Murrindindi
Shire Council

Annual Report
2012 - 2013

Contents

About this Annual Report

The *Murrindindi Shire Council Annual Report 2012-2013* details progress we have made in the past financial year, 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013, towards achieving the activities of the *Council Plan 2009–2013* and the *2012-2013 Annual Budget*.

In this report we identify our achievements, challenges and what is planned for the year ahead for seven themes of Governance, Community, Local Economy, Climate Change and Natural Environment, Planning and Environment, Infrastructure and Corporate Development.

The *Annual Report 2012-2013* also contains audited financial reports and performance statements, which are a requirement of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

The *Annual Report 2012-2013* is written for a variety of audiences including government agencies, the community, ratepayers and businesses. Copies of the *Annual Report 2012-2013* are available at Council's offices in Alexandra, Kinglake and Yea or online at www.murrindindi.vic.gov.au.

We encourage you to tell us how we can improve our reporting to you. If you have any comments or suggestions please write to the Chief Executive Officer, Murrindindi Shire Council, PO Box 138, Alexandra 3714 or email msc@murrindindi.vic.gov.au.

Further copies or questions?

If you would like additional copies of the Murrindindi Shire Council *Annual Report 2012-2013* or you have any questions about this report, please send your enquiry by email to msc@murrindindi.vic.gov.au or mail to Chief Executive Officer, Murrindindi Shire Council, PO Box 138, Alexandra 3714.

Contact us

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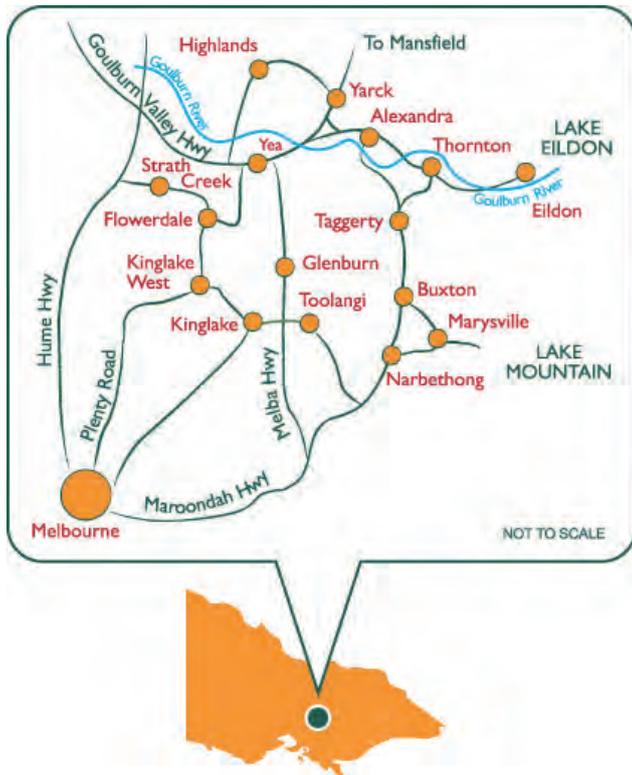Ph: (03) 5772 0333   Fax: (03) 5772 2291

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Murrindindi snapshot

Our history

The Wurundjeri tribe and the Taungurung language speakers are the traditional owners of the land known as the Shire of Murrindindi.

European settlement followed Hume and Hovell's overland exploration in December 1824. Many local towns were established during the 1850s and 1860s after the discovery of gold.

The Murrindindi Shire Council was declared on 18 November 1994 by the amalgamation of the former municipalities of Alexandra and Yea, and the addition of parts of the former municipalities of Healesville, Broadford, Eltham, Whittlesea and Euroa.

Council services offered

• Tourism and Economic Development
• Events management
• Waste management
• Environmental services
• Land use, development and subdivisions
• Building control
• Aged and Disability services
• Youth and Recreational development
• Public Health
• Libraries
• Roads and bridges
• Children and family services
• Community Development

Industries

• Agriculture, aquaculture, horticulture and viticulture
• Forestry and timber processing
• Tourism, hospitality and conferencing
• Light manufacturing and engineering
• Retail and trade services
• Education
• Public services

Our shire

Location: 150 kms or 90 minutes north east of Melbourne
Area: 3,889 sq kms (48% Crown Land)
Population: 13,058 (2011 Australian Bureau of Statistics)
Councillors: 7
Rateable properties: 9486
Sealed roads (Council maintained): 482 kms
Unsealed roads (Council maintained): 714 kms

Townships

• Acheron • Alexandra • Buxton • Castella • Cathkin • Eildon
• Flowerdale • Glenburn • Gobur • Highlands • Homewood
• Kanumbra • Kinglake • Kinglake West • Koriella • Limestone
• Marysville • Molesworth • Murrindindi • Narbethong
• Rubicon • Strath Creek • Taggerty • Terip Terip • Thornton
• Toolangi • Woodbourne • Yarck • Yea

Mission

To care for, foster and promote the Murrindindi Shire in partnership with communities and other stakeholders.

Vision

Murrindindi will be a vibrant and progressive shire, with strong communities thriving within a healthy environment.

Values

• Honesty and Integrity - We will be open and truthful in our dealings.

• Accountability and Consistency – we will accept responsibility for our actions and be consistent in the application of our principles, policies and processes.

• Innovation and Excellence – we will consider new ideas, opportunities and better ways of doing things.

• Respect and Trust – we will respect other people and their opinions and do as we say we will.

Message from the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer

In presenting the Murrindindi Shire Council *Annual Report 2012/13*, we look back on a year that has seen significant change, challenges and successes.

One of the great successes of 2012/13 has been the community's participation in providing valuable support in developing a Murrindindi 2030 Vision.

With more than 30 people attending a Visioning Day workshop in August and a further 270 responses from a mail-out, the feedback has certainly assisted the new Council in developing its four-year plan and has set a solid foundation for developing a 2030 Vision.

The Council elections in October resulted in five new faces representing the shire.

The make-up is:

Koriella Ward	Mayor John Walsh
Redgate Ward	Deputy Mayor Margaret Rae
Cathedral Ward	Christine Challen
Cheviot Ward	John Kennedy
Eildon Ward	Bernie Magner
King Parrot Ward	Cris Ruhr
Kinglake Ward	Andrew Derwent

It is important to recognise and thank the previous Council for its united approach in tackling a range of difficult and complex decisions.

Councillors Sally Abbott Smith, Peter Beales, Kevin Bellingham, Bob Flowers and Chris Healy should be proud of their achievements in setting the Council on a course of financial stability.

Advocacy has remained strong throughout the year. We have continued to engage, support and assist the State Government in our request for financial assistance in meeting our on-going costs for the operation and maintenance of the novated and gifted assets as a result of the 2009 fires.

This included a direct meeting with the Minister for Local Government Jeanette Powell and on-going discussions with the Deputy Premier at a range of events and functions that have taken place in the shire.

We remain positive that our request will be considered favourably. It is unreasonable to expect the Murrindindi Shire community to bear the full costs arising from the new and upgraded facilities.

The year has also seen more changes to our organisation through the services review. This has included significant changes to our Infrastructure Services and Community and Corporate Services Divisions. The decision did have a direct impact on a number of staff with positions made redundant. Overall the Services Review has had a significant impact on all staff across the organisation. It has been a difficult process with the loss of some very good people.

Coming out of those changes has been our ability to restructure internally, make significant operational savings as well as enter into a resource sharing arrangement with Yarra Plenty Regional Library Service - one of Australia's most progressive library services.

It has been a year where we have supported and proactively promoted Murrindindi Shire as a great place to live, visit and invest.

A number of great events have been staged across our shire but the success of the Alexandra Truck, Ute and Rod Show continues to bring thousands of people to our region. And the inaugural Steelband Festival held in Marysville shows the wonderful diversity we have across our communities in developing opportunities to promote the region both nationally and internationally. The festival was part of the Marysville 150 Years celebrations that has seen the community embrace and support a range of events and functions for residents and visitors alike.

Once again weather conditions have played a significant part in defining the year. A record dry spell during summer has certainly put pressure on our agricultural industry. It also reinforces the unpredictability of our climate and strengthens our desire to be recognised for our environmental practices.

We continue to build trust with our community and advocate on its behalf.

We are developing a vision that has been guided by our community. We look forward to that journey as a united Murrindindi Shire.

Councillors

John Walsh

Koriella Ward

First Elected 2008

Portfolio: The Mayor does not hold a portfolio.

Townships: Yarck, Cathkin, Molesworth, Limestone, Highlands, Gobur

The Mayor is Chair of meetings of the Murrindindi Shire Council and represents Murrindindi Shire Council on the following advisory committees and external organisations:

- Audit Advisory Committee
- CEO Performance Review Sub-Committee
- Central Ranges Local Learning and Employment Network (CRLLEN)
- Economic Development Advisory Committee
- High Country Councils Coalition
- Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)
- Murrindindi Scenic Reserve Committee of Management
- Peri Urban Group of Rural Councils
- Rural Councils Victoria
- Timber Roads Advisory Committee (TIRES)
- Timber Towns Victoria (TTV)
- Yea Cemetery Trust
- Yea Saleyards Committee of Management

Cr Margaret Rae, Deputy Mayor

Redgate Ward

First elected November 2012

Portfolio: Land Use Planning

Township: Alexandra

The Deputy Mayor represents Murrindindi Shire Council on the following advisory committees and external organisations:

- Audit Advisory Committee
- Advancing Country Towns Strategic Steering Group
- Alexandra Community Leisure Centre Committee of Management
- Alexandra Police and Community Consultative Committee
- Alexandra Racecourse and Recreation Reserve Committee of Management
- Alexandra Showgrounds and Recreation Reserve
- Alexandra Tennis Club Committee of Management
- CEO Performance Review Sub-Committee
- Mount Pleasant Reserve Committee of Management
- Yea Cemetery Trust

Cr Christine Challen

Cathedral Ward

First elected November 2012

Portfolio: Economic Development

Townships: Taggerty, Buxton, Marysville, Narbethong

Cr Challen represents Murrindindi Shire Council on the following advisory committees and external organisations:

- Buxton Recreation Reserve Committee of Management
- Economic Development Advisory Committee
- Gallipoli Park Precinct Committee of Management
- Linking Murrindindi Partnership
- Marysville Retirement Village Residents Association Inc
- Steavenson Falls Scenic Reserve Committee of Management
- Workspace Australia Board
- Yea Cemetery Trust

Cr John Kennedy

Cheviot Ward

First elected November 2012

Portfolio: Natural Environment and Climate Change

Townships: Yea, Strath Creek, Flowerdale

Cr Kennedy represents Murrindindi Shire Council on the following advisory committees and external organisations:

- Audit Advisory Committee
- Friends of Yea Railway Committee of Management
- Goulburn Broken Greenhouse Alliance (GBGA)
- Goulburn River High Country Rail Trail Advisory Committee
- Murrindindi Environment Advisory Committee
- Strath Creek Pioneer Reserve and Hall Committee of Management
- Yea Cemetery Trust
- Yea Indoor Recreation Centre Committee of Management
- Yea Pioneer Reserve Committee of Management
- Yea Shire Hall Committee of Management (check)
- Yea Showgrounds and Recreation Reserve Committee of Management
- Yea Wetlands Committee of Management

Councillors

Cr Bernie Magner

Eildon Ward

**First elected
November 2012**

Portfolio: Infrastructure & Waste

Townships: Thornton, Eildon

Cr Magner represents Murrindindi Shire Council on the following advisory committees and external organisations:

- Audit Advisory Committee (alternate for J Walsh)
- Advancing Country Towns Strategic Steering Group
- CEO Performance Review Sub-Committee
- Eildon Alliance Boat Ramp Committee of Management
- Eildon Community Centre Committee of Management
- Eildon Community Resource Centre Committee of Management
- Goulburn Valley Regional Waste Management Group
- Thornton Recreation Reserve and Hall Committee of Management
- Yea Cemetery Trust

Cr Andrew Derwent

Kinglake Ward

**First elected
November 2012**

Portfolio Community Services

Township: Alexandra

Cr Derwent represents Murrindindi Shire Council on the following advisory committees and external organisations:

- Bollygum Park Reserve Committee of Management
- CJ Dennis and Castella Public Hall Reserve Committee of Management
- Economic Development Sub-Committee
- Kinglake Community Centre Committee of Management
- Kinglake Memorial Reserve Committee of Management
- MAV Emergency Management Reference Group
- Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
- Yea Cemetery Trust

Cr Cris Ruhr

King Parrot Ward

First elected March 2010

Portfolio Corporate and Customer Services

Townships: Hazeldene, Glenburn, Kinglake West, Pheasant Creek

Cr Ruhr represents Murrindindi Shire Council on the following advisory committees and external organisations:

- Flowerdale Community Hall Reserve Committee Inc
- Glenburn Community Centre Committee of Management
- Murrindindi Environment Advisory Committee
- Yea Cemetery Trust

Our organisation

Chief Executive Officer

Margaret Abbey

Margaret joined Murrindindi Shire Council in 2010 with 26 years of local government experience.

Margaret is the link between the elected Council and the organisation. The Council delegates a number of powers to Margaret to ensure she has the authority to fulfil her role.

Margaret has focused on developing a financially sustainable organisation, as well as continued service delivery across the shire.

Margaret previously held the position of Group Manager, Environment and Planning Services at Nillumbik Council and her first council role was in the Southern Highlands of NSW.

Margaret has an Arts Degree, a Masters Degree in Town and Country Planning and Postgraduate qualifications in Management from Victoria University.

General Manager Sustainability

Michael Chesworth

Michael joined Murrindindi Shire Council as Manager Organisational Development in 1997 to assist in the preparation for compulsory competitive tendering.

Michael's role covers economic and tourism development, land use planning, building compliance, local law enforcement and environmental sustainability.

Michael has been heavily involved in the planning for rebuilding and recovery following the 2009 bushfires.

Prior to joining Council Michael was employed in the private sector and has over 10 years experience in marketing and research consulting, particularly in business and retail.

Michael has a Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Hons.) and has completed postgraduate studies in Local Government Financial Management.

General Manager Infrastructure Services

Tamara Johnson

Tamara joined Murrindindi Shire Council in 2012.

Tamara's role covers the management, maintenance and planning of Council's assets, the management and delivery of Council's Capital Works Program and the delivery of key essential services and maintenance programs to the Murrindindi community.

Tamara joined Council from Nillumbik Council where she held the position of Manager Infrastructure Maintenance.

Tamara has also held previous roles in the areas of waste operations and asset management with the City of Whittlesea.

Tamara has a Bachelor of Applied Science (Environmental).

General Manager Corporate & Community Services

Rob Cherry

Rob started with Murrindindi Shire Council in 2010.

Rob has over 20 years experience in financial and corporate management in private sector companies and state and federal government agencies.

In previous roles, Rob has held senior positions as Corporate Director, Financial Controller in various organisations and as Partner and Principal in public accounting practices.

Rob's role covers the management and strategic development of Council services in relation to corporate services, finances and community services.

Rob is a Member of the Institute of Public Accountants and holds a Bachelor of Business Multidiscipline (Mon).

Executive Director, Reconstruction and Recovery

Dimitri Scordalides

Dimitri joined Murrindindi Shire Council in 2010 to lead its bushfire reconstruction and recovery effort. He came from Benalla Rural City after eight years as the General Manager Infrastructure where he managed the engineering, planning and regulatory functions.

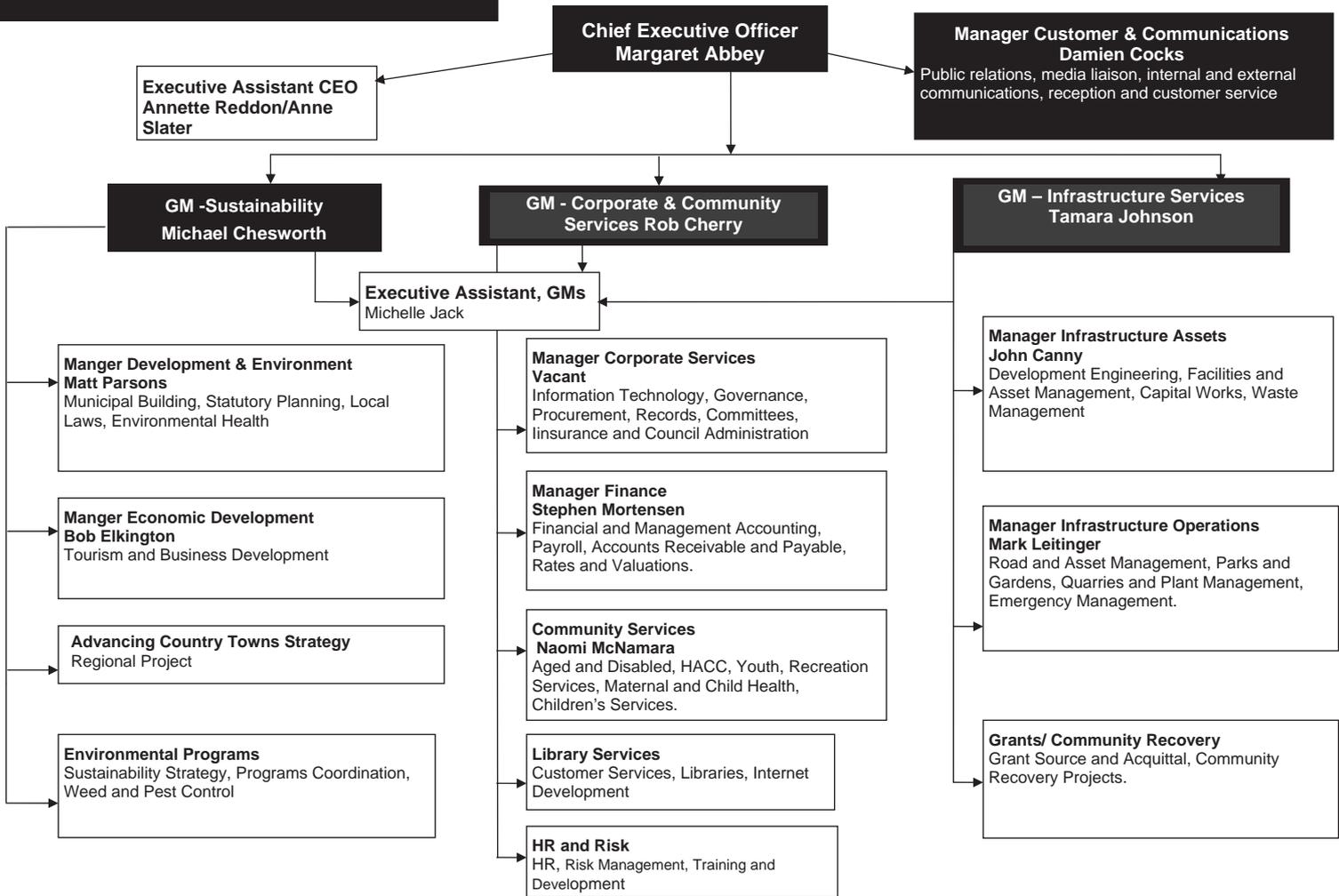Dimitri was a qualified Civil Engineer with 25 years of Local Government experience in metropolitan and rural Councils.

