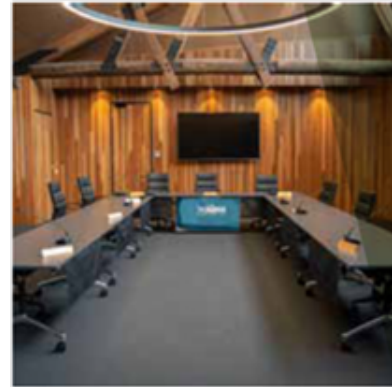


THE YEAR IN REVIEW

CEO'S MESSAGE



The year 2020 will forever be remembered as the year of the COVID-19 pandemic, and while it was at the tail-end of the 2019-20 year, it was the defining moment for our organisation and our Shire, and may well be for many years to come.

As our Golden Plains Shire residents and businesses were challenged in so many facets of their everyday lives, so too was Council challenged. It was the dedication, innovation and flexibility of our staff across many teams that facilitated the many swift and important changes to our services and operations that ensured Council continued to play a supportive and valuable role in the lives of our residents as we move through the pandemic.

A NEW CIVIC HOME

Following many years of planning, the first stage of the Golden Plains Civic Centre (GPCC) was completed and opened for business. While the official opening was put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was an exciting transition to Council's new civic home.

The first meeting of Councillors in the new Council Chambers was a special milestone and we look forward to welcoming our residents to meetings in the future. From the first plans, it was a firm commitment that the history of the Shire would be honoured and celebrated in the new Chambers and unique features including the wooden beams reflecting the iconic Nimons Bridge and traditional seals of the former Shires that amalgamated to make Golden Plains, truly achieve that vision.

As the CEO, it is most important that the GPCC is a modern and accessible workplace. Previously, Council staff members were located across an outdated 40-year-old office and several inadequate portable buildings; and now our team is united. As our Shire grows and so too does our commitment to better serve our community, it is evident that Council made the right decision to invest in the future of the organisation and its workforce, to create a healthy, sustainable, positive work environment for its existing and new staff members.

It's been most rewarding to watch the emotional faces of long-term staff members and the excited cheers from new staff as they walked into the new building for the first time, confirming that the GPCC is a proud achievement of this Council and its dedicated workforce. Stage 2 works to renovate the original office building are underway and the project including carpark and final works will be completed in 2020-21.

EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION

The past three years have defined a period of innovation and excellence for our organisation, a transition to reflect the growth and diversity of our changing Shire.

Embracing a new program of digital transformation, the significant upgrade of mobile technology allowed many staff to move seamlessly to working from home, utilising a range of modern communication applications during the COVID-19 pandemic. While encompassing cameras and broadcasting technology in the GPCC saw the first livestream of our Council Meetings, connecting with residents across our large Shire.

This year, Council continued the move to new locations, with the new civic chambers, the Shire Hall in the centre of Bannockburn was leased for an exciting new commercial future. This year, Council relocated to the new Council Chamber with public meetings held at the GPCC and

the Linton Shire Hall. An upgrade of this Council office to establish a dedicated customer service centre with greater digital connectivity also expanded our suite of services to better serve the residents on the north of the Shire.

OUR VISION AND VALUES

In 2019-20, Council farewelled Director of Assets and Amenity Greg Anders, who dedicated many years of exceptional service to local governments in Victoria including his valuable contribution to the organisation and people of Golden Plains Shire. Phil Josipovic joined Council as its new Director of Development and Infrastructure, bringing with him great experience and knowledge developed during his professional career in local government.

With a passionate and dynamic executive team that has been established this Council term, our organisation embarked on an exciting journey to define and create a new professional Vision and Values that will lead our culture and develop a proud and



In January 2020, Council announced its partnership with the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) to deliver the Bannockburn Growth Plan. Mayor Cr Owen Sharkey, VPA CEO Stuart Moseley and CEO Eric Braslis met in Bannockburn South to discuss the project.

driven workforce, now and into the future. This renewed focus will not only better place Council as an employer of choice but will also strengthen our commitment to best serve our communities and our residents.

As the CEO of Golden Plains Shire, it is my honour and privilege to lead our organisation and the many men and women who come to work at Council every day. In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, our staff have risen to the challenge and continue to do their jobs and do them very well. This Report marks a busy and productive year, as our organisation marches on to the next year and the exciting challenge of a new Council term.

Eric Braslis
Chief Executive Officer

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The purpose of the Annual Report is to convey the performance of Council for the 2019-20 financial year.

It is important to consider this Annual Report in conjunction with the Council Plan, incorporating Council's Strategic Resource Plan, which focuses on the longer term objectives of Council. This document can be found at Council's website at www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au.

The following key indicators provide a brief overview of Council's financial performance for the year, including graphs which visually demonstrate the recent trend and future forecast of each. These key indicators are common tools used to measure financial performance and sustainability and are consistently applied by Council.

OPERATING RESULT

The operating result shows Council's overall performance for the year. The surplus for 2019-20 totalled \$5.5 million, which is \$3.0 million greater than budget. However, this 'headline' figure can be misleading. The 'Adjusted Underlying Result', which removes any non-recurrent grants used to fund capital expenditure, non-monetary asset contributions and other contributions to fund capital expenditure from the result, is actually a surplus of \$0.4 million. Both the operating and adjusted underlying result for 2019-20 includes 50%, or \$2.8 million, of the 2020-21 Financial Assistance Grant that were paid in June 2020.



