



Murrindindi
Shire Council

Annual Report 2011 - 2012

Contents

About this Annual Report	2
Contact us	2
Murrindindi snapshot	3
Our history	3
Message from the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer	
John Walsh, Mayor	4
Margaret Abbey, Chief Executive Officer	4
Councillors	5
Our organisation	7
Organisational Structure	8
2011-2012 – the year in review	9
Calendar of events	12
Financial overview 2011-2012	14
Performance reporting	15
Theme 1 - Governance	16
Theme 2 - Community	18
Theme 3 – Local Economy	21
Theme 4 – Climate Change & Natural Environment	25
Theme 5 – Planning and Environment	28
Theme 6 – Infrastructure	32
Theme 7 – Corporate Development	37
Corporate Development - Our Organisation	41
Capital works summary 2011-2012	50
National Competition Policy Compliance	53
Introduction to the Financials	54



About this Annual Report

The *Murrindindi Shire Council Annual Report 2011-2012* details the progress we have made in the past financial year, 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012, towards achieving the activities of the *Council Plan 2009–2013* and the *2011-2012 Annual Budget*.

In this report we identify our achievements, challenges and what is planned for the year ahead for seven themes of Governance, Community, Local Economy, Climate Change and Natural Environment, Planning and Environment, Infrastructure and Corporate Development.

The *Annual Report 2011-2012* also contains audited financial reports and performance statements, which are a requirement of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

The *Annual Report 2011-2012* is written for a variety of audiences including government agencies, the community, ratepayers and businesses. Copies of the *Annual Report 2011-2012* are available at council offices or online at www.murrindindi.vic.gov.au

We encourage you to tell us how we can improve our reporting to you. If you have any comments or suggestions please write to the Chief Executive Officer, Murrindindi Shire Council, PO Box 138, Alexandra 3714 or email msc@murrindindi.vic.gov.au

Further copies or questions?

If you would like additional copies of the *Murrindindi Shire Council Annual Report 2011-2012* or you have any questions about this report, please send your enquiry by email to msc@murrindindi.vic.gov.au or mail to Chief Executive Officer, Murrindindi Shire Council, PO Box 138, Alexandra 3714.

Contact us

Alexandra
28 Perkins Street, Alexandra
Ph: (03) 5772 0333 Fax: (03) 5772 2291

Kinglake
19 Whittlesea-Kinglake Road, Kinglake
Ph: (03) 5786 1522 Fax: (03) 5786 1515

Yea
Civic Centre, Semi Circle, Yea
Ph: (03) 5797 2209 Fax: (03) 5797 2900

msc@murrindindi.vic.gov.au
www.murrindindi.vic.gov.au

Murrindindi snapshot



Our history

The Wurundjeri tribe and the Taungurung language speakers are the traditional owners of the land known as the Shire of Murrindindi.

European settlement followed Hume and Hovell's overland exploration in December 1824. Many local towns were established during the 1850s and 1860s after the discovery of gold.

The Murrindindi Shire Council was declared on 18 November 1994 by the amalgamation of the former municipalities of Alexandra and Yea, and the addition of parts of the former municipalities of Healesville, Broadford, Eltham, Whittlesea and Euroa.

Council services offered

- Tourism and Economic Development
- Events management
- Waste management
- Environmental services
- Land use, development and subdivisions
- Building control
- Aged and Disability services
- Youth and Recreational development
- Public Health
- Libraries
- Roads and bridges
- Children and family services
- Community Development

Industries

- Agriculture, aquaculture, horticulture and viticulture
- Forestry and timber processing
- Tourism, hospitality and conferencing
- Light manufacturing and engineering
- Retail and trade services
- Education
- Public services

Our shire

Location: 150 kms or 90 minutes north east of Melbourne

Area: 3,889 sq kms (48% Crown Land)

Population: 13,058 (2011 Australian Bureau of Statistics)

Councillors: 7

Rateable properties: 9470

Sealed roads (Council maintained): 482 kms

Unsealed roads (Council maintained): 714 kms

Townships

- Acheron • Alexandra • Buxton • Flowerdale • Glenburn
- Gobur • Highlands • Homewood • Kanumbra • Kinglake
- Kinglake West • Koriella • Limestone • Marysville
- Molesworth • Murrindindi • Narbethong • Rubicon
- Strath Creek • Taggerty • Terip Terip • Thornton
- Toolangi • Woodbourne • Yarck • Yea

Mission

To care for, foster and promote the Murrindindi Shire in partnership with communities and other stakeholders.

Vision

Murrindindi will be a vibrant and progressive shire, with strong communities thriving within a healthy environment.

Values

- Honesty and Integrity - We will be open and truthful in our dealings.
- Accountability and Consistency - We will accept responsibility for our actions and be consistent in the application of our principles, policies and processes.
- Innovation and Excellence - We will consider new ideas, opportunities and better ways of doing things.
- Respect and Trust - We will respect other people and their opinions and do as we say we will.

Message from the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer



We are pleased to present the 2011/12 Murrindindi Shire Council Annual Report.

We can look back over the last 12 months and confidently say there has been significant achievement in focusing Murrindindi Shire firmly on the future.

No doubt we have faced some immense challenges, had some outstanding successes and laid the foundations for a financially viable Council that is here to serve its community.

We have seen a united Council make some key, but difficult decisions in taking an in-depth review of our own operations. The decision wasn't taken lightly and importantly was embraced by the staff who have assisted with the thorough financial examination that has seen a shift in the way we do business.

To fully implement such a services review we sought external, independent advice. That advice resulted in the development of a four point action plan that has the potential to achieve more than \$1.6 million in savings every year, as well as providing a one-off capital injection of \$4.45 million.

The changes have resulted in a reduction in staff numbers and a redefinition in how we deliver services to our community.

It has been a year where we have advocated strongly on behalf of our community for State Government assistance in meeting our on-going financial costs for the operation and maintenance of the novated and gifted assets as the result of the 2009 fires.

Council believes that it is unreasonable to expect the

Murrindindi Shire community to bear the full costs arising from the new and upgraded facilities but is prepared to take its share of responsibility for the long term financial health of the Council and region.

We accepted direct responsibility for more than \$31 million in new or replacement buildings, recreation facilities and bridges with the completion of the bushfire reconstruction and the transfer of project management from the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority (VBRRA) to Council.

Through the initial support of VBRRA we engaged international accountant and auditor KPMG to develop a report that highlighted Council's financial capabilities and what was needed in terms of external assistance going forward to meet our on-going infrastructure and maintenance costs.

This report delivered a frank assessment that outlined the need for change and external support. We have made representation to the Department of Planning and Community Development seeking further State Government support. It is a challenge that will continue to be faced by a new Council, but one that this Council has laid strong foundations to provide a comprehensive case for assistance.

Importantly, this period has been supported by our community. There is no doubt that we have had considerable debate and dialogue regarding our actions, but following significant consultation, the community recognised our position, put forward ideas and continues to work with Council in bringing about the best for Murrindindi Shire.

It has been a year where the natural elements that define our shire have been reinvigorated. Good snow fall and a near capacity Lake Eildon as well as communities proud to highlight their wonderful attractions have seen many people come and visit – to see what is great about our shire. Our events support and partnerships with community groups have also been a significant driver of visitation.

The official opening of the Goulburn River High Country Rail Trail is expected to bring a new era for tourism and business opportunities across our shire. Work continues to develop on the Yea Wetlands E Discovery Centre that will also be a significant drawcard to the region into the future.

Adverse weather continued to provide challenges and severe storms and significant rain events during the past 12 months certainly placed pressure on our outdoor staff, who rose to the occasion to ensure roads and infrastructure remained accessible.

Fostering and developing our leaders of the future has been recognised with the adoption of our Murrindindi Youth Strategy. This important strategy recognises our responsibility to consider the needs of young people as we continue to develop as a community.

The strength, resilience and mateship – the fabric of any community – was emphasised with the awarding of National Emergency Medals in January. These important medals, in recognition of the work and volunteerism of so many in the region during the February 2009 bushfires, were presented in Flowerdale by Prime Minister Julia Gillard.

We are a shire that is willing to give a helping hand no matter what the situation. It is what makes this place great.

We are not defined by the 2009 bushfires, we are defined by the actions in supporting others; making welcoming, supportive and engaging communities.

The Council will continue to face hurdles, but we know by working together we can make good things happen.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "John Walsh".

John Walsh, Mayor

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Margaret Abbey".

Margaret Abbey, Chief Executive Officer

Councillors



Cr John Walsh, Mayor, Koriella Ward

Townships: Yarck, Cathkin, Molesworth, Limestone, Highlands, Gobur
First elected November 2008
Portfolio: The Mayor does not hold a portfolio.

The Mayor is Chair of meetings of the Murrindindi Shire Council and represents Murrindindi Shire Council on the following advisory committees and external organisations:

- Audit Advisory Committee
- CEO Performance Review Sub-Committee
- Central Ranges Local Learning and Employment Network (CRLLEN)
- Economic Development Advisory Committee
- Linking Murrindindi Partnership
- Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)
- MAV Human Services Committee
- Municipal Fire Prevention Committee
- Murrindindi Scenic Reserve Committee of Management
- Peri Urban Group of Rural Councils
- Timber Roads Advisory Committee (TIRES)
- Timber Towns Victoria (TTV)
- Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA)
- Yea Cemetery Trust
- Yea Saleyards Committee of Management



Cr Christopher Healy, Deputy Mayor, Eildon Ward

Townships: Thornton, Eildon
First elected November 2005
Portfolio: Infrastructure & Assets

The Deputy Mayor represents Murrindindi Shire Council on the following advisory committees and external organisations:

- Advancing Country Towns Strategic Steering Group
- CEO Performance Review Sub-Committee
- Eildon Alliance Boat Ramp Committee of Management
- Eildon Community Resource Centre Committee of Management
- Goulburn River High Country Rail Trail Steering Committee
- Lake Eildon Public Use Liaison Committee (LEPULC)
- Peri Urban Group of Rural Councils
- Yea Cemetery Trust



Cr Sally Abbott Smith, Cheviot Ward

Townships: Yea, Strath Creek, Flowerdale
First elected November 2008
Portfolio: Climate Change and Natural Environment

Cr Abbott Smith represents Murrindindi Shire Council on the following advisory committees and external organisations:

- Communications Advisory Group
- Flowerdale Public Hall Reserve Committee of Management
- Friends of Yea Railway Committee of Management
- Goulburn Broken Greenhouse Alliance (GBGA)
- Goulburn River High Country Rail Trail Steering Committee
- ICLEI
- Moores Road Reserve Committee of Management
- MAV Environment Committee
- MAV Transport & Infrastructure Committee
- Murrindindi Heritage Study Steering Advisory Committee
- Murrindindi Environment Advisory Committee
- Strath Creek Pioneer Reserve (Strath Creek Recreation Reserve)
- Victorian Local Sustainability Accord
- Yea Cemetery Trust
- Yea Indoor Recreation Centre Committee of Management
- Yea Pioneer Reserve Committee of Management
- Yea Shire Hall Committee of Management
- Yea Showgrounds & Recreation Reserve Committee of Management
- Yea Wetlands Committee of Management

Councillors



Cr Peter Beales, Kinglake Ward

Townships: Kinglake, Toolangi
First elected March 1997
Mayor 1999-2001, 2009-2011
Portfolio: Economic Development and Tourism

Cr Beales represents Murrindindi Shire Council on the following advisory committees and external organisations:

- C J Dennis & Castella Public Hall Reserve
- Community Building Initiative Advisory Committee
- CEO Performance Review Sub-committee
- Economic Development Advisory Committee
- Kinglake Community Centre Committee of Management
- MAV Emergency Management Reference Group
- Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
- Yea Cemetery Trust



Cr Kevin Bellingham, Cathedral Ward

Townships: Taggerty, Buxton, Marysville, Narbethong
First elected 1997 / Re-elected November 2008
Portfolio: Corporate Services

Cr Bellingham represents Murrindindi Shire Council on the following advisory committees and external organisations:

- Audit Advisory Committee
- Alexandra Racecourse & Recreation Reserve Committee of Management
- Buxton Recreation Reserve Committee of Management
- Communications Advisory Group
- Gallipoli Park Committee of Management
- Marysville Retirement Village Committee of Management
- Marysville Retirement Village Residents Association Inc
- Marysville Community Liaison Group
- Murrindindi Heritage Study Steering Advisory Committee
- Steavenson Falls Scenic Reserve Committee of Management
- Yea Cemetery Trust



Cr Robert Flowers, Redgate Ward

Township: Alexandra
First elected November 2005
Mayor 2006-07
Portfolio: Planning and Environment

Cr Flowers represents Murrindindi Shire Council on the following advisory committees and external organisations:

- Advancing Country Towns Strategic Steering Group
- Alexandra Community Leisure Centre Committee of Management
- Alexandra Tennis Club
- Alexandra Showgrounds & Recreation Reserve Committee of Management
- Alexandra Police & Community Consultative Committee
- Goulburn Valley Regional Waste Management Authority
- Mount Pleasant Reserve Committee of Management
- Murrindindi Heritage Study Steering Advisory Committee
- MAV Planning Committee
- Murrindindi Environment Advisory Committee
- Yea Cemetery Trust



Cr Cris Ruhr, King Parrot Ward

Townships: Hazeldene, Glenburn, Kinglake West, Pheasant Creek
First elected March 2010
Portfolio: Community and Customer Service

Cr Ruhr represents Murrindindi Shire Council on the following advisory committees and external organisations:

- Bollygum Park Reserve Committee of Management
- Glenburn Community Centre Committee of Management
- Kinglake Memorial Reserve Committee of Management
- Yea Cemetery Trust

Our organisation



Chief Executive Officer

Margaret Abbey

Bachelor of Arts (Hons), Master of Town and Country Planning, Diploma of Management and Ord 4 (Cert) NSW

Margaret joined Murrindindi Shire Council on 28 June 2010 with 26 years of local government experience.

In her role as Chief Executive Officer Margaret is the link between Council and the organisation and Council delegates a number of powers to the CEO to ensure that she has the necessary authority to fulfill her role.



General Manager Sustainability

Michael Chesworth

Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Hons.)

Michael was first appointed to Murrindindi Shire Council as Manager of Organisational Development in 1997.

Michael's role involves the management of the sustainability services within Council which include organisational development, economic development and tourism, building, planning and environmental services.



General Manager Corporate & Community Services

Rob Cherry

Bachelor of Bus Multidiscipline (Mon)

Member National Institute of Accountants

Rob started with Murrindindi Shire Council on 3 November 2010.

Rob's role covers the management and strategic development of council services in relation to corporate services, finances and community services.



Executive Director Reconstruction & Recovery

Dimitri Scordalides

Bachelor of Engineering (Civil)

Dimitri joined Murrindindi Shire Council on 26 August 2010.

In his role Dimitri's focus is on providing support and direction for the reconstruction and recovery of our communities following the February 2009 fires.



