



Ararat Rural City

# MINUTES

## COUNCIL MEETING

**Tuesday 18 May 2021**

Held in the Alexandra Oval Community Centre  
1 Waratah Avenue, Ararat  
(Livestreamed)

Commenced at 6.01pm

Council:

Cr Jo Armstrong (Mayor)

Cr Peter Beales

Cr Gwenda Allgood

Cr Rob Armstrong

Cr Henry Burridge

Cr Bob Sanders

Cr Bill Waterston

### **Our Vision**

Our communities, our opportunities

### **Our Mission Statement**

We will demonstrate leadership through social responsibility, openness and transparency by actively working with our community to achieve shared goals.

### **Our Values**

**Respect** - Respect for each other and the wider community.

**Excellence** - Striving for ongoing professionalism and organisational excellence.

**Passion** - Passion for our people, community and services.

A recording of this meeting is being made for the purpose of verifying the accuracy of the minutes of the Council Meeting.

The recording is being streamed live via Facebook, to improve transparency between council and the community and give more people the opportunity to view what decisions are being made. You do not require a Facebook account to watch the live broadcast, simply enter [www.facebook.com/araratruralcitycouncil](https://www.facebook.com/araratruralcitycouncil) into your address bar.

Recordings of Council Meetings (excluding closed sessions) are made available on Council's website.

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## SECTION 1 – PROCEDURAL MATTERS

### 1.1 LIVE STREAMING

Council is keen to engage with members of the community and live streams the formal Council Meetings to make them accessible. The stream is available to view on Council's Facebook page from 6pm and on Council's website following the Council Meeting.

### 1.2 TRADITIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT/OPENING PRAYER/COUNCILLORS PLEDGE

#### *Traditional acknowledgement- CR ALLGOOD*

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today, and pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging.

#### *Opening Prayer- CR BEALES*

Almighty God, we humbly ask you to help us, as elected Councillors of the Ararat Rural City Council. Guide our deliberations. Prosper what is your will for us, to your honour and glory and for the welfare and benefit of the people whom we serve in the Ararat Rural City.

#### *Councillors Pledge- CR SANDERS*

We will faithfully and impartially carry out and exercise the functions, powers, authorities and discretions invested in us under the *Local Government Act 2020* and any other Act to the best of my skill and judgement.

### 1.3 APOLOGIES

RECOMMENDATION (if required)

*That the apology of Cr be accepted*

MOVED CR BEALES

SECONDED CR BURRIDGE

That the apology of Cr Rob Armstrong be accepted.

CARRIED 4436/21

### 1.4 CONFIRMATION OF MINIUTES

RECOMMENDATION

*That the Minutes of the Council Meetings held on 20 April 2021 be confirmed.*



MOVED CR SANDERS  
SECONDED CR BURRIDGE

That the Minutes of the Council Meetings held on 20 April 2021 be confirmed.

CARRIED 4437/21

## 1.5 DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A Councillor who has a conflict of interest in a matter being considered at a *Council meeting* at which he or she:

- 1 is present must disclose that conflict of interest by explaining the nature of the conflict of interest to those present at the *Council meeting* immediately before the matter is considered; or
- 2 intends to be present must disclose that conflict of interest by providing to the *Chief Executive Officer* before the *Council meeting* commences a written notice:
  - (a) advising of the conflict of interest;
  - (b) explaining the nature of the conflict of interest; and
  - (c) detailing, if the nature of the conflict of interest involves a Councillor's relationship with or a gift from another person, the:
    - name of the other person;
    - nature of the relationship with that other person or the date of receipt, value and type of gift received from the other person; and
    - nature of that other person's interest in the matter,and then immediately before the matter is considered at the meeting announcing to those present that he or she has a conflict of interest and that a written notice has been given to the *Chief Executive Officer* under this sub-Rule.

The Councillor must, in either event, leave the *Council meeting* immediately after giving the explanation or making the announcement (as the case may be) and not return to the meeting until after the matter has been disposed of.

There were no Declaration of Conflict of Interests received.

## SECTION 2 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

### 2.1 PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

- 1 Unless *Council* determines to consider it as an item of urgent business, no motion (other than a motion to receive the same) may be made on any petition, joint letter, memorial or other like application until the next *Council meeting* after that at which it has been presented.
- 2 It is incumbent on every Councillor presenting a petition or joint letter to acquaint himself or herself with the contents of that petition or joint letter, and to ascertain that it does not contain language disrespectful to *Council*.
- 3 Every Councillor presenting a petition or joint letter to *Council* must:
  - write or otherwise record his or her name at the beginning of the petition or joint letter; and
  - confine himself or herself to a statement of the persons from whom it comes, the number of signatories to it, the material matters expressed in it and the text of the prayer or request.
- 4 Every petition or joint letter presented to *Council* must be in *writing* (other than pencil), typing or printing, contain the request of the petitioners or signatories and be signed by at least 12 people.
- 5 Every petition or joint letter must be signed by the persons whose names are appended to it by their names or marks, and, except in cases of incapacity or sickness, by no one else and the address of every petitioner or signatory must be clearly stated.
- 6 Any signature appearing on a page which does not bear the text of the whole of the petition or request may not be considered by *Council*.
- 7 Every page of a petition or joint letter must be a single page of paper and not be posted, stapled, pinned or otherwise affixed or attached to any piece of paper other than another page of the petition or joint letter.
- 8 If a petition, joint letter, memorial or other like application relates to an operational matter, *Council* must refer it to the *Chief Executive Officer* for consideration.

### 2.1.1 PETITION FROM HADLAND STREET RESIDENTS

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE  
REFERENCE: 1982

#### OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

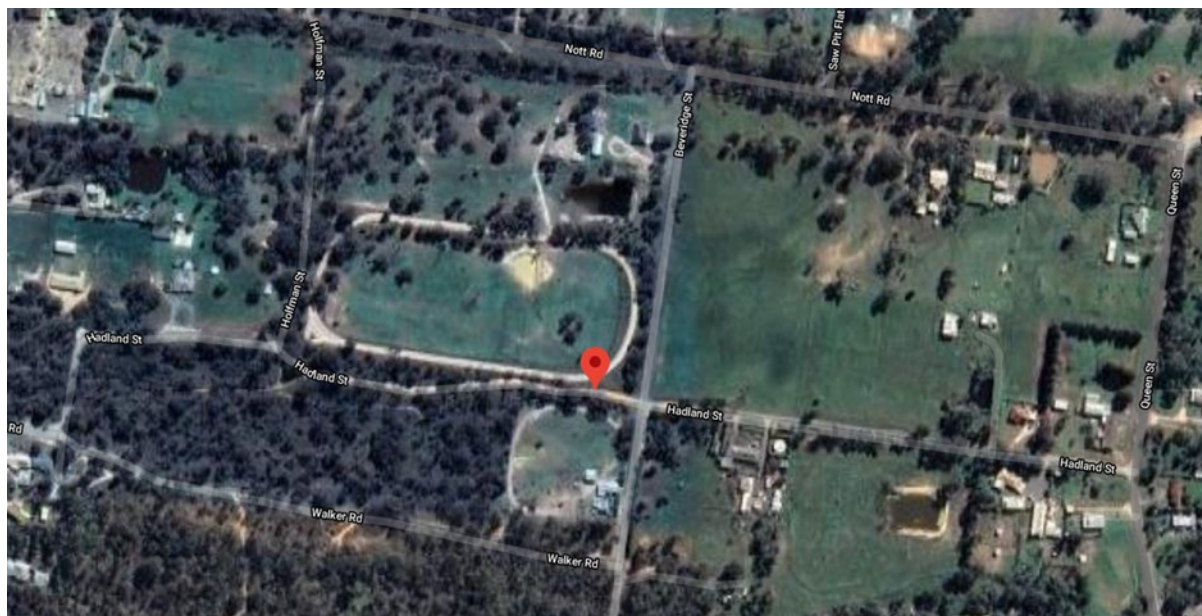
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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A petition regarding Hadland Street, Ararat was presented to the 20 April 2021 Council Meeting, where it was resolved that the petition lay on the table until being presented for consideration at the May 2021 Council Meeting.

Residents of Hadland Street submitted a petition to Council expressing concerns about the amount of dust coming from the road onto surrounding properties. There was an additional reference to courier trucks using the road as a shortcut between the Western Highway and parts of Ararat.

Council Officers have inspected the section of Hadland Street in question and found that the unsealed road surface is overall in sound condition.



#### DISCUSSION

Effective suppression of dust along Hadland Street would require Council to seal the section of road between Beveridge Street and Queen Street. One side of Hadland Street is zoned rural residential, the other residential

and there are currently five houses along the road. This form and density of development is not inconsistent with an unsealed road.

As the overall condition of Hadland Street is sound, there is no urgency in undertaking major works to seal the section of road. It is recommended that it not be considered as an element of the 2021/2022 Capital Works program.

There have been similar petitions received by Council in the last eighteen months. Council has a considerable unsealed urban road network, elements of which will no doubt be the subject of similar petitions and requests over the next few years. Council's draft Asset Management Plan 2021-2031 will require strategic planning for to seal key urban unsealed roads and laneways throughout Ararat Rural City Council. All existing unsealed roads and laneways within urban areas of the municipality will be evaluated as part of this process. It is expected that this will occur during the 2021/2022 financial year.

In reference to understanding the volume of heavier transport using Hadland Street, Council officers will undertake traffic counts at various points over the next three months to assess the transport usage mix.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### *Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives*

Council Plan 2017-2021

#### 3.2 Effective, efficient and safe transport networks

- 3.2.3 Maintain and develop roads, bridges and footpaths to agreed standards.

### *Budget Implications*

The budget for the current financial year does not make any provision for sealing Hadland street.

### *Policy/Relevant Law*

In accordance to section 92 Asset Plan, of the Local Government Act 2020:

- (1) Subject to subsection (6), a Council must develop, adopt and keep in force an Asset Plan in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices.
- (2) The scope of an Asset Plan is a period of at least the next 10 financial years.
- (3) An Asset Plan must include the following—
  - (a) information about maintenance, renewal, acquisition, expansion, upgrade, disposal and decommissioning in relation to each class of infrastructure asset under the control of the Council;
  - (b) any other matters prescribed by the regulations.

### *Sustainability Implications*

None identified

### *Risk Assessment*

In terms of risk to road users and the general public Hadland Street poses no greater risk than any other unsealed road within the urban areas of the municipality.

### *Innovation and Continuous Improvement*

Implementing the Council's Asset Plan 2021-2031, a 10-year strategy for unsealed urban roads will provide a strategic approach and provide some surety for residents of such streets.

### *Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement*

This report has been generated based on a petition from the residents of Hadland Street in Ararat, at this time no further consultation has occurred.

#### RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1 Council consider Hadland Street, Ararat as part of the review of key unsealed roads and laneways conducted as part of the Asset Management Plan 2021-2031 during the 2021/2022 financial year; and
- 2 Council officers undertake a study of transport mix using Hadland Street over the next three months.

#### MOVED CR BEALES

#### SECONDED CR WATERSTON

That:

- 1 Council consider Hadland Street, Ararat as part of the review of key unsealed roads and laneways conducted as part of the Asset Management Plan 2021-2031 during the 2021/2022 financial year; and
- 2 Council officers undertake a study of transport mix using Hadland Street over the next three months.

CARRIED 4438/21

#### ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments relating to this item.

## SECTION 3 – REPORTS REQUIRING COUNCIL DECISION

### 3.1 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE  
REFERENCE: 1983

#### OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The financial statements and performance indicators have been prepared for the period ended 31 March 2021.

Council's financial performance is in line with expectations and a revised budget is not required.

#### DISCUSSION

Council must establish and maintain a budgeting and reporting framework that is consistent with the principles of sound financial management.

#### Key Financial information: Income Statement (Attachment 1)

The Income Statement measures how well Council has performed from an operating nature. It reports revenues and expenditure from the activities and functions undertaken, with the net effect being a surplus or deficit. Capital expenditure is excluded from this statement, as it is reflected in the Balance Sheet.

Attachment 1 shows that Council generated \$27.955 million in revenue and \$19.353 million in expenses to 31 March 2021. This has resulted in an operating surplus of \$8.602 million for the nine months ended 31 March 2021.

##### *Income*

**Rates and charges** account for 56% of the total budgeted income for 2020/21. Rates and charges are recognised when the rates have been raised, not when the income has been received. An amount of \$17.549 million has been recognised as income for the nine months ended 31 March 2021.

**User fees** account for 5% of the total budgeted income for 2020/21 and \$0.633 million has been received to 31 March 2021. The majority of this relates to home care services, transfer station fees and fitness centre income. Income has been lower than budgeted due to several Council facilities being closed down and decreased service levels due to Covid-19, including the Town Hall, Ararat Fitness Centre, Gum San and the Alexandra Oval Community Centre.

**Other Income** totals \$0.163 million to 31 March 2021, which includes interest on investments and rent from Council properties. There is less interest on investments due to lower-than-expected interest rates.

**Recurrent Operating Grants** total \$3.267 million to 31 March 2021, including \$1.417 million from the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission for general purpose grants and \$0.862 million for the local roads grants.



**Non-recurrent Operating Grants** total \$1.817 million to 31 March 2021. Council has been successful in obtaining several grants that had not been budgeted for, including Working for Victoria funding of \$0.400 million and the Local Councils Outdoor Eating Entertainment Package of \$0.250 million.

**Non-recurrent Capital Grants** total \$2.809 million to 31 March 2021. Council has been successful in obtaining several grants that had not been budgeted for, including Local Roads and Community Infrastructure funding of \$0.731 million, funding of \$0.300 million for Helendoite and Tatyoon North Road reconstruction and widening, funding of \$0.351 million for the Willaura Recreation Reserve, and funding of \$0.300 million for the Ararat East Road Realignment.

**Note:**

It is important to note the following:

1. The Grants Operating (recurrent) figure in the Original Budget was \$7.392 million and in the Current Budget is recorded as \$4.234 million, as \$3.158 million was paid to Council in 2019/20 by the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission (VLGGC) for the 2020/21 financial year. Council has still received the expected VLGGC income, to be spent in 2020/21, however it will be reported over two financial years.
2. This change in the budget, plus the note reported under expenses, create a change in the reported surplus position from a projected surplus of \$4.661 million to a deficit of \$0.162 million for 2020/21. The year-to-date variance is a surplus of \$2.841 million when the actual year to date expenses are compared to the year to date budget.

**Expenses**

**Employee Costs** account for approximately 45% of the total budgeted expenditure for 2020/21. For the nine months ended 31 March 2021 Council has incurred \$8.987 million in employee costs, which includes \$0.600 million funded by the Working for Victoria program.

**Materials and Services** account for approximately 28% of the total budgeted expenditure for 2020/21. For the nine months ended 31 March 2021, Council has incurred \$4.973 million in materials and services costs. There are a number of projects, including those carried forward from 2019/20 that are expected to be completed before the end of the financial year.

**Note:**

It is important to note the following:

There has been an increase in expenditure on materials and services from \$7.620 million in the Original Budget to \$9.285 million in the Current Budget for 2020/21. This has resulted from a carry forward amount of \$1.665 million from the 2019/20 financial year surplus and unspent grant funds which will be used for additional activity in 2020/21.

**Balance Sheet (Attachment 2)**

The Balance Sheet is one of the main financial statements and reports Council's assets, liabilities and equity at a given date, in this case 31 March 2021. Comparative figures have been provided as at 30 June 2020.

Council's current assets have increased by \$2.789 million from \$22.320 million as at 30 June 2020 to \$25.109 million as at 31 March 2021. Cash and cash equivalents have decreased by \$0.818 million from \$19.533 million to \$18.715 million. Trade and other receivables have increased \$3.617 million from \$2.697 million as at 30 June 2020 to \$6.314 million as at 31 March 2021, which includes the Fire Services Levy.



These movements are expected because Council raises its rates & charges in the first quarter of the year and Council has now received the lump sum rates due 15 February 2021, as well as the instalments due 30 September 2020, 30 November 2020 and 28 February 2021.

Total liabilities have increased from \$8.651 million in 2019/20 to \$9.049 million in 2020/21, with a decrease of \$0.686 million in trade and other payables. The trust funds and deposits have increased by \$2.405 million from \$0.288 million in 2019/20 to \$2.693 million in 2020/21 which includes \$1.026 million in fire services levy paid to the State Revenue Office in early April 2021.

### Statement of Cash Flows (Attachment 3)

The Statement of Cash Flows shows how changes in the Statement of Financial Position and Income Statement affect Cash and Cash Equivalents, and breaks down the analysis to operating activities, investing activities and financing activities.

The Cash and Cash Equivalents at the beginning of the financial year of \$19.533 million have decreased by \$0.818 million to \$18.715 million as at 31 March 2021.

Net cash provided by operating activities was \$10.375 million and \$11.045 million was used in investing activities.

Investing activities includes payments for property, plant and equipment, and infrastructure totalling \$11.185 million. This included capital building works and capital road works.

### Financial Performance Indicators (Attachment 4)

The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework requires Councils to report various performance indicators at the end of each financial year.

A full list of financial performance indicators is included in Attachment 4.

Indicator	30/6/2020	30/9/2020	30/12/2020	31/3/2021
<b>Working capital</b> Measure - Current assets compared to current liabilities. Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework 100% to 400% Indicator of the broad objective that sufficient working capital is available to pay bills as and when they fall due. High or increasing level of working capital suggests an improvement in liquidity	396%	574%	572%	416%
<b>Loans and borrowings</b> Measure - Loans and borrowings compared to rates. Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – 0% to 70% Indicator of the broad objective that the level of interest-bearing loans and borrowings should be appropriate to the size and nature of a council's activities. Low or decreasing level of loans and borrowings suggests an improvement in the capacity to meet long term obligations	16.15%	16.44%	16.10%	15.78%
<b>Indebtedness</b> Measure - Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – 2% to 70% Indicator of the broad objective that the level of long-term liabilities should be appropriate to the size and nature of a	15.78%	17.22%	16.71%	16.30%

Council's activities. Low or decreasing level of long-term liabilities suggests an improvement in the capacity to meet long term obligations				
<b>Rates concentration</b> <i>Measure - Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – 30% to 80% Indicator of the broad objective that revenue should be generated from a range of sources. High or increasing range of revenue sources suggests an improvement in stability	61.85%	89.34%	76.87%	69.81%
<b>Expenditure level</b> <i>Measure - Expenses per property assessment</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework \$2,000 to \$10,000 Indicator of the broad objective that resources should be used efficiently in the delivery of services. Low or decreasing level of expenditure suggests an improvement in organisational efficiency	\$4,163	\$4,082	\$3,940	\$3,587
<b>Indicator - Revenue level</b> <i>Measure - Average residential rate per residential property assessment</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework - \$700 to \$2,000 Indicator of the broad objective that resources should be used efficiently in the delivery of services. Low or decreasing level of rates suggests an improvement in organisational efficiency	\$1,856	\$1,846	\$1,849	\$1,855
<b>Indicator – Percentage of total rates collected</b> The internal audit conducted in 2019 on Rates Revenue and Rate Debtor Management found no routine or regular reporting of large and long outstanding rates debtors. The outstanding Rates Debtors is reported in the Annual Financial report. As at 31 March 2021 the outstanding Rates Debtors totalled \$5.484 million (this figure includes FSL debtors) compared to \$1.700 million as at 30 June 2020, an increase of \$3.784 million. In percentage terms 45.90% of the rates raised have been collected at 31 March 2021 compared to 47.40% up to 31 March 2020. Council issues approximately 7,500 rate notices. This year there are 2,606 assessments paying by instalments compared with 2,799 assessments last year Outstanding rates are currently charged 10% interest.	90.9%	9.5%	20.0%	45.9%
<b>Indicator – Asset Renewal &amp; Upgrade</b> <i>Measure - Asset renewal &amp; Upgrade compared to depreciation</i> Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – 40% to 130% Assessment of whether council assets are being renewed or upgraded as planned. It compares the rate of spending on existing assets through renewing, restoring, replacing or upgrading existing assets with depreciation. Ratios higher than 1.0	124.52%	135.89%	183.04%	214.25%

indicate there is a lesser risk of insufficient spending on Council's asset base.				
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The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework provides "Expected ranges" for each indicator. The framework has been developed to consider results at the end of the financial year so some results during the year are outside the expected range due to the timing of receipts and payments.

