



AGENDA  
of the  
SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL  
To be held on  
WEDNESDAY 3 AUGUST 2016  
in the  
ALEXANDRA CHAMBERS  
commencing at  
6.00 pm

## INDEX

<b>1.</b>	<b>PRAYER, OATH &amp; RECONCILIATION STATEMENT .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES AND REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST OR CONFLICT OF INTEREST .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>OFFICER REPORTS.....</b>	<b>2</b>
4.1	Adoption of Council Budget 2016-2017 .....	2
4.2	Adoption of Council Plan 2013-2017 (Including Strategic Resource Plan) Final Year Review .....	7

**1. PRAYER, OATH & RECONCILIATION STATEMENT****2. APOLOGIES AND REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

REF: SF/306

**3. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST OR CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

REF: SF/783

**4. OFFICER REPORTS****4.1 ADOPTION OF COUNCIL BUDGET 2016-2017**

Attachments: Murrindindi Shire Council - Adoption Copy – Budget 2016-17 (refer *Attachment 4.1* – TRIM 16/39018)

***Purpose:***

This report provides the draft 2016-2017 Council Budget for adoption by Council.

***Officer Recommendation:***

That having given notice under section 129 of the *Local Government Act 1989* and invited and considered submissions under Section 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, the Council hereby resolves:

1. That the 2016-2017 Budget be adopted as generally exhibited and as attached as *Attachment 4.1*.
2. That responses to issues contained within the four (4) submissions received, in respect of the draft 2016-2017 Budget, be issued by the Manager Business Services.
3. That the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to give public notice of this decision to adopt the 2016-2017 Budget, in accordance with Section 130(2) of the *Local Government Act 1989*.
4. To confirm the differential rates as detailed in the Budget document per *Attachment 4.1*.
5. That the rates officers of Council be authorised to levy and recover the differential rates so declared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989*.
6. That Council note the due dates for instalments will be as follows:
  - 30 September 2016
  - 30 November 2016
  - 28 February 2017
  - 31 May 2017

***Background:***

Council endorsed the Draft 2016-2017 Budget for public consultation at a Special Meeting on 15 June 2016. Consultation in accordance with Section 127 of the *Local Government Act 1989* has

taken place. The Budget document was placed on public exhibition at all Council offices, on Council's website and was advertised in the local newspapers in accordance with the Council resolution.

**Council Plan/Strategies:**

The preparation of the Annual Budget is consistent with the Council Plan 2013-2017 strategic objective to use sound financial management practices.

**Legal/Policy Issues:**

The adoption of the Budget is a statutory requirement of the *Local Government Act 1989* and sets the financial framework in which Council will operate for the 2016-17 financial year.

**Financial/Resources/Risk:**

Adoption of the 2016-2017 Budget is an essential part of strong corporate governance.

**Consultation:**

The 2016-2017 Budget was advertised for public consultation and submissions in the following publications:

<b>Newspaper / Other</b>	<b>Publishing Date (s)</b>
Alexandra Standard	21-Jun-16
Yea Chronicle	21-Jun-16
Marysville Triangle	22-Jun-16
North Central Review	20-Jun-16
Website	20-Jun-16
Copies at Council offices: Alexandra, Kinglake, Yea and also Eildon Resource Centre & Marysville Visitor Information Centre	20-Jun-16

The budget was on public display for 28 days in accordance with statutory obligations, prior to the Special Meeting of 27 July 2016 to consider and hear public submissions. Council also held two public information sessions in Kinglake and Alexandra during July 2016 to allow members of the public to hear further details about the Budget and Council Plan.

**Discussion:**

For 2016/2017, the Budget has identified total operating expenditure of \$32.82 million against forecast revenue of \$32.82 million, which will generate a breakeven operating result. Rate revenue is forecast to increase, incorporating the recent changes to the differential rating structure approved by Council as well as incorporating the decision of the Essential Services Commission (ESC) to allow for a 4.3% increase in the average rate rise. It should be noted that a revaluation of all properties within the municipality has occurred which will take effect from 1 July 2016, though this does not result in Council being able to generate higher rating revenue.

