

Ordinary Meeting of Council 19 March 2024 Attachments

9.2.2. COUNCIL PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE.....	2
9.2.2.1. February 2024 Progress Update Operational Council Plan.....	2
12.1.2. GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT.....	37
12.1.2.1. Attachment Diversity and Inclusion Progress Report February 2024.....	37
12.1.3. REPORT FROM CHAIR OF THE AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE.....	82
12.1.3.1. Report by Chair - March 24.....	82



**Progress Update Report as of
February 2024**

**of the
OPERATIONAL COUNCIL PLAN
2023-2024**

Detailing operational delivery of
the Pyrenees Shire Council Plan
2021-2025

Original Operational Plan endorsed
by Council February 2022
SLT Reviewed February 2024



PURPOSE

This reporting document is designed to align operational objectives and actions with delivering the Pyrenees Shire Council Plan 2021-2025. The Operational Plan will be reviewed annually, alongside reviews of the Council Plan, to maintain alignment with the Council Plan 2021-2025 and Community Vision 2021-2031.

Monitoring, measuring, and reporting.

Outcomes of this Plan will be monitored and measured in accordance with the measures included in the Council Plan 2021-2025. Reporting to Council and Community will be undertaken as part of the quarterly Council Plan reporting.

Contents

PURPOSE.....	2
Monitoring, measuring, and reporting.	2
Status Legend:	3
ENABLING PRINCIPLES	3
PEOPLE	8
PLACE.....	17
ENVIRONMENT.....	21
ECONOMY.....	28



Status Legend:

0%	25%	50%	75%	Complete	Funding required	Information required	Ongoing	On Hold / Deferred to 2024/25	Cancelled

ENABLING PRINCIPLES

a. Motivate and inspire community involvement				
Council priority	Operational focus	Responsibility Lead	Progress summary	Status
1. Embed community participation in project management framework	Monitor engagement through steering group meetings.	Project Steering Committee	Meetings of the steering group are held monthly at which all exceptions are discussed. Project budget is monitored through specific finance meetings.	
2. Work with our communities to understand and realise their aspirations	Re-develop and reinvigorate the Community Action Plan program.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Part of ongoing local needs assessment and planning between community groups and the Community Development team.	
	Facilitate grant submission training for community groups.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Information sessions provided in association with Council's active grant programs. Guidance, training and support provided on request of community groups seeking other third-party grants.	



a. Motivate and inspire community involvement				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
3. Encourage wide representation of community in Council decision-making	Review community engagement policy and develop community communications & engagement strategy; implement strategy.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Final drafting of engagement templates, engagement toolkit / guidelines occurring. Project to be finalised in last quarter of 23/24 financial year.	
	Promote and encourage community participation in Councillor cuppa opportunities.	CEO Office	Opportunities for community discussion with Councillors and senior officers provided monthly in all regions of the shire on a 48-month rotation / schedule. From September 2022, sessions were held in late afternoon / evening – enabling a greater level of engagement.	
	Collaborative annual review of engagement / communications plans.	Communications	Engagement / Communications Plan adopted November 2023.	
4. Provide a range of opportunities for community participation, including online, in-person, and through different media	Redevelop Community Action Planning Framework.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Part of ongoing communications with community groups and members by the Community Development team.	
	Ongoing development and use of the Engagement Hub system.	SLT	Ongoing promotion and use of Engagement Hub system. Currently meeting usage targets.	
5. Annual report to a community consultative group to review the implementation of the Community Vision	Provide annual report to Community via Council.	Communications / Director C&CS	2023 Annual Report Completed.	
	Every two years (Council mid-term and end-of-term) convene in-person forum with community consultative group.	CEO Office	Completed – event held in October 2023.	



a. Motivate and inspire community involvement				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
			Next session to be prepared for late 2024/early 2025 as part of next Council Plan preparation.	

b. Provide transparency and accountability				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
1. Reflect community consultation and research findings in decision-making	Monitor engagement details input into Council reporting.	Director C&CS	Implemented into Council report template and monitoring conducted monthly.	
	Ensure community action plan priorities are considered in Council project and funding opportunities.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships / ELT	Part of ongoing communications with community groups and members by the Community Development team.	
2. Have goals that are clear and measurable	Continue reporting against the operational council plan every six months.	SLT led by Director C&CS	This report provides the second in the 2023/24 financial year cycle.	
	Monitor proper implementation of project planning processes prior to approval by Steering Committee.	Project Steering Committee.	Ongoing activity by the Project Steering Committee.	
3. Provide relevant, timely, and accessible updates via a broad range of communication channels to reach groups and individuals within	Audit public notice boards across the shire and develop processes to facilitate wide dissemination of information to people without internet access. Assign roles for maintenance.	Frontline Services / Assets	Audit in progress by Frontline Services. Maintenance accepted by Assets Team.	
	Continue to update project dashboard (monthly) and promote community access to the dashboard.	Project Managers / SLT	Maintained by Project Managers and Project Management Facilitator. Reviewed on a	



b. Provide transparency and accountability				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
our community (e.g., website, email, e-newsletters, paper newsletters, noticeboards)			monthly basis by project groups and project steering committee.	
	Utilise the Engagement Hub where appropriate for dissemination of information and gaining community feedback.	Project Managers / SLT	Project summaries are posted on the Engagement Hub to provide information about upcoming work to the community.	
	Contribute to content for communications.	SLT	Ongoing activity.	
4. Continue to foster a culture of accountability and transparency	Quarterly reporting to Council and Community against the Council Plan 2021-2025 and aligned operational plan.	Director C&CS	This report provides the 3 rd report in the 2023/24 cycle.	
	Seek feedback and ideas from staff on how they need management to support them.	ELT / SLT	Ideation project in constant use by staff to provide ideas for improvement. New Feedback link provided and promoted to staff.	
	Include project review, case study and issues review in project completion activities.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	In progress with case studies to be developed.	

c. Use resources efficiently and effectively				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
1. Continue to build the capability and capacity of Council	Undertake a project to build organisational capacity and report regularly to Council – Develop a Capacity Building Plan.	ELT	In progress alongside a customer satisfaction improvement plan.	



c. Use resources efficiently and effectively				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
employees to deliver the Council Plan	Continue the dynamic review of a Workforce Plan that is aligned with the Council Plan and operational plan.	SLT / ELT / People & Culture	Operational Workforce Plan developed as a dynamic, living Plan.	
2. Promote financially responsible decisions	Conduct six-monthly checks on aggregate procurement levels with single suppliers or contractors.	Finance	Checks now included within financial reporting to ELT as an ongoing activity.	
	Project Steering Committee to monitor financial adherence of whole-of-project life budgets.	Project Steering Cttee	Project budget adherence being monitored by Manager Finance and true budgets being input on dashboard.	
	Identify financial risks and alignment with Council Plan for all new projects or initiatives.	Project Steering Cttee	To be input as part of project development.	
	Monitor and maintain financial risks within the Strategic and Operational risk registers.	Finance	Annual review for 2024 underway.	
3. Monitor staff wellbeing and satisfaction	Conduct annual staff satisfaction surveys or similar. Analyse results and identify improvement actions. Report back to staff on proposed actions.	People & Culture / ELT	Survey completed for 2023. New feedback link introduced to provide easy route for staff to provide timely feedback and not limited to just once per year.	



PEOPLE

a. Prepare for emergencies and ensure community safety				
Council priority	Operational focus	Responsibility Lead	Progress summary	Status
1. Have appropriate and up-to-date emergency management plans (Facilitate)	Support the MEMPC (Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee) in reviewing the Municipal Emergency Management Plan and preparing for audit in 2023.	Emergency Management	MEMP review completed and submitted for regional endorsement in November 2023.	
	Review operational emergency management plans and maintain emergency management manuals.	Emergency Management	In progress	
	Review emergency management internal roles and maintain appropriate capability.	Emergency Management	Emergency management roles reviewed and new team members attended training exercise in November 2023. Crisis Management Team reinvigorated. Successful CMT response to the February fires emergency event.	
	Evaluate and review post emergency plan to learn and improve.	Emergency Management	Post flood event debrief held mid-2023. Further debrief around Recovery actions to be held in 2024. Debrief planned for February fires emergency event.	
2. Support communities in times of emergencies and in	Maintain / build level of staff / volunteer capability ready for operation in case of emergency.	Emergency Management	Training programs for MEMO and EMLO provided. Relief Centre training provided to Rotary volunteers to support staff when needed.	



a. Prepare for emergencies and ensure community safety				
Council priority	Operational focus	Responsibility Lead	Progress summary	Status
post-emergency recovery (Support)			<p>New MEMO and MRM roles attended regional training exercise in November 2023 around relief centres.</p> <p>CrisisWorks training provided to CMT members in February 2024.</p> <p>On-the-job training and shadowing undertaken as EMLOs and to conduct secondary impact assessments post February fires – March 2024.</p>	
	Implement Recovery Plans for major emergency events.	Emergency Management	<p>Recovery plan implemented following on from 2022 Floods. Flood recovery team established in January 2023 to implement.</p> <p>Scenario-based recovery plans for other types of events under development.</p> <p>Transition to Recovery planning underway for the February fires emergency event.</p> <p>Recovery Plan and resourcing under development. Likely to amalgamate recovery teams between flood / fire where possible.</p>	
	Maintain relationships and alignment with regional teams and plans.	Emergency Management	Ongoing participation in meetings of regional emergency management teams.	
	Identify funding opportunities that facilitate resilience building programs in individual communities or shire wide.	Emergency Management	Successful in safer together funding for community resilience officer who was appointed in Sep 2022 to share with Golden Plains Shire.	