General Manager Infrastructure (December 2010- June 2012)

Andrew Bainbridge

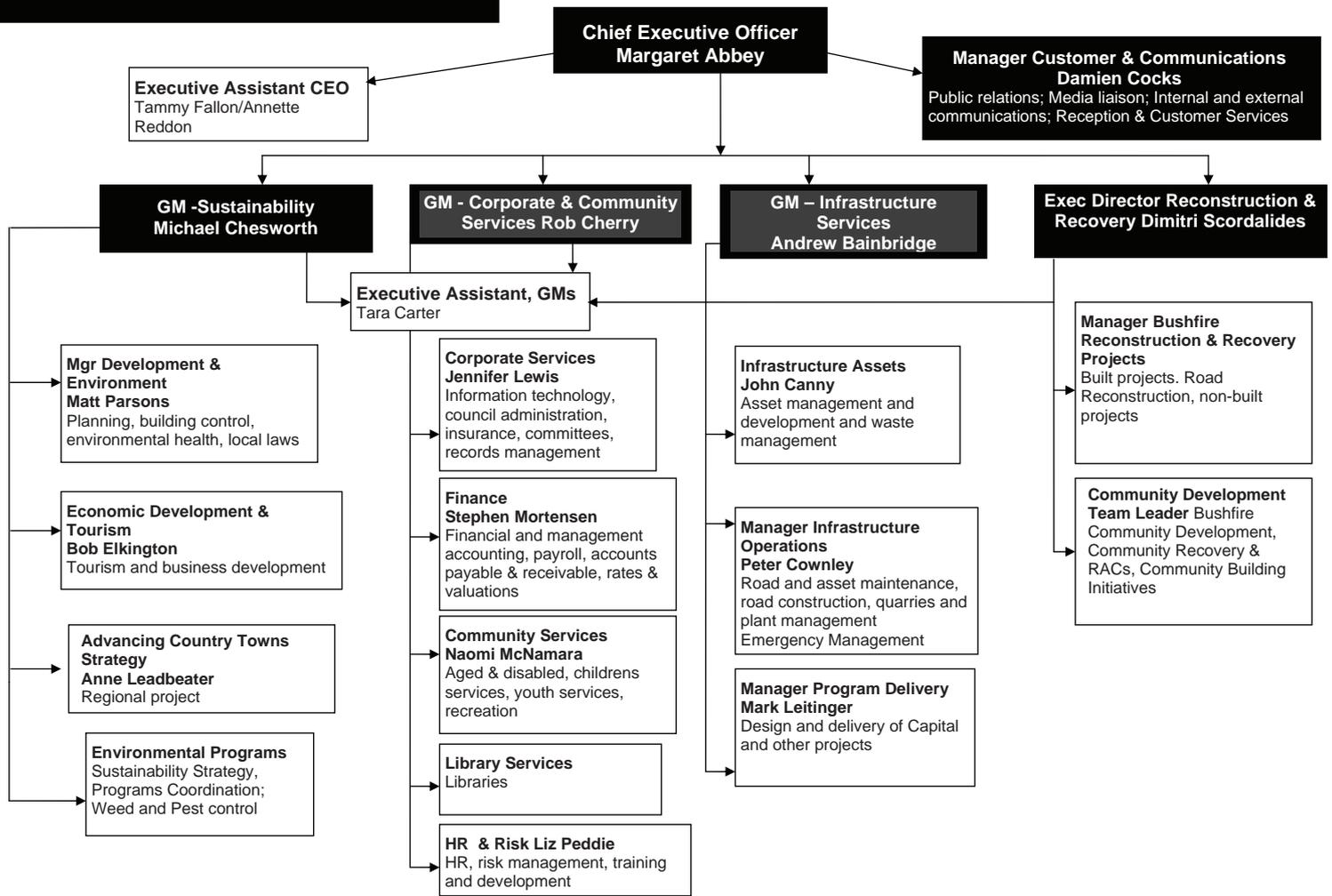
Bachelor of Engineering (Civil)

In his role, Andrew headed up the infrastructure services team focusing on our assets and infrastructure, engineering projects and the infrastructure operations department.



Organisational Structure

Organisation Structure 30 June 2012



2011-2012 – the year in review

Theme 1 - Governance - further information page 16

Strategic objective

Effective leadership providing representation and advocacy for the community backed by a financially strong organisation

Achievements

- Continued advocacy to the State Government in an effort to find a suitable funding solution to meet Council's growing infrastructural renewal gap.

Challenges

- The continued lobbying of State and Federal Governments to secure recovery resources and funding.

Year ahead

- Support community and organisational transition to post recovery operations.
- Continue providing ongoing support and engagement with communities in relation to Council decision-making.

Theme 2 - Community - further information page 18

Strategic objective

Communities enjoying good health and wellbeing

Achievements

- Youth Strategy consultation well delivered and executed with young people across the shire participating in designing and delivering the consultation process as researchers.
- Successful implementation of new National Quality regulations for Home Based Child Care services.
- Continued engagement of the community with Maternal and Child Health Services leading to high immunization rates, breast feeding rates and strong participation in key age and stage visits from families with young children across the shire.
- The rebuilding and upgrading of playgrounds has been completed, there are now 29 playgrounds across the shire.

Challenges

- Maintaining high quality and accessible services, facilities and planning processes to continue meeting the diverse needs of community members across the shire.

Year ahead

- Murrindindi Shire Council, with partners including Berry Street Victoria and Alexandra Kindergarten has successfully secured funding through the Advancing Country Towns Initiative to implement an Early Years Capacity and Collaboration project. This project aims to introduce a new early years program (PEEP) across the shire, build on collaboration and integration of early years services and explore the potential for co-located services in Alexandra.
- Continue providing ongoing support and engagement with communities across a range of services and planning initiatives.

2011-2012 – the year in review CONTINUED

Theme 3 - Local Economy - further information page 21

Strategic objective

Sustainable growth for our local economy

Achievements

- Completed the Murrindindi Sustainable Business Program, externally funded by a \$140,000 grant to assist local businesses in recovering following the 2009 bushfires. The program included a range of business training, networking and promotional initiatives.

Challenges

- Attracting commercial and tourism investment in the shire in a difficult economic climate.
- Supporting development on small scale industrial development despite high infrastructure costs.

Year ahead

- Developing action plans to support the implementation of Council's Economic Development Strategy.
- Establishing a marketing strategy in conjunction with Mansfield and Mitchell Shires for the Goulburn River High Country Rail Trail.

Theme 4 - Climate Change & Natural Environment - further information page 25

Strategic objective

A natural environment that is diverse, healthy and cared for

Achievements

- Completed a grant project involving the containment and treatment of Chilean Needle Grass (weed of National Significance) within threatened grassy woodlands from Molesworth to Homewood (84.2 hectares).

Challenges

- Many of Council's environmental initiatives and works rely on securing funding from external sources which remains an ongoing challenge for the Environment Unit.

Year ahead

- Participation of Council in the Goulburn Broken Greenhouse Alliance Sustainability training program, with specific training on carbon accounting.

Theme 5 - Planning & Environment - further information page 28

Strategic objective

Sustainable land use, development and growth

Achievements

- Prepared corrective amendments to the Murrindindi Planning Scheme to remove a number of identified anomalies to facilitate bushfire recovery and re-building.

Challenges

- The ongoing implementation of the Council's annual fire prevention works program within budgeted resources to meet heightened expectations from the community in relation to reducing fire risk remains a challenge.

Year ahead

- Council's future adoption of the Murrindindi Integrated Fire Management Plan which will provide a framework for consistent and effective fire management planning and respond to a number of the findings of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission.

2011-2012 – the year in review CONTINUED

Theme 6 - Infrastructure- further information page 32

Strategic objective

To enhance the sustainability of our infrastructure, recognising the changing needs and expectations of our communities

Achievements

- Goulburn River High Country Rail Trail was completed and opened for use.
- \$1million of road safety upgrades carried out for motorcycle riders.
- Significant progress was made towards the completion of bushfire reconstruction projects.
- Storm and flood damaged infrastructure restoration continued despite an additional \$2.5million of damage in February 2012.

Challenges

- Meeting the demands of managing and maintaining Council's existing assets as well as the new and expanded assets received through bushfire donations.
- Reducing the environmental and financial impacts of the amount of waste our community generates.

Year ahead

- Detailed design and commencement of construction of a number of significant capital projects will occur next year.
- Introduction of a new Project Management System in the forthcoming year will improve monitoring, management and reporting of all of Council's projects.
- Reconstruction and recovery resources will reduce as projects are completed.

Theme 7 – Corporate Development - further information page 37

Strategic objective

Improve systems and processes

Achievements

- The redevelopment of the external website has created a user-friendly and more responsive functionality. It is more intuitive and functional with interactive components to assist customers in accessing information.
- Council's libraries provided insightful and well received programs throughout the year.

Challenges

- Supporting Special Committees of Council (Section 86 Committees), assisting with good governance and administration as they take on responsibility of new and enhanced assets.

Year ahead

- Undertake a community visioning exercise to develop a Murrindindi 2030 Community Plan.
- Greater efficiencies within administrative processes from implementation of the project management data base.



Calendar of events

July 2011

- Reconstruction works start on the Kinglake Glenburn Road. A special construction technique is used to support the winter working conditions.
- The community is invited to a walk-through of building works and recreational facilities at Pioneer Reserve, Strath Creek.
- Alexandra saleyards – end of an era with the yards dismantled for auction.
- The multipurpose basketball courts in Eildon are officially opened.

August 2011

- Alexandra, Thornton and Eildon towns are announced as benefactors under the Advancing Country Towns program.
- The interim Kinglake, Flowerdale, Toolangi Draft Plan and Design Framework (KFT Draft Plan) Consultation Report is released for comment.
- Council amends sections of the Murrindindi Planning Scheme to support rebuilding in the fire affected areas of Kinglake West, Narbethong and Pheasant Creek.

September 2011

- Council welcomes a \$400,000 commitment from the State Government to redevelop the Yea Saleyards.
- Free green waste disposal and a burn off amnesty is supported by Council to assist land owners and residents prepare for the upcoming fire season.
- Council supports the construction of The Triangle Trails that will feature at Buxton, Narbethong and Taggerty.

October 2011

- Kinglake's Bollygum Park is officially opened with community members

across the Ranges coming together to celebrate the achievement.

- Weed identification and control workshops are held to support Council staff and landowners in identifying noxious, agricultural and environmental weeds and the most efficient and effective ways to control them.
- Rebuilding days are held in Kinglake and Marysville to assist people with building information and planning consents.

November 2011

- Strath Creek Hall and Pioneer Development are officially opened. Works included the construction of a new toilet block and barbecue shelter area, extension and upgrade of the hall's kitchen and meeting room facilities and an upgrade and extension of the tennis courts to become multi-sport courts.
- Marysville Community Centre Stage II is officially opened by the Governor General Quentin Bryce, AC CVO.
- The redeveloped Yea Tennis Courts are officially opened.
- Narbethong Hall is officially opened by The Honourable Alex Chernov, Governor of Victoria.

December 2011

- Councillor John Walsh is elected Murrindindi Shire Council Mayor.
- A severe storm causes more than \$200,000 damage at Buxton.
- Another chapter is completed in the bushfire recovery process, with Council's Business Recovery Officers winding back field services.

January 2012

- Australia Day celebration see Kinglake's Brad Quillam named Murrindindi Shire Citizen of the Year, Ayden Embling is honoured with the Young Citizen Award and the

Calendar of events CONTINUED

January 2012 CONTINUED

- Marysville Sparkling Wine Festival is named Community Event of the year.
- The Yea Saleyard Complex receives European Union Cattle Accreditation Scheme (EUCAS) certification, enabling beef from cattle sold in Yea to be exported to the European Union.
- Prime Minister Julia Gillard presents the National Emergency Medal in Flowerdale to those who showed much courage and service during the 2009 Victorian Bushfires.

February 2012

- Services are held across the shire recognising the third anniversary of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires.
- Council supports the refurbishment of the historic Breakaway Bridge at Acheron. Work to refurbish the existing timber structure will lift its load carrying capacity to 20 tonnes from the current 3 tonnes.
- Business owners and operators take advantage of a number of seminars to support their operations through the Building Stronger Businesses workshops.

March 2012

- Council outlines the findings and recommendations of its operational Services Review at public meetings held in Alexandra, Kinglake, Marysville and Yea.
- Alexandra and Thornton provide the backdrop for a pilot film series for the United States' NBC. The Frontier brings more than 200 cast and crew to the region.
- A business access card is circulated across the shire to assist small business operators in Murrindindi with a range of local, state and federal business contacts.

April 2012

- Council receives 330 submissions relating to its service review and action plan.
- A vision for assisting and developing the needs of the region's youth is supported through the adoption of Council's Murrindindi Youth Strategy.
- Council confirms it can no longer support the Kinglake Ranges Cultural and Community Facility following significant changes in the project's scope.

May 2012

- Tenders are called for the interpretive elements of the Yea Wetlands Discovery eCentre project.
- Murrindindi Shire Council calls on the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund (VBAF) to redistribute its latest funding allocation to community support programs and to help cover the costs of new bushfire assets.
- Council releases its 2012-13 draft Budget, with community information sessions held across the shire.

June 2012

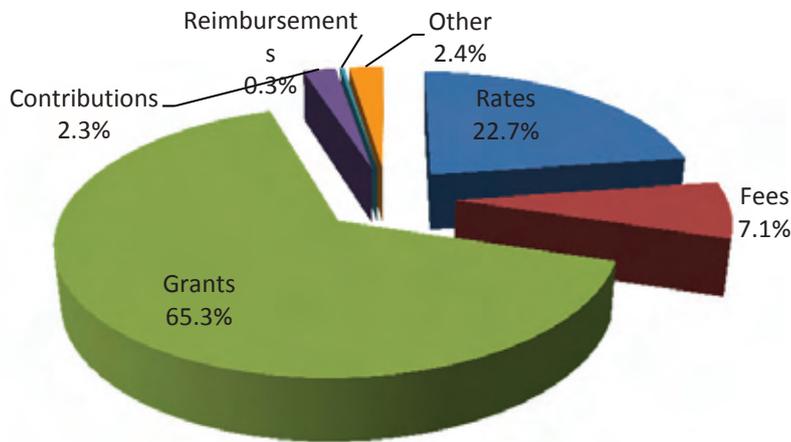
- Council supports a museum concept put forward by the Lions Club of Eildon and Eildon Action.
- The first stage of construction works for the Kinglake Ranges Health Centre are undertaken when Health Minister David Davis joined Kinglake community members turning the first sod for the new complex.
- Murrindindi Shire Council adopts its 2012-13 Budget. It incorporates recommendations from the Services Review which aim to reduce ongoing costs, keep rate increases at 6 per cent or less for the next 10 years and ensure the shire's long term viability.
- The official opening of the Goulburn River High Country Rail Trail is expected to bring new business and tourism opportunities to the shire.



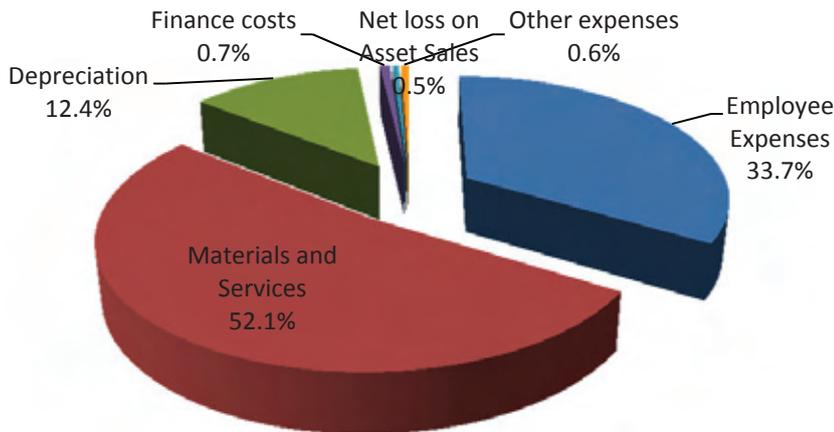
Financial overview 2011-2012

The following graphs are a summary of Council's financial reporting for the year ended 30 June 2012. For further financial detail refer to the Financial Report at the back of the report.

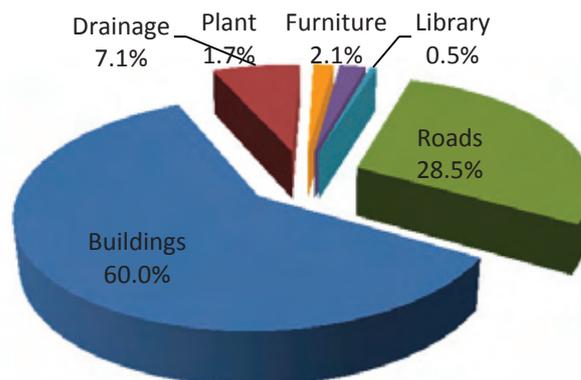
Income Breakdown

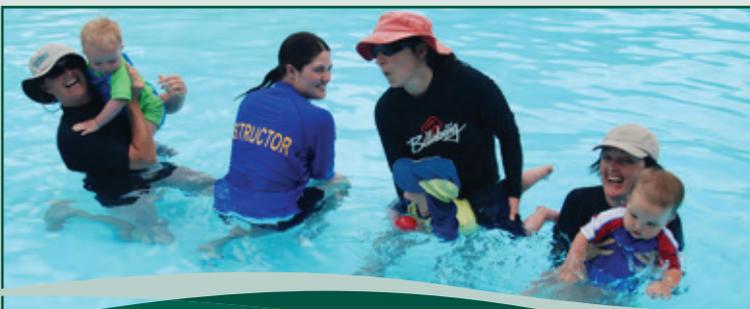


Operating expense breakdown



Capital expenditure breakdown





Performance reporting

We report on our performance under the seven themes of the *Council Plan 2009-2013*.

