

AGENDA

Council Meeting

6.00pm Tuesday 9 June 2020

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

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING
6.00pm Tuesday 23 June 2020

Copies of Golden Plains Shire Council's Agendas & Minutes
Can be obtained online at 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.

Order Of Business

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- 1 OPENING DECLARATION**
- 2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

3 BUSINESS REPORTS FOR DECISION

3.1 SUBMISSIONS TO THE 2020-21 DRAFT ANNUAL BUDGET

File Number:

Author: Fiona Rae, Manager Finance

Authoriser: Philippa O'Sullivan, Director Corporate Services

Attachments: 1. Budget Submissions

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

1. Receives and notes the submissions relating to 2020-21 Draft Annual Budget, and
2. Hear the submissions from those requesting to address Council in support of their submission lodged under Section 129 and 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its meeting held on 28 April 2020, Council resolved to publically exhibit the 2020-21 Draft Annual Budget in accordance with Section 223 of the *Local Government Act, 1989* (the Act).

Submissions from the public were invited via email, hardcopy mail or through Council's Have Your Say webpage, with a closing date of 29 May 2020. In addition, Council included a four page article in the Golden Plains Shire Gazette on the 2020-21 Draft Annual Budget, with distribution to residents across the Shire. The primary focus of the budget being to continue to deliver services under the rates cap, with investment in roads, infrastructure and local community projects was outlined. The draft budget also included the revised rating strategy and also highlighted rating strategy review changes and rates support for ratepayers and businesses explained in detail. Social media was also used as a medium to promote and communicate the key points from the draft 2020-21 budget.

Nine (9) public submissions were received, of which 4 submitters have requested to be heard. The hearing of submissions will commence at 6.00pm on 9 June 2020, with 5 minutes being allowed for each presentation. Officers provided responses to submitters to answer specific questions asked this year, which was due to the current COVID-19 environment whereby the public did not have an opportunity to ask questions at the two scheduled conversation posts which were cancelled in accordance with COVID-19 requirements.

The 2020-21 Draft Annual Budget will be presented to the 23 June 2020 Ordinary Council Meeting for final adoption.

BACKGROUND

Summary of Submissions

A total number of 9 submissions were received, summarised as follows, with submitters requesting to be heard and the order of hearing submissions indicated in the table below:

Submitter	Date of Submission	Request to be heard/ Order	Township	Summary of Submission
Local Committee of Management	11 th May	No	Maude	Requesting for the provision of town water to the Maude Recreation Reserve's toilets to be included in the budget.

Submitter	Date of Submission	Request to be heard/ Order	Township	Summary of Submission
Local Resident	22 nd May	No	Durdiwarrah	Questioning waste management charge when no kerbside collection is available to the resident, and requesting justification of municipal flat rate charges to properties that have no road frontage.
Local Resident	25 th May	No	Shire Wide	Request freezing rate increases to provide assistance to ratepayers dealing with financial hardships. Also requesting a review of the waste management charge increase of \$10 noting a \$450k surplus was generated last financial year.
Local Resident	26 th May	No	Enfield	Querying how much of the budget is being spent in Bannockburn as he feels a disproportionate amount of money is going into Bannockburn (75% of expenditure with only 25% of Shire residents living there).
Local Residents	29 th May	Yes - 1	Inverleigh	Does not believe the budget realistically addresses the hardship facing local communities comparing to City of Geelong hardship allowances. Questioning new building and planning charges being unfair in this time of crisis, including the recreational vehicles new charge. Believes executive salaries should be reduced and concerned with Council's staff turnover rates. Aged care only funded \$2.3m which has declined over the past 5 years while the ageing population is increasing. Questioning borrowing to fund extravagant Bannockburn facilities with inadequate funding for other communities in the Shire, especially Inverleigh and Teesdale. New Development Contribution Policy is completely unrealistic contribution requirement from Developers which should be higher with the contribution leaving a burden with Council.
Local Resident	29 th May	Yes - 2	Meredith	Concerned every household is charged \$340 for waste management regardless of whether their property receives kerbside collection. Would like to understand how rates are applied to farm properties, and resents her property being called a farm.

