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Surf Coast Shire Ordinary Council Meeting Stribling Reserve Pavilion, 45 Otway St, Lorne

Tuesday, 25 March 2025 at 6pm

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CR BODSWORTH: Good evening, everyone. We're having a few little technical issues right at the moment, so although it's 6 o'clock and we're due to make a start now, we'll just pause for a minute and just wait until we get some technical issues sorted. Thanks for coming.

So we're ready to make a start? Sorry about that delay. We've got the green light.

Good evening, everybody, and welcome to our March Council meeting. I'm Mayor Mike Bodsworth and it's a pleasure to welcome everyone joining us here tonight at Stribling Reserve in Lorne for our first offsite meeting of the year. We love having these meetings around the Shire in the wards.

This meeting is also being live streamed, so a big welcome to those tuning in online, and of course welcome to my fellow Councillors, including Councillor Liz Pattison, who's joining online tonight. Live captioning will accompany the live stream of this meeting. We hope that this assists those who may have hearing difficulties.

I'd like to acknowledge that here in Lorne we meet on Gadubanud country. I pay my respects to Gadubanud Elders past, present and emerging. Surf Coast Shire Council is committed to walking with traditional owners on a reconciliation journey that recognises and celebrates the culture and the unique land, sea and waterway country of the Surf Coast. I'd also like to acknowledge Aboriginal people attending or viewing this meeting tonight.

As always, we have so many exciting and inspiring things taking place across the Shire. Of particular note is the five-part online series titled Tourism Reimagined & The Great Ocean Road, held during February and March by the Great Ocean Road Communities Network, or GORCN. GORCN invited internationally recognised speakers and key public agencies responsible for tourism planning to share their insights and plans for tourism. The series explored the argument for tourism's transition from an unsustainable industrial model that equates success with increasing numbers of visitors to a regenerative and resilient model that will enhance our communities and tourist experiences as it sustains the character and cultures and economy of our region.

Also taking place this month is the Lorne Sculpture Biennale, which is currently in full swing and installed until 30 March and I had the pleasure of a quick whip around the sculptures before tonight's meeting. I saw Councillor Phelps out

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there also perusing the sculptures. The Biennale is drawing visitors to Lorne to take in a diverse and memorable range of art.

From lifelong art lovers to casual observers taking a beachside stroll, this event and its vast creations capture a wide audience. The Biennale is a great example of an event that supports a number of our goals, including cultural tourism, supporting First Nations cultural expression, supporting the aspirations of emerging artists and creatives, and a thriving, connected, creative community.

And now to our agenda for tonight. So let's get under way. Council meetings operate according to our adopted Governance Rules, which include 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 Councillor, including the seconder, may speak to a motion for no more than 3 minutes.

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

I'll now recite the Pledge as a sign of Councillors' 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.

I turn to apologies. I'm aware that we have an apology tonight from Councillor Joel Grist. Can I please have a mover and a seconder to accept this apology? Councillor Barker, and seconded by Councillor Stapleton, thank you. And all in favour? Thanks, Councillors. That's carried unanimously.

To confirmation of minutes. Can I please have a mover and a seconder to confirm the minutes of the Council meeting held on 25 February 2025? Moved by Councillor Phelps, seconded by Councillor Walker. All in favour? Thank you. And those against? Councillor Barker, did you vote?

CR BARKER: Abstaining.

CR BODSWORTH: You're abstaining. Okay, thank you. And the motion is carried 7-1. Is that correct? Okay, thank you.

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Leave of absence requests - do we have any leave of absence requests tonight? No?

Declarations of conflicts of interest - if a Councillor or an officer has a conflict of interest, they must declare it now and do so again just prior to the item being discussed. The Councillor and/or officer will be requested to leave chambers, or for those online to be placed by the host in a virtual waiting room, whilst the matter is being considered. Once the matter is resolved, the Councillor and/or officer will be returned to the meeting. Are there any declarations of conflicts of interest in relation to tonight's agenda? Councillor Phelps?

CR PHELPS: I'd like to declare that I have an interest in item 4.2, Future Management of the Winchelsea Shire Hall, as I'm a member of the non-profit organisation Winchelsea Community House and until the end of 2024 I was also the volunteer chair of the House committee. I note that exemptions to the conflict of interest framework are available under the Local Government Act with regard to involvement in non-for-profit organisations which advocate to Council. I have thoroughly considered this matter and while I do not believe that I have a direct conflict that will preclude me from this decision making, in the interests of public transparency and integrity and with an abundance of caution, I will step out for this item, albeit reluctantly and with disappointment.

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you, Councillor Phelps. We now turn to presentations. Do any Councillors have presentations for tonight? Councillor Walker first and then we'll go to Councillor Barker.

CR WALKER: Thank you, Mayor. Firstly, welcome to Lorne, our beautiful backyard where we are here.

Just giving an update of what we've been doing in Lorne down here since we're in this beautiful part of the world. So you can see right now it's beautiful and I want to acknowledge the turf out there is probably one of the best in Victoria and it's been voted that way too, which is amazing. So the Shire has done an amazing job to keep that going, which is pretty amazing.

We've done some great things - not great things, but things that we're working on, which is really good, is since Council declared a key worker accommodation crisis in May 2021, Council have been working with the Lorne community basically to - with the community for Lorne housing subgroup to identify an

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affordable housing project that will target year-round workers including those serving residents like health, education, emergency services and those servicing visitors, including accommodation and food services.

Council is facilitating a series of workshops starting in May with a Lorne community representative to select the model and scope of the project for affordable housing in Lorne. It's an ongoing issue, but hopefully we can get to the bottom of it and work together for that.

You see the netball court up here is getting worked on, which will hopefully be ready and be ready by the first game coming up soon, which will be pretty amazing, and we've recently just had the basketball court resurfaced downstairs. Due to mould problems over the years, it's finally open and it's an amazing facility we've got down there and to the community we've now got a pickle ball court, indoor pickle ball court, which makes a lot of people happy with that too.

And finally, I want to just pass on our sympathies to Karen Ford's family. Karen was an amazing community member who passed away this week in a place where she loved in Lorne and she had a beautiful shop down on the foreshore here, Wallangarra, and she was always a person you'd stop for a chat 10 minutes later and she always made everyone welcome to Lorne where we were and everything like that. So I just want to pass on sympathies to Karen and her family as part of that. And welcome to Lorne.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Walker. Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. As required under our Councillors and candidates in state or federal elections policy, I wish to inform Council that I'm an officially endorsed candidate for the Libertarian Party for the upcoming Federal election. I've advised the CEO of this in writing as required by the policy. I intend to take formal leave of absence from Council during the official election period and this leave will be unpaid.

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you, Councillor Barker. We now turn to public question and submission time. Public question time is a time for community members to ask questions or make a submission at a Council meeting and tonight we have nine community members who've submitted 13 questions.

So our first is Chris Rogers. Chris is not attending in person, so I'll read Chris's question on his behalf: "After contracting Surf Coast Shire website inquiring

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about the reopening of Coalmine Road in Anglesea, I received the standard non-committal email response. Now that a new Council has been appointed, will you stop sitting on your hands and tell the public your plans for the road reopening? The Eden Project seems to have stalled. The previous alignment of Coalmine Road, which was closed due to public safety risks, no longer exists. The decision to keep the road closed was made by Council and is unrelated to safety. What are your plans?" Chris, if you're watching, thanks for your question and I'm going to refer to the CEO for a response.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Thank you, Mayor Bodsworth. Hello, Chris, and thanks very much for your question. You're right, but thank you for your question. Alcoa was required to reconstruct the Coalmine Road on a new alignment as part of the mine rehabilitation works and Council at the time resolved that the newly reconstructed road would remain closed until there was a clear understanding of the future of the old mine site. Once this future use was confirmed, it was intended that Council would consult with the community regarding whether Coalmine Road should be reopened and Council, I guess, has been waiting for that, but it has dragged - as you point out, it has dragged a long time. So it hasn't been on our work program.

The intention is with our new Council to brief Councillors on the current situation and we will then, as part of that, determine how to bring that project back on to our work program given it has been taking such a long time. So we are hoping that we'll be able to - well, our intention is that later on this year we'll be able to talk publicly about what our process is to determine the future of that road and what that looks like, given there's been no movement in relation to the mine and its future use.

So thank you for raising. It's true, it's been delayed, and we will look to bring that project on to our work program. Thank you.

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you, CEO, and thanks, Chris, for the question. Our next question is from Mat Hines, from Torquay. So Mat submitted two questions, the first one: "At the November 2023 Council meeting, the Council approved the establishment of an LGBTQIA+ reference group subject to support from the local LGBTQIA+ community and resolved to conduct targeted engagement with that community to identify their need and interest in a reference group. I have looked back through Council minutes since then and cannot see any report on this engagement. What has happened to this and who was proposed to be engaged? As Council will be aware, many Councils across Victoria have an avenue established to enable the LGBTQIA+

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community to be engaged in decisions that directly affect us. Currently Surf Coast is not one of them. How does Council propose to engage with the LGBTQIA+ community in matters that directly affect us?" Mat has a second question. Would you like to answer the first one?

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Thank you, Mayor Bodsworth. We've done quite a lot of work in this space over the last couple of years, so I might refer it to the GM of Community Life, who's responsible for that work, to respond to Mat's first question.

MR DAMIAN WAIGHT: Thanks, Robyn. Through you, Mayor Bodsworth, thank you for your question, Mat. Following the November 2023 meeting, our staff sought feedback from members of the local LGBTQIA+ community. Respondents recommended that Council continue doing what we are doing now, including activities such as IDAHOBIT day, flying the rainbow flag, using pronouns in signatures, and indicating spaces are inclusive and welcoming.

The feedback also showed there wasn't strong community support for a reference group without it being linked to a specific project, which we didn't have at the time. Instead, most respondents preferred to remain in contact with Council on an as-needs basis - for example, being consulted on projects such as the health and wellbeing plan.

With regards to engaging the LGBTQIA+ community on matters that directly affect them, Council continues to engage with groups and individuals such as Surf Coast for Equality, the Youth Hub and the Rainbow Playgroup. Council also has a Social Equity Working Group, which helps officers with Gender and Equity Impact Assessments for new projects, services or policies and we are always keen to connect with others to broaden this representation.