The decision by the ESC provides for the 2.5 percent rate increase set by the Minister for Local Government under the rate cap for the maintenance of current service delivery levels by Council and an additional 1.8 percent increase in order to continue making provision for asset renewal. This variation approval recognised the underlying funding need to support (although not fully addressing) the future renewal requirements of public infrastructure within the Shire and the financially responsible and prudent approach that Council is taking to managing this challenging issue.

This decision by the ESC recognises Council's approach to long term financial planning and strategic asset management in ensuring that Council is raising sufficient funds to not only meet

its annual services and infrastructure requirements but also that funds can be held in reserve for known future capital renewal of the community infrastructure that is already in place.

Therefore for the 2016/17 year, service levels have been maintained and a limited number of initiatives proposed, in addition to Council reviewing the costs and affordability of managing the renewal of its assets.

Highlights of the \$7.15 million capital works program that are included in this year's draft Budget include:

- Widespread road upgrades and footpath restoration across the Shire.
- Swimming pool renewal works in Alexandra, Eildon and Marysville.
- Substantial renewal of a number of bridges and culverts across the Shire, including work on Old Yarck Road, Maintongoon Road, Brooks Cutting Bridge, Acheron Road Bridge, Dairy Creek Road Bridge, Dyes Lane Bridge and Dropmore Bridge.
- Public conveniences renewal in Kinglake, Yea and Alexandra.
- Continuation of renewal and upgrade works on a new cell at the Alexandra Landfill.
- Upgrade to the flood levee in Buxton.
- Shade sail and playground equipment renewal.
- Upgrade to the Leckie Park pavilion in Alexandra.

### **Public Submissions**

Four submissions were received in relation to the Draft 2016-2017 Budget. All submissions were provided in full to Council and considered at the Special Meeting of Council on 27 July 2016.

The general tenor of the budget submissions received can be summarised as follows and comments are provided to inform Council's consideration of the budget's content:

### **Summary of Submissions:**

#### **Submitter 1**

The submission raises many questions, those specifically related to the budget include:

- Other Income is budgeted \$1,107,000 what is that other income and why it is not detailed?
- Employee cost is budgeted at \$13,866,000 and on page 30 under Section 3.4 flows from operating activities is shown as \$13,615,000. Why is that different?
- Rates and charges are shown \$19,102,000. In Section 3.1 they are shown as \$19,237,000, which do we believe is the correct figure?
- Motor vehicles and plant, cost is shown \$939,000. Can you please explain in more details what motor vehicles and for what use and what plant is going to be purchased?
- Public Convenience Renewal in Leckie Park is shown to cost \$89,000. What works will be done?
- Leckie Park Pavilion cost is shown \$50,000. What will be done there?
- Utilities are budgeted \$538,000, What items, goods are there?
- Legal Expenses are budgeted to \$241,000. In year 2015/2016 it was \$248,000. Please let me know examples of cases and the reasons for legal expenditure?

- Consultants are budgeted for \$246,000 again can I please see some examples for last fiscal year, for what works, services were consultants paid?
- Roads, Streets and Bridges for repairs or maintenance should be named and where they are. I feel that ratepayers/residents are entitled to know where the works are to be done.
- At the information session on the budget, the Councillor Margaret Rae commented that the Council has to prepare the budget to satisfy government regulations. How about sharing those regulations with us, the ratepayers, so we can see what is required of the council to inform and declare to the ratepayers/residents in the budget.

### **Comment**

The comparisons of various figures made by the submitter relate to differences between the operating statement and the cashflow statement, which represent different accounting treatments. Items that appear in the operating statement represent when the activity occurred, but may not be recorded in the cashflow statement due to timing differences (eg. Rates are raised within one financial year, but are not collected until the following financial year if they are not paid on time).

Council's budget documentation has been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and with reference to the Chartered Accountants ANZ "Victorian City Council Model Budget 2016/2017", a best practice guide for reporting local government budgets in Victoria.

