



Rural City of  
**Wangaratta**

# Agenda

For the Scheduled Council Meeting  
Springhurst Community Hall & Reserve  
111 Anzac Road, Springhurst  
**6:00 PM 24 March 2026**



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## 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

#### Recommendation:

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

## Order of Business

### 6. Citizen Ceremony

7.

### Confirmation of Minutes

#### Recommendation:

That Council read and confirm the Minutes of the Scheduled Meeting of 24 February 2026 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 Biannual Audit and Risk Report

Meeting Type:	Scheduled Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	24 March 2026
Category:	Strategic
Author:	Executive Assistant Corporate & Leisure
Approver:	Director - Corporate & 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 note the Audit and Risk Committee's Biannual Audit and Risk Report. This report was prepared in January 2026 to outline the activities of the Audit and Risk Committee between July – December 2025. This report is a requirement of the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) and this report is for Councillors to note only.

#### Recommendation:

That Council:

1. Notes the Biannual Audit and Risk Report attached to this report.

#### Background

##### Biannual Audit and Risk Report

Section 54(5) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) requires that the Audit and Risk Committee: prepares a biannual audit and risk report that describes the activities of the committee and includes its findings and recommendations.

To comply with this requirement, a biannual audit and risk report was produced for the period 1 July 2025 – 31 December 2025.

The attached report (**Attachment 1**) was also presented at the 17 March 2026 Audit and Risk Committee Meeting for endorsement and is now presented to Council for noting.



## Implications

### Policy Considerations

There are no specific Council policies or strategies that relate to this report.

### Financial/Economic Implications

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

### Legal/Statutory

Section 54(5) of the Act requires the Audit and Risk Committee to prepare a biannual audit and risk report and provide a copy of the biannual audit and risk report to the Chief Executive Officer for tabling at the next Council meeting.

The Act requires that the Chief Executive Officer must table the biannual audit and risk report at the next Council meeting.

### 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.

## Conclusion

The completion and tabling of the Audit and Risk Committee Biannual report ensures that the Committee complies with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and all the committee's activities can be monitored by Council.

## Attachments

- 1 Biannual Audit and Risk Committee Report July - December 2025 [↓](#)

## 14. Community and Infrastructure

### 14.1 Municipal Early Years Plan 2026 - 2030

Meeting Type:	Scheduled Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	24 March 2026
Category:	Strategic
Author:	Manager - Community Services
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 provide a draft Municipal Early Years Plan 2026 - 2030 (MEYP) for consideration for the purpose of community engagement.

The Municipal Early Years Plan 2026 - 2030 (MEYP) is a strategic document that outlines Council's commitment to supporting children and families from birth to twelve years of age. The draft plan has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders, including early childhood services, health providers, and community representatives. It identifies priorities and actions to improve outcomes for children and families across the municipality, aligned with State and Federal frameworks.

The draft MEYP is now ready for community consultation to seek the communities feedback before final adoption. Community engagement will ensure transparency and provide an opportunity for families, service providers, and the broader community to contribute to the final plan.

#### Recommendation:

That Council:

1. Endorses the draft Municipal Early Years Plan 2026 – 2030 for community consultation.
2. Invites submissions regarding the draft Municipal Early Years Plan for a period of 28 days.
3. If submissions are received that request changes to the draft Municipal Early Years Plan, considers a further report at a future Council meeting with the view to adopt the Municipal Early Years Plan 2026 – 2030.
4. If no submissions are received that request changes to the draft Municipal Early Years Plan 2026 – 2030, adopts the draft Municipal Early Years Plan attached to this report without further resolution.

## Background

Wangaratta's Municipal Early Years Plan (MEYP) is a local plan designed to provide strategic direction for the development and coordination of early year's programs, activities and other local community development processes that impact on children 0 – 12 years in our municipality. The MEYP engages our community and partners to work together towards positive early years outcomes for children and families within the Rural City of Wangaratta. The MEYP provides an evidence-based approach to planning Council's involvement in social support and change for children and families. It provides a roadmap for planning services and facilities that will be delivered in collaboration with other partner organisations committed to the support and wellbeing of children. The MEYP is a product of collaborative community involvement, and its development has involved families, residents and other service providers who have provided ideas, opinions, data and feedback on the strategic directions proposed. As it is implemented, this collaborative approach with community will be maintained through local area partnerships to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes for children.