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you, Mr Waight, for the response. I'll ask on Mat's behalf his second question: "In the recent Council plan consultation, 5.4% of respondents, or 45 individuals, identified as being part of the LGBTQIA+ community. Upon selecting this, respondents were then asked additional questions around discrimination and inclusion. Can the Council please provide a report on the findings of this specific aspect of the consultation in order for the community to understand the issues that we face and the ideas we have for Council to better meet our needs?"

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Thanks, Mat, for your second question. I'll also pass that through to our GM of Community Life.

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MR DAMIAN WAIGHT: Thanks, Robyn, and through you, Mayor. As you have outlined, Mat, consultation for the Council plan included questions on the experience of various cohorts within our community, including members of the LGBTQIA+ community. The data was not captured with a view to providing a separate public report on the detailed findings, but instead, it will support the development of our key strategic documents, including the Council plan. The data will also help inform Council's work in relation to the Health and Wellbeing Act and the Gender Equality Act. Thank you, Mat, for your questions.

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you. Our next question is from Brent McGregor, from Torquay, and I know that Brent has joined us tonight. Thanks for coming, Brent. I'll invite you to come up and ask your question, please.

BRENT MCGREGOR: At the last Council meeting, a resolution moved by Councillor Pattison and seconded by Councillor Walker and carried 7-2 included the first point, that Council advocates to the Federal Government to formally change the date of Australia Day. My question is what steps have been taken to action this first point in the resolution and what response has been received?

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks for the question, Brent, and thanks for coming to join us live tonight. As you may be aware, the federal election date is likely to be declared later this week, after which the current Government will enter caretaker mode. In caretaker mode, governments avoid making major policy decisions. Council will therefore write to the Commonwealth Government following the outcome of the election.

Council officers are also preparing a report on updated advocacy priorities for the Surf Coast Shire, which will be considered by Council following the election. This report will include a change of date for Australia Day as a new advocacy priority in line with the resolution from the February Council meeting.

BRENT MCGREGOR: Okay, so I'll see you in April.

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you, Brent. Thanks for coming tonight. Our next question is from Julie Dingle of Anglesea and Julie is also here in person. Thanks for coming tonight, Julie.

JULIE DINGLE: Thank you, Councillors. I just wanted to ask in light of the resolution passed at last Council meeting where cultural awareness training is

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to be made available to Councillors before 1 September 2025, I am wondering how this important process is progressing and if the CEO could please report on this.

CR BODSWORTH: So thanks, Julie, I'm going to answer your question tonight. Officers are working with traditional owners and other First Nations providers to schedule cultural awareness training for Councillors. Training will be offered in the months ahead and a report will be prepared in line with the resolution and brought back to Council in September.

JULIE DINGLE: Thank you very much.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks for your question, Julie. Our next question is from Naomi Stewart, from Torquay, regarding 26 Silvereye Street, Torquay. "The initial engineering referral comments (received under freedom of information) for Certificate of Compliance 26 Silvereye Street, PG23/0083 16 May 23 the following was advised. The Planning Scheme dictates vehicles parked in the last space of a dead-end accessway in public carparks must be able to egress in a forward direction. Engineering weren't satisfied that vehicles would be able to egress the site in a forward direction via one turning manoeuvre. Amended plans were provided by the applicant, which were approved by engineering 7 August 23, advising that turning templates provided were satisfactory and carpark dimensions were in accordance with the relevant Australian standard. This was raised through public questions to Council 25 June 24. The CEO's response was 'officers requested additional information on parking movement from Mind Australia. Mind has since provided officers with vehicle turning movements which showed that cars can exit in a forward movement from these parking spaces'. Construction is under way and it would appear that what is being constructed is different. Can Council please confirm that there are still three onsite carparks and these vehicles can exit the site in a forward motion as per the Planning Scheme?"

So I'm going to refer that first question - there are two - to the CEO for response. Thanks.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Thanks, Naomi, for your question and the General Manager of Placemaking and Environment has checked on the plans and so he'll respond to your question.

MR CHRIS PIKE: Thanks, Mayor. So, yes, the Planning team have looked at the most recent plans that we've got on file and these form part of a certificate

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of compliance which was endorsed earlier last year, so 18 January 24. So those plans do show three carparking spaces with dimensions that are compliant with the Australian Standards and they do allow vehicles to exit in a forward manner. Given your concerns, I'll refer that on to our teams so that we can have a check that what's being constructed actually complies with those plans.

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you. The second question from Naomi Stewart is: "Lot 628 on Plan of Subdivision 829221M, known as 26 Silvereye Street Torquay, which shows on the subdivision plans and MCP that there is a 5 metre setback of the frontage from Silvereye Street and a 3 metre setback on the side from Rosella Road. As you are very aware, there has been a huge amount of history and community concern with this block due to the proposal for 12 homes to be built for people experiencing significant mental health challenges in Torquay. The address of this property since it was created has always been 26 Silvereye Street in all correspondence with Council and the owner has always referred to this as 26 Silvereye Street, yet very recently in communication with Council this now appears to have been changed to 2 Rosella Road Torquay. Of note is that on Mind Australia website they are still referring to this as 26 Silvereye Street Torquay. Can Council explain why they are now referring to this site as 2 Rosella Road, which appears to be in contradiction to the plan of subdivision and MCP of Stretton Estate which was formally approved by Council?"

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Thanks, Naomi. I'll pass that through also to the GM of Placemaking and Environment.

MR CHRIS PIKE: Sure, happy to take that, and this is a good pick-up, Naomi. Hopefully I'll be able to shed some light on your question. So the street address was changed on 12 December 2024 and that was on request from the owner and this isn't unusual in this particular circumstance. So street addresses are allocated prior to the plan of subdivision being registered and then at that time corner allotments are allocated a street address based on the likely entrance to the property. However, those elements can change and they don't actually form any official part of the title of the property.

So we received a request as the property entrance will be from Rosella Road and this means that we can comply with the appropriate Australian/New Zealand Standards which require address numbers being assigned according to the location of the point of access for that address.

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CR BODSWORTH: Thank you. Our next question is from Fred Preston, from Torquay. I think that Fred was expected tonight.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: It's a submission.

CR BODSWORTH: Okay, this is a submission from Fred and Fred hasn't joined us tonight? Oh, so Fred, would you like to come forward and ask your question? Or if you'd prefer, I can read it out on your behalf. Would you prefer that? Okay. So I'm just going to consult with the CEO.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: It's a submission.

CR BODSWORTH: Okay, so this is being taken as a submission. Have all Councillors read and understood Torquay Theatre Troupe's submission about the upcoming lease arrangements at the Multi Arts Centre in Torquay? And secondly, is Council aware of TTT's reasons for seeking to continue the previous lease arrangements?" And Fred, I can advise that Councillors have had access to advice from officers, including tonight's report, as well as correspondence directed to them by the different groups. So thanks for that.

The next question is from Virginia Aldred, who is also joining us tonight. Thanks for coming tonight, Virginia. I'll invite you to come and ask your question.

VIRGINIA ALDRED: Okay. In reviewing the Council documents, we have identified inaccuracies and an unbalanced presentation of pros and cons regarding lease options and an unclear process for risk identification. This leads to a two-part question. The first question is: what is the rationale behind the Council's approach to structuring leases with arts organisations and how does this approach compare to leasing arrangements for other community groups and security of tenure? That's the first question. Will I do the second one?

CR BODSWORTH: Sure. Go ahead and ask the second one. Thanks, Virginia.

VIRGINIA ALDRED: Okay, thank you. The second question is in the risk assessments of the specific lease options, were all potential disadvantages thoroughly considered and was there consultation with the MAC user groups during this process? Thank you.

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CR BODSWORTH: Thank you, Virginia, and thanks again for coming tonight. I'm going to refer this question to the CEO for response.

MS ROBYN SEYMOUR: Virginia, it's great to chat to you earlier tonight and also to hear your question. Given the work has been led by the General Manager of Placemaking and Environment, I'll ask him to respond to your questions. Thank you.

MR CHRIS PIKE: Thank you, Mayor. Thanks, Virginia, and good to see so many people down here representing this evening.

So a very short answer is we don't have an approach that's specifically for arts organisations. So more generally the approach that we apply to leases and licences are governed by a policy of Council and that's called Council's Property Use Agreements Policy and when we're talking about community groups, so non-commercial groups, there are specific elements of that policy that relate to those types of leases. So those typically allow for a maximum lease period of up to five years.

I guess the other thing worth pointing out around Council's general approach is that that also outlines a number of arrangements where Council would establish a licence with community groups and users. The key point of difference there would be that the leases grant exclusive use of a space or a facility and licences are non-exclusive.

So more specifically, if this helps for the Multi Arts Centre, the reference point is a decision from Council in August 2019 where that decision stated that the Surf Coast sport and recreation centre would be used as a community-led arts facility when it's no longer required for sport and recreation purposes, subject to a number of conditions, one of them being a multidisciplinary arts collective capable of managing the facility as formed.

So that's led to the current position, where Council has a lease and the report before Council this evening proposes continuing a lease with the Multi Arts Centre Inc. and that is again consistent with Council's property use agreements policy. So not a specific process for arts organisations, but there are some arrangements that are quite particular to this venue.

And your second question - so the MAC and the current user groups were consulted as part of the review of the lease and officers consider that the advantages and disadvantages of the different options were considered during

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that review and have been presented for Councillors' consideration this evening and that matter is now ready for Council to consider in terms of declaring their intention to enter into a lease, which would trigger an advertising period which always affords the opportunity for the public to provide feedback on that proposal.

VIRGINIA ALDRED: Thank you. Thank you, Chris. Thank you.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Virginia. Next we have a submission from Jock Jeffries regarding the Multi Arts Centre lease. Jock is not here in person, but has submitted that the Multi Arts Centre, or the MAC, Incorporated supports option 3, which is coming up later in our agenda, but requests some flexibility in the redrafting of the MAC management plan. As Councillors have all been provided with copies of the submission, I've removed some of the technical explanation in the interests of time. However, Jock has requested that the following be considered: 1, electricity costs; 2, gas costs; 3, governance constraints; 4, undefined KPIs. So thank you, Jock, for your submission.

