

Murrindindi
Shire Council

Rating Strategy

2015

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Section 1 Executive Summary & Recommendations

The selection of rating philosophies and the choice between the limited rating options available under the *Local Government Act* (1989) is a challenge for all Councils to develop. It is most likely that a perfect approach that meets Council objectives, legislative requirements and the preferences of all ratepayers is almost impossible to achieve in any Local Government environment.

Four key platforms currently form the basis of the current approach to rating at Murrindindi Shire Council that is recommended for continuation. They are:

- a) That rates will continue to be based principally on an ad-valorem basis (i.e. based on the valuation of the various properties)
- b) That Council will continue to apply a service charge to fully recover the cost of the collection and disposal of garbage.
- c) That Council will continue to apply differential rating against various property classes that considers equity across the community.
- d) That Council will continue to apply a municipal charge to assist in the funding of the administrative costs of Council.

Prior to the development of this strategy, Council had four different classes of property within the Shire. This Rating Strategy recommends that a new property rating class, vacant land, is developed resulting in five different rate classes of properties.

The longer term view is to consider:

- The implementation of mandatory periodical payments of rates, rather than the current options of full payment in February or quarterly instalments.
- The continued review of rating differentials to ensure equity of rate distribution amongst ratepayers dependant on the type of property owned within the Shire.

This proposed strategy recommends that Council adopt the following:

Section	Strategy Recommendations
Valuation Methodology	That Murrindindi Shire Council continues to apply Capital Improved Valuation (CIV) and the valuation methodology to levy Council rates.
Uniform vs Differential Rates	That Murrindindi Shire Council continues to apply differential rating as its rating system.
What differential rates should be applied?	That Council continues to apply differential rates for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Residential properties, including flats and units. • Rural 1 properties at a rate of 75% of the general rate.

Section	Strategy Recommendations
	<p>That Council introduces differential rates for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacant land at a rate of 150% of the general rate. • Commercial / Industrial properties at a rate of 125% of the general rate.
Special Rates & Charges	<p>That Council use special rates and charges in instances that fit the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding of narrowly defined capital projects (e.g. streetscape works, private road sealing) where special benefit can be shown to exist for a grouping of property owners; • Raising funds for a dedicated purpose where the use of CIV is not the most equitable method of calculating property owner contributions. (e.g. Unfunded Defined Benefit Superannuation Liability or Natural Disaster); or • Covering the cost of an expense relating to a specific group of ratepayers (e.g. licensed premises).
Impact of Council Revaluations	<p>That Council reviews the impacts of revaluations as they occur in accordance with the <i>Local Government Act</i>.</p>
Municipal Charge	<p>That Council continue to utilise a Municipal Charge as part of its Rating Strategy.</p>
Service Charges	<p>That Council continues to apply waste charges as part of its Rating Strategy based on the full cost recovery of the waste function.</p>

Section 2 What is a rating strategy?

The purpose of this strategy is to ensure Council considers rate revenue and how it can be most equitably distributed among the community.

What is a rating strategy?

A rating strategy is the method by which Council systematically considers factors of importance that inform its decisions about the rating system. The rating system determines how Council will raise money from properties within the municipality. It does not influence the total amount of money to be raised, rather it determines the share of revenue contributed by each property. The rating system comprises the valuation base for each property and the actual rating instruments allowed under the *Local Government Act (1989)* to calculate property owners' liability for rates.

It is important to note from the outset that the focus of this strategy is very different from that which is discussed in the Annual Budget. In the annual Budget, the key concern is regarding the **quantum** of rates required to be raised for Council to deliver the services and capital expenditure required. In this Strategy, the focus instead is on how this quantum will be **equitably distributed** amongst Council's ratepayers.

In essence, a rating strategy is not designed to determine **how much** money Council will generate through rates, but **how** Council constructs its ratings framework in order to achieve its desired outcomes.

The importance of a rating strategy

Murrindindi Shire Council is budgeted to receive 54% of its total revenue (excluding non-discretionary capital grants and contributions) by way of property-based rates and waste levies for the 2014/15 financial year. The development of strategies in respect of the rating base is therefore of critical importance to both Council and the community.

The principles of good governance further require Council to provide ongoing or periodic monitoring and review of the impact of major decisions. It is therefore essential for Council to evaluate on a regular basis the legislative objectives to which it must have regard and other strategic rating objectives which Council believes are relevant and pertinent to its long term financial and strategic planning.

Through the development of this strategy, Murrindindi Shire Council is seeking to fully document its objectives and approach to the raising of rate revenue in line with its goal of providing transparency and accountability in its decision-making.

The importance for Murrindindi Shire

As highlighted in Council's recent budgets, annual reports and Council Plan, Murrindindi Shire continues to be challenged in its recovery from the tragic events of the 2009 Bushfires. The population and number of rateable properties in Murrindindi Shire have still not recovered to levels prior to those of February 2009. Furthermore, the additional maintenance, operational, depreciation and insurance costs of the new and enhanced assets received through funding from the Victorian Bushfire Appeal and through the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction & Recovery Authority continue to have a significant impact on the long term financial sustainability of Council.

As detailed in the Council Plan 2013-2017 and the 2014-15 Annual Budget, Murrindindi Shire Council has been seeking State Government financial assistance to help meet the substantial additional annual costs of \$1.762 million related to these assets. Unfortunately, a commitment by the previous or new State Government has not been made to Council despite repeated submissions regarding the burden of these costs that have been placed on the Murrindindi Shire following the most devastating natural disaster in our country's history.

In the interests of financial responsibility and responsible forward planning, Council has been indicating to all ratepayers and residents for the last 12 months that it would be necessary in the coming months to evaluate a range of potential measures that might be applied in the absence of additional financial support.

To that end Council presents to the community a new Ratings Strategy. This is one of the measures highlighted by Council in the last 12 months as a necessity that will be undertaken to address the long term financial sustainability.

The Council Plan 2013-2017 contains a number of initiatives that are addressed through the implementation of the Ratings Strategy, summarised as follows:

Council Plan Goal	Council Plan Strategy	Rating Strategy Outcome
Our Economy	Identify and promote opportunities for growth in housing & business development in and around the Shire's main townships.	The introduction of a differential rate for vacant land to encourage land holders to develop vacant land across the Shire's main townships.
Our Council	Actively develop and implement a long term vision for Murrindindi Shire	Developing a new Rating Strategy will assist in addressing the long term financial sustainability issues currently faced by Council.
Our Council	Communicate key Council decisions and strategies to the community in a variety of ways	The adoption of this strategy will assist in explaining to the community the need for a comprehensive review of Council's rating obligations and future ratings structure.

Council Plan Goal	Council Plan Strategy	Rating Strategy Outcome
Our Council	Grow our rate base through diligent planning	This strategy, in conjunction with the Murrindindi Planning scheme and various township structure plans, is designed to grow Council's rate base over the coming years.
Our Council	Promote an equitable rating strategy for all ratepayers	This strategy considers Council's legislative obligations and delivers a new and equitable rating structure that will assist in Council delivering its service obligations in a financially sustainable way.

Section 3 The legislative framework

The purpose of this section is to outline the legislative framework within which Council operates its rating system and the various matters that Council must consider when making decisions on rating objectives.

3.1 Legislative Framework

Section 3(C) of the *Local Government Act* (1989) stipulates the primary objective of Council is to endeavour to achieve the best outcomes for the local community having regard to the long term and cumulative effects of its decisions. One of the seven supporting objectives to *Section 3(C)* states that Councils are to ensure the equitable imposition of rates and charges.

The issue of equity must therefore be addressed as a part of Council's rating strategy to ensure compliance with the respective legislation.

3.2 Consideration of Equity

Having determined that Council must review its rating strategy in terms of the equitable imposition of rates and charges, the difficulty becomes how to define and determine what is in fact equitable in the view of Council.

In considering what rating approaches are equitable, some concepts that Council needs to take into account are:

- **Horizontal equity** refers to justice or fairness in the treatment of **like** properties, in other words, that similar rates are paid by similar properties. On the proviso that Council valuations fairly reflect the true valuation of like properties, horizontal equity will be achieved.
- **Vertical equity** refers to the justice or fairness in the treatment of properties in different circumstances. (e.g. different property types – Residential/ Commercial/ Industrial / Farming/ Vacant / Developed)

In the case of property rates, it may be considered equitable for one type of property to bear more or less of the rates burden than another type of property. In achieving vertical equity in its rating strategy, Council must consider the valuation base it chooses to adopt to apply property rates and the application of the various rating tools available to it under the *Local Government Act* (e.g. differential rates).
- **Linkage of property wealth to capacity to pay** – the valuation of property is an imperfect system in which to assess a resident's ability to pay annual rates but one which Council is restricted to under the *Local Government Act* (1989). A frequently raised example is in relation to pensioners who may live in their family home which carries a high value, but live on a pension. The equity question for consideration however is should Council support residents in this situation with lower rates that will eventually be to the financial benefit of estate beneficiaries?

Or alternatively should the ability to defer rates (in all or in a part) represent a more equitable outcome for all ratepayers?

- **The Benefit principle** - One of the more misunderstood elements of the rating system is that residents seek to equate the level of rates paid with the amount of benefit they individually directly receive. The reality is however, that rates are a system of taxation not dissimilar to PAYG tax.

In paying a tax on salaries, it is rarely questioned what benefit is received with it being acknowledged that tax payments are required to pay for critical services (Health, Education, Social Infrastructure, etc) across the nation.

Local Government is not different from this with rates being required to subsidise the delivery of services and capital works that would otherwise be unaffordable if charged on a case by case basis. It is also worth considering that of all government revenue collected across all levels of Government in Australia, rates collected by Councils represent just 4% of the total taxation revenue contributed by Australian citizens.

It is a choice of Council to what degree it pursues a 'user pays' philosophy in relation to charging for individual services on a fee-for-service basis. Similarly Council must make a rating decision in terms of whether to use a fixed waste charge to reflect the cost of waste collection and a fixed municipal charge to defray the administrative costs of Council. Both of these choices are discussed further in this document.

The recommended approaches in this Rating Strategy in terms of equity are discussed further under each section.

3.3 What Rates and Charges may a Council declare?

Section 155 of the *Local Government Act (1989)* provides that a Council may declare the following rates and charges on rateable land-

- General rates under *Section 158*;
- Municipal Charges under *Section 159*;
- Service Rates and Charges under *Section 162*;
- Special rates and charges under *Section 163*.

The recommended strategy in relation to municipal charges, service rates and charges and special rates and charges are discussed further below.

3.4 Valuation Methodology available to Council

In raising Council rates, Council is required to primarily use the valuation of the rateable property to levy rates. *Section 157 (1)* of the *Local Government Act (1989)* provides Council with three choices in terms of which valuation base to utilise. These are Site Valuation, Capital Improved Valuation and Net Annual Value. The advantages and disadvantages of the respective valuation basis are detailed further in **Section 4** of this document.

3.5 Declaring Rates and Charges

Section 158 of the Local Government Act (1989) provides that Council must at least once in respect of each financial year declare by 30 June the following for the forthcoming year:

- a) The amount which Council intends to raise by way of general rates, municipal charges, service rates and service charges;
- b) Whether the general rates will be raised by application of –
 - i. A uniform rate; or
 - ii. Differential rates (if Council is permitted to do so under *Section 161 (1)*)
 - iii. Urban farm rates, farm rates or residential use rates (if Council is permitted to do so under *Section 161A*)

Council's approach to the application of differential rates is discussed in **Section 6** of this Rating Strategy.

3.6 Rate Capping

The new Labor State Government in Victoria has recently indicated to all Councils in Victoria that it will introduce legislation before the Parliament that will prevent Councils from raising rates above inflation levels from 1 July 2016.

Whether the inflation rate used to determine the rate capping level will be based on historical averages, current inflation rates or projected inflation rates remains unclear at present, which inhibits Council from being able to make any accurate predictions about the impact that this will have on the long term financial sustainability of Council, or the corresponding impact that this may have on the delivery of services currently provided.

It is also understood by Council that there will be an appeal process where Councils will be able to appeal for an exemption to this new legislation, but it is again unclear at this stage as to how this mechanism will work, what the criteria will be to allow a Council to be considered for an exemption, or what costs from such a process might eventuate.

Once the full implications of this proposed legislation have been made publicly available, Council will communicate the impacts of this to the community through its annual budget development process for the 2016-17 financial year.

Section 4 Valuation methodology

As outlined, under the *Local Government Act* (1989), Council has three options as to the valuation base it may elect to use.

They are:

- **Capital Improved Valuation (CIV)** – Value of land and improvements upon the land;
- **Site Valuation (SV)** – Value of land only;
- **Net Annual Value (NAV)** – Rental valuation based on CIV. For residential and farm properties, NAV is calculated at 5 per cent of the Capital Improved Value. For commercial and industrial properties, NAV is calculated as the greater of the estimated annual rental value or 5 per cent of the CIV.

In choosing a valuation base, Councils must decide on whether they want to adopt a differential rating system (different rates in the dollar for different property categories) or a uniform rating system (same rate in the dollar). If a Council was to choose the former, under the Act it must adopt either of the CIV or NAV methods of rating.

4.1 Capital Improved Value

Capital Improved Valuation is the most commonly used valuation base by Victorian Local Government with over 70 Councils out of 79 in Victoria applying this methodology. Based on the value of both land and all improvements on the land, it is relatively easy to understand by ratepayers as it broadly equates to the market value of the property.

Section 161 of the *Local Government Act* (1989) provides that a Council may raise any general rates by the application of a differential rate if –

- a) It uses the capital improved value system of valuing land; and
- b) It considers that a differential rate will contribute to the equitable and efficient carrying out of its functions.

Where a Council does not utilise CIV, it may only apply limited differential rates in relation to farm land, urban farm land or residential use land.

Advantages of using Capital Improved Valuation (CIV)

- Capital improved value includes all improvements, and hence is often supported on the basis that it more closely reflects “capacity to pay”. The CIV rating method takes into account the full development value of the property, and hence better meets the equity criteria, rather than Site Value or NAV.
- With the increased frequency of valuations (previously legislated as up to six year intervals, now two year intervals), the market values are more predictable and has reduced the level of objections resulting from valuations. The concept of the market value of property is far more easily understood with CIV rather than NAV or SV.
- Most Councils in Victoria have now adopted CIV which makes it easier to compare relative movements in rates and valuations across Councils.

- The use of CIV allows Councils to apply differential rates so as to equitably distribute the rating burden. The application of CIV allows Council to apply higher rating differentials to the commercial and industrial sector that can offset residential rates.

Disadvantages of using CIV

- The main disadvantage with CIV is the fact that rates are based on the total property value which may not necessarily reflect the income level of the property owner as with pensioners and low income earners.

4.2 Site Value (SV)

There are now no Victorian Councils that use this valuation base. With valuations based simply on the valuation of land and with only very limited ability to apply differential rates, the implementation of Site Value in Murrindindi Shire Council's context would cause a considerable shift in rate burden from the industrial and commercial sectors to the residential and farming sectors.

It is difficult to see an equity argument being served by the implementation of Site Valuation in the Murrindindi Shire.

Advantages of Site Value

- There is a perception that under site valuation, a uniform rate would promote development of land, particularly commercial and industrial developments. There is however little evidence to prove that this is the case.
- Under the SV methodology, Council maintains the possibility for concessions on urban farm land and residential use land.

Disadvantages in using Site Value

- Under SV, there would be a shift from the Industrial & Commercial sectors onto the residential sector of Council. The percentage increases in many cases would be in the high range.
- SV is a major burden on property owners who have large areas of land. Some of these owners may have much smaller/older dwellings compared to those who have smaller land areas but well developed dwellings - but would pay more in rates. A typical example is flat, units, townhouses which would all pay low rates compared to traditional housing styles.
- The use of SV can place pressure on Council to give concessions to categories of landowners on whom the rating burden is seen to fall disproportionately (e.g. farm land, urban farm land and residential use properties). Large landowners, such as farmers for example, are disadvantaged by the use of site value.
- SV will reduce Council's rating flexibility and options to deal with any rating inequities due to the removal of the ability to levy differential rates;

- The rate-paying community has greater difficulty in understanding the SV valuation on their rate notices, as indicated by many enquiries from ratepayers on this issue handled by Council's Customer Service and Property Revenue staff each year.

4.3 Net Annual Value

Net annual value, in concept, represents the annual rental value of a property. However, in practice, NAV is closely linked to capital improved value for residential and farm properties. Valuers derive the NAV directly as 5 per cent of CIV.

In contrast to the treatment of residential and farms, Net Annual Value for commercial and industrial properties is assessed with regard to actual market rental. This differing treatment of commercial versus residential properties and farms has led to some suggestions that all properties should be valued on a rental basis.

Overall, the use of NAV is not supported. For residential and farm ratepayers, actual rental values pose some problems. The artificial rental estimate used may not represent actual market value, and means the base is the same as CIV but harder to understand.

4.4 Summary

It is recommended that Council continue to apply Capital Improved Valuation as the valuation base for the following reasons:

- CIV is considered to be the closest approximation to an equitable basis for distribution of the rating burden.
- CIV provides Council with the ability to levy a full range of differential rates. Differential rating is limited under the other rating bases.
- It should be noted that more than 70 of 79 Victorian Councils apply CIV as their rating base and as such, it has a wider community acceptance and understanding than the other rating methodologies.

Strategy Recommendations

That Murrindindi Shire Council continues to apply Capital Improved Valuation and the valuation methodology to levy Council rates.

Section 5 Murrindindi's existing rating framework

Council's current rating structure comprises three key elements. These are:

- Property values, form the central basis of rating under the *Local Government Act 1989*
- A user pays component to reflect usage of certain services provided by Council
- A fixed municipal charge per property to cover some of other administrative costs of the Council.

Striking a proper balance between these elements provides equity in the distribution of the rate burden across residents.

Having reviewed the various valuation bases for determining the property value component of rates, Council has determined to apply a Capital Improved Value (CIV) basis on the grounds that it provides the most equitable distribution of rates across the municipality.

The existing rating structure comprises a general rate (applicable to residential, commercial, industrial and Rural 2 properties) and one differential rate (Rural 1). These rates are structured in accordance with the requirements of *Section 161* of the *Act*. The Rural 1 rate is set at 75% of the general rate and is applied to any land that is not less than 40ha.

The current Council rating category of Rural 2 properties are defined as rateable land greater than 4ha but less than 40ha. Council has previously utilised this rating category to apply a differential rate, and has maintained this category should it choose to do so again in the future, but has not offered a differential rate for this category now for some years.

Council also levies a municipal charge, a kerbside waste collection charge and a recycling charge as allowed under the *Act*.

The below tables display the breakdown of the current rating categories.

Rating Categories for the 2014/15 year as per Council's adopted budget

2014/15 Rating Category	No. of Rating Units	Capital Improved Value	% Rates of Total
Residential	5,988	\$1,652,113,500	42.7%
Commercial and Industrial	471	\$175,497,000	4.5%
Rural 1	1,316	\$1,247,944,000	32.3%
Rural 2	1,727	\$789,216,000	20.4%
Total Assessments	9,502	\$3,864,770,500	100.00%

Council currently utilises service charges to fully recover the cost of the Waste function. These charges are levied under *section 162* of the *Act* and are applicable per rateable assessment where the service is provided.

Type of charge	Adopted 2014/15	Total Income
Kerbside collection (120 litre garbage bin)	\$325.00	\$1,951,087
Kerbside recycling collection (240 litre recycling bin)	\$79.50	\$476,285
TOTAL		\$2,427,372

As detailed further in **Section 9** Council currently applies a municipal charge for the purpose of defraying some administration costs of Council. The municipal charge for the 2014/15 financial year is \$290.00.

Section 6 Uniform vs. differential rates

Council may apply a uniform rate or differential rates to address the needs of Council. They are quite different in application and have different administrative and appeal mechanisms that need to be taken into account.

6.1 Uniform rate

Section 160 of the *Act* stipulates that if a Council declares that general rates will be raised by the application of a uniform rate, the Council must specify a percentage as the uniform rate. Rates will be determined by multiplying that percentage by the value of the land.

Murrindindi Shire Council has not adopted uniform rates.

6.2 Differential Rates

Differential rating allows particular classes of properties to be assessed at different levels from the general rate set for the municipality. Differential rating allows Council to shift part of the rate burden from some groups of ratepayers to others, through different “rates in the dollar” for each class of property.

Under the *Local Government Act (1989)*, Council is entitled to apply differential rates **on the provision that it uses Capital Improved Valuations** as its base for rating.

Section 161 outlines the regulations relating to differential rates. This section is outlined below.

(1) *A Council may raise any general rates by the application of a differential rate, if Council considers that the differential rate will contribute to the equitable and efficient carrying out of its functions.*

(2) *If a Council declares a differential rate for any land, the Council must-*

- a) *Specify the objectives of the differential rate, which must be consistent with the equitable and efficient carrying out of the Councils functions and must include the following:*
 - i. *A definition of the types of classes of land which are subject to the rate and a statement of the reasons for the use and level of that rate.*
 - ii. *An identification of the type or classes of land which are subject to the rate in respect of the uses, geographic location (other than location on the basis of whether or not the land is within a specific ward in Councils district)*
- b) *Specify the characteristics of the land, which are the criteria for declaring the differential rate*

The maximum differential allowed is no more than 4 times the lowest differential.

Council, in striking the rate through the Annual Budget process sets the differential rate for set classes of properties at higher or lower amounts than the general rate. There are five different levels of rates proposed in this Rating Strategy.

6.3 Objective of the rate and characteristics

For a Council to declare differential rates it is considered that each rate will be used to contribute to the equitable and efficient carrying out of Council's functions. The following are the objectives of the differential rate currently adopted by Council.

Rural 1 rate – The main objectives of having a differential rate for rural properties greater than 40ha are:

- To promote and support the use of sound agricultural practices
- To conserve and protect areas which are suited to certain agricultural pursuits.
- To encourage proper land use consistent with genuine farming activities.

6.4 Advantages of a differential rating system

The perceived advantages of utilising a differential rating system are:

- There is greater flexibility to distribute the rate burden between all classes of property, and therefore link rates with the ability to pay and reflecting the tax deductibility of rates for commercial and industrial premises;
- Differential rating allows Council to better reflect the investment required by Council to establish infrastructure to meet the needs of the commercial and industrial sector;
- Enables Council to encourage particular developments through its rating approach e.g. encourage building on vacant blocks;
- Allows Council to reflect the unique circumstances of some rating categories where the application of a uniform rate may create an inequitable outcome (e.g. farming enterprises)
- Allows Council discretion in the imposition of rates to 'facilitate and encourage appropriate development of its municipal district in the best interest of the community'.

