



Higher cap – Application cover sheet (2016/17)

Council name

Moorabool Shire Council

Contact person and phone number

Steve Ivelja – Finance Manager

5366-1216

Base Average Rate (\$): (e.g. \$1,800)

Base Average Rate 1 July 2016 - \$1,620

Proposed increase for 2016-17: (e.g. 5%, \$4,000,000)

Proposed increase in Average Rate (%)	3.50%
Proposed increase in prescribed rate revenue (\$)	\$259,032

Summary of the key reason(s) for the application: *(Please limit response to two pages)*

The key reasons why Council is seeking a higher cap are:

1. To improve its long term financial sustainability,
2. To address its Asset Renewal Gap,
3. To enable additional investment in New and Upgrade Assets for the benefit of the community

Improving long-term financial sustainability

Moorabool Shire has historically struggled to achieve an underlying surplus in its annual operations. The Council has made a significant effort in the past three budgeting cycles to redress the fiscal imbalance in order to improve the financial sustainability of the Council. The progressive impact of Council service reviews and the implementation of stringent budget control measures has shown a marked improvement in the underlying results for the Shire.

However, under a rate capped environment, it is the Council's view that the underlying deficit presents a structural problem for the Council's finances. For this reason, it is the Council's view that if additional measures (in the form a responsible rate cap variation) are not taken to reduce and improve the current imbalance in Moorabool Shire's finances, its underlying deficits will progressively increase over time and will eventually result in financial distress.

Council modelling indicates that based on a 2.50% rate cap, it will not be in a position to generate an underlying surplus in nine of the ten years that form part of its Strategic Financial plan without reducing levels of service to its community. Further modelling indicates that based on a rate increase of 3.50% (inclusive a 1.0% rate cap variation and premised on a further three years of permanent rate cap variations after 2016/17), Moorabool Shire will eliminate the structural deficit which has historically impacted its financial stability.

Long Term Financial Plans based on a rate increase of 3.50% for four years and 2.50% are included in Attachments 02 and 03 respectively.

In cumulative terms, under a 2.5% rate cap, the council will sustain cumulative losses over the next 10 years amounting to \$5.230m as compared to cumulative surpluses of \$4.947m under its request for a 3.5% rate cap variation.

Addressing the Renewal Gap

Council Asset Management Plans demonstrate Council has a backlog of Assets requiring renewal. For instance, our Asset Management Plan – Transport Assets highlighted a \$14.361m renewal backlog in this class of assets.

Under a 2.5% rate cap Council can only fund a \$98.1m Asset Renewal Program over the 10 years of the long term financial plan, with this level of funding Council will begin to reduce the Renewal Backlog but not at a rate that is acceptable to it.

Under a 3.5% rate increase (inclusive of a 1% rate cap variation), Council can fund a \$105.2m Asset Renewal Program over the 10 years of the long term financial plan, with this level of funding Council will eliminate its known asset backlog attributed to the Transport Asset Class in year 10 of the long term financial plan.

Additional investment in New & Upgrade projects

New & Upgrade funding is used to deliver projects that go above and beyond the repair or restoration of assets to their original capability. As a fast growing community, Moorabool Shire has been financially limited in its ability to invest in much needed New and Upgrade projects. Under a 2.5% rate cap Council can only fund \$4m in new and upgrade projects over the next 10 years, this would increase to \$8m over 10 years under a 3.5% rate increase.

New and Upgrade projects are needed to support Moorabool Shire's rapidly growing population. As per our Council Plan the "population of the Shire is estimated to increase by 72% between 2015 and 2041 to 54,418. The majority of growth during this period will come from the new estates in Maddingley which are forecast to increase by over 174% during this same period." This rapid growth highlights the need for New and Upgraded projects in the shire and supports our contention that an additional \$400k per annum is needed to be spent in this area.

+ Please attach evidence of council sign-off/approval of application.

Please refer to Attachment 01 as evidence of council approval of the rate application.

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT


MOORABOOL SHIRE 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:



ROB CROXFORD

31/03/2016

Moorabool Shire Council



**2016/17
ESC Rate Cap
Variation
Application**



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CRITERION ONE – PROPOSED HIGHER CAP

An application must specify a proposed higher cap for each specified financial year.

As resolved at the Special Meeting of Council 23 March 2016, Moorabool Shire is seeking to increase rates by 3.5%¹ in 2016/17 and thus requires a 1% permanent rate cap variation.

The Council at a Special Meeting held on the 23 March 2016 resolved:

“that the Council submit an application to the Essential Services Commission for a rate cap variation of 3.50% (1.0% above the cap) for 2016/2017 based on other fees and charges increasing under a “user-pays” model to be cost reflective including indirect costs”.

Please see Council report and minutes appended as Attachment 01.

¹ Council will also be increasing other fees and charges increasing under a “user-pays” model to be cost reflective including indirect costs.

CRITERION TWO — REASONS

The reason(s) for which the council seeks the higher cap.

The key reasons why Council is seeking a higher cap are:

1. To improve its long term financial sustainability,
2. To address its Asset Renewal Gap,
3. To enable additional investment in New and Upgrade Assets for the benefit of the community

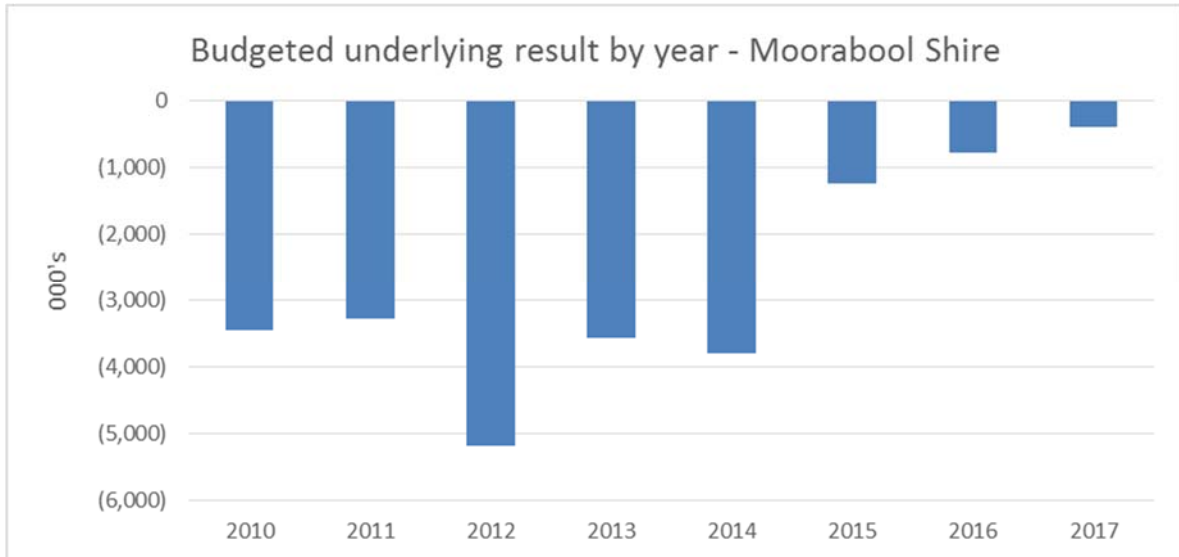
Improving long-term financial sustainability

Historically, Moorabool Shire has generated underlying losses in its annual operations due to a number of factors including but (not limited to);

1. Large geographical area covering approximately 2110 square kilometres
2. Comparatively low population density as compared to the State of Victoria, resulting in reduced economies of scale in comparative terms. At June 2011, the population density of Victoria was 25 people per square kilometre as compared to Moorabool Shire 13.6 people per square kilometre (*source: 2011 ABS census*). Moorabool Shire's population density per kilometre of road rates unfavourably (21.48 person per km of road) as compared to the average of all Victorian Councils (101.20) (*source: 2014/15 results taken from knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au*)
3. The challenges of maintaining a large network of sealed roads, unsealed roads and community infrastructure over a significant geographical area.
4. Limited capability to generate significant alternative revenue sources outside of rates and charges. Rates and charges revenue currently accounts for approximately 70% of total recurrent revenues.
5. A limited capacity to influence a greater share of recurrent grants for the Shire. As per the 2014/15 reporting year, Moorabool Shire generated \$431.03 in recurrent grants per head of population as compared to \$536.10 for all Victorian Councils and \$608.96 for similar councils. (*source: 2014/15 results taken from knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au*)
6. Robust population growth and the resulting impact on demand for services and infrastructure. According to the ABS, Moorabool Shire's population grew by 10.44% between 2009 and 2013. The population of the Shire is estimated to increase by 72% between 2015 and 2041 to 54,418. (*source: 2013:2017 Council Plan*)

Against this backdrop, Moorabool Shire has historically struggled to achieve an underlying surplus in its annual operations. The Council has made a significant effort in the past three budgeting cycles to redress the fiscal imbalance in order to improve the financial sustainability of the Council. The progressive impact of Council service reviews and the implementation of stringent budget control measures has shown a marked improvement in the underlying results for the Shire.

The below graph plots the improvement in Moorabool Shire's Budgeted underlying results since 2010. Note that the 2017 figure is based on no rate cap variation.

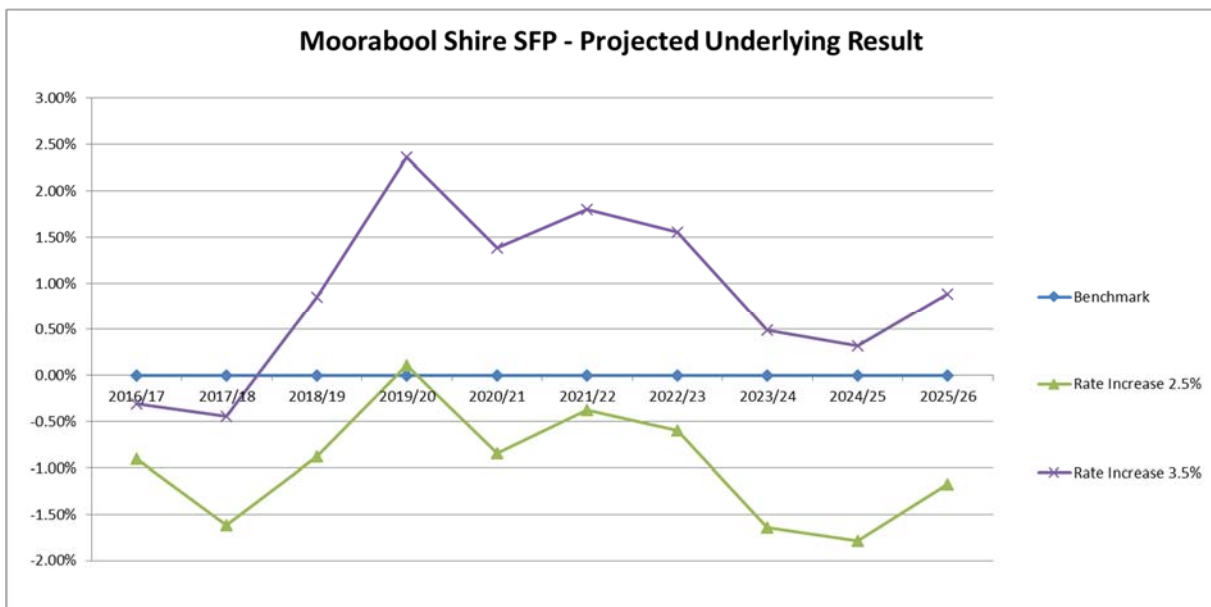


*Moorabool Shire defines underlying results as the Surplus/Deficit of the year as per the Comprehensive Income Statement. Adjusted to exclude Grant – Capital, Contributions - Monetary, Contributions – Non-Monetary and the Net gain (loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment and investment properties. This definition is used throughout this application.

With the gradual improvement in financial results over recent budget cycles, the Council has begun repairing its structural financial deficits for the ultimate benefit of the community while making improvements in capital investment.

Under a rate capped environment, it is the Council's view that the underlying deficit presents a structural problem for the Council's finances. For this reason, it is the Council's view that if additional measures (in the form a responsible rate cap variation) are not taken to reduce and improve the current imbalance in Moorabool Shire's finances, its underlying deficits will progressively increase over time and will eventually result in financial distress.

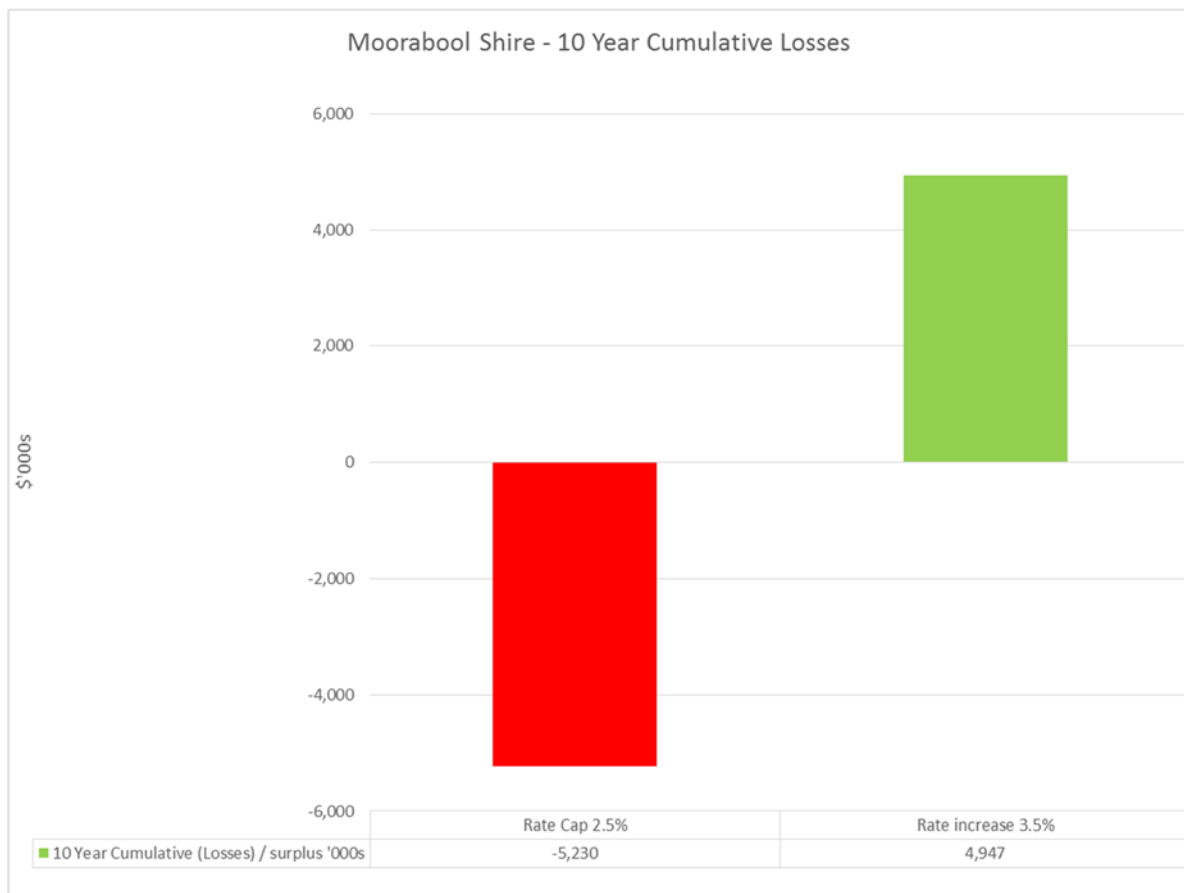
The following table (appended below) highlights the comparative outcomes on Moorabool Shire's ability to generate an underlying surplus, as taken from the 10 year Strategic Financial Plan and is modelled on a 2.5% rate increase and a 3.5% rate increase.



