

HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL RESPONSES TO THE ESC REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION APRIL 2016

1.1 185E(3)(A) – HIGHER CAP

In its application, Council has asked for a higher rate cap of 1.0 per cent above the average rate cap. In the Baseline Information template that Council has provided, it shows that a higher rate of 0.88 per cent above the average rate cap is needed.

Could Council please advise which is the correct higher rate cap that Council is applying for?

The worksheet "Calculating the higher cap" in the Baseline Information template has an error in the data. Cell E80 contains the correct number of assessments for 30 June 2016 of 12,050. This was not correctly translated to cells F119 & F137, which incorrectly show 12,065. Cells F142 & F143 were not correctly formatted in the template which would have contributed to not identifying this error. A corrected baseline Information Template is provided which shows a proposed increase of 1.01% - we have rounded this to 1%.

Attachment RFI 1.1 A

The Certification Statement for the Budget Baseline data provided by Council appears not to be signed. Can Council please provide a signed copy?

Yes apologise we over-looked providing the signed certification page. This has been attached as **Attachment RFI 1.1 B**

1.2 185E(3)(B) – REASONS

The application states that Council has previously identified a growing gap between the renewal spending required to maintain existing assets, and the available funding for that purpose. It further states that Council is addressing its social responsibility to manage a large public asset base in the long term interests of its community.

An initial review by Commission staff has raised areas where further information is needed to verify claims made by Council.

We received an unsigned copy of the Minutes of the Special Meeting on 29 March 2016, at which the Application was approved. Please confirm that it has been properly authorised.

Signed copies of the minutes are provided as **Attachment RFI 1.2**. Minutes are only signed at the next available Council meeting which took place on the 4th of April which was post the closing date required by the ESC for Variation Applications.

The Mayor voted against the motion to submit this Application. Can Council comment on the matter?

Council has 7 democratically elected Councillors with no ward representation. A Council decision is reached by majority and in fact Council could have voted 4 in favour and 3 against and the variation application would still have been lodged. Following debate all councillors accept the majority view and support the application. Each councillor has the right to express their views within the Council chamber and therefore council believes this request is irrelevant to the application.

1.3185E(3)(C) – ENGAGEMENT

This legislative matter requires the Council to specify how it has taken account of the views of the community. It is expected that Council provide evidence of how it sought to engage with the community, what were the outcomes of the engagement (i.e. what were community views) and, crucially, how these were considered in determining the higher cap.

An initial review by Commission staff has identified areas where further clarification is needed to verify claims made by Council.

In its application, Council states that during 2015–16 Council reviewed its engagement policy and framework, and this has been used to establish a detailed engagement plan (provided).

Can Council please provide a copy of the review report, if available?

Council did not produce a specific “Review Report” however the process was undertaken as follows:

The community engagement policy was developed in collaboration with Councillors, the executive management group, managers and other staff. Input was received on what the policy should govern, what the principles of engagement should be and what commitment should be made by Council regarding engagement.

The policy was made available for comment via the website and Facebook this was advertised through our public notices. No comments were received.

We also sought, via a survey, the community’s views on how and when they expect to be engaged in Council’s decision making. The survey was made available through: Council’s website and Facebook page; the North West Grampians Newsletter; and through email. There were two face to face engagements; in the Horsham branch of the library; and at the Natimuk Post Office. The results of this survey informed Council’s engagement processes but were not intended to influence the policy.

The internal engagement plan included the following steps and content:

- Brief selected staff on process plan and request input
Support materials included-example policies, example materials to support policy, the development plan including timeline.
- Brief Executive Management Group on process
Presentation on the purpose of the policy (beyond requirement by legislation), describe the process to develop policy and create ‘buy in’ from councillors, directors, managers and other staff
- Council session

Part 1

A general presentation on what community engagement is and why it is important, outline what the purpose of the policy is and use examples from other organisations to lead conversation

Link the development of the policy to the core values: We are accountable to our community for our decisions and actions; We will seek creative, innovative solutions for continuous improvement in line with our vision for the future; We will work with our community, government and agencies to deliver quality outcomes; We will work together to lead our community in a professional manner; We will be transparent in our work

(a) reflect on the council's past and current practices for engaging the community, by discussing questions like:

- Apart from elections, when do residents tend to get involved in council issues?
- What has council done well in engaging the community in the past?
- What are council's weaknesses in community engagement?
- What does council want to do better in community engagement?

– What will be the benefits to council if community engagement is improved?
(b) discuss the types of issues and decisions where councillors believe it is a priority to engage the community more

Part 2

(a) develop a statement of council's commitment to community engagement
(b) agree on a set of principles that will guide the council's approach to community engagement
(c) discuss the potential costs of doing more community engagement (in terms of staff time and budget needs) balance this against the 'cost' of not doing engagement

- Content review by third line managers and Executive Management Group
- Adopted in Council meeting on Monday 15 June 2015
- Report on adopted policy at general staff meeting

A copy of Council's Community Engagement Policy and Procedure is provided as **Attachment RFT 1.3 A & RFI 1.3 B.**

What is the process followed by Council in taking account of the views of participants in engagement sessions?

Getting a broad cross-sectional view of our community and society is always a challenge. It is often the squeaky wheel that is heard the most and council must balance this against the other form of consultation that occurs regularly at the local level and that is through individual conversation between the elected representatives and the community. This occurs on a continual basis in the community and probably is much more prevalent in a rural community than a metropolitan one, where population numbers mean that the elected representatives are well known across a broad area of the community. These engagements are not formally documented but no doubt help assist councillors in making their decisions in the council chamber.

With respect to the formal consultations council is provided with a summarised version of the individual feedback that is received as provided to the ESC in our application Supporting Evidence SE 3.1 and SE 3.6. And analysis such as that of the on-line survey Supporting Evidence SE 3.5 and the word map re analysis of the free text.

This is provided at a Council briefing session where Council then has broad discussion around what this evidence conveys and weighs that up against the other evidence and matters that need to be considered. Other community evidence such as service requests, feedback at community forums held with the rural community on a regular basis and evidence provided from consultants such as Moloney (Supporting Evidence SE 2.2).

The application states that Council conducted a number of engagement sessions on its 2016–17 budget.

It is unclear what information was provided to participants on options other than the proposed 1% increase to the cap. Can Council outline what options and trade-offs were discussed at the public sessions?

Examples of the presentations given were provided as Supporting Evidence SE 3.3 & SE 3.4 in council's variation application. Issues discussed revolved around the need to balance

service delivery with community expectations, available funding opportunities (particularly through one-off grants) and council's policy around the use of debt.

Engagement of this sort with the community is difficult in terms of keeping it brief enough to maintain interest but detailed enough to have some meaningful discussion. It requires as a first step, for general education to be undertaken as to what it is that council does and the extent of its services and works programs. The presentations made in 2015-16 (SE 3.3) show that considerable effort was undertaken to do this, however there is a cost to undertaking this as the presentation becomes too long and complicated for the average community member. But how can you tackle the more complex questions of trade-offs and alternatives without this base level understanding?

So in the 2016-17 presentations to date we simplified the presentation (SE 3.4) to provide more time for general discussion of the budget and also we kept the key matter of the ESC Rate variation to the very end of the presentation so that this was top of mind in the discussions that took place. Slide 9 of this presentation includes the commentary of the further discussion points to be had around this matter.

It is clearly a very complex decision making process to balance a councils budget where services are being delivered across a very broad range of areas and the community has a very broad range of views and expectations.

It is unrealistic to suggest that complex matters such as trade-offs and alternatives can be decided upon through brief community consultation processes. Councillors make these decisions after considering a broad range of documentary evidence, officers reports, community comments, statutory reports and significant knowledge developed over a long period of time as a councillor.

The Community Feedback sheets appear to record comments made at the 2015–16 and 2016–17 sessions. Can Council clarify how outcomes of this engagement were considered and actioned where appropriate?

For the 2015-16 comments each was analysed to identify whether there were any clear actions that could be taken. These were then collated into an action sheet that identified the types of issues that needed addressing and the course of action to achieve the outcome. These were presented to the Executive Management Group and some (not all) of the actions were factored in to ongoing work plans or considered in the budget process moving forward in to 2016-17. This task has not yet been undertaken with respect to 2016-17 due to the tight time lines and available resources.

You will notice in the first page of SE 3.1 that the topics discussed are very broad ranging and often secondary to the purpose of the presentation being the budget. What these sorts of comments and feedback do is help inform officers understanding and direction in subtle ways as budgets and policy are developed.

If further Community group sessions have now taken place for 2016–17, can Council provide details (location, date and number attending)?

Supporting Evidence SE 3.2 contained an appendix 4 that was not provided as it included individuals contact details for which that they had not given consent to us to provide in a public document. I have now attached that appendix as **Attachment 1.3 C** with the private information removed. You will see from this that there are 29 groups in total that have been contacted by council. Of these 3 sessions have been held to date, 3 groups have indicated that they do not wish to hear from council and the remainder have all been followed up to

see if they are interested but to date none have locked in any dates. Also attached is the list of general community briefing meetings for 2015 & 2016. These are much broader than just the budget but do generally include discussion about the budget and rating matters.

Attachment 1.3 D

This again is an example of the challenge of community consultation with respect to these matters and reflects that it must be viewed as a long term objective and not a short term one-issue item.

Council has been exploring a more participative approach to budgeting in the future, particularly the use of a citizen's jury that could allow cross community views to be held in a representative way. We would however need to factor in some significant extra costs to the budget to allow this to happen and that has not been done in 2016-17 and may be difficult to achieve in 2017-18 without further income to cover this additional requirement, given the rate capping environment.

A report to Council on 22 March 2016 showed that respondents to an online survey gave 'Roads & Paths' the highest average rating of importance. But, of these respondents, more were unwilling (42%) than willing (37%) to pay an additional 1% in rates to update 'ageing roads and community facilities'. Given this feedback, how did Council reach its position to seek a higher cap?

37% willing is in fact 46.8% of those that could answer the question, so it is near enough to 50% for and 50% against. I refer you back to the responses above as to how this piece of information was considered along with all of the others pieces of the puzzle. This question was certainly not the sole determinate in any decision made. Council has had this approach since 2008/09 and have not received one negative budget submission with respect to this over that period of time.

In a presentation to Councillors at the MAV Rural and Regional Forum on 13 August 2015, Mr Ron Ben-David from the ESC stated that the important component of Community Engagement is that it "takes in to account community views , but doesn't have to have 100% community support".

1.4 185E(3)(D) – VALUE AND EFFICIENCY

This legislative matter requires councils to ensure that they can demonstrate they have sufficient policies and processes in place (and have taken specific actions) to ensure that the additional revenue raised will be used efficiently and that the outcomes being pursued represent value for money for ratepayers.

An initial review by Commission staff has identified areas where further clarification is needed to verify claims made by Council.

In the Budget Baseline data provided, the 'Assets - With Higher Cap' sheet shows one significant difference from the 'No Higher Cap' version: an increase of \$210,000 from \$196,000 to \$406,000 on the detail line 'Hennessy St Albert St onwards'. Has any thought been given to 'Value for Money' considerations for this specific project?

The process that has been put in place by the State Government and ESC, for a variation to the rate cap requires significant resources to complete and is itself another form of cost shifting to Local Government from the State Government.

Council has had to take a pragmatic approach to preparing this information and preparing itself for the outcome of the ESC decision regardless of which way it falls. Thus we have taken a simplistic approach to add the \$210,000 re the additional 1% to an individual road project. This will allow us ease to remove this from the budget and push this component of

works in to the next financial year, should we be unsuccessful. This will make it easier to adjust our detailed budget documentation and still meet the 30 June deadline for the adoption of our budget (including 28 days consultation in accordance with Section 223 of the Local Government Act).

The reality is that this is not how things work in the true sense of developing up our works program. Things are done holistically and over a period of time greater than just one year. Removing \$210,000 from the program has ramifications for future years base funding and relative priorities change from year to year due to a range of external forces, project costs and funding availability.

To single this project out for “Value for Money” considerations is inappropriate, the bigger issue is whether Council needs to be addressing the renewal gap or not. Council believes the Victorian Auditor General’s would argue that council does need to be pro-actively addressing this issue. See Supporting Evidence SE 0.2. And this is certainly what our council is doing.