The plan aligns with State and Federal early years frameworks and responds to local needs identified through consultation with families, service providers, and community stakeholders. This report seeks Council approval to place the draft MEYP out for community engagement to allow community feedback before final adoption.

## Implications

### Policy Considerations

The MEYP supports Council's commitment to community wellbeing and aligns with broader strategic objectives for early childhood development.

The MEYP has been prepared in accordance with Council's engagement practices set out in the Community Engagement Policy.

The MEYP complements Council's Community Vision and Health and Wellbeing Plan.

### Financial/Economic Implications

There are no direct financial implications for placing the draft MEYP on public exhibition. Any future actions identified in the plan will be subject to Council's annual budget process and external funding opportunities.

### Equity Impact Assessment (EIA)

The Municipal Early Years Plan is a strategic planning document and does not introduce new policies or programs that would trigger an EIA requirement. However, the plan has been developed with consideration of equity principles to ensure inclusive access to early years services for all families.

## Strategic Links

### Council Plan 2025-2029

This report supports the 2025-2029 Council Plan through the following objectives and actions:

#### 1. Community Wellbeing

- 1.1 Provide access to services and program that enable people to live healthy, active and inspired lives

1.3 Ensure services and spaces are safe, accessible inclusive and welcoming to everyone in our community

**2. Economy and Tourism**

3.2 Ensure residents can access local education and employment opportunities

**3. Infrastructure and Place**

4.1 Plan for infrastructure, facilities and open spaces that reflect changing community environmental needs.

**Rural City of Wangaratta 2045 Community Vision**

- **Wangaratta Council Community Vision 2045** – specifically the objectives related to Healthy, Connected Communities and Inclusive Opportunities for Children and Families.

**Other strategic links**

- **State Government Early Years Reform Agenda.**

**Risk Management**

Risk Management Framework

Risks	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Community concerns about draft content	low	minor	low	Provide clear communication and opportunity for feedback
Limited engagement during exhibition	Medium	Moderate	Medium	Use multiple channels (website, social, media, direct outreach)
Delay in adoption due to feedback volume	Low	Minor	Low	Allocate time for review and incorporate feedback effectively

### Consultation/Communication

Level of public participation	Promises to the public/stakeholders	Tools/Techniques
Inform	We will keep informed	Council website, social media, media release
Consult	We will listen to and acknowledge your feedback	Online survey, email submission
Involve	We will work with you to ensure your concerns are considered	Community workshops, stakeholder meetings
Collaborate	We will partner with you in decision making.	Targeted engagement with service
Empower	We will implement what you decide	Not applicable for this stage.

Officers believe that appropriate consultation has occurred and the matter is now ready for Council consideration. Once the Draft is endorsed it will be open for further community feedback for 28 days. Feedback will be considered before the final version is represented to Council for adoption.

### Options for Consideration

Approve the draft Municipal Early Years Plan for public exhibition for a period of 28 Days to seek community feedback.

Request that amendments be made to the draft plan prior to it being published for community engagement.

### Conclusion

The draft Municipal Early Years Plan 2026-2030 provides a strategic framework to support children and families in the municipality. Public exhibition will allow the community and stakeholders to provide feedback, ensuring the final plan reflects local needs and priorities. Officers recommend that Council endorse the draft plan for public exhibition.

### Attachments

- 1 Municipal Early Years Plan 2026-2030 [↓](#)

## 14.2 C22114 – Supply and Deliver Suction Sweeper

Meeting Type:	Scheduled Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	24 March 2026
Category:	Strategic
Author:	Field Services Manager
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 award Contract C22114 – Supply and Deliver Suction Sweeper.

