



**Murrindindi**  
Shire Council

# Scheduled Meeting of Council

## Minutes

Wednesday 28 February 2024  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom  
6:00 PM

## ORDER OF BUSINESS

<b>1</b>	<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY AND COUNCILLORS' PLEDGE .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>PROCEDURAL MATTERS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>REPORTS - COMMUNITY &amp; DEVELOPMENT GROUP .....</b>	<b>5</b>
4.1	Amendment C71 - Toolangi Forest Discovery Centre .....	5
4.2	Eildon Pondage Masterplan.....	6
4.3	Grants and Sponsorships - Quarterly allocations .....	7
<b>5</b>	<b>REPORTS - PEOPLE &amp; CORPORATE PERFORMANCE GROUP .....</b>	<b>8</b>
5.1	Quarterly Finance Report - December 2023.....	8
5.2	Priority Action Plan - Quarterly Report - September-December 2023 .....	9
5.3	Enterprise Risk Policy - Risk Appetite review .....	9
5.4	Fraud and Corruption Control Policy .....	10
5.5	Audit and Risk Committee Confirmation of Minutes .....	10
<b>6</b>	<b>REPORTS - ASSETS &amp; ENVIRONMENT GROUP.....</b>	<b>11</b>
6.1	Contract - Yea Pool Wet Deck Construction.....	11
6.2	Capital Works Program Mid-Year Report - 30 December 2023 .....	12
<b>7</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR AND CEO REPORTS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>RECORD OF COUNCIL BRIEFING SESSIONS.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>SEALING REGISTER.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS .....</b>	<b>20</b>

## 1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY AND COUNCILLORS' PLEDGE

### 1.1 Acknowledgement of Country

The meeting will be opened with the Mayor reading the following on behalf of the Murrindindi Shire Council:

“Murrindindi Shire Council is proud to acknowledge the Taungurung and Wurundjeri people as the traditional custodians of the land we now call Murrindindi Shire.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging, who are the keepers of history, traditions, knowledge and culture of this land.”

### 1.2 Councillors' Pledge

“The Councillors, democratically elected to represent our community as the Murrindindi Shire Council, are committed to working together in the best interests of the people who live in our municipality, those who conduct business here and those who visit.”

## 2 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

### 2.1 Privacy Note

This public meeting is being streamed live via our Facebook page and website. A recording of the meeting along with the official Minutes of the meeting will also be published on our website.

### 2.2 Apologies and Request for Planned Leave

Cr I Gerencser currently on leave of absence, previously granted.

#### **Present:**

Councillors D Gallagher (chair), J Walsh, K Haslam, S Carpenter, E Lording, S McAulay

#### **In attendance:**

Chief Executive Officer: Livia Bonazzi

Director People & Corporate Performance: Michael Chesworth

Director Community & Development: Andrew Paxton

Director Assets & Environment: Caroline Lintott

Principal Strategic Planner: Emma Kubeil

### 2.3 Disclosure of Interest or Conflict of Interest

Cr Haslam declared a material conflict of interest in item 4.3 Grants and Sponsorship's recommendation 4d, concerning the application for a parkrun for Upper Goulburn Eildon, as she is a member of the working group that has placed the application.

Cr Haslam also declared a material conflict of interest in item 6.2 Capital Works Program Mid-Year Report, as she is President of Eildon Events incorporated which has made application for a funding contribution by Council towards the installation of a shade sail structure at Eildon Pondage.

Cr Gallagher declared an interest with the Agenda Item 4.3 *Grants and Sponsorships – Quarterly Allocations, Part 1a Alexandra Pro Rodeo*, as he is a Director of Alexandra Events Corporation Limited. He stated “I am not conflicted as that matter relates simply to noting a decision made under delegation by council officers”.

Cr Gallagher declared a material conflict of interest with the Agenda Item 4.3 *Grants and Sponsorships – Quarterly Allocations, Part 4e, Alexandra Football Netball Club – Anzac Spirit & Community Celebration*, as he is a member of Alexandra RSL, and a Patron member of Alexandra Football Netball Club.

## 2.4 Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 13 December 2023.

### **RESOLUTION**

**J Walsh / S Carpenter**

**That Council confirm the minutes of the 13 December 2023 Council Meeting.**

**CARRIED**

## 2.5 Petitions

Nil.

## 2.6 Community Recognition

Nil.

## 2.7 Matters Deferred from Previous Meeting

Nil.

## 2.8 Urgent Business

Nil.

## 3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

### 3.1 Open Forum

Steve Meacher spoke in relation to the Planning Scheme Amendment C71 (item 4.1 on the Agenda).

