



Charging ahead in the Pyrenees

Charging stations for electric vehicles will be installed in Avoca and Beaufort in coming months.

Electric vehicles are becoming a more common sight on our roads and that trend is set to accelerate throughout this decade as the push to decarbonize the economy gathers pace.

While EVs make up just a small fraction of vehicles in Australia, that number is on the rise. EV sales jumped by more than 65% in 2022, representing 3.4% of all new vehicle sales.

Many of these cars now have a range of 400km or more on a single battery charge. This makes owning an electric vehicle in the Pyrenees Shire, or touring our beautiful region as a visitor, a much more practical option compared to when EVs first appeared.

As well as convenience for EV owners, charging stations have the potential to benefit the local economy with visitors using local shops and facilities while their cars are charging.

Council has received funding to install 50kW fast chargers in Avoca and Beaufort.

If you were driving one of the more popular EVs on the road at the moment, these chargers would get you from 20% to 80%



charge in around an hour - that's plenty of time for a coffee and a look around the shops.

The Avoca station will be located in the center median strip on High Street and accommodate two vehicles, with the carpark to be extended to make room for the new EV charging bays.

The Beaufort station will be in the existing carpark off Willoby Street, behind the main shopping strip.

An additional station will be installed by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) in Beaufort, bringing the number of charging bays to four.

Powercor has already installed appropriate power to each site and Council is in the final stages of engaging a contractor to supply and install the chargers.

Council aims to have both charging stations installed and operating by the end of June 2023.



Artist's impression of the planned EV charging station in Avoca.

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International Women's Day event a success

Almost 50 people came together at the Beaufort Community Resource Centre to mark International Women's Day on 8 March.

Guest speakers at the event – local GP Dr Pushparani Ravindranayagam, Beaufort and Skipton hospital services CEO Meryn Pease, and Elena Tommasi from the University of the Third Age – shared their personal experiences and discussed challenges faced by women in the community in 2023, particularly in the healthcare space.

"It's fantastic to see so many locals coming together to mark this important day," said Pyrenees Shire Director Corporate and Community Services Kathy Bramwell, who was MC at the event. "As well as celebrating the achievements of all women in our community, we need to acknowledge the gender equity and discrimination we still face. Days like this help us realize that we're not alone in facing these challenges."



Elena Tommasi from the University of the Third Age, Ballarat, speaks to the audience at the International Women's Day event in Beaufort.

Historic weighbridge on the move

The weighbridge building next to the old Mechanics Institute in Havelock Street Beaufort, is on the move.

The historic building is being relocated to accommodate redevelopment of the site by the Beaufort and Skipton Health Service.

Following community consultation in 2021, the Beaufort Rail Precinct was identified as the preferred new location for the weighbridge.

It is temporarily being housed at Council's depot while repairs are undertaken and its new home finalized.

Bulgana chosen as preferred option for the VNI West connection

A report released by AEMO last month has identified Bulgana as the preferred location for a terminal station connecting the Western Renewables Link and VNI West.

What is VNI West?

The Victoria to New South Wales Interconnector West (VNI West) is a proposed new high-capacity powerline, connecting the Western Renewables Link (WRL) in Victoria to EnergyConnect in New South Wales.

What is the Bulgana option?

The AEMO report identified the terminal station at Bulgana as the strongest option in terms of social, environmental and engineering issues. An option to locate the station at Lexton/Waubra was also considered as part of the report.

The Bulgana option includes a proposal to increase capacity for the western section of the WRL to 500kVa, which will impact on landowners and communities in the Pyrenees along that part of the route.

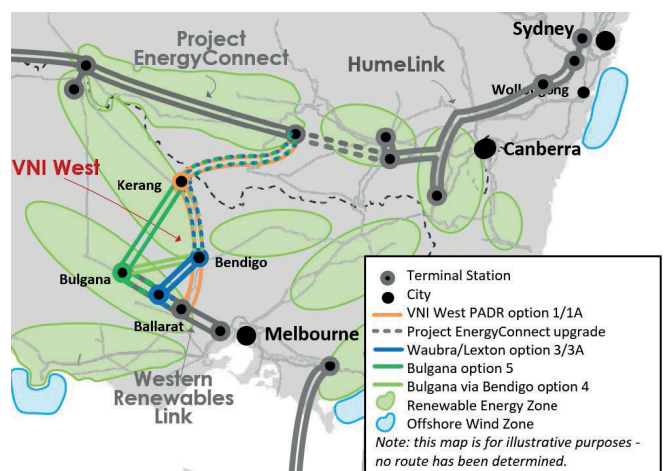
Have your say

AEMO is now in the process of consulting with the community about the report. The consultation period ends on Wednesday 5 April 2023 and a final report will be published by AEMO once all feedback has been considered.

Council will be making a submission, and any impacted residents or landowners are encouraged to do so also.

Council would also welcome any feedback from the community to inform our submission by contacting the CEO on 5349 1100.

The AEMO report and updates are available at aemo.com.au.



AEMO analyzed seven options for connecting Energy Connect in NSW to the Western Renewables Link in Victoria. The preferred option through Bulgana is shown in green on the map.

Avoca's new Digital Hub officially opened

Avoca's Digital Hub is officially open for business. Pyrenees Shire Council Mayor Ron Eason was joined by fellow councillors, council officers and members of the project team in Avoca on 14 March to open the new facility which provides a versatile co-working space equipped with free high-speed internet access to the community.

The Bulaki Wuka Digital Hub – a local Indigenous term that means “giving to the community” – was developed in response to the need for a practical office and meeting space as an alternative to working from home or travelling to Maryborough, Bendigo or Ballarat for work.

