

SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

# Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 21 August 2024

**Council Meeting No.497  
Council Chambers, Leongatha  
Commenced at 2:00pm**



# minutes



*South Gippsland  
Shire Council*

*Come for the beauty, Stay for the lifestyle*

## OUR COUNCIL VISION

***We care deeply about our people, the land and future of South Gippsland.***

***Our vision is to support the whole Shire in creating economic, environmental and social prosperity for this and future generations.***

The Council Agenda relates to the Strategic Objectives of the *Council Plan 2022-2026* indicated in this diagram:



### **Privacy**

Council is required to keep minutes of each Council meeting. The minutes contain details of proceedings which may include personal information about community members disclosed as part of presentations, submissions and questions. The minutes of Council meetings are a public record and can be inspected by members of the public.

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## PRESENT

COUNCILLORS:	Councillor Clare Williams, Mayor Councillor Sarah Gilligan Councillor Mohya Davies Councillor Scott Rae Councillor Michael Felton Councillor Jenni Keerie Councillor John Schelling Councillor Adrian Darakai
NOT PRESENT:	Councillor Nathan Hersey, Deputy Mayor
OFFICERS:	Kerryn Ellis, Chief Executive Officer Tony Peterson, Director Sustainable Infrastructure Allison Jones, Director Performance and Innovation Renae Littlejohn, Director Future Communities Rhys Matulis, Coordinator Governance Natasha Berry, Corporate and Council Business Officer

## **SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL**

Council Meeting No.497, Wednesday 21 August 2024  
Council Chambers, Leongatha, commenced at 2:00pm

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**Kerryn Ellis**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

## **1. PRELIMINARY MATTERS**

### **1.1. LIVE-STREAMING COUNCIL MEETING DISCLAIMER**

This Council Meeting is being streamed live, recorded and published in accordance with Council's Live Streaming in Council Meetings Policy.

Access to the live stream through Council's Internet is an option to view the 'open' component of a Council Meeting. Link to the Live Stream on Council's website: [Live Streaming | Live Streaming | South Gippsland Shire Council](#)

The Chair and/or the CEO have the discretion and authority at any time to direct the termination or interruption of live streaming. Such direction will only be given in exceptional circumstances where deemed relevant. Circumstances may include instances where the content of debate is considered misleading, defamatory or potentially inappropriate to be published.

Today's Meeting is being streamed live as well as recorded and published on Council's website.

Thank you

### **1.2. WELCOME TO THE COUNCIL MEETING**

#### ***Public Questions***

In accordance with *Governance Rules (C82)*, clause 56.4(d) the placement of public questions has now closed. Questions must be received prior to the commencement of the Council Meeting and placed in the receptacle at Governance Officers table. Questions received after the commencement of the Meeting will be considered at the next Council Meeting.

### **1.3. OPENING PRAYER**

As we gather here from diverse backgrounds and beliefs, may we hold privilege with good care and trust. As we deliberate and discuss, may we be wise in our discernment, fair in our decisions and visionary in our planning. May we be guided by our common goal of a strong and united South Gippsland.

#### **1.4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS**

We acknowledge the Bunurong and Gunaikurnai people as the Traditional Custodians of South Gippsland and pay respect to their Elders, past, present, and future, for they hold the memories, traditions, culture, and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia.

#### **1.5. APOLOGIES**

**Councillor Nathan Hersey, Deputy Mayor**

#### **1.6. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

##### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Minutes of the South Gippsland Shire Council Meeting No.496, held on Wednesday 17 July 2024 in the Council Chambers, Leongatha be confirmed.**

##### **RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** Councillor Keerie

**SECONDED:** Councillor Schelling

**That the Minutes of the South Gippsland Shire Council Meeting No.496, held on Wednesday 17 July 2024 in the Council Chambers, Leongatha be confirmed.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

### 1.7. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST FOR COUNCILLORS

The *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), Division 2 sets out the requirements relating to Conflict of Interest. Disclosure of a conflict of interest in respect of a matter to be considered at a Council Meeting is required under section 130(1)(a) and specifically applies to a relevant person being a Councillor, member of a delegated committee who is not a Councillor and a member of Council staff.

Council's *Governance Rules (C82)* (the Rules), clause 3.0 Disclosure of a Conflict of Interest at a Council Meeting sets out the prescribed manner required to disclose a conflict of interest at South Gippsland Shire Council.

The Rules require a Councillor and/ or staff member who has a conflict of interest in a matter being considered at a Council Meeting to announce before the matter is considered and disclose this in a written notice to the Chief Executive Officer. The details included in the disclosure, explain the nature conflict of interest, whether it is classified as general or material (s.127 and s.128), the name of the relevant person(s) and their relationship to them.

Failure to comply with disclosures of conflict of interest (s.130) may be subject to penalty points and/ or other disciplinary measures depending on the nature of the conflict.

The *Local Government Act 2020* can be accessed from the Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary documents website at [www.legislation.vic.gov.au](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au).

Council's *Governance Rules (C82)* can be accessed from [Council's Policies](#) webpage.

**Nil**



## 1.8. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST FOR STAFF

The *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), Division 2 sets out the requirements relating to Conflict of Interest. Disclosure of a conflict of interest in respect of a matter to be considered at a Council Meeting is required under section 130(1)(a) and specifically applies to a relevant person being a Councillor, member of a delegated committee who is not a Councillor and a member of Council staff.

Council's *Governance Rules (C82) (the Rules)*, Chapter 5, clause 7, 8 and 9 sets the prescribed manner required for staff to disclose a conflict of interest when:

- Preparing Reports for Meetings
- Exercise of Delegated Power
- Exercise of a Statutory Function

Council staff must immediately upon becoming aware of a conflict of interest provide a written notice to the Chief Executive Officer disclosing the conflict of interest, explain the nature of the conflict and how it will be managed. Upon becoming aware and declaring a conflict of interest, a staff member may not exercise a power or perform a function in the matter. All prepared reports will record that staff member(s) have considered a conflict of interest and include if any, the details of a disclosure.

Failure to comply with disclosures of conflict of interest (s.130) may be subject to penalty points and/ or other disciplinary measures depending on the nature of the conflict.

The *Local Government Act 2020* can be accessed from the Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary documents website at [www.legislation.vic.gov.au](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au).

Council's *Governance Rules (C82)* can be accessed from Council's Policies webpage.

**Ms Kerryn Ellis, Chief Executive Officer has declared a material conflict of interest in Confidential Agenda Item 14.1. PERSONAL INFORMATION – CEO Employment & Remuneration Com, as the matters relate directly to her role.**

## 2. OBJECTIVE - CONNECTING OUR PEOPLE AND PLACES

### 2.1. FAIR ACCESS FOR RECREATION FACILITIES POLICY

Directorate:	Sustainable Infrastructure
Department:	Infrastructure Planning

#### **Council Plan**

*Objective - Healthy and Engaged Communities*

*The sport and active recreation sector provide opportunities for enriching our communities through the promotion of respect and fair mindedness for all people, while also supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of all Victorians. This policy ensures Council is well positioned to design and implement actions that progress gender equality in community sport.*

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to present the *Fair Access for Recreation Facilities Policy* for consideration and endorsement by Council.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council endorses the *Fair Access for Recreation Facilities Policy* (C96) (Attachment [2.1.1]).**

**RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** Councillor Keerie

**SECONDED:** Councillor Gilligan

**That Council endorses the *Fair Access for Recreation Facilities Policy (C96)* (Attachment [2.1.1]).**

**Councillor Darakai moved an Amendment to the Motion.**

**MOVED:** Councillor Darakai

**SECONDED:** Councillor Rae

**That Council endorses the *Fair Access for Recreation Facilities Policy (C96)* (Attachment [2.1.1]) with an amendment to section 3.5 to read, Women and girls should have equal opportunity to be represented in leadership and governance roles.**

**The Amendment was LOST and the original Motion is now before the Chair.**

**RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** Councillor Keerie

**SECONDED:** Councillor Gilligan

**That Council endorses the *Fair Access for Recreation Facilities Policy (C96)* (Attachment [2.1.1]).**

**The Motion was CARRIED.**

[Link to next Agenda Item.](#)

## REPORT

The purpose of the *Fair Access for Recreation Facilities Policy* is to:

- Address known barriers experienced by women and girls in accessing and using community sports infrastructure.
- Progressively build capacity and capabilities of South Gippsland Shire Council (Council) in the identification and elimination of systemic causes of gender inequality in policy, programs, communications, and delivery of services in relation to community sports infrastructure.
- Establish the expectation that gender equality is considered and prioritised in all current and future planning, policy, service delivery and practice as they relate to community sports infrastructure.
- Ensure Council meets its legal obligations required under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

## CONSULTATION / COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Internal consultation, (and external consultation via GippSport), has been undertaken in the preparation of the *Fair Access for Recreation Facilities Policy*.

Minor changes to Policy section - *Roles and Responsibilities* have been made to accommodate consistency with the Action Plan.

## RESOURCES / FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Councils are ineligible to access State Government community sports infrastructure funding until the Policy is adopted.

## RISKS

By implementing the Policy, Council is satisfying the requirement of the Victorian Government to be eligible for funding programs that relate to community sports infrastructure. Council is required from 1 July 2024 to have a gender equitable access and use policy and action plan in place, as well as the ability to demonstrate progress against that policy and action plan.

## STAFF DISCLOSURE

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have considered and determined that they do not have a conflict of interest in the matter.

## ATTACHMENTS

*Attachments are available on Council's website at the following [LINK](#).*

1. Proposed - Fair Access for Recreation Facilities Policy [2.1.1 - 4 pages]
-

**REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

**Council's Good Governance Framework**

Pillar 4. Structure, Systems & Policies

**Legislative Provisions**

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibility Act 2006

Gender Equity Act 2020

### 3. OBJECTIVE - ECONOMY AND INDUSTRY

#### 3.1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY ANNUAL ACTIONS IMPLEMENTATION

Directorate:	Regional Partnerships
Department:	Economic Development

#### Council Plan

*Objective - Economy and Industry*

*This report relates to the major initiative in the Council Plan - Implement the annual action plan of the 2021–2031 Economic Development Strategy.*

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the 2023/24 annual actions implemented from Council's South Gippsland Economic Development Strategy.

Officers have commenced or completed 97 per cent of the actions from the Strategy since it was adopted by Council.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**That Council receives and notes the 2023/24 annual actions implemented from the *South Gippsland Economic Development Strategy* (refer Attachment [3.1.1]).**

#### RESOLUTION

**MOVED:** Councillor Schelling

**SECONDED:** Councillor Keerie

**That Council receives and notes the 2023/24 annual actions implemented from the *South Gippsland Economic Development Strategy* (refer Attachment [3.1.1]).**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

[Link to next Agenda Item.](#)

## REPORT

Council developed the South Gippsland Economic Development Strategy (the Strategy) in consultation with the Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (the Group).

The Group members included highly skilled and knowledgeable experts who provided key strategic advice and expertise in the Strategy's development.

The Strategy is action oriented; however, also designed to be flexible to allow Council to respond to current and future demands and opportunities for South Gippsland. This was evident with the need for Council to respond to the impacts caused by recent flooding and storm events that required the provision of additional support to the community and businesses in emergency response and recovery.

The South Gippsland Economic Development Strategy was adopted by Council on 21 July 2021.

Below are highlighted actions from the Strategy that were commenced or completed over the past 12 months. A full table of actions from the Strategy with updates has been attached (**Attachment [3.1.1]**)

### **Economic Development Strategy**

- Delivered South Gippsland Latrobe Renewable Energy Impact and Readiness Study.
- Significant engagement with the renewables sector, particularly regarding Offshore Wind developments and submissions to the Federal and Victorian Governments.
- Progressed development of the Industrial Land Supply Strategy.
- Ongoing delivery of Business Concierge and Better Approvals Program to assist businesses through the regulatory process.
- Advocacy on port development for renewable energy, land infrastructure planning funding (Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program), SEATs, food supply and security, freight transport, public transport and telecommunications issues.
- Supported the South Gippsland Dairy Expo, the Shire's largest trade event.
- Hosted the Annual Stakeholder Roundtable bringing together industry, education, health and service providers on the theme of preparing for growth and renewable energy development.

- Hosted second year of the successful Jobs Expo in Leongatha and supported Careers Expo in Korumburra.
- Distribution of monthly business newsletter.
- Supported small business – small business mentoring, business workshops and business bus visits, Gippsland Business Awards and Food and Fibre Awards.
- Emergency Response and Recovery – Welshpool Flood and Mirboo North Storm Events – business and community support.

### **CONSULTATION / COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Strategy's development was supported by an extensive consultation and engagement campaign that ensured the community, including residents, visitors, and other stakeholders, could provide input to help define the key themes and priorities in the Strategy.

### **RESOURCES / FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

Resourcing the implementation of the Strategy is considered as part of the annual Financial Budgets.

### **RISKS**

The implementation of the Strategy allows Council to plan for and mitigate against the risks to our economy into the future. The Strategy has been developed with the flexibility to create a responsive approach to the economic, natural and policy changes that will occur over the next ten-years.

Not all actions and initiatives can be funded each year. Actions are delivered within the annual budget allocations and officers will continue to seek advice and support from industry and government to deliver the best outcomes possible for the South Gippsland community.

### **STAFF DISCLOSURE**

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have considered and determined that they do not have a conflict of interest in the matter.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

*Attachments are available on Council's website at the following [LINK](#).*

1. Economic Development Strategy - Implementation Report 2023/24 [3.1.1 - 10 pages]



## REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

### **Council's Good Governance Framework**

Pillar 1. Direction & Leadership

Pillar 8. Monitoring & Performance Review

### **Council Policy / Strategy / Plans**

*Documents are available on Council's website at the following [LINK](#).*

Economic Development Strategy

Sustainability Strategy

Visitor Economy Strategy

Council Plan 2022-2026

### **Legislative Provisions**

*Local Government Act 2020*

### **Regional, State and National Plan and Policies**

Gippsland Freight Strategy 2013

Gippsland Regional Growth Plan, State Government Victoria

Gippsland Regional Plan 2020-2025

## 3.2. ARTS, CULTURE AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES STRATEGY 2022-2026 - ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT

Directorate:	Future Communities
Department:	Community, Customer and Visitor

### Council Plan

*Objective - Economy and Industry*

*This report relates to the Council Plan Initiative - Implement the annual actions of the Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Strategy.*

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on actions implemented in 2023/2024 to progress Council's South Gippsland Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Strategy.

### RECOMMENDATION

**That Council receives and notes the report on actions implemented in 2023/2024 to progress Council's South Gippsland Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Strategy (refer Attachment [3.2.1]).**

### RESOLUTION

**MOVED:** Councillor Keerie

**SECONDED:** Councillor Gilligan

**That Council receives and notes the report on actions implemented in 2023/2024 to progress Council's South Gippsland Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Strategy (refer Attachment [3.2.1]).**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

[Link to next Agenda Item.](#)

## REPORT

### Background

The South Gippsland Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Strategy 2022-2026 (the Strategy) was adopted by Council on 20 July 2022.

The Strategy is intended to connect to, and support Council's adopted Economic Development and Visitor Economy Strategies 2021-2031, particularly in relation to brand identity, creative economies, cultural assets and events management.

The Strategy has responded to the unique social, cultural, economic, and geographic characteristics of South Gippsland and builds on the innovative community-based approaches to arts development the Shire has established and committed to.

### Discussion

A full report of actions from the Strategy has been provided (**Attachment [3.2.1] Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Strategy – Implementation Report 2024**).

Below are highlighted actions from the Strategy that were commenced or completed over the past twelve-months.

- Commence the development of the Coal Creek Community Park and Museum Strategic Plan.
- Community roll out of the ArtCubes at Loch, Mirboo North, Fish Creek, Meeniyan and Tarwin Lower.
- Supported the Small Halls live music program at Mirboo and Strzelecki along with a youth event at Meeniyan.
- Return of major events at Coal Creek including Southern Lights Festival, Halloween and international country singer, Charlie Crockett.
- Launch of the South Gippsland Creative Fund with 11 recipients.
- Celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Coal Creek in partnership with the community.
- Two major murals completed in Leongatha and Korumburra.
- Development of the Public Arts Policy and Arts and Civic Memorabilia Policy.
- Distribution of 27 arts newsletters to 639 subscribers.

- A total of 17 letters of support provided for funding applications from local organisations (local halls committees, galleries, artists, etc).
- The profile of the creative sector has been elevated with the production of the new South Gippsland Touring Map and two dedicated marketing campaigns in the Gippsland Life magazine.
- Successful application submitted on behalf of Lyrebird Arts Council to the Victorian Government's Creative Neighbourhood Infrastructure Support Program for the purchase of new lighting/sound equipment.
- Whole day tour of Shire arts projects undertaken with Jo Porter, CEO of Regional Arts Victoria to discuss future support and funding opportunities and directions.

### **CONSULTATION / COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Strategy included significant community, industry and stakeholder engagement in its development.

### **RESOURCES / FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

Resourcing the implementation of the Strategy is considered as part of Council's annual budget process.

### **RISKS**

The Strategy has been developed with the flexibility to create a responsive approach to further support arts and creative industries in our community over the four years (2022-2026).

Not all actions and initiatives can be funded each year. Actions are delivered within the annual budget allocations and officers will continue to seek advice and support from the newly established Arts Advisory Committee and partner with artists, the creative industry and government to deliver the best outcomes possible for the South Gippsland community.

