



HEPBURN SHIRE COUNCIL ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL PUBLIC MINUTES

Tuesday 29 July 2025

Council Chamber
24 Vincent Street Daylesford

6:00PM

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

MINUTES

Tuesday 29 July 2025

Council Chamber

24 Vincent Street Daylesford

Commencing at 6:00PM

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BRADLEY THOMAS

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Tuesday 29 July 2025

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: Cr Tony Clark, Cr Shirley Cornish, Cr Tim Drylie, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Pat Hockey, Cr Brian Hood

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mr Bruce Lucas - Director Infrastructure and Delivery, Ms Brooke Holmes - Director Performance and Transformation, Mr Chris Whyte - Manager Technology and Transformation, Ms Rebecca Smith - Manager Governance and Risk

The meeting opened at 6:01pm.

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

Mr Bradley Thomas, Chief Executive Officer and Mr Ron Torres, Director Development and Community.

4 DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Go to 00:03:00 in the meeting recording to view this item.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 24 June 2025 (as previously circulated to Councillors) be confirmed.

MOTION

That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 24 June 2025 (as previously circulated to Councillors) be confirmed.

Moved: Cr Tony Clark

Seconded: Cr Lesley Hewitt

Carried

Voted for: Cr Tony Clark, Cr Shirley Cornish, Cr Tim Drylie, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Pat Hockey and Cr Brian Hood

Voted against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TIME

Go to 00:05:00 in the meeting recording to view this item.

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.

Some questions of an operational nature may be responded to through usual administrative procedure. Separate forums and Council processes are provided for deputations or for making submissions to Council.

Questions received may be taken on notice but formal responses will be provided to the questioners directly. These responses will also be read out and included within the minutes of the next Ordinary Meeting of Council to make them publicly available to all.

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

No petitions were tabled.

6.2 REQUESTS TO ADDRESS COUNCIL

There were no requests to address Council.

6.3 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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

Question 1 – Tass Mousaferiadis, Jac Nancarrow, Jason Cook and Tom Harvey

Would Council consider joining the Rainbow Cities Network?

Response – Mayor Don Henderson

The Rainbow Cities Network is an international entity and being a part of the network would require resource allocation and reporting requirements annually.

Through Council's budget process many annual memberships and membership fees were critically reviewed. Council is not proposing to join the network and pay the approximate \$2,000 membership fee at this stage.

However, we continue advocate and support a healthy and inclusive community where all people, regardless of background and stage of life, have the opportunity to participate and thrive as detailed in our Council Plan and we work towards implementing our Rainbow Action Plan.

Question 2 – Tass Mousaferiadis, Jac Nancarrow, Jason Cook and Tom Harvey

Would the council consider installing a rainbow crossing in Daylesford?

Response – Mayor Don Henderson

Yes.

Council has investigated the idea previously and has yet to find a solution or product that can be implemented that is cost effective and meets Council's responsibilities under the *Road Management Act 2005* and Victoria's Traffic Regulations. A pedestrian crossing is considered a Major Traffic Control Item requiring approval from Department of Transport and Planning and an un-signalised pedestrian crossing is required to have white markings.

Council is continuing to explore options that may include roundabouts or other locations that might be more cost effective and achievable. To this end, we have rainbow bollards at our crossing in Vincent Street and we will continue working on this issue and will keep our LGBTQIA+ Committee advised of any progress.

Question 3 – Fay Magee

The award of Victorian Top Tiny Tourism Town for 2025 to Trentham has highlighted the irony of our Information Desk at The Mechanics Trentham not being regularly staffed and particularly not on Saturdays and Sundays. Would Council Officers please make arrangements for a meeting with local community members/volunteers to find

the best way to reinstate the Visitor Information desk at the Trentham Mechanics on weekends when most visitors are in town?

Response – Mayor Don Henderson

In the short term, we encourage people who are keen to volunteer to complete an application form via the Hepburn Shire Council website: [Volunteer | Hepburn Shire Council](#).

In the near future we will look at other opportunities to encourage volunteers, including hosting an information session.

7 OFFICER REPORTS

7.1 SURPLUS LAND FOR POSSIBLE DISPOSAL, INCLUDING POTENTIAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING LOCATIONS

Go to 00:08:30 in the meeting recording to view this item.

DIRECTOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND DELIVERY

DIRECTOR DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY

In providing this advice to Council as the Property Officer, I Karen Menne have no interests to disclose in this report.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Table 1 Surplus Property with Affordable Housing Potential [7.1.1 - 3 pages]
2. Table 2 Surplus Property for Disposal [7.1.2 - 4 pages]

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. *Resolves that the properties in Table 1 and Table 2 are considered surplus to Council's needs and will be proposed for disposal;*
2. *Authorises Council officers to commence the process to potentially dispose of the properties in Table 1 and Table 2 (including the proposal to dispose of the properties in Table 1 as Affordable Housing as a priority); this will be in accordance with the Disposal and Acquisition of Land Policy and involves a period of Community Engagement with a further report to be considered at a Council Meeting later in 2025;*
3. *Confirms that, in the event of a further decision to dispose of the nominated properties, Table 1 properties will be dealt with via an Expression of Interest process and Table 2 properties will be sold on the open market; and,*
4. *Confirms that, in the event of a further decision to dispose of the nominated properties, it is proposed that the proceeds of the potential sales, less the costs of disposal, will be reinvested into Council's capital works program to provide improvements for the community.*

MOTION

That Council:

1. *Resolves that the properties in table 1 and 2 are considered surplus to Council's needs and will be proposed for disposal;*

2. *Authorises Council Officers to commence the process to potentially dispose of the properties in table 1 and 2 (including the possibility of disposal of the properties in table 1 as Affordable Housing). This will be in accordance with the Disposal and Acquisition of Land Policy and involves a period of Community Engagement with a further report to be considered at a Council Meeting later in 2025;*
3. *Confirms that, in the event of a further decision to dispose of the nominated properties, Table 1 properties will be dealt with via an Expression of Interest process and Table 2 will be sold on the open market;*
4. *Confirms that, in the event of a further decision to dispose of the nominated properties it is proposed that the proceeds of the potential sales, less the cost of disposal, will be invested in the establishment of a grant co-contribution and support financial reserve as proposed in Council's Financial Vision, designed to assist Council in meeting co-contribution requirements associated with a range of external funding opportunities including but not limited to grants and partnership programs;*
5. *Directs the Chief Executive Officer in the development of guidelines for the administration of the grant co-contribution and support financial reserve including but not limited to:*
 - a. *Eligibility criteria and assessment methodology;*
 - b. *Categories of support including Grants;*
 - c. *Application and approval processes;*
 - d. *Funding limits and budget implications;*
 - e. *Risk assessment and sustainability;*
 - f. *The final decisions on the allocation of funds under this program, be made by Council based on the recommendations presented and in accordance with the adopted framework.*

Moved: Cr Shirley Cornish

Seconded: Cr Tony Clark

Cr Lesley Hewitt proposed an amendment to the motion.

MOTION

That Council:

1. *Resolves that the properties in table 1 and 2 are considered surplus to Council's needs and will be proposed for disposal;*

2. *Authorises Council Officers to commence the process to potentially dispose of the properties in table 1 and 2 (including the possibility of disposal of the properties in table 1 as Affordable Housing). This will be in accordance with the Disposal and Acquisition of Land Policy and involves a period of Community Engagement with a further report to be considered at a Council Meeting later in 2025;*
3. *Confirms that, in the event of a further decision to dispose of the nominated properties, Table 1 properties will be dealt with via an Expression of Interest process and Table 2 will be sold on the open market;*
4. *Confirms that, in the event of a further decision to dispose of the nominated properties it is proposed that the proceeds of the potential sales, less the cost of disposal, will be invested in the establishment of a grant co-contribution and support financial reserve as proposed in Council's Financial Vision, designed to assist Council in meeting co-contribution requirements associated with a range of external funding opportunities including but not limited to grants and partnership programs;*
5. *Directs the Chief Executive Officer in the development of guidelines for the administration of the grant co-contribution and support financial reserve including but not limited to:*
 - a. Eligibility criteria and assessment methodology;*
 - b. Categories of support including Grants;*
 - c. Application and approval processes;*
 - d. Funding limits and budget implications;*
 - e. Risk assessment and sustainability;*
 - f. The final decisions on the allocation of funds under this program, be made by Council based on the recommendations presented and in accordance with the adopted framework.*
6. *Requests the Chief Executive Officer prepare a briefing report for Councillors with the history of "Rea Lands Reserve" 42 Raglan Street, Daylesford being bequeathed to Council, and for further investigation whether this site could be considered for sale or other use by Council, and;*
7. *Requests that the Chief Executive Officer actively collaborates with the Good Grub Club Daylesford, who currently have a short-term lease at 79A Raglan Street Daylesford, to identify suitable properties and assist in their relocation.*

The amendment was accepted by Cr Cornish and Cr Clark.

Cr Tim Drylie proposed an amendment.