6.5 Disadvantages of Differential Rating

The perceived disadvantages in applying differential rating are:

- The justification of the differential rate can at times be difficult for the various rating groups to accept giving rise to queries, objections and complaints where the differentials may seem to be excessive;
- Differential rates can be confusing to ratepayers, as they may have difficulty to understand the system. Some ratepayers may feel they are unfavourably treated because they are paying a higher level of rates than other ratepayer groups.

- Differential rating involves a degree of administrative complexity as properties continually shift from one type to another (e.g. residential to commercial, vacant to developed) requiring Council to update its records. Ensuring the accuracy/integrity of Council's data base is critical to ensure that properties are correctly classified into their differential rate category.
- Council may not achieve the objectives it aims for through differential rating. For example, Council may set its differential rate objectives to levy a higher rate on land not developed, however it is difficult to measure whether the differential rate achieves these objectives.

6.6 Local Government Sector Approach to Differential Rating

When comparing Murrindindi's current approach to differential rating with the other 20 small rural shires in Victoria, it is worth noting the following details regarding current rating structures across these Councils:

Rural Land Differentials

- 18 out of 20 small rural Shires (excluding Murrindindi), currently provide a differential rate for rural or farm land assessments.
- In the 18 small rural Shires that provide a differential rate for rural or farming land assessments, the range is between 60% and 98% of the general rate.
- The average rural rate for the 18 Shires that set a reduced rate for rural or farming land is 80% of the general residential rate, above the current level of 75% set by Murrindindi.
- Of the 18 small rural Shires that currently provide a differential rate for rural or farm land assessments, only four Shires provide a tiered rural rating structure (eg. Rural 1 land and Rural 2 Land).
- Most small rural Shires have moved away from the complexity and confusion of a tiered rural land differential and now have just one classification of rural/farm land that qualifies for the differential rate.

Commercial & Industrial Differentials

- 13 out of 20 small rural Shires (excluding Murrindindi), currently provide a differential rate for commercial and industrial assessments.
- Of the 13 small rural Shires that provide a differential rate for commercial and industrial properties, 11 Shires set the same rate for commercial and industrial properties.
- In the 13 small rural Shires that provide a differential rate for commercial and industrial assessments, the range is between 90% and 162% of the general rate.
- The average commercial rate for the Shires that set an increased rate for commercial properties is 135% of the general residential rate.

Vacant Land Differentials

- 11 out of 20 small rural Shires (excluding Murrindindi), currently provide a differential rate for vacant land assessments.
- In the 11 small rural Shires that provide a differential rate for vacant land assessments, the range is between 125% and 360% of the general rate.
- The average rate for the 11 Shires that set an increased rate for vacant land is 201% of the general residential rate.

Retirement Village Land Differentials

- Council is required to give consideration to a differential rate for retirement village land as defined by the *Retirement Villages Act 1986* and in accordance with the *April 2013 Ministerial Guidelines for Differential Rating*.
- Given the minimal development of retirement villages within the Murrindindi Shire, Council sees no present need to introduce a differential rate for this category of land.

6.7 Proposed new rating structure

The *Local Government Act* allows Councils to “differentiate” rates based on the use of the land, the geographic locality of the land or the use and locality of the land.

Council has established a rating structure which is a combination of the following. These are:

- Property values, based on Capital Improved Value; and
- A Range of differential rates in the dollar to reflect variations in the provision and use of supporting services, access to Council assets, and land development and use priorities.

Striking a proper balance between these elements provides equity in the distribution of the rate burden across residents.

As such, two further differential rates are proposed to be added to Council’s rating category structure, in addition to the discount that is currently provided to Rural 1 properties. Rating differentials are now proposed to be applied to properties classified as either commercial or industrial, and to land that is identified as vacant and developable.

Each differential rate will be determined by multiplying the Capital Improved Value of each rateable land and property (categorised by the characteristics described below) by the relevant percentages indicated further below. Details of the objectives of each differential rate, the types of classes of land, which are subject to each differential rate and the uses of each differential rate, are set out below.

6.7.1 General – Residential

This category includes all residential properties including flats, units and rural residential properties (ie. under the 40ha threshold specified for the Rural 1 category).

Objectives:

To ensure that all owners of general residential properties, make an equitable financial contribution to the cost of carrying out the functions of the Council.

Types and Classes:

Includes all properties including residential properties which do not fit the criteria of the following differentials:

- Commercial and Industrial
- Rural 1 properties; or
- Vacant Land;

Properties that satisfy the above criteria will receive the standard general residential rate.

6.7.2 Commercial and Industrial

Commercial and industrial properties are defined as:

- Any property which is used **primarily** for commercial and/or industrial purposes and/or,
- Any property zoned as commercial and industrial land under the planning scheme in force in the municipal district which is not deemed vacant as per **Section 6.7.4**.

Objectives:

To ensure that the owners of the property having the characteristics of Commercial and Industrial Land make an equitable financial contribution to the cost of carrying out Council's functions, including those functions supporting economic development and tourism.

Types and Classes:

Rateable property having the relevant characteristics described above. Commercial and Industrial properties are not:

- General - Residential properties;
- Rural 1 properties; or
- Vacant Land.

New differential rate:

Properties that satisfy the above criteria will be rated at 125% of the general residential rate.

6.7.3 Rural 1

To be classified as a Rural 1 property, an assessment must be classified as rural and be not less than 40 hectares in size. This shall include non-contiguous assessments within the Shire operating as a single-farm enterprise.

Objectives:

1. Encourage uses compatible with the physical capability of the land;
2. Minimise the need for urban works and services to the non-urban area;
3. Conserve the resources of soil, flora and fauna and the significant natural features in the areas identified as having ecological and landscape interest value;

4. Conserve as far as possible the existing patterns of vegetation to maintain landscape quality;
5. Assist in the maintenance of farming activities within areas eminently suited for that purpose; and
6. Discourage the proliferation of non-agricultural activities on soil of high agricultural value by protecting the social characteristics of the rural community from the encroachment of urban-type development.

Types and Classes:

Rateable properties having the relevant characteristics described above. Rural 1 properties are not:

- General Residential Land;
- Commercial and Industrial Land;
- Vacant Land

New differential rate:

Properties that satisfy the above criteria will pay 75% of the general residential rate.

6.7.4 Vacant Land

Vacant land is defined as:

- Any land which is located in Council's defined residential, commercial, rural living or industrial zones for planning purposes that is currently undeveloped.
- Undeveloped land is broadly classified as land not containing an approved, habitable structure, or land that has been developed for the purpose of commercial or industrial use.

Objectives:

The purpose of this differential is to encourage property owners to develop vacant land identified by Council as suitable for development, rather than simply acquire or hold land for the purpose of future investment without developing it. By encouraging the development of land ensures that all rateable land makes an equitable financial contribution to the cost of carrying out the functions of the Council.

Types and Classes:

Rateable land having the relevant characteristics described above. Vacant Land is land which is not classified as:

- General Residential property;
- Rural 1 Land; or
- Commercial/Industrial.

New differential rate:

Land that satisfies the above criteria will pay 150% of the general residential rate.

To support the subdivision of vacant land for development purposes, property owners may be eligible for a Subdivided Vacant Land Differential Rate Rebate. This is further outlined in Section 11.

6.8 Financial impact of new rating structure

The below table displays a revised breakdown of the current year's rating data, adjusted for the introduction of the new rating categories.

Rating Categories for the 2014/15 year as per Council's adopted budget

2014/15 Rating Category	No. of Rating Units	Capital Improved Value	% of Total CIV
Residential	5,334	\$1,556,866,500	40.3%
Commercial and Industrial	428	\$167,909,000	4.3%
Rural 1	1,316	\$1,247,944,000	32.3%
Rural 2	1,607	\$768,735,000	19.9%
Vacant Land	817	\$123,316,000	3.2%
Total Assessments	9,502	\$3,864,770,500	100.00%

The table below highlights the differential rates currently applied by Murrindindi Shire Council and the proposed differential rates in 2015/16 year:

Rating Category	2014/15 Rate in \$	2014/15 Index	Proposed 2015/16 Rate in \$	Proposed 2015/16 Index
General (Residential)	0.003222	100%	0.003415	100%
Commercial & Industrial	0.003222	100%	0.004269	125%
Vacant land	N/A	N/A	0.005122	150%
Rural 1	0.002416	75%	0.002561	75%
Rural 2	0.003222	100%	0.003415	100%

6.9 Non-rateable assessments

As defined in the *Local Government Act 1989* ("the Act"), all land in a Council area is rateable except that which is specified as exempt in legislation. With respect to the definition of rateable land, Sec 154 of the *Local Government Act 1989* states:

(1) *Except as provided in this section, all land is rateable.*

(2) *The following land is not rateable land—*

(a) land which is unoccupied and is the property of the Crown or is vested in a Minister, a Council, a public statutory body or trustees appointed under an Act to hold that land in trust for public or municipal purposes;

(b) any part of land, if that part—

(i) is vested in or owned by the Crown, a Minister, a Council, a public statutory body or trustees appointed under an Act to hold that land in trust for public or municipal purposes; and

(ii) is used exclusively for public or municipal purposes;

(c) any part of land, if that part is used exclusively for charitable purposes;

(d) land which is vested in or held in trust for any religious body and used exclusively—

(i) as a residence of a practising Minister of religion; or

(ii) for the education and training of persons to be Ministers of religion; or

(iii) for both the purposes in subparagraphs (i) and (ii);

(e) land which is used exclusively for mining purposes;

(f) land held in trust and used exclusively—

(i) as a club for or a memorial to persons who performed service or duty within the meaning of section 3(1) of the Veterans Act 2005 ; or

(ii) as a sub-branch of the Returned Services League of Australia; or

(iii) by the Air Force Association (Victoria Division); or

(iv) by the Australian Legion of Ex-Servicemen and Women (Victorian Branch).

Only assessments that clearly meet the Act's definition of a non-rateable assessment will be considered by Council as being exempt from rates.

Strategy Recommendations

1. That Council continues to apply differential rates for:
 - General Residential properties, including flats and units.
 - Rural 1 properties at a value of 75% to the general rate.
2. That Council introduce a Commercial and Industrial differential rate at 125% of the general rate.
3. That Council introduce a vacant land differential rate of 150% of the general rate.
4. That Council review all properties currently classified as non-rateable to ensure equity of rate collection.

In implementing the above outcomes, Council needs to be mindful of the periodic impacts of Council revaluations as discussed in the following section. These differential rates should be reviewed every two years, in the alternate year to when revaluation occurs.

Section 7 Council revaluations

Under the requirements of the *Local Government Act (1989)* Council is required to conduct revaluations of all assessments every two years. A revaluation does NOT provide Council with any additional rate revenue but can significantly re-align how rates are distributed between ratepayers at both a rating group and individual level.

The table below highlights the impact of the most recent Council revaluation, which came into effect for the 2014/15 financial year.

Charge Types	Property Count 2013/14	CIV 2013/14	Property Count 2014/15	CIV 2014/15	CIV growth
Residential	5,957	\$1,549,436,000	5,988	\$1,652,113,500	6.63%
Commercial and Industrial	474	\$160,338,000	471	\$175,497,000	9.45%
Rural 1	1,299	\$1,145,288,000	1,316	\$1,247,944,000	8.96%
Rural 2	1,753	\$726,643,000	1,727	\$789,216,000	8.61%
TOTAL	9,483	\$3,581,705,000	9,502	\$3,864,770,500	7.90%

The table highlights that overall Council properties have increased by **7.9%** as of 1st of January 2014 due to the most recent valuation. Council needs to be mindful of the impacts of revaluations on the various property types in implementing the differential rating strategy outlined in the previous section to ensure that rises and falls in Council rates remain affordable and that rating 'shocks' are mitigated to some degree.

Section 8 Special rates & charges

Special rates and charges are covered under *Section 163* of the *Local Government Act*, which enables Council to declare a special rate or charge or a combination of both for the purposes of:

- Defraying any expenses; or
- Repaying with interest any advance made or debt incurred or loan raised by Council.

In relation to the performance of a function or the exercise of a power by Council, if Council considers that the performance of the function or the exercise of the power will be of special benefit to the persons required to pay the special rate or special charge.

There are clearly defined procedural requirements that Council needs to adhere to in order to introduce a special rate or charge, including how Council can apply funds derived from this source.

Section 185 of the *Local Government Act* provides appeal rights to the Victorian Civil Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) in relation to the imposition of a special rate or charge. The Tribunal has wide powers, which could affect the viability of the special rate or charge.

Council should be particularly mindful of the issue of proving that special benefit exists to those that are being levied the rate or charge.

In summary, differential rates are much simpler to introduce and less subject to challenge. There may be instances however where a special charge is desirable if raising the levy by use of CIV is not equitable.

It is recommended that Council utilises special rates and charges only in the instances outlined below.

Strategy Recommendations

That Council use special rates and charges in instances that fit the following circumstances:

- Funding of narrowly defined capital projects (e.g. streetscape works, private road sealing) where special benefit can be shown to exist to a grouping of property owners;
- Raising funds for a dedicated purpose where the use of CIV is not the most equitable method of calculating property owner contributions. (e.g. Unfunded Defined Benefit Superannuation Liability or Natural Disaster); or
- Covering the cost of an expense relating to a specific group of ratepayers (e.g. licensed premises).

Section 9 Municipal Charge

Another principle rating option available to Councils is the application of a municipal charge. Under *Section 159* of the *Local Government Act*, Council may declare a municipal charge to cover some of the administrative costs of the Council. The legislation is not descriptive on what comprises administrative costs and does not require Council to specify what is covered by the charge or how the funds are to be allocated.

A Council's total revenue from a municipal charge in a financial year must not exceed 20 per cent of the combined sum total of the Council's total revenue from the municipal charge and the revenue from general rates.

The application of a municipal charge represents a choice to raise a portion of the rates by a flat fee for all properties, rather than solely relying on rates that are generated through the CIV valuation method. In applying the legislation, the maximum amount that Council could levy as a municipal charge would be approximately \$338.00 per assessment for the 2015/16 financial year.

The arguments in favour of a municipal charge are similar to waste charges. They apply equally to all properties and are based upon the recovery of a fixed cost of providing administrative services irrespective of valuation. The same contribution amount per assessment to cover a portion of Council's administrative costs can be seen as an equitable method of recovering these costs.

The argument against a municipal charge is that this charge is regressive in nature and results in lower valued properties paying higher overall rates and charges. The equity objective in levying rates against property values is lost in a municipal charge as it is levied uniformly across all assessments.

Given Council's current financial challenges, reduced rating base and the requirement to fund the ongoing maintenance and operation of the new and gifted assets, it is recommended that the existing Municipal Charge continues to be applied for the foreseeable future, in accordance with the legislation detailed above.

Strategy Recommendations

That Council continue to utilise a Municipal Charge as part of its Rating Strategy.

Section 10 Service rates & charges

Section 162 of the *Local Government Act* (1989) provides Council with the opportunity to raise service rates and charges for any of the following services:

- a) The provision of a water supply;
- b) The collection and disposal of refuse;
- c) The provision of sewerage services; and
- d) Any other prescribed service.

Murrindindi Shire Council currently applies a Service Charge for the collection and disposal of refuse on properties that fall within the designated kerbside waste collection area. Council retains the objective of setting the Service charge for waste at a level that fully recovers the cost of the waste function. It should be noted that Council does not currently provide services detailed in a) and c) above.

The advantage of the waste charge is that it is readily understood and accepted by residents as a fee for a direct service that they receive. It further provides equity in the rating system in that all residents who receive exactly the same service level all pay an equivalent amount.

The disadvantage of the waste charge is similar to the municipal charge in that it is regressive in nature. A fixed charge to a low valued property comprises a far greater proportion of the overall rates than it does to a more highly valued property.

On balance it is recommended that Council retain its existing waste Charge. Unlike a municipal charge where the direct benefit to the resident is invisible – the waste charge is a tangible service that is provided directly to all in the same fashion.

Should Council elect not to have a waste charge, this same amount would be required to be raised by way of an increased general rate – meaning that residents in higher valued properties would pay proportionally more for the same service when compared to the waste service for lower valued properties. Whilst this same principle applies for rates in general, the mix of having a single fixed charge for waste, combined with valuation determined rates for the remainder of the rate invoice provides a balanced and equitable outcome for all ratepayers within the community.

Strategy Recommendations

That Council continues to apply a waste charge as part of its Rating Strategy based on the full cost recovery of the waste function.

Section 11 Rates Payment

Payment Options

There are only two options available under the *Local Government Act* (1989) for Council to set payment dates. The first is an option of a lump sum payment (which by law is set on the 15th of February each year). The second is a mandatory instalment approach where payments are required at the end of September, November, February and May. Under this second approach, residents can elect to pay instalments in advance at any point in order to opt out of the instalment dates.

The profile of Murrindindi Shire Council's rate collection has been slowly moving away from the lump sum payment (currently approximately 40%) with the following effects:

1. Council enjoys an improved cash flow that is associated with the instalment payment option. Council operates under a 30 June financial year and if required to wait seven months to receive the majority of its revenue would face significant financial hardship. During seven and a half months between the commencement of the financial year and the mandatory annual payment date, Council is required to continue to provide operational services and capital works which places the cash position under stress. Quarterly payment options provide Council with the opportunity to collect a significant portion of its rate revenue prior to the 15 February deadline.
2. Quarterly payment options also provide ratepayers with the opportunity to better manage their household cashflow, as experience has shown that a percentage of the ratebase are unable to appropriately budget to ensure that the full value of their rates due to Council is available to be paid in mid-February. More regular payment options has enabled many ratepayers to better manage their personal finances and avoid interest charges, legal costs and credit rating implications that are associated with delinquency of Council rates.

In recent years, some Councils have moved to introduce mandatory instalments which is aimed at better matching when Council receives its rate revenue and its associated cost. Some Councils have even gone as far as introducing a discount for quarterly payments to improve cash flow. Should a discount be offered, it should be roughly aligned with the prevailing and expected annual interest rates in the cash investment market. As of 1 January 2015, this would equate to approximately 1.5%.

Although this strategy is not recommending a mandatory introduction of quarterly payments for Murrindindi Shire Council, it is an option that Council has available to it any stage should it choose so. An appropriate communication plan would be required if Council were to implement this change.

Hardship Provision

To assist ratepayers in meeting financial obligations to Council by providing alternative payment arrangements for property based debts, where financial hardship is proven to exist.

This gives ratepayers the opportunity to present their case and to ensure they are treated in a consistent, equitable and confidential manner. If Council becomes aware of any ratepayer providing false or misleading information in order to gain assistance for which he/she would

otherwise not be eligible, the agreement with Council will become null and void. Any charges which have been waived or deferred will be restored to the full amount. In addition, this includes any interest not charged that would have otherwise been payable.

Ratepayers may have rates and charges, or part thereof, deferred subject to the following conditions:

- (a) The ratepayer must be able to demonstrate they are or will experience undue and unusual financial hardship;
- (b) A confidential statement must be submitted by the ratepayer or their representative as evidence of such circumstances;
- (c) Where the ratepayer has complied with clauses a and b, the rate or charge or part thereof may be deferred either for a set period or an indefinite period;
- (d) Where practicable, the ratepayer must enter into an agreement with Council on a payment schedule and perform against such agreement.

Under a deferment arrangement, whilst rates and interest will still accrue, no debt recovery action shall be taken. Annually, confirmation will be sought from either the ratepayer or nominated representative that financial hardships conditions still exist. Council has the ability to review any existing arrangements.

Deferment is withdrawn automatically upon the sale of the property.

Rebates and Concessions

Section 169 of the Local Government Act 1989 states:

- (1) A Council may grant a rebate or concession in relation to any rate or charge—
 - (a) to assist the proper development of the municipal district; or
 - (b) to preserve buildings or places in the municipal district which are of historical or environmental interest; or
 - (c) to restore or maintain buildings or places of historical, environmental, architectural or scientific importance in the municipal district; or
 - (d) to assist the proper development of part of the municipal district.

1A) A Council resolution granting a rebate or concession must specify the benefit to the community as a whole resulting from the rebate or concession.

- (1B) Unless subsection (1D) applies, a Council may only grant a rebate or concession—
 - (a) to owners of specified rateable properties not exceeding one third of the rateable properties in the municipal district; or
 - (b) to owners of rateable properties who undertake to satisfy terms that directly relate to the community benefit as are specified by the Council.

(1C) If subsection (1B)(a) applies and subsection (1B)(b) does not apply, a person may make a submission under section 223.

(1D) Without limiting subsection (1), a Council may grant a rebate or concession in relation to any rate or charge, to support the provision of affordable housing, to a registered agency.

(2) If a person granted a rebate or concession has not complied with the terms on which the rebate or concession was granted, the Council must by a notice sent to the person—

- (a) require the payment of the whole or part of the rate or charge by a specified date; and
- (b) require the payment of interest for the late payment of the rate or charge, as if the rebate or concession had not been granted.

(3) In this section, "registered agency" has the same meaning as it has in section 4(1) of the Housing Act 1983 .

Subdivided Vacant Land Differential Rate Rebate

To support the proper development of subdivided vacant land within the Shire, a rebate of the vacant land differential rate is proposed to apply for vacant land that is the subject of a subdivision and that would otherwise attract the vacant land differential rate. The rebate is to apply from the time at which a Certificate of Compliance is issued by the Council for the subdivision, to the time at which the ownership (title) of the vacant subdivided land is transferred to a new owner.

This rebate recognises the investment committed to a subdivision by a developing land holder and the holding cost of the subdivided lots prior to transfer or sale. The rebate is designed to remove a potential disincentive to subdivisional development of vacant developable land that a vacant land differential on multiple lots within a subdivision may cause. The rebate will therefore promote the economic benefits that result from the subdivision of developable land.

To apply for a Subdivided Vacant Land Differential Rate Rebate, ratepayers must complete and return an Application for Rebate which must include a copy of the Certificate of Compliance for the subdivision and a plan of the subdivision to which the Certificate of Compliance applies.

