



# AGENDA

## Council Meeting

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**6.00pm Tuesday 27 June 2023**

**VENUE:**  
**Golden Plains Civic Centre**  
**Council Chambers**  
**2 Pope Street, Bannockburn**

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING  
6.00pm Tuesday 25 July 2023

Copies of Golden Plains Shire Council's Agendas & Minutes  
Can be obtained online at [www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au](http://www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au)

## **Code of Conduct Principles**

### **WORKING TOGETHER**

We Councillors will:

- acknowledge and respect that a diversity of opinion exists among us;
- recognise that each of us has different life experience, knowledge and values, and that all of these contribute collectively to our discussions;
- behave with courtesy towards each other, Council officers and our citizens;
- conform to the policy and precedents that guide the conduct of meetings;
- attend punctually and participate in all relevant meetings, workshops and briefings;
- share reasonably in the representation, ceremonial and hosting tasks of the full Council; and
- honour the majority decisions made by the Council, irrespective of our own position, and explain these decisions frankly to the community, once made.

### **BEHAVING WITH INTEGRITY**

We Councillors will:

- identify our financial and personal interest, or potential interest, in any matter that comes before the Council;
- be honest and truthful;
- comply with laws and the regulations deriving there from;
- respect Council property and be frugal in its use, where allowed;
- avoid using our position for personal gain or to achieve advantage over others or to obtain preferential treatment;
- be sympathetic to the legitimate concerns of our citizens;
- act impartially when making decisions and have due regard to the needs of the community as a whole, rather than that of narrow vested interest; and
- acknowledge the role of Council officers in providing advice to us and in implementing Council decisions.

### **MAKING COMPETENT DECISIONS**

We Councillors will:

- without diminishing the short term focus, approach decisions with due regard to the long term needs of the municipality;
- form policies with regard to the needs of the entire Shire;
- direct our attentions to the strategic and statutory needs of the municipality rather than short term, transient, operational issues;
- seek to fully inform ourselves on the issues before Council before making a decision;
- take all reasonable steps to improve our knowledge of matters relevant to our municipal duties; and
- use and respect the professional knowledge of Council officers and other advisers to Council.

## Members of the Gallery

Welcome to a Golden Plains Shire Council meeting and thank you for joining us.

### MEETING PROCEDURES

The procedures for this Council meeting are provided in Council's Governance Rules. A copy of the Governance Rules can be found on Council's [website](#).

### MEETING FACILITIES

Council meetings are generally held at:

- Golden Plains Shire Council Civic Centre (2 Pope Street, Bannockburn)
- Linton Shire Hall (68 Sussex Street, Linton)
- The Well, Smythesdale (19 Heales Street, Smythesdale)

### EXPECTATIONS OF THE GALLERY

Council meetings are decision-making forums and it is important that they are open to the community to attend and view proceedings. Community members may participate in Council meetings in accordance with Chapter 2, Division 7 of the Governance Rules.

At each meeting, there is an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions of the Council. Questions must be submitted to Council no later than 10:00am on the day of the meeting in order to be asked at the meeting.

Members of the public present at Council meetings must remain silent during the proceedings except when specifically invited to address the meeting. Mobile devices are permitted for silent use but must not be used for recording, talking or any usage that generates noise, unless permission is granted by the Chairperson of the meeting.

The Chairperson of the meeting may remove a person from the meeting if the person continues to interject or gesticulate offensively after being asked to desist. The Chairperson may cause the removal of any object or material that is deemed by them to be objectionable or disrespectful.

The Chairperson may call a break in a meeting for either a short time or to resume another day if the behaviour at the Council table or in the gallery is significantly disrupting the meeting.

### RECORDING OF MEETINGS

Council meetings are recorded and streamed live on the internet. Recordings are archived and available on Council's [Youtube page](#).

All care is taken to maintain your privacy however as a visitor in the public gallery, your presence may be recorded.

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## **1 OPENING DECLARATION**

We the Councillors of Golden Plains Shire declare that we will undertake, on every occasion, to carry out our duties in the best interest 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 Golden Plains Shire

## **2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

Golden Plains Shire spans the Traditional lands of the Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Peoples.

Council acknowledges them as the Traditional Owners and Custodians and pays its respects to both Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Elders past, present and emerging.

Council extends that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are part of Golden Plains Shire.

## **3 APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

## **4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

### **Recommendation**

That Council confirms the minutes as circulated of the scheduled Council meetings held on 23 May and 6 June 2023 and confidential minutes of the scheduled Council meeting held on 23 May 2023, which remain confidential in accordance with section 3(1)(h) of the Local Government Act 2020.

## **5 DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

## **6 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

## **7 BUSINESS REPORTS FOR DECISION**

### **7.1 CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY**

**File Number:**

**Author:** Elise Holmes, Executive Assistant to the CEO

**Authoriser:** Eric Braslis, CEO

**Attachments:** Nil

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Council would like to congratulate the following residents on their decision to become Australian Citizens:

- Declan Leonard who is from Ireland and resides in Bannockburn
- Maxime Robert Maghe who is from Belgium and resides in Teesdale
- Paul Michael Mitchell who is from the United Kingdom and resides in She-Oaks

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A formal Citizenship Ceremony will take place at the commencement of the Council Meeting.

## **7.2 DELEGATES REPORT & INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS RECORDS**

**File Number:****Author:** Elise Holmes, Executive Assistant to the CEO**Authoriser:** Eric Braslis, CEO

**Attachments:**

1. Informal Meeting of Councillors Record - 6 June 2023 (Strategic Briefing Meeting)
2. Informal Meeting of Councillors Record - 20 June 2023 (CEO Performance Workshop)
3. Informal Meeting of Councillors Record - 20 June 2023 (Briefing Meeting)

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receive and note the Delegates Report and Informal Meetings of Councillors for the past month.

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

At each Council meeting, Councillors have the opportunity to update their colleagues and the community about attendances at various Delegated Boards/Committees/Meetings that they attended on behalf of the Council and can acknowledge significant community events or Council functions / engagement opportunities that they have attended over the past month. This report contains records of informal meetings of Councillors as defined under Rule 1 of Chapter 5 of Council's Governance Rules.

### **MANDATORY BOARDS / COMMITTEES / MEETINGS**

- Audit Committee
- G21 - Board of Directors
- Central Highlands Councils Victoria
- Peri Urban Group of Rural Councils
- Berrybank Wind Farm Community Engagement Committee
- Municipal Association of Victoria
- Geelong Regional Library Corporation
- Tourism Greater Geelong and the Bellarine Board
- Grampians Central West Waste & Resource Recovery Group - Local Government Forum
- Council Meeting, Strategic Briefing, Councillor Briefing and Portfolio meetings

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / EVENTS**

#### **Cr Cunningham**

- Readings at Bannockburn Library for National Simultaneous Story Time
- Mayoral Presentations to Year 5 students at Bannockburn P-12
- Photo Opportunity – New Excavator at Inverleigh
- Meeting with CEO and Libby Coker MP
- Golden Plains Farmers Market

- Inverleigh vs Belmont Football Match
- ZINEverleigh Zine Fair
- Meeting with CEO and Sarah Mansfield MP
- Central Highlands Economic Development Facilitators Forum
- ALGA National General Assembly in Canberra
- Golden Plains Business & Community Networking Lunch with Holly Bailey
- Golden Plains Careers Expo
- Meeting with Maternal Health & Childcare Team
- Meeting with representatives from Haven Home Safe

**Cr Gamble**

- Readings (8) at Bannockburn Library for National Simultaneous Story Time
- Mayoral Presentations to Year 5 students at Bannockburn P-12
- Friends of Inverleigh Nature Reserve Meeting - AGM and hosting of Leon Costermans
- Golden Plains Farmers Market
- ZINEverleigh Zine Fair
- Smythesdale Growing Places Information Session and Engagement
- Golden Plains Careers Expo
- Koala Clancy Foundation Group Tree Planting, Teesdale

**Cr Getsom**

- Nil

**Cr Kirby**

- Mayoral Presentation to Year 5 students at Bannockburn P-12
- Active Ageing and Inclusion External Advisory Group Meeting
- Golden Plains Business & Community Networking Lunch with Holly Bailey

**Cr Rowe**

- Nil

**Cr Sharkey**

- 2023 Rural and Regional Planning Conference, Marysville
- Small Libraries, Big Impact Webinar

**Cr Whitfield**

- Readings at Bannockburn Library for National Simultaneous Story Time

**INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS**

Rule 1 of Chapter 5 of the Governance Rules requires that if there is a meeting of Councillors that:

- a) Is scheduled or planned for the purpose of discussing the business of Council or briefing Councillors.
- b) Is attended by an absolute majority of Councillors and one member of Council staff; and
- c) Is not a Council meeting, delegated committee meeting or community asset committee meeting.

The Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a summary of the matters discussed at the meeting are:

- a) Tabled at the next convenient Council meeting; and
- b) Recorded in the minutes of that Council meeting.

Records of informal meetings of Councillors are reported to an open Council meeting in order to promote transparency of Council decisions, actions and information, in accordance with the Governance Principles as contained in s9(2) Local Government Act 2020. The informal meetings of Councillors records are attached to this report. Rule 6 of Chapter 5 of the Governance Rules provides procedures for the declaration of a conflict of interest at a meeting being held under the auspices of Council, which includes a meeting which meets the definition of an informal meeting of Councillors under Rule 1 of Chapter 5. The informal meetings of Councillors records attached include any declarations of conflicts of interest made at these meetings.

**7.3 ADOPTION OF THE GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL BUDGET 2023-24****File Number:****Author:** Fiona Rae, Manager Finance**Authoriser:** Lynne Gray, Director Corporate Services**Attachments:**

1. 2023-24 Draft Budget
2. 2023-24 Revenue and Rating Plan
3. 2023-24 Draft Fees and Charges

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1. Note the 4 written submissions received on the Draft Budget 2023-24 and considered at the 6 June 2023 Special Council Meeting;
2. Adopt the 2023-24 Budget contained in attachment 1, in accordance with section 94 of the *Local Government Act 2020*;
3. Adopt the Revenue and Rating Plan contained in attachment 2, in accordance with section 93 of the *Local Government Act 2020*;
4. Approve and fix the service and user fees as set in the 2023-24 Budget; contained in attachment 3;
5. Declare the amount of rates and charges intended to be raised from the period 1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024 as follows:
  - (a) An amount of \$29,202,101 (or such greater amount as is lawfully levied as a consequence of this recommendation being adopted) be declared as the amount which Council intends to raise by general rates, the municipal charge and the annual service charges, which amount is calculated as follows:
    - (i) General Rates (including supplementary rates and interest) raised through differential rates - \$22,065,250
    - (ii) Municipal Charge (including on supplementary rates) - \$2,967,750
    - (iii) Annual service (garbage) charge - \$4,169,101
6. Declare the rates and charges for the period 1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024 as detailed in:
  - (a) Appendix 1 of the 2023-24 Budget, noting the adjustment of the rate in the dollar based on final revaluation for 2023; and
  - (b) Council's Revenue and Rating Plan as required under s94(2) (1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* and s161(2) of the *Local Government Act 1989*;
7. Determine to allow:
  - (a) In accordance with section 167(1) and (2) of the *Local Government Act 1989*, payment of rates and charges by four approximately equal instalments paid on or before 30 September 2023, 30 November 2023, 28 February 2024 and 31 May 2024;
  - (b) In accordance with section 167(2A) and (2B) of the *Local Government Act 1989*, payment of rates and charges by lump sum on or before 15 February 2024; or
  - (c) Payment of rates and charges by ten approximately equal direct debit payments from 15 September 2023 until 15 June 2024;
8. Require that any person pay interest on any amounts of rates and charges in accordance with section 10 of the *Local Government Legislation Amendment (Rating and Other Matters) Act 2022* which:
  - (a) That person is liable to pay;

- (b) Have not been paid by the dates specified for their payment; and
  - (c) Is not otherwise waived as part of Council's Hardship Policy
9. Authorise the Director Corporate Services and Manager Finance to levy and recover the general rates and service charges in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989*;
10. Authorise the Manager Finance to make any changes to the 2023-24 Budget as a result of anything that occurs after the making of this resolution, provided that they are changes of a minor and/or administrative character.
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks to formally adopt the 2023-24 Budget, incorporating the 2023-24 rating fees and charges pursuant to Section 96 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The 2022-23 Draft Budget has been prepared based on the adopted principles within the 2021-2025 Council Plan and Financial Plan with rate revenue modelled at a 3.50% average rate cap increase in accordance with the Minister for Local Government's announcement in December 2022.

After making the document available for public inspection and inviting submissions under Section 96 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council received a total of 4 submissions. A Special Meeting of Council was held on Tuesday 6 June 2023 to consider the submissions received with no changes made from the budget submissions.

Separately, amendments have been made to the budget following the announcement of additional grant funds, other government announcements and notifications and following a final review, as outlined below:

- \$769k additional Local Roads & Community Infrastructure Phase 4 grant funding
- \$769k additional LRCI capital projects (Slate Quarry Road)
- \$61k reduction in Active Ageing and Inclusion grant funding
- \$40k reduction in Active Ageing and Inclusion programs
- \$7k increase in training to support updated training and development policy
- \$80k increase in employee costs
- \$269k increase in Financial Assistance grant funding

## BACKGROUND

Section 96 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to adopt the Annual Budget by 30 June each year.

As part of Council's ongoing Community Engagement activities, Council and officers have undertaken many forms of engagement with the community. The feedback from this engagement has been utilised throughout the process of developing both the Council Plan and Annual Budget.

Prior to the Draft Budget being finalised, Council reviewed the document and participated in a workshop to ensure it delivered the services and initiatives contained in the Council Plan and again reflective of the feedback from the community. The final draft of the budget was discussed at the 25 April 2023 Council meeting where Council confirmed its support for the document and resolved to place it on public exhibition and invite submissions from the community.

After making the document available for public inspection and inviting submissions under Section 6 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council received a total of 4 submissions. A Council meeting was held on Tuesday 6 June 2023 to consider the submissions received. Submitters will receive a formal response to their submissions from Council.

## DISCUSSION

The 2023-24 Draft Budget is appended to this report and includes a detailed list of the capital works program. Draft 2023-24 Fees and Charges were provided at the March Strategic Briefing.

The 2023-24 Draft Fees and Charges are provided in attachment three, which include minor updates and updated 2023-24 statutory fees which were not set in March.

### Budget Summary

- Total operating revenue of \$62.3 million;
- Operating Expenditure of \$48.9 million to continue to deliver services to the Golden Plains community with an increased focus on infrastructure maintenance;
- Operating surplus \$13.4 million;
- Underlying surplus of \$0.55 million;
- Cash inflow from operations of \$20.4 million; and
- Total Capital Works investment of \$23.1 million of which asset renewal makes up 35%, capital upgrade 55%, expansion 5% and new assets of 5%.

The 2023-24 budget is forecasting an underlying surplus of \$557k and includes \$3m for Lomandra Drive land sales. Ongoing review of the financial results will be conducted throughout the 2023-24 year with the financial position and analysis against budget included in the quarterly finance council report.

The Financial Performance Indicators disclosed in the budget reflect Council's ongoing commitment to sound financial management. The indicators Council considers critical are outlined in table below and shows that the 2023-24 results are generally positive when compared to best practice and Council's preferred targets.

Indicator	Budget 2023-24	Best Practice	GPS Target	Traffic Light Position
Surplus <sup>1</sup>	\$13,398k	>\$0	>\$5,000k	
Adjusted Underlying Result <sup>2</sup>	\$557k	>\$0	>\$0	
Working Capital (%) <sup>3</sup>	107%	>100%	>180%	
Borrowings (% of Rates and Charges) <sup>4</sup>	29%	<60%	<30%	
Cash Balance <sup>5</sup>	\$13,553k	>\$0	>\$5,000k	

### Budget Principles

The draft budget has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*. The budget seeks to achieve the actions and activities set out in the Council Plan by balancing the demand for services and infrastructure with the community's capacity to pay.

This year, the creation of the draft budget was based on the following principles;

- Rate revenue modelled on valuations with a 3.5% average rate cap increase;
- Waste management fee increase from \$389 to \$427 per property
- Council User Fees – at 3.5% increase apart from kindergarten fees which are based on cost recovery
- Lomandra Drive land sales - \$3.0m profit included
- No increases in operational expenditure beyond a 3.50% increase in line with the rate cap;
- Salary and wages increased based on estimates of new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement;

<sup>1</sup> Surplus – The net result of total revenue and expenditure, including non-cash items such as depreciation.

<sup>2</sup> Adjusted Underlying Result – Surplus less non-recurrent capital grants, non-monetary asset contributions and other contributions to fund capital expenditure. These items have the potential to incorrectly inflate the operating surplus.