Explanations are provided in Attachment 4 for those indicators that are outside the "expected ranges".

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### *Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives*

5. 1 – Good governance through leadership

### *Budget Implications*

Council's financial performance is in line with expectations. Council's cash position was expected to reduce in the first half of the year to pay for the outstanding accounts at year end and the increased capital works program, with the cash position increasing in the third quarter with many ratepayers electing to pay their rates in full due 15 February 2021 and the third instalment due 28 February 2021.

### *Policy/Relevant Law*

Section 97 – Quarterly Budget Report of the Local Government Act 2020 states:

- 1 As soon as practicable after the end of each quarter of the financial year, the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a quarterly budget report is presented to the Council at a Council meeting which is open to the public.
- 2 A quarterly budget report must include—
  - (a) a comparison of the actual and budgeted results to date; and
  - (b) an explanation of any material variations; and
  - (c) any other matters prescribed by the regulations.
- 3 In addition, the quarterly report of a financial year must include a statement by the Chief Executive Officer as to whether a revised budget is, or may be, required.

### *Sustainability Implications*

This report does not raise any sustainability implications.

### *Risk Assessment*

Council is required to establish and maintain a budgeting and reporting framework that is consistent with the principles of sound management and this report assists Council in meeting that requirement.

### *Innovation and Continuous Improvement*

The content of the Quarterly report is continually reviewed to ensure meaningful data is provided.

### *Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement*

Council's financial performance reports are published quarterly.

**RECOMMENDATION**

*That the Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Financial Performance Indicators for the period ended 31 March 2021 be received and adopted.*

**MOVED CR ALLGOOD  
SECONDED CR BURRIDGE**

**That the Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Financial Performance Indicators for the period ended 31 March 2021 be received and adopted.**

**CARRIED 4439/21**

**ATTACHMENTS**

Income statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Financial Performance Indicators provided as Attachment 3.1.

**Attachment 1**

**Comprehensive Income Statement for the nine months ended 31 March 2021**

	Original Budget	Current Budget	YTD Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Variance	Variance
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	
<b>Income</b>						
Rates and charges	17,702	17,702	17,531	17,549	18	0%
Statutory fees and fines	176	176	132	115	(17)	-13%
User fees	1,654	1,654	1,241	633	(608)	-49%
Contributions - cash capital	-	-	-	8	8	0%
Contributions - cash operating	93	93	89	87	(2)	-2%
Contributions - non-monetary assets	-	-	-	-	-	0%
Grants - Operating (recurrent)	7,392	4,234	3,176	3,267	92	3%
Grants - Operating (non-recurrent)	225	225	169	1,817	1,648	977%
Grants - Capital (recurrent)	3,461	3,461	2,596	1,461	(1,135)	-44%
Grants - Capital (non-recurrent)	625	625	469	2,809	2,340	499%
Net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, plant and equipment, infrastructure	48	48	36	46	10	28%
Other income	325	325	244	163	(81)	-33%
Fair value adjustments for investment property	-	-	-	-	-	0%
Share of net profits/(losses) of associates and joint ventures accounted for by the equity method	-	-	-	-	-	0%
<b>Total income</b>	<b>31,701</b>	<b>28,543</b>	<b>25,681</b>	<b>27,955</b>	<b>2,275</b>	
<b>Expenses</b>						
Employee costs	12,077	12,077	9,058	8,987	(71)	-1%
Materials and services	7,620	9,285	5,464	4,973	(491)	-9%
Bad and doubtful debts	-	-	-	-	-	0%
Depreciation and amortisation	6,888	6,888	5,166	5,166	-	0%
Borrowing costs	118	118	47	47	-	0%
Other expenses	337	337	185	180	(5)	-3%
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>27,040</b>	<b>28,705</b>	<b>19,920</b>	<b>19,353</b>	<b>(567)</b>	-3%
<b>Surplus for the year</b>	<b>4,661</b>	<b>(162)</b>	<b>5,761</b>	<b>8,602</b>	<b>2,841</b>	49%
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>						
Other	-	-	-	-	-	
<b>Total comprehensive result</b>	<b>4,661</b>	<b>(162)</b>	<b>5,761</b>	<b>8,602</b>	<b>2,841</b>	

**Attachment 2**

**Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2021**

	31/03/2021	30/06/2020
	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	18,715	19,533
Trade and other receivables	6,314	2,697
Financial assets	-	-
Inventories	80	76
Non-current assets classified as held for sale	-	-
Other assets	-	14
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>25,109</b>	<b>22,320</b>
<b>Non-current assets</b>		
Trade and other receivables	13	14
Investments in regional library corporation	-	-
Property, plant and equipment, infrastructure	230,728	224,517
Investment property	1,315	1,315
Intangible assets	-	-
<b>Total non-current assets</b>	<b>232,056</b>	<b>225,846</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>257,165</b>	<b>248,166</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Current liabilities</b>		
Trade and other payables	693	1,379
Trust funds and deposits	2,693	288
Unearned Income	-	1,219
Provisions	2,612	2,613
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings	34	135
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>6,032</b>	<b>5,634</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>		
Provisions	282	282
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings	2,735	2,735
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>	<b>3,017</b>	<b>3,017</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>9,049</b>	<b>8,651</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>248,116</b>	<b>239,515</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Accumulated surplus	84,575	75,974
Reserves	163,541	163,541
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>248,116</b>	<b>239,515</b>

**Attachment 3**

**Statement of Cash Flows for the nine months ended 31 March 2021**

	Nine months to 31/03/2021 Inflows/ (Outflows) \$'000	Forecast Year End to 30/06/2021 Inflows/ (Outflows) \$'000
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>		
Rates and charges	13,765	17,702
Statutory fees and fines	115	176
User fees	679	1,019
Grants - operating	4,666	4,759
Grants - capital	3,302	4,086
Contributions - monetary	105	113
Interest received	52	202
Dividends received	-	-
Trust funds and deposits taken	2,060	-
Other receipts	119	123
Net GST refund/payment	1,153	597
Employee costs	(8,915)	(12,077)
Materials and services	(6,543)	(9,567)
Trust funds and deposits repaid	-	-
Other payments	(183)	(337)
<b>Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities</b>	<b>10,375</b>	<b>6,796</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>		
Payments for property, plant and equipment, infrastructure	(11,185)	(17,111)
Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment, infrastructure	140	238
Proceeds from investments	-	-
<b>Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities</b>	<b>(11,045)</b>	<b>(16,873)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>		
Finance costs	(47)	(118)
Repayment of borrowings	(101)	(134)
New borrowings	-	-
<b>Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities</b>	<b>(148)</b>	<b>(252)</b>
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	(818)	(10,329)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	19,533	19,533
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period</b>	<b>18,715</b>	<b>9,204</b>

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Attachment 4

Financial Performance Indicators for the nine months ended 31 March 2021

Result

Material Variations

**LIQUIDITY**

**Dimension - Operating position**

**Indicator - Adjusted underlying result**

*Measure - Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit)*

[Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit) / Adjusted underlying revenue] x100

23.01%

**Outside** The adjusted underlying result of  
**Expected** 23.01% is high because the total  
**Range** amount of rates & charges has been  
recognised as income and the  
expenses are only for part of the  
financial year.

Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework

-20% to 20%

Indicator of the broad objective that an adjusted underlying surplus should be generated in the ordinary course of business. A surplus or increasing surplus suggests an improvement in the operating position

**Dimension - Liquidity**

**Indicator - Working capital**

*Measure - Current assets compared to current liabilities*

[Current assets / Current liabilities] x100

416%

**Outside** The working capital ratio of 416% is  
**Expected** high because:  
**Range** a) the total amount of rates &  
charges raised is included as a  
current asset  
b) the \$3.158 million advanced  
payment of the Victorian Grants  
Commission  
c) the \$2.735 million loan to fund  
the Alexandra Oval Community &  
Recreation Centre & Ararat Town  
Hall upgrade is recognised as a non-  
current liability.  
d) Council has a number of reserves  
with funds set aside for specific  
purposes.  
e) Unspent capital works at year end

Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework

100% to 400%

Indicator of the broad objective that sufficient working capital is available to pay bills as and when they fall due. High or increasing level of working capital suggests an improvement in liquidity

**Indicator - Unrestricted cash**

*Unrestricted cash compared to current liabilities*

[Unrestricted cash / Current liabilities] x100

137.52% No material variation

Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework

10% to 300%

Indicator of the broad objective that sufficient cash which is free of restrictions is available to pay bills as and when they fall due. High or increasing level of unrestricted cash suggests an improvement in liquidity

**OBLIGATIONS**

**Dimension - Obligations**



Financial Performance Indicators for the nine months ended 31 March 2021	Result	Material Variations
<b>Indicator - Loans and borrowings</b>		
<i>Measure - Loans and borrowings compared to rates</i>	15.78%	No material variation
[Interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x100		
Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework	0% to 70%	
Indicator of the broad objective that the level of interest bearing loans and borrowings should be appropriate to the size and nature of a council's activities. Low or decreasing level of loans and borrowings suggests an improvement in the capacity to meet long term obligations		
<i>Loans and borrowings repayments compared to rates</i>	1.12%	No material variation
[Interest and principal repayments on interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x100		
Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework	0% to 20%	
<b>Indicator - Indebtedness</b>		
<i>Measure - Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue</i>	16.30%	No material variation
[Non-current liabilities / Own source revenue] x100		
Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework	2% to 70%	
Indicator of the broad objective that the level of long term liabilities should be appropriate to the size and nature of a Council's activities. Low or decreasing level of long term liabilities suggests an improvement in the capacity to meet long term obligations		
<b>Indicator - Asset renewal (&amp; Asset Upgrade included now also)</b>		
<i>Measure - Asset renewal &amp; Upgrade compared to depreciation</i>	214.25%	
[Asset renewal expenses / Asset depreciation] x100		
	<b>Outside</b>	The asset renewal & upgrade
	<b>permissible</b>	indicator is favourably outside the
	<b>Range</b>	expected range with \$8.904 million
		renewal and \$2.164 million invested
		in assets to 31 March 2021.
Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework	40% to 130%	
Indicator of the broad objective that assets should be renewed as planned. High or increasing level of planned asset renewal being met suggests an improvement in the capacity to meet long term obligations		

## STABILITY

### Dimension - Stability

#### Indicator - Rates concentration

<i>Measure - Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue</i>	69.81%	
[Rate revenue / Adjusted underlying revenue] x100		No material variation
Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework	30% to 80%	
Indicator of the broad objective that revenue should be generated from a range of sources. High or increasing range of revenue sources suggests an improvement in stability		

#### Indicator - Rates effort

<i>Measure - Rates compared to property values</i>	0.53%	No material variation
[Rate revenue / Capital improved value of rateable properties in the municipality] x100		
Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework	0.15 to 0.75%	

**Financial Performance Indicators for the nine months ended 31 March 2021** **Result** **Material Variations**

Indicator of the broad objective that the rating level should be set based on the community's capacity to pay. Low or decreasing level of rates suggests an improvement in the rating burden

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**EFFICIENCY**

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**Dimension - Efficiency**

**Indicator - Expenditure level**

*Measure - Expenses per property assessment*

\$3,586.88 No material variation

[Total expenses / Number of property assessments]

Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework \$2000 to \$5,000

Indicator of the broad objective that resources should be used efficiently in the delivery of services. Low or decreasing level of expenditure suggests an improvement in organisational efficiency

**Indicator - Revenue level**

*Measure - Average residential rate per residential property assessment*

\$1,854.93 No material variation

[Residential rate revenue / Number of residential property assessments]

Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework \$700 to \$2,000

Indicator of the broad objective that resources should be used efficiently in the delivery of services. Low or decreasing level of rates suggests an improvement in organisational efficiency

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### 3.2 POLICY REVIEW – COUNCILLOR GIFTS POLICY

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COORDINATOR  
DEPARTMENT: CEO's OFFICE  
REFERENCE: 2259

#### OFFICER CONFLICT OF INTERESTS:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council policies are updated as part of an ongoing policy and procedure review process.

The Councillor Gifts Policy was last reviewed on 23 February 2021, the policy has recently been updated to reflect some additions required to the policy and is presented to Council for consideration:

#### DISCUSSION

The Councillor Gifts Policy has undergone a further review since being adopted in February 2021.

The main additions to the Councillor Gifts Policy are as follows:

<b>Addition of new section "Records of gifts in Personal Interests Returns:</b>
---

Councillors must lodge an initial and biannual interests returns, which contain matters prescribed in the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020.
---

A personal interests return must include the details of any gift received by the specified person, the value of which equals or exceeds \$500 or the threshold amount fixed by the Secretary, including gifts in the form of goods or services and multiple gifts that together equal or exceed that amount, which was received at any time since the specified person lodged the preceding initial or biannual personal interests return.
--

A summary of the personal interests returns are made available on Council's website."
---

<b>Under the heading "Declaration of Gifts", include wording:</b>
---

The following details are required at a minimum when declaring a gift:
--

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name and signature of Councillor</li><li>• Received from</li><li>• Date received, offered or declined</li><li>• Relationship to gift provider</li><li>• Description of gift</li><li>• Value of gift (estimated if unknown)</li></ul> |
|--|

The reference to \$20 in the document has been increased to \$50.
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<b>Under "Terms/Definitions":</b>
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Add Personal Interests Returns sections 132-136 of the Local Government Act 2020.

**Under "References":**

Include – Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020

**Under "Related Documents"**

Include – Public Transparency Policy

The changes to the policy have been highlighted in the attached document.

The Councillor Gifts Policy will be updated on the Council website following adoption.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### *Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives*

5.1 Good governance through leadership

### *Budget Implications*

There are no budget implications relating to the adoption of these policies.

### *Policy/Relevant Law*

The following sections of the Local Government Act 2020:

Section 3 – Definitions – *Gift*

Section 3 – Definitions – *Gift disclosure threshold*

Section 127 – General Conflict of Interest

Section 128 – Material Conflict of Interest

Section 128(3)h and (4) – Disclosable Gifts

Sections 132-136 – Personal Interests Returns

Section 137 – Anonymous Gift Not to be Accepted,

Section 309 – Certain Gifts Not to be Accepted.

### *Risk Assessment*

Clarity and transparency of Council Policies.

### *Innovation and Continuous Improvement*

The regular review and adoption of Council's policies will ensure that Council continues to work in accordance with its established procedures, and within legislative requirements.

### *Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement*

The Chief Executive Officer presented the Councillor Gifts Policy to the Councillor briefing held on 11 May 2021.

## RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopt the Councillor Gifts Policy.

MOVED CR BEALES  
SECONDED CR SANDERS

That Council adopt the Councillor Gifts Policy.

CARRIED /21

**ATTACHMENTS**

Councillor Gifts Policy is provided as Attachment 3.2.



Ararat Rural City

# Councillor Gifts Policy

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

Category Type: Policy  
Type: Council  
Responsible Officer: Governance and Administration Coordinator

Last Review Date: 23 February 2021  
Date Approved: 18 May 23 February 2021  
Next Review Date: February 2025

Revision No: 87

Stakeholder Engagement:  
Councillors  
Chief Executive Officer  
Governance and Administration Coordinator

## Councillor Gifts Policy



### INTENT

This Policy is to ensure that all Councillors exercise care and discretion when being offered gifts, gratuities and favours in kind to ensure that there is no actual or perceived conflict of interest.

### POLICY

This policy is founded on the requirement for transparency and seeks to minimise improper practices and maintain the Council's good reputation.

Councillors should at all times be aware of the Local Government Act 2020 provisions regarding gifts especially in relation to conflict of interests and election donations. Councillors will take action as required by this policy.

Accordingly, the actions of Councillors must be consistent with those principles.

The following general principles apply:

#### Gift Disclosure Threshold

Councillors are prohibited from accepting gifts that equal or exceed the gift threshold unless they know the name and address of the person making the gift.

#### Anonymous Gifts

Section 137 of the Local Government Act 2020 - Anonymous gift not to be accepted

1. Subject to subsection (2), a Councillor must not accept, directly or indirectly, a gift for the benefit of the Councillor the amount or value of which is equal to or exceeds the gift disclosure threshold unless—
  - (a) the name and address of the person making the gift are known to the Councillor; or
  - (b) at the time when the gift is made—
    - (i) the Councillor is given the name and address of the person making the gift; and
    - (ii) the Councillor reasonably believes that the name and address so given are the true name and address of the person making the gift.

Penalty: 60 penalty units.

- (2) If the name and address of the person making the gift are not known to the Councillor for whose benefit the gift is intended, the Councillor is not in breach of subsection (1) if the Councillor disposes of the gift to the Council within 30 days of the gift being received.
- (3) In addition to the penalty specified in subsection (1), a Councillor who is found guilty of a breach of that subsection must pay to the Council the amount or value of the gift accepted in contravention of that subsection.

If for any reason a Councillor finds themselves in possession of a gift when they don't know the name and address of the person who gave the gift, the Councillor can give the gift to the Council within 30 days to avoid committing an offence

#### Gifts must never be sought

Councillors must not solicit, demand or request gifts or any personal benefit for themselves or another person by virtue of their position.

#### No Sense of Obligation

No gift may be accepted that could influence, or be perceived to influence, a Councillor in the performance of their public or professional duties.

#### Prohibited Gifts

Monetary gifts of any value must not be accepted. This includes cash, gift cards and vouchers.



## Councillor Gifts Policy



### Token Gifts

Gifts of a token values (less than \$520) may be accepted by Councillors, provided that the Councillor advises the Mayor of the gift.

The following should be used as a guide in determining whether to accept token gifts. Such gifts may be accepted only when the following has been considered:

- Such a gift is offered in an open or public forum and refusal would be obviously discourteous
- Acceptance would not cause any potential perceived or actual compromise or conflict of interest
- The gift does not have a significant monetary value
- The gift is not offered on a regular basis.

There is no requirement to record token gifts in the Gift Register, unless the cumulative value of a gift from the same provider exceeds \$520.

### Official Gifts

From time to time individuals or organisations may offer gifts of goodwill to the Council organisation. The Chief Executive Officer will ensure that any such official gift is recorded in the Council Gifts Register.

Councillors may be involved in conferences or social, cultural, community, industry events where official gifts are presented or exchanged. Where it would appear to be impolite or inappropriate to decline the offer, it is reasonable for official representatives of Council to accept official gifts on behalf of Council. Unless otherwise determined as set out below, such gifts shall be considered to be the property of Council and may be displayed in an appropriate and secure location for public viewing.

In some circumstances, including where the item may not be suitable for public display or the gift is of a personal nature to the recipient, the Chief Executive Officer will use their discretion as to the appropriate use of the official gift.

A record will be made in the Council's Gift Register in the event that the gift is used for purposes other than Council purposes.

### Significant Occasion Gifts

A Councillor may accept a significant occasion gift on behalf of Ararat Rural City Council.

A significant occasion gift to the Mayor must not exceed \$500. A significant occasion gift to a Councillor must not exceed \$250.

All significant occasion gifts must be declared and the details recorded in the Council Gifts Register.

### Gifts of Appreciation

Demonstrating appreciation for services received from Council should not involve the presentation of a gift or benefit. Acceptable alternatives may include a letter of thanks or a thank you card as these are considered less likely to result in a situation that may compromise or be perceived to compromise either party.

If such a gift is offered in an open or public forum and refusal would be obviously discourteous or acceptance would cause any potential perceived or actual compromise or conflict of interest, the gift may be accepted but is to be surrendered to the Chief Executive Officer for a decision as to the appropriate disposal.

Multiple gifts from the same person/organisation are considered inappropriate and should not be accepted.



## Councillor Gifts Policy



All gifts of appreciation, whether accepted or declined, are to be recorded in the Council Gifts Register.