### **STAFF DISCLOSURE**

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have considered and determined that they do not have a conflict of interest in the matter.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

*Attachments are available on Council's website at the following [LINK](#).*

1. ARTS CULTURE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES STRATEGY - IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2024 [3.2.1 - 13 pages]

## REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

### **Council's Good Governance Framework**

Pillar 1. Direction & Leadership

Pillar 3. Decision Making

### **Council Policy / Strategy / Plans**

*Documents are available on Council's website at the following [LINK](#).*

Annual Budget

Arts and Civic Memorabilia Collection Policy (C69)

Arts, Culture and Creative Industry Strategy

Council Plan 2022-2026

Economic Development Strategy

Great Southern Rail Trail Visitor Experience & Marketing Plan

Visitor Economy Strategy

### **Legislative Provisions**

Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006

Disability Act 2006

Gender Equity Act 2020

Heritage Act 1995

Museum Act 1983

### **Regional, State and National Plan and Policies**

Code of Ethics for Museums (ICOM 2006)

Gippsland Destination Management Plan - Towards 2030 - A Blueprint for Growth  
(Destination Gippsland)

### 3.3. VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY AND GREAT SOUTHERN RAIL TRAIL (GSRT) VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND MARKETING PLAN - ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATIONS PROGRESS REPORT

Directorate:	Future Communities
Department:	Community, Customer and Visitor

#### **Council Plan**

*Objective - Economy and Industry*

*This report relates to the Council Plan Initiatives - Implement the annual action plan of the 2021–2031 Visitor Economy Strategy to encourage tourism and visitation across the Shire and to develop and implement the Great Southern Rail Trail Management Plan, including a visitation and marketing plan.*

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the 2023/2024 actions implemented from Council's South Gippsland Visitor Economy Strategy and Great Southern Rail Trail (GSRT) Visitor Experience and Marketing Plan.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council:**

- 1. Receives and notes the 2023/2024 actions implemented from the *South Gippsland Visitor Economy Strategy (refer Attachment [3.3.1])*; and**
- 2. Receives and notes the 2023/24 actions implemented from the *Great Southern Rail Trail (GSRT) Visitor Experience and Marketing Plan (refer Attachment [3.3.2])*.**

**RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** Councillor Schelling

**SECONDED:** Councillor Davies

**That Council:**

- 1. Receives and notes the 2023/2024 actions implemented from the *South Gippsland Visitor Economy Strategy* (refer Attachment [3.3.1]); and**
- 2. Receives and notes the 2023/24 actions implemented from the *Great Southern Rail Trail (GSRT) Visitor Experience and Marketing Plan* (refer Attachment [3.3.2]).**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

[Link to next Agenda Item.](#)

## REPORT

### Background

#### ***Visitor Economy Strategy***

The South Gippsland Visitor Economy Strategy (the Strategy) was adopted by Council on 21 July 2021.

Council developed the Strategy in consultation with the Visitor Economy Strategy Advisory Group (the Group). The Group's members included highly skilled and knowledgeable experts who provided key strategic advice and expertise in the Strategy's development.

The Strategy is designed to achieve South Gippsland Shire Council's vision that South Gippsland is a destination of choice for local and international visitors. Increased visitation in turn increases the contribution the visitor economy makes across the region.

The Strategy is action oriented but designed to be flexible to allow Council to respond to current and future demands and opportunities for South Gippsland.

#### ***Great Southern Rail Trail (GSRT) Visitor Experience and Marketing Plan***

The Great Southern Rail Trail (GSRT) Visitor Experience and Marketing Plan (the Plan) was adopted by Council on 29 June 2022.

Council developed the Plan with significant community and stakeholder engagement.

The objective of the Plan is to support the visitor economy to make South Gippsland a year-round destination. The GSRT aims to drive visitation across all villages and towns by leveraging the trail as a key visitor experience, with year-round brand marketing.

The Plan is focused on informing projects and activities over a nine-year period from 2022-2031 to align to the Visitor Economy Strategy period. However, the Plan will be treated as a living document that is flexible enough to adapt to an ever-changing visitor and marketing landscape.

### Discussion

A full report of actions (**Attachment [3.3.1]** Visitor Economy Strategy) and (**Attachment [3.3.2]** – GSRT Visitor Experience and Marketing Plan), are provided.

Below are highlighted actions from the Strategy and Plan that were commenced or completed over the past twelve-months.

#### ***Visitor Economy Strategy***

- South Gippsland brand identity actively marketed through regional campaigns and activities.



- Partnerships with Destination Gippsland campaigns including development of the Walks and Rides brochure and the new Eat, Drink guide.
- Major events supported through the Events Acquisition Fund being Mirboo North Italian Festa, Mirboo North Winterfest, Fish Creek Tea Cosy, Fishy Stories and Loch Food and Wine Festival.
- Development and launch of the Visit South Gippsland marketing video.
- GAWK billboards 3-week brand promotion in Bairnsdale and Torquay.
- Marketing campaign focused this year on Tarwin Lower/Venus Bay, Toora, Mirboo North and Korumburra.
- Supported the Bicycle Network in December 2023 for the Great Victorian Bike Ride, with overnight stay at Fish Creek.
- Attended Australia Tourism Exchange Forum held in Melbourne May 2024.
- Supported Destination Gippsland with the development of a local area tourism action plan for Foster, Toora and surrounds.

#### **Great Southern Rail Trail (GSRT) Visitor Experience and Marketing Plan**

- Commenced the development of a new GSRT website and upgrade of the Visit South Gippsland website.
- Successful external grant application to the Council Support Fund for the GSRT Activation Project.
- GSRT interpretative signage content development completed with contract awarded for installation.
- Increased promotion through GSRT Facebook and South Gippsland promotional material.
- Construction of the eastern extension of the GSRT from Welshpool to Alberton in partnership with Wellington Shire Council.

#### **CONSULTATION / COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Both the Strategy and Plan's development were supported by an extensive consultation and engagement program that ensured the community, including residents, visitors, and other stakeholders, could provide input to help define the key themes and priorities.

## **RESOURCES / FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

Resourcing the implementation of the Strategy and Plan is considered as part of the annual financial budgets

## **RISKS**

The implementation of the Strategy and Plan allows Council to plan for and mitigate against the risks to our economy into the future. The Strategy and Plan have been developed with the flexibility to create a responsive approach to the economic, natural and policy changes that will occur over the next ten-years.

Not all actions and initiatives can be funded each year. Actions are delivered within the annual budget allocations and officers will continue to seek advice and support from industry and government to deliver the best outcomes possible for the South Gippsland community.

## **STAFF DISCLOSURE**

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have considered and determined that they do not have a conflict of interest in the matter.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

*Attachments are available on Council's website at the following [LINK](#).*

1. Visitor Economy Strategy - Implementation Report 2024 [3.3.1 - 9 pages]
2. GSRT Visitor Experience Marketing Plan - Implementation Report 2024 [3.3.2 - 6 pages]

## **REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

### **Council's Good Governance Framework**

Pillar 1. Direction & Leadership

Pillar 3. Decision Making

### **Council Policy / Strategy / Plans**

*Documents are available on Council's website at the following [LINK](#).*

Arts, Culture and Creative Industry Strategy

Economic Development Strategy

South Gippsland Coastal Strategy

Visitor Economy Strategy

Annual Budget

Council Plan 2022-2026

Great Southern Rail Trail Visitor Experience & Marketing Plan

### **Regional, State and National Plan and Policies**

Gippsland Destination Management Plan - Towards 2030 - A Blueprint for Growth (Destination Gippsland)

Gippsland Regional Plan 2020-2025  
Gippsland Track & Trails Feasibility Study

### 3.4. VICGRID - DRAFT VICTORIAN TRANSMISSION PLAN GUIDELINES - SUBMISSION

Directorate:	Office of the CEO
Department:	Regional Partnerships

#### Council Plan

*Objective - Economy and Industry*

*This report relates to the major initiatives in the Council Plan - Develop and implement the Advocacy Strategy including Council's Priority Projects and Implement the annual action plan of the 2021 –2031 Economic Development Strategy.*

*Renewable energy is recognised as a strategic objective within Council's Economic Development Strategy: 1.2 - Understand the opportunities and implications from development of the new energy sector.*

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present Councillors with a submission to consider in response to VicGrid's release of the Draft Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines and their proposed land based Renewable Energy Zone Study Areas.

This report recommends that Council endorse a submission, which provides in principle support for renewable energy in South Gippsland in suitable locations, whilst reflecting community concerns and the need for consideration of our rural dwellings and agricultural industry.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**That Council:**

- 1. Endorses the submission to VicGrid's Draft Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines and Renewable Energy Zone Study Areas engagement (Attachment [3.4.1]); and**
- 2. Supports renewable energy development in principle, recognising the changing energy landscape. The region has natural advantages for wind energy facilities. However, Council's support is measured, considering the need to limit negative impacts on nationally significant agricultural and tourism land uses, especially if these impacts affect the economy, local character, natural landscape, culture and environment.**

**As the Victorian Transmission Plan evolves, there needs to be a greater understanding of the direct community benefits and potential offsets for the community and impacted landholders. The Council urges the State Government to recognise the national significance of South Gippsland's agricultural production and the high density of rural dwellings outside townships, which have been important for supporting existing land use and current housing needs.**

**The South Gippsland Renewable Energy Zone Study Area under investigation is likely to raise significant community concerns. Council seeks to ensure that any proposed 'on land' transmission uses existing infrastructure and transmission routes to minimise impacts on existing land use and on amenity.**

**Council supports genuine and collaborative engagement from all levels of government and industry to build social license and address the lack of information on the direct and indirect impacts of proposed projects in or near South Gippsland. Our strong view is that our community needs to be informed and involved in a coherent way to reduce the risk of rural and regional communities being 'taken by surprise' when development is proposed and declared. Having said that, Council is committed to working collaboratively with the government through genuine, timely engagement and partnership.**

## RESOLUTION

**MOVED:** Councillor Keerie

**SECONDED:** Councillor Darakai

**That Council:**

- 1. Endorses the submission to VicGrid's Draft Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines and Renewable Energy Zone Study Areas engagement (Attachment [3.4.1]); and**
- 2. Supports renewable energy development in principle, recognising the changing energy landscape. The region has natural advantages for wind energy facilities. However, Council's support is measured, considering the need to limit negative impacts on nationally significant agricultural and tourism land uses, especially if these impacts affect the economy, local character, natural landscape, culture and environment.**

**As the Victorian Transmission Plan evolves, there needs to be a greater understanding of the direct community benefits and potential offsets for the community and impacted landholders. The Council urges the State Government to recognise the national significance of South Gippsland's agricultural production and the high density of rural dwellings outside townships, which have been important for supporting existing land use and current housing needs.**

**The South Gippsland Renewable Energy Zone Study Area under investigation is likely to raise significant community concerns. Council seeks to ensure that any proposed 'on land' transmission uses existing infrastructure and transmission routes to minimise impacts on existing land use and on amenity.**

**Council supports genuine and collaborative engagement from all levels of government and industry to build social license and address the lack of information on the direct and indirect impacts of proposed projects in or near South Gippsland. Our strong view is that our community needs to be informed and involved in a coherent way to reduce the risk of rural and regional communities being 'taken by surprise' when development is proposed and declared. Having said that, Council is committed to working collaboratively with the government through genuine, timely engagement and partnership.**

**CARRIED**

**[Link to next Agenda Item.](#)**

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## REPORT

There are several strategic objectives that Council recognises that guides its understanding and planning of potential renewable energy development in South Gippsland. The Council Plan 2022–26 has a strategic objective to ‘plan for and support our community to maximise the benefits of the emerging renewable energy industry’.

Renewable energy is recognised as a strategic objective within Council’s *Economic Development Strategy: 1.2 - Understand the opportunities and implications from development of the new energy sector*.

Recently, Council adopted the *South Gippsland and Latrobe City Renewable Energy Impact and Readiness Study 2024*, which also states several objectives for Council to pursue, primarily focused on key readiness themes that includes business supply-chains, jobs and skills, housing and accommodation and infrastructure.

Although, Council does not deliver renewable energy projects, this Study helps understand what is required in preparation for their development, focusing significantly on the proposed development of an offshore wind industry in Bass Strait. Council acknowledges the Victorian Planning Provision – Wind project exclusion area along the southern coast of the Shire.

Council’s Coastal Strategy identifies there are significant pressures on our coastline already, with Port Welshpool identified as a site that would benefit from a detailed coastal hazard risk assessment. The Strategy states the need to ‘proactively work with, and advocate to, the State and Federal Government for the preparation and implementation of nature-based solutions to manage the impacts of environmental coastal hazard risks’.

### ***Renewable Energy in Gippsland***

Gippsland enjoys natural advantages such as wind and solar.

Existing wind farms in South Gippsland are located at Bald Hills and Toora, along with proposed future developments at Delburn and on our municipal boundary at Gelliondale. There is also an existing wind farm located near Wonthaggi in Bass Coast.

The State Government acknowledges the need for Offshore Wind projects to generate the majority of Victoria’s future energy needs and has energy targets of at least 2 Gigawatts (GW) by 2032, 4GW by 2035 and 9GW by 2040.

Currently, feasibility licences have been granted to 12 Offshore Wind projects. Government policy supports continued investment in the renewables sector to

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support transition from 'old to new energy'. There are a diverse range of renewable project types proposed in Gippsland.

This includes:

- Offshore wind farms (6-12)
- Onshore wind farms (3)
- Solar farms (10)
- Battery storage (5)
- Hydrogen (3)

### ***Council's Advocacy***

One of Council's key Advocacy Priorities is supporting Renewable Energy Investment – Barry Beach Marine Terminal and Port Anthony.

Specifically, Council is seeking Australian and Victorian Government policy support, and investment, to realise this once in a generation opportunity for South Gippsland. This requires support to plan and prepare for the activation of industrial and residential land to ensure commercial investment attraction, industry development and workforce accommodation in South Gippsland.

Council has also partnered with Wellington Shire Council with a funding application to the Federal Government's Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program, seeking State Government support and collaboration with regards to land and infrastructure planning.

### ***Federal Government Offshore Renewable Energy Infrastructure Area Proposal: Bass Strait Off Gippsland***

Council provided a submission in October 2022 to the Federal Government's announcement that Gippsland will be the first site in Australia to be formally examined as a new offshore wind zone.

In summary, Council endorsed a submission providing 'in principle' support towards offshore renewable energy projects, excluding the proposed zone's visual impacts, identified adjacent to southwestern coastline and bays of the municipality.

The submission also noted several caveats that needed to be addressed for any further support to be provided. For example, these included the need for more information on the direct and indirect impacts of proposed projects, addressing community interest and concerns, resourcing local government, tourism, farming and visual amenity impacts, plus more. Many of these caveats are still relevant when it comes to considering the opportunities and impacts that land based, or 'onshore' wind farm developments may bring.



### ***VicGrid - Draft Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines***

VicGrid is the Victorian Government Department responsible for coordinating the planning and development of Victoria's Renewable Energy Zones, the Victorian Transmission Investment Framework and working with the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) to deliver major infrastructure upgrades.

On 23 July 2024, VicGrid released their Draft Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines announcing the commencement of their state-wide community engagement.

VicGrid has stated their plan is to prepare the 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan (The Plan) to enable a smooth transition to renewables as ageing coal-fired power stations retire. The Plan aims to identify what renewable energy generation, storage and transmission projects are needed in Victoria, when they are needed and where they should be built.

A key aim is to keep the cost of energy low and attract renewable energy investment to locations where it is most productive. Energy market modelling will be used to identify the most suitable locations to host generation and transmission within the study area from an economic or 'least cost' point of view. The aim is to design a system based on efficiency, reliability and feasibility.

VicGrid states that the development of the Plan aims to provide an opportunity to meaningfully engage with landholders, local communities and industry to refine the proposed Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) to help maximise the collective benefits and minimise negative impacts.

The feedback being sought aims to help:

- Shape the method VicGrid will use to refine the broad geographical study area to draft proposed renewable energy zones
- Identify areas within the study area that VicGrid should protect and that would be suitable for renewable energy projects
- Identify factors that could influence the placement and design of infrastructure within the study area.

The Draft Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines include information about:

- What parts of Victoria VicGrid is investigating for renewable energy generation.
- How VicGrid will determine how much energy is needed, and when.
- How VicGrid will determine what transmission projects are needed to support new energy generation.
- How VicGrid will engage with communities, First Peoples and industry.

The Draft Guidelines note that the study area is a, *'starting point for further detailed analysis'*, as VicGrid looks to identify smaller areas for investigation and prioritisation for REZs.

It will consider regional characteristics and constraints in more detail, such as cultural values and impacts to agricultural land and irrigation districts.

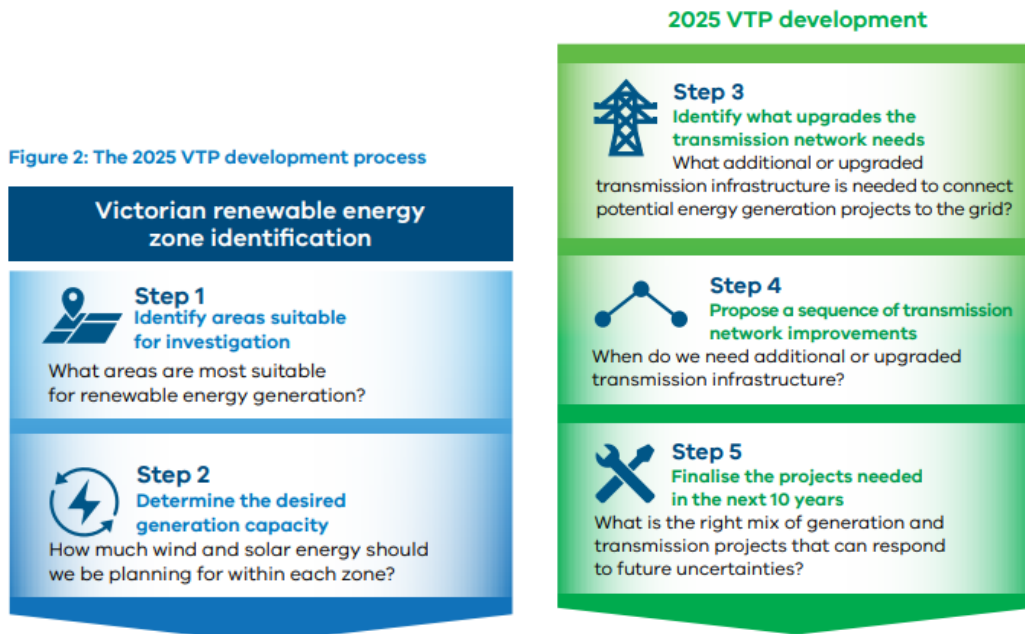
It states that it does not lock in development in any region or prevent individual projects, including other technologies, that might be appropriate outside the study area.