<sup>3</sup> Working Capital – This is a measure of Council's ability to meet its short term commitments.

<sup>4</sup> Borrowings – Balance of total interest bearing loans and liabilities as a percentage of rates and charges (including garbage charges). The prudent limit is considered to be 60%.

<sup>5</sup> Cash Balance – The total cash and cash equivalents.

- 5 additional FTEs; and
- Waste management cost increases for the State Government mandated landfill levy increase and contracted expenses.

### Capital Works

Of the \$23.1 million capital works programme Council is investing more than \$7.9 million into the renewal of assets including our extensive rural roads and bridge network. In our large rural Shire, Council maintains more than 1,744km of local roads across Golden Plains. Council has maintained its commitment to improving, resealing and resheeting local roads, and new infrastructure including bridge replacements, kerb and channelling, and widening existing roads. Key projects included in the 2023-24 budget are:

- Local road resealing program
- Local road improvements
- Local roads and community infrastructure projects – phase 4 (drainage improvements at various locations, Sebastapol Smythesdale Road, Inverleigh Golf Club septic system, Ross Creek public toilet and septic upgrade, Linton Rec Reserve safety fencing)
- Bridge renewal
- Bridge replacement (Hendersons Road bridge masonry abutments, Cape Clear-Rokewood Road bridge, Wurrook Road bridge)
- Emergency drainage works
- Northern Streetscape implementation
- Bannockburn Skate Park
- Maude Community Hall
- Bannockburn Family Services Centre extension
- Woody Yaloak (Smythesdale) lighting
- Bannockburn Vic Park Netball Pavillion
- Teesdale Don Wallace Rec Reserve
- Inverleigh Active Youth Space

### Operational Programs

Key operational programs in the 2023-24 Budget include:

- Preparation of an Open Space Strategy for the Shire
- Continuation of the Community Strengthening Grants Program
- Funding for six more communities to progress through the Community Planning Program
- Continued implementation of Climate Emergency Plan actions
- Development of 2 recreation reserve masterplans for the Smythesdale Gardens/Brewery Dam and Woody Yaloak Equestrian Centre to guide future development
- Completion and adoption of the Tracks and Trails Strategy
- Completion and adoption of the Footpath Strategy
- Completion and community consultation on Waste Services transition to reflect State mandated 4 bin service
- Completion and adoption of Moorabool River masterplan
- Continued development and implementation of the Core Systems Transformation Project

- Implementation of new Learning and Development and Performance Management Strategy
- Development and implementation of the Safety & Wellbeing Strategy

### Customer Hardship Support

Council recognises the current economic climate of increasing costs placing more financial pressure on customers. An initiative to provide support to customers experiencing hardship in the form of a rate rebate has been included with \$50k allocated in the 2023-24 budget to support customers experiencing financial difficulty in accordance with Council's financial hardship policy.

### Declaration of Rates

The amount of \$29,202,101 (or such other amount as is lawfully raised) is declared in respect of the 2023-24 financial year as the amount which Council intends to raise by general rates, municipal charge and annual services charges, which is calculated as follows:

<i>General Rates</i>	<i>\$21,417,250</i>
<i>Municipal Charge</i>	<i>\$2,887,750</i>
<i>Annual Service (Garbage) Charge</i>	<i>\$4,169,101</i>
<i>Supplementary Rates Income</i>	<i>\$498,000</i>
<i>Municipal Charge on Supplementary Rates</i>	<i>\$80,000</i>
<i>Interest on Rates</i>	<i>\$150,000</i>

### **1. General Rates**

- 1.1. *A general rate be declared in respect of the 2023-24 Financial Year.*
- 1.2. *It be further declared that the general rate be raised by the application of differential rates.*
- 1.4. *Each differential rate will be determined by multiplying the Capital Improved Value of each rateable land (categorised by the characteristics described in the Attachment to this resolution) by the relevant cents in the dollar indicated in the following table, or such lesser amount as required to achieve compliance with Part 4, Section 94 – Rate caps of the Local Government Act 2020:*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Cents in the dollar on CIV*</b>	<b>Rating Differential</b>
<i>Residential Improved</i>	<i>0.1927 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>Business, Industrial &amp; Commercial</i>	<i>0.1927 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>Business, Industrial and Commercial (Bannockburn)</i>	<i>0.2506 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value</i>	<i>130%</i>
<i>Farm Land Broadacre</i>	<i>0.1687 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value</i>	<i>87.5%</i>
<i>Farm Land Intensive</i>	<i>0.1831 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value</i>	<i>95%</i>
<i>Farm Land &lt; 40 Hectares</i>	<i>0.1927 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>Non Farm Vacant Land</i>	<i>0.3952 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value</i>	<i>205%</i>
<i>Vacant Land Non Developable</i>	<i>0.1927 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value</i>	<i>100%</i>

*\*The above rates in the dollar are based on stage 4 certified 2023 Revaluations.*

## 2. Municipal Charge

- 2.1. *A municipal charge be declared in respect of the 2023-24 Financial Year.*
- 2.2. *The municipal charge be declared for the purpose of covering some of the costs of Council.*
- 2.4. *It be confirmed that the municipal charge is declared in respect of all rateable land within the municipal district in respect of which a municipal charge may be levied.*

## 3. Annual Service (Garbage) Charge

- 3.1. *An annual service charge be declared in respect of the 2023-24 Financial Year.*
- 3.2. *The annual service charge be declared for the collection and disposal of refuse (including recyclables).*
- 3.3. *The annual service charge be:*
  - 3.3.1. *in the sum of \$427 for each rateable land (or part) in respect of which the annual service charge may be levied; and*
  - 3.3.2. *based on ownership of any land used primarily for residential purposes within the area designated for waste collection in the plan, which are the criteria for the annual service charge so declared.*

## 4. Consequential

- 4.1. *It be recorded that Council requires any person to pay interest on any amount of rates and charges to which:*
  - 4.1.1. *that person is liable to pay; and*
  - 4.1.2. *have not been paid by the date specified for their payment*
- 4.2. *The Chief Executive officer be authorised to levy and recover the general rates, municipal charge and annual service charge in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020.*
- 4.3. *The Chief Executive officer be authorised to make so much of Council's rating database available as is reasonably necessary to enable any person to ascertain the designation of any land located within any of the areas bounded by the continuous and unbroken lines in the plans included in the 2023-24 Budget.*

### Budget Submissions

After placing the 2023-24 Draft Budget on public exhibition, 4 submissions were received, which are summarised in the table below:

Township	Summary of Submission
Batesford	Request Council set aside a budget for the Batesford masterplan. Proposed rate cap of 3.5% suggests a high likelihood of rates increasing again this year but hope to see a reduction in our rates this year due to additional rates contributions from new land and therefore seek a response regarding the rates forecast and impact on Batesford.
Haddon	Requesting a percentage of the road budget be allocated to unsealed roads to seal them when they have passed 40 years of being a dirt road, specifically Racecourse Road in Haddon which is sealed apart from a small section.
Batesford	More funding requested for the Moorabool River reserve to allow for regular maintenance noting the condition of the reserve along the river has deteriorated.
Ross Creek	Expressing concern about the road conditions on Burgess Road in Ross Creek and request allocating some budget to improve the road condition.

Consideration of these budget submissions did not result in any changes being made to the 2023-24 budget, however, of note the grading of Burgess Road was already reflected in the budgeted grading plan for 2023-24.

## REPORTING AND COMPLIANCE STATEMENTS

*Local Government Act 2020 (LGA 2020)*

Implications	Applicable to this Report
<b>Governance Principles</b> (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Policy/Relevant Law</b> (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Environmental/Sustainability Implications</b> (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Community Engagement</b> (Consideration of Community Engagement Principles under s.56 LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Public Transparency</b> (Consideration of Public Transparency Principles under s.58 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Strategies and Plans</b> (Consideration of Strategic Planning Principles under s.89 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Financial Management</b> (Consideration of Financial Management Principles under s.101 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Service Performance</b> (Consideration of Service Performance Principles under s.106 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Yes
<b>Communication</b>	Yes
<b>Human Rights Charter</b>	Yes
<b>Gender Equality</b> (Gender Impact Assessment required by s.9 of Gender Equality Act 2020)	Yes

### GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

The 2023-24 Draft Budget has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

### POLICY/RELEVANT LAW

*Local Government Act 2020*

*Local Government Amendment (Fair Go Rates) Act 2015*

*Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*

Financial Plan

Annual Budget

### ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Environmentally sustainable design and construction is included for all projects.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The principles contained in the 2021-2025 Council Plan were adopted after an extensive community engagement and consultation process. As mentioned earlier in the report the Draft Budget has been prepared based on these adopted principles.

