



# Scheduled Meeting of Council

## Minutes

Wednesday 23 April 2025  
Yea Council Chamber  
15 The Semi Circle  
6:00 PM

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## **1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY AND COUNCILLORS' PLEDGE**

### **1.1 Acknowledgement of Country**

The meeting will be opened with the Mayor reading the following on behalf of the Murrindindi Shire Council:

“Murrindindi Shire Council is proud to acknowledge the Taungurung and Wurundjeri people as the traditional custodians of the land we now call Murrindindi Shire.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging, who are the keepers of history, traditions, knowledge and culture of this land.”

### **1.2 Councillors' Pledge**

“The Councillors, democratically elected to represent our community as the Murrindindi Shire Council, are committed to working together in the best interests of the people who live in our municipality, those who conduct business here and those who visit.”

## **2 PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

### **2.1 Privacy Note**

This public meeting is being streamed live via our Facebook page and website. A recording of the meeting along with the official Minutes of the meeting will also be published on our website.

### **2.2 Apologies and Request for Planned Leave**

#### **Present:**

Councillors A Carr, J Adams, P Hildebrand, S Carpenter, D Gallagher, E Lording, S McAulay

#### **In attendance:**

Chief Executive Officer: Livia Bonazzi

Director People & Corporate Performance: Michael Chesworth

Director Community & Development: Andrew Paxton

Acting Director Assets & Environment: Peter Bain

### **2.3 Disclosure of Interest or Conflict of Interest**

Nil.

### **2.4 Confirmation of Minutes**

Minutes of the Scheduled Meeting of Council held on 26 March 2025.

## **RESOLUTION**

**Cr A Carr / Cr S Carpenter**

**That Council confirm the minutes of the 26 March 2025 Council Meeting.**

**CARRIED**

## **2.5 Petitions**

Nil.

## **2.6 Community Recognition**

Nil.

## **2.7 Matters Deferred from Previous Meeting**

Nil.

## **2.8 Urgent Business**

Nil.

# **3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

## **3.1 Open Forum**

Nil.

## **3.2 Questions of Council**

Nil.

# **4 REPORTS - COMMUNITY & DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

Nil.

# **5 REPORTS - PEOPLE & CORPORATE PERFORMANCE GROUP**

## **5.1 Councillor Induction Program**

Department	People & Corporate Performance
Approved by	M Chesworth, Director People and Corporate Performance
Presenter	Cr P Hilderbrand
Portfolio	Integrity, Finance, and Resilience
Purpose	For Noting
Attachment(s)	Nil



### Executive Summary

The *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024* introduced new induction training requirements for Councillors, and specific training requirements for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor completed the required mayoral induction training on 12 and 13 December 2024, well ahead of the statutory deadline of 20 December 2024. All Councillors completed their induction training on 5 February 2025, well ahead of the statutory deadline of 13 March 2025.

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors have all signed declarations before the CEO confirming that they have completed the required induction training in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

### RESOLUTION

**Cr S McAulay / Cr E Lording**

**That Council note that the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors have signed declarations before the Chief Executive Officer confirming that they have completed the required induction training in accordance with the *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act*.**

**CARRIED**

## 5.2 Council Plan Priority Action Plan - Quarterly Progress Report

Department	Governance and Risk
Approved by	M Chesworth, Director People and Corporate Performance
Presenter	Cr P Hildebrand
Portfolio	Integrity, Finance and Resilience
Purpose	For Noting
Attachment(s)	1. Attachment 1 - Council Plan Priority Action Plan Quarterly Report - Q 3 - Jan to Mar 2025 v 2 [5.2.1 - 40 pages]

### Executive Summary

Each year the Council creates a Priority Action Plan to guide the implementation of the 4 year Council Plan.

The Priority Action Plan for this financial year was approved on 26 June 2024. This item provides a progress report covering the third quarter of the year from January to March 2025.

There are 68 actions in total:

- 66 of them are going well and are on track
- 1 has been temporarily delayed and is being monitored, and
- 1 has been postponed due to budget constraints.

## **RESOLUTION**

**Cr E Lording / Cr S Carpenter**

**That Council note the progress report for the Priority Action Plan for the March quarter 2025, provided in Attachment 5.2.1.**

**CARRIED**

## **6 REPORTS - ASSETS & ENVIRONMENT GROUP**

### **6.1 CONT24/3 Landfill Environmental Monitoring Tender**

Department	Environmental Sustainability
Approved by	P Bain, Acting Director Assets & Environment
Presenter	Cr S Carpenter
Portfolio	Sustainability and Assets
Purpose	For Decision
Attachment(s)	1. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - Confidential Attachment 1 - CONT24 3 Landfill Environmental Monitoring Tender [6.1.1 - 4 pages]

#### **Executive Summary**

This report recommends the award of the contract to undertake environmental monitoring activities and compliance reporting for up to 5 years to support the operation of the Alexandra Landfill and to meet Council's general environmental duty in relation to closed landfill sites.