All proposed projects (both within and outside REZ areas) will continue to be assessed on a case by case, basis and will be subject to relevant planning and environmental approvals in Victoria. However, the declared REZs will provide benefits for communities and energy developers by improving coordination of infrastructure projects to minimise social and environmental impacts.

Victoria's new network access arrangements seek to coordinate generation into REZs to provide more certainty to communities and investors.

The full version of the Draft Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines is available at [www.engage.vic.gov.au/vicgrid](http://www.engage.vic.gov.au/vicgrid)

The 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan development process is outlined below:



### ***Proposed Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) Study Area***

VicGrid's Draft Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines include an initial land-based study area for Renewable Energy Zones to investigate further for potential renewable energy development.

The initial study area is based on the findings of VicGrid's Strategic Land Use Assessment (SLUA). A study area map is attached (**Attachment [3.4.2]**).

It appears that locations for investigation are predominantly driven by the wind resource across the state as well as terrain slope and access to critical infrastructure. The assessment result shows the greatest opportunities for wind development are in the west and south-west of Victoria, as well as South Gippsland.

VicGrid states that only a portion of the study area will be needed to host new energy infrastructure. For planning, they believe it is helpful to start with a broader area and then narrow in on the most appropriate areas for renewable energy generation.

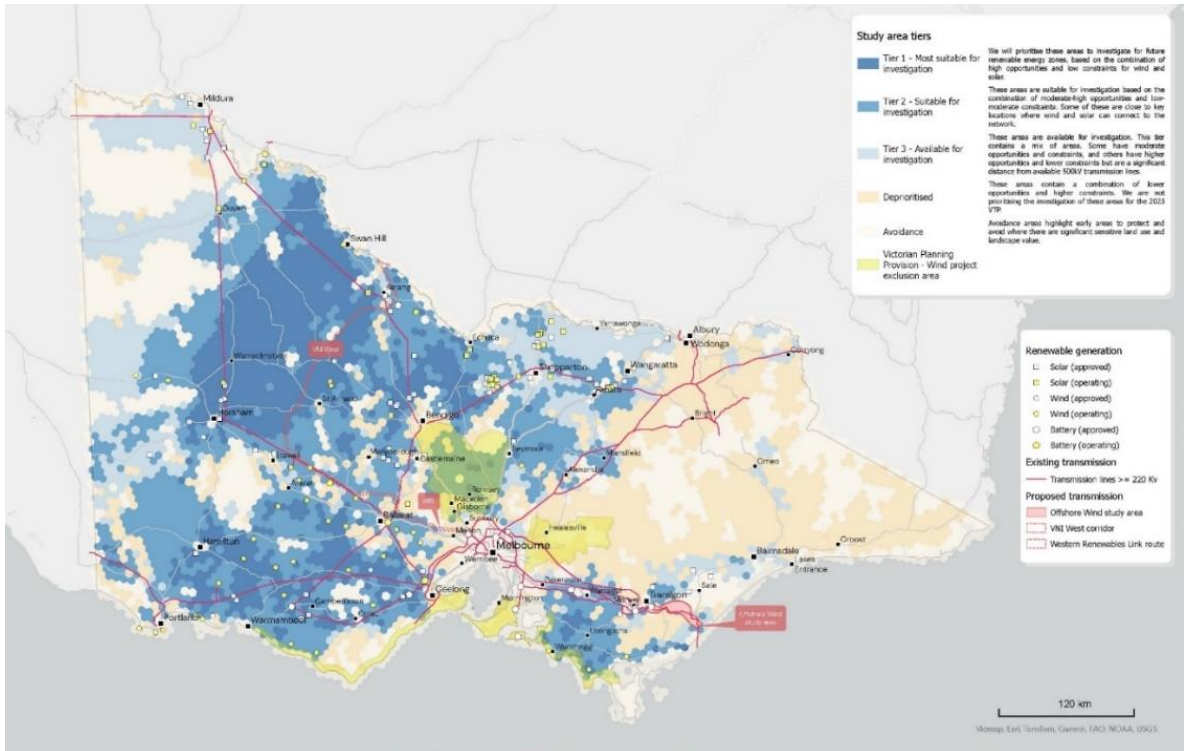
Within the study area VicGrid has identified three areas (Tiers 1 to 3) that they propose to use to prioritise investigation.

**Tiers 1 and 2 areas** aim to be prioritised for future investigation. VicGrid state that this is based on *'strong wind and solar generation opportunities and the likely low impact on land values such as biodiversity, agriculture and rural residences'*.

**Tier 3 areas** are proposed to present moderate opportunities for energy generation and more constraints. VicGrid state that, *'some of these areas may still be required to support overall reliability and security of the power system'*.

**Other areas** of the state have been deprioritised or avoided for reasons such as sensitive or incompatible land uses.

A map displaying the Victorian geographic areas for further investigation is below and attached. Also represented below is a 'zoomed in' South Gippsland version.

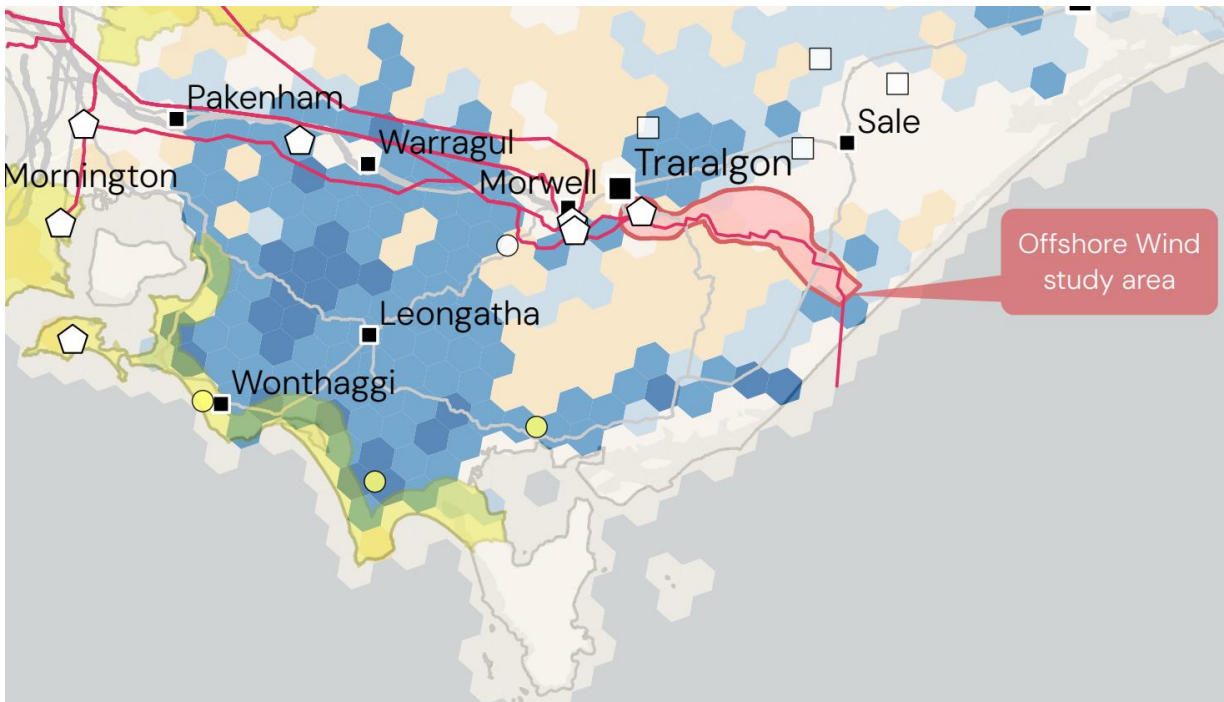


**VicGrid** **VICTORIA** **GOVERNMENT**

**Draft Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines**  
**Geographical areas for further investigation**

This study area is the first step in a process to identify Victoria's renewable energy zones, which will occupy a much smaller area. Datasets including renewables/agriculture compatibility, and detailed local and regional information and feedback, will inform final decisions.

Map disclaimer: This information is provided from VicGrid and Victorian Government data and may be of assistance to you. However, VicGrid does not guarantee that the public data is without error and therefore decisions of liability for any loss or damage which may arise from reliance upon it. This map requires a separate public assessment approval for Western Renewable Link, VNI West and offshore wind. It is intended as a guide only. These alignment lines and corridors are not intended to be used for any other purpose. These alignment lines and corridors are not intended to be used for any other purpose. These alignment lines and corridors are not intended to be used for any other purpose.



**Wind Farm approvals and South Gippsland Planning Scheme**

A planning permit is required for the use and development of new Wind Farms (Wind Energy Facilities). The Minister for Planning is the Responsible Authority for the assessment and approval of the planning permit, not Council.

Changes to the planning system in April 2024 mean applications (more than one megawatt) are assessed by the State's Development Facilitation Program (DFP).

Permit applications will be advertised, and Council and landowners can object; however, VCAT appeal rights have now been removed. The DFP process also removes the role of Planning Panels in the consideration of objections (a Panel considered the Delburn Wind Farm objections).

DFP will consider objections and make a recommendation. The assessment process has a four-month target date to decide, and time commences when the application is certified as having the required information.

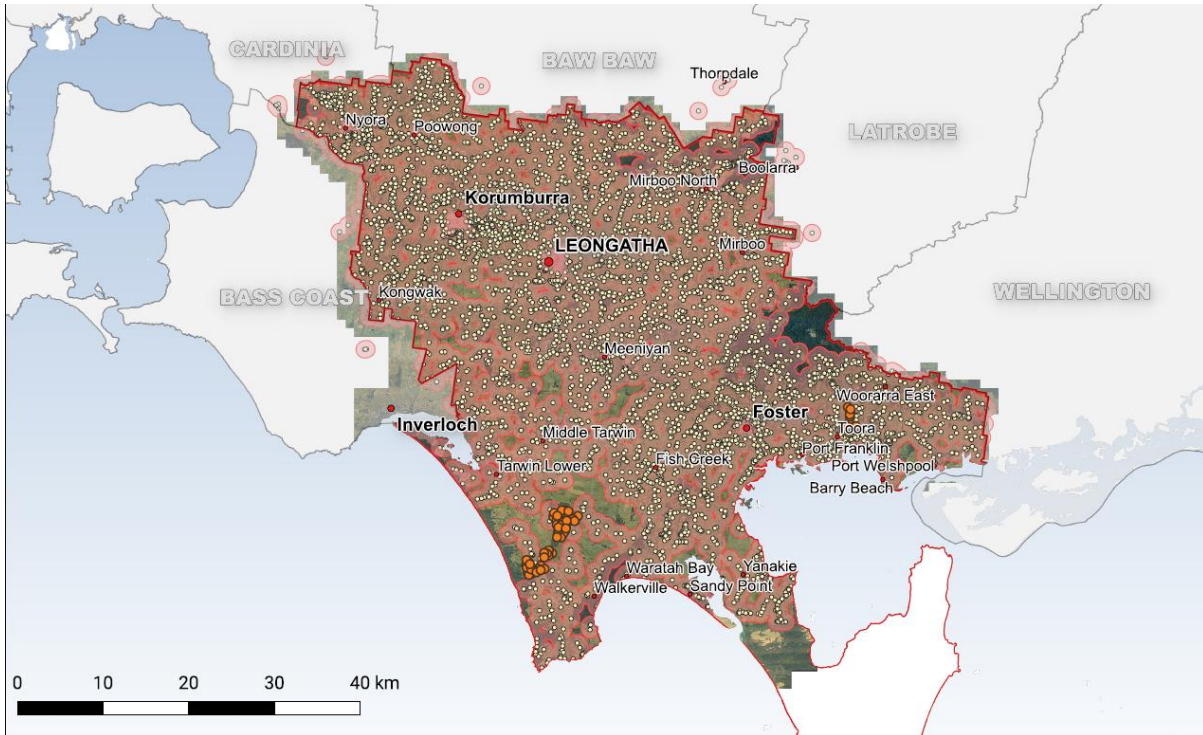
Appeals to the Minister's decision can be made to the Supreme Court.

The EPA are responsible for noise monitoring and noise compliance.

#### One (1) Kilometre Dwelling Setback rule

State planning policy requires new wind turbines to be located one kilometre or more from an existing dwelling. If an application for a new planning permit (or an amendment to an existing permit) proposes a turbine closer than one-kilometre, written consent to the turbine's location is required from the dwelling landowner. If written consent is not provided, the planning permit application is prohibited. Council understands that the dwelling setback and landowner consent requirements cannot be varied by the Minister for Planning.

To illustrate this rule, a map of South Gippsland with the one-kilometre proximity buffer to rural dwellings is provided below (**Attachment [3.4.3]**). This shows the high density of rural dwellings in South Gippsland outside of townships and would indicate the limited locations for new wind farm developments to be considered without obtaining landowner consent.



***Proposed Council Submission***

Officers propose that Council consider making a submission in response to the release of the Draft Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines and the Renewable Energy Zone Study Areas.

Officers understand the methods VicGrid has outlined to determine the most suitable locations for renewable energy investment and development; however, are concerned with the strategic land use planning process not considering the established rural dwelling and highly productive agricultural land use prior to tiered levels being drafted.

There are areas within the study area that should be protected, or omitted for consideration, as they are not suitable for renewable energy projects due to rural dwelling proximity, high performing agricultural production and tourism values. This may also include other commercial uses, that require proximity consideration, for example Leongatha Airport and flight paths.

This should influence the placement of potential projects.

Council’s recent focus on renewable energy has been primarily towards preparing for the Offshore Wind industry being established in Gippsland. As stated earlier, this has included advocating on several matters that can also be considered relevant to onshore wind farm development. For example, land use planning, supportive infrastructure and avoiding conflicts or impacts to farming and tourism.



The rural dwelling data doesn't provide many areas for wind farms to be established in South Gippsland without landholder agreements or the purchase of prime agricultural land to facilitate renewable energy.

Agricultural production is the largest industry and employer in South Gippsland. Data from the REMPLAN economic modelling system shows that Agriculture and Forestry has a total annual output in South Gippsland of just over \$1 billion or nearly 22 per cent of the Shire's economic output.

South Gippsland has the greatest number of agricultural businesses out of any Victorian municipality. The high density of rural dwellings reflects the high prevalence of agricultural economic activity and value placed on agricultural land uses. Approximately 50 per cent of South Gippsland residents live in rural areas outside the township centres of the Shire.

A feature of much of South Gippsland is high quality soils and high average rainfall. This has meant that agricultural production is conducted more intensively than many other parts of the State.

Officers acknowledge that the initial reaction from the community may be one of concern and can raise opposition to renewable energy development, especially new wind farms in South Gippsland, when there is a lack of detail on locations and impacts, and perceived lack of cohesion from the release of information by VicGrid.

Social license and community goodwill can be eroded through poor coordination across government and industry, and ineffective community engagement. The community need to be informed and brought on the journey to reduce the risk that rural and regional communities will be 'taken by surprise' when REZs are proposed and declared.

Proposed Council Position for inclusion in the VicGrid Submission:

*South Gippsland Shire Council supports renewable energy development in principle, recognising the changing energy landscape. The region has natural advantages for wind energy facilities. However, Council's support is measured, considering the need to limit negative impacts on nationally significant agricultural and tourism land uses, especially if these impacts affect the economy, local character, natural landscape, culture and environment.*

*As the Victorian Transmission Plan evolves, there needs to be a greater understanding of the direct community benefits and potential offsets for the community and impacted landholders. The Council urges the State Government to recognise the national significance of South Gippsland's agricultural production and the high density of rural dwellings outside townships, which have been important for supporting existing land use and current housing needs.*

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*The South Gippsland Renewable Energy Zone Study Area under investigation is likely to raise significant community concerns. Council seeks to ensure that any proposed 'on land' transmission uses existing infrastructure and transmission routes to minimise impacts on existing land use and on amenity.*

*Council supports genuine and collaborative engagement from all levels of government and industry to build social license and address the lack of information on the direct and indirect impacts of proposed projects in or near South Gippsland. Our strong view is that our community needs to be informed and involved in a coherent way to reduce the risk of rural and regional communities being 'taken by surprise' when development is proposed and declared. Having said that, Council is committed to working collaboratively with the government through genuine, timely engagement and partnership.*

Council Submission will also include references to the following:

- Feedback to VicGrid to ensure that there is an easy to follow and coherent narrative to bring community and industry along on this journey
- Council's commitment to working collaboratively with government and genuine engagement and partnership with the community
- Objectives identified from the Council Plan/Community Vision and Council's Economic Development Strategy
- Council's position and response to the Oct 2022 Commonwealth declaration of offshore wind investigation area in Bass Strait
- The objectives identified from Council's recently adopted Renewable Energy Impact and Readiness Study
- South Gippsland Planning Scheme - recognition on significance of agricultural land in the Scheme and reference issues with housing and turbine proximity to dwellings in farming zone (1km buffer)
- Economic Data related to the value of agriculture
- Council's advocacy priority related to local ports and application to the Commonwealth Government's Regional Precincts and Partnership Program
- Acknowledge and reflect points made from recent submissions

## **CONSULTATION / COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

*VicGrid's Planned Community Engagement Activities*

Feedback on the Draft Guidelines is open until 25 August 2024 and on the REZ Study Area Map until 30 September 2024.