Details relating to the various capital projects raised by the submitter, as well as clarification on other operating expenditure will be addressed in the response provided to the submitter pending Council's consideration of the submission.

### **Submitter 2**

The second submission raises many questions and discussion points, those specifically related to the budget include:

- It seems Council is putting money into reserves for future servicing and maintenance of assets while also obtaining loans that are to be paid for by future ratepayers. Why is this?
- By offsetting the Rural sector by placing a higher rate on residential, commercial and Industrial ratepayers thus causing disharmony and disparity between these ratepayers, pitting one against the other and using the excuse that the rural sector has further to travel is seriously erroneous as we both know there are many small hamlets who have to travel for services.
- A number of clarifications are also sought regarding the calculation of rates in the dollar, rate revenue, supplementary rates and employee numbers.

### **Comment**

Details relating to the various operational matters raised by the submitter, as well as clarification on the use of financial reserves to fund various projects and future requirements will be addressed in the response provided to the submitter pending Council's consideration of the submission.

### **Submitter 3**

The submission raises many questions and discussion points, those specifically related to the budget include:

- MSC states that we are have a 4.3% rate rise but this is not the case. Without consultation the shire has reduced the rural rate, therefore ordinary people will have to pay a higher percentage to cover this. The shire should not have implemented this

before consulting with the ratepayers and the policy being publicly exhibited. All changes should have been part of the budget process.

- One of the biggest parts of the budget is the 42% spent on wages. This is a very high figure for a small rural shire. So the shire should not be awarding pay rises at this time, as many ratepayers have not had pay rises to help us pay our rates.
- The shire is calculating depreciation, but needs to declare how much is in the fund, where is located and is in an investment account earning interest. If it is not it should be. It certainly does not show up on cash and investments as this decreases this financial year.
- The submitter also raises a number of questions about a list of capital works projects that are included in the budget, including Yea Shire Hall, Leckie Park, Kinglake Memorial Reserve and the Council offices in Alexandra.
- At the tip there seems to be problems with people being charged different rates. Also the shire needs to enforce that non-residents are charged the different rate.
- The shire states we need to all pay more. They need to declare what more is.

### **Comment**

Council rates will rise on average by 4.3% in 2016/17. As detailed in the budget, as 2016/17 is a revaluation year, individual properties will vary to the average rate of 4.3% dependant on the variance in individual property prices to the total increase across the Shire. Additional supplementary rate revenue of \$154,769 is also budgeted to be collected, but this only relates to additional rates paid by properties that are developed or built in the Shire during 2016/17, ie. it is representative of growth. Supplementary rate revenue increases the total amount of revenue collected by Council, but does not affect the average rate rise of 4.3% that is applied across all properties.

Council's budgeted employee costs are comparable to other rural Councils. As a service provider, be it for community services, maintenance of public facilities or the renewal of public roads, these services are undertaken by people employed by Council. Council renegotiated its Enterprise Bargaining Agreement in 2015, reducing the annual employee cost increases.

Depreciation is an accounting treatment that represents the financial cost associated with the deterioration of an asset. This is not a cash item, although Council's strategy of ensuring that funds are available for the future renewal of existing infrastructure does require revenue to be continually invested to ensure that Council is best placed to manage its longer term public infrastructure obligations. All Council investments are held in interest earning accounts. Council's budget also projects a total increase of cash and investments of \$1.924 million throughout 2016/17.

Council has extensively reviewed the waste charges for the Resource Recovery Centre and transfer stations for 2016/17.

Council's rate increase of 4.3% for 2016/17 has been independently reviewed and approved by the Essential Services Commission. As stated in the budget documentation, this is only valid for one year and any future increases above the rate cap set by the Minister for Local Government would require further consultation, review and ultimate approval by the ESC.

### **Submitter 4**

The submission raises many questions and discussion points, those specifically related to the budget include:

- Was it necessary to apply to the Essential Services Commission for variation to increase rate cap?