The Alexandra Landfill is operated under approval from the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) via operating licence OL000012039. A key requirement of this licence is to have in place an environmental monitoring program which demonstrates that the operation of the landfill has a minimum impact on the environment and human health. Council also undertakes environmental monitoring at several closed landfills as part of Council's General Environmental Duty, and to comply with the aftercare plans where these are in place.

Council contracts external consultants to undertake the environmental monitoring activities, send samples to be laboratory tested and to prepare compliance reports. Reports for the Alexandra Landfill are reviewed annually by EPA to ascertain licence compliance.

A public tender was conducted for the works which closed on 29 November 2024. Ten submissions were received at the close of tender. This report, along with the confidential attachment, outlines the procurement and evaluation process undertaken to appoint a suitable consultant for Contract 24/3 - Landfill Environmental Monitoring. Note that no local firms tendered for these services.

## **RESOLUTION**

**Cr S Carpenter / Cr J Adams**

**That Council:**

- 1. Award Contract 24/3 Landfill Environmental Monitoring to SMEC Australia Pty Ltd (Tenderer 1) on a schedule of rates contract with a maximum spend of \$367,837.**
- 2. Release the name of the successful Tender into the Minutes of the 23 April 2025 Scheduled Meeting of Council.**

**CARRIED**

## **7 COUNCILLOR AND CEO REPORTS**

### **7.1 Notices of Motions**

Nil.

### **7.2 Cr Jodi Adams**

I would like to begin by acknowledging the dedication of the many people who took part in raising much needed funds for the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal. There were many events held throughout Murrindindi Shire, and I am sure children loved seeing the flashing lights and many volunteers out and about in uniform. This year's appeal had a Regional Funding Initiative, with health services across rural and regional areas to receive \$3 million in funding ensuring children can access world-class care closer to home.

It was wonderful to attend the Kinglake, Kinglake West and Pheasant Creek Community Led Council Supported Planning session at the Kinglake Pub. I met several volunteers from local groups who provided valuable input and shared ideas over a two-course meal. It was great to hear contributions from those who dedicate their time to local projects and organisations. The Kinglake Community plan is being formed with up to three representatives from each group in the area. Recent examples include Glenburn, where social connections were a focus and Thornton setting up a learn to cycle track.

Murrindindi Council has applied for grants for a Kinglake memorial Reserve upgrade and recreation planning across the Shire. We will keep everyone updated about the outcomes.

I am looking forward to participating in the ANZAC Day Dawn Service this Friday. Everyone is welcome to attend. The service begins at 5.30 am, followed by a traditional gunfire breakfast at St Peter's Community WW1 Memorial Church, Kinglake. There is another service at 10.00 am at the Lions Club ANZAC Memorial, Kinglake Community Centre, 436 Whittlesea-Kinglake Road. (entry via Extons Road). All Murrindindi Shire ANZAC Day Services can be found on the council website: [ANZAC Day Services 2025 - Murrindindi Shire Council](#)

On Saturday 17th May the Volunteer and Community Awards Presentation and Dinner will take place at the Yea Shire Hall. This will be a wonderful event to celebrate through a special ceremony as part of National Volunteer Week celebrations. Council received an impressive 45 nominations across four Community Award categories: Volunteer of the Year, Young Volunteer of the Year, Senior Volunteer of the Year, and Community Group or Initiative of the Year. These nominees are the heart of our Shire, giving their time, skills, and passion to make our

communities stronger, kinder, and more connected. We thank every nominator who helped shine a light on these wonderful volunteers.

To see the nominees and read their inspiring stories, visit the 2025 Awards Nominations page: [2025 Awards Nominations - Murrindindi Shire Council](#). Free morning tea events will be held across the Shire, bringing volunteers and community groups together.

Vic Emergency App Training will be held at the Kinglake Library on Thursday 15th May 2.00 - 3.00 pm where representatives will show you how easy it is to use the app to stay informed and safe during emergencies such as fires, floods, storms, and earthquakes. RSVPs are essential and light refreshments will be provided. To RSVP and for more information or to request assistance: visit [RSVP VicEmergency App Session at Kinglake Library - Rescheduled! - Murrindindi Shire Council](#) or call Council on 5772 0333 or drop in to the Kinglake Library.