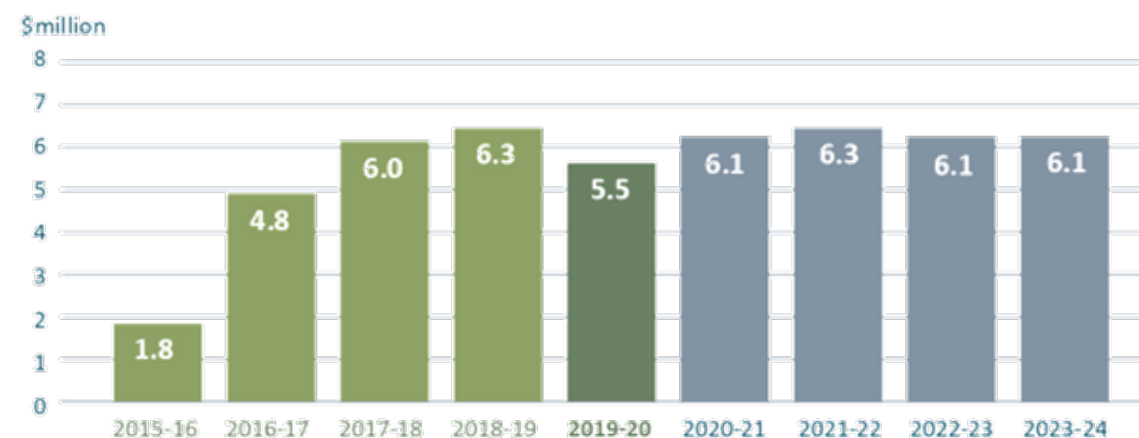
DISCRETIONARY RETAINED EARNINGS

Discretionary Retained Earnings is the surplus funds that Council has available to take advantage of unexpected opportunities. These are primarily utilised to match grants offered by third party funding. Council has been able to maintain a healthy balance for the past five years. It should be noted that the 2019-20 balance of \$4.6 million includes \$2.8 million of 2020-21 Federal Assistance Grants received in advance during June 2020.

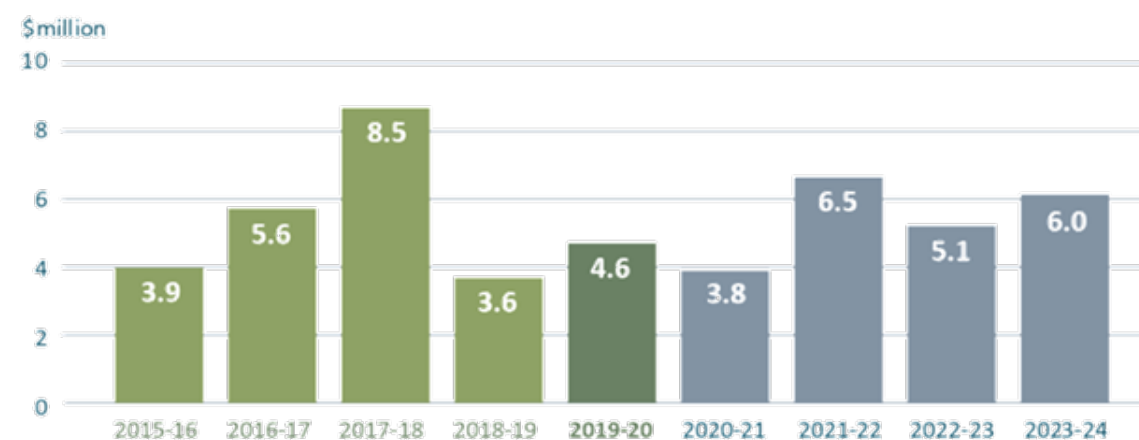
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

The capital program for 2019-20 of \$21.4 million, takes Council's total capital expenditure over the last three years to \$42 million. These programs have been consistent with Council's Strategic Resource Plan and have been funded by a combination of government grants, borrowings and discretionary retained earnings (as outlined above).

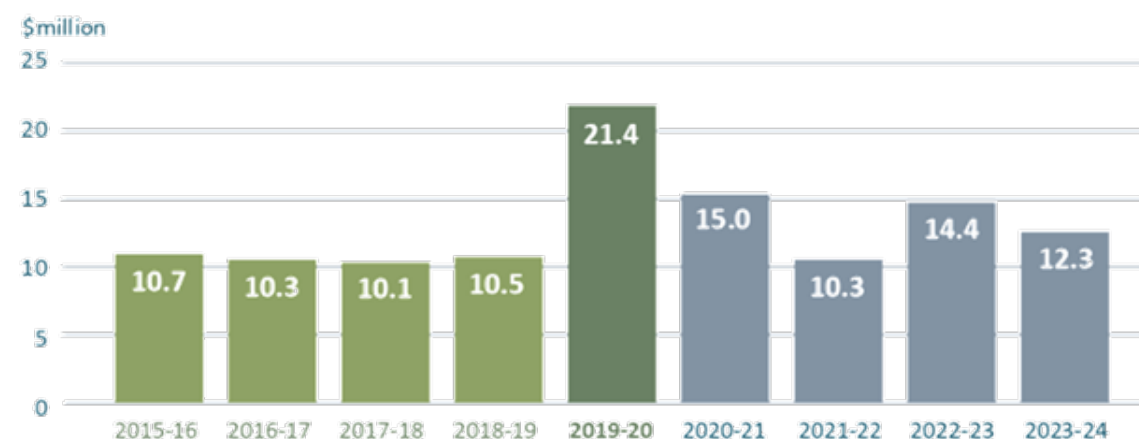
Operating Result



Discretionary Retained Earnings



Capital Expenditure



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

WORKING CAPITAL

Working Capital is the amount by which current assets exceed current liabilities. This is a measure of Council's ability to meet its short term obligations. At 30 June 2020, the surplus is \$13.2 million compared to a budget of \$4.0 million. This large working capital surplus is primarily a result of a higher than anticipated cash balance, which has resulted from grants received in advance, timing of payments and 2019-20 projects that are yet to be completed (and paid).

CASH BALANCE

Council's cash balance at 30 June 2020 totalled \$21.4 million, which is \$14.5 million favourable to budget and an increase of \$2.8 million from the previous year. The balance includes the \$2.8 million of 2020-21 Federal Assistance grants received in advance during June 2020, \$6.5 million being held to complete funded and capital works projects from prior years and recent operating surpluses. Part of the remaining \$9.3 million will be used to fund the development of Stage 2 of the Golden Plains Civic Centre.