Having substantially completed the physical construction of new and expanded assets, Dimitri's focus was on finalising the governance and asset transition.

The Director Reconstruction and Recovery was a temporary position funded through the Murrindindi Assistance Package and came to an end in December 2012.

Organisational Structure

Organisation Structure June 2013

Chief Executive Officer
Margaret Abbey

Manager Customer & Communications
Damien Cocks
Public relations, media liaison, internal and external communications, reception and customer service

Executive Assistant CEO
Annette Reddon/Anne Slater

GM -Sustainability
Michael Chesworth

GM - Corporate & Community Services Rob Cherry

GM – Infrastructure Services
Tamara Johnson

Executive Assistant, GMs
Michelle Jack

Manger Development & Environment
Matt Parsons
Municipal Building, Statutory Planning, Local Laws, Environmental Health

Manager Corporate Services
Vacant
Information Technology, Governance, Procurement, Records, Committees, Iinsurance and Council Administration

Manager Infrastructure Assets
John Canny
Development Engineering, Facilities and Asset Management, Capital Works, Waste Management

Manger Economic Development
Bob Elkington
Tourism and Business Development

Manager Finance
Stephen Mortensen
Financial and Management Accounting, Payroll, Accounts Receivable and Payable, Rates and Valuations.

Manager Infrastructure Operations
Mark Leitinger
Road and Asset Management, Parks and Gardens, Quarries and Plant Management, Emergency Management.

Advancing Country Towns Strategy
Regional Project

Community Services
Naomi McNamara
Aged and Disabled, HACC, Youth, Recreation Services, Maternal and Child Health, Children's Services.

Environmental Programs
Sustainability Strategy, Programs Coordination, Weed and Pest Control

Library Services
Customer Services, Libraries, Internet Development

Grants/ Community Recovery
Grant Source and Acquittal, Community Recovery Projects.

HR and Risk
HR, Risk Management, Training and Development

2012-2013 – the year in review

Theme 1 – Governance – further information page 16

Strategic objective	Achievements	Challenges	Year ahead
Effective leadership providing representation and advocacy for the community backed by a financially strong organisation	• The 2012 Local Government election was successfully conducted in conjunction with the Victorian Electoral Commission. • A comprehensive induction program for the new Council, which included five new Councillors, was completed.	• Continuing to work with the community to improve its satisfaction with Council operations, advocacy and overall performance. • The ongoing lobbying of State Government to secure funding associated with ongoing costs of servicing gifted assets.	• Completing the development of the Murrindindi 2030 Vision. • Providing ongoing support to the community and the organisation for the continuing transition to post bushfire recovery operations.

Theme 2 – Community – further information page 20

Strategic objective	Achievements	Challenges	Year ahead
Communities enjoying good health and wellbeing	• Council held a Positive Ageing Forum in February to highlight the activities, services and opportunities for older people to get involved in their communities. • The Advancing Country Towns Early Years Initiative was launched and included the training of 40 Parent Early Education Partnership (PEEP) facilitators in August for the pilot of the program and the formation of six PEEP groups.	Finding Family Day Care Educators in areas where there are no or few childcare options available. • Preparing for assessment and achieving mandatory accreditation against the Children's Services Standards for our Family Day Care and In Home Care services. • Renewing the ageing infrastructure of Council's swimming pools within the constraints of Council's limited capital works budget and the limited availability of external funding sources.	• Implementing actions of the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017 with key service partners and the community. • Continuing to provide ongoing support and engagement with communities across a range of services and planning initiatives.

2012-2013 – the year in review

Theme 3 – Local Economy – further information page 23

Strategic objective	Achievements	Challenges	Year ahead
Sustainable growth for our local economy	• A Practitioners Guide to Business Recovery following disasters, co- sponsored by the Salvation Army, Council and the State Government was completed and launched. • Under the Advancing Country Towns Project, funding was secured to support the further development of the Murrindindi Training Institute and its diversification into new industry training areas.	• Providing adequate support to Goulburn River Valley Tourism in the quest to become a recognised tourism region. • Managing the continuation of the Alexandra, Thornton and Eildon Advancing Country Towns project following the cessation of the funded Project Manager position. • Encouraging increased involvement and input from business people and associations into strategies and actions required for growth.	• Developing a 10 year plan for the Yea Saleyards to ensure its ongoing development as a premier regional saleyard. • Completing the Great Victorian Rail Trail Integrated Strategy and implementing marketing, business promotion and signage initiatives to increase user numbers and enhance the experience of the trail.

Theme 4 – Climate Change & Natural Environment – further information page 27

Strategic objective	Achievements	Challenges	Year ahead
A natural environment that is diverse, healthy and cared for	• A draft Roadside Management Plan and Code of Practice has been developed to assist in protecting environmental values during roadside works. • Energy audits have been performed on a selection of Council buildings to identify opportunities for improving energy efficiency.	• Managing and meeting community expectations with respect to the level of Council's involvement in environmental initiatives. • Council's reliance on securing external funding sources to achieve many of Council's environmental initiatives and works priorities.	• Implementing a project to change Murrindindi Shire's public streetlights to energy efficiency lighting technology. • Completing the development of Council's Waste Management Strategy.

2012-2013 – the year in review

Theme 5 – Planning & Environment – further information page 30

Strategic objective	Achievements	Challenges	Year ahead
Sustainable land use, development and growth	• Council approved the new bushfire management policy for inclusion into the Murrindindi Planning Scheme, in accordance with the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission findings. • Council was represented at various State Government forums on legislative reforms impacting on bushfire planning and building provisions in order to advocate for those in the community attempting to rebuild.	• Managing the impacts on the community and Council associated with the expiry of the temporary bushfire planning provisions during early 2014. • Managing the impacts on the community and Council associated with the implementation of the new State Bushfire Management Overlay and State bushfire provisions in the Murrindindi Planning Scheme.	• Completion of a review of the Municipal Strategic Statement to guide future strategic planning and growth with the Shire. • Formally adopting the Kinglake Ranges Flowerdale and Toolangi Plan and Design Framework.

Theme 6 – Infrastructure – further information page 33

Strategic objective	Achievements	Challenges	Year ahead
To enhance the sustainability of our infrastructure, recognising the changing needs and expectations of our communities	• Council attained Core Competency in asset management as prescribed by the National Asset Management Assessment Framework. • The construction of the Kinglake Ranges Health Centre building was completed and officially opened on 12 February 2013.	• The ongoing management and funding of the new and gifted assets post the 2009 bushfire reconstruction. • Identifying and seeking opportunities to fund capital improvement into the future to address Council's widening infrastructure gap.	• Continuing to implement Council's asset management plans for all major asset management categories. • Completing two major construction projects, the Y Water Centre at the Yea Wetlands and the restoration and extension of the Yea Shire Hall.

Theme 7 – Corporate Development – further information page 37

Strategic objective	Achievements	Challenges	Year ahead
Improve systems and processes	• A review of Council's Rating Strategy progressed to provide options for an improved rating structure. • A revised Chart of Accounts was implemented which enables improved financial accountability and management reporting.	• Implementing the Fire Services Property Levy • Fulfilling the new Local Government Reporting Framework requirements.	• Developing a Master Plan for growing the rates base to improve the financial sustainability of the Council. • Completing the implementation of the new Electronic Document Management System across the organisation.

Calendar of events

July 2012

- Eight council community care staff increase their range of skills and services by receiving their certificate three in Home and Community Care.
- The inaugural Mayor of Murrindindi Shire Council Cr Stephen Franzi-Ford passes away.
- The new Marysville Police Station is officially opened.
- Council calls for public comment for its Rates Strategy review.

August 2012

- Council hosts a Community Visioning Day that starts the process of developing a Murrindindi 2030 Vision.
- Information session held in Yea to assist potential candidates for the October Local Government elections.
- Council releases its draft *Murrindindi Shire and Lake Mountain Municipal Fire Management Plan*.
- Council hosts a number of public information sessions as it prepares to consolidate its Local Laws.
- Council invites Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke to Toolangi to better understand the local eco system and the role logging plays in the economic sustainability of the shire.

September 2012

- Council announces its annual fire amnesty period for landholders to prepare properties for the fire season.
- Council commences its Caretaker Period as the 2012 Local Government elections draw near.
- Council, working with landholders and stakeholder groups, embarks on a campaign to reduce the impact of the noxious weed Chilean Needle Grass across the shire.
- Yea is named as a location to host a leg of the North Western League Skate & BMX competition.
- Council advocates to the State and Federal Governments to consider some form of tax relief on councils impacted by the Local Government's Defined Superannuation Benefit Scheme.
- Council receives 270 responses to its community visioning survey.

October 2012

- New Council is elected.
- Koriella Ward Councillor John Walsh is returned as Mayor; Redgate Ward Councillor Margaret Rae is appointed Deputy Mayor.
- The new Council is:

Koriella Ward	Mayor John Walsh
Redgate Ward	Deputy Mayor Margaret Rae
Cathedral Ward	Christine Challen
Eildon Ward	Bernie Magner
Cheviot Ward	John Kennedy
King Parrot Ward	Cris Ruhr
Kinglake Ward	Andrew Derwent

- Nominations open for Council's Australia Day Awards.
- Fire restrictions are imposed across the shire.

November 2012

- Council implements the findings of its library service review that sees changes to the Library Headquarters functions in Alexandra.
- Key community projects in Toolangi and Castella are officially opened. The Toolangi Castella District Community House Upgrade, Toolangi Tall Trees Trail, Toolangi Castella Community Garden and Castella Central Park Redevelopment were all opened with the community taking a tour of the respective facilities.
- Council meets with Local Government Minister Jeanette Powell to push for its claim of State Government support to offset costs associated with the novated and gifted assets following the 2009 bushfires.
- Council hosts the Annual Mobile Library Conference in Marysville.
- The Murrindindi Shire Inclusiveness, Access and Equity Committee is formed.

December 2012

- Council designates four new Neighbourhood Safer Places - Places of Last Resort.
- The $1.3 million upgrade to the Yea Saleyards is officially opened by Deputy Premier Peter Ryan.
- Council adopts the *Murrindindi Shire and Lake Mountain Municipal Fire Management Plan.*
- Murrindindi Shire Council uses accrued funds from its Long Service Leave (LSL) Reserve to meet its $1.9 million

Calendar of events CONTINUED

Superannuation Defined Benefits Scheme liability payment.
- Council assumes ownership of the Buxton Nature Trails.
- Council meets with Department of Local Government representatives to further advance its case for a $14.1 million contribution towards gifted and novated assets following the 2009 fires.
- Council adopts Asset Management Plans for all major asset groups and achieves core competency under the National Asset Management Assessment Framework.

January 2013
- Murrindindi Shire Council recognises Toolangi's Steve Meacher as its Citizen of the Year and Eildon's Natasha Beggs as Young Citizen of the Year and the ever-popular and growing Alexandra and District Open Gardens weekend as the Murrindindi Shire Community Event of the Year.
- Council calls for community submissions as it continues to develop its Positive Ageing Strategy.
- Council welcomes tourism figures that show the region is growing in popularity.

February 2013
- More than 80 participants join in the inaugural Celebrating Positive Ageing Forum hosted by Council in Yea.
- Design and concept plans behind the exciting $1.9 million Yea Wetlands centre were on show at a drop-in session in Yea.
- State Premier Ted Baillieu officially opens the new Kinglake Ambulance Station. The state-of-the-art facility provides a modern base for paramedics of Kinglake and its surrounding districts.
- The Kinglake Ranges Health centre, which was a project managed by Council, is officially opened by Premier Ted Baillieu.

March 2013
- A new shelter is opened at the Yea Lawn Cemetery to provide protection and a place of reflection.
- The Restore Your Business Community Practitioners Handbook is launched at the Economic Development Australia's March conference in Hume Shire.
- The Yea Wetlands project is officially named the Y Water Centre at Yea Wetlands.

- Council starts the process of auditing selected buildings for energy use in meeting the objectives of its Environment Strategy.
- The Eildon-Thornton-Alexandra Advancing Country Towns Skills, Training and Workforce Development initiative is launched.

April 2013
- The $2.2 million Kinglake Memorial Reserve is officially opened. The reserve has been transformed into an impressive sporting precinct hosting cricket and football facilities, tennis and netball courts.
- Council supports the inaugural Australian Steelband Festival in Marysville which attracts national and international participants.
- Council CEO Margaret Abbey is reappointed to lead the organisation for three years.
- Murrindindi Shire is showcased at the Regional Living Victoria Expo held in Melbourne.

May 2013
- Yea Saleyards holds its first ever stud sale.
- Family Day Care celebrates 25 years of service with a family fun day.
- Council's effort to reduce weed spread across the shire is outlined in a Code of Practice that is developed for staff and contractors.
- Construction work on the 1000 Hands project – developed by the Triangle Arts Group – starts in Marysville.
- Council calls for community input as its starts the development of its Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.
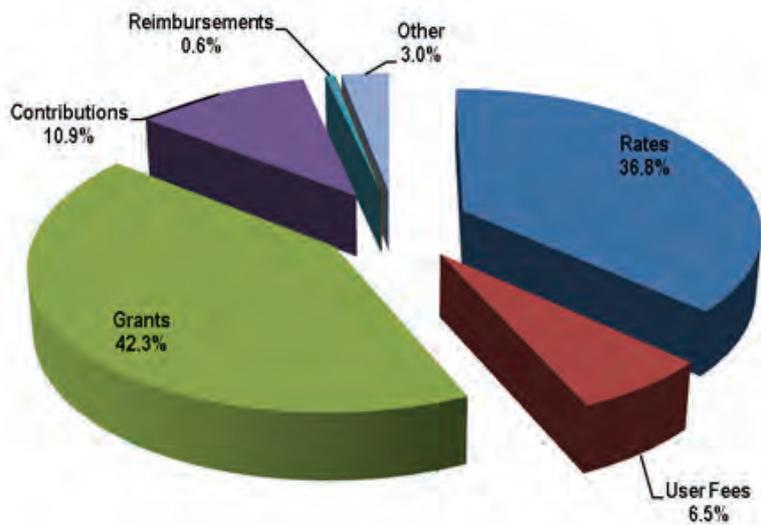
June 2013
- A service agreement between Murrindindi Shire Council and Yarra Plenty Regional Library is endorsed allowing for a sharing of resources.
- Council supports the rail trail name change to the Great Victorian Rail Trail.
- The first sod is turned in the development of the Y Water Centre at Yea Wetlands.
- Council adopts its new four-year plan and the 2013-2014 Budget.
- Council says "yes" to supporting the Yes campaign for the constitutional recognition of Local Government.
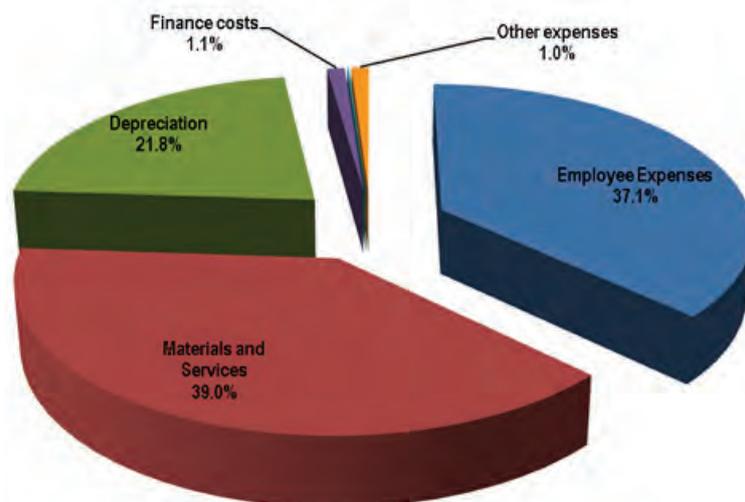
Financial overview 2012-2013

The following graphs are a summary of Council's financial reporting for the year ended 30 June 2013. For further financial detail refer to the Financial Report at the back of the report.