Regular upcoming events at the Kinglake Library include storytime, creating Boomerang Bags, Digital Literacy, Pageturners, High School Drop In sessions and a regular Craft Group. For more information, pop into the library or visit the Library Events and Programs Page on the Murrindindi Council Website, with details on all happenings at the library and customer service centres. [Library Events and Programs - Murrindindi Shire Council](#)

A reminder that the wonderful Kinglake Market will be on this Sunday 29th April at 1 Extons Rd from 10am until 2pm.

Bill Bate will be conducting online sessions for Marketing 101 for small Business on Tuesday 29th April and Monday 5th May 6.30-8.30pm. These sessions aim to provide valuable skills and knowledge to contribute to growth your business. [Marketing 101 for Small Business - Murrindindi Shire Council](#)

On 2nd May, Just a Farmer will be screened at Alexandra Shire Hall. The movie celebrates the strength of rural communities and sparks conversations about mental health. Enjoy a cup of soup & bread from 5.45 pm. Supper and a cuppa will be provided after the film discussion with special guest Leila McDougall (Just a Farmer film producer & lead actor) and guest Warren Davies - The Unbreakable Farmer. Please note the movie is rated M. Bookings are essential as it sold out at Yea recently, more details are on the council website: [Just a Farmer Film Screening - Murrindindi Shire Council](#)

### 7.3 Cr Sue Carpenter

Autumn is a particularly beautiful time of year, and recently we have had a huge influx of visitors coming to experience all that we have to offer in our towns and surrounding areas. People are enjoying the warm weather and sunshine before the cold winter weather arrives.

I have been out and about in the shire. A recent trip for the councillors around Koriella ward showed off some of the more dispersed communities of Murrindindi. We have so much scenic countryside, loved and cared for by their small communities.

Exciting developments are being planned for Yea and Alexandra. I attended Strategic planning community engagement sessions for the Alexandra East Development Plan and the Yea Structure Plan. It was great to see many residents come and give their insights and opinions regarding these Plans.

I along with many of my fellow councillors attended the opening of the Eildon Splash Park, which was opened by Minister Jaclyn Symes MP. I have since visited with my grandson. It was terrific to see so many families having such fun interacting with the water and play equipment. What a fantastic asset for our community we now have.



When Minister Symes visited Eildon the councillors and CEO were able to meet with her and we had an opportunity to strongly advocate for the issues and concerns most important for the continued provision of services for our residents and ratepayers.

I was also invited to the opening of the new Yea Uniting Kindergarten this month.

In Portfolio matters we are seeing the delivery of the new bins. Kerbside collection of the 4-bin kerbside service is set to roll out from 30 June 2025.

Community feedback has directly shaped Council's approach to the new 4-bin kerbside service. Following initial consultation in late 2022, we ran a more detailed engagement process between April and June last year. Residents participated via surveys and pop-up sessions across the Shire.

The message was clear: our community supports waste diversion, fairness in service access, and keeping costs manageable, especially for those already doing the right thing.

Key changes based on that feedback include:

- Mandatory kerbside collection was supported by 55% of respondents, and 66% backed expanding the collection route. We've confirmed a mandatory 4-bin service in urban areas and a 3-bin service in rural areas, with the option to add a FOGO bin if desired.
- FOGO in rural areas will remain optional, reflecting the 89% of respondents who told us they already manage organic waste themselves.
- On cost, we've kept the 4-bin service at \$560, almost the same as the current 2-bin charge. The 3-bin rural service will cost \$410. This was made possible through contract efficiencies and better resource recovery. And 77% of people supported continuing subsidies at our Resource Recovery Centres, which help keep illegal dumping down.
- To ensure fair contributions, 64% of people supported the idea that all properties should help fund Shire-wide waste services, even if they don't get kerbside bins. So Council is proposing an annual Community Waste Charge for those properties, to help fund public litter collection, fire-season green waste disposal, RRC operations, and landfill compliance.
- In terms of collection frequency, the most popular model was fortnightly general waste and weekly organics, preferred by 60% of respondents, and that's exactly what we're delivering. We've also made provisions for families using nappies or incontinence products to request an extra general waste bin at no extra cost.
- There was a strong call for ongoing education. Some people were unsure about the changes, so we will provide practical communication, including launching a new mobile app to provide bin-day reminders and easy access to recycling guidance.

We know that any change takes some getting used to, but we're encouraged by the strong support this proposed new service is already receiving. The updated Kerbside Waste and Recycling Service has been shaped by local voices, guided by our environmental responsibilities, and tailored to meet the unique needs of Murrindindi Shire.