1.5 185E(3)(E) – TRADE OFFS AND ALTERNATIVE FUNDING

This legislative matter requires councils to demonstrate that they have considered the prioritisation of services and different funding options before seeking a higher cap.

We noted that Council’s Application has been prepared in accordance with its Loan Policy and on the basis that borrowings are utilised only for new assets.

What is Council’s process for adopting its financial policies or strategies?

Council has a Policy Framework policy and a procedure for the development and review of its policies. These clearly layout the process for all policy development and review and this is what would apply to a review of the Loan Policy. Incidentally this policy is up for review in the next 6 months. **Attachments 1.5 A & 1.5 B.**

When there are major changes or proposals to change the existing financial policies or strategies, is any consideration given to obtaining the views of community and ratepayers?

See **Attachment 1.5 B** the Policy Implementation, review and Approval Procedure, this clearly sets out the consultation requirements.

Can Council comment further on its policy of funding for road upgrades?

The Roads Asset Management Plan (Supporting Evidence SE 2.3) says:

All new and upgrade projects are prioritised and programmed using Council’s Capital Evaluation Framework as part of the annual capital works budgeting process. Capital works selection criteria would typically include issues such as:

- Fit with Council strategies
- Service level
- Social impact on community
- Capital finance source
- Operational/maintenance cost
- Environmental impacts aspects
- Consequences/likelihood of risk
- Capital classification – renew/new/upgrade

The extent of funding is based on:

- The overall desired capex program
- The level of funding deemed available, considering rate rises and external funding sources
- The criteria of some external funding sources – can they only be used for specific purposes

Our prioritisation is then based on drawing the line where the funding runs out. There is never enough funding to do everything we believe is needed. We have to draw the line somewhere.

1.6 185E(3)(F) – LONG TERM PLANNING

This legislative matter requires that the assumptions and proposals in the application are consistent with those in the council's long-term strategy and financial management policies set out in the council's planning documents and annual budget.

Would Council please provide a copy of its long-term plan, if one has been prepared?

Council does not have a Long term Financial Plan as it is not a statutory requirement.

A Draft document is under development together with a detailed planning framework document, but as yet this has not been adopted by council.

Each year as part of the budget process council considers a longer term view of major capital works and how that may impact on key financial indicators moving beyond the term of Strategic Resource Plan.

1.7 OTHER INFORMATION

This section contains other information that the Commission would like the Council to verify and submit.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE REPORTING FRAMEWORK (LGPRF) – FINANCIAL INDICATORS

Please complete the tables below. These tables utilise the existing LGPRF financial indicator projections for the next 4 years (or longer if available), and provide updated scenarios based on a) the proposed higher cap, and b) based on the average rate cap of 2.5 per cent. This information will aid in demonstrating the potential impacts to the Council with and without the higher cap.

KPI's provided as **Attachment RFI 1.7 A**. We have only removed the proposed higher cap from the 2016-17 year. The years for 2017-18 and 2018-19 are based on an estimated cap of 2.5% plus 1% for Infrastructure Renewal even though this will be the subject of a variation application to the ESC in subsequent years.

ESSENTIAL SERVICES COMMISSION COUNCIL PROFILE

The Council profile is a snapshot of the data the Commission has collected to provide contextual information about Council prior to applying for higher caps. It includes data collected from council budgets, annual reports, the Victorian Grants Commission data, the LGPRF and the VAGO indicators.

The document represents the Commission staff's understanding of some data about the Council. We are extending to the Council the opportunity to correct any data transfer errors that may have occurred when the data was extracted. The Commission requests that the

Council review the information collected in the Council profile, to ensure the information is accurate to the best of their knowledge.

Council has reviewed the document that was provided and has corrected ESC data transfer errors that it has identified. This is provided as **Attachment RFI 1.7 B - Council Profile**

Graeme Harrison
Director Corporate Services
29 April 2016

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL

I certify that I have reviewed this completed Budget Baseline Information template, and understand that it will be used by the Essential Services Commission for the Fair Go Rates System.

I confirm that this data represents fairly the forecast financial transactions and position of our council for the period specified and that the forecasts are made on reasonable grounds.

I confirm that this is public data, and that I have no objection to the Essential Services Commission using and publishing this data for the purposes of the Fair Go Rates System.

Signed:



GRAEME A HARRISON.

26/4/16

ACTING [NAME OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER]

[DATE]

MINUTES of the Special Council Meeting of the Horsham Rural City Council held in the Municipal Chambers, Civic Centre, Roberts Avenue Horsham on Tuesday 29 March, 2016 at 5.30pm.

PRESENT: Cr Heather Phillips, Mayor; Cr Sue Exell, Cr Pam Clarke, Cr Robin Barber, Cr Tony Phelan, Cr David Grimble, Cr Mark Radford

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Peter Brown, Chief Executive; Graeme Harrison, Director Corporate Services; Angela Murphy, Director Planning & Economic; Kevin O'Brien, Director Community Services; John Martin, Director Technical Services; Fiona Kelly, Executive Assistant.

1. Reading of prayer and the acknowledgement of country statement

The Prayer and Wotjobaluk Statement were read by the Chairman, Cr H Phillips.

2. Welcome to distinguished guests or persons in the public gallery

Chairman, Cr Phillips welcomed those in attendance to the Council Meeting.

Heather Proctor

3. Apologies and request for Leave of Absence

NIL

4. Disclosure of Conflict of Interest Sec 79, Local Government Act, 1989 (As Amended)

NIL

5. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS

5.1 DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

5.1 ESSENTIAL SERVICES COMMISSION – APPLICATION FOR A RATE CAP VARIATION

Graeme Harrison

File Ref: F27/A03/000001

Purpose

For Council to approve the draft Rate Cap Variation application to the Essential Services Commission (ESC) for a 1% additional rate increase above the 2.5% Rate Cap.

Background

Under the State Government's "Fair Go Rates System" the Minister for Local Government sets a cap each year on the percentage increase that can be applied to a Council's rates in a given year. This percentage was advised by the Minister for Local Government, Natalie Hutchins on 22 December 2015 as 2.5% for the 2016-17 year.

The system is being overseen by the ESC and applications for variations must be submitted by 31 March 2016. The ESC will then have two months to respond to the request. Council indicated it desire to apply for a variation at its Council meeting on the 1 February 2016.

Following on from that decision a detailed budget has been developed and discussion held between officers and Council, and the application documentation has been completed.

This application is essentially in two parts:

1. **A Budget Baseline Information Template** which is a series of detailed MS Excel work sheets (17 in total):
 - 4 Detailing baseline information around services, expenditure, revenue and assets
 - 5 Detailing information around services, outputs, revenue, expenditure and assets for a budget "without" a variation to the cap
 - 5 Detailing information around services, outputs, revenue, expenditure and assets for a budget "with" a variation to the cap
 - 3 summary analysis sheets incorporating a CEO sign-off sheet
2. **A written application** that addresses the following 6 criteria from the Local Government Act 1989, Section 185E (3):



- I. A proposed higher cap for each specified financial year (For 2016-17 a variation can only be requested for one year. From 2017-18 variations may be requested for up to four years)
- II. The reasons for which the Council seeks the higher cap
- III. How the views of ratepayers and the community have been taken into account in proposing the higher cap
- IV. How the cap is an efficient use of Council resources and represents value for money
- V. Whether consideration has been given to reprioritising proposed expenditure and alternative funding options and why those options are not adequate
- VI. That the assumptions and proposals in the application are consistent with the Council's long term strategy and financial management policies set out in the Council's planning documents and annual budget

The application must include supporting evidence that substantiates the content and to this end there are 25 documents included with the application. These documents have not been provided as attachments to this report but many are publicly available and all have been before Council in some form. The application is provided as **Appendix "5.1A"**.

Issues

Council has for many years recognised the challenge of maintaining a large public asset base and the responsibility to manage those assets effectively both now and for the long term future of the entire community. As a result Council has actively been providing additional capital funds tagged from rate revenue since 2008-09 with the express purpose of addressing the growing infrastructure renewal gap. This is a specific strategic objective that Council has articulated strongly in its Council Plan, Asset Management Policy, Strategic Resource Plan and prior year's budgets. It is something that is needed to continue for a number of years to address the declining condition of Council's assets generally.

The detailed justification and background are contained in the application to the ESC.

Consultation/Communication

Broad community consultation has been occurring on the Council budget and the rate variation application through a range of activities including public meetings, radio and print media, talks with community groups, on-line survey and through information on Council's website.



Financial

Council's Strategic Resource Plan from 2015-16 specified rate rises of 4.5% for the next 4 years comprising of a 2.5% rate rise for operations and a 2% allocation for Infrastructure Renewal, in-line with the 2% goal as articulated in the Asset Management Policy. However, a 1% rate rise is all that has been budgeted for over the last four years since 2011-12 and this is seen as a more acceptable figure to apply for a variation in 2016-17.

The application for a rate variation of 1% will result in additional revenue of \$210,000 which will be allocated to asset renewal projects.

Should the application be unsuccessful then one or more asset renewal projects will need to be cut from Council's 2016-17 budget. The impact for future years budgets will then need to be explored as this loss of income will have a cumulative effect on the asset renewal program.

Council would need to consider whether it wishes to accept a growing asset renewal gap or whether other measures can be undertaken to meet this need such as increased borrowings, or cuts to services. Council will also need to consider its responsibility to its role as a growing regional city and ensure that our budget continues to allow for regional services and regional leadership.

Links To Council Plans, Strategies, Policies

Goal 3 – Asset Management

Goal 4 – Governance and Business Excellence

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Approve the application for a 1% Variation to the Rate Cap as per the draft application and related Baseline Information
2. Approve the Chief Executive to lodge the documents and related attachments with the Essential Services Commission prior to 5pm on 31 March 2016
3. Acknowledges that the documentation provided is a draft document that may undergo some alterations up to lodgement on 31 March 2016. However, any such alterations will be approved by the Chief Executive and will not impact on the overall spirit and intent.

Moved Cr Phelan, Seconded Cr Radford that the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

Cr Grimble called for a Division of Council.

For the Motion

Cr Grimble, Cr Radford, Cr Phelan, Cr Clarke, Cr Barber, Cr Exell

Against the Motion

Cr Phillips

The meeting closed at 5.45pm.



The Mayor, Cr H Phillips
Chairperson



Council Policy

Community Engagement Policy

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the policy is twofold. Firstly to ensure that Council effectively engages with the community when required and when the community expects to be engaged, and secondly to outline expectations for Council's engagement practice.

This will be achieved by:

- ensuring that Council effectively engages with the community in relation to the Council Plan, budget and other strategic documents;
- providing a guide to the kinds of engagement that would produce better outcomes for Council's projects and operations and ensure that this engagement meets the expectations of the community;
- ensuring that the community is effectively engaged by Council and that barriers to participation are minimised;
- ensuring that the appropriate level of engagement is used by Council;
- providing a consistent approach to community engagement across the organisation through the use of the engagement toolkit that will provide tools for planning, conducting, evaluating, and recording of engagement.

In addition, this policy will ensure that Council complies with the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014, containing the Schedule 1 Governance and Management checklist, which requires a community engagement policy.

2. INTRODUCTION

In 2010 a Community Development Framework was developed and adopted by Council. This Policy is the enactment of the recommendation within that to implement a Community Engagement Framework. At the same time as the Framework was adopted an Engagement Template was developed. The Community Engagement Procedure will replace that Template.

Community engagement is a vital function for Council because by effectively engaging with our community:

- We will develop solutions using the knowledge and experience of our community;
- We will hear comments and be able to implement recommendations from the community on our plans, strategies and operations;
- We will be able to inform the community about decisions, plans and strategies that Council intends to adopt or implement.

The benefits of successful engagement can include:

- Community input can improve the quality of policy being developed, making it more practical and relevant;
- Community input can ensure services are delivered in a more effective and efficient way for that community;
- Early notice of emerging issues puts Council in a better position to deal with those issues in a proactive way, instead of reacting as anger and conflict arise;
- Good engagement enhances the reputation of the Council as open, accountable and willing to listen;
- Engagement can foster a sense of belonging to community and considerable benefits from working together on behalf of the community.

The *Local Government Act 1989* [Section 3D-2 (a)] includes in its definition of the role of a Council that “The role of Council includes acting as a representative government by taking into account the diverse needs of the local community in decision making”. One important way in which Council can achieve this is through engaging with our community.

