

# Minutes

## Of the Special Council Meeting

**Location:** Council Chambers, Municipal Offices  
62-68 Ovens Street, Wangaratta

**Date:** 30 June 2020

**Time:** 3PM



RURAL CITY OF  
**WANGARATTA**

Brendan McGrath  
Chief Executive Officer



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## 1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

*We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we are meeting. We pay our respects to Elders past present and emerging and to Elders from other communities who may be here today.*

## 2. OPENING PRAYER

*Almighty God, we humbly ask thee to bless and guide this council in its deliberations so that we may truly preserve the welfare of the people whom we serve. Amen*

## 3. PRESENT

### COUNCILLORS:

MR DAVID FULLER, MR DEAN REES, MR HARRY BUSSELL, MR HARVEY BENTON, MR KEN CLARKE OAM, MR MARK CURRIE, MS ASHLEE FITZPATRICK.

### OFFICERS:

BRENDAN MCGRATH, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER STEPHEN SWART, DIRECTOR DEVELOPMENT SERVICES, SARAH BRINDLEY, DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES MARCUS GOONAN, MANAGER INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES PENNY HARGRAVE, MANAGER ARTS CULTURE & EVENTS.

## 4. ABSENT

### OFFICERS:

ALAN CLARK, DIRECTOR INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES JAIME CARROLL, DIRECTOR COMMUNITY WELLBEING.

## 5. ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES & GRANTING OF LEAVE OF ABSENCE

### ORDER OF BUSINESS

## 6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE

In accordance with sections 77A, 77B, 78 and 79 of the *Local Government Act 1989* Councillors are required to disclose a 'conflict of interest' in a decision if they would receive, or could reasonably be perceived as receiving, a direct or indirect financial or non-financial benefit or detriment (other than as a voter, resident or ratepayer) from the decision.

**Disclosure must occur immediately before the matter is considered or discussed.**

## PRESENTATION OF REPORTS

## **OFFICERS' REPORTS**

### **7. CORPORATE SERVICES**

#### 7.1 PROPOSED GOVERNANCE POLICIES

**Meeting Type:** Special Council Meeting  
**Date of Meeting:** 30 June 2020  
**Author:** Governance and Risk Advisor  
**File No:** IC20/1008

No Council officers or contractors who have provided advice in relation to this report have declared a conflict of interest regarding the matter under consideration.

#### **Executive Summary**

This report is presented to Council to approve the exhibition of proposed new and revised governance policies arising from the introduction of the *Local Government Act 2020*. The new and revised policies include the following:

- Governance Rules
- Audit & Risk Committee Charter
- Council Expenses Policy
- Councillor Support Policy
- Public Transparency Policy

A community impact statement is provided along with the draft proposed policies to enable public submissions to be made.

#### **RESOLUTION:**

**(Moved: Councillor A Fitzpatrick/Councillor M Currie)**

#### ***That Council:***

- 1. *Endorses the following new and revised policies for public exhibition:***
  - a. Governance Rules (attachment 1);***
  - b. Audit & Risk Committee Charter (attachment 2);***
  - c. Council Expenses Policy (attachment 3);***
  - d. Councillor Support Policy (attachment 4); and***
  - e. Public Transparency Policy (attachment 5).***
- 2. *Endorses the Major Council Policy Community Impact Statement for publication to assist the community to make submissions.***
- 3. *Invites public submissions regarding the policies for a 4-week period.***
- 4. *Where submissions are received for a revised policy:***
  - a. Convenes a committee to hear from any person or persons who request to be heard in support of a written submission; and***
  - b. Receives a report on submissions and hearings held; and***

- c. Resolves those revised policies for which submissions were received at the next available Council meeting.*
- 5. Where no submissions are received for a revised policy, resolves to approve that revised policy without further resolution.**

**Carried**

### **Background**

The Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) requires the Council to establish several governance policies by 1 September 2020, including:

- Governance Rules under section 60
- an Audit & Risk Committee Charter under section 53
- a Council Expenses Policy under section 41
- a Public Transparency Policy under section 57

### **Implications**

#### **Policy Considerations**

Establishment of a Council Expenses Policy has required a revision of the Councillor Support Policy.

The new and revised policies are based on model policies released by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning together with the current provisions of related Council policies and local laws.

#### **Financial/Economic Implications**

There are no financial or economic implications identified for the subject of this report.

