

Benalla Rural City Council

Finance and Planning Committee

Agenda

Date: Wednesday 9 April 2025

Time: 6pm

Venue: Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room)
13 Mair Street, Benalla

Contents

Opening and Acknowledgement of Country	4
Apologies	4
Disclosures of Conflict of Interest.....	5
Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting	5
Business.....	7
1. <i>Building and Planning Approvals – February 2025.....</i>	<i>7</i>
2. <i>2024/2025 Quick Response Grants</i>	<i>15</i>
3. <i>Annual Grants Program.....</i>	<i>19</i>
4. <i>Draft Benalla Rural City Destination Management Plan 2025-2029</i>	<i>23</i>
5. <i>Urgent Business</i>	<i>27</i>
Closure of Meeting.....	27

Governance Matters

This Committee Meeting is conducted in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the Benalla Rural City Council *Governance Rules 2020*.

Recording of Council Meetings

In accordance with Rule 6.4 of the *Governance Rules 2020* the Committee Meeting will be livestreamed via the Council's website. An audio recording will be made of the proceedings and made available for public access, with the exception of matters identified as confidential items in the agenda.

Members of the public can watch the live broadcast of the meeting at www.benalla.vic.gov.au

Public Submissions

Any person wishing to participate in Public Submissions in accordance with 7.3 of the *Governance Rules 2020* should contact the Council by emailing council@benalla.vic.gov.au or telephoning the Governance Coordinator Jess Pendergast on (03) 5760 2600.

Behaviour at Meetings

Members of the public present at a meeting must remain silent during the proceedings other than when specifically invited to address the Committee.

The Chair may remove a person from a meeting for interjecting or gesticulating offensively after being asked to desist, and the chair may cause the removal of any object or material that is deemed by the Chair to be objectionable or disrespectful.

The Chair may call a break in a meeting for either a short time, or to resume another day if the behaviour at the Council table or in the gallery is significantly disrupting the Meeting.

Agenda

Chair Councillor Peter Davis

Councillors Councillor David Blore
Councillor Bernie Hearn (Mayor)
Councillor Puna Hewa Gunaratne
Councillor Justin King
Councillor Jillian Merkel
Councillor Nathan Tolliday

In attendance Robert Barber Acting Chief Executive Officer
Nilesh Singh Interim General Manager Corporate
Jane Archbold Manager Community
Courtney Naughton Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
Tom Arnold Community Development and Recreation Coordinator
Jess Pendergast Governance Coordinator

Opening and Acknowledgement of Country

The Chair will open the meeting and recite the following Acknowledgement of Country.

We, the Benalla Rural City Council, acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we are meeting. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and to Elders from other communities who may be here today.

Apologies

Recommendation:

That apology/ies be accepted.

Disclosures of Conflict of Interest

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, a Councillor must declare any Conflict of Interest pursuant to Section 130 of the Act in any items on this Agenda.

At the time indicated in the agenda, a Councillor with a conflict of interest in an item on that agenda must indicate they have a conflict of interest by clearly stating:

- the item for which they have a conflict of interest;
- whether their conflict of interest is general or material; and
- the circumstances that give rise to the conflict of interest.

Immediately prior to the consideration of the item in which they have a conflict of interest, a Councillor must indicate to the Meeting the existence of the conflict of interest and leave the Meeting.

Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes have been circulated to Councillors and posted on the Council website www.benalla.vic.gov.au pending confirmation at this meeting.

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of the Finance and Planning Committee meeting held on 5 March 2025 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

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Business

1. Building and Planning Approvals – February 2025

Ref: 2005329054-533

Sarah Ford – Building Coordinator

Joel Ingham – Interim Manager Development

Nilesh Singh – Interim General Manager Corporate

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report details planning permit applications and building approvals for February 2025.

Planning Permit Applications Determined under Officer Delegation

Permit No		Description	Property Address	Decision
1	P128-24	Construction of a dwelling and outbuilding	176 Racecourse Road, Benalla	Approved
2	P001-25	Alterations and additions to the existing dwelling	33 Benalla Street, Benalla	Approved
3	P017-25	The construction of a carport	6 Neil Avenue, Benalla	Approved
4	P129-24	Construction of a verandah	1 Byrne Street, Benalla	Approved
5	P0041-24	Alterations and additions to existing building and additional Business Identification Signage	49-55 Smythe Street, Benalla	Approved

Planning Permit Amendments Determined Under Officer Delegation

Permit No		Description	Property Address	Decision
1	P0102-19	The use and development of land for a renewable energy facility (solar farm), the removal of native vegetation and the construction and display of Business Identification Signage	379 Goorambat-Chesney Road, Benalla-Tocumwal Road, 256 Peck Road, Spinks Lane and Sharp Road, Goorambat	Approved

Planning Permits Issued Under VicSmart

There were no VicSmart planning permits issued during the month of February 2025.

Planning Permit Applications Determined by the Council

There were no planning permit applications determined by the Council during the month of February 2025.

Planning Permit Amendments Determined by the Council

There were no planning permit applications determined by the Council during February 2025.

Planning Permit Applications Withdrawn or Lapsed

There were no planning permit applications withdrawn or lapsed during the month of February 2025.

Notices of Decision

There were no notice of decisions issued during the month of February 2025.

A notice of decision (NOD) is issued when Council has decided to grant a planning permit when objection(s) are received regarding the application.

An objector may appeal to Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) against the decision to grant the permit within 21 days of a Notice of Decision being issued. After 28 days if no appeal has been lodged Council will issue the Planning Permit.