Meg Caerar spoke in relation to the Planning Scheme Amendment C71 (item 4.1 on the Agenda).

Kerryn Blackshaw spoke in relation to the Planning Scheme Amendment C71 (item 4.1 on the Agenda).

Gayle Cole spoke in relation to the Planning Scheme Amendment C71 (item 4.1 on the Agenda).

### 3.2 Questions of Council

Nil.

## 4 REPORTS - COMMUNITY & DEVELOPMENT GROUP

### 4.1 Amendment C71 – Toolangi Forest Discover Centre

Attachment(s): Nil

**Presenter:** Coordinator Planning, Cameron Fraser

**Approved by:** Director Community and Development, Andrew Paxton

**Purpose:** Decision

#### Executive Summary

Planning Scheme Amendment C71, Toolangi Forest Discovery Centre, has recently completed public exhibition.

A report to Council in April 2021, approved the recommendation to request the Minister of Planning to authorise Murrindindi Shire Council to prepare and exhibit Amendment C71 to Murrindindi Planning Scheme.

At the conclusion of the exhibition period, a total of eight (8) public submissions were received. Two (2) submissions in their current format object to the re zoning based on various matters raised, a summary of the current position of the submissions can be found in the consultation section of this report.

Amendment C71 was initiated by members of the community through the Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action, DEECA (previously known as DELWP, Department Environment Land Water and Planning) as the landowner. The Amendment sought to facilitate an expanded range of uses at the Toolangi Forest Discovery Centre (TFDC), located at 1683 Healesville-Kinglake Road, Toolangi.

The Amendment proposed to rezone the land from the Public Park and Conversation Zone (PPCZ) to the Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ).

By changing the zone, it would allow a schedule to be included in the Murrindindi Planning Scheme to Clause 36.02, Public Park and Recreation Zone to include a new incorporated document titled “Toolangi Forest Discovery Centre, 2023”.

The proposed Amendment included an Incorporated Document to be listed within Clause 74.02 of the Murrindindi Planning Scheme to enable greater use by the community.

Due to not being able to resolve the submissions received, consideration of proceeding to Planning Panels Victoria or not has been given by DEECA and due to budget constraints DEECA are unable to support this amendment to proceed.

As the Amendment is a proponent lead amendment and not an amendment of Council, these costs must be borne by the proponent.

## **RESOLUTION**

**S Carpenter / J Walsh**

**That Council:**

- 1. Defer consideration of Murrindindi Planning Scheme Amendment C71 to the Council Meeting on 27 March 2024**
- 2. Write to the Minister for Environment to have DEECA fund the cost of a Planning Panel and to have the Minister for Planning consider the Amendment**

**CARRIED**

## **4.2 Eildon Pondage Masterplan**

Attachment(s):

1. Eildon Pondage Masterplan - The Masterplan, 2024 - Study Report (February 2024) [4.2.1 - 60 pages]
2. Lions Park & Recreation Reserve FINAL ( Jan 24) [4.2.2 - 1 page]
3. Lions Park FINAL ( Jan 24) [4.2.3 - 1 page]
4. Lower Pondage FINAL ( Jan 24) [4.2.4 - 1 page]
5. Upper Pondage FINAL ( Jan 24) [4.2.5 - 1 page]

**Presenter:** Principal Strategic Planner, Emma Kubeil

**Approved by:** Director Community and Development, Andrew Paxton

**Purpose:** Decision

### **Executive Summary**

This report provides information regarding the development of the Eildon pondage Masterplan including feedback from Stage 2 consultation received from Authorities, user groups and the wider community.

The final Eildon Pondage Masterplan is now complete and includes identified projects with costings.

The Eildon pondage Masterplan, 2023 compliments previous strategic planning documents and is presented to Council for consideration of adoption.

## **RESOLUTION**

**C Lording / K Haslam**

**That Council adopt the Eildon Pondage Masterplan, 2023**

**CARRIED**

### 4.3 Grants and Sponsorships – Quarterly Allocations

Attachment(s): Nil

**Presenter:** Director Community and Development, Andrew Paxton

**Approved by:** Director Community and Development, Andrew Paxton

**Purpose:** Decision

#### Executive Summary

Council's Grants and Sponsorship program provides funding for projects that support our communities to improve the liveability of our towns and places, build connections, create opportunities for participation in community and civic life, improve personal and community health and wellbeing, protect our natural environment and assist communities to plan for the future.

This report provides Council with the applications from the period of November 2023 – January 2024 with the Panel Assessment Report for consideration.

