



Rural City of  
**Wangaratta**

# Agenda

For the Scheduled Council Meeting  
Soldiers Memorial Hall  
24-26 Bartley Street, Moyhu  
**6:00 PM 22 April 2025**



# Contents

1.	Acknowledgement to Country.....	5
2.	Opening Prayer .....	5
3.	Present .....	5
4.	Absent.....	5
5.	Acceptance of Apologies & Granting of Leave of Absence .....	5
	Order of Business .....	6
6.	Citizen Ceremony.....	6
7.	Confirmation of Minutes .....	6
8.	Conflict of Interest Disclosure.....	6
9.	Reception of Petitions .....	6
10.	Hearing of Deputations.....	6
	Presentation of Reports .....	7
11.	Councillor Reports.....	7
	Officers' Reports .....	7
12.	Executive Services.....	7
13.	Corporate and Leisure.....	8
13.1	Revocation of Council Policies .....	8
14.	Community and Infrastructure .....	11
14.1	Community Asset Committee Nominations .....	11
15.	Sustainability and Culture.....	14
15.1	Draft Climate Adaptation Plan .....	14
16.	Special Committee Reports.....	20
17.	Advisory Committee Reports.....	20
18.	Minutes of Advisory Committee Meetings.....	21
18.1	Minutes of Advisory Committee Meetings.....	21
19.	Notices of Motion .....	22
20.	Urgent Business.....	22
21.	Public Question Time .....	22
22.	Confidential Business.....	22

23.	Closure of Meeting .....	22
	Attachments .....	22
13.1	Revocation of Council Policies	
	Attachment 1 Sewer Connection Exemption Policy 2015.....	23
	Attachment 2 Sister City Friendship City Relationship Program Policy 2011 .....	26
	Attachment 3 Development Approval Facilitation Policy 2015.....	27
14.1	Community Asset Committee Nominations	
	Attachment 2 Community Asset Committee Responsibilities Planner .....	29
	Attachment 3 Instrument of Sub Delegation.....	31
15.1	Draft Climate Adaptation Plan	
	Attachment 1 Draft Climate Adaptation Plan.....	43
	Attachment 2 Summary of Comments & Changes .....	102
18.1	Minutes of Advisory Committee Meetings	
	Attachment 1 05 December 2024 Audit and Risk Committee Minutes .....	106
	Attachment 2 ACAC Committee Meeting Minutes - February 2025.....	116



## Rural City of Wangaratta Live Stream

Clause 24 of the Governance Rules provides the following:

*“This public meeting is being recorded to improve access to the meeting for our community. The recording will be published and will be retained by Council in accordance with Council’s legal obligations. As a visitor in the public gallery, your presence may be recorded.”*

### 1. Acknowledgement to Country

*We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands, on which the Rural City of Wangaratta communities reside.*

*We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging, and celebrate and respect their continuing cultures.*

*We are committed to walking beside all traditional owners as we move toward reconciliation.*

### 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

## Order of Business

### 6. Citizen Ceremony

### 7. Confirmation of Minutes

#### Recommendation:

That Council read and confirm the Minutes of the Scheduled Meeting of 25 March 2025 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of the meeting.

### 8. 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.

### 9. Reception of Petitions

### 10. Hearing of Deputations

## **Presentation of Reports**

### **11. Councillor Reports**

Nil

## **Officers' Reports**

### **12. Executive Services**

Nil

## 13. Corporate and Leisure

### 13.1 Revocation of Council Policies

Meeting Type:	Scheduled Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	22 April 2025
Category:	Strategic
Author:	Governance & Reporting Advisor
Approver:	Director Corporate and Leisure

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 revoke the following policies for the reasons detailed below:

#### Recommendation:

That Council revokes the following three policies:

- a. Sewer Connection Exemption Policy 2015 (Attachment 1)
- b. Sister City – Friendship Relationship Program Policy 2011 (Attachment 2) ; and
- c. Development Approval Facilitation Policy 2015 (Attachment 3).

#### Background

Council's governance team has undertaken an audit of Council's policy library to ensure that the policy framework across the organisation is fit for purpose and reflective of the current operations and strategic direction of the organisation. This audit has identified the following policies as being no longer required for the reasons set out below.

1. Sewer Connection Exemption Policy 2015
2. Sister City – Friendship City Relationship Program Policy 2011
3. Development Approval Facilitation Policy 2015

The Sewer Connection Exemption Policy 2015 can be revoked as the content of the policy is now captured by legislation and there is now no longer a need for a policy.

The Sister City – Friendship City Relationship Policy 2011 can also be revoked as Wangaratta has not been a sister city participant since 2016 and there is no likely involvement moving forward.

The Development Approval Facilitation Policy 2015 has not been used since 2015 and Council uses other processes for significant development proposals.

## Implications

### Policy Considerations

There are no specific Council policies or strategies that relate to this report. The policy audit undertaken by governance has considered the policy framework across the organisation with impacted policy owners to ensure that Council's policy framework is current.

### Financial/Economic Implications

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

### Legal/Statutory

There are no legal/statutory implications identified for the subject of this report. Legislation now captures the substance of some policies in some cases (i.e the Sewer Connection Exemption Policy 2015) and there are no legislative impacts for any other policy under this report.

### Social and Diversity

There are no 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

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

## Strategic Links

Nil strategic links satisfied by the production of this report.

## Risk Management

Risks	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Failure to keep Council's policy library updated may result in operational inefficiencies or insufficient coverage over key areas.	Unlikely	Minor	4 – Low	Ensuring an accurate and timely notification of policy reviews to all responsible officers

## Consultation/Communication

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

### Options for Consideration

Council may either determine to revoke the above policies, or request further work be undertaken by council officers before doing so.

### Conclusion

An audit of Council policies has been undertaken by Council's governance team and identified the policies in this report as being past their respective lives. They are presented for formal councillor revocation today.

### Attachments

- 1 Sewer Connection Exemption Policy 2015 [↓](#) 
- 2 Sister City Friendship City Relationship Program Policy 2011 [↓](#) 
- 3 Development Approval Facilitation Policy 2015 [↓](#) 

## 14. Community and Infrastructure

### 14.1 Community Asset Committee Nominations

Meeting Type:	Scheduled Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	22 April 2025
Category:	Strategic
Author:	Community & Recreation Coordinator
Approver:	Director Community and Infrastructure

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 endorse the nominations of volunteers to committees of management (COM) under the Community Asset Committee Instrument of Delegation. These are community members who wish to be considered for inclusion on the local committees of management. Council Officers are in support of the nominations in the attachment to the following COM:

Milawa Public Hall and Park

The nominations are for a period of three years.

#### Recommendation:

That Council endorses and discloses the appointments to the following Community Asset Committee:

1. Milawa Public Hall and Park

#### Background

New Committee nominations can be taken at any point and will be endorsed at a Council Meeting once a quarter. Nominees can still attend meetings before that endorsement, but without voting rights.

All appointments to Community Asset Committees are made in line with Council's policy governing appointments to Council Committees.

The Instrument of Sub-Delegation details in section 3.1(8) that all appointments to the committees will be made by Council in accordance with the Council policy governing appointments to Council Committees.

## Implications

### Policy Considerations

The Community Asset Committee Instrument of Delegation and the Appointment to Council Committees Policy apply to these nominations.

### Financial/Economic Implications

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

### Legal/Statutory

The requirement for nominations is made in accordance with the Local Government Act

### Social and Diversity

The Community Asset Committees provide an important service to their communities, providing a gathering place and social centre for their rural communities. A strong and vibrant committee will benefit the community, and close links between the committee and Council will create greater awareness of needs in that community.

### Equity Impact Assessment (EIA)

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

### Environmental/Sustainability Impacts

COM's are responsible for the management of any environmental issues relating to the land upon which their facilities are situated.

## Strategic Links

### Council Plan 2021 – 2025

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

#### 1. Strengthening our Leadership

1. Continue to support the delivery of the Rural Placemaking Plans in partnership with our rural communities.

#### 2. Nurturing our Wellbeing

1. With support and training, ensure that our community groups and committees have strong governance and are inclusive and viable.
- 2.3.3 Increase opportunities for people to connect to their community and each other.
- 2.3.4.1 Provide quality and accessible community facilities based on community needs.

#### 3. Expanding our Economy

- 4.4.2 Enhance the activity in our rural townships

## Risk Management

### Risk Management Framework



Risks	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Governance risk associated with the sub-delegation of powers from the CEO to Community Asset Committees	3 - Possible	3 - Moderate	6 - Medium	The appointment of members by a formal resolution of Council reduces governance risk by ensuring that all members appointed to a committee are covered by Council's public liability insurance.

### Consultation/Communication

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

### Options for Consideration

- That Council endorses the nominations to the Community Asset Committees
- That Council does not endorse the nominations to the Community Asset Committees.

### Conclusion

Council officers have reviewed the nominations received for endorsement to the relevant Community Asset Committees which will delegate the control, management and maintenance of its council owned community assets and uphold Councils requirements under the Local Government Act.

### Attachments

- 1 Community Asset Committee Nominations - Confidential
- 2 Community Asset Committee Responsibilities Planner [↓](#) 
- 3 Instrument of Sub Delegation [↓](#) 

## 15. Sustainability and Culture

### 15.1 Draft Climate Adaptation Plan

Meeting Type:	Scheduled Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	22 April 2025
Category:	Strategic
Author:	Environment and Sustainability Coordinator
Approver:	Director Sustainability and Culture

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 adopt the Climate Adaptation Plan. The Plan (see **Attachment 1**) has been reviewed and updated in response to feedback and submissions received during the exhibition period, as detailed in **Attachment 2**.

#### Recommendation:

That Council:

1. Considers the submissions received during the exhibition period for the draft Climate Adaptation Plan.
2. Endorses the amendments made to the draft Climate Adaptation Plan.
3. Adopts the Climate Adaptation Plan.

#### Background

The draft Climate Adaptation Plan (the Plan) aims to enhance the resilience of Council operations and, by extension, our community, against natural hazards and extreme weather events. These include storms, floods, heatwaves, droughts, and bushfires. A key component of the Plan is a 10-year action plan that outlines strategic priorities to reduce vulnerability to these impacts while also identifying opportunities arising from climate-related changes.

Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, Councils are required to plan for climate change risks. Additionally, an audit of Environmental Management & Sustainability identified the absence of a climate adaptation plan as a moderate risk. These factors were key drivers behind the Plan's development, which has been made possible through funding from Emergency Management Victoria and collaboration with consultants WSP.

The Plan was shaped through extensive early engagement with the community and stakeholders, including surveys and workshops conducted in August and September 2024. This input ensured the Plan reflects local priorities and concerns. Following Council endorsement, the draft Plan was placed on public exhibition from 12 December 2024 to 14 February 2025, allowing the community and stakeholders to review and provide further feedback. To support engagement during the exhibition period, Council facilitated drop-in sessions and conducted an online survey. Feedback from the public consultation process was overwhelmingly positive, with 96% of survey respondents indicating they largely agreed with the Plan's recommendations, following a review of the feedback received 3 minor changes were made to the Plan (see **Attachment 2**).

### Implications

#### Policy Considerations

The Climate Adaptation Plan supports and complements the Council Plan 2021-2025, as well as a number of strategies relating to climate change, assets, planning, emergency management and environmental sustainability.

This report supports Council's Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Policy 2022-2025, Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2021-2026 and Asset Plan 2022-2032. In addition it aligns with other relevant Victorian State legislation including the Climate Change Act 2017, Environment Protection Act 2017, Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988, Planning and Environment Act 1987, Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, and at a National level the Climate Change Act 2022, National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy.

#### Financial/Economic Implications

The Plan recommends and prioritises actions over 10 years for Council that will have costs associated. These actions will be dependent on funding from project bids, grant applications and in house resources, subject to the prioritisation of the long term financial plan.

#### Legal/Statutory

Under the Local Government Act 2020, "*Councils are required to promote the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks.*" and the Plan aligns with the climate resilience objectives for 2050 outlined in the Victorian Government's Climate Change Strategy.

#### Social and Diversity

The Plan acknowledges that climate change impacts are not felt equally across society, with vulnerable groups such as older residents, remote rural communities, and those with limited resources, facing heightened risks from extreme weather events. By integrating social and diversity considerations, the Plan ensures that adaptation measures are inclusive and support those most at risk, strengthening community resilience across Wangaratta.

#### Equity Impact Assessment (EIA)

Equity is a principle of delivery for the strategy, and an Equity Impact Assessment was completed for this strategy. The EIA highlighted the importance of seeking input from vulnerable members in rural townships (drop in sessions in rural locations) and the viewpoint of younger people (through youth council engagement).

#### Environmental/Sustainability Impacts

The Plan acknowledges the significant environmental challenges posed by climate change in Wangaratta, including increased risks to biodiversity, prolonged droughts, and more frequent extreme weather events such as bushfires and flooding. By integrating climate resilience into asset

management, land use planning, and environmental stewardship, the Plan aims to protect natural ecosystems, enhance sustainable land management practices - ultimately strengthening community resilience and ensuring a healthier environment for future generations.

### Strategic Links

#### Council Plan 2021 – 2025

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

#### 1. Strengthening our Leadership

- 1.2.3 Proactively manage risk across all areas of Council.

#### 2. Nurturing our Wellbeing

- 2.2.4.1 Support all our community members to be healthy and well, especially our most vulnerable.
- 2.6.1 Ensure we are prepared for emergency response and recovery
- 2.6.1.5 Build community and Council capacity and resilience to respond to emergencies and disasters that are a result of climate change.
- 2.6.1.6 Continue delivery of programs to support the resilience and recovery of business and the community in the face of adverse events such as bushfire, pandemic and drought.

#### 3. Valuing our Environment

- 3.1.3 Enhance our natural environment
- 3.13.4 Partner with traditional owners to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge into strategies and practices concerning the management of the natural environment
- 3.3.1 Increase the capacity of the community to mitigate and adapt to climate change
- 3.3.1.1 Explore and advance opportunities to be community leaders in adapting to the impacts of climate change

#### 4. Expanding our Economy

- 4.2.6 Support economic recovery following emergencies
- 4.2.6.1 Understand the economic impacts for our businesses and community following an adverse event
- 4.2.6.2 Advocate for government support and assistance programs to support recovery from adverse events.

#### Rural City of Wangaratta 2033 Community Vision

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

- G1 Strengthen Council's approach to designing and supporting inclusive and liveable communities
- G4 Support all our community members to be healthy and well, especially our most vulnerable
- K1 Ensure we are prepared for emergency response and recovery
- L1 Collaborate with external stakeholders on community-based environment and sustainability initiatives
- L2 Facilitate design and development that creates environmentally supportive impacts
- N2 Increase the capacity of the community to mitigate and adapt to climate change
- Q6 Support economic recovery following emergencies

CC1 Ensure decision making upholds a balance between environmental sustainability, the need for development and acknowledges risks to the landscape

### Risk Management

Risks	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Changing priorities or leadership resulting in reduced support for adaptation initiatives	3 - Possible	3- Moderate	3 - Medium	Maintain strong evidence-based justification for actions and build long-term community and stakeholder support to sustain momentum.
Expectation for Council to fund all recommendations	2- Unlikely	2- Minor	4 - Low	Communication throughout the entire process and within the document clearly outlines required external grant funding requirements.
Legal or regulatory changes impacting Council's ability to implement certain actions	2- Unlikely	3 - Moderate	4 - Low	Stay informed of legislative changes and advocate for policies that support climate adaptation.
Climate change impacts worsen faster than projected, making actions insufficient	3 - Possible	4- Major	7- High	Regular review and update of the Plan to incorporate the latest climate projections and emerging risks.

### Consultation/Communication

Extensive consultation was undertaken throughout the development of the strategy to ensure it reflects council, community and stakeholder priorities. The Plan was informed by early engagement activities, including:

- A workshop with 21 Council officers.
- A workshop with the Youth Council.
- A workshop with Council's Environmental & Sustainability Reference Group (ESRG) to discuss the initial vision, concerns, and proposed community survey questions.
- A four-week community survey, receiving 65 responses.
- Four drop-in sessions held in Moyhu, Glenrowan, Wangaratta, and Milawa.
- Meetings with key stakeholders, including the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Goulburn Murray Climate Alliance, Country Fire Authority, North East Catchment Management Authority, Environmental Protection Agency, and North East Water.

- A follow-up ESGR workshop in November to provide further feedback on the developed draft Plan.

Following Council endorsement, the Plan was placed on public exhibition from 12 December 2024 to 14 February 2025. To encourage further community input, three additional drop-in sessions were held, emails were sent to previous survey participants, and the consultation was promoted through Council's media channels and physical flyers distributed in rural areas. These efforts resulted in 25 attendees at the drop-in sessions and 22 additional survey submissions.

Level of public participation	Promises to the public/stakeholders	Tools/Techniques
Inform	An extensive comms campaign was undertaken during the the development and consultation period.  Between August 2024 and February 2025, the Plan's webpage received 521 visits, and 124 participants downloaded the factsheets and draft Plan.	Websites, social media, rural noticeboards, drop-in sessions and newspapers.
Consult	65 responses were received in the first community survey, with a further 22 during the public exhibition period.	Connect Wangaratta website, two surveys.
Involve	Stakeholder groups were directly consulted/engaged.	One on one meetings with
Collaborate	Feedback was integrated into final draft Plan and then placed on exhibition.	
Empower	The final Strategy will be considered by Council in April 2025.	Council meeting to consider adoption of the strategy.

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


#### Options for Consideration

1. That Council endorses the changes to the draft Climate Adaptation Plan and adopts the Climate Adaptation Plan. **(recommended)**
2. That Council does not endorse the changes to the draft Climate Adaptation Plan, does not adopt the Climate Adaptation Plan and returns the grant funding. **(not recommended)**

#### Conclusion

Submissions regarding the draft Climate Adaptation Plan have been considered and changes made to the Plan in response. The amended Climate Adaptation Plan is ready for Council adoption.

### Attachments

- 1 Draft Climate Adaptation Plan [↓](#) 
- 2 Summary of Comments & Changes [↓](#) 

## **16. Special Committee Reports**

Nil

## **17. Advisory Committee Reports**

Nil



18. Minutes of Advisory Committee Meetings

18.1 Minutes of Advisory Committee Meetings

Meeting Type: Scheduled Council Meeting  
Date of Meeting: 22 April 2025  
Author: Councillor and Executive Services Support Officer  
Approver: Executive Services Coordinator

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




Minutes of Advisory Committee Meetings and committee reports are reported to Council for information (please refer attachments.)

Date	Meeting details	Refer
5 December 2024	Audit and Risk Committee	Attachment
3 February 2025	Arts and Culture Advisory Committee	Attachment

Recommendation:

That Council notes the minutes of these Advisory Committees.

Attachments

- 1 05 December 2024 Audit and Risk Committee Minutes  
- 2 ACAC Committee Meeting Minutes - February 2025  

**19. Notices of Motion**

Nil

**20. Urgent Business**

**21. Public Question Time**

**22. Confidential Business**

Nil

**23. Closure of Meeting**  
**Attachments**



## SEWER CONNECTION EXEMPTION POLICY

Responsible Officer: <b>Manager Environment and Community Safety</b>	Adoption Date:	21/04/2015
	Approved By:	Council
	Review Date:	2018
Authorising Officer: <b>Director Development Services</b>	Policy Type	Council

### INTRODUCTION

This policy is to address applications to allow continued usage of existing onsite domestic wastewater treatment plants on residential properties that meet defined standards, when reticulated sewer becomes available. This policy does not apply to new building and development after the date of adoption of this policy. Such developments are required to connect to sewer.

### CONTEXT

The introduction of Domestic Secondary Treatment Systems (DSTS) for residential dwellings as opposed to older septic systems, has resulted in a much higher quality of effluent being disposed of to land, which in turn means a lower level of pollution to land.

In sewerred areas, properties are required to connect to sewer under the State Environment Protection Policy (SEPP) 'Waters of Victoria'. When sewerage first becomes available, an exemption can be considered if an existing onsite DSTS is able to meet EPA treatment standards and retain all treated wastes within the boundaries of the property.

### SCOPE

Where a property has an existing Environment Protection Authority (EPA) approved DSTS that was installed before the property owners were formally notified by the Water Corporation that a reticulated sewerage system is available, the treatment system may be retained if it meets all the following conditions:

- the effluent quality is verified, via independent sampling and analysis at a NATA approved laboratory, to be 20/30 secondary standard or a higher standard, as required in the original Certificate of Approval.
- the premises owner has demonstrated to the satisfaction of Council that the effluent is being sustainably recycled and contained on site in all weather conditions

- service reports which verify that the premises owner/occupier has maintained an ongoing service history with a professional service technician are provided to Council
- the DSTS is managed and serviced in accordance with the conditions on its Certificate of Approval and the conditions on the Council Permit to Install/Alter.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the environment and public health are protected, and recognises an existing DSTS meeting the standards of this policy can provide appropriate treatment without connection to sewer.

## **POLICY**

### **DEFINITION**

Domestic Secondary Treatment System – an onsite wastewater treatment system which treats all wastes generated on the property to a 20/30 standard (20 mg/L BOD 30 mg/L suspended solids), within the boundaries of the property. Higher standards will apply as required in the original Certificate of Approval.

### **COMMITMENT**

Council is committed to only allowing an exemption where the conditions under the Scope of this Policy have been met.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

Officers responsible for approving an application under this Policy are the Environmental Health Coordinator and the Environmental Health Officer. Any appeal will be decided by the Director Development Services.

Officers responsible for revoking a Sewer Connection Exemption under this Policy are the Environmental Health Coordinator and the Environmental Health Officer. Any appeal will be decided by the Director Development Services.

### **REPORTING**

The results of consideration of applications for exemption from sewer connection will be maintained within Council's record system.

### **MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

Council will maintain a Management Framework that complies with the scope of this Policy.

.Key elements of the management framework include:

- verification that service reports demonstrate compliance with the conditions of the Certificate of Approval and the conditions on the Council Permit to Install/Alter and
- annual inspection and condition report to check that a DSTS complies with the effluent standards of this policy.

The exemption to connect to sewer will be revoked where the system is to be replaced, or becomes unserviceable or does not continue to meet the standards required in this policy, or

maintenance does not comply with conditions of the Certificate of Approval and the conditions on the Council Permit to Install/Alter.

Where an exemption to connect has been revoked, Council will issue a Notice to Connect to Sewer, and connection must occur within the period specified on that notice, which shall be no longer than 3 months.

#### **OTHER INTEGRATION ARRANGEMENTS**

In considering any application for exemption under this Policy, reference must be made to the following reference documents.

#### **REFERENCES**

Guidelines for environmental management: code of practice – onsite wastewater management (EPA publication 891) is the principal reference for this policy.

Victorian land capability assessment framework (Municipal Association of Victoria)

State Environment Protection Policy 'Water of Victoria'

#### **REVIEW**

Any change or update to the basis for this policy which materially impacts and alters this policy will be addressed at the time of the change or update through a Council resolution to adopt an updated policy. Otherwise, this policy will be reviewed once every three years at a detailed level by Council officers. Following the detailed review, an updated policy will be recommended to Council for adoption.