Feedback can be provided by visiting [www.engage.vic.gov.au/vicgrid](http://www.engage.vic.gov.au/vicgrid)

At time of drafting this report, online community information webinars were promoted to be held from 6.00pm to 7.30pm on Monday 29 July and from

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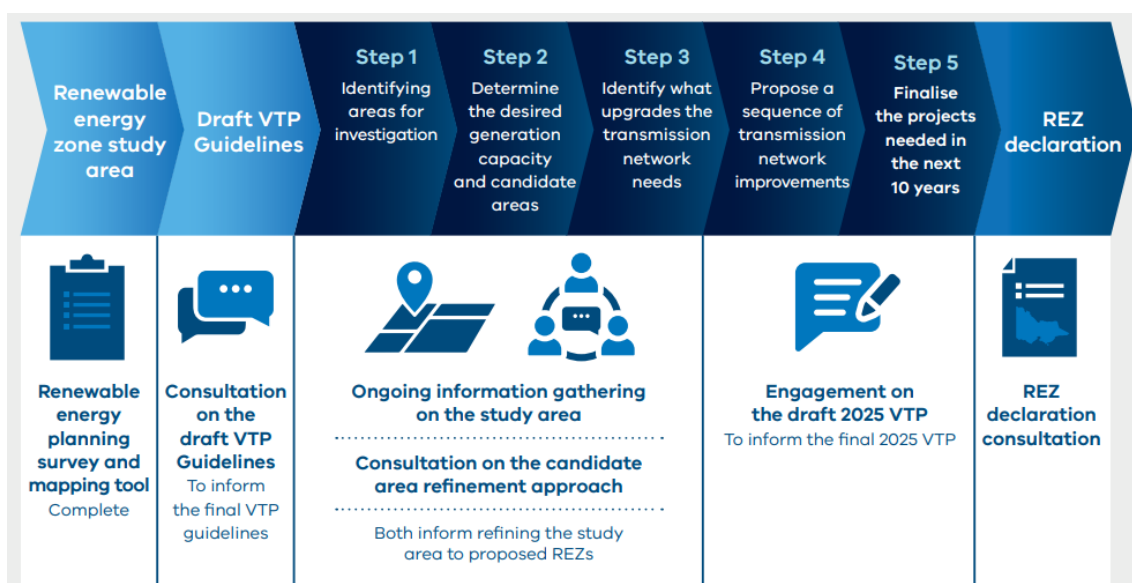
1.00pm to 2.30pm on Thursday 1 August. This is a webinar format with selected questions answered via the online chat.

VicGrid have also promoted drop-in sessions at the Korumburra Community Hub from 4.00pm to 7.00pm on 14 August and from 10.30am to 12.30pm on 15 August 2024.

Following community and Council feedback, an additional drop-in session has been scheduled for Thursday 22 August, from 4.00pm to 7.00pm in Foster at the Foster War Memorial Arts Centre.

Along with a submission, VicGrid are also seeking responses through online surveys which individuals and organisations can choose to complete.

The community and industry engagement process is outlined below.



## RESOURCES / FINANCIAL VIABILITY

There are no material implications for Council to consider at present other than the allocation of internal resources to monitor and manage Council’s position. This is consistent with actions identified in the Economic Development Strategy. Further actions related to renewable energy planning and development will be considered as part of Council’s annual budget process.

## RISKS

The risk of not making a submission may hamper future positioning with regards to attracting the best economic and social outcomes for our community. Making a submission will demonstrate to the community and State Government, Council’s interest and identified concerns with the proposed Plan and process to develop it.

## **STAFF DISCLOSURE**

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have considered and determined that they do not have a conflict of interest in the matter.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

*Attachments are available on Council's website at the following [LINK](#).*

1. Vic Grid Draft Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines SGSC Submission - Final [3.4.1 - 11 pages]
2. Renewable Energy Zone Study Area - Detailed A3 Map [3.4.2 - 1 page]
3. South Gippsland Shire Rural Dwelling 1 km Buffer and Turbines Aug 2024 [3.4.3 - 1 page]

## **REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

### **Council's Good Governance Framework**

Pillar 1. Direction & Leadership

### **Council Policy / Strategy / Plans**

*Documents are available on Council's website at the following [LINK](#).*

Economic Development Strategy

### **Legislative Provisions**

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibility Act 2006

Local Government Act 2020

Planning and Environment Act 1987

### **Regional, State and National Plan and Policies**

Gippsland Regional Plan 2020-2025

## 4. OBJECTIVE - HEALTHY AND ENGAGED COMMUNITIES

### 4.1. EARLY YEARS POSITION PAPER - ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Directorate:	Future Communities
Department:	Community Health and Safety

#### Council Plan

##### *Objective - Healthy and Engaged Communities*

*The Early Years Position Paper supports Council's priority to advocate for increased access to early years services including kindergarten, playgroups, childcare and for equitable access to health and social services for our community.*

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Council on the seven initial priorities of the Early Years Position Paper (Position Paper) and the key priorities for 2024/2025. The Position Paper outlines Council's role and commitment for the provision of early years infrastructure and service levels.

#### RECOMMENDATION

##### That Council:

1. **Receives and notes the Early Years Position Paper (Attachment [4.1.1]) and the Annual Implementation Report (Table 1 below).**
2. **Approves the key priorities for 2024/2025, including:**
  - a. **Developing pipeline projects;**
    - i. **Revisit and update priority list for early years infrastructure; and**
  - b. **Investigating a consistent and sustainable approach to managing early years infrastructure.**

**RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** Councillor Darakai

**SECONDED:** Councillor Davies

**That Council:**

- 1. Receives and notes the Early Years Position Paper (Attachment [4.1.1]) and the Annual Implementation Report (Table 1 below).**
- 2. Approves the key priorities for 2024/2025, including:**
  - a. Developing pipeline projects;**
    - i. Revisit and update priority list for early years infrastructure; and**
  - b. Investigating a consistent and sustainable approach to managing early years infrastructure.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

[Link to next Agenda Item.](#)

## REPORT

The Early Years Position Paper (the Position Paper) **Attachment [4.1.1]** confirms Council's footprint in Early Years services focussing on four key areas:

- direct service delivery for Maternal and Child Health, immunisation and supported playgroups;
- the provision of infrastructure to support early years' service provision;
- sector coordination and capacity building; and
- capacity planning for the service system.

The key principles underpinning Council's role in guiding future directions and commitment for the provision of early years infrastructure and service levels include:

- evidence-based decisions;
- partnering, quality;
- strengthening the service system; and
- advocacy, and sustainable future.

These principles serve as a foundation for decision making and actions to ensure effective planning, delivery, and support of early years services in the community.

To guide the implementation of the Position Paper, seven initial priorities were identified. Of the seven priorities within the Position Paper:

- 58% (4 priorities) are 100% complete;
- 28% (2 priorities) are in progress; and
- 14% (1 priority) is ongoing and a medium to long-term focus.

**Attachment [4.1.1]** details the Position Paper, with **Table 1** below highlighting the key achievements and progress of priorities.

For 2024/2025, there will be a focus on two priorities, which are currently in progress, particularly the development of infrastructure priorities and pipeline projects from the Early Years' Service Needs Assessment (**Attachment [4.1.2]**) and exploring in collaboration a consistent and sustainable approach to managing early years infrastructure.

Additionally, we recognise the importance of facilitating localised early years management as a longer-term goal, ensuring that we are prepared to support future opportunities in early years services.

Excellent progress was made on most priorities with key achievements and progress shown in the table below:

**Table 1 – Annual Implementation Report**

Priority	Actions	Status
1. Share the Position Paper with early years' service providers operating from Council-owned buildings.	The Position Paper was provided to service providers and also published on Council's website.	Complete
2. Share the proposed infrastructure development projects from the Early Years' Service Needs Assessment with the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) and develop an agreed pipeline of projects for capital investment	<p>This is a Priority for 2024/2025.</p> <p>The roll-out of 30 hours of Pre-prep, the State Government announcement of an early learning facility in Meeniyan and the condition of infrastructure requires the Early Years' Service Needs Assessment priority list to be revisited and updated.</p> <p>Initial discussions with Government have commenced on the Kindergarten Infrastructure Service Plan.</p> <p>A Government planning grant was received to investigate early years options in Mirboo North.</p>	In Progress
3. Advocate to the State Government for the provision of 66 licenced places at the Korumburra Primary School to support the future need for three and four-year-old kindergarten	A 66 place two-room modular kindergarten has been installed and has been operational since February 2024.	Complete

<p>4. Enter an interim/short-term lease arrangement with the State Government for the kindergarten facilities proposed at the Korumburra Primary School. The purpose of the short-term agreement is to provide time for Council to facilitate the establishment of an early year's management arrangement as outlined in priority 5</p>	<p>Council has signed an eight-year lease with the Department of Education and sublet to Karmai Community Children's Centre.</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>3. Facilitate the establishment of localised early years managers with the suggested catchments including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Central – Leongatha, Mirboo North and Meeniyan</li> <li>b. West – Korumburra, Loch and Poowong</li> <li>a. East – Foster, Toora, Welshpool and Fish Creek (noting this is already in place)</li> </ul>	<p>Council will provide guidance when opportunities present whether it be a new facility or a current service provider expressing an interest to move towards early years management.</p>	<p>Ongoing Priority – medium to long-term focus</p>
<p>5. Continue to implement the service agreements with early years providers located in Council buildings.</p>	<p>All lease agreements have a service agreement included.</p> <p>An Early Years Facility Guide has been developed and distributed to assist committees of management and early years managers to understand their obligations with delivering a service out of Council owned buildings, and how they can</p>	<p>Complete</p>

	partner with Council in planning for the current and future demands of early years services in South Gippsland.	
6. Explore options for having a collaborative approach to managing the cost of maintaining Council-owned building supporting early years services.	This is a priority for 2024/2025, to develop a consistent approach to maintaining and sustaining early years infrastructure including Council's position on early years infrastructure on school sites.	In Progress

In summary, **Table 1** outlines the significant progress made in implementing the Early Years Position Paper's initial priorities, with the overall commitment demonstrating that through prioritising early years we will continue to have a positive impact on the community, laying the foundation for a brighter future for children and families in South Gippsland. Council will be updated on further advancements in the coming year.

**CONSULTATION / COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Nil

**RESOURCES / FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

Council continues to balance the rising cost of maintaining ageing infrastructure with need to support early years' service provision.

The State Government's policy to introduce 30 hours of pre-prep will further impact Council's ability to provide and maintain adequate infrastructure for kindergarten services across South Gippsland.

**RISKS**

Ageing infrastructure and deterioration of facilities requiring significant works to be fit for purpose.

Access and equity for service provision in smaller and outlying communities.

Increased pressure on volunteer committees of management to implement government policy directions with limited resources whilst maintaining financial viability.

**STAFF DISCLOSURE**

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have considered and determined that they do not have a conflict of interest in the matter.



## **ATTACHMENTS**

*Attachments are available on Council's website at the following [LINK](#).*

1. Position Paper - Councils role in the Early Years 2022 [4.1.1 - 13 pages]
2. Early Years Services Needs Assessment - Executive Summary 2022 [4.1.2 - 17 pages]

## **REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

### **Council's Good Governance Framework**

Pillar 1. Direction & Leadership

Pillar 3. Decision Making

### **Council Policy / Strategy / Plans**

*Documents are available on Council's website at the following [LINK](#).*

Asset Management Policy (C04)

Asset Management Plan - Buildings (internal)

Children and Families - A Plan for the Future in South Gippsland

Children and Families Plan

Council Plan 2022-2026

Leasing Policy (C62)

Municipal Early Year's Plan

Priority Projects

### **Legislative Provisions**

Child Safe Standards 2016

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

Children, Youth and Families Act 2009

Children's Services Act 1996

Children, Youth and Families Regulations 2017

Children's Services Regulations 2020

## 4.2. MIRBOO NORTH KINDERGARTEN PLANNING

Directorate:	Future Communities
Department:	Community Health and Safety

### Council Plan

*Objective - Healthy and Engaged Communities*

*Objective - Sustainable Growth*

*This report relates to the South Gippsland Shire Council – Council Plan 2022-2026 Strategic Objectives Healthy and Engaged Communities and Sustainable Growth, with a specific focus on priorities, ‘Advocate for increased access to early years services including kindergarten, playgroups, childcare and for equitable access to health and social services for our community’ and ‘Manage urban growth within defined town boundaries to deliver fit-for-purpose infrastructure in partnership with other agencies that share this responsibility’ respectively.*

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to endorse the preferred design option, Design Option One – two room kindergarten building with Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services located at the Mirboo North Primary School. This option aligns with the service guidelines from the Position Paper: Council’s Role in the Early Years (**Attachment [4.2.1]**) addressing the need to replace ageing infrastructure and meet future demand amidst State Government policy reforms.

Preliminary cost estimates indicate that the proposed two-room kindergarten building with MCH services will require a Council contribution of approximately \$200,000, whilst also being eligible for State Government funding.

### RECOMMENDATION

**That Council:**

- 1. Proceeds with planning for Design Option One – Two room Kindergarten building with Maternal Child Health services located at Mirboo North Primary School.**
  - a. Allow space within the design for a Stage 2 to construct a Long Day Care, dependant on external funding.**
- 2. Procure and appoint design consultant to undertake the works.**
- 3. Inform the community and relevant stakeholders of the endorsed Design Option.**

**RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** Councillor Schelling

**SECONDED:** Councillor Davies

**That Council:**

- 1. Proceeds with planning for Design Option One – Two room Kindergarten building with Maternal Child Health services located at Mirboo North Primary School.**
  - a. Allow space within the design for a Stage 2 to construct a Long Day Care, dependant on external funding.**
- 2. Procure and appoint design consultant to undertake the works.**
- 3. Inform the community and relevant stakeholders of the endorsed Design Option.**

**CARRIED**

**Councillor Darakai called for a Division.**

**For:** Councillors Rae, Schelling, Keerie, Gilligan, Davies, Felton and Williams.

**Against:** Councillor Darakai

[Link to next Agenda Item.](#)

## REPORT

### Background

In December 2022, Council adopted The Position Paper: Council's Role in the Early Years (**Attachment [4.2.1]**). The purpose of this document is to define the role and level of service Council will provide in supporting early years services and infrastructure in South Gippsland. The Position Paper outlines Council's future provision of infrastructure to support kindergarten, LDC, MCH and playgroups, noting that, the Position Paper only nominates LDC for the townships of Korumburra, Leongatha and Foster.

As part of the Position Paper, a desktop analysis identified the current Mirboo North Kindergarten site would not accommodate any expansion to increase kindergarten capacity. After consultation with the Mirboo North Primary School, it was agreed that an unused area of the school (the Arboretum) would be further investigated as the potential location for any new facility, which is in alignment with the commitment of the Department of Education to building kindergartens on school sites.

In conjunction with this, in July 2023, Council was successful in receiving a \$150,000 State Government grant from the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA), to undertake planning and pre-construction work for a replacement kindergarten in Mirboo North. Council funded an additional \$40,000 to this project budget, allowing a total of \$190,000 to be allocated to the delivery of this project.

The aim of the planning grant was to scope:

- The type of facility required;
- The best location for the facility;
- What potential services could operate within the facility; and
- Cost.

Initial planning work scoped potential locations for the kindergarten that would be suitable to incorporate multiple service delivery options. For example, a facility that could include kindergarten, LDC, MCH, or playgroup and the toy library.

As part of the preliminary planning process, community consultation was undertaken to get feedback on the proposed location of a facility on the primary school site, and the potential services that would be included. Considering Council's Position Paper did not identify the township of Mirboo North as requiring future provision of LDC, the survey advised that LDC would not be included in the scope.

Community feedback which included a survey, submissions and a round table with key stakeholders showed overwhelming support (92%) for a new kindergarten on the primary school site.

However, many respondents expressed concern at the exclusion of LDC. Key concerns raised by the community included the omission of LDC in the planning and challenges that would arise, including:

- Access to before and after kindergarten care.
- Best practice to integrate services such as kindergarten and LDC.
- Financial viability of the LDC service if separated from kindergarten.
- Future proofing Mirboo North with adequate service provision.
- A detailed breakdown of survey responses is included in (**Attachment [4.2.2]**).

**Discussion**

As a result of the feedback, the following options below (**Table 1**) have been considered to identify the inclusion of services and progress the planning of the facility. **Table 1** also depicts how each option meets the key areas of the Position Paper.