### Hospitality

Councillors, in an official capacity, will from time to time receive invitations of hospitality to attend various functions and events.

Where hospitality is only modest in nature and provides an opportunity to network or undertake business of a common purpose, it may be appropriate to accept such invitations.

Incidental refreshments at meetings, working lunches, or similar, are not considered to be a gift and need not be recorded unless they occur at a frequency that may give rise to the perception of a conflict of interest under the Local Government Act 2020.

In some circumstances a Councillor may attend the event if the Council either fully reimburses the organisation for the full cost of the hospitality or if the Councillor personally pays for their own attendance.

If acceptance of the hospitality is likely to create the impression that an attempt is being made to compromise the impartiality of the Councillor, or could be perceived as a conflict of interest, the offer of hospitality should be politely declined.

Offers of hospitality, whether accepted or declined, must be recorded in the Council Gifts Register.

### Awards and Prizes Won at Conferences/ Seminars

Prizes or awards valued at over \$520 that are won at functions attended at Council's expense, must immediately become the property of Council. The Supreme Court has ruled that such prizes or awards are owned by the person/organisation providing 'consideration' for the attendance.

Councillors attending functions as Council representatives, and who make no financial contribution to the attendance, lose entitlement to any award or prize won as a result of attending the function;

- Circumstances in which a person may be entitled to keep a prize or award over \$520 are where personal payment has been made for the attendance, or the person pays for a raffle ticket that wins a prize. In each case the recipient has provided consideration for the prize/award and may lay legal claim to its title; and
- From an ethics point-of-view, recipients of such prizes could potentially be seen as being influenced by the sponsor of the prize. Prizes and awards valued at over \$520 must therefore be reported as soon as possible to the Chief Executive Officer, who must determine the ownership of the item and the appropriate action to be taken, as per this policy.

### Benefits

A Councillor must not knowingly accept travel or hospitality (including meals and accommodation) sponsored wholly or partly by any person, organisation or business, where such acceptance implies an obligation on the recipient.

However, reasonable hospitality may be accepted in circumstances where it is:

- approved by the Mayor on the advice of the Chief Executive Officer;
- provided at a function or event where the person is acting in an official capacity on behalf of Council;
- provided at rates that are openly available to people other than Councillors; or
- of value less than \$520 and by reason of its triviality could not be construed as creating an obligation.

## Councillor Gifts Policy



### Remote or Insignificant Interest

If the acceptance of a gift, benefit or hospitality relates to an interest that is remote or insignificant in accordance with s128 of the Local Government Act 2020, the Councillor will not be considered to have a conflict of interest.

### Campaign Donation Returns

Division 10 of the Local Government Act 2020 outlines the requirements in relation to Campaign Donation Returns.

- Section 309 - Certain gifts not to be accepted

It is unlawful for a Candidate or a person acting on behalf of a \ Candidate to receive during the donation period a gift made to or for the benefit of the Candidate, being a gift the amount or value of which is equal to or exceeds the gift disclosure threshold unless:

- a) the name and address of the person making the gift are known to the person receiving the gift; or
- b) at the time when the gift is made
  - i. the person making the gift gives to the person receiving the gift the person's name and address; and
  - ii. the person receiving the gift has no grounds to believe that the name and address so given are not the true name and address of the person making the gift.

### Conflict of Interest

Gifts must not be accepted which give the appearance of a conflict of interest. A conflict of interest means a general conflict of interest within the meaning of section 127 of the Local Government Act and a material conflict of interest within the meaning of section 128 of the LGA.

A general conflict of interest is where an impartial, fair-minded person would consider that a person's private interests could result in that person acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty.

A material conflict of interest is where an affected person would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter. The benefit may arise or the loss incurred either directly or indirectly and in a pecuniary or non-pecuniary form. A relevant person means a person who is a Councillor, member of a delegated committee or a member of Council staff.

### Records of gifts in Personal Interests Returns

Councillors must lodge an initial and biannual interests returns, which contain matters prescribed in the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020.

A personal interests return must include the details of any gift received by the specified person, the value of which equals or exceeds \$500 or the threshold amount fixed by the Secretary, including gifts in the form of goods or services and multiple gifts that together equal or exceed that amount, which was received at any time since the specified person lodged the preceding initial or biannual personal interests return.

A summary of the personal interests returns are made available on Council's website.

### PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

#### Declaration of Gifts

Any gift, benefit, award or prize over \$520 must be declared and the details recorded on the Council's Gift Register which is administered by the Governance Unit. It is the individual's responsibility to complete the appropriate form and forward it to the Governance Unit.

The following details are required at a minimum when declaring a gift:

## Councillor Gifts Policy



- Name and signature of Councillor
- Received from
- Date received, offered or declined
- Relationship to gift provider
- Description of gift
- Value of gift (estimated if unknown)

Surrendered gifts immediately become 'public property' and will be disposed of in accordance with the 'Disposal of Gifts' process as set out below.

A gift declined must also be disclosed. Disclosure that the gift has been declined and returned protects the Councillor and highlights any systematic patterns. Gifts declined in the presence of the gift giver do not need to be disclosed.

### The **GIFT** Test

The Victorian Public Sector Commission's GIFT test is a good example of what to think about when deciding whether to accept or decline a gift, benefit or hospitality.

<b>G</b>	<b>Giver</b>	<p><b>Who is providing the gift, benefit or hospitality and what is their relationship to me?</b></p> <p>Does my role require me to select contractors, award grants, regulate industries or determine government policies? Could the person or organisation benefit from a decision I make?</p>
<b>I</b>	<b>Influence</b>	<p><b>Are they seeking to gain an advantage or influence my decisions or actions?</b></p> <p>Has the gift, benefit or hospitality been offered to me publicly or privately? Is it a courtesy, a token of appreciation or valuable non-token offer? Does its timing coincide with a decision I am about to make?</p>
<b>F</b>	<b>Favour</b>	<p><b>Are they seeking a favour in return for the gift, benefit or hospitality?</b></p> <p>Has the gift, benefit or hospitality been offered honestly? Has the person or organisation made several offers over the last 12 months? Would accepting it create an obligation to return a favour?</p>



## Councillor Gifts Policy



<b>T</b>	<b>Trust</b>	<p>Would accepting the gift, benefit or hospitality diminish public trust?</p> <p>How would the public view acceptance of this gift, benefit or hospitality? What would my colleagues, family, friends or associates think?</p>
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GIFT	VALUE	ACTION
Any Gift, Benefit, Award or Prize	Under \$520	Nil
Any Gift, Benefit, Award or Prize	\$520 - \$1050	Declare and Retain
Any Gift, Benefit, Award or Prize	Over \$1050	Declare and Surrender
Cash or Gift Card	Any Value	Decline and Declare

### Disposal of Gifts

The Chief Executive Officer may dispose of gifts by any of the following methods:

- Return to the original recipient;
- Return to sender;
- Disposal by resolution of Council;
- Transfer to other public agencies or authorities;
- Transfer as a gift to a recognised charitable, aid or non-profit organisation;
- Archival action by the Victorian Museum or State Library;
- Reduction to scrap; or
- Destruction.

If a gift does not have a public value or is not of particular significance regarding its historical, cultural or protocol value, or was given to a Councillor by virtue of the discharge of that person's duties, the recipient may, at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer, buy the gift from Council. The purchase price must be the manufacturer's wholesale value of the gift in the place of origin at the time of purchase as determined by the Chief Executive Officer, less \$50. If there is difficulty in assessing the value, a valuation must be obtained by Council from an appropriately experienced person or body.

### Policy Breaches

As per the Councillor Code of Conduct, Councillors committed to the following:

- We commit to compliance with our statutory obligations in relation to gifts and hospitality. We also undertake to comply with Council's policy to disclose all gifts, gratuities and favours in kind offered and/or accepted in my capacity as a Councillor, in accordance with the Council's Gifts, Gratuities and Favours in Kind Policy.
- In addition, we commit to notify the Chief Executive Officer if in the conduct of our duties, we receive an inappropriate offer of a gift or hospitality of any kind.

Councillors also committed to ensure their behaviours do not bring discredit to Council and committed to not intentionally misuse their position to gain or attempt to gain directly or indirectly, an advantage for themselves or for any other person.

Councillors must take all reasonable steps to ensure that their immediate family members (parents, spouse, children and siblings) do not receive gifts or benefits that give rise to the appearance of being an attempt to gain favourable treatment.

## Councillor Gifts Policy



Where a gift is received on behalf of the Council, the gift becomes the property of the Council. For transparency and accountability purposes, these gifts will be recorded in the Council's Gift Register.

Gifts equal to or above the gift disclosure threshold received in the twelve months prior to election from a person or body that has a direct interest in a matter may give rise to an interest because of receipt of an applicable gift.

Campaign donations must be disclosed in the campaign donation return.

Councillors must not seek or accept any immediate or future reward or benefit in return for performance of any duty or work for the Council.

Any breaches of this Policy in the case of a Councillor will be to the provisions of the Local Government Act 2020.

## Councillor Gifts Policy



### TERMS/DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
Benefit	Something which is believed to be of value to the receiver, such as a service i.e. access to a sporting event, preferential treatment, access to confidential information, accommodation, personal services, pleasure or holidays.
Bribe	-A bribe is an offer of money or other inducement made with the intention to corruptly influence a Councillor, officer or contractor in the performance of their duties. Bribery or attempted bribery of a public official is a criminal offence.
Conflict of Interest (LGA 2020 s126-131)	<p>The Local Government Act 2020 requires Councillors to declare General or Material Conflicts of Interest.</p> <p>A conflict of interest is a conflict between a Councillor's public duty to act in the best interest of the Council and their private interests (financial or non-financial). A conflict exists whether it is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Real</b> – it currently exists</li> <li>• <b>Potential</b> – it may arise, given the circumstances</li> <li>• <b>Perceived</b> – members of the public could reasonably form the view that a conflict exists, or could arise, that may improperly influence the person's performance of their duty to the Council, now or in the future.</li> </ul>
Gift (LGA 2020 s3(1))	<p>Section 3 of the Local Government Act 2020 defines a gift as meaning any disposition of property otherwise than by will made by a person to another person without consideration in money or money's worth or with inadequate consideration, including</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the provision of a service (other than volunteer labour); and</li> <li>b) the payment of an amount in respect of a guarantee; and</li> <li>c) the making of a payment or contribution at a fundraising function.</li> </ol>
Gift Disclosure Threshold (LGA 2020 s3(1))	Means \$500 or a higher amount or value prescribed by the regulations and notwithstanding the limits specified in this policy
Gift Disclosure (LGA 2020 s128 (3)(h) and (4))	<p>Section A Disclosable Gift means one or more gifts with a total value of, or more than \$500 that was received from a person in the 5 years preceding the decision on the matter:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) if the relevant person held the office of Councillor, was a member of Council staff or was a member of a delegated committee at the time the gift was received; or</li> <li>(b) if the gift was, or gifts were, or will be, required to be disclosed as an election campaign donation—</li> </ol> <p>but does not include the value of any reasonable hospitality received by the relevant person at an event or function that the relevant person attended in an official capacity as a Councillor, member of Council staff or member of a delegated committee.</p> <p>To accord with the LGA on public transparency, The Ararat Rural City Council policy is that ALL gifts, or offers whether accepted or not, are disclosable.</p>



## Councillor Gifts Policy



Hospitality	Where a meal or service is offered which has more than nominal value and is not viewed as being connected to official Council business or part of the accepted meal at a conference or seminar.
Official Gift	A gift received by Councillors as representatives of the City or Council. These gifts may be received from a Sister City, organisations or corporations that are bestowing a corporate gift (e.g. plaques, plates, vases, trophies, art work) or souvenir to the City, or as a token of appreciation for a contribution to a conference or industry event.
<a href="#">Personal Interests Returns LGA 2020 s132-136</a>	<a href="#">Councillors must lodge an initial and biannual personal interests returns with the Chief Executive Officer, which contain matters prescribed in the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020.</a>
Prohibited Gift	Monetary gifts of any value including: cash, credit, gift cards, vouchers
Significant Occasion Gift	A gift, which may be given by Council to the Mayor or a Councillor as a gesture of goodwill for official or ceremonial purposes.
Token Gift	Is of such a nature and minimal value (under \$520) that it could not reasonably be regarded as capable of influencing any actions or decisions of the relevant person in relation to the matter. The token gift does not create a sense of obligation in the receiver that will influence, or appear to influence, the exercise of their official duties. In the event that a gift might reasonably be perceived to influence, or appear to influence, the recipient, it cannot be defined as a token gift.

### ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, a change to the name of a Federal or State department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be by resolution of Council.

### REFERENCES

- [Local Government Act 2020.](#)
- [Local Government \(Governance and Integrity\) Regulations 2020](#)
- IBAC Local Government Integrity Framework Review (March 2019)
- Victorian Public Sector Commission – 'GIFT' test
- Gift Register
- Gifts Register Form
- Personal Interest Return

### RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Councillor Code of Conduct
- [Fraud and Corruption Policy](#)
- [Public Transparency Policy](#)

### APPENDICES

Nil.

### 3.3 VICTORIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION'S REPORT ON THE 2020 ARARAT RURAL CITY COUNCIL GENERAL ELECTION

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S DEPARTMENT  
REFERENCE: 2085

#### OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

---

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is presented to Council to receive the Victorian Electoral Commission's report on the 2020 Ararat Rural City Council general election.

#### DISCUSSION

Regulation 83(1) of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020 (the Regulations) states that the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) must prepare a report to the Chief Executive Officer on the conduct of the election within the period of 6 months after election day.

Further, regulation 93(3) states that the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that the report from the VEC on the 2020 Ararat Rural City Council general election is submitted to the Council at the earliest practicable meeting of the Council held after the report is received.

The VEC provided Council with a copy of the report on 19 April 2021, below is a snapshot of some items of interest from the report.

#### 2020 Ararat Rural City Council general election

The 2020 Ararat Rural City Council general election was carried out in October 2020 by postal vote, with election day being 24 October 2020. Results were declared by the VEC on 4 November 2020 at the Gum San Great Hall.

#### COVID-19 requirements

The Gum San Great Hall was chosen as the venue for Council's general election as it allowed the required space needed to meet the COVID safe election plan requirements. These requirements included meeting health, safety, social distancing and hygiene obligations for voters, election staff, Councils, candidates and all other stakeholders. The election office was open to the public by appointment only.

#### Candidates

Nominations for the election opened at 9am on Thursday 17 September 2020 and closed at 12 noon on Tuesday 22 September 2020. At the close of nominations 12 candidates had nominated for election to Council.

#### Voting and Ballot papers

- No requests for redirection of ballot papers were received.
- No early vote requests were received by the VEC.
- 8,955 ballot packs were mailed out between 6 October 2020 and 8 October 2020.



- 169 ballot packs were returned to the election office, most due to the addressee not residing at the address.
- No unenrolled votes were issued.
- 192 replacement ballot packs were issued during the voting period.
- 6,605 returned ballot papers received by close of business 6pm on 23 October 2020.
- 1,100 ballot papers envelopes accepted during the extended postal vote receipt period.
- 7,705 ballot papers in total returned.
- 184 returned ballot paper envelopes set aside.
- A total of 7,521 ballot paper envelopes were admitted to the extraction process.

### **Election participation**

Overall the participation rate in the Ararat Rural City Council election was 85.68%, which was higher than the State average of 85.68% (excluding Melbourne City Council) and higher than the 80.53% rate for the 2016 Ararat Rural City Council general election.

The overall informal voting rate recorded at the 2020 general election was 4.10%, compared with the State average of 4.76% and the 2016 Ararat Rural City Council general election rate of 5.77%.

### **Complaints**

The VEC received two written complaints in relation to the election of Ararat Rural City Council. One was in relation to the administration of the election and the other was in relation to the conduct of a participant in the election.

The VEC's 2020 report on the Ararat Rural City Council general election is included as an attachment to this report.

## **KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

### ***Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives***

5.1 Good governance through leadership

### ***Budget Implications***

There are no budget implications in relation to this report.

### ***Policy/Relevant Law***

Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020:

83(1) - The VEC must prepare a report to the Chief Executive Officer on the conduct of the election within the period of 6 months after election day; and

83(3) - The Chief Executive Officer must ensure that the report is submitted to the Council at the earliest practicable meeting of the Council held after the report is received by the Chief Executive Officer.

### ***Sustainability Implications***

This report does not raise any sustainability implications.

### ***Risk Assessment***

This report is presented as a requirement of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020.

### ***Innovation and Continuous Improvement***

In January 2021 Council provided feedback to the VEC in relation to the 2020 Local Government Elections. This feedback will assist the VEC for future local government election projects.

***Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement***

The VEC has provided regular progress reports throughout the duration of the general election process.

The Chief Executive Officer and staff have provided assistance to VEC officers during the election process.

The Chief Executive Officer presented the Victorian Electoral Commission's Report on the 2020 Ararat Rural City Council General Election to the Councillor briefing held on Tuesday 10 May 2021.

**RECOMMENDATION**

*That the Victorian Electoral Commission's Report on the 2020 Ararat Rural City Council General Election be received.*

**MOVED CR BEALES  
SECONDED CR BURRIDGE**

**That the Victorian Electoral Commission's Report on the 2020 Ararat Rural City Council General Election be received.**

**CARRIED 4440/21**

**ATTACHMENTS**

1 VEC's Report on the 2020 Ararat Rural City Council General Election provided as Attachment 3.3.



# 2020 Local government elections

## Ararat Rural City Council

### Election Report





© **State of Victoria**  
(Victorian Electoral Commission)  
April 2021

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## Acknowledgement of Country

The Victorian Electoral Commission pays respect to Victoria's traditional owners and their elders past and present who have been custodians of this country for many thousands of years. Their living culture and their role in the life of Victoria is acknowledged by the VEC.

## Letter of Transmittal

19 April 2021

Dr Tim Harrison  
Chief Executive Officer  
Ararat Rural City Council  
PO Box 246  
ARARAT VIC 3377

Dear Dr Harrison

Pursuant to Regulation 83 of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020, I submit this report to the Chief Executive Officer of Ararat Rural City Council on the general election held in October 2020.

Yours sincerely



**Warwick Gately AM**  
Electoral Commissioner

Ararat Rural City Council

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## Ararat Rural City Council

# Introduction

The Victorian local government general elections are held every four years as defined by the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) (**LG Act**). In 2020, general elections were held for 76 of the 79 Victorian councils<sup>1</sup> with Saturday 24 October marking election day. In accordance with section 263(1) of the LG Act, the Victorian Electoral Commission (**VEC**) is the statutory election service provider for the conduct of local government elections in Victoria.

This report provides information on the 2020 Ararat Rural City Council general election including details of the end-to-end service delivery of electoral activities throughout the election timeline. This report also provides details of post-election items including compulsory voting enforcement.

## About the Victorian Electoral Commission

The VEC is an independent statutory authority established under the *Electoral Act 2002* (Vic) (**the Electoral Act**). The VEC's principal functions are to conduct State elections, local government elections, certain statutory elections and polls, commercial and community elections, and to support electoral representation processes for local councils and the Electoral Boundaries Commission for State electoral boundaries. The VEC is also responsible for maintaining the Victorian register of electors and administering political funding and donation disclosure laws. The VEC has a mandated role to conduct electoral research, provide communication and education services, and inform and engage Victorians in the democratic process.

Warwick Gately AM is the appointed Electoral Commissioner and Liz Williams is the appointed Deputy Electoral Commissioner. The Electoral Commissioner and Deputy Electoral Commissioner report to the Victorian Parliament in relation to the VEC's operations and activities.

The Electoral Commissioner heads the VEC's Executive Management Group that comprises the Deputy Electoral Commissioner, the Executive Director, Corporate Services and seven Directors, each leading the main functional areas of the VEC. Each Director acts as subject matter expert within their legislative responsibilities under the LG Act and the Electoral Act.

The VEC has a dedicated local government election program which is managed by Katrina Collins and incorporates a range of programs, projects and activities that are supported through strategic planning, project management, and process mapping. The program is overseen by the VEC's Planning Group and has sponsorship from the Executive Management Group.