All in all, I feel we have landed on a good solution with the new kerbside collection service that balances community priorities, environmental responsibilities, and fairness.

On another note, I am looking forward to commemorating Anzac Day this Friday at the Yea and District Memorial hospital at 9.45 with residents and families, and at the Yea cenotaph at 10.45 for an 11am service. All are welcome.

## 7.4 Cr Sandice McAulay

### Strategic Planning

The last month saw a number of opportunities to participate in engagement sessions on concept plans for both Alexandra East Development Plan and the Yea Structure Plan.

Alexandra East Development Plan discussion highlighted the focus on unlocking appropriately zoned land for sustainable growth to attract and retain services. Participants were keen to see a mix of densities across the area. With smaller and slightly larger blocks that are appropriate to attract a variety of families, singles and retirees.

Land-Owners were able to self-nominate to participate in a community reference group and discussions were encouraged with broader community engagement and drop in sessions. Discussions also focused on the need for finding a balance between protecting biodiversity, drainage / water management, development areas as well as landscapes, etc.

Yea Structure Plan discussion demonstrated that we have an adequate supply of residential zoned land to accommodate growth for a number of years to come. It was generally agreed to focus on increasing density within the town centre. Other discussions were around exploring traffic and walk ability of the area of growth.

It's important to note that the Structure Plan focus is within the Township land, it does not include rural living.

The focus of both strategies is to encourage growth for the sustainability of our community – there is a critical number of people for the viability of services, shops, schools and doctors.

### Camping on private property

There are ongoing issues with camping illegally for profit on private land impacting neighbours and the environment – I ask that people be respectful of neighbours and the amenity of the surrounding area. I can assure you that all the complaints and issues raised are being followed up. Please note that officers are not able to share the details of a compliance case with the person who raised it due to privacy.

Some of the illegal activities have stopped when those responsible have been advised it was illegal, others have had fines and others are progressing their way to the magistrate's court.

### Capacity Building Program

Council's Community Capacity Building Program has been developed to help businesses, volunteers and community members within Murrindindi Shire through a dedicated training and development program. The program supports our communities through; targeted training, mentoring and networking opportunities.

Sessions run to date include:

- Grant writing,
- Starting a cooperative; and
- Governance for not-for-profit organisations

There are also a number of upcoming events that are detailed and bookable on Council's website, which include:

- Small Business 101
- Creative industries (in association with Yea Arts)

- Alexandra business breakfast which I encourage you to join us in a relaxed and friendly free business breakfast with great networking opportunities. Also learn from the guest speaker about enhancing your online visibility and receive updates from Council on important information and events.
- Networking events during Volunteer Week
- Digital 101 for small business - covering all things online and more for your business or community organisation
- A Volunteer Expo - similar to the Jobs Expo except promoting all the opportunities for residents to participate in volunteering.

I have provided a link to the relevant council page below.

[Capacity Building and Training - Murrindindi Shire Council](#)

I encourage everyone, if you haven't already done so, to please hop onto Council's Website and sign up to the business e-newsletter to find out more and keep up to date with upcoming events.

### **Out and about in Cathedral Ward**

A shout out to the Buxton Progress Association who with Council support hosted the very well attended Emergency Preparation session. Participants were provided valuable information and guidance on how to prepare their individual and family 72hour Emergency Plans. Thank you to all of the participants who all contributed to a very informative opportunity.

I was delighted to be able to attend the very popular opening night of the Alexandra Rotary Easter Art Show. What a wonderful array of traditional art, photographic prints and crafts. This was a great way to commence a very busy and successful Easter weekend. It was lovely to see a wide variety of people enjoying our beautiful natural environment and enjoying the hospitality of so many businesses in our Shire. People were all armed with smiles that reflected the beautiful weather.

Finally, this month I am honoured to be once again invited to attend the Maysville RSL march and service this ANZAC Day and to lay a wreath on behalf of Council recognising the people who have served and died in all wars, conflicts and acknowledging the contribution of all those that have served.

Thank you.

## **7.5 Cr Eric Lording**

The roads and infrastructure programs are moving ahead as planned. The dry weather has been helpful in allowing crews to work without weather delays, with the temperatures being in a sweet spot for road sealing. So, all is good there, thanks to the excellent management by shire officers.

RRV will be doing some needed works in Yea in the next few weeks, so delays can be expected.

On Friday evening I was thrilled to have been asked to open the Alexandra Rotary Arts Show. Some 250 persons attended and purchased some 20 artworks on that night with 3 more days to run. It was very well organised with artworks being of an extremely high standard.