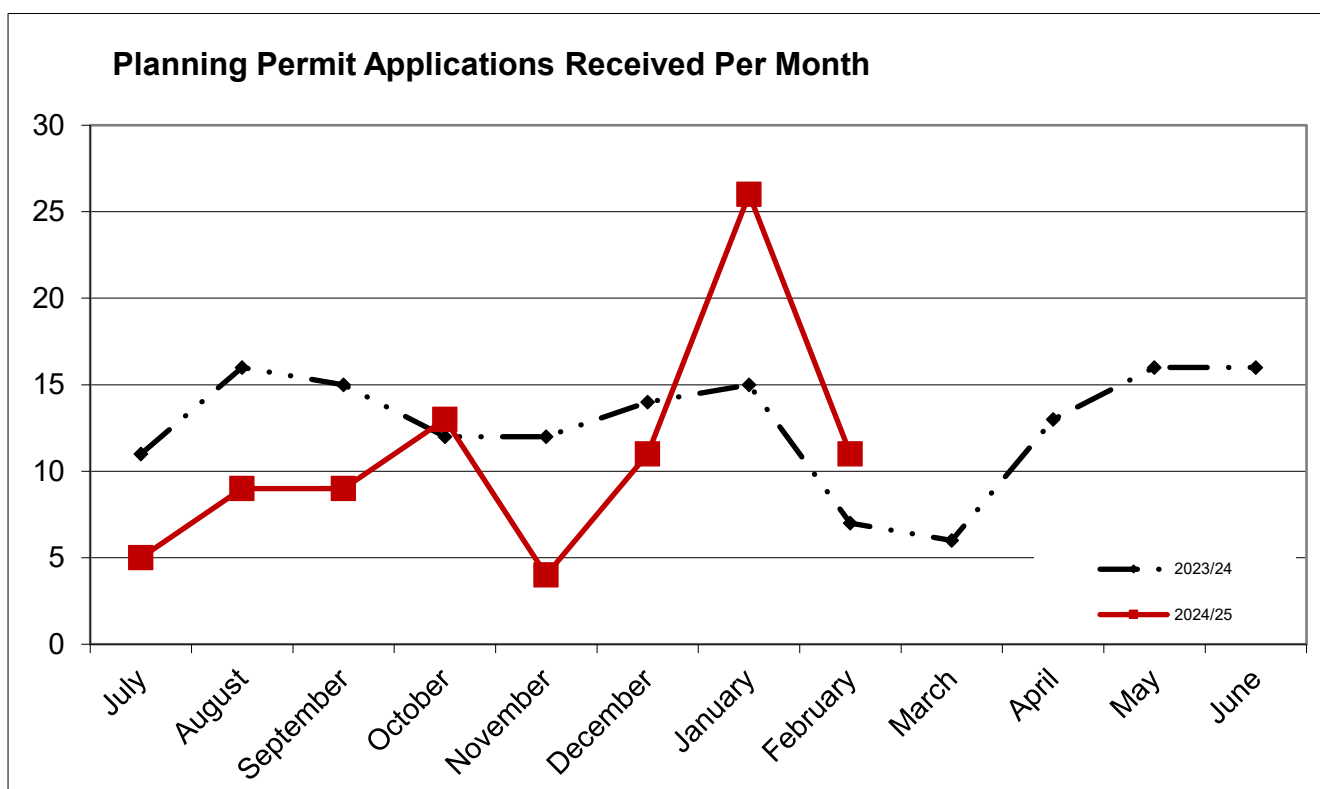
Planning Permit Applications Determined by VCAT

There were no planning permit applications determined by VCAT during the month of February 2025.

