



National Disability Award winner  
Australian Human Rights Commission winner

## Draft Transcript

### **Draft Transcript**

## Surf Coast Shire Council Meeting

27 September 2022

### **About This Document**

This document contains a draft transcript only.

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

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

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

The draft transcript must not be published without The Captioning Studio's written permission.

## Draft Transcript

MAYOR STAPLETON: Good evening and welcome to our September council meeting. I'm Mayor Libby Stapleton and it's a pleasure to welcome members of the community into the chambers tonight. This meeting is also being livestreamed so a big welcome to those tuning in online and of course welcome to my fellow Councillors and our management team. Live captioning will accompany the livestream and the council chamber is fitting with a hearing loop which transmits directly to hearing aids. We hope that this assisting those who may have hearing difficulties. The Surf Coast Shire local government area spans the traditional lands of the Wadawurrung people and the Gulidjan and Gadubanud peoples of the Maar Nation. The main council office here in Torquay is on Wadawurrung country and the Wadawurrung people have nurtured and protected these lands and waterways for thousands of generations. I'm so grateful for the opportunity for all of us to be able to live and work and play in such a beautiful part of the world. We also wish to acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which each person is attending, pay respects to Elders past, present and future and acknowledge any Aboriginal people who may be viewing the meeting tonight. This year, the Victorian Seniors Festival turns 40, a little younger than me, returning in October to the Surf Coast Shire with a month-long program to celebrate people over 55. Known as Positive Ageing Month in the Surf Coast Shire, the theme of the state-wide festival this year is Takin' It Easy and there will be free and low-cost events and activities to enjoy across the Shire from 3 to 31 October. From music concerts to theatre productions and clifftop walks, tech support cafes, historical talks, celebratory morning teas and a host of indoor and outdoor recreation activities, there will be plenty of reasons to be taking it easy this month. Please enjoy it. I would like to pass on a huge congratulations to Anglesea Community House and the team at the Anglesea Resale Shed, who won a Premier's Sustainability Award this month in the Waste and Litter Reduction category for the Anglesea Resale Shed. The resale shed projects diverts an estimated 144 tonnes of non-organic material from landfill each year and is a great example of the circular economy in action. Well done to all the volunteer groups, to Leisure Networks and everyone involved in this really, truly innovative project. I do want to make a special mention to former Councillor Jim Tutt, who was instrumental in getting the resale shed established, and also to Anglesea Community House coordinators Marcel Renkin and Julie Martin for all their hard work leading this project. Thank you. It is very much a community-led project that council is very proud to be able to support, so well done.

On the subject of community-led initiatives, the Aireys Inlet and Districts Association held the community Dark Sky event last weekend. This event was held to help educate people about the need to preserve the night sky from the effects of light pollution, to enjoy some star gazing and to work towards future potential accreditation of Aireys Inlet as a Dark Sky destination. I am pleased to report that the event was a huge success, with an incredible amount of positive feedback, so congratulations to all involved.

## Draft Transcript

As many residents may now be aware, we were recently notified that Southern Rural Water has refused Alcoa's application to amend its existing groundwater extraction licence in the catchment behind Anglesea. Council's submission drew attention to concerns about the health of the Anglesea River and its catchment and possible causal links with Alcoa's historical groundwater extraction. Council does not support extraction that is proven or is highly likely to have a detrimental impact on the Anglesea River and its catchment. In reaching its decision, Southern Rural Water concluded that the proposed pumping did not include a detailed assessment of broader considerations including the sustainability of the water resource, impacts on other users and impacts on environmental values, including the Anglesea River.

Finally, as this is our first council meeting since the recent passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, on behalf of the Surf Coast Shire Council, I would like to extend our sympathies to members of the Royal Family. Her Majesty touched the hearts of many across our Surf Coast community, with her unfailing grace and dignity. May she rest in peace.

Now, we have a great agenda ahead of us tonight with a range of items of community interest, including progress on our council plan, an update on the Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre, a Master Plan for the Australian National Surfing Museum, the Draft Youth Strategy and more. So please stay tuned. The community should be aware that 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 five minutes to open the debate and then a further two minutes to make a closing statement. Any other Councillor, including the seconder, may speak to a motion for no more than three minutes. As Councillors, we are committed to our roles, accountable to the community and at all times aim to be respectful and ethical in all that we do. Our decisions and debate will adhere to these values and principles. With that in mind, and in line with our Governance Rules I would like to recite the pledge as a sign of our commitment. As Councillors, we carry out our responsibilities diligence and integrity and make fair decisions of lasting value for the wellbeing of our community and environment. Apologies - so we have Councillor Gazzard, who is currently on a leave of absence, and we have also received an apology from Councillor Wellington, and I see that all other Councillors are here, so there's no further apologies. Can I have a mover and a seconder? Councillor Hodge and Councillor Allen, thank you. All those in favour? And the motion is carried unanimously. Confirmation of minutes, can I please have a mover and seconder to confirm the minutes of the council meeting held on 23 August 2022. Moved by Councillor Schonfelder and seconded by Councillor Barker. Thank you. All those in favour? And the motion is carried unanimously. Thank you. Are there any leave of absence requests tonight. No. Any declarations of conflict of interest? If a Councillor or officer has a conflict of interest, they may declare it now and do so again just prior to the item being discussed, in which case the Councillor or officer will be asked to leave chambers. We

## Draft Transcript

don't have anyone online so that's OK. Once the matter is resolved, the Councillor or officer can return to the meeting. Are there any declarations?

MS LEONARD: Yes, Madam Mayor. I have a conflict with item 4.3 (inaudible).

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thanks, Ms Leonard. And presentations - I believe we have a presentation from Councillor Allen tonight.

CR ALLEN: Thank you, Chair. Councillors, Elizabeth Bills died on 22 August. Elizabeth was a founding member and a strong community voice on the Council's Positive Ageing Advisory Committee. She was an active volunteer in the Anglesea community, contributing to Meals on Wheels, driving clients to the daycare centre, and she was a worker at the Anglesea Op Shop. On behalf of the Council, I extend our condolences to Rex and family.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Allen. The next agenda item is public question time. We did not receive any questions by Monday at 3pm. However, is there anyone in the chamber who would like to ask a question this evening? Are there any petitions to be tabled? No. And we do not have any notices of motion from Councillors tonight. So we can move on to our reports. Item 4.1 is the annual performance statement and this report for the 2021/22 performance statement and financial statements seeks council's in principle approval as recommended by the Audit and Risk Committee and in accordance with section 99 of the Local Government Act 2020. Does anyone wish to move it? Councillor Allen, thank you. As per the recommendation?

CR ALLEN: As per the recommendation.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Do I have a seconder? Councillor Bodsworth, thank you. And Councillor Allen would you like to speak?

CR ALLEN: Thank you, Chair. The purpose of this report is to present the 2021/22 performance statement and financial statements to council for in principle approval as recommended by the Audit and Risk Committee and in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020. The Audit and Risk Committee considered the statements at its meeting held on Friday, 16 September 2022. The act requires the council to pass a resolution, giving its approval in principle to the financial statements and performance statement prior to submitting the statements to the Auditor-General for the issuing of an audit opinion. These statements will then become part of the 2021/22 Annual Report. Thank you.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Allen. Councillor Bodsworth, did you want to speak to it?

## Draft Transcript

CR BODSWORTH: Just briefly, Mayor Stapleton, just to say I appreciated the information that was in the reports and I've got no hesitation in agreeing with the recommendation but also just urging people if they're interested to look through the reports and to look at the Know your council website, which provides similar sort of benchmarking across other councils, so it's a great tool if you want to familiarise yourselves with how our council compares with others. But that's all.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Bodsworth. Any other Councillors? Councillor Hodge?