INTEREST BEARING LIABILITIES

Borrowings have increased by \$6.4 million from the previous year to a total of \$14.0 million. New borrowings of \$9.5 million were taken-up to fund the redevelopment of the existing customer service centre located at 2 Pope Street, Bannockburn. These amounts are in accordance with Council's Strategic Resource Plan.

Council has structured borrowings to ensure costs are spread fairly over current and future years. Council has taken advantage of the current low interest rate climate borrowing the \$9.5 million borrowings as budgeted.

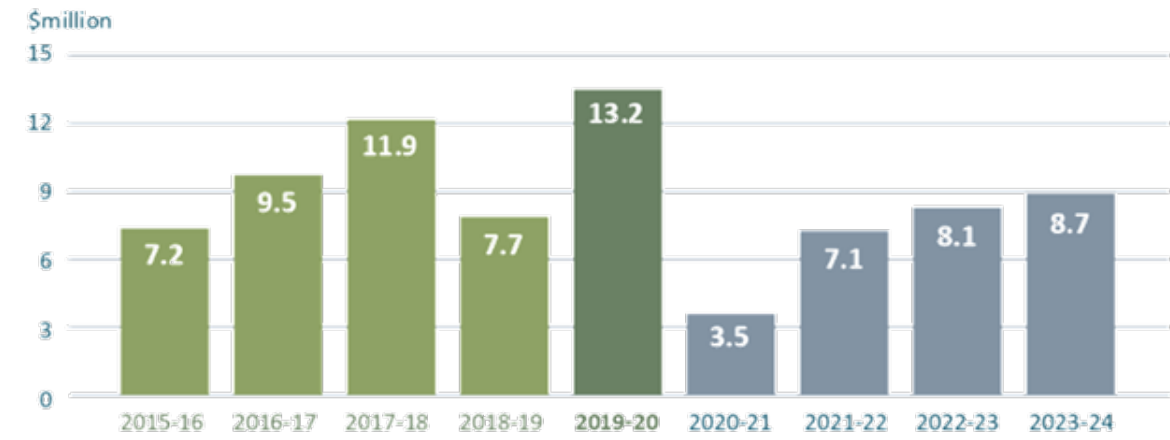
The above indicators demonstrate that Council remains in a healthy financial position and has been able to balance the use of operating revenue; discretionary retained earnings and borrowings to ensure services and projects are delivered to meet the demand of the Golden Plains community.

The overall financial position remains strong and continues to be consistent with that depicted in Council's Strategic Resource Plan.

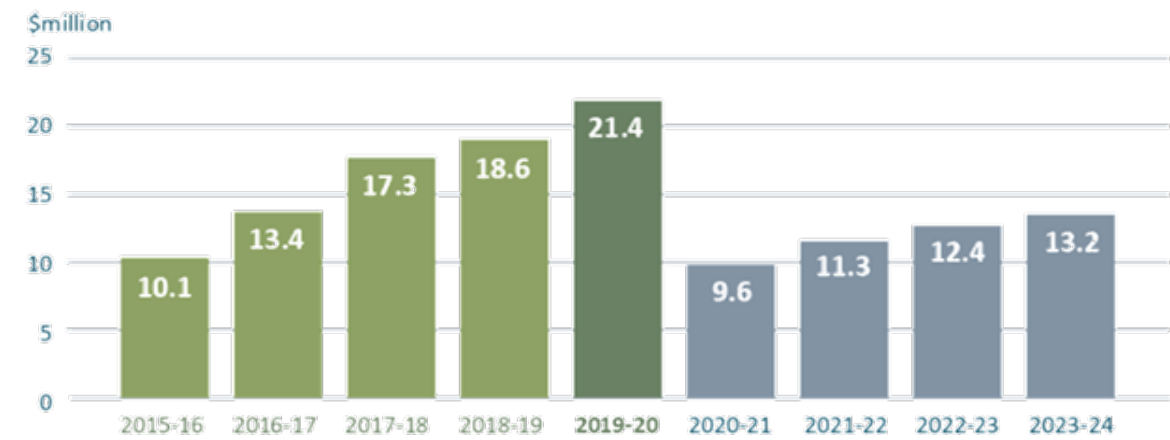
Given the introduction of the 'Fair Go Rates' system (rate capping), Council will need to closely monitor the strategies contained within its Council Plan, Strategic Resource Plan and Long term Financial Plan to ensure it continues to manage assets and deliver the services required by a growing municipality, whilst remaining financially sustainable.



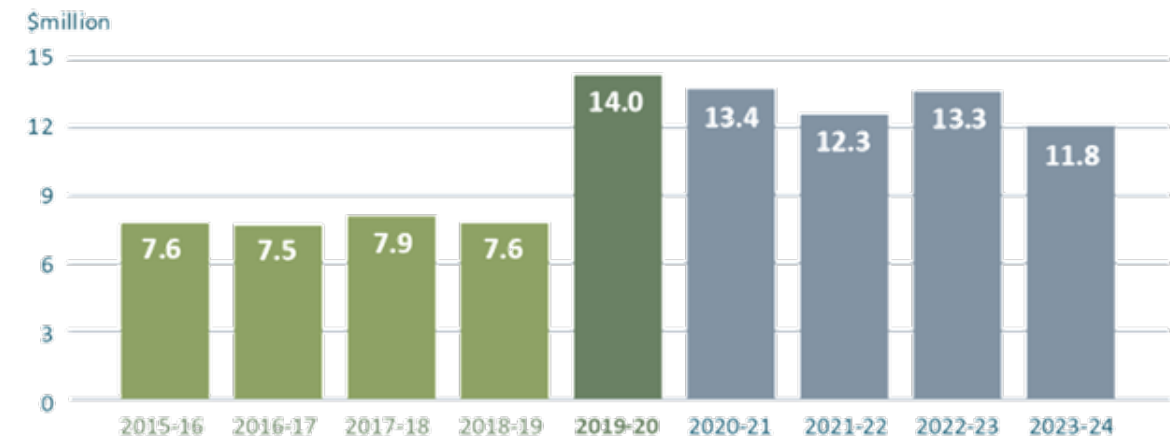
Working Capital



Cash Balance



Interest Bearing Liabilities



THE YEAR IN REVIEW

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

DESCRIPTION OF OPERATIONS

Council is responsible for delivering a wide range of services, facilities and infrastructure, including family and children’s services, youth programs, waste management, support and infrastructure for community and sporting groups, matters concerning business development, planning for appropriate development and ensuring accountability for Council’s Budget.