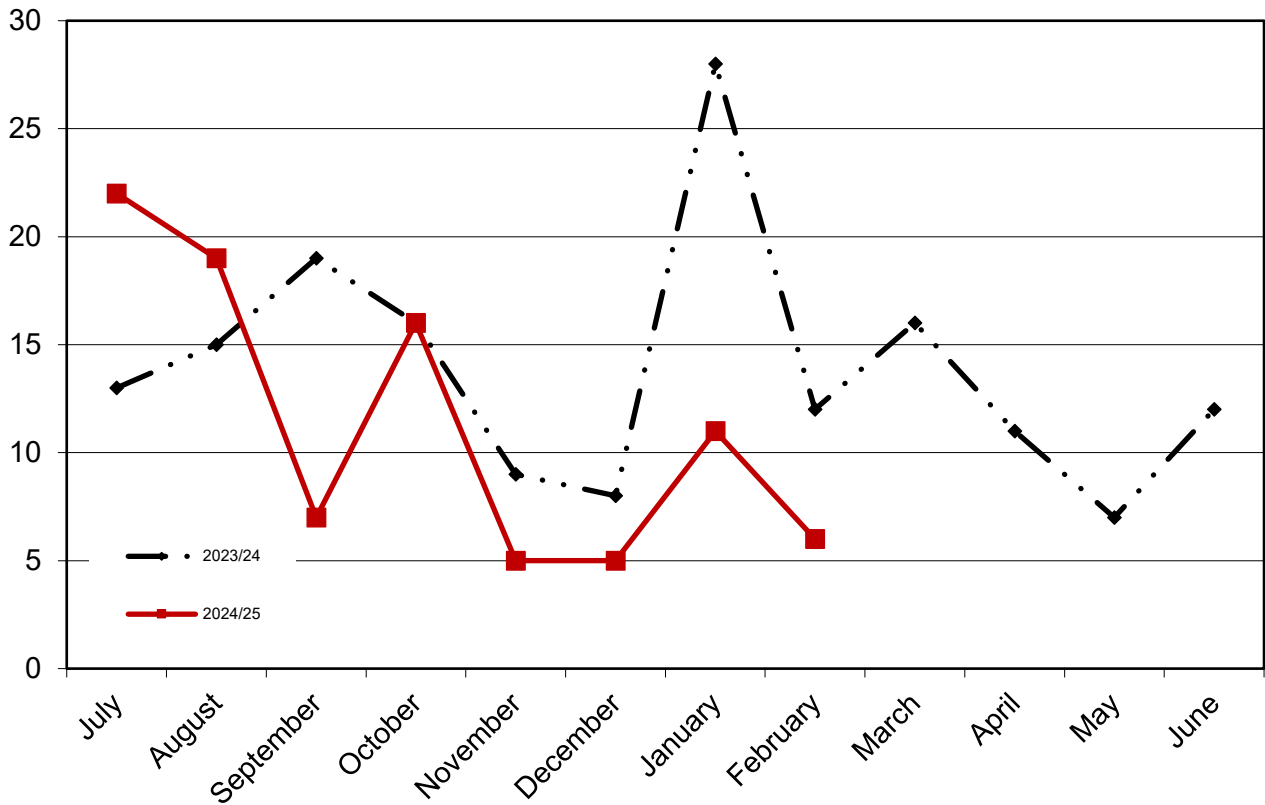
Matters Before VCAT

DA7679	Use and development of land for six dwellings at 3-5 Senator Drive, Benalla
Status	<p>A notice of decision to grant a permit (NOD) was issued on 8 October 2024 for the construction of six dwellings at 3-5 Senator Drive, Benalla. Three objections were received to the proposal and one objector has appealed the NOD. At a compulsory conference on 17 March 2025 all parties to the appeal consented to the approval of the permit subject to two extra conditions as follows:</p> <p>1 b) Enclosure of all carports with a roller door and side fencing to a height of 1.8 metres.</p> <p>1 c) A 450mm high colourbond trellis installed along the northern boundary on top of the existing 1.8 metre high colourbond fence.</p> <p>A planning permit has now been issued for the proposed development.</p>

