



Southern Grampians
SHIRE COUNCIL

Council Meeting Minutes

Council Meeting
9 March 2022

Held at 5:30pm
in Council Chambers
5 Market Place, Hamilton.

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The Meeting opened at 5.30pm

1. Present

Councillors

Cr Bruach Colliton, Mayor
Cr David Robertson, Deputy Mayor
Cr Mary-Ann Brown
Cr Albert Calvano
Cr Helen Henry
Cr Greg McAdam

Officers

Mr Andrew Goodsell, Acting Chief Executive Officer
Ms Evelyn Arnold, Director Community and Corporate Services
Ms Marg Scanlon, Director Infrastructure

2. Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country

The Mayor, Cr Colliton read the acknowledgement of country:

“Our meeting is being held on the traditional lands of the Gunditjmarra, Tjap Wurrung and Bunganditj people.

I would like to pay my respects to their Elders, past and present, and the Elders from other communities who may be here today.”

Please note: All Council meetings will be audio recorded, and may be livestreamed to Council’s social media platform, with the exception of matters identified as confidential items in the Agenda.

By participating in open Council meetings, individuals consent to the use and disclosure of the information they share at the meeting (including any personal and/or sensitive information).

Other than an official Council recording, no video or audio recording of proceedings of Council Meetings will be allowed without the permission of Council.

3. Prayer

Cr Robertson lead the meeting in a prayer.

“Almighty God, we humbly beseech thee to vouchsafe thy blessing upon this Council.

Direct and prosper its deliberations to the advancement of thy glory and the true welfare of the people of the Southern Grampians Shire.”

4. Apologies

Mr Tony Doyle, Chief Executive Officer
Cr Katrina Rainsford

5. Confirmation of Minutes

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 9 February 2022 be confirmed as a correct record of business transacted.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: Cr Brown
SECONDED: Cr Robertson

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 9 February 2022 be confirmed as a correct record of business transacted.

CARRIED

6. Declaration of Interest

7. Questions on Notice

Questions from the public must be submitted prior to the commencement of Council Meetings.

All questions must be submitted through completion of the Public Question Time form, and be forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer at 111 Brown Street, Hamilton. All questions must be received by no later than 5pm on the Monday before the Council Meeting.

Questions must:

1. Not pre-empt debate on any matter listed on the agenda of the Council Meeting at which the question is asked
2. Not refer to matters designated as confidential under the *Local Government Act 2020*.
3. Be clear and unambiguous and not contain argument on the subject.
4. Not be derogatory, defamatory or embarrassing to any Councillor, member of staff, ratepayer or member of the public, nor relate to a matter beyond the power of Council.

If the member of the public is in attendance at the Council Meeting, the Mayor will read the question aloud and provide a response. If a question cannot be answered at the meeting, a written response will be prepared and forwarded to the person raising the question.

Residents do not need to attend the meeting for a question to be answered. If they do not attend the meeting a written response will be provided.

There were no Questions on Notice listed on tonight's agenda.

8. Public Deputations

Requests to make a Public Deputation to Council must be submitted prior to the commencement of the Council Meeting.

Anyone wishing to make a deputation to Council must complete the Request to Make a Deputation form and forward it to the Chief Executive Officer at 111 Brown Street, Hamilton by no later than 5pm on the Monday before the Council Meeting.

Speaking time is limited to 3 minutes per person. Organisations may be represented at the deputation to Council by not more than 4 representatives. The names of the representatives to attend must be advised in writing to the Chief Executive Officer and 1 of the representatives to attend must be nominated as the principal spokesperson for the deputation.

Deputations wishing to make a written submission to the Council must a copy either electronically or hard copy of the submission to the Chief Executive Officer prior to the Council Meeting. One copy will be made available to the local media representative, if requested.

All members of the public addressing the Council must extend due courtesy and respect to the Council and the processes under which it operates. If a member of the public fails to do this the Chairperson can remove them from the Chambers. All members of the public must also comply with Council's Council Meetings policy in relation to meeting procedures and public participation at meetings.

There were no Public Deputations listed on tonight's agenda.

9. Informal Meetings of Councillors

The Southern Grampians Shire Council Governance Rules require that records of Informal Meetings of Councillors that meet the following criteria:

If there is a meeting of Councillors that:

- a) took place for the purpose of discussing the business of Council or briefing Councillors;
- b) is attended by at least one member of Council staff; and
- c) is not a Council meeting, Delegated Committee meeting or Community Asset Committee meeting;

be tabled at the next convenient Council meeting and recorded in the minutes of that Council meeting.

An Informal Meeting of Councillors record was kept for:

- Briefing Session – 9 February 2022
- Audit and Risk Committee Meeting – 15 February 2022
- Briefing Session - 16 February 2022
- Briefing Session – 23 February 2022

This agenda was prepared on 2 March 2022. Any Informal Meeting of Councillors between that date and the date of tonight's Meeting will appear in the agenda for the next Ordinary Meeting of Council.

Southern Grampians Shire Council

Informal Meeting of Councillors

ASSEMBLY DETAILS	
Title:	Industry Visit and Briefing Session
Date:	9 February 2022
Location:	Virtual Via Teams
Councillors in Attendance:	Cr Bruach Colliton, Mayor Cr David Robertson, Deputy Mayor Cr Mary-Ann Brown Cr Albert Calvano Cr Helen Henry Cr Greg McAdam Cr Katrina Rainsford
Council Staff in Attendance:	Tony Doyle, Chief Executive Officer Evelyn Arnold, Director Community and Corporate Services Marg Scanlon, Director Infrastructure Andrew Goodsell, Director Planning and Development Hugh Koch, Manager Economic Development and Tourism Samantha Scott, Strategic Major Projects Coordinator
External Presenters:	Friends of Hamilton Botanic Gardens

The Informal Meeting commenced at 2:00pm.

MATTERS CONSIDERED		CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED
1	Councillor Only meeting	Nil
2	Matters Raised by Council	Nil
3	MAV Workcare Membership Liability	Nil
4	Volcanic Masterplan	Nil
5	Malcolm Fraser Bust Update	Nil

The Informal Meeting concluded at 5:30pm.

Southern Grampians Shire Council

Informal Meeting of Councillors

ASSEMBLY DETAILS	
Title:	Audit & Risk Committee Meeting
Date:	15 February 2022
Location:	Teams Meeting
Councillors in Attendance:	Cr David Robertson, Deputy Mayor Cr Helen Henry
Council Staff in Attendance:	Mr Tony Doyle, CEO Ms Evelyn Arnold, Director Community & Corporate Services Ms Belinda Johnson, Manager Finance Ms Tahlia Homes, Acting Manager Organisational Development Ms Marg Scanlon – Director Infrastructure Mr John Finnerty – Manager Assets Mr Mike Shanahan – Health & Safety Coordinator Mr Russell Bennett – Manager Business Systems Ms Nadine Rhook, EA to Director Community & Corporate Services

The Assembly commenced at 1:30pm

MATTERS CONSIDERED		CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED
1	Welcome	Nil
2	Apologies	Nil
3	Conflict of Interest	Nil
4	Confirmation of Previous Minutes	Nil
5	Summary Table of Outstanding Matters	Nil
6	External Audit - Progress Report of Current Actions	Nil

7	Final Management Letter & Closing Report	Nil
8	Audit Strategy	Nil
9	VAGO Audit – Fraud Control over Local Government Grants	Nil
10	Internal Audit – Progress Overall	Nil
11	Progress Report of Internal Audit Actions (Interplan) – Customer Service & Complaints, Contract Management, Risk Management & Waste Management, Asset Management & Road Maintenance, Building Maintenance. Depot Management, Purchasing Cards & Data Security Protection (VPDSS), Local Laws, Road Asset Management	Nil
12	Internal Audit – Draft Scope – Data Analysis – Accounts Payable & Procurement	Nil
13	Internal Audit Progress – Child Safe Standards – Final Report	Nil
14	Excess Leave Update	Nil
15	ICT Physical Policies & Procedures	Nil
16	Asset Management Framework	Nil
17	Quarry Rehabilitation with Boral Resources	Nil
18	Implementation of Local Government Act	Nil
19	Compliance Framework	Nil
20	Integrated Strategic Planning & Reporting Framework	Nil
21	Review Council's Procurement Policy	Nil
22	Audit & Risk Committee – Biannual Assessment	Nil
23	OHS Report	Nil
24	MAV Workcover Claim	Nil

25	VAGO, Ombudsman & IBAC Reports	Nil
26	Councillor Expenses Quarterly Report	Cr Robertson & Cr Henry declared an indirect conflict at the ARC Meeting at Item 12.2
27	Finance Reports to December 2021	Nil
28	Next Meeting	Nil

The Assembly concluded at 4.01pm

Southern Grampians Shire Council

Informal Meeting of Councillors

ASSEMBLY DETAILS	
Title:	Industry Visits and Briefing Session
Date:	16 February 2022
Location:	MJ Hynes Auditorium
Councillors in Attendance:	Cr Bruach Colliton, Mayor Cr David Robertson, Deputy Mayor Cr Mary-Ann Brown Cr Albert Calvano Cr Helen Henry Cr Greg McAdam Cr Katrina Rainsford
Council Staff in Attendance:	Tony Doyle, Chief Executive Officer Evelyn Arnold, Director Community and Corporate Services Marg Scanlon, Director Infrastructure Andrew Goodsell, Director Planning and Development Tahlia Homes, Acting Manager Organisational Development Susannah Milne, Manager Community and Leisure Services
External Presenters:	Craig Kenny

The Informal Meeting commenced at 11:00am.

MATTERS CONSIDERED		CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED
1	Council Plan Actions 2021-2025 Quarterly Report – 31 December 2021	Nil
2	Aged Care Transition	Nil
3	Rural Land Use Strategy	Nil
4	HIRL – Industry Visit	Nil
5	Pedrina Park – Industry Visit	Nil

The Informal Meeting concluded at 4:15pm.

Southern Grampians Shire Council
 Informal Meeting of Councillors

ASSEMBLY DETAILS	
Title:	Briefing Session
Date:	23 February 2022
Location:	Virtual Via Teams
Councillors in Attendance:	Cr Bruach Colliton, Mayor Cr David Robertson, Deputy Mayor Cr Mary-Ann Brown Cr Albert Calvano Cr Helen Henry Cr Greg McAdam Cr Katrina Rainsford
Council Staff in Attendance:	Tony Doyle, Chief Executive Officer Evelyn Arnold, Director Community and Corporate Services Marg Scanlon, Director Infrastructure Andrew Goodsell, Director Planning and Development Jason Cay, Acting Financial Sustainability Coordinator John Finnerty, Manager Assets Brett Holmes, Manger Works
External Presenters:	Reid Mather, Ailiche Goddard-Clegg

The Informal Meeting commenced at 12:30pm.

MATTERS CONSIDERED		CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED
1	Councillor and CEO Meeting	Nil
2	Matters Raised by Councillors	Nil
3	Rail Freight Alliance	Nil
4	Hycel Presentation	Nil
5	Small Market Electricity Contract	Nil

6	Sale of Former Penshurst Child and Maternal Health Building	Nil
7	Capital Works Update	Nil
8	Works Ute Approval	Nil

The Informal Meeting concluded at 5:00pm.

10. Management Reports

10.1 Greater Hamilton – Volcanic Trail Master Plan

Directorate: Andrew Goodsell, Director Planning and Development
Author: Hugh Koch - Manager Economic Development and Tourism and
Samantha Scott - Strategic Major Projects Co-ordinator
Attachments: 1. Volcanic Trail Masterplan 2022
2. Detailed Community and Stakeholder Feedback Summary

Executive Summary

This report seeks to provide Council with a clear strategic direction on ways to improve the user experience at volcanic attractions across the Shire. The 'Volcanic Trail' concept builds on the significant cultural and environmental values of selected volcanic sites within the Shire.