I have the honour of being asked to attend as a one-person armed catafalque party since the Army no longer do it. Six ANZAC day services this week. Three at junior schools and three at various townships. Looking forward to it.

I was unable to fit in two other requests which shows the Anzac spirit is alive and well.

## 7.6 Cr Paul Hildebrand

Good evening, everyone.

It's been a busy and rewarding few weeks across our region, and I wanted to take a moment to share some highlights and reflections.

Late last month, I had the privilege of joining a guided tour through the Molesworth State Wildlife Reserve — also known as the Molesworth Wetlands. It was a well-attended event, with around 25 of us taking part. The tour was led by Tony Fitzgerald from the Taungurung Land and Water Council, who gave us a rich insight into the environmental and cultural importance of the wetlands. It was a great reminder of the natural beauty we have right here in our backyard.

On the 28th of March, we hit the road for a bus tour of the Koriella Ward. We kicked things off at the Yea Saleyards, where we had an informative tour before heading north through Highlands and Caveat. We stopped in Terip to enjoy morning tea with the Terip Community Hall Committee, then travelled to Yarck for a great catch-up with the Yarck Hall members. Our next stop was Koala Cherries, where we had a tour of their impressive operation and learned more about the work they're doing. After that, we visited Murrindindi Hub, then capped off the day by visiting the iconic Cheviot Railway Tunnel before returning to Yea. It was a fantastic day — full of connection, learning, and appreciation for the communities that make our region so strong.

Earlier this month, I travelled to Alexandra for the *Farming in Dry Conditions* seminar and breakfast. It was very well attended, with farmers from across the shire coming together. The conversations were strong, thoughtful, and full of insight — and it was great to catch up with so many familiar faces. Also, on May the 2<sup>nd</sup> the Alexandra showing of Just a Farmer is on, I encourage anyone that can make this event to go - booking is required. Events like this are vital, especially as we face ongoing dry conditions.

Speaking of which, our farmers are certainly doing it tough at the moment. The paddocks are still dry, our dams are getting low, and we're edging closer to those first frosts. That said, stock prices are holding up well, which is a positive sign in challenging times. Like many of you, I'm hoping for a good break soon - some solid rain would be very welcome.

This Friday marks Anzac Day - a heartfelt and significant day for us all. Ceremonies will be held in towns right across the region as we gather to honour those who served and made the ultimate sacrifice. I truly hope we see strong attendance at these services. It's so important that we stand together in remembrance of our diggers and those who continue to serve our country.

And just this past Sunday, I stopped by Fawcett Hall for a car boot sale and a photo exhibition. It was a lovely event, featuring some incredible old photographs of the area and its early residents, as well as more recent snapshots from Alexandra High School. A great mix of history and community spirit.

In all, it's been a period full of activity, connection, and reflection. From celebrating our communities to facing the challenges of the season together, it's moments like these that show the true heart of our region.

Thank you.

## 7.7 Cr Anita Carr

What a busy Easter around our fabulous Shire. Eildon and Thornton were bustling, the shops and restaurants were busy, the newly opened playground and Bahn Ba Djila splash park were overrun by families enjoying every square inch of the facilities, the skate park was given a good workout and with such warm weather the lake was a hive of energy as was Tumbling Waters and the many fishing spots along the Goulburn River.

Eildon's Epic Book Sale ran over the Easter long weekend with thousands of books to choose from, I commend the organisers and volunteers for running a successful event; all in the aid of raising funds to start up a community gym in Eildon.

Eildon Park Run has been in full swing since day one & continues to be very popular every Saturday morning at 8am around the pondage. Make sure to jump on the Park Run Website & register for this free event. A great opportunity to get out, enjoy some exercise & fresh air with likeminded locals and visitors.

I attended the Thornton Eildon Women's Football Team jumper presentation night on the 27th March – I was blown away by the amount of people who were there to support the team and excitingly the player numbers have grown substantially with nearly enough to field 2 sides which is incredible. They kicked off their season on 5th of April with an away game against Seville and excitingly came home with the win. Well done to the team and their support crew on a big win to kick off the season. The hard work they are putting in on the training track is showing and I wish them luck for their upcoming matches.

I attended the Alexandra Debutante Ball at Marysville on Saturday the 29th March and had a brilliant evening. It took me back as I haven't attended a deb ball since doing my own some 20+ years ago – times have certainly changed with the dance styles which are now fun and upbeat while still incorporating the traditional dances. Individuals can showcase themselves and their personalities into the dances and show their family and friends a different side of them. Congratulations to the organisers for putting the night together and to the debutantes for making their debuts.