### SISTER CITY- FRIENDSHIP CITY RELATIONSHIP PROGRAM

Responsible Officer: <b>Chief Executive Officer</b>  Authorising Officer: <b>Chief Executive Officer</b>	Document No:	24
	Adoption Date:	19 April 2011
	Approved By:	Council
	Review Date:	1 January 2015
	Policy Type	Council

#### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework to ensure that coordination and management of a Sister City/Friendship City program for the Rural City of Wangaratta occurs in a planned and programmed manner.

#### Statement

The Council considers that a Sister City /Friendship City program can establish crucial economic, cultural and social links between the communities involved.

The program will seek to provide and strengthen links and partnerships at an international, national and local level so as to make for a robust network of sharing experiences, expertise, information and knowledge, and to promote global partnerships and cross cultural understanding.

Therefore the Council will:

- Initiate programs to promote and develop mutual understanding, friendship and goodwill, between the Rural City of Wangaratta and Friendship City communities;
- Arrange programs of educational, cultural, sporting, economic and social exchange;
- Facilitate community involvement in any future Sister Cities Program; and
- Provide a focus for tourist and economic development with Sister Cities.

#### Definitions

N/A

#### References

Australian Sister Cities Association.



## DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL FACILITATION POLICY

Responsible Officer: <b>Director Development Services</b>  Authorising Officer: <b>Chief Executive Officer</b>	Adoption Date:	August 2015
	Approved By:	Council
	Review Date:	January 2020
	Policy Type	Council

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that significant development proposals pass through the Wangaratta Rural City Council in the most expeditious, facilitative and coordinated manner possible.

Through this policy Council aims to provide a Whole-of-Council approach and response to a Significant Development Proposal by:

- reducing the overall time for development approval processing whilst operating within legislation requirements;
- greatly enhancing the coordination of the various approval processes within Council; and
- enhancing the facilitative approach offered by Council to significant development proposals.

### STATEMENT

Upon initial identification of a Significant Development Proposal within the Rural City of Wangaratta, the identifying officer will notify the Chief Executive Officer of the proposal together with an indication of the magnitude and likely issues associated with the proposal.

If the proposed development is deemed to be of sufficient magnitude to warrant special attention, the Chief Executive Officer will convene a meeting of the Development Assessment Team (DAT) to oversee and coordinate the passage of development approvals through the organisation.

DAT membership consists of:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Director Development Services
- Director Infrastructure Services
- Director Corporate Services
- Manager Building, Planning and Compliance

#### **Co-opting:**

Other staff may be co-opted to the team as required.

#### **Focus of DAT:**

- (1) A one stop shop for developers.
- (2) A proactive response to significant development proposals.
- (3) A consistent and efficient approach by the organisation.
- (4) All relevant areas of the organisation are informed of and involved in significant development proposals.

## DEFINITIONS

**Significant Development Proposal** is either an application or substantiated enquiry that is likely to lead to a development:

- (a) in the Central Activities Area of Wangaratta; or
- (b) has a value at or above \$2 million.

## REFERENCES

Development Assessment Team Guidelines





## Community Asset Committee Responsibilities Planner

This checklist has been prepared to assist RCOW Community Asset Committees (CAC) comply with their obligations under the Local Government Act, 2020 (Vic). If you require any further assistance with any of the compliance requirements please contact Community & Recreation on 03 5722 0888 or via [recreation@wangaratta.vic.gov.au](mailto:recreation@wangaratta.vic.gov.au)

### Annual General Meeting

Each year committees need to hold an AGM by 31 August. This is to involve the wider community, report on the previous year's activities and finances and to elect officers to the Committee. These meetings need to be advertised for at least 30 days beforehand and should be planned well in advance.

Each Year	When	Details
Advise Annual General Meeting (AGM) date	90 days prior to meeting	Advise Community & Recreation Team of planned AGM date
Advertise AGM	1 month prior to meeting	Send details to RCOW on nominated form. RCOW will advertise AGM date on behalf of the CAC. Each CAC should also advertise the meeting locally, including a link to the form for nominations.
Committee Member Nominations	Prior to AGM	Where possible send nomination forms to Community & Recreation <a href="mailto:recreation@wangaratta.vic.gov.au">recreation@wangaratta.vic.gov.au</a> prior to the meeting, however nomination forms can also be received at the AGM. All nominations to go to Council for endorsement
Hold AGM	By 31 August each year	This must be held annually and should be seen as an opportunity to involve the wider community in the management of the reserve/hall
Elect Executive Committee (office bearers)	At AGM	Election of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office bearers e.g. (President, Secretary, Treasurer) are usually elected annually at the AGM even though the terms of the committee members are for up to three years.</li> </ul>
<b>Reports</b> Presidents Report Financial Report	At AGM – but should be submitted to secretary at least 1 week beforehand to be circulated to existing committee.	Present to committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The President's report should detail the year that was. This should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Details of facility bookings and usage for the year</li> <li>Set a schedule of committee meeting dates for the coming financial year</li> </ul> </li> <li>Annual financial year finance report</li> <li>Any other officer or other committee reports from the year can also be included, i.e. – the Football/Netball Club can also submit a report to the CAC on their year.</li> </ul>
Minutes of AGM	Within 30 days of AGM.	These must be circulated to the committee, members and Council. They must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minutes of the meeting</li> <li>All reports from the meeting, including all financial reports</li> </ul>

Please email all documents to [recreation@wangaratta.vic.gov.au](mailto:recreation@wangaratta.vic.gov.au) Within 30 days of your Annual General Meeting.

Wangaratta Government Centre

62–68 Ovens St  
Wangaratta VIC 3677

PO Box 238  
Wangaratta VIC 3676

P 03 5722 0888  
F 03 5721 9526

E [council@wangaratta.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@wangaratta.vic.gov.au)  
W [wangaratta.vic.gov.au](http://wangaratta.vic.gov.au)

### Financial Requirements

Committees all have financial responsibility for their hall/reserve. This includes regular reporting to the Committee at ordinary meetings, as well as annual reporting to the Committee and to Council.

Annual financial report	Prior to AGM – Must be sent to Committee	Present to committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This report is to be presented at the AGM and must include a summary of the CAC financial situation and future, as well as details of all financial transactions and accounts from the year. Explanations for any large expenditures or losses should also be included</li> </ul>
Annual Financial report and financial review	Within 30 days of AGM.	Submit to Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deliver all financial documents to Customer Service RCOW addressed to Finance</li> </ul>
Financial review	Within 60 days of receipt	Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To review financial documents and raise any issues with CAC and advise Community and Recreation;</li> <li>- Submit any GST refunds as applicable; and</li> <li>- Finance contact CAC, financials left at RCOW Customer Service awaiting collection</li> </ul>
Financial Limitations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Note tenders/spending over \$5000 need Council approval;</li> <li>- Grant applications over \$5000 need to be approved by Council</li> <li>- Send approval requests to <a href="mailto:recreation@wangeratta.vic.gov.au">recreation@wangeratta.vic.gov.au</a></li> </ul>

### Ordinary Meetings

Committees should have regular meetings throughout the year to discuss the operation of the facility, strategic directions and other issues. Finances should be reviewed at each meeting. There should be no less than four regular meetings each year, in addition to the AGM. It is recommended that the schedule of meetings for the coming year is decided at the AGM and provided to Council with the annual report.

Groups that use the facility regularly can be invited to these meetings either as a delegate or observer to report and provide feedback.

Ordinary Meeting Agenda	1 week prior to meeting	Submit to Committee members and to Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agenda for meeting</li> <li>- Any reports to be tabled at that meeting, including Finance</li> </ul>
Changes to Meeting		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide RCOW with any changes to ordinary meeting dates as soon as reasonable</li> </ul>
Minutes of Ordinary meetings	Within 30 days of all meeting	Submit to Committee members & Council
New Committee Members	As soon as possible	New Committee nominations can be taken at any point and will be endorsed at a Council meeting once a quarter. Nominees can still attend meetings before that endorsement, but without voting rights. Nominees being re-elected maintain their voting rights until that endorsement.

# Wangaratta Rural City Council

## Instrument of Sub-Delegation from the Chief Executive Officer to Community Asset Committees

### Instrument of Sub-Delegation

In exercise of the power conferred by s 47(1)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (Act), I, as Chief Executive Officer of Wangaratta Rural City Council (the Council), by this instrument of sub-delegation:

1. delegate to each person who is from time to time appointed as a member of a community asset committee, established by resolution of Council passed on 25 August 2020 and set out in Column 1 of Schedule 1 (the committee), each power and/or function and/or duty set out in Schedule 2; declare that this instrument of sub-delegation comes into force immediately upon its execution;
- 3.2. remains in force until Council resolves to vary or revoke it;
- 3.3. is subject to the conditions and limitations set out in paragraph 4 and 5, and in Schedule 2; and; and
4. declare that the delegate must comply with specified governance requirements to ensure appropriate standards of probity are met and monitor and report on the activities and performance of the committee;
5. declare that the delegate must not determine the issue, take action or do the act or thing if the determining of the issue, the taking of the action or the doing of the act or thing cannot be the subject of a lawful delegation, whether on account of section 47 of the Act or otherwise

This instrument of sub-delegation is dated 3 April 2024 and is made by the Chief Executive Officer.

Signed by the Chief Executive Officer:



\_\_\_\_\_  
in the presence of:

Executive Services Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

7 May 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Schedule 1**

<b>Column 1</b>	<b>Column 2</b>	<b>Column 3</b>
<b>Committee</b>	<b>Community asset</b>	<b>User Groups</b>
Bowmans-Murmungee Memorial Hall and Tennis Reserve Community Asset Committee	Bowmans-Murmungee Memorial Hall and Tennis Reserve situated at Part Crown Allotment 1, Section 3, Parish of Murmungee and contained in Certificate of Title, Volume 5676, Folio 120	Bowmans-Murmungee Tennis Club
Carboor Soldiers Memorial Hall and Recreation Reserve Community Asset Committee	Carboor Soldiers Memorial Hall and Recreation Reserve situated at Lots 1 & 2 PS316389G Parish of Carboor, and contained in Certificates of Title, Volume 10219 Folio 280 and Volume 10219, Folio 281	
Edi Upper Hall and Recreation Reserve Community Asset Committee	Edi Upper Hall and Recreation Reserve situated at Crown Allotment 9C, Section 1, Parish of Edi, and contained in Certificate of Title, Volume 6576, Folio 176 and Volume 9389, Folio 953	
Eldorado Memorial Hall Community Asset Committee	Eldorado Memorial Hall" situated at Crown Allotments 4 7 6, Parish of Tarrawingee, Township of Eldorado and contained in Certificates of Title, Volume 6047, Folio 400 and Volume 357 Folio 257	
Everton Hall & Sports Complex Community Asset Committee	Everton Hall and Sports Complex situated at Part Crown Allotment E, Parish of Everton, and contained in Certificate of Title, Volume 2706, Folio 541006	
Milawa Public Hall and Park Community Asset Committee	Milawa Public Hall and Park situated at Part Crown Allotment 6, Section 16, Parish of Oxley	

Column 1 Committee	Column 2 Community asset	Column 3 User Groups
Moyhu Soldiers Memorial Hall Community Asset Committee	Moyhu Soldiers Memorial Hall situated at Part Crown Allotment 1B, Section 13, Parish of Moyhu and contained in Certificate of Title, Volume 4909, Folio 632 and Volume 5088, Folio 419	
Myrree Soldiers Memorial Hall Community Asset Committee	Myrree Soldiers Memorial Hall" situated at Part Crown allotment 12, Section 3, Parish of Whitfield and contained in Certificates of Title, Volumes 7109, 4593, 8184 Folios 620, 550	
Old Murmungee Hall Community Asset Committee	Old Murmungee Hall situated at Crown Allotment 4B, Section 13, Parish of Murmungee and contained in Volume, 9700, Folio 879	
Oxley Shire Hall Community Asset Committee	Oxley Shire Hall situated at Crown Allotment 8, Section 9, Parish of Oxley and contained in Memorial No. 579, Book 650	
Whitfield Recreation Reserve Community Asset Committee	Whitfield Recreation Reserve situated at Part C/A 19, Section 1, Parish of Whitfield and contained in Certificates of Title Volume 7109, Folio 620, Volume 4593 Folio 550 and Volume 8184, Folio 613	King Valley United Football Netball Club; King Valley Action Association; Whitfield Tennis Club; King Valley Grape Growers Association; Whitfield District Primary School; Country Fire Authority; King Valley Tourist Association
Whorouly Public Hall Community Asset Committee	Whorouly Public Hall situated at Crown Allotment 4 & 5, Parish of Whorouly and contained in Certificate of Title, Volume 1927, Folio 220	Australian Red Cross; Country Women's Association Whorouly Branch; Whorouly and District Pre School Committee; Whorouly Primary School

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Committee	Community asset	User Groups
Whorouly Memorial Park Community Asset Committee	Whorouly Memorial Park situated at Crown Allotment 35C, Parish of Whorouly and contained in Certificate of Title, Volume 5758, Folio 445	Whorouly Football Netball Club; Whorouly Lawn Tennis Club; Whorouly Cricket Club; Whorouly Junior Football Club

## 1. Powers and functions

1. To control and manage the community asset outlined in Schedule 1 in an efficient and effective manner, in the best interests of Council, the local community and users of the community asset;
2. To ensure the efficient financial operation of the facility, including the capacity to enter into contracts, and to incur expenditure, not exceeding the value of **\$5,000**; and
3. To do all things necessary or convenient to be done for or in connection with the performance of those functions, duties and powers.

### Requirements

The members of the Community Asset Committee must, when exercising the powers, functions and duties delegated to them:

4. comply with the following governance requirements:
  - 4.1 The duty to manage, operate and control the community asset efficiently and economically in association with Council;
  - 4.2 The duty to act as a coordinating body between Council and the community, clubs, schools, users and potential users of the community asset;
  - 4.3 The duty to ensure that the decisions and policies of Council are implemented and adhered to without delay;
  - 4.4 The duty to ensure that users of the community asset comply with the policies, terms and conditions for the use and hire of the community asset established by the Committee, Council and relevant Council policies and Local Laws
  - 4.5 The duty to carry out regular inspections of the community asset to identify, report and remedy, if practical, any risk issues, non-compliance with laws and regulations relating to the use and occupation of the community asset and to ensure that relevant maintenance programs are implemented
  - 4.6 The duty to engage qualified personnel, relative to the task being performed, on maintenance tasks where appropriate according to the Maintenance Schedule, and if done to forward to Council all certificates of compliance upon completion of maintenance tasks;;
  - 4.7 The duty to inform council of issues that fall within their remit according to the Maintenance Schedule;
  - 4.8 The duty to ensure that all liabilities incurred by the committee are properly authorised;
  - 4.9 The duty to maintain a register of keys issued by the committee, and to provide Council with a full set of keys to all external and internal locks;



- 4.10 The duty to ensure that the community asset is maintained in a manner that meets all legal obligations;
- 4.11 The power to prepare strategic plans and reports for the future development of the community asset, including to consult with organisations who use the community asset, to consider and recommend on proposals to update facilities or provide new facilities; and ensure that any new facilities are planned and coordinated with existing facilities;
- 4.12 The duty to maintain accounts in a form that generally complies with the Australian Accounting Standards;
- 4.13 The function of recommending to Council a Schedule of Fees and Charges to be levied for the use of the community asset for the following financial year by 31 March each year that will enable the Committee to meet all of its liabilities and to return an annual surplus on its operations, and to recommend to Council items for inclusion in Council's annual budget for the community asset and to advise Council on the budget prior to its being adopted by Council;
- 4.14 The duty to ensure that the Committee's financial decisions do not affect the integrity of Council's budget;
- 4.15 The duty to prepare annually a budget of the Committee's operations and to manage expenditure within the limits of that budget which covers the Committee's financial year commencing on 1 July in each year and ending on 30 June in the following year;
- 4.16 The power to collect, retain and expend all fees, donations, grants and endorsements paid for to the committee and to ensure that moneys due are properly collected and the funds are expended for the purposes for which they are provided;
- 4.17 The power to enter into contracts, and to incur expenditure, up to \$5,000; and to refer any grant applications, capital works, extensions or additions proposed which materially alter the buildings or surrounds of the community asset or exceed the amount of \$5,000 to Council for approval;
- 4.18 The power to open and maintain a bank account at a bank and branch approved by Council, into which all monies received by the Committee shall be paid;
- 4.19 The power to establish reserve funds for capital works, into which can be paid the net surplus of the Committee, obtained in the previous financial year, and to report these amounts to Council;
- 4.20 The duty to pay all utility, municipal and water charges incurred in operating the community asset;
- 5. monitor and report on its activities and performance at least in accordance with the following:
  - 5.1 The duty to prepare an agenda and record the minutes for each meeting of the Committee; and to distribute, or arrange to be distributed, copies of the agenda and meeting minutes of Committee meetings to members of the Committee and to Council;

- 5.2 The duty to ensure that a financial report is included in the agenda of each Committee meeting and recorded in the minutes of each Committee meeting;
- 5.3 The duty to hold an Annual General Meeting of the Committee between 1 July and the 31 August each year unless circumstances related to safety and wellbeing do not permit, in which case the annual general meeting should be held as soon as circumstances permit after 1 July;
- 5.4 The duty to prepare an annual report and annual statement of accounts of the operations of the Committee in the preceding financial year for presentation at the Annual General Meeting of the Committee prior to 31 August each year. The annual report should include information and commentary regarding:
- 5.5
- (a) Patronage;
  - (b) User groups;
  - (c) Risk incidents and issues;
  - (d) Maintenance and improvements;
  - (e) Evaluation of effectiveness;
  - (f) Any other matter considered relevant by the Committee;
- 5.5 The duty to forward to Council a copy of the annual report and annual statement of accounts of the operations of the Committee in the preceding financial year by 31 August each year;
- 5.6 The duty the committee's financials are presented to the Council's finance team annually.

## **6. Exceptions, conditions and limitations**

The Community Asset Committee is not authorised by this Instrument to:

- 6.1 enter into contracts, or incur expenditure, for an amount which exceeds the approved budget, or for an amount which exceeds the amount in clause 2;
- 6.2 spend Council funds other than funds expressly allocated by Council to the Committee for Committee purposes;
- 6.3 undertake any capital works, extensions or additions to the community asset which materially alter the buildings or surrounds of the community asset without Council approval;
- 6.4 make and implement policies, terms and conditions for the use and hire of the community asset without Council's approval of such policies, terms and conditions;
- 6.5 prepare strategic plans for the future development of the community asset without Council's involvement in such strategic plans;
- 6.6 employ people without the prior consent of Council;

- 6.7 enter into leases without the prior consent of Council;
- 6.8 exercise the powers which, by force of section 47 of the Act, cannot be delegated.

**7. Membership**

- 7.1 Membership for a Community Asset Committee is consistent with the Community Reference Group Policy of Council, except for the below.
- 7.2 Each committee shall have up to twenty-five members comprising:
  - (a) not less than four representatives of the local community that is served by the community asset; and
  - (b) up to one representative from each of the user groups of the community asset corresponding to each committee set out in Column 3 of Schedule 1;
- 7.3 Any person appointed to the committee shall hold office for a period of three years, and members of the committee shall be eligible for re-appointment for a further term or terms;
- 7.4 The Chief Executive Officer of Council may appoint an officer or officers of Council to attend meetings of the committee from time to time. The Chief Executive Officer or delegate shall advise the committee of such appointments. The Council officers attending meetings of the committee do not have voting rights;
- 7.5 The Chief Executive Officer of Council shall appoint an officer of Council to liaise with the committee on financial and accounting matters;

**8. Dissolution**

- 8.1 The committee may, at any meeting of the committee, resolve to recommend to Council that the committee be dissolved. In this event the committee must notify Council in writing of the committee's resolution as soon as practicable before dissolution;
- 8.2 Council may dissolve the committee at any time in accordance with the Council policy governing Council committees;
- 8.3 The President of the committee is obliged to make the following arrangements within one month of dissolution of the committee:
  - (a) a statement of accounts must be prepared and presented to Council;
  - (b) the committee's bank account must be closed and the balance immediately forwarded to Council;
  - (c) books of accounts and minutes of the committee must be forwarded to Council;

**9. Insurances**

Council shall arrange and maintain an insurance portfolio to cover risks, including a Personal Accident Policy for members, a Volunteer Worker's Policy and an Indemnity Policy for members of the Committee.

**APPENDIX ONE****Maintenance Responsibilities**

1. Care and Report means the Tenant will care for and, so far as is practicable, maintain the asset in its current state, and will advise Council where repair or replacement may be required
2. Care, Repair, Replace means the Tenant has full responsibility for the life cycle of the asset
3. Contract means the Tenant is responsible for contracting these services, if and when required
4. Prepare and Update means the Tenant has the responsibility for ensuring compliance
5. Remove means the responsible party will incorporate this work into its ordinary work schedule
6. Repair and Replace means that Council will consult with the Tenant and, at its sole discretion, will determine if the asset is to be repaired, replaced, or disposed of, and the timing of any such action.
7. Report means that the Tenant will advise Council of a concern by way of Council's Customer Request Management System (CRMS)
8. Respond means that, when advised of a concern, Council will inspect the issue, and incorporate this work into its work schedule
9. Update means that Council has the responsibility for ensuring that the plan is compliant and fit for purpose, subject to an established schedule.
10. Any assets acquired by the Community Asset Committee is wholly the responsibility of the Community Asset Committee.

