meeting requesting Council to work with the Victorian Government to find an alternative location for the proposed Mind Australia 12-unit development at 26 Silvereye Street, Torquay called Haven Torquay. We have a recommendation before us. Does anyone wish to move a motion? Councillor Barker - is that as per the recommendation?

CR BARKER: Yes, Mayor.

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

CR BARKER: Just very briefly, thank you. The development petition response (inaudible) the challenges that we face in balancing the community concerns with development interests. Now, the intent around the petition is to protect the local interests, but we always need to balance it (inaudible) whether the Council's involvement is justified. I do hear the concerns of the residents and will be attending the upcoming meeting with state government (inaudible). The issue is primarily a state matter. As this Council has set precedence in addressing state, federal and international issues, this topic that directly impacts our residents needs to be advocated for and if we are going to be an

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advocacy body advocating for our residents is the least that we can do. I'll leave it at that.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Barker. Just - I don't know if you when you're speaking next can speak closer or - it was just a little bit difficult to hear some of the words. We could generally get the gist of it, but it was something to do with the clarity of your microphone. So I'm not sure if you've done anything different this time to normal.

CR BARKER: Is that any better?

CR PATTISON: Yes, that is a lot better. So it might have been the distance that you are from the mic - just letting you know for future.

CR BARKER: Yes.

CR PATTISON: And Councillor Bodsworth.

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

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

CR SCHONFELDER: Mayor, I'd like to thank the petitioners for their advocacy of their own amenity in the area and just to note that Councillor Wellington and I did attend a gathering at the site and I would just like to state that I think the council should look again at parking and traffic issues because I do think the roads seem very narrow and when the school traffic comes and goes, there's parking issues that are very relevant and very pertinent. Thank you, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: Would anyone else like to speak to the motion? Councillor Gazzard?

CR GAZZARD: Thank you. Thanks, Mayor. Thanks to the petitioners and thanks to all the public who have attended today and I really congratulate you on continuing to advocate for yourselves and your community and I hope that you feel we are listening.

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It is a tricky balance and I suppose - I really empathise with the concern and distress that you're feeling around the location, but also without wanting to increase the stigma around mental illness, which is very prevalent in our society and often an invisible kind of illness. As an emergency doctor, I work a lot with people with mental illness who come in very distressed and the rates that we've seen, particularly since COVID, have just been increasing, particularly in young people who are very vulnerable.

I think the notion that, you know, schizophrenia is the typical hallucinatory and, you know, they present quite unwell with psychosis, but that's actually very rare and most people who are appropriately seeking treatment have very well controlled symptoms. Far more predominant is anxiety and depression and I think one of my big worries is that the people who will suffer the most from this kind of discourse is the new residents coming in, the stigma around them that they will be the ones who are most vulnerable.

This doesn't answer the question of, you know, how Mind Australia have responded to or lack of response to your concerns and I hope that the meeting with them will clarify some of that.

So, yes, we hear your concerns, but we also know that we do have a need for accommodation, particularly for these vulnerable people. So I will support this motion. Thank you to the petitioners and I hope that there is a good outcome from the meeting.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. And do we have any other - oh, Councillor Hodge? Sorry, Councillor Hodge, you just moved off the screen and you're on mute, if you want to unmute yourself.

Just for members of the gallery, it's - sorry, just for a moment. Once the meeting started, the public question time was an opportunity for the community to engage. Now the Councillors are making decisions. So I understand that you want to raise a question and there are other times that you can do that, but there's not an opportunity now. Councillor Hodge, would you like to --

CR HODGE: Yes, thank you, Mayor. I'm having trouble with my internet, so I do apologise if I fade in and out.

Look, I'll also be attending the forum. I'd like to hear from Mind Australia. But it is one of those things - it is frustrating for Councillors and the shire when you're not the decision maker in this. So I am looking forward to the forum

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and asking questions of the many petitioners, there are many people that have asked questions, but also to Mr Waight, I know the amount of work and advocacy we've tried behind the scenes, so I'm hoping that this forum might answer a few more questions for people.

I heard what Councillor Gazzard said. There are concerns. Hopefully we can get really through them and work out because to get the community at ease if it is going ahead as stated by Haven and Mind Australia. So looking forward to the forum and I hope many other Councillors come as well. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Hodge. Councillor Allen?

CR ALLEN: Thanks, Mayor. Could I also thank the members of the community who have raised their concerns and advocated on behalf of their community and I understand their position.

I just wanted really to give a shoutout really to the officers and to some of my fellow Councillors who before the motion in Anglesea and before the petition were working, were working hard to connect with Mind Australia and Haven Homes, and I just think it's perhaps not recognised that that was being done and I would perhaps urge that the residents put their energies into advocating at the steps of the State Parliament, where the real decisions are made. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Bodsworth, did you want to speak to the motion?

CR BODSWORTH: I don't have much to add. I just also add my thanks to petitioners. Personally, I find this difficult. The Council is in a difficult position in this, given the process that we have. As a Councillor, if I lived in a neighbourhood where there was a proposal like this, I'd probably be wary about it. I might have similar concerns to what neighbours of this proposal have.

I'm also a person who's suffered from mental ill health. I've had periods of anxiety and depression that have required treatment. So I can attest from my own life experience the importance of proper support at those times and noting that often these are psychosocial disabilities which are functional difficulties and barriers related to mental health conditions and it's really about people's freedom from some of those debilitating effects and their ability to live as close

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as possible to a normal life in a normal society. So I strongly support that and, on balance, I do support the response to the petition.

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

CR BARKER: Yes, thanks. How am I at the moment?

CR PATTISON: Can you come a bit closer again? It's just a bit distorted. So the volume is fine, it's just the clarity of word.

CR BARKER: How's that?

CR PATTISON: Much better.

CR BARKER: (Inaudible) being a state issue --

CR ALLEN: That's worse.

CR PATTISON: No, actually, it's worse. Sorry, Councillor Barker, it's worse. Can you go back to the way you were sitting before?

CR BARKER: How is that?

CR PATTISON: Yes, that's good.

CR BARKER: Great. As I said (inaudible) for a bit, please?

CR PATTISON: Yes, that's --

CR BARKER: Given that it is largely a state issue, telling people in our community who we represent to go and advocate for themselves (inaudible) that circumvents (inaudible) and even after that has happened (inaudible) position. I'm not suggesting (inaudible) given that it's a different situation, but we need to communicate the concerns the community have and if that is advocating to the State Government (inaudible) that's a terrible situation the mental health issues in our area, but we've got a balance of needs here and I don't think we're balancing the needs of the local community at all. How much longer do I have?

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CR PATTISON: I think you've got about 20 seconds because you lost a bit of time at the beginning.

CR BARKER: Okay. (Inaudible) near that area (inaudible) State Government situation now and I think (inaudible) we'll support the community (inaudible).

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Barker. We now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour. And the motion is carried unanimously.

We now move on to item 4.2, Award of Contract T24-001 - Construction Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre Torquay. The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to award contract T24-001 - Construction Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre Torquay - and approve to fund the budget shortfall for the Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre project. As the recommendation has some redacted parts, I'll ask officers to display the unredacted recommendation on the screen for us, please, before we continue.

So Councillor Barker and Councillor Hodge, can you see that?

CR HODGE: Clearly, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: Yes, great. And it's there for those that are viewing online and here in the audience. So we can see who the successful tenderer is and the contract sum. So now that everyone has had a look at that, do we have a recommendation - and obviously Council has had this information prior as well. Do we have a recommendation, please? Councillor Gazzard - as per the - yes?

CR GAZZARD: Yes, thank you.

CR PATTISON: And a seconder? Thank you, Councillor Stapleton. Would you like to speak to the motion, Councillor Gazzard?

CR GAZZARD: Yes, I think it feels like this one has been a long time coming and there's been a lot of different briefings and iterations and budgetary challenges, but I'm very excited to move this motion to go ahead with construction.

I think - thank you - it's time that Surf Coast - that Torquay has a pool. Swimming is such an integral part of growing up in Australia and our national results in the Olympics highlights how strong our swimming culture is and

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living on the coast, we obviously need strong swimmers and learn to swim programs that happen in pools rather than the ocean.

I grew up swimming, doing swim squad, lifesaving club, and our kids deserve the same without having to drive into Geelong to go to their swimming lessons. In hospitals I've witnessed the devastation and heartbreak of drownings and near drownings and according to Life Saving Victoria's drowning report, Victoria's fatal drowning rates are higher than the national average and the progress to reduce fatal drownings, there's urgent work still needed, particularly in preschool children, adolescents and young adults and those over 65.

The fatalities are prominent in inland waterways and coastal waterways, of which our shire has many, so this highlights the importance and the need for a proper swimming - proper aquatic facility where kids can learn to swim.

So I'm very excited to move this. Providing swimming lessons to children is one of the main things that I'm excited about, but for lap swimmers as well as the other benefits of hydrotherapy, group fitness and just encouraging active lifestyles for everyone on the Surf Coast. So thank you. I hope everyone will support it.

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

CR STAPLETON: Thanks, Mayor. I'm also very happy to see this report come to Council for a decision. It's been quite a journey over the past four years trying to find a pathway for the pool project to be realised and looking at the tender, we know that a very thorough evaluation and procurement process has taken place, that we're considering a contract that delivers best value for money and that the recommended tenderer has the experience, capability and capacity to deliver an Aquatic and Health Centre for the Surf Coast, which we are - a massive project for this Council.

There's no denying that building a pool in Torquay will come at a significant cost, with a total price tag of around \$56 million, but when weighing this up against the need for this facility, the strong community demand and the social and wellbeing benefits it will deliver, there's no doubt in my mind that we must move forward with this project. It is imperative, however, that whilst delivering this facility, Council also ensures ongoing financial sustainability, taking into account both capital costs and operational performance. Officers have undertaken extensive work to present us with a viable and sustainable

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option for incorporating the Aquatic and Health Centre into the budget longer term.

Council has received a significant amount of funding, almost \$37 million, and it's really important to acknowledge and thank both the Federal and State Governments to allow this community to have a pool in Torquay. When the tendered price for the pool exceeded the available project budget, Council was left in a position where decisions needed to be made, and they are hard decisions, on whether we could bridge the gap and deliver a pool for our community.

So significant work has been undertaken by officers to negotiate with the first ranked tenderer on value management, which has reduced the lump sum tender price to an amount that Council can work with. We're reassured that the cost savings that have been found will have minimal effect on the facility's overall program offering, the ongoing life cycle costs and the sustainable design credentials, which were really important considerations for Council through the value management process. The last thing we wanted was to compromise the anticipated community benefits and the need for a high-rated environmentally sensitive facility.

Officers have also developed a Revised Budget for 2024-25 to accommodate our proposed strategy to bridge the funding gap, allowing for \$6 million in borrowings and reprogramming other projects to underwrite the balance of \$3.207 million. And I note that the successful adoption of this agenda item will be subject to Council also resolving to adopt the Revised Budget, which is coming up next.

So assuming all goes well, we expect to see the pool ready to swim in in just under two years from now and I can't wait for the day that we can all jump in. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Hodge?

CR HODGE: Thank you, Mayor, and thank you to the first two speakers. They've covered it really well and taken a lot of what I was going to say. Councillor Gazzard said it has been a long process. Well, I think a lot of people in Torquay and Jan Juc - it was in the 60s, I think I've mentioned this before in a previous meeting, when it was first mooted. It has been about a decade now since we first went out to the community and when they came to us and discussed it with us and at that time we didn't have the finance.