MOTION

That Council:

- 1. Resolves that the properties in table 1 and 2 are considered surplus to Council's needs and will be proposed for disposal;*
- 2. Authorises Council Officers to commence the process to potentially dispose of the properties in table 1 and 2 (including the possibility of disposal of the properties in table 1 as Affordable Housing as a priority). This will be in accordance with the Disposal and Acquisition of Land Policy and involves a period of Community Engagement with a further report to be considered at a Council Meeting later in 2025;*
- 3. Confirms that, in the event of a further decision to dispose of the nominated properties, Table 1 properties will be dealt with via an Expression of Interest process and Table 2 will be sold on the open market;*
- 4. Confirms that, in the event of a further decision to dispose of the nominated properties it is proposed that the proceeds of the potential sales, less the cost of disposal, will be invested in the establishment of a grant co-contribution and support financial reserve as proposed in Council's Financial Vision, designed to assist Council in meeting co-contribution requirements associated with a range of external funding opportunities including but not limited to grants and partnership programs;*
- 5. Directs the Chief Executive Officer in the development of guidelines for the administration of the grant co-contribution and support financial reserve including but not limited to:*
 - a. Eligibility criteria and assessment methodology;*
 - b. Categories of support including Grants;*
 - c. Application and approval processes;*
 - d. Funding limits and budget implications;*
 - e. Risk assessment and sustainability;*
 - f. The final decisions on the allocation of funds under this program, be made by Council based on the recommendations presented and in accordance with the adopted framework.*
- 6. Requests the Chief Executive Officer prepare a briefing report for Councillors with the history of "Rea Lands Reserve" 42 Raglan Street, Daylesford being*

bequeathed to Council, and for further investigation whether this site could be considered for sale or other use by Council, and;

- 7. Requests that the Chief Executive Officer actively collaborates with the Good Grub Club Daylesford, who currently have a short-term lease at 79A Raglan Street Daylesford, to identify suitable properties and assist in their relocation.*

The amendment was not accepted by Cr Cornish, and a seconder for the amendment was not sought.

MOTION

That Council:

- 1. Resolves that the properties in table 1 and 2 are considered surplus to Council's needs and will be proposed for disposal;*
- 2. Authorises Council Officers to commence the process to potentially dispose of the properties in table 1 and 2 (including the possibility of disposal of the properties in table 1 as Affordable Housing). This will be in accordance with the Disposal and Acquisition of Land Policy and involves a period of Community Engagement with a further report to be considered at a Council Meeting later in 2025;*
- 3. Confirms that, in the event of a further decision to dispose of the nominated properties, Table 1 properties will be dealt with via an Expression of Interest process and Table 2 will be sold on the open market;*
- 4. Confirms that, in the event of a further decision to dispose of the nominated properties it is proposed that the proceeds of the potential sales, less the cost of disposal, will be invested in the establishment of a grant co-contribution and support financial reserve as proposed in Council's Financial Vision, designed to assist Council in meeting co-contribution requirements associated with a range of external funding opportunities including but not limited to grants and partnership programs;*
- 5. Directs the Chief Executive Officer in the development of guidelines for the administration of the grant co-contribution and support financial reserve including but not limited to:*
 - a. Eligibility criteria and assessment methodology;*
 - b. Categories of support including Grants;*
 - c. Application and approval processes;*
 - d. Funding limits and budget implications;*
 - e. Risk assessment and sustainability;*

f. The final decisions on the allocation of funds under this program, be made by Council based on the recommendations presented and in accordance with the adopted framework.

6. Requests the Chief Executive Officer prepare a briefing report for Councillors with the history of "Rea Lands Reserve" 42 Raglan Street, Daylesford being bequeathed to Council, and for further investigation whether this site could be considered for sale or other use by Council, and;

7. Requests that the Chief Executive Officer actively collaborates with the Good Grub Club Daylesford, who currently have a short-term lease at 79A Raglan Street Daylesford, to identify suitable properties and assist in their relocation.

Moved: Cr Shirley Cornish

Seconded: Cr Tony Clark

Carried

Voted for: Cr Tony Clark, Cr Shirley Cornish, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Pat Hockey and Cr Brian Hood

Voted against: Cr Tim Drylie

Abstained: Nil

Cr Cornish called for a division.

Voted for: Cr Tony Clark, Cr Shirley Cornish, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Pat Hockey and Cr Brian Hood

Voted against: Cr Tim Drylie

Abstained: Nil

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council officers have undertaken a review of Council-owned land in order to identify properties that may be considered surplus to Council's needs and proposed for potential disposal.

Council officers have also reviewed the shortlist of potential surplus land to consider whether any properties may be appropriate to dispose of for affordable housing.

The two tables attached to this report contain the details of Council-owned land with recommendations for dealing with them from Council officers following completion of property land assessments:

Table 1 – Surplus Property with Affordable Housing Potential (Attachment 7.1.1)

Table 2 – Additional Surplus Property for Disposal (Attachment 7.1.2)

In accordance with the Council's [Disposal and Acquisition of Land Policy \(Council](#)

[Policy No. 93\(C\)](#) (**Policy**), a Council decision is required for the land to be considered to be declared surplus in order for the statutory process to commence.

BACKGROUND

Council officers have undertaken two Council projects, the Council Property Assessment Project – Review of Surplus Land and Buildings (*Surplus Land Project*), and the Affordable Housing Project.

The Surplus Land Project undertook a preliminary evaluation to assess all Council-owned properties, the result of which has been to identify seven properties considered surplus to Council's needs with disposal potential as listed in Tables 1 and 2 attached. Additional properties may become available for disposal in the future as circumstances of their use change.

The Affordable Housing Project is part of the actions arising from Council's [A Home in Hepburn Shire – Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan](#) (the *Strategy*), which was adopted in 2023. A further assessment of the seven properties with disposal potential was undertaken to identify any sites with affordable housing suitability in accordance with a framework of preferred traits: within township boundaries; appropriate zoning; minimal planning overlays; and land size greater 600m². This resulted in the properties listed in Table 1 attached.

KEY ISSUES

Surplus Council-owned land for Affordable Housing Project or Disposal

The two tables attached to this report contain the following breakdown of Council-owned land as assessed by Council officers with recommendations for dealing:

Table 1 – Surplus Property with Affordable Housing Potential (Attachment 7.1.1)

Table 2 – Additional Surplus Property for Disposal (Attachment 7.1.2)

Surplus Property with Affordable Housing Potential

Table 1 contains the Council-owned land parcels that could be suitable for the Affordable Housing Project, which are:

- i. 79A Raglan Street, Daylesford
- ii. 26 Raglan Street, Creswick
- iii. 10 Camp Street, Clunes – “Camp Hill Site”

Of the three parcels of land proposed, 79A Raglan Street Daylesford present the best opportunity for an affordable housing project.

The other two sites are below the 600m² threshold, but they abut vacant State Government-owned land, and this increases the potential for the larger parcels of land to be utilised for Affordable Housing projects.

Initial conversations with DEECA regarding the affordable housing proposal on the

Creswick and Clunes sites in Table 1 indicate in-principle support for a continued partnership. However, a number of complexities make this option either unlikely or be a much longer-term project.

As a result, Council officers recommend not pursuing this option with DEECA any further at this stage and rather all three sites in Table 1 are progressed as standalone sites for affordable housing. In the event that the Creswick and Clunes sites are not considered favourably by affordable housing providers, Council can revisit the options of either pursuing further discussions with DEECA or out-right sale.

Surplus Property for Disposal

Table 2 contains Council-owned land parcels that may be suitable for disposal via public sale, which are:

- i. 1 Armstrong Street, Daylesford
- ii. 10 Semmens Avenue, Creswick
- iii. 313 Clunes Road, Creswick
- iv. 2 Creswick Road, Clunes

Land Disposal Process

Any disposal of land, including as part of an Affordable Housing proposal, needs to follow the Council's Policy.

The Policy provides the following process required to declare the land surplus to Council's needs, confirm the land will be disposed of, and by what method.

Step 1: A Council decision is required to confirm that the properties in Tables 1 and 2 are *proposed* to be declared surplus and *potentially* disposed.

Step 2: Referral for Community Engagement.

Step 3: Council then considers community feedback and makes a final decision on the proposed disposal of land or confirm other action. The community is informed of this decision.

Step 4: Council officers commence the disposal or other confirmed action in relation to the properties.

This process would be undertaken and completed over a period of the next 12 - 18 months.

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.

Hepburn Working Together

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

Local Government Act 2020

Council's Policy reinforces the statutory requirements for the disposal of land under s.114 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Strategy and Policy Alignment

In addition to these projects supporting the Council Plan, they also align to the following policy and strategy adopted by Council.

Disposal and Acquisition of Land Policy (Council Policy No. 93(C))

Council's Policy acknowledges that Council-owned land is a valuable public asset that should be used to maximise the social, environmental, and economic benefits to the

Hepburn Shire community. The Policy provides the framework to guide Council's decision making in relation to the sale and acquisition of land. Any possible dealings with Council-owned land must comply with this Policy, including disposal via the

Affordable Housing Project.

A Home in Hepburn Shire – Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan

Council's Strategy was adopted in 2023 and sets out the housing demand and need in the Hepburn Shire as well as putting forward tangible actions for Council to implement. The Strategy, shaped by extensive community engagement, outlines 26 actions that focus on key areas such as land use planning, advocacy, partnerships, incentives to encourage long-term affordable rental accommodation and the development of diverse housing options. The Strategy aims to create a clear pathway

for local action and collaboration with State and Federal Governments, which is core for the Affordable Housing Project to succeed.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

In accordance with statutory requirements and the Policy, Council will obtain a valuation from a certified practicing valuer to assess the current market value of the individual properties, taking into account the highest and best use of the property.