### **RESOLUTION**

**E Lording / J Walsh**

**That Council:**

1. **Note the following grants made under delegation:**
  - a. **Alexandra Events Corp Ltd – Alexandra Pro Rodeo - \$2,500**
  - b. **Yea Arts Inc - Bringing Garry Starr to Yea Town Hall - \$1,071**
  - c. **Alexandra & District Traders & Tourism Association – Upgrading the Alexandra Information Centre Computer System - \$1,897**
  - d. **Rotary Club of Alexandra - Rotary Club of Alexandra 54th Easter Art Show - \$2,500**
2. **Note the following grants declined under delegation:**
  - a. **Kinglake Ranges Neighbourhood House - Kinglake Op Shop Repurposing, Upcycling & Recycling**
  - b. **The Lake Eildon Rowing Club - Learn to Row Program**
3. **Decline the following allocations as recommended by the Assessment Panel:**
  - a. **Murrindindi Ranges Wildlife Shelter Inc - Murrindindi Ranges Wildlife Shelter Wildlife Hospital Project - \$5,000**
  - b. **On Point Brewery – Community Market Trash and Treasure - \$4,800**
4. **Endorse the following allocations as recommended by the Grants and Sponsorship Assessment Panel:**
  - a. **Lake Eildon Rowing Club Inc - The Lake Eildon Rowing Club Incorporated - \$5,000**
  - b. **Triangle Arts Group Inc – Community Notice Board & Free Library - \$3,006**
  - c. **Yea Arts Inc – Mechanisation of Yea Town Hall Light Bars – \$5,000**

**CARRIED**

Cr Haslam left the meeting at 6.57pm

## **RESOLUTION**

**J Walsh / S Carpenter**

- 4. Endorse the following allocations as recommended by the Grants and Sponsorship  
d. Parkrun Australia Ltd – A parkrun for Upper Goulburn Eildon - \$5,000**

**CARRIED**

Cr Gallagher vacated the Chair and left the meeting at 7:02pm

Cr Carpenter (Deputy Mayor) took the Chair

## **RESOLUTION**

**S McAulay / E Lording**

- 4. Endorse the following allocations as recommended by the Grants and Sponsorship  
e. Alexandra Football Netball Club – Anzac Spirit & Community Celebration -  
\$2,200**

**CARRIED**

Cr Gallagher rejoined the meeting at 7:06pm and resumed the Chair

## **5 REPORTS - PEOPLE & CORPORATE PERFORMANCE GROUP**

### **5.1 Quarterly Finance Report - December 2023**

Attachment(s) 1. Attachment 1 - Management Statements December 2023 [5.1.1 - 4 pages]

**Presenter:** Director Corporate & Shared Services, Michael Chesworth

**Approved by:** Director Corporate & Shared Services, Cheryl Nickels-Beattie

**Purpose:** For decision

#### **Executive Summary**

This report provides the quarterly financial report for the period ending 31 December 2023. The Annual Revised Budget forecasts an operating surplus for the year of \$5 million.

## **RESOLUTION**

**Cr J Walsh / Cr S Carpenter**

**That council:**

- 1. Receive the Quarterly Financial Report to 31 December 2023.**



2. Note that the Cheif Executive Officer advises that the formal adoption of a revised budget for 2023/24 financial year is not required.

**CARRIED**

Cr Lording left the meeting at 7:09pm

Cr Lording returned to the meeting at 7:11pm

## 5.2 Priority Action Plan - Quarterly Report - September-December 2023

Attachment(s):

1. Attachment 1 - Council Plan - Quarterly Report - September- December 2023-24 [5.2.1 - 40 pages]

**Presenter:** Integrity & Governance Coordinator, David Echeverry

**Approved by:** Director People & Corporate Performance, Michael Chesworth

**Purpose:** For noting

### Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of the progress from 1 October to 30 December 2023 (second quarter) in delivering Council's *Priority Action Plan 2023/24* and *Council Plan 2021-2025*.

## **RESOLUTION**

**Cr S Carpenter / Cr E Lording**

**That Council note the Council Plan 2021-2025 Progress Report – 1 October to 30 December 2023 period as contained in Attachment 5.2.1**

**CARRIED**

## 5.3 Enterprise Risk Policy

Attachment(s):

1. Policy - Enterprise Risk Management [5.3.1 - 7 pages]
2. Policy Attachment 1 - Enterprise Risk Management - Risk Appetite [5.3.2 - 4 pages]

**Presenter:** David Echeverry, Coordinator Integrity & Governance

**Approved by:** Director People & Corporate Performance, Michael Chesworth

**Purpose:** For decision

### **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this report is to present the revised Enterprise Risk Management Policy and Risk Appetite Statement for adoption by Council.