<sup>1</sup> The South Gippsland Shire Council was placed into administration in mid-2019. The Council's general election has been postponed until October 2021. Casey City Council and Whittlesea City Council were placed into

administration in early 2020. The Councils' general elections have been postponed until October 2024.



Ararat Rural City Council

## Key changes

### Changes in legislation

The new LG Act received royal assent on 24 March 2020 and introduced a number of changes, some requiring immediate implementation and others to be implemented progressively. Those requiring immediate implementation had a significant impact on the 2020 local government election program.

Following the LG Act completing its passage through Parliament, the VEC implemented the necessary changes to the 2020 local government election program in response to the reforms as they applied to the elections.

#### The key changes from the LG Act are as follows:

Local government electoral structures	<p>The default electoral structure for all local councils is single-councillor wards, although some regional and rural local councils may be unsubdivided or divided into wards with equal numbers of councillors in each ward.</p> <p>The VEC is no longer responsible for conducting electoral representation reviews of all local councils in Victoria.</p> <p>An independent Local Government Electoral Representation Advisory Panel will review council electoral structures. The panel includes the Electoral Commissioner and other members appointed by the Minister for Local Government.</p>
Voting system	<p>The voting system (attendance or postal) is set by the Minister for Local Government.</p> <p>All local council elections are conducted according to the same voting system.</p>
Enrolment and voters' rolls	<p>Non-resident property owners need to apply to be enrolled (this change will be implemented in stages leading up to the 2024 local government elections).</p> <p>Amendments to the voters' roll are completed by the VEC only (excluding Melbourne City Council).</p>
Candidate qualifications	<p>It is compulsory for local government candidates to complete mandatory training prior to nominating for local government elections.</p>
Nominations/candidate statements	<p>When nominating, candidates are required to declare they have completed the mandatory Local Government Candidate Training.</p> <p>The maximum number of words for a candidate statement was increased to 300 (350 for the Melbourne City Council Leadership Team and Councillor Groups).</p>
Election staff	<p>The term 'Election Manager' replaced 'Returning Officer' making the term consistent with the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i>.</p>
Extraordinary vacancies	<p>The VEC will fix the timeline for local council by-elections (previously fixed by the Minister).</p> <p>Changes to the countback process which now draws on a broader pool of ballot papers to determine the successful candidate at a countback.</p>
Compulsory voting	<p>From the 2024 local government general elections onwards, it will be compulsory for everyone enrolled on a voters' roll to vote.</p>

## Ararat Rural City Council

The LG Act made other changes to the local government electoral landscape, including:

- operational and technical provisions for electoral matters are now prescribed in the Regulations rather than being contained in the LG Act.
- disputed election results are now heard by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

On 8 May 2020, the Minister determined<sup>2</sup> that all of the 2020 general elections would be held by postal voting. As such, the VEC adjusted preparations in response to the Minister's determination.

In addition, new Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020 (**the Regulations**) came into operation on 13 July 2020.

### Response to public health crisis: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic, a State of Emergency was declared in Victoria on 16 March 2020. While the VEC was well advanced in planning for the elections, some uncertainty arose due to speculation that the elections could be rescheduled.

Following the Local Government Minister's confirmation on 15 May 2020 that the 2020 local government elections would proceed, the VEC's operating model was adjusted to deliver a compliant election while meeting health, safety, social distancing and hygiene obligations to voters, election staff, councils, candidates and all other stakeholders.

On Wednesday 1 September 2020, the Governor in Council made amendments to the regulations to allow certain provisions to be varied in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the amendments allowed the VEC to determine an appropriate method for eligible candidates to lodge their nomination form and pay their nomination fee electronically; and to allow the Election Manager to determine the maximum number of scrutineers that may be present for any activity at any one time. The amended regulations commenced the day after

they were made and remain in place until 26 April 2021.

On 29 September 2020, the Governor in Council made further changes to the Regulations to provide greater clarity of mitigation options for any disruptions to the voting timeline, including delays across the postal network that could threaten the integrity of the elections. The changes allowed the Electoral Commissioner to alter the last day of voting and/or the extended postal vote receipt deadline if necessary, to maintain and protect election integrity.

The VEC developed a COVIDSafe Election Plan<sup>3</sup> in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services which complemented the VEC's Service Plan. The COVIDSafe Election Plan outlined the VEC's actions and strategies to deliver safe and compliant local government elections.

The plan considered all electoral operations and activities and included changes such as (but not limited to):

- acquiring larger election office spaces to accommodate social distancing practices
- moving operations from face-to-face to online (when legislation permitted), for example:
  - the VEC's briefing meetings with individual councils
  - the candidate information sessions
- modifying the timeline for ballot paper extraction and counting activities
- modifying scrutineer practices.

The VEC acknowledges the collaboration and contributions of council officers in navigating the changes required to the program due to COVID-19.

<sup>2</sup> The Minister published this decision in the Government Gazette on 18 May 2020

<sup>3</sup> 'VEC COVIDSafe election plan' – <https://www.vec.vic.gov.au/about-us/publications/local-council-election-reports-and-plans>

Ararat Rural City Council

## Election dates

**The key timelines that applied to the 2020 local government elections were as follows.**

Deadline fixed by the VEC for council primary enrolment data	Monday 13 July 2020
Close of roll	4 pm Friday 28 August 2020
Opening of the election office to the public	Wednesday 16 September 2020
Certification of the voters' roll and opening of nominations	Thursday 17 September 2020
Close of nominations	12 noon Tuesday 22 September 2020
*Ballot draw	From 1 pm on Tuesday 22 September 2020
*Deadline for lodging candidate statements, photographs and questionnaires	12 noon Wednesday 23 September 2020
*General mail out of ballot packs to voters	Tuesday 6 October to Thursday 8 October 2020
*Close of voting	6 pm Friday 23 October 2020
Day prescribed as Election Day	Saturday 24 October 2020
*Close of extended postal vote receipt period	12 noon Friday 30 October 2020
Declaration of election results	No later than Friday 13 November 2020

\*Dates with asterisks relate to contested elections only.

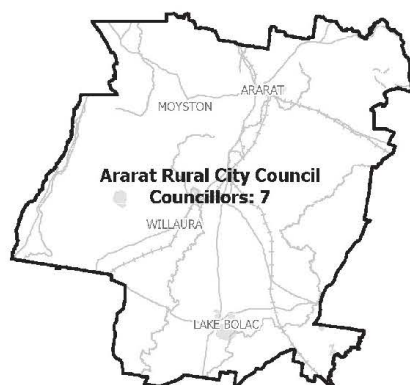
## Ararat Rural City Council

### About Ararat Rural City Council

Ararat Rural City Council is comprised of seven councillors elected from an unsubdivided structure.

The electoral structure was last reviewed in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989* through an electoral representation review in 2019.

Subsequent to the review, in April 2020 the structure of Ararat Rural City Council was determined by the Minister to remain as unsubdivided in accordance with the new LG Act.



**Figure 1:** The electoral structure of Ararat Rural City Council at the general election held on 24 October 2020.

### Voters' roll

The VEC prepared the voters' roll for the election under section 8(2)(c) of the Electoral Act and in accordance with section 249 of the LG Act. The close of roll for the election was 4 pm on Friday 28 August 2020. Pursuant to section 249(4) of the LG Act, the VEC certified the voters' roll on Thursday 17 September 2020.

At certification, the voters' roll for the 2020 Ararat Rural City Council general election included 8,955 enrolled voters.

### Composition of the voters' roll

The LG Act specifies that the voters' roll for a local government election is formed by combining two separate lists of voters.

1. The Electoral Commissioner's list (EC list) – List of State electors that are enrolled within that local government area.
2. The Chief Executive Officer's list (CEO list) – List of council-entitled voters.

Refer to **Appendix 1** for a breakdown of the Ararat Rural City Council general election voters' roll.

### Amendments to the voters' roll

In accordance with section 250 of the LG Act, the VEC is able to amend any error or omission in the preparation, printing or copying of the voters' roll, or correct any misnomer or inaccurate description of any person, place or thing on the voters' roll. Following the passage of the LG Act, amendments to the voters' roll are to be certified by the VEC. All voters added to the roll were issued with a ballot pack. Where a voter was deleted from the roll after the mail-out of ballot material, the VEC had systems in place to ensure that returned ballot papers from the deleted voters could be identified and excluded from the extraction and count. Where roll amendments were required, the total number of voters on the roll was updated.

Following the close of roll, no amendments were required to the Ararat Rural City Council voters' roll.

### Advertising and communication campaign

#### State-wide advertising

The VEC delivered a state-wide advertising campaign to maximise public awareness and participation amongst all eligible voters. Campaign activities and consistent messaging were delivered across two phases – enrolment and voting – and through multiple traditional and emerging mediums, including radio, digital and social media, and offline/outdoor advertising.



## Ararat Rural City Council

### Statutory advertising

The VEC published a series of statutory notices throughout the election as required by the LG Act. The notices included critical information relevant to each milestone of the election timeline.

For the 2020 statutory notices, Ararat Rural City Council nominated the following newspaper for the statutory notices to appear in:

- Ararat Advocate

In 2020, the VEC established a new policy position for statutory advertising in alignment with the updated definition of 'publish' in the LG Act. The policy position included the following:

- all statutory and non-statutory election advertising would be published on the VEC website, and
- where available, all statutory and non-statutory election advertising would be published in local newspapers and/or other selected newspapers identified following consultation with the council.

Refer to **Appendix 2** for further information in relation to the statutory advertising.

### VEC website

The VEC provided council specific information regarding the election on its website under the '2020 local council election' page. The VEC website went live for the local government elections in early August 2020. Whilst some council specific data remained static during the election, the website was regularly updated with content relevant to the election and at each key milestone such as close of roll, nominations, voting and results.

### Media liaison

An online media webinar was held on Friday 21 August 2020. The webinar could be downloaded or accessed later for those who were unable to participate live. The media briefing summarised the planning and timeline for the 2020 local government elections, and also provided a specific update in relation to the availability of election results in light of COVID-19.

Media outlets were provided with a media information booklet that outlined the election

timeline and key messages, and provided the VEC's head office media contacts. The VEC's communication team supported each Election Manager as the primary media spokesperson in relation to each election.

The VEC's media liaison program principally featured staged media releases aimed to highlight key milestones during the election timeline, and capitalise on existing general news coverage. More information on the VEC's media release schedule is available at **Appendix 3**.

### Social media campaign

As part of its state-wide advertising campaign, the VEC used paid promotions on social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat and WeChat, targeting voters through audience segmentation.

This advertising was supported by a defined timeline of organic social media posts on the VEC's channels, designed to cover each of the key messages of the communication campaign to further extend the reach to the community and promote conversation about the democratic process.

### VEC VoterAlert advisories

Electors on the State enrolment register are able to sign up to the VEC's free SMS or email alert service VoterAlert, to receive reminder messages pertinent to elections that affect them. They can subscribe to receive SMS messages only, email only, or both SMS and email.

During the general election, the VEC used its VoterAlert service to send the following direct messages to those State-enrolled voters on the roll for the election.

The messages were rolled out in the following schedule:

Wednesday 19 August to Wednesday 26 August 2020 – 5,008 VoterAlert messages were sent by SMS and email reminding voters to enrol or update their details by the close of roll.

Friday 9 October to Friday 13 October 2020 – 5,117 VoterAlert messages were sent by SMS and email advising that the VEC had commenced posting ballot packs.

Monday 19 October 2020 – 5,099 VoterAlert messages were sent by SMS and email reminding

## Ararat Rural City Council

voters that it was the last week to post their ballot material back to the VEC.

In mid-October, the VEC commenced sending its final VoterAlert – a reminder to post ballot packs by the voting deadline. Whilst approximately 900,000 of the 1.8 million voters scheduled to receive an alert were contacted it was identified that an unanticipated high volume of calls was received by both the VEC and councils as a result of the alert. Therefore, the VEC suspended the VoterAlert messages scheduled for the remaining 900,000 voters.

More information on the VEC's VoterAlert advisories is available at **Appendix 4**.

### Voter engagement

The VEC delivered an extensive voter engagement program. The program sessions were implemented throughout Victoria and were specific to local demographics. Please refer to **Appendix 5** to view the full list of initiatives for the 2020 local government elections. Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the VEC's programs traditionally offered through face-to-face education and engagement were redesigned to comply with health, safety, social distancing and hygiene obligations.

### Blind and low vision services

Braille and large print ballot material was available to blind and low vision voters who had registered for these products by 5 pm on Tuesday 15 September 2020.

The VEC received and processed one request for large print ballot material for Ararat Rural City Council.

The Election Manager did not receive any requests for braille ballot material for the election.

### Interpreting services

The VEC engaged the Victorian Interpreting and Language Services' Language Link to provide a telephone interpreting service for telephone enquiries from voters who had a first language other than English. The VEC advertised direct lines for 20 languages other than English and a general line for all other languages.

### Telephone enquiry service

A local telephone enquiry service was provided at the election office from Wednesday 16 September 2020 until the close of voting, for enquiries regarding the election.

The local telephone enquiry service was supplemented by an overflow call centre at the VEC's head office. The overflow call centre received calls made directly to the VEC's head office line (131 VEC, 131 832 or +61 3 8620 1100 for callers outside of Australia) and diverted calls from the election office when the election office lines were at capacity. Additionally, email enquiries were received and processed through [info@vec.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@vec.vic.gov.au).

The types of calls that are typical during an election relate to:

- voting entitlements and compulsory voting obligations
- enrolment questions
- ballot pack had not been received
- ballot material was spoilt or destroyed, so replacement ballot material was required
- a voter advising that they were overseas or interstate
- queries regarding the content of the ballot pack.

A breakdown of the daily number of calls received by the telephone enquiry service and the overflow call centre in respect to the election is available at **Appendix 6**.

## Election Manager

The VEC maintains a pool of trained senior election officials located across the state to fill election management roles for State and local government elections. Election-specific training is provided to senior election officials prior to each election management appointment.

The size of the election management team appointed for the conduct of an election is based on the size of the council. As required under the LG Act an Election Manager is appointed to conduct the election and is supported by one or more Assistant Election Managers for larger

## Ararat Rural City Council

councils, or a senior election official for smaller councils.

In accordance with section 3 of the LG Act, the Electoral Commissioner appointed Colin Nicholson as the Election Manager for the 2020 Ararat Rural City Council general election.

Based on the size of the Ararat Rural City Council election, an Assistant Election Manager was not appointed, however the Election Manager was supported by a senior election official.

## Election office

The Election Manager was responsible for the establishment and management of the election office located at Gum San Great Hall, 31-33 Lambert Street, Ararat. The election office premises were provided by council.

In accordance with the VEC's COVIDSafe election plan, the election office was open to the public by appointment only. The election office was available for appointments from Wednesday 16 September until Friday 23 October 2020 between 9 am and 5 pm. Opening hours were extended on Thursday 22 October (9 am to 8 pm) and Friday 23 October (9 am to 6 pm) to allow for final enquiries and the hand-delivery of ballots prior to the close of voting. Enquiries regarding the election were also managed by phone.

## Candidates

Nominations for the election opened at 9 am on Thursday 17 September and closed at 12 noon on Tuesday 22 September 2020. Candidates were required to lodge their nomination forms in person at the election office. A \$250 nomination fee applied.

On Wednesday 9 September 2020, the Electoral Commissioner published a determination<sup>4</sup> establishing a framework for prospective candidates who were prevented from attending the election office due to health directions regarding COVID-19 under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*. The determination outlined provisions for electronic lodgement of the

nomination form and nomination fee for affected candidates.

## Candidate information

The VEC developed a suite of resources that were accessible to prospective candidates prior to the nomination period. From early September, candidates were able to access the VEC's information about the process of nominating and becoming a candidate for the election. The VEC's online *Candidate Helper*, accessible via the VEC website, went live on Thursday 3 September 2020. The *Candidate Helper* enabled candidates to pre-complete their nomination form and other forms online before lodging them with the Election Manager.

For the 2020 elections, the VEC's candidate information session was recorded and available for online streaming from the VEC website. The session was complemented by three state-wide interactive seminars consisting of a panel from the VEC's leadership and executive teams.

## Nominations

At the close of nominations, 12 candidates had nominated for election to council.

The ballot draw to determine the order in which the names would appear on the ballot paper was held at the election office following the close of nominations using the VEC's computerised ballot draw application. See **Appendix 7** for the list of candidates in ballot draw order.

## Candidate statements and photos

In accordance with Regulation 39 of the Regulations, candidates were able to lodge a 300 word statement and submit a recent photograph for inclusion in the ballot packs sent to voters. The deadline for the submission of candidate statements and photographs was 12 noon on Wednesday 23 September 2020.

See **Appendix 7.1** for a breakdown of submitted statements and photos, and **7.2** for the sample website version product.

<sup>4</sup> VEC 2020 Determination No.1 - Nominations from candidates impacted by COVID-19 Public Health Directions in respect to local government elections -

<https://www.vec.vic.gov.au/about-us/legislation/determinations>



## Ararat Rural City Council

### Candidate questionnaires

In accordance with Regulation 43 of the Regulations, candidates were able to complete and lodge their answers to a set of prescribed questions in addition to a statement and photograph. The Election Manager accepted questionnaire submissions lodged by 11 of the 12 candidates at the election.

The completed questionnaires were accessible to voters on the VEC website or by contacting the election office.

## Voting

### Redirection of ballot packs

The Regulations provide that a voter may – no later than the day the roll is certified (or a later date if specified by the Election Manager under Regulation 22(2)(f) of the Regulations) – make a request in writing to the Election Manager to have their postal ballot envelope redirected to another address. For the 2020 elections voters had until Thursday 17 September to submit requests for redirection.

The Election Manager did not receive any requests for redirection of ballot packs for the election.

### Early votes

A voter may request an early postal ballot envelope (early vote) prior to the general mail out of ballot packs. The Election Manager processes the request and issues the early vote if the request is assessed as reasonable. Requests for early votes could be processed from Wednesday 23 September 2020, the day after nominations closed, until the commencement of the general mail out of ballot packs on Tuesday 6 October 2020. Due to the timing of early votes, some early voters may not have had access to the candidate statements, photographs or questionnaires.

Due to the impact that COVID-19 restrictions had on election services for the 2020 elections, requests for early votes were managed by appointment.

The Election Manager did not receive any early vote requests for the election.

### Mail-out of ballot packs

The VEC mailed 8,955 ballot packs between Tuesday 6 October and Thursday 8 October 2020. See **Appendix 8** for a breakdown of the packs mailed out on each day during the general mail-out, noting that ballot packs were not mailed to any voters that had passed away between the close of the roll and generation of the mail-out file.

In accordance with Regulation 49(3) of the Regulations, no more than 35% of ballot packs were mailed or delivered to voters on any one day during the mail out period. All ballot packs were lodged with Australia Post under the priority paid delivery timetable.

The VEC liaised closely with Australia Post during the mail out period to confirm that ballot packs had been delivered to voters. The VEC received confirmation that all ballot packs had been delivered to delivery addresses by Wednesday 14 October 2020.

During the voting period, 169 ballot packs were returned to the election office by Australia Post as return-to-sender mail. Most of this mail was due to the addressee not residing at the address.

### Election office counter services

In order to safeguard the health and wellbeing of voters and VEC personnel in the COVID-19 environment, the VEC did not provide an over-the-counter replacement or unenrolled vote service at election offices in the Metropolitan Melbourne region (including Mitchell Shire Council) for the elections. Similar restrictions were initially imposed on election offices in Regional Victoria and were relaxed in the final weeks of voting. Voters were advised to request replacement or unenrolled ballot material by phone, which was sent to them by post.

### Unenrolled votes

Unenrolled votes are issued to people whose name cannot be found on the voters' roll but who claim they are entitled to vote at the election. The unenrolled ballot pack includes a declaration that is signed by the applicant and assessed by the Election Manager prior to either admitting or disallowing the vote.

The Election Manager did not issue any unenrolled votes for the election.