3. SCOPE

Councillors and Council staff should be aware of the importance of engagement, for both ongoing operations and one-off projects, and those circumstances where it is required or desirable.

Councillors and Council staff that are involved in engagement should understand the standards and principles that govern effective engagement and use the engagement toolkit to assess the need to engage and to plan, conduct, review and record engagement using the tools within the kit.

Contractors conducting projects or ongoing operations on Council’s behalf should adhere to this policy when conducting engagement activities. Contracts and Tenders will be constructed to make this an obligation.

4. DEFINITIONS

Community-Horsham Rural City is made up of many communities, including:

- those centred around a town, neighbourhood or region
- those based on a particular interest, such as agriculture, sustainability, arts or sport
- those based on life stages, lifestyles or population groups such as senior citizens, people with a disability or youth, and
- those based on a particular unifying event, such as the drought or the Remlaw fire.

Community Engagement- A broad term that refers to any process, project or initiative that involves the community, or requires community input, in order to make a decision or solve a problem. It includes all levels and ways of including the community in decision-making.

Stakeholders- Individuals or groups who are likely to be affected either physically or financially or with interest in, the project or program e.g. adjacent residents, ethnic groups, absent owners, community groups, sporting clubs, agencies and Council's other departments or directorates.

Council's projects and operations do have varying impacts on the community and different stakeholders will be affected in different ways to account for these differences varying degrees of engagement will be appropriate depending on the circumstances.

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) recognises the following levels of engagement:

Inform- To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.

Inform promise- We will keep you informed.

Consult- To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.

Consult promise- We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.

Involve- To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

Involve promise- We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.

Collaborate- To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.

Collaborate promise- We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.

Empower- To place final decision making in the hands of the public.

Empower promise- We will implement what you decide.

© International Association for Public Participation www.iap2.org

5. PRINCIPLES

When engaging the community in a decision-making process, Council promises to:

- Provide a genuine opportunity for the community to have input and an influence on decisions that are the subject of the engagement
- Actively seek out and encourage contributions from people who may be affected by or interested in a decision
- Provide relevant, timely and balanced information so people can contribute in a meaningful way including clearly defining negotiable and non-negotiable elements of any subject of engagement
- Provide a variety of appropriate and accessible ways for people to have their say and to speak honestly
- Actively listen so that people's ideas and input assist in making the final decision
- Consider the needs and interests of all people in the decision-making process
- Tell the community about the final decision, and how their input was considered
- To effectively record engagement plans, methodologies, community responses, outcomes and evaluations

The following principles will guide Horsham Rural City Council's engagement practice:

5.1 Genuine – Council will be upfront and explain the level of influence the community can have in the community engagement process and will highlight the negotiable and non-negotiable elements of any community engagement.

5.2 Focus and clarity – Council will provide clear statements about the scale, focus and purpose of each community engagement activity.

5.3 Inclusiveness and accessibility – Council will facilitate processes for a diverse range of perspectives to be heard. Community engagement processes will recognize that there are a number of groups within the community who have particular requirements to enable them to participate effectively in engagement processes and will seek to accommodate and include these groups.

5.4 Provision of information and feedback – Council will provide sufficient, easy to read and accessible information so that community members are given the opportunity to provide informed input in the engagement. People participating in a community engagement process will be advised on issues of interest or concern and of the outcome.

5.5 Timing – Council will ensure that community engagement is timed so that results are able to influence the policy, planning, decision making process and the implementation of those decisions. Council will, by using the Engagement Tracker, ensure that the risk of engagement fatigue is reduced by co-ordinating engagement activities when possible.

5.6 Transparency – Council will communicate in an open and transparent way with the community to ensure meaningful input into Council’s planning and prioritisation processes.

5.7 Evaluation – Council will evaluate community engagement processes against the goals as articulated in each community engagement plan.

5.8 Resourcing – Council will consider the effective resourcing for community engagement at the start of each new project and when ongoing operations are reviewed allowance should be made for the resources required for any community engagement that is warranted. Council will, by using the Engagement Tracker, ensure that where practical engagement activities will be conducted together.

6. COMMUNICATION

Executive management group, managers and staff directly involved in engagement will be briefed on the policy and the associated procedure.

This policy will be communicated to Councillors, all HRCC employees, and the community via the Intranet and Council website.

Project briefs that are prepared to engage contractors for work that includes community engagement must contain the obligation to conform to this policy. The policy will be made available via the tender portal when required.

7. RESPONSIBILITY

Policy Owner: Manager Community Development

8. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Document	Location
Community Development Framework	Intranet
Community Engagement Procedure (Engagement Kit)	Intranet
Engagement resources	Intranet
Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014	Internet
<i>The Local Government Act 1989</i>	Internet

9. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version Number	Approval Date	Approval By	Amendment
01	15 June 2015	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New policy

Horsham Rural City Council would like to acknowledge Sunshine Coast Council, the City of Subiaco, Mt Alexander Shire Council, Adelaide City Council and the International Association for Public Participation whose publications have been used as guidance in the preparation of this policy.



Procedure

Community Engagement

1. PURPOSE

This procedure will give staff members and contractors the means to identify when engagement is necessary or desirable and to develop, implement and evaluate effective community engagement. The procedure will also provide a template for reporting on engagement activity.

2. INTRODUCTION

Council recognises the importance of effective and consistent community engagement. This procedure will provide the means for conducting effective engagement and create a consistent approach throughout Council.

3. SCOPE

Councillors and Council staff that are involved in engagement should understand the standards and principles that govern effective engagement and use the engagement toolkit to assess the need to engage and to plan, conduct, and review engagement using the tools within the kit.

Contractors conducting projects or ongoing operations on Council's behalf should adhere to the Community Engagement Policy and when conducting engagement activities, follow this procedure. Contracts and Tenders will be constructed to make this an obligation.

4. DEFINITIONS

Community Engagement - A broad term that refers to any process, project or initiative that involves the community, or requires community input, in order to make a decision or solve a problem. It includes all levels and ways of including the community in decision-making.

Stakeholders - Individuals or groups who are likely to be affected either physically or financially or with interest in, the project or program e.g. adjacent residents, ethnic groups, absent owners, community groups, sporting clubs, agencies and Council's other departments or directorates.

Council's projects and operations do have varying impacts on the community and different stakeholders will be affected in different ways to account for these differences. Varying degrees of engagement will be appropriate depending on the circumstances.

Community - Horsham Rural City is made up of many communities, including:

- those centred around a town, neighbourhood or region;
- those based on a particular interest, such as agriculture, sustainability, arts or sport;
- those based on life stages, lifestyles or population groups such as senior citizens, people with a disability or youth and;
- those based on a particular unifying event, such as the drought or the Remlaw fire.

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) recognises the following levels of engagement:

Inform - To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.

Inform promise - We will keep you informed.

Consult - To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.

Consult promise - We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.

Involve - To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

Involve promise - We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.

Collaborate - To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.

Collaborate promise - We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.

Empower - To place final decision making in the hands of the public.

Empower promise - We will implement what you decide.

© International Association for Public Participation www.iap2.org

5. ACTIONS

Using the templates, guides and tools contained within the Engagement Toolkit, staff and contractors will evaluate the need to engage the community, plan, deliver, report and evaluate in accordance with the Engagement Policy.

Guide to using the Engagement Toolkit - This provides an overview and description of how to use each of the part of the kit. It also guides users through the steps of engagement. See appendix 1.

Scoping for Engagement form - This form briefly summarises the project/process that is the reason for the engagement and broadly outlines some of the factors governing the engagement process. In addition it indicates generally the appropriate level for engagement. See appendix 2

Stakeholder Analysis Tool - This tool analyses the stakeholders according to their perceived level of interest and capacity to be involved in the engagement. The tool then assigns a level of engagement that is appropriate for each stakeholder. See appendix 3

Engagement Tools Matrix - This matrix matches potential methods of engagement with the levels of engagement they are appropriate for. The methods are described in detail in 'Book 3 - The Engagement Toolkit' produced by Department of Sustainability. This supporting document is available on the Intranet. See appendix 4

Engagement Planning Tool - This is a detailed step by step tool to design engagement including identifying stakeholders, establishing the appropriate level of engagement for each stakeholder, identifying means to remove potential barriers to engagement and selecting the most suitable means of engagement. See appendix 5

Reporting and Evaluation template - This template guides users in evaluating engagement and reporting on the outcomes of engagement. See appendix 6

Engagement Flowchart - This is a simple one page diagram showing the key steps in engagement: planning, conducting, evaluating, recording and reporting (including sign off points). See appendix 7

Engagement Tracker - This is a central register of engagements that are planned across the entire organisation. The register is available on the intranet in the form of a calendar. It enables combined engagement when appropriate and limits the risk of 'over' engagement.

6. COMMUNICATION

There will be an initial briefing of all indoor staff to inform them of the Policy and Procedure and their role in engagement.

There will be internal training for staff likely to be involved in engagement. This will include instruction on how to use the Engagement Kit.

The Engagement Kit and reference documents will be available on intranet and reference documents are linked to from within the templates and forms.

Incoming Councillors will be briefed on Policy and their role in engagement.

The policy and procedure will be available on Council's website for the public to view.

7. RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible Officer: Manager for Community Development

8. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Document	Location
Public Participation in Government Decision Making- Better Practice Guide, Victorian Auditor General’s Office	Intranet
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Engagement toolkit, Australian Human Rights Commission	Intranet
Book 1 - An Introduction to Engagement, Department of Sustainability and Environment	Intranet
Book 2 - The Engagement Planning Workbook, Department of Sustainability and Environment	Intranet
Book 3 - The Engagement Toolkit, Department of Sustainability and Environment	Intranet
100 Ideas to Help Engage Hard to Reach People, Capire Consulting Group	Intranet
Inclusive consultation and communication with people with a disability, Department of Planning and Community Development	Intranet
Completed Example-Planning for Engagement Form	Intranet
IAP2’s Public Participation Spectrum	Intranet

9. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version Number	Approval Date	Approval By	Amendment
01	15 February 2016	EMG	New procedure

THE ENGAGEMENT GUIDE

2016



Horsham Rural City
Council urban rural balance

HRCC would like to acknowledge the City of Subiaco, Sunshine Coast Council, Mt Alexander Shire Council, Adelaide City Council, Department of Sustainability and Environment, The Regional Development Company, and the International Association for Public Participation whose publications have been used as guidance in the preparation of these materials.

Designed for Horsham Rural City Council by AR Graphic Design www.argraphicdesign.com.au

Introduction

The community engagement guide is a practical manual for staff who are designing and implementing a community engagement program as part of their work. Created in a step-by-step format, it outlines the various components of each stage of the engagement process, from planning, development and delivery, to reporting and evaluation. A variety of forms and other important information have also been provided to assist staff to work through each stage of the engagement process.

Please note that not all of the steps outlined in the guide will be applicable to every community engagement process. This is something that the community development team will be able to clarify with you once you begin.

The community development team is available to provide support and advice to staff across the organisation to ensure you get the most out of your engagement process from start to finish. The community development team have experience in a wide range of engagement activities and can be a valuable resource in all stages of the engagement process.

Even if the community development team does not need to be involved in your project, it is important that you still let them know you are undertaking community engagement. This helps to identify any crossovers or conflicts that may impact other projects across the organisation.

The work undertaken by many areas within the organisation is defined by legislative requirements and/or regulations which can include specific requirements for 'public consultation'. Examples of this include amendments to, or adoption of, new local laws, development applications, town planning scheme amendments, major land transactions and disposal of property. At a minimum, these legislative or regulatory requirements must be complied with.

Effective community engagement will require resources both human and financial. This will need to be factored into project budgets. Externally funded projects will need to take account of this cost when framing the budget for any grant application. Projects funded by Council should include in the budget bid an appropriate amount for engagement. When ongoing operations are reviewed, allowance should be made for the cost of any community engagement that is warranted.

Council's [Community Engagement Policy](#) sets out the principles and objectives of community engagement and this guide is intended to implement that policy. The Policy contains important definitions and explanations relating to the engagement process and this guide can only be properly understood in the context of the Policy.

The Engagement Process - the steps in broad outline

Preparing for Engagement - Scope, Plan the Engagement, and Develop an Evaluation Plan

Conducting engagement

Post engagement - Reporting back to the Community, Evaluating and debriefing

Forms - Flowchart, Scoping, Planning (stakeholder analysis, tool selection), Evaluating, Reporting

Deciding if you need to engage on your project

Before you begin planning it is important to decide whether you need to do community engagement as part of your project and why.