The revised policy updates the level of appetite in the Financial, Legal and Environment categories from 'Low' to 'Medium' risk, recognising that the current appetite and tolerance level is too conservative and restrictive for Council to attain.

Furthermore, the revised policy contains an attachment to be updated as required, mapping out Council's current strategic and key operational risks against their relevant risk appetite. This process aims to demonstrate how Council manages its risks in line with the level of appetite.

### **RESOLUTION**

**Cr J Walsh / Cr S McAulay**

**That Council adopt the revised Enterprise Risk Management Policy – Risk Appetite as contained in attachments 5.3.1 and 5.3.2**

**CARRIED**

## **5.4 Fraud and Corruption Control Policy**

Attachment(s):

1. Draft Fraud and Corruption Control Policy [5.4.1 - 10 pages]

**Presenter:** Coordinator Integrity & Governance, David Echeverry

**Approved by:** Director People & Corporate Performance, Michael Chesworth

**Purpose:** For decision

### **Executive Summary**

This report seeks Council's endorsement of the revised Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and System, which has been re-aligned to meet the current Australian Standard AS 8001:2021 Fraud and Corruption Control.

### **RESOLUTION**

**Cr S McAulay / Cr E Lording**

**That Council adopt the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy as contained in attachment 5.4.1**

**CARRIED**

## **5.5 Audit and Risk Committee Confirmation of Minutes**

Attachment(s) 1. Audit Risk Committee Meeting - 7 December 2023 - Minutes [5.5.1 - 13 pages]

**Presenter:** Manager Governance & Risk, Amanda Vogt

**Approved by:** Director People & Corporate Performance, Michael Chesworth

**Purpose:** For noting

### **Executive Summary**

This report presents the minutes of the 7 December 2023 Audit and Risk Committee Meeting to Council for noting.

## **RESOLUTION**

**Cr J Walsh / Cr S Carpenter**

**That Council receive and note the minutes of the 7 December 2023 Audit and Risk Committee as enclosed in Attachment 5.5.1.**

**CARRIED**

## **6 REPORTS - ASSETS & ENVIRONMENT GROUP**

### **6.1 Contract – Yea Pool Wet Deck Construction**

Attachment(s):

1. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - CONT23/7 - Yea Pool Wet Deck Construction [6.1.1 - 6 pages]

**Presenter:** Interim Director Assets & Environment, Caroline Lintott

**Approved by:** Interim Director Assets & Environment, Caroline Lintott

**Purpose:** For decision

### **Executive Summary**

This report provides the results of a tender process to appoint a contractor for CONT23/7 – Yea Swimming Pool Wet Deck Construction.

The scope of this project is to pressure test and repair pipework, cut and construct a new wet deck around the body of the main vessel, repairs to movement joints, painting of the pool vessel and all associated works.

Council recently conducted a public tender for these works which closed on the 19 April 2023 at 3pm. Only one submission was received at the close of tender. A detailed evaluation was undertaken in line with Council's Procurement Policy and against tender evaluation criteria by the Tender Evaluation Committee.

This report, and the confidential attachment, outlines the procurement and evaluation process undertaken to appoint a suitable contractor to complete the program of works within Contract CONT23/7 - Yea Swimming Pool Wet Deck Construction.

Based on the evaluation, the Committee recommended Tender 1 be awarded CONT23/7 Yea Swimming Pool Wet Deck Construction for a lump sum price of \$399,108 to complete the required works in accordance with the specification. The Tenderer has confirmed pricing will be honoured until June 2024.

## **RESOLUTION**

**Cr S Carpenter / Cr E Lording**

**That Council:**

- 1. Award CONT23/7 – Yea Swimming Pool Wet Deck Construction to Farley Pools Australia Pty Ltd for a lump sum price of \$399,108;**
- 2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to execute the required contract documentation;**
- 3. Approve the allocation of \$10,000 as a contingency amount to be used in the delivery of this contract as detailed in this report; and**
- 4. Release the name of the successful Tenderer into the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of 28 February 2024.**

**CARRIED**

## **6.2 Capital Works Program Mid-Year Report – 30 December 2024**

Attachment(s):

1. Attachment 1 - Capital Works - Mid- Year Report - December 2023 - Program Financials [6.2.1 - 10 pages]
2. Attachment 2 - Capital Works - Mid- Year Report - December 2023 - Program Comments [6.2.2 - 10 pages]
3. Attachment 3 - Capital Works – Mid- Year Report - December 2023 – Proposed Funding Adjustments [6.2.3 - 3 pages]

**Presenter:** Manager Sustainability & Assets, Peter Bain

**Approved by:** Interim Director Assets & Environment, Caroline Lintott

**Purpose:** For decision

### **Executive Summary**

This is a mid-year progress report of the capital works program (CWP) for the 2023/24 financial year. The period of reporting is from 1 July 2023 to the end of December 2023. The CWP is comprised of those projects endorsed by Council as part of the 2023/24 budget, projects identified for carry forward from the 2022/23 program and any approved projects that have received grant funding during the financial year.