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It was just amazing to get, I think Councillor Stapleton mentioned it, 20 million from our Federal Government and 16.8 million from the Victorian Government. This type of grant funding is extremely rare in such a big project and I thank them both, for the politicians that got that money for us.

I congratulate Kane Constructions for getting the tender. I know there's been a huge amount of conversation behind the scenes about trying to lower costs and I thank the officers for doing that. But we still will be looking, and it says in the report, to seek any other grants that we might be able to apply for as well, philanthropic and any other lowering costs that we can do. So there's a lot more to go on to look at how we might be able to save some more money on this. Councillor Stapleton outlined the financial areas of it.

I too am looking forward to it. I know driving three children into Geelong doing their swimming lessons, this will save people a lot of money, money can be spent, it will be a social hub. And when you think of the actual precinct, you know, you've got the basketball stadium, you've got the swimming pool, you've got the soccer. It will be an absolutely regional set of sporting facilities for people to come to. There will be a coffee shop, there will be things for people to be social, social rooms, there will be allied health services there as well.

So it will become a regional hub for wellbeing and Councillor Gazzard mentioned that in her opening and I'm really looking forward to it as well. And to all the people that started back 10 years ago, Mr Fowler and all of his cohorts who've done a great job. Let's hope that this continues on. Let's hope it gets through and we can turn that soil and hopefully, as Councillor Stapleton said, get in the water in about two years' time. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Allen?

CR ALLEN: Thanks, Mayor. This recommendation concerns the awarding of the contract for the construction of the Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre and endorsing the funding options for the shortfall arising from the tender price exceeding available project budget.

The report highlights that the shortfall can be bridged by borrowings to a maximum of \$6 million, subject to tonight's approval of the revised 2024-25 budget, continued value management seeking further external funding, and by reprogramming other project delivery. I wish to address this last method first.

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I have long been an advocate for the Torquay and district community, the main beneficiary of the project, bearing some of the cost of providing the centre. I frequently, probably ad nauseam, refer to the contributions required by the Lorne community for the Stribling Reserve Pavilion redevelopment and the two-stage construction of the Lorne Historical Society facade. However, although not making a direct contribution to the project budget, the reallocation of funds from the Open Space Reserve to the Spring Creek Reserve and by redirecting renewal funds to the pool, the Torquay community will be contributing, if this option is used, to the pool by forgoing any future works within the township from this allocation.

There are further forgone opportunities in the short to medium term - for example, the realignment of Wadawurrung Way and the deferral of our 25-26 contribution of \$1.376 million to the Torquay Jan Juc DCP, which will push back projects over the next five years. This will inevitably be a complex mix and how the adjustments will be made is not fully known. But it will be at a cost in the short to medium term, again, if this option is used to the amenity of the Torquay and Jan Juc communities.

Referring back to the Stribling Reserve Pavilion redevelopment in Lorne, the Council borrowed \$3.25 million, without which the facility would not be the magnificent Council asset that it is today. Authorising borrowing to a maximum of \$6 million for the Aquatic and Health Centre is, I believe, justified. Our level of debt will still be manageable and within the local government prudential guidelines.

The value management process has been achieved within a framework of not compromising the key facility outcomes. The community benefits of the project will still be achieved and the officers involved deserve our thanks.

Delaying the process is not a realistic option, as to delay would run the very real risk of significant cost escalation. We're likely to see this level of government financial support for an infrastructure build in the foreseeable future and I am happy to endorse this way forward to ensure that the centre will become a reality.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Allen. Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Yes, I'll just do a quick test of audio. How is that?

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CR PATTISON: Way better, good work.

CR BARKER: Firstly, I'd like to thank Councillor Allen for highlighting some of the tradeoffs that are going to be part of that and more than likely that we're going to see more tradeoffs come as a result, and I'd like to touch on some of the things that Councillor Hodge mentioned in terms of the positive impacts that it's going to have and they are undoubtedly going to happen, but I always question at what cost?

So the proposal is going to be a major financial commitment. Now, while the idea of a state-of-the-art facility is appealing, we need to really scrutinise the costs and consider whether this is a sound use of ratepayers' and taxpayers' money. At the moment it's looking like around about \$1,000 per man, woman and child that everyone from the Surf Coast needs to commit to fund this and it's only going to get more with extra borrowings and any other funds that need to come through.

But the intent is clear, to provide a public service that promotes health and wellbeing. But is it really necessary? I know it's wanted and are we being swayed by grand ambitions that don't align with our actual financial reality or capacity?

Now, the tradeoffs are significant. We could create a facility that serves the community well, but on the other we're committing to a project that could easily exceed budget and create ongoing maintenance costs and operational.

Now, our local roads have little more than 50% satisfaction in the community. The reallocation of funds needed to improve this will not be available should this project go ahead. We're going to be scrimping and saving from every which way to fund this. So if you don't like the roads at the moment, expect them to get a whole lot worse if this project goes through. Now, are we prepared to handle those potential overruns and tradeoffs or are we setting ourselves up for a financial strain in the future?

Now, financially, the short-term impact is obvious (inaudible) funds for construction, but the long-term implications are just as important. We're talking about ongoing operational costs estimated to be around half a million dollars a year which will likely blow out to well over a million dollars a year thanks to the electrification of the water heating and reduced visitation as the recession takes hold. Potential upgrades and the inevitable wear and tear, it's

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all going to happen. Now, is this a burden we're willing to place on future Councils and ratepayers? I don't think it's fair.

Now - I'll see if I can squeeze it all in. Now, community engagement obviously shows support, but are we being fully transparent about the cost potential for (inaudible)? I don't think so. More importantly, if we find ourselves in financial stress and need to sell the pool off, who is going to want to buy an overpriced 25-metre pool? If it was a 50-metre pool, you might have a better proposition.

In conclusion, while the benefits of an aquatic health centre are clear, I urge caution. We must ensure that this project is necessary, that it's managed with the utmost fiscal responsibility and that we're not overcommitting ourselves. Now, unless these concerns are addressed, I find it difficult to support this award. I've got a bit more to go, but that's it.

CR PATTISON: Thanks, Councillor Barker. Would you like to speak, Councillor Schonfelder?

CR SCHONFELDER: I'd like to speak and thank my colleagues for their contribution towards this once in a generation and I'd say once in a lifetime because I don't think I'll live long enough to see another pool being built. We are renewing a pool in Winchelsea and I recently attended an MAV conference, a Municipal Association of Victoria conference, and I met a Councillor from Merri-bek and Merri-bek has six pools and it's interesting that I think that every Council actually does have a pool and it's a part - to quote a word that Councillor Barker uses often, it's a part of our remit.

I'd also like to emphasise what Councillor Gazzard said when moving the motion about preventative health. We spend so much money treating people's health conditions, it is better to have preventative health and this is an asset that will be greatly patronised by the local community, but also as someone who has attended pools in the region, including Winchelsea and at Leisurelink in the City of Greater Geelong, many holiday makers, if the weather is inclement or it's cooler, they come to a swimming pool with their children. So there will be visitors from Victoria and other parts of Australia who visit the Surf Coast and internationally who I believe will use this facility.

We are very blessed and fortunate in the fact that it has been touched upon that the State and Federal Governments have contributed so much money towards this project and we're actually envied by many other Councils as a

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result of that. I have met (inaudible) before and I know once during a meeting we were talking about the pool and I didn't speak because I was quite emotional about it, but I did have a cousin who actually drowned at Torquay and I have said before if it saves one life, and I know Councillor Gazzard mentioned this earlier about working in a hospital as well, I can't imagine what the families go through, but I believe if the pool saves one life, it's well worth having and I really look forward to the pool being built and actually using the pool as well. Thank you, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: Really briefly, I think this is a massive occasion, as others have said. This has been such a long time coming. Councillor Hodge said it's been a decade since this dream was reawakened in the Torquay community and here we are - I couldn't believe it reading the agenda, thinking wow, here we are about to vote to award a contract to build the Torquay Aquatic and Health Centre. So it's really exciting.

And then I was thinking it's as exciting as if you caught a glimpse of the summit of Mount Everest from, say, camp 2, where you know it's been an arduous process to get there, but it's going to be super arduous up ahead, but you've got everything in place that you need to to get there.

So it is going to be tough. There's going to be costs, there's going to be other things that we won't be able to do and the pathway between now and the completion and operationalising of the pool is going to be tough as well. But we've been exposed to an incredible amount of information, great quality information. We've seen how this looks on the long-term financial plan. We've had 10 briefings in the last four months and many more before that, so I think as a Council we've been incredibly well served by the officers who've put together all that information. And finally I echo other Councillors' congratulations to the advocates in the community for this project and who I hope feel really excited at this moment. Thanks.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Any closing remarks, Councillor Gazzard? No. We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour? And all those opposed? And motion is carried 7-1.

We now move on to Adoption of the Revised Budget 2024-25. The purpose of this report is to present to Council the Revised Budget Report for 2024-25 for adoption. This is required in order for Council to proceed with the Surf Coast

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Aquatic and Health Centre in accordance with Council's resolution on the previous item for tonight's agenda. Councillor Allen, is that as per the recommendation?

CR ALLEN: Thanks, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: And do I have a seconder? Councillor Schonfelder.

CR ALLEN: The 2024-25 Revised Budget, after the passing of item 4.2, needs to be adopted to incorporate a maximum level of borrowing of \$6 million determined by the revenue needed after alternative means of funding the revenue gap are completed to build the Aquatic and Health Centre; to factor in the borrowing repayments plus interest over a 25-year period, thus spreading the burden of the debt over future generations; to reflect an interest rate of 5.25% if the maximum amount is borrowed, the annual repayment will be \$432,000 including interest; and finally, to demonstrate the level of borrowing aligns with the Council's borrowing policy, the centre being of strategic significance and unable to be financed from our normal revenue streams.

What is the borrowing policy? The interest bearing loans and borrowings over rate revenue will remain below 40%. Well, in the Revised Budget for 24-25 that figure is 20.7% and that interest and principal repayments on interest bearing loans and borrowings over rate revenue will remain below 5%. In the Revised Budget, that is 3.7%.

In fact, if we look at the level of indebtedness - that is, the level of non-current liabilities compared to our own source revenue, that is revenue from rates and fees, not from grants - there is a significant fall. In 2022-23 the ratio was 44.1%. In the revised 24-25 Budget, the ratio is down to 37.3%.

As I mentioned when speaking to item 4.2 on the agenda, there is the ability in the long-term financial plan to fund the debt servicing costs of the loan through the reduction in discretionary spending and, in my view, these in the short to medium term are appropriately reductions made in the Torquay Jan Juc communities. I believe that future Councils must have an eye to ensuring that other parts of the municipality do not suffer and that the burden of reduced discretionary funding focuses on the areas that overwhelmingly use the facility.

From the community consultation concerning the Revised Budget, we received six submissions, four in favour, two against borrowing to support the project.

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There was concern expressed about our financial sustainability and that the value management process should not compromise the operating performance of the facility. Officers have stated that the value management process has focused primarily on components within the facility that will have minimal impact on programming and operating performance and that there was an additional concern expressed around the centre's alignment with the Council's environmentally sustainable facilities policy.