## Ararat Rural City Council

### Replacement ballot packs

Following the general mail-out of ballot packs, a voter who claimed that their ballot pack had not been received, or had been lost, spoilt or destroyed, could apply to the Election Manager for a replacement ballot pack. Requests for replacement ballot packs within metropolitan councils were processed and fulfilled at the election office then lodged at the local postal facility. In order to assist in the mail turnaround time for regional councils, the VEC established a centralised postal vote issuing service at head office. Replacement vote requests were processed at the election office and fulfilled and lodged with Australia Post from the VEC in Melbourne.

The Election Manager issued 192 replacement ballot packs during the voting period. Please refer to **Schedule 1** for further information on replacement ballot packs issued.

### Return of ballot paper envelopes

Voters were provided with a priority reply-paid envelope for the return of their ballot paper envelope containing their completed ballot paper. The return mail was delivered to the election office from local postal facilities or mail distribution centres. Voters who chose to hand-deliver their vote to the election office were able to do so by placing their ballot paper envelope containing their completed ballot paper into ballot boxes located at the election office. The ballot boxes allowed voters to drop off their ballot envelopes without interaction with staff, therefore remaining compliant with a COVIDSafe election<sup>5</sup>.

As ballot paper envelopes were returned, they were progressively checked by the election management team to ensure they had been signed by the voter. Additionally, processes were in place to ensure that only one returned ballot from any one voter could proceed to the extraction and count.

The Election Manager received a total of 6,605 returned ballot paper envelopes by the close of voting at 6 pm on Friday 23 October 2020.

The Regulations provide that the Election Manager can accept returned ballot paper envelopes up until 12 noon on the Friday following the close of voting, if satisfied that the ballot

paper envelope was completed by the voter prior to the close of voting. The Election Manager accepted 1,100 ballot paper envelopes during the extended postal vote receipt period.

The total returned ballot paper envelopes for Ararat Rural City Council was 7,705.

The Election Manager set aside 184 returned ballot paper envelopes that were not admitted to the extraction and counting process due to the voter not having signed the declaration envelope or, in the case of unenrolled declaration votes, an entitlement was not found for the person, or the declaration envelope was not returned with the vote.

Refer to **Schedule 1** for the total certified record of ballot papers and declaration envelopes for Ararat Rural City Council.

## Results

### Extraction

A total of 7,521 ballot paper envelopes were admitted to the extraction process.

The extraction of ballot papers occurred at the election office commencing on Monday 26 October. The extraction of all admitted ballot paper envelopes was completed on Monday 2 November, following the close of the extended postal vote receipt period.

The extraction process involved separating the declaration flaps containing voters' details from each admitted ballot paper envelope, and then extracting the ballot papers from the envelopes. This two-stage process maintains anonymity and ensures the number of envelopes is tracked for ongoing reconciliation.

Any returned ballot paper envelopes found not to contain a ballot paper, or that contained more than one ballot paper, were required to be rejected and could not be counted. There were 17 returned ballot paper envelopes rejected during the extraction activity.

<sup>5</sup> VEC COVIDSafe election plan<sup>5</sup> - <https://www.vec.vic.gov.au/about-us/publications/local-council-election-reports-and-plans>

## Ararat Rural City Council

Following the extraction of ballot papers from the ballot paper envelopes, a total of 7,504 ballot papers proceeded to the count.

### Computer count

Following the extraction of ballot papers admitted to the count for Ararat Rural City Council, preferences on ballot papers were data entered into the VEC's computer counting application at the Election Office. The application distributes preferences using the proportional representation method once data entry of ballot paper preferences is complete. The computer count information session explaining the process was recorded and available for online streaming from the VEC website from Monday 19 October. Results were calculated at the election office on Wednesday 4 November.

The provisional results were published to the VEC website as they became available. Results were updated as finalised<sup>6</sup> once declarations had taken place.

For a breakdown of the first preference results, refer to **Appendix 9**.

### Recounts

At any time before a candidate is declared as elected, a recount may be initiated by the Election Manager or requested in writing by a candidate stating the reasons for their request. Such requests are assessed by the Election Manager supported by the VEC and either accepted or declined.

The Election Manager did not receive any requests for a recount following the count for Ararat Rural City Council.

### Declaration of results

The declaration of results was scheduled later than at previous elections, due to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on extraction and counting timelines. As per the Service Plan, the latest date for all results declarations to have been completed was Friday 13 November 2020.

The results of the 2020 Ararat Rural City Council general election were declared at 11 am on

Wednesday 4 November 2020 at the election office, 31-33 Lambert Street, Ararat.

The VEC website was updated following the declaration to reflect the elected candidates from the election.

## Election statistics

### Participation

Participation is measured by the number of marks on the roll as a percentage of the total enrolment and can vary from turnout. The overall participation rate in the Ararat Rural City Council election was 85.68%, which is higher than the State average of 84.12% (excluding Melbourne City Council) and higher than the 80.53% rate at the 2016 Ararat Rural City Council general election.

Analysis of voter participation for the different enrolment categories shows that participation is higher for voters who are enrolled on the EC's List (87.45%) compared to voters enrolled on the CEO's List (66.40%).

Refer to **Appendix 10** for further information on participation, including a breakdown by enrolment category.

### Turnout

Voter turnout is measured by the number of formal and informal ballot papers counted in the election as a percentage of voters on the voters' roll for the election.

The overall voter turnout for the 2020 Ararat Rural City Council general election was 83.80%. This is compared to the State average turnout of 81.47% (excluding Melbourne City Council). The voter turnout at the 2016 general election for council was 78.97%.

### Informality

The overall informal voting rate recorded at the 2020 Ararat Rural City Council general election was 4.10%, compared with the State average of 4.76%. An informality rate of 5.77% was recorded

<sup>6</sup> A preference distribution report can be found at [2020 council election results | Victorian Electoral Commission \(vec.vic.gov.au\)](https://2020.council.election.results.vic.gov.au/).



## Ararat Rural City Council

at the Ararat Rural City Council general election held in October 2016.

## Complaints

### Type of complaints

At local government elections, complaints generally fall into two broad categories:

#### 1. The conduct of participants in the election.

Complaints about the conduct of candidates and other participants in the election, at times alleging a breach of the LG Act or local laws.

#### 2. The administration of the election.

Complaints about the conduct of the election and services to voters.

The majority of complaints at the 2020 local government elections related to category one, often where the complainant alleged inappropriate or illegal action by another person or group associated with the election.

### Complaints process

The VEC operates a streamlined complaints process during elections, developed in consultation with local councils and enforcement agencies. The process requires complaints to be lodged in writing, and they are then processed through the VEC's head office. For the 2020 local government elections, customers were able to provide feedback and complaints through an online submission form on the VEC's website.

Each complaint is evaluated, and an appropriate course of action is determined. Complaints alleging a breach of the LG Act, for example, are forwarded to the Local Government Inspectorate (LGI). Complaints relating to local laws are referred to council. Complaints about the VEC's services or the behaviour or actions of VEC staff and election officials are the responsibility of the VEC. In these cases, the VEC investigates the matter and determines the most appropriate response. The VEC committed to responding to each complaint within five working days, however due to the unanticipated high volume of complaints received this extended in some instances.

### Complaints received

The VEC received two written complaints in relation to the election of Ararat Rural City Council. Of these complaints, one was in relation to the administration of the election, and one related to the conduct of a participant in the election.

## Post-election activities

### Storage of election material

All records from the election will be kept by the VEC safely and secretly in accordance with Regulation 79 of the Regulations.

### Refund of nomination fees

Nomination fees were refunded to eligible candidates on Thursday 10 December 2020. Eligible candidates included elected candidates or those who received at least 4% of the first preference vote. Any forfeited nomination fees were remitted to Council on 10 December 2020.

### Courts and tribunals

The Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) is responsible for hearing disputes on the validity of an election under section 311 of the LG Act.

Applications for a review of the declaration of the results of an election must be lodged within 14 days of the election and can be made by a candidate in the election, 10 persons who were entitled to vote at the election, or the VEC.

There were no applications to the VCAT disputing the result of the Ararat Rural City Council general election.

## Non-voter follow up

In accordance with section 267 of the LG Act, the VEC has commenced its compulsory voting enforcement program. Any person who was required to vote at the election and failed to vote will be issued with an Apparent Failure to Vote Notice. Apparent non-voters have 28 days in which to respond.

#### Ararat Rural City Council

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People who do not respond to that notice, or do not provide a satisfactory response to the notice, may be issued with an Infringement Notice that will incur a penalty. Further follow-up by way of a Penalty Reminder Notice may also take place – this stage includes the original penalty and a Penalty Reminder Notice fee. Penalties collected on behalf of council will be reimbursed at the end of the Infringement and Penalty Reminder Notice stages.

Additionally, during the Infringement and Penalty Reminder Notice stages, non-voters may request for their matter to proceed directly to the Magistrates' Court.

Any such requests will be actioned at the conclusion of the Infringement and Penalty Reminder Notice stages. The VEC will lodge the file of any remaining non-voters with Fines Victoria at the conclusion of the Penalty Reminder Notice stage.

## Evaluating the VEC's services

The VEC is committed to providing high quality election services to its local government clients. Through the VEC's formal feedback and debriefing program, the VEC is able to gauge its performance and seek advice for future local government election projects.

### Feedback from councils

The VEC invited feedback from councils on its services in December 2020 and acknowledges the receipt of feedback provided by Ararat Rural City Council. Additional feedback can be provided to the Program Manager for Local Government elections by emailing [LGProgram2020@vec.vic.gov.au](mailto:LGProgram2020@vec.vic.gov.au).

### Internal debriefing program

After every electoral event, the VEC conducts an internal debriefing program which includes input from all areas across the VEC's workforce. Internal debriefing following the local government elections commenced in December 2020. In due course, the VEC will publish a consolidated report on its performance and key statistics from the elections. This report will be tabled in Parliament and available on the VEC website.

Ararat Rural City Council

## Schedule 1: Record of ballot papers and declaration envelopes

Ararat Rural City Council 2020 general election	
<b>BALLOT PAPERS PRINTED</b>	
Victorian Electoral Commission	11,000
Election Manager	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,000</b>
<b>BALLOT PAPERS ISSUED</b>	
General mail out	8,955
Early and replacement votes	192
Unenrolled declaration votes	0
Spoilt	0
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>9,147</b>
Unused	1,853
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,000</b>
<b>DECLARATIONS RETURNED</b>	
General mail out admitted to the extraction	7,346
Early and replacement votes admitted to the extraction	175
Unenrolled declaration votes admitted to the extraction	0
Returned declarations unable to admit to extraction	184
Declarations returned to sender	169
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>7,874</b>
Declarations not returned	1,273
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,147</b>



Ararat Rural City Council

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## Schedule 2: Certification statement

In accordance with Regulation 77, I certify that Schedule 1 of this report on the conduct of the 2020 Ararat Rural City Council local government election is a true and correct account of the number of ballot papers issued, returned and not used in this election and declarations not returned.

Warwick Gately AM  
Electoral Commissioner



Ararat Rural City Council

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## Appendix 1: Breakdown of the voters' roll

Ararat Rural City Council	
Voters enrolled through an entitlement under section 241 of the LG Act	8,202
Voters enrolled through entitlements under sections 242 – 245 of the LG Act	753
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,955</b>

Ararat Rural City Council

## Appendix 2: Statutory advertising

### Ararat Rural City Council election Schedule of public notices

#### Close of roll notice (see Appendix 2.1 for example)

VEC Website	8 August 2020
Ararat Advocate	14 August 2020

#### Notice of election (see Appendix 2.2 for example)

VEC Website	31 August 2020
Ararat Advocate	4 September 2020

#### Voting details notice (see Appendix 2.3 for example)

VEC Website	28 September 2020
Ararat Advocate	2 October 2020

#### Reminder notice (see Appendix 2.4 for example)

VEC Website	12 October 2020
Ararat Advocate	16 October 2020

#### Notice of result (see Appendix 2.5 for example)


VEC Website	23 November 2020
Ararat Advocate	27 November 2020

## Ararat Rural City Council

### Appendix 2.1: Close of roll notice for Ararat Rural City Council

## Ararat Rural City Council postal election

*Your council, your vote*



**You must be enrolled to vote**

A general election will be held for Ararat Rural City Council in October 2020. To be able to vote in the election, you must be enrolled by the close of roll at 4 pm on Friday 28 August 2020. Two categories of voters can be enrolled to vote in the Ararat Rural City Council election: State-enrolled voters and Council-enrolled voters.

**State-enrolled voters**

**Am I enrolled to vote?**

You are automatically enrolled for this election if:

- you will be 18 years of age or over on Saturday 24 October 2020 AND
- you live in the Rural City of Ararat AND
- you are on the State electoral roll for your current address.

**You need to enrol if:**

- you are an Australian citizen aged 18 or over on Saturday 24 October 2020 AND
- you live in the Rural City of Ararat and you are not on the State electoral roll OR
- you have lived at your current residential address within the Rural City of Ararat for at least a month and have not yet updated your enrolment details, including any changes to your postal address.

**How do I enrol?**

You can enrol online at [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au)

You can also download an enrolment form from the website. All enrolment applications must be received by the Victorian Electoral Commission by the close of roll at 4 pm on Friday 28 August 2020.

**How can I check my State enrolment?**

You can check your enrolment details online at [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au) at any time, or call 1302 805 178.

**Council-enrolled voters**

**Am I enrolled to vote?**

To be a Council-enrolled voter, you must be:

- 18 years of age or over on Saturday 24 October 2020 AND
- not a State-enrolled voter within the Rural City of Ararat.

You are automatically enrolled for this election if you were enrolled as a non-resident owner at the most recent election for your local area. This includes only by-elections held since the last general election.

If your circumstances have changed since the most recent election and you are no longer a non-resident owner of that property, you will not be automatically enrolled for this election. Depending on your circumstances, you may still be eligible to apply to be enrolled as a Council-enrolled voter.

**Who else can enrol & vote?**

You may also apply to enrol if:

- you have purchased a rateable property in the Rural City of Ararat since the last election or by-election and you are not automatically enrolled OR
- you are not an Australian citizen and you live in, and pay rates for, a property within the Rural City of Ararat OR
- you pay rates on a property you occupy in the Rural City of Ararat, for example you are a shop tenant and pay rates to the Council for the tenancy, and you have no other voting entitlement within the Rural City of Ararat OR
- you are a director or company secretary of a corporation that pays rates to Ararat Rural City Council and you have no other voting entitlement within the Rural City of Ararat.

**How do I apply to be a Council-enrolled voter?**

If you meet any of the mentioned criteria and wish to enrol, contact Ararat Rural City Council on (03) 5255 0208 for a council enrolment form. Council enrolment forms must be received by the Council by the close of roll at 4 pm on Friday 28 August 2020.

**How can I check if I am Council-enrolled?**

You can check your enrolment details by contacting the Council on (03) 5255 0208.

**Thinking about standing for election?**

Candidate requirements have recently changed. To nominate as a candidate for Ararat Rural City Council, you must:

- be an Australian citizen and enrolled on the voters' roll for Ararat Rural City Council AND
- be eligible to become a councillor should you be elected AND
- have completed the mandatory candidate training before lodging your nomination with the Election Manager.

For further information, visit [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au)

**Enrolment closes**

**4 pm Friday 28 August**

State-enrolled voters can register for free VoterAlert SMS and email reminders at [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au)



**vec.vic.gov.au | 131 832**

For enquiries in languages other than English call our interpreting service:

• ARABIC 0209 0100 Arabic • BOSNIAN 0209 0101 Bosnian • CANTONESE 0209 0102 Cantonese • CROATIAN 0209 0103 Croatian • DUTCH 0209 0104 Dutch • ENGLISH 0209 0105 English • FINNISH 0209 0106 Finnish • FRENCH 0209 0107 French • GERMAN 0209 0108 German • GREEK 0209 0109 Greek • HINDI 0209 0110 Hindi • ITALIAN 0209 0111 Italian • JAPANESE 0209 0112 Japanese • KOREAN 0209 0113 Korean • MACEDONIAN 0209 0114 Macedonian • MALAY 0209 0115 Malay • PERSIAN 0209 0116 Persian • PORTUGUESE 0209 0117 Portuguese • ROMANIAN 0209 0118 Romanian • SERBIAN 0209 0119 Serbian • SLOVAK 0209 0120 Slovak • SPANISH 0209 0121 Spanish • TAMIL 0209 0122 Tamil • THAI 0209 0123 Thai • TURKISH 0209 0124 Turkish • VIETNAMESE 0209 0125 Vietnamese • All other non-English languages 0209 0126

Authorised by W. Gately, AEC, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

@elections


**Victorian Electoral Commission**

Ararat Rural City Council

Appendix 2.2: Notice of election for Ararat Rural City Council

## Ararat Rural City Council postal election

Your council, your vote



### Vote by post this October

**Voting**

Ballot packs will be mailed to voters enrolled in the Ararat Rural City Council election from Tuesday 6 October 2020. Return your completed ballot material by mail ASAP or hand-deliver it to the Election Manager by the close of voting at 6 pm on Friday 23 October 2020.

**If you will be away**

If you will be away when ballot packs are mailed, or your address has changed since Friday 28 August 2020, you can request for your ballot pack to be redirected by writing to:

Election Manager  
Ararat Rural City Council election  
c/ Victorian Electoral Commission  
Level 11, 530 Collins Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000

Alternatively, you can email your request to: [redirections@vec.vic.gov.au](mailto:redirections@vec.vic.gov.au)

Please include the address for redirection. Each voter requesting redirection must sign their request.

Requests for redirection must be received by **Thursday 17 September 2020**.

**Large print and braille ballot papers**

Large print or braille ballot papers are available for voters who are blind or have low vision—please register by **Tuesday 15 September 2020**. To register, call (03) 8620 1222 during business hours.

### Request an early postal vote

To apply for an early postal vote, contact the Election Manager from **Wednesday 23 September 2020** on 1300 291 012 and make an application. You must provide a valid reason.

**How to nominate as a candidate**

Candidate requirements have recently changed. To nominate as a candidate, you must:

- be an Australian citizen and enrolled on the voters' roll for Ararat Rural City Council AND
- be eligible to become a councillor should you be elected AND
- have completed the mandatory candidate training before lodging your nomination with the Election Manager.


To nominate, complete the nomination form and lodge it with the Election Manager together with the \$250 nomination fee. Nomination forms can be lodged by appointment during business hours from **Thursday 17 September 2020** until **12 noon on Tuesday 22 September 2020** at:

Gum San Great Hall, 31–33 Lambert Street, Ararat

Visit [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au) for more information and to pre-complete your nomination form using the online Candidate Helper. The online Candidate Helper will be available from **Thursday 3 September 2020**.

If you use the online Candidate Helper, print your pre-completed form and make an appointment to lodge it with the Election Manager along with the nomination fee.

Call the Election Manager from **Wednesday 16 September 2020** on 1300 291 012 to make a nomination appointment.



**Online candidate information session**

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the VEC's recorded candidate information session can be streamed online from **Thursday 3 September 2020** complemented by state-wide interactive candidate seminars based on the information video. To watch the information session or find out how to join an online interactive seminar, visit [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au).

**Nominations close**

**12 noon Tuesday 22 September**

State-enrolled voters can register for free VoterAlert SMS and email reminders at [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au).

[vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au) | 131 832

For enquiries in languages other than English call our interpreting service:


- 0907 9209 0180 Amharic • 0907 9209 0100 Arabic • Bosanski 9209 0181 Bosnian • 0907 9209 0101 Cantonese • Hrvatski 9209 0102 Croatian • 0907 9209 0183 Dari
- 0907 9209 0113 Dinka • 0907 9209 0103 Greek • Italiano 9209 0104 Italian • 0907 9209 0102 Khmer • 0907 9209 0184 Korean • Македонски 9209 0105 Macedonian
- 0907 9209 0106 Mandarin • 0907 9209 0106 Persian • Pycckck 9209 0106 Russian • Svenska 9209 0107 Swedish • Somali 9209 0108 Somali • Español 9209 0109 Spanish
- Türkiye 9209 0110 Turkish • Việt 0907 9209 0111 Vietnamese • All other non-English languages 9209 0112

Authorised by W. Gately, AM, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

Appendix 2.3: Voting details notice for Ararat Rural City Council

## Ararat Rural City Council postal election

Your council, your vote



### Check the mail for your ballot pack

Ballot packs containing voting material will be mailed to enrolled voters from **Tuesday 6 October 2020**.