The Rural City of Wangaratta has invited tenders for the supply and delivery of a Suction Sweeper. This Suction Sweeper will be used by the Urban Drainage team to clean the street and sealed paths across the municipality. Plant has been identified as due for replacement in Council's Plant Replacement program due to age of existing plant and ongoing maintenance issues.

### Recommendation:

That Council:

1. Award Contract C22114 – Supply and Delivery of Suction Sweeper to Rosmech
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to sign and seal all the relevant contract documents for C22114 – Supply and Delivery of a Suction Sweeper
3. Discloses the contract price of contract C22114 – Supply and Delivery of a Suction Sweeper.

### Background

Council officers tendered for the supply and delivery of a new single cab chassis and suction unit to replace its existing Hino FG1628, suction unit Bucher Municipal VT Series.

Council's Procurement Policy and Guidelines outline the approved methods and processes for procurement. In accordance with this policy, a Request for Quote was released to the MAV Panel Contract market on 27 November 2025 via Vendor Panel. Vendor Panel is the online contract management and e-quoting system used by MAV Procurement to give Victorian Councils access to MAV-established panel contracts and approved suppliers.

Through this process, Council received six conforming, and one non-conforming, submissions. The tender review panel assessed each submission against the established criteria for the procurement, and Rosmech were the clear preferred supplier.

## Implications

### Policy Considerations

There are no specific Council policies or strategies that relate to this report.

### Financial/Economic Implications

An allocation of \$580,000 (ex GST) was provided in Council's 2024/25 budget for this plant replacement. The trade-in of the existing plant will be undertaken upon delivery of the new unit

### Legal/Statutory

There are no legal/statutory implications identified for the subject of 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

### Council Plan 2025 – 2029

This report supports the 2025-2029 Council Plan through the following strategic theme:

#### 1. Infrastructure and Place

We are developing places that connect people, businesses, and neighbourhoods. Our focus is on maintaining and improving what we already have, while delivering new infrastructure to meet community needs.

- Ensure Assets are financially sustainable and fit for purpose.
- Explore additional efficiencies in the maintenance and repair of Council Infrastructure and assets.

### Community Vision 2045

The content of this report supports delivery of the new Community Vision:

- Transport, roads and Infrastructure
- Care for nature & environment
- Community Safety

## Risk Management

### Risk Management Framework

Risks	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Inability to provide Council with product as described.	Possible (3)	Moderate (3)	Medium (9)	Council has chosen a well-known and trusted supplier to mitigate this risk.

## Consultation/Communication

This was a public Tender Process and no community consultation was required. Officers believe that appropriate consultation has occurred and the matter is now ready for Council consideration.

## Options for Consideration

1. Award Contract C22114 – Supply and Delivery of Suction Sweeper to Rosmech
2. Not award Contract C22114 – Supply and Delivery of Suction Sweeper in accordance with approved evaluation report and retender publicly as per Council's procurement policy.

## Conclusion

Following an internal evaluation against pre-determined evaluation criteria and weightings, Contract C22114 – Supply and Delivery of Suction Sweeper is recommended to be awarded to Rosmech in accordance with attached evaluation report.

## Attachments

- 1 Council Evaluation Report and Award Recommendation Sweeper - Confidential



**15. Sustainability and Culture**

Nil

**16. Special Committee Reports**

Nil

**17. Advisory Committee Reports**

Nil

**18. Minutes of Advisory Committee Meetings**

Nil

**19. Notices of Motion**

Nil

**20. Urgent Business**

**21. Public Question Time**

**22. Confidential Business**

Nil

**23. Closure of Meeting**

**Attachments**



Rural City of  
**Wangaratta**

## Biannual audit and risk report

Period 1 July 2025 to 31 December 2025

### Objectives and scope

- (1) The Audit and Risk Committee (the Committee) is a committee established by Council under section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) to undertake the following functions and responsibilities:
  - (a) monitor the compliance of Council policies and procedures with the overarching governance principles and the Act and the regulations and any Ministerial directions;
  - (b) monitor Council financial and performance reporting;
  - (c) monitor and provide advice on risk management and fraud prevention systems and controls;
  - (d) oversee internal and external audit functions.
- (2) The committee was established on 25 August 2020.