#### **Legal/Statutory**

All the policies are major council policies. Consequently, the provisions of the Major Council Policy Consultation Local Law (the local law) apply.

The Act requires the Council to establish the policies. This power cannot be delegated. The Act also sets out the content of each policy.

Eventual adoption of governance rules under the Act will cause much of the Governance & Meeting Conduct Local Law to become redundant. It will need to be amended or revoked at some point in the future.

#### **Social**

There are no social impacts identified for the subject of this report.

## **Environmental/Sustainability Impacts**

There are no environmental/ sustainability impacts identified for this subject of this report.

## **Council Plan**

This report supports the 2017-2021 Council Plan by supporting a sustainable organisation through good governance and council decision-making.

## **Risk Management**

There are no significant risks associated with the subject of this report.

## **Consultation/Communication**

Level of public participation	Promises to the public/stakeholders	Tools/Techniques
Inform	Draft new and revised policies are available for public review	Public notice and drafts exhibited on the council website
Consult	Public invited to make submissions over a 4-week period	Written submissions accepted. Persons may be heard regarding their submission if requested.







## **Options for Consideration**

1. Council may endorse the policies for public consultation; or
2. Council may wish to further revise the policies prior to public consultation.

## **Conclusion**

The new and revised policies are required under the Act, and the process recommended ensures compliance with the local law.

## **Attachments**

- 1 Governance rules 
- 2 Audit and risk committee charter 
- 3 Council Expenses Policy 
- 4 Councillor support policy 
- 5 Public transparency policy 
- 6 Community impact statement - proposed governance policies 

## 7.2 COUNCIL BUDGET REPORT 2020/21

<b>Meeting Type:</b>	<b>Special Council Meeting</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>30 June 2020</b>
<b>Author:</b>	<b>Manager Finance</b>
<b>File Name:</b>	<b>NA</b>
<b>File No:</b>	<b>IC20/1014</b>

No Council officers or contractors who have provided advice in relation to this report have declared a conflict of interest regarding the matter under consideration.

### **Executive Summary**

This report is presented to Council to consider adopting the 2020/21 Budget in Attachment 1 (*refer attachment*). This report notes the submissions received and Council Officer recommendations.

Whilst the Local Government Act 2020 received Royal Assent on 24 March 2020, provisions governing the annual budget setting process do not commence until 24 October 2020. This year's process therefore follows the requirements of Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1989 ('The Act'), which still apply.

### *RECOMMENDATION:*

*That Council, in accordance with Sections 127 and 223 of the Local Government Act 1989:*

1. *Considers submissions made regarding the Draft 2020/21 Budget and makes changes to the Draft 2020/21 Budget as follows:*
  - a. *increases expenditure by \$8,000 in 2020/21 for a contribution to Into Our Hands Foundation in response to the submission from submitter 5*
  - b. *increases expenditure by \$5,000 in 2020/21 for Albury Wodonga Carer Accommodation Centre in response to the submission from submitter 9*
  - c. *decreases capital works expenditure by \$300,000 and decreases contribution income by \$200,000 for the removal of the Ivones Bridge upgrade project in response to the submissions from submitters 10, 11, 12 and 13*
  - d. *increases the 2020/21 recycling bin charge from \$144 to \$149*
  - e. *increases operating income by \$6.618 million as a result of officer submissions detailed in this report and the above noted public submissions*
  - f. *increases operating expenditure by \$459,000 as a result of officer submissions detailed in this report and the above noted public submissions*
  - g. *increases capital works expenditure by \$5,020,150 as a result of office submissions detailed in this report and the above noted public*



*submissions*

- h. creates the Business & Community Recovery Grants Program, with budgeted expenditure of \$372,867 in 2020/21*
- 2. Adopts the 2020/21 Budget at Attachment 1 to this report for the purposes of Section 130 of the Local Government Act 1989;*
- 3. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to give public notice of Council's decision to adopt the 2020/21 Budget in accordance with Section 130(2) of the Local Government Act 1989;*
- 4. Notifies in writing each person or persons who made a submission of the decision and the reasons for that decision, in accordance with Section 223(1)(d) of the Local Government Act 1989;*
- 5. Forwards a copy of the 2020/21 Budget to the Minister for Local Government in accordance with Section 130 of the Local Government Act 1989;*
- 6. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to sign a deed of variation to the existing recycling contract to reflect the increase in cost detailed in the confidential attachment; and*
- 7. Requires the 2020/21 Quarterly Budget Reports to include an explanation of any material variations to the estimated Covid-19 financial impacts contained in the 2020/21 Budget.*