**This is a postal election only.**

If you do not receive your ballot pack by **Friday 16 October 2020**, please call 1300 291 012 during office hours to arrange a replacement.

**How to vote correctly**

You must complete your ballot paper correctly for your vote to count. Put the number 1 in the box next to the candidate you most want to see elected, then number ALL the other boxes in order of your choice. You must number EVERY BOX and only use each number once.

**How to return your completed ballot paper**

Follow the instructions on your ballot paper to complete your vote. To return your completed ballot paper, put it in the ballot paper envelope then use the reply-paid envelope provided or hand-deliver it during office hours to:

Gum San Great Hall, 31–33 Lambert Street, Ararat

### Voting is compulsory

Voting is compulsory for all voters who were on the State roll at 4 pm on **Friday 28 August 2020**.

**You may be fined if you do not vote — this includes homeowners and tenants.**

You are encouraged to vote, but you will not be fined if you don't vote, if:

- you live outside this local council area OR
- you are enrolled directly with the Council to be on the voters' roll for this election.

**Your completed ballot pack must be in the mail or hand-delivered by 6 pm\* Friday 23 October**

\*Local mail clearance times vary. Ballot packs must be mailed before final clearance times in the last week of voting. Don't risk a fine.

State-enrolled voters can register for free VoterAlert SMS and email reminders at [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au)

[vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au) | 1300 291 012

For enquiries in languages other than English call our interpreting service:

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- 0907 9209 0113 Dinka • 0907 9209 0103 Greek • Italiano 9209 0104 Italian • 0907 9209 0102 Khmer • 0907 9209 0184 Korean • Македонски 9209 0105 Macedonian
- 0907 9209 0106 Mandarin • 0907 9209 0106 Persian • Pycckck 9209 0106 Russian • Svenska 9209 0107 Swedish • Somali 9209 0108 Somali • Español 9209 0109 Spanish
- Türkiye 9209 0110 Turkish • Việt 0907 9209 0111 Vietnamese • All other non-English languages 9209 0112


Authorised by W. Gately, AM, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

## Ararat Rural City Council

### Appendix 2.4: Reminder notice for Ararat Rural City Council

## Ararat Rural City Council postal election

Your council, your vote



Ararat Rural City

**Check the mail for your ballot pack**

Ballot packs containing voting material were mailed to enrolled voters from Tuesday 6 October 2020.

**This is a postal election only.**

If you do not receive your ballot pack by Friday 16 October 2020, please call 1300 291 012 during office hours to arrange a replacement.

**How to vote correctly**

You must complete your ballot paper correctly for your vote to count. Put the number 1 in the box next to the candidate you most want to see elected, then number ALL the other boxes in order of your choice. You must number EVERY BOX and only use each number once.

**How to return your completed ballot paper**

Follow the instructions on your ballot paper to complete your vote. To return your completed ballot paper, put it in the ballot paper envelope then use the reply-paid envelope provided or hand-deliver it during office hours to:

Gum Son Great Hall, 31-33 Lambert Street, Ararat

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Voting is compulsory for all voters who were on the State roll at 4 pm on Friday 28 August 2020.

**You may be fined if you do not vote** — this includes homeowners and tenants. You are encouraged to vote, but you will not be fined if you don't vote, if:

- you live outside this local council area OR
- you are enrolled directly with the Council to be on the voters' roll for this election.

**Your completed ballot pack must be in the mail or hand-delivered by 6 pm\* Friday 23 October**

\*Local mail clearance times vary. Ballot packs must be mailed before final clearance times in the last week of voting. Don't risk a fine.

State-enrolled voters can register for free VoterAlert SMS and email reminders at [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au)

[vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au) | 1300 291 012

For enquiries in languages other than English call our interpreting service:

• Hindi 0200 0100 Hindi • Urdu 0200 0100 Urdu • Bosnian 0200 0100 Bosnian • Chinese 0200 0100 Chinese • Croatian 0200 0100 Croatian • English 0200 0100 English • Greek 0200 0100 Greek • Italian 0200 0100 Italian • Japanese 0200 0100 Japanese • Korean 0200 0100 Korean • Macedonian 0200 0100 Macedonian • Malay 0200 0100 Malay • Mandarin 0200 0100 Mandarin • Persian 0200 0100 Persian • Polish 0200 0100 Polish • Portuguese 0200 0100 Portuguese • Romanian 0200 0100 Romanian • Russian 0200 0100 Russian • Serbian 0200 0100 Serbian • Slovenian 0200 0100 Slovenian • Spanish 0200 0100 Spanish • Tagalog 0200 0100 Tagalog • Thai 0200 0100 Thai • Vietnamese 0200 0100 Vietnamese • All other non-English languages 0200 0102

Authorised by W. Gately, AM, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.


@electionsvic   

 Victorian Electoral Commission

### Appendix 2.5: Notice of results for Ararat Rural City Council

## Ararat Rural City Council election

Declaration of results



Ararat Rural City

The following candidates were elected to the Ararat Rural City Council at the general election held in October 2020:

ARMSTRONG, Jo (1st elected)

BEALES, Peter (2nd elected)

WATERSTON, William Alexander (3rd elected)

SANDERS, Bob (4th elected)

BURRIDGE, Henry (5th elected)




ALLGOOD, Gwenda (6th elected)

ARMSTRONG, Rob (7th elected)


Further details about the results are available at [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au)

**Colin Nicholson**  
Election Manager  
Wednesday 4 November 2020

[vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au) | 131 832

@electionsvic   

Authorised by W. Gately, AM, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

 Victorian Electoral Commission

Ararat Rural City Council

## Appendix 3: Schedule of media releases and advisories

Ararat Rural City Council Council-specific media releases and advisories	
Enrol now for the Ararat Rural City Council election	7 August 2020
Call for candidates for the upcoming Ararat Rural City Council election	24 August 2020
Candidates announced for the Ararat Rural City Council election	23 September 2020
Ballot packs mailed this week for Ararat Rural City Council election	5 October 2020
Voting closes soon for the Ararat Rural City Council election	12 October 2020
New councillors for Ararat Rural City Council	4 November 2020

Statewide media releases and advisories	
Victorians urged to enrol for upcoming council elections	7 August 2020
October local council elections to proceed under COVIDSafe election plan	19 August 2020
Last chance to enrol for Victorian council elections	21 August 2020
Enrolment closes tomorrow for October's council elections	26 August 2020
Nominations open soon for Victorian local council elections	31 August 2020
Council election information one click away on VEC website	4 September 2020
Accessing candidate information for the 2020 Victorian local council elections	14 September 2020
Victorian voters encouraged to sign up for free election reminders	16 September 2020
Nominations are in for the October council elections	23 September 2020
Authority granted for postal vote contingency	30 September 2020
Voting underway for Victoria's local council elections	5 October 2020
Mobile numbers not from VEC	12 October 2020
Local council elections voting deadline looms	19 October 2020
Strong voter response to local council elections	20 October 2020
Results timeline for Victorian local council elections (media advisory, not for publication)	21 October 2020
Final day of voting shows high voter turnout for council elections	23 October 2020
VEC won't risk public health for quick results in record turnout	28 October 2020
A win for democracy in a challenging year	13 November 2020
Didn't vote in the election? Please explain.	8 February 2021



Ararat Rural City Council

## Appendix 4: VoterAlert advisories

### Appendix 4.1: SMS alerts

#### 4.1.1 close of roll – sent from Wednesday 19 August to Wednesday 26 August 2020



Council elections will be held by post in October. Make sure you are correctly enrolled by 4pm 28 Aug. More info or unsubscribe at: <https://voteralert.vec.vic.gov.au/s/tohMhA5l>

Wed 11:08 AM

#### 4.1.2 mail out of ballot pack Friday 9 October to Friday 13 October 2020



VEC has posted a ballot pack to your enrolled address. Voting in council elections is compulsory. More info or unsubscribe at: <https://voteralert.vec.vic.gov.au/s/ufDvSRO7>

#### 4.1.3 reminder close of voting - Monday 19 October 2020




Council elections: voting closes 6pm Friday. Post your vote or return it to your election office ASAP. More info or unsubscribe: <https://voteralert.vec.vic.gov.au/s/usSUBkIM>

## Ararat Rural City Council

### Appendix 4.2: Email alerts

#### 4.2.1 Close of roll email

**VoterAlert** Victorian Electoral Commission

### 2020 Local council elections

Hello,

Local council elections will be held in Victoria by post this October. It is important that you are correctly enrolled so you receive a ballot pack at your correct address.

**Enrolment closes at 4 pm on Friday 28 August 2020.**

If you haven't changed your postal address, residential address or name, there is no need to do anything.

#### Are your details up to date?

You can check your details online on the VEC's Check My Enrolment portal. Complete all fields, making sure you:

- enter your first and middle names in the 'Given names' field
- start to enter your suburb and pick it from the list suggested
- start to enter your street name only and pick it from the list suggested.

CHECK MY ENROLMENT

Do you need to update your details?

CHANGE MY DETAILS

#### Are you eligible to vote in another council?

In a council election, there are two types of enrolment: State enrolment and council enrolment.

You are receiving this message because you are State-enrolled.

But if you own property or pay rates in another council, you may be enrolled or eligible to enrol directly with that council.

Find out more: [Enrolling for council elections](#)

#### Do I have to vote at these elections?

Voting is compulsory for State-enrolled voters. Don't risk a fine!

If you are on the roll for Melbourne City Council, it is also compulsory for council-enrolled voters to vote.




FIND OUT MORE

Authorised by W. Gately, AM, Electoral Commissioner, 520 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

**Our mailing address is:**  
Level 11, 520 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

This message was sent to you by the Victorian Electoral Commission because your contact details are listed on the Victorian electoral roll.

UNSUBSCRIBE




VEC website | Contact us | Privacy | Legal

## Ararat Rural City Council

### 4.2.2 Ballot Pack mailout email

Please don't reply to this email. Replies go to an automated inbox. For any queries, [contact us](#).

**VoterAlert**  Victorian Electoral Commission

**2020 local council elections**

Hello

You are enrolled to vote in the 2020 local council elections in Council Name.

Voting in this election will be by post. We posted you a ballot pack between Tuesday 5 and Thursday 8 October 2020.

Please follow the instructions in your ballot pack to cast your vote and mail it back to us as soon as possible. Voting closes at 6 pm on Friday 23 October 2020, but local mail clearance times may be earlier than the cut-off. We recommend you return your completed vote as soon as possible.

**Didn't get a ballot pack?**

If you don't get a ballot pack by Friday 15 October, call your local Election Office to request a replacement. You can find [Election Office contact details](#) on our website.

**Are you away from your enrolled address?**

If you are away from your enrolled address call your local Election Office to request a replacement ballot pack. You can find [Election Office contact details](#) on our website.

**Do I have to vote?**

Voting is compulsory for everyone on the State and Melbourne City Council voters' rolls. Don't risk a fine!




[FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE ELECTION](#)

Authorised by W. Gaby, AEC Electoral Commissioner, 502 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

Our mailing address is:  
Level 11, 502 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000.

This message was sent to you by the Victorian Electoral Commission because your contact details are listed on the Victorian electoral roll.

[UNSUBSCRIBE](#)

[VEC website](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Legal](#)

## Ararat Rural City Council

### 4.2.3 Last week to vote email

Please do not reply to this email. Replies go to an unmonitored inbox. For any queries, [contact us](#).

#### VoterAlert



#### 2020 local council elections

Disregard this email if you have already voted.

Hello

You are enrolled to vote in the 2020 local council elections in **Council Name** Council.

Voting closes 6 pm this Friday 23 October.

#### How to vote

As soon as possible, make sure you:

mail your completed ballot paper in the reply-paid envelope provided

OR

drop your completed ballot paper off at [your local Election Office](#).

Please note: voting closes at 6 pm on Friday 23 October. However, local mail clearance times vary and we recommend you return your completed vote as soon as possible.

#### Didn't get a ballot pack?

If you haven't received a ballot pack, [check our website to understand your options](#).

#### Do I have to vote?

Voting is compulsory for everyone on the State and Melbourne City Council voters' rolls. Don't risk a fine!

[FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE ELECTION](#)

Authorised by W. Gately, AM, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

Our mailing address is:  
Level 11, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

This message was sent to you by the Victorian Electoral Commission because your contact details are listed on the Victorian electoral roll.

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Ararat Rural City Council

## Appendix 5: Voter engagement program and initiatives

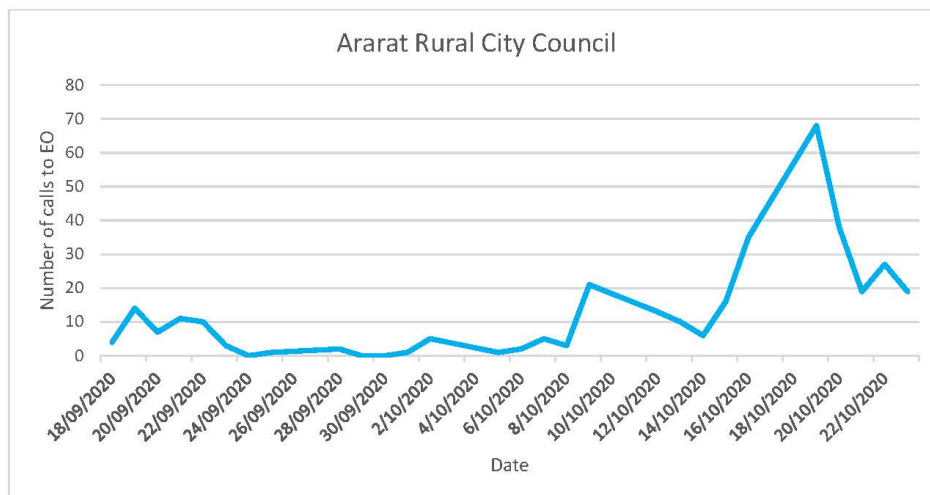
Program	Program Details
Be Heard Democracy Ambassador program	This program normally provides face-to-face electoral education sessions and was adapted to an online delivery model, providing peer-led electoral education to residents in specialist disability services and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. A total of 47 sessions were provided to people with disabilities and a total of 80 sessions were provided to CALD communities through councils and community organisations hosting online sessions.
Myth busting campaign.	This offline campaign addressed myths around enrolling and voting for those experiencing homelessness or with unstable housing. Four myths were dispelled and displayed on billboards and street posters, in metropolitan Melbourne areas with high populations of people experiencing homelessness. During the enrolment period, no-fixed-address enrolment forms were distributed with 4,500 meals to those suffering financial hardship, through a sponsorship with StreetSmart. This partnership included social media and Electronic Direct Mail distribution to StreetSmart's database of homeless services and community partners. A 1800 freecall number was also established to support those with financial hardship to provide support for enrolling and voting. This phone number was advertised on posters distributed through homelessness agencies, drug and alcohol services and services providing COVID-19 testing in hotels.
CALD in-language social media videos.	This project produced a series of three videos in 10-12 different languages which provided electoral information on how to enrol, how to vote by post, and how to respond to an Apparent Failure to Vote Notice. These were widely distributed and shared through the VEC's social media platforms and community networks.
Aboriginal short videos.	This project produced five videos in collaboration with Reconciliation Victoria. Two videos featured Aboriginal Elders and other leading Aboriginal community members discussing the value and ways to engage with local council elections. A further three videos, using culturally relevant animation, explained what services councils are responsible for, how to vote and the role of a councillor. These were shared through Aboriginal community channels and organisations.
DemGraphics young people co-designed social media project.	This project involved conducting research to identify barriers to enrolling and voting with a diverse group of young people. This information was then used to pilot a social media campaign in selected councils to encourage engagement in the elections for those aged 18-29.
Easy English tutor guide and worksheets.	These were produced for people with low English proficiency and designed as a co-read product where a person supports the learner through the worksheets. The tutor guide and worksheets were based on the VEC's Easy English guides for local council elections and were available for download from the VEC's website in PDF and Word formats.



Ararat Rural City Council

## Appendix 6: Daily telephone enquiries

The following graph shows the number of telephone calls recorded by the election office telephone enquiry service including those received by the VEC's overflow call centre and tagged as relating to Ararat Rural City Council during the 2020 local government elections.



Ararat Rural City Council

## Appendix 7: Final list of candidates in ballot paper order

The candidates, in ballot paper order, were as follows:

Ararat Rural City Council election
GONINON, Jane
WATERSTON, William Alexander
BURRIDGE, Henry
SANDERS, Bob
McKENZIE, Colin
ATKINSON, Bernardine
ARMSTRONG, Jo
ALLGOOD, Gwenda
ARMSTRONG, Rob
BEALES, Peter
FRESLE, Cecilia
MANNING, Neil

Ararat Rural City Council

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## Appendix 7.1: Candidate statements and photographs

### Ararat Rural City Council election

Total number of candidates at close of nominations	Number of candidates that lodged a candidate statement	Number of candidates that lodged a candidate photograph
12	12	11

Ararat Rural City Council

Appendix 7.2: Candidate statement leaflet for Ararat Rural City Council election

**Don't Risk a Fine**  
**VOTING CLOSSES 6.00 PM**  
**Friday 23 October 2020**

Your ballot paper is attached to this leaflet.  
Complete and return as soon as possible.  
See the ballot paper envelope for voting instructions.

**VOTING IN THIS ELECTION IS BY POST ONLY**

Your completed ballot material must be posted or in the hands of the Election Manager on or before **6.00 pm on Friday 23 October 2020**. Local mail clearance times may vary. Ballot material must be mailed before final clearance times in the last week of voting. Late votes cannot be included in the count. Alternatively, you may hand-deliver your envelope during business hours to:  
Gum San Great Hall  
31-33 Lambert Street  
Ararat

**CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRES**  
Completed candidate questionnaires are available at [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au) or alternatively from the Election Manager.

**COMPULSORY VOTING PROVISIONS APPLY**  
You have received this ballot pack because you are enrolled for this election. Voting is compulsory if you were on the Victorian State electoral roll for this council on Friday 28 August 2020.  
Further information on voting entitlements can be found at [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au)

You may receive an Apparent Failure To Vote Notice if you complete and return your ballot material after the close of voting.



**Ararat Rural City**  
**2020 Council Election**  
**VOTING CLOSSES 6.00 PM**  
**Friday 23 October 2020**



**Ararat Rural City Council**

THIS IS A POSTAL ELECTION ONLY.

**Voting is compulsory for residents.**  
For further information visit [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au) or phone 1300 231 012 during business hours.

 Victorian Electoral Commission  
Printed on 100% Australian recycled paper

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**GONINON, Jane**

As a Warrak resident for the last six years I have enjoyed every moment of my time living in the region. As a former and small business owner offering a wine tourism destination, it is my passion to see the Ararat Rural City Council area expand and become an even more vibrant and successful community. For me this includes ensuring meaningful engagement between the Council and the wider community, increased social and residential housing, and greater investment across the entire Council area. New ideas and reinvigoration are vital to ensure the growth of Ararat and surrounding areas and I look forward to the opportunity to contribute to the community and particularly so in these challenging times. Prior to moving to Warrak, I spent more than 20 years working with volunteers in aged care and welfare for not-for-profit organisations. My work involved ensuring those in need of assistance received appropriate products and support services in a timely fashion. Volunteers were a mainstay of support provided and vital to the health and well-being of those they assisted. This work has provided me with a sound knowledge of frameworks and how to successfully navigate systems to achieve outcomes. I believe my work history and experience makes me a suitable candidate to become a Councillor who can act as a liaison with the community, presenting the views of residents and ratepayers to the council. I support Jo Armstrong and Peter Bailes for Council and believe we bring a range of skills and experience and electing us will bring a positive mix of perspective and opinion to the council chamber.