### Membership

- (3) The committee comprised 4 independent members and 3 Councillors.
- (4) The independent members were Ms Jane Watson, Mr Vito Giudice, Mr Wilson Tang and Mr Matt Fagence.
- (5) The councillor members were the Mayor, Cr Irene Grant, and Deputy Mayor, Cr Harvey Benton.
- (6) Crs Mayor Irene Grant and Harvey Benton's terms ended on 19 November 2025. Mayor Cr Irene Grant, Deputy Mayor Cr Harvey Benton and Cr Allison Winters were re-appointed by Council resolution on 25 November 2025 for a period of one year.
- (7) The chairperson was Ms Jane Watson. Ms Watson was unanimously endorsed by the Committee as Chairperson for a period of one year on 18 March 2025.

### Meetings

- (8) The Committee met 3 times during the period:
  - (a) 19 August 2025
  - (b) 25 September 2025 (Special)
  - (c) 09 December 2025

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Biannual audit and risk report

### Attendance

(9) The following table shows meeting attendance by members.

Member	19 Aug	25 Sep	9 Dec	TOTAL
Ms Jane Watson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3/3
Mr Vito Giudice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2/3
Mr Wilson Tang	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3/3
Mr Matt Fagence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2/3
Mayor Cr Irene Grant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2/3
Deputy Mayor Cr Harvey Benton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3/3
Cr Allison Winters	<b>Not Required</b>	<b>Not Required</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1/1

### External audit

- (10) The 2024-25 external audit was complete by Crowe on behalf of the Victorian Auditor General’s Office (VAGO).
- (11) The Final Management Letter and Closing Report issued by VAGO provided a summary of audit findings. These findings are:

Open item	Findings	Recommended management action
Revaluation of infrastructure assets	<p>Council were due to perform a comprehensive revaluation of the following asset classes in 2024-25:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Roads</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bridges</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Footpaths and cycleways</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Drainage.</li> </ul> <p>However, due to resourcing constraints in the assets team, the decision was taken to postpone the revaluations to 2025-26.</p>	<p>Council should ensure that the revaluations are completed in the 2025-26 financial year and that future revaluations occur in line with the established valuation cycle.</p> <p>Management should develop a clear timetable for the revaluation process and engage with their assets team or an external valuer early to ensure it is completed in time for 30 June 2026 reporting.</p>
Review of capital work-in-progress	<p>We noted in our review of property, infrastructure plant &amp; equipment that there was \$43.0 million of assets held as capital work-in-progress (WIP) at 30 June 2025. Many of these projects have remained in WIP for an extended period. Some projects may be completed but have not yet been transferred to the appropriate fixed asset class.</p> <p>If WIP is not reviewed and completed projects capitalised on a timely basis, it may result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Understatement of depreciation expense in the financial statements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The carrying amount (cost) being materially different to fair value</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Assets being omitted from revaluations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reduced accuracy of management reporting on the status of capital projects</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Assets not being appropriately safeguarded or monitored within the fixed asset register.</li> </ul>	<p>Management should perform a periodic review of the WIP register to identify completed or inactive projects. Completed projects should be transferred promptly to the relevant fixed asset class so that depreciation commences in accordance with AASB 116 Property, Plant and Equipment.</p> <p>Inactive or abandoned projects should be investigated and, where appropriate, written off.</p>



Periodic review of user access	We noted in our review of IT general controls that there is no periodic review of user access in the finance system to ensure that staff only have access commensurate with job responsibilities.	We recommend that management implement an independent periodic review of user access in the finance system to ensure that access levels remain appropriate. Documentation should be retained as evidence to demonstrate the review has taken place.
Review of privileged user audit logs	We noted in our review of IT general controls that audit logs of privileged IT access activities are not reviewed on a periodic basis.	We recommend that management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> establish regular monitoring controls over privileged user access and activity</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> ensure that privileged access is only granted on a temporary basis when required.</li> </ul>
Accounting for developer contributions and gifted assets	We note that internal process for accounting for developer contributions and gifted assets received throughout the year by the council is monitored on a reactive and ad hoc basis. There is no overarching register to monitor the developer contributions and gifted assets in terms of control and recognition of assets, timing of revenue recognition and communication between various council departments (Planning Team, Engineering Team and Finance Team) to ensure completeness and recognition in a timely manner.	While the Planning Team do maintain records of developer contributions and gifted assets, this is not utilised by the Engineering Team and Finance Team. Recognition of developer contributions and gifted assets relies on email communication between teams. We recommend Council review and implement a more formalised process to assist with accounting, reporting and compliance requirements.