**RESOLUTION:**

**(Moved: Councillor D Fuller/Councillor A Fitzpatrick)**

***For: Cr A Fitzpatrick, Cr D Fuller, Cr D Rees, Cr M Currie, Cr H Benton, Cr H Bussell***

***Against: Cr K Clarke***

***That Council, in accordance with Sections 127 and 223 of the Local Government Act 1989:***

- 1. Considers submissions made regarding the Draft 2020/21 Budget and makes changes to the Draft 2020/21 Budget as follows:***
  - a. increases expenditure by \$8,000 in 2020/21 for a contribution to Into Our Hands Foundation in response to the submission from submitter 5***
  - b. increases expenditure by \$5,000 in 2020/21 for Albury Wodonga Carer Accommodation Centre in response to the submission from submitter 9***
  - c. decreases capital works expenditure by \$300,000 and decreases contribution income by \$200,000 for the removal of***

- the Ivones Bridge upgrade project in response to the submissions from submitters 10, 11, 12 and 13*
- d. increases the 2020/21 recycling bin charge from \$144 to \$149*
  - e. increases operating income by \$6.618 million as a result of officer submissions detailed in this report and the above noted public submissions*
  - f. increases operating expenditure by \$459,000 as a result of officer submissions detailed in this report and the above noted public submissions*
  - g. increases capital works expenditure by \$5,020,150 as a result of office submissions detailed in this report and the above noted public submissions*
  - h. creates the Business & Community Recovery Grants Program, with budgeted expenditure of \$372,867 in 2020/21*
- 2. Adopts the 2020/21 Budget at Attachment 1 to this report for the purposes of Section 130 of the Local Government Act 1989;*
  - 3. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to give public notice of Council's decision to adopt the 2020/21 Budget in accordance with Section 130(2) of the Local Government Act 1989;*
  - 4. Notifies in writing each person or persons who made a submission of the decision and the reasons for that decision, in accordance with Section 223(1)(d) of the Local Government Act 1989;*
  - 5. Forwards a copy of the 2020/21 Budget to the Minister for Local Government in accordance with Section 130 of the Local Government Act 1989;*
  - 6. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to sign a deed of variation to the existing recycling contract to reflect the increase in cost detailed in the confidential attachment; and*
  - 7. Requires the 2020/21 Quarterly Budget Reports to include an explanation of any material variations to the estimated Covid-19 financial impacts contained in the 2020/21 Budget with the CEO to report to Councillors of any significant variations as they become apparent to the Organisation as required.*

**Carried**

### **Background**

Council considered the Draft 2020/21 Budget at the Ordinary Council Meeting held 5 May 2020 and resolved to commence the statutory consultation process in accordance with Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1989.

The Act provides that a council must:

- Prepare a budget for each financial year – Section 127(1).

- Ensure the budget contains financial statements, a description of services and initiatives, prescribed indicators of service performance and a statement as to how these will contribute to achieving the strategic objectives specified in the Council Plan required by the regulations – Section 127(2)(a)(e).
- Give public notice of a proposed budget and make it available for public inspection for at least 28 days – Section 129(1) and (3)(b); so, submissions may be made in accordance with Section 223 of the Act.
- Adopt the budget and submit a copy to the Minister by 30 June each year – Section 130(3)(4) (extended to 31 August 2020 due to Covid-19).

### **Impact of Covid-19 on the 2020/21 Annual Budget**

The Draft Budget issued was largely prepared before Covid-19 began to have an impact on the world. This Budget has now been further revised to incorporate those financial impacts of Covid-19 that Council has been able to anticipate based on the latest government regulations.

The impact of Covid-19 on Council's financial performance for 2019/20 is now largely quantified, with decreased revenues and cash collections and increased expenditure. Council has been able to successfully offset these impacts through prudent financial management including postponing select Capital Works and reducing non-essential spends.

Council has assessed the likely financial impacts of Covid-19 on its 2020/21 Budget and has estimated an unfavourable impact of \$430,000 and is set out in Attachment 2 (***refer attachment***). This unfavourable impact is in addition to the financial elements of the Community Support Package below. Ongoing updates will be provided to Council on the management of council finances and re-allocation and proactive re-prioritisation of funding and initiatives.