Council modelling indicates that based on a 2.5% rate cap, it will not be in a position to generate an underlying surplus in nine of the ten years that form part of its Strategic Financial plan without reducing levels of service to its community. Further modelling indicates that based on a rate increase of 3.5% (inclusive a 1.0% rate cap variation and premised on a further three years of permanent rate cap variations after 2016/17), Moorabool Shire will eliminate the structural deficit which has historically impacted its financial stability.

Long Term Financial Plans based on a rate increase of 3.5% for four years and 2.5% are included in Attachments 02 and 03 respectively.

In cumulative terms, the following table shows that under a 2.5% rate cap, the council will sustain cumulative losses over the next 10 years amounting to \$5.230m as compared to cumulative surpluses of \$4.947m under its request for a 3.5% rate cap variation.



Addressing the Renewal Gap

Moorabool Shire has approved Asset Management plans for its major assets classes. These are as follows;

1. Asset Management Plan – Transport Assets (adopted by council 30/04/2013) refer Attachment 05
2. Asset Management Plan – Buildings, Facilities & Structures (adopted by council 03/12/2014) refer Attachment 06
3. Asset Management Plan – Water & Drainage (adopted by council 03/12/2014) refer Attachment 07
4. Asset Management Plan – Recreation & Open space (adopted by council 03/12/2014) refer Attachment 08

Moorabool Shire is currently in the process of undertaking condition audits on the Transport Asset class which represents the majority of Council's Infrastructure Assets. The condition audits will be completed prior to June 30 and will form the basis of the next strategic review of the Transport Asset Management Plan which is scheduled to be completed in the 2016/17 financial year.

Renewal Demand

In addressing the current Asset Renewal gap, the attached summary table highlights at a snapshot the Asset Renewal demand taken from each of the adopted Asset Management Plans. In interpreting the asset renewal demand data, as shown below, please note that the information is presented in nominal terms (i.e. excluding the impact of inflation). The table has been appended to also show the renewal demand in inflation adjusted terms (at an assumed rate of 2.5%) on a basis consistent with Council's long term financial plan.

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	\$'000's	\$'000's	\$'000's	\$'000's	\$'000's	\$'000's	\$'000's	\$'000's	\$'000's	\$'000's	\$'000's	\$'000's
Renewal demand All Assets (Nominal)*	7,065	7,105	7,169	6,818	6,894	6,938	6,983	6,968	6,984	6,366	6,366	6,366
Renewal Demand (CPI adjusted)	7,242	7,465	7,720	7,526	7,800	8,046	8,301	8,490	8,722	8,149	8,353	8,562

*As Per Asset Management Plans

Understanding renewal demand is a critical component in Asset Management as the relationship between annual demand and the quantum of any asset backlog is key in establishing a funding plan within the long term financial plan to ensure long term business viability.

Currently, the renewal demand for Water & Drainage, Buildings, Facilities & Structures and Recreation & Open Spaces are known areas requiring further development and refinement in future iterations of the Asset Management Plans. As such, the council believes that as its Asset management Plans mature, the renewal demand for these asset classes will most likely result in an increase in the renewal demand in future years.

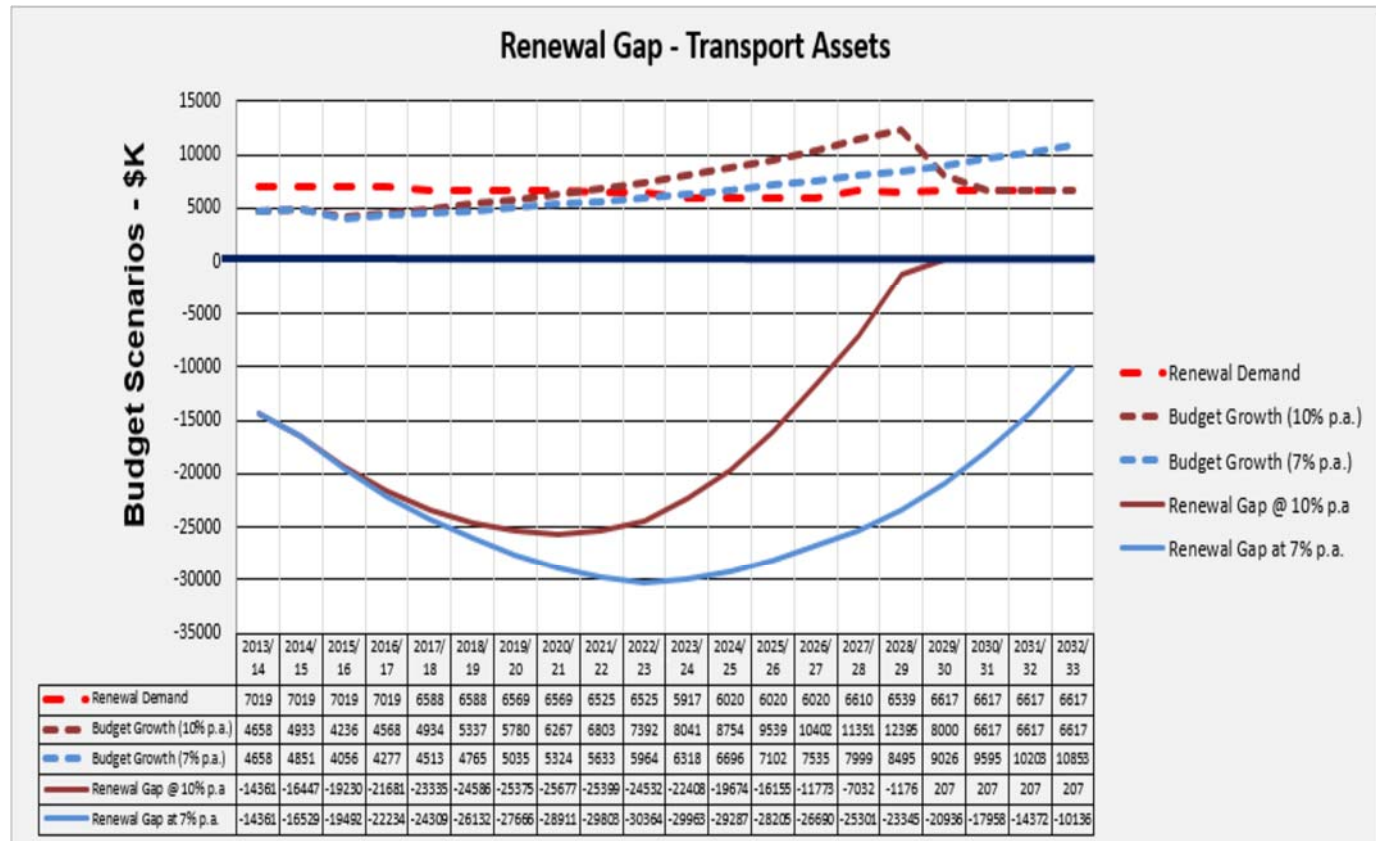
Asset backlogs

Section 1.7 Renewal Forecasts and Renewal Gap of Attachment 05 Asset Management Plan – Transport Assets highlighted a \$14.361m asset backlog as part of the adopted Asset Management Plan in April 2013. The data shows the annual renewal expenditure demand, based on the condition surveys, plotted against the indicative renewal budgets in the long term financial plan. Notwithstanding significant renewal budget increases over time, the report

indicated the backlog would continue to increase for some years, so long as the renewal demand exceeds the annual budget.

To eliminate the established backlog would take:

- 16 years if there is a 10% increase in roads renewal budget every year.
- 21 years if there is a 7% increase in roads renewal budget every year.

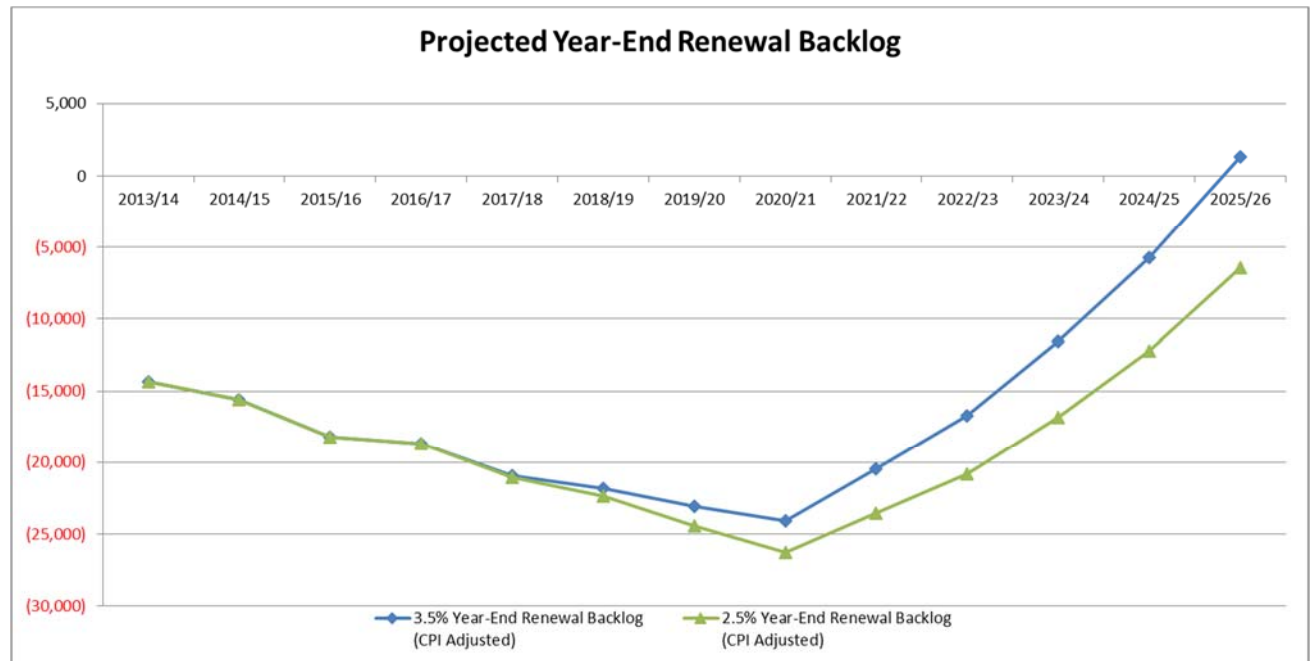


Currently, the establishment of renewal backlogs for Water & Drainage, Buildings, Facilities & Structures and Recreation & Open Spaces are known areas requiring further development and refinement in future iterations of the Asset Management Plans. In most cases the details of renewal and maintenance backlogs will be known with greater clarity following the completion of componentisation and/or condition assessments as part of the ongoing implementation of the Asset Management system. The likely result will be an increase in the reported asset renewal backlog in future years. For this reason, known asset backlogs related to the Transport assets are only included in this analysis.

In interpreting the results of the asset backlog, the data as presented in the adopted Asset Management Plan for annual renewal demand and the Asset backlog is shown in nominal terms (i.e. excludes the impact of inflation). As a result, in order to demonstrate how the rate cap variation of 1% will impact the asset renewal gap, adjustments need to be made to include the impact of inflation over time.

The impact of a permanent 1% rate cap variation on the Asset Backlog

The below graph highlights the impact that the 1% rate cap variation will have on the Asset backlog. Whilst Council can only apply for a single year rate cap variation in 2016/17, the long term financial plan assumes a rate cap variation of 1% for a period of 4 years. This is consistent with the long term financial plan and the message presented to the community as part of the community consultation process. The following graph demonstrates the likely outcome on the asset backlog based on a 1% rate cap variation, as compared to the predicted outcome based on a 2.5% rate cap.



In summary, the above graph demonstrates that under a 2.5% rate cap (or \$98.1m expenditure on Asset renewal over the 10 years of the long term financial plan), Council will begin to reduce the Renewal Backlog but not at a rate that is acceptable to it. Under a 3.5% rate increase (inclusive of a 1% rate cap variation), Council will eliminate its known asset backlog attributed to the Transport Asset Class in year 10 of the long term financial plan.