There is no question that adopting this Revised Budget does come at a significant cost. The revision arises out of the need to borrow the \$6 million and the subsequent costs, but the remainder of the 24-25 budget is unchanged.

The debate concerning the need for the facility is done. This debate is about the methods of funding. The level of borrowing is within our prudential guidelines. The reduction in discretionary spending is at the moment appropriately focused and I believe that the spread of the financial burden over 25 years should be seen through the prism of an expanding population and rate base. I therefore will support the recommendation to adopt the Revised Budget.

I see that I have 54 seconds left and I simply can't resist referring to Councillor Bodsworth's reference to Mount Everest. I would like to change his gaze from Mount Everest to the landscaping at Stribling Reserve. That might be just as difficult to achieve. Thank you, Mayor.

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

CR SCHONFELDER: I will reserve my right, thank you, Mayor.

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

CR BARKER: Okay. Now, where are we? Now, this Revised Budget is probably the most critical decision that we face today, but this is the blueprint of our priorities and we need to ensure that every dollar is spent wisely, not wastefully.

The intent behind this Revised Budget is to address the changing needs. Let's be clear - every adjustment, every reallocation must be justified, not by our

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desires, but true necessities. I don't think this is a true necessity what we're dealing with here.

Now, the tradeoffs in this budget are clear, as has been addressed elsewhere, and I very much appreciate Councillor Allen's comparison of the landscaping at Stribling Reserve to Mount Everest because I think it will be easier to climb Mount Everest than it will be to get that landscaping finished. But it just shows that we can't be everything to everyone.

We're balancing the desire to fund new initiatives against the need to maintain financial discipline. It's easy to say yes to every request, but doing so without considering the long-term consequences will lead to financial instability.

Financially, this Revised Budget sets a course for the year ahead - well, next financial year, but it's not just about immediate spending. The groundwork for future budgets, it will take long-term financial plans. We must be cautious about committing to expenses that could become reoccurring, especially when revenue streams are uncertain. We keep talking about grants and they're unreliable ways to think about funding anything.

It's also going to affect Council officers and the residents and also visitors to our region. If this Revised Budget is adopted, I can guarantee you that many officers will see their project receiving less funding, putting them under more stress. Many people will notice the degraded quality of our local roads and reduced maintenance of public spaces.

Community engagement and ever-expanding funding requirements that we'll have undoubtedly influence this, but we must also consider whether we're being led by public opinion or sound financial principles. Are we prioritising what's truly needed? I don't think so.

We've got \$100 million in investments. The fact that we're talking about all these borrowings while we've got that up our sleeves is incredible.

In conclusion, I urge my fellow Councillors to approach this budget with a critical eye. Let's ensure that we're making decisions based on necessity, not on the allure of an expansion or desire to satisfy every request. Fiscal responsibility must guide our choices. If not, the ramifications will be significant. I cannot support its adoption.

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CR PATTISON: Would any other Councillors like to speak to this motion?
Councillor Gazzard?

CR GAZZARD: Thank you. I will support it. I think we need to in order to have - since we just passed item 4.2, so I'm happy to adopt the Revised Budget to enable us to construct the pool.

Thanks to the officers and all of the work that's been done in value management. I think it's really commendable how they've made it work and, yes, so I'm very happy to adopt it.

We have talked about sort of the intergenerational cost and I agree there will be some things that we won't be able to fund, but I think the importance of the Aquatic and Health Centre to future generations - I think that's fair that they pay for some of it too. So I'm happy to vote for this. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: Just quickly, I guess I'd just like to reiterate that there have been multiple briefings for Councillors on the financial implications and the sound financial planning that underpins the proposed way of funding the pool, so I wouldn't want anyone to think that any Councillor is coming into this decision not fully aware and not understanding the financial implications and how that is going to be managed over the long-term financial plan. We've seen those forecasts. We understand the impacts on the discretionary budgets. But on the weight of it, I don't think Council could justify walking away from the pool project at this point in time and I certainly support the adoption of the Revised Budget and as Councillor Gazzard said, we've just passed item 4.2 to provide the tender and, yes, the budget, there doesn't need to be much more to be said. Thank you.

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

CR ALLEN: Yes, look, Councillor Barker is right. I mean, this decision tonight does have consequences and it does have consequences to other sections of other departments within the shire. There's no walking away from that.

But I'd like to say that this really is the worst-case scenario and that we're attempting to reduce the financial burden and there are still possible ways and avenues to do that and it really, from my point of view, comes down to how could I possibly vote against a proposal where we have close to \$40 million for

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a facility provided for us? It's just - it's too hard to walk away from. Thank you.

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

We now move on to item 4.4, Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre Management Model. The purpose of this report is to affirm the external contractor management model as the preferred model for operating the Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre (including integration with Wurdi Baierr Stadium). We have a recommendation before us. Does anyone wish to move a motion? Councillor Allen - is that as per the recommendation?

CR ALLEN: Yes, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: And a seconder? Councillor Gazzard. Councillor Allen, would you like to speak?

CR ALLEN: Thank you. At the 22 January Council meeting we agreed that the external contractor management model was the preferred model for the Aquatic and Health Centre. We also resolved to investigate the inclusion of the Winchelsea pool and health club into the scope of the contract.

Now that the Council has resolved to award the contract and have a plan to meet the funding shortfall for the centre, including the adoption of the Revised 24-25 Budget, I believe that it is now appropriate to reaffirm our adoption of an external contractor management model that includes the Wurdi Baierr Stadium with the Aquatic and Health Centre as resolved in January of this year.

The option to include the management of the Winchelsea pool in the tender is, I believe, highly appropriate gaining economies of scale and expertise, plus the ability to draw on a wider number of staff to operate the pool in the peak season, which all leads to improved efficiency and safety.

I believe that it is very sensible at this time to exclude the Winchelsea Health Club from the tender. It is operating successfully, with numbers growing along with community satisfaction. I feel that to introduce an outside management agency that would be required to work with the Council, the community asset committee and the broader community is not advisable at this time. I think there is a real danger, I believe, that there could be a decline in the number of

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volunteers to the detriment of the club. Obviously, as the population of Winchelsea grows, this option will need to be reassessed, but if it works, don't try to fix it. Thank you.

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

CR GAZZARD: Thank you. I'll support it as well. I think the modelling shows that the external contractor is a better cost - annual cost to Council and it makes sense to outsource, for the reasons that Councillor Allen has identified, with the exclusion of Winchelsea Health Club, and, yes, I think it makes sense to include Winchelsea swimming pool and keep things consistent and have hopefully good functioning health clubs throughout the shire.

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

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. First up, a quick question, how will this impact what teams and individuals pay to use Wurdi Baierr and will it change the way the space is utilised?

CR PATTISON: I'll pass this one to our CEO.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: So Councillor Barker, we will be setting expectations around the performance of any future contractor around the sorts of ways in which it should function in terms of things like the learn to swim requirements and the gym and the memberships. In terms of the broader kind of cost structure, that has been considered as part of the process, but perhaps the General Manager of Community Life might like to speak to that.

MR DAMIAN WAIGHT: Yes, through you, Mayor Pattison - thank you, Robyn, and thanks, Councillor Barker. Yes, look, those fee structures have been considered in the planning done to date. We think that there will be an added layer of diligence that we'll do through the tender specification process. So while we draw up the tender documents that would be some of the requirements we'd put to market to make sure that we were getting the response we were after in terms of fees, in terms of utilisation of the facility from the courts at Wurdi Baierr to the learn to swim programs to the lap swimming. So yes, we've done some modelling, but we need to do a little bit more detailed modelling and then put that to market, but we will certainly be able to drive that through the tender specification process.

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CR BARKER: Okay. I just want to confirm because at the moment basketball pays around about double what netball does and I don't want to see a situation where netball gets cut because it's more financially viable for basketball to be run. So that was the purpose of that question and you answered it in a way that it appears that won't change. Now I'll speak.

At its core, this is a decision about how much more of the public's purse we're willing to throw into running a facility that could be managed more efficiently by external operators. Now, the argument that Council can - the answer, the argument that Council management is control, but control comes with cost, both financial and operational. We need to ask ourselves whether we're equipped to handle this or whether we're just adding to another layer of bureaucracy. Now, external management, while not without its flaws, might offer a more streamlined approach, keeping our focus on governments rather than micro management.

The tradeoffs here are glaring. We're looking at potential for higher ongoing costs, the risk of inefficiency, and the temptation to expand our reach into areas that are handled by the experts if we were to go through with managing it ourselves.

Now, financially, direct management is likely to be a strain on our budget, both now and into the future. We should be cautious about getting into commitments that spiral out of our control.

So this recommendation I will support simply because it's supporting the profit motive. It's important that that is used to drive efficiencies and best use of the space, but as I highlighted with my question, it may end up changing the way the facilities are used because of that profit motive.

So I'll support in principle, but I just put the warning out there that the way the facilities are used may change as a result. That's all.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Would any other Councillors like to speak? Oh, you've got your hand up. Sorry, Rose - Councillor Hodge, I didn't see that. Over to you.

CR HODGE: Just sort of a question going on from Councillor Barker. Don't we have the rights over the contract and all the services through an effective management would still be through us with conversations with the external contractor?

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MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Councillor Hodge, yes, that's right, and the proposed kind of mechanisms for the contract and the process for outsourcing this will come back to Council. So there will - our intention is to build in and ensure that community are receiving the services and - maximising the services through the facility and we'll be looking to balance cost so it's affordable against, you know, our operational costs as well and looking for a really efficient process to drive that and we know that the more utilisation we have, then that helps offset the cost. So getting the balance right between what we charge and the services provided and the utilisation will be really important.

CR HODGE: Thank you, Ms Seymour. I see that in the report and I'll certainly be supporting it. Thank you.

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

CR ALLEN: Just I should mention that the staff at Wurdi Baierr have been - and Winchelsea pool have been involved in these discussions for some time. How long now, Ms Seymour?

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: So Council made a decision I think in 20 --

MR DAMIAN WAIGHT: January 22.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: 2022 and prior to that coming to Council there was consultation with staff. Now with looking to incorporate Winchelsea Pool into this, there's been further consultation with staff. So they have been aware of our intention to go with this model since prior to Council making the previous decision.

CR ALLEN: Thank you. I was aware that the staff were involved in discussions, but I wanted to highlight that tonight. But as it's an operational matter, I wasn't quite sure of the timing. Thank you for that.

No, I think Councillor Barker's dilemma that he came across quite visually accurately over judging whether you outsource something or do it in house is a dilemma that every organisation faces. It's not a clear-cut question, but I do believe that there will be in this particular case significant efficiencies to be gained and safety, particularly at Winchelsea. Thank you.

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

We now move on to item 4.5, proposed lease to Housing Choices Australia for 2 Fraser Drive Aireys Inlet. The purpose of this report is to present the outcomes of community engagement and to seek Council's approval to enter into a lease with Housing Choices Australia for the purpose of developing additional social and affordable housing. Do we have a recommendation? Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: A mover, yes - as per the recommendation, yes.

CR PATTISON: Yes. And do we have a seconder? Councillor Bodsworth. Would you like to speak, Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: Thanks, Mayor. We've reached another milestone in Council's project to deliver social and affordable housing in Aireys Inlet with the proposed adoption of a 50-year lease to Housing Choices Australia. Entering into this lease will enable Housing Choices Australia to go ahead and seek funding for the development of affordable housing at 2 Fraser Drive, which will be based on the concept design created in partnership with the community advisory group and architects Freadman White.