**Internal audit**

- (12) The following internal audit projects were completed:
  - (a) Service Review – Children’s Services (inc. Child Safety)
- (13) Management implementation of internal audit actions is monitored and reviewed at each committee meeting. Thirty-eight actions were due for completion during the period of 1 July – 31 December (2 actions arising from the Human Resources Risk Management audit, 2 actions arising from Service Review – Children’s Services (inc. Child Safety,) 1 action arising from Contractor Management Review Audit April 2021, 1 action arising from Fraud and Corruption Control Systems and 1 action arising from Project Management Internal Audit.
- (14) Of these actions, ten were completed and reported to the Committee during this period and the remaining two were off track. These off-track items were all due to be reported by 31

December 2022 (after the most recent Committee meeting) but have been categorised as off track for the purposes of this Biannual Risk Report.

### **Risk management**

- (15) Management has provided regular updates on strategic and emerging risks.
- (16) The Aged Care Reforms risk presentation and update on Psychosocial Hazards were provided during this period.
- (17) The committee reviewed councillor expense reimbursements and CEO credit card expenses during the period.

### **Financial and performance reporting**

- (18) The committee reviewed the quarterly budget and performance reports.



Rural City of  
**Wangaratta**

# Municipal Early Years Plan

2026-2030



## Acknowledgement of 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 towards reconciliation.

The Rural City of Wangaratta is committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment, free from discrimination. We celebrate diversity and value the lived experience of people of every ethnicity, faith, age, ability and disability, culture, language, gender identity, sex and sexual orientation



Rural City of Wangaratta Municipal Early Years Plan 2026-2030

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# A Message from the Mayor

As Mayor, I am proud to share our commitment to giving every child in Wangaratta the best possible start in life. Early childhood education is more than learning—it’s about building confidence, friendships, and a love of discovery that lasts a lifetime.

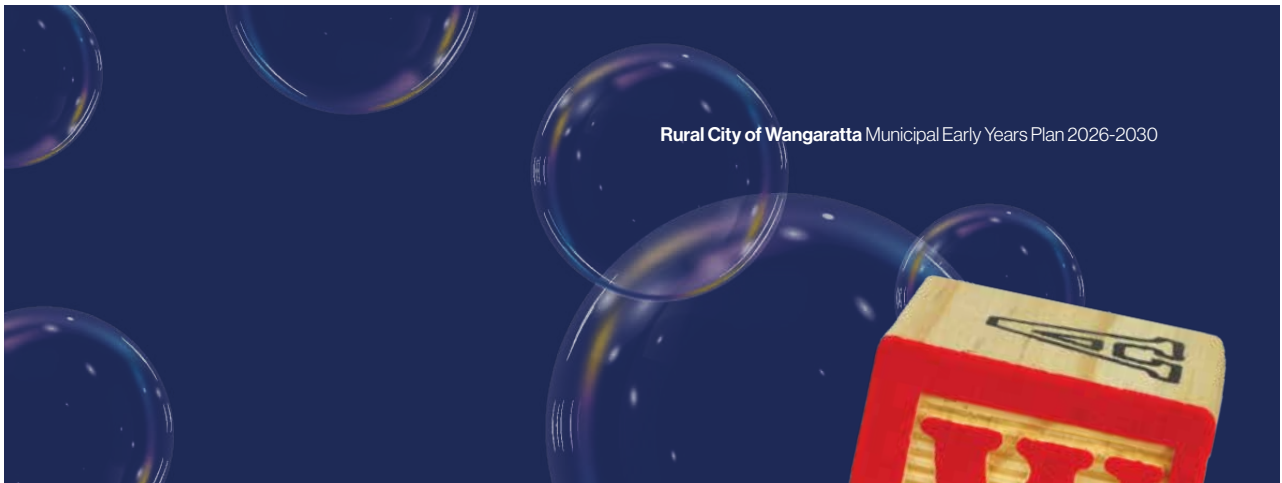
Our community values fairness, transparency, and opportunity. That’s why we are working towards a centralised enrolment approach that makes it easier for families to access kindergarten programs. This system will ensure that every child has an equal chance to thrive, and every family feels supported through a simple, streamlined process.

