



GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

# AGENDA

## Council Meeting

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**3.00pm Friday 16 April 2021**

**VENUE:**  
**Virtual Meeting**

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING  
6.00pm Tuesday 27 April 2021

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.

## Order Of Business

<b>1</b>	<b>Opening Declaration</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Acknowledgement of Country</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Apologies and Leave of Absence</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Declaration of Conflict of Interest</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Business Reports for Decision</b> .....	<b>6</b>
5.1	Leave to consider a Petition and E-Petition - Rokewood Uniting Church - 60 Ferrars Street, Rokewood .....	6
5.2	Receive and note a Petition and E-Petition - Rokewood Uniting Church - 60 Ferrars Street, Rokewood .....	7
5.3	Heritage Designation - Rokewood Uniting Church, 60 Ferrars Street, Rokewood .....	13
5.4	Potential Compulsorily Aquisition - Rokewood Uniting Church, 60 Ferrars Street, Rokewood.....	14



**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**

Council acknowledge the traditional Wadawurrung owners of the land where we meet today. Council pays its respects to Wadawurrung Elders both past and present and 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 DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

**5 BUSINESS REPORTS FOR DECISION**

**5.1 LEAVE TO CONSIDER A PETITION AND E-PETITION - ROKEWOOD UNITING CHURCH - 60 FERRARS STREET, ROKEWOOD**

**File Number:**

**Author:** Helena Kirby, Mayor

**Authoriser:** Eric Braslis, CEO

**Attachments:** Nil

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council seek leave of the Council to consider a Petition and an e-Petition, as taken-up on the 'change.org' platform.

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**5.2 RECEIVE AND NOTE A PETITION AND E-PETITION - ROKEWOOD UNITING CHURCH  
- 60 FERRARS STREET, ROKEWOOD**

**File Number:**

**Author:** Helena Kirby, Mayor

**Authoriser:** Eric Braslis, CEO

**Attachments:** 1. Petitiion

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receive and note the attached Petition and the e-Petition – entitled "Save the Rokewood church".

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Petitioners must be enrolled to vote in the Golden Plains Shire. To be presented by Cr Helena Kirby, Golden Plains Shire.

## PETITION

To the Mayor and Councillors of the Golden Plains Shire Council.

The petition of residents and ratepayers in the Golden Plains Shire brings to the attention of the Council:

- That the Presbyterian Church of Victoria is a creature of the Parliament of Victoria by virtue of the *Presbyterian Synod of Victoria Act 1859*, the *Presbyterian Trusts Act 1890* and other acts.
- That the Uniting Church in Australia and its Property Trust are creatures of the Parliament of Victoria by virtue of the *Uniting Church in Australia Act 1977*.
- That among thousands of properties entrusted to the Uniting Church in Australia – at no cost in 1977 – was the former Presbyterian church at Rokewood (the first stage of which was built in 1865-66 at a cost of more than £1,200 on a 4047 square-metre site which had been purchased for £8 on 11 March 1865).
- That the stated purpose of the Uniting Church in Australia is to “inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice.”
- That on 18 March 2021, Rural Press Limited (trading as Australian Community Media) newspapers nationally syndicated a story reporting the Uniting Church in Australia had permanently closed the Rokewood church due to “falling” church attendances following “steady population loss” in the town.
- That on 26 March 2021, *realestate.com.au* reported that the Uniting Church in Australia had offered the closed Rokewood church for sale, inviting expressions of interest by 2pm Monday 19 April 2021.
- That an estimated 300 people live in Rokewood township with some 500 more populating the surrounding district, with population growth overtaking population decline in recent years.
- That Rokewood viably sustains and justifies a state school and kindergarten, football club, fire brigade, police station, rural health clinic, RSL sub-branch, hotel, post office, mixed retail shop, regular art show and annual fishing day, and should also be able to justify and sustain a church.
- That the failure of the Uniting Church in Australia to “inspire,” “enliven” or in any way engage with the wider Rokewood community represents failings in polity and stewardship that should not be overlooked, excused or unjustly rewarded, and
- That the leadership of the Uniting Church should have recognised and addressed such failings in the aftermath of a Christian Research Association, June 2009, **Roundtable on Rural Church Life** at the Salvation Army’s conference centre in Geelong; on which RMIT Professor Desmond Cahill OAM based his infamous, alarming and prophetic “*They couldn’t give a damn about us*” report of February 2010.

Your petitioners therefore request that the Golden Plains Shire Council either (a) immediately serve The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (Victoria) with a ‘Notice of Intention to Acquire’ by compulsion the former Presbyterian church at Rokewood – in accordance with the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986* and other acts – and re-entrust it to the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, so that our much-loved local church can be returned to its historic use as a place of Christian worship, OR, if necessary, (b) formally request that the Minister for Regional Development, The Hon. Mary-Anne Thomas MLA, urgently take all necessary steps to do so.

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[Redacted Signatures]		

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**5.3 HERITAGE DESIGNATION - ROKEWOOD UNITING CHURCH, 60 FERRARS STREET, ROKEWOOD****File Number:****Author:** Helena Kirby, Mayor**Authoriser:** Eric Braslis, CEO**Attachments:** Nil**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council request the Chief Executive Officer to report to the next Council meeting;

1. On the extent to which 60 Ferrars Street, Rokewood VIC 3330 (VHD Place ID: 23678) is subject (or not) to Heritage protections under the *Local Government Act 1989*, the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, the *Heritage Act 2017* and any other state or federal acts.
  2. On whether any form of interim Heritage protection is necessary and possible.
  3. With at least a broad and rudimentary plan for the fullest, long-term protection of this unique building.
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**5.4 POTENTIAL COMPULSORILY AQUISITION - ROKEWOOD UNITING CHURCH, 60 FERRARS STREET, ROKEWOOD****File Number:****Author:** Helena Kirby, Mayor**Authoriser:** Eric Braslis, CEO**Attachments:** Nil**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council request the Chief Executive Officer to report to the next council meeting, as to whether and how the Council may compulsorily acquire 60 Ferrars Street, Rokewood VIC 3330 from The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (Victoria) and re-entrust it to The Presbyterian Church of Victoria Trusts Corporation for continued use as a Christian place of worship in accordance with the *Presbyterian Synod of Victoria Act 1859*, *Presbyterian Church of Australia Act 1900* and other acts of the Parliament of Victoria which govern the Presbyterian Church of Victoria.

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