This Budget seeks to maintain current levels of service but also starts to highlight the challenges that Council needs to work through to return to a long term adjusted underlying surplus and strong working capital position. The impact of COVID-19 compounds these challenges.

### **New Community Support Package for 2020/21**

The health and wellbeing of our community and of council staff is at the forefront of our minds and we acknowledge the genuine hardship being experienced in our community as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Those most in need will benefit from a range of new financial assistance measures included in the 2020/21 Budget.

The 2020/21 Budget now includes a new and ongoing **Community Support Package** which will start on 1 July 2020. Most notably Council will waive in part or in full some business fees and charges for 2020/21. This will reduce Council's income by \$111,295. In addition, Council will launch a Business & Community Recovery Grants Program, providing \$372,867 of financial support to businesses and community groups. For ratepayers, Council's Financial Hardship Policy is in

place for times such as these and we encourage those who need it to call or email the Customer Service team to put a flexible payment plan in place.

### **Highlights**

The Budget will fund the final stages of the 2017-2021 Council Plan, including some record-breaking capital works for the Rural City of Wangaratta, not least completion of the Wangaratta Aquatics Project (an Outdoor 50m Pool, Hydrotherapy Pool, Splash Pad, car park, solar panels and plant upgrade), and regeneration of the Railway Precinct. This period of substantial capital works delivery would not have been possible without the success of attracting significant State and Federal grant funding, supplemented by ongoing borrowings where Council continues to be able to capitalise upon low interest rates.

Following the recent years of substantial investment, Council's overarching approach to this Budget is to now begin pairing back spending to a long-term sustainable level. The Budget prioritises completion of in-progress capital works and asset renewal/maintenance activities whilst reducing the number of new big-ticket initiatives.

A number of significant changes have occurred since Council released its Draft Budget and these changes are summarised in the attached Officer Recommendations along with a summary of the public submissions received are set out in Attachment 2 (*refer attachment*).

### **Summary**

The Budget provides for:

- total operating income of \$76.458 million
- total operating expenditure of \$70.397 million
- an operating surplus of \$6.061 million
- capital works expenditure of \$29.876 million.
- total new borrowings of \$18.291 million

### **Grant Funding**

Council has recently secured grant funding of \$696,900 to support our drought affected communities to manage the negative impacts of pests and weeds, stimulate local employment and economic activity and contribute to the government's broader biosecurity objectives. Additional grants of \$2.5m have also been included in the budget in anticipation of future funding as a result of Council advocacy work to benefit local roads and community infrastructure. These programs will provide a much-needed boost to the communities in our municipality and will allow Council to complete more infrastructure upgrades.

### **Rates Revenue**

The 2020/21 Annual Budget includes a total rate increase of 2.00 per cent, which is in line with next year's Fair Go rates cap. This is a reduction on the 2.50 per cent rate cap increase in 2019/20 and is required to ensure that Council can maintain revenues in line with inflation to fund the projects and services that our community values into the future.

A one-off rate increase of 5% has also been factored in to the 2022/23 financial year. We anticipate that there will be a need to invest in the recovery of the municipality following COVID-19. Waiting until 2022/23 allows for a period of economic stability following the impact of COVID-19 as well as for significant community consultation which must be undertaken prior to any rate increase above the standard Fair Go Rate Cap. Council would also need to obtain approval from the Essential Services Commission. Prior to any such consultation commencing, Council will engage the community in the creation of a refreshed Community Vision and development of the next Council Plan. In the short term, Council will also undertake a review to identify any opportunities to further reduce operating costs and will only engage the community on a possible one-off rate increase as a position of last resort.

As of 1 July 2018, revaluations are conducted annually, with the Valuer General being the sole valuation authority. The majority of the revaluation has been completed. The current valuation is due for completion in June 2020, with valuations effective from 1 January 2020. Refer to additional comments below under Legal/Statutory for details of changes in valuations from the Draft Budget.

### **Fees & Charges**

Waste charges are proposed to increase by 6% for kerbside waste and organic collection services. An increase of 10% will apply to recycling charges.

The waste industry is undergoing rapid change, in part as a result of China's ban on processing recycling material. With the turbulence in this sector, recycling costs continue to rise. Given this turbulence the State Government has issued a state-wide exemption to allow for the renegotiation of recycling contracts. The Minister for Local Government has provided Section 186 exemptions to all councils so that recycling contracts can be re-negotiated without the need to go through normal procurement processes. Negotiation has occurred with Council's current recycling contractor which has resulted in a proposed \$5.00 increase per recycling bin. This increase is in addition to the recycling charge disclosed in the Draft 2020/21 Budget. A deed of variation needs to be signed by both parties to formalise this change (***refer confidential attachment***).