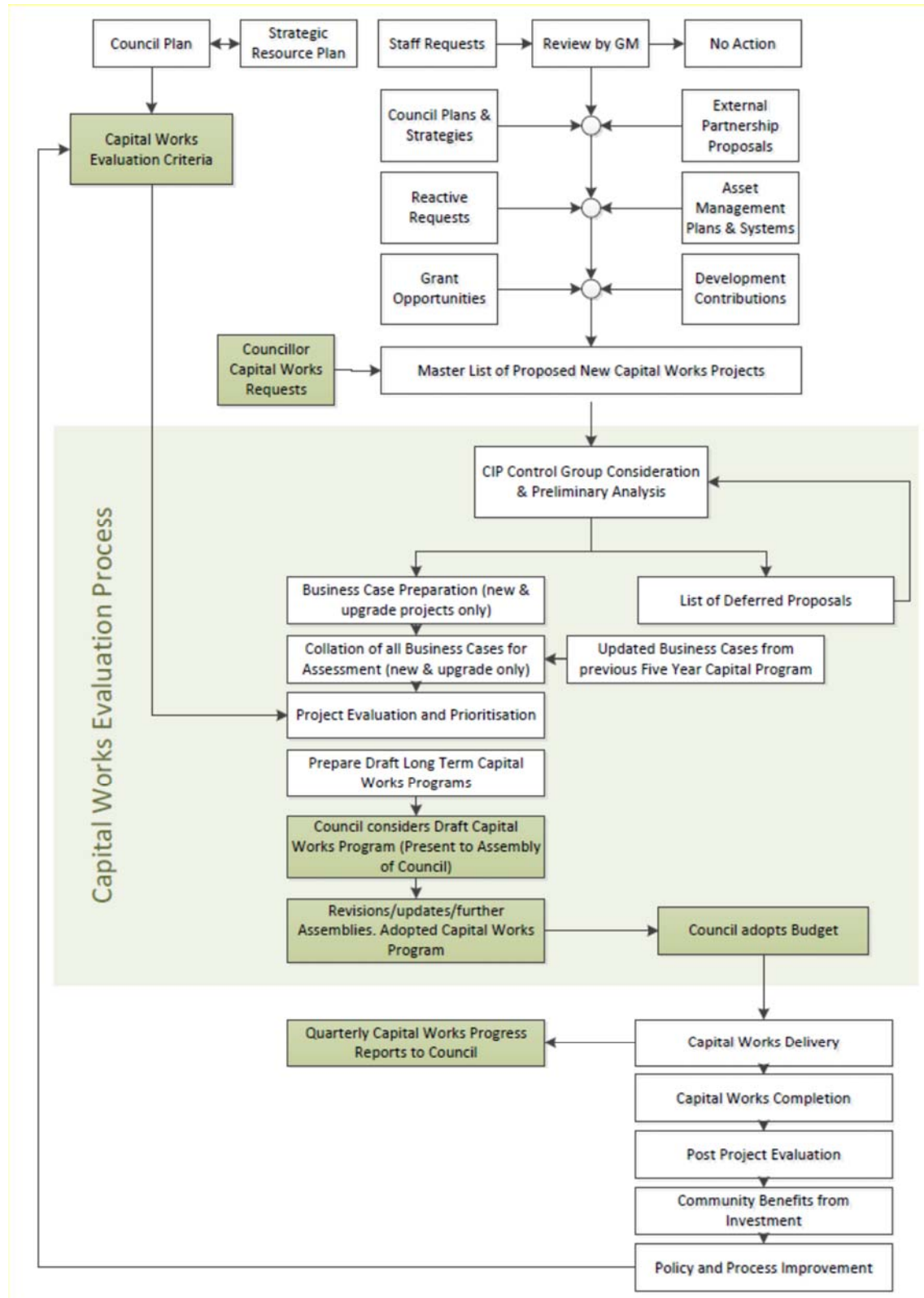
Additional investment in New & Upgrade projects

New & Upgrade funding is used to deliver projects that go above and beyond the repair or restoration of assets to their original capability. As a fast growing community, Moorabool Shire has been financially limited in its ability to invest in New and Upgrade projects.

Council has a well-established New & Upgrade Program that is derived from a number of sources. In developing this program, Officers review all known strategic documentation including Master Plans, Strategic Studies, Audits/Legislation, Council Officer Recommendations, Councillor Requests, Customer / Community Requests and Community Consultation.

For 2016/17, total New & Upgrade Projects amount to \$35.86 million. Please refer Attachment 09 for a full listing of the projects in the current New and Upgrade program. In relation to New & Upgrade projects, project scores have been applied to each project in line with the Capital Works Evaluation Guidelines that were adopted by Council on 04 December

2013 (please refer to Attachment 10 for adopted Capital Works evaluation guidelines and Attachment 11 for its adoption by Council). This rigour is applied to all projects to ensure decision making is informed and based on highest need. The flowchart below is taken from the adopted Capital Works evaluation guidelines to highlight the process related to the Capital program;



As part of Council's ongoing community consultation, Officers also liaise with Committees of Management to assist in informing priority projects. As a result, the New and Upgrade program continually evolves based on an annual basis to ensure it is reflective of community input. The list also evolves as new strategies and master plans are produced or key strategic documents including the Community Infrastructure Plan, are completed.

Under an approved rate cap variation, Council would be in a position to provide a higher level of funding to the community for investment in the New & Upgrade program. To support this contention, the Council can demonstrate;

1. Broad Community need for a higher level of investment in New & Upgrade Assets. Currently, New & Upgrade projects in Councils' Capital Improvement program amount to \$35.86m in total potential projects. Based on a 2.5% rate cap, Council can accommodate \$4.0m in total funding over the next 10 years; \$400k per annum. The rate cap proposal allows for a doubling of this investment to \$800k per annum each year over a 10 year period; a total of \$8.0m
2. Broad community support for the additional investment in the New & Upgrade program as highlighted by the Rate Capping telephone survey conducted in March 2016. Refer Criterion Three of this submission "Community Engagement". In summary, as part of the telephone survey conducted by council, 64% of respondents supported either one of Options B or C as their first preference. Both of these options propose an increase in the New & Upgrade program to \$8.0m over the next 10 financial years.
3. Systematic approach to the identification and prioritisation of New & Upgrade projects – The New & Upgrade program is derived from all known strategic documentation including Master Plans, Strategic Studies, Audits/Legislation, Council Officer Recommendations, Councillor Requests, Customer/Community Requests and Community Consultation. The prioritisation of projects has been applied in line with the Capital Works Evaluation Guidelines that were adopted by Council on 4 December 2013 (refer Attachment 10 Capital Works evaluation guidelines)
4. New and Upgrade projects are needed to support Moorabool Shire's rapidly growing population. As per our Council Plan the "population of the Shire is estimated to increase by 72% between 2015 and 2041 to 54,418. The majority of growth during this period will come from the new estates in Maddingley which are forecast to increase by over 174% during this same period." This rapid growth highlights the need for New and Upgraded projects in the shire and supports our contention that an additional \$400k per annum is needed to be spent in this area.

CRITERION THREE – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

How the views of Ratepayers and the community have been taken into account in proposing the higher cap.

Key Engagement Principles

Principle 1: The engagement program must contain clear, accessible and comprehensive information and follow a timely process to engender feedback from the community

Principle 2: The engagement program should be ongoing and tailored to community needs

Principle 3: The engagement program should prioritise matters of significance and impact

Principle 4: The engagement program should lead to communities becoming more informed about council decision making.

- Council need to describe and demonstrate what information, including details of the options and trade-offs, was presented to ratepayers and communities.
- Councils need to demonstrate that ratepayers and communities have been informed and what level of involvement, if any, they have had in developing options to inform this process. This includes identifying and describing the details of the engagement processes and activities, why the selected methodologies were chosen and who was engaged in these processes and activities. What information, including options and trade-offs, were presented to ratepayers and communities.
- How, why, who and when and where ratepayers and community have been engaged.
- How the views of ratepayers and communities were taken into account in seeking a higher cap.
- Councils will need to show how ratepayers and communities views have been represented in their application.

Community Engagement Framework

The Council has a long standing commitment and practice of community engagement in accordance with its Community Engagement Policy and Framework. The Community Engagement Policy (as contained in Attachment 12) outlines Council's ongoing commitment to high quality engagement processes. The Policy provides a definition of community engagement, examples of engagement opportunities and a Vision for Engagement.

The Community Engagement Framework (as contained in Attachment 13) includes planning tools, supports the implementation of the Community Engagement Policy by providing Council Officers with a consistent approach to planning for genuine and meaningful engagement processes.

The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) continues to be recognised as the leading authority in community and stakeholder engagement practice. Accordingly, the Community Engagement Framework is underpinned by the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum. The spectrum is a useful tool in determining how to most effectively engage a community and stakeholders around a particular issue or project. The spectrum defines five levels of participation – Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate and Empower.

Evidence of Other Community Engagements

Moorabool Council strives to have a constant dialogue with our community to ensure our services meet the community's needs and willingness to pay. Council has an adopted community engagement policy (Attachment 12) and our draft service review and planning policy (Attachment 14) reinforces this commitment to engaging the community.

The Council has undertaken substantial long term strategic planning in the past 5 years involving extensive community engagement that continues to identify community services preferences as demonstrated in Attachment 15. The Strategic Planning has been undertaken as a core component of the Council Integrated Planning and Delivery Framework.

Options and Trade-offs

The Council, at a Special meeting held on the 20 January 2016 resolved:

- (i) that the CEO be authorised to advise the Essential Services Commission that Moorabool Shire Council intends to apply for a rate cap variation for the 2016/17 financial year; and
- (ii) that Officers present the Draft 2016/17 Annual Budget Timetable of Key Dates for the forthcoming 2016/17 budget to a Special Meeting of Council on 10th February 2016.

A copy of the report to the Special meeting of Council held on the 20 January 2016 is contained in Attachment 16.

The Council, at a Special Meeting of Council held on the 10 February 2016, resolved to:

- (i) Endorse the following rate cap options for the purposes of community engagement:

Option A – What Council can deliver under the Minister's Rate Cap of 2.5% in Year 1

Option B – What Council can deliver if it had a rate increase of 4.15% for 2016/17 (inclusive of a 1.65% rate cap variation) in addition to a likely rate increase of 4.15% for a further 3 years.

Option C – What Council can deliver if it had a rate increase of 3.50% for 2016/17 (inclusive of a 1.00% rate cap variation) in addition to a likely rate increase of 3.50% for a further 3 years. This option is also based on other fees and charges increasing under a "user-pays" model to be cost reflective, including indirect costs.

- (ii) Endorse the Rate Cap Variation Community Engagement Plan; and;
- (iii) Endorse an over budget expenditure of \$25,000 in 2015/2016 for the delivery of the community engagement activities.

In the report to the Council at its February meeting and subsequent letter to all households and non-resident ratepayers from the Council's Chief Executive Officer, information was provided on the options and potential trade-offs as follows:

"The Council has made significant progress in preparing for a rate capped environment by:

- Reducing operating costs,
- Reducing management costs,

- Reducing overhead costs,
- A program of ongoing Service Reviews,
- Sharing services with other organisations,
- A policy on special charge schemes for some capital works,
- Future consideration of the commercialisation of some aspects of operations,
- Continued use of Business Excellence as a model to drive continuous improvement and review,
- The introduction of an integrated planning tool and model for officers.

Despite these efforts to contain costs, under a rate cap of 2.5% Council is forecast to produce underlying losses over its 10-year financial plan. These losses will impact the level of service Council can afford to deliver in future years resulting in either cuts to services or a deterioration of our asset base.

Three options for the 2016/17 budget have been prepared, including 10 year forecasts under each option. It is recommended that the Council seek feedback from the community on the three options to inform Council's decision on the level of a rate cap variation sought for 2016/17 from the ESC".

It was further explained that Options B and C are based on four years of rate cap variations. In 2016/17 Council can only apply for a one year variation so, Council will need to further consider an application for a further three year variation application in 2017/18. The quantum of the variations sought for 2017/18 and beyond with further knowledge and a new Council will be re-evaluated prior to making a submission to the ESC.

Options B and C have been prepared to reverse and repair the impact underlying losses Council will have in the rate capped environment. These models propose the minimum level of rate and/or other charge increases necessary for Council to continue to provide current levels of services sustainably into the future. The key difference between these two models is that since other fees and charges are more cost reflective in Option C a lower rate increase is necessary.

A copy of the report to the Special meeting of Council held on the 10 February 2016 is contained in Attachment 16.

A set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) was also prepared and made available on Council's website, as contained in Attachment 17.

How, Who, When and Where

The community engagement on the three rate cap options involved the following activities:

- Telephone Survey
- Listening Posts
- Have Your Say, Council's On Line Engagement Portal
- Written submissions
- Letter from CEO to all households and non-resident ratepayers with a Reply Paid Vote Card attached
- Newspaper Advertisements
- Information on Council's website
- Information on Council's Social Media sites – Facebook

The primary means of engagement was undertaken through a statistically valid and reliable telephone survey. This was complemented by the other community engagement methods.

Council recognises the importance of engaging a representative sample of residents that took into account the demographics and characteristics of the community.

Details of the Community Engagement methods

- A telephone survey of 402 people was conducted between 5-9 March. The key objectives of the research was to:
 - examine resident satisfaction with community and transport infrastructure;
 - the level of service provided by Council in the local area;
 - determine levels of support and preference for each of the three proposed rate cap variation options;
 - understand awareness levels and modes of awareness for the rate cap variation options; and
 - identify the key challenges facing the Moorabool Shire Council area.

The telephone survey was also conducted as part of Council's community engagement to help inform the preparation of the Council Plan 2017-2021.