Submitter	Date of Submission	Request to be heard/ Order	Township	Summary of Submission
Local Resident	28 th May	Yes - 3	Batesford	Questioning governance and corporate planning costs detailed in the budget and requesting details on where this money is to be spent. Would hope Councillors vote themselves the minimum allowance cited in the new range on page 26. Is the Bannockburn Bowls Upgrade going ahead? Requesting details of IT expenditure, and employee entitlements costs. Clarification of compulsory and non-compulsory garbage charges. Requesting details of where the loan of \$9.5m for Civic Centre will be sourced from. Batesford has no money allocated for reconstitution of footpaths which have overgrown and no money for repair to local roads, unhappy there is no money allocated to Batesford. The developer for the Riverstone Estate has been allowed to proceed without providing infrastructure and land which he was required to do as part of the planning permit. How long do we have to wait for the Shire to adopt the land and give the community access for recreational purposes.
Local Resident	29 th May	Yes - 4	Bannockburn	Pleased to see changes made to rate differentials easing rate burden on residents however do object to the rise in the municipal charge as it is against State Government guidelines. Request consideration be given to freezing the rate cap at zero. Actual staff turnover for 2018-19 of 22.43% much higher than neighbouring Councils of 10%, concerned with costs of staff turnover and not properly detailed within the budget, and should be aiming to bring staff turnover ratios down to align with State's average.
Local Resident	1 st June	No	Shire Wide	Requesting the rate cap be frozen at zero due to impacts from COVID-19 and customers experiencing financial difficulties.

Key Points

One budget submission raised a number of issues. Concerns around insufficient financial assistance was responded to with details of the financial support package Council has included for residents and business. The background and rationale for new or increased building and planning fees was explained, and the Development Contribution background and review process was outlined.

Town Water – Maude Recreation Reserve

A budget submission was received requesting the provision of town water to the Maude Recreation Reserve's toilets be included in the budget. The response confirmed that Council officers are investigating and information has been presented to Councillors for their consideration. Additional detailed costings have been obtained for further consideration. The cost of providing the additional supply of town water is approximately \$20,000 and the Maude Recreational Reserve Committee of Management are willing to contribute \$4,000 towards the cost. The installation of the Town water is likely to see Council save over \$2,000 per annum in water supply moving from purchasing loads of water to paying connection and usage fees.

Waste Management Charge

Two submissions queried the \$10 increase in the annual garbage charge. Officer responses to submissions explained the annual garbage charge is levied on a full cost recovery basis to cover the kerbside collection of household waste and recycling. In February 2020, the State Government released its waste related circular economy policy 'Recycling Victoria – A New Economy'. A key action included was the increase in the State Government landfill levy fees over 3 years to bring it in line with other States. The 2020-21 annual garbage charge has been retained at 2019-20 levels plus a \$10 increase in the landfill levy as prescribed by the State Government. Subsequent to the draft budget being placed on public exhibition, the State Government announced the deferral of the levy by 6 months and as a result the annual garbage charge will now increase by only \$5 to \$335. The budget for adoption in June will be revised to reflect this change.

Two submissions queried waste management charges when no kerbside collection is available. The Officer response advised that Council does not charge a fee when a service is not provided. Further investigation confirmed that a service is not provided or charged to these residents.

Rate Cap

Requests to freeze rate charges and not adopt the 2% rate cap increase to assist customers experiencing financial difficulties in the current COVID-19 climate. The response provided explanation on the challenges of the legislated rating system with high population growth and continuing to provide services and infrastructure to a growing population in a small Shire. Council did consider impacts of not applying the rate cap of 2.0% however the long-term cumulative impact is significant amounting to millions of dollars which is not financially sustainable to a Council of our size.

Rating Strategy

The officer response explained how the rating strategy is applied including an explanation of rating differential changes and percentages applied to the farm differentials compared to other differentials. The response also explained that this resident was being charged lower than a residential or vacant land rate as the farm differential has been applied to her property.