This broad range of community services and infrastructure for residents supports the wellbeing and prosperity of our community. Council’s vision, objectives and strategies to further improve services and facilities are detailed in the Council Plan 2017-2021 and the associated Budget 2018-19, and reported upon in this document. For more information on Council’s services, please see the Our Performance section at page 54.

The delivery of services, facilities, support and advocacy to achieve the Strategic Objectives is measured by a set of service performance indicators and measures.

ECONOMIC FACTORS

- Economic conditions in Golden Plains Shire prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic were strong. The Shire’s unemployment rate during 2019 averaged 2.9%, the lowest it had been in a decade, significantly lower than the G21 Region at 5.2% and Victoria at 4.7%. Population growth continued on a strong growth trajectory, with the Shire’s population increasing by 2.6% 23,722 people, making it the fifth fastest growing regional Victorian Local Government Area (by percentage growth rate).
- The Shire has continued to see steady growth in new business registrations, with 445 new businesses registered in Golden Plains Shire during 2019-20, the majority of which were construction businesses with 99 registrations. Construction was followed by professional, scientific and technical services at 44 new registrations, and then agriculture, forestry and fishing, and health care and social assistance both at 32.
- Golden Plains’ Gross Regional Product has nearly doubled over the past decade, increasing to \$686 million in 2019. Agriculture is still a driving force for the Shire’s economy, worth 23% of total economic output. Broadacre cropping, sheep and intensive agriculture such as poultry, pigs and goats are all significant sectors, with nearly one quarter of the state’s eggs produced in Golden Plains, and 11% of the state’s chicken meat.
- Renewable energy is also a growing industry in the Shire, with the development of two significant renewable energy projects continuing to progress during 2019-20. Berrybank Wind Farm, which is being built in the municipalities of Golden Plains Shire and Corangamite Shire, completed the installation of 16 of the 43 wind turbines for Stage One of the project. Stage One is a \$284 million project that will generate 180 megawatts of power. The completed Berrybank Wind Farm will be a \$525 million project that will produce 277 megawatts of power, with 41 of 79 wind turbines to be built in the south-west of Golden Plains Shire. The Golden Plains Wind Farm near Rokewood has now received both Federal and State Government approval to proceed. This project will be one of the largest wind farms in Australia, with up to 228 wind turbines. Both these wind farms will deliver hundreds of jobs during construction, as well as ongoing employment and opportunities for the local community and community projects, and play an important role in strengthening and diversifying the Golden Plains economy. The Berrybank Wind Farm committed \$252,000 in funding for the Teesdale Turtle Bend Upgrade and the relocation of Haddon House, as well as \$180,000 towards the Three Trails Project in the north of the Shire.



The \$1.4 million of Tall Tree Road in Lethbridge improves this key arterial road of the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct, with significant funding from the Victorian Government’s Local Roads to Market Program. In March 2020, Michaela Settle MP, Member for Buninyong; Stewart Marshall of Tall Tree Poultry and Mayor Cr Owen Sharkey met to view the completed project.

DESCRIPTION OF OPERATIONS

MAJOR CAPITAL WORKS

Golden Plains Civic Centre

Golden Plains Shire Council has a new home, with the completion of Stage One of the Golden Plains Civic Centre this year. Completed and opened in May 2020, the modern location features:

- An accessible, welcoming customer service centre;
- Private meeting rooms for residents, Councillors and staff;
- New Council Chambers, with audio visual technology to livestream meetings;
- Sustainable, modern work spaces; and
- Accessibility for people of all abilities (*Disability Discrimination Act* compliance).

Stage Two of the project, the redevelopment of the original Bannockburn Customer Service Centre, is underway and scheduled for completion in December 2020.

The budget for the Golden Plains Civic Centre is \$9.5 million and the project will be funded from Council borrowings to be repaid over a 30-year period. The cost of the project will not result in any increase in rates as Council will manage this cost within its annual expenditure forecasts.

Bannockburn Heart – Stage One

The official opening of Stage One of the long-awaited Bannockburn Heart Precinct was an exciting community celebration in December 2019. After watching the project take shape over eight months of construction, residents of all ages enjoyed their first experience of the new water and adventure play, active recreation equipment; and community facilities including public toilets, seating, BBQs, shade, lighting and landscaped public space.

Stage One of the Bannockburn Heart Precinct has delivered an attractive and welcoming community civic space in the Shire’s largest town. Constructed over two stages, the Precinct will transform and activate the CBD, improving liveability, retail spending, and amenity.

Stage One of the Bannockburn Heart Precinct cost \$3 million, funded by Council, a \$1.2 million Federal Government grant; and \$566,500 in grants from the State Government with \$500,000 from Regional Development Victoria and \$66,500 from Sport and Recreation Victoria.

Bannockburn Recreation Precinct Second Soccer Pitch

The second soccer pitch at the Bannockburn Recreation Precinct was delivered, with the new full-size pitch complementing recent projects at this facility, including the construction of the first pitch, the club and change rooms pavilion and the installation of sports lighting.

The project was funded with a \$250,000 grant from the Victorian Government’s 2018-19 World Game Facilities Fund and \$234,000 from Council. Next on the list for this popular recreation facility are lights and female friendly change rooms for the second soccer pitch.



Victoria Park Sport Oval Lighting Upgrade

The Victoria Park Sport Oval Lighting Upgrade in Bannockburn was completed with the new lights turned on both ovals at the popular recreation facility. Funded by a \$500,000 Community Sport Infrastructure grant from the Federal Government, the lighting was identified as a priority in the G21 AFL Barwon Regional Strategy. The new lighting on both ovals meet the AFL standard for community football and surpass the minimum requirements for local football training and matches.