a. Prepare for emergencies and ensure community safety				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
			Ongoing activity to identify funding to strengthen preparedness and resilience of community.	
	Implement community resilience plan.	Emergency Management	Safer Together project implementing community resilience plan where appropriate. Monitoring of what additional funding might be needed to fully implement underway.	 

b. Support a vibrant community arts, culture, and heritage environment				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
1. Develop a Creative Community Strategy (Facilitate)	Support the community in collaborative development of a creative community strategy.	Planning & Development / Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Draft strategy developed in preparation for Council endorsement.	
	Identify funding opportunities to implement strategy inclusions.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Strategy focus is to empower a community led approach, with support and referral of local arts groups and creative community projects to council's grant programs and other third-party funds as they become available.	 
2. Implement the Reconciliation Action Plan and Reconciliation	Convene, manage, and maintain a Community / Council Reconciliation Advisory Committee.	CEO Office	In place and meets regularly throughout the year. Renewal of membership undertaken in January 2024.	



b. Support a vibrant community arts, culture, and heritage environment				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
Advisory Committee (Facilitate)	Collaboratively implement Pyrenees Shire Reconciliation Action Plan No.2.	CEO Office	In progress.	
	Identify opportunities to recognise Country in publications, on Website and on signage across the shire.	CEO Office / SLT	Acknowledgement of Country done at all meetings where public are involved. Acknowledgement of Country is being implemented as part of Policy templates. Acknowledgement of Country is done on website. Appropriate facilities signage is being considered and appropriate providers being sought.	
	Celebrate NAIDOC week and other reconciliation-focused events.	CEO Office	In progress for 2023/24 – events being identified.	
3. Support our community groups, including historical societies, preserve and understand our region's history (Support)	Prioritise digital historical records' preservation when promoting and assessing community grants.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Support provided via community grant funding where requested.	
	Promote Pyrenees' history through communications.	All	History included in Annual Report 2023.	
	Encourage historical societies and community groups to apply for appropriate grants to support heritage preservation.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Officers planning the facilitation of a professional development and networking event for all Pyrenees based historical societies in 2024.	
	Facilitate grant submission training for historical societies to improve quality of grant submissions.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Community Funding Program provided 7 applicant support sessions in November 2023 and 9 sessions in Feb/ March 2024, with three (3) historical societies participating.	



b. Support a vibrant community arts, culture, and heritage environment				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
4. Support community events (Support)	Provide support via sponsorship and community grants programs.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships / Economic Development & Tourism	2023/24 grant program provided in November 2023 with majority of available funding expended. Finalisation of grant program scheduled for reporting to Council in May 2024.	
	Review Council's events administration to simplify for organisers.	Events Officer	Events administration under continual review for improvements to local volunteer organisations.	
	Attendance by Councillors / Council officers at community events when available.	CEO Office / ELT	Ongoing activity where opportunities arise.	
	Provide, maintain, and promote fit-for-purpose spaces for events.	Economic Development & Tourism	A number of events have been held in public spaces on land managed by council. Land Use re-zoning required for proposed Avoca events space in Station Street.	

c. Improve accessibility and inclusivity				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
1. Facilitate connectivity and increase accessibility through appropriate	Improve pathways, linkages, and connections to and between key locations.	Assets / Strategic Planning	A number of pathway projects have been planned, constructed and completed.	
	Collaborate with community on re-invigorating the community action planning framework to	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Part of ongoing communications with community groups and members by the Community Development team.	



c. Improve accessibility and inclusivity				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
infrastructure (Advocate)	inform asset/facilities management and improvement plans.			
	Ensure community action priorities are communicated and considered as part of project / funding priorities.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships / ELT	Part of ongoing communications with community groups and members by the Community Development team.	
	Continue increased support for Community Asset Committees.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships / Governance / Assets	Review of Instrument of Delegation and Governance Manual underway. Key communication links established with Community Development.	
	Identify available funding to increase planning to develop pipeline of shovel-ready projects.	ELT	Ongoing with focus on available 2024 funding for projects by ELT / SLT in January 2024.	
	Advocate for public transport to meet community needs.	CEO Office / ELT	Ongoing advocacy.	
	Advocate for improved services – telecommunications blackspots and NBN coverage.	CEO Office / ELT	Ongoing advocacy.	
	2. Develop an Accessibility Strategy (Pending funding)	Develop an Accessibility Strategy.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Desk top review of best practise in local government in the development and delivery of Accessibility Strategy has been undertaken. Project initiation brief to be developed in late 2024 for active development of a strategy inhouse and or seeking of external funding opportunity to deliver.



c. Improve accessibility and inclusivity				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
3. Progress towards improved gender equity (Facilitate)	Develop and implement a Gender Equality Action Plan.	People & Culture	Plan development completed. Implementation underway via a working group – multi-year project. First progress report submitted to Gender Equality Commission in February 2024.	
	Continue participation as a member of the Communities of Respect & Equality (CoRE).	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Ongoing attendance when meetings are held.	

d. Promote health, wellbeing, engagement, and connection				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
1. Have a Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan (Deliver)	Implement actions identified in the Municipal Health & Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	In progress. Multi-year project. Review conducted in late 2023/early 2024 has incorporated other outdated plans into the Health Plan – including the Positive Ageing and Early Years plans.	
2. Assist community with access to appropriate aged-care and early-years services (Partner / Deliver)	Review, update and implement Active Ageing Strategy.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Positive Ageing Coordinator recruited with Positive Ageing strategy directions and actions integrated into an updated of Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan.	
	Monitor transition success from Council to private providers of home-based care.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Ongoing advocacy on behalf of our residents occurring that supports and assists ongoing access to appropriate services.	



d. Promote health, wellbeing, engagement, and connection				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
	Review, update and implement Early Years Strategy.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Former Early Years strategy (2014-17) objectives and strategic actions updated and integrated into an update of the Municipal Health & Wellbeing Plan.	
3. Work with partners to support young people to be active in our community (Support)	Support community leaders to develop a Youth Strategy for the Pyrenees Shire.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Development has progressed on the development of a formal youth engagement framework that will lead to the development of a Youth Strategy in 2025.	
	Support community clubs, associations, and other agencies delivering services to young people.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	A range of supports provided to local groups to improve service delivery including Pyrenees Community House (after school engagement), Avoca Guides (membership development), Beaufort Guides (event planning and delivery) and Bluelight Victoria (DASH Program).	
4. Support communities to have access to high-quality assets, facilities, and programs to promote passive and active recreation (Support)	Implement Council’s Recreation Strategy.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	In progress and ongoing.	
	Develop an aquatic strategy for long-management of Council’s public pools.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Planning underway including existing asset condition audits and reviewing contemporary better practise approaches in future of pool services provision.	
	Identify opportunities for funding to maintain, develop, and upgrade community facilities.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Ongoing activity in grant seeking and advocacy to other level of government for funding support.	
	Utilise risk funding to develop clear inspection and maintenance process for Council-insured, but non-Council owned facilities – to maintain	Risk Management	Project complete and report received. The report identified risks associated with insurance funding of non-council owned /	



d. Promote health, wellbeing, engagement, and connection				
Council priority	Operational focus	Responsibility Lead	Progress summary	Status
	insurability and potentially reduce insurance costs.		managed community facilities which highlight the bigger picture of State cost-shifting and non-support of community facilities on Crown land. Other issues highlighted include a community equity issue associated with financial support facilities that are Council owned or managed, and not others. Post-review strategy to be determined in 2024.	
	Schedule inspections for facility essential safety measures.	Building Services/Assets	Ongoing compliance activity.	
5. Advocate for appropriate access to medical and allied health services (Advocate)	Maintain relationships with healthcare providers to understand service needs and support funding applications for new services.	CEO Office	Ongoing advocacy activity.	

e. Improve social outcomes				
Council priority	Operational focus	Responsibility Lead	Progress summary	Status
1. Support community programs targeted at access to healthy food (Support)	Provide ongoing support for the Beaufort and Avoca Food Pantries.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Annual funding subsidy provided to both Food Pantries.	
	Prioritise healthier options as part of the Municipal Health & Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Food security review in the Shire in progress. Ongoing support provided to Grampians Pyrenees Goldfields Food Alliance Network.	



e. Improve social outcomes				
Council priority	Operational focus	Responsibility Lead	Progress summary	Status
			Healthier kiosk options implemented with support of appointed service contractor of Council's Municipal pool facilities.	
	Support community markets that provide local produce.	Economic Development / Tourism	Avoca market now managed by separate entity, receiving half of original support funding awarded by Council. Beaufort market interest regenerated through the Pyrenees Community House. New market at Waubra commenced in February 2024, supported by Council.	
2. Deliver and support activities aimed at increasing community connections and reducing social isolation (Deliver)	Review and redevelop positive ageing / living strategies.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Positive Ageing Coordinator recruited with Positive Ageing strategy directions and actions integrated into an updated of Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan.	
	Continue to provide community grants in support of community events.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	2023/24 Annual Community Grant program delivered, with a one-off Community Resilience Program in progress for awarding at Council Ordinary May 2024 meeting.	
3. Support learning through provision of knowledge services including contemporary library services (Support)	Develop a libraries strategy, collaboratively with the community and schools.	Frontline Services	Libraries strategy drafting well advanced.	
	Promote the use of resource centres as public gathering and events resource.	Frontline Services	Ongoing activity.	
	Expansion of the mobile library outreach program to reach more communities.	Frontline Services	Current expansion now complete.	