The next question is from Zina Carman, from Bellbrae, regarding the Multi Arts Centre lease. Is Zina here tonight? Hi, Zina. Would you like to come forward and ask your question? It's also a submission. Thank you. So Zina, would you like to read your submission? Thanks.

ZINA CARMAN: Thank you. The Torquay Theatre Troupe strongly believes that option 3, maintaining the single lease structure with the MAC Inc. as the representative body managing Multi Arts Centre, is the most efficient approach. We believe individual user group leases with the Shire will increase administrative burden on user groups as well as Council officers and foresee challenging requirements for two or possibly more leases. We envisage duplicate and possibly conflicting reporting and maintenance requests.

Number 4, I apologise, it's very unclear. There's a typing error in that. It says "single lease framework", but it should have probably said "individual lease framework", risks of governance becoming fragmented; possibly lead to inconsistent or conflicting decisions among user groups requiring Council officers' intervention; and I think disrupt community understanding of the MAC and the existing relationships the MAC have developed with the arts community and building hirers.

We support keeping building management under the experienced MAC committee to streamline operations and reduce workloads for all involved.

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After carefully considering all aspects of the lease options presented, we believe option 3 is fair and considerate to all involved. Thank you.

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you, Zina. Thanks very much for coming along to join us live tonight. That brings us to the end of public questions.

We turn to petitions and there are no petitions for tonight's meeting. Notices of Motion - there are no Notices of Motion for tonight's meeting.

So that brings us to the reports part of our Council meeting. So the first is item 4.1, Council Plan Progress Report Mid Year Four. The purpose of this report is to note the Council Plan Progress Report Mid Year Four. We have a recommendation before us. Does anyone wish to move a motion? Councillor Stapleton - is that as per the recommendation?

CR STAPLETON: It is, Mayor, thank you.

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you. And do we have a seconder for that motion? Councillor Walker, thank you. Councillor Stapleton, would you like to speak to the motion?

CR STAPLETON: Thank you, Mayor. So this is an important report for Councillors to note and acknowledge. It marks - sorry, I'll move that back a bit. Is that alright? I'm getting a bit of feedback. It marks the halfway point of the final year of our existing Council plan, which runs from 2021 to 2025, and by way of background, I'm sure most people realise, but the Council plan is the four-year strategic plan that's developed at the beginning of each new Council term to set the way forward for the Council.

So this Council plan, which is set to conclude this coming September, includes 19 strategies that were developed under the seven themes of First Nations reconciliation; healthy connected communities; environmental leadership; sustainable growth; diverse and robust economy; arts and creativity; and an accountable and viable Council.

Some people talk about Councils only being responsible for roads, rates and rubbish, but the reality is that the role of local government has evolved significantly since the 1950s and the obligations of Councils have expanded over many decades. Councils are now mandated to address much more than roads, rates and rubbish. In fact, Victorian Councils have responsibilities under

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more than 100 Victorian acts and regulations, including responsibility for municipal health and wellbeing.

There are also many Commonwealth acts and regulations, ministerial directions, codes of practice, Australian standards, state and federal laws and other guidelines that Councils must abide by, such as mitigation and planning for climate change and ensuring gender equity in our policies, services and programs. So there's a lot going on.

Importantly, it's also recognised that not every municipality is the same and the mix of local demographics leads to different needs, which is why each Council is able to develop its own Council plan for its own community.

In some communities, perhaps all their needs and wants would fall within the remit of roads, rates and rubbish and to be honest, that would actually make life a whole lot easier, but I know that in many places, and definitely here on the Surf Coast, our community expects much more.

With the process now under way to prepare our new Council plan for 2025-2029, it's a good time to reflect on the goals of the existing plan and what has been achieved and what hasn't. What are the things we'd like to continue to pursue and what are we happy to stop doing? We know we'll need to do some of that as well. Hopefully, by reviewing actions and achievements over the past four years, we as a group are better placed to identify key priorities for the next four.

There are so many things that I could pull out of this Council plan progress report and I will list a few, but I'll just try to flag some of the key achievements from over the six-month period of the report, but I do encourage everyone in the community to read this report from cover to cover so that you get a better understanding of the full breadth of services, programs and infrastructure that Surf Coast Shire Council is delivering for our community.

Now, this list is in no particular order. I just think they give a good breadth of the scope of things that Council has worked on over that six-month period. So, one, assessment and planning work for the Karaaf wetlands stormwater management has been a really significant feature of this Council term and an important milestone was reached with the first two years of data collection and analysis completed for wetland vegetation assessments.

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We had the installation of a fast EV charger here in Lorne, which is the first of four fast chargers to be installed using a Victorian Government grant and we know this one has been a long time coming, so I'm pleased to see it's done and that there are charging stations still due to come in Aireys Inlet, Anglesea and Winchelsea by the middle of the year.

We adopted the Circular Economy Action Plan. We adopted the concept plan for the redevelopment of the Anglesea Community and Health Hub. The Painkalac Creek flood study is now under way. The Draft Urban Futures Strategy was completed and shared with the community. The Planning Scheme Review was completed and adopted. We endorsed the community co-design for the Aireys Inlet Social and Affordable Housing Project.

Work continued with the Lorne and Anglesea communities to identify initiatives to support access to more affordable housing for key workers. Work continues on the program for Surf Coast to achieve eco destination accreditation. Parklets or outdoor dining options were approved to support local businesses. The Aireys Inlet Top Shop Design Project got under way and another amazing arts trail was delivered.

I'm almost finished, but I've got two more. A great program to support community arts was the Creative Halls Project that delivered \$50,000 into some of our smaller venues in Winchelsea, Anglesea, Lorne and Deans Marsh that provided infrastructure to enable those groups to host exhibitions for local artists.

And my final one is the development of a service profile which explains what we're doing and why and it's a really significant piece of work that will help this Councillor group in its deliberations over key services and priorities that are to be delivered over the next four-year Council plan. Thank you, Mayor.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Stapleton. Councillor Walker, would you like to speak to the item?

CR WALKER: Yes, please, Mayor. As Councillor Stapleton has pointed out, there's 19 strategies in the Council plan that are grouped under seven themes, all contributing to the community vision. The Council Progress Plan shows some good transparency in a snapshot from this Council term and what has been achieved and will continue to be worked on over the next six months and the following budget.

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Further to this, I'm looking forward to as a new Council group and a new Councillor to the outcome of the current workshops and upcoming Council plans which we as Councillors and the community have and will continue to provide input into. So looking forward to the next four years after what's been achieved so far from the previous four years. So looking forward to that being released in September and onwards from there.

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you, Councillor Walker. Would any other Councillors like to speak to this item? Councillor Barker.

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. Council Plan Progress Report where we get a lovely mid-year update on how well the organisation is spending our money. Now, while we have gender equity impact assessments, there's no mention of economic impact assessments. Shouldn't we be evaluating the programs to justify the costs or do we just like them because they're valued?

Let's talk about risk management. The Council itself rates governance and compliance failures as serious and even after mitigation, it still remains at medium. Now, that doesn't inspire confidence in me. I don't know about you.

By focusing on identities rather than pragmatic outcomes, this organisation isn't committed to core services. By doing much, we struggle to do anything well. I hope that the development of the next Council plan shifts that focus of the organisation to focus on those core functions so that broad community satisfaction is drastically improved. By focusing on the minimum amount of services we provide, we can deliver better-quality services and reduce rates so that there will be more money available in the community to fund those services that are valued by some, but are not valued by all in the municipality.

I don't support this recommendation because it's a rubber-stamping exercise that lacks real accountability. The Council needs proper cost benefit analysis and genuine community engagement before claiming any sort of real progress.

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you, Councillor Barker. Do any other Councillors wish to speak to the item? No. Thank you. Are there any closing remarks, Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: Oh, look, I'll just make a couple of comments. I think it's important to acknowledge that while financial sustainability is certainly important and necessary for Council and we do have a 10-year long-term financial plan that ensures that for our community, Councils are not businesses

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and nor should they be measured - I guess a business may be assessed on its return on investment for investors, but Council's role is to actually deliver services for the community. So I think our success should be measured on the public value that we're able to deliver as part of the program and the Council plan that we develop.

And there was just one more significant piece of work that's been completed that I failed to mention, which is the State of Play Social Infrastructure Report that was delivered to Council and this report identifies all the existing community places, spaces and services across the Surf Coast Shire with a view to understanding more about what we already have in the community and where there's gaps that our community needs. So it's a really important piece of work and it's the first step in developing a broader integrated social infrastructure framework to help Council to plan and invest and provide appropriate social infrastructure for the community. And I'll leave it at that. Thanks, Mayor.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Stapleton. We'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour? Thank you, Councillors. And against? Thank you. So that vote is carried 7-1.

Item 4.2, Winchelsea Shire Hall Management Model. The purpose of this report is for Council to consider updating the management model and costs for Winchelsea Shire Hall. We have a recommendation before us. Does anyone wish to move a motion?

CR PHELPS: Mayor, can I just jump in? I'll just repeat my statement. So I'd like to declare that I have an interest in item 4.2 here, the future management of Winchelsea Shire Hall, and for the benefit of anyone who missed it, I'm a member of the non-profit organisation Winchelsea Community House and until the end of last year was also a volunteer chair of that committee. I note that exemptions to the conflict of interest framework are available under the Local Government Act with regard to involvement in not-for-profit organisations which advocate to Council. And after thoroughly considering this matter, and while I do not believe that I have a direct conflict that will preclude me from this decision making, in the interests of public transparency and integrity and with an abundance of caution, I will step out for this item, albeit reluctantly and with disappointment.

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CR BODSWORTH: Thank you, Councillor Phelps. We'll see you after this item is concluded. So we have a six-part recommendation before us. Does anyone wish to move a motion? Councillor Schonfelder?

CR SCHONFELDER: As read, Mayor, and I would like to say, as Councillor Phelps is exiting the room, that I feel as though - I beg to differ. I feel he doesn't really have a conflict of interest.

CR BODSWORTH: That's noted, thanks, Councillor Schonfelder. So Councillor Schonfelder has moved the motion as per the recommendation. Do we have a seconder? Thanks, Councillor Pattison. Councillor Schonfelder, I invite you to speak to the motion now.