Governance

Objective: Effective leadership providing representation and advocacy for the community backed by a financially strong organisation.

Community

Objective: Communities enjoying good health and well being.

Local Economy

Objective: Sustainable growth of our local economy.

Climate Change & Natural Environment

Objective: A natural environment that is diverse, health and cared for.

Planning and Environment

Objective: Sustainable land use, development and growth.

Infrastructure

Objective: To enhance the sustainability of our infrastructure, recognising and changing needs and expectations or our communities.

Corporate Development

Objective: Improve systems and processes.

For each theme we include:

- a summary of our achievements, challenges and what is before us
- tables listing our Council Plan activities for each strategy and a comment or status for each item

Please note that data is not available for all of our strategic indicators. This is because not all of our indicators are measured annually.

THEME 1 – GOVERNANCE

Strategic Objective

Effective leadership providing representation and advocacy for the community backed by a financially strong organisation.

Strategies

- Facilitate and support recovery within fire affected communities.
- Provide opportunity for open and responsive communication with the community.
- Improve governance systems, processes and relationships.
- Be consistent, fair and transparent in our decision-making.
- Provide sound financial management.
- Advocate on issues of importance to our community.

Achievements

- Undertook a review of Council's Rating Strategy with a view to ascertaining options for an improved rating structure.
- Development of financial modeling through KPMG has assisted Council in its continued advocacy to the State Government in an effort to find a suitable funding solution to meet Council's growing infrastructural renewal gap arising from the gifted and novated bushfire assets.
- Ongoing lobbying and providing opportunities for local communities to highlight to the Federal Government the need for improved communications across some sections of the shire.
- Embarked on a budget road show to highlight Council's financial situation, encouraging feedback on Council's proposed rate increase.
- Completed a Services Review and implemented a four point Action Plan which identified asset rationalisations, efficiencies and savings to support Council's long term financial sustainability.

Challenges

- The continued lobbying of State and Federal Governments to secure bushfire recovery resources and funding which address Council's long term financial sustainability.
- To work with the community to improve its satisfaction with Council operations, advocacy and overall performance.
- Implementation of recommendations from the Services Review that has defined the way the Council should meet its community and financial commitments.
- Preparation of the 2012 Local Government election process and the induction of a new Council.

Looking forward

- Implementation of improved business systems to meet statutory regulations and improve business continuity and practices.
- Support community and organisational transition to post bushfire recovery operations.
- Continued support and engagement with communities in relation to Council decision-making.
- Facilitate the induction of the new Council.

Council Plan activities

Strategy 1 - facilitate and support recovery within fire affected communities.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Lobby other levels of government to secure recovery resources.	On schedule	Independent consultants KPMG have prepared financial modelling to assist Council in its advocacy to the State Government. This information has been provided to local Members of Parliament and the Department of Planning and Community Development for submission to the State Government. Meetings have been held with the Departmental Secretary of the Department of Planning and Community Development who has requested that further work be done by Council and Local Government Victoria on the effectiveness of support currently provided to Council and its future needs. The scope of this project is currently being prepared.

Council Plan activities CONTINUED

Strategy 2 - provide opportunity for open and responsive communication with the community.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Undertake a community visioning exercise to develop a Murrindindi 2030 Community Plan.	On schedule	Advice from other councils that have undertaken similar projects has been sourced and as a result Council has reviewed work undertaken in 2008 and agreed that this will form the basis for a Community Visioning exercise. Council's Visioning Day will occur in August 2012.

Strategy 3 - Improve governance systems, processes and relationships.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Review governance processes to identify opportunities for improvement.	Ongoing	Local Law No 3 has been reviewed and adopted. Delegated Authorities and Authorisations have been reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
Progress Council's Procurement Road Map developed through the Council Reforming Business-Procurement Excellence program.	Ongoing	A review of Council's tendering process has been conducted which resulted in implementation of a policy and procedure that results in executive sign-off before the process can be undertaken. A review of procurement policies and procedures has been conducted and a review of Council's current contracts is in progress. Council has activated software designed for the management of tenders and contracts in the third quarter of the financial year.

Strategy 4 - be consistent, fair and transparent in our decision-making.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Complete continuous improvement and Best Value requirements.	Not due to Commence	Current focus is on the organisational Services Review. This is scheduled for completion in the second quarter of the 2012-13 financial year.

Strategy 5 - advocate on issues of importance to our community.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Develop a strategy to manage and maintain gifted assets and Council's long term sustainability.	Completed	Financial modelling has been prepared and presented to the State Government identifying various revenue assistance options. Resources continue to be applied to the transition of assets into Council registers and systems as each asset reaches practical completion to ensure financial accountability and appropriate maintenance. Council Services Review recommendations have been developed and adopted to assist Council's long term financial sustainability. This has included leasing arrangements, which removes the annual operating and maintenance costs related to some gifted assets.

Services related to this theme

- Civic functions and events
- Councillor training and development
- Council elections
- Community engagement

Fast facts

- 13 new Australian citizens welcomed to the shire
- 64 residents made presentations to Council during Open Forum sessions
- 21 Council meetings held
- 28 Councillor briefing sessions held

THEME 2 – COMMUNITY

Strategic Objective

Communities enjoying good health and well being.

Strategies

- Advocate for and facilitate access to arts and cultural experiences and events.
- Facilitate and support recovery within fire affected communities.
- Foster a more resilient community by promoting diversity, inclusion, access and equity, and supporting community interaction.
- Facilitate improved quality of life for Murrindindi Shire communities.

Achievements

- Savings of \$40,000 were made in the operations of the swimming pools for the 2011/2012 season.
- Two tennis forums run within the shire incorporating all tennis clubs – well received by the clubs and communities.
- The Wriggly Fish toddler swimming program is in its third year. It provides information for both parents and toddlers attending to learn to swim classes, highlighting water safety.
- Seven playground upgrades were completed in 2011-2012 at a cost of \$202,885. Murrindindi Shire now has a total of 29 playgrounds.
- The Cheviot Social Support program took over the operation of the Marysville Swimming Program providing an opportunity for older people to access a specialised gentle water exercise program. A similar program commenced at Kinglake using the Healesville pool. Both programs use the Council community buses and volunteer drivers to provide transport for program participants.
- The RECHARGE Scheme™, an initiative developed between Nillumbik Shire Council and the Victorian Department of Human Services, was introduced across the shire.
- The Murrindindi Shire Council Transport Connections Strategic Plan for 2011/13 was endorsed by Council and renamed Linking Murrindindi – 'Access and Liveability for all' to better reflect the change of direction of Phase 3 away from physical transport infrastructure.
- Improvement in Key Age and Stage Participation Rates, particularly in 2 year old and 3 ½ year old age groups which have risen from 60% to 74%. All other age groups are above 80%.
- Youth Strategy Consultation well delivered and executed with young people across the shire participating in designing and delivering the consultation process as researchers.
- Nine successful FReeZA events engaging a total of 1039 young people with 21 young people active in youth led committees.
- High return rate (more than 50%) of the March 2012 Home

Based Child Care Family Survey, which indicated a high level of satisfaction with our service.

- Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Playgroup Victoria to continue working with playgroups in the bushfire affected areas.
- Assisted six out of the seven playgroups in the shire to successfully secure 0-5 years bushfire recovery grants.
- Council, with partners including Berry Street Victoria and Alexandra Kindergarten, were successful in securing funding through the Advancing Country Towns Initiative to implement an Early Years Capacity and Collaboration project. This project aims to introduce a new early years program (PEEP) to the shire, improve collaboration and integration of early years services and explore the potential for co-located services in Alexandra.
- Volunteers were thanked for their ongoing commitment and support to their communities with lunch and a movie at the Alexandra Cinema.
- The Memory Lane Cafe program (run in partnership with Moira Health Alliance) was a resounding success with consistently high attendance.

Challenges

- Maintenance and operations of the Yea swimming pool are ongoing due to the age of facility.
- Delays in the construction of the Marysville Skate Park due to weather conditions.
- Maintaining momentum and direction of the Transport Connections Program following the move away from physical transport infrastructure.
- Forward planning of projects to ensure sustainability beyond the program funding ending in June 2013.
- Attracting relief staff for Maternal and Child Health Services.
- Increase in Enhanced Maternal and Child Health Services workload due to lack of family support services in the community.
- Completion of the Youth Development Grants program due to bushfire funding.

CONTINUED

THEME 2 CHALLENGES CONTINUED

- Maximising use and support from partners to ensure the sustainability of the youth website and facebook page.
- Having a clear vision for youth service delivery for Council as an agency, and preparing for further reduction in resourcing for the youth unit beyond June 2013, when bushfire funding will cease.
- Difficulties in meeting demand for Family Day Care and In Home Care due to lack of educators in some areas.
- Matching service user needs to the availability of Community Support Workers to provide a flexible service.

Fast facts

- Birth notifications 135
- New enrolments to Maternal and Child Health Service (MCH) service 83
- First Time Parent Groups – 48, with 35 (out of 40) first time mothers attending
- Parent Education Sessions 12, with 44 parents attending
- Number of capsules hired from MCH service 12
- Number of immunisations – 940
- Breastfeeding rates at 6 months of age 47%.
- Number of referrals made by MCH service 168
- Number of additional consultations 1150
- Family Day Care and In Home Care educators assisted 135 families and approximately 180 children over the year, with a total of 57,883 hours of Family Day Care provided

Council Plan activities

Strategy 1 - Facilitate and support recovery within fire affected communities.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Continue work with fire affected communities to assist with ongoing implementation of community based recovery plans based on active participation and strengthened community connectedness.	Ongoing	A number of Council's temporary recovery staffing resources have been extended at various extents into the first half of 2012 to specifically continue assistance with community Recovery Plan projects, including Regional Development Victoria, Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund and Department of Planning and Community Development funding management. Resources include Bushfire Grants Officer, Community Support and Community Development Officer.
Extend programs to all fire affected communities to strengthen communities and prepare for future disasters.	Completed	Utilising the Community Gift Funding, Council has provided additional staff hours to extended programs in relation to youth, play groups and recreation. These funds were expended by 30 December 2011. Council continues to work with the various Government and Non Government Organisations service providers in these areas.

Services related to this theme

- Aged and Disability Services
- Children and Family Services
- Community Development
- Library Services
- Recreation Services
- Reception Services

Fast facts

- 1454 respite hours
- 963 Home maintenance hours
- 1632 assessment hours
- A total of 19,274 people visited the pools within the Murrindindi Shire in 2011-12

Fast facts

- Aged and Disability Services delivered services to approximately 600 people including:
- 9746 hours of domestic assistance
 - 1462 hours of personal care
 - 9920 hours of planned activity (in house, outing groups and centre based meals)
 - 7019 meals delivered to home s(Meals on Wheels)

Fast facts

- 107,470 library items borrowed: 80,511 print material – books and periodicals and 26,959 audio visual – talking books, DVD's etc
- 6415 library members
- 732 new library members

Council Plan activities CONTINUED

Strategy 2 - Foster a more resilient community by promoting diversity, inclusion, access and equity, and supporting community interaction.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Implement initiatives from the Inclusiveness, Access and Equity Plan.	Ongoing	Access appraisals and requirements have been completed in designated public areas of Marysville, Alexandra, Yea and Kinglake. These focus on the physical improvements required in each location. A broader plan incorporating social and cultural inclusion and access issues will be documented as part of the next Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017. Officers work closely with the Murrindindi / Mitchell Access and Inclusion Workers and various community interest groups to address issues that arise. An internal Inclusiveness, Access and Equity Working Group has been established to assist in developing an action plan.
Identify and implement projects, programs and initiatives to meet the key strategic directions of the "Linking Murrindindi" Access and Liveability for All Strategic Plan 2011-2013.	On schedule	This activity will continue to operate until 30 June 2013. Several trial bus routes have been introduced which have been well utilised. As yet, there is no advice from the Department of Transport regarding continuation. Council has developed a partnership with Yarra Ranges Shire Council and Nillumbik Shire Council to improve access to transport for medical appointments across the three catchments. Innovations grant submissions have been completed seeking funding for trials of a 'town bus' service and 'Youth Connect' car pooling initiatives. Council was successful in its submission to operate these services over a two year period. Plans are now underway to establish these programs for the 2012-13 year.
Investigate a community building initiative in Yea.	Review	Officers have held preliminary discussions with interested representatives of the Yea community who have been meeting informally to determine a suitable framework for a community building initiative project. A presentation has been made to the group concerning a similar project undertaken in Kinglake Ranges as a potential model to use for a community building initiative. At the end of June 2012 a specific project was not finalised and this action will continue into the 2012/2013 financial year.

Strategy 3 - Facilitate improved quality of life for the Murrindindi community.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Establish maintenance service standards for Section 86 Committees of Management.	Ongoing	A draft document has been developed and will be considered in conjunction with the findings of a facilities maintenance review which is currently being undertaken. It is expected that recommendations from these reviews will be available early in the new financial year.
Lobby the State Government to improve access to public housing.	Completed	The Department of Human Services and Rural Housing have been actively assisting with the re-housing of residents living in the temporary villages established following the 2009 bushfires. All residents at the Flowerdale, Marysville and Kinglake temporary villages have been re-housed.
Implement initiatives from the Health and Well Being Plan.	Ongoing	Where relevant, initiatives within the Health and Wellbeing Plan have been incorporated into standard program delivery improving the sustainability of positive outcomes for the community. Completed initiatives include; the development and adoption of the Youth Strategy, the Marysville Community Centre and Narbethong Hall being rebuilt and officially opened, sporting facilities, skate parks and playground upgrades, playgroups re-established and community strengthened in fire affected communities, parenting support initiatives provided by Maternal and Child Health Services and Children's Services.

THEME 3 – LOCAL ECONOMY

Strategic Objective

Sustainable growth of our local economy.

Strategies

- Facilitate and support recovery of businesses with fire affected communities.
- Support and promote events and festivals across the shire.
- Provide support to new and expanding businesses.
- Participate in cooperative marketing.
- Facilitate improved access to information communication technology and mobile phone services.
- Undertake or facilitate major economic development projects.

Achievements

- Promotion of the Murrindindi Shire as a great place to live, work and invest at the inaugural Regional Living Expo 2012 held in Melbourne and several other expos and industry shows.
- Reviewed, re-wrote, published and distributed key promotional and visitor attraction material including the lifestyle and investment brochures, the Official Visitors Guide and Holiday Planner.
- Completed the Murrindindi Sustainable Business Program, externally funded through a \$140,000 grant to assist local businesses recover following the 2009 bushfires. The program included a range of business training, networking and promotional initiatives.
- Developed a resource guide (the Murrindindi Business and Tourism Guide) for local tourism, business and industry associations to provide a comprehensive and easily navigable guide to available business support services (both fire recovery and business as usual).
- Successfully advocated for a State Government funding package of \$5.2 million to encourage new investment in Marysville and Triangle in partnership with the Marysville and Triangle Economic Leadership Group.
- Implemented a range of initiatives to encourage residents to buy locally, including a Yea, Alexandra and Eildon Township Marketing Plan, a Marysville and Triangle Trades and Services Directory, customer services improvement training and a 'buy local' promotional campaign.
- Supported the creation of the Murrindindi Training Institute with the aim of enhancing local training options and regional workforce capability.

Challenges

- Attracting commercial and tourism investment in the shire in a difficult economic climate.
- Continuing to attract visitors to the region in a competitive climate with a growing trend of Australians holidaying overseas.
- Developing marketing initiatives and attracting investment associated with the Goulburn River High Country Rail Trail and the Yarra Valley to the High Country Touring Route within tight financial constraints.
- Creating greater awareness of, and preparation for the rollout of the National Broadband Network among the business community.
- Supporting small scale industrial developments, despite high infrastructure costs.

Looking Forward

- Advocating for the expansion of local provision of further training opportunities through the Murrindindi Training Institute.
- Developing action plans to support the implementation of Council's Economic Development Strategy.
- Support the establishment of visitor information centre services as part of the development of the Yea Wetlands Interpretative Centre.
- Facilitating further development of industrial land in Alexandra.
- Establishing a marketing strategy in conjunction with Mansfield and Mitchell Shires for the Goulburn River High Country Rail Trail.