PLACE

a. Sustain and enhance unique character of our communities				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
1. Implement and develop strategic planning projects such as further progression of Pyrenees Futures or the Rural Review (Deliver)		Strategic Planning	Long-term multi-year projects. Resource limitations continue to impact delivery.	
2. Maintain a planning scheme that accommodates community values and guides sustainable development (Deliver)		Strategic Planning	Ongoing.	
b. Enhance the liveability and resilience of our communities				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
1. Manage impacts of large-scale infrastructure projects (e.g., Beaufort bypass)	Implement façade improvement incentive program in Beaufort.	Economic Development & Tourism	Façade Improvement Funding program complete in late 2023.	
	Advocate for funding to identify and implement strategies to make Beaufort a destination and	Strategic Planning /	Beaufort bypass route confirmed by Minister which allows for more firm strategic	



b. Enhance the liveability and resilience of our communities				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
on communities (Deliver, Advocate & Support)	withstand business impacts of bypass implementation.	Economic Development	planning endeavours for Beaufort township development. Funding commitment not in place so bypass implementation unlikely in next five years.	
2. Actively invite and encourage investment that supports employment (Advocate & Support)	Draft Investment Attraction Strategy in progress as a result of RCV program. Ongoing support is being provided for investment attraction.	Economic Development & Tourism	Investment Attraction Strategy completed. Ongoing investment support provided to developers in response to enquiries.	
3. Provide services for towns (e.g., toilets, parks, playgrounds, sports facilities, town entrance signs etc) (Deliver)	Include within 10-year asset management plan.	Asset Management	Included as part of asset renewal program.	
	Annual inspection and maintenance programs.	Asset Management / Works	Ongoing activity	
4. Maintain our streetscapes and public gathering spaces and improve / enhance where funding permits ¹ (Deliver)	Annual inspection and maintenance programs.	Works	Ongoing activity	
	Identify and implement appropriate improvement and place-making initiatives.	Assets and Development Services	Ongoing activity.	

¹ Within current resourcing, Council has budgeted for maintaining existing level of service in these areas. However, where additional funding or grants are obtained, Council will seek to also improve, enhance, and beautify public spaces further.



b. Enhance the liveability and resilience of our communities				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
5. Provide and maintain appropriate infrastructure to ensure a high level of amenity, accessibility, and safety ² (Deliver)	Inclusion with 10-year asset management plan.	Asset Management	Adopted June 2022. Ongoing activity.	
6. Work with our communities to understand and realise their aspirations (Facilitate)	Re-invigorate the community action planning framework.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Part of ongoing communications with community groups and members by the Community Development team.	

c. Promote responsible development				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
1. Adopt and apply principles around sustainable growth and development		Strategic Planning	Not yet commenced – requires project funding to develop and deliver policy and scheme incorporation.	



c. Promote responsible development				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
within townships (Deliver)			Difficulty with recruitment of sufficient strategic planning resources – Australia-wide issue.	



ENVIRONMENT

a. Continue being an environmentally progressive organisation				
Council priority	Operational focus	Responsibility Lead	Progress summary	Status
1. Continue to implement actions from the Climate Change Response and Mitigation Action Plan (Deliver)	Convene a Climate Change Working Group to implement action plan.	ELT	Climate change plan adopted.	
	Install electric vehicle charging stations in Beaufort and Avoca.	Environment & Sustainability	Complete.	
	Implement tree planting in accordance with Council's goals.	Environment & Sustainability	Ongoing Activity. Meeting target subject to budget availability.	
2. Apply environmentally responsible design and construction principles (Deliver)	Promote recycled material use within Council workspaces.	TBA	Roles and responsibilities in this regard to be identified.	
	Review Procurement Policy to include recycled materials priorities.	Director C&CS / Manager Finance	Review of Procurement Policy in progress.	
	Identify strategies and opportunities to use recycled materials in construction projects.	Engineering	Some recycled product use has been installed including recycled bollards and seating products. Ongoing activity.	
	Identify opportunities to build resilience into, and improve energy efficiencies, of Council and public infrastructure.	Assets / Environment & Sustainability	Ongoing projects include LED replacement lighting and the construction of electric vehicle charging stations.	
	Incorporate GBI (Green Building Index) guidelines into planning for green spaces and drainage, e.g., recycled water projects.			



a. Continue being an environmentally progressive organisation				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
	Review Council’s light fleet policy to create incentives for inclusion of electric or hybrid vehicles.	Finance / Asset Management	Review of policy in progress. Cost and travel distances remain prohibitive to large-scale adoption.	
	Ensure project and infrastructure design briefs call for environmentally responsible outcomes – e.g., reduction of energy consumption, reduction of long-term costs.	Engineering	Staff involved in construction and design currently have a high level of understanding of appropriate design incorporating energy and resource efficiency.	
	Facilitate staff training in understanding appropriate design, energy responsible construction, water, and resource usage.	Engineering	Internal training within the engineering team is complete with further additional training planned for the future. Environmental and sustainable design principles have been applied on several current projects.	
3. Continue to increase energy efficiency of Council-owned facilities (Advocate)	Improve utilisation of community facilities – review facilities’ use in collaboration with community.	Environment & Sustainability.	Large investment in improving energy efficiency of Council facilities over past years. Further recommendation implementation will require funding.	
	Review procurement policy and incorporate energy efficiency requirements.	Manager Finance	Full energy audit recently conducted. Seeking to engage an ongoing auditor to monitor CO2 footprint.	
	Undertake an energy efficiency audit on Council assets / facilities.	Environment & Sustainability.	Complete.	
	Convene an Environment Committee to identify further opportunities for improvement.	Director A&DS	To be considered in 2022/23, however officer capacity may be limited. Council are active members of CVGA and have identified a number of opportunities for	



a. Continue being an environmentally progressive organisation				
Council priority	Operational focus	Responsibility Lead	Progress summary	Status
			environmental improvement and these are currently being implemented.	

b. Foster a climate change resilient community				
Council priority	Operational focus	Responsibility Lead	Progress summary	Status
1. Support environmentally responsible technology innovation initiatives (Advocate)	Within the next review of Council’s light fleet policy, include incentives to purchase more environmentally friendly vehicles.	Finance / Director C&CS	Review of policy in progress. Cost and travel distances remain prohibitive to large-scale adoption of EV or Hybrid vehicles. Policy review to include move to more cost effective vehicles.	
	Engage with Agriculture Victoria and other agencies to deliver training and information on innovation to the agriculture sector and to encourage uptake of new innovation.	Economic Development	Partnership with Ballarat Regional Tourism’s “Industry Strengthening Program” to support the flood recovery in Pyrenees. Agricultural commodities and seasons have remained favourable recently, however, focused on forecasted El Nino weather patterns in near future.	
	Encourage use of recycled materials and sustainable products in construction to reduce items taken to landfill.	Engineering	Some recycled product use has been installed including recycled bollards and seating products	
	Leverage projects that convert straw to energy or similar.	Economic Development	Paused while focus is on pandemic recovery for retail and visitor economy, impacts of flood events in October/November 2022, and impacts of February 2024 fire events.	



b. Foster a climate change resilient community				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
2. Ensure urban design and placemaking incorporates climate sensitive principles (Deliver)	Partner with agencies to deliver recycled water projects.	Economic Development	CHW have let contracts for Beaufort recycled water scheme and construction of the trunk pipeline is well-advanced.	
	Create more usable urban spaces that incorporate GBI principles and contribute as cooling spaces.	Economic Development / Assets & Development Services	In progress, tree planting has been ongoing.	
	Facilitate staff training in climate sensitive and appropriate design for urban environments.	Strategic Planning	Ongoing.	
	Increase tree planting with a focus on resilient species.	Environment & Sustainability	Ongoing activity subject to budget availability.	
3. Cooperate regionally to implement initiatives identified within the Grampians Region Climate Adaptation Strategy (Partner)		Environment & Sustainability.	Council adopted a climate change mitigation and adaptation strategy in February 2021 aligned with the Grampians Regional Plan.	



c. Encourage community care of biodiversity and natural values				
Council priority	Operational focus	Responsibility Lead	Progress summary	Status
1. Encourage ownership and leadership over natural public open space, including participation / lead by First Nation Peoples, youth, industry etc. (Facilitate)	Work with partners to improve public open space and establish a community engagement practice – e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoca River Flats public engagement / DELWP • Goldfields Recreation Reserve Masterplan development 	Strategic Planning/ Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Ongoing. Goldfields Recreation Reserve Masterplan complete. Beaufort Linear Park Masterplan development complete.	
	Engage with land councils regarding land use activity agreements. (LUAA)	Project Managers	Now ongoing activity and included within project development requirements. All projects are now being delivered in compliance with LUAA requirements. Governance checklists have been developed.	
2. Support community-led biodiversity projects (Support)	Identify appropriate community-led projects for Council support.	Economic Development	Ongoing activity. Support provided through combined grants programs.	
3. Ensure that the implementation of the Roadside Management Strategy considers and enhances biodiversity regeneration (Deliver)	Review Roadside Management Strategy to incorporate enhanced biodiversity regeneration, with appropriate community engagement.	Environment & Sustainability	In progress.	



d. Improve waste management to reduce landfill and reduce harm to the environment				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
1. Support a regional waste management community education campaign (Support)	Partner and actively participate with regional waste management group.	Director A&DS	Council has been an active participant in the regional waste management forum since its inception. The forum officially ceased on 30/6/2022, however Council is committed to working with Grampians councils on regional waste and recycling issues. Council is aligning waste education with state policy.	
2. Strengthen partnerships with regional and state agencies to develop innovation in services and technology (Partner)	Continue involvement and participation in Grampians Central Waste and Ballarat Regional MRRF.	Director A&DS	Council has been an active participant in this forum since its inception. The forum officially ceased on 30/6/2022, however Council is committed to working with Grampians councils on regional waste and recycling issues. Council is involved in a multi-council project to facilitate interest in regional waste management and recycling.	
3. Work with local partners to encourage practical waste and recycling opportunities (Support)	Support local businesses to improve recycling of waste – e.g., steel, concrete, paper, cardboard.	Director A&DS	Greater access to recycling has been provided including separation of glass from other comingled recyclables. Non-Council (State) project to install recycling facilities in townships commenced 1 November 2023 which appear to be widely accepted and used.	



d. Improve waste management to reduce landfill and reduce harm to the environment				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
4.	Improve education and information to residents on roadside recycling, transfer stations, waste segregation and recovery.	Director A&DS	Information regarding what can be recycled supplied as part of waste calendar information to residents.	



