



Rural City of
Wangaratta

Agenda

For the Unscheduled Council Meeting
Council Chambers, Municipal Offices
62-68 Ovens Street, Wangaratta **6 May 2024**
5pm

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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 their 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

4. Absent

5. Acceptance of Apologies & Granting of Leave of Absence

Recommendation:

That <<enter text>> be granted leave of absence for the period <<enter text>> to <<enter text>> .

Order of Business

6. Conflict of Interest Disclosure

In accordance with section 130 of the Local Government Act 2020 a councillor who has a conflict of interest in respect of a matter must disclose the conflict of interest in the manner required by Council's Governance Rules and exclude themselves from the decision making process in relation to that matter, including any discussion or vote on the matter and any action in relation to the matter.

Clause 28.1 of Council's Governance Rules requires a councillor to indicate that they have a conflict of interest by clearly stating:

- (a) the item for which they have a conflict of interest; and
- (b) whether their conflict of interest is general or material; and
- (c) the circumstances that give rise to the conflict of interest.

Immediately prior to the consideration of the item in which they have a conflict of interest, a councillor must indicate to the meeting the existence of the conflict of interest and leave the meeting.

A councillor who discloses a conflict of interest and leaves a Council meeting must not communicate with any participants in the meeting while the decision is being made.

Presentation Of Reports

Officers' Reports

7. Corporate and Leisure

7.1 2024/2025 Draft Budget

Meeting Type:	Unscheduled Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	6 May 2024
Author:	Finance Manager
File No:	IC23/1999

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 endorsing the 2024/25 Draft Budget (Draft Budget), which has been prepared in accordance with Section 94 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Recommendation:

That Council:

1. Endorses the 2024/25 Draft Budget attached to this report.
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:
 - a. give public notice of the preparation of the 2024/25 Draft Budget in the Wangaratta Chronicle on Wednesday 08 May 2024, inviting the public to make written submissions on the 2024/25 Draft Budget; and,
 - b. make available for public inspection the 2024/25 Draft Budget at the Wangaratta Government Centre; and,
 - c. publish the 2024/25 Draft Budget on Council's website; and,
 - d. receive written submissions up to 5pm Wednesday 05 June 2024.
3. Forms a Committee of Councillors to meet any person wishing to be heard in support of their written submission on the 2024/25 Draft Budget.
4. Considers all submissions when deliberating on the adoption of the 2024/25 Draft Budget, with or without amendment, at the Scheduled Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 25th June 2024 at 3:00pm.

Background

The *Local Government Act 2020* provides that Council must:

- Prepare a budget for each financial year and the subsequent three financial years by June 30 – Section 94(1).
- Ensure the budget contains financial statements, a description of services and initiatives, the total amount that Council intends to raise by rates and charges, 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 94(2).
- Ensure the budget is developed in accordance with the financial management principles and its community engagement policy – Section 96(1).

Budget Highlights

Headline figures of the Draft Budget include:

- Total income of \$91.76m
- Total operating expenditure of \$80.29m
- An accounting surplus of \$11.47m
- An adjusted underlying operating surplus of \$516k
- A capital works program of \$25.76m, inclusive of \$3.67m of works to be carried over from 2023/24
- A rate rise of 2.75% in line with the Fair Go Rate Cap
- A waste service charge rise of 2.75% reflective of the rate cap
- An individual user fees and charges rise of 4%, in line with inflation
- No new borrowings

Capital Works Budget

The proposed capital works budget of \$25.76m is made up of \$22.09m of new works for 2024/25 and \$3.67m of works carried over from the 2024/25 capital works program.

The new program will be funded by \$9.22m of grant funding and \$16.54m of Council cash from operations, reserves, and investments.

The \$22.09m of works for 2024/25 includes:

- Flood Mitigation Structures (\$2.50m)
- Annual Road Reconstruction (\$1.85m)
- Gravel Resheeting Program (\$1.82m)
- Wareena Park Masterplan - Drainage Construction (\$1.60m)
- Parklands Masterplan - Netball Courts Upgrade (\$1.38m)
- WSAC Power Efficiency Implementation (\$1.16m) (1:1 grant funding)
- Annual Reseal Program (\$850k)
- Myrhee-Whitlands Rd (Creyer's) bridge replacement (\$675k)
- Redcamps Bridge (BN335) (\$650k)

- Design & Construction Rowan St Overpass (\$631k)
- Wally Lane Bridge - culvert replacement over Cropper (\$450k)
- FOGO Extension (\$101k)

A full listing of capital works projects can be viewed in Note 4.5 of the attached 2024/25 Draft Budget.