As part of Council's Community Engagement Strategy, Council has implemented an ongoing process which has seen Councillors and officers participate in engagement activities prior to, and throughout, the process of developing the draft Budget.

A range of mediums were used in order to communicate to the community about the public exhibition period, including:

- Budget Engagement workshop in February;
- Public Consultation online session in May;
- Article in Golden Plains Shire Gazette;
- Notices in the Geelong Advertiser and Ballarat Courier;
- Notices on Council's website, including a link directly to the submission page;
- Posts on Council's social media accounts; and
- Electronic copy made available on Council's website or in hard copy on request.

The 2023-24 Draft Budget has been placed on public exhibition in accordance with Council's public consultation policy and was made available for inspection and comment up to the 29 May 2023 with feedback heard at a council meeting on 6 June 2023.

## **PUBLIC TRANSPARENCY**

The public consultation process facilitates transparency of the budget submitted for adoption and all Council reports are available for the public to access.

## **STRATEGIES/PLANS**

The 2023-24 Draft Budget has been prepared ensuring consistency with Council's long term financial plan, and also ensuring alignment with the 2021-2025 Council Plan.

## **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

The 2023-24 Draft Budget has been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*, Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements. Financial sustainability is monitored by considering the financial result for the period and key financial indicators within Council's long term financial plan

## **SERVICE PERFORMANCE**

Service performance levels are considered when developing the annual budget to ensure sufficient funds are available to meet required levels of performance.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

There are identified risk implications associated with this report, detailed below:

The 2023-24 Draft Budget has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* incorporating long term financial plan requirements to ensure financial sustainability over the short and long term.

## **COMMUNICATION**

The 2023-24 Draft Budget has been reported to Council as it has been formulated with a series of workshops held with Council to facilitate the development of the draft budget. Budget engagement workshops were held in February 2023 and May 2023 with the 2023-24 Draft Budget placed on public exhibition from 26 April to 29 May 2023. Public submissions were considered at the 6 June 2023 Council meeting and adoption of the budget at the 27 June 2023 Council meeting.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS CHARTER**

It is considered that this report does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (VIC).

## **GENDER EQUALITY**

A gender impact assessment has been undertaken on the budget development process and has not identified any gender equality concerns. Any policies, programs or services that are proposed to be reviewed or developed as a result of adoption of the 2023-24 budget that would have a direct or significant impact on the public will be subject to a specific gender impact assessment at the planning stage.

## **OPTIONS**

### Option 1 – Council adopt the 2023-24 Budget

This option is recommended by officers as it is a requirement of the *Local Government Act 2020* to prepare and annual budget and formally adopt the budget by 30 June. Council have provided an extensive amount of information on all aspects of the budget and have also been involved in key decisions during the formulation. Adoption of the 2023-24 Budget will enable operations to continue, such as purchases relating to operations and capital works, and the issuing of the annual rates notices.

### Option 2 – Council postpone the adoption of the 2023-24 Budget

This option is not recommended by officers as postponing the adoption of the 2023-24 Budget will cause delays in delivering programs and projects as any new budgets are required to be approved by Council. If there are any delays in the adoption of the 2023-24 Budget this would impact the timing of the issuing of annual rates notices as the annual declaration of rates is included as part of the budget process. If not adopted this would prevent issuing the annual rates notices to customers.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No officer involved in preparing this report has any conflicts of interest in regards to this matter.

## **CONCLUSION**

Council has prepared the 2023-24 budget in accordance with Section 96 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and undertaken all requirements under the *Local Government Act 2020*; including undertaking the statutory advertising process, the call for submissions, and providing the opportunity for submissions to be considered prior to adoption.

## 7.4 COMMUNITY VISION 2040 REFRESH

**File Number:****Author:** Renee Williams, Coordinator Community Development**Authoriser:** Steven Sagona, Director Community, Planning & Growth**Attachments:** Nil**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1. Resolves to commence a review of the 'Golden Plains Community Vision 2040'.
2. Notes that the intention of the review process is for an update and refresh of the existing Community Vision 2040, not a complete rewrite or a new plan.
3. Notes that community engagement will occur in the first half of 2024, followed by presentation of a draft Community Vision to Council for consideration and endorsement prior to the council elections in 2024.
4. Notes that following the 2024 council elections, the Chief Executive Officer will provide the newly elected Council with the endorsed draft Community Vision 2040 Refresh document for its consideration and determination of next steps.

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report presents a proposed methodology for the refresh of the 'Golden Plains Community Vision 2040'. The aim of this refresh process is to build upon the existing plan, recognising and consolidating the valuable work already done by the community in developing the current 2040 Vision. The proposed methodology includes the preparation of consultation documentation by officers in late 2023, followed by community engagement in early 2024, allowing for the presentation and endorsement of a draft Community Vision by the current Council prior to the 2024 council elections. The endorsed draft would then be 'handed over' to the next Council for its consideration and determination of next steps.

**BACKGROUND**

Preparation of a Community Vision is a requirement of section 9(2)(d) of the *Local Government Act 2020*. The Act requires that Council adopt a Community Vision for at least the next 10 financial years, describing the community aspirations for the future of the municipality. The Community Vision is then used to inform the development of the Council Plan, which sets out Council's objectives and strategies for the four financial years following each Council election.

The existing Golden Plains Community Vision was developed following significant community and stakeholder engagement in 2019 and 2020. This inclusive process ensured broad community involvement and collaboration, resulting in the identification of four key priority areas that serve as the foundation of the current plan:

1. *Sustainable Growth and Development*: Balancing responsible growth with the preservation of the natural environment and the character of the Golden Plains Shire.
2. *Connected Communities*: Building strong and interconnected communities through the provision of quality infrastructure, services and amenities that enhance social wellbeing and cohesion.
3. *Vibrant Economy*: Fostering a diverse and thriving economy that promotes innovation, entrepreneurship and job creation while preserving the unique rural and agricultural character of the Shire.

4. *Environmental Stewardship*: Protecting and enhancing the natural environment, including land, waterways and biodiversity through sustainable practices, conservation efforts and climate change adaptation.

## DISCUSSION

At Council's 'Mid-term Strategic Session' in March this year, councillors engaged in an informal discussion about preparation of an updated Community Vision for Golden Plains Shire. Discussion touched on whether Council should facilitate an 'updated' or 'new' vision, and the extent of the current councillor group's role in supporting the next Council (to be elected in October 2024) to undertake this work. The process described in this report is consistent with the discussion that occurred on that occasion, and with subsequent officer consideration of various options.

Given that the current Community Vision was developed only a few years ago, a complete rewrite is not deemed necessary. The aim of the refresh is to build upon the existing plan, incorporating new considerations and learnings from various sources, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

The refresh process recognises the significant work done by the community and stakeholders in shaping the 2040 Vision, specifically in relation to the four key priority areas, and aims to refine and enhance the current plan by incorporating new insights and addressing emerging challenges. Consultation documentation prepared by officers including updated demographic research will be presented to Council in late 2023, to inform a community consultation process in the first half of 2024. The consultation process will allow for a 'sense check' of the current priorities, ensuring they remain relevant and respond to the evolving needs and aspirations of the Golden Plains community.

Since the development of the current 2040 community vision, the world has undergone significant changes, particularly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the pandemic is not the main driver for the refresh, it provides an opportunity to reflect on and respond to the impacts and lessons learned during this time. The pandemic brought about shifts in various aspects of life, including the way we live, work and interact. It has highlighted the need for resilience, adaptability, and a re-evaluation of priorities. Meanwhile, the shire has continued to grow and the draft 'Growing Places Strategy' now provides a greater insight into what the shire may look like in 2040 and beyond.

The refresh process provides an opportunity to ensure that the Community Vision 2040 takes all of these and other relevant considerations into account.