Listening Posts are small 'drop-in' style events that provides an opportunity for community members to be informed about Council's activities and input into new plans. A total of 24 Listening Posts were held across the municipality between 1-17 March at the following locations and over a total of 62 hours:

Date	Location	Time	Duration (hours)
Tuesday, 1 March 2016	Dunnstown Recreation Reserve and Community Centre	9:00am-11:00am	2
Tuesday, 1 March 2016	Bungaree General Store	11:30am-1:30pm	2
Tuesday, 1 March 2016	Gordon Hall	2:00pm-4:00pm	2
Tuesday, 1 March 2016	Lerderderg Library	9:30am-12:00pm	2.5
Wednesday, 2 March 2016	Ballan Library	9:30am-1:00pm	4
Wednesday, 2 March 2016	Blackwood Hall	1:30pm-3:30pm	2
Thursday, 3 March 2016	BM Shopping Centre	10:00am-2:00pm	4
Friday, 4 March 2016	Ballan Library	1:00pm-5:00pm	4
Saturday, 5 March 2016	Lerderderg Library	12:00pm-2:30pm	2.5
Tuesday, 8 March 2016	Dunnstown Recreation Reserve and Community Centre	9:00am-11:00am	2
Tuesday, 8 March 2016	Bungaree General Store	11:30am-1:30pm	2
Tuesday, 8 March 2016	Gordon Hall	2:00pm-4:00pm	2

Date	Location	Time	Duration (hours)
Tuesday, 8 March 2016	Lerderderg Library	9:30am- 12:00pm	2.5
Wednesday, 9 March 2016	Blackwood Hall	1:30pm- 3:30pm	2
Thursday, 10 March 2016	BM Shopping Centre	10:00am- 2:00pm	4
Friday, 11 March 2016	Ballan Library	1:00pm- 5:00pm	4
Tuesday, 15 March 2016	Dunnstown Recreation Reserve and Community Centre	9:00am- 11:00am	2
Tuesday, 15 March 2016	Bungaree General Store	11:30am- 1:30pm	2
Tuesday, 15 March 2016	Gordon Hall	2:00pm- 4:00pm	2
Tuesday, 15 March 2016	Lerderderg Library	9:30am- 12:00pm	2.5
Wednesday, 16 March 2016	Ballan Library	9:30am- 1:00pm	4
Wednesday, 16 March 2016	Blackwood Hall	1:30pm- 3:30pm	2
Thursday, 17 March 2016	BM Shopping Centre	10:00am- 2:00pm	4

- Community members were provided with information and the opportunity to give feedback on their preferred options through a poll on Have Your Say – Council’s On Line Engagement Portal. Community members were also provided with the opportunity to lodge written submissions in relation to the proposal to seek a higher rate cap.
- A letter (as contained in Attachment 18) from the Chief Executive Officer was sent to all households and non-resident ratepayers providing information on Council’s budget, proposed application for a higher rate cap, the three rate cap variation options being considered by Council and encouraging community members’ participation in the community engagement. To facilitate this, a Reply Paid Postcard was distributed with the letter to provide people with an opportunity to provide feedback. Approximately 17,000 letters were distributed.
- Information on the Council’s Budget and proposed application for higher rate cap options were promoted in the Moorabool News (Attachments 19 & 20), posted on Council’s website (Attachment 21), Have Your Say (Attachment 22) Facebook Page (Attachment 23).
- Notification about the telephone survey was promoted in the Moorabool News, posted on Council’s website and Facebook Page.
- A Media Release was issued providing information on the Council’s budget, application for a higher rate cap, and community engagement activities including the telephone survey.
- A set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) was also prepared and made available on Council’s website (Attachment 17).

A community engagement plan was prepared and adopted by the Council to inform its engagement approach on the three rate cap options and endorsed by the Council at its meeting on the 10 February (as contained in Attachment 16).

How the views of ratepayers and communities were taken into account in seeking a higher cap. How ratepayers and communities views have been represented in our Council's application.

The following section provides a summary of the results of the community engagement with details contained in the attachments.

Telephone Survey

- Residents were most supportive of 'Option B' with 61% of residents 'somewhat supportive' to 'very supportive' of this option compared with 57% of residents for both 'Option A' and 'Option C' respectively.
- When asked to indicate their preference, 64% indicated an option that included a rate variation i.e. Options B and C:
 - 37% preferred 'Option B', believing it was 'important to maintain infrastructure i.e. roads' and 'necessary to invest into the future of Moorabool'.
 - 36% preferred 'Option A' as their first preference, primarily because of 'affordability', 'questioning Council's use of funds', and 'poor/uneven service provision'.
 - The remaining 27% preferred 'Option C' also equally placing importance on 'infrastructure' and 'the future investment of Moorabool', as well as considering the 'user pay' principle to be fairer and equitable.
- 44% of residents stated they had prior knowledge of Council exploring community feelings towards a Rate Cap Variation, with half of those residents becoming aware through 'newspaper articles'. Awareness was higher amongst residents of Bacchus Marsh Planning Area, whilst residents of the West Moorabool Planning Region were significantly less likely to be aware.
- 'Traffic congestion' was deemed the key challenge for a quarter of residents, followed by 'road maintenance' (13%), and 'Infrastructure planning' (11%).
- Overall, 66% of residents were at least 'somewhat satisfied' with the level of community and transport infrastructure provided by Council. Residents aged 18-34 were significantly more satisfied, while those aged 50-64, and residents of the West Moorabool Planning Region were significantly less satisfied.
- Three quarters of residents rated the level of service provided by Council in the local area at least 'somewhat satisfactory'. Residents aged 18-34 and non-ratepayers were significantly more satisfied with Council, while residents aged 50-64 were significantly less satisfied with the level of service.

The report from Micromex Research on the telephone survey is contained in Attachment 24.

Listening Posts

A total of 51 responses were received at the listening posts in respect of the three rate cap variation options.

Option	Response	Percentage
A	14	27%
B	10	20%
C	27	53%
Total	51	100%

Just under three-quarters (73%) of respondents preferred either Option B or C followed by 27% for Option A.

Reply Paid Vote card received in the mail

A total of 462 responses were received in the mail in respect of the three rate options in the reply paid vote card.

Option	Response	Percentage
A	296	64%
B	40	9%
C	126	27%
Total	462	100%

Just under two-thirds (64%) of respondents preferred Option A followed by 27% for Option C.

Written Submissions received in the Mail

A summary of the number of people that attended the listening posts; verbal comments received and written responses is contained in Attachment 25.

Have Your Say

A total of 107 responses were received in response to the poll on the three rate options.

Option	Response	Percentage
A	78	72.9%
B	13	12.1%
C	16	15.0%
Total	107	100%

Just under three-quarters (72.9%) of respondents preferred Option A.

Written responses were received through Have Your Say and are contained in Attachment 26.

Summary of Results

From the telephone survey, nearly two thirds of the residents (61%) were 'somewhat supportive' to 'very supportive' of 'Option B'. Over half of the residents (57%) were at least 'somewhat supportive' of Council proceeding with 'Option C'.

When asked to indicate their preference, 64% indicated an option that included a rate variation i.e. Options B and C: 37% preferred 'Option B', believing it was 'important to maintain infrastructure i.e. roads' and 'necessary to invest into the future of Moorabool'; and 27% preferred 'Option C' also equally placing importance on 'infrastructure' and 'the future investment of Moorabool', as well as considering the 'user pay' principle to be fairer and equitable. However, over a third of respondents (36%) preferred Option A – the rate cap set

by the State Government - primarily due to 'affordability', 'questioning Council's use of funds', and 'poor/uneven service provision.

The feedback from the listening posts, Have Your Say, Reply Paid Vote Cards and written comments/submissions, reflect a broad response across the different options. The majority of respondents (53%) at the listening posts preferred Option C; the majority of respondents (64%) completing the Vote Cards favoured Option A; and just under three quarters (72.9%) of respondents through Have Your Say preferred Option A. The written responses contained a wide variety of feedback on the options as well as other ideas, including no rate increase.

Council consideration of Community input

The results of the Community Engagement undertaken on the three rate cap options was presented to a Special Meeting of Council held on the 23 March 2016 as contained in Attachment 27. Acknowledging the broad response to the community engagement, the Council at a Special Meeting resolved to submit an application for a rate cap variation of 3.50% for 2016/2017, based on other fees and charges increasing under a "user-pays" model to be cost reflective (including indirect costs).

The broad rationale for a 3.5% rate cap is based primarily on the outcome of the telephone survey. When asked to indicate their preference, 64% indicated an option that included a rate variation i.e. either Options B or C. Notwithstanding this, 36% of respondents indicated a preference for Option A or for Council to work within a 2.5% rate cap. For this reason, Option C was seen as a logical compromise between Option A (no rate cap variation) and Option B (1.65% rate cap variation).

CRITERION FOUR — VALUE AND EFFICIENCY

How the higher cap is an efficient use of council resources and represents value for money.

In demonstrating that the additional revenue raised will be used efficiently and that the outcomes represent value for money, the Council has embarked on a number of strategies over recent years to address the financial challenges faced by Council including:

- conducting service reviews;
- implementing a service planning and review framework;
- implementing the business excellence program and;
- implementing stringent budget controls.

These strategies have resulted in a significant improvement in the overall sustainability and viability of the Shire.

Service Reviews.

A number of service reviews have been undertaken since 2011 including;

- Rural Library Service, (appended as Attachment 28)
- Community Grants Program, (appended as Attachment 29)
- Community Development Fund (appended as Attachment 30)
- Family Day Care, (confidential report – not attached)
- Review of Crèche and Group Fitness Services – Bacchus Marsh Leisure Centre, (appended as Attachment 31)
- Fleet Policy (appended as Attachment 32)
- Road Management Plan (appended as Attachment 33)
- Street Cleaning Maintenance Management Plan (appended as Attachment 34)
- Statutory Planning (appended as Attachment 35)
- Vehicle Booking system service review (appended as Attachment 36)
- Review of Gas and Electricity suppliers (Review commercial in confidence)
- WorkCover Premium Reductions (appended as Attachment 37)

Please refer to the appendices for a copy of the relevant service reviews for each of the abovementioned service reviews. A concise summary of the high level outcomes of each of the Service reviews below.

A summary of Service Planning outcomes is set out below;

1. Rural Library Service: In December 2013, following a review of the rural library service, it was decided that: services to Leigh Creek and Elaine be discontinued due to underutilisation; service at Ballan be extended due to community demand and; service provision to Blackwood be in-sourced. These changes were of no net cost to Council but increased the effectiveness of the service and ensured it was more tailored to the community needs.
2. Community Grants Program: Council allocates \$140,000 annually for the Community Grants Program to help support and enhance innovative community activities, projects and events. The program is delivered over two separate funding rounds offering \$70,000 in each, under three categories: Community Strengthening; Community Arts and Culture; and Community Events. A review conducted of the program in 2013 led to increased control measures being placed on the allocation of

grants to ensure that the Grant Program is both achieving its objectives and meeting community needs.

3. **Community Development Fund:** The Community Development Fund provides \$100,000 annually to community groups/committees, community networks, progress groups and development associations as seed funding (and leverage for external funding opportunities) to support community infrastructure projects that have a significant impact on community development, liveability and wellbeing in the Shire. Following a review into the fund in 2014 it was resolved that Council continue to work with the Community Development Fund under the present guidelines and to continue to seek seed funding for the small projects throughout the Shire.
4. **Family Day Care Service:** The Review of the Family Day Care Service was an action in the Council Plan 2013-2014. The report on the review of the Family Day Care Service was presented to a confidential session of an Ordinary Meeting of Council given it impacted on the terms and conditions of the employment of staff. The Council resolved to cease the provision of Family Day Care effective 30 June 2014. The net saving to Council in ceasing the service was \$205,000.
5. **Review of Crèche and Group Fitness Services – Bacchus Marsh Leisure Centre:** Following a review into Council subsidised Crèche and Group Fitness Services at the Bacchus Marsh Leisure Centre council resolved to: Cease the provision of crèche at the Bacchus Marsh Leisure Centre from 31 December 2015 and; review and reduce the service level (times and classes) for group fitness to 15 classes per week at a cost to Council of \$3,475 per month or \$41,700 per year until the end of the Belgravia Leisure contract. The reduced timetable developed based on existing participation data, commenced effective 1 January 2016. It is estimated that these measures will save Council \$47,460 annually.
6. **Fleet Review:** In 2014 a review was conducted of Council's existing Fleet Policy. The review included an extensive analysis of Fleet Costs, Staff Contributions and the Vehicle Choices available to staff. The review resulted in a new Fleet Policy being adopted which included significant increase in manager contributions towards their vehicles and largely eliminated Council's FBT liability. This will result in a saving of approximately \$790,000 over the first full five years of the new policy being implemented and approximately \$200,000 pa in subsequent years.
7. **Road Management Plan 2013 – 2017:** The Road Management Plan identifies responsibilities, maintenance standards and inspection regimes required to manage civil liability as well as demonstrate that Council, as the road authority, is responsibly managing all the road assets under its control. This plan was reviewed and formally adopted by Council on 19 June 2013. As part of the review Council conducted benchmarking with neighbouring Councils including Golden Plains, Hepburn and Macedon Ranges. Before being adopted by Council, a "laid on the table" was held for 6 weeks for to elicit community consultation and feedback. It is hoped that this plan will deliver efficiencies and align our Road Management policies with community expectations.
8. **Street Cleaning Maintenance Management Plan:** A Street Cleaning Maintenance Management Plan (SCMMP) was developed in 2015 to define the service levels associated with street cleaning within the Shire where previously a published management plan for the provision of this service to the community had not been in place. The SCMMP is an operational document that provides an overview of Council's street sweeping (kerb and channel), footpath sweeping and stormwater drainage system maintenance practices and established amendments to the pre-

existing regime in order to gain efficiencies. Moorabool is a rapidly growing municipality and the SCMMP reviewed maintenance management options and recommended service levels to refine its cleaning outcomes. The outcome of the service review resulted in direct cost saving through contracts of \$10,000 per annum, reduction of 1.5 EFT to 1.0 EFT for the street sweeping service, reduction of 1.5 shifts per day to 1.0 shift per day with delay of significant plant replacement costs, lower plant operating costs and reduced cost to the community. The review also built capacity into the existing program thus delaying procurement of additional plant and resources for many years.

9. Statutory Planning (Milner Review): In November 2012 council commissioned a review and audit of the statutory planning processes and procedures undertaken by Moorabool Shire Council (Attachment 35). The review identified substantial scope for organisational and procedural reforms and made 21 primary and 62 detailed recommendations. An alternative procedure for processing of applications was also advanced which would significantly enhance the quality of service delivery and provides timelines and tolerances for the permit approvals process. Of these Council identified three recommendations as a high priority:
 - a) The current department structure and roles of each staff member;
 - b) The department processes and procedures; and
 - c) The information systems used within the department and across the organisation.

These were implemented in 2013/14 and have led to significant efficiencies and better outcomes for customers.

10. Vehicle Booking System review: In June 2015, a review into the way pool vehicles were booked, led to a recommendation to implement a new pool booking system with key lockers. Implementing this solution is expected lead to a \$146,044 net-benefit to Council over a 5 year period.
11. Review of Gas and Electricity suppliers: In 2015/16 Council conducted a review into its gas and electricity suppliers resulting in:
 - Major cost savings achieved in large market electricity prices.
 - Improvement in discount percentages applicable to small market electricity prices.
 - Significant price increase avoidance in gas markets in year one of the contract.

Note: details of this review are commercial in confidence so have not been supplied as an attachment.