It is proposed that the proceeds of the potential sales, less the costs of disposal, will be reinvested into Council's capital works program to provide improvements for the community.

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

There are no community or stakeholder engagement implications associated with this report. Community engagement will be undertaken should the recommendation to potentially declare the land surplus and dispose of the Council-owned land be endorsed by Council.

RISK AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

This report proposes actions that comply with all relevant legislation and policy.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no sustainability implications associated with this report.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

There are no gender equity implications associated with this report.

7.2 FOOD AND GARDEN ORGANICS 12-MONTH REVIEW

Go to 00:037:37 in the meeting recording to view this item.

DIRECTOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND DELIVERY

In providing this advice to Council as the Manager Facilities and Circular Economy, I Sean Ludeke have no interests to disclose in this report.

ATTACHMENTS

- Nil

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Notes the outcomes of the 12-month review of the food and garden organics kerbside collection service, including:*
 - a. A 24% reduction in landfill disposal and a 57.3% landfill diversion rate;*
 - b. Collection of 1,264 tonnes of organic material and avoidance of approximately 790 tonnes of CO₂-equivalent emissions;*
 - c. Acknowledges the community satisfaction with current waste services provided from feedback received;*
 - d. 40% of kerbside landfill can still be recycled through mixed recycling and food and garden organic streams; and,*
- 2. Endorses the continued implementation and refinement of the food and garden organics service, including:*
 - a. Ongoing targeted education and engagement activities that support residents in maximising use of the food and garden organics service and managing landfill capacity more effectively; and,*
 - b. Exploring expanded use of compost across Council operations, with a dual focus on enhancing Council-managed open spaces and giving back to the community.*

MOTION

That Council:

- 1. Notes the outcomes of the 12-month review of the food and garden organics kerbside collection service, including:*

- a. A 24% reduction in landfill disposal and a 57.3% landfill diversion rate;*
 - b. Collection of 1,264 tonnes of organic material and avoidance of approximately 790 tonnes of CO₂-equivalent emissions;*
 - c. Acknowledges the community satisfaction with current waste services provided from feedback received;*
 - d. 40% of kerbside landfill can still be recycled through mixed recycling and food and garden organic streams; and,*
- 2. Endorses the continued implementation and refinement of the food and garden organics service, including:*
 - a. Ongoing targeted education and engagement activities that support residents in maximising use of the food and garden organics service and managing landfill capacity more effectively; and,*
 - b. Exploring expanded use of compost across Council operations, with a dual focus on enhancing Council-managed open spaces and giving back to the community.*

Moved: Cr Pat Hockey

Seconded: Cr Tim Drylie

Cr Lesley Hewitt proposed an amendment to the motion.

MOTION

That Council:

1. *Notes the outcomes of the 12-month review of the food and garden organics kerbside collection service, including:*
 - a. *A 24% reduction in landfill disposal and a 57.3% landfill diversion rate;*
 - b. *Collection of 1,264 tonnes of organic material and avoidance of approximately 790 tonnes of CO₂-equivalent emissions;*
 - c. *Acknowledges the community satisfaction with current waste services provided from feedback received;*
 - d. *40% of kerbside landfill can still be recycled through mixed recycling and food and garden organic streams;*
 - e. *Notes that the FOGO collection service fee was reduced by \$40 per property in the current financial year and will be reflected in upcoming rates notices.*
2. *Endorses the continued implementation and refinement of the food and garden organics service, including:*
 - a. *Ongoing targeted education and engagement activities that support residents in maximising use of the food and garden organics service and managing landfill capacity more effectively; and,*
 - b. *Exploring expanded use of compost across Council operations, with a dual focus on enhancing Council-managed open spaces and giving back to the community.*

This amendment was accepted by Cr Hockey and Cr Drylie.

Cr Cornish moved an amendment to the motion.

MOTION

That Council:

1. *Notes the outcomes of the 12-month review of the food and garden organics kerbside collection service, including:*
 - a. *A 24% reduction in landfill disposal and a 57.3% landfill diversion rate;*

- b. Collection of 1,264 tonnes of organic material and avoidance of approximately 790 tonnes of CO₂-equivalent emissions;*
 - c. 40% of kerbside landfill can still be recycled through mixed recycling and food and garden organic streams;*
 - d. Notes that the FOGO collection service fee was reduced by \$40 per property in the current financial year and will be reflected in upcoming rates notices.*
- 2. Endorses the continued implementation and refinement of the food and garden organics service, including:*
- a. Ongoing targeted education and engagement activities that support residents in maximising use of the food and garden organics service and managing landfill capacity more effectively; and,*
 - b. Exploring expanded use of compost across Council operations, with a dual focus on enhancing Council-managed open spaces and giving back to the community.*

This was accepted by Cr Clark and refused by Cr Drylie.

As the amendment was refused by the seconder, the amendment to the motion was put to the vote.

Moved: Cr Shirley Cornish

Seconded: Cr Tony Clark

Carried

For: Cr Shirley Cornish, Cr Brian Hood, Cr Tony Clark, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Pat Hockey

Against: Cr Tim Drylie Cr Lesley Hewitt

MOTION

That Council:

- 1. Notes the outcomes of the 12-month review of the food and garden organics kerbside collection service, including:*
 - a. A 24% reduction in landfill disposal and a 57.3% landfill diversion rate;*
 - b. Collection of 1,264 tonnes of organic material and avoidance of approximately 790 tonnes of CO₂-equivalent emissions;*
 - c. 40% of kerbside landfill can still be recycled through mixed recycling and food and garden organic streams;*

d. Notes that the FOGO collection service fee was reduced by \$40 per property in the current financial year and will be reflected in upcoming rates notices.

2. Endorses the continued implementation and refinement of the food and garden organics service, including:

a. Ongoing targeted education and engagement activities that support residents in maximising use of the food and garden organics service and managing landfill capacity more effectively; and,

b. Exploring expanded use of compost across Council operations, with a dual focus on enhancing Council-managed open spaces and giving back to the community.

Moved: Cr Shirley Cornish

Seconded: Cr Tony Clark

Carried

For: Cr Shirley Cornish, Cr Brian Hood, Cr Tony Clark, Cr Pat Hockey, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Tim Drylie

Against: Cr Don Henderson

Abstained: Nil

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council had committed to undertaking a review of the food and garden organics service at the one-year anniversary of the service implementation. As part of this review, Council invited community feedback on the current service through a Resource Recovery survey between 28 April 2025 – 19 May 2025 which received 102 contributions. Of this, 58 of the contributors responded on their township service (weekly food and garden organics, fortnightly general rubbish/landfill and fortnightly mixed recycling).

Council's review of the service evaluated the service's performance against five key objectives that reflect Council's strategic, environmental, and community priorities such as:

- Provide a cost-effective service
- To meet the resource demand for most households
- To meet community priorities
- Provide the least environmental impacts
- Meet State Government legislation

BACKGROUND

In accordance with the State Government's *Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021*, all local government areas in Victoria are required to transition to a separate food and garden organics service by 2027.

The State Government is preparing service standards to outline the quality and performance expected from councils for the new four-stream household waste and recycling service. Engagement on the service standards began in November 2021, with draft standards released in June 2024 and the final version expected in 2025. The draft standards propose prioritising the food and garden organics service and a glass collection service by 1 July 2027. The overarching goal of these legislative changes is to divert 80% of waste from landfill by 2030.

As part of the Sustainable Hepburn Strategy implementation and following the successful trial in Clunes, Council implemented a weekly organics service, fortnightly landfill collection, and continued the fortnightly mixed recycling in the townships of Creswick, Clunes, Daylesford, Hepburn, Hepburn Springs and Trentham from 8 April 2024. This included an extensive education and communication campaign for the rollout, including media releases, social media, pop-ups, printed information, increased customer service enquiries, videos, radio, and TV ads, supported partially through funding from Sustainability Victoria.

KEY ISSUES

The key results of the service review are as follows:

Cost effective

- Hepburn's current kerbside service which includes a weekly organics bin with a fortnightly landfill bin is the most cost-effective service model, compared to other potential kerbside frequencies – i.e. weekly landfill with fortnightly organics – which is estimated to cost ratepayers an additional \$25-\$65 in the current year and further escalate in future years.
- The landfill waste levy is a fee set by State Government that continues to increase each year, seeing a 100% increase in the last five years. Council can minimise the fees paid by:
 - Reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill
 - Transporting to rural landfills where lower levies are applied.
- Current approved landfill capacity in Victoria is predicted to run out by mid 2030s. If further landfill diversion is not achieved, kerbside costs may be further impacted each year due to the cost of disposing of waste at interstate landfills.