The 'Trail' comprises seven sites within the Shire: Wannan Falls, Nigretta Falls, Byaduk Caves, Harman's Valley Lookout, Wallacedale Tumuli, Mt Napier and Mt Rouse. Currently these sites are developed and maintained to varying degrees across multiple government authorities.

Cooper Scaife Architects and LookEar interpretive design were engaged in July 2020 to undertake a master planning process for the Volcanic Trail. The resulting masterplan places high importance on preserving and promoting both the natural environment and Indigenous heritage of the region. To this end, consultation was undertaken with a range of strategic partners, stakeholders and agencies. Uncle Johnny Lovett, a Gunditjmara Elder, on advice from Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, provided cultural advice to the design team.

A Cost Plan has been developed for the project by WT Partnership, with the total project cost estimated at \$19 million. It is important to understand that each site has different land managers and therefore carriage of developments and improvements to each site. The master plan has been developed by Council to assist in leading further discussions with those land managers and agencies. It is also a robust document that can be used in advocating for funding to State and Federal Governments.

The draft plan has been shared with all agencies, users groups, and stakeholders. A presentation was made to the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation. The draft plan was advertised via public notices and a media release. It was made available to the public online and through our social media platforms. Fourteen (14) responses were received. Overall feedback was positive; and several congratulated Council on their leadership in developing this document. Most of the feedback related to the next stages of the project particularly in the detailed design phase. See addendum for further details on submissions.

It is recommended that Council adopt the Greater Hamilton Volcanic Trails Masterplan.

Discussion

Project Background

The Southern Grampians Shire Council is strategically located within the former Kanawinka Geopark. The volcanic Landscape of South West Victoria is a striking contrast of sweeping

basalt plains studded with remarkable sinkholes and caves, spectacular mountains, extensive lava flows, extinct volcanoes and associated craters (such as Mt Rouse, Mt Eccles)

The area features nearly 400 individual eruption points, most of which occurred between 4.5 and 2 million years ago, and several hundred caves which are west of the Kanawinka Fault. The Byaduk caves in the Mount Napier State Park are a very extensive and accessible set of lava caves. Being so young (only 8000 years), they are largely unweathered and still maintain their natural state.

The region includes the traditional lands of four Aboriginal nations – Boandik, Jardwadjali, Djab Wurrung and Dhauwurd Wurrung (Gunditjmara). Aboriginal people have occupied the area for many thousands of years, and continue to have a close association with the land for its cultural, environmental and spiritual values. The region features the ‘The Dreaming’ and stones from the lava flow that were used by local language groups to construct channels linking the wetlands, weirs, fish and eel traps, wind breaks and stone huts. Excellent examples constructed by the Gunditjmara people can be found in the UNESCO World Heritage Budj Bim Cultural Landscape situated in Lake Condah region, south of the Southern Grampians Shire. Later, European settlers constructed dry stonewalls in order to enclose crops and stock. Many examples can be found around Penshurst and Byaduk.

The primary purpose of the Masterplan is to provide Council with strategic direction on how to improve the supportive infrastructure and resourcing for the volcanic attractions in the Shire, so that a more meaningful visitor experience can be provided. It was understood that Council needed to lead the development of partnerships and collaboration with the relevant management authorities and agencies in order to achieve our community vision, goals and values for the landscape.

The ‘Volcanic Trail’ concept builds on the significant cultural and environmental values of selected volcanic sites within the Southern Grampians Shire. The Volcanic Trail Masterplan aims to provide a clear direction to protect cultural heritage, maintain / improve existing assets and develop the visitor economy by leveraging our natural assets and known tourist linkages. The ‘Trail’ comprises seven sites within the Shire: Wannon Falls, Nigretta Falls, Byaduk Caves, Harman’s Valley Lookout, Wallacedale Tumuli, Mt Napier and Mt Rouse. Currently these sites are developed and maintained to varying degrees across multiple government authorities, and are not linked in any way through branding, interpretive themes, or a consistent approach to infrastructure.

Cooper Scaife Architects and LookEar interpretive design were engaged in July 2020 to undertake a master planning process for the Volcanic Trail. The purpose of the Masterplan is to set out the strategic direction for development of these assets over the next 10 years.

Over a 12-month period, the design team has undertaken extensive site visits, research, consultation and master planning, culminating in a set of proposals for each site. The resulting masterplan places high importance on preserving and promoting both the natural environment and Indigenous heritage of the region, with an approach that is sustainable, respectful and inclusive.

Proposals cover both infrastructure and heritage interpretation, with examples provided to illustrate a best-practice approach. Infrastructure proposals range from the upgrades of existing walking trails, through to the development of entirely new campsites and picnic grounds. An interpretive framework is also provided for each site, covering major themes and supporting content for heritage interpretation.

If implemented fully, the plan has the potential to achieve the dual benefits of attracting increased tourism to the region, as well as improving the recreational opportunities available to local residents, through the creation of high quality and meaningful visitor experiences.

Methodology

The masterplan has been undertaken in a number of phases over approximately 12 months from July 2020 to January 2021, as below.

PHASE 1

Information Gathering & Research

This phase included the review of existing volcanic asset management plans, strategies and resource information, along with research into relevant precedents such as the nearby Budj Bim Landscape and Gariwerd / Grampians National Park. The design team visited all seven sites and developed an understanding of the existing conditions, site opportunities and constraints. Aerial photographs of the sites were sourced and base drawings of the existing conditions were developed.

PHASE 2

Communications and Stakeholder Engagement

Consultation was undertaken with a range of strategic partners including Parks Victoria, DELWP, Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority (GHCMA). Separate consultation sessions were also held with key stakeholders including: Friends Groups, Landcare Groups, Emergency Services, Road Authorities, Council Officers, and Councillors. Traditional Owners' groups, the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, whose country falls within the area of the masterplan were advised of the project, provided with an information package and invited to participate in consultation. In addition to reaching out to Traditional Owners' corporations, Uncle Johnny Lovett, a Gunditjmarra Elder, on advice from Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation was engaged to provide cultural advice to the design team. This took the form of a 2-day tour of the sites in November 2020 and provided a wealth of insight and information about the traditional owners' relationship with this landscape. Community consultation was undertaken in the form of an online survey and face-to-face sessions.

PHASE 3

Development of the Master Plan Concepts, Cost Plan and Master Plan Report

Through the process of gathering site information and in-depth consultation, a clear picture emerged of what was needed at each site and the masterplan design concepts were developed in response to this brief. The plans cover both infrastructure and interpretations. Feedback was sought on these proposals from Councillors and the Project Coordinator, before seeking a cost plan by a Quantity Surveyor (QS). The QS costings were then provided and projects prioritised to help guide future investment decisions.

Common Themes

A number of themes emerged from the initial consultation and surveys:

- Recognition of the high value of these assets from an environmental, cultural, and recreational point of view.
- A lack of pride in the current state of many sites and a desire to see the sites better maintained.
- Potential to involve Traditional Owners in future land management and tours of the sites, including utilising traditional practices such as cool burns.
- A desire to see infrastructure such as lookouts, picnic facilities, and toilets upgraded and modernised.

- A strong interest in interpretations that focus more on the natural environment and indigenous history.
- An appetite for more walking tracks, including upgrading and extending existing tracks as well as providing new extended walking trails.
- A need for better information and wayfinding signage.
- A desire to link the volcanic sites to other tourist attractions in the region.

Site Development and Infrastructure

The following guiding design principles have been developed for the design of physical infrastructure across all the sites:

- Provide infrastructure that is aligned with the profile of the current and target markets and future growth opportunities.
- Provide infrastructure that supports a range of activities and visitors with different levels of physical ability.
- Provide experiences that encourage visitors to extend their stay.
- Respect and preserve indigenous cultural heritage by consulting with Traditional Owners.
- Preserve and protect significant natural assets.
- Encourage removal of non-native (and non-indigenous) plant species, and revegetation of sites with indigenous species to help restore and repair the natural landscape.
- Design infrastructure that promotes engagement with the landscape.
- Plan the sites so that built infrastructure does not dominate the natural landscape.
- Design to limit vehicle access to prevent damage.
- Use a consistent palette of materials to provide a coherent experience across each of the seven sites.
- Use materials that are of this place.
- Design to promote community pride in these local assets, for their cultural and environmental values.

Volcanics Trail Themes and Designs

A series of relevant topics have been identified that can become the basis for on-going research and information gathering. This information is envisaged to be used as a resource base, and used to illustrate and provide content for the main interpretive themes and stories or each site. These include:

- **Volcanic formations** – simple geological explanations linked where possible with Aboriginal creation stories and significance
- **Aboriginal connections** – Aboriginal practices can be explained and demonstrated, highlighting the fact that much of Australia is a cultural landscape that was a carefully and well-managed estate consisting of a series of ‘farms without fences’ under the stewardship of Aboriginal people.
- **Indigenous plants** – their role in the environment and their potential uses for food, medicine and fibre
- **Wildlife** – common species that can be seen, their behaviour, and their cultural connections e.g. the Magpie-lark is included in some creation stories and its call often heralds the coming of bad weather
- **Colonial history** – pastoralist movement into the area for the rich volcanic soils and lush pastures of Australia Felix (meaning blessed) with the changes that came in their wake.

Masterplan Design Proposals

A summary of the design proposals for each site are listed below.

Wannon Falls

Site Development and Infrastructure

Proposals for Wannon Falls are grouped into three areas: the riverside; upper campground; and Thomas Clark viewing area. The following scope is included within each area:

Riverside

- Development of a new picnic area along the Wannon River frontage with new picnic shelters with gas BBQs and tables / benches within landscaped surrounds
- Upgrade of the existing lookout
- Removal of obsolete infrastructure such as the rotunda, signage, toilets, and shelters
- Upgrade of existing walking trails to Thomas Clark viewing area and along the southern side of the Wannon River with a new pedestrian bridge at the base of the gorge to create a complete loop trail
- New walking trail to the upper campground

Upper campground

- Restoration of the heritage listed 'Boomerang gates' at main entrance
- Upgrade of the existing picnic shelter
- Installation of additional new picnic shelters with gas BBQs along with new picnic tables and soft landscaping
- Installation of a new toilet facility to serve both the campground and riverside areas
- Upgrade of campground sites with defined edges, new soft landscaping and picnic tables
- Installation of a new walking trail linking to the Lookout / Thomas Clarke trail

Thomas Clark viewing area

- New picnic shelter and picnic tables
- Soft landscaping to provide a buffer to car park and to encourage visitors to leave their cars and walk through the landscape to the viewing area.

Nigretta Falls

Proposals at Nigretta are divided into three areas: the riverside; main car park loop; and the extended trail to Wannon Falls. The following scope is included within each area:

Riverside

- Development of a new picnic area along the Wannon River above the falls, providing new picnic tables and benches within landscaped surrounds
- Repair of vehicle damage, installation of new soft landscaping and traffic barriers along the riverside (such as volcanic boulders) to prevent informal vehicle access
- Upgrade of existing walking trail to falls lookout
- Removal of falls head lookout (concrete structure)
- New walking trail back to main loop picnic ground

Main car park loop

- Removal of existing picnic shelter and lookout
- Installation of new picnic shelters with gas BBQs, picnic tables and soft landscaping
- Installation of a new lookout
- Installation of a new toilet
- Replacement of cyclone wire fencing with less industrial / more sympathetic barriers

- Reconfiguration of car parking, with new 'pockets' of car park off the main loop and a soft landscape buffer with short walking trail between the car park and new lookout
- New overnight camp area, with picnic tables and parking area
- Upgrade of access down to base of falls with stone steps similar to National Park construction
- Removal of existing timber and concrete steps
- New mountain bike access trail down to start of extended Wannon River trail

Extended Wannon River trail

- Provision of a new shared mountain bike / walking trail along the Wannon River frontage, approximately 9km long
- Trail intersects with Hamilton / Coleraine Rail Trail and would include some interpretative content along the route
- The shared use of the track by walkers and cyclists would need to be considered further at the next design stage including consultation with potential users. This track has the potential to expand the appeal of these two sites to a new group of visitors as well as to help to unify them.

