



PROJECT IN FOCUS

Ararat Jobs & Technology Precinct

Council have secured a cutting-edge research partnership with Federation University Australia that will reactivate higher education in Ararat via the creation of the Ararat Jobs and Technology Precinct.

The landmark facility creates a technological research partnership and business incubator that increases value-added output in the local agriculture and manufacturing sectors.

Federation University will lead the project, reactivating its Campus facility in Laby Street, hosting senior researchers and Council's economic development team to align a collective focus on attracting investment and retaining profits here.

Council's 2021/2022 Budget provides \$60,000 to create 2 PhD scholarships. Combined with Federation University Australia's research commitment, expertise, and capabilities, it opens up new pathways to develop skills for the new economy through applied research, advanced training and technology transfer to local industries.

The research outcomes will address some of the most fundamentally important priorities to value-add in the agricultural sector

- On-farm and post-farm-gate digital technology such as software, mechanization, drone technology and robotics to improve efficiency and traceability.
- Support the development of artisan manufacturing and expanded local production, including breads and value-added butchery processing and packaging to grow the export value of locally sourced ingredients.
- Enhanced domestic and export supply chain and e-commerce pathways, as well as enhanced business cooperation and collaboration.
- Branding - value-based marketing to create an identifiable regional agricultural brand for producing a premium and sustainable product, aligned with destination and tourism marketing.
- Develop a bio-energy plant that develops an economy for the reuse of straw and stubble farm waste to create energy and supply cheap energy to local industry.

A Planning Framework that Grows Our Place and Supports Jobs



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.

We will do this through:

- Developing a new planning scheme for Ararat Rural City that is clear in its intention, supports growth and builds confidence and certainty around land use.
- Supporting innovative housing models that work to overcome market failure and create the capacity to increase the population of Ararat Rural City.
- Working 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.

Reduction in local community fees for using public spaces

Council has recognised in this Budget that community assets belong to you, and that's why we've significantly reduced venue hire fees for community use of public spaces, including Town Hall, Alexandra Oval Community Centre and Gum San Great Hall.

Additional hire fees for rehearsals and piano hire have been abolished at Town Hall, making the space more accessible for local performers including the Ararat Eisteddfod and Ararat Live.

We are also making our retail precincts more welcoming for residents and visitors by abolishing parking meter fees.

Community Facility Upgrades

Council's 2021/2022 Budget invests \$555,538 to modernise community facilities making them more inclusive for local clubs, volunteers and residents.

\$270,000 is allocated to Buangor Recreation Reserve and \$218,000 at the Lake Bolac Complex for kitchen renovations, and \$67,538 will deliver a minor refurbishment at Ararat Library.

Additional funding is also being delivered to undertake preliminary design work for the refurbishment of Lake Bolac Memorial Hall and a feasibility study for the redevelopment of the McDonald Centre (in partnership with Grampians Community Health).



Ararat Rural City

BUDGET 2021/2022

SNAPSHOT

Council's 2021/22 draft jobs building Budget works shoulder-to-shoulder with business and the community to accelerate our prosperity with investment in roads, infrastructure, and innovation.

REVENUE & RATING PLAN

The Revenue and Rating Plan establishes the revenue raising framework within which the Council proposes to work. The purpose of the plan is to determine the most appropriate and affordable revenue and rating approach for Council, which in conjunction with other income sources will adequately finance the objectives in the Council Plan 2021-2025.

CAPITAL WORKS INVESTMENT

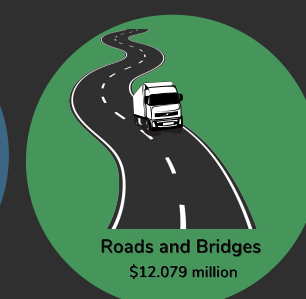
\$13.017 million invested in vital capital works projects, including new record levels of funding for roads and bridges (\$12.079 million) to keep people and freight moving; plus town infrastructure upgrades to footpaths and bicycle paths (\$0.265 million) and drainage (\$0.673 million).

1.5% RATE CUT




Council's 2021/22 Budget will decrease general rates by 1.5 percent. This has been achieved through organisational efficiency and will not affect the delivery of Council services.

Ararat is the only council in Victoria to achieve a net zero per cent rate increase over the past four years. This compares with the state average rate increase of 7.93% and the highest council rate increase over this same period totalling 18.19%.