## REPORTING AND COMPLIANCE STATEMENTS

*Local Government Act 2020 (LGA 2020)*

Implications	Applicable to this Report
<b>Governance Principles</b> (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Policy/Relevant Law</b> (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Environmental/Sustainability Implications</b> (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Community Engagement</b> (Consideration of Community Engagement Principles under s.56 LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Public Transparency</b> (Consideration of Public Transparency Principles under s.58 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Strategies and Plans</b> (Consideration of Strategic Planning Principles under s.89 of LGA 2020)	Yes

<b>Financial Management</b> (Consideration of Financial Management Principles under s.101 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Service Performance</b> (Consideration of Service Performance Principles under s.106 of LGA 2020)	No
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	No
<b>Communication</b>	Yes
<b>Human Rights Charter</b>	Yes
<b>Gender Equality</b> (Gender Impact Assessment required by s.9 of Gender Equality Act 2020)	Yes

## GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

The process of refreshing the Golden Plains Community Vision 2040 will be undertaken in accordance with the Governance Principles of Section 9 the Local Government Act 2020, which include:

- *Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;*
- *The economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted;*
- *The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making;*

A key component of this is that the community itself will 'own' the Community Vision, and that Council will engage in long term planning guided by the Community Vision.

## POLICY/RELEVANT LAW

Section 88 of the Local Government Act 2020 requires that Council adopt a Community Vision (for at least the next 10 financial years) describing the community aspirations for the future of the municipality.

## ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The refresh process will provide an opportunity for the community to consider environmental and sustainability matters of relevance to the shire's future, and in turn to inform Council's future planning and decision-making on such issues.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As required by Section 88 of the Local Government Act 2020, preparation of the Community Vision 2040 Refresh will be undertaken in accordance with Council's deliberative engagement practices as defined in the Council's Community Engagement Strategy and Action Plan. Council will be further briefed on the proposed community engagement process in late 2023.

## PUBLIC TRANSPARENCY

The development of the Community Vision 2040 Refresh will be an open and transparent process in accordance with the public transparency principles of the Local Government Act 2020.

## STRATEGIES/PLANS

One of the overarching principles in s.9 of the Local Government Act 2020 is that the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making. This is further defined by the Strategic Planning principles under section 89 of the LGA 2020.

The development, consultation and subsequent refresh of the Community Vision 2040 will be undertaken in accordance with these principles and in line with the objectives and principles of the current Golden Plains Shire Community Vision 2040.

## **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

There are no immediate financial considerations associated with this report. Initial work can be undertaken in-house. A budget allocation may be required in 2024-25 to take the work to completion.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

The Community Vision 2040 Refresh process will seek to mitigate the risks of insufficient planning and engagement with community and will seek to enable any future development of the Community Vision to be informed by robust, researched evidence and community consultation.

## **COMMUNICATION**

The community will be kept informed with regular updates about the progress of the Community Vision 2040 Refresh process.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS CHARTER**

This report does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (VIC).

## **GENDER EQUALITY**

Although there are no immediate gender inequality considerations associated with this report, Gender Impact Assessments will be undertaken at the appropriate time to ensure that community engagement processes and, ultimately, the refreshed Community Vision are considerate of gender equality.

## **OPTIONS**

Option 1 – That Council endorse the Community Vision 2040 Refresh process as presented in this report, or with appropriate amendments

This option is recommended by officers as the maintenance of a Community Vision is a requirement of the Local Government Act 2020, and the process outlined in this report is consistent with Council's previous discussion on this matter.

Option 2 – That Council does not endorse the Community Vision 2040 Refresh process

This option is not recommended by officers.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No officer involved in preparing this report has any conflicts of interest in regards to this matter.

## **CONCLUSION**

The proposed methodology for the refresh of the Golden Plains Community Vision 2040 builds upon the existing plan, recognising the previous valuable input of the community. The refresh process provides an opportunity to refine and enhance the current vision, ensuring its continued relevance and effectiveness. By engaging the community in early 2024, the current Council will have an opportunity to provide the next (newly elected) Council with somewhat of a 'head start' in its work with the community toward an update Community Vision that reflects the collective aspirations and priorities of the residents.

## 7.5 ADOPTION OF THE DOMESTIC WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023

### File Number:

**Author:** Matthew White, Coordinator Environmental Health

**Authoriser:** Steven Sagona, Director Community, Planning & Growth

**Attachments:** 1. Golden Plains Shire Domestic Wastewater Management Plan, 2023

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopt the 'Golden Plains Shire Domestic Wastewater Management Plan, 2023' (as attached).

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the State Environment Protection Policies (SEPP Waters), a Domestic Wastewater Management Plans (DWMP) is required to be updated every five years. The DWMP is used in conjunction with the EPA Code of Practice for use of onsite wastewater treatment systems to enable compliance with the *Environmental Protection Act 2017* as well as other Acts, Regulations, State and industry guidelines including Australian Standards.

Council's current DWMP has been reviewed and updated, with the 2023 version attached to this report for adoption. It aims to clarify Council's responsibilities for overseeing the management and installation of Onsite Wastewater Management Systems (OWMS) and plan an approach for Council to meet these responsibilities.

### BACKGROUND

Domestic wastewater planning is about the management of wastewater generated from toilets, kitchens and bathrooms in houses, workplaces and public buildings. Where sewerage is available, house owners pay water corporations to manage their domestic wastewater. However, if sewerage is not available, domestic wastewater must be managed onsite (via an OWMS), to ensure that the waste does not cause environmental and health problems for the site and surrounding areas.

The Golden Plains Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2023 aims to clarify Council's responsibilities for overseeing the management and installation of OWMS and plan an approach to meet these responsibilities. This is the third DWMP for Golden Plains Shire, developed with input from stakeholders following a review of the 2015 plan and consideration of legislative changes and other relevant matters.

### DISCUSSION

A DWMP is required to be in place as a part of the Environmental Protections Authority's legislation and guidance for best practice with respect to managing wastewater disposal on site. With the population projected to increase in the shire over the coming decade and increased subdivision of lots, it is important to have in place a current plan that gives clear direction to residents needing a licensed method of disposal and an officer approval system to give the best possible outcome to retain waste onsite.

Most dwellings within Golden Plains Shire are unsewered, resulting in approximately 8,500 existing OWMS. The density of OWMS increases at either 'end' of the shire in closer proximity to Geelong and Ballarat, particularly in and surrounding Bannockburn, Teesdale, Inverleigh, Lethbridge and Batesford in the south, and Smythes Creek, Haddon, Scarsdale and Linton in the north. Meredith also has a high density of OWMS.

Houses already connected to sewerage, and buildings with OWMS capable of discharging more than 5,000 L/day of wastewater, are not the subject of this plan. Only three towns in the shire are sewered - Bannockburn (central and western areas), Smythesdale and Enfield. These areas cover less than 0.5% of the shire. Two water corporations deliver water and sewerage services to

customers in Golden Plains - Barwon Water in the south and east, and Central Highlands Water in the north and west. A small but important part of the shire in the Moorabool River catchment is contained within a designated open potable water supply catchment in Barwon Water's service area.

EPA Victoria recently introduced a General Environmental Duty (GED) under the Environmental Protection Act 2017. Under the GED, household owners and occupiers of houses with OWMS are legally responsible for their own wastewater management. In an unsewered area this means they must ensure their OWMS is designed, installed and maintained to the required standard. Household owners apply to local government to obtain permits for installation of OWMS.

Councils are responsible for and/or have powers to:

- Issue and administer permits to construct, install or alter OWMS;
- Refuse a permit if an OWMS does not meet EPA's requirements;
- Oversee OWMS installation;
- Issue certificates of use;
- Order OWMS maintenance;
- Enforce breaches of duties including breaches to permit conditions and the GED;
- Refer high-risk unsewered areas to water corporations for investigation into sewer provision (see below regarding Meredith); and
- Develop DWMPs.

The Victorian Planning Provisions require that reticulated sewerage or an approved alternative is provided for at the time of subdivision of land. If reticulated sewerage is not available, all wastewater from each dwelling must be treated and retained within the lot in accordance with the requirements of the Environment Protection Regulations 2021 for an OWMS. If it cannot be demonstrated that this is possible, and a reticulated sewer is not available, then a lot must not be subdivided. The wastewater management objective and standard under the Victorian Planning Provisions also require OWMS to be consistent with a domestic wastewater management plan adopted by the relevant council.

When planning for domestic wastewater management, different strategies may be used to manage different risks. For example, existing OWMS require ongoing maintenance, and in some cases upgrades, to prevent public health and environmental issues, while new OWMS must be carefully designed and installed to avoid future problems. Domestic wastewater management planning must also consider issues associated with legacy OWMS on sewerable land, and the potential for future OWMS on sewerable, or sewer-able, land.