CR SCHONFELDER: Thank you very much. I'd like to say that it's a great honour to be here in Lorne, such a beautiful part of the world, and there are beautiful buildings here, including at the primary school, I might add. But I'd have to say in all honesty the most beautiful building that the Council owns in the Shire, in my opinion, is the Winchelsea Hall and I say that very humbly and unbiasedly, I might add.

I very much welcome this recommendation, which seeks to enter an agreement with the Winchelsea Community House with Council and to activate works within the or operations to occur within the Winchelsea Shire Hall and to continue a commitment of 35,000 in the next financial year and 33,000 thereafter in the following financial year. The money will go towards paying for suppliers for utilities, communications and general cleaning and carpet cleaning attributed to the use of the Winchelsea Shire Hall.

I have to say I've attended a number of events there and really enjoy the different events, including a photographic competition that took place and I had to announce the winner of it and that was a lot of fun. It's a real hub of the community. It's a real great meeting place due to the location of the hall.

The key considerations are really the factors considering the community sentiment and the fact that the community have a very high regard and interest in the ownership of the site and also the fact of consistency in equity for access across the Council for people to liaise there and achievements of goals are also being considered as well. We have to realise that we've moved out of COVID, we've had COVID restrictions and that impacted the operation of the hall, so now we also consider the commercial viability of the hall as well and the Winchelsea Community House have reported it is unlikely that the

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usage income will be sufficient to cover the cost of the hall being staffed and open regularly, which is an aspiration of the community.

There's also child and family health services available and I note former Councillor Gary Allen had a very keen interest in education and in early learning and child care as well and I know my mother was a primary school teacher and a music and art teacher and the value of education is so important and the colocation of child and family health services within the Winchelsea Community House has mutual benefits and positive outcomes for families connecting with multiple programs and services. There's also financial implications as well. Costs for various models have been estimated and are included in this report.

I have to say that the Council, the work that has been done at the hall has been absolutely fantastic and the community are so happy and I know having a building that's so historic, having it purposeful and having it renovated in a way that complements the heritage elements of the building, I must say I'm just so pleased about that.

I know there's a bit of background to this building. There was a business operator there who had a non-commercial rated agreement with the Council and this agreement ceased and Council conducted an expression of interest process and interviewed a new - or identified, I should say, a new business operator. However, the start of COVID pandemic in early 2020 prevented this operator from commencing. So I have mentioned COVID previously, Mayor. So I recommend my colleagues to support this item. Thank you.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Schonfelder. Councillor Pattison, would you like to speak to the motion?

CR PATTISON: Yes, thank you. That would be great. This motion will support the Winchelsea Community House to manage the Winchelsea Shire Hall for the next two years and will commence a new arrangement with Council to use the rooms at the Winchelsea Town Hall to deliver the child and family services for the next three years for a fee to the community house. So they already deliver that, but looking at other ways to make it more sustainable for the Winchelsea Shire Hall, the community house.

So Council really focuses on a community development lens in the way that it works with our community and this is an example of that, supporting the community house to be self-sustaining, but doing it in a way that is step wise

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with reduced dollars going to the community house so that over time they can be self-sustaining.

We know that over the last couple of years, as Councillor Schonfelder mentioned, there was COVID disruptions as well as issues with heating and cooling and so the Winchelsea Community House hasn't really had an opportunity to demonstrate how they can get adequate bookings to make their initiative self-sustaining. So I think it's important that we support them to do that, but have a limit to that so that we can bring it in line with the way that our other facilities are managed and that sort of thing.

So, yes, I think it's a good middle ground and I really encourage the Winchelsea community to get on board and to support their community house. Community houses are amazing and this is two years with reducing money coming from Council and so I really, yes, encourage the Winchelsea community to get on board behind this wonderful initiative so that it can continue after this two years reduced fees happens. So I encourage my Councillors to support the motion. Thank you.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Pattison. Would any other Councillors like to speak to this motion? Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. Another classic example of Council overreach creating a mess that it then needs to clean up. We have three options - continue throwing 50 grand or more a year at the problem, gradually phase out funding, or have Council take back the management. But I'd like to ask why is Council involved at all? If the community values the hall, then let them fund it directly.

Now, I can appreciate that we might not sell it, but at least let them make it function independently. With the appropriate incentives of community seeking the necessary funding to run the hall, you'll see a greater diversity of events and activities held there, which will drive more patronage and probably create better community connection.

Now, the Government shouldn't be involved in the business of subsidising community spaces when there's plenty of private and voluntary models out and available. I won't support the recommendation because it continues Council involvement where it isn't needed. I think the best approach is either

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full privatisation or community-led funding without Council interference and this recommendation achieves neither of those.

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you, Councillor Barker. Do any other Councillors wish to speak? Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: I'll just say a few words. Thank you, Mayor. I'm happy to support this recommendation. I think that the funding model that's been proposed should see the Winchelsea Community House continue to receive a similar amount to what's been received over the past three years of the agreement with Council, albeit the funding is structured a little differently. It provides a good balance between enabling the Winchelsea Community House to continue to build on the great program that it's offering to the local community through the Shire Hall, whilst also providing enough time for the house and the broader community to transition to a new model.

Ideally, over the two years of this proposed agreement there will be an increase in income from users of the Shire Hall so that it can become a service primarily sustained by the community and I think that it's important to acknowledge that the Winchelsea Community House has worked really hard to activate the Shire Hall through the past three years of this agreement. There have been challenges and there is an aspiration to have the hall open regularly, regular hours for the community members to drop in. That may not be achievable, but hopefully the community can come up with some creative ways that supports them to achieve this aspiration.

For me, there's no argument about the value of the Winchelsea Community House and what it's delivering for the community through the management of the Shire Hall and I think we should continue to support them for a short time to ensure that that value can be realised. Over the past few years, there has been the introduction of new programs, events, a monthly market, artist exhibitions and more to help activate the space and the hall has also been open to the public throughout the week during this time.

In an ideal world, Council would have ample funds to keep every community facility open all day every day, but we know that's not possible and that it is about providing a balance and that Council will need to make some hard decisions in coming years. But I think it's important that we have a consistent approach and equity across community houses within the Shire and although this particular model is unique to Winchelsea, I do think that what's being

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proposed sets them up for success into the future and that's really the most important outcome for the Winchelsea community.

So I hope that this recommendation is accepted so that there's clarity for the Winchelsea Community House and the broader community about how the Shire Hall will be managed over coming years and to help initiate a process that helps them to transition to a new model in two years' time. Thank you, Mayor.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Stapleton. Do any other Councillors wish to speak to this item? No. Thank you. I offer the mover closing comments. No? Okay, we'll now put the motion to the vote. All those in favour? And against? Thanks, Councillors. So that motion is carried 6-1. So I'll invite somebody to invite Councillor Phelps back into the meeting. Nice to have you back, Councillor Phelps.

So item 4.4, Multi Arts Centre lease. Oh, sorry, I have missed one, thank you. 4.3, Community Bus Review. The purpose of this report is for Council to consider transitioning to a new subsidised model of access to bus hire and the exit of this subsidised model after a two-year transition period. We have a recommendation before us. Does anyone wish to move a motion? Councillor Walker - is that as per the recommendation?

CR WALKER: Yes, Mayor, but with some additional points which I'll put up on the screen here and read through to help clarify some of the points that I'm putting forward.

Now, I'm putting forward that it is put through with a recommendation, but with some additional points relating to the community buses that are down - further down the coast away from the hubs of Torquay as such.

Now, you can read what's up there, but it's also in the point, but the main point that we've got on there is not changing what's being proposed besides disposing of the current bus fleet via sale or gifting in line with Council's management policy.

Point 8, I've got facilitates an expression of interest process to gift one bus to a community group in Lorne for the purpose of community use by local groups (inaudible) of the geographical location unlimited access to a commercial bus hire down this way of the coast. I can speak to that further. And then point 10 on there, it's got "Allocate up to 78,000 from the sale of the remainder of

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the fleet to the dedicated cost centre to subsidise bus hire for community uses for the two-year period".

CR BODSWORTH: Okay, thanks, Councillor Walker, and thanks to the Governance team for displaying that motion. So I'm calling for a seconder for that motion. I don't see a seconder for that motion. So that motion will lapse and so we now - I now call for a new motion.

CR SCHONFELDER: Mayor, I did have an alternative motion, so I don't know if you want to hear that motion.

CR BODSWORTH: I'm calling for a motion to be moved at the moment, thanks, Councillor Schonfelder.

CR SCHONFELDER: Well, Mayor, I'd like to move that the Council updates and replaces the current buses with new vehicles.

CR BODSWORTH: Okay, I'll ask the Governance team if we have that motion in writing so that we can display that for Councillors' reference. So can I just confirm for Councillors' understanding that's the entire motion? Councillor Schonfelder, is that the entire motion?

CR SCHONFELDER: Yes, thank you.

CR BODSWORTH: Okay. I'll now call for a seconder for that motion. Do we have a seconder? No, okay. So that motion lapses. So I now call for a motion. Councillor Pattison? Is it as per the recommendation?

CR PATTISON: It is as per the recommendation.

CR BODSWORTH: Okay, thanks, Councillor Pattison. So I call for a seconder for that motion. Councillor Phelps, thank you. So Councillor Pattison, I'll invite you to speak to the motion, thanks.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Lots and lots and lots of work has gone in over the last couple of years looking at community buses and they are valued by some in the community and the idea of them is amazing and when I first heard about this, I was very supportive of our community buses, but over the period where Council has evaluated its community buses and looked at the risks, the liabilities, especially in light of the crashes that happened, the very, very unfortunate situation some years ago in the Hunter Valley, it's become clear

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that it's an area that Council should exit or could exit, it's not a mandatory service for Council. There's no obligation for Council to provide buses.

As we can see in the report that's put forward, a lot of money is spent on these community buses. They're ending their operational life and would require a significant investment of \$413,000, roughly, to replace those buses, those four buses.

We need to consider that there were only 121 trips in 2024 and over the prior years the number of trips that those buses were being utilised for was continuing to decrease and that was in the context of our Council actively encouraging participation and doing everything they could to promote the service that it provided. So I think that's a really important - in a sense, our community has said to us, "We don't value them to the extent that they're there" and I think what's being put forward recognises that.