Resource demands

- Audits, community survey, and a small number of bin requests show majority of households have bin capacity and are functioning with their current kerbside service.
- 38% of households are using 100% of their available landfill bin capacity.
- Kerbside bin audits (post implementation of organics service) show 40% of material in an average landfill bin could be placed in either the mixed recycling or organic bins. With correct sorting, capacity of the landfill bin would increase.
- Large families with four or more people make up 15% of the shire's demographic. Council has received 66 requests from township properties between March 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025 (1.2%) for additional general rubbish/landfill bins.
- Council has both current and upcoming initiatives to help residents get the most out of their fortnightly collection, including:
 - Soft plastics trial for kerbside and transfer stations (FY2025/2026)
 - Textile drop off at Transfer Stations (FY2025/2026)
 - Reusable products vouchers – cloth nappies, period products
 - Subsidised pet poo composters available periodically to purchase
- Additional bins are available (for a fee) for residents if their waste outputs often exceed the standard kerbside bin service.
- Bin presentation rates - Kerbside audit data indicates the following average presentation rates across kerbside streams:
 - Food and garden organics: 62% average presentation rate
 - Mixed recycling: 78% average presentation rate
 - Landfill: 89% average presentation rate
- Bin capacity - Average bin fullness levels recorded during audits are as follows:
 - Food and garden organics: 70% average capacity
 - Mixed recycling: 71% average capacity
 - Landfill: 81% average capacity

Community priorities

- From the feedback received, 71% of residents receiving an organics service reported being satisfied with their current kerbside service (all three bins).
- From the feedback received, 75% of residents reported being satisfied with the available bin capacity for the kerbside service (all three bins).
- Deliberative engagement panel and community survey show both environmental considerations and cost-effective service are priorities.

Least impact on environment

- Introduction of food and garden organics and fortnightly landfill collections increased rates of diversion from landfill by 41%.
- Diverting 1,264 tonnes of organics from landfill in the first year. This equates to an estimated reduction in Greenhouse Gas Emissions of 790 tCO₂-e.
- Fortnightly landfill with a weekly food and garden organics on average achieves a better diversion rate by over 12%.
- The average contamination rate over 12 months was 2.75%. By keeping contamination low, the potential to create a high-quality compost from the organic material for local community, farms or parks and gardens is increased greatly.
- Continued education on keeping diversion high and contamination low is important for ongoing success. Some of the ways this is achieved are:
 - Bin inspections and audits
 - Direct communication with residents frequently contaminating bins (letters, bin stickers, bin tags)
 - Website, social media and newsletter updates

State Government legislation

- Introduction of a food and garden organics service is required by 1 July 2027.
- Current service is diverting a total of 57% from landfill with a potential to increase to 71%. Rollout of shire wide kerbside services could see Hepburn achieve the states government's goal of 80%.
- Fortnightly landfill collection service supports behaviour change needed to achieve State Government's landfill diversion targets.
- The Service Standards may require Council to introduce an organics service to rural properties. Through the Resource Recovery survey, some rural residents have expressed interest in this service. A shire wide organics collection would further assist in increasing landfill diversion, as rural landfill bins still contain around 34% organic material.

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.

Hepburn Working Together

1. Future-focused services that are easy to use and inclusive.

Victorian Government Legislation

Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021

Sustainable Hepburn

Sustainable Hepburn Strategy 2022-2026, Theme 3: A low waste shire.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Operational costs are covered through annual waste charges and the waste management reserve. This is funded through the payment of waste charges for kerbside collection and waste improvement charges included on the annual rates notices.

- Weekly food and garden organics and fortnightly general rubbish/landfill is the most cost-effective model at \$270/year per household.
- Reintroducing a weekly landfill collection would increase costs potentially up to \$65 annually per household due to higher disposal costs to landfill. This may increase further year on year.
- The State Government Landfill levy is increasing significantly each year with a 100% increase in the last five years.

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Council invited community feedback on the current service through a Resource Recovery survey between 28 April 2025 – 19 May 2025. This was done through our Participate Hepburn site which saw 102 contributions. 58 of the contributors responded on their township service (weekly food and garden organics, fortnightly landfill and fortnightly mixed recycling).

Below is an overview of the feedback on the township service:

Importance

- 81% - reducing waste to landfill and reducing greenhouse gas emissions is important to them.
- 78% - composting and food recycling is important to them.
- 78% - most cost-effective service was important.
- 91% - they had enough information about what went in each bin.

General rubbish/landfill bins

- 64% strongly agreed or agreed they were satisfied with their landfill bin service.

- 63% strongly agreed or agreed capacity was enough, while 26% in the survey mentioned they strongly disagreed or disagreed their landfill bin capacity was sufficient.
- 63% strongly agreed or agreed their frequency is enough, while 28% strongly disagreed or disagreed their frequency was not enough.
- 30% took rubbish to transfer station.
- 9% mentioned having an extra bin.

Mixed recycling bins

- 83% felt satisfied with their mixed recycling bin.
- 93% felt capacity is sufficient.
- 95% felt their frequency is sufficient.
- 18% take recycling to transfer station.

Food and garden organics (organics) bins

- 65% felt satisfied with their organics bin.
- 69% felt capacity is sufficient, but 33% strongly disagreed or disagreed the capacity was enough.
- 7% mentioned having an extra bin.
- 10% take food and garden organics to transfer station.
- 65% appreciated that organics are being recycled into compost.

In February 2025, Council convened a deliberative engagement panel comprising 35 community members to play a key role in guiding and informing the priorities of the Council Plan 2025–2029.

The engagement panel was asked to share their preferred approach to waste management. Panel members emphasised that protecting the environment, reducing landfill, and achieving long-term sustainability are the most important goals. They strongly believe that waste services should be cost-effective, easy to use, and centred on circular economy principles—rather than relying on additional bins or complex processes.

Key data highlights several key insights into community engagement with kerbside services:

- 33% of residents expressed concern about their current landfill bin capacity.
- The presentation rate for food and garden organics bins stands at 62%, indicating positive uptake of the service.
- 40% of materials found in an average landfill bin could be diverted to either mixed recycling or food and garden organic bins, suggesting significant potential for improved resource recovery.
- However, 91% of the community believe they have sufficient information about what belongs in each bin.

These findings underscore the importance of continuing targeted education and communication efforts to support residents in maximising use of the food and garden organic service and managing landfill capacity more effectively. While these are early indicators, they represent positive momentum for the rollout of the new service in its first year.

RISK AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

This report includes actions that comply with all relevant legislation and Council strategy.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The food and garden organics service is aligned with four objectives from the Sustainable Hepburn Strategy 2022-2026 - Theme 3: A low waste shire.

- Reduce waste to landfill and make improvements to kerbside collections.
- Improve operations at transfer stations.
- Be part of a thriving circular economy.
- Provide education and awareness to the community on transitioning to a low waste shire.

The current service also specifically achieves two actions:

- Roll out organics to urban areas and investigate for rural areas, and
- Transition to fortnightly landfill collection schedule.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This project has been assessed using the internal gender impact assessment tool.

- Within our communications, we promote equal household participation in sorting waste and recycling.
- To remain accessible, recycling guidelines have been provided using clear language and imagery.
- Additional bins are available (at a cost per service) to residents with higher waste outputs i.e. medical waste, nappies, menstrual products and incontinence products, however officers will continue to support residents to optimise the capacity of the services provided.
- Continue to provide education initiatives, through schools and reusable items voucher program to support all needs across the community.

7.3 INVESTIGATION INTO PARTIAL CLOSURE OF BATH STREET, TRENTHAM

Go to 01:09:00 in the meeting recording to view this item.

DIRECTOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND DELIVERY

In providing this advice to Council as the Manager Operations and Delivery, I Lance Daniel have no interests to disclose in this report.

ATTACHMENTS

- Nil

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives the information provided in this report and resolves not to progress with a partial closure of Bath Street, Trentham, at this time.

MOTION

That Council receives and notes the information provided in this report and resolves to consider its options on the partial or full closure of Bath St between High and Albert streets when evaluating the budgeted capital works project for Trent Creek Reserve.

Moved: Cr Brian Hood

Seconded: Cr Shirley Cornish

Carried

Voted for: Cr Tony Clark, Cr Shirley Cornish, Cr Tim Drylie, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Pat Hockey and Cr Brian Hood

Voted against: Nil

Abstained: Cr Lesley Hewitt

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to a Notice of Motion from August 2024, this report provides an options assessment for the closure of Bath Street, between High and Albert Streets, in Trentham.

Having considered engineering, safety, community and amenity impacts and long-term planning for the township, it is recommended to maintain the status quo and not proceed with a full or partial closure of this section of Bath Street at this time.

BACKGROUND

At the Ordinary Council Meeting in August 2024, Council resolved the following:

That Council, following the extremely successful completion of the Mechanics Trentham, requests the Chief Executive Officer to consider options for the potential

closure, or part closure to traffic on Bath Street, between High and Albert Streets in Trentham, noting a statutory process will be required for any road closure.

This report is provided in response to the resolution and outlines the background, discusses closure options and considerations and describes the statutory requirements for road closures under Victorian legislation.

KEY ISSUES

Site Assessment



Bath Street, Trentham, between High Street and Albert Street runs north-south between The Mechanics Trentham and Trent Creek Public Park (highlighted red above).

The road provides access to The Mechanics and services residential, commercial and visitor traffic for the surrounding area. Through traffic to Victoria Street is possible but not the primary use.

Bath Street is categorised as a Local Access Level 1 road under Council's Road Management Plan (RMP). The majority of urban roads fall within this classification, being the second lowest category of maintained sealed roads.

Updated traffic data taken in May 2025 indicates average movements of 195 vehicles per day at the southern end of Bath Street, 119 at the northern end, and 109 on Albert Street, just east of Market Street.



Road or pedestrian safety concerns have not been received from the community, relating to traffic along Bath Street. There are no recorded accidents, however it is acknowledged that most accident reporting pertains to serious injury or fatalities and as such, does not capture other incidents or near misses. Given the low-speed environment and low pedestrian numbers, Bath Street does not raise any material road safety concerns.