CR HODGE: Thank you, Mayor. Yes, this document is very good reading, as Councillor Bodsworth said, because many people still equate local government with rates, roads and rubbish, which is our main business, but also there's probably over 60 or 70 other tasks or other jobs that local government do, and this document helps to explain them to you. And just some of the ones that are so important to our community is maternal health, our planning, our libraries, our food safety, recreation and parks and open space. It's really important to so many of us and it's all in this document as well. I think it is really good reading to let you know what local government does, because some people don't see the big picture and I think this is one of the best documents to show that, so I do recommend people have a look at it and just have a look at the figures at the back, attached to some of the costs we have to go through. But I congratulate the officers for putting it all together because it's a good, easy read and I thank them for that.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Hodge. Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: As a member of the Audit and Risk Committee I'm satisfied that these statements are a true and accurate record of the organisation's activities over the previous financial year. I do not endorse much of what has occurred in these statements, as I believe they are a significant driving force to woke left progressive ideology which is inconsistent with developing a prosperous society through the voluntary interaction between consenting adults. This is evidenced by our climate emergency corporate response plan, noted without the cost, to which council is in the realm of a quarter of a million dollars per annum, the advocacy for intermittent energy, otherwise known as renewables, which takes ratepayers' money from those who can least afford it and gives it to those who can afford it, mainly with solar panels, a technology I quite like for off-grid applications and reducing your reliance on grid electricity, and divisive policies such as those that segregate us through race and gender.

Heading down this path, if that's what the municipality keeps voting for, I just know that the long-term consequences for this are negative impacts to individual choice and prosperity, while core services such as roads and waste management are not allocated the necessary resources.

## Draft Transcript

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thanks, Councillor Barker. Any other Councillors? Councillor Allen, did you have any closing comments?

CR ALLEN: No, thanks, Mayor.

MAYOR STAPLETON: We'll put the motion to a vote. All those in favour? And the motion is carried unanimously. The next item is the council plan progress report for the end of year 1 to June 2022, and this is requesting council to note the council plan, including the Health and Wellbeing Plan progress. Would anyone like to move the motion? Councillor Pattison. And seconded? Councillor Schonfelder, thank you. Did you want to speak to the motion?

CR PATTISON: Yes, please. So this is the council plan progress report for the period to end of June 2022 and the purpose of the report is, as it says, to show the status of council plan year 1 deliverables so that council can monitor and report on the progress against the council plan. The report supports transparency and accountability through monitoring and evaluation - through a monitoring and evaluation framework against the Action Plan, which sets out all the actions we're taking towards progressing and adopting the council plan. So some key highlights that I would like to draw attention to are the following: the NAIDOC Week exhibition, with five First Nations artists, was really well received around NAIDOC Week. There's cultural competency training which has started across the whole council and there's been significant uptake on that. We did some of that as Councillors recently and I think it was really well received, and that's towards our theme around reconciliation and respectful engagement with First Nations. Also delivery of the Safer Cycling Strategy and a focus on integrated transport planning.

Council also was certified as a carbon neutral organisation for its corporate operations for the 21/22 financial year and this is the first full year that council has achieved that, which is something that I think is really great and that we should celebrate. There's also been investigation work into the Karaaf wetlands, focussing on environmental impact assessments, hydrology and stormwater mapping, and these are really important pieces of work that demonstrate the impacts that have occurred on the Karaaf from development and will enable the progression of short- and long-term actions going forward. There is also the responsible cafe project which commenced to see reduced level of plastic in disposable coffee cups for a 12-month period. These are just a tiny snippet but, as Rose talked about with our financial statements, there is so much more than our council does than roads, rates and rubbish and they are a few that I thought worth drawing attention to. But there's lots more, lots more in the progress report so I encourage us all to note it tonight.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thanks, Councillor Pattison. Councillor Schonfelder?

## Draft Transcript

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

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Schonfelder. Did any other Councillors want to speak to this item? Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: The council plan was developed with community input so in terms of empowering locals it's excellent but I'm concerned as time goes on, the economic reality is hitting home and the attempts to be everything for everyone is showing that it's not possible. As has been noted previously, it is disappointing to not see organisational service performance in our core responsibilities as a key element of our plan. It is truly saddening to see our publicly funded organisation frit away the hard-earned money of locals on elements that I believe are non-essential.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Barker. Did any other Councillors want to speak? Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Mayor. A couple of general things on this. My experience particularly in the Anglesea ward but elsewhere is there is a huge - high level of community appreciation of our council plan, which is not surprising given the process that brought it about through deliberative engagement and a lot of collaboration with the community. Secondly, I think the report highlights how much we're managing to achieve, given constrained resources and also - particularly also a difficult environment with cost escalation and supply - global supply problems and that kind of thing. So I think we've got some great achievements to look at there, as Councillor Pattison outlined. There's one thing I would like to zoom in on, which is theme 2 of the healthy and connected community, also relevant to theme 4, sustainable growth, and particularly the strategy 5, make it easier for people to move around our towns and in nature without relying on cars. I think as the report outlines, we're making some good progress, but to me, if we want to achieve transformative progress, if we want to achieve - really shift things, we're going to have to apply more leverage and I think we're going to have to apply more resourcing, so some of the things that I hope that we can talk about over - just closing in on halfway through our terms as Councillors, as we go forward, I would like us to talk about some things - options for change that have been explored and applied in other municipalities within Australia and also internationally, which may include things like reduced allocation of spaced parking within town centres, paid and time restricted parking within town centres, changes to development planning settings like minimum parking requirements - again as a disincentive to car dominance - reallocation of space currently allocated to parking to things like outdoor dining, pedestrian and cycle spaces and pathways and street trees, increasing residential density in central zones to improve housing diversity and affordability and create more compact, walkable and cyclable people-filled streets, and reduced local street speed limits in line with OECD and WHO recommendations, making streets safer, quieter, less polluted and more people-friendly. So these are some things



## Draft Transcript

that I think - these are settings that are really significant, leverage applied to those things could be transformative, within our towns at every scale from Torquay to small towns like Anglesea and Aireys, and I really look forward to having some conversations with the council and also with communities about those going forward. Thanks.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Well done, thanks, Councillor Bodsworth. Any other Councillors? Councillor Pattison, did you have any closing comments?

CR PATTISON: Just quickly to point out that I think it's really important that there are so many really important things that council does. I'd hate for people to think they're just icing on the top. Submissions and advocacy to state and local government on social and affordable housing and how our residents can access affordable housing within the State Government's affordable housing rental scheme, they're really important things, advocacy for women's domestic violence support schemes and the like, so there's some really important work that's been happening and this report details that, along with all of the other initiatives and great things. So I encourage us all to note the report.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Cr Pattison. We'll now put the motion to a vote. All those in favour? And the motion is carried unanimously. Thank you, Councillors. Item 4.3 is the Planning Scheme amendment C133 for the Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy implementation adoption. I note that our General Manager Rebecca Leonard will leave the room due to a conflict of interest with this item. Thank you, Ms Leonard.

So the planning scheme amendment implements the Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy, which was adopted by council in 2019. This report is requesting council to receive and note the revised Thompsons Creek catchment review 2022 and to adopt Planning Scheme amendment C133. Would anyone like to move it? Councillor Schonfelder, is that as per the recommendation? Thank you. And a seconder? Councillor Allen, thank you. And Councillor Schonfelder, would you like to speak to that item?