Officers have reviewed a range of land tenure options and the recommendation to enter a 50-year lease with the annual fee of \$1 was supported by Council at our May meeting subject to community consultation, which has now occurred. Four submissions were received in total, with no objection to the proposed lease arrangement.

Although not directly relevant to the lease, there was one submission made through the consultation process in relation to the number of homes, parking and access and consistency with the Aireys Inlet Structure Plan. I'd like to reassure our community that these are all aspects that must be addressed through the detailed design process which will include further community consultation. Relevant neighbourhood character and bushfire overlays would also apply through the planning process.

The suggested lease fee of \$1 per annum makes the project viable for the housing provider and is consistent with Council's intention to forgo the value of land in the interests of enabling the development of affordable housing in the

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Surf Coast Shire, as we have already demonstrated with the sale of land in Winchelsea for \$1 for the WinAngLo project.

A 50-year lease for the site in Aireys Inlet was deemed to best serve Council objectives and community interest. It will provide Council with greater control over the project and future land use and enable Council to meet obligations to the existing social housing residents on the site as well as managing the mortgage liability to Homes Victoria.

The land was valued at \$3.5 million in 2023 and keeping this significant land asset in public ownership longer term was considered very important to many in the local community.

Through this lease agreement, Housing Choices Australia will be responsible for managing the housing, including collection of rental income and maintenance costs. The much loved community garden and public walkway will not be part of the leased area and there is an expectation that the housing that is eventually built on the site integrates thoughtfully and aesthetically with these spaces to benefit the local community, existing neighbours and future residents.

The lease agreement will also detail Council's specific requirements, such as allocation of housing to local residents or those with existing connections to the Aireys Inlet area, agreed construction and maintenance requirements and details on asset handover at the end of the lease period.

I'm excited that Council has elected to work with Housing Choices Australia on this project, knowing they have a record of providing safe, secure and affordable homes for people on low and middle incomes. They have a demonstrated commitment to the region and they develop housing to extensive design guidelines incorporating environmentally sustainable principles like passive solar, building envelope and materials, energy, wastewater and more. They will also be guided by Council's Sustainable Design Policy and are required to achieve the national seven-star rating standard for social and affordable housing.

The four residents currently living on the site in existing social housing units will continue to be supported through development to minimise any disruption and they will have priority access if they choose to move into one of the new dwellings, which will not only be more energy efficient, but also more accessible and more comfortable.

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It is noted that the lease commencement would be conditional on Housing Choices Australia successfully attracting funding for the project and realistically, it could take one to two years for this to occur, but I'm certainly hopeful it will be sooner than that.

This project demonstrates Council's commitment and strategic intent to make social and affordable housing a priority in recognition of the significant economic and social impacts that a lack of affordable accommodation is having on our Surf Coast Shire communities. It is consistent with our Council plan, our social housing policy, the Affordable Accommodation Action Plan, and our declaration of a key worker accommodation crisis.

Well done to the community advisory group for the time and energy they put into creating a really positive and successful co-design process and to the broader community of Aireys Inlet for getting behind this project, for engaging in the process so respectfully and enthusiastically, and for recognising the value in Council providing public land to help create more liveable and sustainable communities on the Surf Coast. I hope we can do your efforts justice now by approving the lease and enabling Housing Choices Australia to get this much-needed social and affordable housing under way. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Bodsworth? Sorry, Councillor Hodge, did you have your hand up for a question - no, great. Alright, Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: I'm struggling to know what I can possibly add to that - an incredibly thorough speech from Councillor Stapleton, so I won't add anything. I just want to congratulate the local community, including immediate neighbours, for their generosity through this process. There was wariness, there was distinct wariness at the start, but a fantastic, open communication process, the ability for local residents to be clear, to be frank about their concerns, to have those listened to really carefully and work through as we progressed. It's really been fantastic and the staff from our organisation who've contributed to that have been so professional, so clear, so upfront. There's been nothing hidden. There is nothing hidden here. The report lays everything out and Councillor Stapleton has as well.

So I'm really pleased that we're at this point. It's essential now that the community be given ongoing opportunities through the detailed design to ensure that that level of comfort continues and for our own part as well that

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we continue to engage with this really carefully to ensure it's a fantastic result. Thanks.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. I've got a couple of things to get through, so hopefully we'll have enough time. The proposal to lease the land to Housing Choices Australia for affordable housing sounds altruistic, but it's not (inaudible). We're giving up valuable land, land could be used (inaudible) to the community, generate revenue.

Now, while advocating for affordable housing may seem a noble cause, the decision to lease this land comes with a significant tradeoff. We're essentially locking in a long-term commitment that ties up the resources and limits future flexibility. What if better opportunities arise. What if the needs of the community shift?

Now, comparing this to the WinAngLo project at Winchelsea is quite different. The original purpose for that land was to provide this style of housing. The original purpose for this land was not.

Now, financially, if this lease - this lease might appear cost neutral on the surface, but hidden costs are real. We're forgoing potential revenue and as has been discussed with previous topics, we are getting into some very tight financial times. Now, once it's leased, it's leased, it's tied up for decades, possibly longer.

Now, I will agree that there is strong community support for affordable housing, but we need to question whether this site and this particular lease are the best ways to address that need. Are we considering all the alternatives? Are we rushing into a decision without fully weighing the long-term consequences?

Now, in conclusion for what I'm going to be talking about, while I appreciate the intent behind this approval, I can't support it with a clear understanding of the long-term impact and without exploring other potentially better options. Philosophically, I'm opposed to Council getting involved in housing because it's not within our remit, it's not within our scope, but we need to be prudent (inaudible) of our assets, not just in the name of doing good for some, but doing what's truly best for the whole community.

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Now, any time that the Government picks winners and losers, you are guaranteed that there are going to be some people that just miss the cutoff, that the pain that they are going to experience under maybe reasonable or unreasonable expectations is going to be real and we're going to have to face that.

But more importantly, I've been contacted by locals that fear that they couldn't be fully upfront with their concerns due to the overwhelming support of everyone else involved. So as brief as I can, the concerns of all locals are not being met.

I can't go into too much right now because there's quite a bit here, but what's been said about locals not really having an issue, there are and that needs to be fully transparent, but unfortunately, I don't have time to get through that now, but I will be contacting those people that have shared their concerns with me and dealing with them as best as I can.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Allen?

CR ALLEN: Thanks, Mayor. The proposed lease arrangements at the Aireys Inlet Fraser Drive development is an outstanding outcome, one that sees the retention of long-term Council ownership, but by maintaining important controls to ensure housing for essential workers and at the same time protecting the rights of the existing residents. I think of three words - positive, template, future. We see a positive approach to develop a template that can be a model to help address the future needs of a coastal community.

This is a wonderful outcome that demonstrates what can be achieved when a community works together to help address a real and urgent problem. I think Councillor Barker in a sense answered the question that he was posing when he said well, what would the land be used for? Well, the community has decided that the land is going to be used for this purpose, and he used the term the overwhelming support and it is overwhelming support. Therefore, we as a Council have our answer. Thank you.

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

CR SCHONFELDER: Mayor, I'd like to say that, perhaps in defence of Councillor Barker, when it comes to public space, we're an ageing population

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generally and I know there will be higher density occurring within the Surf Coast in central activity districts per se, but I do feel - I support this item, but I do feel that with the higher density that is coming and the fact that there is a need for social housing and low-cost housing and also government housing, I would just like to put it on the record that I don't believe it should be at the expense of public space generally speaking.

However, I have inspected the site at Aireys Inlet myself and I feel from considering the different factors at play that given there is housing there already and the fact that there seems to be overwhelming community support for this initiative, I seem to concur with what Councillor Allen has just stated in relation to this.

I'd also like to say that - I'd like to commend Councillor Stapleton and Councillor Bodsworth for their advocacy in this area and I feel also the same way as Councillor Allen by saying and reiterating that it is outstanding and it is a fantastic result. Thank you, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: Any closing remarks, Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: Yes, thanks, Mayor. I'd just like to clarify that the original purpose of the land at 2 Fraser Drive was intended for housing and is already being used for social housing and that despite some conjecture to the contrary, housing is very much in the remit of local councils now, with both State and Federal Government making it clear that they need local government support and assistance and they would like local government to be very much involved in the successful delivery of affordable housing in their communities.

Some may have issues about the affordable accommodation being proposed for Aireys, but there has been a very transparent engagement process and anyone who wanted to object has had an opportunity to do so. As I said, there were only four submissions received in relation to the proposed lease agreement and none of them indicated that they were opposed to it.

And in closing, I would like to remind Councillors of a statement made by Peter Mares in his book called No Place Like Home, which I have referred to before and it is referenced in our Affordable Accommodation Action Plan. Mares says that far from an act of charity, social and affordable housing is increasingly recognised to be social infrastructure. He contends that this infrastructure is essential and vital to people to be able to contribute to economic, social and cultural life, which in turn leads to stronger communities.

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For me, this statement speaks to the very basic reason why Council should remain committed to its path of providing better access to affordable accommodation. Our Council is committed to building stronger and more resilient communities and the provision of affordable housing is one way we can achieve that. I urge my fellow Councillors to support the proposed lease so that Housing Choices Australia can start the next phase of seeking funding for this important project. 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 7-1.

We now move on to Our Places and Spaces State of Play. The purpose of this report is to present the Our Places and Spaces State of Play document, the first step in the development of a broader integrated social infrastructure plan, to Council for noting. Do we have a mover of a motion? Councillor Stapleton - as per the recommendation?

CR STAPLETON: Sure.

CR PATTISON: And a seconder? Councillor Hodge. Would you like to speak, Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: I would, thanks, Mayor. I'm really pleased to see this report, which is presented here for Council to note, and it's the outcome of significant work by officers over the past couple of years to better understand the network of social infrastructure and open spaces that exist across the Surf Coast Shire and to provide visibility to the community around existing commitments and investment priorities.

I encourage everyone in the community to take a look at this document. It's called Our Places and Spaces State of Play and it's really interesting to see what exists and what is currently planned in the places we live and play. There are maps for each location showing the spread of current services and facilities and an overview of projects planned for the next five years which are grouped by both service and place.

The term social infrastructure sounds a bit clinical to me, but it's far from it. These are the places and spaces that form the fabric of our communities. They bring people together. They're places where friendships are often made and services are provided.

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This infrastructure is essential for our health and wellbeing and for the economic prosperity of our community. It includes both hard infrastructure, like community facilities and open spaces, as well as soft infrastructure, like services, IT, data and insights, and of course both are needed to create liveable and sustainable communities.

There are challenges in achieving this. With significant population growth, ageing assets, gaps in provision of some services, changing community expectations and constrained funding opportunities, it is essential that Council plans for the provision of quality social infrastructure to meet the current and future needs of the Surf Coast community.

The data in the report may not be exhaustive, but it appears to be extremely thorough and will be validated with key stakeholder groups over the next six months to be sure and also to confirm that currently planned projects are still valid and of high importance. There is an opportunity for anyone in the community to identify and advocate for projects that are not listed in the document and to help Council build a more complete picture.