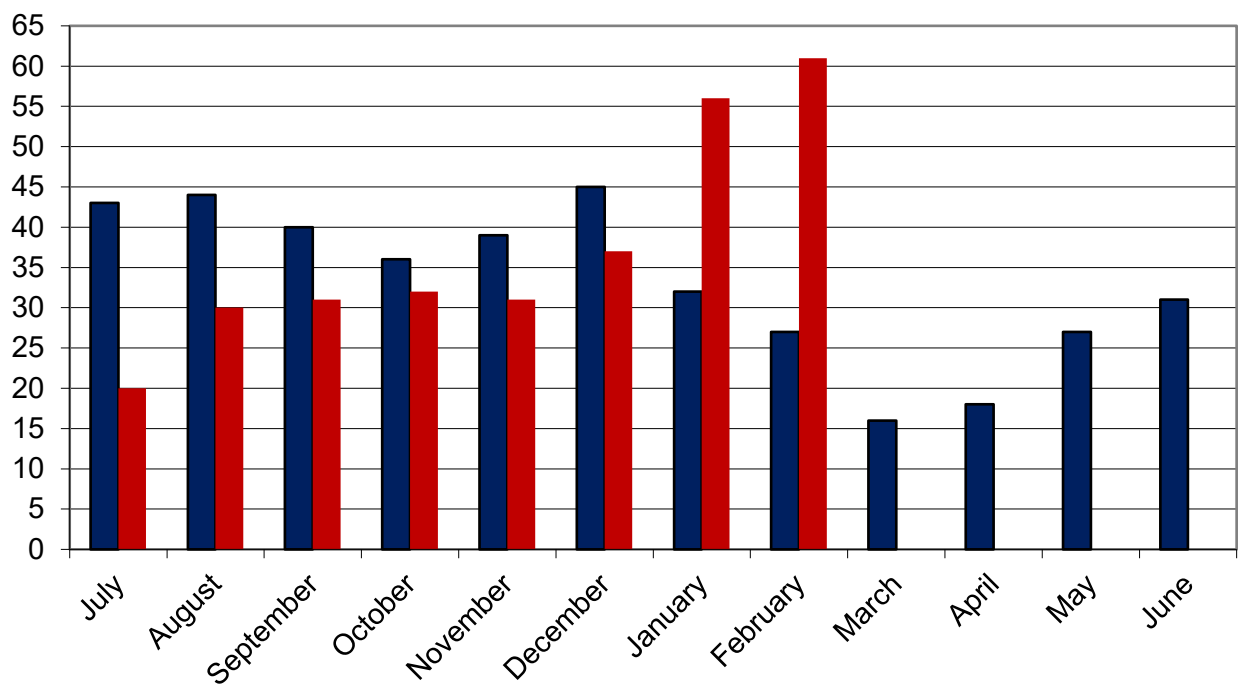
Planning Permit Applications



Planning Permit Applications Decided Per Month



Outstanding Applications at End of Month