- All properties are revalued in 2016 which adds to Council revenue.
- Make staff more efficient and accountable with new computer systems and phones.
- Freeze wages for 5 years.
- No reduction to home care and maintenance services. Hours should be increased where required.
- Four rate notices are received per year in the mail resulting in high administration costs.

### **Comment**

Council has attempted to prepare a budget for 2016/17 that results in the continuation of all services presently enjoyed by the community, as well as continuing its commitment to responsibly manage the ongoing renewal of public infrastructure under its control. To meet these obligations, Council was unable to contain rate increases to the cap of 2.5% that was set by the Minister for Local Government in December 2015 and thus successfully sought a variation to this figure through the Essential Services Commission. This variation only applies to 2016/17 and will require further review for future years.

All properties within the Shire were revalued for rating purposes for the 2016/17, in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Local Government Act. However, a revaluation does not result in Councils being able to collect additional revenue, it only effects the distribution of the total rate increase across all properties.

Council continues to invest in improving its technology systems to ensure efficient services to the community. \$173,000 has been allocated in the capital budget for 2016/17 to provide for the renewal and upgrade of Council's IT systems and computer hardware.

Council renegotiated the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement for all employees during the 2015/16 financial year which resulted in lowered annual increases for staff. The agreement is next due to be reviewed in 2018.

Council has not changed its commitment to the provision of home care and maintenance services. Balancing the costs associated with the delivery of this service to correspond with the need of the community is considered in the development of the budget each year, as it is for all services provided by Council.

Council is required under legislation to issue rate notices for each rate amount due to be paid by ratepayers to Council. For ratepayers that elect to pay via quarterly instalment, Council must issue them with a quarterly rate notice to comply with legislation, and to assist in the timely payment of rates to Council.

### ***Conclusion:***

Having considered submissions from ratepayers it is now appropriate that Council adopt the 2016-2017 Budget..

## **4.2 ADOPTION OF COUNCIL PLAN 2013-2017 (INCLUDING STRATEGIC RESOURCE PLAN) FINAL YEAR REVIEW**

Attachments: Council Plan 2013 – 2017 Exhibition Draft 2016 Review inc SRP (refer *Attachment 4.2 – TRIM 16/29951*)



**Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to complete the statutory process for adoption of the review of the Council Plan 2013-2017 and Strategic Resource Plan (SRP).

**Officer Recommendation:**

**That under section 223 of the Local Government Act 1989 Council resolves:**

- 1. To adopt the Council Plan 2013-2017 (Final Year Review) and the accompanying Strategic Resource Plan as exhibited and as attached as *Attachment 4.2*.**
- 2. That the statutory processes under Sections 125 and 126 of the Act be completed.**

**Background:**

In accordance with Section 125 of the Local Government Act 1989 ('the Act'), Council must review and approve its four (4) year Council Plan and if necessary amend the plan. Any changes must then be exhibited for public comment and submissions.

Council is also required to prepare as part of the Council Plan a four (4) year SRP and review this plan annually. The SRP contains four financial documents:

- Standard Income Statement,
- Standard Balance Sheet,
- Standard Cash Flow Statement, and
- Standard Statement of Capital Works.

**Council Plan/Strategies:**

The Council Plan 2013-2017 is the key planning document which translates Council's obligations under the *Local Government Act 1989* into strategies and actions. Specifically the plan:

- Guides Council's strategic direction;
- Identifies Council priorities and strategic indicators; and
- Contributes to the development of the annual budget

The Council Plan 2013-2017 is a key document for local community groups, residents, investors, and other levels of government who play a vital role in helping the Council to deliver on its commitments. It sets out what Council expects to achieve over a four year period and guides the allocation of finances through the Strategic Resource Plan.

**Legal/Policy Issues:**

The requirement for the Council Plan 2013-2017 inclusive of Strategic Resource Plan is detailed under Sections 125 and 126 of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

The Plan is reviewed annually.