1

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**WATERSTON, William Alexander**

I'm Bill Waterston and I've been an Ararat resident all my life. I'm a father of two and a grandfather and like my family I am passionate about our town, sport and giving everyone a fair go. I want Ararat to achieve great things and I think part of that is having a group of Councillors with Ararat's best interest at heart. I want to see these businesses in our town street while maintaining the ones we have. To achieve this we need ongoing improvements to the streetscape. People will stop and shop in a well-presented shopping precinct. We need to capitalise on people visiting the area. Green Hill lake is an asset to the Ararat district and we must build on this by improving the existing infrastructure. The housing development recently approved will bring much needed employment and money into the city. High gas prices are also an issue, we need to open the market up, to allow other providers into the city. I have a long list of community involvement. I am a life member of the YMCA. Coached many junior sports teams. I want to work as part of a united council to achieve great results for the community.

2

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**BURRIDGE, Henry**

Help me help Ararat Vote 1 Burridge 1st and I have lived in Ararat since 1986 raising our two sons who both moved to Melbourne for employment opportunities. My vision is to help Ararat become a sought after place to live with well maintained roads and infrastructure, gender appropriate and modern recreational facilities, high quality health, educational and social services, vibrant businesses with supported opportunities for expansion, viable and sustainable agricultural sector and a safe environment to raise your family. Council must work together as a unified team and attract people with vision and skill sets to assist the CEO and council achieve these goals. I will bring to council a range of experiences and skills helping Ararat develop strategies and policies to achieve positive outcomes for all residents. I have worked in both public and private sectors with proven experience in the following: high school teacher, nurse educator, director of nursing and acting CEO, pleasant Creek Training Centre, budget and policy development Community Services Victoria, small business owner Freshco Ararat, Boss Hogs Hot Dogs, Pines Creek Roadhouse and presently employed as a JVE leader at Hockley Commercial Centre teaching business while also operating Commercial House Accommodation Ararat. I bring to the council proven senior management skills, excellent communication, corporate governance, strategic planning in large and small businesses, training and development, quality consultation and good understanding of legislative and regulatory requirements. I will listen to all points of view and act for the best interests of Ararat. I have considered the full candidate field and choose to support Jo Armstrong, Peter Bailes and Jane Goninon. We represent a diverse range of skills and experience and electing us will bring a positive mix of perspective and opinion to the council chamber. Lets build Ararat's future together.

3

Ararat Rural City Council

NOTICE: The contents of candidate statements are provided by the candidates. Any enquiries about candidate statements should be directed to the relevant candidate. Candidate statements are not verified or endorsed by the Election Manager.

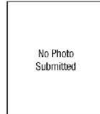


**SANDERS, Bob**

The Ararat district has been my home for 50 years and I have been married for 37. Have three children and five grandchildren who all reside in Ararat and are current ratepayers of the ARC. Having attended Ararat High and completed HSC my love for the land led me to working on the family farm. I worked as a shearer to supplement my farming income until I joined the correctional services. My wife and I purchased a small electrical/furniture business employing 2 staff which grew to 12 after the purchase of larger premises. Since leaving retail I have successfully started and operated 2 new businesses. Having been involved in the Ararat Community for many years as a keen volunteer I have held many executive positions within a variety of local organisations and am currently president of Ararat Lions and chairman of 2020 Lions district convention. I see the Ararat Rural City being in a unique position to be able to be a more vital part of this state due to our central position in western Victoria and feel that I can provide a positive impact on the growth of our council. I look forward to working with all fellow councillors and our CEO in turning some of the negative past into a positive future by achieving maximum benefit from ratepayer dollars. With broad experience in differing roles as a volunteer, my business acumen, being a ratepayer of both rural and commercial properties and a clear understanding of the rating system, I seek your support for the opportunity to represent the people of Ararat and district.

4

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**McKENZIE, Colin**

I retired from Council in 2016 with a serious illness that had affected my attendance during the last six months of that term. I have now recovered. I have retained my interest in municipal affairs, within this Council, and in other Councils of similar size and structure. I am involved in community activities in the district. Many Council projects (now being developed) were commenced in my last term. Thanks for the opportunity of applying to represent residents again. Best wishes to all candidates.

5

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**ATKINSON, Bernadine**

Responsibly led, Ararat Rural City could have full employment, reduced rates and excellent services. New legislation enables Council to work with its community through trusts, partnerships and co-operatives financed by grants and low-interest borrowings. To put Covid behind us and rebuild prosperity, Council needs your help. We need to create a place where you can register your expertise, experience and interests to participate, brainstorm, then prepare for implementation, the best ideas we have. For example, we could make money through Council-Landholder Agroforestry; timber is increasingly scarce and expensive. We could provide inexpensive freight for our produce by building, the long over-due, rail to road, truck to train, freight terminals. Growers also can so easily reach so many important inland cities and sea ports. We could upgrade the old Pyrenees Railway to provide a luxury, slow train, tourist route. We should be part of the push by 13 Councils for Gold Fields World Heritage status. Professional advice suggested, to be successful, our bid should include examples of how life was lived before the Gold Rush. Our municipality not only has old and enduring diggings, relict and beautiful buildings, we also have Rock Art, hidden springs, sacred trees, evidence of micro fauna, boomerangs, cat traps and, best of all, precious Aboriginal People prepared to teach us their unique and enduring cultural respect for landscape and life. To combat collection and provide an excellent recreational resource, we could network all our towns with walking/cycling paths, landscaped to save vulnerable species, while simultaneously, providing Bed and Breakfast business opportunities. We can continue to beautify our towns and support more culturally-enriching activities. We need more politically-unfettered GST revenue to seal our dusty roads. If you agree, please vote Atkinson, Bernadine, number one.

6

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**ARMSTRONG, Jo**

It is crucial that ratepayers and residents understand how much we need a skills-based council with a strategic mindset to deliver the best outcomes for all. The work to be done for COVID-19 recovery further emphasises this need. You first elected me in 2016 and as your Mayor for the past year I have helped build the foundation for a mature and productive relationship with our community. Good leadership and advocacy assist council in securing support and funding from external organisations and government. My vision has stayed strong since 2016: a vibrant future for this generation and beyond, balanced by economic sustainability, improved service delivery and asset renewal should continue while cost to community is carefully controlled. Fairness and equity matter for everyone in our community. I want Ararat Rural City to grow. We must offer greater housing options to welcome the people we need to fill diverse job opportunities across our growing manufacturing industries, tourism and hospitality potential, and agribusiness expansion that will flow from the East Grampians Rural Pipeline. More people will boost our local economy and small businesses will prosper. With my husband Pete, I have farmed sheep and grain on our Yella-Y-Porra farm for 30 years, raising four children and loving my connection with rural life. Many years of volunteering across a range of community organisations has given me insight to the sense of belonging at the heart of our unique rural communities. I ask you to vote for me and support Peter Boske, Henry Burridge, Rob Armstrong, and Jane Goninon because we share a range of proven skills and experience. Together, we will bring stability, an energetic and positive approach, and a diversity of perspectives to keep Ararat Rural City moving forward. You can trust I will do my best for you. Facebook @JoArmstrongArarat

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**ALLGOOD, Gwenda**

I have lived, married, raised a family and worked in Ararat since I was 10 and as most know I am the most passionate Araratian anyone could find. My commitment to the Ararat Rural City Council and its ratepayers has always been an important part of my life and this commitment is still very real for me. I was originally elected to Council when I recognised a need for new netball courts in Ararat and since then have fought for many infrastructure improvements – the latest being the refurbishment of the Outdoor Pools, which some wanted to bulldoze, and more recently the Skate Park. I am extremely proud to have been part of a Council which is putting so much effort into improving sporting, recreational facilities, roads, bridges, and trails not only in Ararat, but also in the outlying townships of our municipality. As a Councillor I have always been available and willing to listen to and help ratepayers and others in whatever way I can. I love Ararat and I want to represent you and improve our wonderful Community in any way that I can, please vote Allgood 1

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**ARMSTRONG, Rob**

Hi, Rob Armstrong here. Thanks for taking the time to have a read of my little spiel. I am a sixth generation farmer in the Tolpocin district. I was born in Ararat, grew up here, pretty sure I'll happily die here (eventually). Don't let that make you think I am narrow minded though. I have done plenty of travelling and run my own businesses off the farm also. I raised my kids here and was heavily involved in their primary school council. I am running for council because I really want to see the Ararat community united. It may sound cheesy but we have a bit of divide between those who live in town and those who live out of town. I think there is a lot of benefit that could come from us working together. I want to really push hard to bring more businesses to Ararat, providing jobs for those in town, and services for those operating farms. I have noticed a lot of businesses close down in Ararat which leaves farmers without anyone to repair machinery or provide products, but at the same time this has affected those looking for work in the town. Ararat really needs some energy about it. We need businesses to want to open up here, we need jobs to support those who live here, encourage other people to want to live here. We need tourists in our hospitality businesses and retail shops on the weekends because that keeps them open and booming, so we locals can enjoy having those great places to go ourselves. This is a great place to live but I think we can do better, do more. I am keen to provide some of that energy and hope with your help we can really change things up a bit.

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## Ararat Rural City Council

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**BEALES, Peter**

First elected in 2016, I am seeking a second term. Jenny and I moved to Ararat, purchasing land after the 2009 fires in Kinglake. I represented Kinglake for 8 terms with four terms as Mayor, including from 2009 to 2011. I was a member of the Victoria Police for 23 years, owned the Kinglake West General Store for seven years and worked in disability, retiring in 2016 upon election to Ararat Council. I have been involved in sporting and community groups as a participant or official, was a Scout leader for 30 years and currently volunteer two days a week with Ararat Neighbourhood House's Second Site food program. I am passionate about helping young people. I am a mentor for the L2P driver program and President of the Rotary Club of Ararat. I have been active in all parts of the municipality, bringing to light projects that seem to have disappeared, such as the refitting of Willaura and Einhorst Halls. As Mayor, I supported the CEO in his restructuring of Council management which is no longer too heavy. I have been very proactive in promoting Ararat as a place to live and invest. Since 2016, Council has spent more on targeted infrastructure and has low borrowings. Voters should be aware of the 2017 Commission of Inquiry's results and should contact all candidates about their views on the Inquiry. During the past three budgets, Council had one minimum rate rise with the last rate a decrease, the only Council in Victoria to do so. My experience was crucial during the turmoil of the past and I seek your support to continue. After consideration, I choose to support Jo Armstrong, Jane Gordon, Henry Burrillidge and Rob Armstrong who represent the values and skills that I admire in prospective Councillors. [pbeales@icloud.com](mailto:pbeales@icloud.com) or 0437116362.

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**FRESLE, Cecilia**

I have nominated to stand for Ararat Rural City Council because I value living in the city. I would like to be part of the team that encourages innovation and development in the City so that others can benefit as the City grows. I was a partner in Ararat Holiday Homes and our business was supported and encouraged by the tourism unit of Ararat Rural City Council. This support is invaluable to beginning businesses. I would like to see business come to Ararat and be nurtured and thrive. I support continued development of community services and resources such as parks and gardens, sporting facilities, housing and nature reserves. I believe that we must support the rural sector of the City, as the farming sector and rural towns provide employment and resources for much of the population. The ability of this population contributes greatly to the communal spirit of the city through business interdependence and the personal relationships and respect that comes through knowing people over time. One of my concerns is the growing number of people working in Ararat but not living here. My concern is due to the need to have a diverse population with personal interest in the city where they work. If Ararat is able to attract those people to live in the City we will benefit from the involvement of these peoples families in our community. Another of my concerns is that the money earned here isn't spent here and therefore local businesses struggle in order to make Ararat a place for people to bring their families we need to manage our resources well and provide services suitable to the needs of their whole family. My vision for Ararat is a community growing together and welcoming innovation. A community taking advantage of opportunities as they arise.

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**MANNING, Neil**

You pay too much in rates. This last budget Council changed the rate differential so that Farmers pay 47%, Home owners pay 100% and Business pays 125% of the general rate. That's right, Council reduced the rates burden on Farmers in the middle of the Covid pandemic when people were on short hours or unemployed and business was struggling. That means that you the home owner or business owner pay more to make up the difference. This is unfair and shows this group of Councillors is out of touch with ratepayers and particularly with those surrounding Councils that use their differential rates powers wisely. Farm rate in Southern Grampians 80%, Pyrenees 79% and Moyne 0% that's right all in Moyne pay the same general rate in the dollar. Ararat needs Councillors that think of all the community not of one sector above others. Given the levels of service we receive Councillors need to drive rates down not play favourites. I believe that Council should help those that help themselves. I pledge to support community groups and sporting clubs. I will support people who put in time to their community clubs, organisations and associations. We need to get back to grassroots politics and support local effort. I have wide experience in local government as a Councillor in Moosdon Ranges and as a local government officer. I know what can be done and how to do it. I have run my own business and been on many public and private boards. It's time to be serious about the future and elect Councillors prepared to work for all of the community. Put my name first and think carefully about who you choose and put like-minded persons high on your choices if you want things to change.

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Ararat Rural City Council

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## Appendix 8: Daily breakdown of the general mail-out

Ararat Rural City Council election			
6 October 2020	7 October 2020	8 October 2020	Total
3,045	3,045	2,865	8,955

Ararat Rural City Council

## Appendix 9: Result information

### Ararat Rural City Council election

Count summary		
<b>Enrolment:</b>	8,955	
<b>Formal votes:</b>	7,196	
<b>Informal votes:</b>	308 (4.10% of the total votes)	
<b>Voter turnout:</b>	7,504 (83.80% of the total enrolment)	
Candidates (in ballot paper order)	First preference votes	Percentage
GONINON, Jane	284	3.95%
WATERSTON, William Alexander	862	11.98%
BURRIDGE, Henry	537	7.46%
SANDERS, Bob	731	10.16%
McKENZIE, Colin	212	2.95%
ATKINSON, Bernardine	165	2.29%
ARMSTRONG, Jo	2,770	38.49%
ALLGOOD, Gwenda	538	7.48%
ARMSTRONG, Rob	295	4.10%
BEALES, Peter	317	4.41%
FRESLE, Cecilia	134	1.86%
MANNING, Neil	351	4.88%
Successful candidates		
ARMSTRONG, Jo (1st elected candidate)		
BEALES, Peter (2nd elected candidate)		
WATERSTON, William Alexander (3rd elected candidate)		
SANDERS, Bob (4th elected candidate)		
BURRIDGE, Henry (5th elected candidate)		
ALLGOOD, Gwenda (6th elected candidate)		
ARMSTRONG, Rob (7th elected candidate)		

Ararat Rural City Council

## Appendix 10: Election participation statistics

Note: Participation is measured by the number of marks on the roll as a percentage of total enrolment and can vary from turnout (total ballot papers counted as a percentage of total enrolment).

Ararat Rural City Council election			
Enrolment category	Participation as a percentage of voters enrolled in each category for 2020 Ararat Rural City Council general election	Comparator for 2016 Ararat Rural City Council general election	Statewide postal election comparator for 2020 LG elections (excl. Melbourne City Council)
Voters enrolled through section 241 of the LG Act	87.45%	83.65%	86.27%
aged 18 to 69 years old on election day	86.26%	83.39%	85.48%
aged 70 years and over on election day	91.41%	84.58%	90.14%
Voters enrolled through sections 243 - 245 of the LG Act	66.40%	58.41%	60.96%
<b>Council total</b>	<b>85.68%</b>	<b>80.53%</b>	<b>84.12%</b>



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### 3.4 DRAFT COMMUNITY VISION 2031

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
DEPARTMENT: CEO's OFFICE  
REFERENCE: 2261

#### OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The draft Community Vision 2031 has been developed and is presented to Council for consideration before the consultation process commences. The Community Vision 2031 will capture the aspirations of our community over the next ten years.

#### DISCUSSION

The draft Community Vision 2031 is an important long term strategic document that sets out the community aspirations for the next ten years.

The Community Vision 2031 will develop into a community characterised by:

- 1 Strong population growth trajectories that buck trends in rural Victoria
- 2 Continuous and sustainable economic development which is focused on job creation through value adding in agriculture, advanced manufacturing, and tourism.
- 3 Leadership in pragmatic approaches to local environmental management
- 4 Sustainable and effective local transport networks underpinned by careful technical and financial planning undertaken jointly between asset users and asset owners.
- 5 Communities that are enhanced by access to artistic, cultural, sporting and recreational opportunities that meet needs and expectations.
- 6 Strong and robust democratic processes underpinned by transparent governance, good financial management and organisational innovation.

As Council facilitates the development of the draft Community Vision 2031, it will be the community who drive the vision by their aspirations and feedback. The Community Vision 2031 will enhance the connection between Council and the community providing a shared vision to work towards.

A copy of the draft Community Vision 2031 is included as an attachment.

The Engage Ararat platform will be utilised for the community consultation process in relation to the draft Community Vision 2031. This platform has recently been launched and will be the place where our community can access information about Council's latest projects and strategic documents and have their say about what matters to them. Community workshops will be held in conjunction with consultation over the draft Budget to provide additional opportunity for community engagement over the final form of the Council Plan 2021-2025.



## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### *Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives*

- 5.1 Good Governance through leadership
- 5.2 Services and infrastructure that meets the municipality's existing and future needs
- 5.4 Sustainable, long term financial management

### *Budget Implications*

The implications of the draft Community Vision 2031 have been considered in the 2021/2022 Budget.

### *Policy/Relevant Law*

In accordance with Section 88 of the Local Government Act 2020 Council must maintain a Community Vision that is developed with its municipal community in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices.

### *Sustainability Implications*

Environmental, social and economic impacts of the draft Community Vision 2031 have been considered in the development of a balanced future plan.

### *Risk Assessment*

The primary objective of Council is to endeavour to achieve the best outcomes for the local community having regard to the long term and cumulative effects of decisions. The draft Community Vision 2031 sets out the long-term aspirations of the community.

### *Innovation and Continuous Improvement*

There remains a number of strategic challenges ahead, including the renewal of Council's asset base, the continuation of an appropriate range and level of services.

### *Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement*

Councillors and the Chief Executive Officer have discussed the draft Council Plan 2021-2025 at briefings held on 23 February 2021, 4 March 2021, 13 April 2021 and 11 May 2021.

Consultation on the draft Community Vision 2031 will be carried out over the next four weeks. A final draft of the Community Vision 2031 will be presented to the Council Meeting to be held on 29 June 2021.

## RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Endorse the draft Community Vision 2031 for community consultation; and
- 2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to commence the community consultation process.

## MOVED CR BEALES SECONDED CR ALLGOOD

That Council:

- 1. Endorse the draft Community Vision 2031 for community consultation; and
- 2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to commence the community consultation process.

CARRIED 4441/21

## ATTACHMENTS

Draft Community Vision 2031 is provided in Attachment 3.4



Ararat Rural City

## DRAFT ARARAT RURAL CITY COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY VISION 2031

Over the next ten years Ararat Rural City Council will develop into a community characterised by:

***Strong population growth trajectories that buck trends in rural Victoria.*** This is underpinned by a planning scheme that provides certainty to the community while providing capacity for further residential, industrial, and commercial growth.

***Continuous and sustainable economic development which is focused on job creation through value adding in agriculture, advanced manufacturing, and tourism.*** Ararat Rural City Council has a strategic advantage provided through the Ararat Jobs and Technology Precinct, which is a world leading example of a research partnership between a university and a rural community.

***Leadership in pragmatic approaches to local environmental management.*** Ararat Rural City Council is a leader in managing a circular economy through a focus on local management of resource recovery. We are home to a number of successful bio-mass and waste to energy power generators which contribute significantly to our positioning as a net zero emissions community.

***Sustainable and effective local transport networks underpinned by careful technical and financial planning undertaken jointly between asset users and asset owners.*** Enabling infrastructure in the form of roads, drainage and utilities is in place to support the social and economic growth of the municipality. Renewal of all asset classes is managed to ensure ongoing financial sustainability.