**Table 1 – Proposed Early Years options in Mirboo North**

	<b>Services Included</b>	<b>Supported in the Position Paper</b>	<b>Council co-contribution required</b>	<b>Council Assets</b>
<b>Option 1</b>	2-room Kindergarten and MCH	✓	✓	No change
<b>Option 2</b>	2-room Kindergarten, MCH, playgroup and toy library	✓	✓	No change
<b>Option 3</b>	2-room Kindergarten, LDC, MCH, playgroup and toy library	X	✓	Increase
<b>Option 4</b>	VSBA delivered Kindergarten and MCH	X	X	Decrease
<p>Option 1 and 2 would be replacing current ageing infrastructure and could accommodate future demand.</p> <p>Option 3 increases council assets by adding LDC which is not currently a Council asset.</p>				

Option 4 decreases Councils assets and future financial liability by handing over delivery and management to the VSBA. The delivery and management of the kindergarten would be at the discretion of the VSBA and Department of Education.

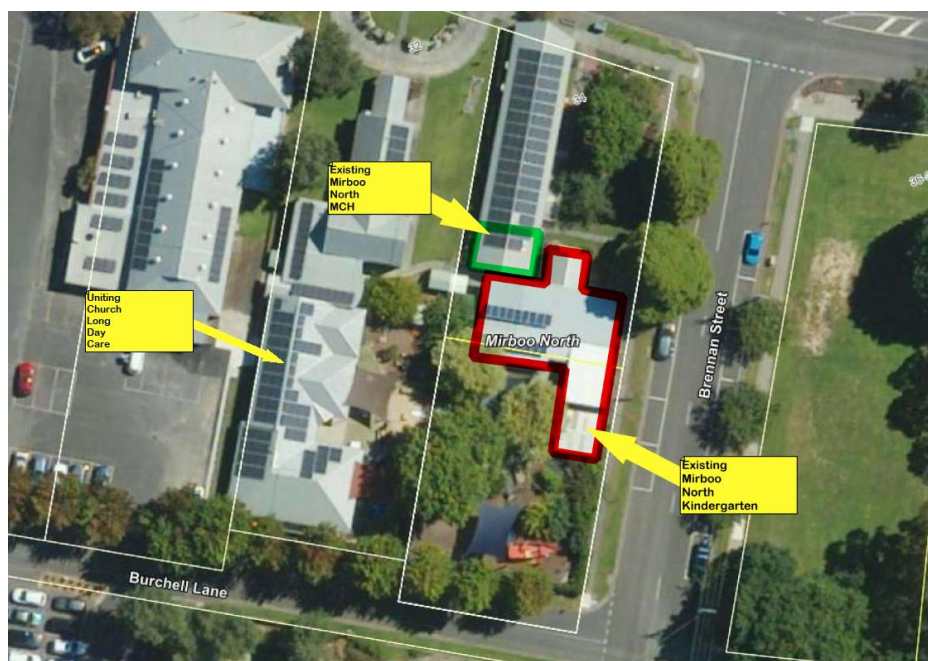
**Table 2** demonstrates the desktop analysis of costings for the construction of all four options. Options 1, 2 and 3 require a contribution from Council and Option 4 is dependant of VSBA delivering and maintaining the facility.

**Table 2 – High Level Cost Estimates of Options**

Option	Services Included	Est. Cost	Council Contribution
1	2-room Kindergarten and MCH	\$2.2M	\$200,000
2	2-room Kindergarten, MCH, playgroup and toy library	\$3.5M	\$600,000 including car park
3	2-room Kindergarten, LDC, MCH, playgroup and toy library	\$6.8M	\$2.3M
4	VSBA delivered Kindergarten and MCH	\$0	\$0

It should be noted that early year’s services in Mirboo North are complex. The existing kindergarten is located on Council land and adjoins the long day care (see **Figure 1** below). The LDC building is owned by, and located on, Uniting Church land.

**Figure 1 – Existing Early Years Services in Mirboo North**



The Maternal and Child Health Centre is located adjacent to the kindergarten in the Council owned library complex. The Y Ballarat, an Early Years Manager,

operates both the kindergarten and long day care centre, and has separate leases with Council and the Uniting Church for use of the buildings.

There is also a playgroup and toy library in Mirboo North. Historically, they operated out of the Council owned former Railway Station building in Baromi Park but have been temporarily relocated to the Anglican Church due to structural issues with the building.

The existing kindergarten is a single room building that is nearing the end of its life and does not have the capacity for expansion to meet the growing demand for kindergarten in Mirboo North in the future. The introduction of the State Government's Best Start Best Life reforms which includes 15 hours of three-year-old kindergarten and a new initiative of 30 hours of pre-prep to be rolled-out over the next eight years means the current site will not have the capacity to meet the needs of the community.

Based on the defined levels of service identified in the Position Paper and projected cost estimates in Table 2, it is proposed to progress the planning works for **Option 1 to replace the existing kindergarten and Maternal Child Health infrastructure at the Mirboo North Primary School site.**

Taking into consideration feedback from community consultation, the design and planning will allow space to include the provision of a Stage 2, to construct LDC. Noting that any construction would be dependent on the development of community partnerships to source external funding.

#### **CONSULTATION / COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The local community was surveyed over a three-week period in November and December 2023 and 109 responses were received. In addition, written submissions were received from the Mirboo North Uniting Church and Mirboo North District Foundation. Refer to (**Attachment [4.2.2]**) for a detailed summary of survey responses.

Further to the survey, the Mayor and Council officers had a round table discussion with key stakeholders from the Mirboo North community including, the Mirboo North District Foundation, Mirboo North Uniting Church, Mirboo North Primary School, playgroup, kindergarten and long day care.

Key themes from the survey and stakeholder consultation identified:

- If the kinder was to be located on the school site, children that access before and after kindergarten care will need to get from the school site to the existing LDC in Ridgway. It should be noted, there is limited availability in the before and after kindergarten care at the LDC. Option: Before and after kindergarten care could be explored in conjunction with the Primary School's existing program.

- The services will not be integrated – co-location of early years services is important to the Mirboo North community.
- There has been considerable investment in the existing LDC service by the Uniting Church, which was purpose built in 2006 to meet the needs of the community.
- Separating the kindergarten and LDC could impact the financial viability of the LDC, leaving Mirboo North without LDC and resulting in a loss of rent if the LDC was to close. It will be hard to find a tenant for the purpose-built facility. This is only likely to be a concern if different providers were operating the kindergarten and LDC.
- Future proofing Mirboo North with adequate service provision – which in turn will provide better outcomes for children.

Council officers will establish a Project Reference Group to keep the community informed of the project, including preparing communication plan to ensure the community is kept informed of the project and consulted when appropriate.

**RESOURCES / FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

Cost estimates have been projected and are summarised in **Table 3** for each option using Council’s Early Years calculator. The Early Years calculator is based on compliant areas per child to provide a footprint for the building which then has a current construction industry \$/m<sup>2</sup> rate applied.

**Table 3 – Cost Estimates**

Design Option	Project Estimate	Funding available	Annual Maintenance Cost to Council	Capital Co-contribution	In 25-40 years
Option 1 2-room Kindergarten and MCH	\$2.2M	Up to \$2M	\$20,000	\$200,000	Full replacement of building
Option 2 2-room Kindergarten, MCH, playgroup and toy library	\$3.5M	Up to \$4M	\$35,000	\$600,000	Full replacement of building



Option 3 2-room Kindergarten, LDC, MCH, playgroup and toy library	\$6.8M	Up to \$4.5M	\$68,000	\$2.3M	Full replacement of building
Option 4 VSBA delivered Kindergarten and MCH	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	No replacement

### Competing Future Builds

Upon completion of the design process, it is envisaged Council will be encouraged to submit the project for construction under the same funding stream.

Council has a number of Early Years facilities that are nearing the end of their lifecycle or are requiring an increase in capacity to meet the roll-out of pre-prep. A pipeline of projects including costs and available resources will be presented to Council in 2025 to determine priority, potential timelines and budget allocation.

### RISKS

#### Long Day Care

Whilst including long day care comes at a significant cost, excluding it may pose a reputational risk for Council. Stage 2 will require partnering with the community to seek external funding. It is anticipated the existing LDC will continue to operate ensuring the Mirboo North Community will still have access to LDC.

#### Council Co-contribution cost for construction

Co-contribution costs are likely to increase due to cost escalation.

#### Car Parking

The proposed location of the new facility at the Mirboo North Primary School will contribute to increased parking demand, (mainly at drop off/pick up times).

Additional parking in Balook Street adjacent to the school will be considered as part of the planning works.

### STAFF DISCLOSURE

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have considered and determined that they do not have a conflict of interest in the matter.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

*Attachments are available on Council's website at the following [LINK](#).*

1. Position Paper: Councils Role in the Early Years 2022 [4.2.1 - 13 pages]
2. Detailed breakdown of survey responses [4.2.2 - 2 pages]

## **REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

### **Council's Good Governance Framework**

Pillar 3. Decision Making

### **Council Policy / Strategy / Plans**

*Documents are available on Council's website at the following [LINK](#).*

Asset Management Policy (C04)

Asset Management Plan - Buildings (internal)

Children and Families Plan

Children and Families - A Plan for the Future in South Gippsland

Leasing Policy (C62)

Municipal Early Year's Plan

Social Community Infrastructure Blueprint

### **Legislative Provisions**

Child Safe Standards 2016

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

Children, Youth and Families Act 2009

Children's Services Act 1996

Children, Youth and Families Regulations 2017

Children's Services Regulations 2020

### 4.3. COAL CREEK COMMUNITY PARK AND MUSEUM STRATEGIC PLAN

Directorate:	Future Communities
Department:	Community, Customer and Visitor

#### Council Plan

*Objective - Sustainable Growth*

*Complete the development of a Strategic Plan for Coal Creek Community Park and Museum and commence implementation of actions is a 2024/25 major initiative.*

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present Council with the final Coal Creek Community Park and Museum Strategic Plan 2024-2034 (the Strategic Plan) (**Attachment [4.3.1]**) for consideration and determination.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**That Council adopts the Coal Creek Community Park and Museum Strategic Plan 2024-2034 (Attachment [4.3.1]).**

#### RESOLUTION

**MOVED:** Councillor Keerie

**SECONDED:** Councillor Rae

**That Council adopts the Coal Creek Community Park and Museum Strategic Plan 2024-2034 (Attachment [4.3.1]).**

#### CARRIED

**Councillor Darakai called for a Division.**

**For:** Councillors Rae, Schelling, Keerie, Gilligan, Davies, Felton and Williams.

**Against:** Councillor Darakai

[Link to next Agenda Item.](#)

## **REPORT**

The development of a Strategic Plan for Coal Creek Community Park and Museum was an adopted 2023/24 Council Plan initiative with the intention of a major review and community engagement process to inform the future direction for Coal Creek.

### **Coal Creek Community Park and Museum Strategic Plan**

The new Strategic Plan is intended to address the actions identified in the *Visitor Economy Strategy 2021-2031* to position Coal Creek as a key cultural tourism asset for South Gippsland. The Strategic Plan also responds to the strategic actions that specifically relate to Coal Creek in the *Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Strategy 2022-2026* to address the needs of Coal Creek.

The Strategic Plan has been developed with the assistance from community and stakeholder engagement specialists, i.e community, who have undertaken significant consultation in its development.

The new Strategic Plan recommends the following proposed vision and strategic directions in supporting a new direction for Coal Creek.

#### ***Draft Vision***

Coal Creek is a vibrant community asset, a place to gather and celebrate, attracting visitors from across South Gippsland and beyond. As a well-positioned gateway to the region, Coal Creek showcases the best of South Gippsland and drives tourism and economic value.

Coal Creek offers a unique blend of engaging cultural events, natural beauty and interactive heritage experiences. By reimagining its heritage offerings, forging strategic partnerships, and implementing a sustainable financial model, Coal Creek is a significant driver of tourism and economic growth for the entire region.

Coal Creek is a source of pride for the South Gippsland community - where locals gather to connect with their heritage, celebrate their culture, and share the best of their region with visitors from far and wide.

#### ***Strategic Directions***

The Strategic Plan aims to capitalise on Coal Creek's strengths to create a vibrant and sustainable community asset. By enhancing current attractions, improving visitor experiences, and strengthening community involvement, we will lay a solid foundation for future growth and development.

To lay the groundwork for Coal Creek to take a new direction, in the short term, we will reduce the financial cost to Council, assess and prioritise infrastructure needs, and rally stakeholder support around our long-term vision.

By focusing on these short-term priorities, we aim to reinvigorate Coal Creek as a vibrant community centre, living history museum, and cultural tourism draw – setting the stage for its continued growth and transformation in the years to come.

To achieve this, the following strategic directions have been developed, each with identified short- and long-term actions.

- Building community involvement and support.
- Achieving financial sustainability.
- Environmental stewardship and open space.
- Contribution to the South Gippsland Economy.
- Preserving historical and cultural significance.
- Operations, marketing and resourcing.

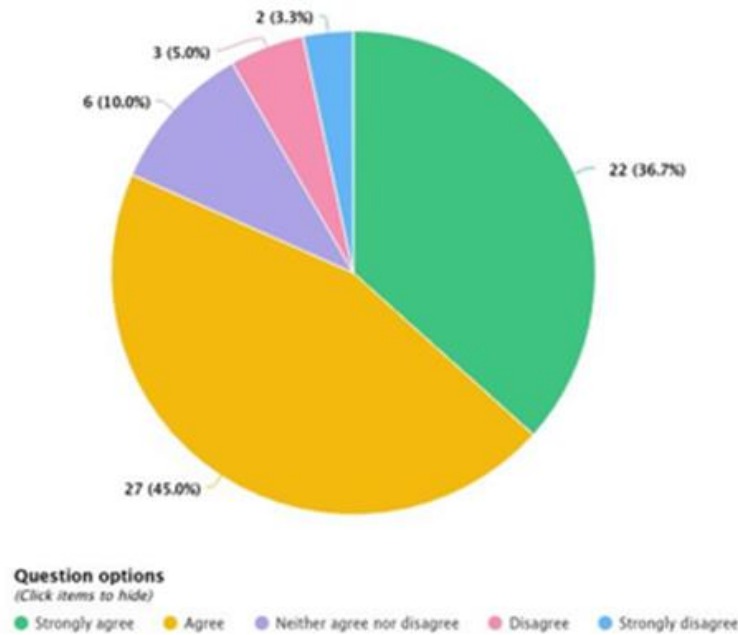
**Community feedback to Draft Plan**

The Draft Strategic Plan was released for public exhibition from 18 July to 1 August 2024, requesting feedback from the community. Feedback was requested via an online survey on the Your Say platform with the opportunity to provide either comments or upload a written submission. A total of 60 submissions were received.

A significant portion of the feedback received was positive and indicated support for the Draft Strategic Plan with the following responses.

***Do you agree or disagree with the draft Coal Creek Strategic Plan?***

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>



In addition to the above, 42 of the 60 respondents provided written feedback which mostly focused on suggestions to implement the strategic actions identified in the draft Plan. This included detailed submissions uploaded by three respondents.

### Changes to Draft Plan

The following changes have been made to the Strategic Plan in response to the submissions received during the final community consultation process.

All other feedback will be retained and considered when implementing actions and the three submitters who gave their names will receive correspondence in relation to their feedback.

- Operations, Marketing and Resourcing

Amend long-term strategic action *Explore Alternative Operational Models* to read 'To ensure long-term sustainability and growth, consider alternative options for Park operations such as management models, commercial partnerships or leases of areas or assets' (refer to the page 33 of the Draft Plan).

- Include an introductory paragraph to the section *Case Studies* to explain their inclusion (see page 35 of the Draft Plan).

### CONSULTATION / COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Plan has been developed through extensive community engagement, including recruiting the Coal Creek Community Assembly to represent the breadth of the South Gippsland community. The feedback from the community

is clear: the people of South Gippsland highly value Coal Creek and want to see it prosper.

The Assembly's recommendation to Council for a 'New Direction' forms the foundation of this Plan, reflecting the community's aspirations to preserve Coal Creek's heritage while embracing progress and ensuring long-term financial sustainability.

#### **RESOURCES / FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

An allocation of \$50,000 was approved in the 2024/25 annual budget towards the major initiative of commencing the implementation of actions identified in the Coal Creek Community Park and Museum Strategic Plan.

#### **RISKS**

The Strategic Plan has undergone a significant community engagement process with various opportunities for feedback from the community. The Strategic Plan has been developed based on the community feedback and will now be considered for adoption by Council as a final document.

If not supported, the proposed actions from the Strategic Plan cannot commence and the future of Coal Creek would remain unclear. This would therefore have an impact on delivering the relevant strategic objectives of the Visitor Economy Strategy and Art, Culture and Creative Industries Strategy.

#### **STAFF DISCLOSURE**

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have considered and determined that they do not have a conflict of interest in the matter.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

*Attachments are available on Council's website at the following [LINK](#).*

1. Coal Creek Community Park and Museum Strategic Plan 2024-2034 - August 2024 [4.3.1 - 42 pages]

#### **CONFIDENTIAL ATTACHMENTS**

Nil

#### **REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

##### **Council's Good Governance Framework**

Pillar 1. Direction & Leadership

Pillar 3. Decision Making

##### **Council Policy / Strategy / Plans**

*Documents are available on Council's website at the following [LINK](#).*

Coal Creek Community Park Museum and Collection Policy (C05)

Arts, Culture and Creative Industry Strategy

Community Engagement Strategy

Visitor Economy Strategy

Annual Budget

Council Plan 2022-2026

Long Term Financial Plan

**Regional, State and National Plan and Policies**

Gippsland Destination Management Plan - Towards 2030 - A Blueprint for Growth  
(Destination Gippsland)



#### 4.4. DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN 2022-2025 - ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Directorate:	Future Communities
Department:	Community, Health and Safety

#### Council Plan

*Objective - Healthy and Engaged Communities*

*Objective - Protecting and Enhancing our Environment*

*This report relates to the South Gippsland Shire Council – Council Plan 2022-2026 Strategic Objectives Healthy and Engaged Communities and Protecting and Enhancing our Environment.*

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to highlight Council's progress and achievements in relation to the Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) 2022-2025, Annual Implementation Report May 2024. The DAMP also includes 34 action items to be completed during its three-year life cycle, with the progress of these actions to be reported on annually, with a copy sent to the Minister of Agriculture at the end of each calendar year.