**Financial/Resources/Risk:**

The final year of the Council Plan 2013-2017 and Strategic Resource Plan continues to be conservative in its scope of discretionary spending, whilst balancing Council's requirement to adhere to the rate cap variation of 4.3% that was approved by the Essential Services Commission with regards to rate increases for 2016-17, providing a responsible and viable financial plan for the ensuing years.

**Consultation:**

The 2013-17 Council Plan and Strategic Resource Plan were advertised for public consultation and submissions in the following publications:

<b>Newspaper / Other</b>	<b>Publishing Date (s)</b>
Alexandra Standard	21-Jun-16
Yea Chronicle	21-Jun-16
Marysville Triangle	22-Jun-16
North Central Review	20-Jun-16
Website	20-Jun-16
Copies at Council offices: Alexandra, Kinglake, Yea and also Eildon Resource Centre & Marysville Visitor Information Centre	20-Jun-16

No submissions from the public were received in regard to the Council Plan and Strategic Resource Plan.

The Council Plan review and Strategic Resource Plan were on public display for 28 days in accordance with statutory obligations, prior to the Special Meeting of 27 July 2016 to consider and hear public submissions. Council also held two public information sessions in Kinglake and Alexandra during July to allow members of the public to come and hear further details about the budget and Council Plan.

**Discussion:**

The review of the Council Plan (2013-17) maintains the key strategies aligned to the four goal themes of Council, namely:

- Our Council
- Our Community
- Our Environment
- Our Economy

With some minor exceptions, it is proposed that the strategic objectives and strategies remain unchanged from 2015/2016. The proposed Year Four Actions have been updated to reflect anticipated progress on implementing the Council Plan as at 30 June 2016. Key actions proposed for 2016/17 include the following:

- Commence community engagement to identify required service levels across all Council services.
- Implement Council's strategy to give greater responsibility to communities for managing infrastructure.
- Undertake an assessment of community needs in order to progress development of Council's Recreation and Open Space Strategy.
- Implement a youth engagement program to encourage all young people to participate in their community and to support youth leadership skills development.
- Develop a Business Case which investigates viable options to increase the recovery of household and commercial food and organic waste.
- Provide opportunities for mobile phone providers to establish the provision of additional infrastructure to address the blackspots in Murrindindi Shire.
- Complete the project to expand the Yea Saleyards.

The 2013-2017 Strategic Resource Plan and 2016/2017 Budget are based upon the following key assumptions in the 10 year timeframe:

- An increase in the average rate had been initially forecast at 5.5% for 2016/17 in the second year review of the SRP, though this was reduced to 5.4% at the time of the submission of the application to the Essential Service Commission (ESC) seeking an exemption from the rate cap for 2016/17. The decision of the ESC to provide a 1.8% additional rate increase to fund future renewal has been reflected in the annual budget for 2016/17 as well as throughout the life of this SRP.
- An additional 1% growth of the rate base is factored in each year.
- For 2016/17, \$282,000 of the general rate increase has been allocated to an Infrastructure Reserve following the endorsement of Council's approach to managing its long term asset renewal by the Essential Services Commission.
- The organisational establishment is anticipated to remain static in 2016/17. No other service level changes have been considered in the longer term financial plan for Council.
- Limited new initiatives or programs other than those that have been included in the 10 year capital improvement plan are proposed.
- Operating and capital savings from the Murrindindi Services Review have been factored in over successive years.
- The maintenance and operating costs of assets have now been reduced based on revised lower service level expectations, following the decision by State Government to not provide any further funding to Council to manage and operate these assets and in light of the recent decision by the ESC regarding Council's rate rise for 2016/17.
- Capital works will occur in accordance with the Ten Year Capital Improvement program.
- Provision has been made for the last three financial years to expense \$300,000 as a contingency for future defined benefits superannuation calls and to quarantine this until such time as a call is made on Council. For 2016/17, this provision will be reduced to \$150,000, with a further provision of \$150,000 to occur in 2017/18.

**Conclusion:**

Council has complied with Sections 125, 126 and 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989* and it is now appropriate that the updated Council Plan 2013-2017 and SRP be adopted.