



MINUTES
of the
UNSCHEDULED MEETING OF COUNCIL
Wednesday 9 June 2021
at
Murrindindi Shire Council
Zoom
Virtual Meeting
Videoconference
6:00 PM

This Unscheduled Meeting of Council was conducted virtually
(as per *COVID-19 Omnibus (Emergency Measures) Act 2020*,
passed by Victorian Parliament on 23 April 2020)

Audio recordings of all Council meetings are taken by Council's Governance Officers
and published on Council's website (Resolution of Council 23 January 2019)

1 PLEDGE AND RECONCILIATION STATEMENT.....2

2 APOLOGIES AND REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE2

3 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST OR CONFLICT OF INTEREST2

4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.....2

4.1 Hearing of Submissions.....2

5 OUR PROMISE.....2

5.1 Consideration of 2021/22 Annual Budget Submissions2

1 PLEDGE AND RECONCILIATION STATEMENT

The meeting was opened with the Mayor declaring the following Pledge on behalf of all Councillors:

"As the Councillors democratically elected to represent our community as the Murrindindi Shire Council, we are committed to working together in the best interests of the people who live in our municipality, who conduct business here and those who visit. We would like to acknowledge the Taungurung Traditional Owners and their ancestors as the traditional owners of the land on which we are meeting virtually and pay our respect to their Elders past and present."

2 APOLOGIES AND REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

There were no apologies or requests for leave of absence tendered.

Present:

Councillors S McAulay (Chair), S Carpenter, K Haslam, I Gerencser, E Lording, J Walsh, D Gallagher

In attendance:

Chief Executive Officer: Livia Bonazzi
Director Corporate and Shared Services: Michael Chesworth
Acting Director Corporate and Shared Services: Marilyn Kearney
Director Community Engagement: Shivaun Brown
Director Assets and Development: Vito Albicini
Manager Governance and Risk: Tara Carter
Manager Business Services: Graham Haylock

3 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST OR CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Nil.

4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

4.1 Hearing of Submissions

The Mayor will invite each submitter to speak to their submission for a 5 minute period.

Ruth Selover, spoke to her submission regarding the 2021/22 Draft Budget.

Robbert Veerman, spoke to his submission regarding the 2021/22 Draft Budget.

Tony Richardson, spoke to his submission regarding the 2021/22 Draft Budget on the topic of AgroForestry.

Tony Richardson, spoke to his submission regarding the 2021/22 Draft Budget on the topic of Virtual Microgrids.

Nick Legge representing Rubiocn Forest Protection Group, spoke to his submission regarding the 2021/22 Draft Budget.

David Webb Ware spoke to his submission regarding the 2021/22 Draft Budget.

Bev Dick, spoke to her submission regarding the 2021/22 Draft Budget.

5 OUR PROMISE

5.1 Consideration of 2021/22 Annual Budget Submissions

Attachment(s):

1. 2021/22 Budget submissions received [5.1.1 - 22 pages]
2. 2021/22 Budget submissions received (distributed to Councillors separately) [5.1.1 – 22 pages]

Purpose

This report is to provide Council with a summary of the submissions received in relation to the draft 2021/22 Annual Budget.

Officer Recommendation

That Council considers the submissions received in relation to the 2021/22 Annual Budget prior to its final adoption at the 23 June 2021 Scheduled Meeting.

Background

At the 28 April 2021 Council meeting, Council endorsed the draft 2021/22 Annual Budget (Budget) for the purposes of public exhibition in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act).

Submissions were sought from the public and the draft Budget was made available on Council's website. The public exhibition period and submission process was advertised on Council's Facebook page and in a range of publications and newspapers. Submissions were due by 28 May 2021.

At the time of preparing the agenda, ten submissions had been received by Council. All submissions have been provided to Councillors for review prior to the Unscheduled Meeting of Council.

An acknowledgement was sent to each submitter, confirming receipt of their submission and informing them of the opportunity to attend the Unscheduled Meeting of Council on the 9 June 2021 to speak to their submission if they wished.