Closure Options

Three options for the future treatment of Bath Street, between High and Albert Streets, are outlined below.

Option 1 – Full closure from High Street to Albert Street

This option provides for the full closure of Bath Street to vehicular traffic, between High Street and Albert Street.

Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential improved safety and amenity for pedestrians and cyclists • Potential creation of community greenspace • Reduction in vehicle noise and emission in the immediate area
Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased congestion at High/Market Street, and Market/Albert Street intersections and increased traffic in other residential areas • Negative impacts to traffic flow and accessibility, particularly for facility users and local residents • Potential disruption to service vehicles, deliveries and/or emergency services • Requires community consultation with possible division or dissatisfaction • Significant infrastructure and administrative costs associated with works required, to be funded by Council • Potential limitations on future development opportunities in the local area

The table below outlines the minimum scope of works recommended to deliver this outcome, with a high-level cost estimate and indication of funding responsibility, based on the current opportunity to access Safe Local Roads and Streets Program funding.

Works	Preliminary Cost Estimate	Funding
High Street footpath crossing, Albert Street kerb installation, linemarking	\$40,000 - \$50,000	Capital grant
Bath Street pavement demolition, landscaping and plantings, signage and bench seating, pedestrian connection (High to Albert Streets)	\$200,000 - \$250,000	Council
Total	\$240,000 - \$290,000	

The footpath and kerb infrastructure required to facilitate the closure of Bath Street is likely to be eligible to be funded as part of a larger package of works in the Trentham area, proposed as part of the Safer Local Roads and Streets Program. The works to remove the existing road pavement, import of clean fill and topsoil, basic landscaping, tree planting, street furniture and an access path would be required to be funded by Council.

Strategic Planning Considerations

- Reducing the already few side access streets of High Street would put more traffic pressure on High Street itself (i.e. leaving only Market and Quarry Street for northern access to service businesses on High Street and Market Street and to enable circulation of vehicles seeking to park at peak times,

compared to the four side access streets from the south of High Street that allow a spread of vehicle movements along the street and reduced pressure on each intersection).

- Typically town centres require more, rather than less, street space to facilitate everyday commerce. Customer movement, business-to-business movements etc, once removed, is difficult to reinstate should businesses grow and seek more street servicing.
- Trentham's adopted Structure Plan shows a desire to consolidate appropriately scaled commercial activity and residential activity, between High Street and Victoria Street, which would be negatively affected by reduced vehicle access.
- The Trentham Structure Plan also envisages a walking path within the Trent Creek Reserve in the medium to long term, however note that the reserve is a state asset and a drinking water waterway, requiring a level of protection from development and activity.
- The proposal would reduce the value of Council's public asset by restricting future access opportunities to the Mechanics, including loading and unloading and incidental or drop-off parking.

Option 2 – Restricted access (one way traffic only) from High Street to Albert Street

This option provides for the restricted access of the section of road, to facilitate one way traffic only. Should this option be implemented, it is recommended that travel be restricted to a northerly direction only, to eliminate right hand vehicle movements across the traffic lane onto High Street. This option may also be implemented as a trial with final outcomes adjusted based on a review and feedback.

Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balances community safety with access • Retains partial use for residents, deliveries and services, with a lower impact than a full closure • Layout facilitates future consideration of long vehicle parking
Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased congestion at High/Market Street, and Market/Albert Street intersections • No increase in community greenspace • Potential confusion for road users • Infrastructure and administrative costs associated with works required, to be funded by Council

The table below outlines the minimum scope of works recommended to deliver this outcome, with a high-level cost estimate and indication of funding responsibility, based on the current opportunity to access Safe Local Roads and Streets Program funding.

Works	Preliminary Cost Estimate	Funding
High Street raised pedestrian crossing, kerb and drainage upgrades	\$120,000	Capital grant
Community engagement, signage and bollards, linemarking	\$10,000	Council
Additional vehicle parking (optional) including drainage, pavement and kerb works	\$25,000*	Council
Total	\$130,000 (\$155,000 including parking)	

*The implementation of one-way traffic would provide an opportunity to create additional carparking, suitable for long vehicles or overflow parking from the Mechanics. This optional work is estimated at \$25,000 if works are undertaken in conjunction with the larger SLRSP scope at Trentham and would be required to be funded by Council. If completed later, the cost is anticipated to be higher.

Strategic Planning Considerations

- The proposal would reduce the value of Council's public asset by restricting future access opportunities to the Mechanics, including loading and unloading and incidental or drop-off parking.
- Removing vehicle access would reduce the ability for less able residents to park adjacent the Trent Creek Reserve and enjoy recreation, unless additional parking was implemented.

Option 3 – No change to existing conditions

This option maintains the current access arrangements, with some road safety upgrades proposed to be delivered via the Safe Local Roads and Streets Program funding.

Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No cost to Council • No long-term disruption to residents, facility users or services and maintains access for all • Maintains existing traffic patterns and accessibility • Layout facilitates future additional parking
Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No increase to green/community space and pedestrian connections to adjacent reserve

The table below outlines the scope of works proposed to be delivered, based on the current opportunity to access Safe Local Roads and Streets Program funding.

Works	Preliminary Cost Estimate	Funding
High Street raised pedestrian crossing, kerb and drainage upgrades	\$120,000	Capital grant
Additional vehicle parking (optional) including drainage, pavement and kerb works	\$25,000*	Council
Total	\$120,000 (\$145,000 including parking)	

*The retention of existing conditions would provide an opportunity to create additional carparking, suitable for long vehicles or overflow parking from the Mechanics. This optional work is estimated at \$25,000 if works are undertaken in conjunction with the larger SLRSP scope at Trentham and would be required to be funded by Council. If completed later, the cost is anticipated to be higher.

Strategic Planning Considerations

- There is limited capacity to allow traffic circulation north of High Street. The adopted strategy of growing the town's commercial capacity along Market Street should result in more pedestrian activity. Maintaining Bath and Quarry Streets open to two-way traffic provides the best support for the town centre, its businesses and other users in the long term.

General Planning Considerations

In addition to the commentary provided above against each option, the following general planning considerations should be made:

- Council should consider starting with a clear aim or objective for the project and then work through outcomes that might best achieve that aim.
- Subject to traffic engineering advice, there may be an opportunity to limit traffic to a single direction, however this should be accompanied by a short study that identifies any required work at other locations to compensate for the downgrading of Bath Street's vehicle service (as would be required for a private application proposing to alter a public road).

Statutory Road Closure Process

Permanent road closures (option 1 only) in Victoria are governed by the *Local Government Act 2020 (1989)* and *Road Management Act 2004* and require a formal statutory process:

1. **Council Resolution:** Council must resolve to initiate the road closure process.
2. **Public Notification:** A public notice must be published in a local newspaper and on Council's website and in the Government Gazette, inviting submissions (minimum 28 days).

3. **Community Submissions:** Council must consider all submissions made under Section 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989* (the old Act has not been completely superseded).
4. **Consideration of Submissions:** Submitters must be given an opportunity to be heard.
5. **Final Decision:** Council must make a final decision taking all feedback into account.
6. **Gazettal:** If closure proceeds, the decision is published in the Victoria Government Gazette.

Should Council resolve to progress with a full or partial closure of Bath Street, it is recommended that broad community engagement be undertaken prior to the above steps, to ascertain the level of community support or otherwise for the proposal.

Assessment Outcome

Whilst the issues raised are acknowledged, it is noted that:

- The closure of Bath Street is not recommended by Council's Strategic Planning or Engineering teams.
- There are potential long-term implications for connectivity, servicing and future development.
- There are potential traffic congestion and safety issues created by the proposed closure, particularly at Market and High Streets which is one of Trentham's busiest intersections.
- The cost of the closure process, including officer time, new infrastructure and administrative requirements, may be in the vicinity of \$250,000, depending on the final layout, most of which is required to be funded by Council.

As such, it is not recommended that Council proceed with a full or partial closure of this section of Bath Street, Trentham at this time.

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.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with the recommendation of this report, to maintain status quo. The table below outlines the estimated financial commitment required for each option (*not including optional additional parking), with the Council contribution being currently unfunded.

Option	Cost Estimate	Council Funding	Grant Funding
1 (full closure)	Up to \$290,000	Up to \$250,000	Up to \$50,000
2 (one way traffic)	\$130,000	\$10,000*	\$120,000
3 (no closure)	\$120,000	\$0*	\$120,000

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement has been undertaken to date in relation to the options outlined above, however, should any form of closure be supported by Council, consultation with various stakeholders is recommended to understand the level of community support or otherwise for the proposal.

Consultation should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Residents and local businesses directly affected by the proposal;
- Emergency services to ensure unimpeded response access;
- Public transport providers if any services are impacted;
- Service utilities to access infrastructure access;
- Disability and mobility advocacy groups;
- Broader community members; and
- Department of Transport and Planning.