Council Plan activities

Strategy 1 - Facilitate and support recovery of businesses with fire affected communities

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Develop Action Plans to enable implementation of the Economic Development Strategy 2011-2016.	Completed	An implementation plan for the Economic Development Strategy has been completed. The priority, focus and timeframes of the action plans are subject to the outcome of the Services Review process.
Undertake a feasibility study into the development of industrial/business park land in the Marysville and Triangle area.	Withdrawn	Following Council's decision to adopt Amendment C29 Part 2 in December 2011, which rezones land from farming to industrial in Narbethong, the need for a feasibility study was no longer apparent. The amendment makes available a substantial amount of land zoned for industrial purposes in that area.

Strategy 2 - Support and promote events and festivals across the shire

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Participate in the development of a region-wide on-line holiday planner and promotional tools.	Completed	<p>The Goulburn River Valley Tourism on-line holiday planner is operational. The hard copy/printed version of the holiday planner was well supported by local businesses through buy-in and has been widely distributed. Positive feedback has been obtained about the quality of the production from visitors and Visitor Information Centre volunteers.</p> <p>The latest promotional tools include a Special Offers Flyer, the Ultimate Experience Postcard series and a local business Champions Showcase YouTube video production. Supplementing this is the latest edition of the Murrindindi Official Visitors Guide being offered as part of a subsidised prospectus being promoted as part of the Marysville and Triangle Events and Marketing implementation plan. Due to the success of the Holiday Planner another edition is being promoted for production and distribution in the second half of the 2012 calendar year.</p>

Strategy 3 - Provide support to new and expanding business.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Develop a plan to attract new business and support existing businesses throughout the shire.	Completed	The final version of the business support and attraction plan was completed in March 2012. Several of the activities identified have been completed including the conduct of a business workshop to identify investment opportunities associated with the rail trail, the completion of township marketing plans for Yea, Alexandra and Eildon in partnership with Local Business Associations and the review and reproduction of investment and lifestyle brochures promoting the shire. Implementation of initiatives is yet to be undertaken and is subject to the outcomes of the Economic Development Service Review.

Council Plan activities CONTINUED

Strategy 4 - Participate in Cooperative marketing.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Participate in a Yarra Valley - High Country touring route marketing campaign.	Completed	Initial buy-in to the Yarra Valley to the High Country touring route marketing initiatives has been undertaken. Council's commitment of funding towards further buy-in will ensure that the opportunities in the next financial year will also be able to be taken up.
Facilitate opportunities for promotion and marketing of the Goulburn River High Country Rail Trail.	Completed	<p>Council adopted the Goulburn River High Country Rail Trail Management Plan that identified the need to form a Rail Trail Marketing Sub Committee. This committee has been formed and has begun the process of developing a marketing and branding strategy.</p> <p>With the trail now complete and operational, the marketing committee is now set to ensure maximum economic benefit is gained via the marketing and branding strategy recommendations as they are developed.</p>

Strategy 5 - Facilitate improved access to Information Communication Technology and mobile phone services.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Undertake a feasibility study to enable improved access to high speed and affordable broadband services. If warranted apply for grant funding for an initial implementation.	Deferred	A written submission was made to the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee outlining key issues and challenges impacting Murrindindi Shire. A further submission, with input from all councils in the Hume region has subsequently been completed and submitted. Further to this the Mayor and Manager Economic Development participated in a workshop to develop a brief for the creation of an Information Communication Technology Strategy for the Hume region. The development of this strategy and an accompanying Hume Digital Business Readiness Plan are being undertaken with support from Regional Development Victoria and Regional Development Australia. The appropriateness of a feasibility study for Murrindindi Shire alone will be clearer once these key documents are completed.

Services related to this theme

- Economic Development
- Tourism
- Event Coordination
- Saleyards

Fast facts

- 54,025 'walk in' visitors to Visitor Information Centres up 32% from 2011
- 58 events passed through Council's event coordination process
- 18 sales held at Yea Saleyard complex.
- 28,925 head of cattle passed through the Yea Saleyard complex

Council Plan activities CONTINUED

Strategy 6 - Undertake or facilitate major economic development projects.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Participate in development of a feasibility study of the Murrindindi Training Institute.	Withdrawn	As this project progressed it was decided that a feasibility study was not the best way to move forward. Council energy was focussed on supporting the steering committee and the creation of the Murrindindi Training Institute (MTI), develop a business plan and implementation plan as well as seeking funding via a range of agencies to enable the MTI to be operational by February 2012. Subsequently Council auspiced a \$70,000 Planning for Tomorrow grant from Regional Development Victoria (RDV) to assist in getting the MTI operational. The MTI formalised its governance arrangements and as a result created a functioning board as of January 2012. The first students arrived at the (old) Alexandra Hospital site in February 2012 and there are currently 31 students enrolled in Certificate 111, Certificate 1V and Diploma level study in Recreation/Outdoor Leadership.
Facilitate processes relating to the development of Mt Pinninger Resort, and a core tourism development in Marysville.	Completed	<p>The proponents of the Mt Pinninger Resort development are progressing activities in order to meet the requirements for an Environmental Effects Statement. They have only recently become aware of a land tenure issue that is being addressed with Goulburn Murray Water. This is causing further delays and a degree of uncertainty.</p> <p>In relation to the Marysville Conference Centre complex, Council has worked closely with the Department of Planning and Community Development and the Planning Minister's office to ensure that the approval process has been streamlined to positively impact on investor confidence and to expedite the process. Council officers met with the responsible officers from the Department of Business and Innovation and the Industry Capability Network to encourage inclusion of local content considerations in the selection process for the build component.</p>
Progress the development of industrial land in Alexandra – Alexandra Saleyards and Binns-McCrae Road.	Completed	<p>All due processes relating to the sale of the land previously used as Council's Alexandra Saleyards have been completed. Council officers will now proceed with the sale of the land to potential developers.</p> <p>With the new Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) development in Alexandra now operational and the department's likely future needs confirmed, a draft development plan has been completed for the Binns-McCrae industrial area. The development plan identifies potential future development options, road and boundary alignments as well as drainage lines and other infrastructure considerations. The development plan will also protect access to the land locked (old) Alexandra abattoir site.</p>

THEME 4 – CLIMATE CHANGE & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Strategic Objective

A natural environment that is diverse, healthy and cared for.

Strategies

- Facilitate and support environment recovery with fire affected communities.
- Reduce generation of waste by Council and the community.
- Integrate environmental resource and land management across Council operations.
- Reduce Council and community carbon footprint.
- Protect and enhance our natural environment.

Achievements

- A project involving shire schools to engage the youth in describing their experiences and feelings concerning the natural environment was completed and culminated in the printing of booklet for public release.
- Completed a business plan to inform Council's future decision making with respect to the possible refit of municipal streetlights with energy efficient lighting.
- Two weed identification and control workshops were held during the year involving community and Council employees.
- An information brochure titled "Is that Plant Poisonous" which highlighted noxious and environmental weeds was finalised for public distribution in June.
- Completed a grant project involving the containment and treatment of Chilean Needle Grass (weed of National Significance) within threatened grassy woodlands from Molesworth to Homewood (84.2 hectares) involving Vicroads, private landholders and the Council working together to achieve a more strategic co-ordinated result.
- Significantly progressed the integration of roadside weed mapping information into Council's information management systems to enable staff and community groups to access information to assist with weed and environmental management across the shire

Challenges

- Council was not able to complete several planned actions from its Environment Strategy due a hold placed on filling the Co-ordinator Environmental Programs position while the Services Review was conducted. Many of these actions have been deferred to 2012/2013.
- Many of Council's environmental initiatives and works rely on securing funding from external sources which remains an ongoing challenge for the Environment Unit.
- Managing and balancing divergent views within the community concerning the need to preserve and enhance environmental values on public and private land and lowering fuel loads and bushfire risks.
- Ensuring effective communication and liaison between the multiple agencies that are involved in natural resource management to achieve better strategic planning and on ground works.

Looking Forward

- Progressing the implementation of Council's Environment Strategy.
- Participation of Council in the Goulburn Broken Greenhouse Alliance Sustainability Training Program, with specific training on carbon accounting.
- Further management plans are being developed and enacted to address Council's native vegetation offset requirements to compensate for vegetation loss through Council's capital works program.
- Development and finalisation of Council's Waste Management Strategy.

Services related to this theme

- Waste management service
- Strategic planning
- Roadside biodiversity and weed mapping
- Advisory role

Fast facts

- 98 roadsides treated for regionally controlled weeds which equates to 845 km municipal roadside recycling
- 84.2 ha sprayed for Chilean Needle Grass and Riparian weeds
- 892 tonnes of paper and cardboard collected from kerbside and 66 tonnes dropped off at the transfer station
- 741.5 cubic metres of green waste received during free waste disposal periods

Council Plan activities

Strategy 1 - Promote and advocate sustainable living, business practice and land use.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Develop and implement communication strategy for environment initiatives.	Deferred	There has been a temporary hold placed on filling the vacancy of the Environment Programs Co-ordinator role while Council completes its Services Review.

Strategy 2 - Reduce generation of waste by Council and the community.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Establish water use targets for Council facilities and activities and monitor progress.	Deferred	There has been a temporary hold placed on filling the vacancy of the Environment Programs Co-ordinator role while Council completes its Services Review.
Finalise and commence implementation of the Council's Waste Management Strategy, including the expansion of recycling facilities in public places.	Deferred	The delay in the development of the Waste Management Strategy is a result of unexpected staff turnover. It is expected the strategy will be completed in the 2012-13 financial year.

Strategy 3 - Integrate environmental resource and land management across Council operations.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Implement an environmental best practice code and training plan for outdoor works.	Deferred	There was a temporary hold placed on filling the vacancy of the Environment Programs Co-ordinator role while Council completes its Services Review.
Develop and implement guidelines for the management and protection of roadside conservation values.	Deferred	Given the temporary hold placed on filling the vacant Environment Programs Co-ordinator position due to the Services Review, it has been necessary to defer the action until next financial year.
Identify and prioritise sites, other than roadsides, with significant biodiversity values and formulate management guidelines to protect them.	Deferred	There has been a temporary hold placed on filling the vacancy of the Environment Programs Co-ordinator role while Council completes its Services Review.

Council Plan activities CONTINUED

Strategy 3 - Integrate environmental resource and land management across Council operations.

CONTINUED

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Develop and commence implementation of an offset plan for native vegetation removal associated with Council managed works.	On schedule	Work has continued to identify suitable Council owned sites for the implementation of offset management plans associated with Council managed works. This work is currently under review prior to a formal plan being prepared for Council's consideration.

Strategy 4 - Reduce Council and community carbon footprint

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Identify and purchase eco-friendly products and materials through participation in a green procurement program.	Deferred	There has been a temporary hold placed on filling the vacancy of the Environment Programs Co-ordinator role while Council completes its Services Review.

Strategy 5 – Encourage the community to adapt to climate change.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Provide support to community education on environmental issues.	Completed	<p>School students across the shire were engaged to describe their experiences and feelings concerning the natural environment. It culminated in the printing of booklet for public release. Two weed identification and control workshops were held involving community and Council representatives.</p> <p>An information brochure "Is that Plant Poisonous" was finalised for public distribution in June.</p>

THEME 5 – PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT

Strategic Objective

Sustainable land use, development and growth.

Strategies

- Streamline approvals processes to encourage rebuilding in fire affected areas.
- Continue to strengthen partnerships with the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Country Fire Authority.

Achievements

- Continued to provide specialist assistance and advice to facilitate bushfire recovery efforts on a variety of rebuilding projects and private dwelling rebuild applications across fire affected areas.
- Representation at various State Government forums on legislative reforms impacting on bushfire planning and building provisions in order to advocate for those in the community attempting to rebuild.
- Of the 278 planning permits determined, 24% were for bushfire recovery. The total value of works for which planning approval was granted was \$26,519,322.
- Of 401 building permits issued (249 issued by Council), 26% were issued for bushfire recovery works. The total value of works for which building approval was granted was \$61,709,785.
- Continued active involvement with the Peri- Urban Group of Councils (comprising councils with Melbourne interface issues) has provided a platform for Council to express its views in relation to existing and future planning challenges.
- Continued participation in the Hume Regional Growth Plan to ensure the sustainability of small settlements, such as those in the Murrindindi Shire, remains a key future direction.
- Prepared corrective amendments to the Murrindindi Planning Scheme to remove a number of identified anomalies to facilitate bushfire recovery and re-building.
- The Murrindindi Shire Heritage Study was adopted by Council in February 2012, which provides direction for future decision making with respect to the protection and enhancement of significant heritage places and features in the shire.
- A number of major development projects have required ongoing advice and support across the shire including the Alexandra Hospital redevelopment, Department of Sustainability and Environment Alexandra office redevelopment, and various rebuilding projects throughout fire affected areas.
- Council participated in the development of the Lake Eildon Land and On Water Management Plan by Goulburn Murray Water. The plan provides a new strategic platform to improve economic, social and environmental outcomes for existing and future use and development on and around the lake.

- Data provided by the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register indicated that Murrindindi's immunisation coverage rates achieved the target of 90% immunisation coverage.

Challenges

- The temporary provisions in the Murrindindi Planning Scheme to assist rebuilding in fire affected areas will cease in early 2013 making it more onerous for people to seek planning approval for temporary and permanent dwellings in bushfire areas.
- The implementation of the new State Bushfire Management Overlay and bushfire provisions in the Murrindindi Planning Scheme is expected to create challenges for applicants in meeting the requirements for planning approval in areas covered by the overlay.
- The ongoing implementation of the Council's annual fire prevention works program within budgeted resources to meet heightened expectations from the community in relation to reducing fire risk remains a challenge.
- Advocating with other councils for a measured approach by the State Government for the designation of potable water supply catchments and the application of associated planning controls to ensure appropriate development in these areas is not unreasonably restricted.

Looking forward

- Council's future adoption of the Murrindindi Integrated Fire Management Plan which will provide a framework for consistent and effective fire management planning and respond to a number of the findings of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission.
- Review of the Municipal Strategic Statement having regard for new State Government directives on bushfire response and relevant associated policies.
- Completion of the Kinglake Ranges, Flowerdale and Toolangi Draft Plan and Design Framework (KFT Plan).
- Incorporate new bushfire management policy into the Murrindindi Planning Scheme, having regard to the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission findings.
- Assisting Goulburn Murray Water with the implementation of future Land and On Water Management Plan initiatives and in the facilitation of the proposed Mt Pinniger Resort Development.
- Continuing to tailor processes within the planning and building units to ensure efficient fire recovery approvals processes.

Council Plan activities

Strategy 1 - Streamline approvals processes to encourage rebuilding in fire affected areas.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Complete Amendments C29 and C35 to the Murrindindi Planning Scheme to correct identified land zoning anomalies.	Completed	Amendment C29 has been approved by the Minister for Planning. Amendment C35 was adopted by Council at its February 2012 meeting, and was forwarded to the Minister for Planning on 6 March 2012 for approval. Amendments C29 and C35 to the Murrindindi Planning Scheme correct identified land zoning anomalies across fire affected areas.
Complete and implement the Kinglake Ranges, Flowerdale and Toolangi Plan.	Ongoing	The Council released an Interim Consultation Report in July 2011 which summarised the submissions received following the public exhibition of the Kinglake Ranges, Flowerdale and Toolangi Draft Plan and Design Framework (KFT Plan). Council is not able to finalise the Consultation Report, nor its recommended changes to the KFT Plan, until the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) has completed work on local planning assessments and bushfire mapping as part of the State Government's response to the Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission findings. This work was not completed by the State Government during the last quarter. Therefore the project remains on hold pending the completion of the work and advice from the DPCD.

Strategy 2 - Use a strategic approach to land use planning to facilitate integrated residential and public facility construction.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Facilitate Goulburn Murray Water land transfers for future development options.	Ongoing	Stage one of this process has been completed, which comprised the transfer of Roads and Reserves that are managed and maintained by Council. Stages two and three are more complex and remain ongoing. Future urban design work will be necessary for Eildon township to consider surplus land owned by Council and Goulburn Murray Water (GMW).
Review and adopt Alexandra Urban Design Framework.	Deferred	Work on this project has not commenced due to other competing priorities, both at a strategic and operational program level.
Develop a plan for the review of existing Urban Design Frameworks.	Review	Work on this project commenced in the fourth quarter of this financial year to define the scope of the review, the outcomes sought from the process and the current status of implementation of each Framework. The plan for the review is now expected to be finalised in the first quarter of 2012/2013.