Teesdale Turtle Bend Reserve Upgrade

Construction of the Teesdale Turtle Bend Reserve Upgrade is underway, including an expansion and power upgrade of the event site, upgrade and widening of the pedestrian bridge, upgrade to the toilets including a disabled toilet and baby change facilities, additional play space elements and seating, new multi-sport space including half court for netball and basketball, improved fencing and sealing the driveway.

The Teesdale Turtle Bend Reserve is a popular recreation and events precinct that is a valuable social meeting space for the Teesdale community and attracts visitors from across the State. The upgrade is delivered with a \$222,000 grant from the Federal Government’s Building Better Regions Fund and matching funds by a community contribution from Berrybank Wind Farm.



Rokewood Recreation Reserve Lighting Upgrade

The new lights on the oval of Rokewood Recreation Reserve were completed and switched on this year. The project meets the AFL standard for local football training and matches. Improved lighting means improved safety at the Reserve, as well as less wear and tear on the field as the full oval can be used for training. Importantly, the upgrade will support the club and Reserve committee to grow and strengthen their membership and schedule more matches, training sessions and events. The project was delivered by a \$169,258 grant through the State Government’s Community Sports’ Infrastructure Fund and \$115,000 from Council.

DESCRIPTION OF OPERATIONS

Smythesdale Courthouse Upgrade

Conservation works were completed on the almost 160-year-old building, which forms part of Smythesdale’s Historic Precinct. Council secured a \$90,000 Victorian Government Living Heritage Grant for the restoration works including the replacement of fascia boards, repair to brickwork and mortar, slate roof repairs, roof flashing, gutter and downpipe repairs and replacements, external timber repairs to windows and doors, works to the interior timber floor boards in the Court Room and internal painting of the building.

The Smythesdale Courthouse is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria, and is an important community asset to the Smythesdale community.



Haddon Recreation Centre Floor

Construction of the new timber floor and line-marking on the one-court Haddon Recreation Centre was completed. Fully funded by the Victorian Government, Council lobbied for many years for government investment in a new, level stadium floor that is safer for all users and will require less repair and maintenance in the future.

The Haddon Recreation Centre is a popular facility for localised sport, and recreational programs and services for the Haddon community. Students from the neighbouring Haddon Primary School regularly use the Centre, and it is home to the Haddon Badminton Club, as well as a variety of active recreation activities.



The Three Trails Project

The Three Trails Project will improve and upgrade three significant multi-use trails: Ballarat–Skipton Rail Trail, Kuruc a Ruc Trail and Rainbow Bird Trail. Popular with walkers, hikers, cyclists and horse-riders, these trails total 101km and connect 15 different townships and communities across Golden Plains Shire, as well as City of Ballarat and Corangamite Shire.

The Three Trails Project will deliver the upgrade and improvement of the current trail infrastructure, as well as design and installation of new supportive infrastructure, including: signage; shelters, seating, picnic tables and chairs; decking upgrades; safety corrals at major highway crossings; culvert and bridge upgrades; spray seal of trail sections; upgrades to the Pittong Sleepover; installation of trail counters for data collection; and environmental works including tree trimming.

The total cost of the Three Trails Project is \$750,000, which will be funded by the Victorian Government’s grant of \$500,000; \$180,000 from the Berrybank Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund; \$57,000 from Golden Plains Shire Council; and \$13,000 from the former Ballarat-Skipton Rail Trail Committee. Council’s contribution was funded in its Budget 2019-20 and works on the Three Trails Project are scheduled to begin in late 2020.

FUNDING GRANTS 2019-20

In 2019-20, Council secured a significant range of grants to deliver major capital works and road projects for Golden Plains Shire.



The following funding commitments were confirmed from the Australian Government:

Program Name	Grant Award
Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program	\$1,333,655
Federal Black Spot Program - Shelford-Mt Mercer Road	\$1,100,000
Round Three of the Building Better Regions Fund (BBRF) - Infrastructure Projects Stream	\$222,000
Victorian Bushfires - Exceptional Assistance Immediate Support Package	\$200,000
Federal Black Spot Program - Russells Bridge Road	\$138,000
Three-Year Old Kindergarten Infrastructure & Building Blocks Grant	\$70,000

The following funding commitments were confirmed from the Victorian Government:

Program Name	Grant Award
Working for Victoria Fund (COVID-19)	\$1,074,886
Three Trails Project	\$500,000
Haddon Recreation Centre Floor Upgrade	\$220,000
Commonwealth Transition Grant	\$80,263
CASI - Community Activation & Social Isolation initiative	\$58,860
Community Heart Connection (Byron Street Shared Pathway)	\$52,378
Bannockburn Recreation Centre - Playground Shade Sail	\$26,654
Covid-19 Kindergarten Cleaning Grant	\$5,700
Maternal and Child Health Nurses – Cultural Awareness Training	\$2,400
Kindergarten Remote Learning Support	\$2,000

DESCRIPTION OF OPERATIONS

MAJOR ROAD PROJECTS

Golden Plains Shire is a large municipality with an extensive rural road network connecting its 56 township with popular routes to Geelong and Ballarat, Victoria's second and third largest cities. Upgrading and maintaining the Shire's extensive sealed and unsealed road network is an ongoing challenge for Council, particularly in a rate-capped environment.

Council works hard to lobby for Federal and State funding for much-needed major road projects. In 2019-20, the following projects received partnership investment.



Teesdale-Lethbridge Road

The reconstruction, sealing and drainage improvements were completed on a 740-metre section of Teesdale-Lethbridge Road, extending north of Shelford-Bannockburn Road.

Council lobbied and advocated for government investment to fix this road for a number of years, following feedback from the local community. The project was delivered through a \$500,000 grant from Regional Roads Victoria under its Fixing Country Roads Round 1 program for vital safety upgrades.