RISK AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

Regarding risk or governance implications associated with the options outlined within this report, the following should be considered:

- Risks of maintaining the status quo are considered very low, with no safety issues or incidents reported to Council, or community advocacy for a closure.
- Risks of a partial or full closure of the section of road primarily relate to the potential safety hazards created with traffic congestion in other areas, and the reputational risk associated with funding these works against a range of other competing priorities.
- Compliance with the legal framework for road closures must be adhered to, relevant to option 1 only.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

In reviewing the options outlined within this report, officers considered the economic, social and environmental impacts of any proposed closure. Whilst there are some environmental benefits associated with reduced through traffic and the potential increase in green space, there are subsequent negative impacts to traffic in other areas of the township, and an associated cost to Council for infrastructure upgrades. A partial closure, whilst financially modest in comparison, would equally provide more modest environmental improvements. Whilst some social benefits may be realised through a full closure, a significant upgrade of the space, linking in with

future upgrades at the adjacent reserve, would be required to support such an outcome.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Whilst a formal Gender Impact Assessment was not undertaken in relation to this preliminary advice, gender-related considerations were integrated into the evaluation of each option, particularly around accessibility, pedestrian safety, and intersectional equity. Closure options were evaluated to ensure that they serve everyone equally, including women, older adults, carers, people with disabilities and gender diverse residents and the infrastructure associated with each option was reviewed with inclusivity in mind.

7.4 REVIEW OF POLICY 64(C) - COMPLAINTS POLICY

Go to 01:20:30 in the meeting recording to view this item.

DIRECTOR PERFORMANCE AND TRANSFORMATION

In providing this advice to Council as the Coordinator Governance, I Dannielle Kraak have no interests to disclose in this report.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Policy 64(C) - Complaints Policy - July 2025 [**7.4.1** - 8 pages]

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. *Adopts Policy 64(C) – Complaints Policy as attached; and,*
2. *Allows officers to make administrative changes to the policy as required.*

MOTION

That Council:

1. *Adopts Policy 64(C) – Complaints Policy as attached; and,*
2. *Allows officers to make administrative changes to the policy as required.*

Moved: Cr Lesley Hewitt

Seconded: Cr Pat Hockey

Carried

Voted for: Cr Tony Clark, Cr Shirley Cornish, Cr Tim Drylie, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Pat Hockey and Cr Brian Hood

Voted against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under section 107 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), councils are required to prepare and adopt a Complaints Policy. Council's existing Complaints Policy was adopted in October 2021 and is due for review.

The Act is prescriptive about what the policy must include. Council's proposed approach to complaints handling is compliant with the Act and Ombudsman's recommendations, and officers are proposing a couple of changes to the current approach, including:

- A shift in the definition of a complaint and exclusions.

- An additional section to address complex and inappropriate behaviour from complainants.

The Victorian Ombudsman released A Good Practice Guide in April 2025 in relation to complaint handling. The draft policy has been developed based on these best practice recommendations.

BACKGROUND

Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, councils are required to prepare and adopt a Complaints Policy. Council's existing Complaints Policy was adopted in October 2021.

Section 107 of the *Local Government Act 2020* states that:

- (1) A Council must develop and maintain a complaints policy that includes—*
 - (a) a process for dealing with complaints made to the Council; and*
 - (b) a process for reviewing any action, decision or service in respect of which the complaint is made; and*
 - (c) a discretion for the Council to refuse to deal with a complaint which is otherwise subject to statutory review; and*
 - (d) the prescribed processes for dealing with complaints about the Council; and*
 - (e) the prescribed processes for internal review of complaints made to a Council; and*
 - (f) the prescribed processes for exercising the discretion referred to in paragraph (c); and (g) any other matter prescribed by the regulations.*
- (2) A review process must provide for a review that is independent of—*
 - (a) the person who took the action; and*
 - (b) the person who made the decision; and*
 - (c) the person who provided the service.*

Defining a complaint

Section 107 of the Act defines a complaint as follows:

- (3) For the purposes of the complaints policy, complaint includes the communication, whether orally or in writing, to the Council by a person of their dissatisfaction with—*
 - a) the quality of an action taken, decision made or service provided by a member of Council staff or a contractor engaged by the Council; or*

- b) *the delay by a member of Council staff or a contractor engaged by the Council in taking an action, making a decision or providing a service; or*
- c) *a policy or decision made by a Council or a member of Council staff or a contractor.*

This definition was developed in response to the 2019 Ombudsman report *Revisiting Councils and Complaints*, which identified inconsistencies in how different councils defined a complaint.

The Victorian Ombudsman provides a simplified definition, in which a complaint to a council is any communication which involves the following:

“An implied or express statement of dissatisfaction where a response is sought, reasonable to expect or legally required.

It includes dissatisfaction with an organisation or its contractors’:

- *customer services*
- *actions or decisions*
- *inaction or delay*
- *policy or processes*

Generally, initial requests for service, action or information are not complaints, although they do prompt action. Subsequent requests may be an implicit complaint about service, inaction or delay.”

The Ombudsman also defines feedback as:

“A compliment, criticism, comment or suggestion where a response is not sought, or not reasonable to expect.

Complaints and feedback can be distinguished by whether the person can reasonably expect a response. Like complaints, feedback is valuable and can help identify opportunities for improvement.”

For example:

Table 1: Complaint / Feedback/Service request examples	
Complaint	Feedback / Service request
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My bin has not been collected for a second week in a row, I am frustrated and require a response as to why. <p><i>(dissatisfied and requiring a response)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My bin was out but wasn't collected this morning. Can you pick it up? • I forgot to put my bin out, can someone collect it? <p><i>(requesting a service because of their own mistake)</i></p>

• You haven't sent out my rates notice again.	• Can you tell me when my next rates payment is due?
• The Council shouldn't have approved a development on Main Road.	• What is the process for objecting to the development on Main Road?
• The Council's website doesn't have enough information about when a planning permit is needed for a pool.	• Can you tell me whether a planning permit is required for a backyard pool?
• Council's investigation into noise from a business wasn't rigorous, and didn't look at peak times. More investigation is needed.	• My neighbour's business is very noisy. Can you make it stop?
• A pothole I reported to Council two months ago hasn't been fixed, and it's getting worse.	• Could Council fill in a pothole in my street?

KEY ISSUES

The definition of a complaint

Officers are proposing a shift in how we currently define complaints in response to feedback received from officers and the community under the existing policy. In addition to the current exclusions, the following would be added to the list of matters that would not be considered a complaint:

- An initial submission of feedback.
- We define feedback as:
- "A compliment, criticism, comment or suggestion where a response is not sought, or not reasonable to expect."
- Matters that are being processed in accordance with their statutory timeframes, i.e. planning applications and freedom of information requests. If someone had a complaint regarding the application decision within Council, there are external agencies to assist with this review.

Under the current policy, repeated follow ups from a community member meets the definition of a complaint. This has led to 1-2 matters per week being classified as complaints, only for the community member to request that the matter not be managed as a complaint, as that was not their intention. This has particularly impacted in the Statutory Planning and Building areas with applicants following up on their applications, which accounts for approx. half of the 150 complaints Council receives each year.

In many instances, the applications are still within their statutory processing timeframe and the complaints process diverts officers from being able to process the applications. This change would allow these follow up enquiries to be excluded from the complaints policy, unless the person requested that the matter be treated as a complaint.

Managing complex complainant behaviour

The Good Practice Guide still allows for councils to restrict or manage individuals who become threatening or unreasonable, and recommends a staged approach, this has now been included within the updated Complaints policy:

1. Respond to complex behaviour as soon as possible,
2. Manage and address behaviour that is or becomes unreasonable,
3. Consider limiting access to some services and officers until satisfactory behaviour is demonstrated.

The overarching policy to manage such behaviours is in draft - 89 (C) Unreasonable Conduct by a Customer Policy. This is expected to be finalised in the coming months.

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.

Council's Complaints Policy is being reviewed in line with requirements under the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Council is currently developing overarching guidelines for managing unreasonable customer behaviour. This document will tie into the Complaints Policy and will be added as reference documents to the Complaints Policy once adopted.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The Complaints Policy has been assessed against Council's Community Engagement matrix, scoring a 7-12, or LOW level of engagement:

The level of engagement is usually indicated a decision has already been made and Council is communicating it to Hepburn Shire citizens and stakeholders. This level of engagement aligns with the inform and consult level in the IAP2 Spectrum.

This is largely due to how prescriptive the Act and oversight agencies are about how councils manage complaints.

Following adoption, social media and Council's website will be used to communicate the changes and outline the process for the community.

RISK AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk implications associated with this report, however, there are associated risk implications to Council not fulfilling its requirements under the Act to regularly review the Complaint Policy in line with the provisions in the Act and the Ombudsman's Best Practice Guidelines.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no sustainability implications associated with this report.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

There are no gender equity implications associated with this report.

7.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 JUNE 2025

Go to 01:26:45 in the meeting recording to view this item.

DIRECTOR PERFORMANCE AND TRANSFORMATION

In providing this advice to Council as the Manager Governance and Risk, I Rebecca Smith have no interests to disclose in this report.

ATTACHMENTS

1. CONFIDENTIAL - Summary of recommendations from the June 2025 Audit and Risk Committee [7.5.1 - 2 pages]
2. CONFIDENTIAL - Draft Confidential Minutes - Audit and Risk Committee - 16 June 2025 [7.5.2 - 30 pages]

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. *Receives the draft minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting that was held on the 16 June 2025; and,*
2. *Notes the recommendations of the Audit and Risk Committee that were moved at the meeting on 16 June 2025 (Attachment 1).*

MOTION

That Council:

1. *Receives the draft minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting that was held on the 16 June 2025; and,*
2. *Notes the recommendations of the Audit and Risk Committee that were moved at the meeting on 16 June 2025 (Attachment 1).*

Moved: Cr Tony Clark

Seconded: Cr Shirley Cornish

Carried

Voted for: Cr Tony Clark, Cr Shirley Cornish, Cr Tim Drylie, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Pat Hockey and Cr Brian Hood

Voted against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is for Councillors to consider advice from the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) meeting that was held on 16 June 2025.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the Audit and Risk Committee is to oversee and monitor the effectiveness of Council in carrying out its responsibilities for accountable financial management and risk, good corporate governance, provide experience in public sector management, and the maintenance of systems of internal control, and the fostering of an ethical environment.