12. WorkCover Premium Reductions: Through enhanced claim management and manual handling risk assessments Council has been able to reduce its WorkCover premiums by over \$100K between 2013/14 to 2015/16 despite growth in rateable remuneration.

Service Planning and Review Framework

To ensure a consistent approach to service reviews and planning, Council has undertaken a rigorous process to develop a Draft Service Review and Planning Policy Framework (appended as Attachment 14). This document is the culmination of a significant body of work undertaken by Council in the past 12 months, built upon the learnings of progressive service reviews undertaken since 2011 in addition to input from a broad cross section of Moorabool staff that were part of the Service Planning and Review reference group. The draft policy was presented to Council for consideration at OMC on 2 March 2016 and is

scheduled for formal adoption at the next Ordinary Meeting of Council on the 6 April 2016. A copy of the policy and report to Council are appended as Attachments 14 and 38 respectively, to this rate cap application.

The draft Service Review and Planning Policy and Draft Framework sets out the Council's commitment to ongoing service reviews and planning to ensure that each service is aligned to Council's strategic direction, valued by its communities, and delivered in the most responsible and sustainable manner.

Moorabool Shire Business Excellence Framework (BEX)

BEX aims to create an environment for continuous improvement, a leadership focus on sustainable performance and improved capability to deliver desirable outcomes for the community.

How does BEX help Moorabool Shire Council's capability to deliver desirable outcomes to the community?

The underlying philosophy of BEX is defined in nine Principles and utilises the following seven categories as a guiding framework;

- (i)** Leadership
- (ii)** Strategy & Planning
- (iii)** Information & Knowledge
- (iv)** People
- (v)** Customers & other stakeholders
- (vi)** Process Management, Improvement & Innovation and
- (vii)** Results & Sustainable Performance.

Every improvement initiative falls under one or more of the above categories, supporting Council to:

- develop a strategic understanding of its operating environment,
- formulate business strategies and to clearly communicate these processes throughout the organisation,
- recognise that people work in the organisation in a 'system' and are inter-dependant,
- continually improve the process enhancing performance and capability relative to its strategy and goals,
- effectively use data and information to support evidence based decision making,
- initiate behavioural changes and cultural alignment to improve Council's overall performance.

The Strategy

Council's Business Excellence program was initially launched in 2012 with a further program iteration entitled 'The Way Forward' introduced in 2015 (refer Attachment 39). 'The Way Forward' facilitated alignment with the Council Plan, emphasizing the achievement of Council's objectives from an operational and strategic perspective. In particular, the program provides the leadership and direction as defined under **Category 1** (Leadership) of the BEX Framework. Supporting Council's revised strategy, three working groups were established to drive change and engagement. These are outlined below;

1. The Business Excellence Framework Working Group supports the program's implementation across Council fostering continuous improvement as a key driver in improving Council's efficiency and effectiveness.
2. Service Review and Planning Working Group ensures that each service is aligned to Council's strategic direction, valued by its communities and delivered in the most responsible and sustainable manner.
3. Staff Development Working Group focuses on developing internal capacity and facilitating employee engagement through staff development and leadership programs along with activities supporting a positive workplace.

BEX achievements:

Integrated Planning and Development Framework

Council developed the Integrated Planning and Development Framework (IPDF) linked to the BEX **Category 2** (Strategy and Planning). The IPDF outlines Council's strategies which cascade from its Project 2041 through its various strategic plans through to annual service unit operational plans and finally to individual plans. With this, each employee has a clear line of sight and awareness of their individual contribution towards the Council Plan. (Refer to page 9 Attachment 39)

Service Review & Planning

The Service Review and Planning strives to align each service to Council's strategic direction and deliver in the most responsible and sustainable manner based on the principles in **Category 2** (Strategy and Planning) of the BEX Framework. Some of the benefits of implementing service review are:

- A more engaged community
- More efficient, effective as well as cost effective services
- Partnership and networks with other local governments and service providers
- A whole of Council approach to service delivery
- Services reflect the Vision, Mission and Values set out in the Council Plan

Systems View

The Systems View provides a snapshot of all activities within a service unit, its customers, services provided, processes, measures and targets. This is in accordance with the principles in **Category 5** (Customers and other Stakeholders) and **Category 6** (Process Management, Improvement and Innovation) of the BEX Framework.

Council has developed its systems views for the top three management tiers with the level 3 Systems Views forming each service unit's operational plan. This plan outlines the operational and improvement activities for the financial year including targets, timeframes, and objectives along with process owner, budget, required staffing levels etc.

For an example of system views please see Attachment 40 - People and Performance Unit System View.

Process mapping using Promapp

The processes scoped in the systems view are mapped in Promapp in line with **Category 6** (Process Management, Improvement and Innovation). Promapp software is used to document, improve, and share processes and process knowledge. Currently Council has 400 processes published in Promapp with each process containing associated documents

like forms, policies and procedures. A further advantage is that various types of attachments can be included not only those in Word or Excel format but also photos or video can be added to processes in Promapp. Some of the processes in Promapp that have changed the way Council works are:

- Planning Applications
- Abandoned and/or derelict Vehicles
- Payroll processes which includes leave forms, timesheets, higher duties form, bank details update etc.
- Events Approval process (Internal)
- Respite Centre Activation process and other Emergency Management processes

Please see listing of processes mapped in Promapp in Attachment 41.

Self-Assessment using BEX

Self-Assessment is conducted to quantify Council's overall performance, strengths and opportunities for improvement against the seven Categories. This encompasses the principles in **Category 3** (Information & Knowledge) and **Category 7** (Results and Sustainable Performance) of the BEX Framework. While few opportunities for improvement undergo the entire PDSA cycle others are improved through consultation. Some processes that have been identified via self-assessment include:

- Flowchart the Integrated Planning process
- Coaching for Individual Excellence process (Performance Appraisals)
- Succession planning – providing leadership training for team leaders and co-ordinators
- Undertake an annual review of Systems Views
- Review of Council's Culture Survey process

Continuous Improvement using Plan-Do-Study-Act

The Plan-Do-Study-Act Cycle comprises a nine step system supporting process improvement which aligns with **Category 6** (Process Management, Improvement and Innovation) of the BEX Framework. A total of 60 managers, co-ordinators and staff have been trained in applying the PDSA cycle. Some of the key processes that have had a significant impact in Council's efficiency and effectiveness after undergoing PDSA cycle are:

- Motor Vehicle Booking process
- Response to Media process
- Request to Speak at an Ordinary Meeting of Council process
- Raising Purchase Orders process

Please refer attachment 36 related to Motor Vehicle Booking Process review, final outcome and recommendation

The Fish! Philosophy

The FiSH! Philosophy is a set of simple, practical tools to help create a positive work culture supporting more connected teams, better communication, extraordinary service and higher retention. This incorporates the principles in **Category 4** (People) of the BEX Framework. Council continues to motivate its employees with the four Fish! Principles which are have fun, be present, make their day, and choose your attitude.

Systems Thinking

Business Excellence offers Council a platform to create a culture of systems thinking which helps Council to:

- understand interconnections between individuals, teams and the organisation
- recognise the current situation within the context of the larger system
- facilitate conversations based on data with all stakeholders to determine the root cause of issues
- drive behaviour leading to sustainable improvements to the whole system
- maximise value to all stakeholders
- optimise enterprise outputs and synergies

Council's implementation of the Business Excellence framework continues supports a focus on efficiency and effectiveness whilst ensuring quality service delivery outcomes for the Moorabool Shire community.

Procurement Policy

Council's policy on procurement (Attachment 42) helps to ensure efficient use of council resources and that value for money is obtained on all purchases. As per the following policy extract, this ethos is embedded in the policy.

2.3.1 Requirement

Council's procurement activities will be carried out on the basis of obtaining Value for Money.

This means minimising the total cost of ownership over the lifetime of the requirement consistent with acceptable quality, reliability, accessibility and delivery considerations. Lowest price is not the sole determinate of value for money, and Council is not required to accept the lowest tender.

Achieving best value also requires challenging the need for the procurement and the way in which the service may be reconfigured to achieve improvements in service delivery, comparing service provision options against all those available, consulting with key stakeholders and ensuring competition in the open market.

Achieving best value for money must be the basis of all procurement decisions within Council.

2.3.2 Approach

This will be facilitated by:

- developing, implementing and managing procurement strategies that support the co-ordination and streamlining of activities throughout the lifecycle;
- effective use of competition;
- using aggregated contracts and SOAs where appropriate;
- identifying and rectifying inefficiencies in procurement processes;
- developing cost efficient tender processes including appropriate use of e-solutions;
- Council staff responsible for providing procurement services or assistance within Council providing competent advice in terms of available approaches and agreements; and

- working with suppliers to create relationships that are professional and productive, and are appropriate to the value and importance of the goods, services and works being acquired.

Shared Services

Council recognises that partnering with other councils presents an opportunity to increase efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of internal and external services. For Moorabool the provision payroll, staff development along with environmental health services have been explored as shared services options.

- **Staff Development:** Council has already developed a partnership with Melton City Council in the delivery of staff development programs. This has included our participation in mentoring programs along with an Emerging Leader program which involves a consortium of four councils including Melton, Wyndham and Moonee Valley. Training, leadership and professional development are areas of significant expense for councils shared services offer economies of scale and greater capacity to negotiate reduced facilitation costs. It is intended that increased cooperation with neighbouring councils will occur each year with the view to establishing training requirements in common particularly in the area of competency training and leadership development.
- **Environmental Health:** Personnel within Council's environmental health team have developed skills and knowledge specific to the area of septic systems. This expertise is not readily available in other neighbouring councils who have similar requirements in respect to inspections and reporting.
- **Payroll:** Over the past 18 months Council has undergone a review of its payroll function. As a consequence Council has developed excellent processes and systems which are transferrable to other councils. Over the past few months Council has been liaising with Hepburn Shire Council. Payroll staff from both councils have initiated a gap analysis to determine opportunities for consistent processes and practices across the two councils. This will facilitate the capacity for back up where required and allow for the similar system upgrades to minimise costs in this area.

A Service Review and Planning framework has been developed which is seeking endorsement through Council. Using this framework service units can assess whether there are shared services opportunities either with other councils or organisations. For example feasibly shared services arrangements could be considered in areas such as Aged & Disability programs, Planning, and Emergency Management.

To date Council has limited exposure to formal shared services arrangements however the options outlined above provide opportunities to develop internal capacity. Council is best served by shared services arrangements which leverage service delivery strengths. This enables Council to reduce the impact of project management on existing personnel and service activities. The focus on areas of Council's strength as outlined above supports Council's conservative entry into the shared service arena providing a platform for other arrangements in the future. As a consequence the return on investment for shared services initiatives may take one to two years to materialise into bottom line results for Council.

Budget and Fiscal control measures

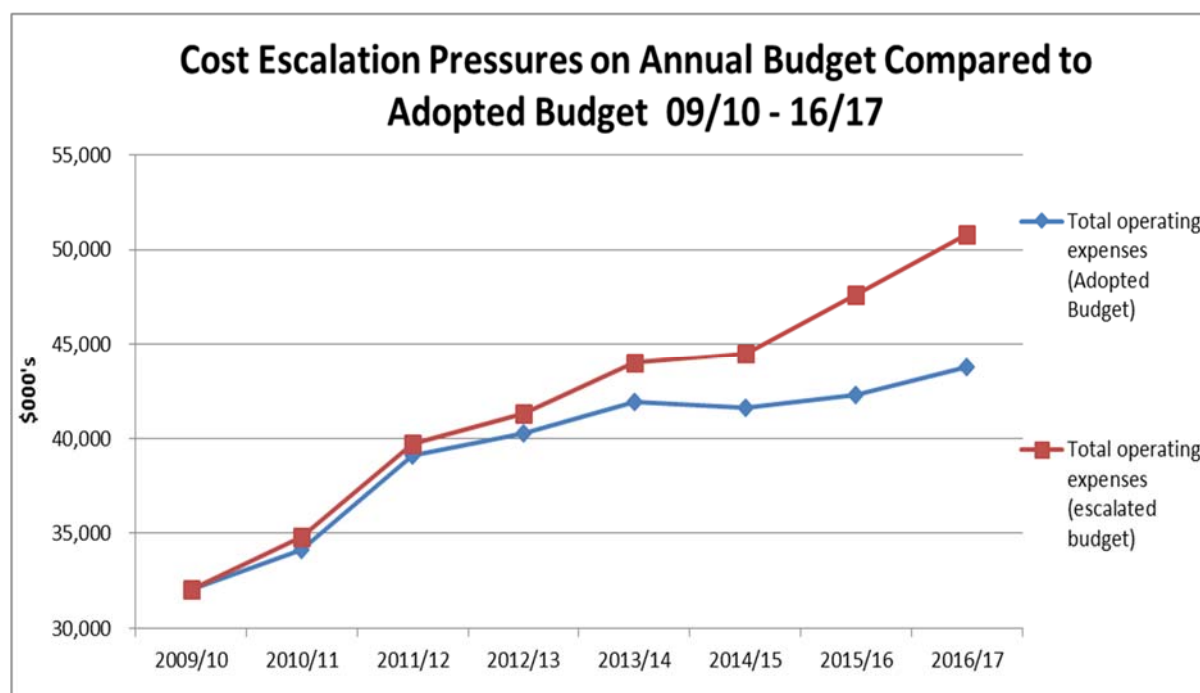
Over the past five budgeting cycles, Council has expended significant effort in controlling and reducing annual operating expenditures notwithstanding the compounding impact of Enterprise Agreement salary increases and the cost pressures presented by CPI and robust population growth.

In the context of the 2016/17 Budget, it is important to review the recent history of budget setting at Moorabool Shire to better understand where the current budget sits relative to cost escalation pressures that have impacted Moorabool Shire over the last 7 years.

Listed below is a summary of the high level cost pressures that have impacted Council expenditure since 2009/10.