Income breakdown

Reimbursements 0.6%
Other 3.0%
Contributions 10.9%
Rates 36.8%
Grants 42.3%
User Fees 6.5%

Operating expense breakdown

Finance costs 1.1%
Other expenses 1.0%
Depreciation 21.8%
Employee Expenses 37.1%
Materials and Services 39.0%

Capital expenditure breakdown

Land under roads, 1.0%
Bridges, 7.6%
Buildings, 38.2%
Roads and Paths, 40.3%
Drainage, 1.4%
Fixtures, furniture and equipment, 3.6%
Plant, machinery and equipment, 5.1%
Library materials, 1.2%
Heritage and cultural, 1.6%
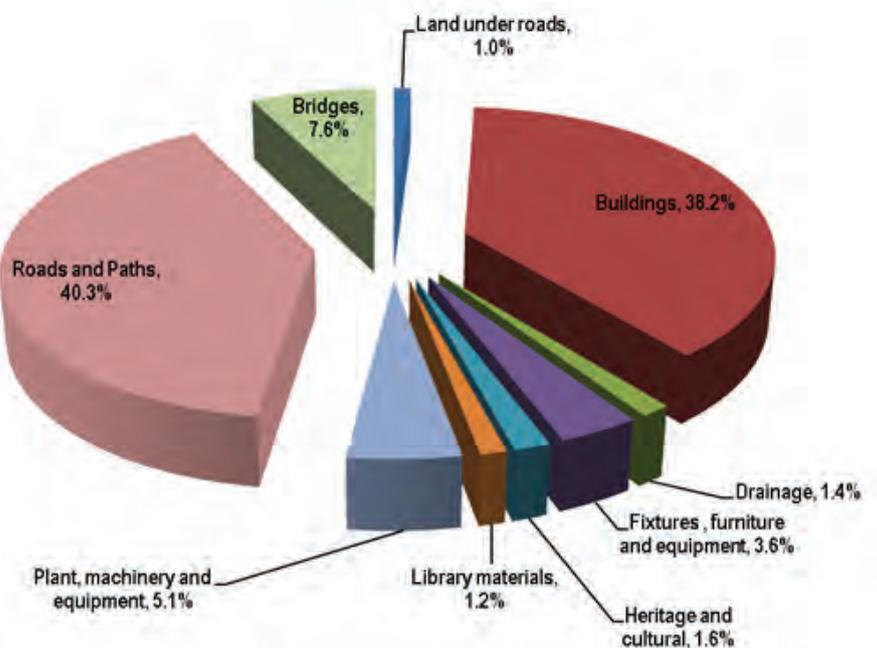
Performance reporting

We report on our performance under the seven themes of the Council Plan 2009-2013.

Governance

Objective: Effective leadership providing representation and advocacy for the community backed by a financially strong organisation.

Community

Objective: Communities enjoying good health and well being.

Local Economy

Objective: Sustainable growth of our local economy.

Climate Change and Natural Environment

Objective: A natural environment that is diverse, healthy and cared for.

Planning and Environment

Objective: Sustainable land use, development and growth.

Infrastructure

Objective: To enhance the sustainability of our infrastructure, recognising and changing needs and expectations of our communities.

Corporate Development

Objective: Improve systems and processes.

For each theme we include:

- a summary of our achievements, challenges and what is before us
- tables listing our Council Plan activities for each strategy and a comment or status for each item

Please note that data is not available for all of our strategic indicators. This is because not all of our indicators are measured annually.

THEME 1 – GOVERNANCE

Strategic Objective

Effective leadership providing representation and advocacy for the community backed by a financially strong organisation.

Strategies

- Facilitate and support recovery within fire affected communities.
- Provide opportunity for open and responsive communication with the community.
- Improve governance systems, processes and relationships.
- Be consistent, fair and transparent in our decision-making.

Achievements

- Council successfully conducted the 2012 Local Government election in conjunction with the Victorian Electoral Commission.

- A comprehensive induction program for the new Council, which included five new Councillors, was completed throughout the year.

- The Council's Reconstruction and Recovery Plan was completed during the year marking a major milestone in the recovery of the Murrindindi Shire following the 2009 fires.

- Council commenced the development of the Murrindindi 2030 Vision involving a community workshop and a shire-wide community survey.

- Service reviews were completed for individual departments during the year leading to increases in Council's financial sustainability.

- Financial modeling was completed for a submission to State Government for financial assistance in relation to funding the ongoing use of the operating, maintenance and renewal costs associated with gifted assets from natural disasters.

- 13 members of the leadership group participated in a High Performance Leadership program.

- A number of health and wellbeing strategies, career transition programs and other engagement programs have been delivered to support and retain staff through the changes.

Challenges

- The ongoing lobbying of State Government to secure funding associated with ongoing costs of servicing gifted assets.

- Continuing to work with the community to improve its satisfaction with Council operations, advocacy and overall performance.

- The integration of key Council management systems including project and grant registers.

Looking forward

- Providing ongoing support to the community and the organisation for the continuing transition to post bushfire recovery operations.

- Providing ongoing support and engagement with communities in relation to Council decision-making.

- Attaining consistent compliance reporting across all of the Council's Special Committees (Section 86).

- Completing the development of the Murrindindi 2030 Vision.

Council Plan activities

Strategy 1 – Facilitate and support recovery within fire affected communities.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Continue to provide leadership and advocate for the community in the recovery process.	Ongoing	Various meetings have been held between Council and the State Government's Fire Recovery Unit, Department of Planning and Community Development and Department of Human Services to ensure the various local bushfire recovery issues continue to be progressed. In particular, Council has continued its advocacy in relation to the Buy Back Scheme and its impact upon the community.
Support ongoing community and organisational transition to post recovery operations.	Completed	Council will maintain a high tempo of advocacy with the State Government with regard to seeking financial assistance as detailed in the KPMG report. The Department of Planning and Community Development - Local Government Victoria (LGV) has prepared a brief on further work to be undertaken by Council to support its current and future needs. In response to this brief, Council has provided information required to further consider the quantum of assistance.
Lobby other levels of government to secure recovery resources (carried forward from previous year).	Completed	Council has continued its advocacy to the State Government on the securing of resources to contribute to the cost of the operating, maintaining and renewing the gifted and novated assets. This has included a media program with the public release of the KPMG report. Meetings have been held with the Departmental Secretary of DPCD and also with Local Government Victoria to discuss the scope of the project requested by the Departmental Secretary. Officers have meet with the consultants providing advice to Local Government Victoria and it is understood that final briefings are now being presented to relevant State Government Ministers.

Strategy 2 – Provide opportunity for open and responsive communication with the community.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Continue to communicate the Council Plan to the community.	Completed	Council continued to actively report on specified activities within the Council Plan to the community via its published quarterly report and media releases on activities achieved. Ground work has already been established, via the Community Visioning exercise conducted in August 2012 to engage members of the community to assist the new Council in the development of the Council Plan beyond June 2013. Council completed the development of the new Council Plan (2013-17) that is focused on four broad themes namely, Our Community, Our Council, Our Economy and Our Environment.
Continue a community visioning exercise to develop a Murrindindi 2030 Community Plan. (carried forward from previous year).	Ongoing	Council received 270 responses to the community visioning survey. These responses have been collated and presented to Council. In addition, the outcomes have provided a framework for the Council Plan 2013-2017 and have been a checklist for the consideration of strategies within the Council Plan.

Council Plan activities CONTINUED.

Strategy 3 – Improve governance systems, processes and relationships.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Implement the Murrindindi Reform and Recovery Plan.	Completed	The Reform and Recovery Plan was implemented through a range of actions including the employment of staff and the conduct of programs funded under the Murrindindi Assistance Package as well as the implementation of organisational system improvements and efficiencies. Council received the second annual report on the implementation of the plan at its March 2013 meeting. The Murrindindi Assistance Package concluded on 30 June 2013 and an extension to the Memorandum of Understanding will be prepared to cover those projects extending into 2013-2014.
Undertake business planning and implement the Services Review recommendations.	Completed	As part of the Services Review, business plans have been implemented by each department. In addition the recommendations of the Services Review were implemented including position savings, organisational efficiencies and implementation of individual service reviews including Parks and Gardens, Library Services, Economic Development and Infrastructure Operations. Further reviews for the Finance and Corporate Services Departments were also completed.
Conduct the induction for new and returning Councillors.	Completed	Implementation of the Councillor Induction and Transition Program has been a high priority since the election of the new Council. Council's legal obligations in relation to its compliance with the *Local Government Act*, the principles of Good Governance and the role of Council in relation to the *Planning and Environment Act* have been key themes for implementation. In addition, the development of the Strategic Resource Plan and the Council Plan have been important elements of the induction program.
Monitor and review the changes to the schedule of Council meeting times and locations.	Completed	Ordinary Meetings of Council were conducted in Yea (August 2012), in Flowerdale (September 2012) in Eildon (January 2013), in Yea (March 2013) and Marysville (June 2013), in line with Council's intention to provide opportunity for community participation at Council Meetings around the shire. Council meetings are currently conducted in the evening with a view to maximising community participation.
Review governance processes to identify opportunities for improvement (carried forward from previous year).	Completed	The Local Government Inspectorate attended Council in the week beginning 3 September 2012 to conduct a review of Council's operations which included governance elements. The report findings indicated that Council was compliant in 21 out of the 27 areas reviewed. Council has reviewed the report findings and has responded to recommendations, providing the Inspectorate with actions to be undertaken in respect of non compliant areas and timelines for achievement.
Progress Council Procurement Roadmap developed through the Council Reforming Business Procurement (carried forward from previous year).	Ongoing	The Procurement Working group engaged consultants to provide a procurement toolkit and training resource. Training in the procurement toolkit will be rolled out in the second quarter of the new financial year. The Procurement Working Group has undertaken preparatory work in order to go to market for priority contracts early in the new financial year.

Council Plan activities CONTINUED.

Strategy 4 – Be consistent, fair and transparent in our decision making.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Complete continuous improvement and Best Value requirements.	Completed	In terms of continuous improvement, the organisation is currently undergoing a process of developing business plans and service level review of all departments. Specific service level reviews have been completed for Parks and Gardens, Economic Development, Library Services and Infrastructure Operations. The reviews for Corporate Services and Finance Departments were completed and implemented by mid June 2013.

Services related to this theme

- Civic functions and events
- Councillor training and development
- Council elections
- Community engagement
- Intergovernmental relations

Fast facts

- 11 new Australian citizens welcomed to the shire.
- 42 residents made presentations to Council during Open Forum sessions.
- 20 Council meetings held.
- 32 Councillor briefing sessions held.

THEME 2 – COMMUNITY

Strategic Objective

Communities enjoying good health and wellbeing.

Strategies

- Facilitate and support recovery within fire affected communities.
- Foster a more resilient community by promoting diversity, inclusion, access and equity, and supporting community interaction.
- Facilitate improved quality of life for the Murrindindi Shire community.

Achievements

- Council held a Positive Ageing Forum in February to highlight the activities, services and opportunities for older people to get involved in their communities which was attended by 80 people from across the shire.
- The Advancing Country Towns Early Years Initiative was launched and included the training of 40 Parent Early Education Partnership (PEEP) facilitators in August for the pilot of the program and the formation of six PEEP groups.
- A Children's Services Network was established to assist in maintaining and developing strong professional networking and communication across Early Years Services in the shire.
- A total of eight FReeZA events were run across the shire with participation from a total of 1330 children and young people.
- An Access and Inclusion Working Group was established bringing together key Council departments, disability support providers and the community to improve access for people with disabilities across Murrindindi Shire.
- The Murindindi Library Service successfully organised and hosted the annual National Mobile Library Conference in Marysville with attendees from all over Australia.

Challenges

- Preparing for assessment and achieving accreditation against the Children's Services Standards for our Family Day Care and In Home Care services.
- Finding Family Day Care Educators in areas where there are no or few childcare options available.
- Continuing to support and chair the Children's Services Network and facilitate the implementation of the Advancing Country Towns Early Years initiatives.
- Renewing the ageing infrastructure of Council's swimming pools within the constraints of Council's limited capital works budget and the limited availability of external funding sources.

Looking forward

- Implementing actions of the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017 with key service partners and the community.
- Completing the Advancing Country Towns Early Years Initiative in partnership with Berry Street and Alexandra and District Kindergarten.
- Working across Council and in consultation with community to begin the redevelopment of the Yea Swimming Pool.
- Continuing to provide ongoing support and engagement with communities across a range of services and planning initiatives.

Services related to this theme

- Aged and Disability Services
- Children and Family Services
- Community Development
- Library Services
- Recreation Services

Fast facts

Maternal and Child Health Services:
- 123 Birth Notifications received.
- 178 New Enrolments (birth to six years).
- 54 First Time Mothers, 43 of whom attended First Parent Groups.
- 11 Parent Education Sessions, with 55 parents attending.
- 672 Immunisations.
- 55 % of mothers still breastfeeding at six (6) months
- 147 Infant Referrals
- 28 Mother Referrals
- 1226 Key Ages and Stages checks done
- 985 Additional Consultations
- 281 Telephone Consultations

Council Plan activities

Strategy 1 – Facilitate and support recovery within fire affected communities.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Continue work with fire affected communities to assist with ongoing implementation of community based recovery plans based on active participation and strengthened community connectedness.	Completed	The Vulnerable Persons Register has continually been updated. Work has continued with Red Cross to identify other vulnerable people who may not be in receipt of services to ensure they are considered in emergency situations. The Red Cross also presented information to the Murrindindi Community Services Group, regarding Vulnerable People in Emergencies Service. The service is open to all service providers and community organisations.
Continue work with fire affected communities to strengthen communities and prepare for future disasters	Completed	This activity is ongoing and is firmly integrated into the daily program delivery across all units within the Community Services department. Aged and Disability services have actively worked with individuals to assist their recovery and plan for future events. Community Capacity Building Initiatives including seniors activities, volunteer support, children's week and ACT Early Years have had a strong focus on building resilience. The Municipal Recovery Plan is regularly updated and the Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) attends the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) meetings and regional emergency management meetings. MRM is also working with the Emergency Management Coordinator to explore collaborative approaches to Emergency Management across other Local Government Areas in an effort to share expertise and resources and avoid duplication of effort.

Fast facts

Aged and Disability Services delivered the following services:
- Domestic Assistance - 8575 Hours of service delivered.
- Personal Care - 1650 Hours of service delivered.
- Planned Activity High - 4658 Hours of service delivered.
- Planned Activity Core - 4033 Hours of service delivered.
- Delivered Meals (MOW's) - 6785 Meals delivered.
- Respite Care - 950 Hours of service delivered.
- Property Maintenance - 1005 Hours of service delivered.

Fast facts

Library services:
- 88,394 library items borrowed:
- 72,015 print material - books and periodicals.
- 16,379 audio visual - talking books, DVDs etc.
- 6,255 library members.
- 557 new members.

Fast facts

Children's Services:
- Provided 13,250 total hours of In Home Care.
- Provided 54,906 total hours of Family Day Care.
- Supported 133 families each week.
- Supported 194 children.

Council Plan activities CONTINUED

Strategy 2 – Foster a more resilient community by promoting diversity, inclusion, access and equity, and supporting community interaction.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Implement initiatives from the Inclusiveness, Access and Equity Plan.	Ongoing	The Access and Equity working group has been reviewing the Access and Equity Action Plan (Disability Action Plan), developed as part of the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The plan has incorporated feedback from community members including people with a disability, their carers and service providers. Further communication awareness training has been undertaken by Council staff, as a result of this training an IPad has been sourced for tAlexandra Reception to assist in communicating with people who have difficulties with speech.
Identify and implement projects, programs and initiatives to meet the key strategic directions of the 'Linking Murrindindi' Access and Liveability for All Strategic Plan 2011-2013.	Completed	The Transport Connections Project finished 30 June 2013. A number of the initiatives and programs developed by this three year program have led to sustainable outcomes including new bus routes, a bank of volunteer drivers and volunteer training, swimming programs (aided by transport), transport timetables for the shire etc. The Transport Innovations program is still continuing to June 2014. Through this program new initiatives are being developed which aim to build on the sustainable outcomes delivered by the Transport Connections Program. It is anticipated that these projects will be complete by June 2014.
Investigate a community building initiative in Yea.	Ongoing	To date it has not been possible to establish a specific project for Yea and work continues to explore a suitable initiative for the use of the available funds. Officers are pursuing opportunities to develop a project initiative under the framework of the new Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan which will target small scale "placemaking" projects to improve and enhance public spaces through community arts and small scale infrastructure projects.

Strategy 3 – Facilitate improved quality of life for the Murrindindi Shire community.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Implement initiatives from the Health and Wellbeing Plan.	Completed	The *Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (2013-2017)* was developed and is currently in draft form, ready to be released for public comment in July 2013. The plan has been developed with a focus on partnership and collaboration with internal and external stakeholders. It is anticipated that the final plan will be approved by Council in October 2013.
Lobby the State Government to improve access to public housing.	Completed	This activity relates to assisting in the rehousing of all residents in temporary villages. All temporary villages have been closed and all residents relocated. Consultations to date have not highlighted this as a current community priority, however, we are awaiting feedback from the public comment process to make a final determination.
Review and redevelop the Early Years Plan.	Completed	The development of a new *Early Years Plan* has occurred in conjunction with the broader *Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan* planning process. The Children's Services Network has been a key partner in the development of the *Early Years Plan* and this group is currently reviewing the proposed draft and has been invited to provide feedback. It is anticipated that the final *Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan* will be approved by Council in October 2013.
Implement strategies from the Youth Strategy.	Completed	The Youth Strategy was reflected in the draft *Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan* which is currently open for public comment. The Youth Partnership continued to meet regularly to progress the priorities within the strategy. The Youth Charter, a key priority of the plan, has recently been finalised and will be presented to Council in 2013/14. Planning for the 'Change it Up' initiative is underway, 20 young people have nominated to attend the youth workshop in September 2013.