## **RESOLUTION**

**Cr S Carpenter / Cr S McAulay**

**That Council:**

1. Note the mid-year report for the quarter ending 31 December 2023 on the status of the delivery of the Capital Works Program.
2. Approve the funding adjustments and carry forward amounts as presented in Attachment 3.
3. Approve the additional project for the installation of a Shade Structure for the Eildon Pondage stage for a budget of \$95,000 and the inclusion of this asset as part of Council's asset register, subject to:
  - o Funding of \$55,000 from Eildon Events Incorporated;
  - o A maximum Council contribution of \$40,000 from the Open Space Reserve which will be replenished once the sale of land in Eildon is realised.

**CARRIED**

## 7 COUNCILLOR AND CEO REPORTS

### 7.1 Notices of Motions

Nil.

### 7.2 Cr Ilona Gerencser

Nil.

### 7.3 Cr Eric Lording

Nil.

### 7.4 Cr Sandice McAulay

#### **Update on the Shaping Murrindindi's Future Project**

The Discovery Phase has commenced with five sessions having been held to date on Farm Forestry, Renewable and Circular Economy, Health and Aged Care Services, Tourism and Sustainable Agriculture, Aquaculture and Horticulture. There has been a great turnout at these sessions with engagement from key members of our community, experts, and government representatives. Thank you to those community and business members who have taken the time from their busy days to participate and provide constructive input into this important project.

The next phase will be to look at those opportunities that have been identified, work further on those which have potential and identify which projects will be included in the final Local Development Strategy. There will be more information updates in the coming months.

#### **Business Breakfast**

The first in a series of business events was held in Alexandra on Tuesday morning, 20 February. The Business Breakfast was held in partnership with Murrindindi Food and Wine as part of a successful grant to support business networking and connection. The Murrindindi Business Resilience Project supports a year-round "Buy Local" Campaign, Networking, training, and connection activities as well as the upcoming Murrindindi Jobs Expo. Expect more to come.

#### **Business eNews**

If you would like to keep informed about what is happening in the Business and Tourism space, I encourage you to hop online to our website and subscribe to the Murrindindi Business & Tourism eNews – which is published monthly and has heaps of news covering topics such as – Business,

Forestry, Tourism, Events, Agriculture and any other current news topics such as the January 2024 Floods.

### **Anniversary of the 2009 bushfires**

I would just like to acknowledge that February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024, marked the 15 year anniversary of the 2009 bushfires, one of the most devastating bushfire events in our local history and which continues its ongoing impact on a number of our community members.

Council paused and acknowledged the loss of many lives in our local community and across Victoria. In company with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor I was proud to be able to visit and lay wreaths at the six bushfire memorials across the Shire on the morning of February 7<sup>th</sup>. We will remember.

## **7.5 Cr Karine Haslam**

Very exciting news! The Eildon Reserves Redevelopment is underway. The area has been cordoned off for safety reasons.

The flying fox area is the first to be started with work on the Skate park to follow.

You will also notice the toilets have been closed to the public as these are due to be demolished in the very near future. Public toilets – are available at the Eildon Pondage, while works are taking place. Due to the expected influx of visitors for the Labour day long weekend, the toilets at the Footy Oval – Collier Reserve will also be open to the public. These will remain open until the end of the school holidays. If there is a need this can be extended.

You will also notice the permanent stage has been completed at the Lion's Leisure Park at the Eildon Pondage. It is great to see infrastructure of this calibre being built. I am sure it will get much use from both local and visiting events and activities.

I had the pleasure of presenting Certificates of Achievement to this year's school Leaders at the Eildon Primary School. Congratulations go to

Lily Anne Goninon	School Captain
Alexis McVean	School Vice-Captain
Tristan Ball	Goulburn House Captain
Brayden Glascott	Delatite House Captain
Ella Spicer-Jones	SRC Captain

Well done on your appointments. I am sure you will set a great example for others to follow.