ECONOMY

a. Support our local businesses and help to strengthen key industries				
Council priority	Operational focus	Responsibility Lead	Progress summary	Status
1. Preserve and promote our built heritage and ecotourism opportunities and support tourism through promotion, marketing, and sponsorship (Advocate & Support).	Partner with regional tourism bodies to leverage government funding for tourism stakeholders.	Tourism	ED&T team work closely with Tourism Mid-West Victoria who have presented to Council recently on progress.	
	Continue support for the Central Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Bid.	City of Ballarat & Greater City of Bendigo	Ongoing. The Goldfields World Heritage Bid is being project managed by City of Ballarat in partnership with City of Bendigo and secured funding of \$500K late 2022 to progress the project. Pyrenees is one of 13 LGA partners and the project that has been funded commenced in March 2023. Media reports show this is progressing satisfactorily.	
	Implement façade improvement program with a heritage priority.	Economic Development & Tourism	Façade improvement funding project completed in November 2023.	
	Facilitate investment in ecotourism products.	Tourism	Refer Investment Attraction Strategy: Destination Management Plan implementation in progress.	
	Continue development of the Avoca to Moonambel cycle track with adjoining nodes to new locations.	Economic Development & Tourism	Funding as yet unsuccessful.	
	Develop strategy for the use of tourism funding / review of regional tourism alignment.	Tourism	Tourism Mid-West Victoria is now in place and is well-progress with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A region wide Destination Management Plan to inform the 	



a. Support our local businesses and help to strengthen key industries				
Council priority	Operational focus	Responsibility Lead	Progress summary	Status
			high priority areas for investment by both the public and private sectors and - Local Area Action Plan for each LGA within the partnership. Tourism Mid-West Victoria recently presented to Council on progress.	
2. Facilitate networks for industry knowledge-sharing and innovation across tourism, agriculture, and commerce (Facilitate)	Continue partnerships with Ballarat Regional Tourism and City of Ballarat to develop and grow tourism opportunities.	Economic Development & Tourism	Economic Development & Tourism are continuing to work closely with both organisations, currently through the “Industry Strengthening” program to support recovery from the impacts of the pandemic.	
	Facilitate expanded training opportunities to agricultural groups.	Economic Development & Tourism	Paused at present.	
3. Build relationships with investors to unlock opportunities for development and innovation and investment that supports employment (Facilitate)	Develop and implement an investment attraction strategy.	Economic Development & Tourism	Strategy Completed.	



a. Support our local businesses and help to strengthen key industries				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
4. Promote and protect agricultural sustainability through land use planning and community education (Deliver)	Rural Land Review.	Strategic Planning	Preliminary project documentation developed and reviewed to confirm scope and outputs of project. Workshop with Councillors held to identify agricultural land that needs preservation and land to be targeted for rural living growth. Difficulty in recruitment of strategic planning staff.	
	Review the Future Landscapes Project to identify appropriate actions to promote and protect agricultural sustainability.	Strategic Planning	Incorporated in the Rural Land Review project.	
	Partner with organisations to facilitate sustainability land use workshops.	Economic Development & Tourism	Paused at present.	
5. Collaborate with business associations to facilitate localised economic development (Partner)	Partner with local associations to reactive the Business Taskforce.	Economic Development & Tourism	Deferred due to flood impacts in October / November 2022 with recovery support activities still underway. Ongoing impacts from disaster recovery activities from February 2024 fire event.	



b. Invest in road infrastructure to improve connectivity for commerce and community				
<i>Council priority</i>	<i>Operational focus</i>	<i>Responsibility Lead</i>	<i>Progress summary</i>	<i>Status</i>
1. Maintain and improve our roads and associated assets to ensure safe and efficient connectivity (Deliver)	Develop a 10-year Asset Management Plan including improvement priorities.	Asset Management	Adopted June 2022.	
	Prepare and deliver a four-year Capital Works Program including re-sheeting, re-sealing, road, and bridge / culvert upgrades.	Engineering / Works / Assets Management	Capital Works Programs are being implemented in accordance with Council's adopted 10-year Asset Plan.	
2. Identify infrastructure constraints and facilitate solutions, including investing in access for high-productivity vehicles to support the agricultural sector and access to markets (Deliver)	Utilise information gained on infrastructure constraints limiting heavy vehicle access (i.e., 28 bridges) to develop improvement plan to increase load limits and bridges and identify key routes where improvements are required (linked to road hierarchy). Link to Assets Improvement plan.	Engineering / Assets Management	Asset plan developed and approved to prioritise bridge replacement and improvement.	
	Identify and allocate appropriate funding to increase heavy vehicle accessibility.	Engineering/ Assets Management	Bridge projects identified and priority projects underway that will enable greater access to heavy vehicles	
	Consult with key industry stakeholders on road improvement priorities (including the Agricultural Reference Group).	Economic Development & Tourism	Ongoing.	



c. Encourage and invest in assets and infrastructure for commerce and community				
Council priority	Operational focus	Responsibility Lead	Progress summary	Status
1. Work with water authorities to facilitate opportunities for secure water sources for rural areas to support agriculture, viticulture, and other economic opportunities (Advocate)	Continue advocating for Moonambel Town Water Potable Water Supply.	CEO Office	Ongoing advocacy. Included in project discussions with RDV. Included in Southwest and Northeast Pyrenees Water Supply Project.	
	Advocate for treatment of more accessible water for potable use.	CEO Office	Ongoing advocacy. Included in pipeline project discussions with RDV. Included in Southwest and Northeast Pyrenees Water Supply Project.	
2. Work with partners to advocate for improved telecommunications service outcomes (Advocate & Support)	Nominate black spots for future funding.	CEO Office	Ongoing advocacy.	
	Engage with Victorian Government Rural Connect program in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government RCIF program to improve internet connectivity at Moonambel, Lexton, and other priority areas.	CEO Office		
3. Establish relationships and advocate for commitment to continued investment and growth to improve access to water /	Identify key projects (e.g., small town sewerage solutions) and priorities for advocacy. Advocate to prioritise small town sewerage solutions during Central Highland Water’s Urban Water Strategy review.	CEO Office / ELT	Southwest and Northeast Pyrenees Water Supply Project in progress.	
	Advocate for power upgrades for recreational facilities.	CEO Office	Advocacy underway and ongoing.	



c. Encourage and invest in assets and infrastructure for commerce and community				
Council priority	Operational focus	Responsibility Lead	Progress summary	Status
sewer / internet access / phone connectivity / transport / housing / power upgrades etc. (Advocate)			Successful funding for Beaufort Goldfields Recreation Reserve.	
4. Develop a strategic plan for asset service improvement (Deliver)	10-year asset management and improvement plan.	Asset Management	Adopted by Council June 2022.	
5. Utilise innovation for better outcomes in asset delivery (Deliver)	Audit existing asset conditions to provide appropriate level of data to make asset management decisions.	Asset Management	Condition assessment of infrastructure assets was completed in the 2021/22 financial year. This condition assessment work is undertaken on a 3-year cycle. Video and still image capture of road assets was also completed 2021/22. Rehabilitation of critical assets impacted by 2022 floods in progress. Assessment of February fire impacts on infrastructure in progress.	
	Continual review and improvement of project management framework and tools.	Community Wellbeing & Partnerships	Ongoing	
	Consider implementation of appropriate contract management and writing tools.	Director C&CS	Internal Audit Review of contract management completed.	



c. Encourage and invest in assets and infrastructure for commerce and community				
Council priority	Operational focus	Responsibility Lead	Progress summary	Status
			Working Group established to improve contract management framework February 2024. Project to improve contract management framework in progress.	
	Review utilisation of drone technology.	Director A&DS	Drone tech has been used for some land surveying and land info purposes and has been considered for some visual prop inspection related matters.	
6. Work with industry stakeholders to capitalise on renewable energy opportunities that will reduce consumption of fossil fuels, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and provide competitively priced energy to local industries and communities (Partner)	Partner with experts (CVGA, other LGAs, private companies, power generators) to improve Council's environmental Responsibility Lead knowledge and expertise.	Environment & Sustainability	Partner with CVGA complete and ongoing. Trellis software implemented. Ironbark Sustainability data analysis complete in 2021.	
	Identify Council's 2030 energy / emissions target.	Environment & Sustainability	Ongoing – regular identification of sustainability projects.	
	Advocate for more efficient and consistent local energy efficient power sources and storage.	CEO Office	Ongoing advocacy.	
	Advocate on achieving a balance between electricity transmission needs / security and preserving community amenity and impact.	CEO Office	Ongoing advocacy.	
	Identify opportunities for future partnership to develop waste to energy products.	Economic Development & Tourism	Maintaining networks with local groups with interests in progressing renewable energy projects. Will provide support to proponents of projects where possible.	