Pension Concession

Persons holding one of the following eligible pensioner concession cards may be entitled to a rebate from their Council rates:

- Pensioner Concession Card issued by Centrelink or Department of Veterans' Affairs;
- Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card - War Widow (WW); or
- Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card - Totally and Permanently Incapacitated

To apply for a pensioner concession, ratepayers must complete and return an application for concession on municipal rates prior to 30 June. A copy of the relevant concession card must accompany any application.

Pensioner concession only applies to eligible pensioners who are permanent residents of a property within the Murrindindi Shire. It does not apply to health care card holders.

Strategy Recommendations

1. That Council continue to apply the quarterly instalment payment option in future rating years;
2. That Council consider options to encourage further participation in the quarterly payment plan by the ratepayers of Murrindindi Shire.
3. That Council continues to provide the opportunity for varied repayment options for residents suffering genuine financial hardship.
4. That Council introduces a Subdivided Vacant Land Differential Rate Rebate.

Section 12 State Government levies

In recent years, Council has seen an increased propensity for State Government to view Local Government as a means of collecting State taxes under the branding of Councils' rate notice.

This occurred with the now defunct State Deficit Levy in the 1990's and has in recent times been revived with Victorian Councils being required to collect and remit a landfill levy to the State Government.

Since 1 July 2013 Council has been required to collect a Fire Services Levy on behalf of the State Government.

It is recommended from a Rating Policy outcome that Council adopt the following view:

- a) That Council fulfil any legislated responsibility to collect State Government taxes;
- b) That Council clearly identify the Fire Services Levy as a State charge and provide clear understanding to all ratepayers as to the purpose of this charge and Council's requirement to collect it on behalf of the State Government; and
- c) That Council utilise any funding provided by the State Government for the cost of collecting State taxes.

Prepared for: Castella Quarries Pty Ltd

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Submission in support of request to extend hours of operation

Castella Quarry
2900 Melba Highway, Castella

November 2014
(2513R01)

FocusCDS Consultants

SUBMISSION IN SUPPORT OF
REQUEST TO EXTEND HOURS OF OPERATION
PLANNING PERMIT No. 1999/75
CASTELLA QUARRIES – 2900 MELBA HIGHWAY CASTELLA

November 2014

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Submission in Support of Request to Extend Operating Hours
Castella Quarries – 2900 Melba Highway, Castella
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1 INTRODUCTION

Focus CDS Consultants acts for Castella Quarries Pty Ltd who operate a hard rock quarry at Melba Highway, Castella. This quarry is operated pursuant to Planning Permit No. 1999/75.

Existing approvals allow extractive and cartage activities to occur at the quarry from 7.00 am to 6.00 pm Monday to Friday and 7.00 am to 1.00 pm Saturday. Due to the commercial imperative of having to be able to deliver rock products to customers on-site prior to 7.00 am and soon thereafter, there is the need for the quarry to have its permitted operating hours modified.

Our client is seeking Council's consent to permanently allow cartage trucks to enter the quarry site from 5.30 am onwards and for extractive and cartage operations to begin at 6.00 am.

2 QUARRY HISTORY

The quarry was given planning approval in the early 1990's via a site specific amendment to the then Healesville Planning Scheme. This approval was then translated into Planning Permit 1999/75 by the Minister for Planning as part of the approval of the consolidated Murrindindi Planning Scheme.

The quarry has been successfully operating since the mid 1990's and primarily services customers in the Shires of Murrindindi, Nillumbik and Yarra Ranges and the Cities of Whittlesea and Maroondah. Over its life of nearly 20 years, it has generated very few complaints about adverse off-site noise impacts.

Early in the life of the quarry, approximately 1998/99, the quarry operator sought authority from the then Inspector of Quarries to allow, on occasions, operations to commence prior to 7.00am. This was apparently agreed to and the operator had worked on this basis since then. There are times when customer requirements dictate that trucks enter and leave the quarry before 7.00am.

Operations at the quarry generally don't commence before 7.00 am, however increasingly there has been a requirement by customers to have rock product delivered on-site prior to 7.00am and soon thereafter. This has meant that the quarry has had to begin operating before 7.00am more frequently to meet this demand.

In 2012 the quarry was the subject of complaints by the residents of 2 properties in nearby Moore Court with respect to noisy trucks and the commencement of operations outside of permitted operating hours.

3 EXISTING QUARRY APPROVALS

The quarry operates pursuant to Work Authority 522 (WA 522) and Planning Permit No. 1999/75.

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Condition 21.1 on WA 522 states:

"Working hours must be in accordance with the approved work plan and any requirements imposed by the Planning Scheme or caused by application of noise emission limits set by the Environment Protection Authority. However, an Inspector may authorise temporary work to occur outside of such working hours with the agreement of the relevant Responsible Authority and the landowner."

In relation to hours of operation, the work plan states:

"Extractive and cartage operations within the site will be between the hours of 7.00 am to 6.00 pm Monday to Friday and 7.00 am to 1.00 pm on Saturdays. Other activities will be between the hours of 6.00 am to 6.00 pm Monday to Friday and 6.00 am to 1.00 pm Saturday.

Work on site outside these hours would only be for essential maintenance."

Condition Q on the planning permit states:

"The operator must ensure that unless authorised otherwise in writing by the responsible authority, no operation including excavation, drilling, blasting, loading, crushing and cartage of stone or other material or access to the site by cartage trucks shall take place outside the hours of 7.00am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday inclusive, and 7.00am to 1.00pm on Saturdays and no works, other than essential maintenance, shall occur outside the hours of 6.00am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday inclusive, and 6.00am to 4.00pm on Saturdays, or on a Sunday or a Public Holiday."

In December 2012, our client sought Council's consent to extend the hours of operation to allow trucks to enter the site from 5.30 am onwards and allow extractive and cartage operations to commence at 6.00 am. In April 2013 Council gave temporary consent for the quarry to commence extraction and cartage operations at 6.00 am subject to a number of conditions. Council officers have agreed to this arrangement continuing while the subject request is dealt with.

4 PROPOSAL TO EXTEND HOURS

The quarry services construction projects in the Shires of Murrindindi, Nillumbik and Yarra Ranges and the Cities of Whittlesea and Maroondah. Occasionally there are projects further afield. Many of the projects serviced require quarry products to be delivered on-site to enable construction activities to commence by 7.00 am or soon thereafter.

In 2014 the quarry has been required to have products delivered by 7.00 am or soon thereafter at the locations listed below. Some of these locations are local and some are further afield. All have required trucks to leave the quarry before 7.00 am.

- Glenburn (Downer Group)

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- Kinglake West (Fortunato Group)
- Coldstream (Shire of Yarra Ranges)
- Yea (Downer Group)
- Pheasant Creek (Shire of Murrindindi)
- Toolangi (Vic Forests)
- Lake Mountain (Cut & Fill)
- Chirnside Park (Montdami)
- Eildon (Fineblade)

Confirmed upcoming projects which are subject to being serviced by 7.00 am include:

- Warburton Highway shoulder works
- Yering Golf Course, Croydon
- Chirnside Park (Stage 2)
- Hill Road Winery, Healesville
- Frank Wood, Yarra Glen

A number of the quarry's regular customers have provided letters expressing their support for the quarry extending its hours of operation so that truck deliveries can be made by 7.00 am or soon thereafter. These letters are provided in Appendix 1.

It takes a truck and trailer combination approximately 25 minutes to enter the quarry, load, attend the weighbridge and then exit the quarry onto Melba Highway. Therefore the trucks need to be able to access the quarry well before the time they need to leave the quarry to be able to deliver their load to the construction site on time.

The quarries that compete in the same market place as Castella Quarries include:

- Yarra Valley Quarries, Woori Yallock
- Boral Quarry, Montrose
- Boral Quarry, Lysterfield
- Boral Quarry, Coldstream
- Yea Sand & Gravel, Yea
- Casacir Quarry, Neerim North
- Lima South Quarry, Lima South
- Holcim Quarry, Kilmore
- Barro Group, Seymour
- Mawsons Quarry, Seymour

Given the location of Castella Quarries' customers and the location of competing quarries, it is important for the quarry to be able to transport material from the site from 6.00 am onwards.

5 BACKGROUND

5.1 NOISE ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

The assessment framework for noise in regional Victoria is “*NOISE FROM INDUSTRY IN REGIONAL VICTORIA – Recommended Maximum Noise Levels from Commerce, Industry and Trade Premises in Regional Victoria (NIRV)*”.

NIRV specifies different periods of the day for noise guidelines. Of relevance in this instance are the Day period (7.00 am to 6.00 pm Mon – Fri & 7.00 am to 1.00 pm Sat) and the Night period (10.00 pm to 7.00 am all days). The currently permitted operating hours fall within the Day period. The earlier operating times would fall within the Night period for which a lower recommended noise level is applicable.

NIRV provides for recommended maximum noise levels from industry in rural areas. These are referred to as Recommended Maximum Noise Levels (RMNLs). These are guidelines, not statutory limits. NIRV does not set statutory limits unless specific limits are incorporated in the planning permit by conditions.

Condition F on the planning permit states:

“Noise generated by extractive industry operations including the movement of vehicles along the internal access road must comply with the relevant noise emission policy of the Environment Protection Authority to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.”

This condition does not set specific noise limits and for extractive industries under NIRV, the EPA do not set specific limits, just recommended maximum levels.

Under certain circumstances NIRV allows for exceptions to compliance with the recommended noise levels where this cannot be achieved due to locational constraints. We submit that the Castella Quarry fits within this scenario.

Supporting documentation for NIRV (*Applying NIRV to Proposed and Existing Industry* - EPA Publication 1413 October 2013 p.10) states as follows:

“If an industrial use is proposed that cannot practicably meet the recommended levels, the proponent will need to follow the assessment and consultation steps. The industry will need to demonstrate whether the proposal is location constrained, and follow the advice under ‘Applicant demonstrates measures to reduce noise as far as is practicable,’ and ‘Applicant addresses net benefit of the proposal, and addresses residual noise risks’ in this section.

In some cases, rural infrastructure or resource-based constraints may make it impracticable for noise emissions to meet the recommended levels (typically in NIRV rural areas).

This may be an issue when a proposed industry or expansion of existing industry cannot be located away from residents, such as where its location is

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determined by a stone or mineral resource or utility infrastructure, and there are no alternative locations that would enable the project to go ahead.

NIRV allows an alternative application approach that applies best practice to address residual noise risks. Under this approach NIRV states that the proponent will need to demonstrate that it has:

- reduced noise as far as practicable;
- demonstrated a net benefit for the proposal;
- explored alternative outcomes with the community to address the noise risks, and
- proposed measures to address the residual noise risks.

5.2 INITIAL QUARRY ACOUSTIC ASSESSMENT

In mid-2012, Watson Moss Growcott acoustics pty ltd (WMG) were engaged to undertake a noise emissions assessment of the quarry to ascertain whether activities at the quarry were conforming to the EPA's noise guidelines. WMG were also asked to assess whether quarry operations would enable compliance with the EPA's noise guidelines prior to 7.00 am. A copy of the report detailing the noise emission assessment has previously been provided to Council. This report is titled "Noise Emission Assessment Conducted at 49 Moore Court, Castella (28 August 2012).

The WMG report states:

"It has previously been established, and remains the case, that the only component of noise emission from the quarry that requires consideration is that due to trucks traveling along the access road, the quarry itself being well attenuated by distance and topography."

Monitoring of background noise levels at 49 Moore Court was undertaken over a 2 week period in July 2012 in order to determine the Recommended Maximum Noise Level (RMNL) under NIRV. The RMNLs were determined to be:

Day Period: 52 dB(A)

Night Period: 45 dB(A)

Measurements of noise levels resulting from truck movements along the quarry access road were undertaken at 49 Moore Court over a 2 hour period on 20th July 2012. WMG reported that:

"Noise due to frogs and traffic on the Melba Hwy provided the background against which noise from trucks traversing the quarry access road had to be measured. Measurements had to be frequently paused in order to exclude extraneous noise. Despite this, there were a number of truck movements along the access road that were clearly audible and measureable, while other truck

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movements were barely audible, and not effectively measurable as they were 'lost' in the ambient background."

"Trucks on the access road varied from barely audible to clearly audible, with those clearly audible being due to engine/exhaust brake usage going downhill rather than going uphill. Some trucks travelling down the hill were barely perceptible, while others were clearly audible with a tonal characteristic."

From their measurements, WMG determined an effective noise level at 49 Moore Court for the trucks using the quarry access road to be 50dB(A).

The effective noise level of 50 dB(A) complies with the RMNL of 52 dB(A) for the day period of 7.00 am to 6.00 pm. It would not however meet the RMNL of 45 dB(A) determined for the period prior to 7.00 am.

WMG stated:

"The key to achieving noise levels at the residential receptor location within the Recommended Maximum Noise Levels for the period 6-7am is to reduce the level and tonal characteristic exhibited by some trucks while descending the access road."

They identified two strategies for doing this. The first was to require trucks descending the access road to not use their exhaust / engine brake and only use mechanical brakes prior to 7.00 am. The second was to ensure the use of effective exhaust mufflers to reduce engine / exhaust noise.

The noise emission assessment concluded as follows:

"Measurement of noise levels arising from trucks operating on the Castella Quarries access road has indicated compliance with the Recommended Maximum Noise Levels determined in accordance with the EPA's recently released document NOISE FROM INDUSTRY IN REGIONAL VICTORIA Recommended Maximum Noise Levels from Commerce, Industry and Trade Premises in Regional Victoria for the day period from 7am, but not for the period 6-7am.

The limitation on compliance with the Recommended Maximum Noise Level prior to 7am was found to be the level and character of engine/exhaust brake noise on some but not all of the trucks operating out of the site.

Operation of trucks on the access road between 6am and 7am will require those trucks that had 'noisy' exhausts, particularly in terms of engine/exhaust brake operation while descending the access road loaded, to either have more effective mufflers fitted, or to avoid the use of engine/exhaust brakes prior to 7am."

Subsequent to the completion of the WMG assessment, Castella Quarries terminated the use of one of the three noisiest trucks identified in the assessment. The owners of the next two noisiest trucks replaced their exhaust muffler systems with new quieter systems.

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5.3 SUBSEQUENT ACOUSTIC ASSESSMENT

WMG undertook further noise testing on the two trucks with the new exhaust systems in November 2012. The results of these tests were reported in the report previously provided to Council titled "Follow-up to Noise Emission Assessment Conducted at 49 Moore Court, Castella (10 December 2012)".

WMG concluded that:

"The combined effects of a direct noise level reduction of 3-6 dB(A) in the level of the noisier truck contributors and a secondary benefit in terms of the duration adjustment could reasonably be expected to reduce the resultant 30-minute effective Leq level at 49 Moore Court from the highest measured/calculated level of 50dB(A) to 45dB(A), and hence comply with the Recommended Maximum Noise Levels from 6am to 7am."

6 INTERIM APPROVAL TO EXTEND HOURS

In December 2012, Castella Quarries sought Council's consent to extend the hours of operation of the quarry to allow trucks to enter the site and undertake loading activities from 5.30 am Monday to Saturday and for all other extractive operations to commence from 6.00 am Monday to Saturday.

To assist in ensuring compliance with the noise guidelines, the quarry offered the following:

1. Monitoring of the quarry's compliance with the derived RMNL. This monitoring would be undertaken by a Council appointed consultant and done at a time nominated by Council and paid for by Castella Quarries.
2. Place a large sign at the entrance to the quarry advising truck drivers to keep their use of exhaust / engine breaks to the minimum necessary to ensure an acceptable noise environment for neighbours.
3. To develop a Code of Conduct for Drivers and as part of the normal quarry induction, educate drivers regarding the importance of making no more noise than necessary when on the access road. Also to advise drivers that as the date and time of their travel along the access road is recorded, it would be possible to identify those drivers who make unnecessary noise, and
4. To locate signs regularly spaced along the access road to reinforce the need for drivers to keep noise levels down

Council in April 2013 consented to the extension of the hours of operation subject to the following conditions:

1. *In the first instance consent is limited to a period of 6 months commencing from a date nominated by the Castella Quarries having taken into account all other criteria of this approval.*

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2. *The extension of hours is limited to a start of 6.00 am for all activities except for the maintenance as already specified in the planning permit.*
3. *Prior to commencement of the early hours the quarry shall provide a list of trucks that will be permitted on site before 7am, providing evidence that trucks have been assessed as satisfactory having regard to the Recommended Maximum Noise Levels (RMNL) and the acoustic report.*
4. *On a monthly basis provide a log of all trucks that have accessed the site prior to 7am including dates, times and identification of the vehicles.*
5. *Castella Quarries to put in place appropriate signage and code of conduct to ensure continued driver education for both day and night periods.*
6. *Encourage nearby landowners to keep a record of any activity that causes a disturbance between 6am and 7am.*
7. *Within the 6 month period monitor the quarry's compliance with the RMNL for both day and night periods. Monitoring to be undertaken by a Council appointed acoustic consultant and paid for by Castella quarries.*
8. *After 4 months commence discussions with all parties to assess impacts of extended hours and reassess continuing with a 6am start.*

Castella Quarries have complied with the above conditions. They have had the trucks servicing the quarry tested for compliance with noise regulations and compliance with the pre-7.00 am RMNL's and supplied to Council a list of the truck that comply and are approved for pre-7.00 am operations. They have also provided to Council on a monthly basis the details of all trucks that have entered the site prior to 7.00 am. The required signage has been installed, a drivers code of conduct implemented and acoustic monitoring paid for.

7 NOISE REDUCTION ACTIONS

Castella Quarries has undertaken substantial measures and spent considerable money to reduce noise levels and to ensure the noise generated by trucks servicing the quarry is kept to a minimum. The following actions have been implemented:

- Undertook acoustic testing of all subcontractor trucks to ensure compliance with noise levels specified in the *Victorian Environment Protection (Vehicle Emissions) Regulations 2003* and determine appropriateness for pre-7.00 am operations.
- Prohibited entry to the site prior to 7.00 am for any trucks not tested or not deemed appropriate on the basis of the above testing.
- Installed a large sign at the quarry prohibiting the entry of unauthorised trucks prior to 7.00 am (refer to Appendix 2).

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- Directed owners of noisier trucks to reduce noise levels by replacing exhaust and muffler systems.
- Terminated the services of trucks whose owners would not comply with directions to reduce noise generation.
- Implemented a drivers code of conduct and educated drivers to ensure driver behaviour is consistent with minimising noise generation.
- Installed signs along the access road requiring drivers to minimise the use of engine brakes to reduce noise (refer to Appendix 2).
- Where ever possible, loaded trucks for pre-7.00 am deliveries on the previous evening.
- Active monitoring of drivers' behaviour while on the quarry site.

There are occasionally non-subcontractor trucks (ex-bin customers) that enter the site over which the quarry operator has no direct control. These are prohibited before 7.00 am. If driver behaviour is unacceptable, they are directed not to attend the quarry.

8 ACOUSTIC MONITORING

AECOM Australia Pty Ltd (AECOM) undertook monitoring of the quarry activities in March 2014 on behalf of Council. This was paid for by Castella Quarries consistent with its December 2012 offer. The key findings of this monitoring were reported as:

- The background noise measured was lower than that measured by WMG in 2012. AECOM were unable to determine the reason for this discrepancy.
- The lower background noise levels resulted in AECOM calculating lower NIRV Recommended Maximum Noise Levels (RMNL's) for both the daytime and pre- 7.00 am periods than had been calculated by WMG.
- The noise levels generated by the quarry trucks had substantially reduced since the initial monitoring undertaken by WMG in mid-2012. The effective noise level had reduced from 50 dB(A) to 42 dB(A).
- All aspects of the quarry operations meet NIRV's RMNL's as calculated by both AECOM and WMG during the daytime period (7.00 am to 6.00 pm).
- For the pre-7.00 am period, the quarry operations meet NIRV's RMNL's as calculated by WMG. It also meets those calculated by AECOM, for up to 2 truck movements per half hour.
- The noise of quarry trucks can generally only be heard at times when there is minimal noise on Melba Highway. At other times it is masked by the background traffic noise. AECOM found that in 8 of 16 occasions when

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trucks traversed the quarry road, noise could not be recorded due to the generated by traffic on Melba Highway.

It is clear from AECOM's monitoring that the implementation of the noise reduction measures as described in Section 7 has substantially reduced the noise levels being generated by the trucks servicing the quarry. The removal of the noisy trucks, upgrading of the exhaust systems, and modification in driver behaviour (using engine brakes) has paid dividends.

It is also important to note that for a small number of truck movements per half hour, the quarry meets the lower AECOM pre-7.00 am RMNL's. A higher number of truck movements would only result in a minor exceedance which is permissible pursuant to the alternative best practice approach for locationally constrained extractive industries adopted in NIRV as discussed in Section 13 of this submission. The quarry operations meet NIRV's RMNL's as calculated by WMG.

9 QUARRY ACTIVITY LEVELS

Appendix 3 details the number of trucks that have entered / left the quarry prior to 7.00 am in 2014 (January to October). The need to enter and leave the quarry varies depending on the nature of the project being supplied. It is important to note that it does not occur every day. Of the 251 working days in the period 13th January to 31st October 2014, trucks exited the quarry prior to 7.00 am on 81 days (32% of possible days). The details of these trucks are being provided to Council's planning department on a regular basis.

Generally it is one or two trucks that leave the quarry prior to 7.00 am on any day. Occasionally in 2014 it has been 3 trucks and on one occasion more than 3. Sales of quarry products decline during winter and therefore the incidence of pre-7.00 am movements also declines.

Based on the AECOM results, if one or possibly 2 trucks leave the quarry before 7.00 am, the RMNL for this period will be complied with. If additional trucks leave the site, the RMNL may be exceeded by a small amount. The quarry operations meet NIRV's RMNL's as calculated by WMG.

From the above it can be concluded that for most days, the quarry will comply with the pre-7.00 am RMNL calculated by AECOM. Occasionally, it may exceed this RMNL, but this is allowed for pursuant to the alternative best practice approach for locationally constrained extractive industries adopted in NIRV as discussed in Section 13 of this submission.