Discussion

Ten submissions were received in relation to the draft Budget. A summary of each submission is provided below:

No.	Summary of submission
1	<p><i>Submitter: Ruth Selover</i></p> <p>Request for Council to begin tree planting in Bayley Street.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In summer it is an aesthetically and environmentally unpleasant significant street • Concrete curbing channels water away from trees • Requests Council saves the money it spends on curbing and spend it on trees.
2	<p><i>Submitter: Robyn Hill, Marysville and Triangle Community Foundation</i></p> <p>Questions why there is no allocation for community development in the 2021/22 draft budget.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murrindindi Shire Council lists "Our People" as its first strategic directive, and yet there are no funds allocated to carry out actual community development work • Community development is a vital framework for building social capital, sustainable communities, and community networking • Community development empowers community members and creates stronger and more connected communities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is Council's commitment to 'Our People' actually demonstrated without any budget allocation for vital community development work?
3	<p><i>Submitter: Robyn Schrader</i></p> <p>Request that Council considers the development of a secure off lead dog park in Alexandra.</p>
4	<p><i>Submitter: Robbert Veerman</i></p> <p>Request for Council to revise its planning and building approvals practice to reduce the direct CO2 emissions of all new buildings in particular by setting defaults for orientation of boundaries on subdivisions, and building envelopes within individual blocks to enable optimum harvesting of natural solar heat and light in winter, and shading in summer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> That revision should include the addition of supporting literature and advice to applicant planners, builders and owners Orientation is just one of several critical factors but it is the only one that comes into play at the subdivision and planning stages and lasts forever. The others are glass, mass, insulation, shading, and layout which are in the hands of customer, designer and builder.
5	<p><i>Submitter: Tony Richardson, Murrindindi Climate Network Inc.</i></p> <p>Requests that Council use part of the funds allocated for the “development of programs which relate to the environment and mitigating the effects of climate change” to conduct a feasibility study of the establishment of a Farm Forestry (AgroForestry) plantation on land controlled by Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study would demonstrate the feasibility of Council (and other private land owners) developing an Agroforestry plantation on marginal agricultural land which would have three main outputs: production of high-quality timber at the end of the 25-year rotation, creation of jobs in the Agroforestry sector and creation of Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCU) which could be used to partially offset Council emissions and assist in achieving a net-zero-emissions target by 2050 Project would also include part-sponsorship of a Master TreeGrower workshop series, using the Council land as a case study, whereby council officers and Murrindindi residents could learn more about the establishment and management of a Farm Forestry plantation The anticipated cost of such a study would be \$40k.
6	<p><i>Submitter: Tony Richardson, Murrindindi Climate Network Inc.</i></p> <p>Requests that Council conduct an investigation into the feasibility of creating a Virtual Microgrid in Marysville using the Enosi Energy Powertracer software, with Energy Locals as the retailer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This study would require the cooperation of approximately ten Marysville households and one larger property with a significant solar & battery installation The study will also examine the potential for delivering FCAS (Frequency Control Ancillary Service) financial benefits This installation could be a pilot project for the more comprehensive SENSE project proposed by MCN The proposed feasibility study would require no additional hardware, and the anticipated cost of such a study would be \$10k.
7	<p><i>Submitter: David Webb Ware</i></p> <p>Requests to speak to Council about how to address the inequity with the Rural 1 differential rate for larger farming properties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inequity exists between Rural 1 and Residential and Commercial in that larger Rural 1 properties individually pay a very disproportional amount of rates Rates calculated principally by valuation changes between the rate categories can be very biased against the larger rural properties Strongly supports council in their attempts to solve the inequities by maintaining the Rural 1 discount and reintroducing the 25% commercial premium Future consideration may be to introduce another tier of Rural rating with large properties of 250 Ha or more (for example) having a larger discount on the general rate Seeking clarification in the budget document where a 2.52% increase in the total amount to be raised by general rates is more than the State Governments cap of 1.5%.
8	<p><i>Submitter: Rubicon Forest Protection</i></p>