THEME 3 – LOCAL ECONOMY

Strategic Objective

Sustainable growth of our local economy.

Strategies

- Facilitate and support recovery of businesses with fire affected communities.
- Support and promote events and festivals across the shire.
- Provide support to new and expanding businesses.
- Participate in cooperative marketing.
- Facilitate improved access to information communication technology and mobile phone services.
- Undertake or facilitate major economic development projects.

Achievements

- In partnership with the Central Ranges Local Learning and Employment Network (CRLLEN) and the Murrindindi Training Institute a study was completed identifying the training and workforce development needs of industry sectors across the shire.

- Under the Advancing Country Towns Project funding was secured to support the further development of the Murrindindi Training Institute and its diversification into new industry training areas.

- A major upgrade of the Yea Saleyard complex was completed including roofing, lighting, drainage, water storage, canteen and significantly improved amenities block resulting in a significant increase in patronage and cattle numbers.

- A Practitioners Guide to Business Recovery following disasters, co- sponsored by the Salvation Army, Council and the State Government was completed, launched and distributed widely.

- Council attended the second annual Regional Living Expo 2013 at the Melbourne Exhibition and Conference Centre to promote the region as a great place to live, work, invest and learn resulting in approximately 80 prospects for relocation to the area.

- The development of the Murrindindi Business and Tourism Association, a shire-wide business and tourism peak body, was progressed.

- Council supported progression of three significant development projects including the Vibe Hotel/Conference Centre and Camp Marysville in Marysville and the United Petroleum retail development in Kinglake.

Challenges

- Providing adequate support within the resources available to the Goulburn River Valley Tourism Association in the quest to become a recognised tourism region.

- Managing the continuation of the Alexandra, Thornton and Eildon Advancing Country Towns project following the cessation of the funded Project Manager position.

- Continuing to grow visitor numbers and yield despite the now well established trend of Australians holidaying overseas.

- Encouraging increased involvement and input from business people and associations in developing and progressing strategies and actions required for growth.

Looking Forward

- The opening and first year of operation of the Y Water Centre in Yea including a new Visitor Information Centre to encourage visitors to stop, stay in and explore the region.

- Completing the Great Victorian Rail Trail Integrated Strategy and implementing marketing, business promotion and signage initiatives aimed at increasing user numbers and enhancing the experience of trail users.

- Undertaking initiatives of the Advancing Country Towns project including the development of an industry association to support the Lake Eildon houseboat industry, and the development of fishing, food and wine events featuring Eildon, Alexandra, Thornton and surrounds.

- Finalising a 10 year plan for the Yea Saleyards to ensure its ongoing development as a premier regional saleyards.

Council Plan activities

Strategy 1 – Facilitate and support recovery of businesses with fire affected communities.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Facilitate processes relating to a core tourism development in Marysville.	Completed	Construction commenced on the Marysville Hotel and Conference Centre in April 2013. A Contractors and Trades information session and Tender Right workshop was held in December 2012 for local businesses resulting in a number of local businesses being successful in gaining contracts to deliver services on the project.

Strategy 2 – Support and promote events and festivals across the shire.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Work with Yarra Ranges Regional Marketing to assist in the delivery of the Marysville and Triangle Marketing and Events Implementation Plan.	Completed	Council continued to support Yarra Ranges Regional Marketing in the implementation of the Marysville and Surrounds Tourism and Events Program. Four locally run events received a $26,000 funding commitment from the May round of applications. A further $32,500 of funding was committed to two, tier one (larger) events for the coming year. A range of marketing initiatives were developed including 20,000 copies of a Marysville 150 Years celebration offers booklet, Marysville Walks and Waterfalls booklet and Marysville 150 Years Celebrations as well as the development of a snow season packages page on the Marysville tourism website.

Strategy 3 – Provide support to new and expanding business.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Attract investment into available industrial land.	Completed	A development plan for industrial land at the Binns-McCrae Road site in Alexandra has progressed providing potential site layout in readiness for future industrial development. Purchasers of the former Alexandra Mill industrial site in Lamont Street were invited to meet with Council officers to enable support to be provided for the development of a truss plant and potentially other industrial uses/businesses at the industrial site. The Council owned property at 42 North Street Yea in the Yea Industrial site was sold at auction in May 2013 to facilitate development.
Develop Action Plans to enable implementation of the Economic Development Strategy 2011-2016.	Completed	Progress has been made on a range of actions identified in the implementation plan for the *Economic Development Strategy (2011 - 2016)*. These include: Completion of the Murrindindi Training Needs Analysis and the reconvening of the skills and training working group to prioritise and action the key recommendations in the report. Development of an action plan to communicate the concept of the Murrindindi Business and Tourism Association to business associations and other key stakeholders. This will occur at a series of business forums across the shire early in the new financial year. Supporting Goulburn River Valley Tourism to secure funding and creation of a working group to develop a Destination Marketing Plan for the region. Preparation for a future directions strategic workshop for the Upper Goulburn Food Wine and Culture Group planned for early July. Significant progress in supporting the development of a sustainable business model for the Y Water Centre/Visitor Information Centre.

Council Plan activities CONTINUED

Strategy 3 – Provide support to new and expanding business. CONTINUED

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Progress the development of industrial land in Alexandra – former Alexandra Saleyards.	On schedule	In May Council resolved to seek expressions of interest to purchase and develop the former Alexandra Saleyards property. The property will now be offered for sale by private treaty.

Strategy 4 – Participate in cooperative marketing.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Subject to available resources, attract investors to fill product gaps on the Goulburn River High Country Rail Trail and Yarra Valley - High Country touring route.	Ongoing	The research undertaken as part of Goulburn River Valley Tourism's (GRVT) region wide tourism product audit was completed in March and a final report is to be presented to the GRVT Board in August. The report and the outcomes of the Destination Management Plan being developed by GRVT will provide a basis for investment attraction opportunities to be built into the Murrindindi Business and Investment Prospectus. Work commenced on the Integrated Strategy for Interpretation, Identity and Wayfinding project for the rail trail with considerable business and stakeholder input into the name and brand development. The final name endorsed by Council is the Great Victorian Rail Trail. The development of a marketing prospectus for the rail trail was a key focus during the latter part of the year. Limited activity has occurred relating to the Yarra Valley to High Country Touring route with the steering committee no longer meeting.
Fulfill undertakings under the Memorandum of Understanding with the Goulburn River Valley Tourism Inc. to grow tourism in the shire.	Completed	Officers continued to focus attention on fulfilling the agreed outcomes outlined in the Memorandum Of Understanding and In Kind agreement with Goulburn River Valley Tourism (GRVT) during the year. The second publication of the regional Holiday Planner was released at the Visitor Information Centres Volunteers Summit in Shepparton on May 7. The Holiday Planner includes the full range of natural attractions in the shire including the Goulburn River High Country Rail Trail (double page spread), a Parks and Waterways feature, and an advertisement for the Y Water Centre at the Yea Wetlands as well as information on local events and markets.

Strategy 5 – Facilitate improved access to information communication technology and mobile phone services.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Investigate and advocate for improved access to high speed and affordable broadband services in the shire.	Completed	Council continues to support the Hume Region approach to improved Information and Communications Technology (ICT) for Murrindindi Shire with ongoing involvement in the Hume Region National Broadband Network (NBN) Readiness Plan and the Hume Region ICT Strategy development. NBN Co has lodged planning applications for two towers to assist in delivery of improved services. More applications are expected as the fibre and fixed wireless networks are rolled out.

Council Plan activities CONTINUED

Strategy 6 – Undertake or facilitate major economic development projects.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Advocate for the expansion of local provision of post secondary training opportunities through the Murrindindi Training Institute.	Completed	Support for the Murrindindi Training Institute (MTI) has continued throughout the year. The Murrindindi Training Needs Analysis was completed to assist in identifying vocational training gaps in the shire. Advocacy for funding from the Advancing Country Towns project to support/facilitate business and network development initiatives for the MTI led to the recruitment of a business development manager for the MTI with a view to expanding the training opportunities on offer.
Facilitate processes relating to the development of Mt Pinninger Resort.	Completed	Council has continued to offer support, including any pre planning application meetings needed, to the proponents of this project to help progress the project to the point where a planning application can be submitted and considered by Council. It is understood that the proponents are in the process of negotiation with Goulburn Murray Water in relation to the future of the development and the current lease arrangements.
Resolve future management arrangements for Yea Wetlands Centre and pursue a sustainable business model.	Completed	The future management arrangements of the Y Water Centre at Yea Wetlands was resolved with Council agreeing in principle to the formation of an independent Incorporated Association to manage the day to day operations of the centre. The association will enter into a lease with Council to operate the centre and Council will provide one full time equivalent position to help co-ordinate operations at the centre.

Services related to this theme

- Economic Development
- Tourism
- Event Coordination
- Saleyards

Fast facts

- 68,879 'walk in' visitors to Visitor Information Centres up 27% from 2012.
- Murrindindi Shire received 745,000 domestic daytrips– up by 17.5% year ending March 2013.
- Murrindindi Shire received 262,000 domestic overnight visitors – up by 30.3% year ending March 2013.
- Visitors spent 588,000 nights and an estimated $51 million in the region.
- 65 events passed through Council's event coordination process.
- 21 sales held at Yea Saleyard complex (12 store, 6 weaner, 23 feature female and 1 stud).
- 37,644 head of cattle passed through the Yea Saleyard complex.

THEME 4 – CLIMATE CHANGE & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Strategic Objective

A natural environment that is diverse, healthy and cared for.

Strategies

- Promote and advocate sustainable living, business practice and land use.
- Reduce generation of waste by Council and the community.
- Integrate environmental resource and land management across Council operations.
- Reduce Council and community carbon footprint.
- Encourage the community to adapt to climate change.

Achievements

- A pest plant and animal program was developed and implemented based on priority roadsides that are controlled by Council.

- Council, in partnership with Mansfield Shire Council, successfully advocated for a more balanced approach to the development of waste water management strategies to facilitate appropriate development around Lake Eildon.

- A draft *Roadside Management Plan and Code of Practice* was developed to assist in protecting environmental values during roadside works.

- Energy audits were completed on a selection of Council buildings to identify opportunities for improving energy efficiency. A supporting documentary was created to help raise awareness around ways in which buildings and occupiers of buildings can conserve energy use.

- As part of its membership of the Goulburn Broken Greenhouse Alliance, Council was successful in obtaining funding from the Community Energy Efficiency Program to replace public streetlights with energy efficient lighting technology over the next three years.

- A training program was delivered to staff, through the Goulburn Broken Greenhouse Alliance, which focused on carbon accounting and sustainable decision making.

- New recycling streams were introduced at the Resource Recovery Centres in 2012-13 include electronic waste, fluorescent tubes and bulbs and couches.

Challenges

- Council's reliance on securing external funding sources to achieve many of Council's environmental initiatives and works priorities.

- Managing and meeting community expectations with respect to the level of Council's involvement in environmental initiatives.

- Ensuring effective communication and liaison between multiple agencies that are involved in natural resource management to achieve better planning and ongoing works.

- Responding to increasing costs of waste disposal.

- Responding to and preventing illegal dumping of waste on public land.

Looking forward

- Progressing the implementation of Council's Environment Strategy.

- Completing the development of Council's *Waste Management Strategy*.

- Implementing a project to change Murrindindi Shire's public streetlights to energy efficiency lighting technology.

- Implementing a selection of environmental communication and engagement initiatives.

- Finalising solutions for managing Council's native vegetation offset requirements associated with Council's capital works.

- Developing a system for Council to measure its environmental footprint.

- Developing a master plan for the Alexandra Landfill.

Services related to this theme

- Waste management services
- Environmental risk assessment and advice
- Statutory planning referrals
- Energy and resource conservation strategies

Fast facts

- 41 roadsides treated for Regionally Controlled Weeds which equates to 625km overall
- 31.8ha sprayed for Chilean Needle Grass

Council Plan activities

Strategy 1 – Promote and advocate sustainable living, business practice and land use.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Develop and implement communication strategy for environment initiatives.	Completed	A draft communications plan covering environmental issues for the 2013-2017 period was developed, and a strategic work plan for communications and community engagement activities for the 2013/14 year has been established. The plan focuses on specific topics each year that will culminate in a range of different communication initiatives involving Council staff and community stakeholders ranging from formally established community groups through to the household level. The plan also involves a revamp of the environmental pages of the Council's website to improve community access to important environmental information which is currently in draft form and due to be published next year.
Review and develop a domestic wastewater management strategy subject to funding being available.	On schedule	Council is participating in a review of Domestic Waste Water Management Plan (DWMP) objectives with Mansfield Shire Council and Goulburn Murray Water. The DWMP's primary objective is to provide a planned coordinated approach around Lake Eildon and in specified locations within each municipality having regard for improved environmental outcomes. The DWMP provides a mechanism for developing strategies that support domestic wastewater management coordination between councils and stakeholders.
Investigate the use of environmental and land management incentives for landholders.	Deferred	In assessing the priorities for the Environmental Programs Unit for 2012/2013 this item was deferred to the next Council Plan.

Strategy 2 – Reduce generation of waste by Council and the community.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Establish water use targets for Council facilities and activities and monitor progress.	Deferred	In assessing the priorities for the Environmental Programs Unit for 2012/2013 this item was deferred to the next Council Plan.
Finalise and commence implementation of the Council's *Waste Management Strategy*, including the expansion of recycling facilities in public places.	Deferred	The project brief for the *Waste Management Strategy* has been prepared and tenders will be called in the new financial year.

Fast facts

- Kerbside waste diversion/recycling rate: 41% increased from 38% in 2011-12.

In 2012 -13 kerbside collections recycled:
- 946 tonnes of cardboard and paper in 2012-2013
- 404 tonnes of glass
- 46 tonnes of metals
- 147 tonnes of various plastics.

which saved over 4000 cubic metres of landfill space.

Additionally Resource Recovery Centres recycled:
- 2700+ m3 of green waste (paid)
- 1400+ m3 of green waste (amnesty)
- 40+ tonnes of mixed recyclables
- 50+ tonnes of cardboard and paper
- 1300+ tonnes of steel
- 800+ items of whitegoods
- 500+ batteries
- 200+ mattresses

Council Plan activities CONTINUED

Strategy 3 – Integrate environmental resource and land management across Council operations.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Implement an environmental best practice code and training plan for outdoor works.	Completed	An environmental best practice code has been developed as part of Council's draft *Roadside Management Plan* involving consultation with staff, contractors and service authorities. A training program covering the code of practice was delivered to Council's infrastructure staff and contractors.
Develop and implement guidelines for the management and protection of roadside conservation values.	On schedule	A draft *Roadside Management Plan* was prepared involving consultation with key internal and external stakeholders with an interest or role in the plan's implementation. The plan will be a guiding document for the implementation of Council's roadside code of practice.
Identify and prioritise sites, other than roadsides, with significant biodiversity values and formulate management guidelines to protect them.	Completed	A small selection of sites other than roadsides have been identified and prioritised as part of the development of a native vegetation offsets business case that will result in the protection of such sites in perpetuity through the implementation of 10 year management plans, subject to the Council's endorsement of a business case currently under review. In regard to other sites work to develop management plans will be progressively implemented in subsequent years, subject to resources.
Develop and commence implementation of an offset plan for native vegetation removal associated with Council managed works.	Ongoing	A native vegetation offset business case to address Council's offset backlog was completed and considered by Council's executive management. It has not been possible to finalise the business case completely due to the recent release by the State Government of changes to the State Native Vegetation Management Framework, which will have implications for the future of management of native vegetation removal and offsets, and which therefore need to be incorporated into the business case. This work will continue into 2013/14 year.

Strategy 4 – Reduce Council and community carbon footprint.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Identify and purchase eco-friendly products and materials through participation in a green procurement program.	Deferred	In assessing the priorities for the Environmental Programs Unit for 2012/2013 this item was deferred to the next Council Plan.

Strategy 5 – Encourage the community to adapt to climate change.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Provide support to community education on environmental issues.	Completed	Early in the year the Environmental Programs Unit continued to engage with local schools which participated in the development of a book containing the experiences and observations of local young people about the natural environment. Educational materials were distributed to residents of several areas in the south of the shire concerning actions necessary to preserve habitat for native animals recovering from the 2009 bushfires, particularly the native bandicoot following an increasing number of reports of bandicoot road deaths in recent months. Provision of community education on environmental issues will be delivered as part of Council's environmental communications plan.

THEME 5 – PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT

Strategic Objective

Sustainable land use, development and growth.

Strategies

- Streamline approvals processes to encourage rebuilding in fire affected areas.
- Use a strategic approach to land use planning to facilitate integrated residential and public facility construction.
- Continue to strengthen partnerships with the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Country Fire Authority.