10 IMPACT ON RESIDENTS

10.1 SLEEP DISTURBANCE

The following extract from the NSW Road Noise Policy (NSW Government Environment, Climate Change & Water - March 2011), page 35, is often referred to in relation to sleep disturbance:

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“From the research on sleep disturbance to date it can be concluded that:

- *maximum internal noise levels below 50–55 dB(A) are unlikely to awaken people from sleep*

An internal noise level of 50 – 55 dB(A) equates to an external noise level of 60 – 65 dB(A) with an open window. There is a 10 dB(A) attenuation from outside to inside with an open window. Therefore the noise level from the quarry trucks would have to be consistently at least 60 dB(A) at the residences to begin to cause sleep disturbance.

WMG determined an effective noise level of 50 dB(A) before the quarry implemented its noise reduction measures. AECOM determined an effective noise level of 42 dB(A). The maximum quarry truck noise levels recorded at the Moore Court residences were 53 dB(A) by WMG and 50.3 dB(A) by AECOM. These are all substantially below the levels stated by the NSW Road Noise Policy as causing sleep disturbance.

Given the two acoustic assessments undertaken, it can be concluded that it is highly unlikely that the quarry trucks will cause sleep disturbance to the residents in the nearest dwellings in Moore Court. The maximum noise levels from the quarry trucks would have to be consistently at least 60 dB(A) at the residences to begin to cause sleep disturbance. The maximum noise levels recorded at 37 and 49 Moore Court for the trucks were substantially less than 60 dB(A). Also, this maximum noise level did not occur consistently.

The Melba Highway is a major highway carrying substantial levels of traffic (estimated at in excess of 4,000 vehicles) including substantial truck traffic. If any occurrences of sleep disturbance for the residents of Moore Court occur, these are highly likely to arise from events associated with traffic on the Highway.

10.2 RESIDENT COMPLAINTS

Castella Quarries have been made aware of a small number of complaints from two residents received by Council since the noise reduction measures have been implemented and interim consent given for the quarry to commence operations from 6.00 am. There have also been a small number of complaints made directly to the quarry.

All of these complaints have been about events occurring after 7.00 am. There have been no complaints regarding activities prior to 7.00 am.

The complaints received have been in relation to individual incidents of an alleged noisy truck. The trucks complained about are not those operated by contractors under the direct control of the quarry. They are from occasional external ex-bin customers. When the quarry management become aware of any alleged noisy vehicles, the drivers are instructed to modify exhaust system and / or their driving behaviour to reduce potential noise. Failure to comply with this results in their attendance at the quarry being banned.

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It must be noted that an individual noisy truck does not constitute a non-compliance with the RMNL's. A number of such events over a half hour period would be required for this to occur.

The absence of any complaints in respect to the pre-7.00 period clearly indicates that the activities of the quarry are not detrimentally impacting on the nearby residents during this period.

The recent AECOM monitoring demonstrates that with a small number of trucks leaving the quarry before 7.00 am, the RMNL's for this period are being complied with. The quarry operations meet NIRV's RMNL's as calculated by WMG. The monitoring also shows that the quarry is complying with the RMNL's for the 7.00 am to 6.00 pm period.

11 DEMONSTRATED NEED FOR EXTENDED HOURS

The past and future projects serviced by Castella Quarry which are listed in Section 5 demonstrate that the quarry's market spans a large area and can involve travelling substantial distances from the quarry. Competing quarries are also well spread through this market area and are capable of taking business away from Castella Quarries if product cannot be supplied to the job site at the time required.

Irrespective of whether the job is local or further afield, any requirement to have product on-site by 7.00 am or soon thereafter, requires the trucks to access the quarry well before 7 unless they were loaded the previous evening which is not always feasible. Even if product is not required on-site by 7.00 am, projects that are located further afield may still require trucks to leave the quarry prior to 7.00 am to deliver product in a timely manner.

It is essential for our client to remain competitive in the market place and to do so they must be able to deliver quarry products to construction sites in a timely manner which at times requires trucks to be loaded and leave the quarry prior to 7.00 am.

12 ECONOMIC & SOCIAL BENEFITS

The inability of our client to remain competitive in manner described above threatens their on-going viability. It also poses a real risk of a reduction in competition in the market place and a consequent rise in the cost of quarry products to the consumer and ultimately the community.

The long term impact of our client's lack of competitiveness is likely to be a loss of local employment, income, industry output and household consumption from the Shire of Murrindindi. The quarry stimulus to economic activity would most likely be transferred to adjacent Shires.

13 NIRV PROVISIONS

As discussed in Section 5, NIRV allows for exceptions to compliance with the recommended maximum noise levels where this cannot be achieved due to locational constraints, such as can be the case with extractive industries. We submit that this is the case in this instance.

NIRV allows an alternative application approach that applies best practice to address residual noise risks. This involves the proponent demonstrating that it has:

- reduced noise as far as practicable
- demonstrated a net benefit for the proposal
- explored alternative outcomes with the community to address the noise risks
- proposed measures to address the residual noise risks.

13.1 REDUCTION OF NOISE

Castella Quarries has achieved a substantial reduction in noise generated by truck movements by employing the measures detailed in Section 7.

This has resulted in the effective noise levels being reduced from 50 dB(A) recorded by WMG in mid-2012 to 42 dB(A) recorded by AECOM in March 2014.

13.2 NET BENEFIT

The quarry's need for extended hours has been demonstrated in Sections 4 and 11 of this submission. The economic and social benefits of the extension of hours is demonstrated in Section 12.

Section 10 demonstrates that the impact of the extended hours on local residents will be minimal. The acoustic assessments undertaken demonstrate that the activities conducted before 7.00 am are highly unlikely to cause sleep disturbance and for the most part can comply with the RMNL's. There may be occasions when the RMNL's may not be able to be strictly complied with, but exceedances are likely to be minimal.

Under the temporary consent, pre-7.00 am activities have been occurring on the quarry site since mid-2013 without any complaints from local residents. This is testament to the fact that these activities have not had any detrimental impact on the residents in the locality.

Given the need for the extended hours, the economic and social benefits arising therefrom and the lack of detrimental impacts on the local residents as demonstrated by the acoustic monitoring and lack of complaints, it can be readily concluded that the proposal to extend the operating hours of the quarry will have a net community benefit.

13.3 ALTERNATIVE OUTCOMES TO ADDRESS NOISE RISKS

Castella Quarries have investigated alternative measures to assist in minimising noise risks, in addition to those described in Section 7.

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Alternative access to the quarry was investigated. Due to the steeply undulating topography of the area there are no alternative access routes to the quarry's extraction area from the Melba Highway. This extraction area is surrounded on the west, north and east by Crown Land which prevents access from these directions. There is no other alternative access available.

Where ever possible, the quarry organises its scheduling of trucks so that product that needs to be delivered early in the morning is loaded late the previous afternoon. However, given the distances involved to some projects and the quantities of products required, this is not feasible to organise deliveries in this manner in all cases.

13.4 MEASURES TO ADDRESS RESIDUAL NOISE RISKS

The quarry will continue to use the measures already implemented to minimise residual noise risks. These are detailed in Section 7. This includes allowing only approved trucks to enter the quarry site prior to 7.00 am.

14 PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Castella Quarries will keep a log of all complaints relating to the quarry's operation and make this available to Council upon request. This log will record:

- The date, time and nature of the complaint;
- The results of the investigation of the cause of the complaint, and
- The actions taken in response to the complaint.

15 CONCLUSION

It is concluded that:

- The quarry is constrained in its location and has no alternative access available to it;
- It is appropriate to apply the NIRV alternative best practice application process for industries with locational constraints;
- Acoustic monitoring undertaken has demonstrated that the measures introduced by the quarry to reduce truck noise have substantially reduced noise levels;
- There have been no complaints from local residents regarding the pre-7.00 am operations of the quarry since mid-2013;
- Acoustic monitoring has demonstrated compliance with NIRV RMNL's during the day and most mornings prior to 7.00 am;

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- Any exceedances of the pre-7.00 am NIRV RMNL are likely to be minor and are catered for pursuant to the alternative best practice approach for locationally constrained extractive industries adopted in NIRV;
- Acoustic monitoring has demonstrated that it is highly unlikely that quarry trucks will cause sleep disturbance;
- The need to service markets in a timely manner and have trucks leave the quarry prior to 7.00 am has been demonstrated;
- The economic and social benefits of allowing operations to commence prior to 7.00 am has been demonstrated;
- The net benefit of allowing operations to commence prior to 7.00 am has been demonstrated;
- The criteria for the NIRV alternative application process for industries with locational constraints has been satisfied, and
- The quarry will continue to undertake performance monitoring to ensure that noise generated by trucks servicing the quarry is minimised.

Given the preceding conclusions, it is submitted that it is appropriate for Council to give consent to permanently allow cartage trucks to enter the quarry site from 5.30 am onwards and for extractive and cartage operations to begin at 6.00 am.

JACK H KRAAN

Director
FocusCDS Consultants

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APPENDIX 1 – LETTERS OF SUPPORT

*Submission in Support of Request to Extend Operating Hours
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(2513R01)

I Jason Comben OF

-Company Quarry Roads

Would like to give my support to enable Castella Quarries to have truck deliveries on site from 7am onward

Major factors include.

No waiting time of site staff or machinery for product deliveries.

Job completion times reduced.

Job costs reduced.

Trucks not being held up by school speed restriction.

Trucks not being hampered by peak hour traffic flow.

Our company commences work from 7am and require Deliveries accordingly.

Signed



QR Construction (Gippsland) Pty Ltd
PO Box 319
Lilydale VIC 3140

Solustore A D'Abaco

-Company- D'ABACO SAND SOIL & MINI MIX CONCRETE

Would like to give my support to enable Castella Quarries to have truck deliveries on site from 7am onward

Major factors include.

No waiting time of site staff or machinery for product deliveries.

Job completion times reduced.

Job costs reduced.

Trucks not being held up by school speed restriction.

Trucks not being hampered by peak hour traffic flow.

Our company commences work from 7am and require Deliveries accordingly.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long diagonal stroke extending to the right.

Michael Connell

-Company- R. S. Connell + Sons P/L

Would like to give my support to enable Castella Quarries to have truck deliveries on site from 7am onward

Major factors include.

No waiting time of site staff or machinery for product deliveries.

Job completion times reduced.

Job costs reduced.

Trucks not being held up by school speed restriction.

Trucks not being hampered by peak hour traffic flow.

Our company commences work from 7am and require Deliveries accordingly.

Signed



Simon Milne
-Company- Contek Constructions Pty Ltd

Would like to give my support to enable Castella Quarries to have truck deliveries on site from 7am onward

Major factors include.

No waiting time of site staff or machinery for product deliveries.

Job completion times reduced.

Job costs reduced.

Trucks not being held up by school speed restriction.

Trucks not being hampered by peak hour traffic flow.

Our company commences work from 7am and require Deliveries accordingly.

Signed



I Michael Charge

-Company SIDDAHED CONCRETE SUPPLIES

Would like to give my support to enable Castella Quarries to have truck deliveries on site from 7am onward

Major factors include.

No waiting time of site staff or machinery for product deliveries.

Job completion times reduced.


Job costs reduced.

Trucks not being held up by school speed restriction.

Trucks not being hampered by peak hour traffic flow.

Our company commences work from 7am and require Deliveries accordingly.

Signed



IAN. LATTA - General Manager
-Company- VIC Mix Pty LTD

Would like to give my support to enable Castella Quarries to have truck deliveries on site from 7am onward

Major factors include.

No waiting time of site staff or machinery for product deliveries.

Job completion times reduced.

Job costs reduced.

Trucks not being held up by school speed restriction.

Trucks not being hampered by peak hour traffic flow.

Our company commences work from 7am and require Deliveries accordingly.

Signed



Ian. Latta

Vic Mix Pty LTD

I Ben Heverin
-Company McMahons Pty Ltd.

Would like to give my support to enable Castella Quarries to have truck deliveries on site from 7am onward

Major factors include.

No waiting time of site staff or machinery for product deliveries.

Job completion times reduced.

Job costs reduced.

Trucks not being held up by school speed restriction.

Trucks not being hampered by peak hour traffic flow.

Our company commences work from 7am and require Deliveries accordingly.

Signed 

I STEPHEN ROBINSON

-Company Downer Australia

Would like to give my support to enable Castella Quarries to have truck deliveries on site from 7am onward

Major factors include.

No waiting time of site staff or machinery for product deliveries.

Job completion times reduced.

Job costs reduced.

Trucks not being held up by school speed restriction.

Trucks not being hampered by peak hour traffic flow.

Our company commences work from 7am and require Deliveries accordingly.

Signed



I Michael Franco

-Company Montdani Construction

Would like to give my support to enable Castella Quarries to have truck deliveries on site from 7am onward

Major factors include.

No waiting time of site staff or machinery for product deliveries.

Job completion times reduced.


Job costs reduced.

Trucks not being held up by school speed restriction.

Trucks not being hampered by peak hour traffic flow.

Our company commences work from 7am and require Deliveries accordingly.

Signed

 Michael Franco

I FRANK WOOD

-Company FRANK WOOD PLANT HIRE

Would like to give my support to enable Castella Quarries to have truck deliveries on site from 7am onward

Major factors include.

No waiting time of site staff or machinery for product deliveries.

Job completion times reduced.

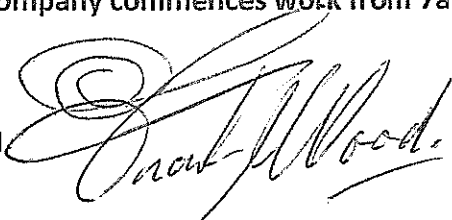
Job costs reduced.

Trucks not being held up by school speed restriction.

Trucks not being hampered by peak hour traffic flow.

Our company commences work from 7am and require Deliveries accordingly.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frank Wood", written over a horizontal line.

I Bradley Donald McBride

-Company Yarra Garden Supplies

Would like to give my support to enable Castella Quarries to have truck deliveries on site from 7am onward

Major factors include.

No waiting time of site staff or machinery for product deliveries.

Job completion times reduced.

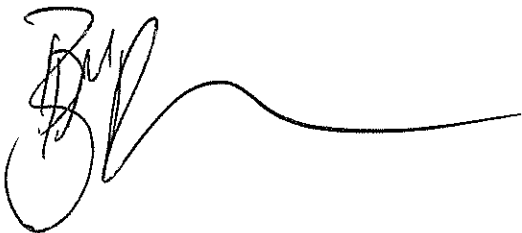
Job costs reduced.

Trucks not being held up by school speed restriction.

Trucks not being hampered by peak hour traffic flow.

Our company commences work from 7am and require Deliveries accordingly.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'BDM', followed by a long, horizontal, wavy line extending to the right.

| _____ CHRIS MOORE _____

-Company- _____ FINERIDGE RTY LTD _____

Would like to give my support to enable Castella Quarries to have truck deliveries on site from 7am onward

Major factors include.

No waiting time of site staff or machinery for product deliveries.

Job completion times reduced.

Job costs reduced.

Trucks not being held up by school speed restriction.

Trucks not being hampered by peak hour traffic flow.

Our company commences work from 7am and require Deliveries accordingly.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Chris Moore', written over a horizontal line.

I REGINA LANE

-Company VIC HOME ROAD SERVICES

Would like to give my support to enable Castella Quarries to have truck deliveries on site from 7am onward

Major factors include.

No waiting time of site staff or machinery for product deliveries.

Job completion times reduced.

Job costs reduced.

Trucks not being held up by school speed restriction.

Trucks not being hampered by peak hour traffic flow.

Our company commences work from 7am and require Deliveries accordingly.

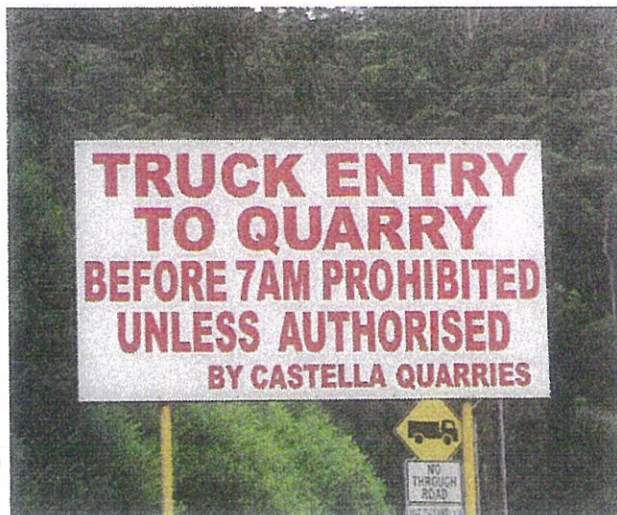
Signed *Regina Lane*

APPENDIX 2 – PHOTOGRAPHS OF SIGNAGE

*Submission in Support of Request to Extend Operating Hours
Castella Quarries – 2900 Melba Highway, Castella
November 2014*

(2513R01)

Castella Quarry signs



APPENDIX 3 – PRE-7.00 AM TRUCK NUMBERS (2014)

*Submission in Support of Request to Extend Operating Hours
Castella Quarries – 2900 Melba Highway, Castella
November 2014*

(2513R01)

Date	Truck No's		Date	Truck No's		Date	Truck No's
February			May			Sept	
10	1		1	1		9	6
11	1		2	1		11	2
21	1		6	1		12	2
24	1		9	1		19	2
25	2		13	1		24	2
26	3		14	1		25	1
28	3		15	1		30	2
			16	1			
March			19	1		October	
3	3		20	1		1	1
4	2		21	1		2	2
5	2		22	1		3	2
6	1		23	2		6	2
11	2		27	1		7	2
12	1		29	1		8	1
13	2		30	1		9	1
14	1					10	1
17	1		June			13	1
18	2		3	1		14	1
19	1		4	1		15	1
20	1		5	2		16	1
21	1		11	2		17	1
25	1		12	2		22	1
26	2		16	2		23	2
27	1		18	1		24	3
						27	1
April			July	Nil		30	1
1	1					31	3
2	1		August				
3	1		27	2			
4	1						
8	2						
9	1						
16	1						
17	1						
23	1						
24	1						
29	1						

Submission in Support of Request to Extend Operating Hours
Castella Quarries – 2900 Melba Highway, Castella
November 2014

(2513R01)

Castella Quarry Noise Assessment



Castella Quarry Noise Assessment

Client: Murrindindi Shire Council

ABN: 83 600 647 004

Prepared by

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11-Apr-2014

Job No.: 60318162

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Quality Information

Document Castella Quarry Noise Assessment

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Revision	Revision Date	Details	Authorised	
			Name/Position	Signature
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Executive Summary

AECOM Australia Pty Ltd (AECOM) was commissioned by the Murrindindi Shire Council (the Council) to perform an assessment of the noise emissions from the quarry operated by Castella Quarries Pty Ltd at 2900 Melba Highway, Castella (the Quarry).

The noise monitoring was commissioned to fulfil a condition of a temporary extension of hours which was previously granted to the Quarry, which required the Quarry noise emissions to be assessed by a Council appointed consultant, prior to any ongoing extension of hours being approved.

The conditions associated with the Quarry's temporary extension of hours require compliance with the Recommended Maximum Noise Levels (RMNL) set out by EPA Publication 1411 "Noise from Industry in Regional Victoria, – Recommended Maximum Noise Levels from Commerce Industry and Trade in Regional Victoria" (NIRV) and an acoustic report which was prepared by Watson Moss Growcott Acoustics Pty Ltd titled "Noise Emission Assessment Conducted at 49 Moore Court, Castella", dated 28 August 2012 (WMG Acoustic Report)

Noise Criteria

The noise criteria that were established for the Quarry in the WMG Acoustic Report are as follows:

Table 1 Quarry Noise Criteria as Determined by Watson Moss Growcott

Period	Times Applicable to Quarry Operation	NIRV Recommended Maximum Noise Level (RMNL), dB(A)
Day	7am to 6pm Monday to Friday 7am to 1pm Saturday	52
Night	6am to 7am* Monday to Saturday	45

* The EPA defines the Night period to be 10pm to 7am. The only portion of the Night period for which the Quarry operates is 6am to 7am.

It has been noted that the background noise levels which were used in the WMG Acoustic Report to determine the NIRV RMNLs are considerably higher than those measured by AECOM during the assessment presented in this report. If the noise limits are determined in accordance with NIRV using the background noise levels measured by AECOM, the resulting RMNLs are 5 dB(A) less than those determined by WMG for the 'Day' period, and 7 dB(A) less for the 'Night' period between 6am and 7am, as presented in Table 5, below.

Table 2 Quarry Noise Criteria in Accordance with NIRV based on Background Noise Levels Measured by AECOM

Period	Times Applicable to Quarry Operation	NIRV Recommended Maximum Noise Level (RMNL), dB(A)
Day	7am to 6pm Monday to Friday 7am to 1pm Saturday	47
Night	6am to 7am Monday to Saturday	38

The RMNLs presented in the WMG Acoustic Report are therefore unexpectedly high and should be reviewed before deciding whether or not to provide further approval to the Quarry for extended operating hours.

Noise Assessment

Noise monitoring for the noise assessment was performed at 37 Moore Court, which is almost directly opposite the entrance to the Quarry from Melba Highway. It is considered that 37 Moore Court is one of the residences potentially most-affected by noise from the Quarry.

The following Effective Noise Levels due to the Quarry were determined in accordance with the procedures prescribed by NIRV:

Table 3 Effective Noise Levels

Period	Times Applicable to Quarry Operation	Effective Noise Level, dB(A)
Day	7am to 6pm Monday to Friday 7am to 1pm Saturday	46
Night	6am to 7am Monday to Saturday	42

The Effective Noise Levels comply with the 'Day' and 'Night' period RMNLs presented in the WMG Acoustic Report. The Effective Noise Levels also comply with the 'Day' period RMNL based on the background noise levels measured by AECOM, but do not comply with the 'Night' period RMNL, based on the background noise levels measured by AECOM.

Regardless of which set of RMNLs are applied, it should be noted that the Quarry's compliance with the noise criteria is partially dependent on the number of truck movements during any half-hour period. Whilst the Quarry noise levels measured during this assessment have been found to comply with all criteria except the 'Night' period RMNL that would apply based on the background noise levels measured by AECOM, the Quarry noise levels during busier periods with more truck movements may or may not remain compliant. Details of the maximum numbers of truck movements that would be allowable during any half-hour period are presented in the report.

In light of the findings of this assessment, it is recommended that the Council should review the noise limits which are applied to the Quarry, and if the Council decides to approve an ongoing extension of the Quarry's operating hours, the Council should consider applying a limitation on the number of truck movements during the period between 6am and 7am Monday to Saturday.

