



HEPBURN SHIRE COUNCIL
ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL
PUBLIC AGENDA

Tuesday 24 March 2026

Council Chamber
24 Vincent Street Daylesford

6:00PM

A LIVE STREAM OF THE MEETING CAN BE VIEWED
VIA [COUNCIL'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL](#)

AGENDA

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Council Chamber

24 Vincent Street Daylesford

Commencing at 6:00PM

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BRADLEY THOMAS

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Tuesday 24 March 2026

1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Hepburn Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which we live and work. On these lands, Djaara have performed age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal. We recognise their resilience through dispossession and it is a testament to their continuing culture and tradition, which is strong and thriving.

We also acknowledge the neighbouring Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri to our South East and the Wadawurrung to our South West and pay our respect to all Aboriginal peoples, their culture, and lore. We acknowledge their living culture and the unique role they play in the life of this region.

2 OPENING OF MEETING

COUNCILLORS PRESENT:

OFFICERS PRESENT:

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

“WE THE COUNCILLORS OF HEPBURN SHIRE
DECLARE THAT WE WILL UNDERTAKE ON EVERY OCCASION
TO CARRY OUT OUR DUTIES IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE COMMUNITY
AND THAT OUR CONDUCT SHALL MAINTAIN THE STANDARDS OF THE CODE OF
GOOD GOVERNANCE
SO THAT WE MAY FAITHFULLY REPRESENT AND UPHOLD THE TRUST PLACED IN THIS
COUNCIL BY THE PEOPLE OF HEPBURN SHIRE”

3 APOLOGIES

4 DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 24 February 2026 (as previously circulated to Councillors) be confirmed.

6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TIME

This part of the Ordinary Meeting of Council allows for the tabling of petitions by Councillors and Officers and 30 minutes for the purposes of:

- Tabling petitions
- Responding to questions from members of our community
- Members of the community to address Council

Community members are invited to be involved in public participation time in accordance with Council's Governance Rules.

Individuals may submit written questions or requests to address Council to the Chief Executive Officer by 10:00am the day before the Council Meeting.

BEHAVIOUR AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

Council supports a welcoming, respectful and safe environment for members of the community to participate at Council Meetings regarding issues that are important to them. Council's Governance Rules sets out guidelines for the Mayor, Councillors, and community members on public participation in meetings. It reinforces the value of diversity in thinking, while being respectful of differing views, and the rights and reputation of others.

Under the Governance Rules, members of the public present at a Council Meeting must not be disruptive during the meeting.

Respectful behaviour includes:

- Being courteous when addressing Council during public participation time and directing all comments through the Chair
- Being quiet during proceedings
- Being respectful towards others present and respecting their right to their own views

Inappropriate behaviour includes:

- Interjecting or taking part in the debate
- Verbal abuse or harassment of a Councillor, member of staff, ratepayer or member of the public
- Threats of violence

6.1 PETITIONS

6.2 REQUESTS TO ADDRESS COUNCIL

Members of our community who have submitted a request in accordance with Council's Governance Rules will be heard.

6.3 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The CEO will read questions received in accordance with Council's Governance Rules and the Mayor will respond on behalf of Council.

7 OFFICER REPORTS

7.1 INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY

DIRECTOR DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY

In providing this advice to Council as the Manager Planning, I Matt Rogers have no interests to disclose in this report.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Hepburn Shire - Integrated Transport Strategy - 2026-2050 [7.1.1 - 67 pages]
2. Draft Integrated Transport Strategy - Summary of Consultation 2025 [7.1.2 - 6 pages]
3. Hepburn Integrated Transport Strategy - DTP Letter to Council [7.1.3 - 11 pages]
4. Hepburn Shire - Local Transport Benchmarking Study - 2019 [7.1.4 - 41 pages]
5. Future Hepburn - Draft Township Structure Plans and Rural Hepburn Strategy- Engagement Report - August 2024 [7.1.5 - 81 pages]

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That, having considered community, stakeholder and agency submissions and community feedback to the draft Hepburn Shire Integrated Transport Strategy 2026-2050 (Attachment 7.1.1) and its informing documents over 2019, 2023, 2024, and 2025, Council:

1. *Acknowledges and thanks the Hepburn Shire community and other stakeholders for their contribution to the draft Integrated Transport Strategy;*
2. *Notes the most recent 2025 submissions and community feedback in the form of survey summary at Attachment 7.1.2;*
3. *Acknowledges that the Integrated Transport Strategy will be used as a decision-making framework to advocate and plan for transport infrastructure and connection across Hepburn Shire;*
4. *Adopts the Hepburn Shire Integrated Transport Strategy 2026-2050 as edited to address community and stakeholder input; and,*
5. *Resolves to prepare an implementation plan setting out how the strategy's actions will be integrated into Council's processes and work programs.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Hepburn Shire Integrated Transport Strategy 2026-2050 ('the Hepburn ITS') provides a principles-based decision-making framework to guide Council decisions on

transport infrastructure investment, advocacy and transport planning over the next 25 years.

The project commenced in 2019 with a Local Benchmarking Study (Attachment 7.1.4) that documents community input. A background/discussion paper was published for input in 2023. That feedback was integrated into the 2025 draft Hepburn ITS – feedback to that is addressed in the strategy as recommended in this report.

The Hepburn ITS is a significant opportunity to lock in agreed principles to be fulfilled with practical actions. Officers recommend the Hepburn ITS to Council for adoption as a Council policy.

BACKGROUND

An Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) identifies the whole range of transport needs in a place and sets priorities for improvement to transport options. It seeks to balance the needs of all forms of transport in the context of anticipated future needs as well as environment, health, safety and efficiency considerations.

The Hepburn ITS sets out principles and actions to guide Council decision making and advocacy about community transport needs including:

- Better access to public transport through advocacy for service improvements and consideration of community/private options.
- Improved accessibility for those using our towns through practical physical works to footpaths and trails, passenger facilities and information and 40kph zones as recently introduced the Daylesford.
- Reducing transport emissions over time through improved opportunities for walking, cycling for daily needs catering for ongoing vehicle electrification.
- Recreational travel improvements such as better connected and serviced path networks including signs and lighting.
- Designing roads and paths to ensure all users feel safe and welcome.
- Ensuring the Shire's transport facilities are fit to serve the community's needs for commerce such as business and employee needs for timely deliveries, parking and service provision.

The Hepburn ITS is a 25-year plan (2026-2050). It may be revised or refreshed to adapt to changing needs over time. However, it is written to address the broad principles and actions that should prove relatively durable over the strategy period.

The document's page 1 overview usefully summarises the strategy's intent:

The Hepburn Integrated Transport Strategy (2024-2050) will guide the continued improvement of transport in the Shire. It will shape Hepburn Shire's priorities and actions through its own annual works programs, as

well as its advocacy to others, especially Victorian and Commonwealth Government agencies and industry bodies.

The Integrated Transport Strategy plans for a local transport system that can efficiently and safely connect people to their everyday needs, catering for residents, workers and visitors alike. Actions developed for this strategy promote better transport connections within and between townships in Hepburn Shire and to places beyond.

The Integrated Transport Strategy addresses active transport (walking and wheeling), public transport and motorised private transport. It also covers recreational transport infrastructure, such as walking and cycling trails, to build on Hepburn's reputation for tourism and events. It is part of Hepburn Shire's Future Hepburn project, which includes:

- *Township Structure Plans for Clunes, Creswick, Daylesford and Hepburn Springs, Glenlyon, and Trentham*
- *Rural Hepburn: Agricultural Land and Rural Settlement Strategy.*

The strategy aims to provide a consistent frame for transport-related decisions over time. The Hepburn ITS does not commit Council to approve or fund specific projects. It identifies broad actions that Council can pursue to improve and adapt transport options in the Shire. It can provide a baseline of data (including its background report) on which to measure specific project viability and alignment to the strategy principles.

KEY ISSUES

Why does Council need an Integrated Transport Strategy?

Council does not currently have a guiding framework for assessing transport road, cycling or pedestrian pathways, network improvements or assisting in long term investment decisions for the Shire.

The ITS provides that guidance and actions for advocacy, community actions, Council works, further planning by Council, implementation and monitoring.