CR SCHONFELDER: Thank you, Mayor. The strategy reinforces the primary uses of rural land for farming by encouraging local food production and identifying the most suitable land for intensive and commercial farming. It provides clear policy direction for tourism and agri tourism while seeking to protect significant landscapes and environmental values. The vision of the strategy is that by 2040, the hinterland will be a key contributor to the local economy and a renowned visitor destination. I think of the Surf Coast similar to the Gold Coast in as far as the significance and very beautiful hinterland area that is present at the Gold Coast and also at the Sunshine Coast as well, in particular when you think of the Glasshouse Mountains there, just emphasising the fact that referring to the Surf Coast is not just referring to the coastal area. It's the hinterland as well. Amendment C133 inserts the strategy into the Planning Scheme as a background document and amends local policy to include the strategic direction of the strategy. It addresses an important policy gap relating to discretionary uses within the



## Draft Transcript

farming zone and introduces design guidelines for development in rural areas. The amendment was exhibited September/October 2021 and council referred the public submissions received to the panel appointed by the Minister of planning. A public hearing was held in March 2020 and the panel report was received in April. It supported the amendments in Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy but recommended some minor adjustments to the policy documents. It also identified a number of gaps in the Thompsons Creek catchment review which provides the strategic justification for the removal of a variation relating to the minimum lot size in the farming zone schedule. In June 2022, council received the panel report and resolved to support undertaking further work on the Thompson creek catchment review and policy wording prior to the adoption of the amendment. This was enable the changes to the farming zone schedule to proceed as part of the amendments and improve policy changes in response to the panel recommendations. The additional work on the amendment documents and the Thompsons Creek catchment review has now been completed and I would like to thank the council officers for the work they have done in relation to this and note that the final draft version of the amendment documents are ready for consideration for adoption and are appended to this report. I know that many people who visit the Surf Coast comment on the fact that when they drive south from Mount Duneed, it's a lovely entrance to our municipality when you have a farming area and various types of agriculture, including - and I think it might be referred to as horticulture with strawberries - I'm not sure if strawberries are agricultural or horticulture - but the strawberry farm as an example on the Surf Coast Highway. So thank you, Mayor.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Schonfelder. Councillor Allen, did you want to speak to it?

CR ALLEN: Thank you, Chair. The adoption of the amendment completes six years of work, two years on the amendment and four years on the plan - the hinterland Futures Strategy. Importantly, this strategy reinforces the primary use of rural land for farming, an important protection and certainty for those who farm and also live, for lifestyle reasons, in our hinterland. It's consistent with theme 3 of the council plan, environmental leadership, in the council plan it places importance on the protection of significant landscapes with environmental values, and as Councillor Schonfelder noted, also included is the introduction of newly improved policy on tourism and discretionary uses in the farming zone, encouraging agri business in suitable locations within the Shire. In the introduction of design guidelines for new developments in rural areas are also included, and I note that the community has been actively involved over the passage of time in its development with around I think over 100 submissions being heard. In supporting this motion, I congratulate the many officers involved in a long and detailed journey to this final point. Thank you.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you. Any other Councillors? Councillor Barker

## Draft Transcript

CR BARKER: A quick question, please. With regards to the Panels Victoria process, how much is that costing? I just noted there was no reference to the cost of that process.

MAYOR STAPLETON: I'll just refer that question through the CEO.

OFFICER: Through you, Mayor, we would have to take that on notice. I would have to find that out.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you. Did you want to speak to the item, Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: I appreciate the work that has gone into it and the fact that officers' recommendations haven't just taken all of the work done beforehand and delivered it to us. They've actually gone through with fine tooth comb and worked out what can be done and what can't be done, so for that, I very much appreciate that. But without an understanding of the costs associated, I can't endorse this motion as it stands.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Barker. Any other Councillors? Councillor Schonfelder, did you want to make any closing comments?

CR SCHONFELDER: I would like to highlight the key benefits. The amendment fills a policy gap in the Planning Scheme for discretionary uses in the farming zone that will assist in making planning decisions. The new policy highlights the importance of protecting productive agriculture and the Shire's significant landscapes and environments as earlier highlighted by Councillor Allen. The new policy also provides better guidance on areas of the Shire best suited for different activities, such as large-scale farming and tourism. Thank you, Mayor.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Schonfelder. We will now put the motion to a vote. All those in favour? And against? And the motion is carried 7 - I had to count them - 6/1. Thank you, Councillors. Our next item 4.4 is to provide a status update on the Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre project, since our last update on 28 June 2022 council meeting, we do have a recommendation. Do I have a Councillor who would like to move a motion? Councillor Hodge. And is that as per recommendation?

CR HODGE: Yes, thank you.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you. And a seconder? Councillor Pattison, thank you. And Councillor Hodge, would you like to speak to the motion?

CR HODGE: Yes this is part of our program to really inform the community to be open and transparent of our struggles in the way we're moving towards hoping to get a Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre. I think the two words are really critical here, that we are at the critical crossroads. If you read this report and see the 12 steps needed, we

## Draft Transcript

really do need more funding if we need to go ahead with the original design. We're yet to have support from politicians for the revised design, which we can try to get to afford. I'd like to thank the Officers for doing all the work that they have done because we know we will never get - to have over 30 million dollars in grants, it's been absolutely wonderful to have, but it has caused concerns with the cost of the build. We can't afford to borrow any more. We've borrowed some money. We're donating the land. We're doing all we can to ensure that those thousands of children that need swimming lessons and travel, people with disabilities and people that need the warm water pools can get that facility in Torquay. We're trying the very best we can. We've worked very hard. The officers certainly have, and I know the leadership group have gone to many of the politicians to try and get more funding and we are sort of keeping our fingers crossed for the Commonwealth Games perhaps but we've really got to now look at if we don't get that funding, and when you read through all the reports, the big thing is in February '23, we're going to have to really bite the bullet and look at the status of the project then and including all the financial commitments because then we'll have to decide on a public tender process. So to the community, thank you for the ones that have actually contacted politicians. We've seen in our report people have done that. We need more of that, and again I'd just like to say to the community we're doing the very best we can to get the best facility for you but within our means, so stay with us. Keep working on the politicians for us. Keep being positive because we need to get those children in the pool. We need to get something done in Torquay in this marvellous area of sports facilities and, again, thank you to the officers for all the work you're doing because I know it's been a long road. I think it's been 7 or 8 years. Let's see it hopefully in February we have got a way forward to attend a process. So thank you.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Hodge. Councillor Pattison?

CR PATTISON: I want to reiterate what Councillor Hodge has already said. Since council's last update in June, there have been no further funding commitments for the Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre and so community support is vital if we are to demonstrate the value of the project to potential funding partners, politicians and the like. We urge people to join the campaign to lobby MPs and candidates ahead of the Victorian elections, so please if you haven't already, hop on, [surfcoast.vic.gov.au/aquatic](http://surfcoast.vic.gov.au/aquatic), to add your voice to the campaign. There are easy ways of going through, letting politicians know just how important it is to have a pool in Torquay, for whatever it is, whether it's swimming lessons, hydro therapy or the like, there's many reasons why the Surf Coast needs and wants a pool. We are continuing as Councillor Hodge has said to pursue new funding solutions and that does include philanthropic donations and other partnerships to make up that funding gap. It's about a 7.5 million dollar funding gap. We would welcome support from the community and businesses who are interested in helping to deliver this project. Given the funding gap and the considerations around an Armstrong creek aquatic centre, unfortunately at this point the Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre is uncertain. Many a time over the last

DRAFT Transcript produced by The Captioning Studio  
W: [captioningstudio.com](http://captioningstudio.com) T: (08) 8463 1639

## Draft Transcript

year have said "are you getting a pool?". And I say "it's happening, don't worry", because unfortunately because of increased building costs and the need for further funding commitments, it is uncertain. So get on board now. Have your voices heard and let our candidates know that the Surf Coast community needs and wants a pool and we need assistance with that. So hop on board and let them know. Thank you.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Pattison. Any other Councillors? Councillor Allen?