Benefits for the community include increased safety, improved community access, including emergency services, increased traffic capacity, improved heavy vehicle access and increased resilience to changing conditions.

Wall Street Bridge

The 99-year-old timber Wall Street Bridge in Teesdale was replaced with a new concrete structure with an increased bridge load, improving safety for road users.

The new Wall Bridge, spanning Native Hut Creek on Stones Road, also delivered a new dedicated footbridge for pedestrians and cyclists.

The new Wall Bridge was a partnership project of Council and the Federal Government's Bridges Renewal Program, splitting the \$607,000 cost of the project. An interpretative sign detailing the

Tall-Tree Road

The \$1.4 million project to widen, replace and seal Tall Tree Road in Lethbridge was completed, funded by a \$943,000 grant from the Victorian Government's Local Roads to Market program and \$472,000 from Council.

The upgraded section of Tall Tree Road provides principal access to the wider road network for a number of primary producers in the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct and to the service providers that support primary industry.

The project involved sealing an existing 3.5km section of unsealed road that was unsuitable for heavy vehicles and regularly required maintenance, particularly following wet weather. A further 2.2km of narrow sealed road was widened and replaced, improving safety and the smooth flow of traffic along the busy road.

Franklin Bridge

A \$2.85 million project to replace the Franklin Bridge in Napoleons is underway and will be completed in 2020. This new bridge is a partnership project with the Federal Government and City of Ballarat; with Golden Plains Shire Council contributing \$512,000.

Coopers Bridge

The replacement of Coopers Bridge in Meredith was a major \$1.6 million road project. The existing single-lane, load-limited bridge was replaced by a new structure with two travel lanes, better alignment and gradients, and improved road safety.

A \$300,000 grant from the State Government's Fixing Country Roads program offset the cost of the new bridge on Meredith-Steiglitz Road, with Council funding the majority of this much-needed project with money allocated in the 2018-19 and 2019-20 Budgets. The works complement \$300,000 spent last year on the approach road to the bridge, funded under the Federal Government's Black Spot Program.

Pitfield-Cressy Road

This significant road upgrade and widening works on 3.8km of Pitfield-Cressy Road had made this route safer for all users including heavy vehicles transporting grain to the receival facility in Werneth. This projects supports recent works by Council including new box culverts on the bridge over Little Woody Yaloak Creek, and widening of the road from the bridge to Werneth Road and the 1km section towards Colac-Ballarat Road. The upgrade was funded by an \$800,000 grant from the State Government's Fixing Country Roads and \$400,000 from the Federal Government's Roads to Recovery Program.

Linton-Mannibadar Road

This \$1.4 million road infrastructure project delivered the widening and sealing of 5.5km of Linton-Mannibadar Road, from Rokewood-Shelford Road towards Linton. The works were funded by a \$933,000 grant from the State Government's Fixing Country Roads program and \$466,666 allocated to the Shire from the Federal Government's Roads to Recovery Program.

Maude-She Oaks Road

Council has completed works on the \$1.485 million widening and upgrade of Maude-She Oaks Road. This project delivered the upgrade and widening of 3km of the Maude-She Oaks Road, from the driveway entrance to Mountain View Quarry in Maude to Strong Road in She Oaks. As part of the works, upgrades were also completed to a number of intersections on the road, including with Sharps Road and Steiglitz Road. Other works included the sealing of road shoulders, new guardrail, and kerb and channel installation.

This important project for the Maude-She Oaks community was funded by \$1.1 million from Council and \$385,000 from the Federal Government's Roads to Recovery Program.

Barwon Park Road Bridge

With the old bridge over Warrambine Creek showing signs of structural distress, the deck of the Barwon Park Road Bridge in Inverleigh has been replaced.

The existing and outdated w-beam bridge barrier was removed and upgraded to a VicRoads-approved medium performance bridge barrier. The narrow, steep 3.8m approach from the north was also widened to provide two traffic lanes and a new retaining wall was constructed to improve retention of the approach fill.

The responsibility for Barwon Park Road Bridge and this \$620,000 project is shared by Golden Plain Shire and Surf Coast Shire Councils. Of Council's \$310,000 commitment, \$110,000 came from the Federal Government's Roads to Recovery Program.



DESCRIPTION OF OPERATIONS

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2019-20, Golden Plains Shire continued to go from strength to strength, with Council securing a record amount of government investment for our communities and residents, with its advocacy work taking great strides.

The Shire's strategic partnership with G21 saw the exciting next step in the development of the Renewable Organics Network, an innovative waste-to-energy facility for the region. While Council's participation in the Peri-Urban Group of Rural Council's realised the milestone of eligibility to the Victorian Government's Growing Suburbs Fund, opening the door to a new and significant funding stream for fast-growing councils.

With Mayor Cr Owen Sharkey elected as Chair of the Central Highlands Councils Victoria, Golden Plains Shire took a leadership role in presenting the lobbying efforts of these eight regional municipalities, defining the group's top advocacy priorities for the future.

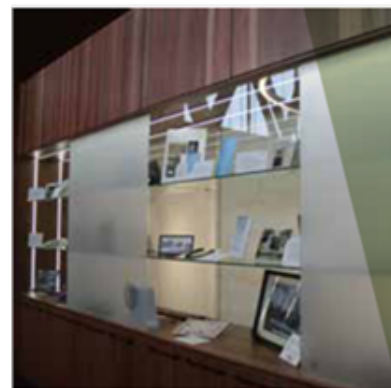


Managing Growth in Golden Plains

As growth in the South of the Shire continues at an impressive rate of 8.5 percent every year, Golden Plains Shire solidified its position at the fifth fastest growing regional Local Government Area (LGA) in Victoria.

Bannockburn is the largest town in Golden Plains Shire, and the town and surrounds is the fourth fastest growing regional Statistical Area Level 2 in Victoria. Council secured a significant grant from the Victorian Government's Streamlining for Growth Program to fund an exciting partnership of Council and the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) that will develop the new Bannockburn Growth Plan in 2020, guiding the sustainable growth of Bannockburn to the year 2050.