1.0 Introduction

AECOM Australia Pty Ltd (AECOM) was commissioned by the Murrindindi Shire Council (the Council) to perform an assessment of noise emissions from the quarry operated by Castella Quarries Pty Ltd at 2900 Melba Highway, Castella (the Quarry).

It is understood that the original permit for the Quarry allowed the Quarry to operate between 7am and 6pm Monday to Friday, and 7am to 1pm Saturdays. The Quarry subsequently applied for consent to allow trucks to enter the site and undertake loading activities from 5.30am, and to allow all other extractive operations from 6am. As a result of this application the Council is understood to have granted a temporary extension to the operating hours of the Quarry, allowing it to commence operations from 6am, subject to a number of conditions designed to address potential noise impacts to nearby residential properties.

Condition 7 of the temporary extension of hours, required that noise monitoring be conducted by a Council appointed consultant to assess the Quarry's compliance with the Recommended Maximum Noise Levels (RMNL) set out by EPA Publication 1411 *"Noise from Industry in Regional Victoria, – Recommended Maximum Noise Levels from Commerce, Industry and Trade Premises in Regional Victoria"* (NIRV) and the acoustic report prepared by Watson Moss Growcott Acoustics Pty Ltd *"Noise Emission Assessment Conducted at 49 Moore Court, Castella"*, dated 28 August 2012 (WVG Acoustic Report).

In fulfilment of the above condition, the objectives of this noise assessment were therefore to:

- Monitor the operational noise emissions from the quarry at nearby residence;
- Assess noise emissions from the Quarry during the 6am to 7am period, in relation to the RNML; and
- Check the Quarry's compliance with the RMNL for other times of the day.

Noise monitoring for the above assessment was performed during the period 14 to 21 March 2014. This report presents the methodology and findings of the noise monitoring and assessment.

A glossary of the acoustic terms used in this report is presented in Appendix A.

2.0 Site Description

The Quarry is located on the eastern side of Melba Highway at Castella, approximately 800 metres north of Castella Road. The Quarry excavation area is at an elevation of approximately 280 metres above the Melba Highway, and access to it is via a relatively steep access road approximately 2km long.

The Quarry is surrounded by the Toolangi State Forest to the west, north and east, with Farming zoned land to the south. To the southwest of the quarry, there is a Low Density Residential zoned area on the western side of Melba Highway. This area comprises thirteen residences within 500 metres of the Quarry property boundary, the majority of which are on Moore Court.

For the purpose of this noise assessment, noise monitoring was performed at 37 Moore Court, which is almost directly opposite the entrance to the Quarry from Melba Highway. It is considered that the Quarry noise at 37 Moore Court would be representative of the Quarry noise at the nearest and most affected residences in this area.

The acoustic environment at 37 Moore Court is characterised by periods of moderate traffic noise levels from Melba Highway interspersed with periods of relative quiet during lulls in the traffic. At the time of AECOM's visit to the site, during the early morning hours, there was observed to be little traffic on Melba Highway, and the ambient noise environment was generally controlled by insect and bird noise.

Noise from trucks climbing and descending the access road to the Quarry was observed to be clearly audible at 37 Moore Court during periods with little traffic on Melba Highway, but was partially or completely masked by traffic noise when vehicles were passing on Melba Highway.

Noise from operation of the quarry, other than trucks on the access road, was not observed to be audible on any of AECOM's visits to the residence, or in any of the noise recordings performed over the course of a week.

Figure 1 presents an aerial photograph of the Quarry and surrounding area.

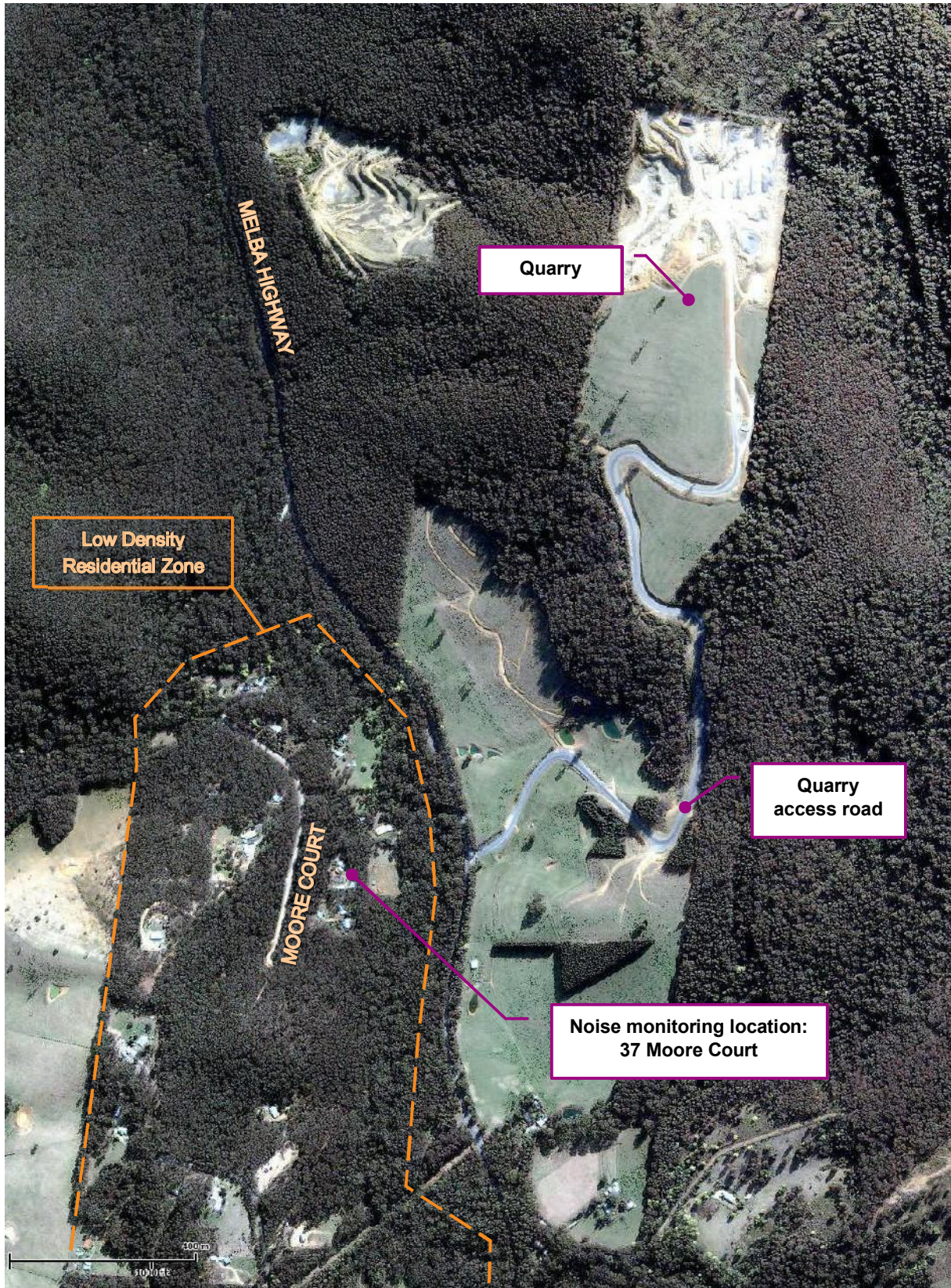


Figure 1 Quarry and Surrounding Area

3.0 Noise Criteria

Noise assessment criteria for the Quarry were established in the WMG Acoustic Report using the guidelines from NIRV. NIRV prescribes the methods recommended by the EPA for setting industry noise limits in regional Victoria. It should however be noted that NIRV is a non-statutory guideline; the NIRV noise limits are only legally binding when applied through statutory instruments such as a planning permit or notice.

The noise criteria that were established for the Quarry in the WMG Acoustic Report are as follows:

Table 4 Quarry Noise Criteria as Determined by Watson Moss Growcott

Period	Times Applicable to Quarry Operation	NIRV Recommended Maximum Noise Level (RMNL), dB(A)
Day	7am to 6pm Monday to Friday 7am to 1pm Saturday	52
Night	6am to 7am* Monday to Saturday	45

* The EPA defines the Night period to be 10pm to 7am. The only portion of the Night period for which the Quarry operates is 6am to 7am.

The RMNLs presented in the table above are the criteria that the Quarry is required to comply with in accordance with Condition 7 of the temporary extension of hours granted by the Council. In accordance with NIRV, the criteria apply at any location which is within 10m of the residence and within the boundaries of the residential property. With respect to trucks entering and exiting the Quarry, the noise limits only apply to noise from vehicles while they are on the Quarry land; the limits are not applicable to noise from vehicles while they are approaching or departing the Quarry on the public road (Melba Highway).

Note, in the course of the noise assessment presented in this report, AECOM has reviewed the above criteria in relation to the background noise levels measured at 37 Moore Court during the assessment period (refer to Section 4.0 and 5.0 for details). Based on this review, AECOM considers the above noise criteria to be inappropriate.

The noise limits which apply in accordance with NIRV are dependent on the planning zone types and the background noise levels in the area of the receptor. The background noise levels which were used in the WMG Acoustic Report to determine the NIRV RMNLs above are considerably higher than those measured by AECOM during this assessment. The measurements performed by AECOM suggest that the 'Day' period background noise levels are approximately 6 dB(A) less than reported by WMG, and the background noise levels for the 6am to 7am period are 8 dB(A) less.

If the noise limits are determined in accordance with NIRV using the background noise levels measured by AECOM, the resulting RMNLs are 5 dB(A) less than those determined by WMG for the 'Day' period, and 7 dB(A) less for the 'Night' period between 6am and 7am, as presented in Table 5, below.

Table 5 Quarry Noise Criteria in Accordance with NIRV based on Background Noise Levels Measured by AECOM

Period	Times Applicable to Quarry Operation	NIRV Recommended Maximum Noise Level (RMNL), dB(A)
Day	7am to 6pm Monday to Friday 7am to 1pm Saturday	47
Night	6am to 7am Monday to Saturday	38

We have been unable to determine the reason for the discrepancy in background noise levels; however it is noted that the WMG Acoustic Report states that frog noise was a component of the background noise levels measured, whereas frog noise was not noted to be a significant component of the background noise environment at the time of AECOMs measurements. As WMG measured in the month of July and AECOM measured in the month of March seasonal differences in frog activity are a possible explanation. Other possible explanations include:

- Potential variation due to WMG measuring at 49 Moore Court whereas AECOM measured at 37 Moore Court. This would be expected to have only minor effect, noting that both residences are similar distance from Melba Highway, which is the main source of ambient noise. AECOM was unable to measure at 49 Moore Court due to the resident refusing permission.

- WMG may have coincidentally measured during a particularly noisy period, or AECOM may have measured during a particularly quiet period, or a combination of both may have occurred.
- A combination of both of the above may have caused the discrepancy.

Regardless of the actual reason for the discrepancy, it is apparent from the measurements that have been conducted by AECOM that the background noise levels at the residences on Moore Court are at times significantly lower than presented in the WMG Acoustic Report. As the lower background noise levels measured by AECOM occurred relatively consistently across the week-long measurement period, the RMNLs determined by WMG are unexpectedly high and should be reviewed.

4.0 Noise Monitoring Methodology

Noise monitoring was conducted at 37 Moore Court, Castella, over the period of one week from approximately 6am Friday 14 March to 9am Friday 21 March 2014.

The noise monitoring was conducted using a laboratory calibrated ARL Ngarra Type 1 environmental noise logger (serial no. 878101). The calibration of the logger was field-checked at the start and end of the noise monitoring period using a Rion NC-74 Class 1 Portable Sound Level Calibrator (serial no. 10786714), and was found to be reading correctly at the time of both checks.

The logger was configured to measure the sound pressure levels at the monitoring location and simultaneously record audio data to enable the sounds occurring at the monitoring location to be played back later for the purpose of identifying the noise sources at any particular time.

The microphone of the noise logger was positioned approximately 10m from the residence at a height of 1.2m above ground level, as shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3 overleaf.

During the period from 6am to 8am on 14 March, visual observations were made of the traffic entering and exiting the quarry site, simultaneous to the noise monitoring, to enable the noise from vehicles on the Quarry access road to be assessed. During the attended monitoring, the weather was calm and clear.

Meteorological data for the period of the unattended noise monitoring was obtained from the Bureau of Meteorology weather station at Coldstream. Periods where rain and wind may have influenced the measured noise levels were noted and/or excluded from the assessment.



Figure 2 Noise Logger Installed at 37 Moore Court – View towards Quarry Access Road



Figure 3 Noise Logger Installed at 37 Moore Court – View towards House

5.0 Noise Monitoring Results

5.1 Background Noise Levels

The following table presents a summary of the L_{A90} background noise levels measured at 37 Moore Court, as determined in accordance with NIRV.

Table 6 L_{A90} Background Noise Levels Measured at 37 Moore Court

Date	Average Hourly L_{A90} Background Noise Level for Period, dB(A)		Comment
	6am to 7am Monday to Saturday in the NIRV 'Night' Period	NIRV 'Day' Period 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday 7am to 1pm Saturday	
Friday, 14 March 2014	34	42	
Saturday, 15 March 2014	35	45	
Sunday, 16 March 2014*	29	42	
Monday, 17 March 2014	43	43	Elevated noise levels due to windy conditions.
Tuesday, 18 March 2014	33	39	
Wednesday, 19 March 2014	34	40	
Thursday, 20 March 2014	39	44	
Friday, 21 March 2014	37	-	
Minimum	33	39	

* Sunday is outside the assessed operational hours for the Quarry. The background noise levels for Sunday are presented for information only.

Note:

- 1) When a spread of results is obtained from a period of background noise monitoring covering a number of days, the EPA has conventionally adopted the approach of taking the day with the lowest average background noise level for any given time period ('Day', 'Evening', or 'Night') as the basis for determining noise limits. Based on the above measurements, the background noise levels that would be applicable for determining noise limits for the Quarry in accordance with NIRV would be 33 dB(A) L_{A90} during the period of 6am-7am Monday to Saturday, and 39 dB(A) L_{A90} during the period 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 7am to 1pm Saturday.
- 2) Whilst the Quarry was operating during the period when the above background noise levels were measured, noise due to the Quarry is unlikely to have significantly influenced the L_{A90} background noise levels measured, since the noise from the Quarry is generally only dominant for a small proportion of the time.

Graphs showing the variation of hourly L_{A90} noise level across the noise monitoring period are presented in Appendix C. Also shown on the graphs are the L_{Aeq} noise levels (including quarry noise and all other ambient noise sources), plus the wind speed, wind direction, and rainfall data from the Bureau of Meteorology Weather Station at Coldstream.

5.2 Quarry Noise

The typical noise levels due to trucks and other vehicles on the Quarry access road were determined based on the attended noise measurements conducted between 6am and 8am on 14 March 2014. During this period, truck movements on the Quarry access road were clearly audible at the residence for a cumulative total of approximately 20 minutes. For some of this time however, the noise levels at the residence were also influenced by noise from other ambient noise sources such as traffic noise from Melba Highway.

In measuring and analysing the L_{Aeq} noise levels due to trucks on the Quarry access road, significant care was taken to exclude periods where noise from vehicles on the public road, or other ambient noise sources, influenced the noise measurements. This resulted in a cumulative sample time of 7.5 minutes of noise from trucks on the Quarry access road, where ambient noise was not considered to have influenced the measured noise level.

During the sampling period, most trucks were observed to descend the access road either without engine brakes applied, or with engine brakes applied only lightly. Details of the noise measurement samples making up the cumulative total are presented in Appendix B.

Based on the measured noise samples, the L_{Aeq} noise level due to trucks on the Quarry access road has been determined to be **48 dB(A)**.

6.0 Assessment

6.1 Adjustments Applicable to Measured Quarry Noise Levels

In accordance with NIRV, the Quarry noise levels are assessed using the measurement procedures prescribed by *State Environment Protection Policy (Control of Noise from Industry, Commerce and Trade) No. N-1* (SEPP N-1). SEPP N-1 specifies various adjustments to the measured levels to account for the temporal and spectral characteristics of the sound being assessed, the influence of the measurement environment, and the duration for which the sound under consideration is audible during any half hour period. The following adjustments are considered to be applicable to the measured noise levels due to the Quarry:

6.1.1 Duration Adjustment

Based on the two hours of attended noise monitoring that was conducted, and on review of the audio recordings from the remaining period of unattended noise monitoring, noise from vehicles on the Quarry access road was typically audible for 15% of any half hour period between 6am and 7am, and up to 40% of any half hour period after 7am. On this basis, the following duration adjustments would apply:

Table 7 Duration Adjustments

Period	Times Applicable to Quarry Operation	% Time Audible	Duration Adjustment
Day	7am to 6pm Monday to Friday 7am to 1pm Saturday	40%	-4 dB(A)
Night	6am to 7am Monday to Saturday	15%	-8 dB(A)

6.1.2 Tonality Adjustment

It was noted that the noise from some trucks was tonal in character, particularly when the trucks were descending. This character was most notable for trucks descending with engine brakes applied (rare during the noise monitoring period), but some trucks were observed to produce a tonal 'drone' even when descending without engine brakes applied.

The tonal character was generally 'just-detectable' rather than 'prominent', and therefore a +2 dB(A) tonality adjustment is considered to apply in accordance with SEPP N-1.

6.2 Effective Noise Levels

Effective Noise Levels are the noise levels of the source under consideration, after any adjustments which may be applicable in accordance with SEPP N-1 have been applied. The Effective Noise Levels are the noise levels that are assessed against the noise criteria, when using the NIRV / SEPP N-1 procedures.

Table 8 presents the Effective Noise Levels which have been determined based on the measured Quarry noise levels and the adjustments outlined in Section 6.1 above.

Table 8 Effective Noise Levels

Period	Times Applicable to Quarry Operation	Measured Noise Level due to Trucks on Quarry Access Road, L_{Aeq} dB(A)	Duration Adjustment, dB(A)	Tonality Adjustment, dB(A)	Effective Noise Level, dB(A)
Day	7am to 6pm Monday to Friday 7am to 1pm Saturday	48	-4	+2	46
Night	6am to 7am Monday to Saturday	48	-8	+2	42

Table 9 presents a comparison of the Effective Noise Levels due to the Quarry trucks with the noise criteria established in the WMG Acoustic Report, and the noise criteria that would apply based on the background noise levels measured by AECOM.

Table 9 Comparison of Effective Noise Levels with Noise Criteria

Period	Times Applicable to Quarry Operation	Effective Noise Level, dB(A)	RMNL as Established in WMG Acoustic Report, dB(A)	RMNL based on Background Noise Levels measured by AECOM, dB(A)
Day	7am to 6pm Monday to Friday 7am to 1pm Saturday	46	52 (✓ Quarry complies)	47 (✓ Quarry complies)
Night	6am to 7am Monday to Saturday	42	45 (✓ Quarry complies)	38 (✗ Quarry exceeds)

6.3 Discussion

6.3.1 Assessment of Effective Noise Levels

The Effective Noise Levels comply with the RMNLs that were established for the Quarry in the WMG Acoustic Report, for both the 'Day' period and the 'Night' period between 6am and 7am Monday to Saturday.

However, when the Effective Noise Levels are assessed in relation to the RMNLs that would apply in accordance with NIRV based on the background noise levels measured by AECOM at 37 Moore Court, the Effective Noise Levels comply with the 'Day' period RMNL, but exceed the RMNL for the 'Night' period between 6am and 7am Monday to Saturday.

6.3.2 Influence of Number of Truck Movements

It should be noted that the number of truck movements¹, and hence the duration adjustment which has been applied in determining the Effective Noise Levels presented above, could have a significant bearing on the compliance outcomes.

During the monitoring performed by AECOM, each truck movement on the access road was audible at the residence for approximately one and a half minutes on average, i.e. 5% of a half hour period. Therefore, the duration adjustment which has been applied to account for truck noise being audible for only 15% of any half hour period between 6am and 7am, for example, allows for nominally 3 truck movements in any half hour period between 6am and 7am. In the event that more than 6 truck movements occur in any half hour period between 6am and 7am, the Effective Noise Level due to the Quarry would no longer comply with the WMG 'Night' period RMNL of 45 dB(A).

¹ A 'truck movement' is taken to be a truck either climbing or descending the Quarry access road. One round trip for a truck (i.e. climbing the access road the quarry and then later descending the access road to the exit) would be counted as two truck movements.

Table 10 presents the maximum number of truck movements that are predicted to be allowable if compliance is to be achieved with the RMNLs as established in the WMG Acoustic Report and the RMNLs that would apply in accordance with NIRV based on the background noise levels measured by AECOM.

Table 10 Predicted Number of Truck Movements Allowable to Achieve Compliance with Noise Criteria

Period	Times Applicable to Quarry Operation	Allowable Number of Truck Movements in any Half-Hour Period to Achieve Compliance	
		With RMNL as Established in WMG Acoustic Report, dB(A)	With RMNL based on Background Noise Levels measured by AECOM, dB(A)
Day	7am to 6pm Monday to Friday 7am to 1pm Saturday	n/a*	16
Night	6am to 7am Monday to Saturday	6	2

* Quarry truck noise could be continuously audible and achieve compliance with the Day period RMNL established in the WMG Acoustic Report.

Whilst AECOM does not have long term data in relation to the number of truck movements each half hour on the Quarry access road, it is considered possible that the Quarry may on some occasions comply with the 'Night' period RMNLs, and may not comply on other occasions, depending on the level of activity at the Quarry.

Placing a limitation on the number of truck movements per half hour, in accordance with the above table, is a measure that could potentially be taken to provide some assurance of the RMNLs being achieved on an ongoing basis.

7.0 Conclusion

AECOM was engaged by the Murrindindi Shire Council to perform an assessment of noise emission from the Castella Quarry to nearby residences, primarily due to trucks on the Castella Quarry access road. The assessment was to be performed in relation to noise criteria presented in the WMG Acoustic Report, in accordance with NIRV.

At the potentially most-affected residences, the Effective Noise Level due to the Quarry was found to be 46 dB(A) for the NIRV 'Day' period, and 42 dB(A) for the applicable part of the NIRV 'Night' period between 6am and 7am Monday to Saturday, based on the period of noise monitoring conducted.

The Effective Noise Levels comply with the 'Day' and 'Night' period RMNLs presented in the WMG Acoustic Report (RMNLs of 52 dB(A) and 45 dB(A) respectively).