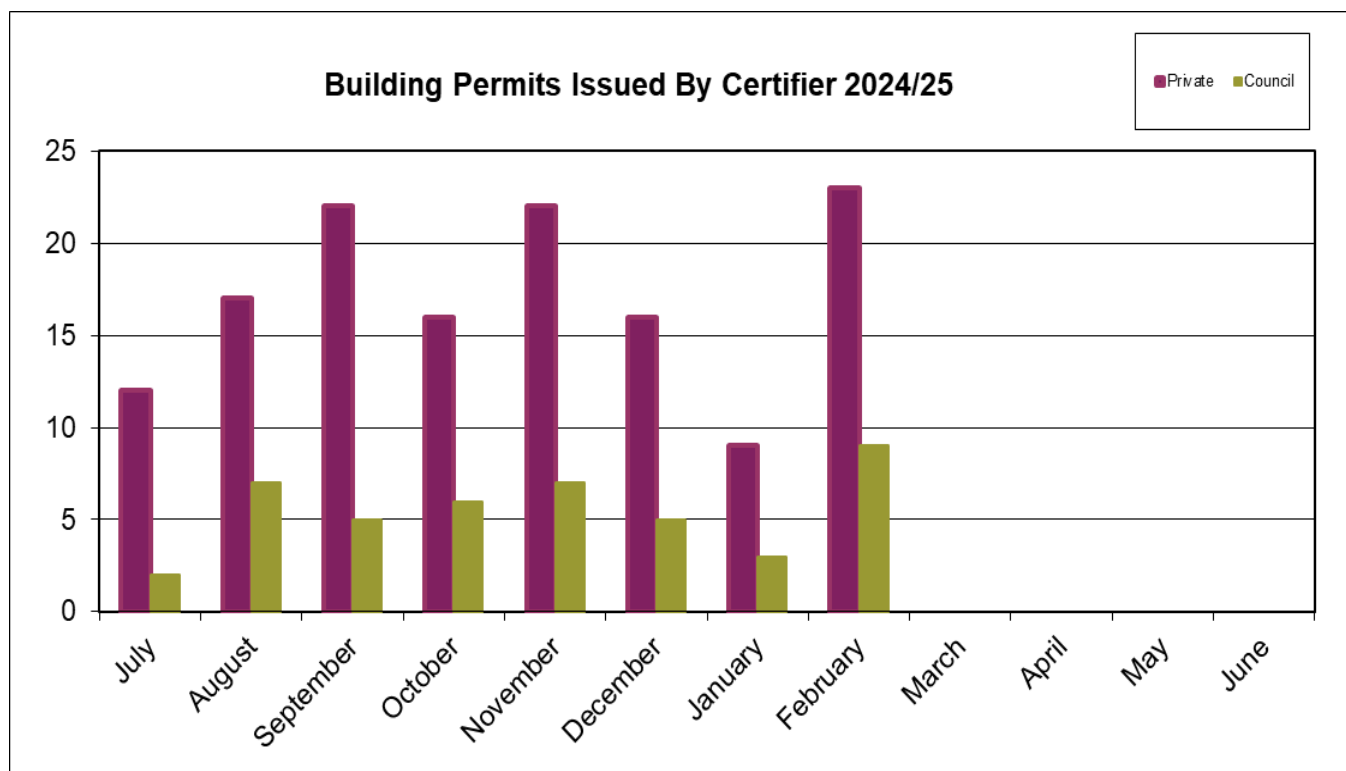


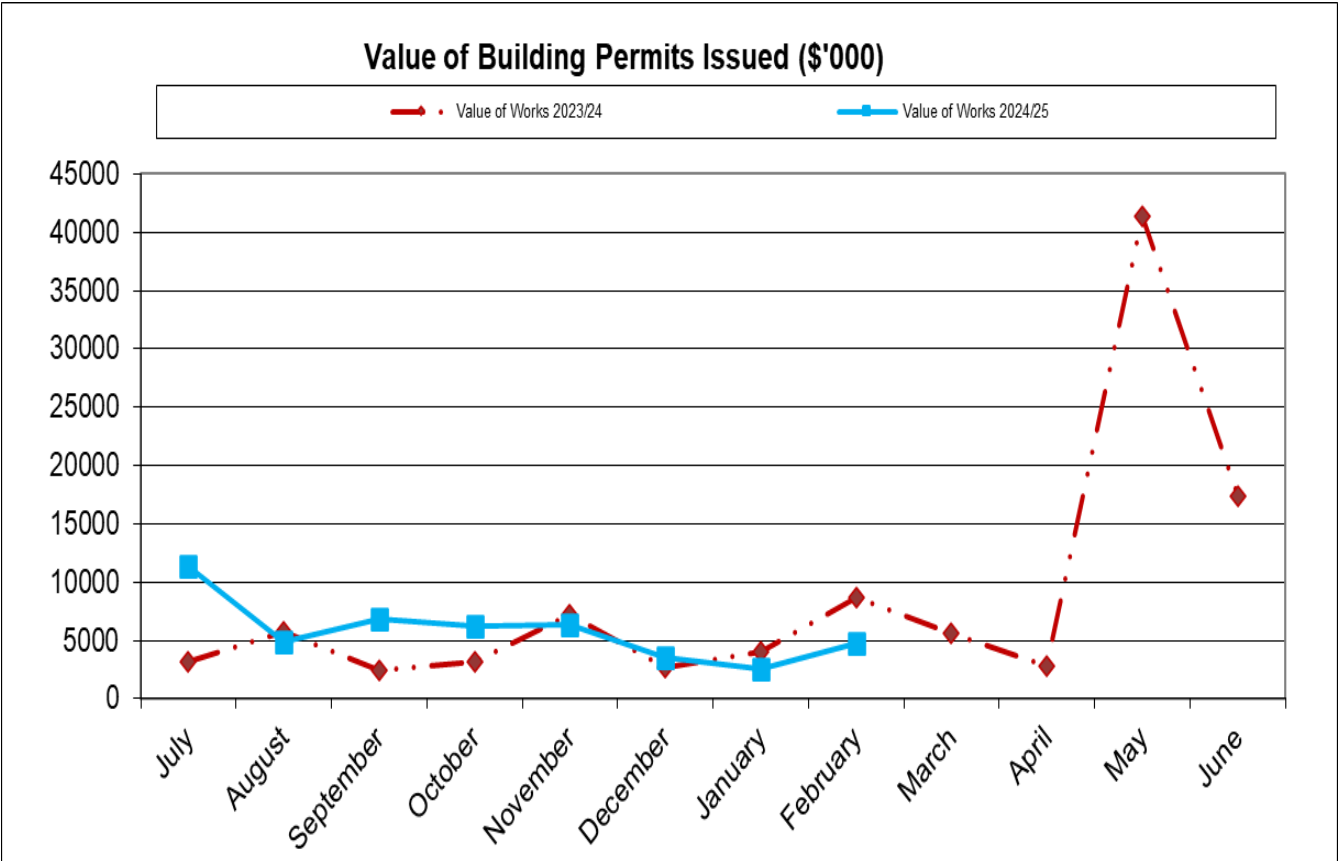
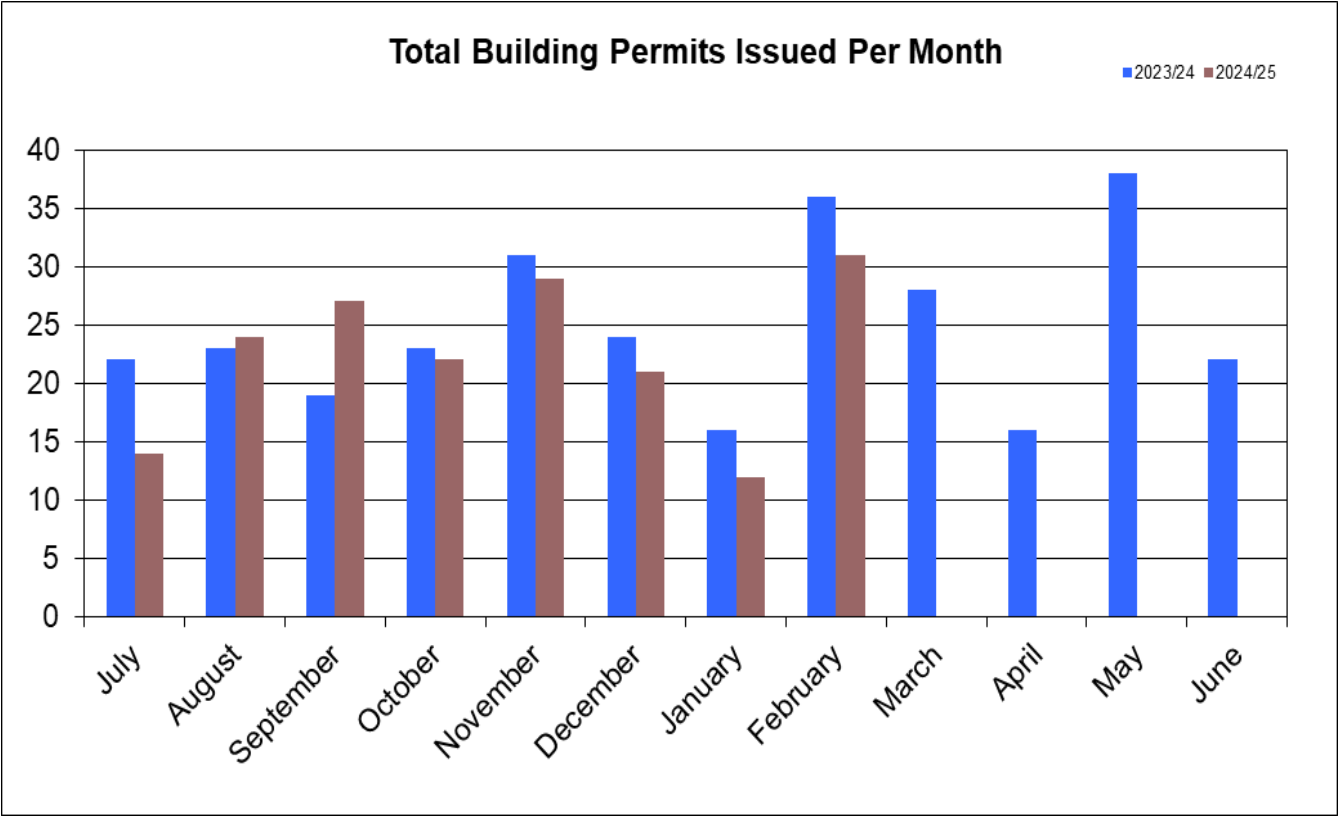
Building Approvals Issued by Council and Private Practitioners