However, we do know that we can't just take something away without helping our community to adapt and work through that over a period of time. So what's put forward enables the community to retain access to the bus hire through a subsidised model, but through a model that actually manages the risk and cost to Council by using a commercial operator to do that and Council subsidising those eligible trips.

So as I mentioned, there's been extensive work over the past two years to get the community engaged, but there just isn't that engagement and so really we need to use this money more wisely.

The proposed arrangement will assist community groups over the next couple of years and allow time to develop alternative ways to get around without using the Council buses and, as we mentioned earlier, the four buses were only used 121 times in 2024 and this demonstrates the limited groups and visits utilising these buses each year and yet Council is allocating a significant amount of money to provide this service.

So there are so many services that Council is mandated to provide to the community and with our reduced budget, we really need to re-evaluate these discretionary uses of our budget and this is one area that Council can cease to deliver this service with some, but minimal impact and that impact can be addressed through this two-year subsidy arrangement.

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As leaders in the community, we need to make the tough decisions that enable good financial management and best use of Council's resources for the whole Shire. So hiring of community buses is not a mandated service and there are some clear benefits for Council from exiting this service. So it's not just about the money. Also, it reduces the Council's cost base, but also it reduces the liability and the potential to increase the overall premium of Council's fleet and it ensures buses that the community are renting through a commercial provider meet current safety requirements because the current buses, they vary in age, but they're in the vicinity of 12 years or more, some less, some more, and so there will shortly be required further safety updates to make them compliant and safe. So the subsidies for the relevant community groups over the next two years will mean that users can look at other ways to get around over that two-year period, but still have those subsidies for two years as they transition to other ways.

So ultimately Council cannot afford to renew the buses at a capital cost of \$413,000 when there is such low usage of 121 trips in 2024 and with the steady decline in usage over the last few years. So I encourage my fellow Councillors to show leadership and be prudent in the way that Council spends its limited budget. Thank you.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Pattison. Councillor Phelps, would you like to speak to the motion?

CR PHELPS: Yes, thank you, Mayor. This is an item directly related to the four-year plan theme of healthy connected communities. Public transport around the Surf Coast Shire is truly woeful. I note that public transport is a major issue for our whole region and is a key advocacy for the G21 group of Councils. I do really hope we get some favourable positive movement at state and federal level where public transport is concerned. It would make a big difference.

Providing transport options for those in the community that are otherwise disadvantaged is something Council needs to consider in the near future. Something different and something innovative is required. Enabling all of our community to move around is more important than ever as our population ages, as social isolation bites, as mental health, rightly, becomes part and parcel of a good place to live.

So I am very disappointed that the current legislative and legal environment has made Surf Coast Shire community buses untenable and too expensive, but

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adding in the current economic situation, this recommended phasing out is a sensible option while we look for something else. So on that basis, I will reluctantly support the motion in the hope and expectation that an innovative new longer-term solution can be determined in the near future.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Phelps. Do any other Councillors wish to speak to this item? Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. You almost had me. I was nearly going to support this, getting out of the buses, but the reported myth that while bus usage has declined, the fleet is outdated and compliance costs are rising, that's all known by everyone, but the proposed solution, a transition to a subsidised model before scrapping it altogether, if given the opportunity, private companies can provide transport more efficiently.

But I don't support Council being involved in this space at all. But more importantly, why isn't Council advocating to government to scrap the regulatory hurdles that are creating the unaffordable compliance costs? Why? We were too busy advocating for duck hunting bans, something that has been proven useless as it had no impact on the matter. If we are going to advocate to the Government on other matters, it needs to be on something tangible.

Now, I support the recommendation to phase out Council-run bus service, happy days, but I don't support the associated subsidies. The transition period is unnecessary. Just let the market take over now and stop wasting ratepayers' money.

Accommodation of Council involvement which eliminates philanthropic contributions to this space and overregulation has resulted in us being where we are now. Narrow-minded thinking won't deliver any sound solutions and I won't support this motion.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Barker. Do any other Councillors wish to speak to this item? Councillor Schonfelder?

CR SCHONFELDER: Thank you, Mayor. I have to say I'm very disappointed that the current fleet is - whether it's on average 12 years old, I would actually argue that if it was a modern fleet or more modern fleet, it would attract people and entice residents to use the buses. It has been put to me by a former President of a Probus association that he said if the bus was more comfortable and more modern, more people would want to use it. I know that

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there's a statistic about the usage being reduced, but possibly if there were fewer trips made, you could have more people in the buses if they're running at capacity.

I do agree largely with what Councillor Barker has said with his opposition to this item. We are an organisation, whether we're a business, we're obviously a Council, however you describe us, over a \$100 million budget we have and I know being here in Lorne, the Lorne residents contribute a lot towards the rate revenue and people do ask themselves, "What do I get for paying my rates?"

I know where I live I have rubbish collected and I have a road outside where I live at Barrabool and people here, I actually think it's great for mental health purposes, I might add, to have buses available for the Council for community groups because the private operators might be booked out as well. That's another factor and another issue that was brought to my attention which I was unaware of.

The CFA, who fight fires, if they're monitoring a fire or working overnight, they use buses to transport the firefighters. They don't necessarily use the trucks. I remember being quite young in grade 3 when Ash Wednesday took place and I hope we never have to endure another calamity like that, but I actually think if we have a fleet of buses, we could possibly renew a bus each year for the next four years instead of spending the \$400,000 upfront. I think to have that fleet available would be worthwhile if we do have a calamity.

We talk about the climate crisis. We're a car-dependent society. Why can't we encourage people to use buses? I ask my colleagues to please reconsider their positions, including the mover and seconder of this motion. I know Scout groups use it at Modewarre and Winchelsea and I just feel - I know we're in a tight fiscal environment, but I just would like my colleagues to please reconsider. Thank you, Mayor.

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you, Councillor Schonfelder. Would anyone else like to speak to this motion? Councillor Walker?

CR WALKER: Thank you, Mayor. I'll just give some context around where we are now. We're in beautiful Lorne down here. Public transport doesn't really exist. The first bus gets in here at 1 o'clock in the afternoon. Now, for community groups to want to use a bus, there is no other option.

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One size doesn't fit all. Yes, the Lorne bus was used around 40 times last year. It would probably be used more if it could be used more, but basically you have to look at what that was used for, for groups to be able to use it. The basis for the lack of self-drive rental opportunities for in particular Lorne and surrounds, there is no other option. You've got to get on the bus to go to Geelong to get a bus - as in to hire a bus that is, or hire a car that is.

Even with the subsidy, the regional community of Lorne and surrounds will be at disadvantage when compared to other Surf Coast towns due to the closest self-drive rental being in Geelong. The communities further down the coast are more disadvantaged as there is inadequate public transport. This is an issue we all know about and we need to really push this.

There's no rental companies here. Thus the cost and the time will be higher due to travelling further to hire a bus or paying higher prices for a private company with a driver. There's a current cap in the policy of \$1,500 per group per year. This won't go far when you've got to employ a driver to drive from Colac or Birregurra or Torquay to come down here. It's important that the regional community groups remain connected, but it's also a low-cost option available.

So further to this, in the option in the management policy, as per 3.4, appropriate disposal methods of assets, like to see that offers first go to community groups as first priority to purchase these buses if there's no other option.

We really need to work towards getting better community facilities and transport options down here as you go further down the coast. We really need to work on that as public transport. I know the issues with why the buses are being sold off due to legislation and the risks involved are real and there's nothing denying that, but we really need to refine this policy further, I believe. So thank you.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Walker. Do any other Councillors want to speak to the item? Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: I'll just quickly add that again, I think this decision is a question of public value and the current bus arrangement provides a relatively high-cost, high-risk benefit to a small number of users on a fairly infrequent basis and, look, we know that the regulations and insurance surrounding community buses, it makes it, I guess, unwise and unviable for Council to

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continue this service, but I do acknowledge and agree that we need to advocate and improve for improved transport for our communities like Lorne and Deans Marsh and even Aireys Inlet, where - and Anglesea, it's really hard to get access to public transport and I don't think that the solution is for Council to continue providing community buses for these communities, but I would like to think that there is other options out there that can be explored to improve what is a really challenging situation, particularly for vulnerable people and seniors in our community.

So, yes, I will support the motion, but I'd like to see more done to improve transport for our outlying communities.

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you. Do any other Councillors wish to speak? No. Thank you. So are there any closing comments, Councillor Pattison?

CR PATTISON: No, I think everyone has spoken very clearly. Ultimately, we all know that public transport is so important, and especially in our remote areas, but Council has to manage its risks and costs closely and this motion does that. Thank you.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Pattison. We'll put the motion to the vote. All in favour? And against? Sorry, I didn't count Councillor Pattison then, so I'm going to go back to in favour. Sorry, I forgot to look at the screen. Thank you. And against? So that's tied 4-4. So in that case, I get a second vote and I'm going to vote for the motion. So that motion is carried 5-4.

CR SCHONFELDER: Mayor, can I just ask a question about governance and the governance laws because my understanding in some circumstances with the status quo with a tied vote the status quo actually remains. So I know the Mayor has and the Chair has the casting vote, but there is a principle with that.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks for the question, Councillor Schonfelder. I'm happy to - I have an answer in mind, but I'm happy to refer that to the Governance team for some governance advice.

OFFICER: Through you, Mayor - can we hear this? Yes, great. So our Governance Rules are quite clear that the Chair has a second vote. There is no mention of a casting vote. There is no direct requirement for the Chair to use the vote in any particular way in this case.

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CR BODSWORTH: Thank you, Governance team. Thanks, Councillor Schonfelder, for the question. So that motion is carried 5-4.

Now we move on to 4.4, Multi Arts Centre Lease. The purpose of this report is to seek Council's agreement to enter a new lease with Multi Arts Centre Incorporated, MAC Incorporated, regarding the facility at 77 Beach Road, Torquay, known as the Multi Arts Centre, or MAC. We have a recommendation before us. Does anyone wish to move a motion? Councillor Pattison? What is your motion?

CR PATTISON: Governance, can you put the motion that I'm putting forward on the screen, please?

CR BODSWORTH: So I know that members of the gallery can't read what's on the screen, so at an appropriate time I'm going to invite Councillor Pattison to read out at least the relevant inserts into what was the published recommendation.