We know that collaboration is key. By working together—council, educators, and families—we can create a system that reflects our shared values and meets the needs of our growing community.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we are building strong foundations for the future of Wangaratta.

Cr Irene Grant  
**Mayor**





Rural City of Wangaratta Municipal Early Years Plan 2026-2030

# 1. Municipal Early Years Plan

## 1.1 Introduction

The Rural City of Wangaratta is committed to ensuring all children aged 0-12 years and their families have access to high quality services, safe environments and opportunities to thrive. The Municipal Early Years Plan (MEYP) 2025 –2029 provides a coordinated approach to early childhood development, aligned with state and national framework and informed by community consultation..

## Plan Overview

Wangaratta's Municipal Early Years Plan (MEYP) is a local plan designed to provide strategic direction for the development and coordination of early year's programs, activities and other local community development processes that impact on children 0 – 12 years in our municipality. The MEYP engages our community and partners to work together towards positive early years outcomes for children and families within the Rural City of Wangaratta.

The MEYP provides an evidence-based approach to planning Council's involvement in social support and change for children and families. It provides a roadmap for planning services and facilities that will be delivered in collaboration with other partner organisations committed to the support and wellbeing of children.

The MEYP is a product of collaborative community involvement, and its development has involved families, residents and other service providers who have provided ideas, opinions, data and feedback on the strategic directions proposed. As it is implemented, this collaborative approach with community will be maintained through local area partnerships to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes for children.



**Vision**

***All children in Wangaratta  
are healthy, safe, and  
supported to reach  
their full potential.***



## Guiding Principles

### Equity and Inclusion

Every child and family, regardless of background or circumstances, has access to services and opportunities.

### Collaboration

Working in partnership with families, services providers, Aboriginal communities, and government.

### Child and Family Centred

Respecting the voices and experiences of children and their caregivers.

### Evidence-informed

Guided by current research and local data.

## 1.2 Wangaratta's commitment to child safe standards

**Council is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where all children are valued, protected from abuse, and where their wellbeing and empowerment is placed at the heart of what we do.**

**We will meet this commitment by:**

- Demonstrating through our leadership, actions, policies, procedures, and documentation that the principles of being a child safe organisation are embedded into our everyday thinking and practices
- Upholding the right of all children to feel safe and protected
- Having a zero tolerance for child abuse and taking all safety concerns seriously
- Promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal children, and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and by providing a safe environment for children with a disability or who are considered vulnerable.
- Creating an inclusive, safe and connected community for children and young people. Recognising that children and young people have different needs, characteristics and life experiences and, although there are similarities within groups, no one child's experience is the same.
- Ensuring we have systems in place to evaluate risk, document incidents and identify appropriate responses consistent with law, policy and procedure.
- Council will not tolerate improper conduct or the taking of reprisals against those who come forward to disclose such conduct.

### 1.3 Our Partnering Stakeholders

- Healthcare providers, incl. Gateway Health and Northeast Health
- Local Long Daycare Providers
- Local Kindergartens
- Local Primary Schools
- Playgroups & Community Organisations
- Wangaratta Library
- Wangaratta Sports & Aquatic Centre
- Wangaratta Youth Council
- Wider Wangaratta Community



## 1.4 Strategic Planning Framework

### 1 Purpose of the MEYP

The MEYP is a local area strategic plan that:

- Guides the development and coordination of early years programs and activities.
- Supports broader community development processes that impact.
- Aligns council efforts with community priorities and state level strategies.