Staff Turnover

In response to a submission received explained that Council employees are integral to the delivery of the 60 services provided to the community with wages at comparable levels to other similar sized Shires, with the budget including an annual wage increase in accordance with the Enterprise Agreement. A number of new large employers moving to the region in recent years, such as TAC and Worksafe, has resulted in an increase of job opportunities in the region which indirectly impacts staff turnover, together with other reasons such as retirements and staff moving to other neighbouring Councils. The calibre of Council's workforce is increasing with a number of new employees with expertise in key areas of specialisation such as digital transformation.

Budget allocated to Bannockburn

The response to the submission requesting to know what portion of the budget has been allocated to Bannockburn was responded with details and the location of major infrastructure, open space and recreation projects included in the capital budget. Reference was also made to the 60 services that will continue to be provided throughout the Shire.

POLICY CONTEXT

The Local Government Act, 1989

The Local Government (General) Regulations 2015

2017-2021 Council Plan

DISCUSSION

At the 9 June 2020 Special Council Meeting, Council will allow submitters to be heard where they have requested to address the Council in person. Of the 9 public submissions received, 4 submitters wish to be heard. The issues raised in all the submissions received will be considered in detail in a report to be presented to the 23 June 2020 Ordinary Council meeting.

CONSULTATION

The 2020-21 Draft Budget was placed on public exhibition as part of the legislated four week consultation period. The draft budget was made available for inspection and comment to the 29 May 2020. Any person was given the opportunity to make written comment on any proposal contained in the budget. Of the 9 public submissions received, 4 submitters have requested to be heard in person.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

In accordance with Section 80B of the Local Government Act 1989, the Officer preparing this report declares no conflict of interest in regards to this matter.

CONCLUSION

The 2020-21 Draft Annual Budget will be presented to the 23 June 2020 Ordinary Council Meeting for final adoption.

2020-21 BUDGET SUBMISSIONS



MAUDE RECREATION RESERVE COMMITTEE of MANAGEMENT



To Golden Plains Shire,

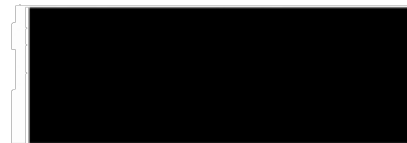
We are writing on behalf of the Maude Recreation Reserve Committee and we are asking for the provision of town water to the Recreation Reserve's toilets be included in the current budget.

It is our understanding that this has been discussed at Council and that for the purposes of transparency it was approved in principle to be included in this current budget.

When the revised quotes come in and along with the local contribution of \$4000 from donations the cost for council should be significantly less than the \$24,000 originally quoted.

We would like to see this project approved and completed before the next summer season.

Yours Sincerely



per



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 20 May 2020 11:51 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re Draft Budget

I wish to raise several issues in regard to the Budget.

In reference to the waste management charge.

How does the shire justify charging a household that fee when there is no kerbside collection available to the resident. There is no reasonable recycle or tip available to the resident who has to pay to use the facility in Geelong. There are no communal bins available. This residence is being levied for absolutely nil available services.

I contend It is an unfair levy on such residents, and I would hazard a guess I am far from being alone in this shire.

Why does this shire not recognise environmentally Covenanted properties and take this into account when levying rates.

How does the Shire justify Municipal flat rate charges to properties that have no road frontage. That regionally the only Council work seen is 1 single mowing of the nearest road verge per annum. It is hard to know what amenity such properties are receiving from the rates.if you check your maps, you will note there is no Vic or Shire Road frontage.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Good Evening.

I hope my email finds you well.

After reviewing the proposed Golden Plains Shire 'Draft Budget 2020' I would like to submit the following feedback for consideration prior to final approval by Council.

During the current environment we find ourselves living in and taking into account the number of rate payers and local businesses that have been financially impacted and facing financial hardship the Golden Plains Shire I believe now has the opportunity to offer real assistance and support to the community by freezing any proposed rate increase for 2020/21.