This document is the very important first step in developing a broader integrated social infrastructure framework, which will help ensure the community has access to a sustainable network of facilities and open spaces to meet current and future needs. It also paves the way for important policy work which is to be developed.

The final framework will be critical in helping Council to identify investment priorities across the shire based on evidence of need and local insights, which should help guide future decision making and hopefully provide our communities with greater visibility of upcoming and competing priorities across the shire, although each project would still be subject to various approvals, community engagement and the relevant funding requirements.

I look forward to seeing the framework be developed and to further engagement with communities so that future priorities can be identified and agreed. A big thanks to officers for the immense amount of time and effort that has gone into pulling this document together. I'm certainly happy to note it here tonight and I look forward to the next steps in this process. Thank you.

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

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CR HODGE: Yes, thank you, Mayor, if there's anything else to say. Well done, Councillor Stapleton.

I think this is a document for everyone to read and I know we're noting it and a lot of community consultation will happen with the next Councillors, but it is a guide for future processes, but it's got the actual numbers of what we've got as a Council.

So many people get confused with what Council does, state does, federal does, what GORCAPA does, but this actually outlines all of the things we look after and in what area. It will bring on new project ideas for the community to look at this, what is missing, what else do they need.

But when you look at some of the statistics of, you know, we've got \$243 million worth of building assets, it costs \$7 million a year on social infrastructure costs, and we've got stable assets, but it goes from kinder right through all the services that we do, so arts and culture, we've got long day care, we've got halls, we've got the outdoor facilities, neighbourhood houses. This actually really shows to people that don't know the mechanisms of Council of what really is involved.

So it's a terrific book that I'm sure that the next Council will move forward with and go out to the community and talk to them and I think the amount of work that's been done on this has been fabulous and it can only be built on in the future. But it is really a document that really does show what Council is all about and I thank the officers for putting it together and look forward to perhaps working with the community on it next term. Thank you.

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

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. Where were we? So the intent to evaluate our current assets and plan for future needs is sound, but I need to express significant concern about the direction and the spending priorities that are outlined in this.

The document reveals that Council is responsible for nearly \$250 million worth of social infrastructure assets and spends about \$7 million annually on maintenance. Yet we're still facing an asset renewal backlog that continues to grow. This raises the question are we truly making the most out of our

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resources or are we simply throwing money at problems without addressing the root cause?

For instance, the report mentions the high levels of maintenance due to ageing infrastructure. We've got heaps of it. It simultaneously suggests that we need new facilities in Torquay and Moriac. Are we not at risk of overextending ourselves by adding new infrastructure when we can't even maintain what we currently have? It seems like a recipe for escalating costs and future financial strain. I can't imagine there's any family out there in Torquay that has a car that's broken down and thinks that the best way to resolve that is buying a new car. The economics don't stack up. When you're in a constrained financial environment, you've got to maintain what you've got first before you get anything new.

Additionally, there's a suggestion to reimagine places and potentially provide new provisions in an area like Torquay, which is already very, very well serviced. Now, while innovation and modernisation are important, we need to be wary of spending excessively on projects that may not deliver proportional benefits to the broader community. Just remember that, proportional benefits to the broader community.

There's also some mention of recent upgrades to the multi arts centre costing over \$1 million. Now, while arts and culture are valuable, is this the best use of our funds when our core infrastructure needs attention? Should we be prioritising high-cost cultural projects over more critical infrastructure and maintenance upgrades? I don't think so.

Now, financially these recommendations could lead to significant increases in spending, both immediately and in the long term. Now, costs of building new facilities, upgrading existing ones and maintaining them over time would far outweigh the benefits, especially if we don't carefully evaluate each project's necessity.

Community engagement might have identified these needs, but it's crucial that (inaudible) we weigh public opinion against our financial realities. We can't fund every desire. We must prioritise what truly services the entire community and offers the most significant return on investment.

Now, while this motion is to simply note, I will support it, but I will - I just need to make sure it's a clear warning of the risks we face. That not alright.

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CR PATTISON: Councillor Barker, I'll get you to finish up there because it is a bit over time now. Thank you. Councillor Bodsworth, would you like to speak to the motion?

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Mayor. I do agree with most of what Councillor Barker has just said, and on the topic of return on investment, obviously we're talking about not just economic returns, but health and wellbeing and social returns on the social infrastructure investments. So it's complicated trying to sort of work out what the health and wellbeing and social returns are.

And that brings me to one point in this which is not so present at this stage, but I'm sure will be present - will be fleshed out more as we go forward, which is the evaluation part of it and for us to use this project as an opportunity to establish an evaluation framework that gives us a clearer picture of those health and wellbeing and social benefits and how they compare with the costs, which is an essential comparison, as Councillor Barker noted.

There are three other points about this that I want to particularly call out. One is we all know that people get frustrated with agencies doing plans and implementing them partially and then the rest of it sitting on the shelf and a whole lot of things that were important and that communities got excited about not being implemented and one of the aims of this stage of this project is to document unfinished business and to roll it over - or to critically analyse it and to roll some of that, most of it, over into this plan and make sure it doesn't get lost.

Another critical part of that is the validation with stakeholders, which is mentioned in this report. So that enables us to look at some of that unfinished business and validate that with stakeholders and perhaps subject some of that to the kind of critical analysis that Councillor Barker is talking about.

Another part of this that I'm really happy to see is the adaptive qualities of it and the ability for us to incorporate this kind of community-enabling ethos that this Council has really tried hard to bring into our community. So this stage of the project obviously puts a lot of emphasis on community enabling and providing pathways for community to pursue community projects, which we've all celebrated over the past four years.

So, yes, noting that this is for the first stage of a multi-stage and big and complex project, I think it's heading in the right direction.

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CR PATTISON: Councillor Allen?

CR ALLEN: Just simply to say that a lot of what Councillor Barker was referring to can be addressed in something that we mentioned in briefings and I know the officers are aware of it and I hope that the future Council takes up the opportunity to really look at underutilised facilities, underutilised infrastructure within the shire, identified in this framework, but really we could achieve a lot of the efficiencies and achieve a lot of service provision by really seriously looking at that underutilisation. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Any closing remarks, Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: I'd just add that I know officers have done an enormous amount of work on our asset management plan and making sure that we're allocating every year finances to that future asset management and that there has been some new software looked at to ensure that we're renewing and maintaining assets in the most effective and cost efficient way and that this plan now will actually enhance Council's ability to actually, I guess, track and maintain and make sure that it's renewing and maintaining assets at the most optimal time. So yes, it's a really important piece of work and I think it sets Council up for some really evidence-based decision making into the future. Thanks.

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

We'll now move on to item 4.7, Management of Unsealed Road Network - Review.

CR ALLEN: Mayor, can I suggest we take the break now?

CR PATTISON: I think we'll do this one and then we'll take --

CR ALLEN: It's a big one. Alright, it's up to you. You're the Mayor.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: She is.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Allen. We'll proceed with this one because I know that there's people that are listening and so to have them waiting would be unfair. So we'll progress with this one. So the purpose of this report is for Council to receive and note the Unsealed Road Network

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Review. Do we have a mover of a motion? Councillor Schonfelder - as per the recommendation?

CR SCHONFELDER: Yes, Mayor.

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

CR SCHONFELDER: Yes, please, Mayor, and I'd like to just briefly reflect on what Councillor Allen said. I've been informed that there are power outages in Melbourne, so I'm not sure if we have a generator here or not, but hopefully we'll be - may I ask, do we have a generator capacity at all, Mayor, in case our power does go out during a Council meeting?

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: We do have back-up power. I think the trickiness might be our connection to the internet and wi-fi. So hopefully all is well. We do have wild weather out there. We can hear it. But fingers crossed we'll be able to proceed with the meeting uninterrupted, Councillor Schonfelder.

CR SCHONFELDER: Thank you, Ms Seymour, and I'll touch wood that hopefully our power won't go out here.

I'm very pleased to move this item tonight in relation to the Management of Sealed Road Network Review and I commend the officers involved with it, including Mr Waight, who is the General Manager of Community Life, and also Travis Nelson is another manager who's very passionate about roads and members of our Council are quite aware of my advocacy in relation to this issue and I'm someone who is economically generally speaking conservative and socially progressive, but when it comes to roads, I am quite perhaps economically not so conservative because I do believe that we need to renew our assets and, in particular, improve the unsealed road network.

I'd just like to state that this recommendation notes that the Unsealed Road Network Review as contained in this report would like to consider the low-, medium- and high-cost options and I know that that can be looked at when it comes to our next budget next year and I also am aware of the fact that we have three graders, one is a John Deere grader and two are Cat graders, and the Council staff and officers that execute these duties do so with a lot of care and I know that tonight really illustrates how weather conditions can make a big impact on our roads.

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I also note that we do also have a water - one water cart and if we need to, we also hire water carts and that's something we might have to review in relation to this because we might need to invest in more water carts in the future as well. So I commend the Council for this review and I thank you, Mayor, for allowing me to move this item.

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

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Mayor. Yes, I think this is a fantastic piece of work that we've done. Unsealed roads is a hot topic for Councils all over Victoria and as we know, in our community satisfaction surveying we often get pretty low scores on unsealed road satisfaction. However, this report points out that we are in fact - we score - that our scores have improved in 2023 46% satisfaction, currently 48 in 2024, the larger all council average being 34 and the Victorian average being 36.

So there's bad news and good news in those figures. The good news is that we score above most comparable councils and the intent of doing this work is that we are able to elevate that satisfaction further and that we're able to do it in a really financially responsible way because we'd all like to get no complaints about unsealed roads, but they're very costly things and if we were to achieve those kinds of levels of service, we'd be giving up a lot elsewhere in our budgets.

So this review provides great information for us to head into our next budgeting cycles with. As Councillors will have noted, there are a number of no-cost options which are presented to us for endorsement, and there are a variety of other options fulfilling every different part of the spectrum of cost and effectiveness for us to consider towards future budgets.

A few particular issues that I want to note. With this process, I appreciated, I think other Councillors appreciated, the opportunity to get involved in the scoping because we know how important it is to the communities that we represent. So it was great to have that opportunity to have some input into the scope. I appreciate that under those circumstances of high community interest.

I've noted that there's been big increases in grading and resheets during the last four years, the current Council term. I've noted the report's recommendations relating to aged Gherang gravel, where Gherang gravel is our sort of local material, our kind of vernacular road material, and that as it

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ages, it loses structural properties that mean that the roads perform more poorly as it ages and yet we know that there's an aesthetic preference for Gherang gravel in some townships.

Another issue is the subjective versus objective measures of road condition where we know that objective assessments of road condition often rate them quite a lot above what the user's perspective is. We notice the importance of roads to walkers and riders as well in our local towns.

And I'd just like to finish by saying how much I wish the Department of Transport and Planning would look at the 100km an hour default speed limit for rural roads because I think that that's part of the wear and tear issue on rural unsealed roads. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: Thanks, Mayor. As others have said, many of us have been eagerly awaiting the results of the review into our unsealed road network and I understand there is a lot of community interest in this report.

There are almost 500km of unsealed roads around the Surf Coast Shire, which is just under half our entire road network, so they really are an important significant part of our asset base, and although Surf Coast Shire Council is rated more highly than comparable Councils with regard to community satisfaction of unsealed roads, we know that the condition of our unsealed roads continues to cause concern for residents and that there is a gap between community expectations and what is actually able to be delivered through existing budgets and service levels, so hence the need for this review.