Permit No		Description	Property Address	Value
1	3364363387754	Construction of two sheds	11 Bradley Court, Benalla	\$1,214,500
2	5890302938165	Construction of a carport and verandah	9 Reilly Avenue, Benalla	\$24,875
3	6452014214149	Construction of a shed	11 Crammond Street, Benalla	\$13,500
4	2925802961333	Restumping of existing dwelling	16 Kent Street, Benalla	\$11,800
5	9956990198549	Construction of a shed	37 Cemetery Road, Benalla	\$80,062
6	1739182881603	Construction of a shed	12 Bond Street, Benalla	\$33,000
7	7451877009580	Extension to an existing shed	63 Grant Drive, Benalla	\$14,611
8	4992955539927	Construction of a shed	10 Harrison Avenue, Benalla	\$18,000
9	3075441653559	Construction of a dwelling and garage	45 Benson Street, Benalla	\$458,014
10	7062119979454	Construction of a dwelling and garage	8 Thoroughbred Lane, Benalla	\$848,564
11	6245942159903	Construction of a garage	104 Thomas Street, Benalla	\$14,750
12	5057858735128	Construction of a pool	92 Lakeside Drive, Chesney Vale	\$54,500
13	4309144124338	Construction of a pergola and pool barrier	85 Centre Road, Molyullah	\$8,745
14	4261986790646	Construction of a verandah building	22 Glenfern Court, Benalla	\$56,398
15	2599662248057	Construction of a dwelling and garage	38 Roynic Parade, Benalla	\$348,058
16	7084356816017	Remedial Works	2/14 Oak Avenue, Benalla	\$39,570
17	9545613711885	Construction of a shed	254 River Road, Goomalibee	\$6,000
18	9784317673301	Construction of a shed	9 Winton-Lurg Road, Winton	\$39,804
19	4151936292786	Construction of a dwelling and garage	1B Meadows Avenue, Benalla	\$250,000
20	3886804760819	Construction of a dwelling and garage	20 Goodenia Drive, Benalla	\$406,698
21	7661768388163	Construction of a dwelling and garage	9 Honeyeater Street, Benalla	\$327,884
22	9736229182805	Construction of a dwelling and garage	2 Wattle Drive, Benalla	\$315,189
23	9229513173002	Construction of a shed	28 Roynic Parade, Benalla	\$37,952

Permit No		Description	Property Address	Value
24	1738877261526	Construction of a shed	5 Piccadilly Court, Benalla	\$36,000
25	4475615021856	Alterations to existing retail tenancy	132-134 Bridge Street, Benalla	\$210,000
26	4969469792698	Construction of a dwelling and garage	21 Ambridge Avenue, Benalla	\$380,500
27	6138336516948	Construction of a dwelling and garage	17 Ambridge Avenue, Benalla	\$373,250
28	6358349468065	Construction of a shed	1170 Lake Mokoan Road, Chesney Vale	\$44,887
29	1340368030722	Construction of a dwelling and garage	2 Bramel Court, Benalla	\$373,500
30	4746584783061	Creation of access to existing building	57 Samaria Road, Benalla	\$76,857
31	3330357860353	Rectification works to shed	28 Cecil Street, Benalla	\$52,000
Total				\$4,759,120

Building Permits Issued by Certifier by Month





***COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025* IMPLICATIONS**

Community

- A healthy, Safe and resilient community.
- A connected, involved and inclusive community.

Livability

- Vibrant public spaces and places.
- Connected and accessible roads, footpaths, transport and parking.

Economy

- Population growth.

Environment

- Healthy and protected natural environment.

Leadership

- Good governance.

OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any general or material conflicts of interest in this matter.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

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2. 2024/2025 Quick Response Grants

Ref: 1138149297-12786
Tom Arnold – Community Development and Recreation Coordinator
Jane Archbold – Manager Community

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents funding applications for 2024/25 Quick Response Grants.

BACKGROUND

The Quick Response grant program enables local community groups, clubs and organisations to seek funding to increase their capacity to work in partnership with the Council and others to address local needs and enhance the local community.

The program distributes grants up to \$500 allowing local clubs, groups and organisations the opportunity to seek funds when the need arises.

DISCUSSION

Applications for consideration under the 2024/25 Quick Response Grant program are detailed in the table below.

Applicant	Details	Amount Requested	Proposed Assistance
Benalla Clydesdale and Heavy Horse Driving Day	Benalla Clydesdale and Heavy Horse Driving Day – 3 May 2025. Offers participants the chance to compete in driving horses through obstacle courses, with classes for both experienced drivers and novices. Held annually for 23 years, the event attracts competitors from across the state to showcase their skills, learn new techniques, and enjoy the camaraderie of fellow horse enthusiasts. With increasing participation and crowd attendance, the event is open to all ages and genders, and features active entertainment, food, and merchandise. The group will put the \$500 towards catering. Remaining catering costs will be covered by event entries.	\$500	\$500
Benalla Heritage Network	Unearthed National Heritage Festival – 2-4 May 2025 The Festival is a celebration of Benalla Rural City's local history and culture. The event will feature community groups sharing their traditions, skills, and stories. It's a chance for the public to learn about and engage with Benalla Rural City's heritage through displays and activities. The Benalla Heritage Network is seeking a grant to cover printing costs for promotional flyers. The flyers will be distributed locally and in surrounding regions, ensuring broad visibility and engagement for this celebration of Benalla Rural City's diverse heritage.	\$500	\$500