Gender impact assessments

Table 1 - Gender impact assessments progress	
Required	Required
Title	Subject
<p>What is the title of the policy, program or service that was the subject of the GIA?</p> <p>Please use one row for each GIA completed. When reporting on multiple actions taken, include this information in the relevant single cell.</p>	<p>Was the subject of the GIA a policy, program or service?</p> <p>For definitions of policies, programs and services, please refer to the guidance materials at Appendix A: Glossary of terms.</p> <p>Use the drop-down menu in the cell to select your answer.</p>
Beaufort Linear Park Project	Service
Beaufort Caravan Park Strategy Implementation	Service

Required Description	Required Status	Required Confirm if actions taken
Provide a description of the policy, program or service subject to the GIA.	Was the policy, program or service new, or up for review? Use the drop-down menu in the cell to select your answer.	Were actions taken to develop or vary the policy, program or service to meet the needs of people of different genders, address gender inequality and promote gender equality as a result of the GIA? Use the drop-down menu in the cell to indicate whether or not actions were taken as a result of the GIA.
Improving the amenity (including pedestrian linkages) and environmental condition of the Beaufort Linear Park.	New	No action taken
Provision of tourist accommodation and supporting facilities at the Beaufort Caravan Park	New	No action taken

Required	Recommended
Describe actions taken	Confirm intersectionality considered
<p>Describe the actions taken to develop or vary the policy, program or service to meet the needs of people of different genders, address gender inequality and promote gender equality.</p> <p>When reporting on multiple actions taken, include this information in one cell. You can press alt+enter to include new lines.</p>	<p>Was it considered that gender inequality may be compounded by disadvantage or discrimination that people may experience on the basis of intersectionality?</p> <p>Use the drop-down menu in the cell to select your answer.</p>
<p>The Gender Impact Assessment was undertaken to inform the development of a masterplan for the area including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - rehabilitating the Garibaldi Creek; - establishing a green corridor with walking and cycling paths and other recreational spaces; - development of cultural assets; - development of educational and stewardship programs. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p>
<p>The Gender Impact Assessment was undertaken to inform a significant redevelopment of the Beaufort Caravan Park, pending funding from Council and government. The redevelopment will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improved accessibility for disabled patrons (including a dedicated disabled access cabin); and - improved booking accessibility. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p>

Recommended
Explain intersectional lens applied
<p>Explain how an intersectional lens was applied while completing the GIA.</p> <p>If this was not done, explain why this was not practicable.</p>
<p>Council has identified the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - take into account the needs of traditional owners. This could include showcasing indigenous culture and complementing the Koori Arts Trail with interpretative signage amongst other things. - Incorporate design features that take into account people with disabilities; - Take into account the safety of school children who walk or ride between school and the pool. - the safety of people generally. <p>Council referred to the following documents and research in conductign this assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council's Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan; - Summary Health Risk Data; - ABS SEIFA Index; - Other demographic data.
<p>Council has identified the need to engage with traditional owners in relation to the potential impact of the redevelopment on the nearby lake.</p> <p>The Gender Impact Assessment took into account the following intersectionalities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender: in relation to accommodation, toilets and showers; - Abilities: in relation to accommodation, toilets and showers; - Age: in relation to accommodation, toilets and showers; - Sexual orientation: in relation to accommodation, toilets and showers; <p>There were no other identified impacts in relation cultural identities or religions. Council also considered the impact of potential referral for homeless people or those impacted by domestic violence.</p>

Strategies and measures

Table 2.1 - Strategies and measures progress	
Required	Required
Strategies and measures	Status
<p>List your organisation's strategies and measures. Include one strategy or measure per row.</p> <p>These are the planned actions that you have outlined in your GEAP to promote gender equality in your workplace.</p>	<p>Assign each strategy or measure a status from the following list:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Complete' indicates that all planned activities related to this strategy or measure have been finalised. • 'In progress' indicates that the activities under this strategy or measure are progressing but not yet complete. • 'Ongoing' indicates that the activities under this strategy or measure do not have an end-date and will be addressed on a continual basis. • 'Not started' indicates that the planned activities related to this strategy or measure have not yet commenced, including those that are intended to commence in future years. This should include strategies or measures that have been delayed. • 'Void' indicates that this strategy or measure appeared in your defined entity's GEAP, but has since been cancelled.
Increase participation of women in Council elections.	Not started
Raise awareness through employee training.	Ongoing
Increase opportunities for employees in part-time or from gendered- segregated work to gain experience.	Ongoing
Support leadership development for women, gender-diverse employees, and employees with diverse backgrounds.	Ongoing

Improve collection data.	In progress
Reduce the percentage of identified gendered operational cohorts across Council.	Ongoing
Increase the number of applicants and appointees with diverse backgrounds.	Ongoing
Ensure that induction of new staff raises awareness.	Ongoing
Improve recruitment practices.	Ongoing
Develop policy to improve pay disparities.	In progress

Remove barriers to work for carers and parents.	Ongoing
Reduce under-identified rates of underemployment.	Ongoing
Improve options and awareness of leave and flexibility arrangements.	Ongoing
Embed flexible options into position descriptions and job advertisements.	Ongoing
Increase awareness of workplace sexual harassment prevention.	In progress

IMPORTANT: When inserting new row(s) to this table, please ensure they are inserted above the

Example(s)

Strategies and measures	Status
-------------------------	--------

<p>Example: Address gaps identified in collecting intersectional data as part of employee and payroll systems</p>	<p>Complete</p>
---	-----------------

Required
Status description
<p>Describe your progress in implementing each strategy or measure in your GEAP.</p> <p>In particular, you need to explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why you have selected that status from the drop-down menu; and • Whether the status indicates any delay or change from what was planned in your GEAP and if so, the reason for this change.
<p>Council elections are due in November 2024. Council's role is to encourage women in the community to stand for election. We will do this by various forms of promotion as we get closer to the election. The Municipal Association of Victoria and the Victorian Local Governance Association will support this strategy on a state-wide basis.</p>
<p>All Employees have attended training. Twenty-seven employees attended Gender Impact Assessment Training on 6th September and 14th September 2022.</p> <p>Council's Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (2023) contains the following relevant clauses: "Emails shall not be used as means of sexual harassment"; and "Emails must not be used for sending offensive comments based on individual gender, age, sexuality, race, disability, or appearance; or any other trait defined in relevant legislation".</p>
<p>One secondment for a female employee to a higher paid position in 2022-23 and one employee at a neighbouring Council took secondment following "1st Women Career Development Workshop"; One secondment for a female employee to a higher paid supervisory role July 2023. During the reporting period, we have also appointed female employees to acting director roles.</p>
<p>Five women, gender diverse employees or employees from diverse backgrounds participated in a mentoring program that was launched 30th November 2022 aimed at leadership development.</p> <p>One female manager participated in the AICD company directors course. Other opportunities to female employees but their applications were <u>unsuccessful</u>.</p>

The organisation is embarking on a significant IT transformation project that will result in new platforms for processing data and transactions across a range of functions, including payroll and HR. This will restrict our ability to improve data collection in the short term.

Council continues to promote itself as an equal opportunity employer by encouraging and welcoming applications from people with diverse backgrounds. However, a paramount consideration is to recruit the best person for each job regardless of personal traits. Council is actively improving female friendly facilities within the male-dominated depot environment which provides opportunities to attract more females within this workforce in the future.

Council continues to promote itself as an equal opportunity employer by encouraging and welcoming applications from people with diverse backgrounds. However, a paramount consideration is to recruit the best person for each job regardless of personal traits.

One of the principles in Council's Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (2023) includes "Commitment to equal employment opportunity and gender equity."

Section 12 of the Agreement contains a list of Council and employee obligations which includes "ensuring equal opportunity for all people" and "a commitment to promoting and reinforcing a culture of gender equity and acceptance of individual diversity and inclusion".

Council has adopted a new policy as part of its Reconciliation Action Plan whereby all applicants identifying as aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background are automatically granted an interview.

An internal committee was formed in December 2023 tasked with reviewing and improving Council's induction systems. This includes gender impact awareness.

Recruitment practices including job design, promotion, candidate assessment, appointment and induction is being continuously improved through:

- Employee training and awareness raising;
- Improved data collection to better target applicants;
- Ongoing improvements in Council's promotional material;
- Having a gender balance on interview panels; and
- Commitment to improving induction practices.

Recruitment and interview practices changed to have a greater focus on organisational fit as well as technical competency, which has resulted in some additional female appointees.

Consideration has been given to policy development but not finalised focusing on areas such as: starting pay-band negotiating skills of different genders; and reinforcing the need to correctly band positions according to job and judgment requirements' criteria included within the Award.

Council's Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (2023) contains generous provisions to enable carers and parents to take leave. In addition, there is a separate "Gender Equality and Family Support" clause that provides support for breastfeeding mothers.

A Child Care Needs survey was undertaken in Avoca but the response was poor.

Council met with the Department of Education to discuss Early Years Reform Agenda, including child care needs.