<b>Council Owned Community Hall</b>			
#	Item	Council Responsibility	Tenant Responsibility
1	Air-conditioning and/or heating systems	Respond	Report
2	Audio-visual equipment	Nil	Care, Repair, Replace
3	Ceilings, walls and skylights	Repair and Replace	Care and Report
4	Cooking and refrigeration equipment – Council owned	Repair and Replace	Care and Report
5	Curtains, drapes and blinds	Nil	Care, Repair, Replace

6	Doors (including cupboard doors) and hardware	Repair and Replace	Care and Report
7	External shell including external walls	Repair and Replace	Care and Report
8	Electrical wiring, switchboard, power points, switches and light fittings	Respond	Report
9	Essential services – automatic doors; fire alarms; fire blankets; fire extinguishers; lighting (emergency and exit); smoke alarms and detectors; fire sprinkler systems	Respond	Report
10	Evacuation plans	Update	Nil
11	External furniture	Nil	Care, Repair, Replace
12	External and security lighting	Respond	Care and Report
13	Fences	Nil	Care, Repair, Replace
14	Floor surfaces and coverings	Repair and Replace, renewal only	Care and Report
15	Fly screens	Respond	Care and Report
16	Food handling areas and storage	Nil	Care, Repair, Replace
17	Gardens and lawns	Nil	Care, Repair, Replace
18	Glass (internal/external) and windows	Repair and Replace	Care and Report
19	Graffiti removal	Respond	Report
20	Gutter cleaning	Respond	Report
21	Hard waste collection	Nil	Remove
22	Keys; locks; electronic access	Repair and Replace	Care and Report
23	Painted surfaces	Repair and Replace	Care and Report
24	Path of travel	Respond	Care and Report
25	Paths (other)	Nil	Care, Repair, Replace
26	Paved areas	Repair and Replace	Care and Report
27	Permanent fixtures including hot water services; inbuilt cupboards; bench tops; sinks; boiling hot water units; filtered water units; stoves; kitchen exhausts/canopies; shelving	Repair and Replace	Care and Report

	and joinery units; bench tops; tiling; ceiling fans; basins and vanity units		
<b>28</b>	Pest control	Respond	Report
<b>29</b>	Playground equipment	Repair and Replace	Care and Report
<b>30</b>	Plumbing such as blocked sewerage; storm water; and plumbing fixtures such as taps; toilet pans; cisterns; seats; shower heads; traps (including grease); pipes	Repair and Replace	Care and Report
<b>31</b>	Roller shutters	Repair and Replace	Care and Report
<b>32</b>	Roofing; roof leaks (including skylights); spouting and down pipes	Repair and Replace	Care and Report
<b>33</b>	Signage (external)	Nil	Care, Repair, Replace
<b>34</b>	Sports playing surfaces	Nil	Care, Repair, Replace
<b>35</b>	Stairs (internal/external)	Repair and Replace	Care and Report
<b>36</b>	Storm damage	Repair and Replace	Care and Report
<b>37</b>	Tag testing and globe replacement	Respond	Report
<b>38</b>	Telecommunications systems (telephones; photocopier; fax)	Repair and Replace	Care and Report
<b>39</b>	Trees	Respond	Care and Report
<b>40</b>	Water tanks	Repair and Replace	Care and Report
<b>41</b>	White goods including refrigerator; microwave; washing machine; clothes dryer; dishwasher; food processors	Nil	Care, Repair, Replace

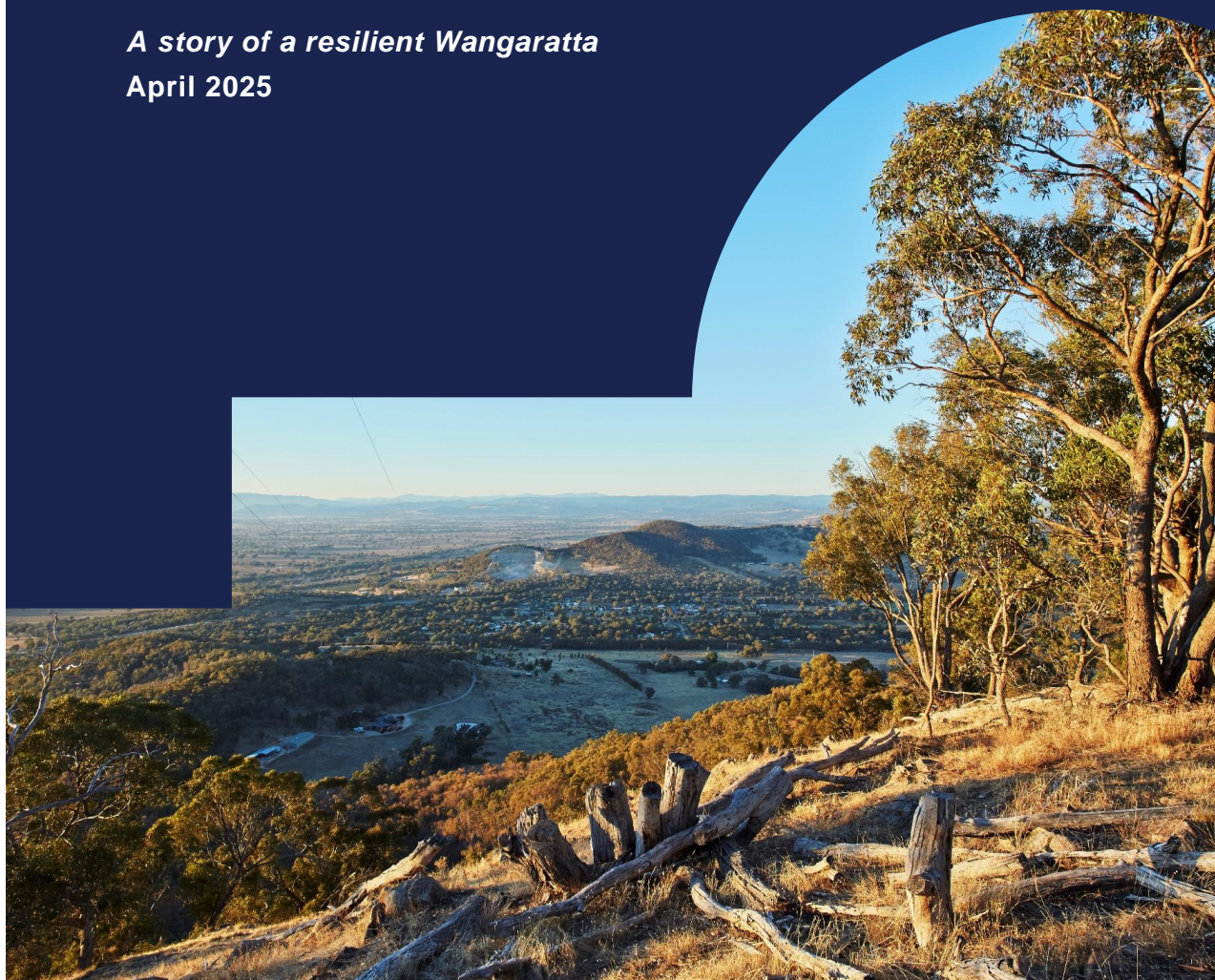


Rural City of  
**Wangaratta**

# Draft Climate Adaptation Plan

*A story of a resilient Wangaratta*

April 2025





# Contents

**Background.....7**

    Rationale ..... 7

    Plan Objectives..... 8

    Approach to Climate Adaptation Planning ..... 8

    Methodology to develop the CAP ..... 10

**A Risk-Based Approach to Climate Adaptation.....13**

    Wangaratta Today ..... 14

    Wangaratta Tomorrow ..... 16

    The Past and Future Climate Context..... 18

    Climate Change Impacts and Risks..... 22

**A Climate Adaptation Plan for a Long-Term Resilient Wangaratta .....27**

    Action Area 1 – Proactive Council, Policies, and Operations ..... 29

    Action Area 2 – Future Proof Council Infrastructure and Assets ..... 31

    Action Area 3 – Future-Proof Land Use Planning and Development..... 34

    Action Area 4 – A Prosperous, Prepared, and Healthy Community ..... 36

    Action Area 5 – A Resilient Natural Environment..... 38

**Monitoring and Evaluation.....40**

**Annexes.....47**



### ***Acknowledgement of Country***

*The Rural City of Wangaratta acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands, on which our communities reside.*

*We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging, and celebrate and respect their continuing cultures.*

*We are committed to walking beside all traditional owners as we move toward reconciliation.*



*Photo courtesy of Michael Peters*

## Executive Summary

The Rural City of Wangaratta Council (Council) has developed this comprehensive 10-year Climate Adaptation Plan (CAP) to address the significant challenges posed by climate change on Council's operations, assets, services, and activities. It is designed to enhance the resilience and adaptability of the Council, ensuring it can support the community to thrive amidst changing climate conditions.

The Municipality of Wangaratta (the Municipality) already experiences extreme weather events that are escalating in frequency and severity. In the future the Municipality is projected to experience higher average and extreme temperatures, longer and more severe heatwaves, lower annual average rainfall, increased time in drought and longer periods with more severe bushfire weather. Extreme rainfall events and flooding are also projected to increase in frequency and severity.

These climate changes are likely to result in increased impacts across the Municipality. Council assets, operations, and service delivery will face increased risks from climate change. Council assets may experience direct damage from extreme events and require more regular maintenance. Council may face difficulties in their operations and service delivery if staff are affected by the disaster, roads are blocked, or essential assets damaged. The increased severity and frequency of disaster events may also require Council to redirect funding from other activities to manage escalating impacts.

Council assets and responsibilities considered in this plan include but are not limited to:



At the same time, the community is likely to require increased support due to increased climate change impacts. The higher likelihood of heat-related distress, respiratory distress from bushfire smoke, physical injuries, and mental health difficulties is expected to impact community health and wellbeing. Notably, vulnerable people in the community are at greater risk of experiencing these impacts.

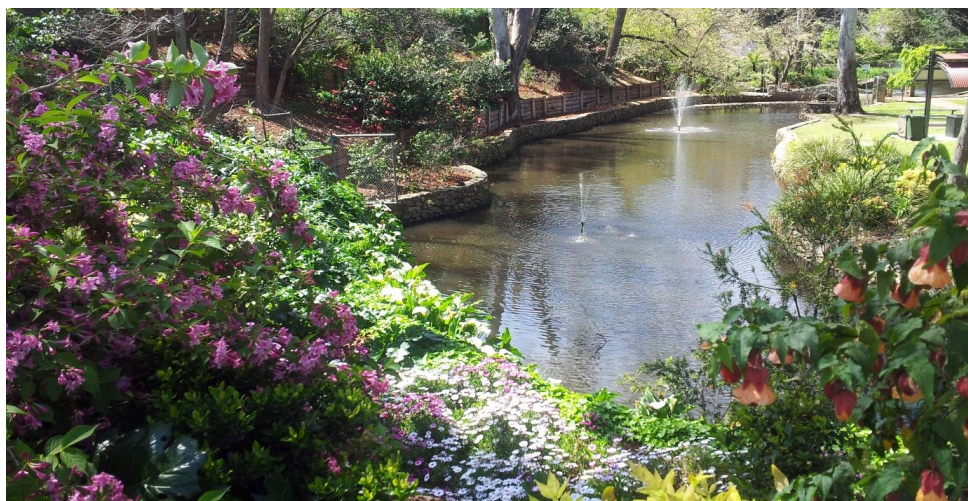
Climate change is also forecast to impact the natural environment, including assets that Council is responsible for. Higher temperatures and prolonged periods of drought are likely to cause stress to vegetation and wildlife, and extreme rainfall and storms may damage vegetation. The regional economy may suffer with limited productivity possible during heatwaves and other disasters, causing damage to businesses and their assets. The agricultural and viticulture industries, significant contributors to the Municipality's financial resilience, are particularly vulnerable due to their reliance on the natural environment. Tourism may be negatively impacted by increasing climate hazards as well.

Council recognises the importance of adapting to climate change to ensure it can continue to service its community in a way that supports social, economic and environmental sustainability and vitality. The challenges posed by climate change are significant and require an informed, targeted approach to

adaptation to effectively reduce climate risks. The development of this CAP to reduce the risks from climate change was included in the 2024–25 budget and was partly funded by Emergency Management Victoria's Risk & Resilience Program. It considers and is designed to work in parallel to existing Council plans, strategies, and policies.

This CAP is the result of extensive research and community and stakeholder engagement. It accounts for the projected changes in climate, climate risks, as well as the current and possible future social, natural, and economic context of Wangaratta.

The CAP presents 18 actions across five action areas that address over 50 risks identified in a climate change risk assessment. The actions range from updating plans and policies, to accounting for climate change in asset management and budgets, to promoting a resilient natural environment. Together, the actions provide a pathway for Council to reduce the risks and impacts from climate hazards on its operations, services, assets and activities, and to support a resilient and thriving community.



*Lagoon in the Municipality*

***What this plan is***

*This Climate Adaptation Plan focuses on adaptation of Council's operations, assets, services and activities. It aims to reduce Council's risks from climate change and enable it to continue to efficiently and effectively serve the community.*

***What this plan is not***

*This is not a community climate adaptation plan. However, by reducing risks to Council operations, assets and services and creating resilience in Council activities, community will benefit from continuity of service and ongoing ability to use Council assets despite the increasing frequency and severity of climate-related weather events.*

## Climate Adaptation Plan - Action Areas and Priority Actions for Consideration 6

1	<b>Proactive Council, policies and operations</b>	Climate change will affect all aspects of Council operations and policies. To reduce impacts from climate change, it is important to ensure climate change adaptation is understood and considered across all of Council's work, staff and volunteers are more prepared to manage escalating and cascading disaster events, and an emergency communications plan is in place for when communications are disrupted.	<b>Action 1.1</b> Continue to integrate climate change adaptation and lessons learned in existing Council plans, policies, strategies, and budget. <b>Action 1.2</b> Improve staff and volunteer capacity to manage disaster relief and recovery activities in the context of climate change <b>Action 1.3</b> Develop an Emergency Management Communications Plan
2	<b>Future-proof Council infrastructure and assets</b>	Council buildings, infrastructure and assets must be resilient to a changing climate to ensure they can continue to function for use in the community. Council funding is limited, so by prioritising investment in critical infrastructure upgrades and identifying state and federal grants, it can support the development of a more resilient Wangaratta.	<b>Action 2.1</b> Create a prioritisation list for upgrading existing council assets <b>Action 2.2</b> Develop plans and applications for funding for infrastructure upgrades that can be submitted when funding is available <b>Action 2.3</b> Create a system to record the costs of repairing and replacing infrastructure after severe weather events <b>Action 2.4</b> Develop sustainable infrastructure policies and plans and update the Sustainable Council Building Policy to continue to ensure climate-resilient design is incorporated into asset renewal and new council construction
3	<b>Future-proof land use planning and development</b>	Land use planning and new infrastructure development is critical to the pursuit of a more resilient Wangaratta. Victoria's municipal based Planning Schemes are key documents that guide what can be considered by local planning decision makers and their ability to promote climate-resilient development.	<b>Action 3.1</b> Advocate for better integration of climate change in state and national planning and building legislation and policies <b>Action 3.2</b> Work with stakeholders to periodically revise hazard and risk modelling for decision making and share outputs with the community
4	<b>A prosperous, prepared and healthy community</b>	Council can support a prosperous, prepared, and healthy community that is well positioned to manage the impacts of climate change. Improving education on climate change, mental health supports, and business continuity during disasters will help the community thrive. Improved access to relief centres or neighbourhood safer spaces will help the community, and particularly the most vulnerable, manage during disasters.	<b>Action 4.1</b> Create a communications plan with relevant partners to promote mental health services, particularly from rural and remote communities who have experienced a disaster <b>Action 4.2</b> Improve community access to relief centres <b>Action 4.3</b> Improve access to financial coaching and resources that improve business continuity strategies for small businesses <b>Action 4.4</b> Collaborate with partners to enhance community outreach efforts on climate change awareness and adaptation
5	<b>A resilient natural environment</b>	Our community and economy rely on a healthy natural environment. The natural environment presents opportunities for recreation as well as underpinning key industries such as agriculture and viticulture. Effective climate-smart land and water management on public and private land and utilising Traditional Knowledge will help ensure that the natural environment is resilient to projected climate changes.	<b>Action 5.1</b> Work with local emergency authorities to improve the distribution of information to landowners on how to develop climate-resilient land management plans <b>Action 5.2</b> Develop a Climate Adaptive Planting Project <b>Action 5.3</b> Work towards Integrated Water Management with relevant partners <b>Action 5.4</b> Work with Traditional Owners to mitigate and reduce the impacts of climate change hazards

*\*Note this list provides a guide for Council's climate adaptation priorities, with implementation dependent on resources and funding. Further details on each action are available in the appendix.*



## Background

### RATIONALE

Surrounded by native bushland, agricultural pastures, and snow-capped peaks, the Rural City of Wangaratta offers a blend of city and country lifestyles. The Municipality is a welcoming community and home to over 30,000 people. However, like many local governments across the globe, Council faces significant challenges posed by climate change. Impacts from increased intensity, duration, and frequency of extreme weather events and unpredictable seasonal patterns threaten Council's ability to effectively and efficiently operate, deliver its services and maintain its assets. More broadly, climate change will cause impacts to the natural environment, agricultural productivity, tourism, and overall quality of life in the Municipality as well. Adapting to climate change is not only necessary, but imperative to ensure Council can meet its mandate, deliver its services, and support the ongoing wellbeing of the community into the future.

In response to these pressing challenges, Council has developed a 10-year Climate Adaptation Plan (CAP). The plan outlines the strategic approach Council will take to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to the impacts of climate change on its assets, operations, and service delivery. Built upon a foundation of research, robust community and stakeholder engagement, and a commitment to sustainability, the CAP outlines priority actions and timelines for implementation. This proactive, participatory approach aims to build a more resilient and adaptive Council, capable of supporting the community through any challenges the future climate may bring.

**Adaptation** is the process of adjusting to actual or expected climate and its effects to minimise harm or utilise opportunities.



*Aerial view of the Municipality*

*Note, this plan has been developed based on physical climate risks only, based on existing climate modelling. Advice and recommendations made within this plan should be reviewed and updated as updated climate data becomes available.*

## PLAN OBJECTIVES

Proactive and targeted adaptation is required to effectively manage the risks from climate change and minimise impacts on Council's operations, assets, services and activities, thereby building community resilience.

The CAP aims to reduce the risks from climate change, including the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather shocks and longer-term events. Through the actions identified, Council will be well placed to achieve its vision for climate change adaptation and resilience. Council and the community will be well prepared to respond, adapt, and continue to thrive.

### Climate adaptation and resilience vision

Into the future, Council assets, operations, and services are resilient to climate change, fostering a prosperous and healthy community, economy, and natural environment

## APPROACH TO CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLANNING

In the face of climate change, everyone—from government bodies to businesses, households, and individuals—shares a responsibility to adapt. As the level of government most intimately connected with its communities, councils are often the first responders to local climate impacts. Through careful stewardship of community resources, councils need to ensure that adaptation is grounded in the specific needs and circumstances of the region.

In adapting to climate change, councils need to integrate these objectives into their everyday operations. Local governments administer policies, regulations, and planning strategies that directly shape land use, risk management, and hazard mitigation. Partnering with regional bodies, councils contribute to environmental and economic initiatives that expand the reach and impact of adaptation efforts.

The services councils provide—from health and community safety to waste management and childcare—are integral to adapting to changing conditions. Ensuring Council operations, assets, and services are adapting to climate change, also supports resident's wellbeing and resilience. Additionally, councils oversee the infrastructure and public spaces that enable local businesses, industries, and users of these spaces to thrive.

Through these combined efforts and the development of this adaptation plan, the Rural City of Wangaratta strives to demonstrate climate change leadership in the region.

### Planning Context

This CAP leverages existing plans, policies, and strategies, recognising the efforts already underway locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally, to reduce risks from climate change. The priority actions identified fit within the Municipality's planning context by building on existing emergency risk management strategies.

### Local context

Council has already taken steps to integrate climate change considerations within their plans, policies and strategies. Relevant key Council documents include:

- **Council Plan 2021–2025**: Describes the strategic objectives, actions to achieve the objectives, indicators for measuring progress, and resources required to implement the four-year plan (addressing climate change impacts via incorporation of strategic priority areas). The Council Plan also includes the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan with priorities related to climate change adaptation and emergency management.
- **Financial Plan 2021–2031**: Through this plan, Council commits to building climate-resilient infrastructure, consider future costs to adapting to climate change, and developing a detailed plan of actions that council can take to respond to climate change.
- **Budget 2024–2025**: Key initiatives in relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation activities within the budget include development and implementation of the climate adaptation plan and delivery of the environmental sustainability strategy actions.
- **Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Policy 2022–2025**: Taking a precautionary planning approach, this policy ensures Council's climate change actions reflect Council's operational and financial capacity and community expectations. Council is expected to provide support systems for emergency preparedness, response, and recovery activities following natural disasters.
- **Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2021–2026**: A plan for a healthy, resilient, and sustainable future across the Municipality, this strategy identifies multiple actions under priority areas to plan for and proactively mitigate against climate change impacts.
- **Asset Plan 2022–2032**: The plan identifies numerous climate change adaptation challenges and opportunities when managing Council's asset portfolio e.g., infrastructure upgrades to meet vulnerable infrastructure requirements to mitigate potential risks.
- **Wangaratta Planning Scheme**: The scheme is used to assess planning permit applications.

### State context

This CAP aligns with the climate resilience objectives for 2050 outlined in the Victorian Government's Climate Change Strategy.

Other relevant Victorian state legislation includes:

- Climate Change Act 2017
- Environment Protection Act 2017
- Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1998
- Planning and Environment Act 1987
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Local Government Act 2020

### National and international context

Climate change adaptation is enabled by efforts at the national and international levels. For example:

#### *National:*

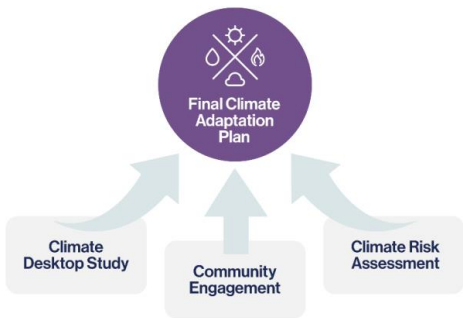
- Climate Change Act 2022
- Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
- National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy

#### *International:*

- Paris Agreement 2015
- Sustainable Development Goals

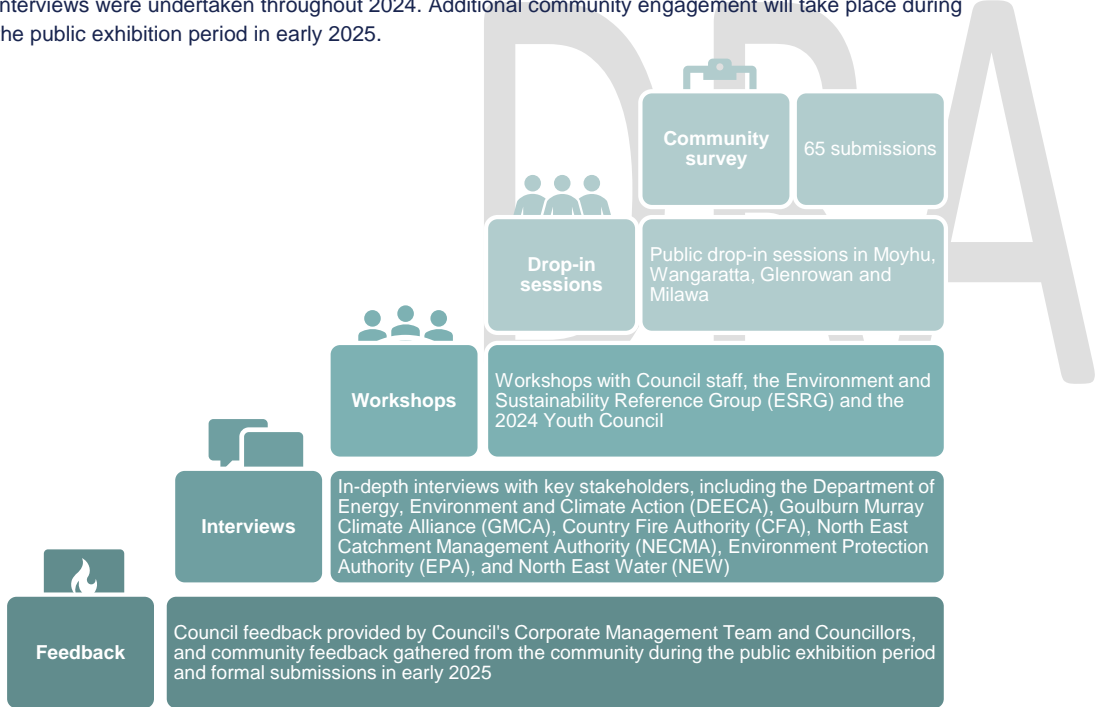
METHODOLOGY TO DEVELOP THE CAP

The CAP is the result of comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement, consultation with Council staff and extensive research including a climate risk assessment.