CR ALLEN: Thanks, Chair. I'm repeating very much what has been said. I think it is important to repeat the message. The report - it's not an optimistic one but the work by the officers continues and I would like to congratulate them for the hard work that they've put in to trying to secure this facility for the community and also thank them for this update, the fact that they're updating the community in the public arena, and thank them for the transparency that is afforded to the community about this project that has wide community support. As Councillor Hodge stated in the report, we really are at the crossroads and we have to really do urge the community to look at non-traditional funding sources and they really need to be urgently pursued. Philanthropic organisations and/or private sponsors really need to be lobbied to seek their involvement. And I too would like to urge members of the community in this lead-up to the election, the state election, to lobby our MPs, and I'll repeat the website, [www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/aquatic](http://www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/aquatic). Thank you.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Allen. Any other Councillors? Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Similar to Councillor Allen, there will be some repetition here but it's necessary. This update highlights a number of concerns for me. The external funding that is allocated to us from state and Federal Governments does have conditions attached and that's fair. These conditions constrain how we can spend the money. When we're getting money from other people, that's always sound to have these conditions attached. If it wasn't, I think it would be poor process from the supplier of the funds. But what's complicated is the rapidly evolving costs of construction. I fear that we're coming close to being in a stalemate. If we can't attract more external funding through philanthropic sources or corporate sponsorship, we'll be stuck in a position where we can't provide what is wanted by a wide segment of the community.

Building a substandard facility will be forever a blight on this organisation's reputation, so we're getting into a situation where we're between a rock and a hard place. We've already spent over \$400,000 on this project and have existing commitments totalling nearly \$2 million relating to the detailed design and quantity surveys. Getting close to opposing this project for four interconnected reasons - the construction cost blowouts, the slow process of the bureaucracy, which is inherent in the size of an organisation like

## Draft Transcript

this, constraints on the use of state and Federal funds, and the community demands not being met. It highlights to me that this should be a private/public partnership at minimum or even better a wholly privatised project but we're so far down the path, there is a bit of cost fallacy going on and we either suck it up or cut or losses and run.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thanks, Councillor Barker. Councillor Hodge, did you want to make any closing comments?

CR HODGE: Yes, thank you, just very quickly. I don't think we would build anything substandard but it would certainly be not what the community first envisaged in the very first, the 50 meter indoor pool. But we are still fighting for it. We are still trying the best we can and we will give you and deliver you good standard but it might not be what the community first perceived but I am sure with the community seeing all this open and transparency in what we're really trying to do, comes along the journey with us and helps us. And if we do build with the tender process in early next year, let's hope we can get something for the community that they will use. It mightn't be to everyone's taste but it will be fantastic for the children, it will be fantastic for the other users to have a pool in Torquay, and I think it would just be absolutely brilliant and it would be a great asset for our community. Thank you.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thanks, Councillor Hodge. We will now put the motion to a vote. All those in favour? And the motion is carried unanimously. Thank you, Councillors. Our next report item 4.5 is requesting council to note the completion of a Master Plan for the Australian National Surfing Museum and to endorse the contents as a vision for theming and future redevelopment. We do have a recommendation before us. Do I have a mover? Councillor Bodsworth, as per the recommendation?

CR BODSWORTH: Yes, thanks.

MAYOR STAPLETON: And a seconder. Councillor Hodge, thank you. And Councillor Bodsworth, would you like to speak to the motion?

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you, Mayor Stapleton. The recommendation is that council notes the completion of the Australian National Surfing Museum Master Plan as detailed in the report, endorses the content of the Master Plan as a vision for future development of the museum, and notes the use of the Master Plan as an advocacy tool in realising the redeveloped Surf Coast Cultural Centre, of which the museum would form part. So I love the surf museum, given I guess that I've been an avid surfer for my whole life, but obviously the Surf Coast, surfing is at the heart of our visitor economy as well, and it's very important to the sense of place here in our municipality.

A few things I would like to note. In February of this year there was an assessment that found the surfing museum's collection to be of national and international

## Draft Transcript

significance. Secondly, our council plan highlights the importance of high-quality, low-impact year-round visitor opportunities. The surfing museum obviously provides that. Also I particularly liked in the report the collaboration with traditional owners, interpretation of cultural heritage and over the last few years, we've seen an increased and strengthened relationship with traditional owners with regard to Bells particularly and the emergence through research of a traditional name for Bells, being Djarrak. So that's been a fantastic addition to the story of Bells Beach particularly. Important also is sustainability and the better preservation of the collection, the collection at the moment, the museum exhibits aren't able to keep the collection in optimum conditions for its longevity. We have things like historic Hawaiian hand made wooden surfboards which need to be properly preserved.

The report also notes that in five kilometres between Torquay and Bells, there are over 20 surf breaks, and I've had a stab at working out if I can make 20. So I've got Fishos, Cosy Corner, Point Danger, Super Tubes, Drainos, Torquay Surf Beach, Torquay Point, Hay Stacks, Jan Juc, Bird Rock, Colders, Steps, Evos, Boobs, Left Boob, Lower, Winty, Bells Bowl, Ringcon, Centreside and Southside, which is 21.

MAYOR STAPLETON: A secret break in there.

CR BODSWORTH: And they're all real and they're all fantastic and it's just amazing. It's a golden - the golden mile or the golden couple of miles of Australian surfing. The Master Plan recognises the importance of the Surf Coast Cultural Centre project but also doesn't rely on the completion of that project, so it's important to note that this Master Plan can be progressed without the construction of the new centre. However, that brings me to my only misgiving about the Master Plan, which is it's all about the Surf Coast Cultural Centre site and the museum itself and what happens within the museum. Me personally I would like to see some explicit proposals for interpretative and museum content outside in the weather and along the coast where you can taste the salt and hear the waves crashing and be more immersed in the elements. So I hope that this - and I have been told that that will be taken into account as we go forward. So that is an approach used successfully by the Torquay museum without walls, which is a fantastic local institution. Finally, I'm hanging out for the day where people can visit this facility by public transport and walking and riding because the way the Surf Coast Cultural Centre Master Plan is laid out, this precinct will be a real hot spot and a really vibrant focal point for Torquay and I certainly hope that we have those public services to help people get there and to and from. So great Master Plan. I fully endorse it. It's really exciting and I just hope we can all see it come to fruition.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Bodsworth. Councillor Hodge?



## Draft Transcript

CR HODGE: There is not much left to say. Well done, Councillor Bodsworth, and thank you for the geography lesson as well, that was great. This will be a fantastic place and, as a tourism landscape as well, local government - we're trying to look at how do we make money. This is the perfect tourism for people to come and see, and many people assume Torquay is made of the surfing world. But just part of the collection, when I was reading the report, there's over 12,000 items and that would be equal to one of the biggest sporting collections in the world, let alone just the sporting world. So to have that as an exhibition and a room to store it, and I do agree with Councillor Bodsworth, it would be great to have rolling exhibitions around the areas. We do know that comes at a cost with officer time and costs of that. But the actual report has five themes of people and place, the history of surfing, the surf science, the sports and the unique culture, and I think that's what really needs to be developed and shown off in this Master Plan so people can come and visit and not just people - people from all around the world we're seeing the surfing fraternity coming out here for Bells, women and men and the sport is growing, so it would be fantastic if we as a Shire and working with the community and our great people at the museum, to get this up and really interested for people to come and visit and hopefully the money that's collected, that can go back into the museum and back into looking at and protecting, as Councillor Bodsworth said, some of the great exhibits that we've got. Thank you.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thanks, Councillor Hodge. Did any other Councillors want to speak? Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. Both before and since being a Councillor, I have been to the Australian National Surfing Museum a number of times and it's great. The collection is awesome. But when it comes down to the practical application of this recommendation, the first two elements, but the third using this plan as an advocacy tool is one that I can't support. Generally I'm opposed to advocacy and getting other people's money, and you've seen me talk about that before, but especially in this uncertain economic climate, to be using external taxpayer funds to improve the facility, I don't think that's a wise use of resources at this time. Much of the content is excellent but I really don't think that this is the right time. I think it's just an example of us trying to do too much. It appears that the plan is largely going to be used as this carrot and as a side part for the Cultural Centre. It's a shame. I would like to foreshadow an alternate motion, should this motion not get up, that it cancels item 3 off the recommendation but I don't think it will happen but I just want to lay it out there.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Barker. Did any other Councillors want to speak to this item? Councillor Bodsworth, did you have any closing comments?

CR BODSWORTH: No, thanks, Mayor.