I understand that Council has implemented a COVID 10 Hardship Application, however many residents I have spoken to believe it could be viewed as to be extremely intrusive and designed to ensure an extremely low number of applications. The reality is it only assists with rate payment referral, no real assistance to many rate payers within the Shire that are dealing with real financial hardships. With global uncertainty, many people are looking for community, connection and stability the challenge being embraced by many Local Governments in Victoria is to enable and facilitate this community connection by way of real assistance and support. My rough calculations leads me to believe that the amount of approximately \$460K would be the amount the Council would have to forgo if a decision to freeze rates was approved which is not really a great amount when taking into account the proposed surplus that will be achieved in the 20/21 proposed Budget. \$460 K is not a great amount when compared to the millions of dollars Council is spending on the new Council Offices, the significant amount of money that was found to fund the additional soccer pitch, the Heart of Bannockburn Project and the amount of rate payers money that was wasted on the failed Inverleigh Street Scape debacle.

I would also like Council to review the submission to increase the Waste Management charge from \$330.00 to an annual fee of \$340.00 my belief is that currently there is no need to increase this fee. My belief is based on the significant surplus achieved (apparently well over \$450K last financial year) that Council received and apparently another significant surplus that will be received maybe an even greater amount come this financial year.

The Waste Management Charge should be the actual amount required to cover costs and not used as a way to raise additional funds to cover the past failures of previous administrations to budget appropriately for the required rehabilitation of the closed Teesdale Tip and the future rehabilitation of the Rokewood tip.

In closing once again I urge Council to take the opportunity to show true leadership and compassion during the current environment and provide real assistance and support to the rate payers of the Golden Plains Shire and freeze rates for 20/21.

Yours Sincerely

[Redacted signature block]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 24 May 2020 2:26 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Distribution of wealth

I live in [REDACTED] and was wondering how much of the budget is getting spent in Bannockburn?
Last time I checked there was approximately 75% of the councils income going into Bannockburn whereas approximately 25% of the councils residents live there.

I am also aware that some of the residents in close by towns would use some facilities but it appears that a disproportionate amount of money is going into Bannockburn.

Kind regards,
[REDACTED]

29 May 2020

The Director of Corporate Services
Golden Plains Shire Council
Bannockburn
Victoria

enquiries@gplains.vic.gov.au

Dear Director,

2020 Draft Budget Submission

We are residents and ratepayers who live full time in the Shire. We also run a small business with clients in Melbourne and overseas.

We have read the Draft Budget in the context of the unique circumstances of the COVID 19 Pandemic and the inevitable economic repercussions for our residents, business and the Council itself.

Our principal concerns about the Draft Budget include, but are not limited to:

1. The Draft Budget is framed as business as usual assumptions and does not realistically address the hardship facing local communities, individuals and businesses. The City of Geelong, in contrast, has delivered a draft budget which realistically addresses the post COVID 19 world and makes proper allowances for hardship.
2. The Hardship announcements by Council are token and generally are aimed at those who have defaulted and have not paid. The suspension of recovery and debt proceedings is a double-edged sword for Council's cash flow and simply delays the inevitable for ratepayers.
3. There is no rate relief which is meaningful compared to Geelong.
4. The new charges also are unfair in this time of crisis. Council has added new fees or increased charges for local businesses such as food trucks and animal breeders, whilst at the same preaching to the community to be kind to local business! Council should walk the talk and scrap all increases and new charges that have the potential to adversely affect business in the Shire. Post COVID, when federal and state budgetary supports are reduced or cease altogether local business will need all the help it can get to survive. New council charges have the opposite effect.
5. The proposed new charge for Recreational vehicles used on private property is also an unnecessary burden on families especially those on rural properties. The Council's definitions of recreational vehicles are confused and contradict the definitions in the Road Safety Act 1985 and potentially also include road going recreational vehicles which is surely unwarranted. Owners who have already paid the registration fee for recreational registration to the Victorian Department of Transport and the TAC levy will be double slapped by this new council charge. Ratepayers should not have to pay both State government and Council. The enforcement justification is not costed and no details of how many complaints and how many infringement notices have been issued are stipulated. Modern, electric recreational motorcycles, for example are now common place and are completely silent. Yet they will be charged on the stated premise by Council that recreational motorcycles make excessive noise! Less affluent families who have small mini bikes for their children will now also have an additional burden to bear. The new charge will no doubt be reliant on self report/disclosure. Few residents will do so and the amount raised will be paltry and penalise the few who do the right thing. The related consequence will invariably be Council officers wanting to come onto properties to conduct audits and so deny residents quiet occupation of their properties. For all of these reasons the Council should re think, refine, reconsider and preferably abandon this onerous ill thought out charge.