Community and Council consultation

Extensive consultation with the local community, key stakeholders, and Council staff was undertaken to inform the development of the CAP. Community surveys, drop-in sessions, workshops and interviews were undertaken throughout 2024. Additional community engagement will take place during the public exhibition period in early 2025.





Community sentiment highlighted climate action as an area of interest and concern. Across the engagement program, the following key themes were identified and are reflected throughout the CAP:



#### Climate desktop study

In parallel to the engagement program, a review of Council policies, plans and strategies was completed. Leading scientific research and community polling data such as the census were reviewed to develop a robust understanding of the region in the context of climate change and climate challenges.



*Bush tucker garden*

### Climate risk assessment

Understanding the risks the Municipality faces from climate change is central to developing a targeted and effective CAP. Therefore, insights from the climate desktop study and consultation activities were used to develop a climate risk assessment.

55 climate risks that could impact the Municipality in the future were identified. They related to extreme temperatures and heatwaves, extreme rainfall and storms, flooding, and bushfire and were classified under four themes:



Risks were assessed based on projections for climate and natural hazards in a high and medium-emission scenario for 2030, 2050, and 2090. Findings from the risk assessment are outlined in the sections below.



*Apex Park flood. Photo courtesy of the Wangaratta Chronicle*

## A Risk-Based Approach to Climate Adaptation

Understanding key concepts relating to climate risk can help Council pinpoint actions that assist the Municipality in achieving its vision for a resilient community capable of withstanding future climate-related shocks and stressors. Taking a proactive approach to reducing climate risk through climate adaptation and planning ensures Council can prepare for possible impacts and bring benefits to create a desirable and thriving city in the future.

This CAP is rooted in the consideration of 'climate risk', defined as situations where "the potential for adverse consequences for human or ecological systems" are felt within a system [1]. That is, the potential for negative consequences as a result of an acute or chronic event (shock or stressor). Risk evolves from the interaction between climate-related *hazards* with the *exposure* and *vulnerability* of the system to the hazard [1]. Hazards, exposure, and vulnerability are subject to uncertainty in terms of *consequence* (magnitude of the impact) and *likelihood* (chance of occurring).



Figure 1: Climate risk framework. Based on IPCC.

### Hazard



Hazards are the possible occurrence of natural or human-caused physical events that can lead to injury, health effects, property damage or loss, fatalities, loss of livelihood, disruption of services, ecosystem harm, or loss of environmental services. [2], e.g., Extreme rainfall, flood, bushfire.

### Exposure



Exposure is the existence of people, livelihoods, species, environmental functions, services, resources, infrastructure, economic, social, or cultural assets within a location that could be adversely affected [2].

### Vulnerability



Vulnerability is the predisposition to be adversely affected. This includes considerations of sensitivity (the degree to which an asset, system, or person may be affected by a hazard) and adaptive capacity of the asset, system, or person (that is, their ability to adjust to the hazard or cope with the change) [2]. Vulnerability can be determined by numerous factors including the materials an asset is made of, how often an asset is maintained, or the underlying health conditions of a population group.

## WANGARATTA TODAY

Council's role is to serve and support the communities in its Municipality and it is best equipped to do so when it understands the make-up of these communities, their environment, and their future. This section presents a summary of these characteristics.

### Socio-economic characteristics

Overall, the Municipality is a growing community. It is currently home to 30,002 people (as of 2023), with Wangaratta home to 19,712 residents.

The socio-economic profile reveals a low unemployment rate (2.9%) and moderate economic hardship, as reflected in the municipality's ranking (30th of 80) on the Victorian socio-economic disadvantage index. A 67% increase in homelessness since 2016 has also driven demand for specialised services, with over 600 residents seeking assistance. Education levels show that nearly half the population (44.1%) has completed Year 12 or equivalent, with 563 students attending university in 2021. Age distribution highlights the need for age-specific adaptation measures, as 31.2% of residents are 60 years or older, compared to 21.3% who are 17 or younger.

Culturally, the Municipality is diverse, with 1.8% of residents identifying as Indigenous, 9.07% born overseas (16% arriving in the past five years), and 5.2% speaking a language other than English at home, predominantly Italian. While only 0.6% of residents have limited English proficiency, these figures highlight the need for culturally inclusive climate adaptation efforts.

Health considerations are also significant, with high overall wellbeing scores (80.2 out of 100, above the Victorian average). However, 39.2% of residents report multiple health conditions, 10.7% identify with mental health issues, and over 2,200 people require daily assistance due to disabilities. Social challenges, including over 2,000 recorded family violence incidents, highlight additional areas for focused support.



Wangaratta Sports and Aquatic Centre



### **Environmental characteristics**

The region is rich in scenic, natural spaces, with vital ecosystems supported by the Ovens and King Rivers which serve as key resources for both the community and local livelihoods. The Ovens River is a Heritage River and the Lower Ovens Wetland Complex (from Killawarra to Lake Mulwala, encompassing parts of the Warby Ovens National Park) is recognised as a nationally important wetland complex that contains over 1,800 individual wetlands. The river systems and wetlands support over 2,000 hectares of agricultural, horticultural, and cropping land. Other significant natural areas include the Mullinmur Billabongs, Lake Buffalo, and Lake William Hovell. Across the municipality, there are five distinct bioregions and 25 Ecological Vegetation Classes, 14 of which are endangered. Additionally, four federally protected vegetation communities and over 2,000 state-listed threatened plant and animal species underscore the region's environmental significance and the need for robust conservation within future climate adaptation plans.

### **Economic characteristics**

Economically, the Municipality is driven by key sectors including agriculture, healthcare, education, manufacturing, and construction. The municipality provides 14,188 jobs, generating an annual economic output of \$4.467 billion, with 81.2% of these jobs located in Wangaratta. Healthcare and social assistance are the largest employment sectors, with over 2,400 people (around 20% of local employment) engaged in these fields. Manufacturing leads economically, contributing \$828 million annually and employing 1,250 people.



*Glenrowan Ned Kelly Discovery Hub*

This profile illustrates the need for a climate adaptation plan that addresses the socio-economic, health, environmental, and cultural requirements of the municipality, enhancing resilience while preserving vital ecosystems and supporting a diverse community.

## WANGARATTA TOMORROW

As a community, the Municipality is already experiencing the impacts of climate change. Increased occurrences of severe drought, bushfire, storms, flood, and heatwave conditions pose significant challenges for the community, businesses, agricultural production, and natural ecosystems.

As a region, Council recognises the influence climate change has across its assets, operations and community life. Existing strategies recognise the importance of this global challenge. For example, the [Council Plan 2021–2025](#) states that “the Rural City of Wangaratta will lead the way and collaborate with others to find the best way to mitigate and respond to climate change.” [3] It aligns with community sentiment on what the future should look like and establishes Council’s strategic priorities to achieve that future:



Leadership



Wellbeing



Economy



Environment



Lifestyle



Growth

In addition to climate change, there are many other likely and possible changes across the region.



*Tower at dusk*

**Social changes**

By 2031, the population in the Municipality is expected to reach 32,220, growing at 0.6% per annum. However, it is also expected to be an ageing population [4]. There is likely to be an increased focus on people aging well at home which may change the general level of support the community requires, increase the need for climate resilient housing, and change the way disasters are prepared for and managed. As the population grows, educational expansion will also support future growth and professional development of the Municipality [5].

**Environmental changes**

Environmental changes will bring several challenges and opportunities for the region, requiring innovative and adaptive strategies. Changes include an increase in extreme rainfall events and flooding, more severe storm events, and longer and hotter bushfire seasons [6]. Further information is provided under the “Past and Future Climate Context” section below.

**Economic changes**

As the Municipality navigates the future, several economic changes are expected to reshape the region:

- Many of region’s key industries are expected to experience economic growth.
- A 30% expansion across the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry is expected [5].
- The healthcare and social assistance industry is the largest employer across the Municipality and is expected to grow due to the Municipality’s aging population, proximity to the Hume Freeway and access to air ambulance via the Wangaratta Aerodrome [5].
- Expansion of the healthcare and social assistance industries presents opportunities for skilled workforce development [7]
- There may be growing investment opportunities for food and beverage tourism [8].
- There may be growing transport activities as a central hub between Melbourne and Sydney is expected to be developed [9].
- There may be a decrease in working age residents.

**Technological changes**

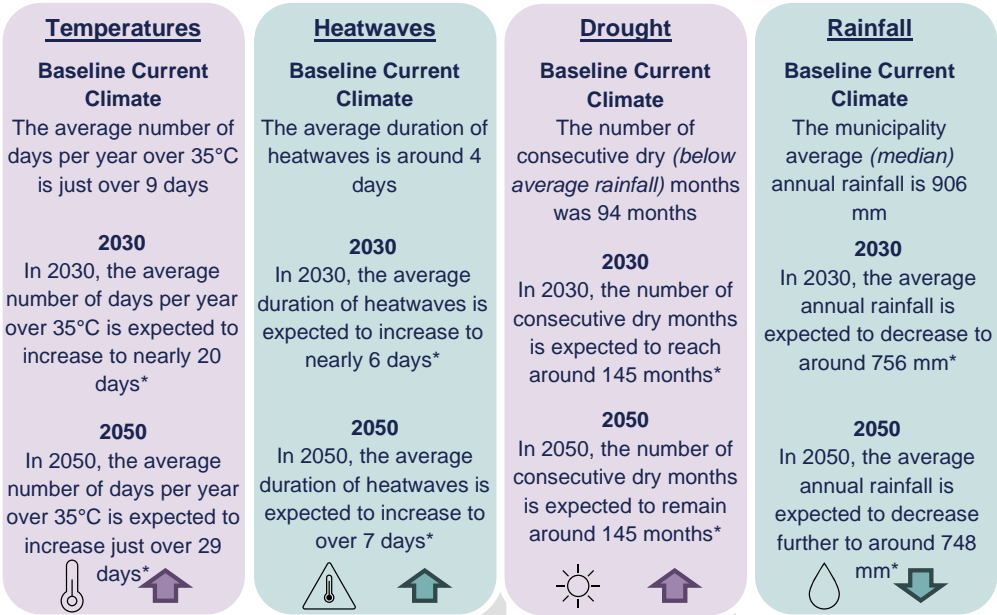
Future opportunities may allow for the region to support manufacturing areas to grow and diversify, particularly around transport electrification and industrial decarbonisation [ 9] and [10].] There are clean energy technology trends across the region including at the household level. Expansion of solar panels on houses, solar farms and increasing installation of community and household batteries is facilitating a transition away from gas in both household and industry.

**Political changes**

Legislative and political changes are rapidly evolving. New climate change legislation is coming to fruition on a regular basis since the development of the Climate Change Act in 2022. Council readily considers climate change within its planning documents as outlined in the “Planning Context” section.

THE PAST AND FUTURE CLIMATE CONTEXT

The Municipality is generally considered to have a warm, temperate climate. In the future, the climate in the Municipality is expected to change. Projections show higher temperatures with more extreme heatwaves, longer and more intense droughts, and increased intense rainfall, flooding and bushfires.



\*Under RCP8.5 and averaged across the entire Municipality

The sections below explain the baseline current and projected future climate. The baseline current climate is the average weather conditions (1986-2005) from the Bureau of Meteorology and Victorian Climate Projections 2019, in line with best practice. Projected future climate has been identified for two 'time slices'. The data for 2030 represents the projected average conditions across the entire Municipality from 2015-2044 and the data for 2050 represents the projected average conditions across the entire Municipality from 2035-2064.

These are averages, meaning the actual weather experienced each year and in different places during these periods will vary. Some years and places will have much more severe weather conditions while others will have less severe weather conditions. Two future climate scenarios are presented as well, showing the range of possibilities the Municipality could experience based on a medium global emissions scenario (Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) 4.5) and a high global emissions scenario (RCP8.5). Future climate data has been externally modelled and is publicly available through [Victoria's Future Climate Tool](#). Where specific data is not available, a qualitative description of the possible changes in characteristics of the climate variables is provided.



**Extreme temperature**

Throughout the year, on average the Municipality experiences around 9 days above 35°C and just over 1 heatwave lasting nearly 4 days. On average, the hottest day is 36.77°C [12]. The north of the region typically experiences more regular high temperatures than the south, with 6 to 7 days over 35 degrees in January [12].

*In late January/early February 2009, Wangaratta experienced 5 consecutive days over 40°C. [13]  
Extreme temperatures in 2019–20 reached 45.6°C on 31st January 2020 [14].*

In the future, average daily temperatures and extreme temperatures are expected to increase (Figure 2) [12]. The number of days on average per year above 35°C is expected to increase to nearly 20 in 2030 and just over 29 by 2050 under RCP8.5 [12]. This represents a doubling and tripling of hot days on average each year, respectively. Heatwaves are also expected to increase in frequency, intensity, and duration (Figure 3) [12].

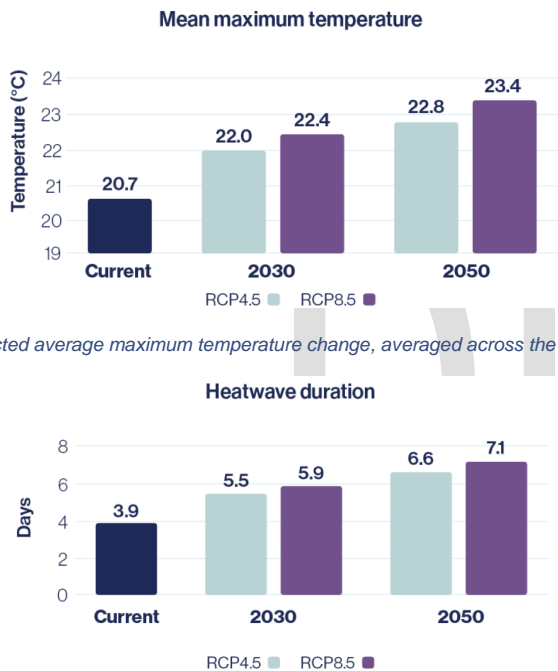


Figure 2. Projected average maximum temperature change, averaged across the entire Municipality

Figure 3. Projected heatwave duration change, averaged across the entire Municipality

While long-term climate modelling for Wangaratta indicates a trend toward warmer average temperatures, the potential for rare or extreme cold weather events such as frosts or cold snaps remains. These events, though less frequent, can still impact vulnerable community members, energy demand, native vegetation and local agriculture

### Drought

The region spends a significant portion of time in drought. While the southern parts of the Municipality experience more months in drought than the northern areas, both have spent multiple consecutive years impacted by less-than-average rainfall, and in extreme cases, drought [12].

The Municipality experienced 94 consecutive months of dry conditions during the baseline period, and 3 months of extreme dry conditions [12].

*Drought from 2006-08 resulted in water restrictions and implementation of other water management strategies [15].*

In the future, rainfall will continue to be variable but is generally expected to decline (Figure 4), particularly over winter and spring [12]. Droughts could become longer, more intense, and more severe (Figure 5) [16]. The Standardised Precipitation Index (SPI) is utilised to measure precipitation anomalies. In the case of droughts, SPI less than -1 indicates severe rainfall deficiencies, which are an indicator of the severity and extent of meteorological drought.

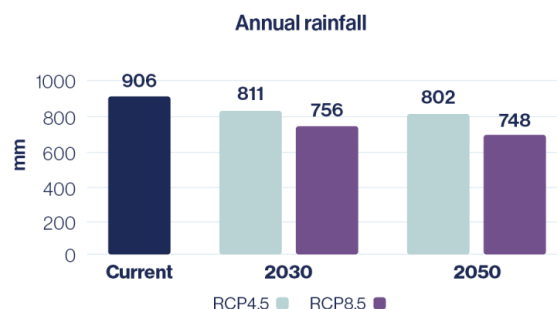


Figure 4. Projected annual rainfall change, averaged across the entire Municipality

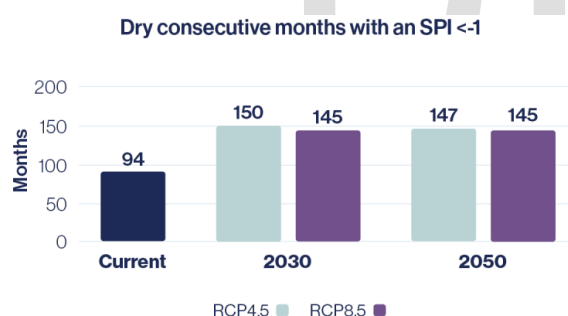


Figure 5. Projected dry consecutive months change, averaged across the entire Municipality.. Note the 6-month SPI was used. See the Victorian Climate Projections Technical Report for more information on this measure of drought.

### **Extreme rainfall and flooding**

Average annual rainfall is about 906 mm and the Municipality experiences around 10 days of rain greater than 20 mm per year [12]. The Municipality experiences an average of 2 months of extreme wet conditions [12].

The south of the Municipality generally experiences more frequent very wet days (over 20 mm of rain) than the north on average. Southern parts may have 19 days annually with over 20 mm while areas to the north only have 5 days [12].

*Storms in February 2024 left 1,742 houses and businesses without power [17].*

Flood events with a 1% chance of happening every year show many of the towns and rural areas bordering the Ovens/King Rivers are vulnerable including Wangaratta, Laceby, Oxley Flats, and Whorouly (as well as Wangaratta Airport).

*Flooding in October 2022 affected 6,509 ha of farmland, causing 440 ha of crop loss, and impacting 319 km of fencing [18].*

In the future significant variability in rainfall in space and time is expected. For the Ovens Murray region, where the Municipality sits, it is projected that extreme rainfall events will become more intense [19]. It is generally expected that flooding will become more frequent and extensive [20].



*Apex Park Flood. Photo courtesy of the Wangaratta Chronicle*

### **Bushfires**

The Municipality can be significantly affected by bushfire. Areas to the south, particularly the Alpine National Park area, are particularly exposed [21].

*Bushfires in 2019-20 resulted in evacuation orders for local and regional residents, loss of pasture, smoke impacts to vineyards, and economic loss through reduced tourism [22].*

In the future, as temperatures increase and the land gets drier, bushfires are expected to become more severe, more frequent, and last longer. The north-east and north-west will likely be most sensitive to these weather changes [21], however the Alpine National Park area is also likely to experience more frequent and severe bushfires due to the high fuel load.

## CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS AND RISKS

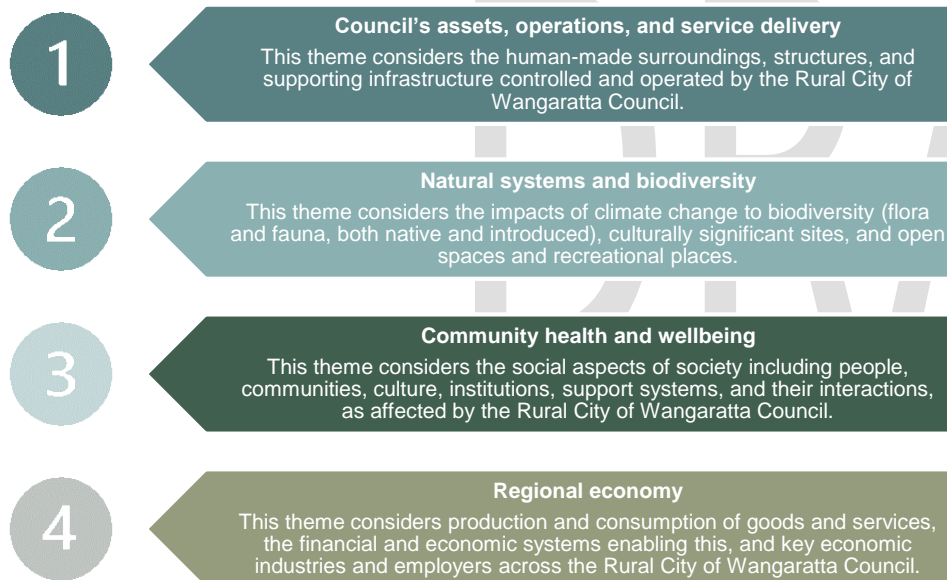
### Community voices on climate change impacts (feedback gathered during the community consultation):

*“As a farmer, all of these extreme weather conditions have a massive impact on managing stock welfare and land health.”*

*“Not that long ago I witnessed people affected by having to evacuate their homes due to bushfire danger which was related to severe drought... Sadly this scenario will be repeated in the not-too-distant future. We must be prepared.”*

*“We are worried that flood mapping in our area doesn’t take into account more extreme flooding that may happen as a result of climate change. Many of our neighbours think they are safe because they have not been flooded out yet, but waters have gotten close.”*

The climate risk assessment underpinning this CAP considered various hazards for the near (2030), medium (2050) and far future (2090). Risks were considered under a high emissions future (RCP8.5), or business as usual, and a medium emissions scenario (RCP 4.5) which considers moderate greenhouse gas emission reduction efforts. 55 risks were identified through the assessment process. Risks have been identified across four thematic areas:



### Council's Assets, Operations and Services Delivery

Council manages a range of assets and services, which will require adaptation to reduce their vulnerability to climate-related natural hazards and ensure business continuity, particularly when staff are re-directed for emergency response and recovery. Council responsibilities include but are not limited to:



**Council managed buildings**



**Parks, gardens and open spaces**



**Roads, bridges, footpaths, drainage & other infrastructure**



**Waste and recycling**



**Land use planning**



**Emergency response**



**Child and aged care services**



The Rural City of Wangaratta has been entrusted as custodians to 3,644 km<sup>2</sup> of land across the Municipality, valued at approximately \$768 million. This includes:

- 728 km of sealed roads
- 406 bridges
- 220 buildings
- 159 sports grounds and playgrounds
- 5 landfills
- 87 water-sensitive urban designs
- 10 flood mitigation measures (pumps and levees)

### **Key Climate Change Impacts to Council Assets**

The following climate change impacts have been identified to Council assets and operations:



**Extreme temperatures, heatwaves & droughts**

- Accelerated degradation of infrastructure including buildings, roads and the Aerodrome
- More regular maintenance, watering, and replanting needed for open spaces like parks



**Extreme rainfall, storms, and floods**

- Increased damage to infrastructure including buildings, bridges, roads and the Aerodrome from extreme rainfall, hail, wind, flooding, and impacts from flying debris such as branches
- Increased likelihood that the drainage capacity will be exceeded creating localised flooding and oversaturation of grassy open spaces
- The capacity of water and sewerage infrastructure may be exceeded



**Bushfire**

- Increased likelihood of damage to infrastructure including buildings, bridges, roads and the Aerodrome
- Increased disruption to essential services, like waste collection or road maintenance, due to bushfires and smoke
- Increased disruption to emergency services due to bushfires and smoke

**Natural systems and biodiversity**

Many of the Municipality's natural systems will be impacted by climate change, which will require careful monitoring, management and intervention. Impacts are likely to have flow on impacts to the community and regional economy as well. Natural systems include but are not limited to:



Native flora



Native fauna



Waterways



Land and soil



Weeds and pests



Natural sites of cultural significance






Bush reserves (60+)



Mount Cobbler, Alpine National Park

**Key Climate Change Impacts to Natural Systems**

The following climate change impacts have been identified to natural systems and biodiversity:

 Extreme temperatures, heatwaves & droughts	 Extreme rainfall, storms, and floods	 Bushfire
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased heat related stress to wildlife</li><li>• Increased dieback and mortality of vegetation may impact natural amenity and could worsen the heat island effect in built up areas</li><li>• Contributes to an increased risk of bushfires</li><li>• Increased prolonged periods of "low-flow" periods, reduced water quality, reduced habitat and potentially pooling or cease-to-flow periods</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased erosion and likelihood of new river channel creation impacting river health, habitat availability and quality</li><li>• Increased likelihood of fish mortality from potential blackwater events</li><li>• Increased frequency of landslips causing further degradation to the natural environment and potentially damaging other built assets</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased loss of wildlife and natural vegetation</li><li>• Increased damage to culturally and naturally significant sites due to land clearing</li><li>• Increased frequency of landslips causing further degradation to the natural environment and potentially damaging other built assets</li><li>• Decreased water quality from increased sediment loads after fire, also impacting potable water offtake and treatment</li></ul>



**Community health and wellbeing**

The community has a diverse range of needs and Council understands that support must be fit-for-purpose. By identifying the different areas in which support is required, adaptation can be tailored to support resilience-building across the community. Some examples include:



Age



Pre-existing  
health  
conditions



Disabilities



Mental health



Loneliness



Unhoused



*Bicycle lockers in Wangaratta*

**Key Climate Change Impacts to Community**

The following climate change impacts have been identified for community health and wellbeing:



Extreme temperatures,  
heatwaves & droughts



Extreme rainfall, storms,  
and floods



Bushfire

- Increased heat related stress, illness, and deaths, particularly for the most vulnerable people in the community and people who work outdoors
- Increased likelihood of power outages as the grid is overloaded, limiting the number of cool spaces to take refuge

- Increased damage to housing and other critical community infrastructure
- Increased likelihood of power and telecommunications disruptions
- Increased likelihood of disruption to Council services like childcare centres or waste collection
- Increased likelihood of disruption to emergency services and healthcare provision
- Increased mental health impacts from more frequent events

- Potential for significant loss of life and injury
- Increased physical health impacts, including respiratory, or cardiac complaints due to smoke and poor air quality
- Increased mental health impacts from more frequent and severe events
- Increased likelihood of damage and loss of housing and other buildings the community relies on (e.g., health care centres) causing disruptions to health service provision



**Regional economy**


Maintaining a healthy economy through climate change induced natural hazard events is paramount to the resilience of the community and Council operations. The Municipality’s key economic sectors include, but are not limited to:



AgricultureManufacturingHealthcareEducationTourismConstructionTransport and Distribution

**Key Climate Change Impacts to the Regional Economy**

The following climate change impacts have been identified to the regional economy:

 Extreme temperatures, heatwaves & droughts	 Extreme rainfall, storms, and floods	 Bushfire
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exposure to heat and heat stress related illnesses may impact safety and reduce productivity of outdoor workers, machinery operators</li><li>• Dryer soils and increased likelihood of erosion may affect the vitality of the agriculture and viticulture industries</li><li>• There may be less water available for irrigation for agriculture</li><li>• There may be reduced snow in the Alpine regions affecting tourism</li><li>• Increased power outages may cause increased business disruptions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased damage to crops and livestock and related assets like sheds, fencing and machinery</li><li>• Increased soil erosion impacting productivity of agriculture and viticulture</li><li>• More frequent hailstorms, rain events and flooding could result in construction delays, damage to machinery, and increased costs from flood mitigation measures and insurance costs</li><li>• Increased likelihood of business disruption if supply chains are cut off, power is cut, or the buildings are damaged</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased likelihood of loss of crops, livestock and related assets like sheds, fencing and machinery</li><li>• Increased likelihood of business disruption if supply chains are cut off, power is cut, or the buildings are damaged</li><li>• Increased costs to protect, maintain, repair, and insure buildings and other infrastructure</li><li>• Reduced tourism during bushfire events</li><li>• Bushfires also have significant impacts via loss of burnt farmland, loss of fencing, and death of livestock, particularly across southern parts of the Municipality near the Alpine Region (Wangaratta Municipal Emergency Management Plan, 2021).</li></ul>



## A Climate Adaptation Plan for a Long-Term Resilient Wangaratta

Using the insights gathered in the community and stakeholder engagement activities, the desktop study and the risk assessment, 18 adaptation actions under five action areas were identified. The action areas reflect the objectives of the CAP on minimising climate risks to Council service delivery and operations and focus on actions within Council's sphere of influence. Therefore, the risk theme relating to Council was broken into two action areas on 'policies and operations' and 'infrastructure and assets'. The risk themes on the regional economy and community health and wellbeing were combined into a community focused action area. An additional action area on land use planning and development was identified. The natural environment risk theme remained an action area within the CAP.

In addition to these actions that focus on climate change adaptation specifically, it is important to note and acknowledge the role of mitigation and other sustainability activities for climate resilience as well. Reducing reliance on mains electricity through the installation of solar panels and batteries will reduce the risk of power outages. Pursuing a circular economy may increase the lifespan of landfills to boost their capacity to absorb increased waste after disaster events. Recognising these synergies across different areas of council operations is important and promoted with Action Area 1. The table below presents an overview of the five action areas.



*Aerial view of the CBD and the River*

**Climate Adaptation Plan Action Areas**

<b>1</b>	<b>Proactive Council, policies and operations</b>	<p>Climate change will affect all aspects of Council operations and policies.</p> <p>To reduce impacts from climate change, it is important to ensure climate change adaptation is understood and considered across all of Council's work, staff and volunteers are more prepared to manage escalating and cascading disaster events, and an emergency communications plan is in place for when communications are disrupted.</p>
<b>2</b>	<b>Future-proof Council infrastructure and assets</b>	<p>Council buildings, infrastructure and assets must be resilient to a changing climate to ensure they can continue to function for use in the community.</p> <p>Council funding is limited, so by prioritising investment in critical infrastructure upgrades and identifying state and federal grants, it can support the development of a more resilient Wangaratta.</p>
<b>3</b>	<b>Future-proof land use planning and development</b>	<p>Land use planning and new infrastructure development is critical to the pursuit of a more resilient Wangaratta.</p> <p>Victoria's municipal based Planning Schemes are key documents that guide what can be considered by local planning decision makers and their ability to promote climate-resilient development.</p>
<b>4</b>	<b>A prosperous, prepared and healthy community</b>	<p>Council can support a prosperous, prepared, and healthy community that is well positioned to manage the impacts of climate change.</p> <p>Improving education on climate change, mental health supports, and business continuity during disasters will help the community thrive.</p> <p>Improved access to relief centres or neighbourhood safer spaces will help the community, and particularly the most vulnerable, manage during disasters.</p>
<b>5</b>	<b>A resilient natural environment</b>	<p>Our community and economy rely on a healthy natural environment.</p> <p>The natural environment presents opportunities for recreation as well as underpinning key industries such as agriculture and viticulture.</p> <p>Effective climate-smart land and water management on public and private land and utilising Traditional Knowledge will help ensure that the natural environment is resilient to projected climate changes.</p>

## ACTION AREA 1 – PROACTIVE COUNCIL, POLICIES, AND OPERATIONS

Climate change is going to affect all aspects of Council operations and policies. To reduce impacts from climate change, it is important to ensure that climate change adaptation is understood and considered across all of Council's work, that staff and volunteers are more prepared to manage escalating and cascading disaster events, and that there is an emergency communications plan in place for when telecommunications are disrupted.

By taking proactive steps, Council can mainstream climate change adaptation across its portfolio, likely increasing uptake of actions and unlocking innovative solutions in areas not typically considered relevant for adaptation. Further, Council will be better prepared to manage disaster events under a changing climate.

### Benefits for the community

The community will benefit from a Council that prioritises climate change adaptation in all areas of its work, reducing risks across operations and assets. Assets will be more likely to remain operational, requiring less costly maintenance and Council will be more likely to be able to continue to deliver its services to the community. The community will also benefit during disasters from more prepared Council staff that have appropriate training and are resilient, with mechanisms in place for emergency communications when telecommunications services are disrupted.

### Action 1.1 – Continue to integrate climate change adaptation and lessons learned in existing Council plans, policies, strategies and budget

Climate risk is already considered in existing Council plans and strategies, including a Business Continuity Policy and Plan (2023) that considers disruptions to council's services due to climate event disruptions (fire/flood/extreme weather). However, this should be extended to consideration of climate change adaptation and budgeting for actions to drive faster action on reducing the risks. Lessons learned should also be integrated into policies, plans and strategies to promote more effective adaptation.



Wangaratta Government Centre

**Action 1.2 – Improve staff and volunteer capacity to manage disaster relief and recovery activities in the context of climate change**

Climate-related disaster events are becoming more frequent, extreme and complex where multiple hazards occur at the same time or in succession. Council can advocate and account for this in emergency management training. Further, hazard-specific emergency management plans should be developed in collaboration with relevant stakeholders. These plans should outline procedures to manage and respond to different hazard events, trigger points for action, and a list of staff trained to implement the procedures. As heatwaves are becoming more frequent, severe, and are extremely harmful to the community, a specific heatwave policy should also be developed. Given the escalating nature of climate disasters, staff and volunteers must be supported in their mental and physical health as well, particularly through trauma-informed responses and training.

**Action 1.3 – Develop an Emergency Management Communications Plan**

Telecommunications towers have limited back-up energy supply, meaning that in disasters with extended grid outages, phone lines and mobile service may be disrupted. While the Neighbourhood Safer Places have Sky Muster Satellite services, they must be connected to power to operate. An emergency management communications plan that outlines how Council will communicate with its staff, with other agencies, and with people in the Municipality, particularly with vulnerable people, should be developed to effectively manage telecommunications outages. Ensuring ongoing access to power where required for communication during a power outage should be a key consideration.



*Lions Park*



## **ACTION AREA 2 – FUTURE PROOF COUNCIL INFRASTRUCTURE AND ASSETS**

Council buildings, infrastructure and assets must be resilient to a changing climate to ensure they can continue to be used by the community. However, Council's limited funding means it must identify which assets should be prioritised for upgrades. Council can also prepare grant funding applications in advance, enabling it to meet short submission timeframes and maximise the chance of increasing budgets for urgent infrastructure upgrades.

Further, establishing a record management system to track the costs of repair and maintenance to Council assets after disasters will enable Council to better plan for the costs of climate change in the long-term financial plan and provide evidence of funding needs. Finally, developing sustainable infrastructure policies will support the climate-resilient development of new assets so that damage is minimised in disaster events, even under a changing climate.

### **Benefits for the community**

The community will benefit from having less interrupted access to Council assets including public buildings, open space, the Aerodrome, roads, and bridges, despite the increasing frequency and severity of disaster events. The community will benefit from a Council that is well prepared to access funding opportunities when they arise to use for upgrades and repair of critical assets. Further the community will benefit from timelier repair and renewal of Council assets as Council is better able to assess and integrate the future costs of climate change into its standard budget planning processes.

### **Action 2.1 – Create a prioritisation list for upgrading existing council assets**

Council funding is limited and must be prioritised to ensure key assets are upgraded, enhanced or maintained. Council should consider a three-pronged approach to developing a prioritisation list and schedule: assessing climate-related vulnerability/sensitivity (e.g. using the GMCA assessment, see page 32 for key findings), assessing criticality (e.g., the bridges that meet the definition of a 'critical asset' in the [Bridge Asset Management Plan](#)) and reviewing the current maintenance schedule.

Together, these assessments can be integrated into the [Asset Management Plan](#) and should provide a climate-resilient approach to asset renewal. Throughout this process, key council sites with off-grid capabilities should be established (e.g., solar power, battery storage, rainwater harvesting) and actively publicised, to educate the community on self-sufficiency and resilience.

### **Action 2.2 – Develop plans and applications for funding for infrastructure upgrades that can be submitted when funding is available**

Council should use the [Asset Management Plan](#) and prioritisation of assets to develop infrastructure upgrade plans and applications for funding for a range of hazards. These should be developed in advance of funding availability to maximise the likelihood of successfully applying for funding, particularly during disaster relief and recovery where Council staff are likely to be extremely busy. Opportunities to leverage other sustainability-related grants should be considered when securing funding.

### **Action 2.3 – Create a system to record the costs of repairing and replacing infrastructure after severe weather events**

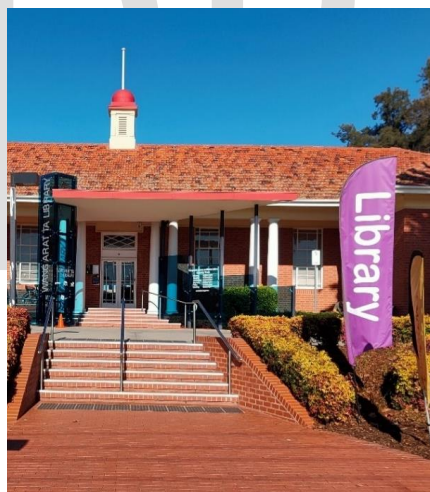
Council should create a system to record the costs of repairing and replacing infrastructure after severe weather events to help improve understanding of the future costs of climate change when events are likely to be more frequent and severe. Understanding these baseline costs could form the basis of a cost-benefit analysis of resilient reconstruction. The system should be incorporated into existing asset management technology, e.g., TechnologyOne, and should contribute to budget processes.

### **Action 2.4 – Develop sustainable infrastructure policies and plans and update the Sustainable Council Building Policy to continue to ensure climate-resilient design is incorporated into asset renewal, and new council construction**

Council should build on and improve how it integrates climate-resilient design across its asset portfolio by developing sustainable infrastructure policies and updating the Sustainable Council Building Policy to include more specific outcomes related to climate change and the changing nature of hazard events.

### **Action 2.5 – Develop guidance on how to integrate climate change into infrastructure management plans**

Given the diverse challenges climate change may bring and the complexity of integrating this knowledge into asset renewal and construction, Council should procure guidance on how to integrate climate considerations into its infrastructure management plans. This includes specific information on how to ensure Council assets can withstand the impacts of the projected extreme rainfall events, heatwaves, and dry periods for the region.

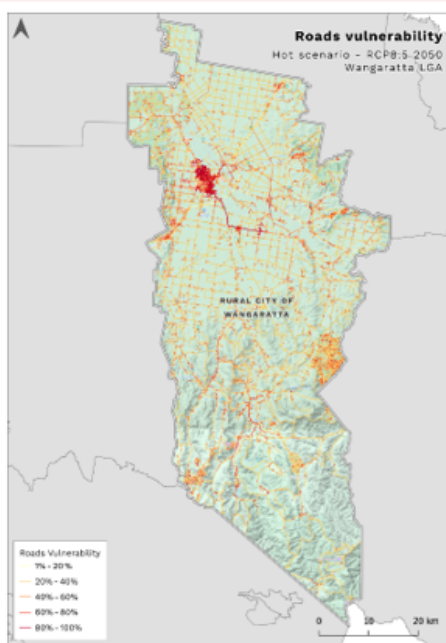


*Municipality roads and library*

### GMCA Resilient Public Estate Report key findings

#### For the RCP8.5 wet scenario in 2050:

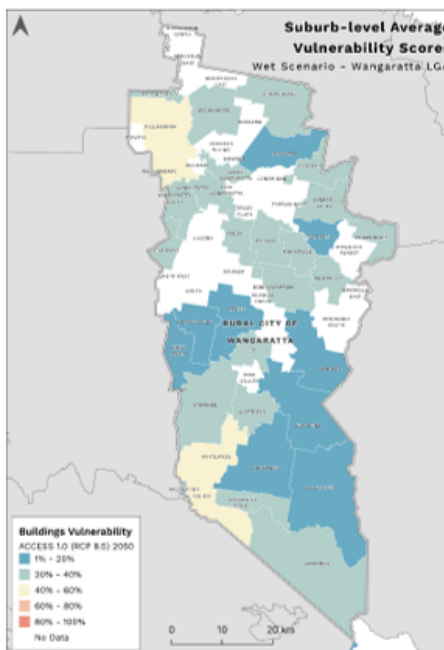
- Buildings in Killawarra, Wangandary, Whitlands, and Tolmie will have highest vulnerability on average
- Bridges in Wangaratta South, Oxley, and Docker will have highest vulnerability on average
- Open space in Whorouly will have highest vulnerability on average
- Roads in Waldara have highest vulnerability on average



RCP8.5 Hot Scenario – road vulnerability.  
Source: GMCA Resilient Public Estates Report

#### For the RCP8.5 dry scenario in 2050:

There are large areas of more vulnerable open space in Murmungee, Wabonga, Wangaratta South, Killawarra, Wangandary, and Wangaratta. Additionally, Springhurst, Eldorado, Boorhaman, and North Wangaratta are already the drier areas in RCoW and are likely to experience decreasing average annual rainfall in the future



RCP8.5 Wet Scenario – building vulnerability.  
Source: GMCA Resilient Public Estates Report

#### For the RCP8.5 hot scenario in 2050:

- There are large areas of more vulnerable open space in Murmungee, Wabonga, Wangaratta South, Killawarra, Wangandary, and Wangaratta
- There are many roads with higher vulnerability in Wangaratta, Carboor, and Tolmie, and towards the south of the LGA

### ACTION AREA 3 – FUTURE-PROOF LAND USE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

In addition to future-proofing council assets, Council should pursue climate-resilient land use planning and development through advocacy with other councils to improve Victoria's Planning Schemes and national building regulations. Victoria's municipal based Planning Schemes are key documents that guide what can be considered by local planning decision makers and the ability they have to promote climate-resilient development [23]. However, currently climate risk and climate adaptation are poorly integrated into the Schemes [23]. Alongside limitations in national building regulations, Council's ability to enforce climate-resilient development in land use planning and development is restricted which can lead to instances where new buildings create or worsen climate-related risks.

Joining with other councils and interested stakeholders and periodically updating hazard and risk modelling will also place Council in a strong position to advocate for the necessary changes to the Planning Schemes that will enable climate-resilient future developments.

#### Benefits for the community

The community will benefit from land use planning and development that is resilient to climate change and does not worsen existing risks like the heat-island effect or flooding. As the population and the Municipality grows, it is important to ensure that new housing developments incorporate climate change considerations for the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors. Additionally, the community will benefit from having access to updated hazard modelling to help them make decisions, such as where to live, and manage personal climate risks.



*Whitfield streetscape*



**Action 3.1 – Advocate for better integration of climate change in state and national planning and building legislation and policies**

Council should join the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment to work with other local councils and advocate for changes to state and national planning and building legislation and policies that better accounts for climate change. As climate risk and climate adaptation are poorly integrated into Victoria's Planning Schemes [23], and construction codes dictate what is mandatory to consider in developments, Council's ability to enforce locally relevant climate-resilient development that minimises the urban heat island effect, prevents new or worse flood risks, prevents new or worse water shortage risks, prevents risk of communities being isolated due to their single road being cut off, and other risks throughout the Municipality, is currently limited beyond creating guidelines and recommendations.

**Action 3.2 – Work with stakeholders to periodically revise hazard and risk modelling for decision making and share outputs with the community**

To keep up to date with the best available science and climate information, hazard and risk modelling should be periodically updated to account for new knowledge and modelling techniques. This information should contribute to advocating that the Victorian Government amend their Planning Schemes generally and creating Planning Scheme Amendments for Council. It is also important for Council to make informed decisions on the management of its assets and ensure the emergency management plans are sufficient. Helping the community understand their exposure to hazards and climate risks should enable them to make informed decisions as well, thereby reducing their reliance on Council.

DRA

**ACTION AREA 4 – A PROSPEROUS, PREPARED, AND HEALTHY COMMUNITY**

Council can support a prosperous, prepared, and healthy community that is well positioned to manage the impacts of climate change. Broadly, each action in this Plan has the potential to improve health and well-being of the community. Specifically, improving education on climate change, mental health support services, and business continuity during disasters will help the community thrive. Improved access to relief centres or neighbourhood safer spaces will further strengthen the community, and particularly the most vulnerable members, manage during disaster events.

**Benefits for the community**

The community will benefit from increased understanding of climate change and how to plan and prepare for associated impacts. For example, the community will better understand how and where to access relief centres or mental health support services, improving people's ability to manage during and immediately after disasters and building reserves of resilience in non-disaster times. Small business owners and by extension the broader community who rely on them for employment, goods, and services provision, will also benefit from improved business continuity.

**Action 4.1 – Create a communications plan with relevant partners to promote mental health services, particularly for rural and remote communities who have experienced a disaster**

Many resources already exist to support mental health for people and communities in Council's Grit and Resilience Program. However, results from the community survey showed that community and individual mental wellbeing are highly impacted by disasters and remain a key concern in the context of climate change due to the impact of disaster events directly and general climate anxiety. A communications plan to promote mental health services and continue to normalise seeking support could be useful to ensure the community is aware of the services available and increase willingness to seek support. It should also be used to support advocacy activities to increase funding for trauma-informed support services.

**Action 4.2 – Improve community access to relief centres**

The Municipality has six emergency relief centres, five in or around Wangaratta city centre and one in Whitfield [24]. These cater for the wide diversity of needs in the municipality including children, pets, people with disabilities, and people experiencing domestic violence. The Municipality also has five neighbourhood safer spaces in Cheshunt, Eldorado, Glenrowan, Springhurst and Whitfield that act as places of last resort when individuals' bushfire plans have failed [25].

However, the GMCA Resilient Public Estate Project identified several areas with high numbers of vulnerable people (defined as those over 65 and under 4 years old) in the areas around Milawa, Tolmie, Whorouly, and Peechelba. These areas would benefit from additional relief centres or neighbourhood safer spaces. Additionally, the capacity of Council to operate more than one relief centre is currently stretched. With increasing and more widespread disasters, increased funding provisions in the Long-Term Financial Plan to run more than one centre at a time during major disaster would improve community access to this service.