I attended the Eildon Action Community Meeting on 2nd April at the Pondage Rotunda. A great turnout of approx. 30 people, all treated to a BBQ put on by Eildon Lions Club, followed by updates from community people on the projects that were prioritised back in 2022. These updates were supported by council officers who attended to show their support. A few of the priorities have certainly come to fruition with live music for Eildon and a Rowing Club being formed in Eildon. Some projects are still being worked towards such as starting a Community Gym – fund raising has been underway for the past couple of years and this community group is getting closer to bringing this dream to life.

I attended 'Beyond the Beats' at Pixies on Sunday 13th April & was in awe of the young, local talent that was displayed on the big stage. All the artists did an amazing job & should be very proud of themselves. A great initiative put on by the Murrindindi Shire Council & I want to thank all who organised & supported this event & our young artists.

Don't forget free green waste disposal is open until the end of April – make the most of this last April long weekend and tidy up your yards and drop it off for free to one of our 5 resource recovery centres.

Finally I am looking forward to Anzac day this coming Friday; one of the most important and special days on our annual calendar. For more than a century, the Anzac spirit has remained a guiding force in our national identity. It is a spirit built on courage, mateship and sacrifice – values demonstrated by those who, despite great adversity, stood together to protect our freedom. Their



selflessness, bravery and devotion to duty continue to inspire us today. I will be heading into Alex for the Dawn Service (it is the one day of the year I am happy to get up at 5am), I will then attend a private service at Darlingford Upper Goulburn Nursing Home at 10:30am where I will welcome everyone and lay a wreath on behalf of council (I am honoured to have been asked to speak at this special event). I will then head to the Eildon RSL service at 11am where I will also lay a wreath on behalf of council – all are welcome. (Just a quick special mention to Eildon RSL members who hosted a working bee on Tuesday 22nd April to get the cenotaph, surrounding area and club rooms ready for Anzac Day and I am amazed by how incredible the whole space looks – well done to all involved) My afternoon will then be spent enjoying the AFL Anzac Day blockbuster in front of the tv with family and friends. It really is one of the most special games of the season with the pre, during and post game tributes to the Anzacs.

I hope everyone enjoys their Anzac day, their second long weekend in a row and the remainder of Autumn before the cold sets in.

Lest we forget. Thank you.

## 7.8 Cr Damien Gallagher

I commence by recognising the legacy of His Holiness, Pope Francis on his passing. He was an instrument of peace, devoted ambassador for inclusion, and reforming warrior for environmental and social justice. Our thoughts are with the faith communities of St. Mary's, Kinglake; Sacred Heart, Yea; Immaculate Conception Parish, Alexandra and Eildon, and people the world over mourning the loss of a champion for respectful humanity.

It was with a deep sense of a mix of sorrow and gratitude that the Alexandra community farewelled Bruce Luckman last Thursday after his passing on 7 April. Bruce was dedicated to his community. As leader of the Alexandra Fire Brigade's Fire Equipment Maintenance team, he helped raise welcome funds for the Brigade and spread the message of fire safety. Last year, Bruce's loyalty and commitment to the CFA was celebrated with a 55 Year Service Medal. Council joins the community in farewelling Bruce and offering its condolences to Lynn and the Luckman family.

In the tradition of recognising our most revered Murrindindi citizens, a panel of volunteers met in April to deliberate upon winners of the 2025 Community Volunteer Awards. It was a privilege to support the panellists with their diligent consideration of 46 nominations for inspiring individuals, groups, and initiatives. The award winners will be announced at a live streamed event from 5:00PM on Saturday, 17 May.

I've enjoyed attending several strategic planning events during April. Engaged in very different projects, community members in Yea and Alexandra grasped the opportunity to have their say on the future shape of their towns. The final drafts of the Yea Structure Plan and the Alexandra East Development Plan will be considered for adoption at a scheduled meeting of Council in July.

This month Mayors, CEOs, and delegates from across the region came together in Flowerdale for another assembly of the Taungurung Local Government forum. Murrindindi Shire Council was proud to host our friends from across Taungurung Country and it was my honour to join with Murrindindi Shire Council CEO, Livia Bonazzi in welcoming attendees and sharing the story of our collaboration with local Traditional Owners, about our challenges and opportunities, and about our community's leadership in the pursuit of meaningful reconciliation and engagement with cultural traditions.