The Minister for Planning has assumed planning authority for the Bannockburn Growth Plan, which will deliver 7,000 additional homes and approximately 17,000 new residents in the south of the town, significantly increasing the population of Golden Plains Shire.



Record Investment for the Community

In 2019-20, Council also completed and opened an impressive list of valuable community infrastructure projects across Golden Plains Shire including Stage One of the Bannockburn Heart, the second soccer pitch at Bannockburn Recreation Precinct, oval lighting upgrades at Rokewood and Victoria Park in Bannockburn, historic conservation works on Smythesdale Courthouse, the Teesdale Turtle Bend Reserve Upgrade and the new floor on the Haddon Recreation Centre.

Council continued its commitment to best managing the assets of infrastructure of our large rural Shire with several long-awaited road projects completed in 2019-20. Residents and visitors are now enjoying safer journeys across Golden Plains on Teesdale-Lethbridge Road, Tall Tree Road in Lethbridge, Pitfield-Cressy Road, Linton-Mannibadar Road, Maude-She Oaks Road, Barwon Park Road Bridge in Inverleigh, Wall Bridge in Teesdale, Cooper Bridge in Meredith and Franklin Bridge in Napoleons.

In 2020, Council proudly delivered a new civic home for the Golden Plains Shire, with the opening of the long-awaited Golden Plains Civic Centre. After many years of planning and development, the modern and accessible customer service centres, united staff offices and the new Council Chamber that will serve the Shire for the next 50 years.

MAJOR CHANGES

Golden Plains Shire is a large rural municipality of 2,705 square kilometres with a socio-economically diverse population living in 56 communities, ranging from villages with less than 100 people to a fast-growing town of more than 5,000 residents.

In 2019-20, Golden Plains Shire's population reached 23,722 people, an increase of 2.6% on the previous year, with the Shire retaining its position as fifth fastest growing regional Victorian Local Government Area (by percentage growth rate). This year, the Shire's largest town of Bannockburn moved up from the ninth to the fifth fastest growing regional Statistical Areas Level 2 (by percentage growth).

The COVID-19 Pandemic Change

The most impactful change of the 2019-20 year at Council, as it was across the nation and the world, was the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In March, the majority of Council's office staff relocated to working from home, a move made possible by Council's recent transition to new digital and mobile technology across the organisation. Council continued its many essential community services and made significant health and wellbeing adjustments to keep serving our local residents during a very challenging time. Many new initiatives, projects and programs were launched during a short time to support our communities living under

restrictions and insolation. While the 2019-20 year ended, the COVID-19 pandemic continues, and Council is moving through the many stages of this unprecedented crisis, leading and supporting our local residents and businesses.

Changes to Operations

In late 2019, Golden Plains was one of many councils across Victoria who experienced significant impacts to waste services, with a lengthy shutdown of recycling services in the State and the eventual collapse of SKM Recycling, Council's contracted recycling company. This was the second shutdown in 2019, the first of a couple of weeks and the second for several months, and led to the diversion of a significant amount of recycling to landfill, a disappointing environmental and financial outcome. The return to recycling collection was welcomed by Council and Shire residents, however Council continues to advocate for more substantial, long-term solutions for waste in Victoria.

In 2019-20, there were several changes – small and large - to operations that improved Council services including the online permit manager system that streamlined building permit approvals and the new online road grading calendar. To better connect and engage with residents, Council began livestreaming Council Meetings and increased communications to reach readers across more traditional and digital platforms. Council's new and upgraded Customer Service

Centres better serve our residents, with additional hours and services coming online for residents in the north of the Shire.

Organisational Change

The greatest change for the organisation was the completion of Stage 1 and relocation to the new Golden Plains Civic Centre (GPCC). With a modern and accessible workplace, a welcoming Customer Service Centre and a Council Chambers with technology to livestream meetings, the new building has delivered an exceptional new civic home for the Golden Plains community.

Within the organisation, Director of Assets and Amenity Greg Anders retired from Golden Plains Shire Council after many years of dedicated service to Council and to local governments in Victoria. Council welcomed Phil Josipovic as its new Director of Development and Infrastructure, who joined CEO Eric Braslis and Directors Philippa O'Sullivan and Lisa Letic leading the organisation as its Senior Management Team.



OUR COUNCIL

2,705
sqkm of land

16
townships

23,722
people

56
communities

2.6%
growth rate per annum

OUR SHIRE

Golden Plains Shire is situated between two of Victoria's largest regional cities, Geelong and Ballarat, with a population of more than 23,722 people across 56 vibrant rural communities.

Renowned for its award-winning food and wine, iconic music festivals, goldfield heritage and friendly communities, Golden Plains Shire is an attractive destination both to visit and call home.



New residents, particularly young families, are attracted to the area's rural lifestyle, affordable housing and proximity to the services and jobs available in the Shire, as well as those in Melbourne, Geelong, Ballarat and the Surf Coast.

Residents value the character of Golden Plains' small townships and communities, local facilities and services, and natural environment.

As one of the fastest growing regions in rural Victoria, boasting rich biodiversity and a broad range of flora and fauna, Golden Plains Shire has much to offer.

Golden Plains also offers many opportunities for businesses, investment, sustainable development and employment, with more than 1,982 businesses including farming, construction, retail and home-based businesses.

The Shire has a strong agricultural sector, with a history of wool, sheep and grain production. Now-a-days the Shire is seeing strong growth in intensive agriculture, including poultry, pigs, beef and goat dairy, as well as the expansion of viticulture in the Moorabool Valley. This in turn has driven an increase in the regions tourism offering, with visitors attracted to the region's picturesque wineries, gourmet food

producers, agri-tourism and the monthly Council-run Golden Plains Farmers' Market.

Golden Plains Shire is one of the leading producers of eggs and chicken meat in Victoria, producing nearly a quarter of Victoria's eggs. Council is encouraging continued growth and investment in intensive agriculture, by establishing the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct, near Lethbridge, which is on track to become one of Victoria's premier areas for intensive agriculture development and expansion.