Having a guiding strategy enables Council to prioritise key actions and integrate these into the future strategies, practices and investment decisions in a consistent way. It also provides residents, community service providers and business a reference point to understand Council's direction on transport matter broadly over the 25-year strategy period.

Officers have commenced drafting work on an implementation plan. Many of the 42 actions can be delivered in combined outputs. Some are already underway.

For example, several actions under the principles 'people centred transport' and 'fairer transport' require an initial survey and audit of existing footpaths, roads

school pick up drop off points, bus services and so on. These 'survey and audit' actions can be undertaken using Council's existing asset records, with additional surveys as needed, to establish a baseline picture of current conditions and identify priority areas for attention guided by each action and the relevant principle(s).

Examples of activity already underway are:

- Council's sustainability team ongoing rollout of electric vehicle charging stations at convenient locations across the Shire (Action 3.2).
- Council's parks and open space team has a street tree master plan that fits with Action 3.4 'increase canopy tree cover and pedestrian priority' by providing improved shade and attractiveness on footpaths and walking routes.
- The recent establishment of a 40kph zone in the town centre of Daylesford is also consistent with the strategy action 4.1 'lower speed limits in built up areas and in school zones'.

The strategy's 'Vision for Transport in Hepburn in 2050'

The Hepburn ITS expresses a guiding vision for transport in Hepburn at page 24:

In 2050, people have many options to move independently, safely, and sustainably throughout Hepburn Shire. Townships are lively, connected by a range of transport choices which prioritise local community connections and the environment. Streets are vibrant and active, promoting strong connections in the community.

Physical connections across the Shire reflect Dja Dja Wurrung insights and law, minimising negative impacts on cultural heritage and natural environment. Hepburn Shire is a leader in sustainable travel, with all movement undertaken by transport modes that contribute to net-zero emissions.

All people, regardless of age, race, ability or gender can confidently use Hepburn's streets and trails for day-to-day activities and recreation.

The strategy's 'Principles for transport in Hepburn'

Six principles will guide how Council intends to pursue the vision for transport:

People centred transport

Focuses on the road and path network serving many purposes for people of all interests and are not simply for cars and trucks.

For example, Action 1.1 Install pedestrian crossing infrastructure in town centres and around schools seeks to balance the need for children to feel safe and comfortable crossing the street to get to school.

Fairer transport

Focuses on prioritising access to alternative transport options and ensuring travel spaces are safe and convenient for people who struggle getting around for physical or financial reasons.

For example, Action 2.4 Explore car share and taxi options to improve mobility for residents and visitors – this could provide a vital local service to those without a car needing to simply attend an appointment or event in circumstances where regular public transport is unavailable.

Greener and healthier transport

Greener transport options contribute to net-zero Shire emissions, preserve air quality, improve health outcomes and reduce car dependency. For example, Action 3.1. Continue to develop recreational walking and wheeling networks

An existing successful example is the Wombat Trail in Trentham. The first stage of the trail was identified in Council's 2011 Walking and Cycling Strategy between Albert Street and Trentham Recreation Reserve via Trentham Public Park and Park Street. Since then, Hepburn Shire has installed wayfinding signage and mapping for the trail and added gravel to formalise the path.

Safer movement and places

People should feel safe when travelling throughout Hepburn. Streets are designed for people (not just cars) to facilitate walking, wheeling, social interaction and access to public transport.

In a rural area like Hepburn, with long stretches of roads between towns, it can be difficult to contemplate going for a bike ride alongside fast-moving vehicles. Action 4.6 'Consider bicycle lanes on key segments of rural roads' seeks to achieve an outcome where both inter-towns drivers and cyclists can safely use the same stretch of road.

A connected Shire

There are many gaps in the path network across the Shire which can deter people from riding or walking to town and gaining the health and social interaction benefits this can bring. Action 5.3 'Identify key gaps in the shared user path network and prioritise investment to fill gaps each year' clearly provides for a continuous monitoring and investment to build walk and cycle routes into a network over time as investment opportunities arise.

A vibrant economy

The Shire's affordable and efficient transport networks support the local economy by reducing travel costs and enabling easy movement of people and goods. Our towns are busy places for residents. The Shire has experienced significant increases in visitors over the past 15 to 20 years. Council should ensure that both residents and businesses can fairly use the transport network for the benefit of all.