Demand for contractors and materials, supply shortages and bottlenecks, and other global and flood events, has impacted delivery of the 2023/24 capital works program. As such, to date \$3.76m of projects have been identified as being required to carry forward into the 2024/25 financial year. These projects are identified in Note 4.5.3 of the attached Draft Budget and these include the Flood Mitigation Structures (\$2.50m) and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (\$21k).

Operating Budget

Alongside funding the continued delivery of council's core services, the Draft Operating Budget includes highlights such as: facilitating the next Council election; delivery of an updated Community Vision, Council Plan and Public Health & Wellbeing Plan; continued ICT Strategy implementation; Environmental Sustainability Strategy Action Plan Implementation; development of the LGA Housing Strategy & Homelessness Action Plan and a Residential Growth Strategy.

The wellbeing of every member of our community remains important to Council, with initiatives in the budget to support this including completing delivery of the Wangaratta Sports and Aquatic Centre extension, the implementation of the Inclusive Wangaratta Action Plan implementation, and delivery of the Community Grants Program.

The Draft Budget also provides funding for continued delivery of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy which will see actions implemented including education programs on energy efficiency, and funding for energy efficiency and emissions reduction projects.

Council has also made provision for the implementation of the Historical Story Boards, and implementation of the Visitor Service Review Action Plan to continue to improve visitation and tourism in the municipality.

Rates

The Fair Go Rate Cap of 2.75% is reflected in the Draft Budget, resulting in projected general rate revenue of \$32.27m. The Fair Go Rate Cap amounts have not kept up with inflation for the past four years placing increasing financial pressure on the Local Government sector. As such, the full rate cap has been applied in the Draft Budget as an essential means for Council to continue to fund the core projects and services that our community values into the future.

Property valuations are undertaken annually, with the Valuer-General being the sole valuation authority. Section 4.1.1 of the Draft Budget outlines the preliminary revaluation data as of January 1, 2024. However, these valuations are not finalised until June and are subject to changes, including adjustments resulting from supplementary valuations. The section also indicates that the rate in the dollar will be reviewed and disclosed prior to the adoption of the 2024/25 Budget, considering any such changes.

Current draft valuation data suggests an average Capital Improved Value (CIV) increase across the municipality of 1.84%. Property owners may see an increase or decrease to their Council rates

depending on their individual property value movement relative to other properties in the municipality.

Movements in individual property valuations are not yet certified by the Victorian Valuer-General and are difficult to communicate through the Draft Budget document. Section 4.1.1(f) of the attached Draft Budget provides an indication of the valuation movements for each rating differential; however individual property valuation movements will not be advised until the 2024/25 annual rates and valuation notice for each property are distributed.

Waste Service Charges

In alignment with the rate cap, Council is also increasing waste service charges by 2.75% for 2024/25. The Minister for Local Government published new best practice guidelines for service rates and charges earlier this year. Council is undertaking a thorough review of waste service charges against these guidelines and will communicate the outcome of the review when completed.

User Fees and Charges

User fees and charges have been reviewed by each operating unit to ensure they continue to represent the determined fee structure and account for increases to CPI, benchmarking and full-cost recovery where applicable. Individual user fees and charges have increased generally by 4%, reflective of inflation. Total user fees are \$13.33m, an increase of \$1.53m on the 2023/24 Projected Full Year Forecast.

This growth also demonstrates projected underlying growth in certain services, such as the continued growth of the Wangaratta Sports and Aquatics Centre based on ongoing increases in memberships, expansion of Learn to Swim program enrolments, and the opening of the upgraded Stadium. Parking fees are anticipated to continue to grow and an increase in childcare fees relates mainly to the recovery of service delivery costs.

Proposed updated Fees and Charges can be reviewed in section 6 of the Draft Budget.