## **MEREDITH**

The DWMP highlights Meredith as high-risk for domestic wastewater for the following reasons:

- The town has a relatively large Township Zone (TZ) area adjacent to a tributary creek in the Moorabool catchment
- The community has previously expressed concern regarding stormwater drainage and environmental issues throughout the town, including impacts on the creek
- These issues have been thought to be compromised by failing OWMS
- There has been an increasing number of complaints regarding OWMS discharging offsite
- There has been demand for growth in Meredith for many years
- Recent in-fill growth, including the development of small lots (2,000-3,000 m<sup>2</sup>) has further increased the density of OWMS within the TZ and has been associated with several recent OWMS complaints.

A previous study of water quality concluded that the water quality of Coolebarghurk Creek at Meredith was at a level that precluded recreation, aesthetic enjoyment, stock watering, irrigation and impacted aquatic ecosystems. The study noted that nutrient concentrations were highest at the

mid-stream (township) location which may suggest that run-off and discharge from in and around the town are impacting water quality.

In relation to Meredith, the DWMP recommends the following actions to pursue a case for sewerage in Meredith:

- Council to confirm Meredith as the highest priority town in Golden Plains Shire for sewerage, including planning and environmental health teams
- Gauge indicative level of support from the local community and gather evidence to support a case for sewerage
- Engage with Barwon Water and work through the steps required to demonstrate the case for sewerage
- If successful, work with Barwon Water to put forward a proposal in the next water plan.

Council's Environmental Health Team has arranged further water testing to assist in the case for sewerage in Meredith and working closely with Council's Strategic Planning Team.

## REPORTING AND COMPLIANCE STATEMENTS

*Local Government Act 2020 (LGA 2020)*

Implications	Applicable to this Report
<b>Governance Principles</b> (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Policy/Relevant Law</b> (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Environmental/Sustainability Implications</b> (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Community Engagement</b> (Consideration of Community Engagement Principles under s.56 LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Public Transparency</b> (Consideration of Public Transparency Principles under s.58 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Strategies and Plans</b> (Consideration of Strategic Planning Principles under s.89 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Financial Management</b> (Consideration of Financial Management Principles under s.101 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Service Performance</b> (Consideration of Service Performance Principles under s.106 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Yes
<b>Communication</b>	Yes
<b>Human Rights Charter</b>	Yes
<b>Gender Equality</b> (Gender Impact Assessment required by s.9 of Gender Equality Act 2020)	No

## GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

The governance principles in s.9 of the Local Government Act 2020 give priority to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community and that continuous improvement is to be pursued.

Wastewater management throughout the municipality is a requirement under the Environmental Protection Act. It plays a part in the environmental sustainability of the natural environment throughout the shire.

### **POLICY/RELEVANT LAW**

Development and implementation of the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan is required by the Environment Protection Act 2017.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Failing wastewater systems will have an impact on the environment by allowing untreated or partially untreated effluent to enter the environment outside of the system's dwelling on an associated lot that it is designed to service.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Community consultation took place last year inviting feedback in relation to the DWMP. That feedback was passed on to the consultant and incorporated into the plan. Communication was also sent to directly installers and real estate agents for feedback.

### **PUBLIC TRANSPARENCY**

In accordance with section 58 of the Local Government Act 202, this report will be made publicly available as part of the Council Meeting Agenda.

### **STRATEGIES/PLANS**

The Strategic Planning principles under section 89 of the Local Government Act 2020 have been considered in the development of the DWMP. In particular, the DWMP ensures an integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance.

### **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

As there is a statutory requirement for Council to approve and monitor wastewater systems throughout the shire, the standard licensing fee assists with the financial viability of the regulation of the activity.

### **SERVICE PERFORMANCE**

Maintenance of an updated DWMS will assist with the ongoing performance of Council's environmental health service, particularly as it relates to wastewater management.

### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

The key risk associated with this report is that failure to implement the plan will result in not fulfilling the Council's statutory duty to have a DWMP in place.

### **COMMUNICATION**

The DWMP will be made publicly available on Council's website.

### **HUMAN RIGHTS CHARTER**

It is considered that this report does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (VIC).

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No officer involved in preparing this report has any conflicts of interest regarding this matter.

### **OPTIONS**

Option 1 – Adopt the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan

This option is recommended by officers as the plan improves on the 2015 DWMP and will guide Council with domestic wastewater planning. This report has been prepared by consultants working with Council staff and is informed by the with results of the 2022 'Have Your Say' survey [Domestic Waste Water Management Plan | Golden Plains Shire Council](#)

Option 2 – Do not adopt the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan

This option is not recommended by officers. Council must have a DMWP under the EPA Act.

**CONCLUSION**

This is the third DWMP for Golden Plains Shire. It has been developed with input from stakeholders including the community following a review of the 2015 plan and responds to legislative changes and other relevant matters. If adopted, there are several actions that Council officers will begin to work through, including advocating for sewerage in the Meredith area.

## 7.6 AWARDING OF A TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF CONCRETING SERVICES

**File Number:****Author:** Vicki Shelton, Manager Asset Services**Authoriser:** Phil Josipovic, Director Infrastructure and Environment**Attachments:** Nil**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1. Resolves to award Contract RFT-01-2023 – Provision of Concreting Services to the following list of providers:
  - D & N Hope Constructions
  - Zantagra Group
  - SHAE Enterprises Pty Ltd
  - Complete plumbing Construction Concepts Pty Ltd
  - Davis Constructions Landscapes Pty Ltd
2. Resolves to award this contract as a Schedule of Rates (SoR) contract for the initial contract term of three (3) years and two (2) X 12-month options to extend at Council's discretion in line with the Chief Executive Officer's Instrument of Delegation.
3. Delegates to the Chief Executive Officer or his delegate authority to execute the contract on behalf of Council.

**CONTRACT OR TENDER NUMBER**

GPSC-RFT-01.2023

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Council sought to engage suitable qualified and experienced contractor/s for the provision of concreting services to deliver Concrete pathways, kerbing and associated construction works.

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**BACKGROUND**

Previously only one supplier delivered concreting services under contract for Council. This presented challenges in the supplier was not often not available to deliver services and officers were required to source alternative providers in line with Council's Procurement Policy. In this evaluation, the panel recommended that the supply of concreting services would be supported by a panel of suppliers. A key advantage is the ability to improve capacity to seek work from a panel of pre-approved suitable contractors which improves 'value for money' for Council. The current annual estimate spend for this panel of contractors is therefore expected to increase from \$90k (one contractor) per annum to \$300K-400k per annum (5 contractors), in line with available budgets.

**DISCUSSION**

Requests for tender were released via eProcure and advertised in the Geelong Times, Ballarat Times, Golden Plains Times on 28 April 2023 and closed on 17 May 2023. Six [6] responses were received. The submissions were reviewed and compliance checked, with *nil* submissions identified as non-compliant. After the evaluation panel members had reviewed and scored each tender independently, a consensus evaluation meeting was held on 24 May 2023 and 26 May 2023. Companies D & N Hope Constructions, Zantagra Group, SHAE Enterprises Pty Ltd, Complete plumbing Construction Concepts Pty Ltd and Davis Constructions Landscapes-Pty-Ltd were chosen as the preferred suppliers by consensus agreement. Sutra Services were not

recommended by the panel due to higher risks identified in areas of their capacity and capability to provide the required services for Council. The submissions and scores were measured by *capacity, capability, price and local content*

The panel noted that a 'panel of suppliers' rather than a sole supplier would be preferable to ensure more capacity is available for Council for this type of service. The specifications and conditions of tender allow for Council to appoint multiple suppliers.

A confidential Evaluation Report has been provided to Council previously.

## REPORTING AND COMPLIANCE STATEMENTS

*Local Government Act 2020 (LGA 2020)*

Implications	Applicable to this Report
<b>Governance Principles</b> (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	No
<b>Policy/Relevant Law</b> (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Environmental/Sustainability Implications</b> (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	No
<b>Community Engagement</b> (Consideration of Community Engagement Principles under s.56 LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Public Transparency</b> (Consideration of Public Transparency Principles under s.58 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Strategies and Plans</b> (Consideration of Strategic Planning Principles under s.89 of LGA 2020)	No
<b>Financial Management</b> (Consideration of Financial Management Principles under s.101 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Service Performance</b> (Consideration of Service Performance Principles under s.106 of LGA 2020)	No
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Yes
<b>Communication</b>	Yes
<b>Human Rights Charter</b>	Yes
<b>Gender Equality</b> (Gender Impact Assessment required by s.9 of Gender Equality Act 2020)	No

## POLICY/RELEVANT LAW

Tender GPSC-RFT-01-2023 – Provision of Concreting Services complies with the GPSC Procurement Policy and the *Local Government Act 2020*

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The community will be informed of planned works and any disruption to access.