2

6. Council's salary and wages budget needs to be tailored to the reality. Executive salaries in business are currently being slashed to deal with COVID economic reality. Many CEO's have publicly announced salary reduction for themselves and their leadership groups. There is no such concession in this Draft budget and nor is there any suggestion of a review. At the same time, Council's staff turnover rate once again continues to be the highest in the State of Victoria. (See rate my Council website for more details). The on costs in recruitment, training, departure packages, staff morale and poor service delivery are self evident. This carries a significant budgetary cost that is not addressed in these Budget papers. Transparency requires this situation to be reviewed and the savings to the budget considered.
7. Aged care and support is funded only to the extent of \$2.3 million and is shared with those with disability who have generous NDIA funding in many cases. In many respects, the budgetary assumptions appear to continue to rely on services being hand balled to community groups and charities and the Commonwealth to deliver. Council's allocation to aged care support type services appears to have declined in the last 5 years. Yet his cohort of residents is increasing significantly and will continue to do so. This draft budget reflects an inadequate consideration for the contribution the aging population pay in rates and the declining services that the Council is funding.
8. Council's loan obligations, largely to fund extravagant Bannockburn facilities, are some of the highest in the State. The consequence is that there is inadequate funding for other communities in the Shire, especially those such as Inverleigh and Teesdale which Council is determined to grow at any cost without any realistic ability to provide requisite services and infrastructure. Communities in the North of the Shire are in a similar position of prejudice.
9. Council's new Developer Contribution Policy, that was surprisingly dealt with separately from this Budgetary process at the May Council Meeting revealed a completely unrealistic contribution requirement from Developers. The contribution, when compared to the actual budgetary cost for infrastructure required, is paltry and leaves the burden with Council. For example the Inverleigh Streetscape process disclosed that the Department of Transport estimates of the cost of treating the Hamilton Highway intersection of Common Road consequent on C75 exceeded \$750K. The Developer contribution for the Berthon Estate in C75 seems likely even on the new policy assumptions, to be a small percentage of the actual outlays. Developers are mostly based out of the Shire and have the capacity to pay more. This budget opportunity does need to be seriously and realistically reviewed.
10. We reserve the right to address the Council meeting on the Draft Budget please.

Yours sincerely



Director Corporate Services
Golden Plains Shire Council
PO Box 111
Bannockburn
Vic 3331

From:

29/5/20

Dear Sir,

Thankyou for the current Gazette with the information on the Draft Budget 2020/21, and my apologies for being so slow to respond. I would love a detailed copy and also to be able to attend the upcoming meeting on 9th June. There are two issues which I would like to discuss.

- ① It concerns me that every household in the shire is charged the \$340 rate for waste management regardless of whether their property receives kerbside collection.

My property is in such a position that it is not feasible to have rubbish collection so I have always sorted my recyclables and taken them and my rubbish (plus other plenty of other

②

people's rubbish dumped on the track to my property) to the Geelong recycle and transfer station.

② Rating Strategy review

I would like more information on how the rates are worked out on so called "farm" properties.

I resent having my property called a "farm".

When I bought the property in [REDACTED]

It was an abandoned ex cattle and sheep farm which had been seriously overgrazed and cleared of nearly all trees. There was

virtually no topsoil, massive tunnel erosion, extensive areas of gorse and other weeds.

The property is in the middle of the Meredith State forest and should never have been farmed and certainly not in the irresponsible way it had been done.

My aim on buying the property was to restore it to native bushland for the local birds and animals.

③

I have planted thousands of native trees and shrubs and cleared masses of weeds.

As soon as Trust For Nature became available I was greatly relieved to place a covenant on the property - so no future owner could wreck what I have worked tirelessly for nearly 40 years to achieve.

I live simply on the property and there is no way any financial income from farming or anything else which uses any area of the covenant (which covers the whole property except a narrow strip down the drive and the hut area).

Councils in some areas respect the Trust for Nature protection for the environment in perpetuity and adjust rates to help environmental enthusiasts so that this is all possible.

Personally I can afford the rates but there are others also supporting the environment who struggle to manage and would be greatly relieved at a lower rate.