### 2 Key Strategic Functions

- Incorporating community priorities into Council planning and programming.
- Mapping the early years system to help families understand available services and pathways.
- Identifying council's role not only in direct service delivery but also in partnership and advocacy.

### 3 Community Engagement

The Framework is community informed shaped by:

- Community survey and children's worksheets
- Consultation events and workshops
- Feedback from local service providers

### 4 Plan Development

- **Survey Phase:** Community input gathered via online survey events.
- **Review Phase:** Contributions are evaluated to identify key themes and needs.
- **Final Report:** Outcomes and recommendation are documented for future actions.



## 1.5 Role of the Rural City of Wangaratta

**Council understands the importance of the early years and embraces this through the development of this plan and direct links to service provision including:**

**Direct service delivery** including Maternal and Child Health services, Early Childhood Education and Care services, immunisations, library services, recreation and leisure activities.

**Advocacy** on behalf of children and their families to influence other levels of government and other organisations or agencies.

**Providing and supporting programs and infrastructure** that support children and their families, such as children's events and festivals, arts programs, walking paths and play spaces.

**Community capacity building** through provision of forums, workshops and support to communities that encourages information sharing, workforce development, and local collaborations.

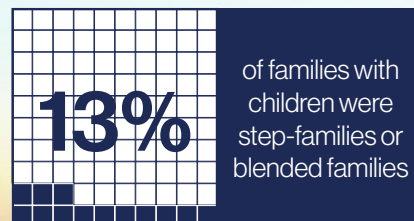
**Collaborative partnerships and networks** to embed a strong, coordinated and responsive service system and community for children and their families.

**Planning** to develop and implement services, and advocate for shared goals to support the developmental needs of children.





## 1.6 Snapshot of Children & Families in Wangaratta





### most popular activities to do as a family

- ✓ Parks & Playgrounds
- ✓ Splash Park/Pool
- ✓ Bike Rides



### top requested activities from the community

- ✓ Indoor play activities
- ✓ More school holiday activities
- ✓ More enclosed Parks

\* Municipal Early Years Engagement Survey 2025



## 2. Our Goals

The Municipal Early Years Plan focuses on four goal areas

### 1. Health and Wellbeing

### 2. Learning and Development

### 3. Family and Community Support

### 4. Safe and Connected Communities.

Each goal has its own strategic actions which are supported by tailored initiatives. Council's Role in each of these initiatives is outlined.

- **Deliver** – focuses on Council services and what is within their capacity to provide.
- **Partner** – Collaboration and coordination with community and other service providers and sectors, including joint initiatives, referral pathways, and cross-sector planning.
- **Advocate** – includes opportunities for Council to influence other organisations and levels of government for funding, programs and policy development.



## GOAL 1: HEALTH & WELLBEING

### Objective

Support children and families to achieve optimal physical, emotional and mental wellbeing through accessible, inclusive and representative services.

### Strategic Action

#### 1.1 Promote healthy eating, physical activity, and mental health in early years settings.

Initiative	Council Role
Implement movement programs	Partner, Deliver
Promote healthy eating initiatives	Partner, Advocate
Include mindfulness and emotional literacy activities in early years programming	Partner, Deliver

#### 1.2 Strengthen partnerships with early years, health, education and community services.

Initiative	Council Role
Partner with local providers to deliver health information sessions	Partner, Deliver
Develop referral pathways, shared resources, and shared care plans	Partner, Deliver
Establish Early Years Partnership meetings, and develop joint initiatives	Partner, Deliver

#### 1.3 Provide targeted support for vulnerable families

Initiative	Council Role
Continue Maternal Child Outreach programs	Deliver, Advocate
Connect families with culturally safe services.	Partner
Promote programs that support vulnerable families	Partner

#### 1.4 Support services to provide child-safe practices and trauma-informed care.

Initiative	Council Role
Continue to offer training and development to staff in best practice for children's wellbeing, including training in child safe standards and trauma-informed care	Deliver
Promote child-safe standards across all early year's services	Partner

## GOAL 2: LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

### Objective

Ensure all children have access to high-quality learning experiences that support their development.