*Wangaratta Parklands Relief Centre*

#### **Action 4.3 – Improve access to financial coaching and resources that improve business continuity strategies for small businesses**

Business continuity is central to maintaining the viability of businesses that are facing increasing climate events that result in power outages, supply chain disruptions, and direct damage to assets. While some resources exist such as those listed in the [Municipal Emergency Management Plan \[24\]](#), Council should improve access to financial coaching focused on business continuity which may help businesses manage the impacts of disasters and continue to serve the community long after the disaster has passed.

#### **Action 4.4 – Collaborate with partners to enhance community outreach efforts on climate change awareness and adaptation**

To enable the community to take action to reduce the impacts of climate risks, Council should continue to share information about climate change, hazards, risks and preparedness and planning for response and recovery by leveraging existing and potentially introducing new education programs and tools. Council could work with and develop community leaders and other groups to support this outreach. Council should also review the effectiveness of its communication with the community and implement changes in its communication strategies: in the community survey over 25% of respondents said they did not know that services were available to them after a disaster.

## **ACTION AREA 5 – A RESILIENT NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

The community and economy of the Municipality rely on a healthy natural environment. It provides opportunities for recreation and social connectedness and underpins key industries such as agriculture and viticulture. Effective climate-smart land and water management on public and private land and utilising Traditional Knowledge will help ensure that the natural environment is resilient to projected climate changes.

### **Benefits for the community**

There are many diverse benefits for the community from a resilient natural environment. For example, the community will benefit from improved water management that facilitates consistent access to water and minimises the frequency and severity of flooding. The community will benefit from improved natural amenity and a landscape that is less susceptible to other major hazard events such as bushfires. Directly, the community will benefit from increased knowledge on climate-resilient species and be able to take personal actions to improve the resilience of their home gardens. Landowners also have a huge potential to contribute to the overall resilience of the community and Municipality through hazard mitigation activities on their land and climate risk preparedness to reduce the impacts of hazards when they do occur. A strong agricultural sector also contributes to the financial resilience of the Municipality.

### **Action 5.1 – Work with local emergency authorities to improve the distribution of information to landowners on how to develop climate-resilient land management plans**

Landowners should be prepared to manage the increasing frequency and severity of climate hazards including flood, bushfires, heat, and drought. Council can support landowners to create their own proactive and forward-thinking plans by improving the distribution of relevant climate change adaptation information and strategies. This would be beneficial for landowners, soil and land conservation, and the region more broadly which relies on agriculture and viticulture.

### **Action 5.2 – Develop a Climate Adaptive Planting Project**

A list of recommended tree species was developed as part of the GMCA Naturally Cooler Towns Project and Council has an [Urban Tree Plan](#) identifies the benefits of urban forests on reducing the impacts of climate change. Council should build on this and develop a list of climate smart shrubs and grasses that can withstand climate hazards, create a cooler microclimate, promote soil stability in droughts and floods and act as a wind break in higher winds. Lists of climate appropriate plants should then be utilised by Council in vegetation programs and shared with the community to promote climate resilience on private land as well.



*The natural environment in the Municipality*

#### **Action 5.3 – Work towards Integrated Water Management with relevant partners**

Council should continue to engage with the North East Integrated Water Management forums when developing plans that consider compounding pressures of population growth and climate change, potable, rain, storm, recycled and groundwater. Working towards one cohesive strategy on water management can enable goals across the social, economic, and natural domains to be achieved through mitigating drought and flood hazards and their impacts.

Council already implements some water management strategies through its [Sustainable Buildings Policy](#) and there are some overlapping actions (e.g., Action 2.4 and the Sustainable Drainage Infrastructure Policy), but Council should continue to work towards integrated water management that considers all elements of the water cycle.

A collaborative approach is required when developing and revising strategies and plans related to Integrated Water Management, as neighbouring councils and water authorities all contribute to the management of water catchments within our region. Consideration should be made for partnering with local universities and research groups, to consider how various water sensitive design solutions may improve drought tolerance and minimise impacts to local creeks and waterways.

#### **Action 5.4 – Work with Traditional Owners to mitigate and reduce the impacts of climate change hazards**

Council should continue to work with Traditional Owners to incorporate cultural knowledge and practices in bush reserve management plans for the municipality. Indigenous land management practices are successfully reducing the probability and severity of climate-related hazards across Australia, particularly for bushfires and drought. Council, NEW, and other local organisations are working with Traditional Owners to implement cultural land management practices like burning and watering, recognising the benefits these techniques bring to the region. Activities that engage Traditional Owners can also enhance wellbeing and have benefits for Indigenous Communities. It is important that projects with First Nations people are First Nations led and owned. Council recognises that this requires ongoing strengthening of its relationships with Traditional Owners.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the CAP are important to understand whether and how actions are being implemented and whether they are achieving their objectives. By undertaking M&E, Council can understand what is working, what isn't, and what to reprioritise so that they can remain on a climate-resilient trajectory.

Action 1 directly addresses embedding M&E into the annual reporting process. By doing so, Council will be accountable to achieving the actions laid out in this CAP. Tools that may be used to collect information for each measure include:

- Assessments at the end of activities
- Community surveys
- Interviews with the community and key stakeholders
- Case studies
- Self-evaluation

As the future is uncertain, it is also important to repeat the climate risk assessment periodically. This will help Council identify reduction in risks and potentially attribute this to their activities. Further, the risk assessment would enable identification of any new risks that have arisen due to unexpected climate changes or other changes in the social, natural, economic, or built environments. The revised risk assessment would drive a revised climate adaptation plan as well.

Suggested measures can be found in Table 1. Achievement or improvements in these measures would indicate that climate resilience is improving.

1	Proactive Council, policies and operations	<p>Climate change will affect all aspects of Council operations and policies.</p> <p>To reduce impacts from climate change, it is important to ensure climate change adaptation is understood and considered across all of Council's work, staff and volunteers are more prepared to manage escalating and cascading disaster events, and an emergency communications plan is in place for when communications are disrupted.</p>
2	Future-proof Council infrastructure and assets	<p>Council buildings, infrastructure and assets must be resilient to a changing climate to ensure they can continue to function for use in the community.</p> <p>Council funding is limited, so by prioritising investment in critical infrastructure upgrades and identifying state and federal grants, it can support the development of a more resilient Wangaratta.</p>
3	Future-proof land use planning and development	<p>Land use planning and new infrastructure development is critical to the pursuit of a more resilient Wangaratta.</p> <p>Victoria's municipal based Planning Schemes are key documents that guide what can be considered by local planning decision makers and their ability to promote climate-resilient development.</p>
4	A prosperous, prepared and healthy community	<p>Council can support a prosperous, prepared, and healthy community that is well positioned to manage the impacts of climate change.</p> <p>Improving education on climate change, mental health supports, and business continuity during disasters will help the community thrive.</p> <p>Improved access to relief centres or neighbourhood safer spaces will help the community, and particularly the most vulnerable, manage during disasters.</p>
5	A resilient natural environment	<p>Our community and economy rely on a healthy natural environment.</p> <p>The natural environment presents opportunities for recreation as well as underpinning key industries such as agriculture and viticulture.</p> <p>Effective climate-smart land and water management on public and private land and utilising Traditional Knowledge will help ensure that the natural environment is resilient to projected climate changes.</p>



Table 1: Suggested success measures by action

Action	Suggested success measures
<b>Action Area 1: Proactive Council, policies, and operations</b>	
1.1 Continue to integrate climate change adaptation and lessons learned in existing Council plans, policies, strategies, and budget.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental and Sustainability Strategy links with the CAP</li> <li>• The CAP is reviewed yearly in line with budget cycles</li> <li>• M&amp;E of CAP is integrated into the Annual Reporting cycle</li> <li>• Adaptive capacity of Council improves over time</li> </ul>
1.2 Improve staff and volunteer capacity to manage disaster relief and recovery activities in the context of climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Emergency Management Plan is updated to include yearly simulations of disaster events</li> <li>• Multi-agency, multi-council disaster simulations are held at pre-defined intervals</li> <li>• Emergency management plans are developed for flooding, extreme rainfall, storms, bushfire and heatwaves and shared with the community</li> <li>• Heatwave policy is developed</li> <li>• Percent of staff that feel well prepared to respond in any hazard context</li> <li>• Percent of staff and volunteers that state they know how to access mental health support after disasters if needed</li> <li>• Wait times for trauma-informed counselling services</li> </ul>
1.3 Develop an Emergency Management Communications Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency Management Communication Plan is developed</li> <li>• Working phone tree is established so that all identified vulnerable community members can be contacted</li> </ul>



Action	Suggested success measures
<b>Action Area 2: Future-proof Council infrastructure and assets</b>	
2.1 Create a prioritisation list for upgrading existing council assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritisation list is created</li> <li>• Number of prioritised assets upgraded to be climate resilient</li> </ul>
2.2 Develop plans and applications for funding for infrastructure upgrades that can be submitted when funding is available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percent of assets on the prioritisation list that are included in at least one plan or drafted application for funding</li> </ul>
2.3 Create a system to record the costs of repairing and replacing infrastructure after severe weather events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• System to record the costs of climate-related maintenance and repair is created</li> <li>• All relevant staff use the system to record the costs of climate-related maintenance and repair of assets</li> <li>• Accurate summary of costs of climate-related maintenance and repair of assets able to be calculated each year and factored into budget processes</li> </ul>
2.4 Develop sustainable infrastructure policies and plans and update the Sustainable Council Building Policy to continue to ensure climate-resilient design is incorporated into asset renewal, and new council construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Sustainable Transport Infrastructure Policy is developed</li> <li>• A Sustainable Drainage Infrastructure Policy is developed</li> <li>• The Sustainable Building Policy includes consideration of major flood events that exceed the current State Government overlays</li> <li>• Both policies include provision to consider relocation or decommissioning of assets</li> <li>• Percent of built (buildings and infrastructure) assets that integrate climate resilient design</li> </ul>
2.5 Develop guidance on how to integrate climate change into infrastructure management plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council staff are capable of integrating climate change considerations into infrastructure management plans</li> </ul>

Action	Suggested success measures
<b>Action Area 3: Future-proof land use planning and development</b>	
3.1 Advocate for better integration of climate change in state and national planning and building legislation and policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of advocacy activities on updating Victoria's planning schemes to account for climate change</li><li>• Victorian Planning Provisions are updated to better integrate climate change adaptation</li></ul>
3.2 Work with stakeholders to periodically revise hazard and risk modelling for decision making and share outputs with the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provision for updated climate modelling included in the long-term financial plan</li><li>• Modelling for flood risk considering climate change is completed</li><li>• Modelling for urban heat island effect in each built up area considering climate change is completed</li><li>• Work to better understand bushfire risk under climate change is completed</li><li>• Modelling of risk of community isolation is completed</li><li>• Modelling of compounding disasters/multi-hazard risk is completed</li><li>• Number of community events to share information on updated information</li></ul>

Action	Suggested success measures
<b>Action Area 4: A prosperous, prepared, and healthy community</b>	
4.1 Create a communications plan with relevant partners to promote mental health services, particularly from rural and remote communities who have experienced a disaster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post Disaster Toolkit is developed</li> <li>• Number of media articles that discuss where and how to access mental health support</li> </ul>
4.2 Improve community access to relief centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percent of communities with high numbers of vulnerable people have access to a relief centre or neighbourhood safer space in their community</li> </ul>
4.3 Improve access to financial coaching and resources that improve business continuity strategies for small businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percent of businesses accessing business continuity learning resources</li> <li>• Number of businesses implementing climate adaptation to ensure continuity through a disaster</li> <li>• Percent of businesses that close within 12 months after a disaster event in their area</li> </ul>
4.4 Collaborate with partners to enhance community outreach efforts on climate change awareness and adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of community climate change outreach events held each year</li> </ul>

Action	Suggested success measures
<b>Action Area 5: A resilient natural environment</b>	
5.1 Work with local emergency authorities to improve the distribution of information to landowners on how to develop climate-resilient land management plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of landowners reached through the awareness campaign</li> </ul>
5.2 Develop a Climate Adaptive Planting Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of climate-smart shrubs and grasses is developed and appropriate for the local context</li> <li>• Number of events attended or website visits where the recommended species lists are shared with the public</li> <li>• Percent of new Council plantings that are on the recommended species lists</li> </ul>
5.3 Work towards Integrated Water Management with relevant partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of engagements with the north east's integrated water management forums</li> <li>• Number of plans amended to better integrate water management practices</li> <li>• Development of explicit plans or strategies related to integrated water management</li> </ul>
5.4 Work with Traditional Owners to mitigate and reduce the impacts of climate change hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percent of bush reserve management plans that incorporate cultural knowledge</li> <li>• Other metrics as defined by First Nations people</li> </ul>



## **Annexes**

1. Additional information on adaptation actions
2. Glossary of terms
3. List of acronyms
4. References

## Climate Adaptation Plan - Additional Information on Adaptation Actions

48

Action	Time-frame	Cost*	Funding mechanism	Responsible Directorate	Suggested steps to implement
<b>Action Area 1 – Proactive Council, policies, and operations</b>					
1.1 Continue to integrate climate change adaptation and lessons learned in existing Council plans, policies, strategies and budget	1-2 years	Very low	Council funded budget	Sustainability & Culture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Council policies, plans and strategies, and in particular, The Environmental and Sustainability Strategy, should complement the CAP and explicitly include <b>consideration</b> of climate change adaptation (as well as risk). Budget processes should include <b>review</b> of the Climate Change Adaptation Plan so that actions are considered in each Annual Budget cycle and long-term financial plan.</li> <li><b>Report</b> on adaptation monitoring and evaluation (M&amp;E) (using measures in this CAP) as part of the Annual Reporting process on a yearly basis beginning in 2025-26 or as a stand-alone report.</li> <li><b>Complete</b> the adaptive capacity checklist provided by How Well Are We Adapting every 2-3 years to track the adaptive capacity of Council and ensure knowledge and capability to integrate climate change adaptation in their work areas is maintained through staff turnover.</li> </ol>
1.2 Improve staff and volunteer capacity to manage disaster relief and recovery activities in the context of climate change	1-2 years	Low	Council funded budget, multi-agency budgets, alternative sources of funding (e.g., grants)	Community & Infrastructure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Advocate</b> that the Municipal Emergency Management Plan is updated to include a predefined yearly schedule of emergency response operations simulations considering escalating disaster frequency and severity in the context of climate change (e.g., severe storms resulting in damage to council assets and energy/internet outages, followed by bushfires triggered by lightening). Community volunteers or community members should be included where possible. Include consideration of visitors and tourists who may not know what to do during extreme events. Ensure all relevant staff attend at least one simulation per year. Advocate for consideration of recovery coordination and trauma-informed response training for all involved in disaster management and recovery.</li> <li><b>Work with</b> the State Government and Voluntary agencies to continue to develop and implement emergency management plans for each hazard that identifies trigger points for action across the Municipality (including when assets will stop being maintained), responsibilities including lead agency and community responsibilities and roles, building on the Municipal Emergency Management Plan. Consider the needs of the most vulnerable people in the community when developing these plans. Share plans with the community regularly so they are informed.</li> <li><b>Continue to develop</b> a heatwave policy or plan in conjunction with heat-health experts, that identifies temperature-based triggers for action in Council to keep the community safe including alerts, keeping more public facilities open longer (e.g., libraries), and providing water in public places. Consider how to reach and ensure the safety of the most vulnerable in the community, for example by using phone trees to check on community members or providing transport to cooler places.</li> </ol>
1.3 Develop an Emergency Management Communications Plan	1-2 years	Moderate	Future Council funded actions, alternative sources of funding (e.g., grants), shared funding from partner organisations	Community & Infrastructure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Undertake</b> a cost benefit analysis of different transportable communication tools such as satellite phones and Starlink and determine which is the best for the Municipality context.</li> <li><b>Consider installing</b> an emergency phone in each small town to be used to establish communication between communities, Council and emergency services.</li> <li><b>Investigate the feasibility</b> of installing permanent generators at Whitfield, Eldorado, and Glenrowan Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSP) (and any new NSP) so that the Sky Muster satellite services remain operational during a power outage.</li> <li><b>Develop</b> a phone tree in partnership with community, identifying key community members that may hold a satellite phone or alternative communication method (including one provided by Council) and would be able to check on and communicate with vulnerable community members including those with vision, hearing, or mobility disabilities (if it is safe to do so).</li> </ol>

					5. <b>Develop</b> a budget bid for satellite phones, portable Starlink devices or other alternative communication strategy or incorporate funding requirements into long term financial plan.
Action	Time-frame	Cost*	Funding mechanism	Responsible Directorate	Suggested steps to implement
<b>Action Area 2 – Future-proof council infrastructure and assets</b>					
2.1 Create a prioritisation list for upgrading existing council assets	3-5 years	Very low	Council funded budget	Community & Infrastructure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Identify</b> which communities and rural properties are only serviced by one or two roads that may be cut off in a disaster through modelling.</li> <li>2. <b>Create</b> a priority list of council assets based on their contribution to the basic operations and function of Council, and community wellbeing.</li> <li>3. <b>Use information</b> from steps 1 and 2, the GMCA assessment (see below for key findings), and asset management schedule to create a list of priority assets to be upgraded to be climate resilient.</li> <li>4. <b>Create</b> budget bids for infrastructure upgrades of the most critical assets.</li> <li>5. <b>Incorporate</b> plans for asset upgrades into the long-term financial plan.</li> </ol>
2.2 Develop plans and applications for funding for infrastructure upgrades that can be submitted when funding is available	3-5 years	Low to Moderate*	Council funded budget	Community & Infrastructure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Identify staff</b> to lead the development of plans and applications. These staff could be from across each directorate.</li> <li>2. <b>Draft plans</b> and applications for funding for infrastructure upgrades that could be submitted after disaster events or when grants are available. Use the list of prioritised assets to identify which to draft first.</li> <li>3. After disaster events or when grants are identified, <b>tailor</b> to the requirements of the funding available and submit the applications.</li> </ol>
2.3 Create a system to record the costs of repairing and replacing infrastructure after severe weather events	3-5 years	Low to Moderate	Council funded budget	Corporate & Leisure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Procure</b> a software developer to develop a system of recording costs of climate-related maintenance into existing asset management technology or create a new system if required.</li> <li>2. <b>Train</b> maintenance staff and managers on how to use the software.</li> <li>3. <b>Estimate</b> the future costs of climate change once enough data is collected, by applying multipliers to costs and integrate into budget planning.</li> </ol>

2.4 Develop sustainable infrastructure policies and plans and update the Sustainable Council Building Policy to continue to ensure climate-resilient design is incorporated into asset renewal, and new council construction	3-5 years	Low**	Future Council funded actions, requires funding (business case may be required), alternative sources of funding (e.g., grants)	Community & Infrastructure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Undertake</b> a landscape scan to understand what policies and plans already exist.</li> <li>2. <b>Develop</b> a Sustainable Transport Infrastructure Policy for roads, bridges, and the Aerodrome. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Undertake</b> modelling and consult with engineers to understand the requirements of the infrastructure to be climate resilient for heat risk to roads and Aerodrome infrastructure and flood risk to the Aerodrome, roads, and bridges.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. <b>Develop</b> a Sustainable Drainage Infrastructure Policy for the drainage and stormwater systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Undertake</b> hydraulic modelling and consult with engineers to understand the capacity and future requirements of the drainage and stormwater systems.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. <b>Develop</b> a Regional Climate Resilient Waste Management Plan to better manage waste in the context of climate change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Undertake</b> a region-wide study on the impacts on climate-related disaster on waste generation and the capacity of current landfills to absorb increased amounts of waste generated by disasters. Based on this study, <b>develop</b> a plan to address any issues identified.</li> </ul> </li> <li>5. <b>Update</b> the Sustainable Council Building Policy to include consideration of a flood overlay for a flood that has a 0.5% chance of happening each year when upgrading or approving new Council assets.</li> <li>6. In all Policies <b>include a provision</b> for considering whether the asset should be relocated or decommissioned due to the expense to upgrade or continually maintain or repair after hazard events.</li> </ol>
2.5 Develop guidance on how to integrate climate change into infrastructure management plans	3-5 years	Low to Very High	Alternative sources of funding (e.g., grants)	Community & Infrastructure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Procure development of specific guidance on how to integrate climate change considerations into infrastructure renewal, maintenance and in new Council developments, considering different hazards. For example, how to integrate the specific increases in extreme rainfall and flood depth the Municipality is likely to experience into upgrading roads in Waldara or bridges in Wangaratta South, Oxley, and Docker (potential Very High cost). And/or</li> <li>2. Procure the development of general guidance on how to integrate climate change considerations into infrastructure renewal, maintenance and in new Council developments. For example, guidance on typical or best practice methods to integrate increased flood frequency and severity into road and bridge maintenance. This would not be bespoke to the Wangaratta context (and therefore has a potentially Low to Moderate cost)</li> </ol>



**Action Area 3 – Future-proof land use planning and development**

3.1 Advocate for better integration of climate change in state and national planning and building legislation and policies	1-2 years	Low	Council funded budget	Sustainability & Culture	<p><b>Join</b> the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment to join with other local councils and advocate for changes to state and national planning and building legislation and policies that better accounts for climate change including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocating to the state government to give all climate risks that have the potential to threaten life, for example flooding, the same priority in land use and planning decision making across Victoria.</li> <li>Preventing new developments from worsening the heat island effect and flood risks.</li> <li>Ensuring new developments include climate-smart design including recycled water infrastructure.</li> <li>Expanding the flood overlays to include consideration of increasing flood probabilities, worsening severities, and larger extents due to climate change. In the absence of specific flood modelling incorporating climate change for the region, NECMA advises that the best available representation of future flood risk is the 0.5%AEP flood event (a flood that has a 0.5% chance of happening each year) for the Wangaratta Urban Waterways (provisions currently consider 1%AEP flood events). Incorporate recommendations into the Wangaratta Planning Scheme as relevant.</li> <li>Updating Planning Provisions regularly based on best available climate change science.</li> </ul>
3.2 Work with stakeholders to periodically revise hazard and risk modelling for decision making and share outputs with the community	6+ years	Moderate	Council funded budget, alternative sources of funding (e.g., grants)	Sustainability & Culture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Undertake</b> a landscape scan to understand the recency of available modelling and the extent it considers climate change.</li> <li><b>Integrate</b> GMCA Resilient Public Estate outputs into Council mapping software (Intramaps) to better enable Council to use it for decision making.</li> <li><b>Work with</b> NECMA to ensure flood modelling accounts for climate change under multiple emissions scenarios (e.g., RCP4.5 and RCP8.5) and hazard return periods (a one in 100-year flood (1%AEP) and one in 200-year flood (0.5%AEP)).</li> <li><b>Work with</b> relevant stakeholders to improve understanding of bushfire risk under multiple emissions scenarios.</li> <li><b>Procure</b> heat modelling to understand urban heat island effect for each built up area in the Municipality under multiple emissions scenarios.</li> <li><b>Procure</b> modelling to understand which communities and households have low redundancy in their road networks and are likely to be isolated if a road is blocked (linked with Action 4).</li> <li><b>Procure</b> modelling of multi-hazard risks. For example, heatwaves and drought increasing the risk of bushfire. Work with local emergency services to determine appropriate hazard/risk scenarios.</li> <li><b>Share findings</b> of modelling with the community through community exhibitions and other public events (such as the Wangaratta Show).</li> <li><b>Work with</b> surrounding Councils and GMCA to understand if there is shared demand for this work to share the costs.</li> <li><b>Use the findings</b> of modelling in advocacy to the Victorian Government to update the Victoria Planning Provisions.</li> <li><b>Update</b> local planning schemes in the short term, including appropriate community engagement.</li> <li><b>Incorporate</b> provision for updated modelling into the long-term financial plan.</li> </ol>