Thank you, that's it from me

## **7.6 Cr John Walsh**

During the past few months, I have chaired meetings of the Murrindindi Flood Recovery Committee while Cr Gerencser has been away. The Committee was established to coordinate  
Scheduled Meeting of Council

recovery activities and support after the October 2022 floods. Its role was expanded after the October 23 floods and again after the January 24 floods. Following the storms earlier this month, the Committee has increased its role further to include community resilience following power and communications outages.

Last week's meeting reported on the on-going advocacy for support for flood effected residents; and the wellbeing services being provided, particularly for farmers at the Yea saleyards where at each cattle sale a variety of health checks are being provided. Importantly, the Committee recognised the need for processes and materials to be in place for the community when faced with communications outages like those experienced most recently. Each of the participating support agencies have improved their operational and internal comms over the years but procedures and capabilities are sorely needed to allow members of the community to know what to do, where to go and the assistance available when their mobile phones and internet connections are not available. We need to encourage everyone to own a battery-operated radio; to remember their car has a radio and that the volunteers at UGFM are dedicated to providing emergency communications. There are facilities throughout the Shire with backup generators where people can recharge their phones and Council will be increasing the advocacy efforts to have service providers improve the redundancy of their systems. Each agency in the Recovery Committee will be asked to contribute to Community Operating Procedures so people have fall back options when faced with a failure of communications.

In my Portfolio, work is continuing in developing the budget for 2024/25. There are major financial challenges. As was reported earlier, the underlying deficits this year and in past years continue to reduce our reserves. They cannot continue. It is becoming clear that service levels and operational priorities will have to change in the face of recent rate caps that rarely match CPI and bear no relation to the actual cost increases born by Councils. We could ignore the issues and leave it up to our successors to sort out. But it is pleasing that this Council doesn't walk away from hard problems but wants to solve them or at least get solutions underway.

Some in the community see the solution to this financial dilemma as being to only address the old shibboleths of Roads, Rates and Rubbish and to ignore all else, particularly areas of wellbeing and climate change often grouped under the heading "Woke". I ask those with such simplistic views to read the Role of Councils proscribed in the Local Government Act Part 2 Division 1 Section 8. I won't read out all the listed functions that we as a Council must address but the Act certainly is not limited to just the three "R's".

So we have a lot to do with limited resources. Decisions will have to be made on priorities and the standards to be attained in each functional area. When the draft budget is released, I encourage all residents to review it; to ask Ward Councillors for the rationale behind the document; and if changes are wanted to then make a submission that not only supports the change, but also identifies where other areas can be amended to compensate for any financial adjustment resulting from the suggestion.

The Victorian Electoral Commission is undertaking a review of Ward boundaries in the Shire, resulting from the changes in population causing the numbers in each Ward to vary by more than 10%. The initial report is now out with two options to be considered. Geographically some Wards markedly increase in size and some shrink. The results are interesting to say the least. Time is limited in which to make submissions which are required by 13 March 24. The VEC website has the reports and all the details for making submissions. As for Koriella Ward, we've dealt with storms, floods, only minor fires, avoided pestilence and we don't worry about famine so long as there are rabbits.

## 7.7 Cr Sue Carpenter

Our Shire has experienced extreme weather events since our last council meeting. I am saddened by the impact of damage done to some residences and the number of trees that have fallen or been badly compromised by the severe wind and rain events. Sincere thanks must go to the SES, CFA brigades and other agencies that worked together to support affected residents on several occasions this year. They have also been busy clearing fallen trees and branches off numerous roads and other areas. Thanks also to council staff that have been involved with the massive clean ups.

Recently a community meeting was held for flood affected residents from the newer developments at the west end of Yea to discuss floods and drainage issues in their area. They were appreciative of being able to voice their concerns with the engineering officers and inform the council of their experiences during the flood event.

Tomorrow evening a meeting is to be held for flood affected residents in the west and north areas of Yea near the Yea River. They will have the opportunity to talk about their experiences and concerns with council.

The shire continues to advocate to the government for our fair share of funds to support the repairs needed to reinstate damaged assets and infrastructure.

In my portfolio area:

A second round of roadside slashing is required this season and is due to start by the end of this month.

Our Road grading program is well underway.

Now that council has approved a tender this evening Yea Swimming Pool wet deck works will commence soon, after the pool season closes.

Finally, I would like to agree with Cr McAulay that a special time was had visiting the 6 bushfire memorials on the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of those bushfires and laying a wreath at each of the memorials.

Thank you.