Achievements

- Specialist assistance and advice continued to be provided to facilitate bushfire recovery efforts on a variety of rebuilding projects and private dwelling rebuild applications across fire affected areas.
- Council was represented at various State Government forums on legislative reforms impacting on bushfire planning and building provisions in order to advocate for those in the community attempting to rebuild.
- Council continued its participation in the development of the Hume Regional Growth Plan with strong advocacy to ensure the plan promotes the sustainability of the Murrindindi Shire into the future.
- Amendments to the Murrindindi Planning Scheme to correct anomalies and to expand the amount of available industrial land were prepared and exhibited.
- Council approved the new bushfire management policy for inclusion into the Murrindindi Planning Scheme, in accordance with the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission findings.
- Council completed the implementation of the State-wide Streatrader system which reduces "red tape" for food operators and vendors within the shire.
- A Municipal Pandemic Plan and Heatwave Plan were developed and presented to the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee for final comment before being presented to Council for final endorsement.

Challenges

- Managing the impacts on the community and Council associated with the expiry of the temporary bushfire planning provisions during early 2014.
- Identifying and recognising likely growth areas within the shire in the Planning Scheme to ensure the economic sustainability of the municipality moving forward.
- Managing the impacts on the community and Council associated with the implementation of the new State Bushfire Management Overlay and State bushfire provisions in the Murrindindi Planning Scheme.
- Meeting heightened expectations from the community in relation to Council's ability to reduce municipal fire risks within tight budgetary constraints.

Looking forward

- Completing a review of the *Municipal Strategic Statement* to guide future strategic planning and growth with the shire.
- Implementing the Bushfire Management Overlay and associated controls.
- Investigating future growth opportunities within the shire and particularly around Yea.
- Completing a review of the *Domestic Animal Management Plan*.
- Completing a review of the *Emergency Management Plan*.
- Formally adopting the *Kinglake Ranges Flowerdale and Toolangi Plan and Design Framework*.

Services related to this theme

- Development approvals
- Building services
- Fire prevention
- Environmental Health
- Local Law enforcement

Fast facts

- 333 building permits processed (39 for fire affected properties).
- 16 days average to process building permits on fire affected properties.
- 100% Council building permits determined within 30 days.
- 297 building certificates issued.
- 42 days average to process planning permits.
- 42 planning consents issued.
- 12 days average to process planning consents.

Fast facts

- 110 septic tank permits issued (32 For fire affected properties).
- 301 health premises registrations.
- 91.84% Immunisation coverage across all age cohorts.
- 2,475 dogs registered.
- 451 cats registered.
- 121 burning off permits issued.
- 435 Fire Prevention Notices issued following inspection of approx 2000 properties (inspected twice, therefore equates to 4000 property inspections). Four penalty infringements issued for non-compliance of FPN.

Council Plan activities

Strategy 1 – Streamline approvals processes to encourage rebuilding in fire affected areas.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Assist Goulburn Murray Water in rezoning process related to the Mt Pinniger Resort Development.	Completed	Council continued to offer support, including any pre planning application meetings needed to the proponents of the Mt Pinninger Resort development to help progress the project to a point where a planning application can be submitted and considered by Council. It is understood that the proponents are in the process of negotiation with Goulburn Murray Water in relation to the future of the development and the current lease arrangements.

Strategy 2 – Use a strategic approach to land use planning to facilitate integrated residential and public facility construction.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Facilitate development options Goulburn Murray Water Land transfers for future.	Completed	Stage 1 of this process has been completed, which comprised the transfer to Council of Roads and Reserves that are managed and maintained by Council. Council is awaiting advice from Goulburn Murray Water on its plans for dealing with other surplus land in and around Eildon. A review of the *Eildon Urban Design Framework* will be necessary for Eildon township to consider future development options for surplus land owned by Council and Goulburn Murray Water.
Review and adopt Alexandra Urban Design Framework.	Ongoing	Work on this project has not commenced due to other competing priorities, primarily the work being done on the Flying Squad funded projects, the *Kinglake Ranges Flowerdale Toolangi Plan* and *Design Framework and the Hume Regional Growth Plan*. It is anticipated work will commence in late 2013.
Develop a plan for the review of existing Urban Design Frameworks.	Ongoing	Work has commenced on reviewing the current status of Council's existing urban design frameworks. Due to considerable restructuring within the Infrastructure Services Division of the Council it was not possible to finalise this work during this financial year. Work has progressed on developing a project scope for the development of streetscape frameworks for townships covered by the *Kinglake Ranges, Flowerdale and Toolangi Plan and Design Framework*. It is planned to undertake this project during 2013/14.
Commence a review of the Municipal Strategic Statement.	Ongoing	An audit of the *Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS)* was completed in May 2013. Further work is necessary to align the strategic directions of the *Council Plan 2013 - 2017*, which will drive improvements to the Murrindindi Planning Scheme. It is anticipated that this work will commence in September 2013.
Complete and implement the Kinglake Ranges, Flowerdale and Toolangi Plan.	Ongoing	Work to finalise the *Kinglake Ranges, Flowerdale and Toolangi Plan and Design Framework* has not progressed and remains on hold pending further advice from the State Government on its response to measures contained within the plan which address bushfire safety. Council officers have held discussions with representatives of Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure in an attempt to progress actions within the plan that do not relate to bushfire safety. Work to develop plans for improving the local streetscape amenities is planned to proceed in the coming months.

Council Plan activities CONTINUED

Strategy 3 – Continue to strengthen partnerships with the Department of Sustainability & Environment and the Country Fire Authority.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Map municipal fire risk.	On schedule	The former Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) has co-ordinated all new bushfire mapping for the whole of Victoria. Updated mapping has been prepared but is yet to be implemented into the Murrindindi Planning Scheme (MPS). The existing Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) covers approximately 1,500 properties and the updated mapping is expected to cover up to 5,500 properties (additional 4000 properties) when the new BMO is introduced. Work commenced by Council on mapping the fire risk around some townships in the shire to assist in the preparation of schedules that will assist in simplifying the approval processes in specific locations.
Ensure appropriate planning responses to the 2009 Bushfire Royal Commission recommendation taking into account any State Government subsequent policy or legislative changes.	Completed	Council has responded to significant legislative change since the 2009 Victorian Bushfires and Royal Commission recommendations. A significant number of corrective amendments to assist bushfire recovery and rebuilding were undertaken by Council and implemented by the Minister for Planning. Council completed a draft Local Planning Policy to complement the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) changes and which provides a localized context to bushfire risk assessments under the Murrindindi Planning Scheme. Council has consented to a Ministerial amendment to the Planning Scheme to incorporate this policy. Council has advocated to the Country Fire Authority (CFA), Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) and the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) concerning opportunities for in-fill development within established settlement areas in bushfire risk areas. CEOs of Bushfire affected councils have met to agree on a joint approach to progress this issue.
Complete the *Municipal Fire Management Plan*.	Completed	The *Municipal Fire Management Plan (MFMP)* was adopted by Council on 17 December 2012 and provides a strategic and integrated approach to fire management within Murrindindi Shire and the area of the Lake Mountain Resort. The new MFMP responds to the 2009 Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission findings and forms part of the broader state and regional framework established under the *Emergency Management Act (1986)*.
Develop a planning guideline that responds to high fire risk environments having regard to settlement patterns, access and egress options and an improved awareness of the inherent risks posed by wildfire.	Ongoing	Work on this project commenced in June and it is anticipated that an informative brochure will be completed prior to the 2013/14 fire season.

THEME 6 – INFRASTRUCTURE

Strategic Objective

To enhance the sustainability of our infrastructure, recognising the changing needs and expectations of our communities.

Strategies

- Rebuild community infrastructure damaged or destroyed by the February 2009 fires.
- Work with fire affected communities and other levels of government to assist the implementation of priority infrastructure projects.
- Undertake a range of community infrastructure projects which enhance community amenity and foster civic pride.
- Align infrastructure service delivery with community needs and expectations.
- Improve and expand the network of footpaths and shared trails both within towns and linking communities.
- Maintain and further develop a safe and efficient transport network.
- Undertake whole-of-life cost analyses of all new assets and commit to funding necessary for operational, maintenance and renewal.
- Enhance the organisation's asset system knowledge and data.
- Define and quantify the infrastructure renewal funding gap and seek to close this gap by 5% per annum.

Achievements

- This year saw the commencement of construction of the $1.9million Y Water Centre at the Yea Wetlands which will provide a state of the art interpretive centre and a Level 2 Visitors Information Centre.
- Major road safety works were undertaken with the rehabilitation of 3.5 kms of the Break O'Day Road at Glenburn.
- Council achieved its core competency in asset management as prescribed by the *National Asset Management Assesment Framework*. This included the completion and adoption of the Asset Management Strategy and Asset Management plans for all major asset categories.
- The 1,000 Hands Installation within Gallipoli Park which consists of over 700 handmade tiles with hand prints taken from the community and other people who contributed to the rebuilding of Marysville was completed.
- The Skate Park in Gallipoli Park has been completed with landscaping around the skate park expected to be completed by December 2013.
- The construction of the Kinglake Ranges Health Centre building was completed and officially opened on 12 February 2013.
- Flowerdale Youth Shed was completed. The project consisted of a large shed incorporating an indoor half court basketball court with associated skate facility and car parking.
- Completion of the Buxton Trail project which provides a walking loop within the Buxton Township with two swing bridges over the Steavenson and Acheron rivers and is well used by the community.
- The Toolangi Tall Trees Trail project was completed. This project links with the Bicentennial Trail and stretches from Silver Creek Road along the Healesville Kinglake Road to the Toolangi Dixons Creek Road.

- Council has continued to manage the bushfire reconstruction program both for assets destroyed by fires and new and expanded assets funded through donations.
- Council also continued to address the reconstruction of storm and flood damaged infrastructure from the February 2012 major rain events. Some $2.7 million of these works were completed this year.

Challenges

- Identifying and seeking opportunities to fund capital improvement into the future to address Council's widening infrastructure gap.
- The ongoing management and funding of the new and gifted assets post the 2009 bushfire reconstruction.

Looking Forward

- Next year will see the completion of the refurbishment and or upgrade of two major bridges in the shire. The Breakaway Bridge at Acheron will be fully restored and a new bridge will be installed on Allendale Road at Strath Creek. The design works for the replacement of the Ghin Ghin Road bridge will also be undertaken.
- Council will continue to implement its asset management plans for all major Asset Management categories.
- Council will complete two major construction projects, the Y Water Centre at Yea Wetlands and the restoration and extension of the Yea Shire Hall.
- The first stage of the two year program to refurbish the Yea swimming pool will begin.
- Council will commence work on three new pathway projects at Kinglake and Taggerty.
- Next year will see the completion of all bushfire related projects.
- Development and implementation of the various elements of the asset management system including A*sset Management Plans* and *Service Management Plans* for key asset classes.

Council Plan activities

Strategy 1 – Rebuild community infrastructure damaged or destroyed by the February 2009 fires.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Rebuild buildings damaged and destroyed by fire in 2009 including Gallipoli Park development – Marysville drainage.	On schedule	The rebuilding program is nearing completion. The 1,000 Hands project has been completed and the Marysville Community Centre car park is under construction. Remaining landscaping works in Gallipoli Park are to be finalised by December 2013.

Strategy 2 – Work with fire affected communities and other levels of government to assist the implementation of priority infrastructure projects.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
All scheduled activities completed in 2012.	Ongoing	The Taggerty Community project will be delivered during the 2013/14 year following extensive consultation with the community.

Strategy 3 – Undertake a range of community infrastructure projects which enhance community amenity and foster civic pride.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Develop Asset Management Plans for key infrastructure categories - Roads - Bridges - Paths - Buildings - Drainage.	Completed	Core level Asset Management Plans were adopted by Council in December 2012.
Implement findings of Alexandra and Yea Stormwater strategies as opportunities arise.	Ongoing	Drainage improvement works are scheduled for completion for Alexandra and Yea by mid 2014.
Undertake a review of Special Charge Scheme policies and processes.	Deferred	The draft policy has been completed and is awaiting final amendments and presentation to Council. It is anticipated that this will be finalised by October 2013.

Services related to this theme

- Facilities maintenance
- Engineering design and management
- Infrastructure planning
- Parks and gardens
- Roads & Bridges

Fast facts

Roads and Bridges: In 2012 -13 Council maintained:

- 484.6 kms of sealed roads.
- 702 kms unsealed roads.
- 68.2 kms sealed paths (including 2.1 km rail trail).
- 98 km un-sealed paths (including 72.6 km rail trail).
- 73.kms of streets swept.
- 23 kms of unsealed roads resheeted.
- 34 kms of sealed roads resealed.
- 80 kms of Rail Trail built including 7 toilets and 2 shelters along the route.
- 67.5km of underground drainage.
- 5.4 km of open drain and 2400 pits and enwalls within the urban areas.

Council Plan activities CONTINUED

Strategy 4 – Align infrastructure service delivery with community needs and expectations.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Develop a shire-wide Pathway Strategy to identify future priorities.	Completed	The Pathway Strategy is completed and included in the Asset Management Plans. A Pathway condition audit was undertaken and completed in June 2013.
Review key road and related renewal strategies for input into the 10 year capital works program.	On schedule	Core Asset Management Plans for Roads include these strategies and were adopted by Council in December 2012. Further review of the 10 year capital improvement plan was undertaken and was adopted by Council. The *Road Management Plan* has been reviewed and is currently out for community consultation and is scheduled for adoption in August 2013.
Implement essential service safety systems for public buildings under Council control.	On schedule	These systems and procedures are currently being developed by Council staff and implementation has been carried forward to the 2013/2014 financial year as part of the Capital Works Program.

Strategy 5 – Improve and expand the network of footpaths and shared trails both within towns and linking communities.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Pursue funding for Alexandra to Eildon shared path link.	Ongoing	The Hume Regional Strategy has identified the development of a trail from Alexandra to Eildon as a priority. The DPCD is currently preparing a *Hume Regional Tracks and Trails Strategy* that is also considering this project. Council at its meeting on 27 March 2013 endorsed the Advancing Country Towns project to prepare a feasibility concept for this project.

Strategy 6 – Maintain and further develop a safe and efficient transport network.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Undertake works at Breakaway Bridge subject to available funding.	Ongoing	A contractor has been appointed to undertake the refurbishment of the bridge and works commenced in May 2013 and are expected to be completed in August 2013.
Develop a new Road Safety Strategy.	Deferred	The development of a new Road Safety Strategy is not considered a priority at this time.

Council Plan activities CONTINUED

Strategy 7 – Undertake whole-of-life cost analyses of all new assets and commit to funding necessary operational, maintenance and renewal amounts.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Develop a construction rates database.	Completed	Data is currently being compiled and incorporated into the asset management systems. A construction rates database was developed and data will continually be added and reviewed as required.

Strategy 8 – Enhance the organisation's asset system knowledge and data.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Development of a working plan that will ensure "core competency" under the *National Asset Management Assessment Framework (NAMAF)*.	Completed	Council achieved a core competency under the *National Asset Management Assessment Framework (NAMAF)*. This is a significant achievement and recognition of a large amount of work undertaken to improve Council's Asset Management practices.

Strategy 9 – Define and quantify the infrastructure renewal funding gap and seek to close this gap by 5% per annum.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Implement systems that quantify the infrastructure renewal gap and adopt policies that seek to close the gap by 5% per annum.	On schedule	Core Level Asset Management Plans were adopted by Council in December 2012. Officers have reviewed the long term capital improvement plan which indicates an increasing renewal gap. Strategies to address this will be developed throughout 2013.
Implement project management systems and build project management capacity.	Completed	The new Murrindindi Project Management System was launched in July 2012 and all Council projects will be managed using this improved system.
Review the list of annual supply contracts and draft annual supply contracts for key areas not already contracted.	Ongoing	Annual supply requirements are being reviewed and new contracts are expected to be tendered throughout July and August 2013.
Review bridge renewal strategies.	Completed	The Bridge Renewal Strategy is completed and included in core level asset management plans. Condition surveys are scheduled for the 2013/14 year.
Undertake a review of maintenance scheduling activities for Council buildings.	Ongoing	The Draft *Facilities Maintenance Policy* is currently being developed and is expected to be completed by December 2013.

THEME 7 – CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT

Strategic Objective

Improve systems and processes

Strategies

- Improve systems and processes.
- Communicate well with stakeholders.
- Deliver excellent customer service.
- Reduce organisational risk.

Achievements

- A review of Council's *Rating Strategy* progressed to provide options for an improved rating structure.

- A review of Council's *Business Continuity Plan* incorporating a disaster recovery plan commenced in during the year.

- A revised *Workforce Transition Plan* and *Workforce Development Plan* were developed for Council. The management team are prioritizing and scheduling actions for 2013-16.

- The annual awards scheme continued in 2012-13 which is to recognise staff and services in a number of categories that align with the organisational values.

- Council commenced the transition from a paper-based to an electronic document management system.

- A revised *Chart of Accounts* was implemented during the year which enables improved financial accountability and management reporting.

Challenges

- Providing a smooth transition from the manual records system to the electronic document management system.

- Assisting Special Committees of Council (Section 86 Committees), and ensuring good governance and administrative practices whilst taking on responsibility over new and enhanced assets.

- Implementing the Fire Services Property Levy.

- Fulfilling the new Local Government Reporting Framework requirements.

Looking forward

- Developing a Master Plan for growing the rates base to improve the financial sustainability of the Council.

- Streamlining processes for the management of projects and grants.

- Undertaking in-house modeling of financial sustainability scenarios for the Council.

- Completing the implementation of the new Electronic Document Management System across the organisation.

- Finalising of the review of Council's Rating Strategy.