Statutory fees and fines that are determined by prescribed fee or penalty units will be updated on publishing of the 2024/25 unit rates by the Department of Treasury and Finance.

Other Budget Influences

In preparing the Draft Budget internal and external influences, such as the recent negotiation of council's new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, and the impact of ongoing inflation service delivery, have been taken into consideration.

Budgetary pressures extending into future years may include the continued increase to the Superannuation Guarantee, and possible outcomes from WSAC Employee Bargaining Agreement negotiations.

The release of the best practice guidelines published by the Minister for Local Government earlier this year means that Council is undertaking a thorough review of Waste Service Charges against these guidelines and its impact is currently being assessed. There is considerable pressure given by the rate cap, especially in an environment where cost inflation of materials and services Council procures far exceeds the 2.75% rate cap.

Similarly, Council recognises that our community is also facing cost of living pressures, and so has reviewed the Draft Budget thoroughly to identify savings opportunities for the year ahead.

Financial Performance Indicators

Section 5 of the attached Draft Budget documents Council's current and projected forecast across several prescribed indicators. These indicators are useful for analysing Council's financial position and are further supported by the Financial Policy Statements adopted in Council's Ten-Year Financial Plan.

Noteworthy results include strong working capital (greater than 100%), indebtedness within Financial Policy Statement guidelines (less than 60%) over the budgeted and projected years and an Adjusted Underlying Surplus. Council's operating position remains within the target measures set over the life of the Long-Term Financial Plan.

Implications

Policy Considerations

The Annual Budget resources the Council Plan to enable the outcomes in the Council Plan to be achieved, including the implementation of Council policies.

Financial/Economic Implications

	2023/24 Projected Full Year Forecast (\$'000s)	2024/25 Draft Budget (\$'000s)	Variance (\$'000s)	Comments
Revenue /Income	\$92,527	\$91,761	(\$776)	-Rates and charges and waste service charges proposed to increase in line with the rate cap - Total user fees have increased in line with growth, benchmarking and inflation - Total non-recurrent capital grants have decreased significantly, reflecting the size and nature of the proposed 2024/25 capital works program - Total operating grants have increased
Expense	\$80,449	\$80,294	(\$155)	Steady council expenditure largely reflects careful consideration of the council's increasing financial pressures and identification of savings in the context of overall inflation, including a reduced capital works program.

Net Result - Accounting Surplus	\$12,078	\$11,467	(\$611)	
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Legal/Statutory

The Draft Budget has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1989*, *Local Government Act 2020*, and the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 No.17.

Social and Diversity

The Draft Budget provides resources for the implementation of various strategies, plans, works and the delivery of services required to achieve the objectives of the Council Plan including an active and engaged community.

Environmental/Sustainability Impacts

Environmental and sustainability impacts have been considered when developing the Draft Budget, including funding the delivery of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy Actions and energy efficiency initiatives.

Strategic Links

The 2024/25 Draft Budget describes the resources required to deliver the strategic objectives of the Council Plan 2021-2025. See section 2 of the Draft Budget for services and major initiatives to be delivered under each strategic objective.

Risk Management

A well-planned budget will reduce the risk that Council will not be able to provide the services expected and required by the community.

Risks	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Budget not adopted within statutory timeframes	Low	High	Medium	Ensure Budget timetable for adoption is adhered to.
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.
Budget adopted without consideration of ratepayer input	Low	High	Medium	Undertake community consultation.

Consultation/Communication

The Draft Budget has been developed in consultation with Managers, Leadership and Councillors to ensure it reflects delivery of the Council Plan. The following deliberative engagement approaches will now be taken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy:

Level of public participation	Promises to the public/stakeholders	Tools/Techniques
Inform	Community	Undertake public engagement process: Public notice in local newspaper and make available for viewing online and at Council's main office.
Involve	Community	Consider community submissions.

Subject to Councillor endorsement of the Draft Budget at an Unscheduled Council Meeting on 6 May, the document will be placed on public exhibition for 28 days from Wednesday 08 May to invite submissions from the community.

The Draft Budget will be available for inspection on Council's website at www.wangaratta.vic.gov.au and at the Wangaratta Government Centre.