	<p>Two budget suggestions arise from the submitter's ongoing promotion of native forest values other than logging, these being:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Indigenous cultural significance and values of this mountain landscape (for all people, not just indigenous users), and 2. Enabling safe and secure visitation by tourists and locals alike into the forest for their wellbeing and recreation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reconciliation Action Plan</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Supports the proposed Reconciliation Action Plan proposed by the Shire ◦ Proposes the development of a Taungurung cultural heritage trail, as part of a suite of proposed tourist developments to help the transition to a post-logging economic future for the Shire ◦ Suggests an element of the reconciliation plan could include a review of any names of streets and places in the Shire that may commemorate people who inflicted harm or injustice on Aboriginal people. • <i>Reinstatement of near-impassable 1.3 km gravel section at the east end of Cathedral Lane.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Suggests reinstatement of a 2WD all-weather gravel road at the eastern end of Cathedral Lane as Council's contribution to a proposed scenic loop drive from Cathedral Range State Park to Blue Range Rd via Cathedral Lane and Chitty Ridge Rd and back to the Park via Tweed Spur Rd ◦ Works would also be potentially fundable with some of the \$36 million the State Government has allocated as part of the Forestry Transition funding package, however the prospect of funding from that source would doubtless improve with some Council contribution to the project.
9	<p><i>Submitter: Bev Dick</i></p> <p>Suggests that Council creates a position of a Climate Change Officer and supports a range of initiatives regarding climate change, trees and the forest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce "The Pledge" asking ratepayers to make a written optional annual pledge of what they will do/can do for CCA for the next 6 months; 12 months • discounts on rates e.g. \$40 reduction in rates, or reduced cost of a worm farm or compost rubbish bin, or three free tip vouchers etc. • organise simple Business Awards (recommendations - like star of the week on the local paper for school kids) for businesses and organisations doing great things for Climate Change • consider the purchase of a thermal reader for loaning out from/rotating around the Alex and Kinglake Libraries, and arrange for the libraries to host workshops about Emissivity and Thermal Imaging so that locals learn how to use this equipment. • Bring in Communal or 'street-hub' worm-farms or Bokashi bins or compost bins. • Subsidise wormfarms, bokashi buckets or compost bins for rate payers as happens in other shires around the state • Look at all projects to do with tree planting and tree preservation - planting new tree lots on shire land, big and small, and encouraging local landowners to do the same • Continue to champion the survival of the very little old-growth native forest that the shire has left • Encourage tourism, enjoyment and preservation of the biodiversity and beauty within our State Forests • Encourage farmers to not plough or spray close to the root zone of trees – introduce fines, use local laws to support tree preservation.
10	<p><i>Submitter: Nicholas Reuter</i></p> <p>Requests that rates need to be lowered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher than other places • Massive burden on families.

Following this meeting to consider the submissions any proposed changes to the draft Budget in response to the submissions will be presented to Council at the 23 June 2021 Scheduled Council Meeting for Council's endorsement as part of the adoption of the budget.

Council Plan/Strategies/Policies

This report supports the *Council Plan 2017-2021 Our Promise* strategy to “maintain Council’s financial sustainability through sound financial and asset management”.

Relevant Legislation

This process complies with the relevant provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Financial Implications and Risk

There are no financial or risk considerations regarding the hearing of submissions.

Conflict of Interest

There are no declared conflicts of interest by Council officers in relation to this report.

Community and Stakeholder Consultation

The draft Budget was made available to the community on Council’s website from 30 April 2021 and advertised on Council website, Facebook page, and in a range of publications, with written submissions sought by 28 May 2021.

RESOLUTION

Cr E Lording / Cr J Walsh

That Council considers the submissions received in relation to the 2021/22 Annual Budget prior to its final adoption at the 23 June 2021 Scheduled Meeting.

CARRIED

The meeting was closed at 07:28 pm.

CONFIRMED THIS



CHAIRPERSON

Cr S McAulay