In 2021, Council successfully applied for \$1.5 million to extend the Beaufort Early Childhood Centre with an additional 33 places for 3 year old pre school and child care. The additional modular unit became operational in early 2022.

Council is to engage a part-time Early Years Project Officer in 2023/24 to further progress Early Years projects, including child care.

Continuous efforts are implemented to offer opportunities to employees to increase employment - e.g., internal expressions of interest processes and transition of casuals to permanent positions.

One of the principles in Council's Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (2023) includes "the development and improvement of an organisation based on the principles of flexibility, teamwork and valuing people as individuals."

On the 6th and 8th September 2022 the Manager People and Culture undertook 5 roadshows within Council to speak about flexible work arrangements and other matters, including HR policies and GEAP. 34 employees participated.

Job advertisements have been changed to include reference to flexible work arrangements.

Job advertisements have been changed to include reference to flexible work arrangements.

Flexible work arrangements are available upon mutual agreement between any employee and the organisation, and 40% of employees are on flexible work arrangements (50/50% male/female).

Council's Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (2023) contains the following relevant clauses: "Emails shall not be used as means of sexual harassment"; and "Emails must not be used for sending offensive comments based on individual gender, age, sexuality, race, disability, or appearance; or any other trait defined in relevant legislation".

Education opportunities on removing unconscious bias were provided to all employees which included sexual harassment prevention.

These two black rows.

Status description

This strategy was implemented in March 2023.
A payroll systems firm was engaged to upgrade our systems to support the collection of intersectional data in relation to sexual orientation, race, Aboriginality, religion, ethnicity, disability and gender identity. We have now begun collecting intersectional data and addressing the gaps identified in our 2021 audit.

Recommended	Recommended	Recommended
Evaluation of success	Timeline	Responsible
<p>Evaluating the success of each of your strategies or measures may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tracking against pre-identified success markers. These markers may have been specified in your GEAP. • other evaluation markers that may not have been specified in your GEAP, such as participation levels, outcomes, or changes resulting from the strategy or measure, • other ways the strategy or measure has contributed to promoting gender equality in your defined entity. 	<p>If your GEAP included a timeline for action or implementation for your strategies and measures, include this timeline below.</p> <p>If you did not include a timeline in your GEAP, we highly recommend you do so in this progress report by including a timeline below.</p>	<p>Include the role or team responsible for implementing of each strategy or measure.</p>
<p>The degree of success will be determined on 24 September 2024 when candidate nominations close.</p>	<p>24-Sep-2024</p>	<p>CEO and Council</p>
<p>The number of new employees who have participated in Gender Impact Assessment training.</p>	<p>2023 to 2025</p>	<p>Manager People and Culture</p>
<p>The number of opportunities provided by the organisation to transfer from a gendered- segregated workplace.</p>	<p>2023 to 2025</p>	<p>Executive Leadership Team (ELT), Senior Leadership Team (SLT), and Manager People and Culture</p>
<p>The number of female and gender-diverse employees who participate in leadership development.</p>	<p>2023 to 2025</p>	<p>ELT</p>

The number of new and improved measures available to Council.	GEAP says 2023, but will be 2025.	Manager People and Culture
The percentage reduction in identified gendered operational cohorts across Council.	2022 to 2025	ELT, SLT and Manager People and Culture
The number of job applicants and appointees from diverse backgrounds.	2022 to 2025	ELT, SLT and Manager People and Culture
The number of new employees who have participated in Gender Impact Assessment training.	2023 to 2025	ELT, SLT and Manager People and Culture
The number of new initiatives to improve recruitment practices that have been implemented.	2023 to 2025	ELT and Manager People and Culture
The degree to which pay disparity is reduced.	2023 to 2025	ELT, SLT and Manager People and Culture

Complete identification of the barriers to work for carers and parents.	2023 to 2025	Manager Community Wellbeing and Partnerships
Identify the level of under-employment.	2022 to 2025	ELT, SLT and Manager People and Culture
The number of employees who take advantage of flexible work arrangements. A reduction in the number of employees who believe an application for flexible work arrangements would not be considered.	2022 to 2025	ELT, SLT and Manager People and Culture
The percentage of job advertisements that refer to flexible work arrangements.	2023 to 2025	ELT, SLT and Manager People and Culture
The number of sexual harrassment claims.	2023 to 2025	Manager People and Culture

Evaluation of success	Timeline	Responsible
------------------------------	-----------------	--------------------

<p>Although originally anticipated for implementation in 2022, delays meant this strategy was implemented in March 2023. Intersectional data is being collected as part of new recruitments and promotions, and voluntary updates by existing staff. New intersectional data as part of our 2023 progress audit and future GEAPs will enable us to better understand intersectional gender equality in our organisation and areas for improvement.</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>People and Culture Corporate Support</p>
--	-------------	---

Recommended						
Relevant indicator(s)						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>Identify one or more indicators for each strategy or measure that the action was designed to address.</p> <p>See the Indicators key to the right of this table for a description of each workplace gender equality indicator.</p>						
x						
x	x	x	x	x	x	
x	x	x				
x	x	x				

Indi
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

X	X	X	X	X	X	
X	X	X				
X						
X						
X						
X						

X						
X						
X						
X						
X						

Relevant indicator(s)						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

X	X	X		X	X	X
---	---	---	--	---	---	---

icators key
Gender composition of all levels of the workforce.
Gender composition of governing bodies.
Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender.
Sexual harassment in the workplace
Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace.
Availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- family violence leave- flexible working arrangements- working arrangements supporting employees with family or caring responsibilities
Gendered segregation within the workplace

Resourcing your GEAP

Table 2.2 - Allocation of resources to implement the strategies and measures in your GEAP
<p>Recommended</p> <p>You might consider some or all of the following, in addition to any other aspects you consider relevant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who implements the strategies and measures in your GEAP? What role do they perform at what level in your defined entity? • How many staff members/FTE are allocated to implementing the strategies and measures? • Was enough resourcing allocated to successfully implement your strategies and measures? If not, how will this be addressed?
<p>Your Comments</p> <p>The GEAP is implemented by the Executive Leadership Team, Senior Leadership Team, and other officers. In the short-term, Council has provided a specific budget allocation as follows:</p> <p>2022-23 \$20,000 (used on staff training by an external training provider)</p> <p>2023-24 \$10,000</p> <p>2024-25 \$10,000</p> <p>Discussions during the preparation of Council's budget will determine if additional funding is required. In the long term, implementation of the GEAP will probably be resourced through existing budgetary allocations including salaries of the afore-mentioned employees. As a small rural council, we do not have the financial resources to employ new staff to implement the GEAP, conduct GIA assessments or report to the Commission. This is an added impost that Council will fund from existing salaries. In effect, this means that Council has had to divert resources from, and therefore pay less attention to, other important Council responsibilities. At this stage, Council is unable to quantify the actual cost of fulfilling its obligations to implement the GEAP, albeit it is</p>

Workplace Gender Equality Indicators

Table 3 - Workplace gender equality indicators progress	
Required	Required
Indicator	Confirm if progress made
<p>This column contains the seven workplace gender equality indicators. Complete the 'required' fields, and you are encouraged to complete the 'recommended' columns, to the right of each indicator.</p>	<p>Indicate whether your organisation has made progress in relation to the workplace gender equality indicators.</p> <p>Use the drop-down menu in the cell to select 'yes' or 'no.'</p>
Gender composition of all levels of the workforce	Yes
Gender composition of governing bodies	No
Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender	Yes
Sexual harassment in the workplace	Yes
Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace	Yes
Availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to: - family violence leave; and - flexible working arrangements; and - working arrangements supporting employees with family or caring responsibilities	Yes

Gendered segregation within the workplace	No
---	----

Example(s)

Indicator	Confirm if progress made
Example 1: Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace	Yes

Example 2: Sexual harassment in the workplace	No
---	----

Required
Progress description
<p>Demonstrate your progress in relation to each workplace gender equality indicator.</p> <p>In this column, please explain why you believe changes in your data do or do not represent progress against each indicator.</p> <p>Refer explicitly to quantitative changes in the data between your previous workplace gender audit and your progress audit.</p> <p>If you wish, you may also make reference to any strategy or measure from your GEAP that supported, or was designed to support, progress against that indicator.</p>
<p>Gender composition is more balanced in 2023. (50% men and 50% women compared to 2021 with 61% women and 39% men.)</p>
<p>No change since 2021 as there was no Council election since.</p>
<p>According to the Workforce Data, gender pay gap has decreased from 8% to 6.4%</p>
<p>Less women (drop from 6% to 3%) and men (drop from 11% to 4%) reported experiencing sexual harrasment behaviour at work via the People Matter Survey. Our internal reporting system had no reports at all about Sexual Harassment</p>
<p>Although not necessarily backed up by data, Council has made progress in this space. Training was conducted to raise awareness, such as unconscious bias of recruiters. Job interview panels are generally balanced with at least one female on each. Council delivered female-only career development workshops, to support women in preparing for job applications and to build confidence. Secondment and higher duties options have been made available and taken up by female staff. Whilst a mentoring program was offered to all staff, it remained to be taken up by female employees. Council also continues to promote and encourage female</p>
<p>Council's Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (2023) contains generous provisions to enable carers and parents to take leave. In addition, there is a separate "Gender Equality and Family Support" clause that provides support for breastfeeding mothers;</p> <p>One of the principles in the Agreement includes "the development and improvement of an organisation based on the principles of flexibility, teamwork and valuing people as individuals."</p> <p>Another principle in the Agreement includes "Commitment to equal employment opportunity and gender equity."</p> <p>Section 12 of the Agreement contains a list of Council and employee obligations which includes "ensuring equal opportunity for all people" and "a commitment to promoting and reinforcing a culture of gender equity and</p>

We are aware of gender segregated workplaces within our organisation. Whilst small changes have been made, overall there is no significant progress.