Community engagement that is inappropriate or unnecessary wastes the time and resources of both the municipality and the community, especially when there is no opportunity for the community to influence the outcome or decision being made. This damages the community's confidence in Council and future engagement processes. For this reason, it is important to be sure you are engaging for the right reasons.

The need to engage is able to be assessed using the impact assessment tool below.

Answer the following questions:	Yes	No
Should the community be informed about this issue?		
Will the decision being made have a significant social, environmental and/or economic impact on the community or other stakeholders?		
Is there a legal requirement to undertake engagement?		
Are you changing a service?		
Is there, or is there likely to be, strong community concern or interest in the issue?		
Is this a complex or difficult situation with widely differing views?		
Is there existing or potential community outrage about the issue?		
Has council asked for community input on this or similar matters in the past?		
Is there a council resolution attached to the project that requires community engagement?		
Would engagement assist the municipality or council to better understand local values, priorities, needs or issues that relate to your project?		
Is there a lack of other relevant information available in order to reach the decision?		
Is the decision being made likely to have a financial impact on the community?		

If there is more than one tick then you should use the tools in the Engagement Tool Kit to determine what the engagement should be.

If the only tick is in question one then you should work with the Media and Communications Officer to ensure that the community is informed when required.

Generally the more ticks the higher the level of engagement that should occur.

Preparing for Engagement

Scoping engagement

The purpose of this template is to define the project in precise terms and to identify the critical issues that are associated with the project. This will help those involved in the project set clear boundaries for the project and enable the project to be understood properly by others. It will also provide you with some clear parameters for engagement.



Many of the answers to these questions may already exist in your project plan.

1. Explain the project in a few sentences

Provide a short summary of the project and its purpose.

2. What do you want to find out or tell the community?

It is important to clearly define which parts of the project you are seeking community input on and to be clear in communicating about the project about what input the community can have. What are the decisions that the community can influence?

3. What are the non-negotiables/constraints?

Being clear about the extent to which participants will be able to influence the decision being made is critical to establishing trust and to avoid incorrect perceptions. Non-negotiables and constraints are those things that can't be changed. These might be defined by funding agreements, prior commitments to the community, legislation, regulation, prior Council decisions or other non-negotiable factors. It is also important to be clear about who will be the final decision maker on the project.

4. What is the history of this project?

It is important to understand what existing beliefs and perceptions the community (or other stakeholders) may have of the project. By carefully reviewing how the project got to where it is hopefully you can identify issues that may come up during engagement or in other ways threaten the success of the project.

5. Who do you think will be involved in the process?

By identifying everyone with an interest in the project you can ensure that relevant information can be sought from all stakeholders. It is important to consider who else from within Council may have an interest in the project so that they can have input at the most appropriate phase of the project. Not all stakeholders will need to have the same level of engagement in the project and their involvement can be tailored to suit their interest. It is best to try and identify as many possible stakeholders as you can even if some of them only have a low level of engagement with the project.

Internal stakeholders (within Council)

External stakeholders (Community, government, other organisations, etc.)

6. What are the potential views or concerns about this project?

Just as understanding the history of the project can help identify potential stumbling blocks, by considering what are possible or likely concerns that may be held by people, you can plan how these may be aired and addressed without threatening the project.

7. What are the project timeframes? (i.e. how long have you got to undertake community engagement?)

Engagement activities will need to be planned that can fit with the existing project timelines.

8. Is there a budget available to support this process?

Engagement activities will need to be planned that can be accommodated in the existing budget.

9. What are your indicators of success for this project?

What is your ideal outcome for this project and your community engagement process? Think through what success would look like. If you are aware of this from the beginning, it will help you to keep focused and on track throughout the process. This will also help you establish evaluation criteria that can be used in the evaluation form.

10. Complete the Stakeholder analysis tool

Using the list developed in step 5 place internal and external stakeholders in the matrix in the stakeholder analysis tool. This will enable you to identify the level of engagement appropriate for each stakeholder.



Planning engagement

The planning form needs to be used in conjunction with the stakeholder analysis and tool selection matrix.

Stakeholder analysis

Different stakeholders may need to be involved in different ways. The Stakeholder Analysis tool will allow you to see to what level stakeholders need to be involved.

Stakeholders can change their position within the spectrum as the project evolves and new stakeholders may be identified. This may happen as you learn more about the stake or resources that an interested party has or as the project evolves in response to engagement inputs or other factors.

Engagement tool selection matrix

Having determined the level of engagement for the stakeholders in the project this table enables you to see a range of tools available for the different levels of engagement. The tools are also categorised to show whether they are suited to broadening or narrowing options.

Choosing the right engagement techniques for your project is crucial to the success of your process. This decision will be largely based on the level of impact and level of engagement you have already identified, but also on the resources and time available to you, as well as what is suitable for the stakeholders involved. Some stakeholders may need to be engaged at different levels and therefore different tools will be required. For example a stakeholder with a high stake and high resources may need to be invited into a project steering group or a working party.

The matrix of engagement techniques shown in the engagement tools matrix presents a number of appropriate techniques for each level of engagement and provides examples of techniques you could use. The community engagement team can also provide advice in relation to selecting techniques.

Details on each technique can be found in the resource [Book 3 - The Engagement Toolkit, Department of Sustainability and Environment](#), including information on what can go right and what can go wrong. This information is particularly important so you can anticipate and be prepared for some of the issues that may arise. This resource can also be used to help evaluate the appropriateness of any techniques you are considering using for your engagement process. On the Community Engagement page of the intranet there is a [version of this tool](#) with embedded links. This will enable you to easily view what is involved in all of the various techniques.

Planning for Engagement

It is now time to develop your community engagement action plan, which is the practical methodology for your engagement process.

The Planning for Engagement Template will become an invaluable resource when it comes to delivering your engagement program. Its purpose is to have all important information about your actual engagement process in the one place. It will be necessary to review the engagement plan and update it if necessary throughout the project cycle.

Each step below corresponds with a question on the Planning for Engagement Template. In addition, on the intranet there is an [engagement plan example](#) that has been completed which may help you develop your plan. Note that this example has some modified tables to suit a staged process and that as engagement processes can vary widely you may wish to add elements to the plan to suit your project.

1. Project Engagement details

This provides a snapshot of who is managing the project; prospective dates of engagement; the level of the engagement and the commitment to the community. Some parts of this summary page can only be filled in after the rest of the form has been completed and the details are known about the design of your planned engagement. For example the 'Level of Engagement' will be the highest level assigned to a stakeholder and this determines the engagement goal and the promise to the community.

2. Stakeholders

The results of the stakeholder analysis and the engagement tools matrix are combined to identify how the internal and external stakeholders will be involved in the project. The IAP2 level of engagement for each stakeholder will have been determined by the stakeholder analysis and should be noted here so that the engagement activities that are planned match the stakeholders' needs.

3. Engagement activities

One of the principles identified in the [Community Engagement Policy](#) is “When engaging the community in a decision-making process, Council promises to... Provide a variety of appropriate and accessible ways for people to have their say and to speak honestly.” Therefore you should plan a number of activities to cater for varying levels of interest and stake.

What activities are you planning (online survey, social media campaign, etc.)?

What events are you holding (i.e. workshop, community information session, etc.)?

When and where will they be held (i.e. date, time and venue)?

What tools or techniques will be used?

Possible tools have already been identified using the Stakeholder Analysis tool with reference to the Engagement Tool Matrix. To finalise the tools that will be used it may be necessary to switch between steps 2 and 3 to ensure that all stakeholders are engaged at the most suitable level and that a range of activities and events have been identified.

Engagement may need to occur at several stages in your project. For example, after an initial engagement to develop a plan, comment may be sought on a draft before it is finalised and presented to Council. You may therefore need to plan for activities in several phases of your project.

Not all columns will apply to all activities. For example an online survey will have a start and finish date but no venue or time.

4. Equity of Access to Engagement

It is important to consider those members of the community who may experience barriers to participation. We have identified people with a disability and young people as sections of our community that may require additional opportunities to engage. The following tables enable you to record the steps you have taken to be inclusive.

For further accessibility information- [“Inclusive consultation and communication guide”](#) or talk to the Rural Access Worker. Other helpful ideas are available in these resources [“100 Ideas to Help Engage Hard to Reach People”](#), [“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Engagement toolkit”](#) or talk to the Community Development staff.

5. Communications

Who is your target audience? What communication methods will you use (i.e. invitations, letters, advertising, posters, etc.)? What tasks need to be completed?

Council has a number of channels of communication that are readily accessible these include our website, Facebook page and public notices these should be considered.

This section should always record how you are going to report back to stakeholders especially the community about the outcomes of the engagement including the decisions made and the next step in the project.

6. Resources

What resources will you need (i.e. catering, printed materials, equipment, transport, etc.)? Have you booked these resources or made arrangements to have them collected or delivered? The community development team has a range of equipment and resources you can borrow.

7. Facilitator/presenter

Have you engaged a facilitator or presenter for your event? Have they been briefed on the project, the purpose of the event and what services are required?

8. Additional Support (Staff, technical support, etc.)

Do you require any additional support to deliver your engagement program (i.e. other staff, technical support, etc.)?

Updating the Engagement Tracker

The engagement tracker is a central register of engagements that are planned across the entire organisation. The register is available on the intranet in the form of a calendar. It enables combined engagement when appropriate and limits the risk of 'over' engagement.

To update the tracker, on the left of the [Engagement Tracker page](#) are arrows and a yearly calendar. Use these to bring up the relevant month or months in the Calendar.

If there are other engagements planned in that period you should contact the person responsible for that project. (When you click on the coloured bar representing an engagement the project manager's name should appear in the section labelled 'description'.) It may be possible if the two projects have similar target groups for your engagements to work together or it may be more productive to plan your engagements so that they do not coincide. The Community Development Team are available to assist in determining what would work best in the case of engagements that may be planned in the same timeframe.

To establish a new entry double click on the day at the beginning of your engagement period. A dialogue box will open for the calendar entry. The title should be the name of your project. The start and finish dates of the entry can be adjusted from this dialogue box. Most engagement processes will take days if not weeks to be completed so tick the box that turns off the start and finish times of the appointment (this is located towards the bottom of the box). In the description area of the calendar entry put the name of the person responsible for managing the engagement. You may also choose to add the dates and times for specific events (if your engagement process includes these) in this same area.

Planning for Evaluation

It is important to consider evaluation before you begin the engagement process. In the scoping for engagement form you were asked to consider ‘What are your indicators of success for this project?’ and ‘What do you want to find out or tell the community?’ the answers to these two questions are central to the evaluation of your engagement. You should now read the Evaluation Form and consider how you will evaluate your engagement process.



There are a number of ways you can gain community feedback on how the engagement process went. Examples include:

- distribute a short evaluation survey to participants
- contact a sample of stakeholders or participants afterwards
- make your own observations during the event or process
- talk to participants during the event
- remember the best assessment always comes directly from participants. Throughout the process be sure to ask them how it is going and if their needs are being met.

[The Evaluation Form](#) that addresses the points listed is available on the intranet. This can be used during stage four when you are evaluating your engagement process.

There are a number of other evaluation methods available, which may benefit your project or the decision-making process. The community engagement team can assist you in finding the most appropriate method.

It is a good idea where practical to collect photographs and other records of your engagement practice this may include for example screenshots of on line activities.

Conducting engagement

After all of your planning, it's time to deliver the engagement program. Below is a list of some things to consider before you begin. Talk to the Community Development team if you are in doubt as to what preparations might be required.

Engagement Events

RSVPs

Once you have advertised, promoted or sent out invitations you will need to be ready to take RSVPs. Ensure you have informed Records and Reception Staff so they can forward responses (emails, letters or phone calls) to you or your project team.

If your event will be catered, it is recommended that you ask if people have any special dietary requirements.

But remember participants often do not RSVP, so be prepared for extra people to show up at your event. Make sure you can accommodate additional attendees in terms of catering, seating, staff, and the format of your event.

Registration sheets

The information requested on the registration sheet depends entirely on what you need to know about your participants. If you would like to keep them informed on the progress of the project, or would like to invite them back to a later engagement event, you will need to ask for contact details. A phone number and email address is usually sufficient. You may also want to know other details, like residential address or town. (See page 14 for information on Privacy Statements.)