## PUBLIC TRANSPARENCY

Public Notice of Tender was provided and included advertisements in the Geelong Times, Ballarat Times, Golden Plains Times and Council's web portal - eProcure. Decision outcomes will be advised on eProcure website and in the Council/SMT Minutes

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The services provided are funded from various Council programs including: Footpath Construction; K&C Construction; K&C and Footpath Renewal; K&C and Footpath Maintenance Programs. The estimated spend of between \$300-400K per annum is within the available budgets.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

There are no identified risk implications associated with this report.

Risks were considered by the Evaluation Panel requirements associated with this specific type of use. Activities are actively monitored throughout the life of the contract.

## COMMUNICATION

Council decisions on tender/s awarded are advised through Council Minutes and the electronic tender system, and suppliers are notified via procurement email

## HUMAN RIGHTS CHARTER

It is considered that this report does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (VIC).

## OPTIONS

### Option 1 – Approve Tender Award – GPSC-RFT-01-2023 – Provision of Concreting Services

This option is recommended by officers through the Tender evaluation and selection process, which recommends that GPSC-RFT-01-2023 – Provision of Concreting Services – be awarded to a panel of contractors:

- D & N Hope Constructions;
- Zantagra Group;
- SHAE Enterprises Pty Ltd;
- Complete plumbing Construction Concepts Pty Ltd;
- Davis Constructions Landscapes Pty Ltd.

### Option 2 – Not award contract to any tenderer

This option is not recommended by officers as new, renewal and maintenance works on our footpath and kerb and channel assets have been identified from condition assessments, renewal programs and community requests and, if a contract is not awarded, may result in reputational damage for Council and increased risk to asset users.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No officer involved in preparing this report has any conflicts of interest regarding this matter.

## CONCLUSION

The Evaluation Panel has conducted a comprehensive assessment of the submissions which were received in response to Council's request for tender for GPSC-RFT-01-2023-Provision of Concreting Services as outlined in this report to ensure compliance with:

1. Relevant provisions of the Local Government Act 2020 (Vic); and
2. Council's Procurement Policy requirements.

In conclusion, D & N Hope Constructions, Zantagra Group, SHAE Enterprises Pty Ltd, Complete plumbing Construction Concepts Pty Ltd and Davis Constructions Landscapes Pty Ltd met the Council's tender requirements and is considered best placed to provide these services for Council.

## **7.7 REVIEW OF AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE CHARTER**

**File Number:****Author:** Rosie Wright, Acting Coordinator Governance and Risk**Authoriser:** Lynnere Gray, Director Corporate Services**Attachments:** 1. Audit and Risk Committee Charter**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council note and approve the Audit and Risk Committee Charter as reviewed and recommended by the Audit and Risk Committee at the May Committee meeting.

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Section 12 of the Audit and Risk Committee charter states that following annual review by the Audit and Risk Committee, a report will be provided to the Council to recommend approval of the Charter.

In accordance with this section, the Audit and Risk Committee Charter was reviewed by the Committee at the Audit and Risk Committee meeting on 9 May 2023. Minor administrative corrections were identified and made. The Charter is now recommended to Council for approval.

**BACKGROUND**

The Local Government Act 2020 section 54 requires that a Council must prepare and approve an Audit and Risk Committee Charter. This requirement was introduced in Stage 2 of the implementation of the Local Government Act 2020 and an Audit and Risk Committee Charter was required to be adopted by Council no later than 1 September 2020. The Audit and Risk Committee Charter was adopted by Council on 28 July 2020, well ahead of the deadline for adoption.

The Audit and Risk Committee Charter section 12 requires that the Charter undergoes an annual review by the Committee, with a report to be presented to Council to approve the Charter. Since its initial adoption in 2020, no significant changes to the Charter have occurred, and the Charter continues to function as required. The Charter was last approved by Council at the February 2022 Council meeting.

**DISCUSSION**

As the Charter was extensively reviewed and refreshed as part of the implementation of the Local Government Act 2020 and continues to be functional without incident, no substantive changes have been recommended by the Committee. Minor corrections to references and punctuation within the Charter were identified at the May 2023 meeting and have been made. These are summarised below:

<b>Change made</b>	<b>Reasoning</b>
Item 3 – Background Date of last review by Committee amended to 8 February 2022	This item contained the date of the last review prior to 2022
Item 5 – Mandate Remove reference to the Local Government Act 1989	This item contained a reference to the section of the Local Government Act 1989 under which Golden Plains Shire Council's Audit and Risk Committee was originally established. While this is still accurate, the Committee considered it irrelevant as the section of this Act has since been repealed and the relevant legislation is now the Local Government Act 2020.
Item 6 – Authority Paragraph break removed	A paragraph break had been inadvertently inserted in this item which caused the section to lack clarity. This has been amended.

## REPORTING AND COMPLIANCE STATEMENTS

*Local Government Act 2020 (LGA 2020)*

<b>Implications</b>	<b>Applicable to this Report</b>
<b>Governance Principles</b> (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Policy/Relevant Law</b> (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Environmental/Sustainability Implications</b> (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Community Engagement</b> (Consideration of Community Engagement Principles under s.56 LGA 2020)	No
<b>Public Transparency</b> (Consideration of Public Transparency Principles under s.58 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Strategies and Plans</b> (Consideration of Strategic Planning Principles under s.89 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Financial Management</b> (Consideration of Financial Management Principles under s.101 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Service Performance</b> (Consideration of Service Performance Principles under s.106 of LGA 2020)	No
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	No
<b>Communication</b>	No
<b>Human Rights Charter</b>	No
<b>Gender Equality</b> (Consideration of the Gender Equality Act 2020 and obligations to conduct gender impact assessments on new or reviewed policies, procedures and services that have a significant and direct impact on the public)	No

**GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES**

The Audit and Risk Committee Charter is aligned to the governance principles as outlined in Section 9 of the Local Government Act, 2020 by ensuring that Council's Audit and Risk Committee considers all key principles when undertaking their function.

**POLICY/RELEVANT LAW**

Local Government Act 2020

**ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

The Audit and Risk Committee Charter assists to mitigate environmental risks by providing the framework to the Audit and Risk Committee's role and responsibilities and ensures that Councils control, processes and risk management practises are compliant.

**PUBLIC TRANSPARENCY**

By providing a report to Council and requesting approval of the Audit and Risk Committee Charter, the public transparency principles as outlined in section 58 of the Local Government Act 2020 are upheld.

**STRATEGIES/PLANS**

- Audit and Risk Committee Charter
- Risk Management Framework
- Long Term financial Plan
- Budget
- Council and Organisational Policies

**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

The Audit and Risk Committee Charter assists to mitigate financial risks by providing the framework to the Audit and Risk Committee's role and responsibilities and ensures that Councils control, processes and risk management practises are compliant.

**RISK ASSESSMENT**

There are identified risk implications associated with this report, detailed below:

- Failure to maintain an Audit and Risk Committee Charter would be non-compliant with the Local Government Act 2020
- The Audit and Risk Committee requires the Charter to ensure roles and responsibilities are determined and met

**HUMAN RIGHTS CHARTER**

It is considered that this report does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (VIC).

**GENDER EQUALITY**

This report has considered the gender equality principles as set out in the Gender Equality Act 2020.

**OPTIONS**

Option 1 – That Council note and approve the Audit and Risk Committee Charter as reviewed and recommended by the Audit and Risk Committee at the May Committee meeting.

Option 1 is recommended by officers in order to comply with both the Local Government Act 2020 and the obligations under the Charter.

Option 2 – That Council do not approve the Audit and Risk Committee Charter as reviewed and recommended by the Audit and Risk Committee at the May Committee meeting.

Option 2 is not recommended by officers as the Audit and Risk Committee Charter must be reviewed annually.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No officer involved in preparing this report has any conflicts of interest in relation to this matter.

### **CONCLUSION**

In accordance with Section 12 of the Audit and Risk Committee Charter, the Audit and Risk Committee has completed its annual review of the Audit and Risk Committee Charter, which is now recommended to Council for approval.