Services related to this theme

- Communication
- Corporate Services
- Customer Service
- Financial Services
- Information Technology
- Human Resources
- Risk Management

Fast facts

- 655 Land Information Certificates issued.
- 4,850 IT support requests completed.
- 8953 invoices processed.
- 34,625 visitors to Council's web site.
- 21 workplace inspections were undertaken.

Council Plan activities

Strategy 1 – Improve systems and processes.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Continue to investigate electronic document management options.	Completed	A contract for the supply and installation of an electronic document management system was signed in the second quarter of the financial year. Considerable work has been undertaken to implement this project including the mapping of data and the progressive implementation of this system in a number of departments.
Implement procurement policies and processes.	Completed	Council's *Procurement Policy* was reviewed in May. Introduction to procurement training was rolled out to all officers with a financial delegation during December. Further procurement training will be rolled out later this year.
Implement proposed Chart of Accounts.	Completed	There has been significant progress with the Chart of Accounts review reassigning all accounts to match organisational hierarchy. Additional work on resource codes for income accounts has been undertaken to automate the production of Financial Statements, in particular identifying the 'underlying operating result'. Further work will now be required on the organisational hierarchy flowing from the Infrastructure Services Division Service Review outcomes, and the June 2013 review and adjustment to the Organisational Structure.
Progress an electronic document management system.	On schedule	A contract for supply and installation of an electronic document management system was entered into in December 2012. Mapping of data has been completed. A number of departments have gone live at the end of the 2012/2013 financial year and the roll out will be happening between July and December 2013.
Review and implement the Rating Strategy.	Ongoing	The *Rating Strategy Review Report* was submitted to Council on 20 June 2012 and the report was launched and circulated to residents on 16 July 2012. Information sessions were held and the new Council has been briefed on the development of the strategy to date. Further work with the strategy has been deferred until the beginning of the new financial year (July 2013 onwards).

Strategy 2 – Communicate well with our stakeholders.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Document Policies and Procedures relating to financial services.	Ongoing	A complete review is to be undertaken of Council's Financial Policies / Procedures- in particular those that relate directly to external stakeholders to ensure these are up to date, easily accessible, readily available and easy to understand. This review was due to commence in the fourth quarter of the 2012-2013 financial year, however the complete review has been delayed until the second quarter 2013-14, due to workload issue with budget development, implementation of the fire services property levy and key financial staff on leave.

Council Plan activities CONTINUED

Strategy 3 – Deliver excellent customer service.

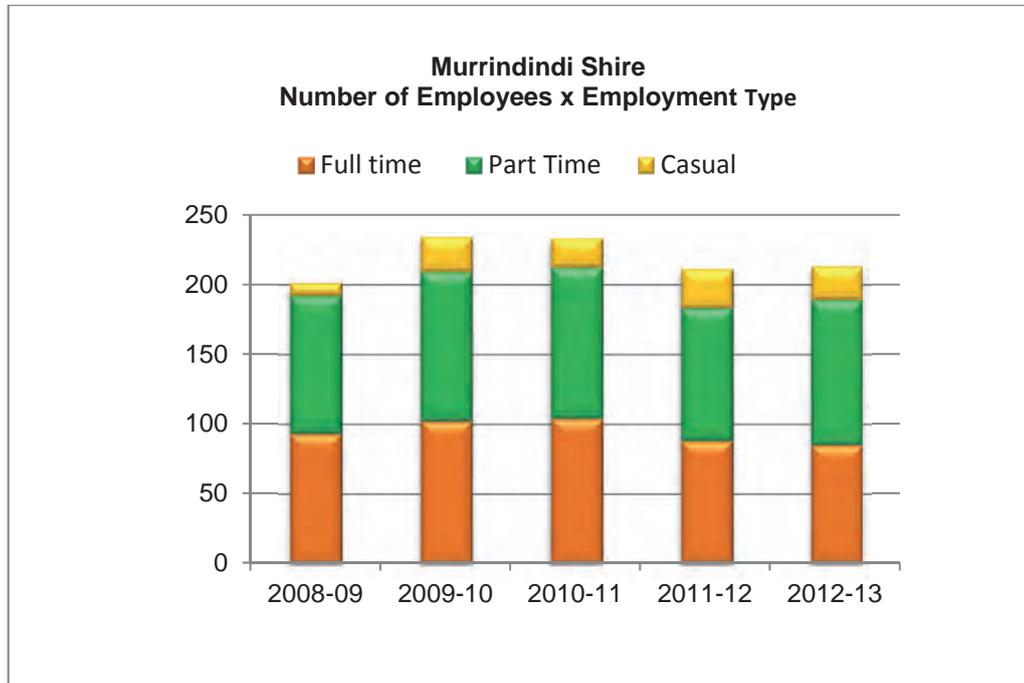| Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Continue to provide excellent customer service to the community.	Ongoing	The delivery of customer service continues to be achieved through the implementation of Council's *Customer Service Charter*. Council's website is also used as another customer service resource.

Strategy 4 – Reduce organisational risk.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Support staff to achieve their best given the increased workload of bushfire recovery.	Ongoing	As the workload of additional projects and programs is winding back so are staff numbers. In conjunction with the service reviews, there has been a realignment of some responsibilities to manage key services into the future. Support for staff in the form of 'transition programs' has been implemented for affected staff.
Refine the grants application and management process.	Completed	A grant application process has been established and a register system put in place to monitor and report on process of grant activity.
Complete business continuity plans.	On schedule	A comprehensive review of the *Business Continuity Plan* was completed in September 2011. As part of corporate governance auditing HLB Mann Judd, reviewed the Business Continuity Planning and Disaster Recovery Planning in May 2012. In response to the audit nine items of potential risk (three high, five medium and one low risk) were identified. Action plans are in place to address these issues and improve the plan. Actions to improve the frequency of back up of IT systems are now implemented, reducing potential loss of data from one week, to 1-2 days of information. In addition to these actions, Council proposes to review and redevelop the BCP in 2013 after the budget development process has been finalised for 2013-14.
Develop and implement a workforce development and transition plan.	Ongoing	Work has been undertaken on the identification of transition arrangements for those staff and positions which concluded on 30 June 2013 or earlier and sessions held with each staff member both individually and collectively. Workshops have been held in relation to the identification of current and future workforce requirements to finalise the workforce development plan which will occur in July 2013.

Corporate Development – Our Organisation

WORKFORCE PROFILE

Number of Employees x Employment type

Murrindindi Shire
Number of Employees x Employment Type

Full time Part Time Casual

Age Distribution of employees (actual numbers)

Murrindindi Shire
Age Distribution of Employees

<30 30-39 40-49 50-59 >60
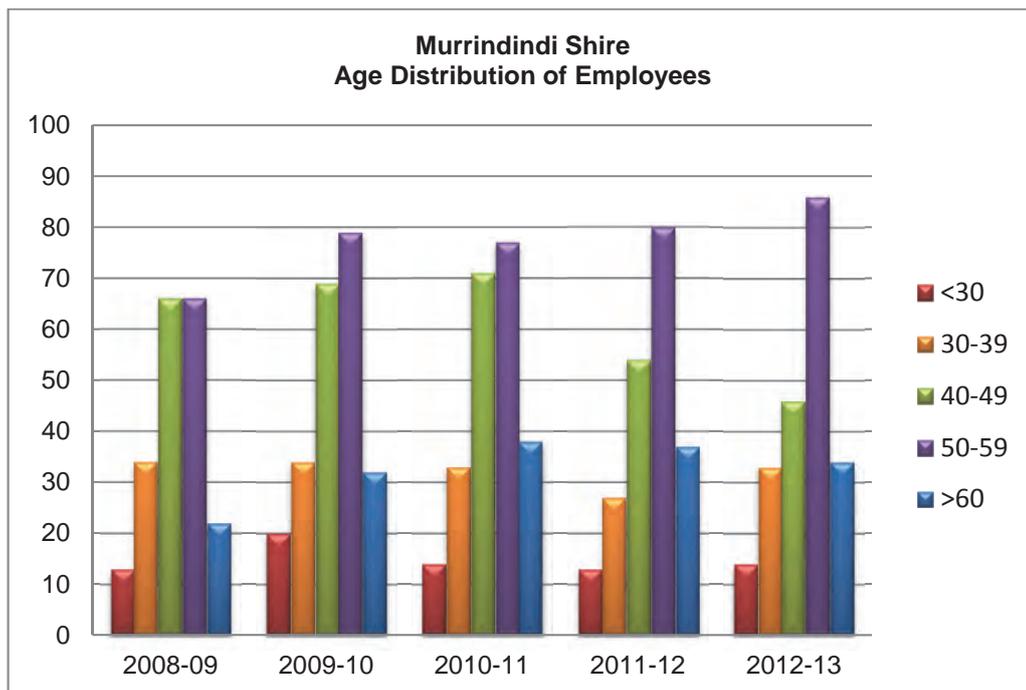
Employees in each work area

**FTE Employees by work category and gender
June 2013**

F   M

Work area	F	M
Customer/Library, Communications and Organisational Services	15	5
Corporate & Finance Services	15	4
Community Services	29	7
Development & Environment	8	6
Infrastructure Services	9	44
Economic Development	3	1

Employees by gender

**Murrindindi Shire
FTE Employees x Gender**

Male   Female   Total FTEs

Year	Male	Female	Total FTEs
2008-09	65	70	136
2009-10	63	72	135
2010-11	75	68	143
2011-12	70	75	145
2012-13	69	78	147

Corporate Development – Our Organisation

Health and safety of our people

Our staff are our most valuable asset because they are essential to the delivery of our services and our achievements.

Health and Wellbeing

Council again conducted WorkSafe Health Checks aimed at early detection of preventable conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol, with 280 staff (including casuals and contract staff) participating.

Council secured a $10,000 grant to promote and improve employee health, wellbeing and education. A range of health and wellbeing programs and activities such as quit smoking, healthy eating, exercise, and stress reduction was delivered by a range of local providers across the shire. Activities drew participants from a wide range of staff categories and were very well received. A number of staff have continued to participate in programs at their own cost.

The integrated Health and Wellbeing Program was nominated in the Worksafe Awards Health and Wellbeing category.

Regular information on health initiatives are provided to staff through the daily update, the internal staff newsletter and notice boards.

Council remains a participant in the Local Government Employees Health Plan scheme which enables Council staff to join a private health fund at competitive rates.

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)

Council is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment and ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of all employees.

Council operates a Risk and Safety Committee made up of seven Health and Safety Representatives and seven Management Representatives who support and represent each workgroup across the organisation. The committee aims to ensure that all identified hazards and risks are acknowledged, communicated and resolved promptly.

In 2012-13 the Risk and Safety committee had an improved attendance and was able to address a number of key items including:

- Purchase of four defibrillators for each Council office and the Yea Saleyards
- Improved safety measures at all Resource Recovery Centres across the shire
- Risk assessment for Outdoor PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and uniform to inform the purchase of new clothing

OHS CONTINUED

- Confined space risks were identified and five staff have been trained to mitigate the associated risks

Training, information and education remains an important aspect of our strong OH&S culture resulting in

- Four Health and Safety Representatives undertaking refresher training
- All fire wardens and deputies and staff have participated in three office drills.
- Sun Smart information being provided to all outdoor staff.
- WorkSafe week celebration including a 'Sun Smart' theme; staff barbecue, parade of best 'Sun Smart' gear and staff quiz.
- First Aid & CPR training for 47 staff
- Confined space training for five staff members
- Manual Handling training for 40 staff

Our Risk and Improvement Coordinator and OH&S Committee have conducted 21 Workplace inspections across all areas of Council.

Ergonomic assessments are completed on all new staff and equipment purchased as required.

Training and development

Council continued this year to implement an in-house training and development plan to reduce the time and costs incurred by travelling to city or regional venues. This included active participation in a North East Regional Development Scheme (NERDS) involving 10 Councils.

The online learning program Learning Seat continues to improve Council's access to professional development opportunities and training needs. In 2012-13 over 70 staff were enrolled in online training modules. A total of 300 units were assigned to staff and only 11% of those remain either incomplete or not attempted.

Over 250 staff participated in courses and programs run predominantly on site or at local venues. In 2012-13 the delivery of onsite training included;

- MS Office 2007
- Writing for the Web
- Ombudsman Presentation/Training
- Introduction to Procurement Principles
- High Performance Leadership Coach Program
- Providing Exceptional Customer Service
- Career Transition
- Managing Employee Performance

Corporate Development – Our Organisation CONTINUED

Training and development CONTINUED

- Business Writing Skills
- First Aid Level 2 and CPR
- Manual Handling

Training opportunities were also made available offsite and through externally arranged workshops including:

- Council Report Writing
- Managing the Manager
- Planning Reforms
- Freedom of Information
- Introduction to Local Government
- Web Accessibility for Writers and Editors

Staff satisfaction survey

The staff satisfaction survey was last conducted in November 2011. The results reflected staff concerns with the organisational challenges related Service Reviews and other factors and demonstrated a drop in staff satisfaction with our performance.

Despite ongoing challenges and change due to Service Reviews, restructuring and transition from bushfire funded programs, work has continued to implement improvement in areas reported as the greatest gaps in perceived

The survey is scheduled to run again in October 2013.

Awards / recognitions

Activities to recognise staff excellence and effort include

- Regular peer-nominated Organisational Development recognition award (OD Fellow award) for employees
- Delivery of the annual awards scheme to recognise services delivered in line with the organisational values. The presentation was held at the staff Christmas party and awards were presented to staff by the Deputy Mayor and CEO.

Staff turnover / recruitment / numbers

In 2013-13 Council completed a Service Review in all departments. In addition a number of the positions funded by the Murrindindi Assistance Package were finalised, with the remainder due to finish within the 2013-14 financial year.

Once again staff turnover figures showed more staff terminations (60) than commencements (51), indicating the overall reduction to standard operating staff levels.

Staff turnover CONTINUED

The terminations included a number of redundancies as a result of the implementation of the Service Review and cessation of the Murrindindi Assistance Package. However seven people whose positions were made redundant in the service reviews, were redeployed internally retaining their skills. In addition three people formerly employed under the Murrindindi Assistance Package were successful in securing ongoing employment.

Staff accommodation

With the cessation of the Murrindindi Assistance Package, Council ceased leasing the temporary accommodation in Grant Street by the end of June 2013.

Equal employment opportunity

Murrindindi Shire Council is committed to the principles of equal opportunity and anti-discrimination in employment and delivery of council services to the community.

Council believes that its employees are entitled to be treated on the basis of their true abilities and merit, and to work in an environment which is free of discrimination and harassment.

Council has an *Equal Employment Opportunity Policy* and supporting procedures which apply to council employees and contractors.

The establishment of the Access and Inclusion Committee also incorporates considerations for access to employment.

Staff Code of Conduct

The *Murrindindi Shire Council Code of Conduct* is an agreement about the way in which we have chosen to behave in our working relationships with each other and with the wider community.

The *Code of Conduct* establishes a shared understanding of how we can work well together to create an enjoyable, satisfying and productive workplace.

For the community our *Code of Conduct* establishes our commitment to carry out our duties and deliver our services responsively, impartially, professionally and with the highest level of integrity.

All new staff are made aware of their obligations under the code of conduct as part of their induction.

In addition fraud prevention awareness and training was conducted for all staff, as a refresher in line with best practice.

Corporate Development – Our Organisation CONTINUED

Internal communications

Council's intranet, 'Murri', and the Daily Update front page have continued to develop as integral communication tools for our organisation.

These tools are a key component in the induction of new staff and provide a single focal point for access to a range of information.

The staff newsletter *The Murricle* is published fortnightly. Staff membes are encouraged to contribute to the newsletter and articles can be on professional, informative or social topics.

A number of departments also produce service specific newsletters for their staff or customers.

- *Works Talk* for outdoor staff
- *Dindi Chat* for staff, volunteers and clients of the aged and disability services
- *YAK* for home care staff
- *Home Based Child Care News* for Family Day Care and In Home Child Care families and carers

Other forms of internal communication include general staff meetings, departmental meetings and depot meetings. As a result of a six month leadership program, managers have increased one on one and regular team meetings to assist in effective communication and engagement.

Planning process

Council's Corporate Planning Framework
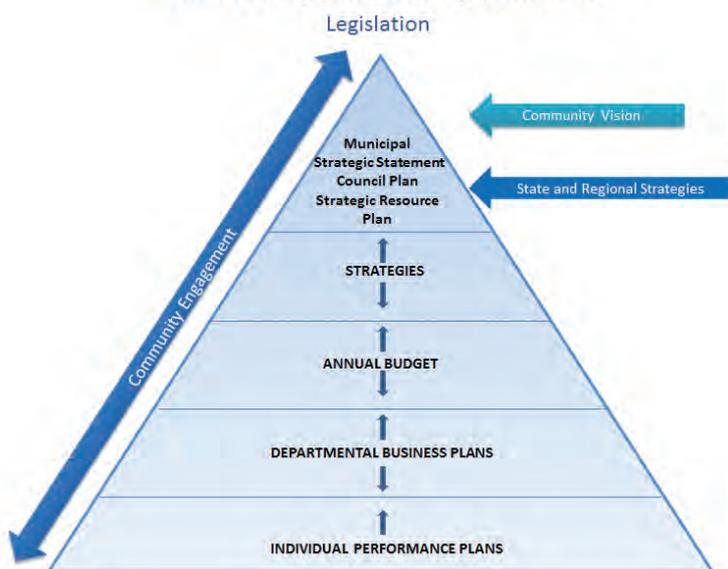
The role of Local Government

Local Government is governance by Councillors who are democratically elected by the voters of the local communities. As such it is the 'grass roots' level of government.