The data and insights obtained via the review are really valuable and will help Council to be more strategic in the way it manages, maintains and renews the unsealed road network long into the future and will also assist with decision making around any future investment.

The report provides 24 specific initiatives ranging from no-cost through to low-cost and high-cost options, as indicated by Councillor Bodsworth, and it will help inform how we prioritise future works.

It's important to note that the total sum of these recommendations would be well beyond Council's financial capacity longer term. I think even if there wasn't a pool, the total sum of these recommendations, when you look at it

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over the long term, would be unattainable based on our limited ability to raise revenue.

Clearly, the four no-cost options should be implemented now and if this motion is supported tonight, they will be. These are simple options and will improve productivity and achieve some improvement in the existing condition of unsealed roads without impacting the current annual budget. And as mentioned, the remaining recommendations would require substantial investment which will lead to important budget conversations around priorities and tradeoffs in relation to other programs and services that Council delivers for the community. Consideration of population growth and increased demand for a range of Council services and infrastructure will be an important part of future investment decisions around this.

With asset management and maintenance already demanding a substantial portion of our budget and forecasts to increase in the long-term financial plan, it is essential that Council weighs up the cost benefit of all the recommendations in this review to identify the best value for money and best outcomes for community. I'm pleased to see the recommendation for a policy to be developed to help identify and prioritise if and when unsealed roads should be sealed and obviously that would need to take into account local nuances and things like traffic volume, dwelling density, safety, drainage and maintenance.

There's a lot more in this report I could talk about, so please have a look at it. It's really thorough and I'd also encourage everyone to keep an eye out for the next News Angle publication, which I believe will include a story about our unsealed roads by one of the local writers. I'll leave it at that. Thanks, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Allen?

CR ALLEN: Thanks, Mayor. I was going to start off with the good news, bad news as well, but I won't repeat it, the bad news of course the rating being 48. That does represent, as Councillor Stapleton said - this represents a gap between our level of service that we can provide and what the community expectations are and we are higher than other like Councils.

All concerned with the unsealed road network would like us to do better and I know that they would like to have more resources to do their job, and I congratulate Travis Nelson and his team, who I believe work wonders with the resources that we do give them.

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I believe that this review provides a very good base to do both. It provides the new Council with an excellent start to review the Council's Road Management Plan that ends in 2025. The review identifies 24 initiatives that could improve the delivery of services, ranging from low cost to high cost, and each has been allocated a priority as choices must be made. The no-cost options should be implemented according to the priority listing as they deliver improvements that do not directly impact the current or future budgets.

The enormity of the choices can be seen when looking at initiative 24. If we were to seal 5% of our unsealed roads, that's 23.85km, the initial capital cost is estimated to be \$7.7 million, plus future renewal obligations. Sure, there will be maintenance cost savings, but this is also hard to determine as location and weather conditions are important factors when estimating this value. I believe that it is intended to use the information gathered to complete at a later date a matrix that will give a priority list of roads to seal.

It is obvious that if there is to be significant improvement in our unsealed road network, it will require major injections of funding and it would have to come from the Commonwealth and State Governments. However, I believe that the new Council will need to reassess the funding provided to allow the operations team to properly fulfil its day-to-day operations and regular maintenance, but are being affected by increased traffic, resulting from increased shire population and tourism, and the frequency of severe climatic events, plus unique local circumstances - for example, the level of logging traffic in the Deans Marsh Bamba area. Any funding reassessment will of course have been made more difficult due to the decisions we made earlier this evening. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. I'll start with the bad news and the bad news. The bad news is that our unsealed road networks have less than 50% support from the community and the bad news is that other like Councils in the rest of the state are even worse than us. That is no cause for celebration. The reality is that sealed roads cost a lot to build, but take little cost to maintain compared to unsealed roads that cost little to build, but are incredibly costly to maintain.

Now, when it comes to the unsealed road network, we're facing a familiar dilemma - the temptation to pour more money into a system that will always

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demand more. The reality is that unsealed roads, while necessary for some, are in reality a financial black hole.

The review aims to improve management, but let's be honest, improvement often means more spending. We need to ask whether these roads are being used enough to justify the expense and are we spending a fortune on infrastructure that benefits a few at the expense of many?

The tradeoffs here are stark. Maintaining these roads might seem like a necessity, but every dollar we spend on them is a dollar we aren't spending elsewhere on services that might well benefit a larger portion of our community.

Now, financially the ongoing cost of unsealed road maintenance is significant. Short-term fixes lead to long-term obligations and we risk locking ourselves into a cycle of perpetual spending. We should be questioning whether this is the best use of our resources.

Now, community engagement has shown that rural residents value these roads, obviously, but their needs need to be balanced against the broader community interests. Are we being fair to all residents? We can't please all the people all the time.

Possibly the most important part of this review is the report that touches on drainage needing attention. Now, if there's rural landowners, you'll know that many have seen the result of poorly designed or maintained swale drains. Now, this is one of the least sexy things that we do, but to allow these essential assets to continue to be a problem is something that I can't support. If we're going to do something, we need to do it well.

In conclusion, I will support this recommendation conditionally that we work to rectify the rural roadside drainage and commit to better, more innovative blends of material for our unsealed roads. If you talk to local quarries, the answers will be found there. That's all.

CR PATTISON: Councillor Hodge?

CR HODGE: Thank you, Mayor, and I'll be very quick. It's just more of an observation of when I use unsealed roads and the roads that now the officers are dealing with is a mixture of the bitumen and the gravel and I've heard really good reports about Elkington Road and also Ghazeepore Road, which I

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use very frequently, which is the road parallel in between the Surf Coast and the Anglesea Highway. It takes a lot of traffic.

So even though we've got these networks and it's costing us money, the new materials and experimenting with them has with these two roads really improved them and I think hopefully that can be a part of the future to look at what materials we're using and actually the one at Elkington Road was even resistant to a huge downpour that we had a few weeks ago.

So I look forward to relooking at this if I can in next year's budget, but also to relook at what we're using and the improvements that our on the field - the guys that work there all the time, what they're seeing is improvement in material as well. So it's just an observation, but it's a great report and thank you, officers, for putting it together and especially Travis and his crew. Thank you.

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

CR SCHONFELDER: Just I'd like to thank my colleagues for their enthusiasm and care in relation to this item and the importance of the unsealed road network and I'll just touch on one other point that I think is worth mentioning and that is we live in one of the most fire-prone areas in the whole world and I think having road networks that are maintained in the event of a fire emergency, as an example, is just so, so important, Mayor, and we take that very, very seriously. Thank you.

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

We will now have a break, Councillor Allen. We will have a 15-minute break and we will be back after that. So can I have a mover to suspend Standing Orders? Moved by Councillor Schonfelder and seconded by Councillor Bodsworth. And all those in favour? Thank you. We'll suspend Standing Orders and we'll be back at 8.25.

(Short break)

CR PATTISON: Welcome back, everybody. Thank you. We've just had our short break. I'll now have a mover to resuspend Standing Orders. Moved by Councillor Gazzard and seconded by Councillor Bodsworth. All those in favour? And the motion is passed unanimously.

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We'll now move on to 4.8, Draft Submission to Plan Victoria. The purpose of this report is to present the Surf Coast Shire submission to Plan Victoria for endorsement. Do we have a mover of a motion? Councillor Bodsworth - is it as per the recommendation?

CR BODSWORTH: It's slightly different from the recommendation, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: Great, Governance --

CR BODSWORTH: And I believe Governance can display --

CR PATTISON: On the screen, that's wonderful. Thank you. Can we make - can people see that here?

CR HODGE: Yes, I can, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: Oh, good, thanks. I'll just let others read that. And do we have a seconder, please? Councillor Stapleton. Would you like to speak to the motion, Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: Actually, that's not the correct version.

CR PATTISON: Oh, that's not?

CR BODSWORTH: That's an earlier version that was superseded when I was working on this.

CR PATTISON: Governance, do you have the latest version? I think Governance have got it.

CR BODSWORTH: It's a little bit different from the one that was displayed. I can read it out, if you like.

CR PATTISON: You could just email it to Governance. I've got a copy of it. Have you forwarded it to Governance?

CR BODSWORTH: I've just forwarded it to Jake. Yes, correct.

CR PATTISON: Councillor Bodsworth, that's as - that's the motion?

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CR BODSWORTH: Correct, yes.

CR PATTISON: Great. Councillor Stapleton, do you still want to second this one? Yes?

CR STAPLETON: Yes.

CR PATTISON: And would you like to speak?

CR BODSWORTH: So I'm strongly supportive of the submission to Plan Victoria that we've got. It's been really well put together. But in considering it, I became increasingly concerned that the Council might not say something about the concept of limits to growth, which I know is really important to a lot of people in our community. It's definitely very important to me and I think it's widely acknowledged all over the world that it's important for us to begin to consider how the issue of limits to growth, which is around the capacity of planetary systems to support growth, how that sort of filters down into local and state-level policies. So it was in recognition of that that I proposed including this in what was the previous recommendation.

So I'm proposing adding those words to the existing recommendation "that Council notes that the material presented for public engagement hasn't considered limits to growth and that it believes any planning for Victoria's long-term future should consider the issue of limits to growth in recognition of the finite capacity of natural systems and environments to sustain growth". So to me that's an appropriate addition to what was already a good draft submission to Plan Victoria.

And I just point out it's 50 years since the book Limits to Growth was published by MIT in 1972. Since then, the MIT forecasts are proving accurate or they're proving conservative around the breakdown of planetary systems in response to ongoing growth and the planet's ability to assimilate waste and to provide the resources that we all use and that help to provide for growth. So recognising that the Victorian Government has taken some really important policy steps around recognising the importance of limits to growth but, yes, it's my belief that it would be appropriate for this Council to add something along those lines to our submission to Plan Victoria. So just note that my proposal is that those words become part of the submission. Thanks.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Stapleton?

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CR STAPLETON: Thanks, Mayor, and I commend Councillor Bodsworth for the proposed amendment to the recommendation and fully support the inclusion of those words in the submission.

With the State Government developing its future growth plan for Victoria, it's important that Surf Coast provides input with regard to housing targets and proposed growth within the shire to ensure that we can influence state planning outcomes as much as possible and hopefully see climate change considerations and greater acknowledgment of impacts of growth as indicated by Councillor Bodsworth embedded in all planning schemes.

The State Government is responsible for setting housing targets for each local municipality, while at a local level Surf Coast is able to influence where and how this growth occurs. I'm pleased to see that the submission prepared by officers places significant focus on the need for the plan to give visible consideration to water security, environmental protection and risk, climate change and resilience.

The significant work already undertaken by Council's strategic planners through the Planning Scheme review and development of the Urban Futures or the Draft Urban Futures Strategy helps to inform this submission, reflecting Council's expectation that there will be limited new growth in Torquay and Jan Juc as a result of the DAL, or the Distinctive Area and Landscape Declaration, and that Winchelsea will be the focus for new growth longer term.

Through the Urban Futures Strategy, Council is aiming to move towards a more sustainable growth model, recognising the need to curtail urban sprawl and preserve more green natural spaces and promote environmentally sensitive urban design. Housing diversity and choice are also important considerations in future planning. The submission notes that there will be a demographic trend on the Surf Coast towards smaller households, with more single people and smaller families needing homes and an expectation that they will represent 68% of all household growth.