Byaduk Caves

Proposals at Byaduk Caves are divided into two areas: Caves 1 to 4; and the extended trail to the Great Barrier formation (which then leads onto the overnight campsite within Tapoc / Mt Napier State Park).

The following scope is included within each area:

Caves 1 to 4

- Development of a new picnic area near caves 1 and 2, including picnic shelters with gas BBQs and tables
- Installation of a new toilet
- Upgrade of existing walking trail from car park to caves 1 and 2
- Installation of new trails around caves 1 to 4 and to dry stone wall viewing area
- Installation of new steps down into cave 1
- Removal of existing cave lookout points and replacement with loop tracks or boardwalk with a lightweight edge marker that circumnavigates the cave openings
- Installation of soft landscaping around picnic area and along south boundary to provide a buffer to adjacent farmland
- Upgrade of existing carpark, to provide an improved surface and turnaround loop suitable for coaches with edges defined by soft landscaping

Extended trail to Great Barrier Formation

- Installation of new walking trail that skirts caves 5 & 6 but takes walkers away from caves 7-9, which provide important habitat for some rare species
- Walkers can choose to finish at the great Barrier Formation and return via the same trail or continue on an extended trail into Tapoc / Mt Napier State Park

Harman's Valley Lookout

The following scope is included at Harman's Valley lookout:

- Upgrade of the road base and sealing of road surface
- Formalising of car park spaces in 'pockets' separated by soft landscape
- Installation of a new picnic table and a bench seat, separated from the car park area by soft landscaping
- Additional soft landscaping to provide a greater buffer to the main road

- Removal of existing signage and replacement with less intrusive interpretive materials

Wallacedale Tumuli

The following scope is included at the Wallacedale Tumuli:

- Installation of a new car park with a turnaround loop suitable for coaches within the site boundary
- Installation of a new walking trail leading from the car park to the first 3 tumuli formations
- Installation of some bench seating at the second tumuli
- Removal of weeds and revegetation with indigenous species throughout the site to out-compete weeds and provide a more natural context for the tumuli
- Upgrade perimeter fencing to prevent entry of livestock and make boundaries clear to visitors
- Provide a small roadside pull-out on the crest approaching the tumuli from the east, as an introductory viewing point

Mt Napier

Proposals at Tapoc / Mt Napier are divided into three areas: the campsite; the summit; and the extended walk. The following scope is included within each area:

Campground

- Upgrade of the Menzies Pit Road access track to provide all weather 2WD access to the campground, suitable for coaches and RVs
- Development of a new campsite area on the site of a former scoria quarry
- The campsite would comprise three areas, one campground to cater for groups such as schools or coach tours, a picnic area for day visitors and another campground for independent campers
- The group campsite will include a vehicle access loop, installation of a large cooking shelter with gas BBQs, benches and picnic tables, plus additional picnic tables in the open
- The day visitor area will have a mix of picnic tables and shelters with gas BBQs as well as a designated day visitor parking area
- The independent campsite will include installation of a vehicle access loop, a communal cooking shelter with gas BBQs, benches and picnic tables, plus additional picnic tables in the open
- Installation of a new toilet facilities to serve both the campgrounds and day visitor area
- Installation of new soft landscaping to provide natural edges and buffers between campsites and to revegetate the former quarry
- A new walking trail will lead from the campsite to the Devil's Hole Crater, providing access to another volcanic feature with an easier grade walk than the summit track
- Another new trail will lead southwest from the campsite, forming the start of a new extended walking trail to Byaduk Caves

The Summit

- Upgrade of the carpark at the summit trail head
- Upgrade of the existing summit walking trail, including a new loop track on the summit to circumnavigate the crater
- Removal of the dilapidated concrete plinth and plaque on the summit and replacement with more appropriate interpretations
- Installation of a new mountain bike loop trail traversing the slopes of the mountain and linking to the existing Mt Napier Access Track to the northeast

- Upgrade of the car park at the start of the Mt Napier Access Track, to provide an additional starting point for mountain bike rides or walks into the park

The Extended Walk

- Installation of a new extended walking trail, approximately 12km long to link the Tapoc / Mt Napier campground with the Byaduk Caves
- Installation of a walk-in overnight campsite, with designated camping areas, a toilet and a small cooking shelter with a picnic table

Mt Rouse

Proposals at Mt Rouse are divided into two areas: the summit / north entry; and the crater / south entry. The following scope is included within each area:

Summit / North Entry

- Removal of the existing picnic shelter, toilet and tree stumps
- Installation of new picnic facilities, including new shelters with electric BBQs, benches and picnic tables
- Installation of a new toilet
- Selectively prune or remove large trees to the north of the picnic ground to open up views to the Grampians
- Installation of new soft landscaping around the picnic ground and a landscaped island within car park to create a loop and reduce the amount of bitumen surface
- Installation of a new barrier to the adjoining quarry to the east of the picnic ground, which is sympathetic to the landscape surrounds
- Upgrade existing car park off Ritchie St to the north of the site
- Resurface the existing concrete path from this car park to a more sympathetic material
- Upgrade the existing northeast summit walking trail as a combined walking / mountain bike trail to the picnic ground
- Upgrade the existing northwest summit walking trail to the steps and lookout
- Upgrade existing summit steps and viewing platform, to reduce visual impact of structure, comply with NCC (National Construction Code) and provide some bench seating
- Provide additional soft landscaping on the summit around telecommunications installations, to screen these structures as much as possible without obstructing distant views
- Provide a new combined walking / mountain bike trail on the slope between the picnic ground and the crater, connecting to a new crater loop trail
- Installation of a bench seat along this new trail with a vantage point to nearby Tapoc / Mt Napier
- Further revegetation on the slopes of the mountain to build on the previous efforts to return the reserve to its pre-Colonial state

Crater / South Entry

- Installation of a new combined walking / mountain bike trail leading from the existing crater car park to a new picnic area and onto a loop trail circumnavigating the crater
- Installation of a new crater picnic area, including a new shelter with gas BBQ and picnic tables
- Revegetation around the crater rim and installation of barriers (such as volcanic boulders) to prevent vehicle access into the crater
- Installation of new soft landscaping to reinforce the edge of the existing car park and prevent vehicle access off road

- Installation of a gate to restrict access into the former quarry site to special interest and education groups only
- Removal of the dilapidated main entrance gateway
- Installation of a new gate to enable the site to be closed on extreme fire risk days
- Upgrade of main entrance, including new signage

Recommendations to implement the plan

To implement the masterplan, the report recommends that Council establish priorities for both short and long-term projects and set a timeframe for delivery. This will guide the allocation of funds in future budgets and direct campaigns to obtain the substantial funding necessary to pursue the large-scale proposals contained in the plan.

The design team recognises that the masterplan is likely to be undertaken in a number of stages and therefore priority projects need to be identified within the overall scope. Where funding is limited, we strongly recommend undertaking the full scope of works proposed at a select number of sites, rather than a piecemeal approach where small parts of the design proposals for all seven sites are undertaken and the impact of the improvements are lost or confused by the existing infrastructure that still surrounds it.

It is also recommended that a signage manual / style guide be developed, including an associated branding strategy to ensure that all the reserves across the Shire present a consistent, and well-designed, suite of signage elements.

The criteria used for these recommendations are:

- existing and potential visitations
- site suitability for the potential for increased numbers
- relative ease / straight forward nature of implementing the recommendations
- the level of risk posed to the public at each site in its current state.

Lower priority sites are based on an assessment of relative difficulty to access, sensitivity to visitor impact and requiring a larger degree of base works with other organisations (i.e. PV).

Priority sites that have been identified for early implementation are:

- Nigretta Falls
- Wannon Falls
- Harman's Valley
- Mount Rouse
- Byaduk Caves

Sites / projects that will require a longer design and consultation process in order to proceed are:

- Mt Napier
- Extended walks (Nigretta to Wannon and Mt Napier to Byaduk Caves)
- Wallacedale Tumuli

Further consultation and engagement with Traditional Owners is essential, to ensure they are involved in, and can gain tangible economic and social benefits from, any tourism that is based on the sharing of their culture.

Negotiations will also be important with key stakeholders particularly on those properties that are owned or managed by other government bodies such as Mt Napier, Wallacedale Tumuli, and Byaduk Caves. The formation of strong partnerships with Parks Victoria and DEWLP will be essential to successfully implementing the masterplan proposals on these sites.

Once Council is in a position to proceed with implementation of the plan, it is recommended that a detailed design process be undertaken for the physical infrastructure, landscape, and interpretations. This is critical to ensure the built outcome achieves the level of quality needed to match other similar attractions in the region and appeal to the intended target markets.

To implement the masterplan, Council should establish priorities for both short and long-term projects, and set a timeframe for them to be undertaken.

Financial and Resource Implications

It is important to understand that each site has different land managers and, therefore, carriage of developments and improvements to each site. The masterplan has been developed by Council to assist in leading further discussions with those land managers and agencies. It is also a robust document that can be used in advocating for funding to State and Federal Governments. The estimates provided below are for the envisaged project with a variety of external funding sources expected to be sought to realise the project. It would be expected that Council will need to provide some funding in the future to leverage further support from other levels of Government but this is unknown at this stage.

A Cost Plan has been developed for the project by WT Partnership, a quantity surveying firm with extensive experience working on similar types of environmental and cultural tourism projects. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$19 million excl GST.

Wannon Falls	\$2,680,000
Nigretta Falls	\$2,533,000
Byaduk Caves	\$1,603,000
Harman's Valley	\$ 147,000
Wallacedale Tumuli	\$ 595,000
Mt Napier	\$3,959,000
Mt Rouse	\$2,082,000
Extended Walk – Nigretta Falls to Wannon Falls	\$ 817,000
Extended Walk – Mt Napier to Byaduk Caves	\$1,237,000
Other (Wayfinding / Website Creation)	\$ 143,000
Subtotal	\$15,796,000
Project Management and Detailed Design (for all sites)	\$ 3,160,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST (ex GST)	\$18,956,000

It is important to be aware that the costings are based on current day rates and no allowance has been made for escalation because, at this early stage, the implementation date is unknown. The report therefore recommends that Council obtain a review of the Cost Plan from the same quantity surveyors once funding becomes available, to adjust the estimate to reflect the rates at the time the works will be undertaken.

The report also notes that Council should also be aware that the cost plan makes many assumptions about the nature of both the site conditions and the proposed works, as the masterplan designs do not contain detailed information about proposals. We therefore recommend obtaining further cost plans at subsequent design stages, including concept design, design development, and pre-tender.

Submission will be made in March 2022 to the Victorian Government's – "Enabling Tourism Fund" seeking funding to support the next stage of detailed design, permits, and approvals.