MAYOR STAPLETON: We will now put the motion to a vote. All those in favour? And



## Draft Transcript

against? And the motion is carried 6/1. Thank you, Councillors. Item 4.6 is seeking council's endorsement of the Draft Youth Strategy for 2022 to 25 that will be made available for public comment. We do have a recommendation, and Councillor Allen, would you like to move it as per the recommendation?

CR ALLEN: Thank you, Chair.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Do we have a seconder? Councillor Bodsworth, thank you. And Councillor Allen?

CR ALLEN: Thank you. Since the expiration of the previous youth strategy in 2021, officers have been working to prepare this draft for exhibition. It has been informed by the Surf Coast Shire coast census conducted last year, plus discussions with students from our secondary colleges and through both internal and external consultation. The target group for the draft strategy is the 12s to 25 age group, and in the Surf Coast Shire, there are approximately 5,200 in this cohort. The strategy is aligned with four of the themes from the council plan, which includes the municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan. The draft plan in my view provides an excellent framework for the council in partnership with other bodies to support young people to thrive and to focus on the matters that young people identify as being important to them. They clearly love living in the Surf Coast and feel a close connection to the community and, most importantly, the census shows that the majority are excited about the future. A more than appropriate time to hold a census, with a background of severe natural disasters that have been occurring in our nation and overseas, the pandemic with all the fears and problems of isolation that it generated, and both of these two major concerns were identified in the Census. The exponential growth in the power of technology, with its associated benefits and problems, all at a time when young people, I believe, are generally more socially aware, value the importance of relationships and have a better understanding of global issues.

The draft strategy highlights key community areas that are important to young people: rubbish. This gladdened my heart considerably. Climate action and the environment. Anti-social behaviour and the related alcohol issues.

The key areas that in their view would make the Surf Coast Shire better involved improvements to recreational and youth spaces and entertainment. The Youth Census informed - information highlighted six key priorities as focus areas, namely recreation, the arts, culture, mental health support, alcohol and other drug support, and the environment. The draft strategy lists what are seen as the actions to be undertaken over the life of the plan to address these focus areas. The draft strategy outlines the council's role in terms of partnership development, facilitation, advocacy and the delivery of programs. However, the first role listed, prevention, is admirable and valid but, as I constantly say, it's often too late. The strategy does discuss working with

## Draft Transcript

primary schools. Again I believe that this is too late. For example, a child is not born a racist, but alarmingly, I have seen children entering primary school with well-established prejudices. Our work and advocacy should, in my view, be strengthened in the early childhood space. Our challenge as an organisation is to endeavour to make the reality of what we do match the rhetoric. It does concern me that resources and effort at all levels of government and voluntary organisations can be made less effective when major events send a message to young people that essentially negate what we are trying to promote. I did not see it but I believe the Brownlow medal presentation was a blueprint of how not to provide proper role modelling to young people. This is a challenge and should form part of our advocacy. I look forward to reading and listening to the community feedback on this draft that has been so well developed by the officers. Thank you.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Allen, and Councillor Bodsworth, did you want to speak to it?

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Mayor. I thank Councillor Allen for those really thoughtful comments and I also really like this strategy and I endorse this for the public comment period and I hope that we get a good level of engagement with the draft. I noted a 21% participation from the youth demographic in this project, which I thought was really good. We do struggle to get engagement from young people with some of our planning, which is something that I guess we'll continue to work on and strive for. As Councillor Allen noted, recreation was the number one thing listed to make Surf Coast Shire better and I note that mountain biking was the number one out of those recreational issues, which, as a person who has been at the forefront of mountain biking advocacy in the Shire for 15 years now, which makes me think I can't be a very good advocate, we are not - notwithstanding a fantastic effort particularly from this organisation, before our time as Councillors, and since, I don't think we're any better off now than we were 15 years ago. So in terms of all of these young people who are frothing to get out there and explore trails and hit jumps and that kind of thing, we're nowhere near where we can be. I certainly would do my best to help try to get us there. I noted also that mountain biking got over three times the mentions of aquatic facilities, which I hate to put a dampener on our pool conversation, but to me it highlights the fact that mountain biking and cycling generally are really, really important activities to people in this municipality and elsewhere and they don't get anywhere near the resources they deserve, talking both as a mode of transport and as a recreational activity.

Finally, the six focus areas miss an important - an area that I think is an important focus, which is the placemaking area and a kind of wholistic notion of what our towns are like for young people. Placemaking in transport/accessibility is what I have noted, and these are things like safe streets where people can - where streets are shared between pedestrian, cyclists and cars, safely, where young people are able to make the

## Draft Transcript

kind of mistakes that young people make, the kind of errors of judgment and that kind of thing, the streets are forgiving, they allow people to get away with mistakes and not suffer catastrophic consequences. Yesterday a 19-year-old woman was killed in Canberra, hit by a car, on an e-scooter. So these are the kinds of things that we need to get hold of and work on as part of our overall youth effort. A youth-friendly town scale, walkable neighbourhoods, pathways and public transport. Thank you. Thank you to the Officers for their hard work on this.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thanks, Cr Bodsworth. Did any other Councillors want to speak to this item? Councillor Hodge?

CR HODGE: Not so much to speak but I wanted to read out a paragraph that I think is really important and I really want to hear the feedback from the youth, that are we doing this right? We will make every effort to ensure that all our facilities, programs and events are respectful and inclusive of everyone in our community, including the LGBTQIA+ people, people with a disability and culturally and linguistically diverse people. We will foster a safe and welcoming environment for everyone. We will work hard to address the needs of all young people so they can thrive. So we need feedback from young people because I think Councillor Pattison is the youngest, which is great, but we don't hear from them. So we really need - are we doing this right? How can we make our youth celebrate the diversity and inclusion? We must hear from them. So I'm really imploring the secondary school and all the high schools and even the kindergartens to come and tell us are we doing it right, how can we make it better for you because that's what we're here for, to make it better for our young people. And this document is just a stepping stone, are we doing it right, please feed in because I think we really need to make sure that we capture everyone that we can in this - the youth, in this document so that we can go to the future with a confident way that we're doing the right thing for our youth. Thank you.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Hodge. Any other Councillors? And Councillor Allen, did you have any closing comments?

CR ALLEN: I suppose I can sum up with the three Rs - rubbish, recreation and respect.

CR HODGE: And rainbow.

CR ALLEN: Yes, it is wonderful the diversity that is highlighted in the report and I really do encourage people to give us the feedback, as Councillor Hodge said. It's very important that we do receive that. Thank you.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Allen. We will now put the motion to a vote. All those in favour? Is and the motion is carried unanimously. Thank you, Councillors. Next up we have item 4.7, the community project development program

## Draft Transcript

was initiated in February 2017 to improve council's ability to respond to community projects and project ideas and to ensure that projects seeking council support and/or funding are appropriately assessed, scoped and prioritised. Members of the community can register their project ideas via the community project development portal on the Surf Coast Shire website. So we do have a September 2022 update ahead of us, with a recommendation from officers. Do I have a Councillor who would like to move that? Councillor Bodsworth, thank you. And a seconder? Councillor Hodge. Thank you. Councillor Bodsworth, would you like to speak to the motion?

CR BODSWORTH: Thank you, Mayor. I think as we all know, this is an extremely popular program out in the community because it enables communities to put their best foot forward and get attention and support for projects that they're particularly passionate about. We have a rigorous process for analysis and assessment of project feasibility, so again all of the project proponents are on the same footing. There's a good, clear process for them to put things forward. There's a clear process for assessing the feasibility and for taking those proposals forward, so I think we're seeing evidence of that in front of us. So the first one in the report is the Cameron Park tree sculpture proposal in Anglesea, just opposite the shops, where we've got I think particularly noteworthy the collaboration with traditional owners, the Wadawurrung community, which was particularly pleasing to me, and it's resulted in a really exciting design, which is described in the report, shade sails over Bob Pettitt reserve playground, we've got a really solid analysis and rationale for that in the report, there's good grant potential through VicHealth and climate change resilience grant programs so those are recommendations also in the report. I have nothing really further to add. I really value this program and the officers who work on it and I know it's a very strongly supported program in the community.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Bodsworth. Councillor Hodge?