## Action Area 4 – A prosperous, prepared, and healthy community

4.1 Create a communications plan with relevant partners to promote mental health services, particularly for rural and remote communities who have experienced a disaster	3-5 years	Low	Council funded budget, shared budget with partnering organisations, alternative sources of funding (e.g., grants)	Community & Infrastructure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Undertake</b> a landscape scan to understand the state of communication on mental health services in the Municipality.</li> <li>2. <b>Work in consultation</b> with the Grit &amp; Resilience Consortium that has relevant stakeholders for the municipality.</li> <li>3. <b>Create</b> a Post Disaster Toolkit for the staff of Rural City of Wangaratta Council.</li> <li>4. <b>Create</b> a communications plan to share information on available mental health support services with the community, focusing on rural and remote communities who may require online services or telehealth and communities that have recently experienced a disaster. Include a variety of communication tools and languages to cater for the diversity of the Municipality.</li> </ol>
4.2 Improve community access to relief centres	6+ years	Moderate	Future Council funded actions, requires funding (business case may be required), alternative sources of funding (e.g., grants)	Community & Infrastructure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Identify</b> Council buildings or other privately owned buildings in vulnerable communities without relief centres or neighbourhood safer spaces that could act as a refuge of last resort in a disaster. Use the Neighbourhood Safer Places (Bushfire Places of Last Resort) Plan – V2.1 checklist to determine suitability.</li> <li>2. <b>Incorporate</b> funding provisions for operating more than one relief centre or neighbourhood safer space during a major disaster in the long-term financial plan to minimise the consideration of costs of keeping the community safe.</li> </ol>

4.3 Improve access to financial coaching and resources that improve business continuity strategies for small businesses	6+ years	Very low to Moderate	Council funded budget, alternative sources of funding (e.g., grants)	Sustainability & culture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Run</b> a survey or stakeholder engagement to understand knowledge gaps and needs of small business owners regarding business continuity in the context of climate-related disasters. Which hazards and impacts have the most extreme consequences?</li> <li>2. <b>Reach out</b> to financial planners or advisors in the region and the Financial Advice Association of Australia to see if they would be able to support business continuity training and workshops for local businesses.</li> <li>3. <b>Identify</b> existing relevant business continuity learning resources that address business owners concerns and gaps in knowledge (for example ADAPTWEST climate change checklists for businesses). Share with the community via email, newsletters, workshops or other activities, partnering with local financial advisors if possible. The basis of this training may build upon learnings from published studies on business continuity planning and management by The World Bank and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery.</li> <li>4. <b>Consider</b> procuring a consultant to create bespoke materials, if specific to the Municipality business context if existing resources do not address community needs, support from financial advisors is not available, or if funding opportunities are identified. Disseminate via workshops or reports to the community. NOTE: This could significantly increase the cost of this action into the 'moderate' category.</li> <li>5. <b>Advocate</b> for the State Government to improve incentives for businesses to address their climate risks including increasing rebates for solar systems and batteries to maintain basic business functions through mains power outages or increasing tax incentives to reduce climate risks like retrofitting flooring to tiles including up the walls to be flood resilient.</li> </ol>
4.4 Collaborate with partners to enhance community outreach efforts on climate change awareness and adaptation	1-2 years	Low	Council funded budget, shared budget with other organisations	Sustainability & Culture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Identify</b> community leaders and partners, including the following groups (as relevant): DEECA (who have an action on community education in the Hume Regional Climate Adaptation Strategy); CFA (who already publish extensive public materials on climate change); and RCoW Youth Council (who could be partners in community outreach on adaptation). Ensure they are provided relevant training and support.</li> <li>2. <b>Provide</b> information on hazard and risk modelling that is accessible and understood by the community. Incorporate updates as new modelling becomes available, ensuring this is shared in a timely manner.</li> <li>3. <b>Share</b> information on how people can reduce their risks including programs that subsidise energy efficiency measures, solar, batteries, and insulation in homes, particularly targeting vulnerable community members and contexts where it is necessary to stop outdoor activities and work (such as in extreme heat or cold events).</li> <li>4. <b>Share</b> information on how to access support, including mental health support.</li> <li>5. <b>Investigate</b> the feasibility of sharing information on climate change through a range of activities such as workshops to explain hazard maps, webinars on the impact of climate change on biodiversity, stalls at community events such as the Wangaratta Show and Farmers Markets on climate change and how Council is addressing it (this Plan). Consider inviting community members periodically to emergency event simulations.</li> </ol>

Action Area 5 – A resilient natural environment					
5.1 Work with local emergency authorities to improve the distribution of information to landowners on how to develop climate resilient land management plans	1-2 years	Low	Council funded budget	Sustainability & Culture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Engage</b> with local emergency authorities such as the CFA, NECMA, and NEW to develop awareness campaigns for landowners on how to develop climate-resilience management plans for different hazards. Material to share could include short-term emergency management actions such as bushfire management where extensive guidance and knowledge already exists, but also long-term actions such as selection of appropriate vegetation, benefits of agroforestry, diversifying the business, and other innovative climate-resilience strategies.</li> </ol>
5.2 Develop a Climate Adaptive Planting Project	6+ years	Low	Future Council funded actions, alternative sources of funding (e.g., grants)	Sustainability & Culture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Develop</b> a list of climate-smart shrubs and grasses to compliment the recommended tree species list.</li> <li><b>Share</b> the lists and information about the benefits of planting climate-smart plants with the public through websites, brochures, and stalls at public events such as the Wangaratta Show.</li> <li><b>Lead</b> by example by committing to integrate the recommended species list into the <a href="#">Tree Management Manual</a> and ensuring the listed species are used in new Council planting projects.</li> <li><b>Create</b> a vegetation planting program to increase canopy cover and climate-resilient shrubs and grasses for Council managed parks and gardens in the northern areas of the Municipality.</li> </ol>
5.3 Work towards Integrated Water Management with relevant partners	6+ years	Low**	Future Council funded actions, alternative sources of funding (e.g., grants), shared funding with other stakeholders	Community & Infrastructure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Engage</b> with existing integrated water management (IWM) forums and take stock of existing IWM planning works.</li> <li><b>Work</b> with NEW, NECMA, regional university partners and / or local research groups to identify and implement research required, to better integrate IWM into existing plans and identify current gaps.</li> <li><b>Consider</b> levees and flood risk management to open space assets in Whorouly.</li> <li><b>Identify</b> activities that need to be integrated into the long-term financial plan.</li> <li><b>Leverage</b> findings from Action 2.4 Part 3 regarding modelling of drainage capacity and future requirements of the drainage and stormwater systems (if already complete). If not, include provisions for it within IWM planning.</li> </ol>
5.4 Work with Traditional Owners to mitigate and reduce the impacts of climate change hazards	3-5 years	Moderate	Future Council funded actions, alternative sources of funding (e.g., grants), shared funding with other stakeholders	Sustainability & culture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Investigate</b> opportunities and feasibility of engaging a First Nations subcontractor to lead engagement with First Nations groups in the region to establish what projects are already ongoing and where gaps may exist in the Municipality. Ensure enough time is allowed for meaningful engagement. Also, leverage existing relationships between NEW, other councils and relevant First Nations groups if possible and appropriate.</li> <li><b>Work with</b> Traditional Owners to incorporate cultural knowledge and practices in bush reserve management plans for the municipality. For example, reducing the prevalence of Eucalypts in specific areas to manage fuel loads.</li> <li><b>Identify</b> actions that require funding and develop budget bids or incorporate into long term financial plan.</li> </ol>

### Glossary

Climate Adaptation	The process of adjusting to actual or expected climate and its effects to minimise harm or utilise opportunities [26].
Climate Mitigation	Interventions aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
Consequence	Magnitude of the impact.
Disaster	A serious sudden accident/disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events or natural catastrophe interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading that cause great human, material, economic, and/or environmental losses and damages [26].
Exposure	The presence of people; livelihoods; species or ecosystems; environmental functions, services, and resources; infrastructure; or economic, social, or cultural assets in places and settings that could be adversely affected [26].
Hazard	The potential occurrence of a natural or human-induced physical event or trend that may cause loss of life, injury, damage/loss to property, infrastructure, livelihoods, service provision, ecosystems and environmental resources [26].
Likelihood	Chance of a risk occurring.
Municipality	Refers to the Wangaratta Local Government Area governed by the Rural City of Wangaratta. Also referred to as 'the LGA' and 'the Region' throughout the Report [26].
Representative Concentration Pathway	Climate change scenarios used in climate models (IPCC) to generate data about possible future climates. It usually refers to the portion of the greenhouse gas concentration pathway extending up to 2100. Provide one of many possible scenarios that would lead to specific radiative forcing characteristics [26].
Resilience	The capacity of interconnected social, economic and ecological systems to cope with a hazardous event, trend or disturbance, responding or reorganising in ways that maintain their essential function, identity and structure [26].
Risk	The potential for adverse consequences for human or ecological systems. In the context of climate change, risks can arise from potential impacts of climate change as well as human responses to climate change [26].
Scenario Analysis	Scenario analysis is a process for identifying and assessing the potential implications of a range of plausible future states under conditions of uncertainty [27].
Sensitivity	Sensitivity is the degree to which human and systems could be harmed by the exposure to risks (climate risks in this report context).
Shock	Disruptive short-term events that negatively impact assets, wellbeing, livelihood, and safety [28].
Stressor	Long-term pressures with no clear beginning or end which weaken a systems overall stability and increase its vulnerability [28].
Trend	A general direction in which something is developing or changing.
Vulnerability	The propensity or predisposition to be adversely affected [28].

**Acronyms**

\$	Australian Dollars
%	Per cent
&	And
+	Plus
AEP	Annual Exceedance Probability
AV	Ambulance Victoria
BF	Risks relating to bushfires
CAP	Climate Adaptation Plan
CFA	Country Fire Authority
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
DJPR	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
e.g.,	For example,
EPA	Environment Protection Authority
ESRG	Environment and Sustainability Reference Group
EVCs	Ecological Vegetation Classes
FL	Risks relating to flooding
GMCA	Goulburn Murray Climate Alliance
ha	Hectare(s)
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IWM	Integrated Water Management
km	Kilometre(s)
LGA	Local Government Area
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAR	Managed Aquifer Recharge
mm	Millimetres
NA	Not Available
NECMA	North East Catchment Management Authority
NEW	North East Water
°C	Degrees Celsius
RCoW	Rural City of Wangaratta
RCP	Representative Concentration Pathway(s)
RNST	Risks relating to rain and storms
RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
SPI	Standardised Precipitation Index
TMP	Risks relating to temperature
VCCEM	Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministry
VIC	Victoria
VicPol	Victoria Police

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PS213907 - Wangaratta Climate Adaptation Plan - Comment Tracker					
No.	Source	Comment	Comment Type	Comments	Status of Action
1	Feedback Survey	Give significant support and funding to Wangaratta Sustainability and Landcare and any similar groups/businesses conserving the environment and strengthening renewable energy projects.	Note (no action required)	Throughout the actions, we have addressed partnerships with local groups and believe this is already addressed within the plan. Council will continue to support our local Sustainability and Landcare groups, along with advocacy. Where projects require funding, they will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.	Closed
2	Feedback Survey	It is heartening to see Council be proactive in this important space and plan for a longer period of time. Good job. Will point out that Council should only fill in gaps of other agencies that are already doing work in this space so tax payer money is spent the best way possible.	Note (no action required)	Noted.	Closed
3	Feedback Survey	The RCOW is expanded very quickly to the north west there needs to be a priority undertaking to review infrastructure to support all these developments	Note (no action required)	We currently acknowledge new development areas in Action Area 3. Strategic priorities are consistently changing, and development areas may change in the future. No changes are proposed.	Closed
4	Feedback Survey	Stop any action based upon the flawed premise that climate action is required at all. Its not.	Note (no action required)	Noted.	Closed
5	Feedback Survey	Good to see mental health impacts of climate change being considered by Council alongside the usual like infrastructure, and that forward planning is happening in general.	Note (no action required)	Noted.	Closed
6	Feedback Survey	Well written but order is wrong. Would move the action table to higher up in the document as its easily missed but its also the most important aspect of the document.	Action (additional updates)	Noted, action table has been introduced into the Executive Summary (page 6)	CAP Updated
7	Feedback Survey	The brown haired girl at the kiosk was very friendly and explained about the plan in a very informative way. Good to see council engaging with community in this way	Note (no action required)	Noted.	Closed
8	Feedback Survey	Will be interested to see more detail regarding actual milestones and specific activities	Note (no action required)	Noted.	Closed
9	Feedback Survey	All new roads, bridges and buildings should be built considering the impacts of climate change. Good to see this in there and council showing leadership for a change. Shows we elected a good council.	Note (no action required)	Noted.	Closed
10	Feedback Survey	Positive in taking serious action, but I believe council also has a responsibility to reduce carbon emissions which are causing climate change, as well as adapting to it. (as do all of us)	Note (no action required)	Noted.	Closed
11	Feedback Survey	We need to stop the focus on growth and economics and put higher priority on what it is that we love about the area - the open space with rivers and bush	Note (no action required)	Noted.	Closed
13	Feedback Survey	Selection of trees and shrubs that are both resilient to climate extremes and provide essential services including cooling and water use. The action suggested is good but needs to go a step further to test species in different context within council areas. Water sensitive urban design is critical for mitigation of drought and flood events. Retention of water to infiltrate into the water table rather than direct to stormwater and local creeks and rivers will minimise stormwater impacts and peak flooding. Linking to street trees and constructed wetlands with passive irrigation support greening under low rainfall. Partnering with university will be important for testing innovative solutions.	Action (additional updates)	<b>Updated Action 5.3</b> with "Consideration should be made for partnering with local universities and research groups, to consider how various water sensitive design solutions may improve drought tolerance and minimise impacts to local creeks and waterways." (pg 39) and wording from 'Integrated Water Management Plan' to 'Intergrated Water Management' to encompass a greater range of plans, policies and activities council under takes in this area.	CAP Updated
14	Feedback Survey	I understand that we need to focus investment on supporting people, however many are attracted to Wangaratta by our range of diverse natural spaces within the city, and these assets deserve more support as green refuges as our climate deteriorates	Note (no action required)	Noted. The natural environment is intended to be an area of focus for Action Area 5.	Closed
15	Feedback Survey	Action areas 4 & 5 stand out for me as a person who values people and the environment, it's our responsibility to not repeat the errors of those who went before us.	Note (no action required)	Noted.	Closed
16	Feedback Survey	Overall the strategy is comprehensive but only as good as implementation, and adequate resourcing, and continuous monitoring and evaluation, with updated information where available. Important to have input from health services (NHW, Gateway etc) as well as community groups and to learn from other LGAs	Note (no action required)	Noted.	Closed
17	Feedback Survey	it seems to going in right direction	Note (no action required)	Noted.	Closed
18	Feedback Survey	I support all the initiatives relating to helping the most vulnerable and frail people during a heat wave event. I support Action point 4.2 Page 45 develop "...temperature-based triggers for action" including access to "cool zone" buildings like the library. I support budgeting for staffing the library on a Sunday on a high heat day. 1.3 point 2 "consider installing an emergency phone in each small town" this would be a valuable investment. I support RCOW council joining the - Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment	Note (no action required)	Noted.	Closed
19.1	Feedback Survey	There's a big focus in the plan on communication/education of residents about climate change. While some focus on this is OK (eg incl in every Council page in Chronicle), research in social & health education indicates this has limited effectiveness.	Note (no action required)	Noted.	Closed

19.2	Feedback Survey	<p>Instead, Council needs to identify, develop and nurture the capabilities critical to managing climate change and target these through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitating/enabling training and development to improve the capacity of key business operators, social and community organizations around climate change mitigation and response</li> <li>• Establish an advisory group of climate change experts within the municipality</li> <li>• Create a role of Climate Mitigation Ambassador, and appoint and support a number of these Ambassadors to spread information and publicize resources</li> <li>• Create a dynamic space within the proposed Council building that provides resources, advice and acts as a focus for people in the municipality, including</li> </ul>	Note (no action required)	<p>- <b>Capacity building:</b> This will be addressed in action 4.4 'Collaborate with partners to enhance community outreach efforts on climate change awareness and adaptation'</p> <p>- <b>Advisory group:</b> Good suggestion, but council currently has an Enviro &amp; Sustainability reference group, who are leveraged when strategies such as this require development.</p> <p>- <b>Climate Mitigation Ambassador role:</b> Good suggestion and something to be considered, but the feasibility of this requires review and would be a separate project as this is a Climate Adaptation Plan and not focused on mitigation.</p> <p>- <b>Climate change focus space:</b> Our website contains information, and links to resources (this material is currently going under review and will be updated). Also have times of year like at the library for events where info is distributed. Given the diversity of spaces, it is not always appropriate to have one focus space. Typically this is reviewed periodically and this will be taken on board</p>	Closed
20	Feedback Survey	Environmental changes we should be making now . Before it's too late to establish new plants. Eg why are there non native plant trees in ovens at new centre of the road plantings. It seems like the usual amount of bureaucracy and committee speak . I'm grateful we are thinking about	Note (no action required)	Noted.	Closed
21.1	Feedback Survey	Page 45, point 3 I think the public library is a much more suitable "cool zone" than the Sports Centre because it has friendly welcoming staff, impressive reading resources and comfortable seating.	Note (no action required)	Reviewed and agreed, the library is noted as a potential refuge space within Action 3.	Closed
21.2	Feedback Survey	I very much support RCOW joining the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Environment listed on page 47 - 3.1. I think this Draft Climate Adaptation Plan should be supported fully by RCOW and any financial concerns should be weighed against the enormous debt burden of dealing with flooding and heat events which are increasing in frequency and magnitude because of climate change, Flooding events are increasing in number each year and I wonder if our Council is focusing sufficiently on building and upgrading facilities and structures to cope with this. As a 72 year old I am increasingly alarmed by particularly hot summer seasons in Wangaratta and am starting to think I would be more comfortable back in Melbourne so am contemplating a move there over the next few years	Note (no action required)	Noted.	Closed
22	Feedback Survey	Planning and the promotion of future-proofing strategies are likely to have wide-ranging effects for the benefit of all members of the community. Equally, leaning into climate change with efforts to create a resilient natural environment could potentially mitigate worsening effects. Congratulations to Council for their initiative in developing this forward-looking, critically important Climate Adaptation Plan	Note (no action required)	Noted.	Closed
23	Feedback Submission	<p>Point one of action 4 cites the RCoW Youth Council as potential partners in "community out reach".</p> <p>I question the suitability of this. The Youth council should be spending time on joint projects that they devise themselves. Did the Youth Council have direct input to this Draft document specifically requesting this partnering arrangement? Or was it a suggestion that came from council officers?</p> <p>It is an understatement to say there are differing views in the population of Wangaratta about the way to respond to climate change. At times these differing views become politically charged. I don't think it is appropriate to engage young people to advocate for council policies and actions. Especially when some of those actions may end up generating criticism from the public.</p> <p>Council staff charged with supervising and mentoring the Youth Council should be careful to not push or reinforce a particular point of view. There must be room for a diversity of view points on this issue and other issues within the youth council.</p> <p>If the youth council come up with their own initiatives to address Climate Change I think that is terrific.....I just don't a reference to partnering with youth in a document of this nature is appropriate.</p> <p>The "Grit and Resilience" organisation would be a much more preferable community group to partner with on outreach projects</p>	Note (no action required)	Noted, however the Youth Council have previously expressed interest and concern in this process and have been a significant contributor. The youth demographic requires representation, and as a volunteer organisation it is appropriate to acknowledge them as part of the wider community.	Closed
	Online Drop-in Session	<p>• Depot – there should be generators, batteries, fuel access in the event of an emergency at the depot. Believed in council 'leading by example' on how we can run self-sufficiently in the event of an emergency. (We discussed this in relation to Actions 2.1 + 2.2)</p>	Action (additional updates)	<p>Noted. Council has access to generators where needed, and will continue to invest in opportunities for off grid and community batteries. Council may consider undertaking a case study on the next 'disaster', showcasing how new council assets responded during this event.</p> <p>Noting there is an absence in this plan for acknowledging council's position to showcase 'best practice resilience' for the community, adjustments have been proposed within Action 2.1 on pg 31:</p> <p>Throughout this process, key council sites with off-grid capabilities should be established (e.g., solar power, battery storage, rainwater harvesting) and actively publicised, to educate the community on self-sufficiency and resilience.</p>	CAP Updated