However, it was incidentally noted during the noise monitoring that the background noise levels at the residence are substantially lower than reported in the WMG Acoustic Report. If the RMNLs determined in accordance with NIRV are based on the lower background noise levels measured by AECOM, the applicable limits are 47 dB(A) for the 'Day' period and 38 dB(A) for the 'Night' period between 6am and 7am Monday to Saturday. The RMNLs presented in the WMG Acoustic Report are therefore unexpectedly high and should be reviewed.

The Effective Noise Levels due to the Quarry would comply with the 'Day' period RMNL that would be applicable based on the background noise levels measured by AECOM, but would not comply with the 'Night' period RMNL.

Regardless of which set of RMNLs are applied, it should be noted that the Quarry's compliance with the noise criteria is partially dependent on the number of truck movements during any half hour period. Whilst the period of noise monitoring assessed in this report found the Quarry noise levels to comply with the 'Day' and 'Night' period RMNLs presented in the WMG Acoustic Report and the 'Day' period noise RMNL as determined by AECOM, the Quarry noise levels during busier periods with more truck movements may or may not remain compliant. A limitation on the number of truck movements per half hour should therefore be considered if the Council decides to approve an ongoing extension of the Quarry operating hours.

Appendix A

Glossary of Acoustic Terms

Appendix A Glossary of Acoustic Terms

dB(A)	A-weighted Decibels. The 'A' weighting adjusts the frequency spectrum to better reflect the subjective loudness of each frequency as perceived by the human ear.
$L_{A90(T)}$	The value of 'A'-weighted Sound Pressure Level which is exceeded for 90 percent time during a given measurement period (T). L_{90} Sound Pressure Levels are commonly used to represent background noise levels. [Unit: dB(A)]
$L_{Aeq(T)}$	The A-weighted Equivalent Continuous Sound Pressure Level. It is the A-weighted value of Sound Pressure Level of a continuous steady sound that has the same acoustic energy as a given time-varying Sound Pressure Level when determined over the same measurement time interval (T). Often referred to as Average Sound Pressure Level. [Unit: dB(A)]
Noise Sensitive Receiver / Receptor	<p>For the purposes of assessment of industrial noise levels in relation to <i>State Environment Protection Policy (Control of Noise from Commerce Industry and Trade) No. N-1</i> and <i>Noise from Industry in Regional Victoria</i> a noise sensitive receiver is any area of land within 10m of the of the external walls of any of the following buildings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Residential dwelling ▪ Caretakers house ▪ Hospital ▪ Hotel ▪ Institutional home ▪ Motel ▪ Reformative institution ▪ Tourist establishment ▪ Work release hostel
Sound Pressure Level	Twenty times the logarithm to the base ten of the ratio of the root mean square sound pressure at a point in a sound field, to the reference sound pressure; where sound pressure is defined as the alternating component of the pressure (Pa) at the point, and the reference sound pressure is 2×10^{-5} Pa. [Unit: Decibels]

Appendix B

Attended Quarry Noise Measurement Results

Appendix B Attended Quarry Noise Measurement Results

Table 11 Noise from Trucks and Vehicles on Quarry Access Road, Measured at 37 Moore Court

Time	Event Description	Measurement Time (secs) ¹	Duration Audible ² (secs)	Event L _{Aeq} , dB(A)	Comment
6:18	Ute driving up the quarry access road	-	-	-	Masked by Melba Highway traffic noise. Not audible at residence.
6:28	Ute driving up the quarry access road	-	-	-	Masked by Melba Highway traffic noise. Not audible at residence.
6:29	Two trucks with dog trailers and a ute driving up the quarry access road	60	120	45.7	
6:31	Car driving up the quarry access road	-	-	-	Masked by Melba Highway traffic noise. Not audible at residence.
6:33	Car driving up the quarry access road	-	-	-	Masked by Melba Highway traffic noise. Not audible at residence.
6:35	Ute driving up the quarry access road	-	-	-	Masked by Melba Highway traffic noise. Not audible at residence.
6:37	Truck with dog trailer driving up the quarry access road	31	80	49.0	
6:38	One truck with dog trailer driving high up on quarry access road plus another truck with dog trailer driving up from bottom	30	120	44.9	
6:48	Car driving up the quarry access road	-	-	-	Barely audible at residence. Not able to be measured over ambient noise.
7:00	Single dump truck driving up quarry access road plus truck with dog trailer descending.	80	100	49.0	
7:03	Two trucks with dog trailers driving up quarry access road.	30	90	50.3	
7:05	Truck with dog trailer descending access road plus two trucks with dog trailers driving up	80	150	46.1	
7:08	Truck with dog trailer driving up the quarry access road	70	90	46.1	
7:12	Single dump truck descending quarry access road plus single dump truck driving up	-	80	-	Audible at residence but not able to be measured due to Melba Highway traffic noise.
7:14	Two trucks with dog trailers driving up quarry access road.	-	90	-	Audible at residence but not able to be measured due to Melba Highway traffic noise.

Time	Event Description	Measurement Time (secs) ¹	Duration Audible ² (secs)	Event L _{Aeq} , dB(A)	Comment
7:20	One ute driving up the quarry access road and one ute driving down	-	-	-	Barely audible at residence. Not able to be measured over ambient noise.
7:25	Single dump truck descending quarry access road	-	30	-	Audible at residence but not able to be measured due to Melba Highway traffic noise.
7:29	Ute descending quarry access road	-	-	-	Masked by Melba Highway traffic noise. Not audible at residence.
7:31	Truck with dog trailer driving up the quarry access road plus truck with dog trailer descending	-	-	-	Masked by Melba Highway traffic noise. Not audible at residence.
7:33	Beeper from truck reversing near bottom of access road.	-	15	-	Audible at residence but not able to be measured due to Melba Highway traffic noise.
7:37	Ute driving up the quarry access road	-	-	-	Masked by Melba Highway traffic noise. Not audible at residence.
7:38	Single dump truck driving up the quarry access road	-	-	-	Loud engine brake used on road leading up to entrance, but once on access road the truck was barely audible over ambient noise at the residence and not able to be measured. (Note: The NIRV noise limits do not apply to noise from trucks on public roads).
7:43	Truck with dog trailer descending access road	-	-	-	Barely audible at residence. Not able to be measured over ambient noise.
7:45	Two trucks with dog trailers descending access road. Ute driving up access road from 7:48am	70	170	48.9	
7:59	Truck with dog trailer driving up the quarry access road and single dump truck descending.	-	60	-	Audible at residence but not able to be measured due to influence of Melba Highway traffic noise.
	Cumulative Total	7.5 mins	20 mins	47.7	

Notes:

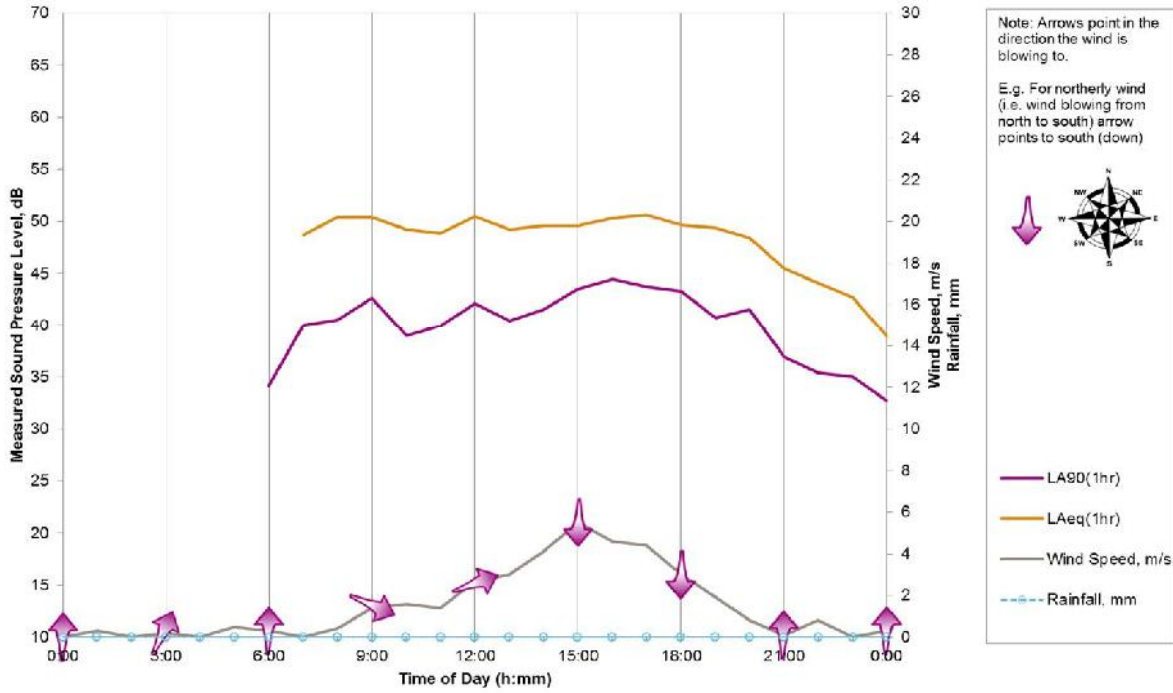
- 1) 'Measurement Time' is the duration over which the L_{Aeq} sound pressure level of the Quarry activity was able to be measured without influence from other ambient noise.
- 2) 'Duration Audible' is the duration for the sound of the Quarry activity was actually audible at the residence. Note that this value was generally greater than the measurement time, as other ambient noise sources, such as traffic on Melba Highway would have influenced the measurements if the noise levels had been measured over the full duration for which the Quarry noise was audible.