(4)

I would be very interested to be
able to discuss these matters and
also the parts of the Budget plan
so hope this will be possible at
the meeting on the 9th June

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

29th May 2020

Ms Philippa O'Sullivan

Director of Corporate Services

Golden Plains Shire

2 Pope Street BANNOCKBURN, VIC 3331

enquiries@gplains.vic.gov.au

Re: Golden Plains Council Budget 2020-21

Dear Philippa,

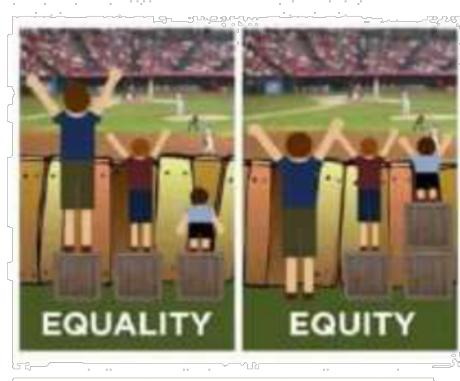
Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft budget for 2020-21.

Firstly an acknowledgement. In my budget submission last year I put the question:

"Present rate differentials which see pensioners in Bannockburn pay at a CIV rate which is 10% higher than a vineyard in the Moorabool Valley still remain unchanged. Should our intensive agriculture enterprises such as broiler farms and vineyards be on the same discounted CIV rate as broadacre farming?"

I subsequently had conversations with several Councillors, the CEO and other staff regarding the need to bring a different approach to rate differentials. I am please to see that the work has been undertaken and while I do not agree with all the measures that resulted it is a welcome step, particularly as it has allowed the easing of some rate burden on residents. Therefore thank you to all involved.

However I will also note my objections to the 30% rise in the Municipal Charge in that submission still stand. I explained it went against State Government guidelines and would increase inequity as it has. While it remains at a level much higher than most other Councils who either sit at an average of 10% or do not use one at all it will always challenge any contention that the Council is seeking "equity" from its rating strategy.



Rate Freeze

Given the current situation of increasing unemployment and high business uncertainty due to the CoVID19 crisis I strongly recommend that consideration be given to freezing the rate cap at zero. Many other Councils around Victoria have done this and it has been welcomed by their residents as a prudent and empathetic measure to ease current and expected financial pressures on the many households who have been impacted by measures to combat this disease.

With forecasts of a likely recession and possible depression I submit that any aim of attempting to keep pace with inflation is no longer valid. The March 2020 Quarter figures released by the RBA show an exceptionally low "Measures of Consumer Price Inflation" figure of 0.3% with the organisation predicting further decreases due to CoVID19. Some of the 0.3% was propped up by "strong price increases for products subject to COVID-19-related stockpiling behaviour such as rice, pasta and personal care products" but that pressure has now dissipated.

<https://www.rba.gov.au/publications/smp/2020/may/inflation.html>

Given the likelihood of substantially decreasing CPI figures the Golden Plains Shire would need to have extremely strong reasons for not instituting a rate freeze and be prepared to fully justify such to the ratepayers of the Shire.

Staff Turnover

The 2019-20 Budget set a figure of 13.9% for the ratio of staff turnover this financial

year. This is despite the 2018-19 year having a figure of 22.43%

The explanation of that high figure on the Compare Council's website that "The number of staff resignations tend to vary from year to year" is in my opinion not an adequate response.

To illustrate how stark the numbers are this is a graphic comparing our neighbouring Councils.



There really does need to be a better account for the reasons behind this figure and to determine why we should have any confidence in the current budgeted figure of 13.9%, which is still markedly higher than the State average for Councils of this type.