Council is recognised for engaging with its communities to build community spirit; and plan for growth and future facilities and services. Residents continue to support their townships, with high levels of participation in clubs, activities and volunteering.

Looking to the future, Golden Plains Shire residents have shared their vision and priorities for the next 10 to 20 years. They identified the need to plan and manage the competing interests of a growing population whilst maintaining the Shire's highly valued rural character, meet community service and infrastructure needs, and maintain and improve the Shire's extensive road network.

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL

BANNOCKBURN CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE

2 Pope Street, Bannockburn, Victoria 3331

Local call 1300 36 30 36
Phone 03 5220 7111
Fax 03 5220 7100

SMYTHESDALE CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE

19 Heales Street, Smythesdale, Victoria 3351

Local call 1300 36 30 36
Phone 03 5321 1500
Fax 03 5220 7100

Postal Address

Golden Plains Shire Council,
PO Box 111, Bannockburn,
Victoria 3331

Email

enquiries@gplains.vic.gov.au

After Hours

To contact Council outside normal business hours, call 03 5220 7111

OUR COUNCIL

COUNCILLORS



Cr Owen Sharkey
Mayor 2019-20

Cr Owen Sharkey lives with his family in Batesford, where he is strongly involved in the community, and works in Bannockburn. Cr Sharkey's priorities are to improve the survey rating, reduce unnecessary spending, reduce borrowings and raise revenue by means other than increasing rates. Cr Sharkey was elected as Mayor

for the 2018-19 term and re-elected to the position for the final year of the Council term.

Cr Sharkey has been appointed by Council as its representative to the following: G21 Board of Directors; Tourism Greater Geelong and the Bellarine Board; Central Highlands Councils Victoria; and Peri Urban Group of Rural Councils. As the Mayor, Cr Sharkey is also a member of Council's Audit and Risk Committee.



For many years, Council Meetings were held in the Linton Shire Hall (left) and the Bannockburn Shire Hall. From May 2020, Council Meetings in Bannockburn will be held in the new Council Chamber at the Golden Plains Civic Centre (right).



Cr Joanne Gilbert
Deputy Mayor 2019-20

Cr Joanne Gilbert was born and raised in Napoleons, and now lives in Cambrian Hill with her husband and three children. Cr Gilbert believes community consultation is paramount and is strongly committed to improving infrastructure and services whilst being financially responsible. She served as Deputy Mayor in 2018-19 and 2019-20. Cr Gilbert has been appointed by Council as its representative to the following: Grampians Central West Waste & Resource Recovery Group - Local Government Forum and Highlands Local Learning & Employment Network.



Cr David Evans

Cr David Evans is a Bannockburn resident, passionate about making Golden Plains' rates fair and equitable. He understands the issues facing the Shire, and is interested in making budgetary cost savings, wherever possible. Cr Evans wishes to be seen as approachable and is willing to hear new ideas. Cr Evans has been appointed by Council as its representative to the following: Geelong Rural and Peri-Urban Advisory Committee; G21 Environment Pillar; G21 Health and Wellbeing Pillar; and G21 Planning and Services Pillar.



Cr Nathan Hansford

Cr Nathan Hansford lives with his family in Bannockburn and owns a local business, as well as serving as the Controller of the Bannockburn SES. Returning to Golden Plains Shire Council for a second consecutive term, Cr Hansford is focused on working together to achieve the best outcome possible for the Golden Plains community. Cr Hansford has been appointed by Council as its representative to the following: Municipal Association of Victoria; Geelong Regional Library Corporation; G21 Education and Training Pillar; G21 Sport and Recreation Pillar; G21 Transport Pillar; MAV Emergency Management Committee; MAV Financial Assistance Grants and Rate Capping Taskforce; MAV Human Services Committee; and MAV Transport & Infrastructure Committee.



Cr Helena Kirby

Cr Helena Kirby is a resident of Rokewood where she resides with her family and owns and operates her own business in the town. Serving in her third consecutive Council term, Cr Kirby was Mayor in 2017-18. She enjoys representing the interests of the residents of Rokewood and the surrounding districts, and will ensure the communities within Golden Plains Shire prosper. Cr Kirby has been appointed by Council as its representative to the following: G21 Arts, Culture and Heritage Pillar; Geelong Heritage Centre Collection Advisory Committee; Golden Plains Disability, Access and Inclusion Committee; Rural Financial Counselling Service Victoria's Colac Local Reference Group; and Golden Plains Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee.



Cr Des Phelan

Cr Des Phelan, a farmer from Springdallah, has lived and worked in Golden Plains Shire all his life. He has served on the former Grenville and now Golden Plains Shire Council for 25 years, including six terms as Mayor, most recently serving in the position in 2016-17. Cr Phelan is a member of the following committees: Ballarat Regional Landfill Monitoring; MAV Emergency Management Committee; MAV Environment Committee; MAV Financial Assistance Grants and Rate Capping Committee; and Timber Towns Victoria.



Cr Les Rowe

Cr Les Rowe has lived in Golden Plains his whole life, owning and operating a business in Sutherlands Creek. He has been involved in the community for many years. Cr Rowe has been active in the community for many years, and notably worked with Council and government departments to lobby for a new K-12 school in Bannockburn when he was Bannockburn Primary School President. His priorities are to support the residents, ratepayers and community organisations of Golden Plains, and make decisions that benefit the whole community. Cr Rowe has been appointed by Council as its representative to the following: G21 Environment Pillar and Council's Audit & Risk Committee.

OUR PEOPLE

OUR PEOPLE

SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

Council is the governing body that appoints a Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO has responsibility for the day-to-day management of operations in accordance with the strategic directions of the Council Plan.

Three Directors together with the CEO form the Senior Management Team (SMT) and lead the organisation.



Eric Braslis
Chief Executive Officer



Philippa O'Sullivan
Director Corporate Services



Lisa Letic
Director Community Services



Phil Josipovic
Director Infrastructure and Development



ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