Applicant	Details	Amount Requested	Proposed Assistance
Room at the Table	<p>Benalla Boardgame Project – 2025 Benalla Street Art Festival</p> <p>The event is hosted by Room at the Table Inc. and invites participants to combine art and boardgame design. Led by artist and boardgame designer Alex Wynnter, the event will feature a talk on boardgame design followed by a hands-on workshop where participants will create a custom boardgame focused on exploring the sights and experiences of Benalla Rural City.</p> <p>Participants will design a game where players, armed with a set amount of holiday money, visit iconic local spots, collect points, and engage with the area's attractions. The game will be created using reskinned Monopoly boards, featuring photos of Benalla's landmarks and customised cards and pieces.</p> <p>The event is open to all, with children under 15 requiring an adult. The venue at Benalla's Gliding Club is an accessible space.</p> <p>Funding will go toward catering and other associated event expenses.</p>	\$500	\$500
Total		\$1,500	\$1,500

COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025 IMPLICATIONS

Community

- *A healthy, Safe and resilient community.*
- *A connected, involved and inclusive community.*

Leadership

- *Engaged and informed community.*

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In accordance with the Council's *Community Engagement Policy*, it is proposed that community engagement be undertaken at the 'Inform' level under the International Association for Public Participation's IAP2 public participation spectrum.

Level of Public Participation	Promise to the community	Techniques to be used
Inform	We will provide information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promotion of program via media, website and social media. ▪ Program presented in public reports to the Council. ▪ Outcomes advised directly to applicants. ▪ Outcomes detailed in Annual Report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The *2024/25 Budget* allocates \$15,000 to the Quick Response Grant program. To date, \$8,291.00 in Quick Response Grant funding has been allocated.

Recipients of support throughout the financial year are detailed in the Annual Report.

OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any general or material conflicts of interest in this matter.

Recommendation:

That \$500 grants from the *2024/2025 Quick Response Grant program* be awarded to the Benalla Clydesdale and Heavy Horse Driving Day, Benalla Heritage Network, and Room at the Table Inc.

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3. Annual Grants Program

Ref: 1536132109-871

Tom Arnold – Community Development and Recreation Coordinator
Jane Archbold – Manager Community

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents proposed changes to the guidelines and funding allocations for the Quick Response Grant and Community Grant programs.

BACKGROUND

The Council has increased its annual funding allocation for the Annual Grants Program to \$110,000 in the 2024/25 budget period based on a report reviewing the grant program in 2024. The increase aligns with the higher costs associated with running events and purchasing goods.

Program	Description	Funding Allocation	
		2023/24	2024/25
Community Grants Program	Annual funding allocation designed to encourage not-for-profit, community-based organisations to seek funding up to \$2,500 for projects and activities.	\$66,666	\$95,000
Quick Response Grants	Quick Response Grants distribute grants up to \$500 throughout the financial year, allowing local clubs, groups and organisations the opportunity to seek funds when the need arises.	\$15,000	\$15,000

DISCUSSION

Quick Response Grants Guidelines and *Community Grant Guidelines* have been reviewed by the Community Development and Recreation team.

All sections within the guideline document were reviewed.

The review incorporated feedback from grant applicants, staff administering the grants and benchmarking against other councils.

Proposed Changes

The increased funding pool will enable the Council to award larger grants to Community projects.

Considering benchmarking against other similar sized councils and feedback received from community groups and internal stakeholders, it is proposed that the Council increase the funding amount awarded for Quick Response Grants and Community Grants.

It is also recommended that Community Grants are split into Major and Minor categories.

Increased funding allocations will enable the Council to better support larger-scale initiatives, allowing for the delivery of more ambitious community projects that can make a lasting impact on local infrastructure, social wellbeing, and community development.

The proposed funding changes are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1 – Proposed funding changes

Grant Category	Amount Awarded	Funding Pool
Quick Response Grants (QRG)	Up to \$750	\$15,000
Minor Community Grants (CG)	Up to \$3,000	\$60,000
Major Community Grants (MCG)	Between \$3,001 -\$7,000	\$35,000
Total funding pool		\$110,000

Previously, Quick Response Grants and Community Grants have been administered under one guideline document. Many eligibility requirements for both programs remain the same.

No significant changes have been made to the acquittal process. Successful applicants must complete an acquittal with evidence that the grant funding has been used for the purpose described in the application.

Key Changes include:

Grant	Key Changes
Quick Response Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget and Acquittals – Applications will now need to include quotes or evidence of costs associated with their project. Acquittals will require additional detail on how the funding was used. The changes to the Quick Response Grant Program will take effect from the beginning of the 2025/26 financial year.
Community Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on equitable distribution of funds – When awarding both Major and Minor Community Grants assessors will take into account the amount of funding received through Council grants over the previous three years to applicants. Focussing on ensuring that a variety of applicants have access to funding each year. Detailed Budgets – Applicants will need to include detailed quotes and demonstrate value for money within applications.

Two guideline documents have been created to support the administration of the respective grant programs. The *Benalla Rural City Council Quick Response Grant Guidelines (Appendix 1)* and the *Benalla Rural City Council Community Grant Guidelines (Appendix 2)* are attached.

COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025 IMPLICATIONS

Community

- A healthy, Safe and resilient community.*
- A connected, involved and inclusive community.*

Leadership

- Engaged and informed community.*

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In accordance with the Council's *Community Engagement Policy*, it is proposed that community engagement be undertaken at the 'Inform' level under the International Association for Public Participation's IAP2 public participation spectrum.

Level of Public Participation	Promise to the community	Techniques to the used
Inform	We will provide information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Promotion of program via media, website and social media.▪ Program presented in public reports to the Council.▪ Outcomes advised directly to applicants.▪ Outcomes detailed in Annual Report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2024/25 Budget allocates \$110,000 to the Annual Grant Program.

OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any general or material conflicts of interest in this matter.