Appendix C

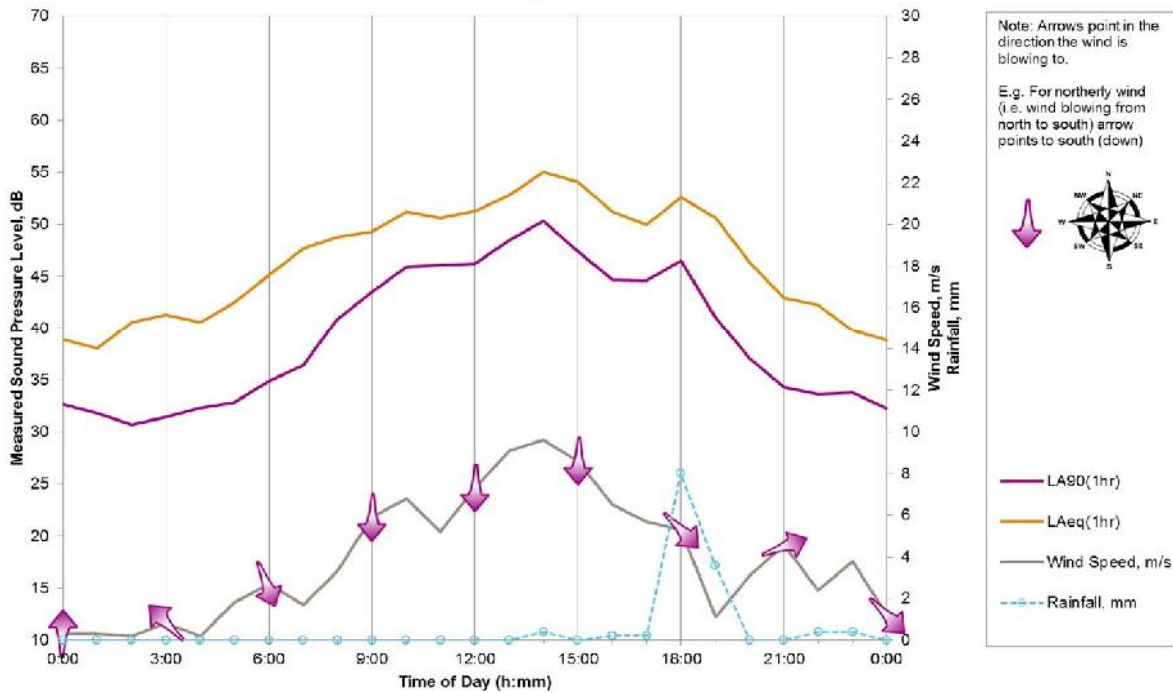
Logged Noise Levels at 37 Moore Court

Noise Levels Measured at 37 Moore Court

Friday, 14 March 2014

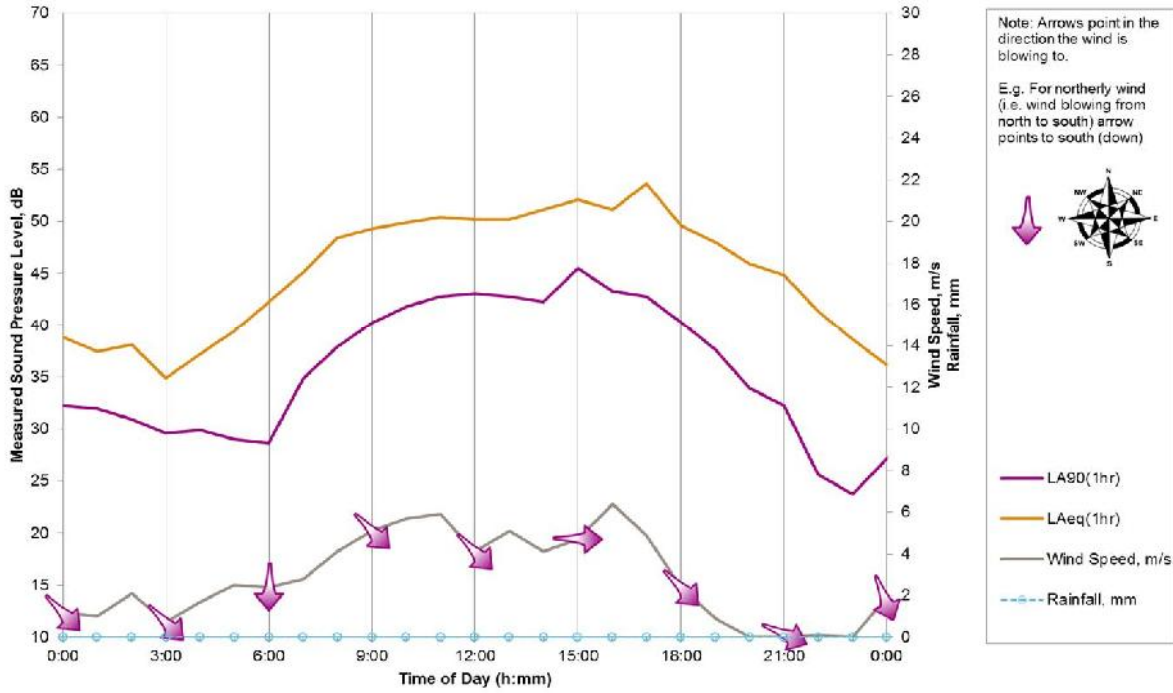


Saturday, 15 March 2014

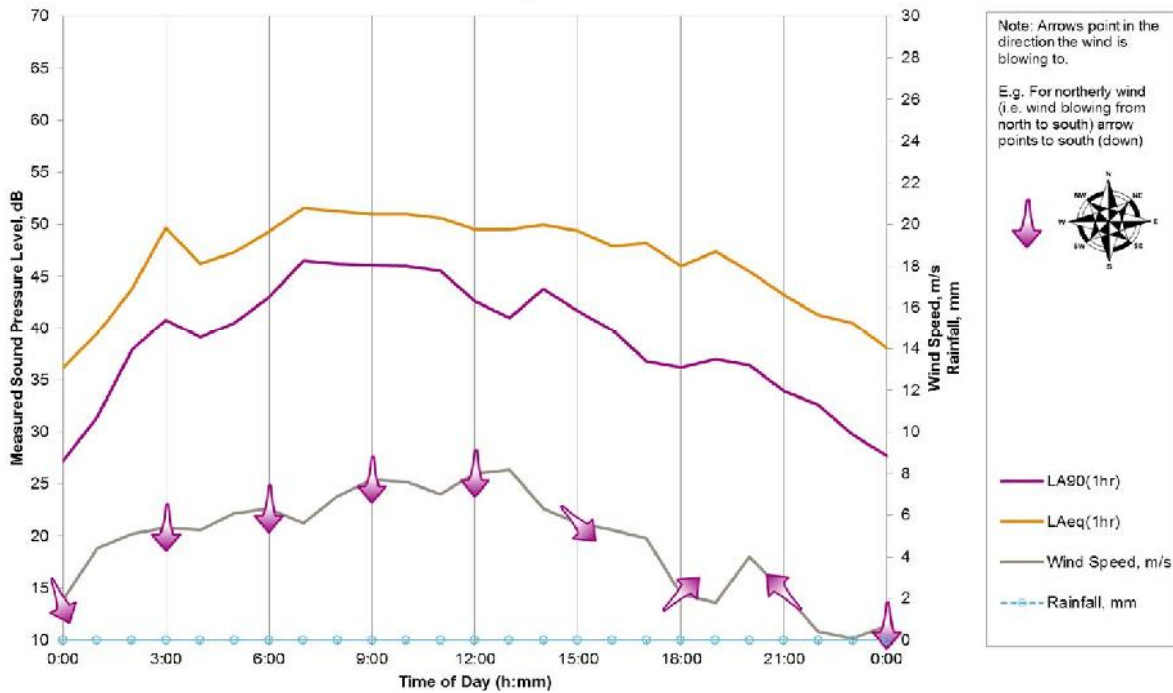


Noise Levels Measured at 37 Moore Court

Sunday, 16 March 2014

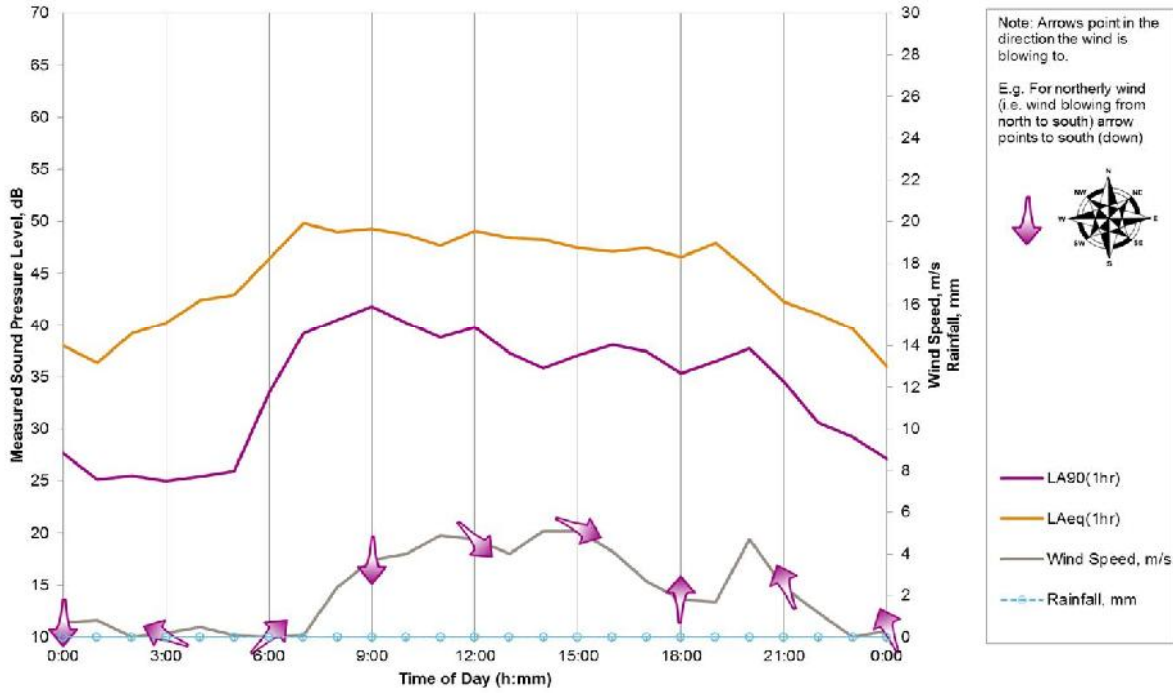


Monday, 17 March 2014

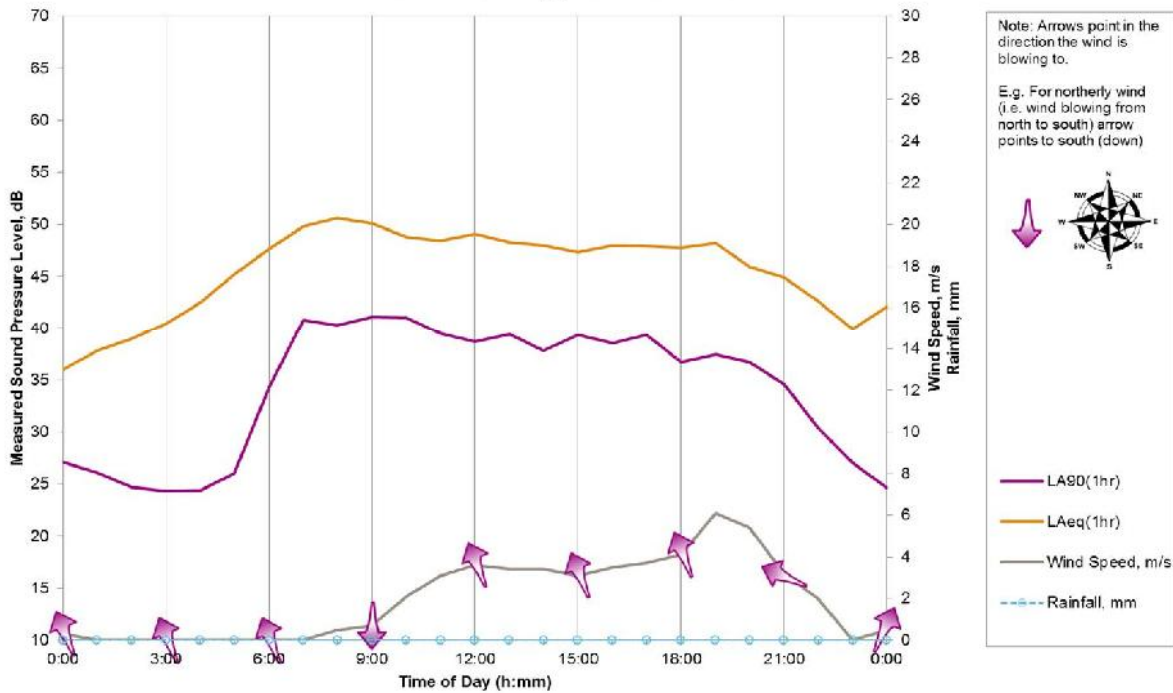


Noise Levels Measured at 37 Moore Court

Tuesday, 18 March 2014

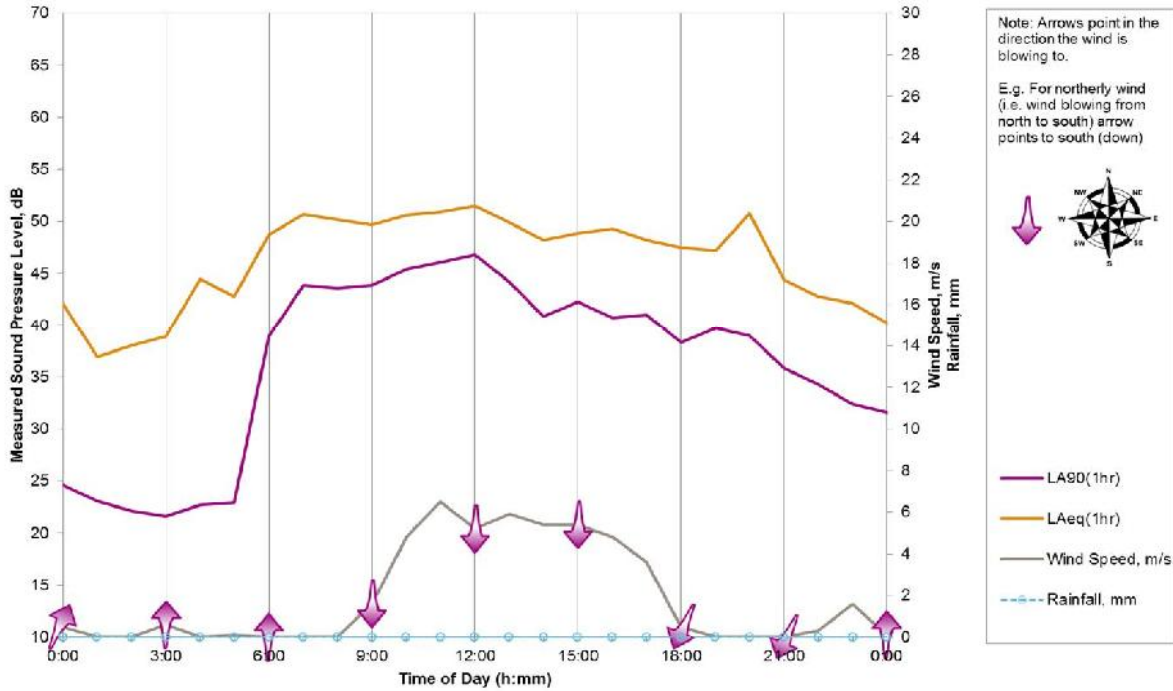


Wednesday, 19 March 2014

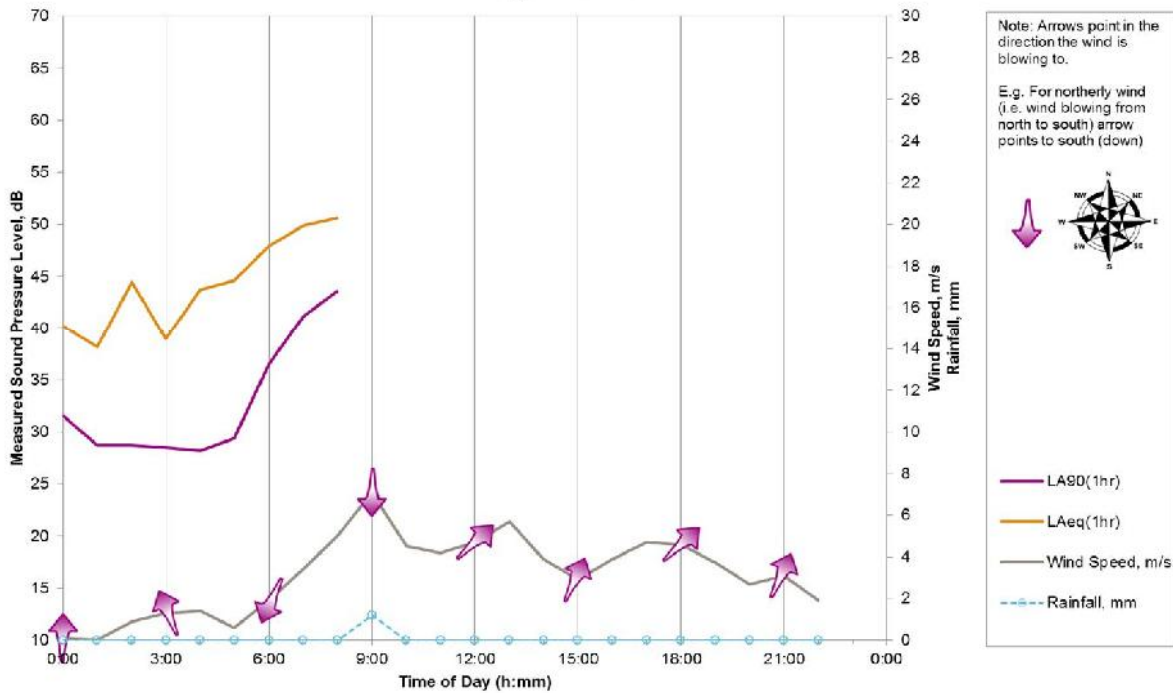


Noise Levels Measured at 37 Moore Court

Thursday, 20 March 2014



Friday, 21 March 2014



R/N 588746. \$502.



Office Use Only

Application No.:

Date Lodged:

Murrindindi Shire Council
RECEIVED - ALEXANDRA
13 OCT 2014
Trim No:.....

Application for Planning Permit

Planning Enquiries
Phone: (03) 5772 0333
Web: <http://www.murrindindi.vic.gov.au>

If you need help to complete this form, read *How to Complete the Application for Planning Permit form*.

▲ Any material submitted with this application, including plans and personal information, will be made available for public viewing, including electronically, and copies may be made for interested parties for the purpose of enabling consideration and review as part of a planning process under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. If you have any concerns, please contact Council's planning department.

Questions marked with an asterisk (*) are mandatory and must be completed.

Clear Form

The Land

1 Address of the land. Complete the Street Address and one of the Formal Land Descriptions.

Street Address *

Unit No.:	St. No.: 1556	St. Name: GOULBURN VALLEY HWY
Suburb/Locality: THORNTON	VIC	Postcode: 3712

Formal Land Description * Complete either A or B.

▲ This information can be found on the certificate of title.

A Lot No.: 1 Lodged Plan Title Plan Plan of Subdivision No.: 119159

OR

B Crown Allotment No.: Section No.:

Parish/Township Name:

If this application relates to more than one address, please click this button and enter relevant details.

Add Address!

The Proposal

▲ You must give full details of your proposal and attach the information required to assess the application. If you do not give enough detail or an adequate description of the proposal you will be asked for more information. This may delay your application.

2 For what use, development or other matter do you require a permit? *

If you need help about the proposal, read: *How to Complete the Application for Planning Permit Form*

Select the focus of this application and describe below:

Restaurant + Primary Produce Sales

A portable 3x3m Farmgate stall & 16 seat Restaurant including car spaces

Provide additional information providing details of the proposal, including: plans and elevations; any information required by the planning scheme, requested by Council or outlined in a Council planning permit checklist; and if required, a description of the likely effect of the proposal.

3 Estimated cost of development for which the permit is required *

Cost \$ 4,000

▲ You may be required to verify this estimate.

Insert '0' if no development is proposed (eg. change of use, subdivision, removal of covenant, liquor licence)

Existing Conditions

4 Describe how the land is used and developed now *

eg. vacant, three dwellings, medical centre with two practitioners, licensed restaurant with 80 seats, grazing.

Single Dwelling - Farm Zone

Provide a plan of the existing conditions. Photos are also helpful.

Proposal/Description

for Fairweather Farmgate at 1556 Goulburn Valley Hwy Thornton Vic 3712

Farmgate Store

Showcasing primary produce from my own property and that of my neighboring artisan producers, including local egg co op, the building would not be a permanent structure eg moveable and will be less than 10 meters squared, it would be an honesty box system.

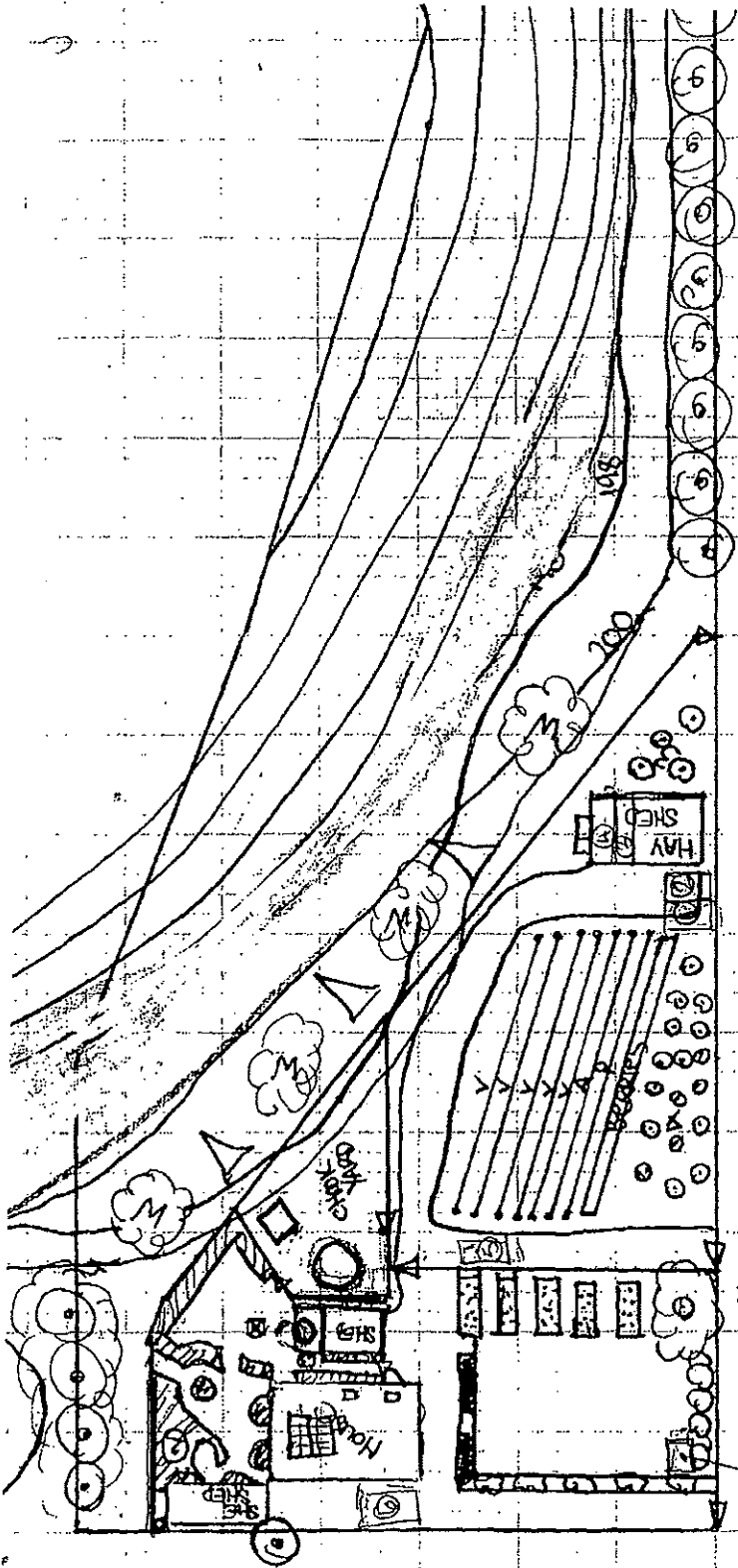
Restaurant/PopUp Café

Proposing to do monthly dinners of up to 16 people during daylight savings, would possibly open during the day on long weekends.

There are no plans for loud or amplified music or a liquor license.

There are easily 6 car spaces available within recommended sizing on the property.

The kitchen is already registered with the shire.



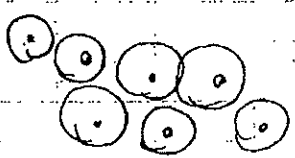
Proposed car spaces

Driveway

Clives

Proposed ramp to store

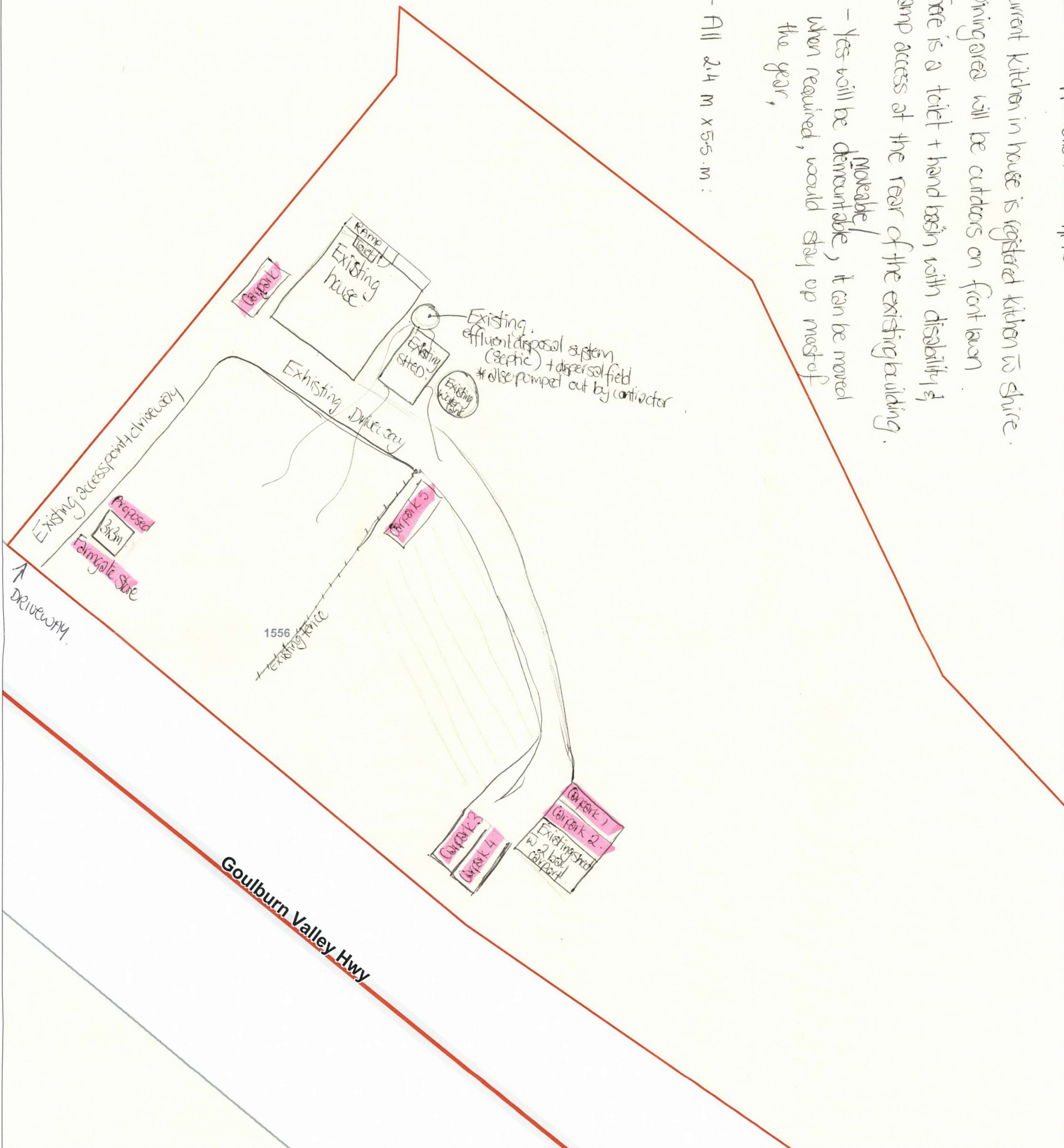
188 = 10M



Carspaces - All 2.4 m x 5.5 m :

Farmgate Store - Yes will be demountable, it can be moved when required, would stay up most of the year,
Moveable!

Restaurant - Current kitchen in house is registered kitchen in shire.
- Dining area will be outdoors on front lawn.
- There is a toilet + hand basin with disability & ramp access at the rear of the existing building.



1556 Goulburn Valley Highway



Printed 17/10/2014

Scale 1:400



1cm = 5m



Murrindindi Shire Council

Murrindindi Shire Council
 RECEIVED ALEXANDRA
 Date Lodged:
 17 FEB 2015
 Trim No:.....



Office Use Only Application No.:

Application to AMEND a Planning Permit

Planning Enquiries
 Phone: 5772 0333
 Web: <http://www.murrindindi.vic.gov.au>

If you need help to complete this form, read *How to Complete the Application to Amend a Planning Permit form*.

- ⚠ Any material submitted with this application, including plans and personal information, will be made available for public viewing, including electronically, and copies may be made for interested parties for the purpose of enabling consideration and review as part of a planning process under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. If you have any concerns, please contact Council's planning department.
- ⚠ This form cannot be used to amend a permit issued at the direction of VCAT.
- ⚠ Questions marked with an asterisk (*) are mandatory and must be completed.

Clear Form

The Land **I**

① Address of the land. Complete the Street Address and one of the Formal Land Descriptions:

Street Address *

Unit No.: St. No.: 1556 St. Name: GOUBERNALLEY HWY
 Suburb/Locality: ALEXANDRA Postcode: 3714

Formal Land Description *
 Complete either A or B.

⚠ This information can be found on the certificate of title.

A Lot No.: Lodged Plan Title Plan Plan of Subdivision No.:
 OR
 B Crown Allotment No.: Section No.:
 Parish/Township Name:

Check Address

If this application relates to more than one address, please click this button and enter relevant details.

Add Address

Planning Permit Details **I**

② What permit is being amended? *

Planning Permit No.: 2014/176

The Amended Proposal **I**

⚠ You must give full details of the amendment being applied for. Insufficient or unclear information will delay your application.

③ What is the amendment being applied for? *

- Indicate the type of changes proposed to the permit.
- List details of the proposed changes.

If the space provided is insufficient, attach a separate sheet.

This application seeks to amend:

what the permit allows plans endorsed under the permit
 current conditions of the permit other documents endorsed under the permit

Details: * separate produce stall off this application as another application has been filed out, leaving the Restaurant as a * seasonal, occasional as currently stated

Provide plans clearly identifying all proposed changes to the endorsed plans, together with; any information required by the planning scheme, requested by Council or outlined in a Council checklist; and if required, include a description of the likely effect of the proposal.

Development Cost **I**

④ Estimate cost of development *

If the permit allows *development*, estimate the cost difference between the development allowed by the permit and the development to be allowed by the amended permit.

Cost of proposed amended development	Cost of the permitted development	Cost difference (+ or -):
\$ <u>NA</u>	\$	\$

Insert 'NA' if no development is proposed by the permit (eg. change of use, subdivision, removal of covenant)

⚠ You may be required to verify this estimate.