Legislation, Council Plan and Policy Impacts

Council Plan

Key Priority 2 - Grow Our Regional Economy

2.2 Increase our regional profile

2.2.2 Invest in and advocate to the responsible agencies for the improvement and maintenance of the Shire's natural and cultural attractions to improve the visitor experience

2.2.3 Ensure clear and accurate wayfinding for our region including traditional ownership recognition to improve the visitor experience

Key Priority 3 - Maintain and Renew Our Infrastructure

3.1 Plan and maintain sustainable assets and infrastructure

3.1.2 Maintain infrastructure to the agreed standard and ensure the principles of sustainability and universal design are considered in the planning and development of infrastructure to support community access and connection meeting the needs of the communities

3.3 Attractive Council-owned and managed community and open spaces

3.3.1 Continue to invest in and activate open spaces within Southern Grampians

Key Priority 4 - Protect Our Natural Environment

4.1 Protect and enhance biodiversity including the health of waterways, wetlands, soil and air

4.1.1 Advocate for, promote and support natural resource management with stakeholders

4.1.3 Protect endemic flora and fauna species throughout the Shire

4.2 Balance environmental protection with Council's support for growth

4.2.1 Ensure land use planning balances growth with appropriate levels of environmental stewardship

Key Priority 5 - Provide Strong Governance and Leadership

5.2 Effective advocacy

5.2.2 Advocate on behalf of the community in line with identified and agreed priorities

5.2.3 Support and partner with service providers, State and Federal Government departments to improve inclusive opportunities for the Southern Grampians community

Risk Management

The report notes that the volcanic sites highlight the current planning and presentation of these experiences as a significant weakness. Furthermore, the quality of the visitor experience is limited by the lack of interpretation, onsite information, and visitor amenities. If the report is not endorsed by Council, there is a risk that we will not have an agreed position on how to advocate for improvement to these important sites to various stakeholders and agencies.

Feedback from DELWP provided the observation "that there is a risk that the high quality presentation of the Masterplan's development proposals may generate community expectations that are not able to be satisfied either at all or in the indicated form." They also note "three of the sites are managed by Parks Victoria and DELWP rather than Council. It is not clear to readers that a mutual understanding has been reached regarding Council's

preparation and potential delivery of Masterplan content on land managed by other agencies.”

As has been noted already, this Masterplan is Council’s opportunity to lead other stakeholders and agencies to realise the vision for each of the sites investigated. Ongoing engagement is required with all stakeholders in the detailed design phase when relevant stages of the master plan are ready be further developed.

Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

As previously noted in the discussion, environmental considerations, and sustainability are at the forefront of the principles and actions of the masterplan. Feedback from DELWP particularly notes that in the implementation of the plan there will need to be consideration given to a variety of legislation including and not limited to the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwth)

Community Consultation and Communication

Throughout the initial stages of the project, Council sought local people’s attitudes and experiences at the various Volcanic Trail sites via an online questionnaire. This provided some indication as to the visitor demographic and their potential areas of interest. Broad community consultation was also undertaken via face-to-face consultation sessions held over two nights in December 2020 at Wannon and Peshurst respectively.

Consultation was undertaken with a range of strategic partners including Parks Victoria, DELWP, Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority (GHCMA). Separate consultation sessions were also held with key stakeholders including: Friends Groups, Landcare Groups, Emergency Services, Road Authorities, Council Officers, and Councillors. Traditional Owners’ groups, the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, whose country falls within the area of the masterplan, were advised of the project, provided with an information package and invited to participate in consultation.

Following development of the plan, the draft was shared with all agencies, users groups, and stakeholders – requesting feedback via email. A presentation was made to the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation with CEO, Tony Doyle, in attendance.

The draft plan was advertised via public notices and a media release. It was made available to the public online and through our social media platforms. Community members were encouraged to participate and provide their feedback through email and/or the Southern Grampians Shire Council’s Facebook page.

Fourteen (14) responses were received from individuals and stakeholders.

Overall feedback was positive and constructive; and several congratulated Council on their leadership in developing this document. Many took the time to provide detailed responses. Most of the feedback related to the next stages of the project particularly in the detailed design phase. Feedback in relation to factual errors in the report were fact checked and corrected, where appropriate. Opinion provided on aspects of the report have been noted.

Feedback received did not change the overall content of the document but again it is noted that more work is required with land managers, traditional owners, and community in the next stage of detail design of each site.

An addendum to the masterplan has been prepared specifically addressing matters raised from submissions and how these can best be addressed in future planning of all volcanic assets.

Land Manager's Feedback

Parks Victoria were invited and participated as part of the project working group including site visits. Department of Environment Water Land and Planning (DEWLP) as land owners responded on behalf of Parks Victoria. The overall feedback received was supportive noting ongoing engagement is required in the detailed design phase when relevant stages of the master plan are ready be further developed. DEWLP noted many of the regulatory steps that will be required in order to realise the objectives of the document. DEWLP identified several areas that will require further negotiation and understanding in the detailed design stage of the project. The main themes of feedback received were on the following:

- Land Management strategies
- Further engagement with traditional owners
- Native Vegetation assessment
- Emergency Management Plan for bush fires
- Biodiversity
- Planning Permits

An attachment with detailed feedback from the community and stakeholder has been included as an appendix to this report.

Disclosure of Interests

All Council Officers involved in the development and advice provided in this Report affirm that no general or material interests need to be declared in relation to any matters in this Report.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Adopt the Greater Hamilton Volcanic Trail Masterplan.
2. Endorse the application for funding opportunities to assist in the detailed design and documentation to implement the Greater Hamilton Volcanic Trail Masterplan.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: Cr Calvano
SECONDED: Cr Brown

That Council:

- 1. Adopt the Greater Hamilton Volcanic Trail Masterplan.**
- 2. Endorse the application for funding opportunities to assist in the detailed design and documentation to implement the Greater Hamilton Volcanic Trail Masterplan.**

CARRIED

10.2 Draft Pricing Register 2022/23

Directorate: Evelyn Arnold, Director Community and Corporate Services
Author: Belinda Johnson, Manager Finance
Attachments: 3. Council Services Draft Pricing Register 2022/23

Executive Summary

The Council Services Pricing Register has been developed as part of the 2022/23 Budget process. The register is built upon a pricing policy as outlined in the Revenue & Rating Plan 2021/22 – 2024/25. This 4 year plan was initially adopted by Council on 23 June 2021 for a 1 year term and again on 8 December 2021 for a further 1 year term. The Plan sets out the principals of revenue recovery from the various services Council provides.

Discussion

The Draft Pricing Register is developed in conjunction with the 2022/23 Budget process and prepared under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2020.

Council's Revenue & Rating Plan guides the process, ensuring processes are followed to ensure prices are in accordance with the pricing principles and pricing basis for each type of charge.

Financial and Resource Implications

Council is required to implement the principles of sound financial management detailed in Section 101 of the Local Government Act 2020.

Legislation, Council Plan and Policy Impacts

The Pricing Register compliments the preparation of the 2022/23 Annual Budget and details how revenue will be raised to support the key activities and initiatives to be funded that will contribute to achieving the strategic objectives specified in the Council Plan 2021-2025

The Council Plan establishes that we will:

- Support our Community
- Develop our Regional Economy
- Maintain and Renew our Infrastructure
- Protect our Natural Environment, and
- Provide Strong Governance and Leadership

Risk Management

In developing the Pricing Register, Council considers relevant financial risks to ensure it can achieve its Council Plan objectives within a longer term prudent financial framework.

Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

N/A

Community Consultation and Communication

Feedback on The Draft Pricing Register 2022/23 will be invited from the public over a 3 week period from Saturday 12 March to Monday 4 April 2022.

Feedback will take the form of either:

- the completion of a broad survey regarding processes and content of the document or
- written commentary.

Following this period of exhibition and consultation, all feedback will be provided to Councillors as well an opportunity to hear from members of the public regarding the process or specific service areas of fees and charges.

At the conclusion of the feedback discussion/presentation stage, a final Pricing Register will be presented to Council for adoption.

Disclosure of Interests

All Council Officers involved in the development and advice provided in this Report affirm that no direct or indirect interests need to be declared in relation to any matters in this Report.

RECOMMENDATION

That feedback be requested from the community between 14 March and 4 April 2022 on the Draft Pricing Register 2022/23 and all feedback be considered by Council prior to the adoption of The Pricing Register 2022/23.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: Cr McAdam
SECONDED: Cr Robertson

That feedback be requested from the community between 14 March and 4 April 2022 on the Draft Pricing Register 2022/23 and all feedback be considered by Council prior to the adoption of The Pricing Register 2022/23.

CARRIED

10.3 Response to Aged Care Reforms – Final Report

Directorate: Evelyn Arnold, Director Community and Corporate Services
Author: Susannah Milne, Manager Community & Leisure Services.
Attachments: 4. Appendix one – Principles and Values

Executive Summary

Southern Grampians Shire Council is a long-term provider of aged and disability services for its community.

Significant Commonwealth reforms have been implemented in the past decade, the current Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) transitions to the new Support at Home program after 30 June 2023. This new program as well as changes to the funding and operating environment will result in Council being ill-equipped and not suited to continuing as a provider.

In November 2021, an in-principle decision was taken by Council that it is in the best interests of the community that Council transitions out of the service delivery function. This decision allowed the commencement of an engagement and consultation process with clients, staff, and community. Council also resolved that it would also seek to influence appointment of a values-aligned local provider to build local service system capacity and improve access and outcomes for older residents.

Council has followed through on its commitment to transparency and engagement and has invested in significant engagement with clients, staff, and community and has assured all stakeholders that it will respect all current service agreements and industrial obligations.

After consideration of feedback, it is recommended that Council proceed to confirm that it will commence an orderly and managed transition out of all funded home-based and community-based services for older residents and it will ensure that all obligations to clients, families, staff, and funding bodies are recognised and respected.

In taking this decision Council understands it has responsibilities to clients and families, long service staff and the broader community to manage the transition effectively and to anticipate and mitigate risk.

Discussion

Southern Grampians Shire Council (the Council) has been an important provider of home and community care services to assist older people and those recovering from acute care to continue to live independently in the community.

The investment and organisational commitment to provision of services has over time become emblematic of the supportive relationship between Local Government and its community. Investment in services was a means of expressing a strong commitment to many vulnerable members of the community: this included older people, people with a disability or mental illness and people at risk of homelessness.

The National Aged Care reforms

Australia's integrated national aged care program has been undergoing significant reforms over the past ten years following Commonwealth agreement to take full responsibility for aged

care in August 2011 and establishment of the National Disability Insurance Scheme at around the same time.

The key drivers for the aged care reforms included:

- the number of people in Australia requiring aged care (in some form) would increase by 350% between 2011 and 2050.
- significant system weaknesses (difficult navigation, limited services, variable quality, and no consumer choice) and inefficiencies (duplication of effort, no competition, and high-cost structures) that needed to be eradicated, and
- real concern that the cost of providing adequate care for older people in future would be unaffordable as a nation.

Attributes of the current aged care model include:

- CHSP – ‘entry level’ basic home support and community-based services – domestic assistance, personal care, shopping etc – this program provides services to 839,400 older Australians nationally.
- Home Care – four levels of ‘packaged care’ funded from basic to high care to maintain independence – services were provided to 175,000 older Australians.
- Residential Care – funded residential aged care (respite and permanent) – 310,000 older Australians nationally.

In 2019/20 the total Commonwealth aged care budget in 2020/21 was \$21.5 billion or \$5,063 per older person; this comprised Residential Care \$13.64 billion and Home Care and Home Support \$6.7 billion.

Design principles for the aged care reforms have remained very consistent since initiation, these include:

- **Consumer Choice and Control** – funding is provided directly to the clients based on assessed need to support choice and control – the client purchases services from a range of providers. This has a strong human rights and philosophical basis but introduces competition and signals the end of ‘block funding’ certainty for providers in most circumstances.
- **A Simplified Gateway** – My Aged Care is the single point of entry for all Australians to access aged care services – the 2017 Legislated Review of Aged Care has recommended merging of the RAS (Home Support) and Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACAT) (Residential Aged Care) into a streamlined national assessment service.
- **Demand Driven System** – the current ‘block funded’ and supply driven system will progressively move to a ‘demand driven’ funding system to ensure consistent services are delivered to where they are needed rather than what areas funding is allocated.
- **Competition Policy** – there is a renewed national focus on competition policy to drive economic growth, productivity, and efficiency in service delivery. It is more likely than not that future program design will be based on market and competition principles meaning that Local Government will face direct market exposure and ratepayer subsidy will be, in effect, prohibited.
- **Monopoly Market** – the current protected market arrangements are being completely dismantled to facilitate open competition and improved efficiency. Local Government is not equipped to effectively operate under market conditions. (Block funding may be

retained for some niche programs and regional and remote areas, but most of the program will likely be on a 'most efficient' multiple provider basis.)