Recommendation:

1. That allocations for Quick Response Grants and Community Grants be awarded as follows:
 - Quick Response Grants: up to \$750.
 - Minor Community Grants: up to \$3,000.
 - Major Community Grants: from \$3,001 to \$7,000.
2. That the *Benalla Rural City Council Quick Response Grant Guidelines* be adopted.
3. That the *Benalla Rural City Council Community Grant Guidelines* be adopted.

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4. Draft Benalla Rural City Destination Management Plan 2025-2029

Ref: 154273666-172

Alison Angus – Visitor Economy Coordinator

Courtney Naughton – Manager Economic Development and Sustainability

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report discusses the draft *Benalla Rural City Destination Management Plan 2025-2029* and the *Benalla Rural City Destination Assessment Report*.

BACKGROUND

The draft *Benalla Rural City Destination Management Plan 2025-2029* (DMP) (refer **Appendix 1**) recognises the importance of a capable and empowered industry supported by an effective governance framework to provide connected and seamless experiences for visitors.

Tourism Recreation Conservation (TRC) were appointed as consultants to develop the draft DMP. The draft DMP is designed to guide the efforts of government, industry, and the community in making informed decisions regarding tourism development. It aligns with regional, state, and national strategies, including the *Tourism North East Destination Management Plan*, the *Victorian High Country Destination Management Plan 2023-2033*, *Experience Victoria 2033*, and *Thrive 2030 Visitor Economy Strategy*.

The draft DMP builds upon the insights from the *TRC Benalla Rural City Destination Assessment Report* (refer **Appendix 2**).

The *TRC Benalla Rural City Destination Assessment Report* provides a comprehensive analysis of the key aspects of tourism planning and development necessary to inform the draft. The report offers an overview of Benalla Rural City's tourism landscape, evaluates market opportunities, and aligns them with existing products and experiences in the city.

The report identifies the unique elements that distinguish Benalla Rural City, laying a solid foundation for future development. The assessment was informed by extensive desktop research and engagement with visitor economy stakeholders, ensuring that the draft DMP is grounded in the needs and aspirations of the local community.

DISCUSSION

The draft DMP will guide the visitor economy for Benalla Rural City from 2025 to 2029. It is designed to shape the future of tourism in Benalla Rural City, ensuring that the region can effectively leverage its strengths and opportunities to foster growth, increase investment, and deliver exceptional experiences for visitors while providing value to the local community.

The development of the draft DMP has been a collaborative effort. An internal working group has been actively engaged with consultants from TRC to develop the draft DMP.

A community workshop was held at the Benalla Cinema on 14 May 2024, which saw the participation of 40 attendees from both the community and tourism industry.

The workshop provided a platform for attendees to voice their opinions and contribute to the planning process.

Following the workshop, a community survey was listed on the Council's online community engagement platform '*Have Your Say*'. Fourteen responses were received and were influential in forming the draft DMP.

In conclusion, the draft DMP represents a strategic framework that will guide Benalla Rural City's tourism sector towards sustainable growth and prosperity. The draft DMP focuses on strategic investment in tourism to maximise its potential value.

Benalla Rural City's tourism initiatives align with the vision and values of the Benalla Rural City Council, as well as the plans from Victoria's High Country and Visit Victoria. By leveraging regional and state efforts, there's a significant opportunity to enhance visitor numbers and the overall value of tourism in the region.

Further community consultation will be sought on the draft DMP to ensure that the DMP is robust, inclusive, and reflective of the community's vision for the future of tourism in Benalla Rural City.

COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025 IMPLICATIONS

Community

- *A connected, involved and inclusive community.*

Livability

- *Vibrant public spaces and places.*

Economy

- *Flourishing tourism.*

Leadership

- *Good governance.*
- *High performance culture.*
- *Engaged and informed community.*

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council has allocated \$50,000 to the development of a Destination Management Plan in the *2023/24 Budget*. As of the end of March 2025, \$44,770 had been expended.

LEGISLATIVE AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

It is considered that the report is consistent with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In accordance with the Council's *Community Engagement Policy*, it is proposed that community engagement be undertaken at the 'Consult' level under the International Association for Public Participation's IAP2 public participation spectrum as detailed in the table below:

Level of Public Participation	Promise to the community	Techniques to be used
Consult	We will provide information and consider feedback prior to making a decision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Business and community workshop on the draft DMP.▪ Feedback invited via the Council's website and social media channels.▪ Public Notice in the <i>Benalla Ensign</i> and on Council website.▪ Draft DMP posted on Council's website.

A business and community workshop will be held at 11am on Thursday 1 May 2025 at the Benalla Visitor Information Centre. Businesses and individuals who have already provided input into the draft DMP will be invited to attend the session. The workshop will be advertised via the Council's website, social media channels and *Benalla Ensign*.

Community consultation on the draft DMP will open on Thursday 10 April and close 5pm Thursday 15 May 2025.

Community feedback will be invited via the Council's website and social media channels and through a formal public notice in the *Benalla Ensign*.

OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any general or material conflicts of interest in this matter.

CONCLUSION

Submissions relating to the draft *Benalla Rural City Destination Management Plan 2025-2029* will be heard at the additional Finance and Planning Committee meeting on Wednesday 21 May 2025.

Recommendation:

That the Finance and Planning Committee, acting under its delegated authority of the Council, resolve:

That the draft *Benalla Rural City Destination Management Plan 2025-2029* be placed on public exhibition for a period of at least 28 days.

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5. Urgent Business

Closure of Meeting