Summary Community Grants October 2014 – February 2015

File No FY13-02

No	Org/Club	Project Name/Brief Description	Grant Type	Project Value	Amount Requested	Amount Allocated	Previous Grant?	Comments from Community Services Department
1	The Flowerdale Sports Club Inc.	The education Department donated playground equipment from now closed Thornton Primary School. We have used existing limited funds to relocate the equipment to our Reserve using professional contractors to ensure installation to Australian Standard. We are providing much needed safe and secure children's playground facilities which have been lacking for six years. The facilities cannot be made available to the children of the community before safety fencing; netting and soft fall mulch is installed. Safety standards and our duty of care must be met. The community Grant would help pay for the competition of the work thus making a safe, secure playground available to the children of the community.	Community Grant	\$11,356.00	\$5,000.00	\$0	No	Not supported <i>The Community Grants committee recommended that the club seek funding opportunities through Sport and Recreation Victoria and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. The club will be invited to resubmit in a future grant round if not other funding is found.</i>
2	Flowerdale Men's Shed	Attending Biennial National Men's shed Conference in Newcastle in October 2015 (Saturday 17 th to Tuesday 20 th). Twenty men's Shed members will attend as delegates and as members of the choir from six shed's in the Shire.	Community Grant	\$18,220.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000	No	Supported
3.	Berry Street – Connect for Kids	RedRecreation targets disengaged or unemployed youth in Eastern Murrindindi aged 17-22. The program is an attempt to address the cycle of disengagement through a variety of activities; outdoor physical activities to building confidence and social connections, therapeutic practices such as mindfulness and strengths based work to highlight participant's innate skills. Funds from the Community Grant would add value to the program by allowing it to run the full range of proposed activities.	Community Grant	\$30,089.00	\$4,966.00	\$0	No	Not supported <i>The Community Grants Committee raised concerns regarding budget and the amount of assistance sought from Council, including for services provided by Council.</i>
4.	Eildon Community Centre Committee of Management	To replace the existing bench tops, modify the existing cupboards and draws to create a new space to house and to install a dishwasher.	Community Grants	\$4235.03	\$3,135.03	\$0	No	Not Supported <i>The Community Grants Committee recommended that funds for capital renewal should be sought through provisions in the Joint Use Agreement or the owner of the asset rather than Council Community Grants.</i>

Council Plan Goal: Our Community								
Issue	Specific Issue	Outcome Sought	Priority	Advocacy Target (State, Federal)	Advocacy Partners	Action Taken	Next Steps	Responsible Officer
Joint use agreements with State Government agencies	Reduction in obligations upon Council in joint use agreements	New joint use agreements in place which release Council from ongoing obligations in relation to State government owned or managed facilities	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Member for Eildon Minister for Sport and Recreation Minister for Education Federal Member for Indi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dept. of Education and Training (DET) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review joint use agreement or alternative arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek assistance of local MPs for meetings with relevant Ministers Local Members of Parliament to be advised when applications are lodged 	GMCCS
Alexandra Football / Netball Club	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Clubrooms and pavilion need replacing Opportunity to look at the whole precinct to include an upgrade of the showgrounds and the caravan park 	Funding to construct new pavilion and clubrooms	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> High High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Member for Eildon Minister for Sport and Recreation Federal Member for Indi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 86 Committee DELWP Alexandra Football / Netball Club Alexandra Pastoral and Agricultural Society Alexandra Cricket Club Other user groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master plan being updated Feasibility Study completed Research undertaken by Alexandra Football / Netball Club Concept plans prepared and costed by Alexandra Football/Netball Club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council commitment / agreement in principle to the project need to be confirmed Detailed design and costing needs to be undertaken Potential funding sources need to be identified Seek meetings with local Members of Parliament Seek assistance of local MPs for meetings with relevant Ministers 	GMCCS
Early Years Services	Fostering greater integration and co-location of services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Funding to construct a new facility to house early years services in Alexandra Ongoing funding for family day care and kindergarten programs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Medium High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Member for Eildon Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development Federal Member for Indi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alexandra Kindergarten Alexandra Playgroup Department of Education & Training (DET) Other early years providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate co-location site identified as part of the feasibility study Advocacy letters sent to local members of parliament Participation in MAV advocacy program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine appropriate site and seek Council approval for use Detailed design and costing needs to be undertaken Identification of potential funding sources Seek support from DET 	GMCCS

Council Plan Goal: Our Community								
Issue	Specific Issue	Outcome Sought	Priority	Advocacy Target (State, Federal)	Advocacy Partners	Action Taken	Next Steps	Responsible Officer
Aged and Disability	<p>1. Maintenance of HACCC funding levels, particularly during transition to Federal Government management of HACCC program from 2016 and beyond</p> <p>2. Maintenance of the Victorian HACCC system</p> <p>3. Greater access to 24 hour residential respite services</p> <p>4. Greater number of aged care packages to support the needs of community members to remain at home for as long as possible</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmation of ongoing HACCC funding and maintenance of service levels New model for HACCC to incorporate the Victorian system Greater access to 24 hour residential and in home respite services for people with disabilities and their carers More aged care packages managed by Murrindindi Shire Council to meet future demand 	<p>1. High</p> <p>2. High</p> <p>3. High</p> <p>4. Medium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Member for Eildon Minister for Ageing Federal Member for Indi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAV HRLGN Department of Health Hume Region Aged care service providers including ADH and YDH, Kellock and Darlingford PCP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeping updated with MAV efforts in advocating with State and Federal governments Identified need through Disability Action questionnaires of carers and service providers Application for further packages currently in place with the Federal Department of Health and Ageing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Await further information from MAV Undertake further scoping to determine the nature of the need Determine link to NDIS Await outcome of current funding application for further packages Advocate for further packages if unsuccessful 	GMCCS
Transport	Capacity to address the transport needs of community members who are isolated as a result of lack of access to transport	Ongoing funding to continue to respond to and advocate for the needs of the transport vulnerable	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Member for Eildon Minister for Transport Federal Member for Indi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DTPLI Department of Transport 	∴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for ongoing resources to maintain a focus on improving access to transport and services Identify additional project partnerships 	GMCCS
Public Dental Services	High rate of dental health issues in Murrindindi (one of the top three reasons for hospitalisation)	Greater access to local public dental services	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Member for Eildon Minister for Health Federal Member for Indi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PCP ADH Department of Health Hume Region Health service Kindergartens and Primary Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need identified through consultation for the MPHWPB Initial investigation into public services available underway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further scoping of need is required to determine nature and priority of the issue Discussion with hospital regarding opportunities for service 	GMCCS

Council Plan Goal: Our Environment

Issue	Specific Issue	Outcome Sought	Priority	Advocacy Target (State, Federal)	Advocacy Partners	Action Taken	Next Steps	Responsible Officer
Road Network	Black Spur as a major route into the shire (Yarra Valley to the High Country)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety Improvements • Increased reliability of road (too many closures) • More passing opportunities • Link between Narbethong and Toolangi 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Member for Eildon • VicRoads • Minister for Roads • Federal Member for Indi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goulburn River Valley Tourism Board • Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges Tourism • Tourism Victoria • Lake Mountain Alpine Resort • Alpine Resorts Commission • Other municipalities including:- Yarra Ranges, Mansfield & Benalla • Emergency Service agencies including CFA, DEPI, SES • Heavy Transport Industry • Four Wheel Drive User Associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive representations at State Government level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek a regional approach with other municipalities. • Engage with emergency service agencies • Seek a partnership with Tourism bodies. • Seek meetings with local Members of Parliament • Seek assistance of local MPs for meetings with relevant Ministers 	GMIDS
Road Network	Melba Upgrade	Improved ongoing maintenance and upgrading of the highway	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Member for Eildon • Minister for Roads • Minister for Tourism • Federal Member for Indi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yarra Ranges Shire Council • Mansfield Shire Council • HRLGN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussed with VicRoads and was advised that it was a low priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek a regional approach with other municipalities • Seek further discussion with VicRoads • Seek meetings with local Members of Parliament, Seek assistance of local MPs for meetings with relevant Ministers 	GMIDS
Road Network	Eildon/Bonnie Doon	Upgrade route around (Skyline Road western side of) Lake Eildon	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Member for Eildon • Minister for Roads • Minister for Tourism • Federal Member for Indi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goulburn River Valley Tourism Board • Eildon Action • Mansfield Shire Council • Resident groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representations have been received by Council from tourism organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with tourism and local organisations on agreed approach. • Seek further discussion with VicRoads • Seek meetings with local Members of Parliament • Seek assistance of local MPs for meetings with relevant Ministers 	GMIDS

Council Plan Goal: Our Environment

Issue	Specific Issue	Outcome Sought	Priority	Advocacy Target (State, Federal)	Advocacy Partners	Action Taken	Next Steps	Responsible Officer
Infrastructure Maintenance and Renewal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic approach to the renewal of infrastructure and funding to do so is required Jerusalem Creek sewerage upgrade Urban Streetscapes and recreational areas 	Grant and money to upgrade and renew infrastructure	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Member for Eildon Minister for Regional Development Federal Member for Indi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAV DELWP RDV GM Water Mansfield Shire Council RDA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of grant priorities. As grant programs become available, applications are lodged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantification of infrastructure needs and 10 year program developed. Regular forums with state agencies need to be re-established Seek assistance of local MPs for meetings with relevant Ministers Local Members of parliament to be advised of lodged applications 	GMIDS
Yea Transport Infrastructure and Streetscape Works	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Improved parking management Traffic control works Vegetation Management Plan 	Improved traffic management in High Street	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Member for Eildon Minister for Regional Development VicRoads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yea community and business organisations Y Water Association 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Design Framework completed Preliminary concept plans prepared Discussions held with VicRoads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed design and costing needs to be undertaken Potential funding sources need to be identified Seek meetings with local Members of Parliament Seek further discussions with VicRoads Seek assistance of local MPs for meetings with relevant Ministers Local Members of Parliament to be advised when applications are lodged 	GMIDS
Trail development	Bicycle and pedestrian pathway connecting Alexandra, Thornton and Eildon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Funding to undertake a detailed Design & Development Plan for the route from Alexandra to Eildon Funding to construct trail from Thornton to Eildon subject to the Development Plan Funding to complete the detailed design and implementation of the remaining route subject to completion of the link from Thornton to Eildon 	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Member for Eildon Minister for Regional Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoor Education providers Eildon Action ATTA YBTA Alexandra Events Bicycle Victoria Other municipalities including Mansfield and Mitchell High Country Councils Coalition Hume Region Local Government Network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions held with local MPs Feasibility study completed and outcomes noted by Council Remaining Advancing Country Town's funds have been set aside to contribute to the cost of the first stage of the trial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed design and costing needs to be undertaken for Alexandra to Eildon Potential funding sources to be identified Agreements relating to the ongoing maintenance to be sought 	GMIDS

Council Plan Goal: Our Environment								
Issue	Specific Issue	Outcome Sought	Priority	Advocacy Target (State, Federal)	Advocacy Partners	Action Taken	Next Steps	Responsible Officer
Great Victorian Rail Trail network maintenance	Funding assistance to address the ongoing maintenance of rail trails and trail networks	Ongoing funding assistance for maintenance of trails	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Members for Eildon Minister for Regional Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GRVT Other tourism bodies High Country Councils Coalition HRLGN MAV VLGA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support provided by the High Country Councils Coalition Support provided by Hume LGN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek assistance of local government sector Seek assistance of local MPs for meeting with relevant Ministers 	GMIDS
Implementation of the Bushfire Management Overlay	Risk that development rights may be removed in parts of the Shire	A more interactive and flexible approach by CFA to considering planning controls that may support development in higher bushfire risk areas	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minister for Planning CFA DELWP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAV Other local governments 	Meeting sought with Minister for Planning and CFA representatives to consider issues	Meeting with CFA and DTPLI representatives on BMO Implementation of new guidelines	GMIDS
Pest plant and animal funding	State Govt focus on cost shifting to Local Government and local communities for weed and pest animal control	Guaranteed funding streams for Council and community groups	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minister for Environment DELWP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAV Other local governments Upper Goulburn Landcare Network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received funding over the past 3 years of \$30,000 per annum No indication that funding will continue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss with Local Member concerning support for further funding Seek MAV support Seek meeting with State Minister 	GMIDS
Implementation of Kinglake Ranges, Flowerdale and Toolangi Plan	Following advice from the then Minister for Planning the KFT Plan was adopted by Council in February 2014 excluding the development investigations areas	Capacity to undertake further work concerning the investigation areas	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minister for Planning DELWP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAV Peri Urban Regional Group of Councils 	Issue raised with local Member of Parliament	Seek meeting with State Minister	GMIDS
Emergency Services including support for State Emergency Services	Differing levels of recognition for various emergency response agencies	Recognition of the VICSES in the same manner as other emergency response agencies	High	Minister for Emergency Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAV Other local governments 	Preparation of a Position Paper by the MAV	Seek meeting with State Minister	GMIDS
Murray Darling Basin Authority Constraints Management Strategy	Potential impacts of the proposed strategy upon landholders and facilities	Impacts of proposed environmental flows and the absence of mitigation mechanisms for tributary catchments	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minister for Water Member for Indi 	Property owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings held with concerned property owners Information provided to Member for Indi to enable representations to the MDBA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek assistance of local MPs for meetings with relevant Ministers Seek meeting with the State Minister for Water Continue representations through the Member for Indi 	GMIDS

Council Plan Goal: Our Economy								
Issue	Specific Issue	Outcome Sought	Priority	Advocacy Target (State, Federal)	Advocacy Partners	Action Taken	Next Steps	Responsible Officer
Community Communications	Broadband network	Improved service coverage	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal Member for Indi Federal Minister for Communications 	Other municipalities facing similar issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillors and Community Recovery Committee representatives have met with the Federal Minister Council participating in the Hume Region Broadband Readiness Planning Council has received representations from NBN Co. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeking meeting with Federal Member Seek support of MAV in broader advocacy program Confirm requirements and opportunities with DET Seek assistance of Federal Member for meetings with Federal Minister 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager Economic Development Manager Communications, Library and Customer Service
Community Communications	Mobile	Improved service coverage across the Shire with priority on business development such as Yea Saleyards and surrounds	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal Member for Indi Federal Minister for Communications Telecommunications companies 	Other municipalities facing similar issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One priority identified as part of the Indi Blackspot program Priorities provided to HRLGN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek meeting with Federal Member Seek support of MAV in broader advocacy program Seek assistance of Federal Member for meetings with Federal Minister 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager Economic Development Manager Communications, Library and Customer Service
Investment	Implementation of the GRVT Destination Management Plan	Funding to enable implementation of the DMP	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Member for Eildon Minister for Tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GRVT Murrindindi Inc. Business organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided links for developments to Tourism Victoria investment section Discussed issue with Minister for Local Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek meeting with Minister for Tourism Support GRVT in its funding applications Eildon Structure Plan to be prepared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager Economic Development Manager Planning and Development Services
Investment	Business Development	Increased business investment in the Shire	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Member for Eildon Minister for Regional Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RDV Murrindindi Inc. Business organisations Established business 	Proactively support business opportunities as they are identified in the Shire	Business prospectus currently being prepared	Manager Economic Development
Investment	Zipline Project	Establishment of a Zipline attraction	Low	Minister for Environment	Parks Victoria	Broad advocacy through the Minister for Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with DELWP and Parks Vic to confirm an appropriate site in the Shire Continue to advocate for the project with State Govt. 	Manager Economic Development

Council Plan Goal: Our Economy								
Issue	Specific Issue	Outcome Sought	Priority	Advocacy Target (State, Federal)	Advocacy Partners	Action Taken	Next Steps	Responsible Officer
Yea Saleyards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding required to implement the adopted Business Plan Resolution of water/sewage issues 	Additional funding to complete development	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Member for Eildon State and Federal Governments Minister for Regional Development Adjoining land owner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Livestock agents Local farmers CFA (use facilities as staging area) GV Water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business and development plans Approved planning applications Discussed with State and Federal members and election candidates Placed several federal and state funding applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to identify funding sources (RDV limited interest to date) Meet State and Federal members and seek assistance 	GMCCS
Employment and Training Facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for Murrindindi Employers Training (MET) and post secondary education Support for trade training and transitional education programs 	Funding to support ongoing business development of the MET	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Member for Eildon State and Federal Governments Minister for Education Minister for Sport and Recreation Federal Member for Indi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MET Board Alexandra Hospital CEACA Outdoor Education Group Education providers Alexandra Secondary College Dept. of Education and Training User groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MET Board established MET now operational offering Outdoor Education vocational training Funding secured through Advancing Country Towns for Business Development Worker Advocacy to the Minister for Education on funding levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future steps to be determined through consultation with MET Board Potential funding sources need to be identified Confirm requirements and opportunities with DET Seek assistance of local MPs for meetings with relevant Ministers Local Members of Parliament to be advised when applications are lodged 	Manager Economic Development
Expansion of the House Boat Industry	The house boat industry has become a major business sector which requires upgraded infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding to enable the upgrade of infrastructure necessary for the expansion of businesses servicing the house boat industry Funding to enable the development of an Economic Benefit Analysis of the impact of the house boat industries 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Member of Eildon Federal Member for Indi Minister for Regional Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lake Eildon Houseboat Industry Association Goulburn Murray Water Mansfield Shire Council 	Support through the Advancing Country Towns program provided to enable the establishment of the Lake Eildon Houseboat Industry Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantification of costs of infrastructure upgrades Potential funding courses need to be identified Seek assistance of local MPs for meetings with relevant Ministers 	Manager Economic Development
Support for Small Business	The Murrindindi Shire economy is made up of mainly small to medium businesses which benefit from ongoing support	Funding to continue implementation of the opportunities identified within the Business Investment Prospectus	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Member for Eildon Minister for Regional Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Murrindindi Inc. Local business and tourism organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council support for the establishment of Murrindindi Inc. Council has been successful in obtaining funding to develop an investment prospectus 	Seek assistance of local MPs for meetings with relevant Ministers	Manager Economic Development

Council Plan Goal: Our Council								
Issue	Specific Issue	Outcome Sought	Priority	Advocacy Target (State, Federal)	Advocacy Partners	Action Taken	Next Steps	Responsible Officer
Long Term Financial Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding to manage the new and gifted assets Changes in government policy leading to loss of grants such as the LGIF and CRABI Financial sustainability of small rural shires Transition of Assets to be initiated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in grant funding from the State Government Acceptance of transition of responsibilities back to the State Government 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Member for Eildon Federal Member for Indi State Ministers Regional Development and Local Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small Rural Shires Rural Councils Victoria HRLGN MAV LGV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission to LGV Minister for Local Government has advised of no further assistance Participation in Whelan Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report from LGV to relevant Ministers Appointment of Grants Officer Development of Grants proposals Participation in advocacy program of small rural shires 	CEO
Various local government sector issues	To be defined during the course of the plan	Will vary according to the issue	Low	State Minister for Local Government, Treasurer etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VLGA LG Pro MAV HRLGN Rural Councils Victoria 	Submissions preparation as required	Will vary according to each issue	CEO

Minutes - Murrindindi Environment Advisory Committee				File: SF/1078		
Date	10 th Feb	Time	1:30pm	Location	Council Chambers, Alexandra	
Attendance:	Cr. John Kennedy, Mark Leitinger, Zoe Blakeney, Steve Meacher (Chair), Rita Seethaler, Robert Chaffe, Ron Litjens, Judy Watts, Peter Mc Kernan, Christine Glassford, Roger Cook			Apologies:	Cr. Andrew Derwent, Ann Jelinek, John Coyne, Nigel Waterhouse	
Item	Description of Issue			Action	Who	When
	General Meeting					
1.	<p><u>Welcome and update from Manager Infrastructure Operations</u> Manager Infrastructure Operations provided an update on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Environmental Programs Business Plan and major projects for 2014/15 and 2015/16. Coordinator Environmental Programs (Zoe Blakeney's) Maternity Leave. Council's submission to VicForests Draft Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management Plan. <p>Committee members provided the following feedback/commentary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advised for a 'handover' or 'business plan report' to committee members prior to Zoe's departure. Requested that the final copy of the submission be distributed to all MEAC members. 			Information on the 2015/16 Environment Unit's program be provided to MEAC A copy of Council's submission to VicForests be provided to MEAC.	ZB	Next Meeting
2.	<p><u>Historical Offsets Program Update and Discussion</u> The Coordinator Environmental Programs provided an update on the above captioned program including recommendation to change project direction (due to the outcomes of the research and consultation undertaken to date). The major finding being that many of the Council land parcels identified are not suitable for the project. As a result, Council officers have been liaising with the Department of Economic, Jobs, Transport and Resources' (old DEPI) Land Health Program and the GBCMA River Health Program to investigate implementing works via existing landholder agreements held between private landholders and these agencies. The Coordinator Environmental Program is currently preparing a report to capture this work, which will be used to inform senior management (both within the Council, DEJTR and GBCMA) and</p>			A progress report to MEAC.	ZB	Before next meeting.

	<p>the Councillors. Committee members requested that an update be made on continued progress at the next MEAC meeting in April.</p>			
<p>3.</p>	<p><u>Progress updates 'around the table'</u></p> <p><u>Robert Chaffe:</u> Observations lately indicate that while much work has been developed on roadside management protocols, ongoing training relating to environmental codes of practice is required. Rotary continues to be involved in salvaging unused timber and logs.</p> <p><u>Rita Seethaler:</u> Finalising the Green Business Assessment Program via two projects with the Council. The first is in Green Cleaning Methods across Council's offices and community services area - including family day care and maternal childcare and health. The project is looking at developing some guidelines and trialling some alternative products for cleaning purposes. The second project is looking at funding the installation of energy monitors on Council's large consuming sites.</p> <p><u>Judy Watts (UGLN):</u> A weed mapping and control project on the rail trail continues, which will include spraying and control of all Weeds of National Significance (WONS). The mapping data will be provided to the Council and loaded onto the GIS system to assist with future program planning. UGLN also struggling to find an answer from the Great Victorian Rail Trail Committee for whether there is a consistent branding style for informative signage on the rail trail. Many Landcare groups are wishing to install informative signage at their adopted sites.</p> <p><u>Peter Mc Kernan:</u> Working with the Green Business Assessment Program specifically on the roll out of energy monitors. To date over 60 businesses have monitors installed at their premises. With additional funding available we are now in position to install in Council buildings.</p> <p><u>Roger Cook:</u> Revegetation, and weed control works continue at Kinglake Number One Creek, Stony Creek Reserve and Koala Browsing area. Targeted species include blackberry and broom.</p> <p><u>Christine Glassford (GBCMA):</u> Updated MEAC on the \$1.8 million research program into Trout Fisheries led by the State Government. The program will focus on four waterways in Murrindindi Shire. GBCMA team is also in the process of undertaking reviews of in-stream habitat works undertaken, and continues to implement works along King Parrot Creek in</p>	<p>Investigate standards on the informative signage requirements along the Great Victorian Rail Trail.</p> <p>Investigate approval process for the installation of energy monitors at Marysville Community Centre and RAC.</p>	<p>ZB/ML</p>	<p>20 Feb 2015</p>

	<p>partnership with private landholders (includes willow control, fencing, revegetation).</p> <p><u>Cr. John Kennedy:</u> On the 7 February, a meeting of property owners across the Goulburn Broken flood plains occurred in Yea. The meeting was held to express concern relating to the proposed Murray Darling Basin Plan and the issue of environmental flows.</p> <p><u>Steve Meacher:</u> Provided a report to MEAC, that 'Walter' the oldest known <i>Pomaderris vacciniifolia</i> plant in Toolangi has officially died and the remains have been removed. The community is also preparing an advocacy campaign against the proposed burn in the Toolangi Reserve this coming Autumn. The announcement (by Federal Minister for Environment, The Hon. Greg Hunt) of Leadbeater Possum to Critically Endangered should occur imminently.</p> <p><u>Ann Jelinek (via email):</u> Council has recently released a draft Rating Strategy. Is concerned that there could be implications for biodiversity, especially vacant land with high conservation values, especially less than 40ha (> 40ha properties with conservation values are acknowledged in the Draft Strategy) and wants concerns noted.</p>			
Item	Description of Issue	Time	Who	When
Environment Policy and Strategy Steering Committee				
4.	<p><u>Environment Policy:</u> The MEAC discussed the changes made to the policy document and commentary focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns that some of the content from the old policy had been lost in the efforts to create a more succinct document. Concerns that some of the terms are too technical and there is a need for plain English. Definitions for terms should be consistent with definitions in other documents such as Environment Strategy or other Council policies. 	Policy to be reviewed in light of feedback received.	ZB	By next meeting.
	<p><u>Environment Strategy:</u> There was a lack of time to cover this aspect of the agenda, however the intention was to seek feedback from MEAC on the 'Evaluation of the Environment Strategy's Implementation Report' including the changes made since last MEAC meeting –</p>	To distribute an update on the revised approach to this evaluation based on MEAC's feedback at December 2014 meeting.	ZB	20 Feb 2015

	incorporating members' feedback.			
	Next Meeting: 14 April 2015, Yea, Venue TBC			
	The meeting closed at:			
	Attachments: 1. Council Submission to VicForests 2. Environment Strategy Evaluation Approach			