To assist pensioners with the increased recycling costs, Council will continue to fund the additional Pensioner support that was first introduced in 2018/19 through a rebate of approximately \$43,000.

The State Government has also announced that an increase to the waste levy will become effective on 1 January 2021. This increase in the waste levy will be introduced progressively over the coming years and Council will subsequently review its charges for kerbside waste collection for the 2021/22 year.

### **Depreciation**

Depreciation expense has decreased by \$3.9 million compared to the Draft Budget. Council's road assets have been over-depreciated in prior years and a number of these assets have now been fully depreciated. This has had the impact of understating Council's operating surplus for 2018/19. Depreciation expense has been revised down for both 2019/20 and 2020/21 and this has significantly improved Council's operating surplus position.

A revaluation of Council's road assets will be undertaken in 2020/21 and any subsequent increase in depreciation expense for 2020/21 will be reported via the budget revision process.

### **Capital Works**

Highlights of the Capital Works program include:

- \$2.55 million on local roads and community infrastructure projects
- \$1.8 million on resheeting gravel roads across the municipality. This represents more than 2.5 times the amount spent on gravel resheeting in 2015/16.
- \$1.5 million will be spent on developing a Regional Playspace at Apex Park. The playspace will meet a range of social and recreational needs of a wide age group – ranging from equipment for young children and parents, to a Parkour element for older children and adults.
- Completion of the construction of the new aquatic facilities at the Wangaratta Indoor Sports and Aquatic Centre (WISAC). The completion of construction works will be coupled with Council commencing operating the facilities from November 2020.
- Commencement of works at the former Olympic pool site. More details will be shared in the coming months as the community consultation is finalised for the Wareena Park Masterplan.
- Completion of the Railway Precinct works, with \$5.2 million to be spent during 202/21.
- \$200,000 on public toilet renewal and upgrade works.
- \$756,000 on continuing the implementation of improved Information and Communications Technology (ICT) throughout the organisation. This will modernise the systems and tools Council use to deliver services.

### **Implications**

#### **Policy Considerations**

The 2020/21 Budget contains programs and initiatives that support Council policy.

#### **Financial/Economic Implications**

Council has prepared the 2020/21 Budget in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and its adoption will ensure long term financial viability.

Detailed information on relevant aspects of the 2020/21 Budget are contained in Attachment 1.

The implications of the 2020/21 Budget and assumptions made for future years are embodied in Council's Strategic Resource Plan.

The key financial information contained within 2020/21 Budget includes:



1. The estimated total amount to be raised by general rates is \$28.120 million.
2. The estimated total amount to be raised by a municipal charge is \$Nil.
3. The estimated total amount to be raised by waste collection charges (garbage, organics and recycling) is \$6.933 million.
4. That an amount of \$18.291 million be borrowed. The borrowings will fund the new developments of the Regional Playspace and Mitchell Avenue Children's Garden. The funds will also be applied to capital works projects undertaken in earlier years such as the Cruse Street development, and CBD masterplan improvements for the Railway Precinct and King George Gardens.
5. The cost of servicing borrowings during the financial year will be \$0.498 million.
6. The total amount of loans proposed to be redeemed during the financial year will be \$0.357 million.
7. The total amount of borrowings at 30 June 2021 will be \$34.485 million.

### **Legal/Statutory**

The 2020/21 Budget has been prepared in accordance with the Local Government Act 1989, the Local Government (Planning & Reporting) Regulations 2014 and Australian Accounting Standards. The presentation of the 2020/21 Budget is in a format as a model of best practice and contains a comprehensive assessment of Council's financial position and proposed revenue and expenditure.

The 2020/21 Budget has been prepared with a strong focus on long term financial sustainability of the Council and responsible financial management.

Council prepared its 2020/21 Draft Budget (including the calculation of proposed rates in the dollar) based on Stage 3 valuations. The 2020/21 Budget has been updated to include Stage 4 (final stage) valuations. In undertaking any revision in the rate in the dollar between proposed budget and adopted budget, council is required to assess the materiality of any such change.