Services related to this theme

- Development approvals
- Building services
- Fire prevention
- Environmental Health
- Local Laws

Fast facts

- 401 building permits processed (105 for fire affected properties)
- 12 days average to process building permits on fire affected properties
- 97% Council building permits determined within 30 days
- 363 building certificates issued
- 217 planning permits issued
- 44 days average to process planning permits

Fast facts

- 61 planning consents issued
- 6 days average to process planning consents
- 135 septic tank permits issued (46 for fire affected properties)
- 284 health premises registrations
- 2,493 dogs registered
- 475 cats registered
- 44 burning off permits issued

Council Plan activities CONTINUED

Strategy 2 - Use a strategic approach to land use planning to facilitate integrated residential and public facility construction. CONTINUED

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Assess implications of conducting a shire-wide Rural Land Study.	Deferred	The assessment was completed and Council agreed not to embark on a Rural Land Study in the short term due to other work that is being conducted in the region by the State Government that should inform future rural land study requirements. The Hume Regional Growth Plan initiative and the potential Ministerial Amendment to adjust the Farming Zone provisions to allow a greater range of allowable uses has been welcomed by all rural councils.
Assist Goulburn Murray Water in rezoning process related to the Mt Pinnering Resort Development.	Ongoing	The proponents of the Mt Pinnering Resort development have received a decision from the Planning Minister requiring an Environmental Effects Statement (EES) to be undertaken prior to any development occurring. The proponents have been working on further studies to satisfy the additional information required for the EES. There has been little progress due to a new question being raised in relation to whether the status of land identified for development should be transferred to National Park. This new level of enquiry is of concern to Council, however it is a State Government land tenure matter that needs to be resolved.
Review Rural Living Development Guidelines.	Completed	A review of the Rural Living Development Guidelines has been finalised and requires consideration by Council before its public release. It is expected to be released for public comment in August 2012. The guidelines have been amended to respond to bushfire risk and to generally update and streamline the document.

Strategy 3 - Continue to strengthen partnerships with the Department of Sustainability & Environment and the Country Fire Authority.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Review the Council's fire management planning having regard to the State Government's response to the 2009 Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission.	On schedule	The Murrindindi and Lake Mountain Draft Municipal Fire Management Plan has been finalised and requires consideration by Council before its public release. It is expected to be released for public comment in September 2012. A new Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (MFMPC) has been established to guide the development and implementation of the plan. The Municipal Fire Management Plan (MFMP) will provide a strategic and integrated approach to fire management within the Murrindindi Shire and the area of the Lake Mountain Resort. The new MFMP responds to the 2009 Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission findings and forms part of a broader state and regional framework established under the Emergency Management Act (1986).

Council Plan activities CONTINUED

Strategy 3 - Continue to strengthen partnerships with the Department of Sustainability & Environment and the Country Fire Authority CONTINUED

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Map municipal fire risk.	Overdue	<p>The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) is coordinating all new bushfire mapping for Victoria. The Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) mapping adjustment that occurred on 18 November 2011 applied only to existing Wildfire Management Overlay (WMO) mapped areas. Updated mapping has been prepared but is yet to be implemented into the Murrindindi Planning Scheme (MPS). The current BMO covers approximately 1500 properties and the updated mapping is expected to cover up to 5500 properties (additional 4000 properties). Council is not aware of any transitional arrangements for the mapping update, which will have major implications for permit applications, both for those currently being assessed by Council and for the additional properties that will be subject to this mapping adjustment once it is introduced. Planning Consents issued for bushfire rebuilding that are due to expire may also be impacted by these changes. DPCD has been informed of Council's concerns in relation to the impact on Council's resources and the community of this change.</p> <p>Council has completed a draft Local Planning Policy to complement the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) changes already introduced by DPCD, which provides a localised context to bushfire risk assessments under the Murrindindi Planning Scheme (MPS). The draft Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) has been submitted to DPCD for approval, and will require further Council consideration prior to any adjustment of the MPS.</p>
Ensure appropriate planning responses to the 2009 Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission recommendation taking into account any State Government subsequent policy or legislative changes.	Ongoing	<p>Council has responded to significant legislative change since the 2009 Victorian Bushfires and the Royal Commission recommendations. Council has worked hard to fine tune service delivery to achieve a seamless introduction of new government policy direction and regulation change. The implementation of proposed mapping adjustments to the Bushfire Management Overlay are expected to have a significant impact on planning and building controls across the shire and are still being considered by the Department of Planning and Community Development.</p> <p>Strategic Planning studies have been undertaken for the areas of Marysville and Kinglake, Flowerdale and Toolangi having regard for bushfire activity. The Kinglake Ranges, Flowerdale and Toolangi Draft Plan and Design Framework is also reliant on updated BMO mapping from the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) prior to any further consideration or finalisation.</p> <p>Council has completed a draft Local Planning Policy to complement the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) changes already introduced by DPCD, which provides a localised context to bushfire risk assessments under the Murrindindi Planning Scheme (MPS). The draft Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) will require further Council consideration prior to any adjustment of the MPS.</p> <p>A significant number of corrective amendments to assist bushfire recovery and rebuilding have been undertaken by the planning department and implemented by the Minister for Planning.</p> <p>A new Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (MFMP) has been established to guide the development and implementation of the Municipal Fire Management Plan. The Municipal Fire Management Plan (MFMP) will be responsible for providing a strategic and integrated approach to fire management within the Shire of Murrindindi and the area of Lake Mountain Resort.</p>

THEME 6 – INFRASTRUCTURE

Strategic Objective

To enhance the sustainability of our infrastructure, recognising the changing needs and expectations of our communities.

Strategies

- Rebuild community infrastructure damaged or destroyed by the February 2009 fires.
- Work with fire affected communities and other levels of government to assist the implementation of priority infrastructure projects.
- Undertake a range of community infrastructure projects which enhance community amenity and foster civic pride.
- Align infrastructure service delivery with community needs and expectations.
- Improve and expand the network of footpaths and shared trails both within towns and linking communities.
- Undertake whole-of-life cost analyses of all new assets and commit to funding necessary operational, maintenance and renewal amounts.
- Enhance the organisation's asset system knowledge and data.

Achievements

- This year saw the completion and opening of the Goulburn River High Country Rail Trail providing some 78 kilometres of trail within the Murrindindi Shire.
- Major road safety works were undertaken through the upgrade of Whanregarwen and Jerusalem Creek Roads for motorbike riders with assistance of over \$1 million of funding from VicRoads.
- Council has continued to manage the bushfire reconstruction program for both assets destroyed by fires and new and expanded assets funded through donations. The major projects completed this year include:
 - All damaged or destroyed buildings have been reconstructed or alternative facilities provided.
 - Completion of three new bushfire related projects; Marysville Heart, Castella Central Park and the Kinglake Memorial Reserve redevelopment.
 - Nine bridges destroyed or damaged by bushfire have been reinstated including the Vic Oaks Bridge, Marysville.
 - Completed rebuilding all roads damaged or destroyed by bushfire.
 - Tree planting replacement works and replacement of road signs and furniture destroyed by bushfire was completed.
 - All pathways destroyed by bushfires have been reinstated
 - Marysville Community Centre completed.
 - Completion of Marysville streetscape and drainage.
 - Completed construction of Glenburn Hall.
 - Restored Old Glenburn Schoolhouse.
 - Redeveloped Strath Creek Hall, Pioneer Reserve.
- Council also continued to address the reconstruction of storm and flood damaged infrastructure from major rain events over the past two years. Some \$5.4 million of these works were completed this year plus an additional \$1.2m of damage resulted from the February Flood event.

Challenges

- The receipt of over \$30 million of new and expanded gifted assets has created unprecedented demands including: governance arrangements, increased expenditure, development of maintenance plans and resourcing maintenance needs.
- Identifying and addressing the difference between what Council is investing annually to renew assets versus what is actually required. The "Infrastructure Renewal Gap" continues to be a high priority.
- Meeting community expectations with the limited available resources.
- Encouraging more recycling and waste minimisation to reduce waste to landfill and mitigate the impact of rising Environment Protection Authority landfill levies.

Looking Forward

- Next year will see the practical completion and financial acquittal of all directly bushfire related projects and the concurrent winding down of the Reconstruction and Recovery Division.
- The Infrastructure Division will focus on the development and implementation of the various elements of its asset management system including adopting of the Asset Management Strategy and complete Asset Management Plans and Service Management Plans for key asset classes. This will assist in Council achieving core asset management competencies as prescribed by the National Asset Management Assessment Framework model.
- Road related renewal strategies will be reviewed and used to improve the quality of the information contained in the 10 year capital works plan.

THEME 6 LOOKING FORWARD CONTINUED

- Detailed plans, documentation and tendering and commencement of works for a number of major project will occur next year including: the replacement of Breakaway Bridge, Acheron; Interpretive Centre at the Yea Wetlands; implementation of findings of Alexandra and Yea stormwater strategies; refurbishment of the Yea Shire Hall and the Allandale Road Flood Mitigation works.
- Development and adoption of Council’s waste management strategy will be completed.
- The Murrindindi Project Management System will be implemented providing a consistent Project Management framework for all staff involved in developing and delivering projects. This will assist in delivering projects which meet the project scope, the available budget and within an appropriate timeframe.

Services related to this theme

- Facilities maintenance
- Engineering design and management
- Infrastructure planning
- Parks and gardens

Fast facts

- 482 kms of sealed roads maintained
- 714 kms unsealed roads maintained
- 65kms sealed paths maintained
- 81.5 kms of streets swept
- 58 kms underground drainage pipes maintained
- 13.3 kms of unsealed roads resheeted
- 39.4 kms of sealed roads resheeted

Council Plan activities

Strategy 1 - Rebuild community infrastructure damaged or destroyed by the February 2009 fires.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Rebuild buildings damaged and destroyed by fire in 2009.	Completed	All destroyed buildings have been re-constructed. Practical completion has been achieved on a number of other bushfire related projects including Marysville Heart, Castella Central Park and the Kinglake Memorial Reserve redevelopment.
Rebuild bridges damaged and destroyed by fire in 2009..	Completed	There were nine bridges which suffered major damage or were destroyed by the February 2009 Bushfires. All bridges have been reinstated including the Vic Oaks Bridge, Marysville which achieved practical completion in June 2012.
Rebuild roads damaged and destroyed by fire in 2009	Completed	All road repairs and reinstatements have been completed.
Replace roadside signs, furniture and vegetation destroyed by fire in 2009.	Completed	Tree planting replacement works and all other works were completed by 30 June 2012 to allow the final bushfire Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Funding Arrangements claim to be submitted to the Department of Treasury and Finance by 5 July 2012.
Rebuild pathways destroyed by fire in 2009.	Completed	All pathway works have been completed.
Narbethong Hall.	Completed	The Narbethong Hall project was overseen by the Narbethong Public Hall Committee through a Project Control Group. Council was represented on the PCG. The public opening of the building was held on 26 November 2011, and was officially opened by the Honourable Alex Chernov, AO, QC, Governor of Victoria.

Council Plan activities CONTINUED

Strategy 1 - Rebuild community infrastructure damaged or destroyed by the February 2009 fires

CONTINUED.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Marysville Community Centre.	Completed	The managing contractor, Lend Lease, achieved practical completion on 24 October 2011. The official opening of the Centre was held on Saturday 19 November 2011, with her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia formally opening the centre.
Gallipoli Park development..	On schedule	The contractor, Warrandale Industries Pty Ltd, has achieved practical completion, although additional works involving landscaping around the skate park area are delayed while the skate park is under construction.
Marysville Streetscape.	Completed	The project consisted of landscaping on Murchison Street with dry block work wall features on the township entries and the reconstruction of Darwin Street including an off street car park (with 32 spaces). This project has made a significant contribution to the amenity of the Marysville township area.
Marysville drainage.	On schedule	The main cut off drain along Lyell St has been completed. Council has installed important easement drainage in the township precinct. Easement drainage works in the Allison Crescent area have been completed. Further allotment drainage works are planned although the scoping is dependent on the remaining funds available.
Kinglake Memorial Reserve improvements.	Completed	The works have been completed although some defects remain to be rectified subject to improved weather conditions. A final surface coating is also required on the netball courts.
Flowerdale Community House.	Completed	The construction of the Flowerdale Community House was managed by Flowerdale Community House Inc. The facility was officially opened on 3 December 2011.

Strategy 2 - Work with fire affected communities and other levels of government to assist the implementation of priority infrastructure projects.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Glenburn Hall.	Completed	The hall construction is complete with some defects to be addressed mainly associated with external works/surrounds.
Glenburn Community Precinct.	Completed	The restoration works on the Old Glenburn School House have been completed.
Pioneer Reserve, Strath Creek Public Hall.	Completed	The works on the extension and refurbishment of the Strath Creek Hall have been completed. The local community worked closely through the Project Control Group to ensure the timely delivery of this valued community asset. The official opening was held on 12 November 2011.

Council Plan activities CONTINUED

Strategy 3 - Undertake a range of community infrastructure projects which enhance community amenity and foster civic pride.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Develop Asset Management Plans for key infrastructure categories (priorities determined by OAMS). Roads, Bridges & Paths.	Deferred	Development of the Asset Management Plans has commenced. Staff resources have been diverted to asset transition to assist this. The target date is to be revised to December 2012 for completion of the draft plans.
Undertake a review of Special Charge Scheme policies and processes.	Overdue	A draft Special Charge Scheme Policy has been prepared and work is currently being undertaken on the procedures associated with this policy. It is intended that this policy will be completed prior to mid August 2012.
Implement findings of Alexandra and Yea Stormwater strategies as opportunities arise.	Overdue	Council has obtained funding under the Local Government Infrastructure Program (LGIP) to implement drainage study initiatives in Alexandra (2012/2013) and Yea (2013/2014). Work will be programmed over the next two financial years. Once the report has been approved by Council the recommendations will be implemented.

Strategy 4 - Align infrastructure service delivery with community needs and expectations.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Develop a shire-wide pathway strategy to identify future priorities.	Review	The project has not yet commenced. Resources required to complete this task will be a priority for the 2012-13 financial year.
Review key road and related renewal strategies for input into the 10 year capital works program.	Review	A review of key road related strategies has commenced. However, detail for input into the 10 year capital works plan has not been finalised. This initiative will be finalised on completion of the Asset Management Strategy being presented to Council in August.

Strategy 5 - Improve and expand the network of footpaths and shared trails both within towns and linking communities.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Build the Goulburn River High Country Rail Trail.	Completed	This project is completed. The handover process from Mansfield Shire Council to Murrindindi Shire Council was completed late June 2012 and Council is now responsible for ongoing maintenance.

Council Plan activities CONTINUED

Strategy 6 - Undertake whole-of-life cost analyses of all new assets and commit to funding necessary operational, maintenance and renewal amounts.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Pursue funding for the replacement of Ghin Ghin Bridge over the Goulburn River.	Completed	Due to the introduction of the Vic Roads CRABI (Country Roads and Bridges Initiative) Council has been able to program \$1.2m of capital funding over the 2013/14 & 2014/2015 financial years for this project.
Undertake works at Breakaway Bridge subject to availability of funding.	On schedule	A request for quotation for bridge concept consultants is currently being called. It is expected that Council will appoint a Design and Construct Contractor in January 2013 for completion of the project in October/November 2013.

Strategy 7 - Enhance the organisation's asset system knowledge and data.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Development of a working plan that will ensure "core competency" under the National Asset Management Framework (NAMAF).	Overdue	A working plan has been prepared and the Asset Management Policy has been adopted by Council. The strategy will be presented to Council next financial year. Asset Management Plans are still to be finalised.
Develop a 10 year forward capital works plan (new and upgrade works) aligned to the Strategic Resource Plan (SRP).	Completed	A 10 year capital works plan has been prepared. Council at its 28 September 2011 meeting resolved to support the 10 Year Capital Improvement Plan.

Strategy 8 - Define and quantify the infrastructure renewal funding gap and seek to close this gap by 5% per annum.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Implement systems that quantify the Infrastructure renewal gap and adopt policies that seek to close the gap by 5% per annum.	Overdue	Adoption of the Asset Management Strategy will provide direction to complete the Asset Management Plans to establish the renewal gap.

THEME 7 – CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT

Strategic Objective

Improve systems and processes

Strategies

- Improve systems and processes.
- Communicate well with stakeholders.
- Deliver excellent customer service.
- Reduce organisational risk.
- Be an employer of choice.