## **7.8 Cr Damien Gallagher - Mayoral Report**

Since our last meeting we have sadly lost many – too many – fine contributors to the Murrindindi Shire community. I'd like to recognise one such person whose legacy will live on in Murrindindi Shire for generations. Maurie Pawsey OAM left us on 30th December, 2023 but not before a life of service to Rotary, Kellock Lodge, and so many organisations and initiatives to advance his beloved local community. A true gentleman whose counsel I sought, whose life was to be celebrated, and who will be missed.

We've had a summer of coming together with family and friends at community get togethers. I'd like to extend Council's appreciation to those who foster a welcoming and engaging Murrindindi vibe for visitors to our major events and to our exceptional and varied local destinations. I'd like to offer very specific recognition to community celebrations from Taggerty to Kinglake and beyond which ensured that everyone had the opportunity to connect on Christmas Day.

It's also been a summer of extreme weather and emergency events.

Following the acute flood event on 8 January, it was difficult not to stand a little taller as I told the story regionally and nationally of the courage and resilience of the Murrindindi Shire Community. We should all take pride in the out-pouring of support for one another in the face of adversity. The emergency services, including volunteers, worked with community members to fill and to



supply sandbags. Families, friends, and strangers supported one another with shelter and welfare. Council staff worked tirelessly, around the clock to enact the Municipal Emergency Plan. Agencies worked harmoniously to support the community.

Council appreciated the prompt offer of support from the Local Government Minister.

Since that time, as promised, Council has actively shared its advocacy priorities: For the implementation of sufficient river flow gauges, for support with updated flood terrain mapping, for financial support for emergency recovery funding, and for provision for building back better, more resilient assets.

Council has also continued to share its perspective that there remains an opportunity for financial assistance grants from the Federal Government to be more equitably distributed. In support of local emergency service agencies, and in recognition that fast flowing, unpredictable flood water movement represents a different challenge to slow-rise flood water peaks experienced downstream in the catchment, Council has advocated for early activation of the purpose-built Incident Control Centre here in the Murrindindi Shire. Local incident or sector control is destined to receive more timely event intelligence which could be more readily translated to accurate and timely emergency warnings and alerts for the community.

In 2024, Council continued the tradition of awarding thousands of dollars in support of unique and engaging Australia Day events across Murrindindi Shire, all tailored for residents and visitors by generous local groups. In January, I cherished the honour of presiding over the conferring of Australian citizenship upon six Murrindindi residents.

I share the almost universal community ambition for unifying federal leadership to bring all Australians together for an annual celebration of the nation: Of our freedom, our democracy, our equality before the law, and our shared commitment to a fair-go.

It was moving to join fellow Councillors at memorial sites across Murrindindi Shire, to reflect upon lives lost and to remember the day lives changed following the fires on 7 February, 2009. Our community moves forward, but always, we remember.

This coming Saturday 2 March, at 3PM, the community is invited to celebrate the official opening of the iconic Rotary Park Swing Bridge, some 45 years after the completion of the construction. The initiative of Ted Norris, and the contributions of so many in the community to what is an icon in Alexandra will be celebrated with a short ceremony.

Finally:

It's now 241 days until the fourth Saturday in October, 2024, the day of Local Government Elections in Victoria. I'd encourage everyone with a strategic mind, a collegiate approach, a passion for sound governance, and a desire to represent our community as a custodian of public local assets, to give some consideration to representation.

It is vitally important that the Councillor role and the responsibilities are understood: For those with a connection to our community, and the capacity to contribute, I commend the experience to you.

## **7.9 Chief Executive Officer Report**

The start of 2024 has been very difficult for many members of the Murrindindi community due to extreme weather, with record-breaking rainfalls experienced in the first 9 days of the year and a 1

in 200-year flood event on 8-9 January. We then saw widespread storm damage from 13 February with prolonged power outages, mainly due to trees falling on powerlines. Phone and internet connections were also interrupted, due to the short battery life for NBN and mobile phone towers. Murrindindi residents were kept informed thanks to regular updates by UGFM radio, and Council made available our libraries to community members to charge their devices, and use the free wifi to access support services and connect with loved ones.

Council staff, SES, other emergency respondents and volunteers have been on the front line to support communities through these difficult circumstances, and as we enter the recovery phase, and I extend my deep appreciation to them for their efforts.

To assist residents with their clean-up associated with the storm event, Council is offering free disposal of household green waste and food waste, at our RRCs. As well as attending to more than 110 community requests for assistance, clearing fallen trees and debris, and providing relief centres if required, Council's role during these emergency is also to reach out to state government departments like Emergency Management Victoria and the Ministers for Emergency Services and for Local Government, to outline the extent of damage and disruption to our shire and to advocate for appropriate support for our impacted communities.