- **Market Efficiencies** – the Commonwealth is seeking to reduce transaction costs by having fewer contracts with larger organisations who can operate across large geographic areas – it is unclear whether there will be direct contracts between the Commonwealth and individual Local Governments after June 2023.
- **Client Contribution** – the Commonwealth expects that all Australians will make a consistent contribution to care depending on their capacity and capability.

Recent reform decisions have reinforced the direction of the Commonwealth, the May 2021 Federal Budget announced a significant response to the Aged Care Royal Commission in its May budget, this included:

- \$6.5 billion for 80,000 additional aged care packages.
- \$3.9 billion for improved front line residential care.
- \$630 million improved access for vulnerable Australians.
- \$365 million for better transition to residential care.
- \$230 million to strengthen aged care quality and compliance.
- \$49.4 million for aged care training.
- \$21 million for improved sector governance.
- \$13.4 million to Primary Health Networks to drive better coordination.

The budget included an announcement of an extension of the CHSP program to 30 June 2023 to enable the design and roll-out of the new 'Support at Home' program. The original reform timing was for completion by 30 June 2018, and this has been subject of four extensions: one to 2019, then to 2020, again to 2022 and now to 2023.

The 'Support at Home' program will be a new integrated program commencing 1 July 2023 that combines CHSP, Home Care Packages, Residential Respite and Short-term Restorative Care. This integrated model will most likely be client-directed, offer a range of providers (i.e. a market-based model) and require that providers offer a suite of services across in-home, personal, nursing, and allied health.

The Regional Assessment Service that undertakes intake and assessment for the CHSP and HACCPYP programs was on a pathway to a national streamlined model by 1 July 2020. This initial plan was delayed pending the outcomes of the Aged Care Royal Commission and the Commonwealth announced in May 2021 that it will initiate a unified assessment model in 2022, and this new program will have responsibility for the new 'support at home' program from July 2023.

Key Issues

Reform Update – Support at Home

The Commonwealth released a program overview on 6 January 2022 that provides the first look at the architecture of the future Support at Home programme.

This overview confirms previous advice to Council that the proposed program will be radically different from the existing CHSP program, it will include:

- Individualised support plans for clients linked to funding that is based on assessed need.

- A new integrated assessment tool that controls access to all aged care services, from home-based to residential-care services.
- An increased reliance on technology and digital services for clients, business systems, and payment platforms.
- A service list that will better define the outputs and allow flexibility for clients.
- Client being allowed choice and control over the time and place services are provided; this assumes multiple providers being available.
- The end of block funding and transition to payment for units of service delivered – a completely different business model.
- Introduction of regulated competition between providers.

This information release from the Commonwealth confirms that Council would not be able to effectively operate under the new Support at Home program without significant investment in changes to its operating model and reduction in operating costs.

The Commonwealth has advised that all providers not accepting the offered service agreement extension will be required to transition by 30 June 2022, working with their nominated service provider.

Engagement and feedback from clients

Extensive engagement has occurred with clients and families since Council made its in-principle decision.

Almost no direct feedback has been received from clients or families, some clients have sought additional information from Community Support Workers. In these instances, the staff members have clarified using information that had been provided (FAQ and information sheet) and a small number of questions were referred to the office for follow up.

Engagement and feedback from staff and unions

Staff have been kept informed through group meetings and individual follow up sessions. A standing offer of support through Council's Employee Assistance Program has been made to all affected staff.

Enquiries and comments from staff included:

- Tax and superannuation implications of the decision – these are matters for staff to follow up individually as Council cannot provide specific advice.
- Some staff have commented that they feel confident that there will be ongoing work for them.
- Some staff have expressed that they are not confident they will be engaged by the new provider.
- Staff expressed a desire to maintain connection with existing clients. Service and client continuity will be a priority in the transition process.
- Most staff are reassured they are valued workers and would be an asset to any provider.
- Some Community Support Workers expressed concern regarding the media release following the Council decision and that this did not reflect the appropriate tone for such a major determination.

Engagement and feedback from community

Council officers conducted six public information sessions across the Shire. Attendance levels were low which likely indicates that the decision did not cause significant anxiety or distress in the community. Feedback included:

- Service continuity, more so with respect to the ability to keep their existing Community Support Workers.
- Cost impact if Council did not provide the service – could fees increase?
- Ensuring that service provision would still be provided to remote and rural homes.
- Will there be local service delivery and administration points if they have concerns/problems or need to notify of absenteeism?
- Will people from areas outside Southern Grampians have access to these new providers?
- How do we refer our neighbour who is living alone and independently into getting service provision?

Other general enquiries included:

- Call recommending a private cleaner for the job.
- A visit from an elderly client wishing to discuss the broader directions of the reforms.

Expression of Interest

Council has completed an expression of interest (EOI) process to test the local and regional market of providers. The EOI sought information from providers regarding:

- Compliance and financial viability – quality standards and financial capacity
- Service experience, capacity, and organisational form – experience in similar services and local presence
- Employment and local economic development – fair employment and commitment to local jobs
- Client related matters – protecting the rights and wellbeing of clients

This process has identified a potential values-aligned successor provider that Council will recommend to the Commonwealth.

Council has considered the outcomes from the EOI process and recommendations in a separate confidential report.

Pathway Options Available to Council

The following options are available to Council.

Option 1 – Transition out of direct service delivery and focus on broader policy

This option is recommended as being in the public interest and aligned with Council's broader obligations to the community.

Council accepts that Commonwealth policy is moving towards a consistent national integrated aged care system and that this will require more efficient providers who can deliver services across a broad spectrum of needs.

The decision to transition out of its long-term commitment to service delivery is a significant decision and not taken lightly. Council has an obligation to resource and support an effective transition for clients and staff.

Council will proactively manage an effective transition out of service delivery and ensure that all clients (and especially those clients that are vulnerable or at risk of social isolation) are provided with support.

Council accepts its moral and industrial obligations to all staff affected by this decision. Council will effectively manage the transition and simultaneously shift focus from service delivery as its primary role to investment in broader age-friendly and positive ageing policy initiatives that are aligned with its health and wellbeing obligations.

Option 2 – Resolve to remain as a service provider until 30 June 2023

If Council does not resolve on the Officer Recommendation it will retain its service agreements and continue to deliver funded services until the new Support at Home Program initiates in July 2023.

Council will therefore accept that it will transition as part of a wholesale program transition with remaining Councils in 2023.

This option is not recommended as Council will:

- have less influence and control over the mode of transition to the new program
- not be able to influence the appointment of a successor provider, and
- continue to be challenged by service and business continuity challenges.

The Commonwealth Government have advised that amended program and service agreement requirements are being implemented for the 2022/23 financial year and there will be a need for additional investment in business systems and administrative support.

Financial and Resource Implications

This report has significant financial implications for Council.

The ongoing ratepayer subsidy (estimated at between \$350,000 and \$400,000 in recent years) will not be required to deliver Commonwealth policy objectives of an integrated aged care program to support older people to live independently in the Southern Grampians community.

Council will commit resources to support an effective transition process, this is estimated to be around \$45,000 over the next 6 to 8 months.

Industrial obligations to staff in the form of redundancy payments have been incorporated into long-term financial planning.

It is recommended that Council's Audit and Risk Committee receive a review report at the end of the transition process that summarises all costs and addresses lessons learnt.

Legislation, Council Plan and Policy Impacts

Commonwealth Policy

The Commonwealth took full policy, funding, and commissioning responsibility for an integrated aged care program in August 2011 and has proceeded to implement a range of

reforms based on very consistent design principles. The Commonwealth is seeking to design and deliver a nationally consistent consumer centred, integrated, and flexible aged care system that meets the needs of all older Australians.

National Competition Policy

A constraint on Council decision making is the application of National Competition Policy to Local Government in Victoria. The Commonwealth is more than likely to apply market principles to a future Home Support service model and that National Competition Policy and Competitive Neutrality Principles would therefore apply to Local Government operations.

Competitive Neutrality Principles apply to the significant business activities of Councils and not to non-business or non-profit activities. The concept of 'significance' is defined on a case-by-case basis looking at the importance of competition in a specific market.

Given the Commonwealth is more than moving to a market-based model for delivery of future services, it is reasonable to assume that there will be a high degree of focus on ensuring the market is not distorted or disrupted by government subsidised activity.

There is a mandated 'public interest test' that must be undertaken if Council wishes to continue to provide services that are subsidised in competition with other 'not-for-profit' and 'for-profit' providers. There is no viable or significant public interest in Council continuing to be a provider in competition with more efficient and more effective non-government providers.

Industrial obligations

Council has satisfied its industrial obligations to staff to ensure notification of change and consultation and engagement on significant decisions that impact the workplace.

This decision to exit the program will trigger redundancy provisions of the Enterprise Agreement, exploration of redeployment opportunities and payment of retrenchment packages for affected staff.

An estimate of the total transition cost has been provided to Council in a confidential report.

Human Rights

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

Probity and Confidentiality

The EOI process has been governed by a probity auditor and will meet the probity and confidentiality requirements of the Commonwealth. This will be an important decision criterion in any 'without prejudice' recommendation to be made to the Commonwealth by Southern Grampians Shire.

Council Plan

The Council Plan 2021-2025 provides as follows:

1. Support our community

Council's transition from being a provider of home support services will potentially strengthen its capacity to invest in positive ageing and health and wellbeing initiatives for older citizens.

Council will continue to play a strong advocacy role to ensure older residents have access to quality aged care services and in not being a provider will be able to take a more active planning and coordination role.

Council will have a future focus on adaptation of universal services (recreation, leisure, libraries, open space etc) to meet the needs of older citizens and people with a disability.

Council will take a strengths-based approach to managing transitions and seek to empower clients, families, and staff in their engagement with the implementation of the decision.

2. Grow our regional economy

It is in the interests of the Commonwealth and Southern Grampians Shire to have a diverse range of home support and aged care providers servicing regional needs. The aged care system is much larger than home support services and future providers can bring additional benefits and investment.

Future providers will deliver across aged care planning regions (8 to 10 LGAs) and deliver services to meet entry-level to complex care needs.

3. Maintain and renew our infrastructure

Council will focus on ensuring future infrastructure meets the needs of older people and people with a disability in its community.

4. Protect our natural environment

There are no significant environmental implications arising from this report.

5. Provide strong governance and leadership

Under the former HACC program Council had a strong history in delivery of integrated services to its community.

Government reforms, creation of the NDIS and future Support at Home program have challenged this role and Council must now plan for its future policy objectives and potential role.

The Local Government Act 2020 includes service performance principles that mandate that Council services must be responsive to changing needs and emerging trends. This decision is reflective of the radically changed policy environment, anticipates the future design of the Support at Home, and outlines a course of action that will be in the best interests of the community.

Risk Management

A comprehensive risk and community impact analysis has been completed for Southern Grampians Shire Council; the high-level risks associated with this decision were incorporated into the previous report to Council.

No additional risks have been identified but in making this decision, Council is committed to ensuring that transition related risks are identified on an ongoing basis and addressed in a timely and responsive manner.

Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

There are no environmental sustainability implications associated with this report.

Community Consultation and Communication

Significant consultation with the Community has identified that supporting our ageing population is an important priority for the Southern Grampians community. This has been outlined earlier in the report.

Council officers have engaged with Commonwealth and Victorian government agencies to provide notice and advice of the decision-making process.