Some high level pressures on the Operating Budget	Budget 2009/10	Budget 2010/11	Budget 2011/12	Budget 2012/13	Budget 2013/14	Budget 2014/15	Budget 2015/16	Budget 2016/17
Consumer price index (Source: http://www.abs.gov.au/)	3.10%	3.60%	1.20%	2.40%	3.00%	1.50%	1.70%	2.50%
population growth (source: http://forecast.id.com.au/)	2.16%	2.26%	2.06%	2.40%	2.49%	2.45%	2.67%	2.66%
EBA	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%
Superannuation increase	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.25%	0.25%	0.00%	0.00%
Banding movements (est)	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	0.80%	0.80%
Approved New Staff recurrent (\$000's)	\$0	\$0	\$151	\$252	\$325	\$145	\$174	
Approved New Initiatives recurrent (\$000's)	\$97	\$18	\$177	\$192	\$95	\$33	\$113	
Approved New Initiatives one off (\$000's)	\$110	\$50	\$80	\$311	\$315	\$508	\$575	

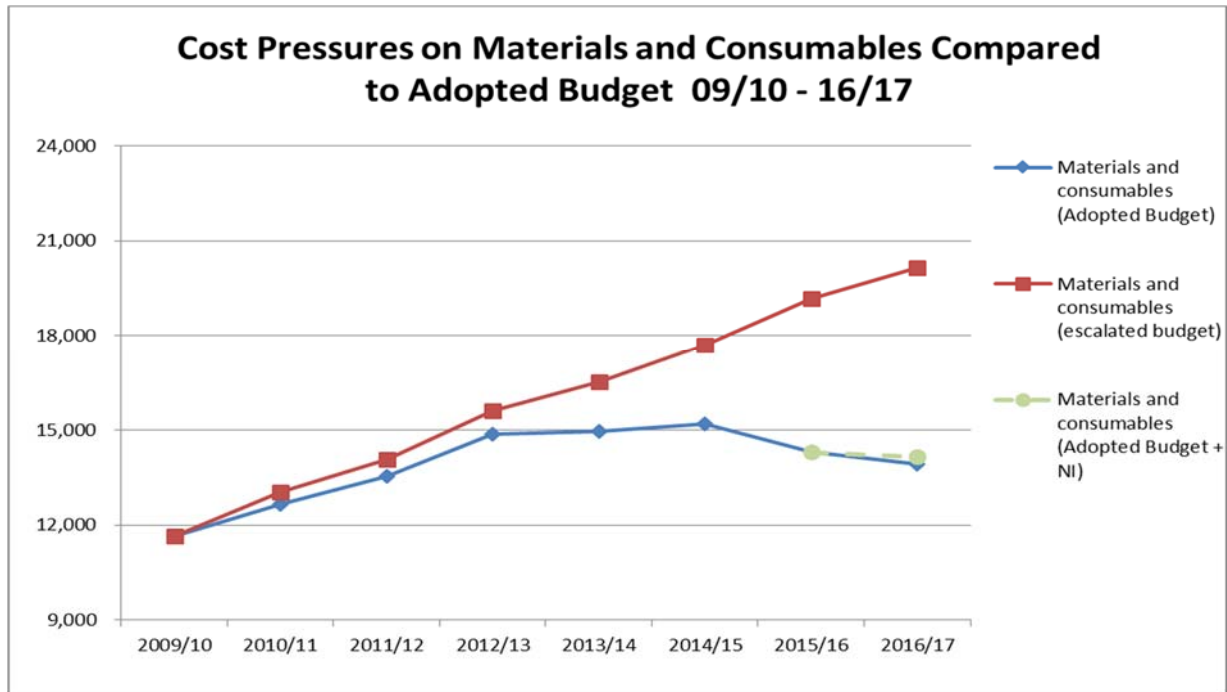
The following graph compares the Adopted Budget Operating expenses from 2009/10 to 2016/17 (blue line) with total Operating expenses for 2009/10 to 2016/17 if total operating expenses continued to grow based on the annual cost escalation pressures as demonstrated in the table above (red line).



The graph demonstrates, at a high level that Council has continued to make cutbacks in spite of the pressures of CPI, EB movements, population growth and the impact of other external factors.

When analysing the impact on materials and consumables expenditure in the graph below, it can be shown that despite the pressures of CPI, population growth, and investment in Council endorsed new initiatives, the organisation has been successful in controlling growth

in discretionary expenditures over an extended period of time. In 2016/17, the proposed Budget sees this trending downwards. This trend is dependent on the level of New Initiatives that are approved by Council in 2016/17.



Budget Approach

Generally, in October, prior to the commencement of the data collection process for the upcoming budget, the CEO conducts a series of budget briefings with all Managers and General Managers. The intention of these briefings is to communicate the strategic financial context of the upcoming budget, external pressures impacting current and future budgets in addition to specific direction as to the level of detail and justification that officers were required to present in submitting their draft budgets.

Following on from this, over a two week period, the CEO, GM Infrastructure, Finance Manager and Senior Finance staff meet with individual Department Managers and Budget Officers in relation to the draft Budget's proposals. At these meetings, budgeted expenditure and revenue is analysed, reviewed and justified. Clarification and agreement is sought and where necessary, rework and revision is undertaken to ensure that budgets are delivered within agreed upon parameters. A copy of the Budgeting framework is appended as Attachment 43.

Some high level examples of planned efficiency and productivity initiatives in recent times include;

1. Reduction in Senior Management Staff levels and Admin staffing levels—discontinuation of the General Manager Corporate Services position and personal assistant to the General Manager of Community Services resulting in savings of \$251k pa.
2. Elimination of Motor Vehicle FBT resulting in eventual savings of \$210k pa.
3. Significant increase in staff contribution rates for motor vehicles

4. Discontinuation of Family Day Care service \$205k pa.
5. A reduction in 2016/17 budgeted operating lease expense of \$408k from 2012/13 level.
6. Redirection of cash windfalls to improve Council's operating result for e.g. Fire services levy grant.

Please note the above summary is not an exhaustive list but represents some of the major cost savings/efficiency initiatives identified. When read in conjunction with the above mentioned graphs demonstrates a proactive approach to efficiency and productivity.

Conclusion

It is the Council's opinion that based on the existence of a strategic approach to service reviews and service planning, evidence of outcomes of individual service reviews, stringent budget and fiscal controls and the demonstration of an evidence base which shows a significant improvement in Council's annual financial result progressively over the last three years, that the Essential Services Commission can be satisfied that the additional revenue generated will be directed towards the improvement of the underlying result and a higher level of investment in the Capital Works program.

CRITERION FIVE — TRADE-OFFS AND ALTERNATIVE FUNDING OPTIONS

What consideration has been given to reprioritising proposed expenditures and pursuing alternative funding options and why those funding options are not adequate.

Reprioritising proposed expenditures – Council’s ongoing commitment

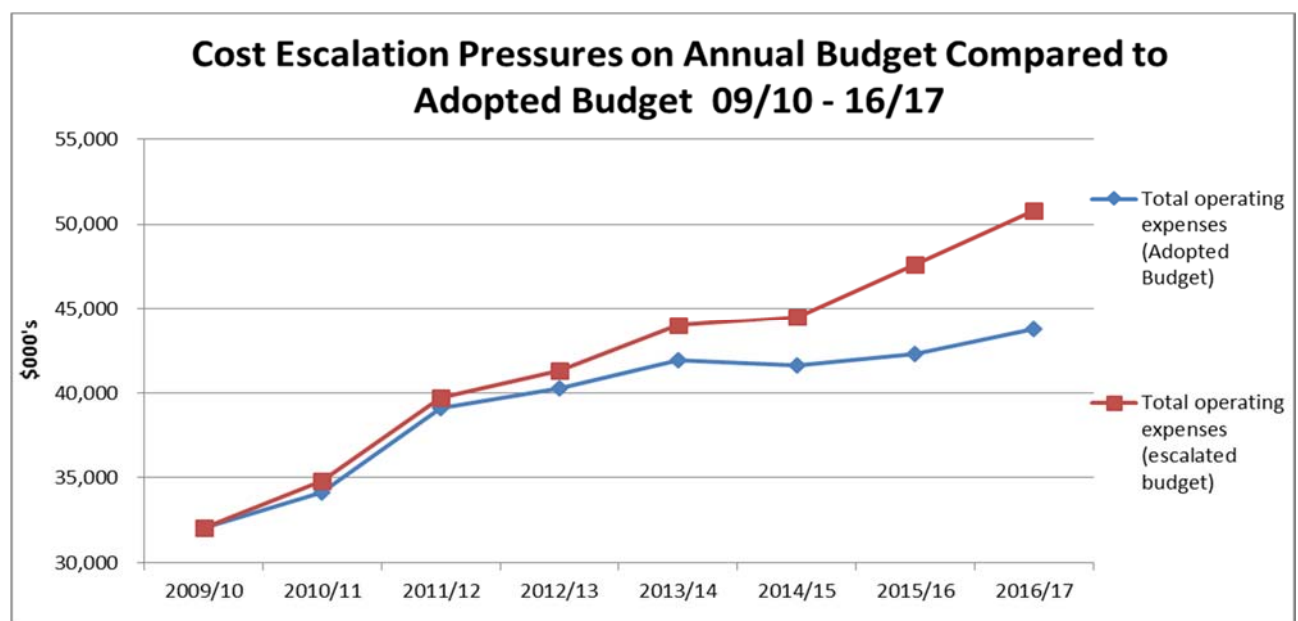
Council has embarked on a planned program of efficiency and cost savings over a number of years. To this end, Council can demonstrate that it has an ongoing process of reprioritising proposed expenditures that has been in existence prior to the implementation of the Fair Go Rates System. Through this process of constant review, the council has been able to deliver significant improvements in annual budget outcomes to the community.

Council continually evaluates its expenditures through its budgeting process and in recent years has made savings by reprioritising expenditures, examples include:

1. Reduction in Senior Management Staff levels and Admin staffing levels– discontinuation of the General Manager Corporate Services position and personal assistant to the General Manager of Community Services resulting in savings of \$251k pa.
2. Elimination of Motor Vehicle FBT resulting in eventual savings of \$210k pa
3. Significant increase in staff contribution rates for motor vehicles.
4. Discontinuation of Family Day Care service resulting in eventual savings of \$205k pa
5. A reduction in 2016/17 budgeted operating lease expense of \$408k from 2012/13 level.

This combined with finding more efficient ways of doing things has led to Council achieving considerable savings in expenditure when compared to cost escalation factors.

The following graph compares the Adopted Budget Operating expenses from 2009/10 to 2016/17 (blue line) with total Operating expenses for 2009/10 to 2016/17 (red line), if total operating expenses continued to grow based on the annual cost escalation pressures as demonstrated impacting Council.



Furthermore, Council has developed a Service review and planning policy that will be used to guide how Council prioritises its services moving forward.

Despite significant efforts to control costs, Council is still forecast to produce underlying losses over the next ten years.

Reprioritising proposed expenditures – 2016/17 and beyond

If Council were unsuccessful in its application for a rate cap variation, it will immediately reduce its proposed expenditure on New and Upgrade projects from \$800k per annum to \$400k per annum in the 2016/17 year. This would be a departure from the 2015/16 Strategic Financial Plan which was based on an annual New & Upgrade program of \$800k per annum. From a Council perspective this would be undesirable as Moorabool's rapid growth requires additional investment in enhancing infrastructure.

Over the longer term, if Council were unsuccessful in its application for a rate cap variation, it is the Council's view that service cuts would be required to address its long term financial sustainability. As mentioned in its justification to Criterion 2, the Council has historically generated underlying operating losses in its annual operations and whilst it has taken significant measures to improve its sustainability over recent years, in the absence of ESC support for a rate cap variation, Council services will need to be reduced to avoid ongoing annual deficits. Whilst the Council has yet to make specific decisions in relation to further service cuts, it is the Council's view (based on the results of the community engagement) that this would be contrary to the views of a statistically significant sample of the population.

Finally, if Council were unsuccessful in its application for a rate cap variation, Council will need to reduce expenditure on asset renewal by approximately \$7M over the next ten years. As per Criterion 2 discussion, under a 2.5% rate cap (or \$98.1m expenditure on Asset renewal over the 10 years of the long term financial plan), Council will begin to reduce the Renewal Backlog but not at a rate that is acceptable to it. Under a 3.5% rate increase (inclusive of a 1% rate cap variation), Council will eliminate its known asset backlog attributed to the Transport Asset Class in year 10 of the long term financial plan.

Alternative Funding Options

Council has implemented numerous different funding options including:

- Implementing a Special Charges Policy
- Reviewing Fees and Charges to ensure they are cost reflective
- Analysing indirect costs and attributing them in user pays models

Special Charges Policy

On 5 February 2014 Council endorsed a Special Rates and Charges Policy (Attachment 44). This policy will enable alternative funding sources outside of general rates for certain projects. Under this policy, where it can be demonstrated that properties will receive a special benefit from implementing necessary infrastructure works, Council may implement a Special Rate or Charge process to provide some or all of the necessary funds. A proposed Special Rate or Charge will have regard to the level of special benefit and community benefit received from such infrastructure works and Council's capacity to finance the necessary cash flow requirements during the term of the Special Rate or Charge Scheme.

Reviewing Fees and Charges

As part of the 2016/17 budget process Council reviewed charges for its largest contributor of discretionary fees and charges; the Community Safety Unit. The review concluded that cost

recovery is not being achieved in this area. Fees were also benchmarked against neighbouring councils to determine if there was scope to increase Moorabool's charges to achieve full cost recovery. Based on this analysis, certain Community Safety Unit charges will be increased for a period of six years until full cost recovery is achieved. Increasing Community Safety Unit charges in this manner is forecast to increase Council revenue by \$47,982 in 2016/17, and over a ten year period will have a cumulative benefit of approximately \$2.107m. It is envisioned that in future years other discretionary charges will be reviewed to ensure cost recovery is being achieved. Please refer to Attachment 45 for more details of this analysis.

Attributing Indirect Costs

Historically, the Waste Management Charge only included the direct costs of the Waste Management Services Council provides. An exercise was conducted to calculate the share of organisational overheads attributable to Waste Management Services and estimates it to be \$458,558. This cost has been allocated in the proposed 2016/17 Waste Management Charge and included in the Draft 2016/17 Budget. Please refer to Attachment 46 for more details of this analysis.

Why reprioritising expenditures and pursuing alternative funding options are not adequate

Based on feedback from the community, coupled with Moorabool Shire's robust population growth, it is Council's view that cutting services by a further reprioritisation of expenditure is not desired. More so, cost reflective fees and charges are factored in to the modelling but Council is still forecast to have underlying losses moving forward. It is Council's view that the only way to address the issue of underlying losses whilst increasing the rate of investment in Asset Renewal and New and Upgrade projects is by a responsible rate increase of 1% above the 2.5% rate cap.