***Communities that are enhanced by access to artistic, cultural, sporting and recreational opportunities that meet needs and expectations.*** Volunteering is a key part of community life and its resurgence has breathed new life into a range of community organisations and activities. Ararat Rural City is a place that is known for its cultural inclusion and connection to traditional owners.

***Strong and robust democratic processes underpinned by transparent governance, good financial management and organisational innovation.*** Ararat Rural City Council is seen as an exemplar of what rural local government can be and achieve for its community.

It is a place of strength, compassion, self-reliance and new ideas. It is a place that knows how to make things happen!

### ***Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners***

Council acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, and pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging.





## DRAFT ARARAT RURAL CITY COUNCIL'S COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025



Ararat Rural City

### 1. GROWING OUR PLACE

*We will create the settings to support growth across our municipality through an improved planning scheme, actively pursuing new housing options and exploring models for in-migration.*

- 1.1 Develop a new planning scheme for Ararat Rural City that is clear in its intention, supports growth and builds confidence and certainty around land use.
- 1.2 Support innovative housing models that work to overcome market failure and create the capacity to increase the population of Ararat Rural City.
- 1.3 Work with other levels of government, business, and not-for-for profits to develop programs to increase in-migration to Ararat Rural City to grow our population.

### 2. BUILDING ROBUST LOCAL ECONOMIES

*We will develop strong relationships to build and strengthen a diverse local economy, focussed on creating jobs and wealth through adding value to existing strengths in agriculture, manufacturing, tourism and hospitality.*

- 2.1 Partner with Federation University Australia to deliver the Ararat Jobs and Technology Precinct.
- 2.2 Work with other levels of government, local business, and private investors to develop a business park within Ararat Rural City, focused on agricultural value adding and advanced manufacturing, potentially leveraging "behind the meter" power.
- 2.3 Engage with Grampians Tourism and local businesses to drive growth in high yield tourist outcomes.



### 3. PRESERVING OUR ENVIRONMENT

*We will take pragmatic approaches to ensuring that Ararat Rural City Council takes a regional lead in responsible environmental management and engagement with the circular economy.*

- 3.1 Position Ararat Rural City Council as a prime mover in driving circular economy policy in waste management, including local processing and management of recyclables, and in use of renewable energy for Council purposes.
- 3.2 Develop innovative energy solutions utilising locally produced waste.
- 3.3 Partner with local organisations and scientific experts to develop an appropriate and pragmatic local government Environment Strategy, focussed on the circular economy, emission reduction through renewable energy and management of Council assets.

### 4. DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING KEY ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE

*We will ensure that we plan, fund and develop new infrastructure in ways that delivers strong public value. Existing infrastructure will be managed, renewed, and maintained to ensure that it continues to serve identified public needs.*

- 4.1 Ensure that asset development and renewal during the planning period matches that identified in Council's Asset Plan 2021-2031.
- 4.2 Work directly with asset users to manage and develop new and existing assets.
- 4.3 Deliver infrastructure outcomes that support economic growth, promote community wellbeing and safety, and align with Council's financial sustainability.

### 5. ENHANCING COMMUNITY LIFE

*We will work with the communities of Ararat Rural City to maintain social cohesion, support community activity and cultural life, and enhance safety.*

- 5.1 Open up Council's arts and culture assets to greater community participation, ownership and engagement in decision-making.
- 5.2 Develop models of volunteering that recognise, support and properly utilise the skills that community volunteers bring to community life.
- 5.3 Partner with community groups, not-for-profits, and traditional owner organisations to develop Ararat Rural City as a more inclusive and diverse community.

### 6. STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

*We will work hard to build models of governance that place delivering public value at the centre through effective financial management; well measured risk management; and implementation of effective community engagement practices.*

- 6.1 Deliver responsible budget outcomes, linked to strategy, that deliver value, innovation and rating fairness.
- 6.2 Ensure appropriate risk management is applied to Council and organisational decisions. Council's internal function is applied to areas of perceived risk.
- 6.3 Continuously improve Council's community engagement process and practices in line with deliberative engagement practices, while acknowledging the need for a range of different techniques to ensure effective engagement.





## MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Ararat Rural City

### GROWING OUR PLACE

- Completion of new planning scheme by 30 June 2023.
- New planning scheme supports commercial and industrial land provision for growth.
- Available residential land increased by 600 lots by 30 June 2025.
- Residential housing stock increased by 300 properties by 30 June 2025.
- Total population of the municipality increased by 750 by 30 June 2025 (6.3%).

### BUILDING ROBUST LOCAL ECONOMIES

- Increase in jobs in local economy by 15% by 30 June 2025.
- Ararat Jobs and Technology Precinct fully functional with 8 PhD scholars in place.
- Business park developed and lead tenants established in agricultural value add sector.
- Ararat Rural City Council identified as the tourism leader in the Grampians Region.
- Tourism visitation and stays in Ararat Rural City increased by 50% by 30 June 2025.

### PRESERVING OUR ENVIRONMENT

- Fully implemented new waste plan, aligned with circular economy outcomes by 30 June 2022.
- Local processing of waste recyclables in place by 31 December 2022.
- All energy used by Ararat Rural City Council is from renewable sources, with a preference for local solutions such as rooftop solar/battery by 30 June 2024.
- Industrial bio-mass power plant, utilising straw waste in final pre-construction phase by 30 June 2025.
- Environment Working Group has produced draft Environmental Strategy by 31 December 2021.

### DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING KEY ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE

- Aradale planning project funded and completed by 30 June 2023.
- Planning and funding models for rural roads "spine" developed and endorsed by Rural Roads Group by 30 June 2022.
- Negotiations with government and utility providers to ensure future industrial, commercial and residential development is supported by essential trunk infrastructure by 30 June 2023.
- Policy in place regarding sealing of urban gravel roads and sealing of significant urban laneways by 31 December 2021.
- Implementation of key infrastructure projects from the Asset Plan 2021-2031 during the planning period.

### ENHANCING COMMUNITY LIFE

- Increase annual visitation to the Ararat Art Gallery by 30% p.a.
- Increase community use of the Town Hall by 20% p.a.
- Increase audience sizes at commercial and funded performances at the Town Hall by 20% p.a.
- Increase Ararat Rural City Council's volunteer numbers by 20% per annum.
- Explore a model for improving the viability of Gum San by 31 December 2021.

### STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

- Council budgets continue to deliver public value and return efficiency dividends where appropriate.
- Risk management processes continue to be effective and approved by Audit and Risk Committee.
- Community engagement process show longitudinal signs of improvement.

[www.ararat.vic.gov.au](http://www.ararat.vic.gov.au)



### 3.5 DRAFT COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
DEPARTMENT: CEO's OFFICE  
REFERENCE: 2261

#### OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The draft Council Plan 2021-2025 has been developed and is presented to Council for consideration before the consultation process commences. The Council Plan 2021-2025 includes the strategic objectives for the next four years, including the strategic actions and indicators for monitoring the achievement of these objectives.

#### DISCUSSION

The Council Plan is guided by the long-term Community Vision 2031, a document which captures the aspirations of our community.

The draft Council Plan 2021-2025 (the Council Plan) sets the strategic direction for Council for the next four year. As Council's role is to support the community through leadership and service provision, it is ultimately a plan for the community.

The Council Plan highlights six key strategic objectives:

- 1 Growing our place
- 2 Building robust local economies
- 3 Preserving the environment
- 4 Developing and maintaining key enabling infrastructure
- 5 Enhancing community life; and
- 6 Strong and effective governance

The Council Plan includes the actions related to each of the strategic objectives and further identifies the measures of success. These measures will form an annual action plan that the Chief Executive Officer and staff will implement. A copy of the draft Council Plan 2021-2025 is included as an attachment.

Engage Ararat platform will be utilised to commence a community consultation process for the draft Council Plan 2021-2025. This platform has recently been launched and will be the place where our community can access information about Council's latest projects and strategic documents and have their say about what matters to them. Community workshops will be held in conjunction with consultation over the draft Budget to provide additional opportunity for community engagement over the final form of the Council Plan 2021-2025.

#### KEY CONSIDERATIONS

*Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives*

- 5.1 Good Governance through leadership
- 5.2 Services and infrastructure that meets the municipality's existing and future needs
- 5.4 Sustainable, long term financial management

#### ***Budget Implications***

The implications of the draft Council Plan 2021-2025 have been considered in the 2021/2022 Budget.

#### ***Policy/Relevant Law***

In accordance with Section 90 of the Local Government Act 2020 Council must prepare and adopt a Council Plan for a period of at least the next 4 financial years after a general election in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices.

#### ***Sustainability Implications***

Environmental, social and economic impacts of the draft Council Plan 2021-2025 have been considered in the development of a balanced future plan.

#### ***Risk Assessment***

The primary objective of Council is to endeavour to achieve the best outcomes for the local community having regard to the long term and cumulative effects of decisions. The draft Council Plan 2021-2025 manages the financial risks faced by Council, ensuring that decisions are made and actions taken having regard to the effects on future generations.

#### ***Innovation and Continuous Improvement***

There remains a number of strategic challenges ahead, including the renewal of Council's asset base, the continuation of an appropriate range and level of services.

The key strategies, activities and initiatives in the draft Council Plan 2021-2025 aim to meet these needs and continue to deliver on the draft Council's Vision 2031.

It is expected the community will benefit from activities and initiatives funded in the draft Council Plan 2021-2025.

#### ***Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement***

Councillors and the Chief Executive Officer have discussed the draft Council Plan 2021-2025 at briefings held on 23 February 2021, 4 March 2021, 13 April 2021 and 11 May 2021.

Consultation on the draft Council Plan 2021-2025 will be carried out over the next four weeks. A final draft of the Council Plan 2021-2025 will be presented to the Council Meeting to be held on 29 June 2021.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

- 1 Endorse the draft Council Plan 2021-2025 for community consultation; and
- 2 Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to commence the community consultation process.

#### **MOVED CR BURRIDGE SECONDED CR ALLGOOD**

That Council:

- 1 Endorse the draft Council Plan 2021-2025 for community consultation; and
- 2 Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to commence the community consultation process.

CARRIED 4442/21

#### ATTACHMENTS

Draft Council Plan 2021-2025 is provided in Attachment 3.4.

## SECTION 4 – INFORMAL MEETINGS

### 4.1 INFORMAL MEETINGS

AUTHOR'S TITLE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE  
REFERENCE: 13039074

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#### OFFICER'S DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Governance Rules states that if there is a meeting of Councillors that:

- 1 is scheduled or planned for the purpose of discussing the business of *Council* or briefing Councillors;
- 2 is attended by at least one member of Council staff; and
- 3 is not a *Council meeting*, *Delegated Committee* meeting or *Community Asset Committee* meeting, the *Chief Executive Officer* must ensure that a summary of the matters discussed at the meeting are:
  - a) tabled at the next convenient *Council meeting*; and
  - b) recorded in the minutes of that *Council meeting*.

#### DISCUSSION

As a requirement of the Governance Rules, a summary of matters discussed at the Council Briefings held since the last Council Meeting are presented to Council and will be recorded in the minutes.

INFORMAL MEETINGS
Council Briefing held on 5 May 2021
Council Briefing held on 11 May 2021

#### KEY CONSIDERATIONS

##### *Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives*

5.1 Good Governance through leadership.

##### *Financial*

No financial impact for the receiving of Informal Meetings of Councillors.

##### *Policy/Relevant Law*

Reporting of Informal Meetings is in line with the requirements of the Governance Rules.

##### *Risk Assessment*

Following the requirements of the Governance Rules will ensure that Council meets its legislative requirements.

##### *Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement*

A summary of matters discussed at the Council Briefings are presented for community information.

**RECOMMENDATION**

*That the Informal Meetings of Councillors Report be received.*

**MOVED CR BURRIDGE  
SECONDED CR SANDERS**

**That the Informal Meetings of Councillors Report be received.**

**CARRIED /21**

**ATTACHMENTS**

The Summary of Council Briefings are provided as Attachment 4.1.



## Councillor Briefing



Date: Tuesday 11 May, 2021  
Commencement: 5.00 pm  
Location: Shire Hall- Ararat (Barkly St)

### Present

**Councillors:** Cr Jo Armstrong  
Cr Peter Beales  
Cr Gwenda Allgood  
Cr Rob Armstrong  
Cr Henry Burridge  
Cr Bob Sanders  
Cr Bill Waterston

**Officers:** CEO, Dr Tim Harrison

**Attendees:** Peter Vogel, Chairman, GWM Water  
Mark Taylor, Managing Director, GWM Water

### Apologies:

### Disclosure of Conflict of Interests

Disclosure of Interests are to be made immediately prior to any relevant item being discussed  
(*Local Government Act 2020 - Section 131 and Chapter 5, Section 6 of the Governance Rules*).

Absence from Room			
Item No.	Councillor	Before Discussion	During Discussion
		Yes / No	Yes / No
		pm - pm	pm - pm

### Matters Considered:

1	Presentation by GWM Water
2	Shire Hall Lease
3	Quarterly Financial Report March
4	Councillor Gift Policy – Minor Amendment
5	Community Vision/ Council Plan
6	VEC Council Election Report
7	Budget Question/Discussion
8	
9	
10	

Assembly Closed: 6:35 PM  
DR TIM HARRISON

## SECTION 5 – NOTICES OF MOTION

A *notice of motion* must be in writing signed by a Councillor and be lodged with or sent to the *Chief Executive Officer* no later than 12.00pm (noon) and at least six (6) days prior to the Council Meeting to allow sufficient time for the *Chief Executive Officer* to include the *notice of motion* in agenda papers for a *Council meeting*.

**There were no Notices of Motion received.**

## SECTION 6– URGENT BUSINESS

Items cannot be admitted as urgent business other than by resolution of *Council* and only then if it:

- 1 relates to or arises out of a matter which has arisen since distribution of the *agenda*; and
- 2 cannot safely or conveniently be deferred until the next *Council meeting*.

There were no Admission of Urgent Business items received.

## SECTION 7 – CLOSE SESSION (CONFIDENTIAL)

In accordance with section 66(2)(a), 3(1)(a) and 3(1)(g) of the Local Government Act 2020, the following agenda items are listed for consideration in the confidential section:

- Item 7.1- Contract No. 647- Provision of Municipal Building Surveyor services
- Item 7.2 – CEO Employment & Remuneration Committee update

### 6:27 PM CLOSURE OF COUNCIL MEETING TO THE PUBLIC

The Open Council Meeting will now be closed, but members of the public are welcome to rejoin the Council Meeting following the recommencement of the meeting.

#### RECOMMENDATION

*That the meeting be closed to members of the public pursuant to section 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020 to consider confidential reports.*

**MOVED CR BEALES  
SECONDED CR WATERSTON**

**That the meeting be closed to members of the public pursuant to section 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020 to consider confidential reports.**

**CARRIED 4445/21**

### 7:07 PM OPEN COUNCIL MEETING RECOMMENCEMENT

#### RECOMMENDATION

*That the Open Council Meeting recommence.*

**MOVED CR BEALES  
SECONDED CR WATERSTON**

**That the Open Council Meeting recommence.**

**CARRIED 4448/21**

**Gallery invited to return to Council Chamber.**

### LIFTING OF CONFIDENTIALITY OF CLOSED SESSION RESOLUTIONS

#### RECOMMENDATION

*That the Confidentiality of the report and decision in relation to Confidential Agenda*

- 1 *Item 7.1 be lifted; and*
- 2 *Item 7.2 not be lifted.*

MOVED CR SANDERS  
SECONDED CR BEALES

That the Confidentiality of the report and decision in relation to Confidential Agenda

- 1 Item 7.1 be lifted; and
- 2 Item 7.2 not be lifted.

CARRIED 4449/21

The following resolutions are extracted from the minutes of the Ararat Rural City Council Meeting IN Camera Session held on 18 May 2021. Any disclosures of interest, relevant to these items, are recorded in the Council Meeting In Camera minutes.

#### 7.1 CONTRACT NO. 647- PROVISION OF MUNICIPAL BUILDING SURVEYOR SERVICES

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: MANAGER PLANNING, COMMUNITY & COMPLIANCE  
DEPARTMENT: BUILDING  
REFERENCE: 2278

#### OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

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#### To be considered in camera

It is considered appropriate for this matter to be dealt with in camera pursuant to section 66(2)(a) and 3(1) (g) of the Local Government Act 2020 as it relates to a personnel contractual matter.

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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ararat Rural City Council seeks the services of an appropriately qualified and experienced Building Practitioner. The successful contractor will present professional expertise in the statutory requirements to be provided as a Municipal Building Surveyor and proactively undertake compliance with regulations of the Building Act. Services under this role will include, without limitation, the issuing of building permits for private and Council sponsored projects and actively carrying out field work and inspections.

The term of this contract will be for an initial two (2) years, with an option to extend for a further two x two-year options. This option is exercisable by Council only, at its sole discretion.

#### DISCUSSION

One (1) Tender was received and assessed in accordance with the evaluation method detailed in the tender offer.

- Fletcher Development Services

The Evaluation Panel have met and considered the tenders submitted. A copy of the Evaluation Panel Report is included in the *Confidential Tendering Attachment Booklet* which was provided to Councillor's for information.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

**Fletcher Development Services** was the only tender received for this service. Understanding that the services requested are of a unique nature and very difficult to obtain through the market, it was decided to interview the tenderer to gain an understanding of their capacity to meet Council's requirements.

The Manager of Planning, Community and Compliance and the Contracts and Procurement Coordinator met with the tenderer on Tuesday 4 May 2021. Discussions took place and the following details are provided:

- The tenderer is currently the Building Surveyor for our neighboring Council, Pyrenees Shire.
- Flexible with his time and wishes to be dynamic within the role – providing information when required not just on a given day within the office.
- Belief in good communication and working with community to achieve outcomes that meet the needs of the customer and legislative/regulative requirements.
- Has knowledge of our current system for processing of building requests and reports being 'Greenlight'.
- Willingness to build relationships across Councils to share information, practices and processes.
- Willing to work and mentor Council's Cadet Building Surveyor and provide her with guidance and by working with other Councils offering opportunities not available within this area.
- Able to commence as soon as Council requires.

After meeting with the representative from Fletcher Development Services, the panel are happy to recommend them for the contract as submitted and believe they will be a positive and dynamic attribute to the building team.

### *Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives*

- 1.2 Accessible, responsive and inclusive community services
- 5.1 Good governance through leadership
- 5.2 Services and infrastructure that meets the municipality's needs

### *Budget Implications*

Council has allocated \$120,000 in its 2020/2021 Budget for Building Control. The recommended tender is within budget.

### *Policy/Relevant Law*

- Council's Procurement Policy.
- Local Government Act 2020.

### *Sustainability Implications*

Not Applicable.

### *Risk Assessment*

Low Risk – Mitigated Risk assessment – risk will be managed through the project management process and contract administration.

### *Innovation and Continuous Improvement*

The building surveyor will provide continuous improvement to Council's current processes and flexibility within the building environment.

### *Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement*

Consultation internally has occurred through the budget process.



#### RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1 Council award the contract for the Provision of Municipal Building Surveyor Services (Contract No. 647) to Fletcher Development Services for the conforming tender price of \$80,000 per annum (ex GST);
- 2 The Chief Executive Officer sign the Contract Agreement when the documents are ready; and
- 3 The confidentiality of the report and decision be lifted on adoption of the motion.

#### MOVED CR BEALES SECONDED CR SANDERS

That:

- 1 Council award the contract for the Provision of Municipal Building Surveyor Services (Contract No. 647) to Fletcher Development Services for the conforming tender price of \$80,000 per annum (ex GST);
- 2 The Chief Executive Officer sign the Contract Agreement when the documents are ready; and
- 3 The confidentiality of the report and decision be lifted on adoption of the motion.

CARRIED 4446/21

#### ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments relating to this item.

Meeting closed at 7:08 PM

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT PAGES 2500 TO 2598 INCLUDING PAGES 180 TO 197 OF THE CLOSED SESSION ARE CONFIRMED AND ARE A TRUE AND CORRECT RECORD.

MAYOR - CR JO ARMSTRONG