Progress description

Recruitment

In our 2021 audit, women represented only 35% of new recruits in the year to 30 June 2021. In our 2023 progress audit, this rose 6% to 41%.

In 2021, of the women we recruited, 17% were employed on a full-time permanent basis, 14% on a part-time permanent basis and 69% on fixed-term contracts. In 2023, 22% of women recruited were employed on a full-time permanent basis, 20% on a part-time permanent basis and 58% on fixed-term contracts.

We were not able to collect non-binary or gender diverse data in 2021. Our employee and payroll systems have since been updated to collect improved gender-diverse data. This has been achieved through the implementation of strategy 5.2 under our 2021 Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP): 'Embed inclusive practices into our HR electronic systems. For example, offering a range of gender selection options'. As such, in 2023, our data showed that 2% of new recruits identified as non-binary or gender diverse.

Our organisation argues that these figures, in conjunction with successful implementation of relevant GEAP strategies, contribute to progress against Indicator 5. Not only have we been able to notably increase our recruitment of women and gender diverse employees, but we have also been able to offer these new recruits more attractive contract conditions. Stable contracts will also support us to retain employees of all genders and move towards a more gender-balanced workforce in the future.

Promotions

Our 2021 audit showed that 25% of promotions in the 12 months to 30 June 2021 were awarded to women. These promotions occurred in the lower and middle levels of the organisation only, and not within the executive leadership team. Our 2023 progress audit showed that 30% of all promotions were awarded to women, an increase of 5%. Of these, 10% occurred in the higher levels of the organisation and were ongoing permanent roles.

Our organisation historically has a very stable executive leadership team where roles tend to be longer-term contracts or ongoing positions, with few exits. We are pleased to see promotion at the higher level of our organisation into ongoing positions for women.

In 2021, we were not able to collect promotion data for non-binary or gender-diverse employees. In 2023, our updated systems allowed us to collect this data. However, there were no promotions awarded to this staff cohort.

We believe that a significant aspect of our success in increasing the proportion of promotions awarded to women has been our focus on improving secondment and higher duties opportunities for women and gender-

Our 2021 Employee Experience Survey data showed that 7% of women and 4% of men who responded to the survey had experienced sexual harassment in the workplace, and of those 5% of women and 6% of men made a formal complaint. In 2023, our Employee Experience Survey data showed that 9% of women and 6% of men who responded to the survey reported having experienced sexual harassment in the workplace, an increase of 2% from 2021 for both cohorts. Of those, 9% of women and 10% of men indicated that they had made a formal complaint.

Our 2023 Employee Experience Survey also indicated that women with disability were overrepresented among those who reported experiencing sexual harassment. We have initiated a review process to consider how we might address this between now and the 2025 reporting cycle.

No respondents in our 2021 Employee Experience Survey identified as gender diverse. We also didn't record any formal sexual harassment complaints in our 2021 workforce reporting data from employees of self-described gender. In our 2023 employee experience survey, 2% of respondents identified as non-binary or gender diverse. Of this cohort, 10% indicated experience of sexual harassment, with 50% of this group indicating that they had made a formal complaint.

We note that these figures represent an increase in anonymous self-reporting of sexual harassment. This is concerning, as anonymous reporting tends to be more accurate than formal incident reporting processes.

In analysing our 2021 and 2023 audit data, we found that our workforce reporting shows minimal change in terms of outcomes for formal complaints of sexual harassment. In 2021, our audit data showed that no outcome was reached for 70% of matters where the complainant was a woman, and 50% of matters where the complainant was a man. In 2023, our progress audit showed that of the incidents of sexual harassment reported by women, no outcome was reached for 65% of matters. This figure was 40% for men. We did not collect data on gender diverse and non-binary employees in 2021, nor their experience of sexual harassment. Our 2023 progress audit showed that of the incidents of sexual harassment reported by gender diverse and non-binary employees, no outcome was reached for 67% of matters.

The enduring high levels of formal complaints with no outcome across our 2021 and 2023 audit data suggests that we have work to do in effectively and efficiently resolving sexual harassment complaints. The lack of

Recommended						
Factors						
a	b	c	d	e	f	g
<p>Indicate below whether or not one of these factors has affected your organisation's progress against each indicator. You are encouraged to reference these factors in your discussion in column L.</p> <p>See the Factors key to the right of this table for a description of each factor.</p>						
Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes

No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
----	----	----	-----	-----	----	----

Recommended
Factors discussion
<p>If you have selected 'yes' to any of the factors in the recommended columns to the left, you are encouraged to complete this column.</p> <p>This column allows you to discuss each factor that has affected your organisation's progress in relation to any of the workplace gender equality indicators.</p>
<p>Council tries to be mindful to have a balanced gender composition in its workforce. Similar to section 3, Council has socially entrenched barriers, ie aged care and customer service (traditionally low-paid female workforce) and depots (traditionally male dominated workforce), and being a small organisation, we have limited ability to change this wider social dynamic in the short term.</p>
<p>Due to the fact that the next Council election is not until late 2024, no progress could be made. The political nature of local government renders it difficult for the CEO to encourage anyone or specific cohorts to stand for election, and consequently, this is best promoted by the State government and the peak industry bodies including the MAV and VLGA. At best, Council can influence gender composition of candidates, but we cannot control the outcome.</p>
<p>Council tries its best to minimise the gender pay gap where possible. The small size of the organisation makes it difficult to achieve statistically significant progress because of the small sample size. The gender pay gap at Council is not attributable to women being paid less than men for doing the same job: it relates to the fact that most of the occupations traditionally filled by women are at lower pay levels. Furthermore, the average hours worked by women are less than men.</p>
<p>Training on workplace behaviour, such as sexual harrasment, has probably resulted in better outcomes.</p>
<p>See progress description.</p>
<p>Family violence leave, as well as flexible work arrangements and working from home arrangements are in place and well subscribed by employees.</p>

Despite the limitations referred to in row 1, Council has an opportunity to improve female-friendly working conditions within the outdoor depots that may encourage greater female employment. For example, the construction of new depot facilities at Avoca will incorporate female-friendly toilets and changerooms.

Factors discussion

As a largely male-dominated industry we recognise we have started from a lower baseline for this indicator and by implementing the strategies identified in our GEAP, in particular: strategy 5.2 'Embed inclusive practices into

We note that we are two years into the four-year GEAP implementation period, and as such have not fully impl

We believe our genuine efforts to implement strategies against this indicator and measurable progress arising

(e) Competing priorities and operational obligations

Our organisation is a metro health service. During the recent covid-19 pandemic, Victoria's public health system such, our organisation prioritised its public-facing service delivery. We directed the majority of our stretched resources were directed to keeping ICU and general wards staffed. As a result, we were not able to deliver comprehensive We also lacked the resources to comprehensively review our internal sexual harassment processes.

(d) Resources

As described cell D9, our resources were significantly stretched due to an increase in demand for ICU services as comprehensive sexual harassment training delivery and process review.

For this reason, we focussed on low-cost strategies and measures in our GEAP, including delivering a sexual harassment Employee Experience Survey. Our communications campaign focussed on drawing attention to existing sexual

Factors key:	
a.	The size of the defined entity, including the defined entity's number of employees.
b.	The nature and circumstances of the defined entity, including any barriers to making progress.
c.	Requirements that apply to the defined entity under any other Act, including an Act of the Commonwealth.
d.	The defined entity's resources.
e.	The defined entity's operational priorities and competing operational obligations.
f.	The practicability and cost to the defined entity of making progress.
g.	Genuine attempts made by the defined entity to make progress.



d there is further to go. Despite this, we have made genuine efforts to attract and recruit a more gender diverse
o our HR electronic systems. For example, offering a range of gender selection options’.

plemented all GEAP strategies. The majority of our strategies against this indicator remain in early implementatic

from the data, demonstrate progress against indicator 5.



m experienced unprecedented demand. In particular, rates of access to ICU and ventilation increased dramatic sources externally to enable high-quality public health care. Demand outstripped supply, and already-stretched ve in-person bespoke staff training in relation to sexual harassment, so instead delivered a low-cost e-learning r

s during the covid-19 pandemic. Competing priorities reduced the resources available for internal-facing program

harassment e-learning module, circulating internal communications campaigns and encouraging staff to undertake harassment policies including how the organisation will respond.



workforce

on stage.

ally. As
resources
module.

ms, such

ake the

3 March 2024

The Mayor
Pyrenees Shire Council
5 Lawrence Street
BEAUFORT VIC 3373

Dear Sir

Report on Council Audit and Risk Committee – November 2023 to March 2024

Under the Audit and Risk Committee Charter, as Chair of the Council's Audit and Risk Committee I am required to report to Council twice each year on the performance and activities of the Committee. This is the first report for 2024 and covers the period above.

The Audit and Risk Committee met on 28 November 2023. The meeting was held in Council Chambers with Mr Brian Keane joining by video link. The VAGO representative Mr Ryan Schischka of Johnsons MME, did not join the meeting as the Financial and Performance Audits had been completed and were discussed at the September meeting.