The reason it matters is that the cost of staff turnover is significant and not properly detailed within the budget. A study completed in 2009 breaking down the true cost of staff turnover in the City of Mitcham is often referenced in discussions of this topic concerning Local Government. It includes three Case Studies accounting for 'Notice Costs', 'Recruitment Costs' and 'New Employee Costs' and returned the following figures for various positions within the Council;

Leading Worker Street Trees (Internal Application Process) – Total Cost \$12,851.50

Manager Contracts – Total Cost \$ 49,228.00

Finance Officer – Total Cost \$ 93,695.00

[https://web.archive.org/web/20200229073402/https://www.lga.sa.gov.au/webdata/resources/project/Project Output - Labour Turnover Cost Study-1.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20200229073402/https://www.lga.sa.gov.au/webdata/resources/project/Project%20Output%20-%20Labour%20Turnover%20Cost%20Study-1.pdf)

Applying an estimated cost of turnover per Golden Plains Shire staff member at \$30,000 in today's figures and a ballpark number of 40 staff being replaced in the previous financial year returns a total cost of \$1.2 million dollars. If we accept that the State average would account for half that figure it still leaves an excess of \$600,000 of ratepayer's money going to service an extraordinarily high turnover ratio. It really requires a proper audit, preferably independently, to fully understand why this cost is being incurred and to test the validity of the ongoing budgeted figures.

We should be aiming to bring staff turnover ratios to at least align with the State's average for similar Councils. This is unfortunately not reflected within the current budget.

Kind regards,




28th May 2020

Mr Eric Braslis

CEO Golden Plains Shire

cc: Mr Owen Sharkey Mayor GPS

Subject: Shire Draft Budget 2020-2021

Dear Eric

Thank you for the opportunity to make comment on the subject Budget. Whilst I find the budget in keeping with the general needs of the Shire, I would appreciate a better understanding of several items as follows.

Page 21 Objective 4 details a cost of \$818,000 for delivering of good governance and leadership.

- It states that: Governance is the process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented. This program aims to strengthen Council's decision making capacity and identifies key areas of advocacy that Council will focus on in the 2018-19 financial year.

No doubt the date should be 2020-2021. However, would you please advise in what manner this programme money is to be spent. For example, is it for training?

Also, on the same page Corporate Planning is quoted as costing \$1145000.

- Corporate Planning states that: Maintenance of an integrated approach to corporate planning, financial planning, budgeting and resource allocation and the maintenance and measurement of organisational performance and promotion of cultural change to meet customer service needs.

Again, would you please advise in what manner this money is to be spent.

The total of costs for all of the items quoted under Objective 4 is \$5285000 whereas on page 24 the cost is quoted as \$6216000, objective summary item 4 refers. I have used the net cost as this is what the budget has to carry. Would you advise which is correct please.

On page 26 it states that in January 2020, the Minister for Local Government undertook a review of Mayoral and councillor allowance categories and altered the Golden Plains Shire category from Category 1 to Category 2 which will be applied following the 2020 Council elections. As the Shire only just qualifies for the new category it is hoped that Councillors will vote themselves the minimum allowance cited in the new range. Does the budget reflect the new allowance?

If the current allowances are based on Category 1 then they do not seem to be in accordance with the stated allowances of \$21049 maximum for councillors and \$62884 for the Mayor. Have I accessed out of date figures?

On page 44 there is reference to the Bannockburn Bowls Club. Is this project going ahead? If so, is there an expenditure for potential issues associated with Geotech analysis of the grounds which has not been identified or costed? Also, why has the \$90000 contribution detailed on page 44, which was not collected last year, not been carried over?

On page 45 there is an expenditure of \$684000 for IT. This represents an increase of 23.4% over the current budget. How is this increase being spent and why? There is also an expenditure of \$200000 for hardware on page 54. Are these totals additive?

Would you please advise what the difference is between a compulsory and non compulsory garbage charge?

One entry suggests that there is a surplus of \$4.8million but, when adjusted, this reduces to a deficit of \$1.8million. On the basis that grants and contributions are actually received what is the correct figure?

On page 64 there is a loan cost of \$9.5million for the Civic centre at 1.88%. However, there is no entry for where the loan is to be sourced. This being the case, can you confirm the actual interest rate negotiated and from which entity the loan will be sourced?

I note that there is an item on page 50 which details an amount of \$858000 for employee entitlements. Would you please clarify what these entitlements are and when they will be spent?

In conclusion, I note that once again Batesford has no monies allocated for reconstitution of footpaths which have overgrown and are no longer discernible, no monies for repair to local roads, etc. In fact, there is no money allocated for Batesford at all.