Section 3D of the *Local Government Act 1989* states that the role of a council includes:

- acting as a representative government by taking into account the diverse needs of the local community in decision making
- providing leadership by establishing strategic objectives and monitoring their achievement
- maintaining the viability of the Council by ensuring that resources are managed in a responsible and accountable manner
- advocating the interests of the local community to other communities and governments
- acting as a responsible partner in government by taking into account the needs of other communities
- fostering community cohesion and encouraging active participation in civic life.

Councillor Code of Governance

All Councils in Victoria are required by the *Local Government Act 1989* (s76C) to develop and regularly review a *Councillor Code of Governance.*

A *Councillor Code of Governance* was adopted by Murrindindi Shire Councillors in March 2010 and will be reviewed before October 2013 in accordance with the Act.

The *Councillor Code of Governance* sets out the standards expected of Councillor behaviour and disclosure, and identifies a process for resolving complaints.

Councillor support and remuneration

Section 74 of the *Local Government Act 1989* provides for the Governor in Council to set allowances for the Mayor and Councillors. Councils are categorised according to their size and revenue base and an allowance range payable to Councillors is set for each category. Murrindindi Shire Council is a level one council.

For 2012-2013 the allowance paid to the Mayor of Murrindindi Shire Council was $53,684 plus an executive standard vehicle, and an amount equivalent to 9% superannuation.

The allowance paid to the Councillors was $17,969 and an amount equivalent to 9% superannuation for the 2012 / 2013 year.

Corporate Development – Our Organisation CONTINUED

Councillor support and remuneration CONTINUED

All Councillors are provided with an IPad and mobile phone.

Council also adopted on 26 November 2012 the *Councillor Reimbursement Policy* which outlines other Councillor expense entitlements.

Council elections

All seven current Murrindindi Councillors were elected on 27 October 2012 for a four-year term

Council's next election will be held on 27 October 2016.

Each year the seven Councillors elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

Council electoral structure

The Shire of Murrindindi is divided into seven single councillor wards. Boundaries are aligned in order to seek to achieve an equitable distribution of voters in each ward.

Council meetings

Council decisions are made by resolution of Council either at ordinary Council meetings or at Special Council meetings.

Ordinary meetings of Council are held on the fourth Wednesday of the month.

Council meetings are held in the Alexandra Council Chamber except for three meetings annually which are

Council meetings CONTINUED

held in locations across the shire. A schedule of Council meetings is available at any Council office or on our web site. Community members are encouraged to attend and participate in Council meetings.

Councillors also meet on the first and second Wednesdays of each month for briefing sessions. Briefing sessions give Councillors the opportunity to hear presentations by officers and the community on upcoming items and to seek clarification on these and other issues that may appear on the agenda at future Council meetings.

An 'Open Forum' session is held at the beginning of each Council meeting and briefing session to allow members of the public to address Council. If you wish to speak at this time please submit an 'Open Forum' application form prior to the meeting. Forms are available from Council offices or online.

Agendas for Council meetings are made available no less than 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting from a Council office or on our website.

Additional special meetings of Council may be called to consider specific issues. As well as the formal notice we make every effort to publicise these meetings.

Council meetings are conducted in accordance with the procedures as detailed in Murrindindi Shire Council's *Governance Local Law No. 3 – 2011 (Incorporating Meeting Procedure and Use of Common Seal)*.

A meeting is held annually to elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, set allowances for the Mayor and Councillors, and nominate Council's representatives for a range of committees. This meeting was held on 26 November 2012.

	Ordinary Council Meetings		Special Meetings	
	Eligible to Attend	Attended	Eligible to Attend	Attended
Cr John Walsh, Mayor	12	11	8	8
Cr M Rae	8	8	7	7
Cr C Challen	8	7	7	7
Cr J Kennedy	8	7	7	6
Cr B Magner	8	6	7	7
Cr A Derwent	8	7	7	6
Cr Cris Ruhr	12	10	8	4
Cr Chris Healy*	4	4	1	1
Cr Sally Abbott Smith*	4	1	1	0
Cr Peter Beales*	4	4	1	1
Cr Kevin Bellingham*	4	3	1	1
Cr Bob Flowers*	4	4	1	1

* Forner Councillor (July to October 2012)

Corporate Development – Our Organisation CONTINUED

Special Committees of Council

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989* Council may establish special committees with delegated powers to inform and act on behalf of Council. Murrindindi Shire Council has 20 Section 86 Committees of Management.

Portfolios

Each Councillor, with the exception of the Mayor, is responsible for a specific 'portfolio' which focuses on a functional area of Council.

This allows each Councillor to maintain a close relationship with staff managing issues associated with their portfolio, and to report to Council meetings on points of interest that fall under that portfolio.

Councillor	Portfolio
Cr John Walsh	Mayor does not hold a portfolio
Cr M Rae	Land Use Planning
Cr C Challen	Economic Development
Cr J Kennedy	Natural Environment and Climate Change
Cr B Magner	Infrastructure and Waste
Cr A Derwent	Community Services
Cr Cris Ruhr	Corporate and Customer Services

Local Laws

Council's Local Laws are:

- *Governance (incorporating meeting procedure and use of common seal)*
- *Community Local Law*

Local Laws are available for viewing at all Council offices and online at www.murrindindi.vic.gov.au

Council conducted a review of its Local Laws in 2011-2012 and introduced *Local Law 3 Governance (incorporating meeting procedure and use of common seal) in 2011-2012* and combined its existing local laws (excluding its Governance Local Law) into a new format 'Community Local Law' in September 2012.

Policy and strategy reviews

Policies

There were four new policies adopted during the year.

Councillor Portfolio

Articulates the role and support to be provided to Portfolio Councillors.

Health & Wellbeing

Provides guidance on and raises awareness within the workplace about issues that impact on health and wellbeing, including the health benefits of physical activities and healthy eating.

Job Evaluation and Classification

Provides a consistent, robust and broadly understood process for the evaluation and classification of Council positions.

Youth Services

Facilitates the provision of services across cultural, recreational, social, educational and employment frameworks for young people.

Eleven policies were reviewed during the year.

Communication

Provides the community and Council staff with opportunities to understand issues, participate in decision making, and promote Council activities and performance.

Community Engagement

Facilitates active community engagement in the delivery of a range of Council services and projects.

Community Grants program

Provides guidance for Council's decision making in its support of activities to strengthen our communities.

Customer Services

Details how Council will deliver on its commitment to customer service and the process to achieve it.

Councillor Reimbursement

Establishes the expense entitlements for a Councillor in relation to reimbursement or pre payment of out of pocket expenses incurred while performing duties as a Councillor, support entitlements that will be provided to Councillors to allow them to effectively carry out their duties, and support available to Councillors for upgrading their skills during their term of office.

Corporate Development – Our Organisation CONTINUED

Policy and strategy reviews CONTINUED

Policies

Employee Conduct

Establishes the framework to direct and guide employees of Murrindindi Shire Council in delivering services and utilising resources that is consistent with Council values and statutory requirements.

Procurement

Provides guidance to Council to allow consistency and control over procurement activities; demonstrate accountability to ratepayers, and guidance on ethical behavior in public sector purchasing;

Smoke Free Workplace

The purpose of the policy is to protect the health of Council employees, contractors and visitors by eliminating exposure to environmental tobacco smoke in and around all Murrindindi Shire Council buildings and facilities including vehicles.

Study Assistance

Provides an outline of the level of assistance available to employees undertaking an external course of study that is relevant to their professional development and potential career opportunities within the Council.

Travel Hospitality and Personal Expenses

Provides guidance and clear direction for employees of Council undertaking travel, providing hospitality or incurring personal expenses in the course of conducting Council business.

Ultra Violet (UV) Protection

Establishes Council's commitment to providing a safe and healthy working environment in providing adequate protection from the hazards that workers may be subject to when working in an outdoor environment.

Strategy

During 2012-2013 Council adopted three strategies.

- *Asset Management Strategy 2012-2017*
- *Roadside Weeds & Pest Animal Control Plan*
- *Murrindindi Shire and Lake Mountain Municipal Fire Management Plan*

Auditing

Audit Advisory Committee

The Audit Committee is an independent advisory committee to Council. The primary objective of the Audit Committee is to assist Council in the effective conduct of its responsibilities for internal and external financial reporting, management of risk, maintaining a reliable system of internal controls and facilitating the organisation's ethical development. It also serves as an effective conduit for communications between the external auditor, internal auditor, management and Council.

The Internal Audit Committee currently comprises the following members with voting rights:

> Jeff Hunter (Chair)
> Cr John Walsh
> Cr Margaret Rae
> Cr John Kennedy
> Robert Richards
> Ian McKaskill

The Chief Executive Officer and a representative of the Internal Auditor are also required to attend meetings in a non-voting capacity. A representative of the External Auditor is also required to attend where either the year-end financial statements or external audit reports are to be considered.

The Audit Committee met on four occasions during the 2012-2013 financial year, providing invaluable advice to Council on a number of important issues including reviews of Contract Management Framework, Payroll and Purchasing systems.

Recommendations from the audit program are prioritised and addressed as opportunities for improvement across the organisation.

Internal Audits

Murrindindi Shire Council's internal audit function is contracted to HLB Mann Judd - appointed 1 December 2010.

During 2012-2013 the Internal Auditor completed the following components of the audit program:

- **Review of Business Continuity Plan and Disaster Recovery – completed February 2013**
- **Review of Bushfire Funding Program – completed May 2013**

In addition a special audit was conducted on the management of an infrastructure works project – completed September 2012

External Audits

Council's external auditor is currently the Victorian Auditor-General's Office. The main audit is conducted in early September with interim audits conducted during the year.

Corporate Development – Our Organisation CONTINUED

Public Liability and Property Audits

Council has a two year cycle of external audits and the next audits will be conducted in 2014.

Council's Property risk audit ranking JMAPP 2010 -2012 regional ranking of eight or better

- The Regional ranking was 14 in 2011-12. The audit is conducted on a two year cycle and not reported for 2012-13

Councils Commercial Crime risk audit ranking JMAPP 2010-2012

- The Regional ranking was 11 in 2011-12 The audit is conducted on a two year cycle and not reported for 2012-13

CMP 2010 -2012 regional ranking of 10th or better

- The regional ranking was five in 2011-12 The audit is conducted on a two year cycle and not reported for 2012-13.

Public and Professional Liability

Civic Mutual Plus (CMP), now known as MAV Insurance, Liability Mutual Insurance, conducted the Public and Professional Liability audit.

Privacy

Council is committed to the responsible collection, handling and protection of the personal privacy of residents, ratepayers and the community as a whole. Council has policies in place to ensure adherence with the *Information Privacy Act 2000* and will only collect, use or disclose information where it is necessary to perform Council functions or where required by law.

Murrindindi Shire Council will endeavour to take all reasonable steps to keep any information held about you secure. Murrindindi Shire Council employees are aware of their obligations to respect the confidential nature of identifying and personal information held by Council.

Freedom of Information

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* gives the community a legally enforceable right to information held by Council.

Applications under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* must be made in writing and a fee of $25.70 (as of 1 July 2013) must be paid. Information regarding Council's FOI application process can be found on Council's website or available from any of the Council Offices.

Community members are encouraged to contact Council's FOI Officer prior to lodging an application to receive advice regarding what is and isn't accessible.

Year	Number of applications
2008/09	3
2009/10	3
2010/11	12
2011/12	16
2012/13	9

Freedom of Information	2012-2013
Access granted in full	3
Access granted in part	2
Access denied in full	1
Withdrawn	0
Not proceeded with	2
Act does not apply	0
Not processed	1
No documents	0
Outside the Act	1
Not yet finalised	1

Protected Disclosures

2012-13 Disclosures	
Protected Disclosures Topic	Report 2012-2013
Number of disclosures made	Nil
Disclosures referred to Ombudsman for determination	Nil
Disclosures referred by Ombudsman	Nil
Disclosures referred to Ombudsman to investigate	Nil
Investigations taken over by the Ombudsman	Nil
Requests made under Section 74 during the year to Ombudsman to investigate disclosed matters	Nil
Disclosures the public body has declined to investigate	Nil
Disclosures that were substantiated on investigation	Nil
Recommendations by the Ombudsman under this Act that relate to Murrindindi Shire Council	Nil

Corporate Development – Our Organisation

Protected Disclosures CONTINUED

(formally Whistleblowers Protection Act)

The new *Protected Disclosure Act 2012* increased integrity reforms in Victoria, including the establishment of the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC), a body established to promote integrity and accountability across the Victorian public sector, including Local Government.

Whistleblowers expose serious problems within the management and operations of a government organisation. The *Protected Disclosure Act 2012* enables people to make disclosures about improper conduct within the public sector without fear of reprisal. *The Act* aims to ensure openness and accountability by encouraging people to make disclosures and protecting them when they do.

Murrindindi Shire Council is committed to the aims and objectives of the *Protected Disclosure Act 2012* and has in place procedures to facilitate the making of disclosures. Council does not tolerate improper conduct by its employees, officers or members, nor the taking of reprisals against those who come forward to disclose such conduct.

Contact details for Council's Protected Disclosure Coordinator/Officer are:

- **Protected Disclosure Coordinator:** Michael Chesworth, General Manager Corporate and Community Services, Murrindindi Shire Council, PO Box 138, Alexandra 3714. Ph: 5772 0335
- **Protected Disclosure Officer:** Liz Peddie, Coordinator Human Resources, Murrindindi Shire Council, PO Box 138, Alexandra. Ph: 5772 0396

Alternative Contacts

- Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC), Address: IBAC, GPO Box 24234, Melbourne Victoria 3000, Internet: www.ibac.vic.gov.au; Phone: 1300 735 135

Note: All disclosures about Councillors should be directed to IBAC.

Public documents

Section 11 of the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2004* requires Council to have certain documents available for public inspection. Documents and registers available for inspection in accordance with these Regulations and the *Local Government Act 1989* are:

- The certified voters' roll for a Council election - for the period beginning on the certification date and ending 30 days after election day.
- Copies of Campaign Donation Returns lodged by candidates in the last Council elections.
- The Council's adopted Code of Governance for Councillors.
- Register of interests.
- All Local Laws adopted by the Council.
- Copies of the Council's *Council Plan, Strategic Resource Plan, Budget* and *Annual Report*.
- Details regarding differential rates declared by Council.
- Special Rate.
- Quality and Cost Standards.
- Details of current allowances fixed for the Mayor and Councillors under Section 74 or 74A of *The Act*.
- Details of senior officers' total salary packages for the current financial year and the previous year including the gross salary, the amount of the Council or employer contribution to superannuation, the value of any motor vehicle provided by the Council and the total value of any other benefits and allowances provided by the Council.
- Details of overseas or interstate travel (with the exception of interstate travel by land for less than three days) undertaken in an official capacity by Councillors or any member of Council staff in the previous 12 months, including the names of the Councillors or members of Council staff and the date, destination, purpose and total cost of the overseas or interstate travel.
- Names of Councillors and Council Officers who submitted returns of interest during the financial year.
- Agendas for Council meetings - except parts of meetings closed to the public under section 89 of *The Act*.
- Minutes of Council meetings - except parts of the meetings closed to the public under section 89 of *The Act*.
- A list of all special committees established by the Council which were abolished or ceased to function during the financial year.
- Minutes of meetings of special committees established under Section 86 of *The Act* and held in the previous 12 months except if the minutes relate to parts of meetings

Public documents CONTINUED

which have been closed to members of the public under Section 89 of *The Act*.

- A register of delegations kept under Sections 87, 88 and 98 of *The Act*, including the date on which the last review under Section 98(6) of *The Act* took place.
- Submissions received in accordance with Section 223 of *The Act* during the previous 12 months.
- Agreements to establish regional libraries under Section 196 of *The Act*.
- Details of all property, finance and operating leases involving land, buildings, plant, computer equipment or vehicles entered into by the Council as lessor or lessee, including the name of the other party to the lease and the terms and the value of the lease.
- A register of authorised officers appointed under Section 224 of *The Act*.
- A list of donations and grants made by the Council during the financial year.
- A list of organisations that Council was a member of during the financial year.
- A list of contracts valued at $100,000 (or such higher amount as is fixed from time to time under Section 186(1) of *The Act*) or more –

(i) which the Council entered into during the financial year without first engaging in a competitive process; and

(ii) which are not contracts referred to in section 186(5) of *The Act*.

- Council's current Procurement Policy.
- Written record of "Assembly of Councillors' for a period of 12 months after the date of the assembly.

Cemetery management

Murrindindi Shire Council as Trustee for the Yea Cemetery Trust administers the pioneer and new cemeteries in Yea.

Works completed with regard to the Yea cemeteries in 2012–2013 included:

- Completion of construction of a new memorial shelter.
- Lodged grant application for laptop.
- Completion of general maintenance and upkeep at the old cemetery, including works for erosion mitigation.
- Appointment of a Maintenance Contractor.

Looking forward

- Complete Cemetery Site Survey for sealed road, pavement design and drainage.
- Seek funding for road works to achieve safe pedestrian access.
- Develop a 'leaves' memorial recognising those whose remains are not interred in the cemetery.
- Prepare a business plan and revise fee structure.