Consideration of materiality in this context may apply to a range of factors such as the magnitude of any variation to the rate in the dollar, the magnitude of any changes in the distribution of rates across different property classes, or the magnitude of any changes in the mix between rates and service charges.

It is considered that the changes are not material as indicated below:

- The rate in the dollar to be levied as general rates under section 158 of the Act has changed from the Draft 2020/21 Budget to the 2020/21 Budget by 0.43%.
- The estimated total amount to be raised by general rates in relation to each type or class of land, and the estimated total amount to be raised by general rates has changed from the Draft 2020/21 Budget to the 2020/21 Budget by between -\$70,000 to \$103,000, with the majority of changes occurring due to properties being reclassified from one type or class of land to another.

- The estimated total value of each type or class of land, and the estimated total value of land has change from the Draft 2020/21 Budget to the 2020/21 Budget by between -\$7.592 million to \$10.866 million.

## **Social**

The 2020/21 Budget contains programs and initiatives that will have a positive social benefit, such as the creation of a Business and Community Recovery Grants Program, support for Grit & Resilience mental health initiatives, improved play spaces for children, and improved sport and recreation facilities.

## **Environmental/Sustainability Impacts**

The initiatives funded by the 2020/21 Budget aim to contribute to environmental enhancement and sustainability. These initiatives have a strong focus on economic sustainability and protection.

## **2017 – 2021 Council Plan**

This report supports the 2017-2021 Council Plan:

### **Goal**

We are Sustainable

### **We will plan, research and advocate for the future:**

By maintaining a responsible and transparent long-term financial plan.

To make sure that everything we do – from building assets to delivering events – considers the physical, social, cultural and financial needs of our community members.

## **Strategic Links**

### **a) Rural City of Wangaratta 2030 Community Vision**

The 2020/21 Budget funds delivery of the Council Plan 2017-2021 (2020 Revision). The strategic objectives contained within the Council Plan were determined with consideration to and guided by the objectives identified in the Rural City of Wangaratta 2030 Community Vision.

### **b) Other strategic links**

N/A



## **Risk Management**

Risks	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
That the impact of COVID-19 will result in substantial and unplanned financial losses to Council	Likely (Strong likelihood of occurrence in next 12 months)	Catastrophic: extensive financial loss (\$1m+)	Extreme	Anticipated impacts of Covid-19 incorporated into the Budget. Ongoing updates to be provided to Council on the management of council finances and re-allocation and proactive re-prioritisation of funding and initiatives if required
Budget not adopted within statutory timeframes	Low	High	Medium	Budget presented 30 June 2020 for adoption. Minister for Local Government has extended the deadline to 31 August 2020 given Covid-19 developments.
Budget adopted without consideration of Long-Term Financial implications	Low	High	Medium	Ensure continual review of Council's Long Term Financial Plan as part of budget setting process.

## **Consultation/Communication**

Council made available the Draft 2020/21 Budget at the Wangaratta Government Centre and Council's website for a period of 28 days, from 8 May 2020. Written submissions closed on the 5 June 2020.

Eighteen written submissions were received. Three (3) submitters requested to be heard. Council appointed a Committee of Council to hear submitters requesting to be heard in accordance with Section 223 of the Local Government

Act. Submitters were heard at the Committee of Council meeting on Thursday, 11 June 2020.

A summary of written submissions received, including officer responses, is at Attachment 2 (*refer attachment*).

Following the adoption of the 2020/21 Budget, Council will:

- Give public notice of the adoption of the 2020/21 Budget,
- Write to all submitters advising of Council’s decision to adopt the 2020/21 Budget and providing reasons for the decision, and
- Forward a copy of the 2020/21 Budget to the Minister for Local Government.

### **Options for Consideration**

The adoption of Council’s Annual Budget is a mandatory requirement of the Local Government Act 1989.

Council must prepare a Budget for the 2020/21 financial year in order to comply with the Act. Options are:



1. Adopt the 2020/21 Annual Budget in the current state (refer to Attachment); or
2. Amend the 2020/21 Annual Budget to modify the Officer Recommendations for the submissions received.

### **Conclusion**

Following the conclusion of the public consultation and consideration of budget submissions, Council’s 2020/21 Budget is now ready for Council adoption.

Regular reporting to Council will continue regarding any further changes required to the Council Plan and Budget 2020/21 considering the impacts of Covid-19.