Traditional detached houses of more than two bedrooms currently dominate the housing mix on the Surf Coast and across the shire only 6% of housing stock has two bedrooms or less and only 1% has one bedroom. We know this is really important in terms of how we plan for future population changes on the Surf Coast. The absence of local affordable housing, and particularly in our coastal townships, continues to create issues for key workers and limits Council's ability to attract diverse population groups within these communities.

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The submission by officers points to the need for the State Planning Scheme to provide more tools and levers to actively facilitate this much-needed housing diversity with a range of recommendations and I do really hope that the State Government planners take note of the submission. There's some really great stuff in it. It's thorough and well considered and I'm happy to endorse it. Thank you.

CR ALLEN: Excuse me, Mayor. I'm just a bit confused. Are we debating the amendment?

CR PATTISON: No, because it wasn't an amendment --

CR ALLEN: Oh, sorry.

CR PATTISON: -- because Councillor Bodsworth moved it.

CR ALLEN: And you accepted it.

CR PATTISON: Yes.

CR ALLEN: Sorry.

CR PATTISON: So there's no amendment. It was just a variation. So Councillor Bodsworth has put forward a motion.

CR ALLEN: So Councillor Bodsworth has spoken to the motion?

CR PATTISON: He's spoken to it. Councillor Stapleton has seconded, she's spoken to it. If you'd like to speak to the motion, you're welcome to.

CR ALLEN: Yes. I'm with you, it's alright.

CR PATTISON: But someone else can speak first if you want to gather your thoughts.

CR ALLEN: No, no, no. Look, I think in some ways the amendment was not really necessary because I think the Victorian Government has it very much in mind the limits to growth before they put forward Plan Victoria and it's evidenced by the fact that we have a DAL here, we have bushfire management overlays, we have a whole range of things that are limits to growth already

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existing. So I think that is very much evident in the Victorian State Government's operations. But I'll speak to the motion.

Plan Victoria, as stated, is a three-year urban growth plan for Victoria which includes housing targets. The housing target for the Surf Coast Shire is 7,800 by the year 2051. The Victorian Housing Statement states that a new plan for Victoria will bring to life our target of 70% of new homes be built in established areas, while making sure growth areas deliver 30% of new homes.

The recent work undertaken by officers in the Integrated Planning Department to prepare the Draft Urban Futures Strategy, which is currently on public exhibition, is somewhat serendipitous as it is extremely relevant to this submission to the Department of Transport and Planning to help inform the development of Plan Victoria. Highlighted in the Urban Future Strategy is that urban growth to meet the demand for housing by our growing population will essentially occur in the shire through greenfield land supply identified in the North Torquay to Winchelsea corridor and from infill development in identified areas in Torquay.

Infill is inevitable, but the following considerations make a 70% infill target inappropriate in the shire. The implementation of the DAL has restricted growth from Torquay to Bellbrae. Coastal townships are surrounded by state forest, providing very limited growth, limited opportunities for urban growth, and the introduction of the Bushfire Management Overlay places even greater restrictions on our coastal townships, with increased infill difficult to achieve.

The submission appropriately highlights these features in the shire, making the 70% infill target difficult and almost inappropriate when considering our existing neighbourhood character overlays. Also highlighted in the submission are the contextual difference across Victoria - for example, access to public transport and car dependency, water security, and the nature of future housing density and diversity, particularly affordable housing for essential workers. The submission is concise and well crafted and I congratulate Kate Sullivan and her team and I support the motion.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Allen. Councillor Barker, would you like to speak to the motion?

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. We'll start off with overall the submissions. It's an opportunity to inform state policy. We need to tread carefully. While it's tempting to advocate for all sorts of initiatives, we must remember that every

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recommendation we make could lead to increased regulations, more government oversight, increased housing costs, and ultimately more costs for our shire.

The intent behind this submission is to protect our local interests, that's understandable, but we need to question whether we're truly protecting or whether we're inviting further government involvement in areas that we could manage just fine on our own. Now, the tradeoffs are significant. By pushing for state-level planning interventions, we might gain some protections, but at what cost? More bureaucracy, more rules and regulations that limit our ability to make decisions at the local level? More state taxes?

Financially, the long-term impact of these state plans could be substantial. Once the state imposes new guidelines, the cost of compliance will often fall on us, whether through direct spending or through the burden on local businesses and residents.

Now, community engagement has shown a desire for local control, yet here we are potentially handing over more power to the state. Are we sure this is what our community wants or are we being swept up by state planning initiatives?

Now, for anyone that both advocates for affordable housing and any sort of regulation that will limit growth, puts overlays that restrict what you can do with your properties or any other sort of interference into how houses are planned or built is not consistent. You could even call it hypocritical because on one hand to be advocating for things that make things more expensive and then advocating for more affordable housing, it just doesn't add up. You need to pick your line, pick what tradeoffs you're willing to advocate for and consistently go about that or just flop around whatever way you see fit on the idea.

Now, in conclusion, I urge caution. It's not being too quick to support a submission that could ultimately reduce our autonomy or increase (inaudible) both ourselves and others. We should only endorse what is absolutely necessary and nothing more. I will not be supporting the motion.

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

CR HODGE: Thank you, Mayor. It's more of a frustration. I will be supporting the recommendation and I thank Councillor Bodsworth for the extra words.

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But firstly we talk about the DAL and we talk about low residential land and we talk about the plans that we have. All those plans can change if someone wants to do a retirement village. We can't stop it. We can't do anything about it. It's a State matter.

To me it - you know, I look forward to the Messmate growth area and doing stuff like that, but with all the greatest plans, we've got - if someone wants to put in a retirement village, they can if it gets passed and if it goes to VCAT and ticks all the boxes for some say affordable, social affordable. But that's what frustrates me when we look at planning for the area, but that could be by the bye, but it's neighbourhood by stealth a lot of these villages.

I'm going to leave it there. I do support what we're trying to do. I am grateful for those extra words. Thank you, Councillor Bodsworth.

CR PATTISON: Councillor Gazzard?

CR GAZZARD: Thank you. I'll support it. Thanks, Councillor Bodsworth. I think that's a good addition. I think it's a great submission. Thanks to Kate Sullivan and the team.

It's really important to provide that local context to inform the plan and in keeping with our Urban Futures Strategy, and particularly with regards to the water security environmental protection and climate change resilience. It is a really challenging - there's lots of different levels at play and obviously we need some growth, but where that can be sustainable and limit the effect on town character and environmental protection in the area. So thanks to Councillor Bodsworth for adding that part in and, yes, I will support it.

CR PATTISON: Councillor Schonfelder?

CR SCHONFELDER: Mayor, I'd like to echo the sentiments of Councillor Gazzard and thank Councillor Bodsworth for his amendment and I do note that in the community many people say that if growth has to happen in Victoria, let's say it's 5% or whatever percentage, we don't have to necessarily grow at the same rate because of the DAL and because of the environmental uniqueness that exists in our municipality, which is similar, I believe, to the Mornington Peninsula and Bass Coast Shire. There are significant farm areas that have very valuable soil qualities that should be maintained for farming purposes.

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We also have the Karaaf Wetlands as well. One thing too about this initiative too is the active transport that's been also advocated for and that's a trend that is being adopted by many councils and governments as well. So I really welcome that.

It's also interesting with Victoria's Housing Statement that includes a new plan for Victoria that will bring to life our target for 70% of new homes to be built in established areas, while making sure growth areas deliver 30% of new homes. So when you consider Winchelsea, that seems to be quite a challenge there when you think of the possible urban sprawl that can take place there. But I also feel that where there are railway lines, there should be more development where rail infrastructure currently exists and we do have a railway station at Winchelsea and we have an active railway line in the northern part of the shire. But I also welcome the findings of the Urban Futures Strategy and I know that members of the community have been making submissions in relation to that and I really also look forward to learning more about what happens with this initiative as well. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Schonfelder. And 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 opposed? And the motion is carried 7-1.

We now move on to item 4.9, which is Growing Healthy Communities Grant Application. The purpose of this report is to ratify Council's application for a Growing Healthy Communities VicHealth Grant to create a culturally safe Surf Coast Shire which was submitted by 31 July 2024. Do we have a mover of a motion? Councillor Gazzard - as per the recommendation?

CR GAZZARD: Yes, thank you.

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

CR GAZZARD: Yes, I think this is a fairly easy one. The application has been put in to meet the deadline, so we're just ratifying it. I certainly agree with the grant application which doesn't need any additional funding from Council. It aligns with our Reconciliation Action Plan and I really like the plan for - so a

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range of education opportunities for staff and community to increase cultural safety for First Nations people in our community, largely - especially around parenting and maternal and child health nurse - maternal and child health team increased skills, particularly regarding First Nations cultures during early parenting and work with First Nations families. So I think this is really important and very happy to support this grant application.

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

CR BODSWORTH: Nothing to add, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: Do any other Councillors wish to add to this? Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. It's disappointing to understand that the shire is culturally unsafe if we're going down this path. I didn't know it was.

But the grant application, it might seem like a no-brainer, free money, who doesn't want that, (inaudible) who doesn't want that, promote all this other stuff, but I don't see a defined need for this. All we're doing is taking more Victorian taxpayers' money for something that I don't think necessarily needs to happen.

But let's be clear, there's no such thing as free money. Every grant comes with strings attached and every new program has another layer of complexity and cost. The intent here to support the initiatives seems sound, but we need to ask ourselves whether these are programs we really need or whether we're simply expanding the scope of Council responsibilities without considering the long-term implications. The tradeoffs involve committing to programs that, once started, may require ongoing funding and management. Are we ready to take that on or are we setting ourselves up for future budget shortfall?

Now, financially the grant might cover the initial costs, but what happens when the grant money runs out, and it will, I guarantee that. Do we cut the program, leaving the community disappointed, or do we continue at our own expense? Either it's necessary and we fund it ourselves or it's not necessary and we don't take Victorian taxpayers' money to fund it.

Now, community engagement has shown support for health initiatives broadly, but we need to be careful to not over promise and under deliver. It's easy to get caught up in the excitement of a new program, but we need to stay

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focused on our core responsibilities. As we've discussed, there's a lot of budgetary impacts happening after decisions from tonight and they're going to have significant impacts in the future.

Now, in conclusion, I am very sceptical about this grant. We should only pursue it if we're confident the programs it funds are truly necessary and that we won't be left holding the bag when the grant money dries up. We need to prioritise fiscal prudence over fleeting opportunities. I will not be supporting this motion.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Any other Councillors? Councillor Hodge?

CR HODGE: Yes, thank you. Look, just looking at what the grant will deliver - cultural awareness, delivery of events for new families, and targeted training. Now, once the targeting is done, that's done. That will be staff training the thing. I think it's money well spent.

It is a grant and I think consultation with the traditional owner grant and for their children - this is what our council plan really wanted. It goes actually a step more than that. I know the Council plan could change with the next Council, but I think the training and the awareness - I mean, that lives on through an organisation. So I'm really for that. It's a grant that I think we will deliver very well and I think it will be long lasting and with good effect. Thank you.