Donations and Grants provided by Council 2012-2013

Received By	Amount
Alexandra Community Leisure Centre	$14,000.00
Alexandra Historical Society	$466.00
Alexandra Information Centre	$3,585.36
Alexandra Pastoral & Agricultural Ladies Auxiliary	$100.00
Alexandra Playgroup	$1,794.00
Alexandra Pre School	$2,132.00
Alexandra Quilters	$639.60
Alexandra Senior Citizens	$2,786.97
Alexandra Timber & Tramways Museum Inc	$1,014.00
Alexandra Traders & Tourism	$1,000.00
CEACA	$4,900.00
Eildon Community Leisure Centre	$1,000.00
Eildon Information Centre	$1,145.45
Eildon Pre School	$4,200.00
Eildon Resource Centre	$500.00
Flowerdale Pre School	$3,414.13
Kinglake Community Centre	$2,000.00
Kinglake Senior Citizens	$4,780.00
King Parrot Creek Environment Group	$410.00
Made in Murrindindi	$1,700.00
Marysville Information Centre	$6,050.00
Marysville Pre School	$5,317.05
Rotary Club of Alexandra	$1,500.00
Rotary Club of Kinglake	$1,500.00
Rotary Club of Yea	$1,500.00
State Emergency Service Alexandra	$18,809.00
State Emergency Service Kinglake	$18,809.00
State Emergency Service Marysville	$18,809.00
The Royal Humane Society	$200.00
Yea Community House	$614.00
Yea Indoor Recreation Centre	$4,000.00
Yea Information Centre	$1,854.72
Yea Pre School	$1,052.00
TOTAL	**$131,582.28**

Organisation memberships for 2012-2013

Organisation	Membership Fee
Local Government Professionals	$1,045.45
North East Regional Development Scheme - E Learning	$2,254.55
Australian Local Government Job Directory	$725.00
Municipal Association Of Victoria	$22,893.82
Australian Library & Information Association	$636.00
Family Day Care Australia	$145.36
Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce	$6,000.00
Timber Towns Victoria	$2,500.00
Public Libraries Victoria Network Inc	$1,000.00
Family Day Care Victoria	$145.36
Civil Contractors Federation	$2,279.50
National Saleyards Quality Assurance Ltd	$460.00
Children's Book Council	$80.00
Victorian Local Governance Association	$2,400.00
Goulburn Valley Regional Waste Management Group	$6,792.00
SAI Global	$407.27
Meals Victoria	$80.00
Association for Children with Disability	$50.00
Victorian Maternal & Child Health Coordinators Group	$50.00
National In-Home Childcare Association	$200.00
National Timber Councils Association	$2,500.00
Active Ageing	$30.00
TOTAL	**$52,674.31**

Capital works summary 2012-2013

CAPITAL WORKS UNDERTAKEN AND COMPLETED DURING 2012/2013

Description of works	Works in progress 01 July 2012 $	Total value of works 2012-2013 $	Total value of works completed 30 June 2013 $
LAND			
Toolangi All Purpose Trail		71,311	71,311
Total Land	**-**	**71,311**	**71,311**
BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES			
Access Compliance		10,016	10,016
Alex Depot Gardeners Shed		25,223	25,223
Alex Depot Lunch Room		11,801	11,801
Alexandra Skate Park		7,098	7,098
Alexandra Swimming Pool		13,518	13,518
Yea Railway Reserve		2,000	2,000
Glenburn Community Centre Water Storage		10,333	10,333
Glenburn Community Centre		4,000	4,000
Kinglake Medical Centre	86,837	465,802	552,639
Kinglake Transfer Station		3,572	3,572
Marysville Skate Park	80,435	118,786	199,221
Memorial Reserve Redevelopment - Kinglake		30,347	30,347
Pioneer Reserve BBQ Shelter and Toilets		18,980	18,980
Pioneer Reserve Tennis Courts & Clubroom Upgrade		1,059	1,059
Playground Renewal		16,696	16,696
Public Convenience Upgrades		18,317	18,317
Saleyards Amenities		50,003	50,003
Saleyards Canteen		240,909	240,909
Saleyards Lighting		136,982	136,982
Saleyards Roof	820,425	22,784	843,209
Saleyards Water harvesting		144,528	144,528
Toolangi Neighbourhood House		44,510	44,510
Toolangi/Castella Hall Upgrade		9,202	9,202
Total Buildings and Structures	**987,697**	**1,406,466**	**2,394,163**
PLANT AND MACHINERY			
Major Plant		41,249	41,249
Motor Vehicles		312,150	312,150
Total Plant and Equipment	**-**	**353,399**	**353,399**

Capital works summary 2012-2013

CAPITAL WORKS UNDERTAKEN AND COMPLETED DURING 2012/2013

Description of works	Works in progress 01 July 2012 $	Total value of works 2012-2013 $	Total value of works completed 30 June 2013 $
ROADS & PATHS			
Flowerdale Shared Path		1,768	1,768
UT Creek Precinct		53,006	53,006
Gravel Roads - Resheeting		816,583	816,583
Sealed Road - Renewal and Major Patching		604,660	604,660
Sealed Roads - Reseals		736,230	736,230
Final Seals		52,000	52,000
Minor Capital Works - UDF		10,578	10,578
Urban Access Improvements - Inclusiveness Project		15,357	15,357
Bus Shelter Construction		6,884	6,884
Footpath Renewal		27,541	27,541
Kerb Renewal		18,397	18,397
Footpaths - Missing Links		16,247	16,247
Kinglake Ranges Pathways Project		8,270	8,270
Limestone Road - Extend Seal		39,220	39,220
Road Safety		4,494	4,494
Whanregarwen Road Blackspot	228,755	88,067	316,822
Jerusalem Creek Road Blackspot	556,257	245,530	801,787
Total Road and Paths	**785,012**	**2,744,831**	**3,529,843**
BRIDGES			
Yellow Creek Bridge		77,277	77,277
Bridge Works Renewal		2,360	2,360
Abes Lane Bridge		33,845	33,845
Total Bridges	**-**	**113,482**	**113,482**
DRAINAGE			
Drainage Renewal		7,257	7,257
Drainage - Network Expansion		25,577	25,577
Yea Recreation Reserve	5,253	42,169	47,422
Total Drainage	**5,253**	**75,002**	**80,255**

Capital works summary 2012-2013

CAPITAL WORKS UNDERTAKEN AND COMPLETED DURING 2012/2013

Description of works	Works in progress 01 July 2012 $	Total value of works 2012-2013 $	Total value of works completed 30 June 2013 $
FURNITURE & EQUIPMENT			
Total Furniture & Equipment	-	**253,040**	**253,040**
LIBRARY MATERIALS			
Books		54,147	54,147
DVD and Talking Books		25,416	25,416
Magazines		3,355	3,355
Total Library Materials	-	**82,918**	**82,918**
WORK IN PROGRESS			
Green Street		158	158
Molesworth-Dropmore Rd Safer Road Project		18,736	18,736
Buxton Streetscape		28,391	28,391
Marysville Town Amenity		6,883	6,883
Toolangi All Purpose Trail		9,346	9,346
Y Water Centre		364,392	364,392
Buxton Reserve Upgrade		32,846	32,846
Marysville Community Centre		295,966	295,966
Marysville Heart		720	720
Gallipoli Park		18,125	18,125
Narbethong Reserve		165,633	165,633
Narbethong Reserve		73,416	73,416
Marysville Community Centre Fit Out		67,716	67,716
Marysville Retirement Village - Rebuild		12,991	12,991
Tumbling Waters Reserve Playground and Facilities		43,140	43,140
Yea Pioneer Reserve		8,181	8,181
Kinglake Lions Park		14,891	14,891
Yea Shire Hall - Upgrade		142,146	142,146
1000 Hands Project Marysville		113,291	113,291
Marysville Drainage		20,527	20,527
Buxton Drainage		413	413
Toolangi and Castella Central Park		3,849	3,849
Strath Creek Community Hall		5,935	5,935
Allendale Road Bridge		31,444	31,444
Breakaway Bridge		343,870	343,870
Rotary Park Cable Bridge		37,320	37,320
Yea Railway Reserve	132,976	-	132,976
Total Works In Progress	**132,976**	**1,860,324**	**1,993,300**
Total value of Capital works completed 2012-2013	**1,910,938**	**6,960,774**	**8,871,712**

Local Government Indicators 2012-2013

The Victorian Government requires all Victorian councils to measure and annually report against seven Victorian Local Government Indicators.

Category	Description	Score 2011-2012
Overall performance	Community satisfaction rating for overall performance generally of the Council	47
Advocacy	Community Satisfaction rating for Council's lobbying on behalf of the community	45
Community Consultation	Community satisfaction rating for Council's community consultation and engagement.	48
All rates	Average rates and charges per assessment	$1,543.28
Residential rates	Average residential rates and charges per assessment	$1,318.93
Operating costs	Average operating expenditure per assessment	$3,525.95
Capital expenditure	Average capital expenditure per assessment	$735.03
Infrastructure	Renewal	75.0%
	Renewal and maintenance	87.0%
Debts	Average liabilities per assessment	$1,164.03
Operating result	Operating result per assessment	$662.94

National Competition Policy Compliance

Council continues to ensure compliance with the National Competition Policy in order to ensure the transparency of its decision making and as a good business practice.

Introduction to the Financials

Understanding the financial statements

The Financial Report shows how Council performed financially during the 2012-2013 financial year and the overall position at the end (30 June 2013) of the financial year.

Council presents its financial report in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards.

Particular terms required by the Standards may not be familiar to some readers. Further, Council is a 'not for profit' organisation and some of the generally recognised terms used in private sector company reports are not appropriate for Council's reports.

Council is committed to accountability and transparency. It is in this context that the plain English guide has been developed to assist readers to understand and analyse the financial report.

What is contained in the Annual Financial Report?

Council's financial report has three sets of Statements:

1. Standard Statements
2. Financial Statements
3. Performance Statement

Each of these statements is prepared by Council's employees, examined by the Council Audit Advisory Committee and by Council, and then are audited by the Victorian Auditor-General.

Standard Statements

The Standard Statements report on how the Council performed financially during the year compared to its annual budget. The Standard Statements include an Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow Statement and Statement of Capital Works. With the exception of the Statement of Capital Works, each of the statements is discussed later in this guide. The Statement of Capital Works sets out the expenditure on creating or buying property, infrastructure, plant and equipment assets by each category of asset. It also shows how much has been spent on renewing, upgrading, expanding or creating new assets of this type.

These Standard Statements provide a comparison between the actual results for the year and the budget that was set at the start of the year. All major differences are explained in accompanying notes.

Financial Statements

The Financial Statements report on how the Council performed financially during the year and the overall financial position at the end of the year.

The Financial Statements include a Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity and Cash Flow Statement. The Financial Statements also contain Notes, which set out Council's accounting policies and details of the line item amounts contained in each of the first four main statements.

Comprehensive Income Statement

The Comprehensive Income Statement is sometimes referred to as a 'Profit and Loss Statement' and shows the:

- sources of Council's revenue under various income headings
- expenses incurred in running the Council during the year. These expenses relate only to the 'Operations' and do not include the cost associated with the purchase or the building of assets. While asset purchase costs are not included in the Expenses there is an item for 'Depreciation'.

The surplus or deficit for the year is the key figure to look at on the Comprehensive Income Statement to assess Council's financial performance. It is calculated by deducting the total expenses for the year from total revenues.

Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet is a one page summary which is a snapshot of the financial situation as at 30 June. It shows what Council owns as assets and what it owes as liabilities. The bottom line of this Statement is Net Assets. This is the equity or net worth of Council which has been built up over many years.

The assets and liabilities are separated into Current and Non-Current. Current generally means those assets which will be received or liabilities which will be paid, within the next 12 months. Non-current are all those assets and liabilities which are held for a longer term.

The net current assets or working capital as it is sometimes called is an important measure of Council's ability to meet its debts as and when they fall due.

Introduction to the Financials CONTINUED

Current and Non-Current Assets

- Cash assets include cash and investments, i.e. cash held in the bank and in petty cash and the market value of Council's investments.
- Trade and other receivables are monies owed to Council by ratepayers and others.
- Prepayments are expenses that Council has paid in advance of the service delivery.
- Inventories – consumables are stocks held for sale or consumption in Council's services.
- Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment is the largest component of Council's worth and represents the value of all the land, buildings, roads, drains, vehicles, equipment etc, which has been built up by Council over many years

Current and Non-Current Liabilities

- Trade and other payables are those to whom Council owes money as at 30 June.
- Trusts and Deposits represent monies held in trust by Council e.g. Security Deposits.
- Provisions – represent Employee Benefits includes accrued Long Service and Annual Leave owed to employees.
- Provisions also represent estimates of future obligations – Landfill Rehabilitation.
- Interest-bearing liabilities are borrowings of Council.

Net Assets

This term is used to describe the difference between the value of Total Assets and the value of Total Liabilities. It represents the net worth of Council as at 30 June.

Total Equity

This always equals Net Assets. It is made up of the following components:

- assets revaluation reserve is the difference between the previously recorded value of assets and their current valuations
- accumulated surplus is the value of all net assets accumulated over time.

Statement of Changes in Equity

During the course of the year the value of Total Equity as set out in the Balance Sheet changes. This Statement shows the values of such changes and how these changes arose.

The main reasons for a change in equity stem from:

- the 'surplus or deficit' from operations, described in the Comprehensive Income Statement as Comprehensive Result for the year
- the use of monies from Council's reserves
- a revaluation of the assets which takes place on a regular basis to ensure the most up-to-date value is included in Council's books. It also occurs when existing assets are taken up in the books for the first time.

Cash Flow Statement

The Cash Flow Statement summarises Council's cash payments and cash receipts for the year. This Statement is presented according to a very specific Accounting Standard and needs some care in analysis. The values may differ from those shown in the Comprehensive Income Statement because the Comprehensive Income Statement is prepared on an accrual accounting basis.

Cash in this Statement refers to bank deposits and other forms of highly liquid investments that can be readily converted to cash.

Council's cash arises from, and is used in, three main areas.

1. Cash flows from operating activities:

- Receipts – all cash received into Council's bank account from ratepayers and others who owe money to Council. Receipts also include the interest earnings from Council's cash investments. It does not include the costs associated with the sale of assets.
- Payments – all cash paid by Council from its bank account to employees, creditors and other persons. It does not include the costs associated with the creation of assets.

2. Cash flows from investing activities:

- This section shows the cash invested in the creation or purchase of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment assets and the cash received from the sale of these assets.

3. Cash flows from financing activities:

- This is where the receipt and repayment of borrowed funds are recorded.

The bottom line of the Cash Flow Statement is the cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year. This shows the capacity of Council to meet its cash debts and other liabilities.

Notes to the Financial Statements

The Notes are a very important and informative section of the report. The Australian Accounting Standards are not prescriptive regarding a lot of issues. Therefore, to enable the reader to understand the basis on which the values shown in the Statements are established, it is necessary to provide details of Council's significant accounting policies.

Apart from the accounting policies, the Notes also give details behind many of the summary figures contained in the Statements. The Note numbers are shown beside the relevant items in the Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet and the Cash Flow Statement.

The Notes also include information that Council wishes to disclose but which cannot be incorporated into the Statements.

Other notes include:

- the cost of the various functions/activities of Council
- the breakdown of expenses, revenues, reserves and other assets
- contingent liabilities
- transactions with persons related to Council
- financial performance indicators (ratios).

The Notes should be read at the same time as, and together with, the other parts of the Financial Statements to get a clear picture of the accounts.

Performance Statement

The Performance Statement shows the results that were achieved for the year for a number of performance indicators. These are then compared against targets that were set for those indicators at the beginning of the year and published in Council's Annual Budget.

Certification by the Principal Accounting Officer, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Councillors

The Certification of the Principal Accounting Officer is made by the person responsible for the financial management of Council that, in her/his opinion, the Financial Statements have met all the statutory and professional reporting requirements.

The Certification of the CEO and Councillors is made by two Councillors and the CEO on behalf of Council that, in their opinion, the Financial Statements are fair and not misleading or inaccurate.

Auditor General's Report

The Independent Audit Report provides the reader with an external and independent opinion on the Financial Statements. It confirms that the Financial Report has been prepared in accordance with relevant legislation and professional standards and that it represents a fair picture of the financial affairs of the Council.

Summary

The financial statements represent a positive outcome for the 2012-2013 financial year. Council has demonstrated an ability to meet operational expenses, statutory requirements and its commitment to achieving the goals as set by the Council Plan 2009-2013 incorporating the Strategic Resource Plan.

Note 38 of the statements sets out a number of indicators to monitor the financial health of the Council.

The debt servicing ratio expresses the amount of interest paid as a percentage of Council's total revenue. This ratio was 0.89 per cent however has been distorted by inflated levels of revenue due to additional grants received by Council. The debt commitment ratio indicates the percentage of rate revenue used to pay interest and redeem debt principal.

The revenue ratio indicates Council's dependence on rates income. The higher the percentage of Council's total revenue the higher the dependence. The current ratio of 36.84 per cent is also distorted with higher than normal bushfire and storm grant income inflating total annual revenue.

In addition the total revenue figure also includes the recognition of contributed assets, taking up the constructed value of the Rail Trail $3 million and Buxton Community Trail $1.3 million. The rate revenue ratio will continue to trend upwards and on 2013-14 budget estimates would be 50.22% which is not unusual for a small rural Council.

The working capital ratio shows a coverage of current assets to current liabilities of 3.29 times which is a financially sound measure, where a ratio around 1-1.5 times would be considered favourable to meet current commitments.

The debt exposure ratio indicates the level of realisable assets that would need to be sold to extinguish Council's debt.

In conclusion, the indicators of operational surplus, increased equity, and sufficient cash reserves, ensure that Council's financial position remains sound.

Please see the commentary contained in the Strategic Resource Plan that sets out the financial challenges facing the Council.