### **Attachments**

- 1 Council Budget 2020/21 
- 2 Officers recommendations 
- 3 Confidential Attachment - Confidential

### **Public Questions**

Please follow link [30 June 2020 - Special Council Meeting Video](#) and refer to minute 8.10 to 10.20 for public questions and responses related to Item 7.2 Council Budget Report 2020/21.

## 7.3 COUNCIL PLAN 2017-2021 (2020 REVISION)

**Meeting Type:** Special Council Meeting  
**Date of Meeting:** 30 June 2020  
**Author:** Director Corporate Services  
**File No:** IC20/1015

No Council officers or contractors who have provided advice in relation to this report have declared a conflict of interest regarding the matter under consideration.

**Actions to be completed following Council Meeting**

ACTION	DETAILS	RESPONSIBLE
Send Letter	Minister for Local Government	Governance & Reporting Advisor Director Corporate Services
Publish	Council's Website	Media & Communications Coordinator
Public Notice / Advertisement	Wangaratta Chronicle Rural City Connection Council's Website	Governance & Reporting Advisor Media and Media & Communications Coordinator

**Executive Summary**

This report is presented to Council to adopt the Council Plan 2017-2021 (2020 Revision).

**RESOLUTION:**

**(Moved: Councillor A Fitzpatrick/Councillor M Currie)**

***That Council:***

- 1. Adopts the Council Plan 2017-2021 (2020 Revision) attached to this report for the purposes of Section 125 of the Local Government Act 1989 (the Act)***
- 2. Adopts the Strategic Resource Plan 2017-2021 (2020 Revision)***
- 3. Notes that no submissions were received relating to the Council Plan***
- 4. Approves the forwarding of the Council Plan 2017-2021 (2020 Revision) including the Strategic Resource Plan to the Minister for Local Government.***

**Carried**

## **Background**

Sections 125 and 126 of the Local Government Act 1989 (the Act) require that Council at least once in the financial year reviews its Council Plan and Strategic Resource Plan to determine if they require any adjustments and if so, amend and adopt those changes.

Following the Draft Council Plan 2017-2021 (2020 Revision) being placed on public exhibition and amendments being made, Council Officers now present the Council Plan 2017-2021 (2020 Revision) to Council for adoption.

## **Impact of COVID-19 and 2020/21 Community Support Package**

The health and wellbeing of our community and of council staff is at the forefront of our minds and we acknowledge the genuine hardship being experienced in our community as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic. These are unprecedented times for us all and we understand Wangaratta's recovery from the health, economic and social impacts will take considerable time.

On 8 April 2020 Council put in place immediate actions aimed at relieving the financial pressure on individuals, businesses and community groups in the short term. During the consultation period for this Council Plan (2020 Revision), a new Community Support Package for 2020/21 has been developed, to further assist recovery.

The 2020/21 Community Support Package contains financial assistance measures valued at \$484k including:

- The creation of a new Business and Community Recovery Grants Program worth \$372k;
- 50% reduction in Business Premises Registration Fees (for businesses such as cafes, restaurants and beauty salons);
- Waiving upcoming renewal fees for caravan parks;
- Waiving fees for footpath trading permits (a permit is still required but will be free for signage and outdoor dining permits);
- 50% reduction in building and planning permit fees for community groups;
- No ground fees for sporting clubs until 1 October 2020.

Individuals having difficulty paying their rates will continue to be offered access to Council's Financial Hardship Policy. Interest will not be charged for late rate payments until 30 September 2020. We encourage those who need this financial assistance to contact the Customer Service team as soon as possible to put a flexible payment plan in place.

## **Summary of changes made following Public Exhibition**

The following changes have been made to the Council Plan 2017-2021 (2020 Revision) following the conclusion of the public exhibition period:

Changes include:

- Inclusion of programs to support recovery from Covid-19 and the bushfires (see details above);
- Inclusion of delivery of roadside weed and pest management programs following the award to council of a \$696,900 grant to undertake this additional work;
- Amendments to the Strategic Resource Plan to reflect the above changes and other grants obtained by Council. Further information as to the detail of these changes is provided in the Council Budget 2020-21 Report.

## **Implications**

### **Policy Considerations**

The Council Plan details the Council's strategic objectives, key strategic activities and actions required to achieve those objectives. The strategic objectives outlined within the Council Plan influence a number of strategies, frameworks and policies within Council.