CR HODGE: This is what we need. We asked the community to talk to us and tell us what they want and these projects are from the community and these programs, we help support them and guide community members towards a feasible community-led project. It might not always be reliant on financial contributions from council but it's fantastic to have them talk to us and the success that we have had in the future with these - in the past has been fabulous and, as Councillor Bodsworth said, the ones that are listed here, the Cameron Tree Park Sculpture proposal and the Bob Pettitt, which is in Jan Juc, are terrific add-ons on to already some really lovely spots. It is lovely to see the Spring Valley Park and the Deans Marsh streetscape, we know how absolutely combined the Deans Marsh community is for their beautiful area. So thank you again to the officers for this and to the community that feed in, sometimes we can't help them or we can assist them in other ways, but I congratulate the community members that do put their hand up and work with us to get things done. It's a very strong connection between local government and community.

## Draft Transcript

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Hodge. Any other Councillors? Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thank you, Mayor. It sounds like money grows on trees. I think 40 grand on a tree sculpture is a grossly irresponsible use of public funds, especially so at a time of high inflation when many in our municipality are experiencing financial stress. If it is so well supported and everyone who does want it chips in a few bucks, it would probably get up, but to use public funds at this time I think is a grossly irresponsible use of it. I'm not totally opposed to the Bob Pettitt Reserve shade proposal but at this point in time, I think it's a non-essential project and should be shelved until such time that we're in a more sound financial position and economic environment more broadly.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Barker. Would any other Councillors like to speak to this item? And Councillor Bodsworth, did you have any closing comments?

CR BODSWORTH: Just to clarify with reference to Councillor Barker's comments, that the recommendation isn't to allocate \$40,000 to the project. It's affirming the feasibility of the project, providing an estimated cost of that amount, and it's highlighting a couple of possibilities for external grant funding, which I know Councillor Barker is likely not to support, but just to clarify that it's not any kind of budget allocation and that that remains to take place and to be debated along with other budgetary priorities. Thanks.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Bodsworth. And equally it's probably just worth mentioning that I don't believe the recommendation is for the Bob Pettitt shade proposal to go ahead but to be referred to council's social infrastructure plan for future consideration, so just important to clarify that. We will now put the motion to a vote. All those in favour? And against? And the motion is carried 6-1. Thank you, Councillors. And next we have a road safety grant opportunity for blackspot funding and the Department of Transport has invited Surf Coast Shire Council to apply for blackspot grant funding through its 23/24 program at locations within council's local road network. Submissions to this program are due by 29 October so this report is requesting council to authorise the CEO to lodge blackspot funding applications as per the recommendations in the report and to sign funding agreements if successful. Does anyone wish to move a motion? Councillor Schonfelder. Is that as per the recommendation? Thank you. And a seconder? Councillor Pattison, thank you. And Councillor Schonfelder, would you like to speak to this item?

CR SCHONFELDER: Yes, please, Mayor. The Department of Transport has invited Surf Coast Shire to apply for 2023/24 blackspot grant funding at locations within council's local road network. Submissions to this program are due by 29 October 2022. Officers are currently finalising these funding submissions through adoption of the 2016 to 21 road safety strategy. Council committed to pursuing blackspot funding applications for

## Draft Transcript

projects that would address local roads with high accident data.

Based on detailed analysis of potential opportunities and discussions with Department of Transport, blackspot funding submissions are currently being developed and recommended at the following locations: Fischer Street, Torquay, to Zeally Bay Road, to Centreside Drive safety improvements including installation of raised wombat crossings and roundabout modifications at high-risk locations to support safe speeds and safe pedestrian connections. The estimated cost is \$250,000. Erskine Falls Road, Lorne, safety improvements on a high-risk bend including sealing of shoulders, motorcycle-friendly guard rail, improved signs and line marking and speed management. The site of the two recent crashes sadly in that area. The estimated cost is 160,000. The Esplanade in Torquay, Beach Road to Zeally Bay Road, improved in pedestrian and cycling connection and speed management project. Estimated cost 115,000. Beach Road, Torquay, adjacent Surfworld precinct, pedestrian safety upgrades and crossing improvements - the estimated cost 90,000. Blackgate Road, Connewarre, road safety barrier installations on a high-risk section of road - estimated cost 510,000. If successful, these projects would be fully funded through the blackspot funding program administered by Department of Transport. There would be no requirement for a council contribution. Council has been successful in securing blackspot funding in recent years. In 2022/23, council successfully attracted funding of \$1,268,000, inclusive of Department of Transport administration costs, for road safety works on Atkins Road, Cape Otway Road, Horseshoe Bend Road and Ghazeepore Road. Thank you, Mayor.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Schonfelder. Councillor Pattison, did you want to speak?

CR PATTISON: No, thanks.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Any other Councillors? Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: Thanks, Mayor. I strongly support this list of projects. My problem is with the funding program's basis around - it's a reactive basis based on accident data which I guess that's one way of doing things. Another approach would be more proactive and it's based on creating safety streets by design. This is harking back to what I talked about before. And one option, which I hope that we can explore together around that, is something which is being looked at worldwide, and that is much lower speed limits on local residential streets. So the World Health Organisation, OECD, bicycle network are three organisations looking at a 30 kilometre an hour local street speed limit where we have a much lower speed differential between pedestrian, cyclists and motor vehicles. So that wouldn't fit in - it may but it would in the necessarily fit within a high accident data kind of a framework, like we see here, but it would be, as I was talking about before, transformative and it would create streets that are not only



## Draft Transcript

safer but quieter, less polluted, more pleasant places to be that encourage liveliness and a more lively town. So I've got no hesitation in supporting these proposals but I would love to see that other paradigm sort of brought to bear and for us to do some work on that as well.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Bodsworth. And did any other Councillors want to speak? Councillor Barker

CR BARKER: Thank you, Mayor. I agree these blackspots are worthy of consideration but they're our responsibility. This is just more evidence of our addiction to opium. If this motion is passed and funding is allocated, it will represent more than 1.1 million dollars, most of which will be dedicated to Torquay, being taken from taxpayers all around the state. If you like taking money from other people, go for it but I will not be supporting this. I cannot implore you more than this to work on the addiction of using other people's money. If this is successful, I thank every Victorian taxpayer for their 25 cent contribution to our local roads.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Barker. Any other Councillors? And Councillor Schonfelder, did you have any closing comments?

CR SCHONFELDER: I would like to highlight the key benefits, which include improved safety of Surf Coast local road network, support council plan to reduce reliance on cars as primary road of transport through improving pedestrian and cyclist safety on a number of critical locations, furthermore supporting our community to participate in Community Life by enhancing the road or the safe movement of traffic on our roads, which includes light vehicle, motor vehicles and also those who are cycling and using other modes of transport. I would like to thank the council organisation and the officers for the work that they do and I would like to emphasise that I did ask the Acting General Manager of placemaking and environment, Ms Sullivan, a very important question recently, Mayor, and that was: which football team she supported, and she said the Cats, so that pleased me greatly. Thank you very much, Mayor.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Had to get that in. Thanks, Councillor Schonfelder. We will now put the motion to a vote, with regard to black gate funding - I mean, blackspot funding. You've thrown me! All those in favour of the motion? And against? And the motion is carried 6-1. Thank you, Councillors. The next item on our agenda is the acknowledgment of country policy, and this report is requesting council to adopt the acknowledgment of country policy before us, which is part of council's ongoing commitment to reconciliation with traditional owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community. It's just important to note before I ask for someone to move this item that further to our engagement with Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar traditional owners, we have received some additional late feedback from the Wadawurrung traditional owners for a minor word change in the policy. So it's



## Draft Transcript

slightly different to that that was provided in our agenda and inclusion of the suggested changes does not change the intent of the policy and the recommendation is that it's important to accommodate these suggestions. So I think governance is able to put the revised or the updated motion on the screen and if you could have a quick read of that. Just noting that this proposed motion was circulated ahead of this meeting so all Councillors have had an opportunity to look at it. Do I have a mover as per the recommendation on the screen? Thanks, Councillor Pattison. And a seconder? Councillor Allen. And Councillor Pattison, would you like to speak to the motion?