### Strategic Action

2.1 Increase access to funded kindergarten programs, especially for priority groups.

Initiative	Council Role
Collaborate with community services to boost enrolment.	Partner, Deliver
Expand outreach to priority families.	Partner, Deliver

2.2 Support educators with professional development aligned to Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework.

Initiative	Council Role
Provide mentoring and peer learning opportunities across Council Services	Deliver
Continue to offer regular training for staff at Council services	Deliver

2.3 Promote play-based learning and inclusive curriculum planning.

Initiative	Council Role
Engage families in curriculum planning.	Deliver
Promote local playgroups, programs and events for children that provide these outcomes.	Partner

2.4 Strengthen transition between early years services and schools.

Initiative	Council Role
Coordinate transition plans with schools, especially for vulnerable children.	Partner, Deliver
Facilitate joint orientation sessions for children and families.	Partner, Deliver

## GOAL 3: FAMILY & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

### Objective

Empower families with knowledge, confidence, and support to nurture their children's safety, development and wellbeing.

### Strategic Action

#### 3.1 Provide accessible parenting programs and peer support networks.

Initiative	Council Role
Promote and deliver group and online parenting sessions.	Partner, Deliver
Facilitate parent-led groups and support circles.	Partner, Deliver

#### 3.2 Strengthen referral pathways to family support services..

Initiative	Council Role
Continue to build partnerships with community agencies and service providers	Partner
Work collaboratively to streamline referral processes	Partner

#### 3.3 Engage families in decision-making and service design.

Initiative	Council Role
Create opportunities for regular family feedback, including forums and surveys	Deliver
Include family representatives in planning committees.	Deliver

#### 3.4 Improve Service navigation and access for families.

Initiative	Council Role
Create centralised service directories.	Partner, Deliver
Share resources and referral pathways with other agencies	Partner, Deliver

## GOAL 4: SAFE & CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

### Objective

Create safe, inclusive, and welcoming environments where children and families feel supported, valued, connected to their cultural identity and community.

### Strategic Action

#### 4.1 Support services to respond to family violence and child protection concerns.

Initiative	Council Role
Provide regular staff training on family violence and child protection.	Deliver
Regularly review reporting protocols	Deliver

#### 4.2 Offer culturally responsive and flexible family services.

Initiative	Council Role
Work with community and partner services to identify needs.	Partner, Deliver
Deliver inclusion and cultural awareness training and development for staff and services engaged with children.	Deliver
Work with cultural and community groups to offer community events that build social connections and inclusion	Partner

#### 4.3 Partner with Aboriginal and multicultural organisations to co-design programs.

Initiative	Council Role
Engage cultural leaders in planning and delivery.	Partner
Work with cultural and community groups to offer community events that build social connections and inclusion	Partner

#### 4.4 Embed inclusive practices across community services, spaces and programs

Initiative	Council Role
Use inclusive materials and signage in public spaces to create welcoming environments that reflect diverse experiences	Deliver
Promote diverse storytelling through libraries and media	Deliver

## 3. Measuring Our Success

**Success across the MEYP goals is measured through a combination of data, feedback, and service-level evaluation. This includes tracking participation rates in programs, improvements in child development and wellbeing, and family satisfaction with services. Tools such as surveys, observational assessments, professional development records, and community engagement logs help build a clear picture of progress.**

Each goal has tailored measures: health and wellbeing is assessed through Maternal Child Health data and early intervention outcomes; learning and development through school readiness and educator feedback; family support through program uptake and service access; safe communities through child-safe standards and community involvement; integrated systems through service coordination and responsiveness; and culture and identity through children's pride, family inclusion, and diverse representation. Together, these measures ensure services are meeting the needs of Wangaratta's children and families in meaningful and measurable ways.





**Rural City of Wangaratta** Municipal Early Years Plan 2026-2030

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