### **Financial/Economic Implications**

The Strategic Resource Plan aligns with the Budget FY2020/21. The Strategic Resource Plan has been amended to include changes made to the Draft Budget FY2020/21 following the preceding period of public consultation. The approval of the budget details how Council will fund the strategic intent of the Council Plan.

### **Legal/Statutory**

The review of the Council Plan is a legislative requirement and has been undertaken to meet the requirements of Sections 125, 126 and 223 of the Local Government Act.

Whilst the Local Government Act 20920 received Royal Assent on 24 March 2020, provisions governing the Council Plan revision process do not commence until October 2020. This year's process therefore follows the requirements of the Local Government Act 1989 ('The Act'), which still apply.

### **Social**

The strategic objectives contained in the revised 2017-2021 Council Plan (2020 Revision) aim to contribute to the overall health and social wellbeing of our community. Positive social outcomes will be achieved by the delivery of key initiatives and Council's ongoing advocacy and partnership that focus on delivering benefits and opportunities for residents and visitors of the municipality.

Following public exhibition of the Draft Council Plan (2020 Revision) and Draft Budget 2020/21, a new Business and Community Recovery Grants Program has been included to provide additional relief and recovery assistance to the community due to Covid-19 and the recent bushfires.

### **Environmental/Sustainability Impacts**

The strategic objectives contained within the Council Plan 2017-2021 (2020 Revision) aim to contribute to environmental enhancement and sustainability. The Council Plan has a strong focus on environmental sustainability and protection.

### **Strategic Links**

#### **a) Rural City of Wangaratta 2030 Community Vision**

The strategic objectives contained within the Council Plan 2017-2021 (2020 Revision) were determined with consideration to and guided by the objectives identified in the Rural City of Wangaratta 2030 Community Vision.

#### **b) Other strategic links**

N/A

### **Risk Management**

Risks	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
That the impact of Covid-19 requires significant subsequent change to the Council Plan 2017-2021 (2020 Revision) due to the ongoing impact of the virus.	Likely (Strong likelihood of occurrence in next 12 months)	Major (delays and inefficiencies in core processes and systems impacting significantly on customer services levels; severe impact on program of business operations. Note: financial impact rated as Catastrophic: extensive financial loss \$1m+)	High	Changes have been made to the Council Plan to incorporate those impacts of Covid-19 that Council has been able to anticipate based on the current State Government social distancing restrictions. Regular reporting will occur throughout the year should any further changes need to be made.

That the impact of Covid-19 will impede delivery of the Strategic Objectives and Performance Measures laid out in the Council Plan 2017-2021 (2020 Revision)	Likely (Strong likelihood of occurrence in next 12 months)	Major (delays and inefficiencies in core processes and systems impacting significantly on customer service levels; \$50,000 - \$500,000 financial loss; severe impact on program or business operations)	High	To focus council resources to support delivery of the most essential community services during the COVID-19 pandemic and reprioritise other initiatives and associated resourcing if required. Quarterly performance reporting to be provided to Council showing progress against targets.
Council Plan not adopted within statutory timeframes	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	Council Plan presented 30 June 2020 for adoption. Minister for Local Government has extended this deadline to 31 August 2020 given Covid-19 developments.

### **Consultation/Communication**

Following the endorsement of the Draft Council Plan 2017 - 2021 (2020 Revision) at the Ordinary Council Meeting on 5 May 2020, the plan was placed on public exhibition for 28 days inviting submissions from the community.

No written submissions were received in direct relation to the Council Plan. 18 submissions were however made in response to the Draft Budget that supports this Council Plan. These submissions are reported in the 'Council Budget Report 2020/21', also in this agenda.

Officers believe that appropriate consultation has occurred and the matter is now ready for Council consideration.

### **Options for Consideration**


1. Adopt the Council Plan 2017 - 2021 (2020 Revision) in the current state (refer to Attachment); or
2. Council recommends changes to the Council Plan 2017 - 2021 (2020 Revision) which are required to be made prior to the document being published on Council's website and issued to the Minister for Local Government

### **Conclusion**

The Council Plan 2017 - 2021 (2020 Revision) is presented to Council for adoption.

Council will continue to review the Council Plan on an annual basis and where required, make amendments to reflect the community aspirations and to ensure the Council Plan continues to reflect and guide the strategic direction of Council, informing our service delivery, resource allocation and advocacy.

### **Attachments**

- 1 Council Plan 2017-2021 (2020 Revision) 



**8. CLOSURE OF MEETING**

The Meeting closed at 3.32.