Action 6.3: 'Explore peripheral visitor parking hubs in tourist centres' aims to identify potential parking locations close to, but not in, town centres where visitor vehicles can be accommodated without clogging up our favourite shopping strips.

COUNCIL POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Council Plan 2025-2029

Future Hepburn

2. Responsible management of infrastructure and environment to support wellbeing now and for future generations.

Future Hepburn

1. Preserve the unique character of our towns and communities, plan for future growth and protect our productive rural landscape.
2. Responsible management of infrastructure and environment to support wellbeing now and for future generations.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Integrated Transport Strategy has a high potential for gender-based impacts. This includes the safety of women travelling in public spaces, the still prevalent burden of child-rearing and associated day-to-day multi-trip activity and responsibility for other persons when travelling.

Transport matters with more potential impacts on women have been considered in the strategy's principles and actions. Most actions are gender neutral, but those with safety improvement aspects should have a greater advantage for females. For instance, research shows that females in general are less hesitant to ride a bike for a daily shopping or work need if they know there is a bike lane with good separation from vehicle traffic and somewhere to safely park a bike at the end.

Action 2.6 'Increase installation of public toilets along key recreational links' can assist mums, who most often bear the burden of rearing young children, to use walking routes knowing there are on-route facilities for changing youngsters.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Integrated Transport Strategy supports the integration and upgrade of infrastructure that promoted environmental sustainability and active transport options for Hepburn Shire residents and visitors.

Specifically, the Greener and Healthier Transport choices principal and associated actions aim is to identify and enable greener transport options and contribute to net-zero Shire emissions, preserve air quality, improve health outcomes and reduce car dependency.

The Shire is a leader in green movement choices, including low and zero emissions vehicle use and higher levels of walking for recreation. The strategy seeks to push these opportunities further by delivering transport infrastructure that enables people to integrate walking and other non-car transport more easily into everyday activities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific financial commitments sought in this report. Decisions to implement any specific Hepburn ITS action remains at the discretion of Council.

Strategy actions will require some planning work by Council. But the overall financial commitment for implementation should be relatively neutral – that is the strategy aims to enable a different, more structured and focussed, way of approaching the transport service tasks that Council already delivers.

RISK AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

No risks to Council other than those already identified.

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

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

2025 feedback

Survey results

The results are summarised at Attachment 7.1.2.

33 people completed the online survey with a roughly 60/30 split of female/male identified participants with 10% unspecified gender. 29 of the 33 responses were from people aged 55 or over. All responses were from residents in the Shire. 30% of people identified as LGBTQIA and 18% of people identified as living with a disability.

The small sample of respondents across the Shire does limit the utility of the survey. However, there were some notable points. More than 57% of respondent rate each principle 'very important' but for 'a vibrant economy' with only 42% rating as very important. 70% of respondents rated 'People centred transport' principle as very important.

Interview with local transport advocate

An interview with a local transport advocate identified major issues with public transport in Hepburn Shire. Bus and coach services are poorly mapped and inaccurately timetabled in the PTV app, limiting usability for residents and visitors. State Government rules requiring all services to be fully accessible prevent some willing providers from operating, reducing overall service availability.

The significant commuter flow between Ballarat and Daylesford is not properly serviced by a regular and reliable public transport service.

Department of Transport and Planning (Transport) submission (Attachment 7.1.3)

DTP Transport are supportive of the ITS, with officers having accommodated minor changes to correct descriptions to existing bus services in the Shire, clarify that Hepburn Shire Council is responsible for maintaining physical bus stops, shelters and passenger access to bus stops per the Road Management Act 2024. The Department also sought to clarify that its nomination as a delivery 'partner' role does not imply any decision about its funding of changes to the arterial road network. These changes were integrated into the final draft attached to this briefing.

2023 and 2024 feedback

The community told us in 2023 that they face multiple barriers which prevent access to and affect the usability of active transport options. Identified barriers included the lack of/and quality of localized footpaths, dangerous road conditions and a lack of connected and consistent public transport options (ITS background report, 2023 survey outcomes).