Anyone who makes a written submission can request to be heard by a Committee of Council in support of their submission. The proposed timeline is as follows:

Monday 6 May 2024	Special Council Meeting to endorse the 2024/25 Draft Budget
Wednesday 8 May 2024	Invite the public to make submissions in response to the 2024/25 Draft Budget
Wednesday 5 June 2024	Submission period closes 28 days later, at 5:00pm
Monday 10 June 2024	If required, Committee of Council is formed to hear submissions
Tuesday 25 June 2024	Adoption of the 2024/25 Budget at the June Scheduled Council Meeting

Options for Consideration

Council must prepare a budget for the 2024/25 financial year to comply with the Act.

Options for consideration are:

1. Endorse the 2024/25 in the current state (refer to Attachment); or
2. Council recommends changes to the 2024/25 Draft Budget which are required to be made prior to the document being made available for public consultation and to receive submissions. This is not recommended as it risks that the organisation wouldn't have an Adopted Budget in place ready for the start of the 2024/25 financial year which is in breach of the Act.

Conclusion

The 2024/25 Draft Budget reflects the resources required to deliver the Council Plan and has been developed with input from Councillors and Council Officers.

Attachments

- 1 Draft Budget 2024 - 2025 [↓](#) 

8. Sustainability and Culture

8.1 Planning Permit Application 23/202 - Replacement of a Roof in a Heritage Overlay

Meeting Type:	Unscheduled Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	6 May 2024
Author:	Planning Coordinator
File No:	IC24/664

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 determine planning permit application – PInApp23/202.

The application is for buildings and works to replacement a tiled roof with an iron sheet roof at 7 Gray Street, Wangaratta. The property is within the Heritage Overlay (HO9) which applies to the Docker Street West Precinct.

A detailed assessment of the application is included at **Attachment 1** and the officer's conclusion is that the application should not be supported.

Recommendation:

That Council:

1. Issues a Notice of Refusal for planning permit application PInApp23/202 for Building and Works to replace a tiled roof at 7 Gray Steet Wangaratta, on the grounds contained in **Attachment 2**.
2. Advise the Applicant of the decision.

Property Details

Land/Address	Lot 1 on Title Plan 809522W Vol 10659 Fol 673 7 Gray Street, Wangaratta, Vic 3677
Zones and Overlays	Neighbourhood Residential Zone - Schedule 1 Heritage Overlay – HO9
Why is a permit required	Clause 43.01-1: Removal and replacement of a roof

Proposal in Detail

The application seeks approval to remove the existing red terracotta tile roof and replace it with a red corrugated iron sheet roof.

The subject site is located on the western side of Gray Street, to the north-west of the Wangaratta train station and to the north-east of the Wangaratta Hospital. The site currently contains a single-storey, detached dwelling (shown below).



The dwelling is an early to mid-20th century style red brick dwelling with a red terracotta tile roof. There is a garage/outbuilding located to the rear of the dwelling.

The application is described in detail in the Officers Assessment Report at **Attachment 1**.

Summary of Key Issues

The proposal is not consistent with state and local heritage policies of the Wangaratta Planning Scheme.

The proposal is not consistent with the purpose and decision guidelines of the Heritage Overlay, particular the HO9 precinct.

Background

The subject site sits within a row of red and yellow brick early to mid-20th century style dwellings, all with red terracotta or brown tile roofs. The row of houses along this section of Gray Street are highly intact. No. 5 and No. 7 Gray Street have a similar design, with both being triple fronted and having hipped roofs.

The dwellings along this section of the streetscape that have iron sheet roofs are from a different era, very early 20th and late 19th century dwellings (Victorian & Federation style dwellings). There have been minimal changes to the contributory and individually significant dwellings along this part

of Gray Street, with the tiled roofed dwellings forming a pocket of construction typology character that is little changed from its original development. The fact that these sites are so highly intact is part of why they contribute to the heritage significance of the heritage precinct within which they sit.

The Heritage Overlay (HO9) applies to the Docker Street West precinct. The HO9 has the following statement of significance:

The Docker Street East Precinct is a predominantly residential area with significant high quality residential housing stock and streetscapes in Gray Street in particular. It contains significant street tree plantings in Gray, Docker, Spearing and Cusack Streets. The items associated with the development of the railways and hospital are historically significant.