Achievements

- Flowing on from participation in Workplace Health checks, funding has been secured to continue with this important initiative that contributes towards staff health and wellbeing.
- The redevelopment of the external website has created a user-friendly and more responsive functionality. It is more intuitive and functional with interactive components to assist customers in accessing information.
- Implementation of a new project management system will greatly assist in the effective and efficient oversight of Council projects and related grants.
- Council's libraries provided insightful and well received programs throughout the year, providing the community with access to library services that would otherwise be unavailable.
- Introduction of the Northeast Regional Development Scheme (NERDS) electronic self paced learning system, enables staff to fulfill training requirements in house in lieu of accessing externally facilitated training.

Challenges

- Progressing from a manual records system to an Electronic Document Management System.
- Assisting Special Committees of Council (Section 86 Committees), with good governance and administration practices as they take on responsibility over new and enhanced assets.
- Meeting service needs of the community with a decline in temporary staff numbers as Council business returns to normal following the 2009 bushfires.

Looking forward

- Greater efficiencies within administrative processes from implementation of the project management data base.
- Undertake a community visioning exercise to develop a Murrindindi 2030 Community Plan.

Services related to this theme

- Communication
- Corporate Services
- Customer Service
- Financial Services
- Information Technology
- Organisational Development
- Risk Management

Fast facts

- 672 Land Information Certificates issued
- 4,700 IT support requests completed
- 11,300 invoices processed
- 45,861 visitors to Council's web site
- 18 workplace inspections were undertaken

Council Plan activities

Strategy 1 - Improve systems and processes.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Investigate the option of participating in the MAV Shared Services proposal.	Withdrawn	The project funding and facilitation was withdrawn
Continue to investigate electronic document management options.	Deferred	This project is now included in the adopted 2012-2013 budget.
Implement procurement policies and processes.	Review	A process for pre approval of tendering conditions and documentation has been completed and implemented. Council's Contract Register software program is being reviewed and it is intended to be populated during the first financial quarter of 2012-2013. A review of all procurement policies was undertaken in December, 2011 and was adopted by Council April 2012. A procurement steering team was formed and is meeting weekly.
Review Chart of Accounts to enable more efficient reporting aligned to the organisation structure, the Council Plan and relevant statutory requirements.	On schedule	Consultants and software providers have been engaged. Mapping of the recommended chart structure has been completed. Alignment to accounting standards, financial reporting requirements and asset management protocols is being reviewed to enable more detailed reports at departmental level. The implementation of the revised chart of accounts will commence in early July 2012.
Review the Rating Strategy.	Review	The draft report of the Rating Strategy Review was completed by MacroPlan Australia and submitted to Council in its final form on 20 June 2012. Presentation of the Final Report to residents is scheduled for July 2012.

Strategy 2 - Communicate well with our stakeholders.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Adopt the Communications Strategy.	Completed	The Communications Strategy and Guidelines have been developed and input was sought from managers. Aspects of the strategy have been implemented including the development of a signage policy (internal), events signage policy and a guide to preparing and hosting official openings. Importantly the guidelines support a range of communication tools available to staff to deliver key council messages, promote activities and highlight the positive aspects of the organisation.

Council Plan activities CONTINUED

Strategy 3 - Deliver excellent customer service.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Develop, implement and monitor the Customer Service Charter.	Completed	The Customer Service Charter has been developed and awareness sessions have been conducted with all departments. The Charter is available from all office reception desks and via Council's web site under Customer Service information.

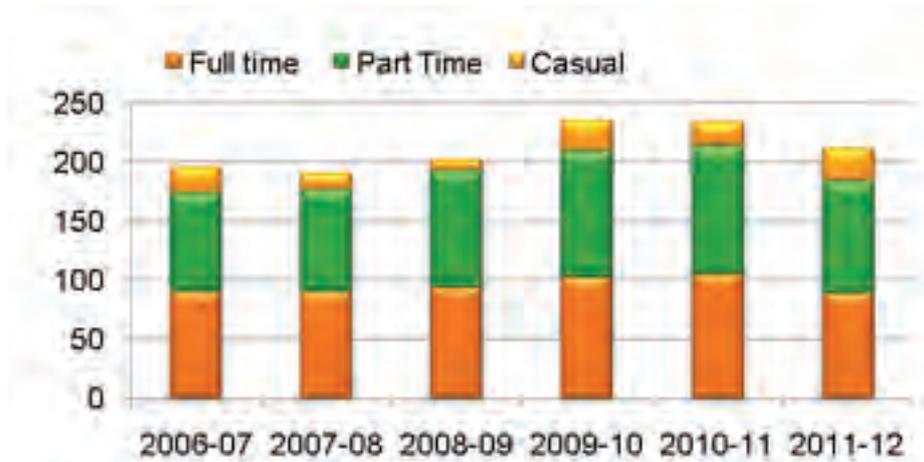
Strategy 4 - Reduce organisational risk.

Activities	Status	Comment on progress and outcomes
Support staff to achieve their best given the increased workload of bushfire recovery.	Ongoing	To date the Murrindindi Assistance Package has provided specific support for additional positions to cope with the additional work load across all operational areas as a result of the 2009 Bushfires. As part of Council's Service Review an assessment of resource allocation is being undertaken for the purpose of establishing and ensuring fair distribution of workload.
Refine the grants application and management process.	Review	Documentation is complete and a grant register has been developed which links to project and budget monitoring data. Operational use of the register will commence early in the new financial year.
Complete business continuity plans.	On schedule	A comprehensive Business Continuity Plan for the Alexandra Office is currently nearing completion. The plan covers broad business continuity requirements and roles as well as detailed department requirements in the event of a significant disruption. It also contains general business continuity elements for the Yea and Kinglake Service Centres.

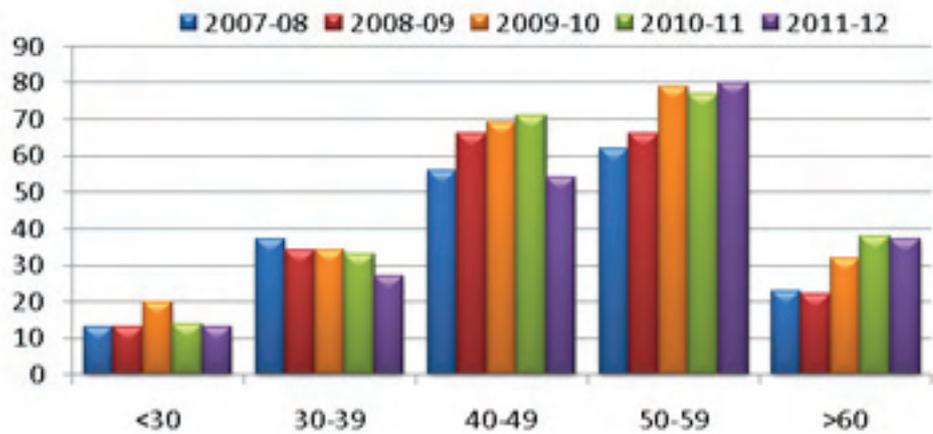
Corporate Development – Our Organisation

WORKFORCE PROFILE

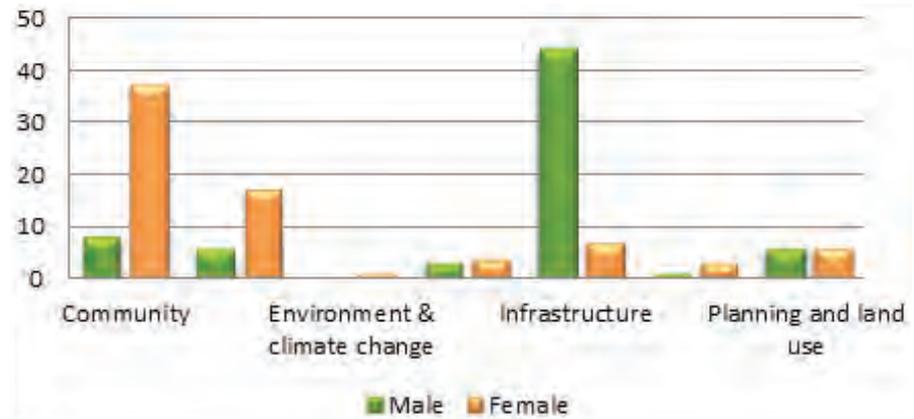
Number of Employees x Employment type



Age Distribution of employees (actual numbers)



Number of employees in each work area



Corporate Development – Our Organisation

Health and safety of our people

Our staff are our most valuable asset because they are essential to the delivery of our services and our achievements.

Health and Wellbeing

A program of staff support and counselling remains available to those require it including pro bono assistance from The Training Connection.

More than 125 staff participated in the WorkSafe Health checks aimed at early detection of preventable conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Due to the number of staff participating in the health checks Council was eligible to apply for a Health and Wellbeing grant.

Council was successful in securing the \$10,000 grant to promote and improve employee health, wellbeing and education. The grant enables staff to participate in Health and Wellbeing programs such as quit smoking, healthy eating, exercise, and stress reduction which will be delivered by a range of local providers across the shire. Regular information on health initiatives are provided to staff through the daily update, the 'Murricle' newsletter and notice boards.

In addition a Health and Wellbeing policy was adopted to support all employees' to maintain and adopt healthy lifestyles.

Council also joined up to the Local Government Employees Health Plan scheme which enables staff to join the private health fund at competitive rates.

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)

Council is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment and ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of all employees.

Council operates a Risk and Safety Committee made up of seven Health and Safety Representatives and seven Management Representatives who support and represent each workgroup across the organisation. The committee aims to ensure that all identified hazards and risks are acknowledged, communicated and resolved promptly. The committee also developed the Risk and Safety 'Consultative Committee Charter', and updated the Risk and Safety policy.

Training, information and education remains an important aspect of strong OH&S culture resulting in:

- Two Health and Safety Representatives undertaking refresher training
- All fire wardens and deputies attended fire warden training and practical drills

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)

CONTINUED

- Sun Smart and Manual Handling workshops provided to all outdoor staff.
- WorkSafe week was celebrated with a 'Sun Smart' theme; staff barbecue, parade of best 'Sun Smart' gear and staff quiz.

Our Risk and Improvement Coordinator conducted workplace inspections across 18 areas of Council, including regular inspections of the Yea Saleyards during the roof construction to ensure the safety of all users.

Ergonomic assessments at all locations were completed and departments have purchased equipment as required for staff.

The Pandemic Plan was reviewed and transferred to the Environmental Health Department for implementation.

Training and Development

Council continued this year to implement an in-house training and development plan to reduce the time and costs incurred by travelling to city or regional venues. This included active participation in the North East Regional Development Scheme (NERDS) involving 10 Councils.

One of the key strategies involved the introduction of an on-line learning program which has seen over 1000 enrolments in different on-line courses improving access to training on many areas required to meet best practice standards in governance.

The NERDS project was successful in winning a Victorian Local Government *Award for Excellence* in the category of *Innovative Management Initiative* and then subsequently won a National Local Government Award *Regional Collaborations Small Council Winner*.

In addition to the increase in online learning, more than 190 staff participated in a number of workshops including

- Managing Time
- MS Office 2007
- Defensive Driving
- Wellness
- Leader as Coach
- Customer Focussed Business Writing
- First Aid Level 2 and CPR
- Providing Exceptional Customer Service
- Youth inclusion Consultation workshops
- Freedom of information

Corporate Development – Our Organisation CONTINUED

Staff Satisfaction Survey

One hundred and sixty staff participated in the Staff Satisfaction Survey in November 2011. The results reflected staff concerns with the organisational challenges related to the financial position and service review and demonstrated a drop in staff satisfaction with our performance.

Our best performing areas were

- Providing a safe work environment.
- Producing or delivering quality products and services in my work area.
- Working as a team in my work area.
- Achieving my work area's goals and objectives.
- Having the person to whom I report listen and respond to me.

Our areas requiring the greatest improvement were

- Keeping skilled employees.
- Valuing employees at MSC.
- Trust among people at MSC.
- Providing incentives and rewards.
- Cooperating across work areas.

Best Value

Council remains in the Business Excellence and Best Value network informally, but has suspended our formal activities. Following the service review, the Executive Management Team will determine the appropriate strategies to support our on-going commitment to continuous improvement and excellence.

The principles of Best Value are:

- Services must meet quality and cost standards.
- Services must be responsive to community need.
- Services must be accessible for those members of the community who need them.
- Council must achieve continuous improvement in provision of service.
- Council must regularly consult with their community.
- Council must regularly report to their community on its achievements against the other principles.

Awards/Recognitions

Activities to recognise staff excellence and effort include

- Regular peer-nominated Organisational Development recognition award (OD Fellow award) for employees.
- Development on an annual awards scheme to recognise services delivered in line with the organisational values.
- Nomination of staff to receive membership to professional organisation and leadership programs.

Staff Turnover/Recruitment/Numbers

With the funding from the Murrindindi Assistance Package gradually diminishing, a number of programs and activities have been finalised, resulting in many of the fixed term positions coming to an end. We thank all of those people who came and assisted our community and our permanent staff with the many challenges of the last few years.

As a result of this and the on-going Services Review, Council staff numbers are returning to 2009 levels. The staff turnover this year therefore has seen significantly more terminations (71) than commencements (41) with only half the staff leaving being replaced.

Staff Accommodation

With the reduction in numbers, the Council was able to cease leasing the portable accommodation that was housed in the car park on Perkins Street.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Murrindindi Shire Council is committed to the principles of equal opportunity and anti-discrimination in employment and delivery of Council services to the community.

Council believes that its employees are entitled to be treated on the basis of their true abilities and merit, and to work in an environment which is free of discrimination and harassment.

Council has an *Equal Employment Opportunity Policy* and supporting procedures which apply to Council employees and contractors.

Council successfully negotiated a new Enterprise Agreement with staff which was ratified in January 2012.

Corporate Development – Our Organisation CONTINUED

Staff Code of Conduct

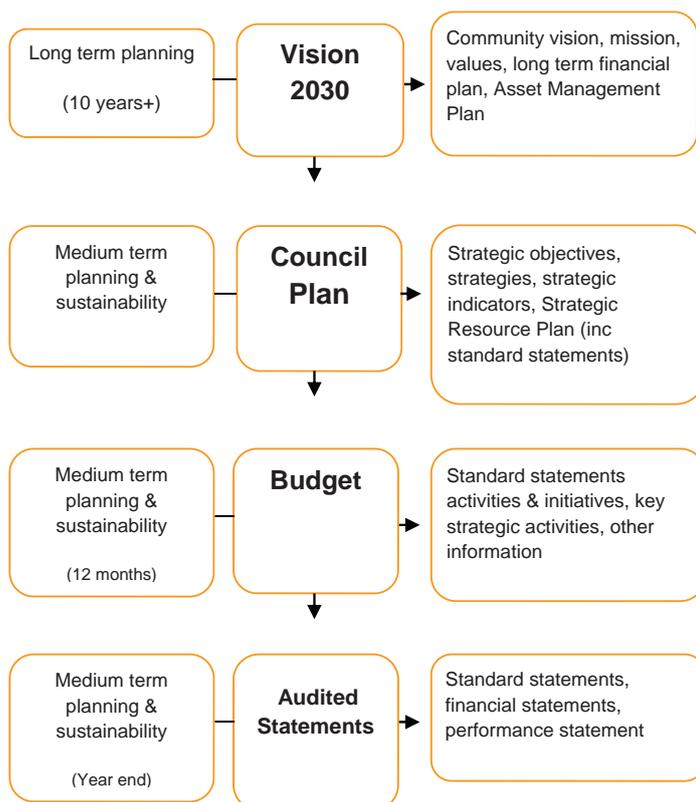
The Murrindindi Shire Council *Code of Conduct* is an agreement about the way in which we have chosen to behave in our working relationships with each other and with the wider community.

The *Code of Conduct* establishes a shared understanding of how we can work well together to create an enjoyable, satisfying and productive workplace.

For the community our *Code of Conduct* establishes our commitment to carry out our duties and deliver our services responsibly, impartially, professionally and with the highest level of integrity.

In 2011-12 the *Employee Conduct Policy* and associated *Code of Conduct* were reviewed and updated.

Planning Process



The Role of Local Government

Local Government is governance by Councillors who are democratically elected by the voters of the local communities. As such it is the 'grass roots' level of government.