The data collected during the 2024 Future Hepburn consultation (see Attachment 7.1.5) undertaken identified the community had concerns regarding the wide main streets and extensive angle parking, no regular local buses, connected footpaths, greening pedestrian pathways, dedicated bicycle facilities and options for transport connections. Respondents indicated that safe access is vital so residents can move safely around the townships, using traffic reduction and calming measures, routing truck traffic away from residential areas and infrastructure that would reflect usage and pedestrian priority. Public transport connectivity and improving accessibility was also identified by submissions.

2019 Benchmarking Study (Attachment 7.1.4)

The Local Transport Benchmarking Study reports on the current benchmark of local transport services and the issues, gaps and opportunities in Hepburn Shire. This study was conducted via more than 150 engagements and thousands of pieces of data using interview, survey and workshop research methods.

The study identified eleven key findings, all of which include aspects of all five themes and relate to local, public and active transport assets and infrastructure. Safe travel, access to buses and other transport service options, and access to accurate public transport information and services were identified by the respondents. Opportunities for safe cycling infrastructure improvements, filling gaps in the network, and investigating promotional programs for E-bikes as a legitimate transport option exist throughout Hepburn Shire.

7.2 2025/2026 BUDGET INITIATIVES PROGRESS REPORT DIRECTOR PERFORMANCE AND TRANSFORMATION

In providing this advice to Council as the Corporate Planning and Performance Officer, I Erin Vanzetta have no interests to disclose in this report.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Budget Initiatives 2025/2026 - H1 Progress Report - visual [7.2.1 - 1 page]
2. Budget Initiatives 2025/2026 - H1 Progress Report [7.2.2 - 17 pages]

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. *Notes the Budget Initiatives 2025/2026 Progress Report for the first half period; and,*
2. *Notes that this report will be published on Council's website.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The attached report provides an update on the progress against projects and initiatives included in the 2025/2026 Budget for the first half period – effectively being the initiatives in 2025/2026 to deliver on our Council Plan. The report shows that of the 17 projects listed for 2025/2026, ten are on track for completion by end of June 2026, four have been completed and three have progress delayed.

The progress, and comments are designed to be as at 31 December – so on many further progress has been made.

BACKGROUND

The Budget 2025/2026 was adopted by Council at its Ordinary Meeting held on 24 June 2025. Once published, the report updates our stakeholders on the progress of the 17 initiatives.

KEY ISSUES

The attached report provides a list of the projects included in the Budget 2025/2026 and a progress comment has been provided for each project by the responsible officer, for the first half (July-December) period of the 2025/2026 financial year.

COUNCIL POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Council Plan 2025-2029

Hepburn Working Together

2. Maintain corporate governance to enable good Council decision making and to ensure long-term financial viability.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All Budget 2025/2026 projects and initiatives have been budgeted for in this current financial year.

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

There are no community or stakeholder engagement implications associated with this report – the status report will be communicated to the community post adoption at the Council Meeting.

RISK AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

The *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* support the operation of the strategic planning and reporting requirements under the *Local Government Act 2020*, by prescribing information to be contained in Council budgets and revised budgets, financial plans, and annual reports, as well as mandating for councils the system of performance reporting. Annual Plan and Budget Progress Reports form part of the Council Plan reporting requirements.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no environmental sustainability impacts associated with this report, however projects and initiatives have been individually assessed for sustainability as part of the budgetary process. The ongoing delivery of these projects any further impacts will be managed at a project management level.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Projects and initiatives have been assessed individually for gender impacts as part of the budgetary process. Any further implications because of delays or cancellations will be assessed at a project management level where further details can be obtained.

8 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

9 COUNCILLOR AND CEO REPORTS

9.1 MAYOR'S REPORT

Councillor Tony Clark

9.2 COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Councillor Tim Drylie

Councillor Lesley Hewitt

Councillor Pat Hockey

Councillors, my month spanned the shire from Drummond in the far East to Clunes in the west and south to Creswick. Days after last month's meeting I attended the 150th celebration of the Creswick Town Hall opening and what a perfectly conceived and executed event it was. Congratulations to the organisers. In the new colony 150 years ago, the commissioning of a new Town Hall was a significant moment and with all the trappings of modern life it was a formidable challenge to recreate the importance of that moment to the mostly new migrants of the time.