Of the 34 actions:

- 30% (10 actions) are completed;
- 53% (18 actions) are in progress with high confidence levels for completion by the end of the DAMP life cycle;
- 15% (5 actions) have not yet commenced, however are on the Community Health and Safety's departmental business plan for commencement in the 2024/25 financial year; and
- 2% (1 action) is currently being monitored and will continue to be reviewed as part of operational deliverables in relation to 'Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs'.

**Attachment [4.4.1]** details the progress of the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2022-2025 – Annual Implementation Report May 2024.

## RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **Adopts the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2022-2025 – Annual Implementation Report May 2024 (Attachment [4.4.1]).**
2. **Notes a copy of the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2022-2025 – Annual Implementation Report May 2024 that will be sent to the Minister of Agriculture.**

## RESOLUTION

**MOVED:** Councillor Keerie

**SECONDED:** Councillor Rae

That Council:

1. **Adopts the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2022-2025 – Annual Implementation Report May 2024 (Attachment [4.4.1]).**
2. **Notes a copy of the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2022-2025 – Annual Implementation Report May 2024 that will be sent to the Minister of Agriculture.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

[Link to next Agenda Item.](#)

**REPORT**

In accordance with section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, Council is required to prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) every four years. The DAMP was adopted at the 16 November 2022 Council Meeting and outlines the services, programs and policies established to address the administration of the Domestic Animal Act 1994. It also ensures responsible pet ownership with consideration to the wider environment and municipality.

Council has made excellent progress on most actions, with key achievements highlighted in the table below:

<b>Key Achievements</b>
<b>Strategy: Training of Authorised Officers</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Safety Officers are attending mandatory training sessions. This includes completing a Certificate IV in Animal Management and practical bite prevention training, with a focus on understanding animal psychology.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy: Registration and Identification</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A test online animal registration application system was developed in collaboration with the Communications and Engagement team.</li> <li>The development of an e-pathway option is underway.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy: Nuisance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issues relating to nuisance dogs and cats continue to be addressed, with Council establishing clear processes to manage common complaints.</li> <li>A total of 129 barking dog complaints were managed, with 96% (124) resolved successfully at the time of the report.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy: Dog Attacks</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issues relating to dog attacks continue to be addressed with Council receiving 23 reports for dog attacks. Whilst these matters can take time to resolve, Council ensures each case is treated with due diligence to ensure sufficient evidence is gathered and the case is investigated thoroughly to achieve the best outcome.</li> </ul>

- A FAQ brochure was developed to support both the victim and owner following dog attack incidences, ensuring they have clear information about Council's process and next steps.

**Strategy: Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs**

- Council continues to ensure compliance is maintained and scheduled visits are undertaken to dogs registered as dangerous and menacing. No restricted breeds have been identified in the municipality.
- The Victorian Declared Dog Register is maintained and regularly referred to as part of service delivery. This ensures that Council is up to date with the movement of any dangerous, menacing or restricted animal breeds both into and out of our municipality. This includes Community Safety officers undertaking restricted breed identification training.
- The Department of Agriculture's Dangerous Dogs Hotline is available for the community to report dog attacks or suspected dangerous dogs; however, no referrals are recorded to date.

**Strategy: Overpopulation and High Euthanasia**

- The cat trapping program has expanded. Cat traps can be booked by members of the public to catch feral and nuisance cats on their property, with the current wait time 2-3 weeks.
- Council continues to manage the pound service internally, with full control over the fate of all animals which are impounded.
- The advertising of impounded animals on Facebook has been highly successful, especially when owners have not been found. The posts reach an extensive audience and receive a high volume of comments and shares, which gives the animals the best chance of being reunited with their owners.
- Where animals remain unclaimed, or are surrendered directly to Council, Community Safety Officers work closely with at least 14 rescue organisations across Victoria to facilitate the rehoming of all suitable animals.

**Strategy: Domestic Animal Businesses**

- Council continues to develop a procedure that will allow for all audit inspection documentation to be stored electrically against the licensee. Our current customer request management system Pathway is the preferred system with a licencing module.

**Strategy: Other Matters**

- Council successfully negotiated another 18 months with the Korumburra Veterinary Clinic to lease their facilities for our in-house pound service. This will continue to be explored as part of the Community Health and Safety departmental business plan 2024/25.

**Strategy: Annual Review of Plan and Annual Reporting**

- Council continues to report on the progress of actions in the DAMP to Council. The Domestic Animal Management Plan 2022-2025 – Annual Implementation Report May 2024 was presented at the Council Briefing on Wednesday 8 May 2024.

**CONSULTATION / COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

There was an extensive consultation period during the development of the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2022-2025. Future actions, specifically those associated with new Council Orders, will be subject to additional community engagement and consultation programs.

**RESOURCES / FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

The implementation of actions included in the DAMP are accommodated from within the Community Safety Team operational budget.

**RISKS**

If Council does not endorse the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2022-2025 – Annual Implementation Report May 2024, it will not be able to meet its legislative obligations, including the report being forwarded to the Minister for Agriculture.

**STAFF DISCLOSURE**

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have considered and determined that they do not have a conflict of interest in the matter.

**ATTACHMENTS**

*Attachments are available on Council's website at the following [LINK](#).*

1. Domestic Animal Management Plan 2022-2025 - Year 1 reporting 2023 [4.4.1 - 5 pages]

**REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

**Council's Good Governance Framework**

Pillar 1. Direction & Leadership

**Council Policy / Strategy / Plans**

*Documents are available on Council's website at the following [LINK](#).*

Domestic Animal Management Plan

**Legislative Provisions**  
Domestic Animals Act 1994

## 5. OBJECTIVE - LEADING WITH INTEGRITY

### 5.1. COUNCILLOR POLICIES UPDATE

Directorate:	Performance and Innovation
Department:	Governance

#### Council Plan

##### *Objective - Leading with Integrity*

*Ensure that Council is leading with integrity. It is essential that Council policies are reviewed and updated regularly to ensure they are compliant with legal requirements and sector leading practices.*

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the report is to seek Council consideration of the *Councillor Support and Expenditure Policy Attachment [5.1.1]* and *Councillor, Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy Attachment [5.1.2]*. Both policies were adopted in March 2022 and April 2021 respectively. Both policies have had administrative reviews conducted and sections either updated or created to ensure they compliant with legal requirements and sector leading practices.

#### RECOMMENDATION

##### That Council:

1. **Adopts the updated Councillor Support and Expenditure Policy as per Attachment [5.1.3]; and**
2. **Adopts the updated Councillor, Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy as per Attachment [5.1.4].**

**Councillor Williams moved a Motion different from the Recommendation.**

**RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** Councillor Williams

**SECONDED:** Councillor Keerie

**That Council:**

- 1. Adopts the updated Councillor Support and Expenditure Policy as per Attachment [5.1.3]; with an amendment to the Mayoral Vehicle provision for private use to be restricted to within the Shire boundary; and**
- 2. Adopts the updated Councillor, Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy as per Attachment [5.1.4].**

**The Motion was CARRIED on the casting vote of the Mayor.**

[Link to next Agenda Item.](#)



## REPORT

A recent internal audit report into Councillor Compliance recommended that Council review both the *Councillor Support and Expenditure Policy* and *Councillor, Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy*.

As part of the review into the *Councillor Support and Expenditure Policy* and *Councillor, Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy*, Council Officers undertook benchmarking against other Councils to ensure Council's policies were inline within sector norms and practices.

### Proposed Changes to Policies

#### *Councillor Support and Expenditure Policy*

The *Council Support and Expenditure Policy* has had an administrative review conducted (updating of titles or removal of references to outdated acts or regulations etc) and several sections have been updated, added or removed.

- *Updated - Section 3.18 - Payment of Councillor Allowance* - Payment of the Councillor Allowances are to be paid on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month for the current month and this is to take effect from November 2024.
- *Removed – Mayoral Office* – All Councillors are provided access to the Councillor lounge as per Section 3.40.
- *Updated – Section 3.22 - Mayoral Vehicle* – A Mayoral vehicle can be provided for full Council and private use restricted to within Victoria. The Mayoral vehicle will be insured, maintained and allocated a fuel card by Council.
- *Updated – Section 3.48 - Reimbursement of reasonable meal expenses* - Reasonable meal expenses are to be capped at the ATO rate for meal allowances (*Reasonable amounts for domestic travel expenses – employee's annual salary \$143,650 or less*) and alcoholic beverages are unable to be reimbursed.
- *New – Section 3.56 - Reimbursement of the fee for Working with Children Check (WWCC)* - Currently Councillors are not required to obtain a WWCC to undertake their role. But in keeping with Council's commitment to the implementation of the Child Safe Standards, this could be seen as removing a barrier for Councillors to obtain a WWCC.
- *Updated – Section 3.108 - Childcare Fees Reimbursement* – For days in which Councillors have regularly scheduled briefings or meetings such as Wednesdays, if Council cancels or does not hold a briefing or meeting on the regular scheduled briefing or meeting day, a Councillor can be reimbursed for any charges they are required to pay to their childcare service for holding of the allocated position at the childcare service for

their child on that day, only if the child does not attend childcare service on that day.

This updated wording acknowledges the commercial requirements of childcare providers and ensures Councillors are not out pocket for childcare which would have been provided for the Councillor to conduct Council business. This would further strengthen Council's commitment in relation to gender equality

- *New - Section 3.125 - Unable to Reimbursement Any Item Twice* – New section to provide clarity that Councillors are unable to be reimbursed for any item listed in this Policy if they have already been reimbursed by their employer or any other third party for the said item.

#### *Councillor, Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy*

The Councillor, Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy has had an administrative review conducted (updating of titles etc) and several sections have been updated or added.

- *New – Section 3.11 – Gift Acceptance and Refusal* - To support the intent and expectations of the policy by including information relating to gifts offered or received by family members as defined under the *Local Government Act 2020* which may give rise actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest or reputational risk to Council must be declared.
- *Updated – Section 3.38 – Reward Programs* – To support the intent of this section, it has been updated with the word purposely. It is understood that Councillors may from time to time make Council related transitions which may unintentionally collect reward program points.
- *Updated – Section 4.41 – Procurement and Tender Processes* - To support the intent of this section it has been updated with the wording on Council business. It is understood that Councillors may visit current supplier's premises to purchase items in a personal capacity due to the geography of South Gippsland.

#### **CONSULTATION / COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

No community engagement was undertaken as these policies relate directly to Councillors. Benchmarking against other Councils was undertaken.

#### **RESOURCES / FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

All changes and current requirements of the policies can be managed within existing allocated budgets.

#### **RISKS**

To manage risks effectively, Council policies should be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure they are compliant with legal requirements and sector leading practices.

## **STAFF DISCLOSURE**

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have considered and determined that they do not have a conflict of interest in the matter.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

*Attachments are available on Council's website at the following [LINK](#).*

1. Current - C51 Councillor Support and Expenditure Policy - Adopted 16 March 2022 [5.1.1 - 18 pages]
2. Current - C01 Councillor Gifts Benefits and Hospitality Policy - Adopted 21 April 2021 [5.1.2 - 17 pages]
3. Proposed Councillor Support and Expenditure Policy C51 21 - 21 August 2024 [5.1.3 - 15 pages]
4. Proposed Councillor Gifts Benefits and Hospitality Policy - 21 August 2024 [5.1.4 - 15 pages]

## **REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

### **Council's Good Governance Framework**

Pillar 3. Decision Making

### **Council Policy / Strategy / Plans**

*Documents are available on Council's website at the following [LINK](#).*

Councillor Support and Expenditure Policy (C51)

### **Legislative Provisions**

Local Government Act 2020

## 5.2. SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC BRIEFINGS - 13 JUNE TO 12 JULY 2024

Directorate:	Performance and Innovation
Department:	Governance

### Council Plan

*Objective - Leading with Integrity*

*Council's transparency and governance is strengthened by regularly reporting on summaries of briefings held, that assist Council to make informed decisions in Council Meetings on behalf of the community.*

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the information presented to Councillors during 13 June and 12 July 2024.

This aligns with the principles of the Local Government Act 2020 and supports transparency around Council decisions and actions.

### RECOMMENDATION

**That Council receives and notes this report.**

### RESOLUTION

**MOVED:** Councillor Keerie

**SECONDED:** Councillor Davies

**That Council receives and notes this report.**

### CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

[Link to next Agenda Item.](#)

## REPORT

Meeting Title	Details
<b>Wednesday 19 June 2024</b>	
<b>Executive Update</b>	<p><b>Councillors Attending:</b> Mohya Davies, Scott Rae, Clare Williams, John Schelling, Sarah Gilligan, Jenni Keerie and Nathan Hersey.</p> <p><b>Conflict of Interest:</b> Nil disclosed.</p>
<p><b>Council Meeting Agenda Topic Discussion – 26 June 2024</b></p>	<p><b>Councillors Attending:</b> Mohya Davies, Scott Rae, Clare Williams, John Schelling, Sarah Gilligan, Jenni Keerie and Nathan Hersey.</p> <p><b>Conflict of Interest:</b> Councillor Jenni Keerie has declared a material interest in Confidential Agenda Item 10.1 2023/24 Community Grants - Round 2, as she is employed by an organisation that auspiced one community grant application and auspiced the funds for another community grant application on behalf of another organisation.</p> <p>Councillor Clare Williams has declared a material conflict of interest in Confidential Agenda Item 10.1 2023/24 Community Grants - Round 2, as she is a joint owner of a business that provided a quote to a community grant application.</p> <p>Councillor Clare Williams has declared a general conflict of interest in Confidential Agenda Item 10.1 2023/24 Community Grants - Round 2, as she is a member of community group that has made a community grant application.</p> <p>Councillor Mohya Davies has declared a general conflict of interest in Confidential Agenda Item 10.1 2023/24 Community Grants - Round 2, as she is the Chair on an organisation that has made a community grant application.</p> <p>Councillor Sarah Gilligan has declared a general conflict of interest in Confidential Agenda Item 10.1 2023/24 Community Grants - Round 2, as she has a</p>

Meeting Title	Details
	<p>close association to a project that has made a community grant application.</p> <p>The matters with a declared conflict of interest were not discussed.</p>
<b>Mirboo North Kindergarten Project</b>	<p><b>Councillors Attending:</b> Mohya Davies, Scott Rae, Clare Williams, John Schelling, Sarah Gilligan, Jenni Keerie and Nathan Hersey.</p> <p><b>Conflict of Interest:</b> Nil disclosed.</p>
<b>Marinus Link Update</b>	<p><b>Councillors Attending:</b> Mohya Davies, Scott Rae, Clare Williams, John Schelling, Sarah Gilligan, Jenni Keerie and Nathan Hersey.</p> <p><b>Conflict of Interest:</b> Nil disclosed.</p>
<b>Leongatha and Korumburra Rail Precincts Update</b>	<p><b>Councillors Attending:</b> Mohya Davies, Scott Rae, Clare Williams, John Schelling, Sarah Gilligan, Jenni Keerie and Nathan Hersey.</p> <p><b>Conflict of Interest:</b> Nil disclosed.</p>
<b>Former Mirboo North Railway Station Refurbishment</b>	<p><b>Councillors Attending:</b> Mohya Davies, Scott Rae, Clare Williams, John Schelling, Sarah Gilligan, Jenni Keerie and Nathan Hersey.</p> <p><b>Conflict of Interest:</b> Nil disclosed.</p>
<b>Wednesday 26 June 2024</b>	
<b>Executive Update</b>	<p><b>Councillors Attending:</b> Mohya Davies, Scott Rae, Clare Williams, John Schelling, Sarah Gilligan, Jenni Keerie and Nathan Hersey.</p> <p><b>Conflict of Interest:</b> Councillor Clare Williams has a declared material conflict of interest in Executive Update discussion on Simon's Lane, as she is part owner of a business that tendered for machinery used in the Simon's Lane Project. Councillor Clare Williams left the meeting at 9.26am and returned at 9.28am with a conflict of Interest.</p>

Meeting Title	Details
<b>Council Meeting Agenda Topic Discussion – 26 June 2024</b>	<b>Councillors Attending:</b> Mohya Davies, Scott Rae, Clare Williams, John Schelling, Sarah Gilligan, Jenni Keerie and Nathan Hersey. <b>Conflict of Interest:</b> Nil disclosed.
<b>Coal Creek Community Park and Museum</b>	<b>Councillors Attending:</b> Mohya Davies, Scott Rae, Clare Williams, John Schelling, Sarah Gilligan, Jenni Keerie, Adrian Darakai and Nathan Hersey. <b>Conflict of Interest:</b> Nil disclosed.
<b>Qube - Barry Beach Marine Terminal</b>	<b>Councillors Attending:</b> Mohya Davies, Scott Rae, Clare Williams, John Schelling, Sarah Gilligan, Jenni Keerie, Adrian Darakai and Nathan Hersey. <b>Conflict of Interest:</b> Nil disclosed.
<b>Integrated Water Management Plan</b>	<b>Councillors Attending:</b> Mohya Davies, Scott Rae, Clare Williams, John Schelling, Sarah Gilligan, Jenni Keerie, Adrian Darakai and Nathan Hersey. <b>Conflict of Interest:</b> Nil disclosed.
<b>Wednesday 10 July 2024</b>	
<b>Executive Update</b>	<b>Councillors Attending:</b> Mohya Davies, Scott Rae, Clare Williams, John Schelling, Sarah Gilligan, Jenni Keerie, Michael Felton and Nathan Hersey. <b>Conflict of Interest:</b> Nil disclosed.
<b>Council Meeting Agenda Topic Discussion – 17 July 2024</b>	<b>Councillors Attending:</b> Mohya Davies, Scott Rae, Clare Williams, John Schelling, Sarah Gilligan, Jenni Keerie, Adrian Darakai, Michael Felton and Nathan Hersey. <b>Conflict of Interest:</b> Nil disclosed.
<b>Ward Boundary Review and Election Update</b>	<b>Councillors Attending:</b> Mohya Davies, Scott Rae, Clare Williams, John Schelling, Sarah Gilligan, Jenni Keerie, Adrian Darakai, Michael Felton and Nathan Hersey. <b>Conflict of Interest:</b> Nil disclosed.
<b>People &amp; Culture Update</b>	<b>Councillors Attending:</b>

Meeting Title	Details
	Mohya Davies, Scott Rae, Clare Williams, John Schelling, Sarah Gilligan, Jenni Keerie, Adrian Darakai, Michael Felton and Nathan Hersey. <b>Conflict of Interest:</b> Nil disclosed.
<b>Audit and Risk Committee Update</b>	<b>Councillors Attending:</b> Mohya Davies, Scott Rae, Clare Williams, John Schelling, Sarah Gilligan, Jenni Keerie, Adrian Darakai, Michael Felton and Nathan Hersey. <b>Conflict of Interest:</b> Nil disclosed.
<b>Planning Briefing</b>	<b>Councillors Attending:</b> Mohya Davies, Scott Rae, Clare Williams, John Schelling, Sarah Gilligan, Jenni Keerie, Adrian Darakai, Michael Felton and Nathan Hersey. <b>Conflict of Interest:</b> Nil disclosed.
<b>Electronic Surveillance Data Usage Policy</b>	<b>Councillors Attending:</b> Mohya Davies, Scott Rae, Clare Williams, John Schelling, Sarah Gilligan, Jenni Keerie, Michael Felton and Nathan Hersey. <b>Conflict of Interest:</b> Nil disclosed.
<b>Integrated Water Management Plan</b>	<b>Councillors Attending:</b> Mohya Davies, Scott Rae, Clare Williams, John Schelling, Sarah Gilligan, Jenni Keerie, Michael Felton and Nathan Hersey. <b>Conflict of Interest:</b> Nil disclosed.