CRITERION SIX — LONG –TERM PLANNING

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.

Council's application for a 1% rate cap variation is consistent with Council's long term planning as documented in the Council Plan and Asset Management Plan.

Council Plan: 2013-2017 Council Plan (Revised 2015) (ATTACHMENT 47)

This Council Plan outlines the direction of Moorabool Shire Council for a four year period.

The development of the 2013-2017 Council Plan involved consultation with our community and input from Councillors and staff. The information gathered through this engagement process assisted in preparing the Council Plan.

The plan represents the key directions and critical projects required to respond to a constantly changing and challenging environment. It is a framework from which Council strives to achieve its vision of facilitating "vibrant and resilient communities with unique identities" and to satisfy its mission to "work together with our people to deliver valued outcomes that improve community well-being and are economically responsible".

For a growing community such as Moorabool Shire the Council Plan is the key strategic document outlining our approach to dealing with this rapid growth. The Council Plan states the "population of the Shire is estimated to increase by 72% between 2015 and 2041 to 54,418. The majority of growth during this period will come from the new estates in Maddingley which are forecast to increase by over 174% during this same period." This rapid growth highlights the need for New and Upgraded projects in the shire and supports our contention that an additional \$400k per annum is needed to be spent in this area.

The plan is based around three key result areas with specific strategic objectives under each:

- Representation and Leadership of our Community
 - Advocate for services and infrastructure that meets the Shire's existing and future needs.
 - Good governance through open and transparent processes and strong accountability to the community.
 - Leadership through best practice community engagement.
 - Provide quality customer services that respond to the needs of our whole community.
 - Sound, long term financial management.
 - Professional and skilled staff in a safe and supportive environment. Develop a Workforce Plan that supports the future needs of Council.
 - Effective strategic and business planning for a growing community
- Community Wellbeing
 - Community self-reliance and resilience
 - Inclusive, responsive and accessible community services.
 - A safe community

- Increase and encourage participation in a range of sport, recreation and leisure activities.
- A strong and diverse local economy.
- Enhanced Infrastructure and Natural and Built Environment
 - Effective and integrated strategic planning in place to create sustainable communities
 - Ensure current and future infrastructure meets the needs of the community.
 - Management of assets and infrastructure.
 - Enhance and protect the long term integrity and biodiversity of the natural environment.
 - Effective management of municipal waste and recycling.
 - Promote, and enhance places of heritage, landscape and environmental significance.
 - Effective and efficient land use planning and building controls.

Council requires a 1% rate cap variation to improve long-term financial stability and help bridge the renewal gap. This is consistent with the following strategic objectives of the Council Plan:

- Sound, long term financial management.
 - Develop and maintain a long term financial planning, management and reporting system, which ensures resources to deliver services and manage Council's assets.
- Management of assets and infrastructure.
 - Develop Asset Management Plans for all asset classes.
 - Address the infrastructure renewal gap through prudent financial strategies and an accurate understanding of the renewal demand.
 - Management of gifted assets through development.
 - Delivery of the annual Capital Improvement Program.
 - Proactive maintenance of roads, bridges and footpaths to the documented standards in the Road Management Plan.

Furthermore Moorabool's Council Plan is consistent with Section 136 of the Local Government Act

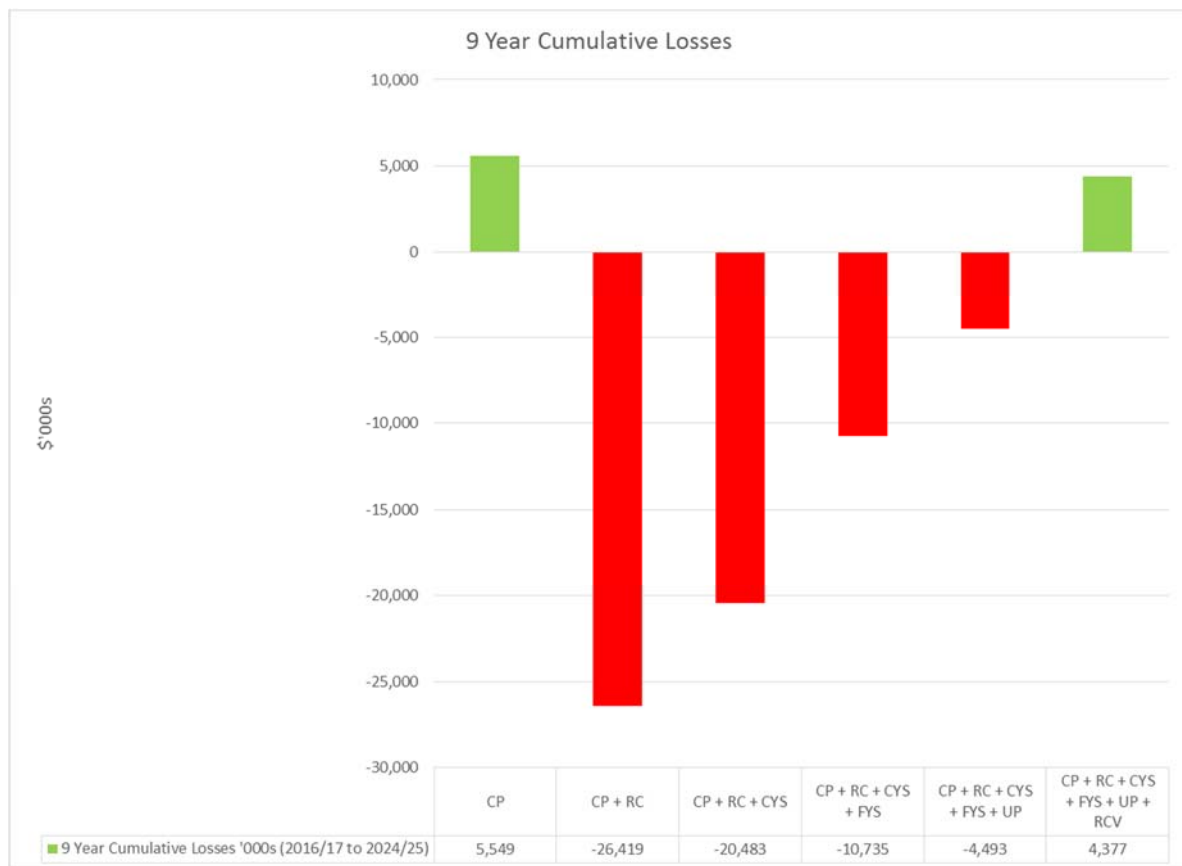
Principles of sound financial management

1. A Council must implement the principles of sound financial management.
2. The principles of sound financial management are that a Council must—
 - a. manage financial risks faced by the Council prudently, having regard to economic circumstances;
 - b. pursue spending and rating policies that are consistent with a reasonable degree of stability in the level of the rates burden;
 - c. ensure that decisions are made and actions are taken having regard to their financial effects on future generations;
 - d. ensure full, accurate and timely disclosure of financial information relating to the Council.
3. The risks referred to in subsection (2)(a) include risks relating to –
 - a. the level of Council debt;
 - b. the commercial or entrepreneurial activities of the Council;
 - c. the management and maintenance of assets;
 - d. the management of current and future liabilities;

e. changes in the structure of the rates and charges base.

The 2015/16 Council adopted Strategic Resource Plan embedded in the Council Plan (CP) was modelled on a 5% rate increase. The below graph outlines the impact the Rate Cap (RCV) has on Council surpluses forecast over the next nine years, and the measures Council has taken to reduce this impact, including:

- CP – Council Plan 2015/16 (i.e. 2015/16 Strategic Resource Plan)
- RC – The impact of the 2.5% rate cap on cumulative losses based on reducing annual rate increases in the 2015/16 SRP from 5% to 2.5%.
- CYS - Current Year budget controls and cost savings (see Criterion 4) – Savings identified in the 2016/17 budget compared to the 2015/16 SFP extrapolated over 9 years.
- FYS- Future Year savings anticipated by applying more stringent Budget Control measures in future years. This includes the incorporating higher efficiency dividends, reducing future year staff increases and reducing future year new initiative expenditure.
- UP - A move to user pays more cost reflective charges for some Council services (see Criterion 5)
- RCV - Planned rate cap variations of 1% above the cap for the next four years (inclusive of this year’s application)



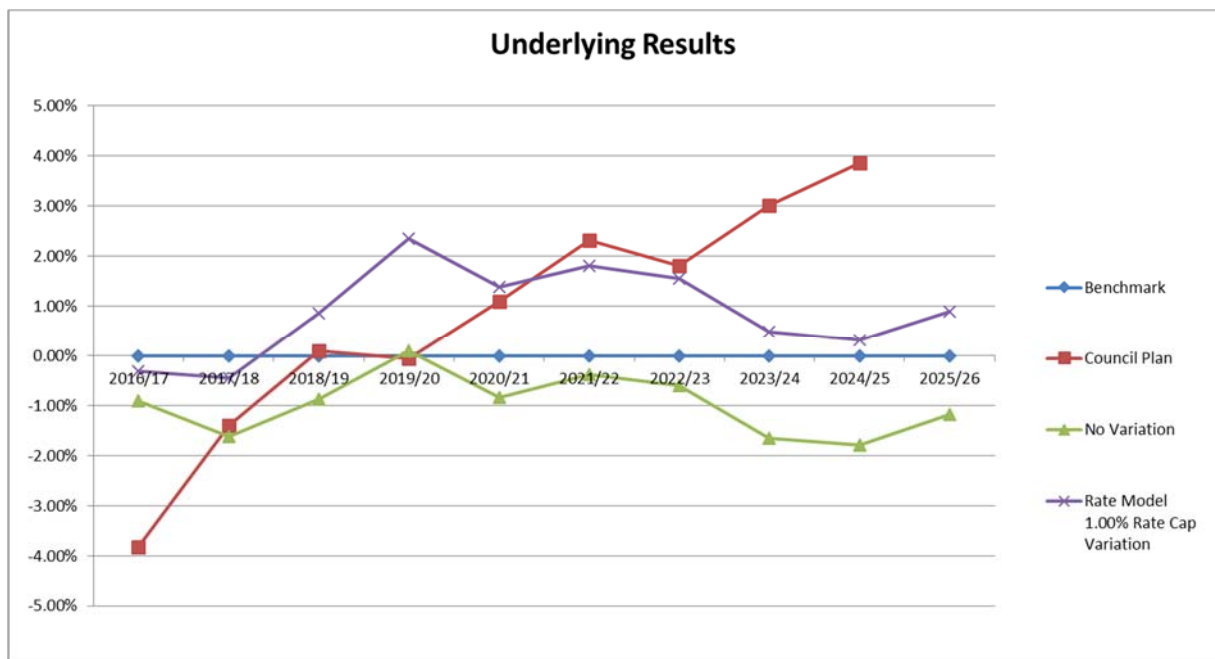
As per the above, it is clear that Council requires a combination of the measures already implemented plus additional rate increases above the cap for it to become financially stable.

As part of the 2016/17 Budget, Moorabool shire is using a combination of saving strategies, efficiency dividends, full cost reflective pricing and a responsible level of rate cap variations to return to long term financial plan to a similar financial position it would have been in but for rate capping.

The below table illustrates how the rate cap variation will also allow Council to achieve the capital works program set out in the 2015/16 Council Plan.

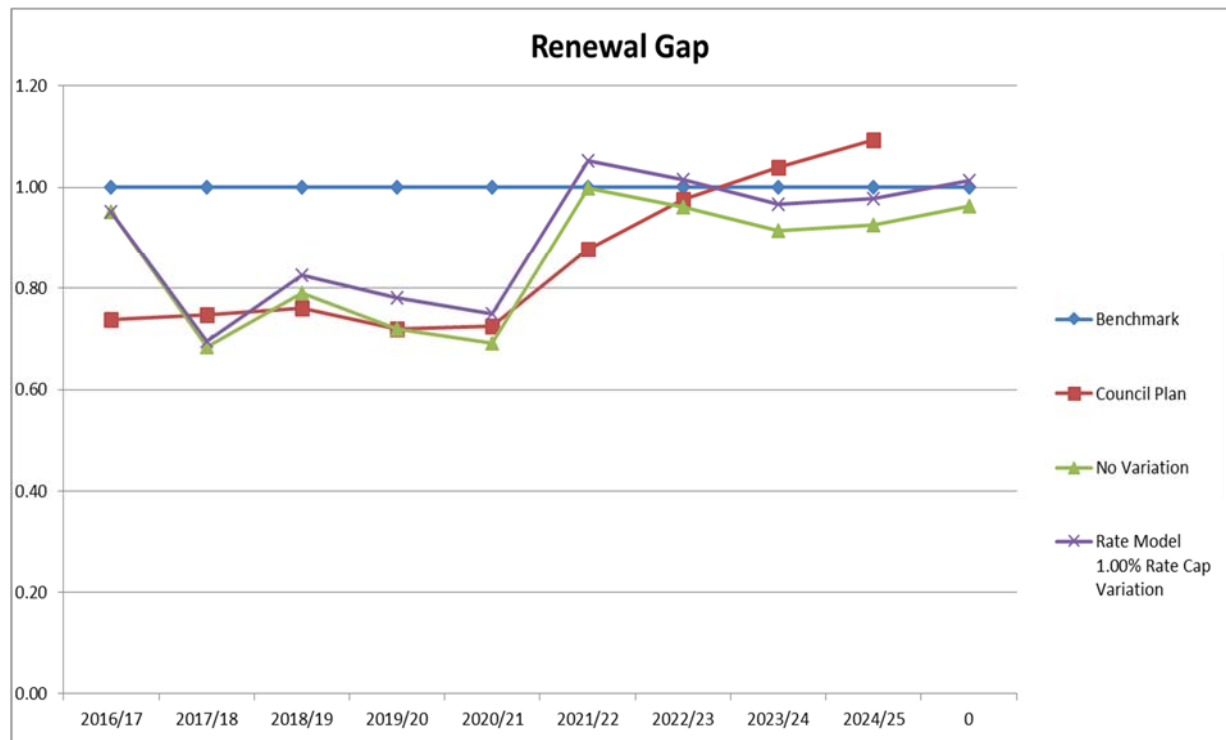


The below graph compares Underlying Results predicted in the Strategic Resource Plan underpinning the 2015/16 Council Plan, to current predictions of Underlying Results with and without Rate Cap variations. As demonstrated below, without a rate variation Council will be unable to generate underlying surpluses which in turn may threaten its financial viability.