I made it too for the first moments of the Picnic in the Park in Creswick that same evening and all was in place for a great event. I would really encourage the community to get behind these twin music events as they could rise as significant get togethers that cross the town boundaries and bring us all together.

Along with the mayor, I attended the Grove of Gratitude Celebration that heralds the start of the ChillOut Festival and a busy weekend.

On Friday of that week I attended the official opening of Wirmal, the new Early Learning Centre in Clunes. Wowsers! This facility is very impressive and begins its life at about a third of capacity in the kindergarten so all set for a big expansion in the west of the shire. With its wide open spaces Clunes is all set to receive a lot more population if only the price of land is affordable.

That afternoon I dashed off to Drummond in the east of the shire where the happy committee of the Drummond Hall hosted me for their meeting and shared some pizza afterwards. These moments are the things I will cherish after my time on council. Meeting residents in far-flung places doing tireless voluntary work to support their community.

Sunday saw the Mayor, Councillors Drylie and Hewitt, acting CEO Ron Torres and other senior staff and myself step out in grand style for the ChillOut street parade. What a great privilege and a heck of a lot of fun.

Still this month I attended the regular meeting of the Clunes Museum where their enthusiastic team has a number of projects unfolding centred on the amazing facility that is the Clunes Warehouse, including the reinstatement no less of an historic cannon, known as the Baden-Powell, or also known as the Clunes Cannon. I followed up at the Lee Medlyn Home of Bottles meeting last week before the week finished with the remarkable Clunes Booktown Festival. An incredible event that is a tribute to the sturdy crew of volunteers and staff, that was once again a great success.

Councillor Brian Hood

Councillor Shirley Cornish

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Mayor's and Councillors' reports.

9.3 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The Chief Executive Officer Report informs Council and the community of current issues, initiatives and projects undertaken across Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Chief Executive Officer's Report for March 2026.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER UPDATE

- As Acting CEO, I (Ron) was lucky enough to attend the International Women's Day event in Creswick. This year we welcomed Pauline Hawker, Betty Rea (posthumous and accepted by Stefan Rea), Erica Higgins and Kate Smith onto the Heather Mutimer Women's Honour Roll. A heartfelt congratulations to these remarkable women for their outstanding contributions in their fields. They have served as inspiring role models for the next generation. In attendance were keynote speaker Katrina Baraquiel and her guest Brenda Nakanjakko, Charlie Rigg (representative for the Honourable Catherine King, Member for Ballarat), Daylesford College students (Matilda, Martha and Jamie) and performer Amie Brûlée. Great work from the Economic Development and Community team organising another successful IWD event.
- Chillout Festival – Although the ChillOut Street Parade experienced some windy conditions this year, it did not diminish participants' enthusiasm. Marching alongside fellow staff members highlighted a strong sense of support. Additionally, I (Ron) had the opportunity to DJ during Drag Storytime with Frock Hudson, which proved to be a valuable and rewarding experience.
- Further big events are around the corner with Clunes Booktown on 21 and 22 March and Cresfest on 10-12 April.
- Picnic in the Park was a day of BIG smiles, LOUD laughs, and a little bit of magic! It was a fun day with live music from awesome young local musicians, FREE food, face painting, crafts, and the chance to check out a real CFA fire truck. Glinda the Good Witch and Cath the Magician were both in attendance.
- Community groups across Hepburn Shire are encouraged to apply for funding as Council opens the latest round of its Community Grants Program. The program, which supports community-based projects and initiatives, will open Monday 16 March and close Friday 15 May 2026.
- Hearings on the Western Renewables Link (WRL) project have now concluded where Council presented evidence from experts in tourism, agriculture, solutions for an underground line, and visual amenity.
- The Daylesford Town Hall has reopened for hire after some significant and essential work to ensure safety and preservation of the building.

- Council is supporting local agribusinesses, farmers, producers and growers to attend the inaugural Farmer's Day Out by providing a limited number of free tickets, ensuring the region's farming community has access to vital business tools, connections and resources. The event will be held on Wednesday 25 March. [Local producers invited to attend inaugural Farmer's Day Out Hepburn Shire Council](#)

10 CLOSE OF MEETING