**STAFF DISCLOSURE**

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have considered and determined that they do not have a conflict of interest in the matter.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Nil

**REFERENCE DOCUMENTS****Council's Good Governance Framework**

Pillar 3. Decision Making

**Council Policy / Strategy / Plans**

Documents are available on Council's website at the following [LINK](#).



Governance Rules (C82)  
Public Transparency Policy (C75)

**Legislative Provisions**

Local Government Act 2020

### 5.3. DOCUMENTS SEALED, CONTRACTS VARIED, AWARDED OR EXTENDED BY CEO - 13 JUNE 2024 TO 12 JULY 2024

Directorate:	Performance and Innovation
Department:	Financial Strategy

#### Council Plan

*Objective - Leading with Integrity*

*Council's transparency of financial decisions made and overall financial sustainability is strengthened by regularly reporting on documents sealed, contracts awarded, varied or extended under the CEO's delegation.*

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents the following actions undertaken by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) which occurred during the period from 13 June 2024 to 12 July 2024. Council's *Procurement Policy (C32)* requires the CEO to report to Council any of the following actions undertaken to the next appropriate Meeting:

- Documents sealed;
- Contracts awarded after a public tender process within the CEO's delegation;
- Contracts varied or extended by the CEO which exceeded the CEO's delegation;
- Annual WorkCover premiums; and
- Annual Insurance Premiums.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**That Council receives and notes this report.**

#### RESOLUTION

**MOVED:** Councillor Darakai

**SECONDED:** Councillor Schelling

**That Council receives and notes this report.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

[Link to next Agenda Item.](#)

## REPORT

### Documents Sealed

Under the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), s.14 states that each Council is a body corporate with perpetual succession; and must have a common seal. Sealing a document makes it an official document of Council as a corporate body. Documents that require sealing include agreements, leases or any other contractual or legally binding document that binds Council to another party.

Use of the *General Local Law 2024*, Part 5 - Administration, clause 65 – Common Seal of Council, states that if the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) uses the Common Seal in a manner described by sub-clause (5), this means on the authority of a Council resolution, then Council must be advised of such use on a regular basis.

In accordance with the *General Local Law 2024*, Part 5 - Administration, clause 65 (6), the following are presented to Council as documents sealed during the period from 13 June 2024 to 12 July 2024.

1. Nil

Section 173 Agreements are prepared in accordance with s.173 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, allowing Council to enter into agreements relating to the use or development of land, conditions to which the land June be used or developed or any matter that relates to planning or planning schemes in Victoria. Section 174 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* requires that such an agreement be under seal and must bind the owner to the covenants specified in the agreement.

In accordance with the *General Local Law 2024*, Instrument of Delegation and *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, the following are presented to Council as documents sealed during the period from 13 June 2024 to 12 July 2024.

1. Section 173 Agreement between South Gippsland Shire Council and the owner of 110 D M Scotts Road, Korumburra for a two lot subdivision. Seal applied 1 July 2024.
2. Section 173 Agreement between South Gippsland Shire Council and the owner of 24 Railway Road, Baromi for a two lot subdivision. Seal applied 1 July 2024.

### Contracts Awarded, Varied or Extended

In accordance with Council's Procurement Policy where contracts are awarded under delegation, varied or extended, they are required to be reported to the next practicable Council Meeting.

1. Contracts awarded by Council after a public tender process, signed by the CEO between 13 June 2024 to 12 July 2024.
  - a. Nil
2. Contracts awarded after a public tender process within the CEO's delegation between 13 June 2024 to 12 July 2024.
  - a. CON/398 for Provision of Mount Lyall Road, Nyora Road Rehabilitation was awarded to Sure Constructions(Vic) Pty Ltd, signed by the CEO 20 June 2024.
  - b. CON/403 Leongatha Memorial Hall Precinct Feasibility Study to Wendy Dunstan, T/A Outside the Square Creative Consulting, signed by the CEO 24 June 2024.
3. Contract variations approved by the CEO between 13 June 2024 to 12 July 2024.
  - a. Nil
4. Contract extensions approved by the CEO 13 June 2024 to 12 July 2024.
  - a. CON/252 for Provision of South Gippsland Shire Council Pool's Maintenance Services was awarded to Mechanical Plumbing Services Pty Ltd. The contract was for a three-year term commencing on 1 July 2020 with an option of two 1-year extensions. An extension of 1 year (second year extension option) has been approved, signed by the CEO 12 July 2024.
  - b. CON/284 for Provision of HVAC Maintenance Services was awarded to Williams and Burns Pty Ltd. The contract was for a three-year term commencing on 1 July 2021, with an option of two one-year extensions. An extension of 1 year (first extension option) has been approved, signed by the CEO 12 July 2024.

### **Annual WorkCover Premium**

In accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), s.5 where insurances are processed for payment under delegation, they are required to be reported to the next practicable Council Meeting.

1. WorkCover Premium for 2024-2025 has been approved for payment for the value \$558,098.88 (value includes GST and is the Early Full Payment value with 5% discount).

## **Annual Insurance Premiums**

In accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), s.5 where insurances are processed for payment under delegation, they are required to be reported to the next practicable Council Meeting.

1. Councils Insurance Premiums for 2024-2025 have been approved for payment for the value \$1,451,888.60 (value includes GST).

## **STAFF DISCLOSURE**

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have considered and determined that they do not have a conflict of interest in the matter.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Nil

## **REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

### **Council's Good Governance Framework**

Pillar 3. Decision Making

### **Council Policy / Strategy / Plans**

*Documents are available on Council's website at the following [LINK](#).*

Governance Rules (C82)

General Local Law 2024

Procurement Policy (C32)

### **Legislative Provisions**

Local Government Act 1989

Local Government Act 2020

Planning and Environment Act 1987

## 6. OBJECTIVE - PROTECTING AND ENHANCING OUR ENVIRONMENT

### 6.1. DOMESTIC WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN - ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Directorate:	Future Communities
Department:	Community Health and Safety

#### Council Plan

*Objective - Protecting and Enhancing our Environment*

*This report relates to the South Gippsland Shire – Council Plan 2022-2026 Strategic Objective Protection and Enhancing our Environment.*

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to highlight Council's progress and achievements in relation to the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) 2022-2026, Annual Implementation Report May 2024. The DWMP includes eight strategies with a suite of 74 actions across those strategies, to be completed during its four-year life cycle.

Of the 74 actions:

- 26% (19 actions) are completed.
- 48% (36 actions) are on track with high confidence levels for completion by the end of the DWMP life cycle, and
- 26% (19 actions) are currently being monitored and will continue to be reviewed as part of delivery of the DWMP 2022-2026.

The attached Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2022-2026 – Annual Implementation Report May 2024 **Attachment [6.1.1]** details the current progress of the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2022-2026.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**That Council:**

1. **Adopts the report of the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2022 – 2026 – Annual Implementation Report May 2024 (Attachment [6.1.1]); and**
2. **Note a copy of the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2022-2026 – Annual Implementation Report May 2024 will be made public on Council's website.**

**RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** Councillor Keerie

**SECONDED:** Councillor Rae

**That Council:**

- 1. Adopts the report of the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2022 – 2026 – Annual Implementation Report May 2024 (Attachment [6.1.1]); and**
- 2. Note a copy of the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2022-2026 – Annual Implementation Report May 2024 will be made public on Council’s website.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

[Link to next Agenda Item.](#)

**REPORT**

To ensure the health of our environment and that of our residents, visitors and those working within the municipality, South Gippsland Shire Council has several significant roles and legislative responsibilities which govern the effective management and disposal of wastewater.

In accordance with the *Environment Protection Act 2017* and the *Environment Protection Transitional Regulations 2021*, Council must develop and implement a DWMP that:

- (a) Identifies the public health and environmental risks associated with onsite domestic wastewater management systems; and
- (b) Sets out strategies to minimise those risks.

Council’s Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2022-2026 was adopted by Council at the 22 July 2022 Council meeting and outlines the strategies and actions that will be taken to manage domestic wastewater across the municipality.

Council has made excellent progress on most actions, with key achievements highlighted in the table below:

<b>Key Achievements</b>
<p><b>Strategy 1: Further Develop Information Management Systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant progress has been made in the way Council captures Onsite Wastewater Management System (OWMS) data, including increased reporting and mapping capabilities. These improvements have seen a dramatic reduction in the number of days taken to assess and issue OWMS permits. Most permits have been issued within half the designated statutory timeframe (42 days).</li> <li>• Approximately 3,000 OWMS service reports have been received and processed since the introduction of the DWMP in 2022.</li> <li>• Relationship building, and community engagement with key stakeholders has continued and significantly improved since the implementation of the DWMP. A successful business breakfast gathering (Annual Onsite Wastewater Management System Conversation) was held with local plumbers, OWMS installers and service agents invited to attend. The session provides a platform for Council to provide an update on new OWMS processes, outline any trends and discuss any wastewater issues and concerns which require further attention.</li> <li>• The development of new OWMS educational material has been released to assist new homeowners with identifying the location of their OWMS,</li> </ul>



understanding OWMS maintenance requirements and standard operational information.

### **Strategy 2: Education and Community Consultation**

- The Environmental Health team have actively engaged with OWMS plumbers, installers and service agents to promote stronger relationships and to increase understanding of the OWMS permit process.
- Internal OWMS processes have been reviewed and updated to better align with the requirements of the *Environment Protection Act 2017*. This has seen a complete rework of all OWMS forms, fees and publicly available information. Further updates are scheduled in line with the DWMP strategies in future years.
- Council continues to meet with the regional Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and other regulatory authorities on a regular basis to advocate for shared goals and outcomes. This includes advocating for sewer infrastructure in priority townships.

### **Strategy 3: Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Development**

- A review of Council's Wastewater Management Policy (C78) has commenced and is on track for completion in the 2024/25 year. The new policy will focus on Council's information systems, permit processes, improved mapping, system life span and other requirements of the *Environment Protection Act 2017* and the *Environment Protection Regulations 2021*.
- Compliance and enforcement processes have been improved to reduce the impact of off-site wastewater discharge on stormwater drains and ground waters. This process improvement has seen an increase in risk identification and property owner/occupier compliance. As a result, overall compliance of OWMS with the *Environment Protection Act 2017* has been experienced.

### **Strategy 4: Environmental Monitoring**

- Council has been successful in obtaining a financial grant from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), which is being used to develop a pilot environmental water sampling program to monitor the effect of OWMS systems in vulnerable areas. The pilot sampling program is on track for completion (and acquittal) at the end of December 2024.
- Improved process continues to identify failing OWMS and implement compliance and enforcement processes to achieve corrective actions as

required. As a direct result of process change in this area, an increase in ongoing compliance of OWMS has been experienced.

- Approximately 4,000 OWMS have been assessed as compliant through the OWMS Compliance Program since the beginning of the DWMP implementation.

#### **Strategy 5: Management of Commercial Properties**

- The Environmental Health team continues to routinely engage with property owners in unsewered commercial areas to achieve best environmental outcomes.
- The development of commercial property OWMS education and information is on track to be delivered in the 2024/25 financial year. This package of information will assist commercial businesses in understanding their OWMS and identify any issues early.

#### **Strategy 6: Continue to Develop and Implement Compliance Management**

- There has been a review, with updates undertaken to the suite of information provided to property owners upon the issue of the Certificate to Use. This information informs and educates property owners regarding the service, maintenance and upkeep requirements of their OWMS.
- Improved electronic data capture has been undertaken by completing the historic uptake process for OWMS records prior to amalgamation.
- An audit and enforcement program has been established to ensure property owners, service technicians and agents adequately fulfil their respective responsibilities.
- All notified OWMS failures or outstanding works were followed up and entered the enforcement process where required.

#### **Strategy 7: Regulatory Management**

- The Environmental Health team provided significant input and user context for the review and development of the new EPA OWMS Guidelines, which was implemented in May 2024.
- The identification of errors in the previous EPA OWMS Code of Practice was completed, which achieved an improved outcome for OWMS installed in sandy soils.
- Bore impacts on OWMS installed in sandy soils was investigated, particularly those in Venus Bay, Sandy Point and Walkerville, and developed a new bore process in line with current legislation resulting in an improved outcome for the environment and property owners.

- Commenced the implementation of the pilot environmental sampling program, to monitor stormwater systems, surface waters and groundwaters in high-risk areas and priority townships.

**Strategy 8: Reporting, Audits and Review**

- The requirement to have the DWMP third party audited has been removed from legislation, therefore this cost will no longer be incurred by the DWMP implementation. Internal audits will replace the previously required external audits and be conducted every three years.
- No updates to the DWMP 2022-2026 are required currently.

**CONSULTATION/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

There was an extensive consultation period during the development of the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2022-2026.

**RESOURCES / FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

The implementation of strategies and actions included in the DWMP are accommodated from within the Environmental Health team operational budget.

**RISKS**

Environmental protection legislation requires Council to develop and implement a domestic wastewater management plan to identify public health and environmental risk associated with OWMS, and to specify strategies to manage these risks. Council’s DWMP 2022-2026 complies with this requirement. Council’s risk exposure is being managed.

**STAFF DISCLOSURE**

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have considered and determined that they do not have a conflict of interest in the matter.

**ATTACHMENTS**

*Attachments are available on Council’s website at the following [LINK](#).*

1. Domestic Wastewater Management Plan - Year 1 Reporting 2024 [6.1.1 - 12 pages]

**REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

**Council’s Good Governance Framework**

Pillar 1. Direction & Leadership

Pillar 8. Monitoring & Performance Review

**Council Policy / Strategy / Plans**

*Documents are available on Council’s website at the following [LINK](#).*

Domestic Wastewater Management Plan

**Legislative Provisions**  
Environment Protection Act 2017

## 7. OBJECTIVE - SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

### 7.1. COASTAL STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

Directorate:	Future Communities
Department:	Planning and Building Services

#### Council Plan

##### *Objective - Sustainable Growth*

*The activities outlined in this report support our coastal communities to respond to existing and emerging risks to their liveability and environmental health and protect the character of our communities, including our built, natural and cultural heritage.*

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to discuss the ongoing implementation of the South Gippsland Coastal Strategy 2023. The Coastal Strategy is a key strategic document that sets out how Council will work to identify and mitigate coastal hazards to protect coastal communities and our precious coastal environment. The Coastal Strategy was adopted by Council in September 2023.

This report outlines the progress of actions identified in the Coastal Strategy. It is provided for Council and community information.

#### RECOMMENDATION

##### That Council:

1. **Notes the South Gippsland Coastal Strategy 2023/2024 progress report (Attachment [7.1.1]).**
2. **Endorses the continued implementation of the South Gippsland Coastal Strategy in 2024/2025.**

**RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** Councillor Gilligan

**SECONDED:** Councillor Darakai

**That Council:**

- 1. Notes the South Gippsland Coastal Strategy 2023/2024 progress report (Attachment [7.1.1]).**
- 2. Endorses the continued implementation of the South Gippsland Coastal Strategy in 2024/2025.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## **REPORT**

The Coastal Strategy identified a range of short, medium and long-term actions for implementation. Implementation of several of these actions has commenced (see comments below and **Attachment [7.1.1]**).

Council has been successful in obtaining grant funding totalling \$462,000 to progress a range of these actions.