Two rooms at the rear of the Avoca Information and Community Centre were completely redeveloped to create the digital hub, which features fast internet access, mobile phone charging stations, video conferencing, co-working and private workspaces, plus CCTV security and kitchen facilities.

“I'm very proud of our team and what we've delivered here,” Cr Eason said. “What was an under-utilized space that few people would have even known was here is now a fantastic asset for the Avoca community and surrounding districts, and I'm sure that it will be a busy place for many years to come.”

The Victorian Government provided \$90,000 towards the \$110,000 total cost of the project through its Regional Digital Fund.

100 years of Vegemite

In 1923 Cyril Callister, a food technologist working for Fred Walker in Melbourne, developed the black, salty, delicious yeast extract we know and love today as Vegemite.

Cyril was born in Chute, just north of Beaufort, and to mark the centenary of this much-loved ingredient in Australian pantries, Cyril's grandson Jamie will be launching his book *Vegemite: The True Story of the Man Who Invented an Australian Icon* at the Beaufort Town Hall on 2 May.

You can also delve into the history of Vegemite and its inventor at the Cyril Callister pop-up museum in Beaufort on the fourth Saturday of every month, from 10am – 2pm.

Toilets to get major refurbishment

The toilets in Havelock Street Beaufort are about to undergo a major refurbishment. Work is scheduled to start in late April and the facilities will be closed for 6-8 weeks.

This work is part of Council's building renewal program including public toilet blocks recently replaced at Amphitheatre, Waubra and Beggs St, Beaufort.



Work on the Havelock Street toilet block refurbishment is due to start next month.



A crane lowers the deck into place on Bridge 139 on the Raglan-Elmhurst road.

New bridges

Construction on the Raglan-Elmhurst Road bridge is nearing completion and another is set to begin, with the existing bridge across the Spring Hill Creek on Beaufort-Carngham Road to be replaced.

Works are scheduled to begin on 28 March. Beaufort-Carngham Road will be closed for approximately four months and a detour will be in place. While there is a chance wet weather could delay construction, if all goes to plan the road is expected to reopen at the end of July.

Works afoot

Work on a shared pathway between 12 Neill Street and 49 High Street in Beaufort is expected to begin in April and take around six weeks to complete.

Council is also finalizing details for the construction of a shared pathway in Gregory Street, from South Street to Stuart Street.

In Avoca, work will soon begin on a shared pathway along Homebush Road and Boyce Street, with construction expected to be completed by July.

Repairs to flood-damaged infrastructure continues

The huge recovery effort following extensive flooding throughout the Pyrenees Shire late last year is continuing.

A new four-person Flood Recovery Team led by Council Flood Recovery Coordinator, Jane Bowker, has been established to consolidate Council's efforts to develop and deliver a flood recovery program for impacted individuals, businesses, and communities.

A Municipal Recovery Coordination Committee has also been set up to make sure the community's views and needs are included in recovery planning. The first meeting of the committee will take place later this month.

So far more than \$7M worth of repairs to flood-damaged infrastructure has been identified throughout the shire, and the list is continuing to grow as further inspections and estimates are completed.

Severely damaged roads that carry the most traffic are being prioritized in the recovery program.

More than a dozen roads have been approved for repair in the first stage of works, including the Lexton-Ararat Road, Landsborough-Elmhurst Road, Moonambel-Natte Yallock Road, Beaufort-Waubra Road and Waubra-Talbot Road. Repairs to community infrastructure such as the Avoca Lions Park are well underway.

Updates on infrastructure repairs can be found on our website pyrenees.vic.gov.au/flood-updates and if you need help with any aspect of flood-recovery you can contact the Flood Recovery Team on 1300 797 363 or email recovery@pyrenees.vic.gov.au.



Susan's Lane in Percydale was among the roads severely damaged during the floods.

Single use plastic ban

Under the Victorian Government's Circular Economy Plan, single-use plastics were banned across Victoria in February 2023.

The Victorian Government has banned the sale and supply of:

- drinking straws
- cutlery (including knives, forks, spoons, chopsticks, sporks, splades, food picks)
- plates
- drink-stirrers and sticks
- expanded polystyrene food service items and drink containers. This includes expanded polystyrene plates, cups, bowls, clam shells and any cover or lid that is also made from expanded polystyrene.
- cotton bud sticks.

People who need single-use plastic drinking straws due to disability or medical needs can still purchase and use these items.

You can find out more about the single-use plastic ban on Sustainability Victoria's website: www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/recycling-and-reducing-waste/in-a-business-2/single-use-plastics-ban-centre

Events

- **Avoca Autumn Races** | Mar 25, 11am – 6pm | High Street, Avoca
- **The Cyril Callister Pop-up Museum**
The man who invented vegemite | Mar 25, 10am – 2pm | Servo23, Beaufort
- **Avoca Riverside Market** | Mar 26, 9am – 1pm | Avoca Riverside
- **Pyrenees Unearthed Wine and Food Festival** | Apr 22 | Avoca Riverside | pyreneesunearthedfestival.com.au
- **Vegemite 100th birthday celebrations & book launch** | May 2 | Beaufort Town Hall, Lawrence Street
- **Lake Goldsmith Steam Rally** | May 6–7 | www.lakegoldsmithsteamrally.org.au
- **Pyrenees Art Exhibition** | Jun 10–12

For a full list of events in the Pyrenees region see visitpyrenees.com.au/whats-on

Pyrenees Shire Council acknowledge the people past and present of the Wadawurrung, Dja Dja Wurrung, Djab Wurrung and Wotjobaluk tribes, whose land forms the Pyrenees Shire. We pay our respects to the customs, traditions and stewardship of the land by the Elders and people of these tribes.