	Feedback Submission (Ac	<p>I don't support council expending resources on developing strategies, financial advice, brochures, workshops etc for the business community. There are a multitude of businesses affected by climate change and extreme weather events. For example tourism, music festivals, farming, horticulture, building profession. Each of these sectors have there own professional associations where they can go when seeking resources, expertise and advice.</p> <p>The council should make available to those who seek it, any scientific modelling of projected climate change in our region. This could help businesses understand what is ahead for our part of the world. However I do not support council becoming a defacto training organisation for the business community.</p> <p>accordingly I oppose the inclusion of clause 4 - "Consider procuring a consultant to create bespoke materials"</p> <p>I support advocating to the state government for that tier of government to do more to support small businesses on this issue.</p> <p>I support clause 5 which focuses on sharing information with the wider community. That clause suggests "Consider inviting community members periodically to emergency event simulations". This is a good idea as it would give more people in the wider community (including local business leaders) an understanding of what kind of events the council are planning for.</p>	Note (no action required)	<p>If there is a need addressed for the community, the action is specific to identification of existing resources first. The business community are part of the wider network within Wangaratta and should be acknowledged within this plan.</p> <p>Regarding consultant procurement for bespoke materials, the action is specific to the Municipality only if available resources are deemed insufficient to address challenges that are identified through other areas of the action.</p>	Closed
	Feedback Submission	<p>I don't support RCoW paying for a "...First Nations subcontractor."</p> <p>It is my understanding that there is scientific uncertainty about whether a re-introduction of indigenous fire regimes (into what are very different landscapes to pre-colonial times) will have the positive effect proponents are expecting.</p> <p>It is important the council operates from evidence based decision making. All interventions that RCoW make into the local landscape should be justifiable using scientific principles.</p> <p>I do support RCoW staff strengthening respectful communication channels with local indigenous leaders. However I can't support adopting a blanket proscription that RCOW "work with traditional owners to incorporate cultural knowledge and practices in bush reserve management plans for the municipality."</p>	Note (no action required)	<p>As part of this initiative, consideration for appropriate practices relevant to the current landscape are included. Representation is important of the wider community.</p> <p>No changes are proposed to Action 5.4. Fire regimes are not mentioned within the report and action references existing initiatives within the municipality.</p>	Closed
	Feedback Submission	<p>The library already is a place many people enjoy relaxing in comfort on a very hot day. I would like to see the library given higher importance in heat wave planning. Increasing the hours the library is open during Summer heatwaves should be considered. When considering the frail and the elderly it is obvious the library is a much more suitable place as a heat relief location than the Wangaratta Sport Centre at Barr reserve.</p> <p>There is reference in this document to communication strategies with the wider public. The library could be the ideal venue for such efforts. The Library already has an annual event program called "March into Sustainability" why not make council climate adaptation outreach a regular part of the annual "March into Sustainability" programming. If there is a library staff member who wished to be given professional training to enable them to participate in RcoW community outreach efforts on the climate topic I would be fully supportive.</p>	Note (no action required)	Agreed, the library is acknowledged as part of Action 1.3	Closed
	Feedback Submission	<p>Supportive of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* considering the CAP in "...each Annual Budget cycle and long-term financial plan"</li> <li>* annually reporting on the progress of CAP</li> <li>* up dating the Municipal Emergency Management Plan in collaboration with state government and voluntary agencies</li> <li>* proposed yearly schedule of emergency response operation simulations</li> <li>* creating a list of priority assets to be upgraded to be climate resilient</li> <li>* Create draft plans and applications for funding for infrastructure upgrades that are ready to go following a disaster</li> <li>* working with engineers to understand the infrastructure upgrades our city needs</li> <li>* ensuring new developments include climate-smart design</li> </ul>	Note (no action required)	Noted.	Closed

	Feedback Submission	Extremely supportive of: * “continue to develop a heatwave policy or plan in conjunction with heat-health experts”  * “consider installing an emergency phone in each small town to be used to establish communications between communities, Council and emergency services”  * expanding the flood overlays to include consideration of increasing flood probabilities & incorporating changes into the Wangaratta Planning Scheme.  * develop a sustainable drainage policy for the drainage and storm water systems.  * Work with NEW and NECMA to develop an Integrated Water Management Plan.  * investigating the feasibility of installing permanent generators in the small RCOW townships for use during power outages * improve community access to relief centres * develop a Climate Adaptive Planting Project	Note (no action required)	Noted.	Closed
	Email	Support the following points of the plan:  •More support for vulnerable people during extreme heat, cold, bushfire and flooding events •Library to be better resourced so it can be a "cool zone" in heat waves for vulnerable people. •RCOW joining the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Environment.	Note (no action required)	Noted.	Closed
	Email	My new comment It would be good to build synergies amount the different actions. Here I would advocate for planning to avoid high impact areas, building in mitigation mechanisms to avoid heat, drought and flood impacts with specific actions for stormwater and greening projects. Here we can see passive irrigation of street trees links to species selection to minimise stormwater, enhance cooling and minimise heat and drought impacts.  As mentioned I am a wang resident and [redacted - personal info] . Here I have active research in plant response to the environment specialising in heat and drought adaptive capacity. Current project include ecological restoration and urban greening. My webpage for some details: [redacted - personal info]	Note (no action required)	Thank you and agree that synergies are important and this will be considered, however steps to implement also include partnerships with existing projects and organisations.	Closed
	Email	Shade trees are important and the council has been proactive in street plantings.  I think when the council buys trees from a supplier they should get some extra and offer them for sale to the public at cost.  Also council may consider offering the public a service re advice on saving and caring for important shade trees at their residential properties. Such advice can assist before people employ an arborist at great cost.	Note (no action required)	Good suggestions, council will look at this for future projects. Currently we collect and grow seeds within a nursery, and the library will be launching a seed library in March.	Closed
	Online Drop-in Session	•Council should be keeping an eye on technology and being ready to go when electrification tech improves / grants are available.	Note (no action required)	Take onboard your comment, thank you. This is considered within the Environment & Sustainability	Closed
	Online Drop-in Session	Felt there was business focus more than community	Note (no action required)	Action 4 ' A prosperous, prepared, and healthy community ' is included to address this and feels community is well represented , but we note the comment.	Closed
	Online Drop-in Session	Housing construction code - advocacy piece for council to ensure code updates are mandated to achieve emissions reduction commitments (Action 3.1)	Note (no action required)	Included in action 3.1.	Closed



Rural City of  
**Wangaratta**

# Minutes

For the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting  
Council Chambers Municipal Offices  
62-68 Ovens Street, Wangaratta **5 December 2024**

wangaratta.vic.gov.au

## 1. Welcome

The traditional owners of the land on which we met were acknowledged and respects were paid to Elders past, present and emerging and to Elders from other communities who may have been present at the meeting.

## 2. Present/Absent/Apologies

### Committee Members

Mr Vito Giudice (chairperson) (virtual)

Mr Wilson Tang

Mr Matt Fagence (virtual)

Ms Jane Watson (virtual)

### Councillors

Cr. Harvey Benton

### Auditors

Brad Ead - Internal Audit

Dannielle Mackenzie – External Audit (virtual)

### Staff Members

Brendan McGrath – Chief Executive Officer

Sarah Brindley – Director Corporate and Leisure

Andrew Lovett – Corporate Planning and Governance Specialist

Andrew Scoffern – Governance and Reporting Advisor

### Apologies

Cr. Irene Grant

## 3. Confirmation of Minutes

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee read and confirm the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting for the Special Meeting on 17 September 2024 as a true and accurate record of the meeting was moved by Independent Member Matt Fagence and seconded by Independent Member Wilson Tang and CARRIED.

## 4. Conflict of Interest Disclosure

In accordance with sections 53 and 131 of the Local Government Act 2020, a member who has a conflict of interest in respect of a matter must disclose the conflict of interest in the manner required by the Council's Governance Rules and comply with the procedures specified in the Governance Rules.

It was NOTED that no disclosures were made.

## 5. Reports

### 5.1 Climate Change Risk Management Presentation

The Environment and Sustainability Coordinator presented to the Audit and Risk Committee on how Council manages its climate change obligations and the risks associated with climate change.

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee note the Climate Change Risk Management Presentation December 2024 was moved by Independent Member Jane Watson and seconded by Independent Member Matt Fagence and CARRIED.

#### Discussion

Independent Member Vito Giudice asked if Council had a wider Environmental Social Governance (ESG) strategy and noted that there has been an increase in organisations, including councils, having ESG strategies in effect. The Environment and Sustainability Coordinator confirmed that there is no wider ESG at this stage, only an Environment and Sustainability Strategy. It was noted that Council management should be aware that having an ESG in effect may be mandated at some point.

Independent Member Jane Watson and External Auditor Brad Ead noted that although there is a lot of work that needs to be done in this space, funding and cost shifting remain key issues. There is no sector specific guidance on this area but councils are proactively working to minimise the risks that arise from ESG matters.

### 5.2 Cybersecurity and Penetration Testing - December 2024 Update

The Manager Customer, Digital & Transformation Services presented an update to the Committee on the Cybersecurity Internal Penetration Test Summary and a motion that the Audit and Risk Committee noted the attached Cyber Security Internal Penetration Remediation Program update was moved by Independent Member Matt Fagence and seconded by Independent Member Wilson Tang and CARRIED.

### 5.3 Fraud Management Presentation

The Corporate Planning & Governance Specialist presented an update to the Audit and Risk Committee on Council's Fraud and Corruption risk management and a motion that the Audit and Risk Committee note this presentation was moved by Independent Member Jane Wilson and seconded by Councillor Harvey Benton and CARRIED.

#### Discussion

Independent Member Matt Fagence asked how fraud and corruption training is being received across the organisation and if there is a genuine interest or desire to actively engage with the content. The Corporate Planning and Governance Specialist indicated that the governance team contextualises the training and makes it specific to each business area and provide case study



examples to make the content more relatable. The training has resulted in greater reporting across the organisation, particularly in the gifts and conflict of interest declarations.

Council's governance intranet site provides information on public interest disclosures, conflict of interest, gift declarations and fraud and corruption in basic English.

#### **5.4 CEO, Strategic, Emerging and Industry Risks Report**

The purpose of the CEO Strategic, Emerging and Industry Risk report was to assist the Audit and Risk Committee to monitor Council's risk exposure, including the status of strategic and emerging risks, industry risks, major lawsuits and compliance investigations. A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee noted the report was moved by Councillor Harvey Benton and seconded by Independent Member Wilson Tang and CARRIED.

##### **Discussion**

The Audit and Risk Committee requested a report on financial sustainability to be bought back at a future meeting.

Independent Member Vito Giudice still had discomfort on whether the strategic risks are being managed within appetite and requested that an additional column be included to explain whether the risk is within risk appetite levels and a rationale for this determination. Current commentary of why a risk is increasing / decreasing is not sufficient and management to consider an approach in the future of capturing this information in the Strategic Risk Register, perhaps in an adjacent column.

The Audit and Risk Committee also flagged that the accuracy of risk 4 – information management risk should be considered as a result of the cybersecurity and artificial intelligence increase as noted in an earlier report.

##### **Actions**

**Action 1:** A sample of some of the operational risks to be presented bi-annually as a separate attachment in this report

**Action 2:** The Corporate Planning and Governance Specialist to have a look at the risk register and to discuss an approach with the Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee.

**Action 3:** Provide the financial sustainability report to the Audit and Risk Committee.

#### **5.5 Committee Action Items and Annual Work Plan**

This report was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee to review the status of the Committee Annual Work Plan and monitor outstanding Audit and Risk Committee, internal and external audit action items. A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee noted the report was moved Independent Member Jane Watson and seconded by Independent Member Matt Fagence and CARRIED.

### Discussion

Independent Member Wilson Tang questioned whether we needed to have an external sight over the overdue policy audit action given the complexity and breadth of services. The Corporate Planning and Governance Specialist confirmed that the governance team was managing this action by auditing each business area to determine policies that are in effect and not in Council's policy register.

Independent Member Vito Giudice also questioned the depth and granularity of the OHS actions as presented to the Committee.

### Actions

**Action 4:** A scaled back, summarised version of these actions to be presented at future committee meetings.

## **5.6 Internal Audit Program and Status Update**

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee note the updated internal audit program and status update was moved by Independent Matt Fagence and seconded by Independent Member Wilson Tang and CARRIED.

## **5.7 Strategic Internal Audit Program**

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee endorse the updated strategic internal audit program was moved by Independent Member Matt Fagence and seconded by Independent Member Wilson Tang and CARRIED.

Internal Auditor Brad Ead explained that the Strategic Internal Audit Program is a static program and is designed to be flexible to satisfy any areas that the Audit and Risk Committee, Council or Council management consider require attention.

Independent Member Wilson Tang queried whether the proposed child safety audit was in response to any concerns or purely an assessment on the 12 Child Safe Standards. Council management confirmed that as Council has recently undertaken a lot of work in this area, this is purely an independent, third party review to determine any blind spots or areas of further improvement.

Independent Member Matt Fagence stated that although comfortable with the proposed Strategic Internal Audit Program, with a new Council in place, they should have oversight on the program, particularly new Councillors.

The Audit and Risk Committee noted that there were very few financial audits in the first year of plan but the Director Corporate and Leisure responded by explaining that given the significant number of audits in this area in the past couple of years and given the IT uplift in the program, the preference was to have other areas of the business prioritised.

### **5.8 Data Analytics Payroll Internal Audit - Final Report and 5.9 Data Mining – Accounts Payable and Procurement**

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee note the findings and actions arising in the Data Analytics - Payroll Internal Audit Final Report, note the findings of the Data Mining – Accounts Payable and Procurement Final Report and note the findings presented in the Road Asset Management Internal Audit – Final Report was moved by Councillor Harvey Benton and seconded by Independent Member Matt Fagence and CARRIED.

#### **Discussion**

Internal Auditor Brad Ead stated the main area of focus was the hygiene of where some Council staff had multiple positions and the potential of this creating fraud risk and Council management confirmed that the actions arising from the audit in relation to this risk were already complete.

Independent Member Wilson Tang questioned the accuracy of the excessive leave balances recommendation and the implementation of this action. Council management confirmed that there has been much progress in this area in the past 18 to 24 months but risks remain and continue to be monitored.

### **5.10 Road Asset Management Internal Audit - Final Report**

#### **Discussion**

Internal Auditor Brad Ead noted that there was little evidence of intervention levels being demonstrably met and this created a risk of greater levels of litigation pertaining to injuries and damage to vehicles. Council is benchmarking lower than other councils in road asset management maintenance.

Council management noted that despite these findings, technology has been improved in recent times and this has helped mitigate these risks. Council expects a significant improvement in the next 6 to 12 months in this area.

#### **Actions**

**Action 5:** Director Community and Infrastructure to present on progress of findings regarding this audit at a future meeting.

### **5.11 2023/24 Management Letter & External Audit Action Status**

The Final Management Letter was finalised since the last Audit and Risk Committee meeting, noting the resolution of five prior period issues and the addition of five new items to the audit actions register.

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee notes the 2023/2024 Final Management Letter and External Audit Actions Status was moved by Independent Member Matt Fagence and seconded by Independent Member Jane Watson and CARRIED

### 5.12 Quarter 1 Finance Report and Aged Debtors Status

This Finance Report and Aged Debtors was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee to provide an update of Council's Quarter 1, 2024/2025 financial performance and projected full year financial position.

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee:

- received and noted the 2024/2025 Quarter 1 Forecast Review, including the decrease in the projected full year accounting surplus by \$485k to \$13.42m and the increase in capital works expenditure by \$1.55m; and
- Received and noted the status of Aged Debtors as 30 September 2024

was moved by Councillor Harvey Benton and seconded by Independent Member Matt Fagence and CARRIED.

### 5.13 Corporate Card Review

This report was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee to note the findings of the Corporate Card Review. A corporate card dashboard has been created to monitor and report, on a bi-annual basis, compliance with some high-risk components of the Corporate Card Policy ('the Policy').

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee noted the findings of the Corporate Card Review was moved by Independent Member Matt Fagence and seconded by Independent Member Wilson Tang and CARRIED.

#### Discussion

Independent Member Wilson Tang noted that incomplete transactions were still quite high and if there were any identifiable root causes. Council management noted that finance working with relevant stakeholders to ensure these transactions are complete. Finance has begun cancelling cards for repeat offenders and have worked with Council's financial institution to find a real time solution to 'zero out cards' for repeat offenders.

The Audit and Risk Committee noted that Council management had to work on communicating with repeat offenders and working on changing the culture of these offenders.

### 5.14 Mayor, Councillor and CEO expenses

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee noted the report was moved by Independent Member Matt Fagence and seconded by Independent Member Wilson Tang and CARRIED.

### 5.15 Council Plan Performance - Quarter 1 (July - September 2024)

This report was presented to provide the Quarter 1 2024/25 Council Plan Strategic Indicators and Actions update for 2024/25 as required under the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic). A motion that the Audit & Risk Committee noted the report was moved by Independent Member Jane Watson and seconded by Independent Member Matt Fagence and CARRIED

### 5.16 Update on Annual Committee Performance Assessment - Results

This report was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee to consider the results of the Annual Audit and Risk Committee Performance Assessment survey.

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee noted the results of the Annual Performance Assessment and has determined independent members will perform an additional Annual Committee Performance Assessment Survey was moved by Independent Member Matt Fagence and seconded by Councillor Harvey Benton and CARRIED.

#### Discussion

The Committee questioned whether management could provide some feedback on the success or otherwise of the Audit and Risk Committee and any areas for improvement or strength.

#### Actions

**Action 6:** Council management to organise a further survey performance assessment.

### 5.17 2025 Annual Work Program and Meeting Schedule

This report is presented to the Audit and Risk Committee to adopt the proposed 2025 Audit and Risk Committee Annual Work Plan and Meeting Schedule. A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee endorse the proposed 2025 Audit and Risk Committee Annual Work Plan, consider any specific policy compliance analyses for inclusion in the Annual Work Plan, advise on any operational areas they would like to receive future risk presentations and endorse the proposed meeting schedule for 2025 was moved by Independent Member Matt Fagence and seconded by Independent Member Wilson Tang and CARRIED.

#### Discussion

The Audit and Risk Committee would like the Child Safety Policy presented and considered by the Committee before the proposed internal audit (including reportable conduct).

The Audit and Risk Committee also indicated a desire to have an artificial intelligence operational risk report, alongside an update on the accompanying policy, presented in 2025.

#### Actions

**Action 7:** Council management to present the Child Safety Policy to the Audit and Risk Committee.

The meeting closed at 5:09pm.

**Action Tracker**

	13 September 2023 CMT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council to undertake an audit of all existing council policies and procedures to determine policies that are missing and no longer required.</li> </ul>	Andrew Scoffern	Open	Work has commenced with this action but has not been high priority. Governance is expecting to complete this action and present a report to that affect to CMT for closure in the first quarter of 2025.
20240806-03	5.5 CEO, Strategic, Emerging and Industry Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate Governance and Planning Advisor to review residual risks with risk appetite with Council management and develop a report for the next meeting.</li> </ul>	Andrew Lovett	Open	This has not progressed due to resource constraint.
5 December 2024	5.4 CEO, Strategic, Emerging and Industry Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A sample of some of the operational risks to be presented bi-annually as a separate attachment in this report</li> </ul>	Andrew Lovett/Andrew Scoffern	New	
5 December 2024	5.4 CEO, Strategic, Emerging and Industry Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Corporate Planning and Governance Specialist to have a look at the Register and to discuss an approach with the chairperson of the Committee</li> </ul>	Andrew Lovett	New	
5 December 2024	5.4 CEO, Strategic Emerging and Industry Risks Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide the financial sustainability report to the Audit and Risk Committee</li> </ul>	Anthea Sloan	New	
5 December 2024	5.5 Committee Actions and Work Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A scaled back OHS actions summary to be presented at future ARC meetings</li> </ul>	Zoe Giglio	New	
5 December 2024	5.10 Road Asset Management Internal Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Director Community and Infrastructure to present an update on the actions and findings of this audit at a future meeting.</li> </ul>	Lauren Malins/Marcus Goonan	New	

5 December 2024	5.16 Update on Annual Committee Performance Assessment - Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council management to organise a further survey performance assessment.</li> </ul>	Andrew Scoffern	New	
5 December 2024	5.17 2025 Annual Work Program and Meeting Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council management to present the Child Safety Policy to the Audit and Risk Committee</li> </ul>	Andrew Scoffern	New	



# Minutes

**Arts and Culture Advisory Committee Meeting**

**5:30pm Monday 3 February 2025**

**Mullinmur Room**

**Attendees**

Cr Dave Fuller, Cr Alison Winters,  
Margaret Pullen, Rachel Vallender, Tim Dickinson, Marc Bongers,

**Council Officers**

Stephen Swart, Director Sustainability and Culture  
Simone Nolan, Manager Arts Culture and Events  
Denise Pirko- Community Engagement Advisor (RCOW)

**Chair – Cr Dave Fuller**

Apologies Mayor Cr Irene Grant, Paddy Milne, Pam Procter, Fran O’Neil  
Acceptance of Apologies - **Moved** Tim D/ **Seconded** Marg P

- **Conflict of Interest Declarations – N/A**
- **Acknowledgement Country** - Cr Al Winters

Agenda Item	Time
<b>Previous Minutes - Cr Fuller</b>	5.30 pm
Review of previous minutes (from meeting held December 2, 2024). Actions acknowledged, business arising from previous minutes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Closure of Digital Hub prompted concern for Wangaratta Camera Club. Item reported to be resolved, club now meets at Log Cabin in Chisholm St (Rotary Club meeting place)</li><li>• Homework and follow up for council plan discussed.</li></ul>	
Acceptance of previous minutes - <b>Moved</b> Tim D/ <b>Seconded</b> Marc B	



**Council Plan Community Engagement & Overview**  
(Denise Pirko Community Engagement Advisor)

- Recap on Arts Culture and Events actions in current Council Plan and Committee homework
- Presentation by Denise P outlining the staged and targeted engagement process with the community
- Discussion on the current council plan pillars, what are of importance and what are their meanings.
- Group discussion on Wellbeing and Lifestyle are of importance, followed by Economy.
- (Marg P), re Wellbeing pillar, can it be described in a more inspiring or user-friendly way?
- 1<sup>st</sup> round of Consultation closes on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2025.
- Follow up workshops and dates to be provided to committee, all members encouraged to subscribe to the RCoW connect website.

**Events & Attractions Strategy Update – Simone Nolan (on behalf of Elisha Naish:**

- Report, timeline and update provided.
- All members are invited to provide feedback on the draft through the Connect Wangaratta website until 28 March 2025
- Questions and discussion:
  - (Marc B) - Will the location of main events space be identified – / Officers confirmed the Rodeo Grounds were still in use and considered as a high priority events space.
  - (Rachel V) -Can the committee advise and advocate, individually or as a group? / Cr Fuller reminded the committee that the members can action feedback or recommendations to Councillors via the minutes or via the Councillor portfolio holders to Arts, Culture and Events
  - Tim D) How were RCoW Events Curated – / Officers advised this is articulated and itemised in the Strategy.

## ACAC Committee Meeting Minutes

February 2025

3

**General Business- Arts Culture & Events – Simone Nolan**

- (Marc B) – Can the Advisory members explore the availability of a group communication platform, request to explore a group Teams chat, request put forward for officers to clarify if this would be available via RCoW Officer Action required
- Chatty café program update at Wangaratta Library.
- (Marc B) Wangaratta Art Gallery Friends upcoming openings, student award \$1000 being processed to be awarded to a local Year 12 student.
- (Tim D) Wangaratta Arts Council will be folding within the next month, proposal of acknowledgement to the important work of Marg Brickhill and remaining funds to be divided x3 ways, one proposal suggests the Steinway Piano, GANEAA and the Wangaratta Historical Society.  
GANEAA update on membership and some concerns on the lack of grant funding for the Across the Arts Festival. (now down to one day with opening and workshop)
- (Marg P) Noth Wangaratta Community Group have received their pod seat, East Bank of Reidy Creek, want to formally thank council.
- Cr Al Winters, Pride Hub relocation update to Larkings Street West End.
- Next Meeting – **Wednesday 2 April 2025, 5.30pm Wangaratta Library Community Room** 7.22pm
- Meeting Closure 7.22pm