DRAFT BUDGET 2021/2022 HIGHLIGHTS



ARARAT RATE CUT COMPARISON

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	NET INCREASE OVER 4 YEARS	
 ARARAT RURAL CITY	0.00%	2.50%	-1.00%	-1.50%	0.00%	✓
 STATE AVERAGE	2.26%	2.65%	1.63%	1.39%	7.93%	☹
 HIGHEST RATE RISE	2.25%	13.94%	2.00%	0.00%	18.19%	☹



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



I'm pleased to provide you with an overview of Council's 2021/2022 Budget.

This comes at a time when we have gone through an unprecedented period of challenges and uncertainty. I'm proud as a community we stood up declaring that we would be stronger together.

By looking out for each other - community, businesses and volunteers, we've actually achieved something unique, turning the challenge of the health crisis into an opportunity.

New jobs have been created, businesses are investing in plant and equipment and people are moving here in record number. Council's record pipeline of infrastructure investment is also supporting local jobs and supply chains.

We've stayed the course on reform, transforming Council into a lean and efficient organisation that concentrates on getting value for money for the people it represents.

This Budget delivers a 1.5% rate cut and stabilises the share of the total rating burden paid by residential, farm, commercial and industrial ratepayers.

Our prudent financial management has secured a surplus; new record investment in local roads and bridges totals \$12 million; fees for community use of Council facilities have been reduced; and iconic community infrastructure projects such as the Gordon Street Recreation Reserve Redevelopment will be delivered.

Mayor
Cr. Jo Armstrong

BIG TICKET INITIATIVES IN THIS YEAR'S BUDGET INCLUDE:

- Exploring public private partnerships to secure housing construction that supports an in-migration of workers to fill the local jobs available and grow our population.
- Designing a new planning scheme that takes a red carpet not red tape approach to securing new development and investment.
- Diversifying the local economy via research partnerships with Federation University to create value-added opportunities in agriculture and manufacturing that retain profits here.
- Driving growth in local tourism that yields high-value outcomes for the retail, hospitality, wine, recreation and cultural sectors.
- Improving our engagement with the community to increase transparency and public participation in decision making.
- Leading the way in the development of a circular economy strategy that enhances waste management services to ratepayers, including implementation of a green waste collection.



PROJECT IN FOCUS

Gordon Street Recreation Reserve Redevelopment



The project will transform the former Ararat Technical School Oval into a premium regional sporting facility.

Council's 2021/2022 Budget commits \$3.224 million to deliver the multi-purpose redevelopment of the Gordon Street Recreation Reserve.

Funding of \$2.55 million from the Victorian Government and \$400,000 from the Australian Government enables Council to transform the reserve, delivering an iconic new and inclusive female friendly sporting venue for Ararat.

A new pavilion and spectator area, soccer pitches, track and field playing surfaces, and an enhanced AFL/Cricket oval, addresses a facilities gap for a number of underrepresented sports.

An AFLW centre of excellence will see the Ararat Storm Female Football Club continue their extraordinary record of developing players onto pathways with league clubs.

Receiving the endorsement of AFL Victoria and Football Victoria, competitions and league development will be programmed at Gordon Street. This will position Ararat as Western Victoria's home of AFLW and Soccer.

Cricket pathways to the state and national level are a priority, with new premium turf wickets fostering junior development and participation, lifting the standard for access and inclusion for young people.

New track and field infrastructure offers a major boost for Ararat Little Athletics, providing a new 6-lane turf sprint track, plus long, jump, triple jump, high jump, javelin, shot put and discus, as well as shared access to the main oval.

Local schools will also benefit with access to multiple playing surfaces to support training and hosting inter-school sporting carnivals.

Council would like to give special thanks to Ararat Storm, Chalambar and St Andrews Cricket Clubs, the Grampians Cricket Association, Ararat & District Little Athletics Club and the state sporting associations for their enormous input into the co-design process.

NEW RECORD LEVELS OF FUNDING TO UPGRADE LOCAL ROADS AND BRIDGES

Council's 2021/2022 Budget continues our record level of investment to upgrade and renew local roads and bridges totalling \$12.079 million.

Aarat Rural City Council's Roads Renewal Plan has identified the roads which need to be upgraded and reconstructed based on road condition, the class of the road and strategic importance for farming, our townships and tourism.



Key upgrades in the 2021/22 works program include:

Back Bolac Road \$1.4 million

Yarram Gap Road \$439,000

Delacombe Way \$478,000

Helendoite Road \$1.6 million

Chatsworth-Wickliffe Road \$852,000

Darlington-Nerrin Road \$1 million

Chatsworth-Lake Bolac Road \$836,000

Wilson Street \$609,000

Tobin Street \$381,000

Gravel Road Resheeting \$1.5 million

Reseal Program \$1.5 million

Sealed Road Shoulders \$500,000

Pollands Bridge \$650,000