Name badges

If you are having an event where you (or the facilitator) will be interacting with participants, or if participants will be expected to interact with each other, it is a good idea to provide name badges, including for Council staff.

You may be able to prepare name badges beforehand from the RSVPs you have received. This may help reduce congestion as guests arrive.

Venue set up

You will need to think about how to set up the venue according to the activities you are planning on running.

Tips for venue set up:

- Ensure all participants can see the projector screen, facilitator and/or visual displays.
- Although quite common, arranging seating in theatre style (i.e. seats in rows with all participants facing forward and the facilitator or presenter on a stage or platform at the front) may not always be the most appropriate set up. This format can sometimes create an 'us versus them' atmosphere.
- Consider the needs of people with a disability e.g. ensure that aisles are wide enough for people using walking aids or wheelchairs. (The rural access worker will be able to assist you with your planning.)

Non-event activities**Social Media****Facebook**

Council has a number of active Facebook pages that can be used to promote engagement activities and raise awareness of engagements. Council's Media & Communications Officer can post onto all of Council's pages. It may be appropriate for larger projects to establish a page dedicated to that project. This should be done in consultation with the Media & Communications Officer and the Community Development team. There are risks involved in using social media and these need to be identified and managed. Council has a 'business' page that enables us to centrally manage log-ins and permissions. This should be used to establish any pages used for Council business.

Twitter

Council has a twitter feed that can be used for promotional purposes. As with Facebook a project specific feed may be appropriate but please discuss this with the Media & Communications Officer and the Community Development team.

Other on-line tools**Survey Monkey**

This is an on-line survey service that includes managing the results and creating graphs. Paper versions of the survey can also easily be created. Surveys can be created in our corporate colours and include our logo. Council has a subscription to this service contact the Community Development team for the details.

Privacy Statement

When collecting information, a privacy statement should be made at the point of collection. The privacy statement should include: who is collecting the information and the relevant contact details; the purpose that the information will be used for; that information that is collected can be accessed by the person that provided that information; and if the information is to be shared or publicly available, how and under what circumstances that will happen. It is important that information is collected in compliance with the *Privacy and Data Collection Act 2014*. The Community Development Team can provide advice or refer you to the appropriate Council officer if required.

For example if soliciting written submissions on our website there should be a statement that says for example “This information is being collected by Horsham Rural City Council (P.O. Box 511, Horsham, Victoria 3402- phone 5382 9777) for the purpose of developing a community precinct plan. The information you provide including your name may be included in a report to Council. You will be able to gain access to the information we collect.”



Post engagement

Evaluate the process

How did it go?

Evaluate the process

Now that you have delivered your engagement, it is time to evaluate the process. To do this you will need to refer back to the evaluation strategy that was determined during the planning for engagement stage.

Think about

Did you collect any information along the way that could assist with your evaluation? For example, participant numbers, participant surveys, team debriefs, observation notes, etc.

You should use the [evaluation template](#) provided to conduct a simple evaluation of your engagement process.

Remember

Constructive criticism actually gives you the greatest opportunity to improve your practice, so it is really important that you take notice of any negative feedback you receive.

Each step below corresponds with a question on the Evaluation Form

1. Evaluate each technique you used. (Do you think it worked well? Would you use it again?)
2. Assess the engagement objectives determined in the scoping for engagement form. (What did you want to find out or tell the community?)
3. Assess participation rates. (How many people were made aware of your engagement process? How many people did you expect to participate? How many people actually participated?)
4. Assess the overall engagement process. (What was the engagement promise determined in stage two? Was the engagement promise fulfilled? What worked well? What challenges were encountered? How were these addressed? What were the lessons learned?)
5. How did the engagement process contribute to the project's overall decision-making process?

Evaluation debrief

Once you have completed your own evaluation it is valuable to organise a meeting with the community engagement team, to gain their feedback on your process and also provide feedback on how it was to work with the team and to share the things you learnt from the process that will assist the organisation in future engagements. This is particularly important so we can continue to improve the service provided to the community.

Reporting on Engagement

In developing a Council report on your engagement it is important to include the following information that will be already recorded in your engagement plan or evaluation form; the IAP2 level at which you engaged, its description and the corresponding promise to the community; the purpose of the engagement; the target community for your engagement, for example the whole community, users of a particular service, a specific demographic etc. (this is a summary of the stakeholders from the Planning Template); a description of the engagement activities that you undertook; a summary of participation; a statement on whether you achieved the purpose of the engagement and the impact that Community Engagement had on the outcome of your project.

Celebrate!

Don't forget to stop and congratulate yourself and your team. Always take the time to acknowledge the hard work and successes you have had.



Additional resources to support engagement

[Public Participation in Government Decision Making](#) - Better Practice Guide, Victorian Auditor General's Office

[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Engagement toolkit](#), Australian Human Rights Commission

[Book 1 - An Introduction to Engagement](#), Department of Sustainability and Environment

[Book 2 - The Engagement Planning Workbook](#), Department of Sustainability and Environment

[Book 3 - The Engagement Toolkit](#), Department of Sustainability and Environment

[100 Ideas to Help Engage Hard to Reach People](#), Capire Consulting Group

[Inclusive consultation and communication with people with a disability](#), Department of Planning and Community Development



2. SCOPING FOR ENGAGEMENT

This template is designed to assist in bringing together all the relevant information regarding a project, to ensure staff are well prepared before beginning the planning phase of engagement and to determine whether engagement is required or preferable for a particular project.

Once the scoping document has been completed, please send a copy to the Manager of Community Development, attaching any supporting documents.

For further information please consult the community engagement tool kit guide. If you have any questions contact Martin Bride martin.bride@hrcc.vic.gov.au or Melissa Morris melissa.morris@hrcc.vic.gov.au

CONTACT DETAILS PROJECT MANAGER

Name:

Email:

Phone:

Project Name:

Date:

1. Explain the project in a few sentences
2. What do you want to find out or tell the community?
3. What are the non-negotiables/constraints?
4. What is the history of this project?
5. Who do you think will be involved in the process or have an interest in the outcome?
List here the internal stakeholders (within Council)
List here the external stakeholders (Community, government, other organisations, etc.)
6. What are the potential views or concerns about this project?
7. What are the project timeframes? (i.e. how long have you got to undertake community engagement?)
8. Is there a budget available to support this process?
9. What are your indicators of success for this project?
10. Complete the [Stakeholder analysis tool](#).

3. STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Purpose: To determine who should be involved in the project and at what level their engagement should be.

How to use: This is best completed in a group, for example a steering committee or working group. This will help ensure that as many stakeholders as possible are identified and that each stakeholder's resources and interest are evaluated from a range of perspectives.

Who are the stakeholders? Stakeholders are the individuals, groups and organisations that are or may be affected by the project. This can include adjacent residents, ethnic groups, absent owners, community groups, sporting clubs, agencies and Council's other departments or directorates.

Stakeholders and the location on the analysis graph are best completed as a group activity.

From the list of stakeholders, considering each one in turn, think of their interests from their perspective.

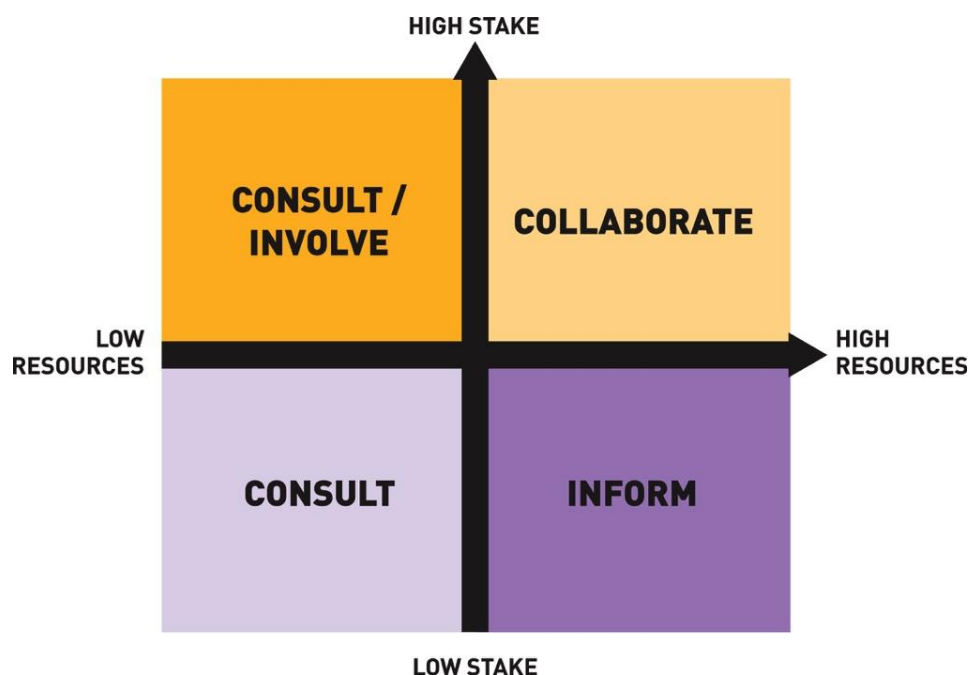
What is at stake for them? Are they really concerned about the issues relating to the project?

Then consider what resources they bring to the project. Do they have the influence and power to make the project succeed or fail?

Using the matrix drawn on a white board or butchers paper, determine where each stakeholder should be.

There may be considerations not covered by this simple analysis and stakeholders may need to be adjusted up the engagement spectrum.

Once stakeholders have been placed in the matrix each stakeholder will be in one of the four quadrants (Consult/Involve, Collaborate, Consult, or Inform). The stakeholders can then be listed in the appropriate section of the table. Using the engagement tools matrix, methods and techniques can be assigned to stakeholder groups.



Level of Engagement	Stakeholder	Possible Tools & Methods
EMPOWER IAP2 promise - We will implement what you decide.		
COLLABORATE IAP2 promise - We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.		
INVOLVE IAP2 promise - We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.		
CONSULT IAP2 promise - We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.		
INFORM IAP2 promise - We will keep you informed.	All stakeholder groups plus the wider community	

Alternative definition - A stakeholder is any entity with a declared or conceivable interest or stake in a policy concern. The range of stakeholders relevant to consider for analysis varies according to the complexity of the reform area targeted and the type of reform proposed and, where the stakeholders are not organised, the incentive to include them. Stakeholders can be of any form, size and capacity. They can be individuals, organisations, or unorganised groups.



4. ENGAGEMENT METHOD SELECTION

The following table matches the tools to the [IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum](#). A bracketed tick indicates the tool that best fits the engagement type (inform, consult, involve, collaborate or empower). [The Community Engagement Policy](#) contains further information on how the definitions and promises in the spectrum should inform Council's engagement processes.

You will also notice the 'diverge' and 'converge' columns in the table. A diverging tool is one that is predominantly focussed on generating ideas and information. A converging tool brings information together and enables decisions to be made or a solution/recommendation to be identified. Some tools can be both diverging and converging, while others are more specific and focussed on either generating ideas or making decisions.

This table is intended as a guide only and focuses on matching decision-making processes to your purpose of engagement. The table can also be used for individual decision-making.

You may need to employ varying types of engagement for the same stakeholder during the lifespan of your project. A range of tools may be utilised and consequently the promise made at differing stages in the project process will need to be accommodated.

The methods (and others) in the table overleaf are described in the DSE resource ['Book 3 The engagement toolkit'](#). Alternatively there is table on the Community Engagement section of the Intranet ([Engagement Method Selection](#)) that contains embedded links that connect directly to the techniques in the resource.