CR BARKER: When was this circulated?

CR BODSWORTH: Can I refer that question to the Governance team, please? Did you get the question?

OFFICER: Through you, Mayor, we received it later this afternoon, 5.15pm.

CR BODSWORTH: Okay, thanks, Governance team. So Councillor Pattison, I'd invite you to read out - it doesn't have to be the whole motion, but I can see the pieces in red that have been inserted.

CR PATTISON: Thank you. Can you hear me there?

CR BODSWORTH: Yes.

CR PATTISON: And just to clarify, I flagged this with Councillors and officers at our agenda review this morning and then have progressed to ensure there's not unintended consequences on this motion working with officers to make sure it's compliant, shows good governance, and the like, and then it was - the entirety of it was circulated around 5 o'clock today.

So the key changes relate to that the key performance indicators that the Council officers and the MAC develop targets for those. So there are some key

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KPIs which are put forward in the document, but they're not measurable without targets, so there's an item to say that the officers and MAC together determine the targets for those.

The other point is around the requirement for the management plan before the end of the lease period, including the review, including a process to consider expressions of interest for user groups as part of a future management plan. Can you scroll down? Thank you.

The main point that I wanted to include in this motion was a requirement that MAC executes equitable user group agreements with Torquay Theatre Troupe and Surf Coast Arts Space to operate the theatre and gallery space respectively and then an additional point, MAC Inc. will manage the use of MAC spaces and other shared spaces. That's the motion that I am putting forward.

CR BODSWORTH: Okay. So thanks for clarifying the motion, Councillor Pattison. Do we have a seconder for this motion? A question from Councillor Phelps.

CR PHELPS: A question of process. So if I'd like to move an amendment to that motion, can I do so now?

CR BODSWORTH: I'll stand to be corrected. You can't do that until the motion is seconded. If the motion is seconded, then you could propose an amendment to the motion. So I'm looking for a seconder for that motion. Thank you, Councillor Stapleton. Councillor Phelps, if you'd like to propose an amendment, you can now.

CR PHELPS: I'd just like to propose a minor amendment to 1.2.8, so a requirement "that MAC Inc. executes equitable user agreements with Torquay Theatre Troupe and Surf Coast Arts Space to operate the theatre and gallery spaces respectively with durations of no less than two and a half years", "2.5 years".

CR BODSWORTH: Okay, thanks for clarifying that. So the mover and seconder are able to tell us if they'd accept that amendment. So can I put that to the mover and seconder if that's an acceptable amendment to their motion?

CR PATTISON: Thank you, Chair. I did consider this at length and I think it's better that the MAC - I think the intent is that it would be up to a five-year lease and I think it's better for the MAC to have the jurisdiction to determine

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exactly the length of the lease and this kind of implies that it could be a shorter lease. So, look, I did decide that I didn't want to include that in the motion, so I won't accept that.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Pattison. So I'm just going to check in with the Governance team on the process at this point.

OFFICER: Through you, Mayor, so you would now seek a seconder for the amendment and, if seconded, follow the amendment process.

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you. So does that amendment have a seconder? Councillor Barker, thank you. So we now move to debating the amendment, as far as I remember. Thank you for the confirmation. So we're now - I'll now invite Councillor Phelps to speak to the amendment.

CR PHELPS: I missed that. So that has been accepted, has it?

CR BODSWORTH: The amendment has been seconded as an amendment, so you're now able to speak to the amendment - not to the substantive motion, but to the amendment, to your inclusion of that timeframe.

CR PHELPS: Yes, okay, thank you. Look, just a quick comment. A key concern for any group like a theatre or a gallery is that they're building a brand over time. Security of tenure is important for that. The concept that has been explained to us about the Multi Arts Centre doesn't really fit in terms of having various groups come in, come out, come in, come out. So security of tenure is a very important aspect of any such group, building a brand over time in a space like that, so I would really like to see that this proposal continues as suggested by Councillor Pattison, but with a minimum timeframe for the user groups concerned just to provide that security.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Phelps. Councillor Barker, would you like to speak to the amendment?

CR BARKER: No, thanks.

CR BODSWORTH: No? Would anybody else like to speak to the amendment? Councillor Pattison?

CR PATTISON: Thank you. So ultimately Councillor Phelps and I agree that we want our wonderful Torquay Theatre Troupe and Surf Coast Arts Space to

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have long tenure and a sense of ownership and the like for their spaces. The reason that I didn't include that in the motion, the specific timeframe of no less than two and a half years, was that actually I think we need to give the MAC the ability to set reasonable user agreements and there may be some administrative reason why it's four and a half years or it's two and a half years or it's five years and I don't think that we should put those caveats.

The intention is that it would be as long as possible within the lease agreement that they have with the Shire. But I think to enable the MAC to step up and be a great entity that oversees both of these user agreements, we should give them the space to do what works best and I think that it looks like, when you say 2.5, no less than 2.5 years, that maybe a three-year lease is good, whereas in essence I think a four-and-a-half or five-year lease makes more sense.

So it's based on that that as Councillors we should not be too operational in the way we put forward motions and leave space for our officers and different user groups, and the like, to actually do what's best for them and that's why it was omitted from what I put forward. But at the end of the day, both are fine.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Pattison. Do any other Councillors wish to speak to the proposed amendment? Councillor Stapleton?

CR STAPLETON: Yes, look, I'll just add that I too support the idea of giving Torquay Theatre Troupe and Surf Coast Arts Space as long a tenure as possible and would be reluctant not to support that amendment purely on the fact that I think it is probably a bit too prescriptive and that the idea of giving them five years would be my preference, rather than two and a half years. And I know you're not saying two and a half years - sorry, Councillor Phelps - but, yes, I think that it is a little prescriptive and hopefully, through the initiation of some new governance structures and a new lease, the user groups are able to negotiate with the MAC suitable user agreements for the length - a reasonable length of time.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Stapleton. Do any other Councillors wish to speak to the proposed amendment? No, thank you. So we'll put the proposed amendment to the vote. All those in favour? Thank you. And those against? Thank you. So the amendment vote is tied 4-4. That gives me a second vote again. In this case, I'm actually going to vote for the amendment. So I'm voting for the amendment, which means that that amendment is

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carried and we can continue to debate the substantive motion, which now includes that amendment.

So does anybody need to see that again or are we good on what that contains and happy to keep going with the debate? Okay, so I don't see anybody asking to see that again. So in the debate itself we had not commenced the debate on the substantive motion. So the mover is Councillor Pattison and the seconder is Councillor Stapleton, so I now invite the mover and seconder to start the debate. So Councillor Pattison?

CR PATTISON: Great. Thank you. We currently have two thriving community organisations, the Torquay Theatre Troupe and Surf Coast Arts Space. As you can see from the statistics of the MAC provided in the agenda, they are providing an amazing service to the community through their arts offerings, both for artists to be involved as well as attendees at amazing exhibitions and performances. I'm really proud of the arts community that we have on the Surf Coast. We should all be so proud of our amazing - and we should all be - and ultimately that's the MAC offering and that wonderful arts space that we have there.

As the motion I have put forward preferred leasing model going forward is to enter a new lease with the MAC with new measurable KPIs that are specifically defined and measurable as outlined through officers and the MAC and the ability for user groups to have a representative on the MAC committee, which I think is really important, and direct user agreements so the MAC doesn't go through an EOI process, but they have user agreements with TTT and SCAS as we want the MAC and inherently both of those user groups to continue to thrive with equitable user group agreements.

I put forward this motion to ensure that our currently thriving groups have certainty that their user groups will proceed with these equitable user agreements and ultimately I think, when we were talking through this item, I think we were constantly thinking further into the future, but ultimately the changes that have been put forward in this motion reflect that we're looking at what we have now, which is two amazing user groups and an overarching MAC which there are some changed governance structures which will enable sort of equal representation and better governance, and I think we should give the MAC another opportunity over this next management plan because having the MAC that really promotes the arts offerings across both theatre and gallery has great opportunities for our community.

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Once again, we talked about this with the Winchelsea Shire Hall, but our Council's focus is on a community development approach and ideally the community is running the whole entity with user agreements, and the like, and that's the model that Council moved towards so that we're enabling our community to do what they do best.

So in five years the management plan will be reviewed with MAC and I'm hopeful that we will have wonderful governance structures, two very happy user groups that want to continue and we move forward, they've been meeting their KPIs and that's wonderful and that would be what we would aspire to, but it will be reviewed again at that five-year time and if that's not the case, then those other EOI arrangements and the like can come into play at that point.

I wanted to point out, and I think it's really important, our officers at the Shire are all about equity of access to services, about encouraging the arts across our whole community and being inclusive and in that concept, when you think about it, it would make sense to have an EOI process now to confirm that TTT and SCAS are the best people to move forward with user agreements at the MAC.

However, I really think we need to think about the hard work that both of these groups have been putting in over the years to build both of their amazing offerings and we're about to - there's refurbishments under way, both of these groups will be coming back - are looking to come back to the MAC and I think it makes sense, the hard work that they've done, that we acknowledge that and we give the opportunity for the MAC to enter into user agreements directly with both of these groups.

We really want them to feel ownership over their spaces because they're doing wonderful work and we really want to support our volunteers. It's a big commitment what they're doing and I myself, and I know a lot in our community and those that attend the wonderful performance, really value the work that's being done by all of our volunteers and artists and performers and the like because it's not just volunteers, obviously the gallery has artists coming and exhibiting as well.

So there's many layers to it, but ultimately, I think this motion meets the balance in supporting those user groups, but enabling the broader arts offering. So I encourage Councillors to support the motion. Thank you.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Pattison. Councillor Stapleton?

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CR STAPLETON: Thanks, Mayor. This item has been given great consideration by Councillors and I just want to thank all of those involved who have contacted us with feedback and additional insights to help us in our decision making.

Ultimately, we really want to do what we can to support community-led arts groups to flourish and various of these options have been proposed and considered, but based on what I've read and understand, I'm happy to support the motion that's been moved to enter into a lease agreement with MAC for five years with an updated management plan.

I do support the addition proposed by Councillor Pattison that the MAC executes direct user agreements with Torquay Theatre Troupe and Surf Coast Arts rather than an immediate EOI process to provide them with the reassurance that's needed to continue delivering the really important and valuable arts programs that they're providing for our community.