This week we were notified that Council has been allocated \$500,000 under the Council Flood Support Fund, to undertake clean-up activities following the January 2024 floods. We thank the State government for this much needed funding, which will go some way to cover the important work repair assets that are not eligible for funding under the National Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

As the Mayor has mentioned, we continue our advocacy for extra government funding, and changes to disaster recovery funding to enable us to build back infrastructure to a better or more resilient standard. Several assets we had just finished rebuilding after the 2022 floods were lost again in the recent flood event as we are only funded to build back exactly what we lost.

#### Key Worker Accommodation

I am pleased to advise that Council has submitted an Expression of Interest for the Regional Worker Accommodation Fund program, to seek a grant to support the provision of suitable living accommodation for key workers in Eildon, and we expect a response this financial year.

#### Review of Early Childhood education provision across the Shire

To help address the current shortage of Early Childhood education services across our shire, Council has been exploring opportunities to assist service providers to build new kinder and childcare capacity both in Yea and Alexandra. As part of the "Planning to Meet Demand" project funded (\$148,586) through the Building Blocks Planning Grant stream from the Department of Education and Training, we are looking at the current and future demand, staffing needs, service design and possible options and solutions, which include both private and public operators.

In addition, the State government has recently announced that it will build a new government-owned and run early learning and childcare centre in Alexandra, to open in 2027-28, with the site yet to be confirmed.

## 8 RECORD OF COUNCIL BRIEFING SESSIONS

### Purpose

For noting.

### Executive Summary

This report presents the records of Council Briefing Sessions for 24 January 2024 to 21 February 2024, for Council to note. Please note that Council Briefing Session scheduled for 14 February 2024 was cancelled due to technical difficulties caused by the February storm event.

The following summary details are for 24 January 2024 to 21 February 2024.

Meeting Name/Type	Briefing Session
Meeting Date:	24 January 2024
Matters Discussed:	Rating Strategy Review Floodplain Grazing Productivity Research Project Capital Works Program Review – December 2023
Councillor Attendees:	Cr J Walsh, Cr K Haslam, Cr S Carpenter, Cr D Gallagher, Cr S McAulay, Cr E Lording
Council Officer Attendees	Livia Bonazzi, Michael Chesworth, Caroline Lintott, Andrew Paxton, Cheryl Nickels-Beattie, Desiree Rodgers, Dilshan Liyange, Peter Bain
Conflict of Interest Disclosures:	Nil

Meeting Name/Type	Briefing Session
Meeting Date:	7 February 2024
Matters Discussed:	Defined Benefits Scheme Briefing Alpine Resorts Victoria – Strategic Plans National Volunteer Week Appreciation Event Preliminary Draft of Priority Action Plan 2024/25 Draft Fair Access Policy CONT23/7 – Yea Pool Wet Deck Construction Grant Funding Opportunities for the Year
Councillor Attendees:	Cr J Walsh, Cr K Haslam, Cr S Carpenter, Cr D Gallagher, Cr S McAulay, Cr E Lording
Council Officer Attendees	Livia Bonazzi, Michael Chesworth, Caroline Lintott, Andrew Paxton, Stu Coller, David Echeverry, Brad Gill, Mel Spinks, Courtney Hamil, Stuart Russell
Conflict of Interest Disclosures:	Nil

Meeting Name/Type	Briefing Session
Meeting Date:	21 February 2024

Matters Discussed:	1. Council Website Re-design project - discussion on initial recommendations and community engagement 2. Draft 2024/25 Capital Works list Draft 2024/25 Financial Position & New Initiatives 3. Early Years Planning Project Update 4. Draft Naming Roads and Places Policy 5. Key Regional Worker Accommodation Fund
Councillor Attendees:	Cr J Walsh, Cr K Haslam, Cr S Carpenter, Cr D Gallagher, Cr E Lording
Council Officer Attendees	Livia Bonazzi, Michael Chesworth, Caroline Lintott, Andrew Paxton, Dilshan Liyange, Peter Bain, Ben Harnwell, Courtney Hamil, Stu Collier, Rosie Kane, Anna Cullen, Max Rae-Goodings, David Echeverry (virtual)
Conflict of Interest Disclosures: Nil	

## **RESOLUTION**

**Cr S Carpenter / Cr S McAulay**

**That Council receive and note the records of Council Briefing Sessions for 24 January 2024 to 21 February 2024.**

**CARRIED**

### **9            SEALING REGISTER**

Nil.

### **10          CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

Nil

This meeting was closed at 8:01pm.

CONFIRMED THIS:

CHAIRPERSON: Damien Gallagher