I note that in this regard, Batesford gets mentioned 2 times in the budget whereas Bannockburn is mentioned 44 times.

I remain disappointed that Batesford is once again being treated as a cash cow for the Shire coffers.

Furthermore, and regarding the donation of land to the community by the developer of the Riverstone Estate.

The developer for the Riverstone Estate has been allowed to proceed without providing the infrastructure and land which he was required to do as part of the planning permit. This land should have been handed over by now. How long do we have to wait for the Shire to take the appropriate action to adopt the land and give the community access for recreational purposes?

This item should be recognised in the draft budget as a cost as no doubt the Shire will attract some costs once the land is adopted.

I seek leave to present my case to the Council at the appropriate Council meeting.

Yours sincerely



Hi

I have just realised that submissions in reply to the GPS budget are listed were required by 29 May 2020. Due to family and business issues I inadvertently missed the close date however given the close was last Friday and today is Monday morning I feel it is not improbable for my submission to be considered. I have just quickly viewed the Council Budget and wish to submit comment as follows. Subsequently I wish to submit a response to the budget in relation to Property Rates as follows;

Golden Plains Shire Council Budget - Proposed Property Rate Increase for 2020-2021

Golden Plains Shire Council has many residents seriously impacted by the Coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic who are experiencing extreme financial difficulty through no fault of their own. Many GPS residents either now experiencing unemployment, or have been forced to accept reduced working hours, in addition to many self-employed GPS residents (either local GPS businesses or other business owners who operate outside of the GPS municipality) who are either experiencing a total business shutdown or extremely reduced income as a direct result of the Coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic. I request the rate cap for GPS be frozen to zero in addition to no additional charges or increase in charges whatsoever for the GPS 2020-2021 rates year with further consideration given to future rating years dependent on the outcome of this current worldwide pandemic and crisis situation.

With high business uncertainty due to the Coronavirus/COVID-19 crisis I cannot believe Golden Plains Shire Council are still proposing an increase for 2020-2021 rates. Many local GPS ratepayers and residents are of the strong opinion that the Golden Plains Shire Council should be rethinking strategies to keep our community going, not burden it further by attempting to keep pace with inflation and/or pass on any additional charges for the rating year 2020-2021 at all. It has been widely advertised by a number of leading economists that there is definite potential of a likely recession and possible depression. Additionally, the Reserve Bank of Australia March 2020 Quarter figures indicate extremely low measures of Consumer Price Inflation and predict further decline in due to the current Coronavirus/CoVID19 pandemic. Even though GPS are aware of this rates for 2020-2021 are being budgeted for an increase by the maximum amount that they are allowed to which is unbelievable.

The Golden Plains Shire Council should be following the example of many other Victorian Councils, including one of the largest being Melbourne City Council, who will be 'Freezing' rates for 2020-2021 as a sign of understanding and compassion and who are offering fantastic and absolutely necessary support and assistance needed by their Rate payers. This of course has been overwhelmingly welcomed by their residents as a prudent and empathetic measure to ease current and expected financial pressures on the many households who have been impacted by the Coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic. Where is a sign of the Golden Plains Shire showing compassion and support to many who are not able to support rate increases of any kind?

Many GPS residents strongly believe this municipality is a great place to live for young and old. Many believe GPS to be a great place to raise young families. Currently GPS do not appear to understand or realise this as there is real detachment between Council and the GPS community. Why?

Are GPS really trying to force ratepayers out of this municipality? This of course result in further reduced income and an even worse scenario for GPS? If Melbourne Council can freeze rate costs why can't GPS? Please show some compassion for those struggling within the GPS and hopefully many people looking to move out of the region won't.

In October 2020 there is an opportunity for Ratepayers to review the performance of their currently elected Mayor and Councillors at the upcoming Council Elections. This is an opportunity to vote for the change that appears to be lacking and seriously needed. Not to mention an evaluation of the performance of the GPS CEO and staff whose salaries are paid by the GPS community.

Golden Plains Shire would need to have extremely strong reasons for not instituting a rate/rate cost freeze which of course will need to be fully justified to the ratepayers of the GPS Shire.

Please acknowledge receipt/acceptance of this submission.

Many Thanks.

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