The Audit and Risk Committee is not a delegated committee and cannot exercise statutory functions and powers of the Council under delegation, and essentially acts as an advisory body on behalf of Council.

The Audit and Risk Committee meetings are closed to the public.

KEY ISSUES

The Audit and Risk Committee held its quarterly meeting on 16 June 2025. The Confidential Minutes of the meeting are attached for Councillors' consideration, along with a summary of the recommendations (Attachment 1).

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.

Local Government Act 2020

The Audit and Risk Committee is governed by section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, and operates in line with the Audit and Risk Committee Charter. A Workplan is developed to align with their obligations.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report. The secretariat of the Committee is managed within Council's operational budget.

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

There are no community or stakeholder engagement implications associated with this report. The Audit and Risk Committee, and representatives from Council's

external and internal auditors respectively, have been engaged and consulted on reports that relate to their function and duty to Council.

RISK AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

The Audit and Risk Committee was established by Council resolution on 28 August 2020 in line with section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020*. As at the June 2025 meeting, the Committee was made up of four independent committee members – Mr Shane Marr (Chair), Dr Jason Young, Ms Philippa Murphy, and Mr Kelvin Tori.

At the Statutory Meeting on 26 November 2024, Council resolved to appoint Cr Don Henderson (Mayor) and Cr Tony Clark to the Audit and Risk Committee for 2024/2025.

Those Committee members in attendance were duly briefed on all reports and a robust discussion was had. Should Council disagree with any recommendations that the Audit and Risk Committee present for its consideration, then Council will need to, via a resolution of Council and in line with Council's good governance framework, state which motions Council does not accept.

If officers do not present this report to Council at the next practicable Council meeting for consideration, then there will be a breach of the Audit and Risk Committee Charter.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no sustainability implications associated with this report.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

There are no gender equity implications associated with this report.

8 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

Go to 01:30:45 in the meeting recording to view this item.

MOTION

That Council admits an item of urgent business in relation to a motion for the upcoming Municipal Association of Victoria State Council Meeting.

Moved: Cr Tim Drylie

Seconded: Cr Shirley Cornish

Carried

Voted for: Cr Tony Clark, Cr Shirley Cornish, Cr Tim Drylie, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Pat Hockey and Cr Brian Hood

Voted against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

8.1 ITEM OF URGENT BUSINESS - MOTION FOR MAV STATE COUNCIL

MOTION

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) should initiate a comprehensive, statewide communications and marketing campaign that promotes positive messages about the vital role of Local Government and the wide array of services it provides. This campaign should also include targeted messaging aimed at countering negative community behaviours and addressing social media attacks directed at Councillors and Officers.

Moved: Cr Tim Drylie

Seconded: Cr Tony Clark

Carried

Voted for: Cr Tony Clark, Cr Shirley Cornish, Cr Tim Drylie, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Pat Hockey and Cr Brian Hood

Voted against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

9 COUNCILLOR AND CEO REPORTS

9.1 MAYOR'S REPORT

Go to 01:34:03 in the meeting recording to view this item.

Councillor Don Henderson

Firstly a huge thank you to my colleagues who have attended events and functions during my recent illness.

Sadly I had to forego the opportunity to welcome quite a number of our residents who became Australian citizens. To them I extend my best wishes and hope they enjoy their new rights and continue to prosper.

There were some highlights this month and these included the attainment of 150 years of the Clunes Primary school. The school and the students certainly made the many guests and former pupils welcome and the pride in the school was very evident.

Pavillion Arts opened their Art Café in the Creswick Town Hall which was part of a weekend of open galleries. On the opening night there was certainly plenty of talent representing many different forms of art on show.

Another highlight was the launch of our new Reconciliation Plan ,Innovate. In what is believed to be an Australian first the Hepburn Shire has signed an MOU with the Dja Dja Wurrung that allows waste trees from council parks and roadworks to be turned into valuable timber . This resource would normally just go into low value wood chips instead of providing training opportunities in timber processing and use.

There was great concern expressed at the Greater Ballarat Association of Councils concerning the Government implementation of The Emergency Services Levy and the impact upon residents and more particularly the rural communities. The message was delivered to Minister Staikos as well as local MPs Mikayla Settle and Juliana Addison. The important issue was coupled with a crippling drought that has affected most of Victoria.

The fight against the WRL transmission towers continues and I urge all residents to put in submissions regarding the environmental and far reaching financial impacts of this method of above ground transmission of power.

The new residents welcome event in Creswick saw 16 new residents welcomed by community groups and all reported that it was a very well run and much appreciated event . Katherine Shalless thanked Judy Henderson for her running of the event for 14 years. It will now be up to someone else to step up if this event is to continue. I

am not quite sure if all realise that these events do not just happen but take a great deal of organization.

Finally I wish to express sadness at the departure of Michelle Dove . Over the thirteen years she has been at council she has looked after our diaries and has seen that we have been looked after. Sometimes that has not been easy . Michelle has been a colleague and friend and I am sure I echo many others thoughts and wish her well in her future endeavors.

9.2 COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Councillor Shirley Cornish

Presented a verbal report.

Councillor Tim Drylie

This past month has reminded me of the care and resilience that defines our communities - from long-time locals to new residents, staff, artists, and volunteers, to those raising their voices on issues that matter deeply. It is of great concern that to hear of the imminent closure of the Bendigo Bank's agency in Clunes and the loss of in-person banking services that so many Clunes residents rely on.

I attended the MAV Regional Meeting in Ararat as councillor delegate, where councils from across the region discussed shared challenges - the MAV continues to support rural and regional councils on important issues including service levies and infrastructure pressures to the energy transition and the impacts of drought and climate change. Undoubtedly there is a mental health toll on rural communities and the need for a fairer deal for local government.

Locally, I attended one of Council's independent community information sessions in Creswick, helping residents engage with the Environmental Effects Statement for the Western Renewables Link. These sessions are assisting people to understand the issues and make submissions before 22 August.

It was also a joy to attend the Official Opening of the Pavilion Arts Trail in Creswick, a celebration of place, creativity and connection, and to join the Clunes Primary School 150th Anniversary Ceremony, honouring generations of education and care. At the Creswick New Residents Welcome, I was reminded how much we are gaining from those bringing fresh ideas and energy to our towns, including Creswick.

This month we also celebrated NAIDOC Week and the launch of our INNOVATE Reconciliation Action Plan - an ongoing commitment to truth telling, healing, and Treaty with the First Nations people of Victoria. I acknowledge the recent tabling of

the Yoorrook Justice Commission's Final Report this month, and the MOU struck with Djaara Timbers locally to offer them useful timber from fallen and damaged trees.

It is disappointing that the Sustainable Hepburn Advisory Committee term was reduced to six months as we had a very productive final meeting this month. This group is contributing meaningful work across biodiversity, water security, climate adaptation, housing and circular economy. In a time of such challenge and transition, we need sustained ethical leadership.

We also heard tonight about the strong outcomes from the first year of our FOGO program, a practical achievement that's turning food and garden waste into compost used across the Shire. It's a win for the environment and for Council - reducing landfill, costs and emissions. This success has been made possible by many - including Jodie Newcomb, our Circular Economy Officer, whose role was unfortunately one of many lost in the recent round of service cuts passed by Council in the 2025-26 budget.

Jodie brought great insight and energy to her work. She helped lead the FOGO rollout and successful composting trials, assisted with the Adaptation Game to build climate resilience, supported the creation of a Circular Economy Toolkit for local business, and was key to last year's Sustainable Hepburn Festival and with the integration of circular economy activities across the organisation. Her departure, as with Michelle Dove and the loss of roles across arts, early years, youth, inclusion, housing, and economy - is deeply felt. These decisions will have long-term consequences.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the grief many in our community feel about the ongoing genocide in Gaza. While the federal government has condemned Israel's actions, serious questions remain around arms exports and transparency. I've heard the community calls for Council to take steps toward ethical procurement and human rights screening in our own operations. I support these conversations taking place and commit to listening with care.

Councillor Lesley Hewitt

A highlight for this month was the citizenship ceremony where in my role as deputy mayor I deputised for the mayor who was ill. 13 people became new citizens, and most had been in Australia for several years, not taking the decision to become a citizen lightly. I welcome them again and look forward to hearing about their contribution to Australia and Hepburn Shire as they begin this new chapter of their life story.

Last night I attended Council's community information session at Newlyn for those are planning to put in a submission to the EES for the Western Renewable Link. Submission are due on the 20th August and whilst Council is not opposed to renewables, we are

opposed to the proposed route and that it is above ground. It was important to hear of the impacts on individuals whose properties are along the route, and I encourage people to make submission and let impacts be understood by the Panel members. Thank you to officers Ron Torres and Matt Rogers who provided useful information to attendees on how to make a submission.