Tool	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower	Diverge	Converge
Brainstorming		✓	{✓}	{✓}	{✓}	✓	
Briefings	{✓}	✓					✓
Citizen committees		{✓}				✓	✓
Community fairs	{✓}					✓	
Community profiling	✓	{✓}	✓	✓	✓		✓
Conference	{✓}	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Deliberative opinion polls	✓	{✓}					✓
Displays and exhibits	{✓}	✓				✓	
Field trips	{✓}	✓				✓	
Fishbowl	✓	{✓}	✓			✓	
Focus groups		✓				✓	
Information contacts	✓					✓	
Information repository	✓					✓	
Key stakeholder interviews		✓				✓	
Kitchen table discussion	✓	{✓}	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Media Releases	{✓}	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Mind maps	✓	{✓}	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Newspaper inserts	✓	{✓}	✓			✓	
Nominal group			✓	✓	{✓}	✓	✓
Open house	✓	{✓}	✓	✓		✓	
Open space technology			✓	✓	{✓}	✓	✓
Poster competitions	{✓}	✓	✓			✓	
Printed information	{✓}	✓				✓	
Prioritisation matrix		✓	✓	{✓}	✓	✓	✓
Public involvement volunteers	✓	✓	{✓}	✓		✓	✓
Public meeting	✓	{✓}	✓	✓		✓	✓
Questionnaires and responses	✓	{✓}				✓	
Shopfront	{✓}	✓				✓	
Simulation (electronically generated)	✓	✓	{✓}	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sketch interviews	✓	{✓}	✓	✓		✓	
Speakout (version 2)			✓	✓	{✓}	✓	✓
Study circles		✓	{✓}	✓	✓	✓	
Submissions	✓	{✓}	✓				✓
Surveys	✓	{✓}				✓	
Technical assistance	✓	✓	{✓}	✓	✓		✓
Technical reports and discussion papers	{✓}	✓				✓	
Visioning		✓	✓	{✓}	✓	✓	
Websites	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Workshops		✓	{✓}	✓	✓	✓	✓



5. ENGAGEMENT PLANNING TOOL

CONTACT DETAILS OF ORGANISING PERSON

Name: _____ **Position:** _____ **Directorate:** _____
Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

1. Project Engagement Summary

Name of project: _____ **Dates of engagement:** _____
Purpose of engagement: _____
Level of impact: _____ **Level of Engagement:** _____
Community Engagement goal: _____
Promise to the community: _____

2. Stakeholders - Use the results of the stakeholder analysis to complete this section

Internal

Who	IAP2	How will they be involved?	Done

External

Who	IAP2	How will they be involved?	Done

3. Engagement activities- [“Book 3 – The Engagement Toolkit”](#)

Activity	Date	Brief Description	Tools and Techniques	Time	Venue

4. Equity of Access to Engagement

Some ways to improve access: Provide contact details in your publicity and a simple statement such as “If you have accessibility needs please contact...” or “For additional access requirements please specify with RSVP”. When selecting a venue for events ensure the venue is accessible, has accessible toilets and arrange the seating in such a way as to allow people using wheelchairs to fully participate. Ensure that written materials are in a clear sans serif font such as Arial and that the font is at least 14 pt.

For further accessibility information- [“Inclusive consultation and communication guide”](#) or talk to the Rural Access Worker.

What steps have been taken to facilitate the engagement of: Sight impaired, hearing impaired, mobility impaired or people with other disabilities?

Target group	Access improvement	If no improvement why not?	Notes

Some ways to reduce barriers to participation: Ask Nexus to put information on their Facebook page (to increase access for young people); Have a range of means of engagement e.g. online, public meeting/drop-in and one-to-one phone contact .

For further information - [“100 Ideas to Help Engage Hard to Reach People”](#), [“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Engagement toolkit”](#) or talk to the Community Development staff.

What steps have been taken to reduce the barriers to participation for: indigenous residents, people who have English as a second language, people with low literacy, young people?

Target Group	Access improvement/extra engagement option	If no improvement why not?	Notes

5. Communications

This section should always record how you are going to report back to stakeholders especially the community about the outcomes of the engagement including the decisions made and the next step in the project.

Task	Audience	Who	Progress	Notes

6. Resources

Item	Date	Venue	Provider contact details	Notes	Who is responsible	Progress

7. Facilitator/presenter

Name of Facilitator/presenter	Company	Contact details	Have they been briefed?	Notes

8. Additional Support (Staff, technical support, etc.)

Name	Company/Directorate	Contact details	Times and Dates	Notes



6. REPORTING AND EVALUATION

PROJECT DETAILS

Name of project:

Date/s of engagement:

Contact details *(Person responsible for community engagement evaluation)*

Name:

Position:

Directorate/department:

Phone extension:

Evaluate each technique you used

Technique	Do you think it worked well?	Would you use it again?	Notes

Technique	Do you think it worked well?	Would you use it again?	Notes

Assess the purpose of engagement determined in the planning for engagement tool (i.e. what did you want to find out or tell the community?)

Objective	Was the objective achieved?	Why or why not?	Notes
1.			
2.			
3.			

Assess participation rates

Evaluation question	Your response	Notes
<p>How many people were made aware of the engagement process?</p> <p>For example: How many invitations were sent out? What was the distribution area of the letterbox drop?</p>		
<p>How many people were expected to participate?</p> <p>For example: How many RSVPs were received?</p>		
<p>How many people actually participated?</p>		

Evaluation question	Your response	Notes
In the scoping for engagement form you were asked to consider ‘What are your indicators of success for this project?’ Did you achieve these indicators?		

Assess the overall engagement process

Evaluation question	Your response	What evidence is there to support this?
What was the engagement promise determined during planning stage? (i.e. from the level of engagement)		
Was the engagement promise fulfilled?		
What worked well?		
What challenges were encountered?		

Evaluation question	Your response	What evidence is there to support this?
How were these addressed?		
What were the lessons learned? (i.e. What would you do differently?)		
What was the community and stakeholder response to the outcomes, decisions and next steps?		

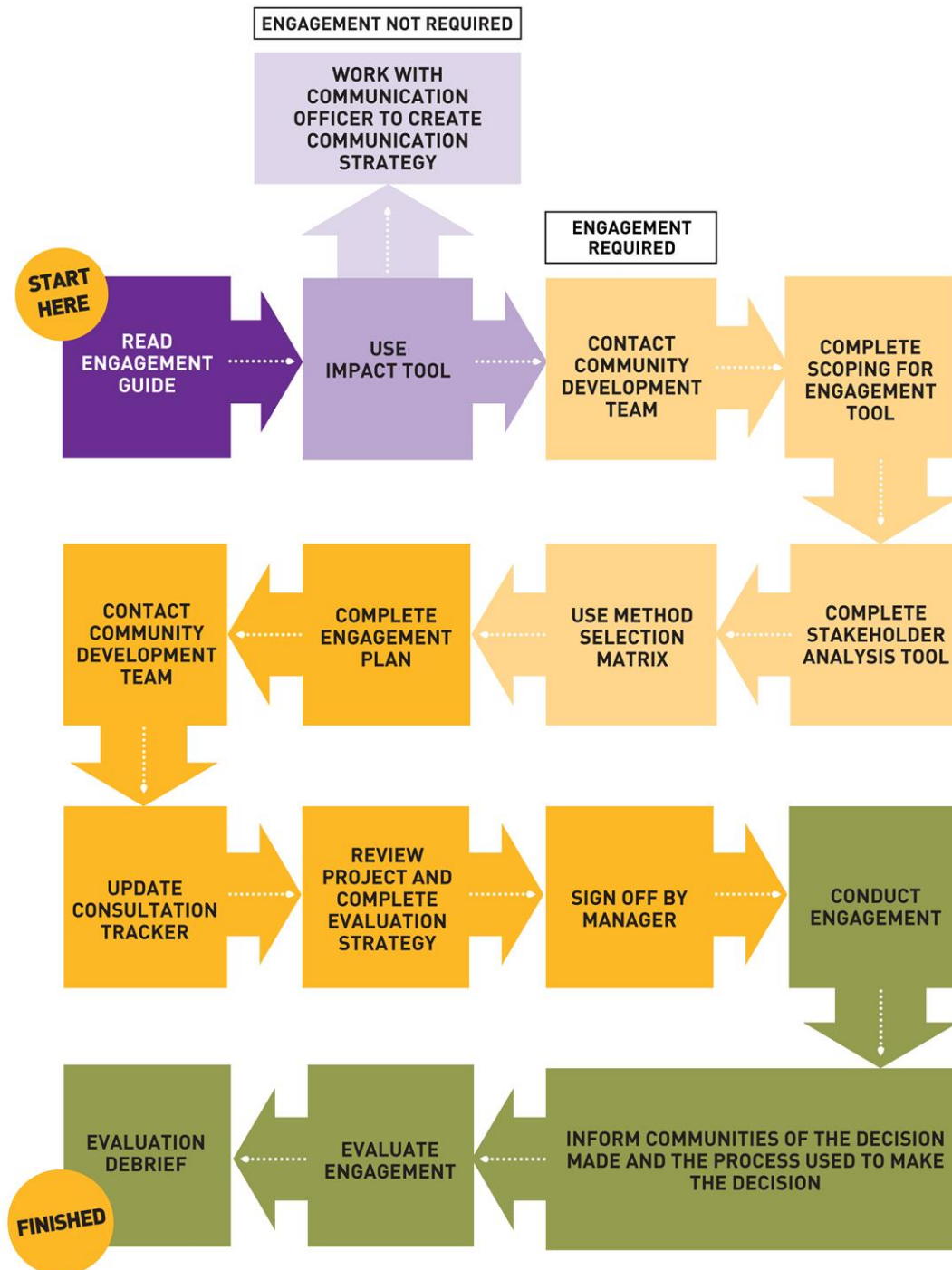
How did the engagement process contribute to the overall decision-making process of the project?

Did you use an outside facilitator or presenter? If so were they effective? Were they value for money?

If applicable, which member of the community development team provided support to this project?

To whom and how are you going to communicate the results of this evaluation? This could include: the community development team, your manager or director, EMG or Council

ENGAGEMENT PROCESS FLOWCHART



BUDGET DISCUSSIONS - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (February to May 2016)

Community Group

Apex Club of Horsham
Business Horsham
Country Women's Association Horsham
Country Women's Association Horsham Evening Branch
Country Women's Association May Branch
Dadswells Bridge Progress Association Inc
Federation University – Geoff Lord
Horsham Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association
Horsham Secondary College
Independent Retirees
Lions Club of City of Horsham
Lions Club of Horsham
Lions Club of Natimuk
Longerenong??
Nexus Youth Council
Oasis Wimmera
Probus - Combined Club of Horsham
Probus Club - Horsham (Ladies)
Probus Club - Horsham (Mens)
Probus Club - Horsham East (Ladies)
Quota International of the Wimmera
Rotary Club of Horsham
Rotary Club of Horsham East
St Brigids College
U3A
Victorian Farmers Federation



**COMMUNITY CONSULTATION & BRIEFING MEETINGS
DATES FOR 2016**

MONTH	DATE	DAY	VENUE	TIME
January	27	Wednesday	Horsham	6.00pm
February	8	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
February	22	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
March	15	Tuesday	Horsham	6.00pm
March	29	Tuesday	DADSWELLS BRIDGE	7.30pm
April	11	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
April	26	Tuesday	Horsham	6.00pm
May	9	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
May	23	Monday	TOOLONDO	7.30pm
June	14	Tuesday	Horsham	6.00pm
June	27	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
July	11	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
July	25	Monday	MITRE	7.30pm
August	8	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
August	22	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
September	12	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
September	26	Monday	NATIMUK	7.30pm
October	10	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
October	24	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
November	14	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
November	28	Monday	PIMPINIO	7.30pm
December	12	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm

PETER F. BROWN
Chief Executive



**COMMUNITY CONSULTATION & BRIEFING MEETINGS
DATES FOR 2015**

MONTH	DATE	DAY	VENUE	TIME
January	27	Tuesday	Horsham	6.00pm
February	9	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
February	23	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
March	10	Tuesday	Horsham	6.00pm
March	23	Monday	TELANGUTUK	7.30pm
April	13	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
April	27	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
May	11	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
May	25	Monday	WARTOOK	7.30pm
June	9	Tuesday	Horsham	6.00pm
June	22	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
July	13	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
July	27	Monday	CLEAR LAKE	7.30pm
August	10	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
August	24	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
September	14	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
September	28	Monday	NATIMUK	7.30pm
October	12	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
October	26	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
November	9	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm
November	23	Monday	JUNG	7.30pm
December	14	Monday	Horsham	6.00pm

PETER F. BROWN
Chief Executive



Procedure

POLICY DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION, REVIEW AND APPROVAL

1. PURPOSE

To ensure that all Horsham Rural City Council (HRCC) policies are developed, reviewed, implemented and approved using a consistent approach.

2. INTRODUCTION

HRCC has an approved Policy Framework (Council Policy No C04/001). This procedure contains the rules and controls required for policy development, implementation, review and approval.