Council by taking this confirming decision will trigger a comprehensive communications and consultation exercise; this will include:

- Clients and families will be informed of Council's decision will be provided with information and a priority contact number to raise any questions or concerns during the process.
- A proactive media engagement strategy to explain the rationale for Council's decision, the transition process, and long-term benefits for the community.
- Staff and union, acting as the industrial representatives of staff will be advised of the determination on this matter. A staff working group will be established to ensure clear communication throughout the transition process.
- Council Officers will host an information and 'Q & A' session for the general community following Council determination on this matter.
- A comprehensive 'Frequently Asked Questions' document will be updated and made available via Council's website and customer service centres.

Disclosure of Interests

All Council Officers involved in the development and advice provided in this Report affirm that no general or material interests need to be declared in relation to any matters in this Report.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- (a) Notes that since 2011 the Commonwealth has progressed implementation of a consistent and integrated national aged care service system based on increased consumer choice and control and competition between providers to drive quality improvements and service efficiencies with a final transition date of 1 July 2023.
- (b) Accepts that due to inherent service cost, financial constraints, competition policy, and other structural challenges, Southern Grampians Shire Council along with many other Victorian councils will not be able to play a meaningful future role in service delivery.
- (c) Confirms that it will not accept the service agreement extension for the 2022/23 year and transition out of direct service delivery roles in the following programs:
 - (i) All funded Commonwealth Home Support Programme services
 - i. Domestic Assistance
 - ii. Personal Care
 - iii. Flexible Respite

- iv. Social Support – Individual
 - v. Home Maintenance and Modifications
 - vi. Delivered Meals
 - vii. Sector Support & Development
- (ii) All HACC-PYP funded services
- i. Domestic Assistance
 - ii. Personal Care
 - iii. Property Maintenance
 - iv. Social Support Group
 - v. Volunteer Coordination
- (d) Commits to working with the Commonwealth and Victorian governments to negotiate timing and transition processes that will protect the interests of clients, their families, much valued staff, and the broader community.
- (e) Notes that under its service agreements all processes and matters related to the transition process (i.e., names of future providers) will remain confidential until the Commonwealth and Victorian governments provide consent for release of information.
- (f) Reaffirms that in taking this decision it will continue to play an active role in ensuring its community will receive high-quality aged care services and will advocate for the needs of vulnerable members of the community.
- (g) Commits to the values and principles outlined in Attachment - Appendix A of the report to underpin and support decision making through the transition process.
- (h) Notes that Council has undertaken an expression of interest process and has identified values-aligned potential a successor provider that it will recommend to the Commonwealth on a without-prejudice basis.
- (i) Notes that the appointment of a successor provider is the responsibility of the Commonwealth and Council is bound to confidentiality under its service agreement and cannot release any information about the appointment and transition process.
- (j) Realigns its policy direction towards future investment in age-friendly or positive-ageing initiatives and ensuring that Council's universal services and facilities are designed to meet the needs of a growing population of older residents. Further policy work and recommended directions will be referred to the 2022/23 budget process for review and approval.
- (k) Notes that Council's policy objective of ensuring that older adults seeking to live independently in the community will be provided with quality home support services will not be compromised by this decision. Services will continue to be provided and Council will be able to reinvest its current ratepayer subsidy into alternative strategic priorities.
- (l) Provides delegated authority to the Chief Executive Officer, or their nominee, to undertake or commission all tasks and activities related to the implementation of this council decision.

- (m) Appoints the Mayor and CEO as spokespersons for all matters related to the Home Support Transition process.
- (n) Approves immediate notification of its final decision to, and appropriate consultation with:
 - (i) Clients and families
 - (ii) Staff and union representatives
 - (iii) Media and other communications
 - (iv) Broader community

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: Cr Robertson
SECONDED: Cr Henry

That Council:

- (a) Notes that since 2011 the Commonwealth has progressed implementation of a consistent and integrated national aged care service system based on increased consumer choice and control and competition between providers to drive quality improvements and service efficiencies with a final transition date of 1 July 2023.
- (b) Accepts that due to inherent service cost, financial constraints, competition policy, and other structural challenges, Southern Grampians Shire Council along with many other Victorian councils will not be able to play a meaningful future role in service delivery.
- (c) Confirms that it will not accept the service agreement extension for the 2022/23 year and transition out of direct service delivery roles in the following programs:
 - (i) All funded Commonwealth Home Support Programme services
 - i. Domestic Assistance
 - ii. Personal Care
 - iii. Flexible Respite
 - iv. Social Support – Individual
 - v. Home Maintenance and Modifications
 - vi. Delivered Meals
 - vii. Sector Support & Development
 - (ii) All HACC-PYP funded services
 - i. Domestic Assistance
 - ii. Personal Care
 - iii. Property Maintenance
 - iv. Social Support Group

v. Volunteer Coordination

- (d) Commits to working with the Commonwealth and Victorian governments to negotiate timing and transition processes that will protect the interests of clients, their families, much valued staff, and the broader community.**
- (e) Notes that under its service agreements all processes and matters related to the transition process (i.e., names of future providers) will remain confidential until the Commonwealth and Victorian governments provide consent for release of information.**
- (f) Reaffirms that in taking this decision it will continue to play an active role in ensuring its community will receive high-quality aged care services and will advocate for the needs of vulnerable members of the community.**
- (g) Commits to the values and principles outlined in Attachment - Appendix A of the report to underpin and support decision making through the transition process.**
- (h) Notes that Council has undertaken an expression of interest process and has identified values-aligned potential a successor provider that it will recommend to the Commonwealth on a without-prejudice basis.**
- (i) Notes that the appointment of a successor provider is the responsibility of the Commonwealth and Council is bound to confidentiality under its service agreement and cannot release any information about the appointment and transition process.**
- (j) Realigns its policy direction towards future investment in age-friendly or positive-ageing initiatives and ensuring that Council's universal services and facilities are designed to meet the needs of a growing population of older residents. Further policy work and recommended directions will be referred to the 2022/23 budget process for review and approval.**
- (k) Notes that Council's policy objective of ensuring that older adults seeking to live independently in the community will be provided with quality home support services will not be compromised by this decision. Services will continue to be provided and Council will be able to reinvest its current ratepayer subsidy into alternative strategic priorities.**
- (l) Provides delegated authority to the Chief Executive Officer, or their nominee, to undertake or commission all tasks and activities related to the implementation of this council decision.**
- (m) Appoints the Mayor and CEO as spokespersons for all matters related to the Home Support Transition process.**
- (n) Approves immediate notification of its final decision to, and appropriate consultation with:**
 - (i) Clients and families**
 - (ii) Staff and union representatives**
 - (iii) Media and other communications**
 - (iv) Broader community**

CARRIED

10.4 MAV WorkCare Member Financial Liability

Directorate: Evelyn Arnold, Director Community and Corporate Services
Author: Evelyn Arnold, Director Community and Corporate Services
Attachments: None

Executive Summary

To inform Council of the potential financial impact by Work Safe Victoria, following its decision not to renew the licence of the Municipal Association of Victoria's (MAV) WorkCare Scheme.

Discussion

The MAV WorkCare Scheme (the Scheme) was Victoria's only Local Government workers' compensation self-insurance scheme; at its peak, it had 31 members.

Southern Grampians Shire Council was a member of the Scheme from 2017 until it ceased operations on 30 June 2021. The decision to cease the operation of MAV WorkCare followed WorkSafe Victoria's refusal of the MAV's application for renewal of approval as a self-insurer, despite a strong performance.

With the Scheme having now come to an end, its Council members and their communities - the majority of whom are regional and rural Councils - will be required to absorb significant financial cost as required by WorkSafe. It is an ongoing financial burden that will be felt by members potentially until the latter half of 2027.

As of 30 June 2021, WorkSafe's valuation estimated the scheme members' unpaid claims at \$74 million, of which \$59 million is funded by existing assets held by MAV.

In line with advice from the MAV's actuary, and as previously advised to members, the shortfall in funding will be allocated between members based on their share of the unpaid claims' costs.

The allocation methodology will use the estimates of unpaid, open claims ("case estimates") and member premiums to estimate each member's share of the financial shortfall. The fact sheet appended to this document sets out in more detail the methodology used to calculate each member's share.

The assessed contribution of this organisation is \$797,800 of which \$718,800 is due immediately.

Financial and Resource Implications

This amount is unexpected and therefore unbudgeted. This payment could be covered from the provision being made to cover any defined benefits superannuation obligations.

Legislation, Council Plan and Policy Impacts

When Council joined the Scheme they entered into a contract which provided for additional payments to cover Scheme liabilities.

Risk Management

The outstanding claims liabilities has significantly increased as a consequence of the cessation of the Scheme and the related funding gap has escalated materially. Among the reasons for the higher claims' liabilities include:

- The impairment of the scheme's reinsurance assets due to WorkSafe not recognising these contracts despite purchasing this reinsurance being a condition of the self-insurance licence
- A higher cost of claims management within the WorkSafe Victoria system
- Significant costs associated with the closure and transition of the scheme to a ceased self-insurer

Obligations now exist for the MAV as a ceased self-insurer and the 31 members of the scheme until June 2027. These obligations are significant and will impose significant obligations and risks to the MAV and the Scheme's constituent members. These risks are particularly acute as WorkSafe has now assumed control of the outstanding claims.

The Scheme is constituted as a mutual which is formalised via a Participation Agreement between the MAV and each of its members. A mutual is a mechanism to operate collaboratively and share risk to reduce the overall harm to participants' workers and ultimately reduce costs.

As part of this structure, there existed a range of obligations on each participant, the most relevant of which is that any deficiency in funding is required to be paid by those members.

The WorkSafe Victoria obligations are set out in the Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act, which requires:

- Valuations of claims liabilities to occur annually by the WorkSafe appointed actuary.
- Any increase in the value of claims at the three and six-year period will be funded by the ceased self-insurer, which in this case is MAV
- Any reduction in the value of claims at the three and six-year period will be refunded to the ceased self-insurer by WorkSafe Victoria
- The ceased self-insurer is required to hold a bank guarantee of 50 per cent of the outstanding claims liabilities at all times until June 2027
- The ceased self-insurer is required to meet the cost of the actuarial review and audits for this six-year liability period.

The MAV has held briefing sessions for member councils since March 2021 to inform Council of the winddown of MAV WorkCare and forecast potential financial implications.

The MAV has advocated for a range of solutions to reduce the financial consequence on Councils. Among genuine solutions it had pursued - through meetings and correspondence with Work Safe Victoria, the Victorian Government and the State Opposition - to mitigate the financial consequences for members are:

- Calling on WorkSafe to agree to recognise the MAV's re-insurance in the transfer of scheme assets;
- Deferral or waiver of the bank guarantee

- Recognition of WorkSafe’s underfunding of the Scheme at its commencement, and
- Recognition of WorkSafe’s investment income that it will earn on the returned scheme assets.

As a result of consultation with Scheme members, the MAV has ceased its advocacy efforts and has requested more modest forms such as recognising the high credit rating of participating members by seeking a waiver of the bank guarantee requirement, or alternatively for the guarantee to be provided by the Treasury Corporation of Victoria and for an extension to the payment terms.

To date, there has been little acknowledgement of the significance of the cost to Councils despite previous WorkSafe Victoria public concerns about the financial consequence to scheme members in its consideration of the licence.

WorkSafe has determined and is invoicing the liabilities to the MAV. Full payment was due to WorkSafe Victoria on 12 November 2021. The initial payment of \$59 million was to be made by the MAV on 11 October 2021.

MAV has invoiced all members by 1 October 2021 and subsequently, issued invoices to fund members on 4 October 2021. Invoices were to be paid to the MAV by 31 October 2021.

In line with advice from the MAV’s actuary, the shortfall in funding has been allocated between members based on their share of the unpaid claims’ costs. Given that not all claims’ costs are known as yet, the allocation methodology will use the estimates of unpaid, open claims (“case estimates”) and member premiums to estimate each member’s share of the financial shortfall.

Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

There are no Environmental or Sustainability considerations

Community Consultation and Communication

This report did not require community consultation.