Another highlight was attending Council's NAIDOC week event which celebrated our new RAP – Innovate and the recently signed MOU with Djaara that allows for access to timber from Council trees. It was positive to see such a strong community turnout.

Two issues that keep coming up regularly in the community are our local economy and council's community engagement. I was pleased to attend two VLGA sessions, one on Council's role in growing the local economy and why this is critical for community well-being and the second on Council's community engagement. Both were useful with the community engagement session highlighting that the challenges that Hepburn faces in this area are not confined to Hepburn but rather the challenges faced by all Councils.

Finally, I want to acknowledge Michelle Dove who has left Hepburn Shire after 13 years. Michelle has always been helpful and supportive to Councillors but also to community members. In particular I want to acknowledge the support that Michelle has given me personally as both a newly elected Councillor and new mayor in 2020. Michelle has always provided support going beyond what I could have personally expected and I wish her well.

A list of my diary activities is below.

Councillor Diary Activities

Presentation LGV Emerging Leaders Program – 27/6/25

Councillor Briefing 7/7/25,

NAIDOC week HSC Event – 11/7/25

Clunes Listening Post – 13/7/25

CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee – 14/7/25

Councillor Meeting – 14/7/25

Citizenship Ceremony – 18/7/25

VLGA Webinar -Growing the Local Economy – 22/7/25

VLGA Webinar – Community Engagement and Advocacy 25/7/25

Community Information Session – Newlyn 28/7/25

Councillor Pat Hockey

Along with Councillors Henderson, Cornish and Hewitt I attended the Clunes Market Listening Post at the regular Clunes Market which falls on the second Sunday. As with other such public occasions the Council has created for folk to reach out, there were

only a few approaches made to chat. One of the ironies of these formal occasions being set up is that residents may perhaps discount the possibility of approaching Councillors about matters that concern them at any other time. I for one am more than happy to receive emails or phone calls or just a chat in the queue at the supermarket; whenever someone feels the urge to say hello and share a concern. So please do grab me by the sleeve if you see me out and about.

In addition, I also took part in the Community Meeting for the Djuwang Baring Traffic Management Plan having a first look with the community at the concept plans responding to concerns about shuttling on St George's Lake Road and in the vicinity. There is no doubt that there remain some serious concerns about the impacts to local residents, but on the whole the feedback about the meeting was positive and residents appreciated the chance to speak to experts. I note too recent reports of the sale of the British Hotel in Creswick and reports the new owners have ambitious plans in light of the vibrancy of the community in recent times.

A personal highlight this month was the Citizenship Ceremony in the Council Chambers on 18 July. What a privilege it was to be present at the occasion when these folk took the momentous step to become fully fledged citizens. A modest but heartfelt ceremony took place and it was lovely to enjoy the get-together afterwards with the new citizens. Those I spoke to confessed their thrill at finally making the step while also puzzling over why it had taken them so long. Of course, life gets in the way.

Finally, I would like to commend the senior staff for their tireless work across so many issues this month and the many staff working on the ground every day with limited resources to make this shire the best possible place to live and work.

Councillor Brian Hood

Presented a verbal report.

Councillor Tony Clark

Presented a verbal report.

RECOMMENDATION

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

MOTION

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

Moved: Cr Pat Hockey

Seconded: Cr Lesley Hewitt

Carried

Voted for: Cr Tony Clark, Cr Shirley Cornish, Cr Tim Drylie, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Pat Hockey and Cr Brian Hood

Voted against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

9.3 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Go to 01:49:00 in the meeting recording to view this item.

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

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER UPDATE

- Council sends out a monthly e-newsletter to subscribers detailing our latest news and information. Sign up at [Hepburn Life Hepburn Shire Council](#)
- After adoption of the Council Plan and other key strategic documents at the June Meeting, many meetings with staff and stakeholders have occurred (and will continue to occur) to ensure implementation.
- The Environmental Effects Statement (EES) for the proposed Western Renewables Link (WRL) project is being publicly exhibited. Although this is not a Council project, Council has allocated significant funding within its budget to support a comprehensive submission, reflecting strong community concern and a clear opposition to the project. Staff are working on a detailed submission for Council to consider at the August Council meeting and are holding a number of community information sessions.
- As part of this year's NAIDOC Week celebrations, Council proudly launched its INNOVATE Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), a key milestone in Council's ongoing commitment to truth-telling, respect, and meaningful change.
- The Victoria Park (Daylesford) soccer field is set to benefit from the Victorian Government's Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Fund with \$269,780 in funding announced this month. The project will see the installation of new lighting infrastructure to provide 100 Lux level lighting at the soccer field in Victoria Park for the 2026 season.
- Expressions of interest are now open for sporting clubs who want to partner with Council and Women's Health Grampians to deliver Act@Play. The program aims to develop and deliver culture change programs that support clubs to develop welcoming and inclusive environments for all genders.
- Many school holiday programs were undertaken across the shire.
- We are super excited to share that a cutting taken from the original Tree of Knowledge has been planted in its new home in the lawn area at Burke Square in Daylesford. Thank you to our team at Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens who have been taking great care of this precious cutting.
- A number of projects are open for community feedback through our Participate Hepburn page - [Home Hepburn Shire Council](#)
 - Newlyn Recreation Reserve Playspace Feasibility Project
 - Hepburn Mineral Springs Reserve Masterplan Development
 - Hammon Park Trailhead Precinct Traffic Management Plan
 - Draft Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS)

- Council completed an \$850,000 reconstruction of 1.9 km of Dean-Newlyn Road in Newlyn, with \$700,000 of Federal funding to assist.
- We are excited to see The Block start screening on Sunday 27 July to showcase Daylesford and our beautiful region.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Chief Executive Officer's Report for July 2025.

MOTION

That Council receives and notes the Chief Executive Officer's Report for July 2025.

Moved: Cr Lesley Hewitt

Seconded: Cr Pat Hockey

Carried

Voted for: Cr Tony Clark, Cr Shirley Cornish, Cr Tim Drylie, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Pat Hockey and Cr Brian Hood

Voted against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

10 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

10.1 CLOSURE OF MEETING TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Go to 01:49:58 in the meeting recording to view this item.

Pursuant to section 66(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) Council or delegated committee must keep a meeting open to the public unless the Council or delegated committee considers it necessary to close the meeting to the public because a circumstance specified in subsection (2) applies.

The circumstances detailed in section 66(2) of the Act are:

- a) the meeting is to consider confidential information; or
- b) security reasons; or
- c) it is necessary to do so to enable the meeting to proceed in an orderly manner.

RECOMMENDATION

That in accordance with sections 66(1) and 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020, the meeting to be closed to members of the public for the consideration of the following confidential items:

1.1 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Because it is personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs;

This ground applies because the item concerns applications to Council's Audit and Risk Committee and personal information of the applicants.

1.2 APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURE OVER FINANCIAL DELEGATION - PUBLIC LIABILITY, PRODUCTS AND PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE 2025/2026

Because it is private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage;

The ground applies because report includes information relating to the commercial offering and the operation of the provider.

MOTION

That in accordance with sections 66(1) and 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020, the meeting to be closed to members of the public for the consideration of the following confidential items:

1.1 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Because it is personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs;

This ground applies because the item concerns applications to Council's Audit and Risk Committee and personal information of the applicants.

1.2 APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURE OVER FINANCIAL DELEGATION - PUBLIC LIABILITY, PRODUCTS AND PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE 2025/2026

Because it is private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage;

The ground applies because report includes information relating to the commercial offering and the operation of the provider.

Moved: Cr Lesley Hewitt

Seconded: Cr Pat Hockey

Carried

Voted for: Cr Tony Clark, Cr Shirley Cornish, Cr Tim Drylie, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Pat Hockey and Cr Brian Hood

Voted against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

The meeting closed to the public at 7:52pm for the hearing of confidential items and did not reopen to the public.

The Confidential Meeting opened at 7:52pm.

The Council determined to release the following information to the public on these items as detailed below.

1.1 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEMBERS

MOTION

That Council:

- 1. Endorses the Panel's recommendation to appoint Ms Rebecca McKenzie and Mr James Kelly to the Audit and Risk Committee for a term of four years, with the option to extend for a further four years;*
- 2. Notes that the skills and attributes of the recommended independent committee members fulfil the requirements pursuant to section 53(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2020;*

- 3. Formally thanks and acknowledges the contribution, skills and attributes of Dr Jason Young and Mr Kelvin Tori to the Committee during their tenure, noting that Mr Kelvin Tori's term will cease in November 2025;*
- 4. Amends the Audit and Risk Committee Charter to alter the composition of the recruitment panel to include one member of the Executive, one Councillor representative and one Independent Member;*
- 5. Resolves that, pursuant to Section 125(2) of the Local Government Act 2020, the resolution will be made available in the Public Minutes; and,*
- 6. Resolves that the Chief Executive Officer communicate the effect of this resolution to the extent necessary to give effect to it.*

Moved: Cr Clark

Seconded: Cr Cornish

Carried

For: Cr Tony Clark, Cr Pat Hockey, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Shirley Cornish

Against: Cr Brian Hood

Abstained: Cr Tim Drylie

1.2 APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURE OVER FINANCIAL DELEGATION - PUBLIC LIABILITY, PRODUCTS AND PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE 2025/2026

This item is to remain confidential as it is Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released. This information will remain confidential until documentation has been signed.

11 CLOSE OF MEETING

The Meeting closed at 8:34pm and did not reopen to the public.