Assessment under the Planning and Environment Act

A detailed assessment of the application against the relevant policies and provision of the Wangaratta Planning Scheme and the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act) is included at **Attachment 1**.

Planning Policy Framework, Zoning, Overlays, and Particular and General provisions

Section	Clause	Provision
Planning policy Framework and Municipal Planning Strategy	02.03-5 15.01-5S 15.01-5L 15.03-1S 15.03-1L	Built form and heritage Neighbourhood character Neighbourhood character Heritage conservation Heritage places and precincts
Zone	32.09	Neighbourhood Residential Zone – Schedule 1
Overlay	43.01	Heritage Overlay (HO9)
Decision Guidelines	65.01	Decision Guidelines – Approval of an Application or Plan

Implications

Policy Considerations

Council's local planning policies (given effect by the Wangaratta Planning Scheme) are of relevance to this report. These policies are considered and addressed within this report and in the Assessment Report at **Attachment 1**.

Financial Implications

There are no specific financial implications to Council arising from this report although there may be potential costs for Council representation at the Victorian Civil Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

Legal/Statutory

All procedures associated with the lodgement and assessment of this application have been carried out in accordance with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

Social

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

Equity Impact Assessment (EIA)

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

Environmental/Sustainability Impacts

Environmental and sustainability matters have been considered in this report.

Referrals

The matter was referred to the Heritage Adviser.

Strategic Links**Council Plan 2021 – 2025**

This report supports the 2021-2025 Council Plan through the following objectives and actions:

1. Expanding our Economy

4.2 Support employment through business growth, development and recovery.

Rural City of Wangaratta 2033 Community Vision

This report supports the 2033 Community Vision through the following objectives:

- BB1 – Ensure new development is facilitated and does not conflict with existing land uses.
- BB2 – Provide an efficient and effective permit system.

Risk Management

It is not considered that there are any relevant risks to Council beyond those associated with standard statutory process (such as any decision being appealed at VCAT).

Risk Management Framework

Risks	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Appeal of decision at VCAT	Possible	Minor	Low	Appropriate representation of Council at VCAT.

Consultation/Communication

The application was not required to be advertised as the application was made under the VicSmart provisions, which exempts the application from public notification.

Options for Consideration

1. Issue a Refusal to Grant a Permit, subject to grounds as per the recommendation.
2. Issue a Planning Permit

Conclusion

The Heritage Overlay seeks to conserve and enhance elements that contribute to the significance of a heritage place. The subject site and surrounding dwellings are contributory to the HO9 precinct. Whilst these sites do not have individual statements of significance, the intact styles and features of the dwellings based on their era of development and the statement of significance for the wider precinct identifying the high-quality residential stock all contribute to the heritage significance of the Docker Street West area.

The proposed replacement of the terracotta tile roof to an iron sheet roof is unsympathetic to the heritage significance of the place and would disrupt the heritage setting. The terracotta tile roof provides a particular texture and consistent rhythm, particularly in conjunction with the tiled roof of the dwellings adjacent, within the streetscape. The proposed alteration would detrimentally impact the visual relationship between the subject site and the neighbouring contributory heritage sites. Terracotta tiles, being a natural building material, have a softer appearance and are consistent with the brick construction of the dwelling and front fence. Iron sheeting would have a harsher appearance in this context, particularly against the interwar style of the subject dwelling. Heritage advice indicated that the proposal is not appropriate based on the era and typology of the dwelling on the subject land, with dwellings containing iron sheet roofing within the immediate area being of significantly earlier construction.

The Heritage Overlay seeks to protect places and areas that contribute to the character of our townships. Many people are drawn to places with strong heritage values and character, and permitting what might be considered as a "small" change has wider impacts by setting inappropriate precedents that will eventually degrade entire heritage areas and undermine the character of a place.

Ultimately, the proposal represents a disorderly planning outcome within the Neighbourhood Residential Zone – Schedule 1 and Heritage Overlay (HO9). It is therefore recommended that the application be refused, subject to the grounds as outlined in **Attachment 2**.

Attachments

- 1 Officers Assessment Report - 7 Gray Street [↓](#) 
- 2 Grounds for Refusal - 7 Gray Street [↓](#) 

9. Closure of Meeting

Attachments