3. SCOPE

This procedure applies to the development, implementation, review and approval of all Council and Administrative policies for HRCC.

4. DEFINITIONS

Administrative Policies: Policies that focus on how the internal administration of HRCC operates and do not have any direct or significant impact on the public. These policies are approved by the Chief Executive or Executive Management Group. It is not necessary for Administrative policies to be formally adopted by Council, unless they have a material consequence for Council's budget.

Council Policies: Policies generated by HRCC's strategic direction which have attributes that directly impact on the public. These policies are endorsed by the Executive Management Group and adopted by resolution of Council.

Document Master List: A listing of all HRCC policies, procedures, frameworks, plans, forms, templates, guidelines and other such related documents, which is stored centrally on the intranet.

Framework: Sets out the broad principles required to guide HRCC plans, policies and procedures.

Policy: Regulates, directs and controls actions and conduct. Policies give effect to relevant HRCC principles, values, goals and strategies and help improve overall risk exposure. Policies can range from broad philosophies to specific rules but they do not contain procedural content.

Policy Owner: The position/department/unit with overarching responsibility for the policy. The Policy Owner must ensure that the policy is relevant and implemented, maintained, reviewed and approved in accordance with this procedure.

Procedure: Tells users how to, and who will, implement the policy. Procedures are specific, factual, succinct and to the point. They do not include detailed descriptions of routine processes, timelines, forms and templates which may be subject to frequent modification at the user level. Procedures should be approved by the Chief Executive or relevant Group Director.

Responsible Officer: The Responsible Officer has the ongoing responsibility of ensuring that the procedure remains relevant and that it is implemented, maintained and reviewed.

5. ACTIONS

The Policy Owner will guide the development, implementation, review and approval of the policy to ensure that the content is accurate, does not conflict with other Council policies and aligns with the current Council direction. The following steps will be taken:

STEP ONE – Problem/Issue Identification and Analysis

- **Identify the reason for policy development/review.** There are usually triggers that highlight the need to develop or review a policy, eg, change in legislation, circumstances, need for a commitment on an issue, community request, review of the strategic direction in the Council Plan or reasonable risk in not having a policy.

- **Identify any relevant laws.** Current or new legislation may have a direct influence on policy development or review, eg, the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* or the *Victorian Disability Act 2006*, and may necessitate the need to review relevant policies to reflect this legislation.
- **Is there an existing policy with the same intent?** Identify related policies or any links to other documentation, eg, the Staff Development policy may link to the Study Leave policy which may need to be changed also.
- **Stakeholder feedback.** Identify the scope and key stakeholders. The key stakeholders are those directly affected by the policy, including those responsible for implementation and compliance monitoring and must be consulted during development or revision of the policy.

STEP TWO – Research

- Research/review any relevant literature on best practice to determine whether the policy is still consistent with best practice, Council’s strategic direction and/or changes in government policy and legislation. If possible, consider policies from similar organisations by using existing networks and contacts.

STEP THREE – Development/Review Process

- Determine who is involved in developing/reviewing the policy. In some instances, it may be appropriate to establish a small working group.
- Prepare a draft policy using the HRCC Policy Template.
- The draft policy should:
 - be clear and concise;
 - consider the needs of users and stakeholders;
 - align with Council’s values and strategic direction; and
 - not contradict other HRCC policies.

STEP FOUR – Consultation/Analysis

- Circulate to relevant key stakeholders for feedback.
- Consider ALL feedback, and provide reasons if you choose not to include feedback.
- Amend, revise, redraft, re-circulate as appropriate.
- Determine if a new procedure or amendment to an existing procedure is required.

STEP FIVE – Quality Control

- Once the consultation/analysis process has been completed, the policy should be submitted to the Organisational Development Unit who will conduct a final check of the content, format and style for consistency. They will also give consideration to relevant Council obligations, for example, human rights, access and inclusion, etc.

STEP SIX – Approval

- When the key stakeholders and Organisational Development Unit are satisfied with the draft, policy endorsement/approval should be sought.
- For Council policies, endorsement is required from the Executive Management Group prior to submitting the policy to Council for approval via a formal resolution of Council.
- For Administrative policies, approval is required from the Executive Management Group. These policies do not require approval via a formal resolution of Council, unless they have material consequences for Councils budget.

STEP SEVEN – Policy Register

- Once the policy is approved, an electronic copy should be forwarded to the Organisational Development Unit. The policy will be allocated with a policy number and entered onto the Document Master List. The Organisational Development Unit will forward a copy of the policy to the Records Department and arrange for it to go onto the website and/or intranet as appropriate.

STEP EIGHT – Communication/Implementation

- Following approval and registration, the outcome should be communicated appropriately including details on how the policy is to be applied.

- You should consider:
 - How will you educate your stakeholders in the new policy?
 - What marketing/promotion do you need to do?
 - Does it refer to an old policy or other related material that requires updating?
 - Do you need an amnesty period?
 - What evidence or records do you need to keep of the implementation?
 - What allocation of resources, training and rule changes are required?
 - What budget do you have to do the things you have planned?
 - How will related publications/documents that may be impacted by the policy be updated?

STEP NINE – Policy Review

- Policies must be monitored and reviewed regularly or as necessary. When reviewing a policy you should ask the following questions:
 - Is the policy still consistent with best practice, strategic directions and changes in legislation?
 - Does the policy continue to meet stakeholder needs?
 - Does the policy meet current compliance levels?
 - Are there any related policies that need to be revised or rescinded?

6. COMMUNICATION

- HRCC Staff Newsletter
- HRCC Intranet
- HRCC Staff Meetings
- HRCC Website
- Email to all staff

7. RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible Officer: Organisational Development Manager

8. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Document	Location
Council Policy No C04/001 – Policy Framework	Intranet/Website
Policy Template	Intranet
Procedure Template	Intranet

9. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version Number	Approval Date	Approval By	Amendment
01	18/03/13	Council	New Procedure



Horsham Rural City
Council urban rural balance

Council Policy

POLICY FRAMEWORK

1. PURPOSE

To ensure that all Horsham Rural City Council (HRCC) policies are necessary, current, relevant and useful, by providing a framework for their design, approval, implementation, monitoring and review.

2. INTRODUCTION

Over a long period of time, many HRCC policies have not been developed using a common approach. They have not been regularly reviewed to ensure that they align with current Council direction and do not conflict with other Council policies. Sometimes policies have not been appropriately adopted and although essentially only in “Draft” status, are in operation. No common approach to formatting has been adopted.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Council and Administrative policies for HRCC.

4. DEFINITIONS

Administrative Policies: Policies that focus on how the internal administration of HRCC operates and do not have any direct or significant impact on the public. These policies are approved by the Chief Executive or Executive Management Group. It is not necessary for Administrative policies to be formally adopted by Council, unless they have a material consequence for Councils budget.

Council Policies: Policies generated by HRCC’s strategic direction which have attributes that directly impact on the public. These policies are endorsed by the Executive Management Group and adopted by resolution of Council.

Document Master List: A listing of all HRCC policies, procedures, frameworks, plans, forms, templates, guidelines and other such related documents, which is stored centrally on the intranet.

Framework: Sets out the broad principles required to guide HRCC plans, policies and procedures.

Policy: Regulates, directs and controls actions and conduct. Policies give effect to relevant HRCC principles, values, goals and strategies and help improve overall risk exposure. Policies can range from broad philosophies to specific rules but they do not contain procedural content.

Policy Owner: The position/department/unit with overarching responsibility for the policy. The Policy Owner must ensure that the policy is relevant and implemented, maintained, reviewed and approved.

Principles: The fundamental norms, rules or values that govern the policy.

Procedure: Tells users how to, and who will, implement the policy. Procedures are specific, factual, succinct and to the point. They do not include detailed descriptions of routine processes, timelines, forms and templates which may be subject to frequent modification at the user level.

5. PRINCIPLES

5.1 This Policy Framework will regulate the development of policies and ensure clarity between Council Policies and Administrative Policies.

5.2 All policies will assign responsibility and accountability to ensure due diligence. They should be relevant and transparent in their intentions and meaning.

5.3 All policies will be prepared using the Policy Development, Implementation, Review and Approval Procedure.

5.4 All policies will be finalised and formatted in accordance with the HRCC Policy Template.

5.5 Relevant procedures relating to any policy will be implemented using the HRCC Procedures Template.

5.6 Matters which impact directly on the public are Council Policies and are managed through formal Council processes.

5.7 Matters which are administrative in nature and do not impact on the public are Administrative Policies and are managed by Council Officers in the course of undertaking their duties.

5.8 All policies will be developed in consultation with relevant key stakeholders.

5.9 Policies may stand alone or be connected with, or derived from, other policies, legislation, regulations or local law.

6. COMMUNICATION

- Staff Newsletter
- Intranet
- Staff Meetings
- Website
- Email to all staff

7. RESPONSIBILITY

Policy Owner: Director Corporate Services

8. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Document	Location
Policy Development, Implementation, Review and Approval Procedure	Intranet/Website
Policy Template	Intranet
Procedure Template	Intranet

9. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version Number	Approval Date	Approval By	Amendment
01	18/03/13	Council	New Policy

Horsham Rural City Council KPI's with Proposed Higher Cap in 2016/17

Indicator	Measure	Actual 2014/15	Forecast Actual 2015/16	Budget 2016/17	Strategic Resource Plan Projections			Trend +/-
					2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	
Operating position								
Adjusted underlying result	Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit) / Adjusted underlying revenue	6%	-12.3%	-2.8%	-5.7%	-5.4%	-4.9%	-
Liquidity								
Working Capital	Current assets / current liabilities	229%	211.7%	206.6%	227.1%	247.7%	267.4%	+
Unrestricted cash	Unrestricted cash / current liabilities	105%	165.5%	160.2%	183.5%	204.7%	224.3%	+
Obligations								
Interest Paid to Rates	Interest bearing loans and borrowings / rate revenue	17%	30.4%	27.6%	30.2%	39.2%	45.6%	-
Debt Repayments to Rates	Interest and principal repayments / rate revenue	3%	3.3%	3.2%	3.3%	3.4%	3.7%	-
Indebtedness (Longterm Obligations)	Non-current liabilities / own source revenue	15%	24.2%	27.1%	26.3%	33.8%	40.2%	-
Asset renewal	Asset renewal expenditure / depreciation	92%	100.5%	95.1%	67.9%	71.9%	83.1%	-
Stability								
Rates concentration	Rate revenue / adjusted underlying revenue	51%	56.7%	52.2%	55.0%	55.9%	58.5%	-
Rates effort	Rate revenue / property values (CIV)	0.6%	0.67%	0.62%	0.59%	0.62%	0.64%	-
Efficiency								
Expenditure level	Total expenditure / no. of assessments	\$3,437	\$3,909	\$4,012	\$4,039	\$4,085	\$4,001	+
Revenue level	Residential rate revenue / No. of residential assessments	\$1,594	\$1,328	\$1,359	\$1,386	\$1,413	\$1,440	o
Workforce turnover	No. of resignations & terminations / average no. of staff	11%	10.1%	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%	o
Key to Forecast Trend:								
+ Forecast improvement in Council's financial performance/financial position indicator								
o Forecasts that Council's financial performance/financial position indicator will be steady								
- Forecast deterioration in Council's financial performance/financial position indicator								

Horsham Rural City Council

KPI's **without** Proposed Higher Cap in 2016/17

Indicator	Measure	Forecast		Budget 2016/17	Strategic Resource Plan Projections			Trend +/-
		Actual 2014/15	Actual 2015/16		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	
Operating position								
Adjusted underlying result	Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit) / Adjusted underlying revenue	6%	-12.3%	-3.3%	-6.2%	-5.9%	-5.4%	-
Liquidity								
Working Capital	Current assets / current liabilities	229%	211.7%	206.6%	227.1%	247.7%	267.4%	+
Unrestricted cash	Unrestricted cash / current liabilities	105%	165.5%	160.2%	183.5%	204.7%	224.3%	+
Obligations								
Interest Paid to Rates	Interest bearing loans and borrowings / rate revenue	17%	30.4%	27.8%	30.5%	39.6%	46.0%	-
Debt Repayments to Rates	Interest and principal repayments / rate revenue	3%	3.3%	3.2%	3.3%	3.5%	3.8%	-
Indebtedness (Longterm Obligations)	Non-current liabilities / own source revenue	15%	24.2%	27.3%	26.4%	34.1%	40.4%	-
Asset renewal	Asset renewal expenditure / depreciation	92%	100.5%	93.1%	65.9%	69.9%	81.0%	-
Stability								
Rates concentration	Rate revenue / adjusted underlying revenue	51%	56.7%	52.0%	54.8%	55.7%	58.3%	-
Rates effort	Rate revenue / property values (CIV)	0.6%	0.67%	0.61%	0.59%	0.61%	0.64%	-
Efficiency								
Expenditure level	Total expenditure / no. of assessments	\$3,437	\$3,909	\$4,012	\$4,039	\$4,085	\$4,001	+
Revenue level	Residential rate revenue / No. of residential assessments	\$1,594	\$1,328	\$1,344	\$1,371	\$1,397	\$1,424	o
Workforce turnover	No. of resignations & terminations / average no. of staff	11%	10.1%	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%	o
Key to Forecast Trend:								
+ Forecast improvement in Council's financial performance/financial position indicator								
o Forecasts that Council's financial performance/financial position indicator will be steady								
- Forecast deterioration in Council's financial performance/financial position indicator								