Disclosure of Interests

All Council Officers involved in the development and advice provided in this Report affirm that no general or material interests need to be declared in relation to any matters in this Report.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolves to approve the payment of \$797,800 to MAV Workcare from the Defined Benefit Superannuation Investment Account in the 2021/22 financial year.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: Cr Henry
SECONDED: Cr Brown

That Council resolves to approve the payment of \$797,800 to MAV Workcare from the Defined Benefit Superannuation Investment Account in the 2021/22 financial year.

CARRIED

10.5 Proposed Sale of Penshurst Maternal Child Health Building

Directorate: Marg Scanlon, Director Infrastructure
Author: John Finnerty, Manager Assets
Attachments: None

Executive Summary

At the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 10 November 2021, Council resolved to give public notice of Council's intention to sell the former Penshurst Maternal Child Health building located at 98 Watton Street, Penshurst under s114(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020.

Council resolved to also undertake a community engagement process in accordance with its community engagement policy in accordance with s114(2)(b) of the Local Government Act 2020. A public submission period of not less than 28 days on the proposed sale was also provided for in the public notice.

At the close of the public submission period on Monday 31 January 2022, 1 written submission had been received.

It is recommended that:

1. Having given public notice of its intention to sell the former Penshurst Maternal Child Health building located at 98 Watton Street, Penshurst and having received a submission, Council receives and acknowledges the submission received at the close of the public submission period;
2. Council resolves to sell 98 Watton Street, Penshurst; and
3. Council authorises the Chief Executive Officer to appoint local estate agent(s) to sell 98 Watton Street, Penshurst and to execute all the paperwork necessary for the sale and transfer of this block.

Discussion

The former Penshurst Maternal Child Health Centre comprises two titles (Refer Image 1 below), located to the east on the corner of Watton and Martin Streets is the Penshurst Memorial Hall. The Volcanoes Discovery Centre is located to the north (indicated with yellow hashed lines in Image 1 below).

Lot 1 is the lot proposed for sale and Lot 2 will be retained for continued access for the Volcanoes Discovery Centre.



Image 1: Peshurst Maternal Child Health Centre

In 2005, Council considered a proposal to sell this property, however subsequent advice confirmed that the septic system servicing the site is located on adjacent Council owned land. A tender process to lease the building was conducted at the time, however no submissions were received. Council subsequently considered an enquiry from Advance Peshurst at the June 2008 Briefing Session, for the possible use of the building by the Peshurst Newsletter Committee. The proposal put forward by Advance Peshurst indicated the possibility of other groups associated with Advance Peshurst using the building.

Council subsequently entered into an agreement with Advance Peshurst for an initial period of 12 months commencing on 1 October 2008. Council agreed to be responsible for the municipal rates and charges, water charges and any other taxes, or statutory charges levied on the property. Council also insured the building and maintained the outside surrounds and external building structure. Advance Peshurst was required to keep and maintain the interior of the premises in a clean and tidy condition at all times and pay the related costs. Advance Peshurst now known as Peshurst Progress Association Inc has been leasing the former Peshurst Maternal Child Health building since then, until September 2020 when the lease was cancelled by the tenant.

In mid-2020, Council received enquiries from both the Peshurst Lions Club and Peshurst RSL requesting the option to lease the building however both groups withdrew their interest shortly after. A small number of general enquiries have also been received from the public regarding leasing the building for various commercial purposes. Council Officers have made it known to these interested parties that the building is dilapidated and does not meet the required standards to operate as a commercial business or public facility. Council has also received interest to purchase this building in its current condition.

Services to the building have been inspected and it is advised that they are adequately independent of the neighbouring buildings and would not prevent the sale process.

The 98 Watton Street (Lot 1) property is approximately 393sqm and is located in the Township Zone according to the Southern Grampians Planning Scheme.

The proposed process to complete the sale of this property is as outlined below:

- Council to consider the written submission received after the close of the community engagement process.
- Council to appoint a local estate agent(s) to sell the 98 Watton Street Penhurst.
- The Chief Executive Officer to execute all paperwork necessary for the sale and transfer of this vacant block.

Financial and Resource Implications

Property maintenance costs to Council have been minimal as these relate to routine mowing. There are no building maintenance costs as all services are disconnected and no works have been undertaken on this building since 2020. There is no income as the property is vacant.

Council will meet the costs associated with the sale of this block including appointment of a local estate agent(s), advertising, legal, and conveyancing, however, these would be offset by the proceeds from the sale.

Legislation, Council Plan and Policy Impacts

The Maternal Child Health Centre services have not been provided from this property since 1996, a Hamilton-based Maternal Child Health nurse regularly visits Penhurst clients.

The Volcanoes Discovery Centre programs and activities are managed well within their current facility and immediate surrounds and there is no demonstrated need for additional space. Continued access to the lots directly behind the Volcanoes Discovery Centre within the 98 Watton Street, Penhurst title is required.

There are no identified strategic needs within Council strategies or plans that support retention and/or redevelopment of 98 Watton Street, Penhurst.

Under Section 114 of the Local Government Act 2020, Council advertised and gave public notice of its intention to sell 98 Watton Street, Penhurst for a minimum of 28 days by a Notice published in the Hamilton Spectator and on Council's website on Saturday 11 December 2021 and the Mt Rouse News & Views on Wednesday 15 December 2021. A written submission was received from the public (Attachment 1). Council has also obtained a valuation for 98 Watton Street, Penhurst.

Council's Asset Disposal Policy is pertinent to this item.

Risk Management

Retaining this building in its current form poses a risk due to the opportunity for vandalism and damage.

Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

98 Watton Street, Penshurst is a redundant Council building. Sale of this property enables the opportunity for purchase or development of the site.

Community Consultation and Communication

Under Section 114 of the Local Government Act 2020, Council undertook a community engagement process by giving public notice of its intention to sell 98 Watton Street, Penshurst for a minimum of 28 days by a Notice published in the Hamilton Spectator, Mt Rouse News & Views, and on Council's website.

A public submission period of not less than 28 days on the proposed sale was also provided for in the public notice with one submission received. This submission supported the sale citing various benefits including economic and aesthetic to both the Council and the local community. The submitter enquired if the revenue from the sale would be redirected to undertake improvements to the local Penshurst community. While the proceeds from the sale will be returned to Councils' consolidated revenue, Council is undertaking the Community Infrastructure Plan and Small Towns Strategy in 2022 which, through community engagement, will determine priority community infrastructure needs. This strategic planning will guide Council's future long-term capital program and opportunities for external funding and partnerships.

The Penshurst Volcanoes Discovery Centre has a master plan that was informed by community consultation, the Master plan does not identify any future use of the site.

Contact has been made with the president of the Penshurst Progress Association as well as the Penshurst Hall Committee and neither group has any objection to the sale of the former Penshurst Maternal Child Health Property.

Disclosure of Interests

All Council Officers involved in the development and advice provided in this Report affirm that no general or material interests need to be declared in relation to any matters in this Report.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. Having given public notice of its intention to sell the 98 Watton Street, Penshurst and having received a written submission, Council receives and acknowledges the submission at the close of the public submission period;
2. Council resolves to sell 98 Watton Street, Penshurst; and
3. Council authorises the Chief Executive Officer to appoint local estate agent(s) to sell 98 Watton Street, Penshurst and to execute all the paperwork necessary for the sale and transfer of this block.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: Cr Calvano
SECONDED: Cr Henry

That:

- 1. Having given public notice of its intention to sell the 98 Watton Street, Penshurst and having received a written submission, Council receives and acknowledges the submission at the close of the public submission period;**
- 2. Council resolves to sell 98 Watton Street, Penshurst; and**
- 3. Council authorises the Chief Executive Officer to appoint local estate agent(s) to sell 98 Watton Street, Penshurst and to execute all the paperwork necessary for the sale and transfer of this block.**

CARRIED

10.6 Annual Plan Quarterly Report

Directorate: Evelyn Arnold, Director Community and Corporate Services
Author: Tahlia Homes – Acting Manager Organisational Development
Attachments: 5. Action and Task Progress Report 1 October – 31 December 2021

Executive Summary

The Action and Task Progress Report for the period 1 October to 31 December 2021 has been prepared to provide information regarding the performance of the organisation against the Annual Plan.

Discussion

The Annual Plan is developed each year to assist in the delivery of the Council Plan objectives and to demonstrate to the community the key projects to be delivered that year. The Annual Plan sets out the specific actions and includes a detailed list of Council's activities and initiatives for the upcoming financial year. These initiatives are projects that are undertaken over and above normal service delivery and are intended to attain important outcomes for Council and the community.

Reports on the progress of the Annual Plan are reported to Council quarterly. This allows Council to receive timely, relevant, and measurable information about how the organisation is performing. This, in turn, allows Council an opportunity to raise concerns about performance in a timely manner. The Annual Plan reporting will also help formulate the Annual Report and support the reporting against the Council Plan each year.

There are currently 54 actions reported on from the Annual Plan and Council Plan. Of these 54 actions:

- 43 actions (80%) are on track - at least 90% of the target achieved;
- 1 actions (2%) require monitoring –between 70% and 90% of the target achieved;
- 7 actions (12%) are off track – less than 70% of target achieved; and
- 3 actions (6%) have no target set

Details about the specific performance of the Annual Plan actions is detailed in the attached Action and Task Progress Report.

Legislation, Council Plan and Policy Impacts

Council is required to adopt a Council Plan in accordance with section 90 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and subsequently determine whether any adjustments are required.

This Plan is supported by the development of an Annual Plan which details the actions that will be undertaken to achieve the strategic objectives in the Council Plan.

Reporting on the Annual Plan is to be presented to Council quarterly so that Council can regularly monitor the performance of the organisation.

Disclosure of Interests

All Council Officers involved in the development and advice provided in this Report affirm that no general or material interests need to be declared in relation to any matters in this Report.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive the Action and Task Progress Report for 1 October – 31 December 2021.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: Cr McAdam
SECONDED: Cr Robertson

That Council receive the Action and Task Progress Report for 1 October – 31 December 2021.

CARRIED

10.7 Small Electricity Contract

Directorate: Marg Scanlon, Director Infrastructure
Author: Jason Cay, Financial Sustainability Coordinator
Attachments: None

Executive Summary

Council is currently contracted with ERM Power for small electricity and some minor lighting connections (93 meters). These contracts expire at 30 June 2022 and 30 June 2023 respectively.

Council has the opportunity to join the VECO (Victorian Energy Collaboration), an alliance of 46 Councils for purchase of 100% renewable electricity for our small market connections.

Due to the lead time required to join electricity contracts we need to review this contract prior to expiry for both the 2022 and 2023 years.

Discussion

Council already procures 100% renewable electricity for its large market meters including 111 Brown St, Hamilton Indoor Leisure and Aquatic Centre and most public lighting. We now have the opportunity to enter into a contract for all the small market connections (93 meters).

The VECO option would involve joining an alliance with 46 Councils who are directly procuring an aggregated electricity contract with a retailer.

The VECO alliance with the retailer involves direct procurement of renewable electricity from two regional windfarms - the Dundonnell Wind Farm (23kms north east of Mortlake in the Moyne Shire) and one in Yarriambiak Shire.

Financial and Resource Implications

Pricing comparison of the VECO offering shows potential savings of \$46K per year over the current contract of annual costs of \$210,979 per annum. This would be an estimated annual cost of \$164,979 per annum plus an annual \$850 membership fee. The VECO contract expires on 30 June 2030. The total estimated costs over the contract life will be \$1,154,854.

Legislation, Council Plan and Policy Impacts

Utilising collaborative contracts has been granted Ministerial Approval under section 186 of the Local Government Act 2020. VECO has undertaken a publicly advertised competitive tender process which also meets the requirements of Council's Procurement Policy.

Risk Management

As this is a contract for the provision of essential services, prudent financial and risk management supports utilising the purchasing power and expertise of VECO. Utilising renewable energy will significantly decrease our carbon emissions without diminishing our commitment to reduce Council's responsibility to focus on improving our energy efficiency.

Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

Will reduce our emissions by over 700 tonnes CO₂-e/year

Community Consultation and Communication

Discussion with VECO and modelled comparison pricing of our current electricity contract versus the VECO offering.

Contacted three neighboring Councils to consult on their experiences with the VECO contract. Feedback was positive on their experiences.

Disclosure of Interests

All Council Officers involved in the development and advice provided in this Report affirm that no general or material interests need to be declared in relation to any matters in this Report.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council enters into a contract via VECO for electricity supply for our small market connections once the current contract arrangements expire in 2022 and 2023.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: Cr Brown
SECONDED: Cr Henry

That Council enters into a contract via VECO for electricity supply for our small market connections once the current contract arrangements expire in 2022 and 2023.

CARRIED

10.8 2021/2022 Capital Works Program Quarterly Report

Directorate: Marg Scanlon, Director Infrastructure
Author: Marg Scanlon, Director Infrastructure
Attachments: 6. Capital Works Program Half-Year Project Status Update

Executive Summary

Delivery of the 2021/2022 Capital Works Program is progressing with twenty-two of the total seventy-one projects either completed or under construction. This half-year report is for the period July-December 2021 and provides a status overview of each project or works program and the forthcoming activities which contribute to the progression of the current capital works program.

It is recommended that Council receive and note this 2021/2022 Capital Works Program half-year status report. The content of this report will be used for Council's standard publications including social media.

Discussion

Of the total program there are seventy-one capital projects, one plant/fleet management program which comprises purchasing of various light and heavy vehicle purchases and six civil works programs. Appendix one of this report provides details on the current status of projects and programs in summary;

Of the seventy Capital Works Projects

26 or 36% are in the planning and design phase

17 or 24% are in the procurement phase

17 or 24% are under construction or have commenced

6 or 9% are complete

3 or 4% are not yet commenced

2 or 3% are deferred (Pedrina Park Soccer Drainage and Recreation and Leisure Strategy Implementation)

Plant/Fleet Management:

50% Complete

25% is within the assessment and planning phase

25% within the procurement phase

Six Works Programs equating to \$6.546M of the capital program:

5 or 7% are complete

9 or 12% are commenced

57 or 81% are not yet commenced but scheduled for construction over March and April 2022.

Financial and Resource Implications

The total 2021/2022 Capital Works Program budget is \$26,340,725 which includes carry-over from 2020/2021 of \$7,071,592. The carry-over allocations apply to the following projects;

- Lake Hamilton Development*
- Cox Street Revitalisation (Design, construct and landscaping) *
- Hamilton Structure Plan Implementation*
- Hamilton Gateways *
- Recreation Strategy Implementation

- Hamilton CBD Design Stage 3 *
- Hamilton Waste Transfer Shed
- Hamilton Dam Wall Reinstatement
- Melville Oval Facilities Upgrade *
- Dunkeld Visitor Information Hub
- Hamilton Industrial Land Development
- Henty Highway and South Boundary Road Intersection Upgrade

* Indicates those projects which have been funded across multiple years.

The 2021/2022 Capital Works Funding Program includes \$988,500 confirmed external funding secured through state and federal government.

Legislation, Council Plan and Policy Impacts

The majority of the projects included in the 2021/2022 Capital Works Program derive from various strategic plans and legislative requirements specifically relating to asset and property management and protection. Some of the projects are initiatives identified by the Southern Grampians community and submitted to Council through the annual budget engagement process.

Within the 2021/2022 Capital Works Program several projects include works within the arterial road reserve or on roads managed by the Department of Transport (DoT). These projects include various design requirements and works approvals as specified by DoT. Specific examples include the Cox Street Redevelopment, Henty Highway and South Boundary Road Intersection Upgrades and the Hamilton Regional Livestock Exchange Underpass. Council engages with DoT on a regular basis through project working groups and other forums to ensure works requirements and capital delivery are consistent with legislative and agency policy requirements.

Risk Management

Specific risk assessments are undertaken for each project within the capital program through both the planning and implementation stages. As a part of the overall risk mitigation across Council's capital program, the development of a Project Management Office is underway. This operational change will result in improvements to the planning, development and implementation of the capital works program.

Currently four contracts have been awarded, two of which are Southern Grampians based contractors which equates to approximately \$525K within the program. Twenty projects are currently progressing through the procurement phase.

A key risk identified within the 2021/2022 Capital Works Program includes the capacity to plan and deliver some projects within one financial year. Typically works on state government managed land or assets require approvals for both the works designs and implementation. For example, within the 2021/2022 Capital Works Program there are approximately nine projects that require multiple approvals from the Department of Transport. Time needs to be scheduled into the project program to allow for these approvals including turnaround time on any required design changes. Council Officers are engaging with the Department of Transport to review and consider internal processes and staff development specifically in relation to Road Management requirements. It is preferred that project plans, designs and, where relevant, approvals are completed prior to the funded year of capital delivery. This removes the likelihood of project delays, unnecessary risks and associated costs.

Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

Typically, environmental and sustainability considerations are included in the planning and design phases of the individual projects. Significant considerations include native vegetation management, material reuse and recycle opportunities, legislative requirements such as those contained within the Environmental Protection Act and the Road Management Act.

Community Consultation and Communication

The purpose of this report is to provide the Southern Grampians community and Council with an update on the progress of the 2021/2022 Capital Works Program which represents, as a minimum, \$26M investment into the Southern Grampians region.

It is proposed that similar reports will be tabled with Council quarterly and that a version of the project updates provided to the community on a monthly basis through the Council website and standard communication methods including social media. An example of a project page update is the Cox Street Revitalisation Project which can be accessed via Council's website https://www.sthgrampians.vic.gov.au/Page/Page.aspx?Page_Id=2907

A dedicated email address has been established for the Southern Grampians Shire Project Management Office to enable direct communication, enquiries and reports to respective project managers. Community members and key stakeholders are encouraged to engage with Council's Project Management Team to address any project enquiries via this email; projects@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au

Disclosure of Interests

All Council Officers involved in the development and advice provided in this Report affirm that no general or material interests need to be declared in relation to any matters in this Report.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the 2021/2022 Capital Works Program update for the period July – December 2021.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: Cr Brown
SECONDED: Cr McAdam

That Council receive and note the 2021/2022 Capital Works Program update for the period July – December 2021.

CARRIED

10.9 Light Fleet Purchases Utility Vehicles

Directorate: Marg Scanlon, Director Infrastructure
Author: Brett Holmes, Manager Works
Attachments: None

Executive Summary

The Southern Grampians Shire Council's 2021/2022 Light Fleet Capital Replacement program is an integral part of ensuring an effective and efficient service delivery to renew Council's ageing assets parallel to Council's Long Term Financial Plan.

Council's Light Fleet comprises various items that are integral to our road construction and maintenance works programs throughout the Shire.

Each year a selection of light fleet is identified to be replaced and where possible these are sourced through the local dealer network and purchased via the Victorian State Government Purchase Contract commonly known as VicFleet and align with Council's Procurement Policy.

Discussion

Throughout the year, Council procures light fleet via the Victorian State Government Purchase Contract commonly known as VicFleet which aligns with Council's Procurement Policy.

Current motor vehicle shortages and shipping delays has caused supply shortage across Australia and subsequently Council's Light Fleet purchasing has adjusted to ensure supply is available for Council to continue with its replacement program.

Financial and Resource Implications

Council resolved and adopted the 2021/2022 Light Fleet Replacement Works Programs which includes the purchase of nine utilities which have been individually acquired through local vendors. These purchases equate to \$429,739.99 of the total Light Fleet Replacement Program

Legislation, Council Plan and Policy Impacts

Council's procurement of Light Fleet is consistent with the 2017-2021 Council Plan, specifically Council's objective to Plan for our Built Environment and Infrastructure.

Risk Management

All vehicles to be delivered will be compliant with all Vic Roads and other associated agency requirements. Once commissioned, Council's pre-start check process is part of the plant daily requirements.

Council monitors any vehicle factory recalls or warranty issues to mitigate the risk of failures.

Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

One of the key aspects of the light fleet selection is environmental and sustainability considerations combined with being fit for purpose in the field. Council is currently undertaking a review of its fleet management to ascertain efficiencies including environmental and sustainable options.

Community Consultation and Communication

Council's Light Fleet Program is advertised via Public notice managed by state government in accordance with section 186 of the Local Government Act 1989 and the tender process complied with Council's Procurement Policy.

Tenderers will be notified by the Procurement Officer of the decision made by Council at its meeting on 9 March 2022

Disclosure of Interests

All Council Officers involved in the development and advice provided in this Report affirm that no general or material interests need to be declared in relation to any matters in this Report.

The evaluation panel affirm that no direct or indirect interests need to be declared in relation to any matters in this Report:

Allan Wishart, Logistics Coordinator
Brett Holmes, Manager Works

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. The purchase of the 9 utilities received from Taylor Motors Hamilton for the accumulative GST price of \$429,739.99 be accepted.
2. The purchasing documents be signed when prepared.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: Cr Robertson
SECONDED: Cr McAdam

That:

1. The purchase of the 9 utilities received from Taylor Motors Hamilton for the accumulative GST price of \$429,739.99 be accepted.
2. The purchasing documents be signed when prepared.

CARRIED

10.10 Audit and Risk Committee - Minutes

Directorate: Evelyn Arnold, Director Community and Corporate Services
Author: Evelyn Arnold, Director Community and Corporate Services
Attachments: 7. Minutes – 15 February 2022

Executive Summary

The Minutes from the February meeting as endorsed by the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) are presented to Council for adoption.

Discussion

The Audit and Risk Committee, as an Advisory Committee of Council, fulfils both a statutory and consultative function. It provides feedback, advice and direction to Council. The intention is not to focus on financial risk which is adequately addressed by the external auditors, but rather to review internal processes in line with the culture of continuous improvement.

Legislation, Council Plan and Policy Impacts

The Local Government Act 2020 (Section 53).

Disclosure of Interests

All Council Officers involved in the development and advice provided in this Report affirm that no direct or indirect interests need to be declared in relation to any matters in this Report.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes for the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 15 February 2022 be noted.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: Cr Henry
SECONDED: Cr Robertson

That the Minutes for the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 15 February 2022 be noted.

CARRIED

11. Notices of Motion

There were no Notices of Motion listed on tonight's agenda.

12. Delegated Reports

Reports on external Committees and Representative Bodies for which Councillors have been appointed as a representative by Council.

12.1 HAMILTON REGIONAL LIVESTOCK COMMITTEE

Cr Brown and Cr McAdam reported on their attendance at the Hamilton Regional Livestock Committee Meeting.

12.2 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

Cr Henry and Cr Robertson reported on their attendance at the Audit and Risk Committee on the 15 February 2022.

12.3 GREAT SOUTH COAST GROUP

Cr Colliton reported on his attendance at the South West Alliance meetings held on the 10 February and on the 16 February.

13. Mayors and Councillors Reports

Address from the Mayor and Councillors in relation to matters of civic leadership and community representation, including acknowledgement of community groups and individuals, information arising from internal Committees, advocacy on behalf of constituents and other topics of significance.

14. Confidential Matters

RECOMMENDATION

That the following items be considered in Closed Council as specified in section 66(2)(a) and referenced in section 3(1), Confidential Information (a) Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released as per the Local Government Act 2020.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: Cr Brown
SECONDED: Cr Calvano

That the following items be considered in Closed Council as specified in section 66(2)(a) and referenced in section 3(1), Confidential Information (a) Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released as per the Local Government Act 2020.

CARRIED

14.1 Response to Commonwealth Aged Care Reforms

15. Close of Meeting

This concludes the business of the meeting.

Meeting closed at 7:08pm

Confirmed by resolution 13 April 2022

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Chairman