### **Advocacy**

Council is advocating to the State Government for coastal specific planning controls that can be used to avoid risks from climate change in coastal settlements through minimising new and inappropriate infill urban growth. This work is nearing completion and will form the basis of a planning scheme amendment to implement key recommendations of the Coastal Strategy, including removal of township growth area and restrictions on further subdivision.

Council has in the past year advocated on coastal matters through submissions to the State Government's House Committee on Regional Development and the Legislative Council 'Economy and Infrastructure Committee Inquiry' into Local Government funding and services. The submissions discussed the cost of maintaining our infrastructure (including coastal infrastructure) in a financially constrained and rate capped environment.

Council will continue to advocate and engage with both State and Federal Government to secure more funding and support for our coastal communities, especially in relation to risk mitigation and resilience planning.

### **Risk Avoidance**

In May 2024, Council was successful in obtaining \$200,000 in State Government funding to commence the preparation of a coastal hazards risk assessment for Waratah Bay. Indigenous communities have been invited to participate in the project steering / reference committee, along with Parks Victoria and the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority.

Additionally, Council has secured \$150,000 Federal Government funding to investigate the condition of coastal levees across the municipality. This work will build upon previous investigations conducted in 2018 and provide a detailed assessment of levee weak points and vulnerabilities to impacts of rising sea levels. The project will also investigate policy options to address the risks posed by the levee system, the majority of which are located on private land.

Council continues to work with the State Government in the preparation of the Cape to Cape Resilience Plan (Cape Paterson to Cape Liptrap including Andersons Inlet and the Tarwin River at Tarwin Lower) which investigates the

impacts of climate change and rising sea levels on our coastline and considers options to manage the impacts.

Development of the next stage of the draft Resilience Plan is currently being considered by the State Government. Council will continue to work with the State Government on the project.

Council is also partnering with the Gippsland Alliance for Climate Action (GACA) to develop a risk analysis tool to model and map climate hazards and impacts for Port Welshpool and Barry Beach. When complete, the risk mapping will provide a visual representation of the spatial, temporal and climate hazard variability (heat, bushfire, sea level rise etc.) in these areas. The project has received \$32,000 funding from Emergency Management Victoria's Risk and Resilience Grants Program.

Council has also contributed to and supported the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) motion that "MAV call on the Victorian Government to fund and implement a state-led process to modify Victorian Planning Schemes to amend, strengthen, and protect the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay to manage risk areas that are vulnerable to climate change, inclusive of all affected coastal and riverine areas".

### **Emergency Management**

In 2023, Council partnered with State Government agencies and the community to prepare the '[Venus Bay Emergency Planning Information](#)' publication with funding assistance from Emergency Recovery Victoria. Should additional funding become available, similar management plans could be developed for our other coastal communities.

### **Environment and Landscape (Common Ground)**

Council is investigating options for the reinstatement of saltmarsh on farmland between Andersons Inlet and the Venus Bay settlement. The farmland is protected by an earth levee which is unlikely to manage the impacts of rising sea levels. Some saltwater incursion is already occurring on the land and the project will look at the pros and cons of allowing natural processes to continue to occur and for the land to gradually return to its pre levee state. The project has received \$80,000 in State Government funding for implementation.

### **Committees of Management at Yanakie, Foster Beach and Waratah Bay**

The Committee of Management of Waratah Bay ("the Gap") was formally passed from Council to Sandy Point Foreshore Committee in April 2024. Council remains Committee of Management for Yanakie (Red Bluff) and Foster Beach. Additional consultation and negotiation with affected stakeholders and agencies are required to progress the land management options at Yanakie. It is expected that this work will be ongoing.



## **CONSULTATION / COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

External and internal consultation will continue to be undertaken as part of each action's implementation, as required.

## **RESOURCES / FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

Actions are typically undertaken within existing staff resources and budgets. Where additional expertise / work is required to complete actions, external grant funding will be sought where available.

## **RISKS**

The continued implementation of the South Gippsland Coastal Strategy will ensure the risks it identifies are investigated and effectively managed into the future for net community benefit and the support of healthy natural systems.

Effectively responding to the identified risks will provide greater certainty for residents' safety, infrastructure planning, ecosystem health and tourism opportunities.

Advocacy by Council for policy and financial support to the State and Federal Governments will need to continue if these risks are to be effectively managed and funded.

## **STAFF DISCLOSURE**

All officers involved in the preparation of this report have considered and determined that they do not have a conflict of interest in the matter.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

*Attachments are available on Council's website at the following [LINK](#).*

1. Coastal Strategy Implementation Progress Report 2024 [7.1.1 - 6 pages]

## **REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

### **Council's Good Governance Framework**

Pillar 1. Direction & Leadership

### **Council Policy / Strategy / Plans**

*Documents are available on Council's website at the following [LINK](#).*

Community Vision 2040

South Gippsland's Planning Scheme

### **Legislative Provisions**

Marine and Coastal Act 2018

Planning and Environment Act 1987

### **Regional, State and National Plan and Policies**

West Gippsland Regional Floodplain Management Strategy 2018-2027

## **8. NOTICES OF MOTION AND/OR RESCISSION**

**NIL**

## **9. COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

### **9.1. REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**NIL**

### **9.2. COUNCILLOR UPDATES**

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**Councillor Sarah Gilligan, addressed Council by reporting on attendance at or made comments on:**

- **Gippsland Skies Offshore Wind drop-in information sessions.**
- **Toora Art Cubes**
- **Meeniyah Progress Society Annual General Meeting (AGM) and shared a meal with community members.**
- **Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) Emergency Management Meeting, with a discussion focus on the need to redesign energy transmission.**
- **Victorian Coastal Councils Working Group, the meeting focused on the coastal future for Australia, what needs to be done and the issues at hand.**
- **Leongatha Secondary College Information Night.**
- **Council's Audit & Risk Committee meeting.**

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**Councillor Mohya Davies, addressed Council by reporting on attendance at or made comments on:**

- **Council's Citizenship Ceremony**
- **Council's Community Grants Presentation Evening**
- **Parma for a Farmer, event held in Mirboo North about creating awareness around issues and support for farmers.**
- **Council hosted a MAV Stand for Council Session.**
- **Development of a new local newspaper for Foster, the 'Prom Coast News' working group with an aim to create a trustworthy and reliable source of news. There is an information community engagement session being held this Saturday morning in Foster.**

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**Councillor Jenni Keerie, addressed Council by reporting on attendance at or made comments on:**

- **Council's Community Grants Presentation Evening**
  - **Council's Citizenship Ceremony**
  - **Council hosted a MAV Stand for Council Session.**
  - **Stockyard Gallery thank you to volunteers event held at Waratah Winery.**
  - **Koonwarra Hall Triannual Meeting**
  - **VicGrid sessions at the Korumburra Hub.**
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- **Arawata Community group road safety study.**

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**Councillor John Schelling, addressed Council by reporting on attendance at or made comments on:**

- **Leongatha Community Garden AGM**
- **Council's Citizenship Ceremony**
- **Leongatha Senior Citizens AGM**
- **Leongatha Community Garden Market AGM**
- **Mirboo North Playgroup meeting**
- **Opening event of Rail Trail at Alberton, great to see the collaboration between the two Shires.**
- **Karmai Children's Centre opening**
- **Korumburra Scouts**
- **Leongatha Recreation Reserve Meeting**
- **Leongatha Business Association**
- **Regional Roads in Victoria across the Shire and the State are in much need of an upgrade.**

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**Councillor Scott Rae addressed Council by making comments on agricultural land and the need to retain for agriculture use and not shift to industrial use.**

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**The Mayor, Councillor Clare Williams, addressed Council by reporting on attendance at or made comments on:**

- **Leongatha Secondary College, community planting sessions project with year 6 students.**
- **Minister House meeting and the need for co-design with South Gippsland and Wellington Shire around offshore wind, what 'payments in lieu of rates looks like'.**
- **Local Government Enquiry and local councils financial viability.**
- **Meeniyah Children's Centre meeting with a view to ensure there is engagement with stakeholders.**
- **Victorian Coastal Councils, proud of all the councils getting together to do better.**
- **Leongatha Knights Football Club 20th Anniversary celebrations**
- **Mirboo North Winter Fest, fabulous event.**
- **Go Girls – South Gippsland initiative aimed at developing women.**
- **Leongatha Senior Citizens AGM**
- **Mirboo North Playgroup meeting**
- **Council's Citizenship Ceremony**
- **Opening of the South Gippsland Camera Club Show.**
- **Leongatha Business Association, meeting including Tom McIntosh MP. Discussions focused on youth crime, the Mayor reminded us all to check in on each other, there has been a call for more police presence in our town.**

## 10. URGENT BUSINESS

This section of the Agenda is for urgent business items:

Normally no motion should be debated by Councillors unless the matter is already included as an item on the Agenda. However, in some circumstances it is possible to raise urgent motions.

Council's *Governance Rules 2020* (clause 22 - Urgent Business) adopted on 19 October 2022, allows for where a situation has not been provided for under the Governance Rules, the Council may determine the matter by resolution. Established practice has provided for urgent motions to be raised at Council provided the matter cannot be dealt with at the next Council Meeting or by Officers under delegation.

It is necessary for the Councillor wishing to raise a matter of urgent business to raise a motion similar to the following:

'That consideration of (the issue) be dealt with as a matter of urgent business and Councillor....be allowed a 'short period' to indicate the reason(s) why the matter should be considered as a matter of urgent business.' If the Chairperson accepts the motion as meeting the urgent business criteria, normal meeting procedures in Council's *Governance Rules 2020* (clause 22) will apply.

If the motion to accept the item as a matter of urgent business is passed by Council, the motion relating to the specific issue can then be put and debated in the normal way.

**Nil**

## 11. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

### 11.1. PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

Petitions and Joint Letters are written requests that have been signed by a number of community members. According to the *Governance Rules (C82)*, *clause 57*, members of the community may submit a valid petition or joint letter to a Councillor or to Council addressed to the Chief Executive Officer.

At the Meeting a petition or joint letter is presented, Council will consider a motion to receive it, the matter itself will not be considered unless determined as urgent business.

The Councillor presenting the petition or joint letter is responsible for ensuring that they are familiar with the contents and purpose of the petition or joint letter and that it does not contain language disrespectful to Council.

The requirements of the lead petitioner are detailed in the *Governance Rules (C82)*, *clause 57*.

Source: [Governance Rules \(C82\)](#) – adopted 19 October 2022.

**Nil**

## **11.2. ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Answers to previous questions taken on notice at a former Council Meeting, are included in the Minutes of this Meeting.

Background material submitted with a question will not be recorded in the Council Meeting Minutes.

Source: [Governance Rules \(C82\)](#) – adopted 19 October 2022.

**Nil**

### 11.3. SUBMITTED PUBLIC QUESTIONS

All community member questions for Council Meetings are to be written and submitted to the Governance Team by 9.00am on the Monday morning preceding the Council Meeting to allow time for a response to be prepared, where possible, for the Council Meeting. All reasonable attempts will be made to answer pre-submitted questions at the Meeting. When further time is required to prepare an answer, questions may be taken on notice and responses will be provided at the next Council Meeting.

On the day of the Meeting, questions on the prescribed form must be received prior to the commencement of the Council Meeting by 2.00pm and placed in the receptacle at the Governance Officers table. These questions will be taken on notice, included in the Minutes and responses provided at the next Council Meeting.

Public Question Time in Council Meetings is to be used for matters that are relevant to the business or functions of Council and are clear and legible. Questions may not be allowed where the question(s) is deemed to be:

- Related to a matter beyond or outside the powers of Council;
- Trivial or frivolous;
- Defamatory, indecent, abusive or objectionable;
- Derogatory or designed to embarrass a Councillor, a member of Council staff or a member of the community;
- Related to subject matter previously received and responded to;
- Related to a matter already considered and resolved upon by Council;
- Breach Council's confidentiality obligations; and/or
- Illegible, vague or not make sense.

A person may submit a maximum of three (3) questions for any one Council Meeting, this includes a combined total of three (3) questions for related parties or groups. The total word count of all questions submitted is to be 100 words or fewer.

Background material submitted with a question will not be read out or recorded in the Council Meeting Minutes.

The CEO retains the discretion, in consultation with the Mayor, to not refer questions to Council meetings if there is a more effective or appropriate way to respond to the matters raised. Answers to questions from a member of the community who is present in the gallery will be read out at the Council Meeting by the CEO or Mayor.

Source: [Governance Rules \(C82\)](#) – adopted 19 October 2022.

**Ms Catherine McDonald submitted written questions, responses are provided in these Minutes.**

**Question 1**

**Hancock Victorian Plantations (HVP) operates within the boundaries of the South Gippsland Shire. Its operations adversely effect other road users. How does Council monitor the damage done to public roads by HVP logging trucks?**

**Response**

Council's roads are inspected in accordance with Councils Road Management Plan (2022). In addition to this, Council's maintenance team conduct proactive inspections of roads experiencing heavy use by other operators.

**Question 2**

**what restrictions and impositions (i.e. fees, restitution, restrictions etc) does it place on HVP in their use of public roads?**

**Response**

Single trailer semi-trailers have an "as of right" use of Council roads as long as they are within minimum sizes specified by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR). Larger vehicles such as B and A Double vehicle must acquire a Heavy Vehicle permit from the NHVR with approval of the appropriate Road Authorities (DEECA, DTP and Council).

When assessing applications for NHVR permits, Council can require conditions to restrict times, speeds and use. Applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The NHVR (or Police) are the responsible authorities for enforcement of conditions applied to permits.

**Question 3**

**What is the weight of the HVP logging trucks using this bridge?**

**Response**

Council is unaware of the weight of the HVP logging trucks using the bridge. Despite being a single-lane, single-span bridge built in 1960, the bridge inspection reports advise that the structure is in good condition and does not require any load limits.



**Mr David Amor submitted written questions, responses are provided in these Minutes.**

**Question 1**

**Why won't shire tell rate payers the sales of public land / shire owned in the last 3 years? numbers of land sold?**

**Response**

The following land sales have occurred during the last three years.

- 21 Shellcot Road Korumburra – Settled June 2024
- 6A Davis Court Leongatha part road discontinuance – Settled February 2024
- 1 Albert Street Loch part road discontinuance – Settled July 2023
- 155 Commercial St, 28 Victoria St & 1 King Street – Settled June 2023
- 6A Warralong Court Leongatha – Settled November 2023
- 60 Gardner Lane Poowong part road discontinuance – Settled April 2023
- 8 Clarence Street Loch part road discontinuance – Settled April 2023
- Part Williamson Street Fish Creek part road discontinuance – Settled August 2023
- 41 Rees Road Jumbunna part road discontinuance – Settled May 2022
- 10 Clarence Street Loch part road discontinuance – Settled November 2021
- 18 Taverners Road Jumbunna part road discontinuance – Settled November 2021
- 27 Rees Road Korumburra part road discontinuance – Settled July 2021

**Question 2**

**With all the money from these sales and individuals buying of land, now with rates as a bonus why does the shire need extra money for 2025 or even 2026?**

**Response**

Income from land sales is factored into future budgets and strategies. Rates are not considered a bonus and form approximately 60% of council revenue and are required for Council to be able to deliver services to our community.

**Question 3**

**With the shire wages over the last 4 years going up by over \$2.5 Million dollars from the Budget report can Shire carrier on?**

**Response**

Staff numbers have remained stable over several years. Wage increases align with the agreed Enterprise Agreement, along with statutory obligations for superannuation payments and insurance. Council prioritises long-term financial sustainability when planning future budgets and strategies.

## 12. CLOSED SESSION

The *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), section 66 provides that if a council or delegated committee determines that a meeting is to be closed to the public to consider confidential information, the Council or delegated committee must record in the minutes of the meeting that are available for public inspection –

- a) the ground or grounds for determining to close the meeting to the public by reference to the grounds specified in the definition of ***confidential information*** in section 3(1); and
- b) an explanation of why the specified ground or grounds applied.

The Act defines ***confidential information*** in s.3(1)(a)-(l), and includes information that may prejudice or impact; commercial negotiations, the security of Council, land use planning, law enforcement, legal privilege, personal information, private commercial information, confidential meeting information, internal arbitration, Councillor conduct panel information and information specified under s.77 of the previous *Local Government Act 1989*.

Once confidential information has been considered and decided in a closed session of a Council Meeting, a further resolution to resume open Council is required.

### RECOMMENDATION

**That Council pursuant to section 66(5)(a) and (b) of the *Local Government Act 2020* close the Council Meeting to the public to consider the following confidential information:**

1. **Per s.3(1)(f) Agenda item 14.1 – Personal Information – CEO Employment & Remuneration Committee, designated as personal information,**
  - a. **being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs;**
  - b. **The grounds for designation have been made to protect the privacy of an individual's personal information.**

**RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** Councillor Schelling

**SECONDED:** Councillor Keerie

**That Council pursuant to section 66(5)(a) and (b) of the *Local Government Act 2020* close the Council Meeting to the public to consider the following confidential information:**

- 1. Per s.3(1)(f) Agenda item 14.1 – Personal Information – CEO Employment & Remuneration Committee, designated as personal information,**
  - a. being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs;**
  - b. The grounds for designation have been made to protect the privacy of an individual's personal information.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

### **13. MEETING CLOSED**

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next Council Meeting open to the public will be held on Wednesday, 11 September 2024 commencing at 2pm in the Council Chambers, Leongatha.

**The Council Meeting closed at 4.22pm.**

**Confirmed this 11<sup>th</sup> day of September 2024**

**Councillor Clare Williams, Mayor**