Artists and enjoyers of artistic talents have been treated of late. The Beyond the Beats event in Eildon celebrated young and emerging performing artists, while sculptures were on display in the

gardens of Marian Rennie, and the Rotary Club of Alexandra hosted the annual Easter Art Show in the Alexandra Town Hall. We are truly surrounded by some superlative local talent.

Around a dozen ANZAC Day services will be conducted across Murrindindi Shire with details posted on Council's website. Residents and visitors are encouraged to take pause this Friday, 25 April to commemorate the service and sacrifice of Australians in the defence of our country, our democracy, and our way of life. Lest we forget.

Finally:

During April, I shared Council's federal election advocacy platform. We're asking for a fair go for our community, calling for commitments to some extraordinarily high-value investments in our region such as the \$49m growth-enabling infrastructure project to help activate Lake Eildon, which brings dividends to the entire region, delivering \$9.20 for every dollar invested.

As the federal election campaign has progressed, I've appreciated discussions about democracy itself. Democracy doesn't thrive in noise, but in the quiet, steady work of bringing people together, of disagreeing with respect, of focusing on outcomes, not outrage. The Murrindindi Shire community famously moderates itself. It values respect, reason, and local problem-solving. People are tired of the negativity. They are fatigued by the noise, and the increasingly sharp edges of public discourse. We need our elected representatives, all of us, to set a higher standard.

This is *the* moment for leadership that unites, not divides. For rebuilding trust in our democratic institutions, and for restoring confidence that government at every level is here to serve. Civil debate is a tool for achieving better outcomes, not a contest to be won. I call on federal election candidates to be agents for positive change and to turn away from unnecessary culture wars and the deficit mindset and instead turn towards what truly matters. I look forward to working with representatives committed to a thriving, connected, and inclusive community.

## 7.9 Chief Executive Officer Report

### Forestry Transition and Community Innovation

I'm pleased to report that Council has received \$320,000 through the Victorian Government's Forestry Transition Program. This funding will support the delivery of two key projects:

- \$200,000 to progress four innovation areas identified by the community through the *Shaping Murrindindi's Future* strategy, focusing on farm forestry, renewable energy and the circular economy, health and aged care, and tourism.
- \$120,000 to support the development of a Health and Aged Care Workforce Strategy, addressing workforce shortages and access challenges in dispersed rural communities.

These projects build on earlier investment in community capacity building and skills development, and they are directly supporting new job creation and economic resilience across the Shire.

A reminder that the Victorian Government has rolled out a Forestry Transition Program to support affected businesses, workers, and communities. We encourage interested individuals and businesses to seek information directly from the State Government.

### Support for Businesses

- Forestry Transition Fund (Round 2) - which includes a \$20,000 incentive for businesses employing former timber workers.
- Victorian Timber Innovation Fund (Round 3) - helps businesses explore and implement new opportunities.
- Supply Chain Resilience Package - supports manufacturers in adapting to change.
- Forestry Business Support Package - assists with equipment, income loss and redundancy costs not covered under other schemes.

### Support for Workers

- Training, skills recognition, and wellbeing programs available.

### Support for Communities

- Community Development Fund which enables early implementation of Local Development Strategies initiatives.

Several local businesses have already been successful in securing transition funding, and we're starting to see positive outcomes in terms of local employment. Our Economic Development team continues to support businesses exploring future opportunities.

Council will continue to advocate for a successful economic transition for our communities and has been actively engaged to ensure our region is well-placed for long-term success.

### **Upcoming New Kerbside Collection Service**

The bulk rollout of the new recycling bins is substantially complete, and we are now addressing special situations like bin compounds, requests for extra bin capacity and medical exemptions. This will occur through to June, in time for the commencement of the services on 30 June.

I'd like to Remind residents to

- Please let Council know as soon as possible if you wish to opt into the food and green organics service or require extra bins – requests made after 15 May may not be able to be accommodated until after the service commencement.
- Please be patient with officers who are working hard to respond to the high volume of queries.

Overall we have received great positive feedback “loving the new bins” “applauding council for the initiative” “looking forward to better recycling”.

### **Draft Budget – 2025/26**

The Draft Budget for next financial year 2025/26 will be available to view as of tomorrow on our website. Council will hold a Special Meeting next Wednesday 30 April in Alexandra, to adopt the draft budget for public exhibition. Once endorsed, it will be available for community feedback from Thursday next week.

We invite community members to provide submissions in writing or in person at the Council Meeting on 28 May. This is an important opportunity to help shape priorities for the year ahead, and we welcome your input. We plan to present the final budget for Council adoption at the scheduled Council meeting on 25 June

### **Follow-up Carey Road, Killingworth Development**

At the March Council meeting, Mr Garry Angus and Mr Charles Exton raised concerns during the public forum regarding the Carey Road development in Killingworth and made reference to perceived delays and possible irregularities in Council's planning process relating to this development.