CR PATTISON: Yes, I would, thanks. I'm very glad that we did receive feedback from Wadawurrung traditional owners and I am glad that is the motion we're moving today because I think incorporating their feedback into the policy is important and it makes the policy more significant to know that it has their feedback and it's in the spirit of what we're trying to do with respectful engagement of our traditional owners. So this is an important policy and I am proud it is one we are bringing to council to endorse during my term as a Councillor on the Surf Coast Shire. Respectful acknowledgment of traditional owners of the places that we meet is really important. These acknowledgments of country set the tone of our relationships and I think the small things add up and over time they do make a difference. Delivering a respectful and appropriate acknowledgment of country is a tangible action that council representatives can take to work towards the council plan goals of respectful engagement with First Nations people. The policy sets out an approach to ensure that acknowledgment of country is given in a respectful, consistent and appropriate way. It's necessary for council to commit to this policy and development of subsequent detailed guidelines. The policy will provide clarity for council representatives in giving an acknowledgment which will in turn set an important example for community groups and members who might like to do the same, by providing the basis for a respectful acknowledgment, it enables people to develop their own meaningful words to use in their own acknowledgment of country. The addition of this policy is an important gesture of respect towards Aboriginal owners and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It acts upon promises made in our commitment to the reconciliation statement, especially in walking with traditional owners to increase understanding and knowledge of their connection to and care of this place for thousands of years. Thanks.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Pattison. And Councillor Allen?

CR ALLEN: Thanks, Chair. Theme one in our council plan is First Nations reconciliation. Firstly, working with traditional owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community to achieve reconciliation and, secondly, ensuring that our decisions consider and respect traditional owner perspectives, culture and knowledge. In 1992, the High Court Mabo decision was a turning point for the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights because it acknowledged their unique connection with the land. It also led to the Australian Parliament passing the

## Draft Transcript

Native Title Act in 1993. The path to true reconciliation is an evolving process. One tiny but important step in this journey is acknowledgment of country. A proper acknowledgment of country is one that is delivered with respect, sincerity and with an understanding of the background that makes this much more than an important formality. Not all people are confident to provide a respectful acknowledgment of country at the appropriate occasion. This is true not only for council personnel but for many in our community. Reference to this policy will provide us all with the confidence and guidance as to how we may pay the proper respect to First Nations country and culture, recognising the appropriate language group and country, with proper meaning and tone.

Personally, I'm pleased that the policy will be updated with consultation with our traditional owners, as I would like music to be commissioned, to be played, for example, at the start of our council meetings as part of our acknowledgment. This I believe will allow for personal reflection. However, I understand that this will only be achieved after consultation with and consent from the traditional owners. Thank you.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thanks, Councillor Allen. Would any other Councillors like to speak to this item? Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: I would just like to echo the comments from Councillors Pattison and Allen and just to thank both the officers who have worked on this and also the traditional owner groups who have been extremely busy. They were already busy and then year after year, there is more for them to get involved in, and we're all - organisations like our own are all clamouring for traditional owner representation on all kinds of things. So I would just like to express my appreciation of how hard they work to try to help us to get things right. But I'm really pleased to see this.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Bodsworth. Any other Councillors? Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thank you, Mayor. I don't know what the practical benefit of this policy is, but what I do know is it is seen as virtue signalling by many. Sure, it gives officers and council representatives guidance on how to conduct an acknowledgment of country. But what if they don't want to? Given we will likely have this policy implement, I fear that officers who may not want to do an acknowledgment of country will be compelled to do so, given the environment that this policy creates. I don't think that these acknowledgments make a tangible difference to Indigenous reconciliation and I don't think this policy will result in a net benefit to our community. More importantly, I am not satisfied that this policy is supported by all Indigenous Australians. I think proper Indigenous reconciliation will be achieved by structural change at a state and Federal level, not by what is said at a local level.

## Draft Transcript

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Barker. And Councillor Schonfelder?

CR SCHONFELDER: Thank you, Mayor. I would like to once again reiterate what has been expressed on this item from the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Pattison and also from Councillor Allen and Councillor Bodsworth and simply say the key benefits from this are that the council representatives are informed and empowered. It also contributes positively to council's relationships with traditional owners and our First Nations people in the community. It aligns with council goal theme 1, First Nations reconciliation. This is part of the council plan - reconciliation with traditional owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community. Furthermore, it aligns with Surf Coast council community vision 2021, principle 10, respectful engagement and consultations with First Nations people. A consistent example for the Surf Coast Shire community in giving a respectful acknowledgment of country. I would like to add that I'm very proud to be a six-generation resident of the Surf Coast and I've met First Nations people and I've told them that and they have responded in a very kind and even loving way towards me and I've said to them that they are thousands of generations, which is just incredible. I had visited Fort Niagara in the United States and that place was part of the native American Indian country and that had been invaded by the French, the British and now the Americans have possession of it and it's very interesting seeing how some places have been parts of different countries. In relation to that, the First Nations people in North American, Japan and Australia I believe, and most people believe, they are the first people who have lived in those areas and it's important to show respect in relation to that. Thank you, Mayor.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Schonfelder. Councillor Hodge?

CR HODGE: I've been part of this council for a long time and I've worked with many, many officers and there's three words in this policy that resonate: recognition, respect and understanding. I don't think there would be any officer that I have ever come across that would find difficulty in using those three words in an acknowledgment to country. So I fully back this support. I am really glad Karina Eccles - her work has been fantastic with the Wadawurrung, with the Eastern Maar people that have become part of it - and those three words come back to the whole principle of that report of respect, recognition and understanding. If we can't do that, it's a pretty poor example of what humans can do because we've got to use those three words for our Indigenous.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Hodge. And Councillor Pattison, did you have any closing comments?

CR PATTISON: I think Rose has summed it up nicely.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Pattison. We will now put the motion to a vote. All those in favour? And against? And the motion is carried 6-1. Thank you,

## Draft Transcript

Councillors. Next we have the sale exchange or transfer of council land policy SCS-013. The policy has been reviewed and updated to reflect the amendments to the Local Government Act 2020, which sets out the legislative requirements to the sale, exchange or transfer of council land. We do have a recommendation to endorse the updated policy for community consultation for a period of four weeks. Do I have a mover for this item? The Councillor Barker, is that as per the recommendation?

CR BARKER: Yes, Mayor.

MAYOR STAPLETON: And a seconder?

CR HODGE: I'll have to second Councillor Barker.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Hodge. Councillor Barker, would you like to speak to the item?

CR BARKER: No, thanks. It is all there in the report. You're more than welcome to see it.

CR HODGE: I agree with Councillor Barker.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Glad you agree on something. Any other Councillors? No? We'll put the motion to a vote. All those in favour? And the motion is carried unanimously. Well done. Thank you, Councillors. Next up we have another policy for consideration which is SCS-057, calling in of planning permit applications. This report is requesting council to adopt the calling in of planning applications policy, which is aimed at improving the governance and decision making that occurs when Councillors have expressed an interest in having an application determined by the council or when officers decide to refer an application to council rather than the officers making the decision. So we've had a policy presented to us with a recommendation for adoption and do I have a Councillor to move that? Councillor Allen, thank you. And a seconder? Councillor Barker. Thank you. And Councillor Allen, would you like to speak to the motion?

CR ALLEN: Thank you, Chair. The overwhelming majority of planning permit applications are dealt with by the officers in conjunction with the applicant or applicants. Some applications are referred to the full council as a result of the decision by the relevant officers. This policy refers to a minority of planning applications where Councillors have expressed an interest in having an application determined by the full council. The grants for calling in an application are detailed in point 4.6 of the policy, for example the receipt of a significant number of objections or where there is wide community interest in a planning matter and therefore transparency becomes an important consideration.