## 7.8 REVIEW OF INSTRUMENT OF APPOINTMENT AND AUTHORISATION - PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT ACT 1987

### File Number:

**Author:** Rosie Wright, Coordinator Governance and Risk

**Authoriser:** Lynne Gray, Director Corporate Services

**Attachments:** 1. Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation - Planning and Environment Act 1987

### RECOMMENDATION

In the exercise of the powers conferred by s 147(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and other legislation referred to in the attached Instrument of Appointment (the 'instrument'), Golden Plains Shire Council (Council) resolves that:

1. The members of Council staff referred to in the instrument as shown in Attachment 1 be appointed and authorised as set out in the instrument;
2. The Chief Executive Officer is authorised to sign the instrument;
3. The instrument comes into force immediately upon being signed by Council's Chief Executive Officer and remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it; and
4. The previous instrument dated 23 May 2023 is revoked.

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The appointment of authorised officers under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* cannot be delegated and must be made through resolution of Council. The Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* was last reviewed and adopted by Council in May 2023. A statutory planner is commencing with Council and must therefore be authorised under this Act.

It is recommended that Council consider and adopt the revised Instrument, as shown in Attachment 1.

### BACKGROUND

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) appoints the majority of authorised officers under Council's delegation to the CEO. However, under section 188(2)(c) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, the appointment of authorised officers under this Act cannot be delegated and must be made through resolution of Council.

By authorising the relevant officers to act under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* Council will ensure they have the required authority to carry out their roles within legislative requirements.

### DISCUSSION

Council subscribes to the Maddocks Lawyers Delegations and Authorisations service. This service includes the provision of templates and regular updates as required to reflect new or amended legislation.

The instrument of appointment and authorisation under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* was updated by Maddocks Lawyers in January 2023. Authorised staff have been recently reviewed and the instrument has been updated to include a statutory planner who is commencing with Council.

Officers authorised to act under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* have authorisation to enter sites, gather evidence or serve legal notices, etc. if required, as appropriate to their level of experience and qualifications.

The specific authorisations provided through this instrument include:

1. under section 147(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* – appointment as an authorised officer for the purposes of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and the regulations made under that Act; and
2. under section 313 of the *Local Government Act 2020* authorisation generally to institute proceedings for offences against the Act and/or any regulations.

The proposed changes to the instrument are detailed below:

Change	Reason
Added Shawn Langley	New Statutory Planner commencing

## REPORTING AND COMPLIANCE STATEMENTS

*Local Government Act 2020 (LGA 2020)*

Implications	Applicable to this Report
<b>Governance Principles</b> (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Policy/Relevant Law</b> (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Environmental/Sustainability Implications</b> (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Community Engagement</b> (Consideration of Community Engagement Principles under s.56 LGA 2020)	No
<b>Public Transparency</b> (Consideration of Public Transparency Principles under s.58 of LGA 2020)	Yes
<b>Strategies and Plans</b> (Consideration of Strategic Planning Principles under s.89 of LGA 2020)	No
<b>Financial Management</b> (Consideration of Financial Management Principles under s.101 of LGA 2020)	No
<b>Service Performance</b> (Consideration of Service Performance Principles under s.106 of LGA 2020)	No
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Yes
<b>Communication</b>	No
<b>Human Rights Charter</b>	No
<b>Gender Equality</b> (Gender Impact Assessment required by s.9 of Gender Equality Act 2020)	No

## GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

The overarching Governance Principles have been taken into consideration when completing the update to the instruments of authorisation attached to this report.

## POLICY/RELEVANT LAW

*Local Government Act 2020*; and  
*Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

**ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Delegation of powers provided by the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* will allow Council officers to exercise these powers in protection of the environment.

**PUBLIC TRANSPARENCY**

Council will make available for public inspection a register of authorisations, including the dates on which the last reviews took place.

**RISK ASSESSMENT**

- Authorised officers are required to ensure Legislative Compliance; and
- Authorisations mitigate risks associated with inappropriate exercise of powers.

**COMMUNICATION**

Council will make available for public inspection a register of authorisations, including the dates on which the last reviews took place.

Changes to the authorisations will be communicated internally.

**HUMAN RIGHTS CHARTER**

It is considered that this report does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (VIC).

**OPTIONS**

Option 1 – That Council adopt the reviewed Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (*Planning and Environment Act 1987*)

This option is recommended by officers as this will ensure compliance with legislation and ensure the members of Council staff exercising these powers are appropriately authorised.

Option 2 – That Council defer the report.

This option is not recommended by officers as it will risk non-compliance with legislation and hinder Council staff who require these authorisations to perform their duties.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No officer involved in preparing this report has any conflicts of interest in relation to this matter.

**CONCLUSION**

The appointment of authorised officers under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* cannot be delegated and must be made by resolution of Council. The Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* was last reviewed and adopted by Council in March 2023. A review of that instrument has now been completed and updated to include a statutory planner commencing with Council. It is recommended that Council consider and adopt the revised the Instrument, as shown at Attachment 1.

## **7.9 MAYORAL ATTENDANCE - NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION 2023**

**File Number:****Author:** Elise Holmes, Executive Assistant to the CEO**Authoriser:** Eric Braslis, CEO**Attachments:** Nil**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receive and note the Mayoral conference report in relation to the 2023 National General Assembly.

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Mayor, Cr Brett Cunningham, along with CEO, Eric Braslis, and Director Corporate Services, Lynne Gray, attended the 2023 Regional Cooperation and Development Forum and the National General Assembly (NGA) of Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) in Canberra from Tuesday 13 June to Friday 16 June 2023.

**BACKGROUND**

Mayor Cunningham attended the conference along with over 1,100 delegates from the over 500 Councils across Australia. Many seminars were attended addressing the theme of "Our Communities, Our Future" – looking for ideas for new federal programs and policies that would support councils to build stronger communities in the future.

**DISCUSSION**

Council's attendance at the NGA provides the opportunity to listen to the current challenges confronting the sector from Councils across the country and consider solutions or innovative ideas that may be relevant to Golden Plains Shire.

The Regional Forum specifically targets those Councils considered rural, regional and remote. The day focused on topics such as Increasing Resilience to Natural Disasters, Skills Shortages in Regional and Rural Australia, Connecting Our Communities, and Investing in Our Regions.

The theme of this year's NGA "Our Communities, Our Future" – looking for ideas for new federal programs and policies that would support councils to build stronger communities in the future.

260 notices of motions were put to the Assembly, identify opportunities where a strong partnership between the Federal Government and local government can progress our mutual policy interests, and the ALGA Board will now consider these in forming its policy positions and federal advocacy.

The program for this year's NGA also provided an opportunity for exhibitors of service and asset providers to engage with the delegates.

Keynote speakers included Governor-General, His Excellency General the Honourable David, the Hon Catherine King, the Hon Kristy McBain, the Hon Peter Dutton, the Hon Darren Chester, and His Excellency, Vasyl Myroshnychenko, Ukraine Ambassador.

## REPORTING AND COMPLIANCE STATEMENTS

*Local Government Act 2020 (LGA 2020)*

Implications	Applicable to this Report
<b>Governance Principles</b> (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	No
<b>Policy/Relevant Law</b> (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	No
<b>Environmental/Sustainability Implications</b> (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	No
<b>Community Engagement</b> (Consideration of Community Engagement Principles under s.56 LGA 2020)	No
<b>Public Transparency</b> (Consideration of Public Transparency Principles under s.58 of LGA 2020)	No
<b>Strategies and Plans</b> (Consideration of Strategic Planning Principles under s.89 of LGA 2020)	No
<b>Financial Management</b> (Consideration of Financial Management Principles under s.101 of LGA 2020)	No
<b>Service Performance</b> (Consideration of Service Performance Principles under s.106 of LGA 2020)	No
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	No
<b>Communication</b>	Yes
<b>Human Rights Charter</b>	Yes
<b>Gender Equality</b> (Gender Impact Assessment required by s.9 of Gender Equality Act 2020)	No

## HUMAN RIGHTS CHARTER

It is considered that this report does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (VIC).

## OPTIONS

### Option 1 – Note the update

This option is recommended by officers

### Option 2 – Request further information

This option is not recommended by officers

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No officer involved in preparing this report has any conflicts of interest in regards to this matter.

## CONCLUSION

That Council note Mayor Cunningham's report.

**8 NOTICES OF MOTION**

Nil

**9 PETITIONS**

Nil

## **10 CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS FOR DECISION**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council considers the confidential report(s) listed below in a meeting closed to the public in accordance with Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2020:

#### **10.1 Glass Early Adopter Expression of Interest**

This matter is considered to be confidential under Section 3(1) - a of the Local Government Act, and the Council is satisfied that discussion of this matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest as it deals with Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released.

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