While no evidence was provided, officers undertook a review of the development's timeline and approval processes. I can confirm that no irregularities were identified. The planning permit was issued well within the required statutory period, taking 35 days once the applicant submitted all necessary information. This is consistent with Council's strong record of timely planning permit processing and decision-making.

According to the Know Your Council reporting, Murrindindi Shire Council performs well above the state average for planning application timeframes, with a median processing time of 41 days,

compared to the Victorian average of 64 days. This reflects Council's continued commitment to efficient and responsive statutory planning services.

Council is proud to support sustainable growth and development in a way that aligns with our planning responsibilities and broader community objectives.

## 8 RECORD OF COUNCIL BRIEFING SESSIONS

**Purpose:** For noting.

### Executive Summary

This report presents the records of Council Briefing Sessions for 26 March 2025 to 23 April 2025 for Council to note.

Meeting Name/Type	Council Pre-Meet
Meeting Date:	26 March 2025
Matters Discussed:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Delegations - Council endorsement - 3 separate reports</li> <li>2. Audit and Risk Committee Confirmation of Minutes</li> <li>3. Audit and Risk Committee Biannual Report</li> <li>4. CONT24/25 - Wilhelmina Falls Road Reconstruction &amp; Sealing contract award</li> <li>5. CONT24/16 - ARGN 1037 October 2022 Flood Recovery - Snobs Creek Rd Landslip</li> </ol>
Councillor Attendees:	Cr D Gallagher, Cr A Carr, Cr S McAulay, Cr J Adams, Cr E Lording, Cr S Carpenter, Cr P Hildebrand
Council Officer Attendees	L Bonazzi, M Chesworth, C Lintott, A Paxton, A Vogt, S Schinck, P Bain, S Russell.
Conflict of Interest Disclosures:	Nil

Meeting Name/Type	Briefing Session
Meeting Date:	2 April 2025
Matters Discussed:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parks Victoria - Charlie Bisset</li> <li>2. Be Power</li> <li>3. Advocacy Priorities - James Trenery - Liberal Candidate for Indi</li> <li>4. Saleyards 1/2 yearly report and Allied Health Services report</li> <li>5. Council Plan Development Workshop</li> <li>6. Draft Budget 2025/26 - Financial Statements</li> <li>7. Councillor Induction Training - Confirmation of completion</li> </ol>
Councillor Attendees:	Cr D Gallagher, Cr A Carr, Cr S McAulay, Cr J Adams (virtual), Cr S Carpenter, Cr P Hildebrand
Council Officer Attendees	L Bonazzi, M Chesworth, A Paxton, C Lintott, L Elward, M Hill, J Beer, N Rongong, A Vogt
Conflict of Interest Disclosures:	Nil

Meeting Name/Type	Briefing Session
Meeting Date:	9 April 2025
Matters Discussed:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Advocacy Priorities - Helen Haines – Federal Member for Indi</li> </ol>

	2. Kinglake Friends of the Forest Presentation 3. Waste and Recycling Budget 4. CONT24/3 – Landfill Environmental Services Contract Award
Councillor Attendees:	Cr D Gallagher, Cr A Carr, Cr S McAulay, Cr E Lording, Cr S Carpenter, Cr P Hildebrand
Council Officer Attendees	L Bonazzi, M Chesworth, A Paxton, P Bain, T Heard, J Russell
Conflict of Interest Disclosures: Nil	

Meeting Name/Type	Briefing Session
Meeting Date:	16 April 2025
Matters Discussed:	1. Council Plan Development Workshop 2. Council Plan Priority Action Plan Q3 (Jan to March) 3. Councillor Professional Development Plan - Draft
Councillor Attendees:	Cr D Gallagher, Cr A Carr, Cr S McAulay, Cr J Adams, Cr S Carpenter, Cr P Hildebrand
Council Officer Attendees	L Bonazzi, M Chesworth, A Paxton, P Bain, A Vogt
Conflict of Interest Disclosures: Nil	

## **RESOLUTION**

**Cr A Carr / Cr S Carpenter**

**That Council receive and note the records of Council Briefing Sessions from 26 March 2025 to 16 April 2025, noting that Cr. Lording left early, prior to briefings, on 16 April 2025.**

**CARRIED**

## **9 SEALING REGISTER**

Nil.

## **10 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

Nil.

The meeting was closed at 6:56pm.