Although the motion includes a minimum time of 2.5 years, I hope that the MAC committee is able to deliver longer-term agreements and sustainable agreements for both user groups over the five years and I'm hopeful that our arts community can focus on delivering great performances and exhibitions for our community, leaving the administration and the governance to the MAC committee to provide that overarching leadership in the arts space and much needed advocacy on behalf of all the arts groups in our community so that, I guess, as a committee the MAC will be helping Council to achieve its vision for this much loved community space and we know it's a really important community space in the delivery of arts for the Surf Coast.

I think that we know there have been significant outcomes and achievements as a result of the MAC being a dedicated arts facility. I think it was inspirational for those that sort of came up with the idea of converting the old sport and rec centre into an arts centre and we've seen how that has flourished and, you know, the groups have won multiple awards, they've profiled hundreds of artists, there's been opportunities for volunteering, theatre plays and exhibitions and connection to Council events such as the Arts Trail. We know there's also been substantial facility improvements, with more currently under way through the \$1.5 million refurbishment grant.

So as well as supporting this recommendation, I just want to reiterate the value that both Torquay Theatre Troupe and Surf Coast Arts have delivered for

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our community and thank you so much for your dedication and hard work to achieve such significant outcomes for the arts community. So thank you.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Stapleton. Do any other Councillors wish to speak to the motion? Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. The Multi Arts Centre where ratepayer money goes to fund creativity whether you like it or not. The guiding principle of my decision making is the voluntary interaction between consenting adults. This motion does not achieve that.

Council wants to renew a five-year lease with subsidised rent and shared costs. Now, while I'm supportive of the arts, I've bought paintings from local artists and been to movies, the best way to fund them is through voluntary means, not forced taxation through rates. If artists can't sustain themselves through ticket sales, patrons or other sponsorship, why should ratepayers cover the bill?

I've made mention before that when governments involve themselves in activities, it removes the appetite for private investment. I think this private voluntarily contributed funding model could quite easily fund the MAC's operations if it's as valued in the community as I think it is.

I oppose this recommendation because it forces ratepayers to subsidise a non-essential, though valued service. The arts should be voluntarily funded, but not through coercion.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Barker. Councillor Phelps?

CR PHELPS: Thank you, Mayor. As mentioned, we have had two distinct users of the Multi Arts Centre, being the theatre group and the gallery group, with clearly delineated spaces that they have been successfully making use of for a few years now, as noted in the report. There are additionally some common areas and other spaces available to use between themselves and other groups.

I do see two direct leases with the user groups concerned being an effective and definitive solution to ensuring that the Multi Arts Centre continues to thrive as both performance arts and visual arts spaces that involve many in the community as audiences and as participants. That being said, I believe the changes being proposed to the structure of the head lessee, MAC Inc, offer a different way of doing things that really should lead to sustainable and

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equitable use of the Multi Arts Centre and, more importantly, offer opportunity to community members who are more generally interested in supporting and growing the arts in and around Torquay.

I note that the finer details around the lease requirements are yet to be determined by officers - for example, key performance indicators and associated targets and benchmarks. I am pleased to see the proposal being amended with Councillor Pattison's ideas and that it now provides a minimum security of tenure.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Phelps. Do any other Councillors want to speak to the motion? No? Thank you. We will now put that motion to a vote. All those in favour? Thanks, Councillors. And against? Thank you. So that motion is carried 7-1. Thank you, Councillors.

The next item is 4.5, SCS-065 Surf Coast Public Art Policy. The purpose of this report is to seek - thanks, everyone - Council's endorsement for the public exhibition of the SCS-065 Surf Coast Public Art Policy. We have a recommendation before us. Does anyone wish to move a motion? Thanks, Councillor Stapleton. And do we have a seconder? Thanks, Councillor Walker. Councillor Stapleton, would you like to speak to the motion?

CR STAPLETON: I will, thank you, Mayor. It's great to see this Draft Public Art Policy come to Council for consideration and I hope it's supported to go out to the community for engagement and feedback.

I remember a few years ago we were contacted by a local Anglesea resident inquiring as to whether Council had a public arts register and whether there was any allocation for maintenance because she was particularly concerned about a sculpture in the community that looked to be deteriorating. At that point in time, there was no comprehensive arts register and it was recognised subsequently as a priority in the Creative Places Strategy that was adopted in 2023, so I feel like we've gone full circle and we now have a public arts policy for community to consider.

We know that officers worked really hard since that time to collate a full inventory of public art across the Shire. We know there's an amazing array of artwork, but we didn't necessarily always know where it was, why it was there, who provided it and whether or how it was being maintained. So that process will kick-start a regular public art audit and condition report assessment to be undertaken every three years now as part of this policy.

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Public art adds so much value to our community. I can think of many sculptures and murals in public spaces that add vibrancy and help create a sense of place. For example, I love the way the Ayres Inlet Community Hall has been transformed by the Geoffrey Carran hoodie mural and that the location is now commonly referred to as Hoodie Hall. Across the Shire, we have public seating that doubles as art, we have creative playground installations, artistic tree stumps, and more. Public art helps tell local stories, old and new, and can help to define a community's identity.

Beyond the local enjoyment of public art, we know that it can also attract interest from afar and bring visitors to explore and connect with our community, as we're seeing right here in Lorne at the moment with the Sculpture Biennale. Surf Coast has established a reputation as one of regional Australia's top creative hotspots.

We know that public art is important, so we should be looking after it. This policy will help guide Council to achieve that. It provides a long-term framework for sustainable management of public art in the Surf Coast Shire, addressing how we acquire or commission artworks in the first place, how we maintain and care for them and clear guidelines if a piece of art needs to be decommissioned and removed from a public space.

It means that existing new public artworks around the Shire will be recognised as important assets that are included on Council's asset register with an accompanying maintenance schedule to safeguard against damage and deterioration. It will also help ensure that information on all artworks is recorded and kept up to date.

Ultimately, this policy will help ensure long-term preservation of public art and help maintain the significance and integrity of artworks, while protecting artists' rights. Whether artworks are commissioned directly by Council or acquired through grants, private developers, community-led projects or other means, we are committing through this policy to ensure best practice management and care of Surf Coast's public art collection as part of Council's obligation to the artist and to our community.

I encourage my fellow Councillors to support this motion so that the draft policy can be exhibited and community provided with an opportunity to respond and provide feedback. Thank you.

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CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Stapleton. Councillor Walker?

CR WALKER: Thank you, Mayor. An audit in 2024 found 279 amazing public art items. There's no current framework to manage public art. This draft policy on public display will ensure public art in the Surf Coast, in conjunction with GORCAPA, will be managed sustainably through the lifetime of art from the development, conception, maintenance and the end of life of that art.

The policy will help create a unified approach to the acceptance, management and care of ...

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CR PHELPS: ... installation has a lifespan and often requires maintenance. It is good to see some structure being put around this with a policy that defined whether and how Council becomes responsible for public art, how it will look after it and what happens at the end of its useful life.

A line item in the budget provides full transparency on what this is costing ratepayers. This policy is a positive addition and accordingly, I'm happy to support it.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Phelps. Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks. Public art, the pinnacle of public purchasing priorities. The pragmatic elements of management are fine, but Council is proposing a policy that keeps spending money on murals, sculptures and even ephemeral art - a fancy term for art that disappears.

Let's be clear, Council committees should not be deciding what art is worthy of funding. If it's good, people will pay. If it's not, why should ratepayers foot the bill?

I oppose this recommendation because art should be funded voluntarily, not through forced payments from ratepayers. If businesses and individuals want public art, I'll be happy to consider the allocation of public land for it to be placed on, but let them pay for it directly. I won't be supporting the motion.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Barker. Do any other Councillors wish to speak to this motion? Councillor Bourke?

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CR BOURKE: Thanks, Mayor. I'm not sure - there we go. Public art is a really important part of our collective identity, I think. It's foundational to being able to stop and reflect along the way. I put a really high value on local artists and artwork, so I think this is a really important policy to put forward.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Bourke. Do any other Councillors wish to speak to this item? So Councillor Stapleton, do you have any closing comments?

CR STAPLETON: No, that's fine, thanks, Mayor.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillors. We'll put the motion to a vote. All in favour? Thank you. And against? Thanks, Councillors. So that motion is carried 7-1.

4.6, Customer Experience Bi-Annual Update July to December 2024. The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the Customer Experience Bi-Annual Update for July to December 2024. We have a recommendation. Do any Councillors wish to move a motion? Councillor Barker - is that as per --

CR BARKER: As per the recommendation.

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you. And a seconder? Councillor Pattison. Thanks, Councillor Barker. I invite you to speak to the motion.

CR BARKER: Thanks. Now, the Council is patting itself on the back for maintaining a 94% time completion rate for customer requests. Let's go a little bit deeper. While that figure sounds impressive, it's actually a decline from 95% in the previous period and first contact resolution is also down. Only 15% of customer inquiries were resolved immediately, down from 16%. Complaints, 35 formal investigations, slightly fewer than last time, which is good, but over half of them related to outdoor maintenance - roads, drainage and facilities. Now, that tells us the basics, the things that ratepayers expect, aren't being handled as well as they should be.

And what's Council's biggest achievement? Its commitment to understanding performance. Well, that's lovely, but where's the commitment to actually improving performance? We talk about a high-performing organisation. I don't see that.

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We don't need reports to tell us services should be better. We can all see it. What we need is the actual services to be better.

I don't support this report as a measure of success. The real question should be why does Council need to be involved in so many services that could be handled more efficiently by private contractors, voluntary means, user pay models or community-led initiatives?

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you, Councillor Barker. Councillor Pattison?

CR PATTISON: Thank you. So there will always be mixed views around the customer experience that, you know, our residents, ratepayers, visitors experience of the Surf Coast Shire, but I as an engineer love the data and this report does provide that data and it clearly shows how our Council has performed from July to December 2024 with regards to the customer experience.

Now, the Council is always working to improve its customer experience looking at timeframes for customer requests to be resolved, staff training, enhancing channels for customers to lodge their service requests, and lots of others. I think the data demonstrates that customers receive consistent service, complaints are managed equitably and tasks are completed within designated timeframes.