The below graph compares the Asset Renewal Gap predicted in the Strategic Resource Plan underpinning the 2015/16 Council plan, to current predictions of Asset Renewal Gap

with and without Rate Cap variations. This graph uses forecasts of depreciation based on a percentage of assumed asset bases and is compared to planned renewal expenditures taken from Councils Strategic Financial Plan. As per the below, the Council Plan predicted a closing of the Renewal Gap in 2023/24, at which point additional funding could be used to fund the backlog of renewal works. Due to changes in depreciation forecasts, a 1% rate cap variation will see Council close to closing the Renewal Gap in 2023/24 and in a much healthier position than if it did not have a rate cap variation.



Asset Management Plan

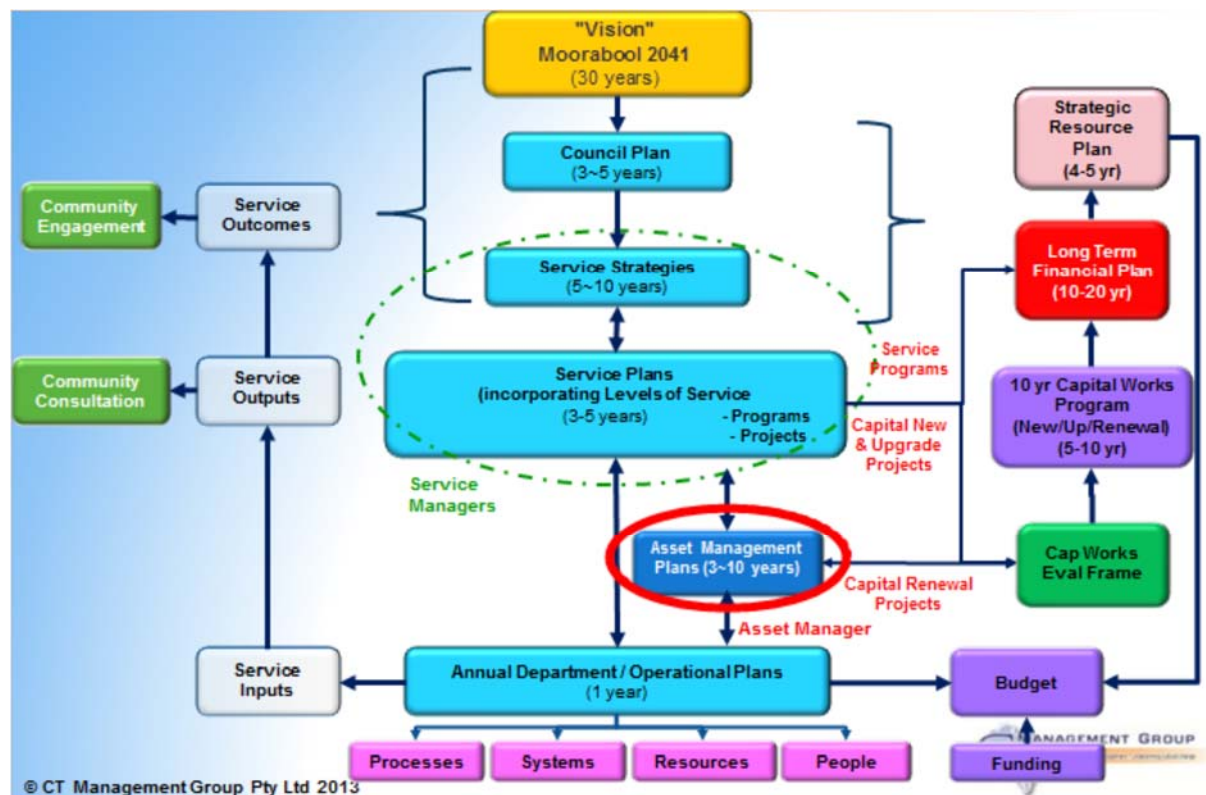
Moorabool Shire is currently in the process of undertaking condition audits on the Transport Asset class which represents the majority of Council's Infrastructure Assets. The condition audits will be completed prior to June 30 and will form the basis of the next strategic review of the Transport Asset Management plan scheduled to be completed in the 2016/17 financial year.

Council's Asset Management Plan outlines key elements for managing Council assets. It combines management, financial, engineering, environmental, and other technical practices to match budgetary realities with levels of service desired by customers so as to provide affordable levels of service in an economical manner.

The specific purpose of the Plan is to:

- Demonstrate responsible stewardship by the Council;
- Define and articulate how infrastructure will be managed to achieve Council objectives; Provide a basis for customer consultation to determine the appropriate levels of service; Manage risk of asset failure;
- Identify asset management improvement opportunities;
- Achieve savings by optimising whole of life costs; and
- Support long term financial planning.

Asset Management Plans are a key component of Council's Business Excellence process. This Plan draws on or feeds into diverse Council policies, strategies and actions. Figure 2 (from the MAV STEP Program) illustrates the relationship between AMPs and key strategic and operational documents of Council.



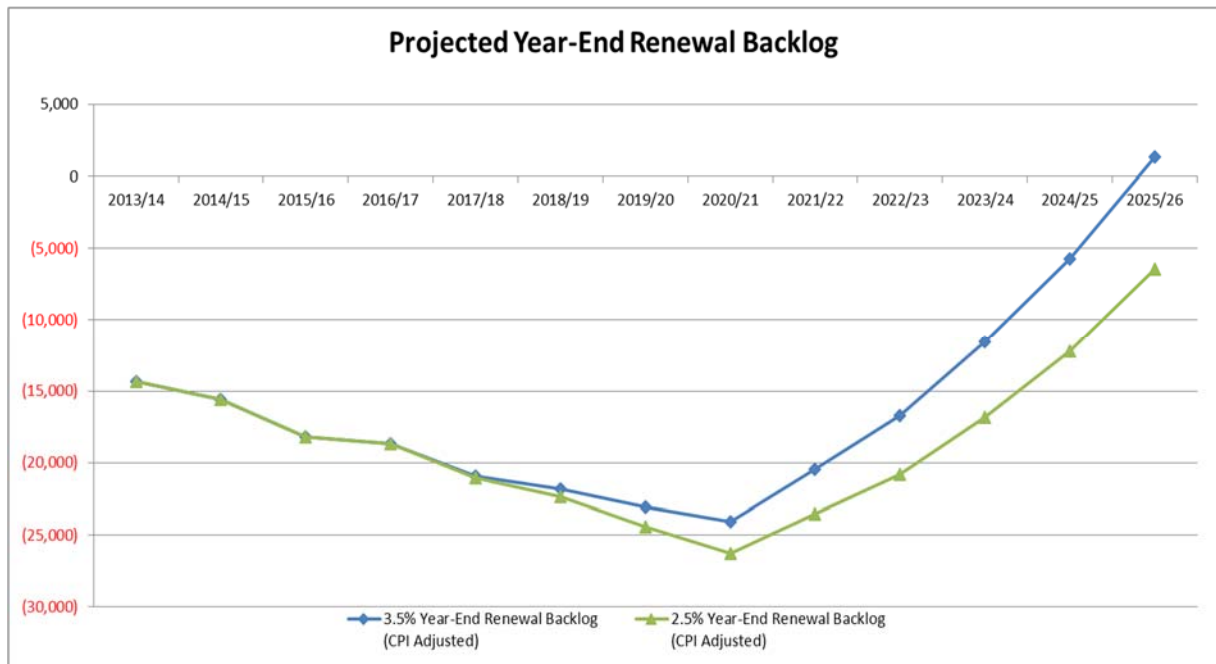
Council's Asset Management Plan is divided into five parts:

- Part A – General Information: Background or information common to all assets. (Attachment 04)
- Part B – Road Asset Management Plan. (Attachment 05)
- Part C – Buildings & Structures Asset Management Plan. (Attachment 06)
- Part D – Drainage Asset Management Plan. (Attachment 07)
- Part E – Recreation and Open Space Asset Management Plan. (Attachment 08)

In April 2013 the plan identified that Council should be spending around \$7.14million on asset rehabilitation each year, which was significantly more than Council's contribution of \$3.189m for the 2012/13 financial year. The plan also identified a renewal backlog of \$15.21m in the Transport Asset Class. Hence, the plan called for significant increases to asset rehabilitation funding.

Asset Category	Asset Component	2012 Replacement Cost	Asset Service Lives	Expected Annual Renewal Cost
Road Pavement	Sealed Road Pavement	105,401,000	60	\$1,760,000
	Unsealed Road Pavement	18,138,000	20	\$907,000
	Road Seals (asphalt & seal)	44,666,000	25 (asphalt) 15 (seal)	\$2,500,000
	Road Shoulders (gravel)	20,361,000	20	\$1,020,000
Paths	Pathways	11,457,000	50	\$230,000
Car Parks	Car Parking	2,028,000	40	\$50,000
Drainage	Kerb and Channel	17,650,000	70	\$250,000
Bridges & Major Culverts	Bridges & Major Culverts	18,908,000	80	\$240,000
Traffic Control & Ancillary Assets	Street name signs	~ \$1,000,000	40	\$25,000
	Traffic control & advisory signs	~ \$1,000,000	10	\$100,000
	Guardrails	~ \$1,000,000	30	\$33,000
	Guide posts	~ \$100,000	10	\$10,000
	Bus shelters (town bus)	~ \$250,000	50	\$5,000
	Bus shelters (school)	~ \$360,000	30	\$12,000
Total				\$m 7.14

The below graph highlights the impact that the 1% rate cap variation will have on the Asset backlog. Whilst Council can only apply for a single year rate cap variation in 2016/17, the long term financial plan assumes a 1% rate cap variation for a period of 4 years. This is consistent with the long term financial plan and the message presented to the community as part of the community consultation process. This graph uses the annual renewal demand reported in the Asset Management plan indexed for inflation.



In summary, the above graph demonstrates that under a 2.5% rate cap (or \$98.1m expenditure on Asset renewal over the 10 years of the long term financial plan), Council will begin to reduce the Renewal Backlog but not at a rate that is acceptable to it. Under a 3.5% rate increase (inclusive of a 1% rate cap variation), Council will eliminate its known asset backlog attributed to the Transport Asset Class in year 10 of the long term financial plan.

Due to the relative maturity of Council's Asset Management Plans, future iterations of Council's Asset Management Plans for non-Transport related asset class will likely identify the existence of further asset backlogs. For this reason, Council believes that it is prudent to apply for a 1% rate cap variation. This rate cap variation will effectively close the reported backlog in Transport Assets whilst enabling a greater capacity and flexibility to deal with the identification of new backlogs whilst minimising the need for further rate cap variations in the future.

ATTACHMENT LISTING

- Attachment 01 - Minutes of Special Meeting -23/03/16
- Attachment 02 - Long Term Financial Plans - 3.5% for four years
- Attachment 03 - Long Term Financial Plans - 2.5%
- Attachment 04 - Asset Management Plan – General Information
- Attachment 05 - Asset Management Plan – Transport Assets (adopted by council 30/04/2013)
- Attachment 06 - Asset Management Plan – Buildings, Facilities & Structures (adopted by council 03/12/2014)
- Attachment 07 - Asset Management Plan – Water & Drainage (adopted by council 03/12/2014)
- Attachment 08 - Asset Management Plan – Recreation & Open space (adopted by council 03/12/2014)
- Attachment 09 - Current New and Upgrade program
- Attachment 10 - Capital Works Evaluation Guidelines
- Attachment 11 - Capital Works Evaluation Guidelines -adopted Council report
- Attachment 12 - Council's Community Engagement Policy – March 2016
- Attachment 13 - Council's Community Engagement Framework – March 2016
- Attachment 14 - Draft Service Review and Planning Policy Framework
- Attachment 15 - Strategic Planning Outcomes and Community Engagement
- Attachment 16 - Rate Cap Variation – Community Engagement Plan – Report to Special Meeting of Council – 10 February 2016
- Attachment 17 - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) made available on Council's website.
- Attachment 18 - Rate Capping Letter from CEO to all households – February 2016
- Attachment 19 - Newspaper Advertisements – Moorabool News 010316 - Rate Cap Variation Community Engagement
- Attachment 20 - Newspaper Advertisements – Moorabool News 150316 - Rate Cap Variation Community Engagement
- Attachment 21 - Website Screen Information – Rate Cap Variation Community Engagement
- Attachment 22 – Have Your Say Screen Information – Rate Cap Variation Community Engagement
- Attachment 23 - Social Media Information: Facebook – Rate Cap Variation Community Engagement
- Attachment 24 - Rate Cap Variation – Telephone Survey Results – March 2016
- Attachment 25 - Rate Cap Variation – Results of Listening Posts; responses to Vote Card and verbatim comments
- Attachment 26 - Have Your Say Written Submissions
- Attachment 27 - Rate Cap Variation – Community Engagement – Report to Special Meeting of Council – 23 March 2016
- Attachment 28 - Service Review: Rural Library Service
- Attachment 29 - Service Review: Community Grants Program
- Attachment 30 - Service Review: Community Development Fund
- Attachment 31 - Service Review: Crèche and Group Fitness
- Attachment 32 - Service Review: Fleet Policy
- Attachment 33 - Service Review: Road Management Plan
- Attachment 34 - Service Review: Street Cleaning Maintenance Management Plan
- Attachment 35 - Service Review: Statutory Planning

- Attachment 36 - Service Review: Vehicle Booking system service review
- Attachment 37 - Service Review: WorkCover Premium Reductions
- Attachment 38 - Service Review and Planning Policy Framework - Council Report
- Attachment 39 - The Way Forward' introduced in 2015
- Attachment 40 - People and Performance Unit System View
- Attachment 41 - Listing of processes mapped in Promapp
- Attachment 42 - Procurement Policy
- Attachment 43 - Budgeting framework
- Attachment 44 - Special Charges Policy
- Attachment 45 - Fees & Charges Briefing Note
- Attachment 46 - Indirect Costs Briefing Note
- Attachment 47 - Council Plan: 2013-2017 Council Plan