Audit and Risk Committee

The Committee comprised:
Three Independent members -
Ms Wendy Honeyman (Chair);
Mr Rod Poxon; and
Mr Brian Keane
and
Two Council members
Cr Robert Vance and
Cr Damian Ferrari

A quorum was present for the meeting.

At the start of the meeting a session was held for internal and external audit representatives to discuss matters in a closed setting. A closed session is required to be held at least once per year. The items discussed were:

- Moving from three to four meetings per year of the Audit and Risk Committee as proposed by Management. This will fit better with the timing of financial reporting and will spread the workload for meetings more evenly;
- How the Risk Assessment Survey conducted by AFS assists in the development of the Internal Audit Program and helps to meet conditions of the Audit Committee Charter;
- The intention to ask about staff turnover and whether its level was still a concern (this item was discussed and addressed in the Governance and Compliance report)
- Whether AFS had any issues in conducting audits for Pyrenees Shire Council – AFS confirmed that they have a good working relationship and that it was a pleasure working with the Council;
- A commendation to Kathy Bramwell for the quality of reports in the Audit and Risk Agenda papers and for the secretariat duties that she performs; and
- Appreciation too, for Emma Poyser for maintaining a high standard of minute taking.

The most recently updated and endorsed Audit and Risk Committee Charter, which was the result of consultation between Management and the Committee, was included in the Agenda Papers. The Charter clarifies the possible terms of membership and now includes an appendix showing the names of the Independent Members and their length of tenure.

The Audit and Risk Committee Work Plan for 2024 was agreed and endorsed by the Committee, noting the move from three to four meetings for the year.

Reports such as VAGO Status reports, on the reviews that are underway, about to begin or recently concluded were circulated to members out of session, as was the Industry Update prepared by AFS. The Outstanding Internal Audit Recommendations register was also circulated out of session, further action on outstanding recommendations including the removal of stale or completed items was anticipated to have been prepared for the March meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee. This may, of course, now be delayed due to Bushfire Recovery requirements.

The low scoring item from the Audit and Risk Committee Performance Review by Councillors was clarified and explained as a misreading/misunderstanding of the question. The Committee was pleased to hear this.

CEO Reports

The CEO provides reports to each meeting, keeping the Committee apprised of what is happening in the Pyrenees Shire and particularly about matters of management and governance. At the November meeting the CEO provided information about:

- Road Funding – recent allocations and programs and reports on funding for country roads
- Renewable Energy Infrastructure – new wind farm proposals, revenue from existing wind farms, and details about the EES process for the Western Renewable link
- Beaufort Bypass - Update of progress, including Ministerial support for the Council's preferred alignment for the Bypass, noting that Regional Roads Victoria to be assigned as the Planning Authority for an Acquisition Overlay and that funding has not yet committed by Commonwealth or State Governments.
- Land Development – information on Council purchase of land for residential development in Beaufort and Avoca, and stimulation of development in Avoca in response to housing demand. Reasons for market failure of developers was also noted

Internal Audit Services

AFS & Associates Pty Ltd of Bendigo, is the Internal Audit Service provider and presented the *Cyber Security* report to the Committee for their consideration.

The objective of the report was to ensure that Council has identified and assessed cyber security threats, and has created appropriate mitigation and monitoring to reduce cyber security risk to an acceptable level.

The review found that the Council has a reasonable *Cyber Security Framework* for identifying and assessing cyber threats. A number of strengths were particularly the existence and use of Strategy documents and a suite of ICT cyber policies and procedures. Other strengths noted the capture and recording of cyber risk in the relevant Risk Registers, an ICT Team, an ICT Steering Committee, purchase of Cyber Insurance, regular backups that are duplicated in Beaufort and Avoca, email filtering, the installation of a Firewall and a secure server room with flood and fire protection. Staff and Councillor awareness of cyber threats was also mentioned as a strength. Assessment against the Australian Cyber Security Centre Essential Eight in May 2022, identifying gaps and opportunities to strengthen maturity of the organisation was also noted.

To further strengthen the Council's position against cyber threats the review made two moderate recommendations, one for the development of a plan to cover key person functions for the ICT Manager in periods of absence, and a recommendation to identify and engage a vendor to perform penetration testing over the ICT environment and to establish an action plan to address critical vulnerabilities.

Five minor recommendations were also made relating to Risk Register treatments, Essential Eight action plans, Cyber security training, ICT Security Incident Handling Procedure – testing, and Post-incident reviews.

Status of Internal Audit Program

A copy of the Strategic Internal Audit Program has been provided and accepted by Management and the Committee. The Cyber Security audit was the first to be completed for 2023-24, with Review of Past Recommendations and an audit of Purchasing Cards listed to follow. A scope for the audit of Purchasing Cards was offered for comment and it was suggested that the scope include an analysis of purchasing activity, particularly the volume of low transactions that may provide opportunities to improve procurement efficiencies.

The Internal Audit Program is viewed as dynamic and subject to review and amendment as the risk environment and priorities change.

Past Issues Review

The Past Issues is due for review in March 2024 with particular emphasis on aging items and their relevance and currency. This is supported by a comment made by the Auditor-General, Andrew Greaves at the VAGO Audit Committee Forum, in which he advised that any old or stale outstanding audit recommendations be reviewed to see if the situation or risk attached to them has changed, and if no longer relevant the recommendations could be removed.

Victorian Auditor General Office (VAGO) Audit - Annual Financial and Performance reports

In my Chair's report for October, I indicated that I had written to the Auditor General's Office about the Financial and Performance audits for 2022-23 having been conducted remotely with no visits to the Pyrenees Shire by the VAGO representative. In response I received a call from Travis Derricott, Sector Director Financial Audit, VAGO who advised that the tender for Financial and Performance Audits had not been let on an exclusively remote basis. He undertook to contact Ryan Schischka of MME Johnson to discuss this. I have not been advised of the outcome of the discussion.

VAGO External Performance Audits

Pyrenees Shire was not directly involved in any of the Performance Audits undertaken by VAGO in 2022-23, but as always monitor any published reports for recommendations that affect all Councils.

Annual Report

Once again the Annual Report is an excellent publication in an easy to read and understand format. Hard copies were mailed to Committee members, and it can be accessed on the PSC website. The Annual Report is published as a means to advise the Pyrenees Shire Community about Council's operations and performance during the financial year. It is also produced to demonstrate Council's ongoing commitment to transparent reporting and accountability to the community.

Budget and Financial Reports

In the financial report for the period 1 July to 30 September, the Manager Finance advised that there were no significant issues for income. Some variations related to timing issues were expected to be offset by grant income or subject to year-end adjustments or transfers. The Cash Flow Statement was affected by the lower collection rate of rate income, an item of some concern as it was \$573k less than predicted. Cost of living pressures seems

the most likely reason for non-payment. It is uncertain if the allowance of \$250k in the 2023-24 budget will be the final result. The Capital Works Program was shown as being behind schedule, but this is not unusual at such an early stage of the year. I anticipate that the recent Bushfire Disaster in the Pyrenees Shire will have an effect of further delaying the Capital Works Program.

Comprehensive Budget and Financial Reports continue to be prepared in a timely and professional manner. Explanations are given and additional information that is requested by Committee members is always provided.

Statutory reporting and publishing deadlines are met. As with the Annual Report the information that is presented to the community is easy to read and understand.

The reports and the responses to its questions have given the Committee confidence that the PSC is operating in a stable and sustainable manner.

Regular updates from Governance

The Committee receives a governance, risk and compliance report at each meeting these reports outlined and updated the activities of that section, in particular:

- staff changes,
- service reviews undertaken,
- insurance issues,
- COVID impacts, The
- risk management,
- business continuity,
- Policy and Procedures review and update
- FOI (an increase from 2 in 2021-22 to 8 in 2023, the additional requests being mostly from Council Watch)
- health, safety and wellbeing;
- Emergency Management; and
- Fraud and protected disclosures (nil reported).

The Committee is satisfied that these items are being managed appropriately.

While the Committee were comfortable that the staff turnover has settled back to its usual level, a question was raised about the impact that Working from Home is having on productivity and capacity. Further information is to be provided.

As mentioned in my October Chair's report, on behalf of the Committee, I wrote to both Council Watch and to the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner (OVIC) about the increasing volume of FOI requests coming from Council Watch and the impact that it was having on Council resources.

Council Watch replied in a rather aggressive manner, having identified a Wendy Honeyman on LinkedIn which was not me. The CEO responded but Council Watch persisted, maintaining that the privacy of a person who made a request had been breached and demanding an apology to that person. I did send an apology to that person for him having been brought into the conversation, he replied with a "Thank You" and advised that he was no longer on the Council Watch committee. No further correspondence on this matter has been received.

OVIC also responded to my email and following my suggestion contacted Kathy Bramwell, who was handling FOI requests for the Council. OVIC provided some advice and options for Pyrenees Shire Council.

Summary

I believe that the Audit and Risk Committee has undertaken its duties in a responsible and effective manner.

I would like to acknowledge the contributions of members of the Audit and Risk Committee and Council officers during my nine year tenure on the Audit and Risk Committee, especially during the period in which I have been the Chair.

Thanks, in particular to Jim Nolan, Kathy Bramwell and the Secretariat team.

And last but by no means least, I cannot imagine the devastation caused by the recent (and ongoing) Bushfire Disaster and offer my best wishes to the Pyrenees Shire and its community in making a full, but probably not quick recovery

Should you have any questions regarding this report, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0400 438 053

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy Honeyman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Wendy Honeyman
Audit and Risk Committee Chair
Cc Chief Executive Officer