We need to put this in context. When we say there were 53 complaints received, there were 18,143 customer requests lodged. That's a lot of customer requests. And yes, we can do better, but we can always do better, but I think, personally, our Council is doing a good job. There are some minor reductions from prior years, I agree, and we do need to reflect on those and understand what's happened, why there are these changes and always look to improve the services that we deliver, but I think we should also be proud. 18,143 customer requests were lodged and 15% of customer inquiries resolved at the first point of contact. So of those, when they lodged their request, it was resolved straightaway. The average time that a call is answered is 18 seconds. I would think that that demonstrates a responsive Council.

And I think it's interesting - once again, as I said, I do love the data - when we look at how our customer requests are lodged. We still have a lot of customer requests being lodged by the phone, which is really interesting. 8,408 of these were lodged over the phone. I thought that our online portal, you know, where you can hop on to the website and lodge requests was the easiest and

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quickest way, but maybe that's a generational thing because only 4,775 of them were lodged via the online means, and there's other ways that they've come to us.

So I think Councillor Barker has touched on a few things around the percentages of customer requests completed on time, and the like. What I know anecdotally when I'm driving around other shires and on different country roads, and the like, I love it when I get back into the Surf Coast Shire jurisdiction because in comparison to the other regional Councils, I think our Council is doing an amazing job at maintaining its assets and we need to look at this within the lens of what local government can actually do as a regional Council and the budget that we actually have. So it can always be better, but I think our Council is doing a pretty good job at trying to make the best of what we have within our budget. Thank you.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Pattison. Do we have any other speakers? Councillor Phelps?

CR PHELPS: I'd just like to make a comment that just looking at a couple of scores in particular, the customer experience score of 7.3 out of 10 and a net promoter score of plus 79 out of 100, those are numbers that any organisation would be and should be proud of. They're good numbers. So I'd just like to make a note of that. Although the customer experience score has dropped in the last couple of periods here, it would be well worth investigating what's going on there, but all the same, they're still good numbers and we should be proud of them.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Phelps. Do we have any other Councillors who wish to speak to this item? No, thank you. So Councillor Barker, do you have any closing comments?

CR BARKER: No, thanks.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillors. We'll put that to the vote. All in favour? Thanks, Councillors. And against? Thank you. So that motion is carried 7-1.

Item 4.7, Positive Ageing Advisory Committee Member Appointments. The purpose of this report is for Council to consider appointing four new members to the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee. We have a recommendation.

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Does anyone wish to move a motion? Councillor Phelps, thank you. Is that as per the recommendation?

CR PHELPS: As per the recommendation, Mayor.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Phelps. Do we have a seconder?
Councillor Barker, thanks. Councillor Phelps?

CR PHELPS: Thank you, Mayor. The Positive Ageing Advisory Committee provides valuable two-way communication between our growing demographic and Council. Having attended two committee meetings already, I am the designated Councillor for that committee. I'm also the oldest Councillor on the Council. I can say that the volunteer members are engaged and positive and they're making a genuine contribution. It's been great hearing from them.

I would like to congratulate Harry, Joy, Keri and Kathryn for volunteering their time, experience and brainpower and welcome you aboard. I look forward to hearing from you all and all committee members on how Surf Coast Shire can continue to improve, how everyone in our community is equitably included. Thank you.

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you. Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks. I'll be very brief. The committee had five vacancies and received seven applications, yet we're still left with one unfilled spot. Either people aren't seeing value in this committee or the Council's methods of advertising aren't working. I'd rather have more hands on deck that aren't quite right than leaving it up to less people. I'll support the recommendation even though I don't fully like it.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Barker. Do any other Councillors wish to speak to this motion? No. And are there any closing comments, Councillor Phelps? No. Thank you. We'll put that motion to a vote. All in favour? Thanks, that motion is carried unanimously.

4.8, Project Budget Adjustments and Cash Reserve Transfers - March 2025. This report contains proposed project budget adjustments and cash reserve transfers for Council approval. The report presents adjustments including existing projects requiring adjustment, project closures, new projects to be initiated, Chief Executive Officer-approved transfers under delegation, all

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corrections to prior reports presented to Council. We have a recommendation. Do we have a motion? Councillor Stapleton - is it as per the recommendation?

CR STAPLETON: It is, thanks, Mayor.

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you. And a seconder? Councillor Schonfelder, thank you. Councillor Stapleton, would you like to speak to this?

CR STAPLETON: Thanks, Mayor. The intention of this report is to provide transparency on new projects, closed projects, identifying where the funding is coming from and showing any movement of funds for projects such as grants being received or any additional funds that are required from or being returned to different reserves.

Just one new project I'd like to draw attention to on the table is a review into speed limits in some of our coastal townships, including Anglesea, Aireys Inlet, Fairhaven and Moggs Creek. This project is funded by a State Government grant as part of a program to improve road safety in regional communities, not just for drivers, but for all road users, including cyclists and pedestrians.

Given the lack of pathways on local streets in parts of these communities, the road serves as a shared pathway of sorts. So in Aireys Inlet, for example, I often see walkers, parents with prams, kids on bikes, dogs and horses all sharing the road with cars. Council, not surprisingly, has received multiple requests from community over many years seeking speed reductions due to this shared nature of the road to help make some of these roads safer and more user friendly for all.

The review is to take place in coming months and will consider the retention of existing speed limits for each area or the potential to reduce the speed to an area-wide limit of 40km or 30km per hour. So I encourage community to stay engaged with the review, provide their feedback and hopefully we can ensure that all perspectives are heard and considered alongside with any relevant technical data collected through the review process. And I'll leave it there. Thanks, Mayor.

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you. Councillor Schonfelder?

CR SCHONFELDER: I'd just like to say very quickly, just reflecting on the comments of Councillor Stapleton in relation to horses being on a roadway or any thoroughfare, horses actually have right of way and there are people who

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are unaware of that. So I'd just like to reiterate that if you do come across someone riding a horse, they have right of way on the roadway.

But I do sympathise with the sentiments expressed by Councillor Stapleton about the road limits and that being reviewed and safety is so important. Thank you.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Schonfelder. Do any other Councillors wish to speak to this motion? Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks. Here we go again, another round of budget adjustments and reserve transfers because sticking to an original budget is just too much to ask.

Now, while there's been some returns, the report includes over \$250,000 in new project allocations covering everything from speed limit reviews to operating frameworks for development contribution plans because apparently we need more frameworks to shuffle money around.

Let's talk about those speed limit changes. Over \$150,000 in State Government grants just to review speed limits - not to implement them, just to look at them. Now, I'd love to see the cost breakdown. Are we hiring consultants to sit in a room and debate whether 40km an hour is better than 50km? Even better, how about 30km an hour? Don't laugh, we're heading that way. Roads are risky. We need to manage risk the best we can and that's paying attention.

And then we've got grant-funded projects, the cheeky cost shift where State Government funds us to manage projects while at the same time compelling us to undertake other actions at our own cost.

I oppose this report. Instead of reallocating funds to more red tape, Council should be cutting unnecessary spending, reducing reserves through rate reductions and outsourcing projects to the private sector without the constraints that Council imposes wherever possible.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Barker. Do any other Councillors wish to speak to this motion? No. Thank you. So I invite Councillor Stapleton to offer closing comments.

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CR STAPLETON: I'll just make one point that the speed limit review isn't just about consultation, it's also about the installation of speed limit signs where they're being reduced to 40 or 30km an hour, so I imagine some of the expense is involved in that as well.

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you, Councillor Stapleton. We'll now put that motion to a vote. All in favour? Thanks. And against? Thank you, Councillors. That is carried 7-1.

We'll now move - I note that it's 8 o'clock. I propose that we keep going through the next couple of items.

4.9, Councillor Expenses and Attendance at Meetings - October to December 2024. The purpose of this report is to present the Councillor allowances, expenses and attendance at meetings for the December 2024 quarter. We have a recommendation. Do we have a motion? Councillor Schonfelder - is that as per the recommendation? Thank you. And seconded by Councillor Phelps. Councillor Schonfelder?

CR SCHONFELDER: This item is very well documented and self-explanatory and it shows that we are an organisation that displays the expenses that we have incurred and showing transparency. Mayor, I am a Madonna fan and you're probably thinking what on earth does Madonna have to do with Councillor expenses? Well, we live in a democracy and a lyric from one of her songs is "some things cannot be bought" and I actually agree with that sentiment. Thank you, Mayor.

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you, Councillor Schonfelder. Councillor Phelps?

CR PHELPS: As mentioned by Councillor Schonfelder, this is a quarterly report that is important for Councillor transparency purposes. It details what meetings Councillors were able to attend and it details the Councillor expenses for the period, including allowance, mileage, professional development, attendance at events and ongoing expenses such as phone and laptop. Ratepayers have full visibility of what's being paid for, a measure of transparency that I fully support.

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Councillor Phelps. Do any other Councillors wish to speak to this? No. And any closing comments, Councillor Schonfelder?

CR SCHONFELDER: No, thank you.

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CR BODSWORTH: No, thank you. We'll put it to the vote. All in favour?
Thanks, Councillors. That's carried unanimously.

The next item is 4.10, Conflict of Interest Records. The purpose of this report is to present conflict of interest records received since the previous Council meeting. We have a recommendation. Do we have a motion? Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: As per the recommendation.

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you. A seconder? Councillor Schonfelder, thanks.
Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: No, thanks.

CR BODSWORTH: Okay. Councillor Schonfelder?

CR SCHONFELDER: No thank you.

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you. Do any other Councillors wish to speak to this?
No, thank you. We'll now put it to a vote. All in favour? Thanks. That's carried unanimously.

That brings us to the end of our open meeting. Thank you, Councillors, and thanks to remaining members of the public. We now close the meeting to the public as we have a confidential Council meeting coming up. So thanks, Councillors. We'll just take a little pause while we rearrange.

Would anybody like to propose - well, we're in between meetings. We don't need a motion, do we, to have a break? We do? Okay. So suspend Standing Orders - motion moved by Councillor Stapleton and seconded by Councillor Schonfelder. All in favour? Thank you. So we're suspending Standing Orders for 10 minutes for a break. We'll be back at 8.15.

(End of public meeting)