## Draft Transcript

When the application is called in, there is a Special Council Meeting called and submissions invited, allowing the Councillors to hear from interested community members. Under this new policy, it is clearly stated that there must be three Councillors stating the reasons for calling it in, requesting the CEO to call the matter in. This is formalising what has been in the past practice by convention of the council. The reasons given by the Councillors should be made clear to the community and clear to all parties concerned in the matter, with four key principles: that the priority is to the community-wide - sorry, is to the council-wide community interest, that the reasons are made available, to consider all interested parties - and this is an important consideration, as planning matters are subject to appeal - and lastly that a proper time frame should be considered. Councillors, this is an important policy that gives greater clarity and will improve decision making and transparency. Thank you.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Allen. And Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: Thanks, Mayor. As noted by Councillor Allen, this policy will allow for three Councillors to call in planning permit applications. Personally I think it should be one or two, but to suggest it requires any more would indicate that the bar would be set far too high and that applications that some Councillors think are in the public interest would not be heard in public. I'm happy to support this policy in its original form as noted in the agenda.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Barker. And would any other Councillors like to speak to this item? Any closing comments, Councillor Allen?

CR ALLEN: Just that I think three is a reasonable number because it does require at least one council from a different ward, so there are three Councillors going across two wards, and that I think gives some gravitas to the notion to call it in. So I think three is quite appropriate. Thank you.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Allen. I will now put the motion to a vote. All those in favour? And against? And the motion is carried 6-1. Thank you, Councillors. Moving on to item 4.12, which is the declaration for Sparrow Avenue, special charge scheme in Anglesea. So this report is requesting that council declare a special charge scheme in accordance with section 163(1) of the Local Government Act of 1989 in relation to the construction of Sparrow Avenue, Anglesea, between McMillan and Parker Streets. We do have a recommendation before us but I would just like to note that item 1.1, which states the special charge is declared for a period of four years, is actually a typo error. So it should be for a period of 10 years. Does governance have that update to put on the screen for us? Thank you.

OFFICER: Madam Mayor, if I can just add to that. There is a connected piece of the

## Draft Transcript

recommendation, which is 2.2.1. It talks about the quarterly instalment repayments, which should read 40 rather than 16. That will be shown on the screen too.

MAYOR STAPLETON: So with those changes in mind, do I have a Councillor who would like to move a motion with the additional amendment? Councillor Bodsworth? Thank you. And seconded by Councillor Barker. And Councillor Bodsworth, would you like to speak to this item?

CR BODSWORTH: I'll speak to it briefly, thank you, Mayor. So through this process, this special charge scheme process offers the opportunity for community members with particular preference for works, that they have a close involvement in to their properties, to pursue those according to a fair and predictable process, and that's what we see here. So I'm satisfied with the process. I note that in the end, the possible initial scope has been narrowed through the process so that it really relates only to a steep part of Sparrow Avenue, which is a steep gravel street in Anglesea, which I'm quite familiar with. I think that in general within the Shire, the steep gravel streets that we have - we still have quite a few in Aireys Inlet - I won't get into that too much - but we still have a lot of steep gravel streets that are very hard to maintain. They're somewhat unsafe, particularly for pedestrians. We lose gravel, which is a non-renewable natural resource, due to erosion and wear and tear from vehicles. So there are good reasons to seal steep gravel streets, so I'll be pleased to see Sparrow Avenue sealed and I would note a high degree of agreement from property owners with this proposed special charge scheme. There's one objector noted in the papers. And I would say for anybody who ends up objecting and who faces this charge to achieve work that they oppose, they would be very hard to swallow. So I express sympathy for people who find themselves in that situation, whether it be in regard to this one or any other special charge scheme. But on the whole, I think it's a fair process. It's clear and, in this case, I think the results should be really good. So I support it.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thanks, Councillor Bodsworth. And Councillor Barker?

CR BARKER: I'm generally opposed to special charge schemes as it's typically a large impost on ratepayers who, while deriving some benefit from the works outlined, may not be a position to afford the charge. However, the rationale for this special charge scheme is quite sound. Given the narrow scope of benefit, I don't think it's fair to share the charge with the whole Shire if it was to be included as part of our normal infrastructure projects. So I'm happy to support it as is, as mentioned, with the note to 10 years or 40 months - 40 repayments.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thanks, Councillor Barker. Any other Councillors wanting to speak? And any closing comments, Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: No, thanks.



## Draft Transcript

MAYOR STAPLETON: Put the motion to a vote. All in favour? The motion is carried unanimously. Thank you, Councillors. Next up, 4.13, which is the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee member appointment, further term of appointment, and this report is requesting that council endorse a further term appointment for three years to Susan Cole for the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee. Susan has currently reapplied for a second term as she has been a committee representative for a total of three years. We know Susan is a positive contributor to the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee and council officers have recommended the further term of appointment. Are there any Councillors who would like to move the motion? Councillor Allen, thank you, and seconded by Councillor Hodge.

CR ALLEN: Nothing more for me to say, Mayor. The purpose of this report is to seek the reappointment of a Positive Ageing Advisory Committee member for a further three-year term. Susan Cole is the community representative for the town of Deans Marsh and her current term expires on 25 September 2022. Susan was appointed to the committee to fill a vacancy due to a resignation. Susan has been an active member of the committee, bringing a breadth of experience to the committee, particularly in the health area. She is an active and extremely valuable volunteer in the Deans Marsh community and it is with the greatest of pleasure that I move the motion for her reappointment to the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Allen. I would say you had a significant amount to add. Councillor Hodge?

CR HODGE: I would just like to thank Susan for her previous work and for putting her hand up again for another three years. Volunteering isn't easy and we truly appreciate people that do it. So thank you to Sue and hopefully she's in part of the conversation so that we can ensure that our Positive Ageing Committee does really well for our community in the future.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Hodge. Did any other Councillors want to speak to this item? Any closing comments, Councillor Allen?

CR ALLEN: No, thank you, Mayor.

MAYOR STAPLETON: We will put the motion to a vote. All those in favour? And the motion is carried unanimously. Thank you, Councillors. Item 4.14 is for council to consider and approve the project budget adjustments and ratify the project budget adjustments endorsed by the executive management team. We do have a detailed recommendation in the report. Do I have a mover for this motion? Councillor Barker.

CR BARKER: As per the recommendation.



## Draft Transcript

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you. And a seconder? Councillor Bodsworth, thank you. And Councillor Barker, did you want to speak to this item?

CR BARKER: I want it noted that I don't oppose everything this organisation does and very much value the transparency garnered by having all the changes to the original plans noted in the agenda.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Barker. Councillor Bodsworth?

CR BODSWORTH: No, thanks, Mayor.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Any other Councillors? Councillor Hodge?

CR HODGE: Just very quickly, I am really pleased to see the Duffields and Grossmans Road intersections upgrade being looked at. That is one of the busiest roads now, with Jan Juc people taking their children up the back way to St Therese or Torquay College or even missing all the lights in Torquay, and that intersection is quite difficult. There's a bend in the road, so it would be terrific to see that upgrade there because I think it needs - it is a safety issue and great to see that's on our books now to have a look at. Thank you.

MAYOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Councillor Hodge. We will now put the motion to a vote. All those in favour? And the motion is carried unanimously. Thank you, Councillors. And item 4.15 is conflict of interest records. We do have a recommendation listing all the records for noting. Would anyone like to move it? Councillor Allen, thank you. And seconded by Councillor Bodsworth and did anyone need to speak to this item?

CR ALLEN: As per the recommendation.

MAYOR STAPLETON: We'll put the motion to a vote. All those in favour? And the motion is carried unanimously. Thank you, Councillors. There being no further items of business on our agenda this evening, I declare the meeting closed at 7.35pm. Thank you and good evening.