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

CR GAZZARD: Yes, I'll just say that just because Councillor Barker doesn't think something is necessary does not equate to it being an important program. The treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is our country's greatest shame since colonisation and it's actually - cultural safety and awareness is a huge priority in many organisations, including the health system throughout Australia. The Australian Medical Council has made it a priority for all intern and junior doctor training program accreditation that cultural safety and awareness is a priority as part of standards in the hospital system and so I think it's a well-known necessary training program if we are working towards reconciliation. 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 7-1.

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We now move on to 4.10, Award Contracts under 2024-25 Capital Works Program. The purpose of this report is to recommend providing the Chief Executive Officer with authority to award and execute contracts for specified projects with approved budgets above the financial delegation limit of \$1 million, except during Council Election Period, where the limit will be \$642,000. This will enable the CEO to award and execute contracts between Council meetings so that project delivery can progress, including meeting grant milestone obligations. Do we have a mover of a motion? Councillor Schonfelder - is that as per the recommendation? Yes. And a seconder? Councillor Hodge. Would you like to speak, Councillor Schonfelder?

CR SCHONFELDER: Mayor, I'd just like to state that throughout Victoria every Council will be enacting this because of the caretaker convention and the fact that Council elections will be taking place.

I will just also highlight the fact that the CEO will be overseeing the Anglesea Netball Courts renewal and the refurbishment of the Multi Arts Centre Torquay, Coombes Road widening and roundabout, and also the hockey pitch at Banyul-Warri Fields Torquay, which are very important projects and this is for the period that was specified during the caretaker period and that is from 17 September 2024 to 26 October 2024. Thank you.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Hodge?

CR HODGE: Yes, look, just very quickly, when you do look at the ones that Councillor Schonfelder mentioned - the Anglesea courts, the Multi Arts Centre, Coombes Road and the hockey pitch, I think we've got to get moving as quickly as we can to save costs because (inaudible) foot the bill.

Especially Multi Art Centre, that's really necessary to get going as soon as possible and also the hockey pitch really needs to get its skates on and I'm glad that we'll be able to do this. Hopefully it will get passed so that the CEO can move with - moving it forward so that nothing is held up, that nothing is - just because we go into caretaker, the business of or the daily business of Council and officers working don't have to slow down.

So yes, I'm all for this recommendation and hopefully the CEO can move on with it very quickly so we can get those things done and started after the next Council. Thank you.

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

CR BARKER: Thanks. I'll be brief. What this recommendation does is place too much power in the hands of an unelected CIO. If you're okay with that, support the recommendation.

CR PATTISON: Councillor Schonfelder, do you have any closing remarks?

CR SCHONFELDER: No, thank you.

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

We'll now move on to item 4.11, Customer Experience Bi-Annual Update January to June 2024. The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the Customer Experience Bi-Annual Update January to June 2024. Do we have a mover of a motion? Councillor Stapleton - as per the recommendation?

CR STAPLETON: Yes, Mayor, thank you.

CR PATTISON: And do we have a seconder? Councillor Gazzard. Would you like to speak, Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: Yes. The bi-annual reports are really useful. They provide a snapshot of customer experiences, what Council is doing well and where there is need for improvement. Council has implemented a range of reforms in recent years to improve the process for registering and managing customer requests and anecdotal feedback I received from people in the community is that they find the system mostly works very well.

This report is looking at the period from January to June this year and it's good to be reminded of some of the figures. In that six-month period, Council received 18,877 customer requests, with 16.5% of these resolved at the first point of contact. 95% of all requests were completed on time and there were 1,182 requests that were overdue. We also received 74 compliments, which is nice, and 1,373 complaints, which is not surprising. These were mostly requesting infringement reviews or reporting missed bin collections. When I say that's not surprising, I mean that in the context of 18,877 customer requests.

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The customer experience score was based on 2,365 ratings and achieved 7.9 out of 10, with 81% of respondents saying their level of satisfaction was either awesome or good. While this is really positive, we know there is always room for improvement, which is why Council values this feedback so much.

We often hear in the media about results of the annual community satisfaction survey, which is a different but also important measure and it's conducted by the State Government through an annual telephone survey. It seeks community views on a range of Council services and infrastructure, overall performance and Council direction, amongst other things.

It's interesting that the research company had to make almost 13,000 phone calls to achieve 600 interviews with Surf Coast residents and may point to the need for a future model that better reflects the way communities want to engage and provide feedback to their local councils and I understand that officers are working with the State Government to review that process. It's all valuable information and, importantly, provides a pathway for Council's continuous improvement. Thank you.

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

CR GAZZARD: Oh, not much to add. It's important that we continue surveying and hearing from the community so we can have ongoing improvement in our services.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Allen?

CR ALLEN: Thanks, Mayor. Look, my observation over the last four years is that the CRM system is really working well. I think it had a bit of a scratchy start in that I think people expected they'd come and complain to you as a Councillor and expected you to become involved in operational matters and that has slowly changed and so we're gradually working through that.

It's great to see the increase in email and online requests noted in the report, which again we're getting traction. There's still a significant number of people who don't use the system. They probably complain on social media or still come and complain to the Councillor.

19,000 requests is increasing in line with population growth and I think the 16.5% resolved immediately is a new measure, which is great to see that

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included in the statistics, and 95% resolved within an acceptable period. I can only assume that it must be to the consumer's satisfaction because I don't think we've seen a great increase or a spike in complaints, which you would expect to see if that system wasn't working properly.

I'm also pleased to see an increase in the satisfaction with waste management and I can assume that it might have something to do with the locked bins in Lorne. I think for a moment, at least for a moment, we're ahead of the cockatoos. I was walking down the street and there was a bin that was inappropriately closed by a resident and of course the cockatoos were having a field day. I closed the bin properly, took away the pole that was leaving the lid open, and the cockatoos returned and I stood watching them and they were just so frustrated because they couldn't get into the bin. So it is working well. So yes, a good report. Thank you.

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

CR STAPLETON: 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 item 4.12, Reappointment of Independent Member Audit and Risk Committee. The purpose of this report is for Council to consider the reappointment of Paul Robson to the Audit and Risk Committee. Officers have asked me to note that the date provided in the recommendation should read 28 February 2024. Do we have a mover a motion, please? Councillor Bodsworth - as per the recommendation?

CR BODSWORTH: Yes, thanks, Mayor.

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

CR BODSWORTH: No, thanks. It's all there in the recommendation. Paul has been a fantastic member of the committee, always super well prepared, comes in with really insightful comments, so we're lucky to have him, as we are the other independent members of the committee.

CR PATTISON: That's great. Thank you. Councillor Hodge?

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CR HODGE: I'll just reiterate what Councillor Bodsworth just said. Thanks, Paul, for having his hand up again to be part of the Audit and Risk for the Surf Coast. Thank you, Paul.

CR PATTISON: Would any other Councillors like to speak to the motion? 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, Project Budget Adjustments and Cash Reserve Transfers for August 2024. The purpose of this report is to present adjustments, including existing projects requiring adjustment, project closures, new projects to be initiated, Chief Executive Officer-approved transfers under delegation, or corrections to prior reports presented to Council. Do we have a mover of a motion? Councillor Bodsworth - as per the recommendation?

CR BODSWORTH: Yes, thanks, Mayor.

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

CR BODSWORTH: Just briefly, thanks, Mayor. There's some good stuff in this one as well, so very happy to recommend to you all that we approve this.

There's a couple I want to call out particularly. I'd like to commend officers on the great work over the last few years in improving pedestrian safety and connectivity. There are items in there that relate to that. There's a grant allocation from the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority for the Painkalac Creek Estuary Flood Mitigation Adaptation Project, so fantastic to have that from the CCMA. Thanks very much for that. It means a lot to the local community and it will be great to do that work and learn more about the best possible management of the Painkalac Creek estuary.

Also a very exciting allocation of \$200,000 from the Open Space Reserve to the Spring Valley Bike Park in Torquay. I'm super excited to see that and a lot of keen riders will be very excited to see that too. We're going to need a lot of dirt for that and if only we knew someone who was digging a big hole somewhere so that we could get some dirt for that bike park. Oh, hang on. Dirt from the pool is quite likely to be reused - that's circular economy for you - in the Spring Valley Bike Park renewal, so that's incredibly exciting that and good on local bike advocates for their advocacy to the Council over many years and also the volunteers have proven their worth on the Bob Pettitt Bike

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Park upgrade and there's a high chance it will be able to use a similar community volunteer-led or assisted approach with the Spring Valley site.

We've also got the bridge upgrade coming up on Spring Creek, which is going to improve accessibility of that site, so those kind of ducks come into a row or jumps coming into a row. A fantastic site and it just underlines our bike friendliness as a municipality, which I'm very proud of.

And finally, just to note that the GORCAPA transition of parcels from - of crown land parcels from Council to GORCAPA is now complete and I'd like to, as I've said before, underscore the importance of the allocation that we made to helping that process go well. I think that was a really good decision and our staff, particularly Kristin Davies and Bryce Balsillie, have done a fantastic job helping local communities cope with that transition, so that was a job really well done.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Councillor Schonfelder?

CR SCHONFELDER: Mayor, I'd just like to state that I'm very pleased that the Freshwater Creek riding shed will be built and I've previously ridden there myself, so I know the area very well and I know there are very significant trees there and it has very high cultural significance to First Nations people as well. So I'm so glad that those trees are still healthy and I wish the riding club well.

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

CR BARKER: I'll be opposing the motion as there's too much money being taken from Victorian taxpayers for a project that isn't absolutely necessary.

CR PATTISON: Do you have any closing remarks, Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: No, thanks, Mayor.

CR PATTISON: We'll now put the motion to the vote - oh, sorry, Councillor --

CR ALLEN: Oh, no, it's alright. I was just pleased to see that the electronic vehicle charging infrastructure is going ahead, although I do have some reservations because I've heard in the news that there are some fly problems with these new facilities. So we've been waiting for two years, I hope we're

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not going to wait another two. But it's nice to see that it's in the transfer table.

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 6-1.

We now move on to 4.14, Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation - Planning and Environment Act 1987. The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement for authorised officers under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 through the updated Instrument of Authorisation. This instrument requires updating due to recent staff changes. Do we have a mover of a motion? Councillor Allen. Is it as per the recommendation?

CR ALLEN: As per the recommendation.

CR PATTISON: And seconded by Councillor Hodge. Would you like to speak, Councillor Allen?

CR ALLEN: No, thanks, Mayor.

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

CR HODGE: Just quickly, it's just showing that two officers have left and updating the files. So that's all. Thank you, Mayor.

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

We now move on to item 4.15, Conflict of Interest Records. The purpose of this report is to present conflict of interest records received since the previous Council meeting. Do we have a mover of a motion? Councillor Bodsworth - as per the recommendation?

CR BODSWORTH: Yes, thanks, Mayor.

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

CR BODSWORTH: No, thanks, Mayor.

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CR PATTISON: Would you like to speak, Councillor Stapleton? We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour? And the motion is carried unanimously.

We'll now move on to - no, we won't. The next section will be closed for our Council meeting due to a number of confidential items to consider tonight, so we'll now need to close the meeting to the public and end our live stream. I wish to thank everyone who has joined us tonight, both in person and online. Can I have a Councillor to move and second us going into confidential, please? Moved by Councillor Allen and seconded by Councillor Stapleton. And all those in favour? And opposed? And the motion is carried 6-1. So thank you, everyone, for joining us tonight. The meeting will now move into confidential. Goodbye.