Section 3D of the *Local Government Act 1989* states that the role of a council includes:

- Acting as a representative government by taking into account the diverse needs of the local community in decision making.
- Providing leadership by establishing strategic objectives and monitoring their achievement.
- Maintaining the viability of the Council by ensuring that resources are managed in a responsible and accountable manner.
- Advocating the interests of the local community to other communities and governments.
- Acting as a responsible partner in government by taking into account the needs of other communities.
- Fostering community cohesion and encouraging active participation in civic life.

Councillor Code of Governance

All Councils in Victoria are required by the *Local Government Act 1989* (s76C) to develop and regularly review a Councillor Code of Governance.

A Councillor Code of Governance was adopted by Murrindindi Shire Councillors in March 2010.

The Councillor Code of Governance sets out the standards expected of Councillor behaviour and disclosure, and identifies a process for resolving complaints.

Councillor Support and Remuneration

Section 74 of the *Local Government Act 1989* provides for the Governor in Council to set allowances for the Mayor and Councillors. Councils are categorised according to their size and revenue base and an allowance range payable to Councillors is set for each category. Murrindindi Shire Council is a level one council.

For 2011-2012 the allowance paid to the Mayor of Murrindindi Shire Council was \$52,375 plus an executive standard vehicle, and an amount equivalent to 9% superannuation.

The allowance paid to the Councillors was \$17,531 and an amount equivalent to 9% superannuation for the 2011 / 2012 year.

Corporate Development – Our Organisation CONTINUED

Councillor Support and Remuneration

CONTINUED

All Councillors are provided with a laptop computer and/or ipad and mobile phone.

For further detail regarding allowances and expense entitlements please refer to the Councillor Reimbursement Policy adopted on 23 November 2011.

Council elections

Six of the seven current Murrindindi Councillors were elected on 29 November 2008 for a four-year term. A by-election was held on 6 March 2010.

Council's next election will be held on 27 October 2012.

Each year the seven Councillors elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

Council Electoral Structure

The Shire of Murrindindi is divided into seven single councillor wards. Boundaries are aligned to average out the number of voters in each ward.



Council Meetings

Council decisions are made by resolution of Council either at ordinary Council meetings or at special Council meetings.

Ordinary meetings of Council are held on the fourth Monday of the month.

Council meetings are held in the Alexandra Council Chamber except for three meetings annually which are held in locations across the shire. A schedule of council meetings is available at any Council office or on our website. Community members are encouraged to attend and participate in Council meetings.

Councillors also meet on the first and second Monday of each month for briefing sessions. Briefing sessions give Councillors the opportunity to hear presentations by officers and the community on upcoming items and to seek clarification on these and other issues that may appear on the agenda at future Council meetings.

An 'Open Forum' session is held at the beginning of each Council meeting and briefing sessions allow members of the public to address Council. If you wish to speak at this time please submit an 'Open Forum' application form prior to the meeting. Forms are available from Council offices or online.

Agendas for Council meetings are made available no less than 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting from a Council office or on our website.

Additional special meetings of Council may be called to consider specific issues. As well as the formal notice we make every effort to publicise these meetings.

Council meetings are conducted in accordance with the procedures as detailed in Murrindindi Shire Council's *Governance Local Law No. 3 – 2011 (Incorporating Meeting Procedure and Use of Common Seal)*.

A special meeting is held annually to elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, set allowances for the Mayor and Councillors, and nominate Council's representatives for a range of committees. This meeting was held on 7 December 2011.

Council meeting attendances for 2011-2012

	Ordinary Council Meetings (12)		Special Meetings (9)	
	Eligible to Attend	Attended	Eligible to Attend	Attended
Cr John Walsh, Mayor	12	11	9	8
Cr Chris Healy, Deputy Mayor	12	12	9	7
Cr Sally Abbott Smith	12	10	9	8
Cr Peter Beales, Mayor	12	9	9	7
Cr Kevin Bellingham	12	11	9	9
Cr Bob Flowers	12	12	9	9
Cr Cris Ruhr	12	10	9	7

Corporate Development – Our Organisation CONTINUED

Special Committees of Council

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989* Council may establish special committees with delegated powers to inform and act on behalf of Council. Murrindindi Shire Council has 20 Section 86 Committees of Management.

Portfolios

Each Councillor, with the exception of the Mayor, is responsible for a specific 'portfolio' which focuses on a functional area of Council.

This allows each Councillor to maintain a close relationship with staff managing issues associated with their portfolio, and to report to Council meetings on points of interest that fall under that portfolio.

Councillor	Portfolio
Cr John Walsh	Mayor does not hold a portfolio
Cr Bob Flowers	Planning and Environment
Cr Peter Beales	Economic Development and Tourism
Cr Chris Healy	Infrastructure and Assets
Cr Cris Ruhr	Community and Customer Service
Cr Kevin Bellingham	Corporate Services
Cr Sally Abbott Smith	Climate Change and Natural Environment

Local Laws

Local Laws are available for viewing at all Council offices and online at www.murrindindi.vic.gov.au

Council introduced Local Law 3 Governance (incorporating meeting procedure and use of common seal) in 2011-2012.

Council's Local Laws are:

<i>Local Law No. 1</i>	Consumption of Liquor in Public Places
<i>Local Law No. 2</i>	Environment
<i>Local Law No. 3</i>	Governance
<i>Local Law No. 4</i>	Streets and Roads
<i>Local Law No. 5</i>	Livestock
<i>Local Law No. 6</i>	Open Air Burning
<i>Local Law No. 7</i>	Swimming Pools (unauthorised entry)

Council has conducted a review of its Local Laws in 2011-2012 and is looking to combine its existing local laws (excluding its Governance Local Law) into a new format 'Community Local Law'.

Policy and Strategy Reviews

POLICIES

There were five new policies adopted during the year.

Arts & Culture

Provides a framework for the delivery of cultural services over the next two years.

Councillor Reimbursement

Establishes entitlements for Councillor reimbursement and support.

Election Caretaker

Provides guidelines for the carrying out of Council business across the shire during the Election period.

Township Entrance and Community Event Frames Guidelines

Assists Council or its nominated community group to manage event promotion on town entry signage and service/club signage.

Travel Hospitality and Personal Expenses

Provides guidance and clear direction for employees of Council undertaking travel, providing hospitality or incurring personal expenses in the course of conducting council business.

Eleven policies were reviewed during the year.

Annual Leave

Defines the procedures for annual leave and the parameters for the use of accrued annual leave by employees of Murrindindi Shire Council.

Corporate Credit Card

Provides Guidelines for the correct use of the Corporate Credit Card.

Employment & Recruitment

Promotes a fair, competitive, transparent and legally compliant recruitment, selection and appointment process.

Exit Policy

Provides guidance on understanding factors affecting staff retention and improve management of documentation and return resources.

Financial Delegations

Provides guidance on limits for purchasing, tendering and receiving funds on behalf of Council.

Induction

States the Council's commitment to the induction of new employees and existing employees who are appointed to another position and specifies responsibilities in relation to induction.

Corporate Development – Our Organisation CONTINUED

Policy and Strategy Reviews CONTINUED

Petty Cash

Prescribes the principles for the payment of petty cash.

Procurement

Provides guidance to Council to allow consistency and control over procurement activities while demonstrating accountability to ratepayers.

Risk & Safety

Promotes an integrated, holistic approach to strategic risk management.

Using Consultants

Provides guidelines on the use of consultants.

Volunteers

Provides a framework to ensure Council and community programs are well administered, meet any legal obligations to volunteers and to enable best practice standards.

STRATEGY

During 2011-2012 Council adopted three strategies.

Economic Development 2011-2016

Provides a revised Economic Development Strategy to incorporate strategies for fire affected businesses.

Youth Strategy 2012-2015

Implements a Youth Strategy to engage isolated or vulnerable young people experiencing psychological distress as a direct result of the 2009 bushfires, through locally coordinated youth participation and youth outreach projects.

The Murrindindi Shire Council Transport Connections Strategic Plan for 2011/2013

The aim of Transport Connections 2011-2013 is to enable a local and regional focus in responding to the needs of people with limited access to transport, and to demonstrate a more innovative approach to developing local and regional solutions.

Auditing

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee is an independent advisory committee to Council. The primary objective of the Audit Committee is to assist Council in the effective conduct of its responsibilities for internal and external financial reporting, management of risk, maintaining a reliable system of internal controls and facilitating the organisation's ethical development. It also serves as an effective conduit for communications between the external auditor, internal auditor, management and Council.

Auditing CONTINUED

The Internal Audit Committee currently comprises the following members with voting rights:

Margaret Rae (Chair)

Jeff Hunter

Cr Kevin Bellingham

The Chief Executive Officer and a representative of the Internal Auditor are also required to attend meetings in a non-voting capacity. A representative of the External Auditor is also required to attend where either the year-end financial statements or external audit reports are to be considered.

The Audit Committee met on four occasions during the 2011-2012 financial year, providing invaluable advice to Council on a number of important issues including reviews of Contract Management Framework, Payroll and Purchasing systems.

Recommendations from the audit program are prioritised and addressed as opportunities for improvement across the organisation.

Internal Audits

Murrindindi Shire Council's internal audit function is contracted to HLB Mann Judd - appointed 1 December, 2010.

During 2011-2012 the Internal Auditor completed the following components of the audit program:

Review of Payroll – completed July 2011

Review of Purchasing – completed October 2011

Review of Contract Management – completed March 2012

External Audits

Council's external auditor is currently the Victorian Auditor-General's Office. The main audit is conducted in early September with interim audits conducted during the year.

Public Liability and Property Audits

Council participated in three external audits

- Property Audit
- Commercial Crime Audit
- Public and Professional Liability Audit

JMAPP, Council's public liability and property auditors undertook the Property and Commercial Crime audits. Scores are measured as a percentage of compliance with audit items. Council improved its performance by a 5% increase in our Property score and 4% in Commercial Crime. This is an excellent result considering the work load over the past two years.

Corporate Development – Our Organisation CONTINUED

Public Liability and Property Audits

CONTINUED

Our audit performance is ranked against all other councils in our region and in Victoria.

JMAPP Audit Scores

Our state ranking on Property audit has improved to 51st and the regional ranking has remained at fourteenth.

Murrindindi Shire Council	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2010	2010/ 2012
Overall compliance with audit (%)	67.33%	61.67%	66.67%
Regional Ranking	11	14	14
State Ranking	48	57	51

JMAPP Commercial Crime Audit Scores

The Commercial Crime audit state ranking is 42nd and the regional ranking is 11th, so while our overall score has improved our ranking has not.

Murrindindi Shire Council	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2010	2010/ 2012
Overall compliance with audit (%)	61.00%	70.00%	74.00%
Regional Ranking	5	7	11
State Ranking	17	37	42

Public And Professional Liability

Civic Mutual Plus (CMP), now known as MAV Insurance, Liability Mutual Insurance, conducted the Public and Professional Liability Audit.

MAV Insurance, Liability Mutual Insurance Public and Professional Liability Audit Scores.

Council achieved a final score of 86% resulting in a state ranking of 27th, and 5th in our region. The Council Plan 2009/2013 target was to achieve a rating of 10th or better, so this represents a great result.

Murrindindi Shire Council	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2010	2010/ 2012
Overall compliance with audit (%)	64.00%	78.00%	86.00%
Regional Ranking	14	10	5
State Ranking	61	15	27

MAV Insurance also completed a Target Risk Appraisal on skate facilities in June; the overall results indicated the need for signage at each facility and to develop a routine approach to inspection and maintenance.

Privacy

Council is committed to the responsible collection, handling and protection of the personal privacy of residents and ratepayers. Council will only collect, use or disclose personal information where it is necessary to perform Council functions or where required by law.

Murrindindi Shire Council will endeavour to take all reasonable steps to keep any information we hold about you secure. Murrindindi Shire Council employees are also obliged to respect the confidentiality of any personal information held and not disclose such unless required to do so by law.

Council has a Confidentiality and Information Privacy policy, adopted in January 2010 and is available on Council's website.

Freedom of Information

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* gives the community a way to access information held by Council.

Applications under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* must be made in writing and addressed to the Freedom of Information Officer, Murrindindi Shire Council, PO Box 138, Alexandra, 3714.

An application costs \$25.10 to lodge.

Applicants are encouraged to contact Council's Freedom of Information Officer prior to lodging an application to assess whether an application is in fact needed.

In 2011-2012 the Murrindindi Shire Council received 16 applications under the *Freedom of Information Act*.

Year	Number of applications	Freedom of Information 2011-2012	
2007/08	7	Full access granted	3
2008/09	3	Request denied	0
2009/10	3	Request granted in part	3
2010/11	12	Request outside the legislation	4
2011/2012	16	Not proceeded with	2
		Not yet finalised	4

Whistleblower Protection

The *Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001* came into effect on 1 January 2002. Its purpose is to encourage and facilitate the disclosure of information about improper conduct by Council officers or Councillors.

Council has established procedures to facilitate the making of disclosures under the Act. Council does not tolerate improper conduct by its employees, officers or members, nor reprisal against those who come forward to disclose such conduct.

The Chief Executive Officer is the Council's Protected Disclosure Coordinator.

Corporate Development – Our Organisation CONTINUED

Whistleblower Protection CONTINUED

Whistleblower Protection Topic	Report 2011-2012
Number of disclosures made	Nil
Disclosures referred to Ombudsman for determination	Nil
Disclosures referred by Ombudsman	Nil
Disclosures referred to Ombudsman to investigate	Nil
Investigations taken over by the Ombudsman	Nil
Requests made under Section 74 during the year to Ombudsman to investigate disclosed matters	Nil
Disclosures the public body has declined to investigate	Nil
Disclosures that were substantiated on investigation	Nil
Recommendations by the Ombudsman under this Act that relate to Murrindindi Shire Council	Nil

Public Documents

Section 11 of the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2004* requires Council to have certain documents available for public inspection. Documents and registers available for inspection in accordance with these Regulations and the *Local Government Act 1989* are:

- Details of current allowances fixed for the Mayor and Councillors under Section 74 of the Act.
- Details of senior officers' current gross salaries, allowances and other benefits for the current financial year and previous financial year.
- Details of overseas and interstate travel exceeding three days undertaken in an official capacity by Councillors or any member of council staff in the previous 12 months.
- Names of council officers who were required to submit a return of interest during the financial year and the dates these returns were submitted.
- Names of Councillors who submitted returns of interest during the financial year and the dates these returns were submitted.
- Agendas for and minutes of ordinary and special meetings kept under Section 93 of the Act, except where such minutes relate to parts of meetings, which have been closed to members of the public under Section 89 of the Act.
- A list of all special committees established by the Council and the purpose for which each committee was established.
- A list of all special committees established by the Council which were abolished or ceased to function during the financial year.
- Minutes of meetings of special committees established under section 86 of the Act except where such minutes

Public Documents CONTINUED

relate to parts of meetings which have been closed to members of the public under Section 89 of the Act.

- Register of delegations kept under Section 87, 88 and 98 of the Act.
- Submissions received under Section 223 of the Act during the previous 12 months.
- Details of all property, finance and operating leases involving land, buildings, plant, computer equipment or vehicles entered into by the Council as lessor or lessee.
- Register of authorised officers appointed under Section 224 of the Act.
- List of donations and grants made by the Council during the financial year.
- List of names of organisations of which the Council was a member during the financial year.
- List of contracts valued at \$150,000 or more which the Council entered into during the financial year without first engaging in a competitive process.
- The certified voters' roll for a Council election - for the period beginning on the certification date and ending 30 days after election day.
- Copies of Campaign Donation Returns lodged by candidates in the last council elections.
- The Council's adopted Code of Governance for Councillors.
- Register of interests.
- All Local Laws adopted by the Council.
- Copies of the Council's Council Plan, Strategic Resource Plan, Budget and Annual Report.
- Details regarding differential rates declared by Council.
- Special Rate.
- Quality and Cost Standards.

Cemetery Management

Murrindindi Shire Council as Trustee for the Yea Cemetery Trust administers the old and new cemeteries in Yea.

Works with regard to the Yea cemeteries in 2011–2012 include:

- Commencement of construction of a new memorial shelter.
- Lodged grant application for completion of new roadway forming.
- General maintenance and upkeep at the old cemetery.

The year ahead:

- Completion of the memorial shelter.
- Completion of road works to achieve safe pedestrian access.
- Instigation of memorial 'leaves' catering for those who may not be interred.