Financials

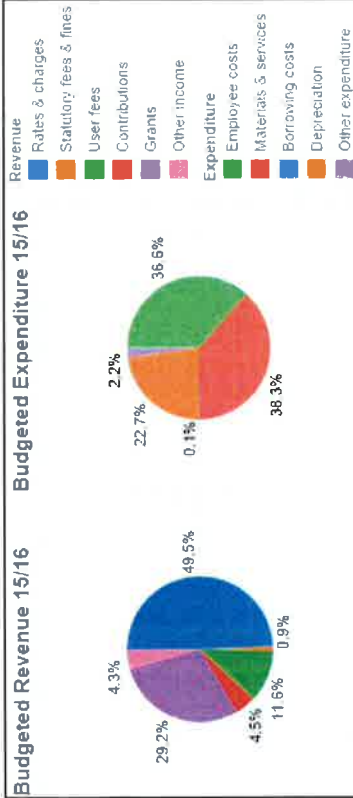
Budgeted Income Statement 2015/16 (\$'000) - sourced from council budget (2015/16) and audited baseline information template

	Council Budget	Council Forecast Actual
Rates & charges	23 564 ✓	23 728
Grants	13 890 ✓	11 133
Other income	10 113	10 546
Total income	47 567 ✓	45 407
Employee costs	16 745 ✓	16 745
Materials & services	17 529 ✓	18 647
Depreciation & amortisation	10 396 ✓	10 396
Other expenses	1 059 ✓	1 059
Total expenses	45 729 ✓	46 347
Surplus/(deficit)	1 838	

Budgeted Balance Sheet 2015/16 (\$'000) - sourced from council budget (2015/16)

	Council Budget
Financial assets	20 649
Non-financial assets	450 956
Other assets	1 255
Total assets	472 860
Payables	3 764
Provisions	8 936
Borrowings	7 280
Other liabilities	587
Total liabilities	20 967
Total equity	452 193

Handwritten notes: Cash, CIVIC Debts ✓
inc other ased. ✓
Inst Dep ✓



Budgeted CAPEX 2015/16 (\$'000) - sourced from council budget (2015/16) and budget baseline information template

	Council Budget	Council Forecast Actual
New asset expenditure	4 972 ✓	5 906
Asset renewal expenditure	10 562 ✓	8 961
Asset expansion expenditure	0	0
Asset upgrade expenditure	3 750 ✓	3 457
Total capital works expenditure	19 284 ✓	18 324

Indicators

VAGO Indicators - sourced from Victorian Auditor General, Local Government Results of Audits reports

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Underlying result (%)	2.1	24.3	22.7	10.3	4.8
Liquidity Ratio	2.9	3.3	2.9	2.7	2.7
Indebtedness (%)	19.5	19.9	33.6	24.1	19.0
Renewal gap (ratio)	0.8	0.6	1.5	1.5	1.0

Note: green = low risk, orange = medium risk, red = high risk

LGPRF Indicators - sourced from Local Government Victoria

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Adjusted underlying result (%)	6.1	-3.0	-4.4	-2.2	0.1
Working capital (%)	229.3	219.0	225.2	219.8	199.7
Unrestricted cash (%)	104.9	160.6	164.2	163.5	150.4
Indebtedness (%)	14.7	35.0	39.6	40.2	41.9
Asset renewal (%)	91.5	101.6	70.1	79.1	100.2
Loans & borrowings (%)	16.9	30.9	37.2	38.1	43.4
Loans & borrowings repayments (%)	3.4	3.1	3.3	3.5	3.5

Extended Analysis

Income Statement

Annual Report Income Statement (\$'000) - sourced from council annual reports

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Rates & charges	16,330	17,859	19,377	20,875	22,312
Statutory fees & fines	364	407	414	429	417
User fees	4,544	5,198	5,210	5,491	5,614
Grants - operating	0	0	6,320	11,906	11,906
Grants - capital	0	0	7,219	3,905	3,905
Contributions - monetary	966	1,534	459	886	1,589
Contributions - non monetary	805	425	1,734	601	1,828
Net gain/(loss) on disposal of prope...	-59	277	-425	-48	-91
Fair value adjustments for investme...	0	1	179	77	0
Share of net profits/(losses) of asso...	71	119	47	82	66
Other income	24,797	26,588	25,167	2,113	2,224
Total income	47,818	52,406	52,162	44,045	49,770
Employee costs	12,845	16,555	13,521	14,896	14,974
Materials & services	13,410	13,692	18,257	14,500	14,736
Depreciation & amortisation	8,767	9,290	9,566	9,724	10,111
Borrowing costs	250	289	303	255	212
Bad & doubtful debts	9	18	46	72	76
Other expenses	272	346	3,269	1,890	1,133
Total expenses	35,553	40,190	44,962	41,337	41,242
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	12,265	12,216	7,200	2,708	8,528

Budgeted Income Statement (\$'000) - sourced from council budget (2015/16) and SRP (2015/16)

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Rates & charges	23,564	24,771	26,032	27,349
Statutory fees & fines	410	430	450	470
User fees	5,537	5,758	5,989	6,228
Grants - operating	9,314	7,905	8,136	8,374
Grants - capital	4,576	5,779	5,671	3,359
Contributions - monetary	1,633	200	680	400
Contributions - non monetary	500	500	500	500
Net gain/(loss) on disposal of prope...	-57	60	60	60
Fair value adjustments for investme...	55	78	80	83
Share of net profits/(losses) of asso...	60	63	66	69
Other income	1,975	2,075	2,125	2,175
Total income	47,567	47,619	49,789	49,067
Employee costs	16,745	17,297	17,751	18,217
Materials & services	17,529	16,277	16,472	16,670
Depreciation & amortisation	10,396	10,516	10,636	10,756
Borrowing costs	63	66	68	73
Bad & doubtful debts	350	370	350	474
Other expenses	727	735	744	753
Total expenses	45,729	45,261	46,122	46,943
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	1,838	2,358	3,667	2,124

Data Transferred
w/longer

Balance Sheet

Annual Report Balance Sheet (\$'000) - sourced from council annual reports

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Cash & cash equivalents - C	20,004 ✓	14,511	19,985	19,195	16,486
Trade & other receivables - C	3,151 ✓	3,142	3,196	2,885	1,996
Other financial assets - C	0	0	0	3,000	7,050
Inventories - C	390 ✓	435 ✓	486	618	702
Non-current assets classified as held..	274 ✓	488 ✓	138	0	314
Other assets - C	0	0	1,765 ✓	1,405	681
Other current assets - C	3,815 ✓	5,697 ✓	1,765 ✓	0	0
Trade and other receivables - NC	106 ✓	120	227	213	174
Investments in associates & joint v..	848 ✓	967	1,013	1,095	1,161
Property, infrastructure, plant & eq..	337,579 ✓	393,557	405,616	415,015	444,292
Investment property - NC	2,455 ✓	2,610 ✓	2,995	2,490	2,300
Intangible assets - NC	0	0	0	0	0
Other non-current assets - NC	0	0	0	0	0
Total assets	368,622 ✓	421,527 ✓	435,421 ✓	445,916 ✓	475,156 ✓
Trade & other payables - C	4,411 ✓	3,463	4,225	3,914	4,497
Trust funds & deposits - NC	561 ✓	579	700	654	718
Provisions - C	2,734 ✓	3,541	3,630	4,793	5,354
Interest-bearing loans and borrowin..	626 ✓	737	778	561	1,305
Other current liabilities - C	0	0	0	0	0
Provisions - NC	710 ✓	1,583	3,000	2,283	2,026
Interest-bearing loans and borrowin..	4,006 ✓	4,269	3,491	2,931	2,455
Other non-current liabilities - NC	0	2,972 ✓	0	0	0
Total liabilities	13,048 ✓	17,144	15,824	15,136	16,355
Reserves	154,261 ✓	190,834	201,990	213,161	232,120
Other equity <i>Ar. Sur</i>	201,313 ✓	213,550	217,607	217,619	226,681
Total equity	355,574 ✓	404,384 ✓	419,597 ✓	430,780 ✓	458,801 ✓

Budgeted Balance Sheet (\$'000) - sourced from council Budget (2015/16) and SRP (2015/16 to 2018/19)

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Cash & cash equivalents - C	16,374	16,875	17,751	18,665
Trade & other receivables - C	3,125	3,063	3,001	2,941
Other financial assets - C	970	989	1,009	1,029
Inventories - C	600	550	561	572
Non-current assets classified as held..	0	350	200	200
Other assets - C	0	0	0	0
Other current assets - C	0	0	0	0
Trade and other receivables - NC	180	158	136	114
Investments in associates & joint ve..	0	0	0	0
Property, infrastructure, plant & equil..	447,756	451,455	455,726	459,618
Investment property - NC	2,600	2,678	2,758	2,841
Intangible assets - NC	0	0	0	0
Other non-current assets - NC	1,255	1,280	1,306	1,332
Total assets	472,860	477,398	482,448	487,312
Trade & other payables - C	3,764	4,101	4,402	4,726
Trust funds & deposits - C	687	707	729	750
Provisions - C	4,734	4,434	4,634	4,834
Interest-bearing loans and borrowin..	438	451	481	1,311
Other current liabilities - C	0	0	0	0
Provisions - NC	4,202	4,394	4,547	4,700
Interest-bearing loans and borrowin..	6,842	8,761	9,441	10,552
Other non-current liabilities - NC	0	0	0	0
Total liabilities	20,667	22,848	24,234	26,973
Reserves	225,313	225,843	226,927	228,063
Other equity	226,880	228,706	231,287	232,276
Total equity	452,193	454,549	458,214	460,339

CAPEX

Annual Report CAPEX (\$'000) - sourced from council annual reports

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
New asset expenditure	0	0	0	1,893 ✓	4,780 ✓
Asset renewal expenditure	0	0	0	7,100 ✓	9,253 ✓
Asset upgrade expenditure	0	0	0	2,111 ✓	5,397 ✓
Asset expansion expenditure	0	0	0	0	0
Total capital works expenditure	0	0	0	11,104 ✓	19,430 ✓

Budgeted CAPEX (\$'000) - sourced from council budget [2015/16] and SRP [2015/16 to 2018/19]

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
New asset expenditure	4,972	6,523	4,785	1,449
Asset renewal expenditure	10,562	7,372	8,415	10,780
Asset upgrade expenditure	3,750	1,420	1,805	2,487
Asset expansion expenditure	0	0	0	0
Total capital works expenditure	19,284	15,315	15,005	14,716

Expenditure on services (\$'000) - sourced from the Victorian Grants Commission

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Aged & Disabled Services	2,356	2,798	2,455	2,559	2,657
Business & Economic Services	3,864	4,576	4,655	5,012	4,967
Environment	1,051	1,400	1,421	1,540	1,308
Family & Community Services	3,398	2,855	2,350	2,616	2,665
Governance	951	4,422	7,915	5,376	3,703
Local Roads & Bridges	9,066	9,247	8,699	8,817	9,742
Recreation & Culture	5,593	5,508	5,879	5,805	6,528
Traffic & Street Management	4,201	4,220	3,327	3,485	3,710
Waste Management	3,858	4,435	4,841	3,972	4,509
Other (Main Roads & Other)	1,274	729	498	613	634
Total	35,612	40,190	42,038	39,795	40,424