Donations and Grants provided by Council 2011-2012

Received By	Amount
Alexandra & District Senior Citizens	\$1,335.00
Alexandra Community Leisure Centre	\$14,000.00
Alexandra Information Centre	\$4,775.28
Alexandra Pre School	\$2,070.00
Alexandra Traders & Tourism	\$500.00
Berry Street	\$5,500.00
Eildon Action	\$500.00
Eildon Community Leisure Centre	\$1,000.00
Eildon Pre School	\$4,200.00
Eildon Resource Centre	\$500.00
Eildon Information Centre	\$1,210.00
Glenburn Community Centre	\$500.00
Glenburn Community Progress Association	\$500.00
Glenburn Hall & Progress Association	\$500.00
Kinglake Community Centre	\$2,000.00
Kinglake Ranges Business Network	\$20,000.00
Kinglake Information Centre	\$1,832.50
Kinglake Ranges Neighbourhood House	\$500.00
Kinglake Senior Citizens Centre	\$4,640.00
Kinglake West Uniting Church	\$500.00
Lions Club Eildon	\$550.00
Lions Club Marysville	\$550.00
Mystic Mountains Tourism Inc.	\$4,930.92
Marysville Pre School	\$4,200.00
Mate to Mate - Kinglake	\$1,000.00
Rotary Club Yea	\$550.00
Royal Humane Society	\$200.00
Spring Valley Recreation Reserve	\$550.00
State Emergency Service Alexandra	\$18,351.00
State Emergency Service Kinglake	\$18,351.00
State Emergency Service Marysville	\$18,351.00
Strath Creek Reserves & Hall	\$500.00
Toolangi Castella Community House	\$500.00
Yea Indoor Recreation Centre	\$4,000.00
Yea Information Centre	\$1,123.60
Yea Pre School	\$1,052.00
Total of Donations and Grants with a value less than \$300.00 paid to (21) organisations	\$3,500.00
	\$144,822.30

Organisation memberships for 2011-2012

Organisation	Membership Fee
Local Government Professionals	\$1,000.00
Australian Local Government Job Directory	\$650.00
Municipal Association Of Victoria	\$22,135.82
Family Day Care Council Australia	\$145.36
Timber Towns Victoria	\$2,500.00
Public Libraries Victoria Network Inc.	\$822.00
Alzheimers Association Australia	\$100.00
Family Day Care Victoria	\$126.00
Civil Contractors Federation	\$2,208.95
National Saleyards Quality Assurance Ltd	\$450.00
Childrens Book Council	\$80.00
Victorian Local Governance Association	\$2,250.00
Goulburn Valley Regional Waste Management Group	\$6,594.00
SAI Global	\$370.91
Meals Victoria	\$80.00
Victorian Maternal & Child Health Coordinators Group	\$50.00
International Council Local Environmental Initiatives	\$600.00
National In-Home Childcare Association	\$150.00
National Timber Councils Association	\$2,500.00
Total	\$42,813.04

Capital works summary 2011-2012

CAPITAL WORKS UNDERTAKEN AND COMPLETED DURING 2011/2012

Description of works	Works in progress	Total value of works	Total value of works completed
	01 July 2011 \$	2011-2012 \$	30 June 2012 \$
LAND			
Total Land	0	0	0
BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES			
Alexandra - Rotary Park Upgrade	220,869	14,941	235,809
Alexandra Swimming Pool		11,994	11,994
Bollygum Park	1,211,066	23,599	1,234,665
Buxton Park Upgrade	15,098	1,586	16,684
Buxton Reserve Upgrade	12,695	51,619	64,314
Castella Park Shelter and Parking		105,000	105,000
Eildon Basket Ball Court Fence		11,435	11,435
Eildon Bowling Club Disabled Access	4,537	5,709	10,246
Eildon Go Fishing - Tables & facilities		4,717	4,717
Eildon Swimming Pool		58,561	58,561
Flowerdale Moore's Reserve Upgrade	46,662	151,726	198,388
Gallipoli Park	1,483,950	931,986	2,415,936
Glenburn - Alf Miller Reserve	3,095	24,734	27,829
Glenburn Community House		77,855	77,855
Kinglake Lions Park		20,286	20,286
Kinglake Memorial Recreation Reserve	313,146	2,068,508	2,381,654
Kinglake Neighbourhood House		417,715	417,715
Marysville Amenities Block and Carpark		286,837	286,837
Marysville Caravan Park	264,855	321,616	586,472
Marysville Community Centre	4,531,893	3,712,029	8,243,922
Marysville Heart	78,739	934,823	1,013,562
Marysville Retirement Village	153,433	418,244	571,676
Marysville Swimming Pool		3,545	3,545
Program Management	170,825	-53,825	117,000
Public Convenience Upgrades		27,591	27,591
Strath Creek Community Halls	318,113	145,839	463,952
Strath Creek Pioneer Reserve - BBQ, Shelter & Toilets	232,304	-2,144	230,160
Strath Creek Pioneer Reserve - Facilities Upgrade	231,812	125,347	357,159
Taggerty BBQ and Shelter		15,964	15,964
Toolangi & Castella Central Park		456,573	456,573
Toolangi Castella Hall Upgrade	91,968	49,889	141,857
Transfer Stations Works		38,692	38,692
Yea Caravan Park	43,378	36,000	79,379
Yea Fountain Refurbishment	9,936	4,810	14,747
Yea Swimming Club Rooms	630	29,133	29,763
Yea Swimming Pool		2,854	2,854
Yea Tennis & Multi Purpose Rooms	225,079	275,537	500,615
Total Buildings & Structures	9,664,083	10,811,326	20,475,410
PLANT AND MACHINERY			
Major Plant		152,921	152,921
Motor Vehicles		180,010	180,010
Total Plant & Equipment	0	332,931	332,931

Capital works summary 2011-2012

CAPITAL WORKS UNDERTAKEN AND COMPLETED DURING 2011/2012

Description of works	Works in progress	Total value of works	Total value of works completed
	01 July 2011 \$	2011-2012 \$	30 June 2012 \$
ROADS, STREETS & BRIDGES			
Narbethong Streetscape	70,247		70,247
Buxton Streetscape	9,890	23,027	32,917
Toolangi All Purpose Track		318,698	318,698
Marysville Town Amenity Project	1,176,822	674,382	1,851,204
Flowerdale Shared Path	15,796	111,696	127,492
Kinglake - Glenburn Rd Walking Track	484,930	588	485,518
Bridge Rebuild Program	778,830	616,053	1,394,883
Murchison Gap Observation Platform	38,755	34,048	72,803
Bakers Lane Car Park	20,195	3,172	23,367
Hazeldene Streetscape	12,633	20,264	32,897
Molesworth Streetscape	1,715	10,338	12,053
Taggerty Picnic Area Access	4,815	15,255	20,070
Pheasant Creek Streetscape	3,750	18,680	22,430
Wilhelmina Falls Road	111,411	250,916	362,327
Banbury Road	21,039	143,236	164,275
Gravel Roads - Resheeting		688,912	688,912
Vegetation Projects		7,723	7,723
Sealed Road - Renewal & Major Patching		395,894	395,894
Sealed Roads - Reseals		783,548	783,548
Final Seals		76,672	76,672
Sealed Roads - Pavement Renewal		193,825	193,825
Bridge Component Renewal		61,394	61,394
Minor Capital Works - Urban Design Framework		2,643	2,643
Urban Access Improvements	1,530	12,517	14,047
Bayley Street Car Parking	18,018		18,018
Bus Shelter Construction		7,972	7,972
Kerb Renewal		128,861	128,861
Footpaths - Missing Links		102,892	102,892
Lamont St & Station St Intersection	2,080	177	2,257
Topsie Gully Road	124,039		124,039
Kinglake Ranges Pathways Project	230,560	13,317	243,878
Vickery St & Green St Intersection	9,196	844	10,040
Craigie St & Nolan St Intersection	8,183	1,364	9,547
South Cathedral Lane	51,511		51,511
Limestone Road - Extend Seal		90,151	90,151
Recreation Road Kinglake West		14,895	14,895
Wentworth Road Upgrade		13,103	13,103
Total Road, Streets & Bridges	3,195,945	4,837,056	8,033,002

Capital works summary 2011-2012

CAPITAL WORKS UNDERTAKEN AND COMPLETED DURING 2011/2012

Description of works	Works in progress 01 July 2011 \$	Total value of works 2011-2012 \$	Total value of works completed 30 June 2012 \$
DRAINAGE			
Marysville Drainage	69,402	1,257,118	1,326,520
Drainage - Network Expansion		86,243	86,243
Drainage Renewal		58,403	58,403
Drainage Upgrade- trouble spots		7,152	7,152
Total Drainage	69,402	1,408,917	1,478,319
FURNITURE & EQUIPMENT			
Computer Equipment		173,530	173,530
Other		255,422	255,422
Total Furniture & Equipment	0	428,951	428,951
LIBRARY MATERIALS			
Books		69,478	69,478
DVD and Talking Books		35,215	35,215
Magazines		4,082	4,082
Total Library Materials	0	108,776	108,776
WORK IN PROGRESS			
Buxton Drainage		11,037	11,037
Jerusalem Creek Rd Blackspot		556,257	556,257
Kinglake Medical Centre		86,837	86,837
Marysville Skate Park		71,118	71,118
Molesworth-Dropmore Rd Safer Road		1,425	1,425
Whanregarwen Rd Blackspot		228,755	228,755
Yea Railway Reserve		194,046	194,046
Yea Recreation Reserve Drainage		5,253	5,253
Yea Saleyards Development		802,236	802,236
Yea Shire Hall - Upgrade		17,908	17,908
Yea Wetlands Visitor Information		85,615	85,615
Total Works In Progress	0	2,060,488	2,060,488
Total value of Capital works completed 2011-2012	12,929,431	19,988,445	32,917,875

Local Government Indicators 2011-2012

The Victorian Government requires all Victorian councils to measure and annually report against 11 Victorian Local Government Indicators.

Category	Description	Score 2011-2012
Overall performance	Community satisfaction rating for overall performance generally of the Council	51
Advocacy	Community Satisfaction rating for Council's obbying on behalf of the community	48
Community Consultation	Community satisfaction rating for Council's community consultation and engagement.	53
All rates	Average rates and charges per assessment	\$1,431.57
Residential rates	Average residential rates and charges per assessment	\$1,226.05
Operating costs	Average operating expenditure per assessment	\$4,757.79
Capital expenditure	Average capital expenditure per assessment	\$2,113.61
Infrastructure	Renewal	88.05%
	Renewal and maintenance	88.39%
Debts	Average liabilities per assessment	\$1,554.91
Operating result	Operating result per assessment	\$1,554.31

National Competition Policy Compliance

Council continues to ensure compliance with the National Competition Policy in order to ensure the transparency of its decision making and as a good business practice.

Introduction to the Financials

Understanding the Financial Statements

The financial report of the Murrindindi Shire Council is a general purpose financial report that consists of an Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity and Cash Flow Statement together with notes accompanying these statements.

This general purpose financial report has been prepared to comply with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1989*, *Local Government (Finance and Reporting) Regulations 2004*, applicable Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.

Council's Audit Committee and the Council have examined the report. The Victorian Auditor General has provided an 'unqualified' audit opinion.

The Income Statement

The Income Statement sets out the movement in relation to revenue, expenses and other adjustments from all activities and compares these figures to the previous financial year. It provides a view of Council's operating performance. The Income Statement requires revenues to be separately disclosed where the item is of such a size, nature and incidence, that its disclosure is relevant in explaining the performance of the Council.

The change in total revenues from \$65.33 million in 2010-2011 to \$59.69 million in 2011-2012 represents a decrease of \$5.64 million. This variance relates primarily to 2010-2011 revenue, where the transfer of \$7.67 million of bushfire assets constructed by Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction & Recovery Authority (VBRRA), were recognised when control of the remaining rebuild of these projects was handed over to Council.

The reduction in total expenses of \$7.43 million, from \$52.42 million in 2010-2011 to \$44.99 million in 2011-2012 reflects, in the most part, bushfire related works as the recovery and reconstruction process following the 2009 Bushfires comes to a conclusion. Council has also recorded a \$1.98 million Vision Super Defined Benefits unfunded liability within the 2011-2012 financial period.

The operating surplus, as indicated by the Income Statement, for the financial year was \$14.69 million. It primarily represents non-recurrent grant funding received in 2011-2012 related to capital works for bushfire reconstruction and recovery projects and other major Infrastructure works either completed in 2011-12 or within budgets carried forward to be expended in 2012-13.

The Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet shows a snap shot of Council's financial position at the end of the period. It shows the total of what is owned (assets) less what is owed (liabilities). The assets and liabilities are separated into current and non-current. Current means those assets or liabilities that fall due in the next 12 months. The 'bottom line' of this statement is net assets, which is the net worth of the Council. The change in net assets between the two years shows how the financial position has changed over the period. Net assets is made up of the total current and noncurrent assets less the current and noncurrent liabilities.

Items of note in the balance sheet include:

- a decrease in cash and cash equivalent of \$ 2.55 million as a result of greater level of expenditure on capital works achieved in 2011-2012. Cash funds held at year end are also affected by the increase of \$2.47 million in Trade & Other Receivables mostly relating to outstanding Natural Disaster funding for Bushfire and Storm events.
- an increase in the value of property, plant and equipment of \$25.72 million. This is mainly attributable to a high level of capital works of \$19.98 million achieved in 2011-2012, together with the indexation of Roads, Streets and Bridges valuation.
- there was minimal movement in liabilities between the two financial years.

An overall increase in total equity or net worth of the Council of \$25.82 million demonstrates that the value of assets under Council's control has increased over the period.

Notes 15 - 24 in the financial report provide more detail on the items reported in the balance sheet.

Statement of Changes in Equity

The Statement of Changes in Equity tables the types of movement and adjustments in the financial reporting that determines the balance of ratepayers equity at the end of the reporting period.

The most significant items in the table relates to:

- recognition of increased values of infrastructure assets – Roads, Streets, Bridges & Drainage of \$11.12 million
- the effect of the \$14.69 million surplus.

Introduction to the Financials CONTINUED

Cash Flow Statement

The Cash Flow Statement shows what has occurred during the year in terms of cash. It explains what cash movements have resulted in the difference in the cash balance at the beginning and end of the financial year. The net cash flows from operating activities show how much cash is remaining after paying for Council operations and commitments. The information in the Cash Flow Statement assists in the assessment of the ability to generate cash flows and meet financial commitments as they fall due including the servicing of borrowings.

The Cash Flow Statement also reports on any restriction on Council's cash assets. Note 28 of the accounts more fully outlines the legislative restriction to provide for employee entitlements and reserve funds. Importantly the closing cash position of \$13.61 million is in line with the 2011-2012 budget projections and enables the Council's recurrent and capital functions to be undertaken in the coming year. The cash balances are higher than normal due to bushfire restoration funding being received in advance of project delivery.

Performance Statement

The Performance Statement reports on the actual results of the key strategic activities as outlined in Council's Budget.

The report provides the performance measure for those activities and details on whether or not the targets were achieved. The Performance Statement is found in the financial report and shows that Council achieved four of its seven performance targets.

Summary

The financial statements represent a positive outcome for the 2011-2012 financial year. Council has demonstrated an ability to meet operational expenses, statutory requirements and its commitment to achieving the goals as set by the *Council Plan 2009-2013* incorporating the *Strategic Resource Plan*.

Note 38 of the statements sets out a number of indicators to monitor the financial health of the Council.

The debt servicing ratio expresses the amount of interest paid as a percentage of Council's total revenue. This ratio was 0.56 per cent and was skewed by inflated levels of revenue due to additional grants received by Council. The debt commitment ratio indicates the percentage of rate revenue used to pay interest and redeem debt principal.

The revenue ratio indicates Council's dependence on rates income. The higher the percentage of Council's total revenue the higher the dependence. The current ratio of 22.68 per cent is also skewed by higher than normal bushfire and storm related grant income.

The working capital ratio shows a coverage of current assets to current liabilities of 2.34 times which is a financially sound measure. It is noted however that this is artificially inflated as a consequence of the additional grant revenues received by the Council. In normal circumstances this ratio would be around 1-1.5 times, which is still acceptable in terms of Council meeting its day to day creditors. The debt exposure ratio indicates the level of realisable assets that would need to be sold to extinguish Council's debt.

In conclusion, the indicators of operational surplus, increased equity, and sufficient cash reserves, ensures that Council's financial position remains sound.

Please see the commentary contained in the *Strategic Resource Plan* that sets out the financial challenges facing the Council.